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**ENGAGING GLADIATORS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIVATIONS OF *SCANDAL'S*
TWITTER AUDIENCE**

A Thesis in

Communications

by

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Abstract

Second screen use while watching television has steadily increased, while live-television viewing is declining (Consumer Technology Association, 2017). To combat this trend and encourage live viewing, television networks are using Twitter to interact with television audiences to encourage live viewing practice. Alongside the changing television viewing landscape is the recent public recognition of the sometimes insidious usage of social media by corporations, which has ignited a societal critical analysis of our social media engagement practices. Following the heavy utilization of social media during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, users began to publicly question the legitimacy of social media content, the content creators, and what they thought they knew to be reliable sources for information.

In 2018, ABC's hit drama *Scandal* ended after seven seasons on the network after ushering in a new social television era that show creators helped to construct by integrating Twitter into the American political thriller's marketing plan, offering viewers a new, enhanced viewing experience. This engagement modification not only increased viewership, but additionally earned an audience once dubbed the most loyal on Twitter (Nielsen Social, 2015). The trending reduction of live television viewing, combined with the recent cultural critical analysis of our adoption and utilization of social media, makes what happened with *Scandal* a unique phenomenon worth exploring.

This analysis aims to explore the motivations for *Scandal's* audience to tweet while watching the program live by analyzing survey responses of 109 *Scandal* viewers who engaged on Twitter while watching the show. Drawing on the concepts of power relations, the creation of meaning, and convergence culture, this analysis examines the mechanics of the producer/fan relationship to see if any conclusions can be made regarding the motivations behind fans

engaging in live-tweeting practices. The findings and patterns found in *Scandal's* public sphere offer unique insights into how the convergence of even the most serious political discourses can become Twitter-mediated pseudo-entertainment.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2018 after ushering in a new social television era, ABC's hit drama *Scandal* ended after seven seasons on the network. The American political thriller focused on the main character Olivia Pope, played by the first black female lead in a U.S. network drama in almost 40 years (Vega, T., 2013), and her Washington, D.C. crisis management firm, Olivia Pope & Associates. Known for its inclusive casting and emotional monologues, each episode of *Scandal* revolved around a crisis that Olivia and her team of political and public relations 'fixers' took care of for their high-powered clients.

Following a lackluster launch in 2012, show creators integrated Twitter into the show's marketing plan, offering viewers a new, enhanced viewing experience. This change in viewing experience has been credited by some as saving the show (Weinstein, 2014). This engagement modification not only earned increases in viewership, but additionally created an audience labeled the most loyal on Twitter (Nielsen Social, 2015). While social media use among television fans is not unique to *Scandal*, the integration of social media in a drama in a way that led to the establishment of a new, voluntary online community is a phenomenon worth exploring.

Online social networks such as Twitter provide users with the opportunity to take the television viewing experience beyond the parameters set by the starting and ending time of a television show. Twitter has created a new public sphere for television viewers from diverse cultural backgrounds and geographical locations to share and consume information on their favorite programs in real time. Beyond discussion of the show itself, *Scandal's* Twitter conversation connected the public sphere by interweaving real-life political issues into the fictitious programming, blending real-life and fiction-based fodder on television screens as well as Twitter feeds. While *Scandal*-creator Shonda Rhimes borrowed from news headlines in the past

for some of her storylines, such as the President having an affair with an intern, it was the ‘hot-off-the-presses’ headlines such as the Ferguson, Missouri and the shooting of Michael Brown, and the federal government’s plan to defund Planned Parenthood, that allowed for the public mixing of *Scandal*’s Twitter fodder with the real-life rhetoric in real time.

This analysis focuses on the unknown motivations behind social media usage of television viewers by using *Scandal* as my case study to examine the mechanics of the producer/fan relationship to see if any conclusions can be made regarding the motivations of fans to engage in live-tweeting practices.

This is an important time period culturally for this study as technologies and social media are changing at a rate in which the traditional power structures such as laws and social norms cannot keep up, leaving us to make decisions on social media consumption without being well-informed or well-equipped to handle the potential outcomes or consequences.

One of the significant engagement decisions is the live television viewing experience. According to a Consumer Technology Association (2017) report, people are spending less time watching television live. Millennials (people aged 18-34) spend 55% of their video-watching time consuming content after it has already aired on live television and only 45% of the same group are watching live. While the forecast is trending away from live viewing, the practice remains strong with people older than 35 with 66% of their television viewing being live.

This is also culturally significant when examining the shared experiences within families and communities. Television was once the focal point in a home and heavily influenced family life. The television was a place where families and friends gathered for a shared experience, but our social understanding of the shared experience is changing. For the first time children aged five to 16 are more likely to watch television shows and videos on devices such as laptops and

mobile phones, rather than on televisions (Coughlan, 2018), turning what was once a shared experience into a private and individual activity.

As viewers are slowly moving away from the live viewing/shared experience, television broadcasters have found a way to encourage live viewing through the utilization of social media to create a sense of the shared moment among viewers, encouraging the utilization of second screen devices for inter-audience discussion while watching television. The creation of the new ‘watercooler’ discussion has found a home on Twitter where broadcasters are extending their audience relationship by integrating on-screen hashtags and live-tweeting experiences with show personalities. According to Nielsen (2014), the Twitter/television relationship is strong reporting 84% of smartphone and tablet owners turn to Twitter as their second screen. Further, 85% of users active on Twitter during primetime television hours tweet about television, and 90% of those who saw television-related tweets took action to further engage with the show—whether to watch, search for, or share content about it (Advertising Research Foundation, 2014; Yang, 2016).

According to McKinsey Global Institute and Co. (2012), the use of social technologies can potentially unlock billions for a company. A correlation was specifically found with Twitter as a way for companies to communicate and connect with viewers to improve content and make informed marketing decisions that increase value. While the intentions of broadcasters and show creators may be clear, the willingness of audiences to interact with social media while watching television is still relatively unknown.

Alongside the changing television viewing landscape is the recent public recognition of the insidious usage of social media by corporations which has ignited a societal critical analysis of what we are personally giving up by opting in to social media engagement. This new type of

pseudo-entertainment engagement by those who were previously recognized as trusted sources of information, such as journalists and politicians, has caused many to question the legitimacy of the social media content being consumed.

Following the heavy utilization of social media during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, users began to publicly question the legitimacy of social media content, the content creators, and what they thought they knew to be reliable and safe sources of information. During the campaign fake social media accounts filled Facebook walls and Twitter feeds with propaganda that was quickly shared as facts among social media audiences. Further, the recent news regarding Cambridge Analytica's usage of Facebook users' data without their knowledge caused users to delete their social media accounts and lawmakers to question the structures currently in place to protect users' information (O'Sullivan, Griffin, and DiCarlo, 2018).

Baym (2015) examines how technology has changed our conventional understandings of ourselves and our relationships. The questioning of the roles of media and technology and our interactions with them is what she describes as the cultural anxieties that come with the implementation of new media and technology.

Baym (2015) explains:

Most anxieties around both digital media and their historical precursors stem from the fact that these media are interactive. Especially in combination with sparse social cues, interactivity raises issues about authenticity and well-being of people, interactions, and relationships that use new media. (p. 24)

Driven in part by anxiety some individuals are turning away from social media usage as a trusted source of information or deleting their accounts altogether due to concerns over personal privacy. Baym (2015) explains this action:

The internet's ability to store and replicate information without regard to its content leads to fears about what that content might include and how this power might be abused in harmful ways. The mobility of some new media means that we can now have

conversations when we are in public that would have once been had in our homes and that we can be with others wherever we are, feeding into a related set of concerns about privacy and companionship. (p. 24-25)

The recent cultural shifts places us at a unique time period ripe to explore how and why we use social media, how we potentially benefit, and who is gaining from our use. The intersectionality between a desire for connectivity and the potentially gains and losses from that connectivity within an online community is the exact point where I place my study.

The trending reduction of live television viewing, combined with the recent cultural critical analysis of our adoption and utilization of social media makes what's happened with *Scandal* a unique phenomenon worth exploring. This study will examine the Twitter community of the popular ABC television show *Scandal*, which finished ninth across broadcast stations on the social media charts with 5.2 million interactions during the show's six season (Agence France-Press, 2018). For a better understanding of why users are interacting with content, and how they create communities which affects their lives, we need to start with concrete case studies. Hence, this thesis revolves around a focused question: "What motivates *Scandal* viewers to live-tweet while watching the show?"

Drawing from the theories and concepts of negotiated power relations, the creation of meaning, convergence culture, and networked communities as researched by Hall (2013), Jenkins (2006), and Baym (2015) I will analyze the dynamics of this relationship to identify any potential markers that may influence or encourage live-tweeting.

Along with the significance outlined previously regarding the current cultural anxiety surrounding social media utilization, this type of analysis is important because little has been done on network television dramas and Twitter. While many studies have analyzed second screen usage by television audiences and Twitter, many have focused on topics such as live-

tweeting during sports, political events, and reality television, (Kjeldsen, 2016; Hull 2016) and not on fan engagement with a primetime drama. Additionally, previous studies have been done on what fans are saying on social media and their behaviors (Ji and Zhao, 2015; Houston, McKinney, Hawthorne, and Spialek, 2013; Nee, 2015), but only a few have placed focus on only motivations and even less on the motivations of a specific online community devoted to one medium.

Lastly, it is important to analyze *Scandal's* Twitter community to see what we can learn that may better equip social television audiences to make decisions on future engagement, hopefully allowing for more collaboration and control in the engagement process by audience members.

This thesis will begin with an exploration of the rise of Twitter and second screen usage and the ways in which television producers and televisions audiences have used Twitter for personal gains. I will then transition to focus on *Scandal* to explore how producers of this program have used Twitter and what gains have been realized from this relationship for both the producers and the fans. Finally my study will conclude with an examination of *Scandal's* Twitter community by asking fans about their habits and motivations for engagement with the show and other fans.

Chapter 2: Background

In order to critically analyze *Scandal's* Twitter culture, it's important to examine the creation of the various power structures and conventions that helped to make the community possible. By looking at past research and identifying the motivations for fandom/community interactions online, we can gain insight into the motivating factors at play within *Scandal's* Twitter community.

The Rise of Twitter Television

Before we can begin an analysis on the potential motivating factors for online engagement within *Scandal's* community, we need to critically examine the social media medium that has extended the television audience experience beyond viewers' living room walls: Twitter. It's first helpful to first outline the basic conventions of Twitter and how the service has become a part of the daily lives of its 330 million (Collins, 2017) users. Founded in 2006, the social network site Twitter was originally designed to mirror text (SMS) messages, allowing users to communicate via 'tweets' or messages with character limits of 140 or less. Developed initially as a web-based only platform, the service prompted users to respond to the question 'what are you doing' in order to encourage engagement, but many users ignored the question and just posted messages that acted more like conversations. Today, the platform has evolved to match the changing digital landscape, including the addition of smartphone app integration and expansion from 140 to 280 characters or less. The platform allows for various forms of communications from simple link or content sharing, to retweeting, to one-to-one conversations, but for the most part tweets are structured in the one-to-many structure. Tweets may be used to

post an update, send a public message directed to another member, or to forward a message posted by another to all the members of a follower list (Deller, 2011).

Each Twitter user can personalize their own Twitter experience by only ‘following’ other users that they want to hear from. At the time of the inception of Twitter, this was a unique design for interactions and conversation flow. Instead of approving a connection to other users by ‘friending’ like Facebook, Twitter users choose to ‘follow’ other users, which could be people they know personally, or celebrities, public figures, news outlets, businesses, brands, or people with similar interests. It’s important to note this unique structure given that this is the first time that an average person could feel directly connected to a celebrity or high-profile person without barriers like Facebook has with users needing to approve the connections to other users. This unique connectivity and sense of intimacy help establish the framework for the renegotiation of power between the traditional producer and consumer relationship structure.

Communication on Twitter is fast-paced, on average garnering 350,000 tweets a minute worldwide (Hil, 2018). To keep track of the talk that emerges, users developed a number of conventions including the use of the prefix ‘@’ to signal another member’s user name, the abbreviation ‘RT’ to indicate that a message has been forwarded or retweeted, and the use of a hashtag (#) as a prefix to indicate a search term. All three resources can be leveraged to display connection with others or to signal influence as indicated by the number of times a user name is mentioned or a retweet is forwarded.

The various ways to access Twitter outside of its direct website Twitter.com likely played a part in its initial success and still plays a part in its current success by allowing its users to customize its utilization in whatever way works best for them. Users can access the social

networking tool by using various platforms and applications made specifically for second screen devices such as HootSuite and TweetDeck.

The adoption of Twitter by high-profile figures led to a dramatic user-base increase with many academics, political figures, businesses, and media organizations also jumping on board seeking to understand and unlock the potential power of this platform. Deller (2011) wrote about this potential power in an article on audience research and participation on Twitter, specifically focusing on audience relationships and Twitter user engagement with news and television programs. Deller foreshadows the power negotiations at play within *Scandal's* Twitter community when she explains:

When a user tweets something that people believe to be worth recirculating, the message may be forwarded, or 'retweeted' by followers preceded by the letters RT and sometime an additional comment. The process of retweeting helps messages or links circulate quickly and provides affirmation and recognition for the original sender, as well as giving them and their tweets a level of status—tweets that are recirculated a number of times are labeled 'top tweets' by Twitter and appear high in the search feeds for a particular term within that tweet. (p. 218-219)

The integration of Twitter into the television viewing experience has transformed the experience, slowly moving it away from one that is spatially isolating to one that is interactive and communal. In an era when digital technologies have been credited with deepening the personal connection divide, social television hits such as *Scandal* suggests the desire for connectivity enhances the viewing experience.

Twitter complements existing media channels by providing audiences with opportunities for contributions to the wider public sphere and conversation. This dynamic has led to the rise in television fan engagement on Twitter. According to Deller (2011) television programs are so commonly discussed on Twitter that they often are found on the platform's trending topics, with British, American, and Australian television trending most frequently. A majority of the Twitter

television trending topics tend to focus on ‘watercooler TV’ or television shows with cult followings such as reality television shows, contests and talent shows, or event drama, such as series finales (Deller, 2011, p. 255). Twitter also offers media scholars, as well as marketers, a unique opportunity to witness feedback, reactions, and interactions as it happens.

Twitter has broken down the walls of accessibility between the average audience member and their favorite television celebrities. Through Twitter it is possible to have a conversation with your favorite television show’s actors while fans are watching them since many of celebrities tweet from their personal Twitter accounts while the show they are starring in is airing live on television. This type of convergence is not unique to entertainment media and in fact is prominently featured within the political realm where politicians offer seemingly intimate access to their constituents by speaking directly to them on social media instead of through a spokesperson or news article. Twitter features such as hashtags and trending topics extends the accessibility of celebrities and politicians by offering ways for anyone on Twitter to find, and join, a conversation. This platform is an interesting example of the convergence between old and new media and between producers and consumers.

Celebrities and public figures also can form the audience for television programs, tweeting their own thoughts and using fan-related hashtags to participate in the conversation. For example, late-night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel often tweets about ABC’s *The Bachelor* even though he isn’t on the show. His tweets about the show mimic a common show fan interaction, but his celebrity status elevates the content’s importance because of the number of followers reading and potentially retweeting his tweets (Deller, 2011). Additionally, when a celebrity interacts on Twitter as a fan it can function as a repositioning of power, putting the celebrity in the same space as the fan, making the interactions seem natural. The convergence of

these types of interactions on Twitter has transformed the television viewing experience by creating a shared space online where messages can serve as a social function instead of just information sharing. This act reinforces connections and helps to create social bonds that previously did not exist prior to Twitter.

The Power of Twitter for Television Networks

Twitter has opened up a new level of interaction between television producers and their audiences. Although many social media platforms encourage engagement and interaction, Twitter is uniquely positioned to encourage participation from all parties: celebrities, journalists, producers, writers, businesses, and average users, all on the same, seemingly equalizing platform. This convergence culture has encouraged the ongoing power negotiations between producer and consumer within online communities by allowing both parties to create meaning within the community.

Mainstream television programs often operate official Twitter accounts, and audience members are encouraged to follow and interact with these accounts. These accounts are active throughout the week, and interact with viewers during the live shows, asking and answer questions, and sometimes even offering ‘insider information or sneak previews’ as incentives for engagement (Deller, 2011). Television programs are also integrating input provided by the viewers in social media. Some programs display live tweets while viewing the show live, others have even pulled suggested storylines from social chatter. In other words, Twitter discourse has become a part of the show itself.

According to a McKinsey Global Institute and Co. (2012), the use of social technologies can potentially unlock billions for a company. A correlation was specifically found with Twitter

as a way for companies to communicate and connect with viewers to improve content and make informed marketing decisions that increase value. Nielsen (2013) and Social Guide analyzed tweets about live television and the findings showed a strong correlation between Twitter and television ratings (Wang, 2014).

A correlation was also identified in the results of a Nielsen (2015) study on brain activity and Twitter television engagement which found that Twitter chatter can be used as an accurate indicator of the overall audience's interest in a show, right down to a specific scene. Researchers found a 79.50% correlation between the level of activity on Twitter and the viewers' neurological engagement with the show.

Twitter provides instant audience feedback, which provides broadcasters with true data on its audience. The in-depth, minute-by-minute, quantitative and qualitative data, provides broadcasters with sophisticated, immediate measurement and understanding of audience activity (Harrington, Highfield, and Burns, 2013). This type of analysis can be combined with traditional audience measurement tools in an effort to analyze audiences in an increasingly converged media environment. Some television networks have prioritized the execution of Twitter enhanced television as a way to encourage live viewing, thereby exposing the audience to commercials that would otherwise be missed if the program was not viewed live. Encouraging live viewing through the promotion of live-tweeting helps television networks quantify and measure audience engagement, a tool that has been lost in the era of television time shifting devices such as DVR, Netflix, or On Demand. Additionally efforts have been made to measure Twitter fan engagement by the Nielsen Company with the creation of the Nielsen Twitter TV rating system in 2013, a tool needed by television networks to sell advertising.

The efforts to control and measure fan engagement by utilizing tactics that encourage live viewing serves as a mechanism to rebalance the broadcaster/audience relationship back in favor of the broadcaster by making live engagement meaningful. Still the unique makeup of *Scandal's* Twitter community allows the audience to exert power and control as observed through similar fandom activities.

The Power of Twitter for Fans

The popularity of the second screen has provided both opportunities and challenges for television networks. While second screen usage via Twitter makes visible the reactions and interactions of the viewing audience for semi-instantaneous feedback for producers, second screen usage has simultaneously placed some of the power in the hands of fans worldwide, creating new tension and renegotiated power relations within this convergence culture.

Some fans have recognized their power potential and are navigating the existing systems in order to negotiate more control and potentially influence network programming. Evidence of this can be viewed in the execution of 'save our show' campaigns. In 2009, fans of NBC's *Chuck* feared cancellation due to the declining Nielsen ratings, which fans attributed to a shift in timeslot. In an effort to keep their program on-air, fans mobilized and executed a multifaceted campaign to save the show. Fans ultimately saved the program by not only trying to appeal to the network, but the sponsors as well. Through their power as consumers, fans influenced the decisions of the networks regarding their favorite show and *Chuck* was renewed (Savage, 2014).

This recognition of fan-power-potential continued through the next season. Each week, fans would tune in and live-tweet the sponsors based on advertisements that aired during the episode. Fans would thank the sponsor for their support and included the hashtag

#NotANielsenFamily. Fans also executed a photo campaign that involved tweeting pictures of themselves with a show sponsored product and the Nielsen hashtag (Savage, 2014).

According to a recent study, the strength of a show's Twitter community can serve as a public display of its success—or failure. One interviewee noted:

I've noticed that whenever a show gets cancelled, it's something I'm not reading a lot about on Twitter, and if I do check the hashtag or the official Twitter account, the activity will be very, very low. There won't be a lot of replies, there won't be a lot of people tweeting about watching or enjoying it. (Schirra, Sun, and Bentley, 2014)

While we know that fans have the power to create and influence content, what is still generally unknown are the unmeasurable motivations of television fan communities to engage on Twitter. Previous research on fans' motivation to engage on Twitter commonly reference similar motivating factors such as: a desire to discuss the program characters, plot, or other show-related content, a feeling of watching the show with others or a desire to interact and connect with other fans and celebrities while watching the show (Deller, 2011; Schirra, Sun, and Bentley, 2014; Markwick and boyd, 2011). I will draw from some of these identified motivations in my research on *Scandal* fans' Twitter engagement, paying particular attention to the power negotiations at play as both fans and creators work to establish some control within the community in a way that feels meaningful to encourage further live engagement.

***Scandal*: Twitter Case Study**

The American political thriller *Scandal* first debuted on April 5, 2012. Best known for its poignant language, inclusive casting, and willingness to take on tough political topics, this primetime drama created by Shonda Rhimes was built on the lead character Olivia Pope played by Kerry Washington and her Washington, D.C. crisis management firm, Olivia Pope &

Associates. After seven seasons and more than 120 episodes, the series ended on April 19, 2018, leaving behind a new era of appointment and interactive television through live-tweeting.

According to Nielsen, *Scandal* garnered 8.21 million viewers in its first, seven-episode, season. This number increased slightly to 8.46 in Season two when Twitter was introduced by the show's creators as a way to interact with the audience. The ratings grew steadily over the first few years, peaking in season four with an average total viewership of 12.66 million (Turchiano, 2018).

Scandal's creator Shonda Rhimes and ABC retooled the show in the second season to integrate Twitter audience engagement, turning the program into one of the most talked about broadcast television programs. The show's social media strategy established a niche, engagement community that some entertainment pundits have argued 'saved' *Scandal* following its mediocre growth in viewership from between Seasons one and two.

Although based in a political setting, its plot based more so within the complexity of the characters and their relationships instead of within politics. Rhimes' ultrafast paced and frenetic program also fit nicely with Twitter's format, offering fans a chance react instantly to its sometimes jaw dropping plot twists and turns.

Show producers created clever hashtags to streamline the conversations such as #WhoShotFitz and #WhatTheHuck. Additionally, the show's cast, writers, makeup artists, and producers began interacting via live tweets and question and answer sessions with fans of the show using the hashtag #AskScandal. According to the research team at Twitter, when cast members and talent tweet, there was a bump in conversation of up to 65% about the program (Nielsen, 2015).

Scandal is a great text to use to examine the motivations for audience engagement because it is widely recognized by media industry professionals as one of the best examples of television social media integration and “it is best known as an exemplar of the power of social media to catch and hook an audience” (Farhad Manjoo, 2015). The program’s social success even led to the desire to mimic the network’s methodology, leading to the creation of *Scandal*-inspired social media boot camps held by Twitter executives (Turchanio, 2018).

While viewership numbers have fluctuated over the years, fan engagement on Twitter remained strong. In 2015, *Scandal* was ranked number one by Nielsen Social as having the most socially loyal fans which was defined as the share of authors who tweet about three or more episodes during a season. Nearly a quarter of *Scandal* viewers reengaged through Twitter during the 2014-15 season (Nielsen Social), which was also the most tweeted about season garnering 8.9 million tweets (TwitterTV).

According to Twitter data, the series finale elicited more than 338,000 tweets, making it the top trending topic of the night, most-tweeted episode of Season 7, and the fifth-most tweeted hour in the show's history. In addition to #*Scandal*Finale, other top hashtags included #gladiators and #TGIT, an acronym that was added by ABC which stands for “Thank God It’s Thursday” a phrase meant to mirror the network’s former TGIF branding of its Friday night sitcoms (Stanhope, 2018).

While the numbers tell the tale of *Scandal*’s Twitter community quantitatively, the show’s creator and actors recognized its potential impacts through the relationships, motivations, and conversations with fans that were made possible through this forum.

According to an April 2018 Variety article on *Scandal*’s Twitter engagement, the show’s cast and crew expanded their individual reach by interacting with their audience on Twitter. In

April 2012, Kerry Washington had 479,873 Twitter follows, which grew to 5.3 million six years later. Tony Goldwyn, who played President Fitzgerald Grant, had 209 followers in April 2012, which grew to more than 527,000 in April 2018. And similarly, Bellamy Young, who played First Lady and Later President Mellie Grant, only had 58 and now boasts more than 404,000 (Turchiano, 2018).

Goldwyn credited Washington as the catalyst for *Scandal's* cast and crew engagement on Twitter, telling reporters at the Television Critics Association that:

You know, Kerry had this idea of getting on Twitter in our very first broadcast. And she talked to Shonda [Rhimes] about it. And we all got together and Shonda said, 'I'd like you to do this if you would.' I didn't know — I mean, I knew what Twitter was — but I had no interest in it at all, or I was afraid of it. And I thought the fact you could communicate in 140 characters is what's wrong with our culture (Maas, 2018)

Goldwyn noted that he very quickly saw the power of Twitter, "You could just feel this one-on-one relationship with an audience that I had never felt. And you could literally have conversations with people wherever they were — in Ohio or in Brazil or in Nairobi" (Maas, 2018).

The television industry similarly noticed the significance of *Scandal's* Twitter relationship with fans. Following the rise of *Scandal's* Twitter successes in terms of driving audience engagement and tune-in, Twitter's global partnership solutions leader Lara Cohen noted an uptick in outreach from other television networks and other shows asking, "How can we do what *Scandal* did?" (Turchiano, 2018). In response, Twitter execs would then hold boot camps for other series to help them see the potential in the platform.

Cohen credits the cast and crew's ritualistic devotion to engagement as part of what made the relationship successful stating, "They made this party on Twitter every week where they

created this amazing relationship with fans where everyone could watch the show together....It really drove this tremendous word-of-mouth campaign” (Turchiano, 2018).

Cohen also noted that the live-tweeting helped “eventize” the episodes and make the audience feel like they needed to watch live to be a part of something bigger than the average viewing experience. The fact that the cast was interacting in real-time as the storylines played out on-screen encouraged audiences to say more on the platform, creating a sense of community (Turchiano, 2018).

While *Scandal*'s crew, and the television industry as a whole, noticed the importance in cultivating this relationship, crediting differing individuals with driving the relationship's success, Rhimes gives credit to the fans' prolific live-tweeting during the show's real-time airing that carried through the hours that followed an episode's airing, for its success (Everett, 2015).

While public figures have a platform to explain why they engage within a culture such as *Scandal*'s Twitter community, fans generally don't have a similar resource. Short of reading their tweets and drawing conclusions based on the content, it's difficult to say why someone interacts within an online community. This analysis serves to offer insights into motivations for fan engagement within this community in hopes of explaining how Rhimes was able to carve out a place for this community to converge on Thursday evenings in front of television screen and second screen devices.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

As with all discussions on media and communications culture, we need to discuss the concepts of power and control within *Scandal's* Twitter community. While Twitter appears to be a relatively democratizing space, the presence of strategic marketing techniques integrated into the communications within the community changes the dynamics of the environment in a way that calls into question issues of ethics, power, and control, as briefly outlined in my introduction.

In order to critically analyze *Scandal's* Twitter culture, I will examine the power structure dynamics between the audience and the show's cast and crew for insight into how these interactions are made meaningful for both parties. I will also draw from the concepts of convergence culture and characteristics of online communities to see if the characteristics and potential motivations for engagement within this community can offer greater implications for other online communities.

Power Negotiations and the Creation of Meaning

One cannot examine a powerful phenomenon such as *Scandal's* Twitter network without grounding the analysis in the concepts of theorists and researchers such as Stuart Hall. Hall was interested in how meaning and knowledge are produced within a culture. In order to examine the power structures within *Scandal's* Twitter community, it's important to draw from the work of Hall to explain how this community came to be, how it functions, and how its existence is culturally meaningful.

I will specifically draw upon the work of Hall (2013) and his definition of culture as the process by which meaning is produced, circulated, consumed, commodified, and endlessly

reproduced and renegotiated in society, to explain how *Scandal's* Twitter community functions. Hall's work suggests that people are considered to be culturally connected when they interpret the word in roughly the same ways and can communicate, participate, and share thoughts and feelings in ways that are mutually understood, and they must share the same 'cultural codes' to do this. This exchange of meaning can easily be applied to an examination of *Scandal's* Twitter community. One example of a shared cultural code in this community is the shared understanding that the term gladiator does not refer to an armed combatant of the Roman Empire, but instead is a member of Olivia Pope's team of 'fixers'.

While Hall's work can help explain how cultures function, it more importantly helps examine how a specific culture creates meaning. According to Hall, "...culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings—the 'giving and taking of meaning'—between the members of a society or group" (Hall, 2013, p. 1). His concern with how meaning is produced within a given culture is a critical foundation for any critical communications analysis.

According to Hall, meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are, and with whom we belong to culturally (Hall, 2013, p. 4). The question of how meaning is created is connected to the different moments or practices within a given culture. We can give something meaning when we incorporate or make use of something in the rituals and practices of daily life, which gives it value or significance.

Meaning is also produced whenever we express ourselves in, make use of, consume, or appropriate cultural 'things'; that is, when we incorporate them in different ways into the everyday rituals and practices of daily life and in this way give the value or significance. Or, which is the case in fandom cultures, when we weave narratives, stories—and fantasies—around them. Hall also said that meanings regulate and organize our conduct and practices, setting the

rules and conventions by which social life is ordered and governed. These concepts can be identified in some of the basic practices, rules, and functions of *Scandal's* Twitter community such as the practice of logging on Twitter every Thursday while watching *Scandal*, live-tweeting each week, and using show-specific hashtags.

Along with an understanding of how *Scandal's* Twitter community has created meaning this analysis will also rely on Hall's concept that power is not fixed, but instead is negotiated, "between competing social, political, and ideological forces through which power is contested, shifted, or reformed" (Hall, 2013, p. 344). Hall's concept of negotiation acknowledges the unequal power relations involved in the production of definitions and identities, but at the same time recognizes the struggle and negotiation that exists from subordinate groups. Hall states that this is an ongoing process in constant transformation (Hall, 2013).

This concept is important for my study because it allows us to conceptualize that the production of meaning and identity in a way that acknowledges the inequity between producers (*Scandal's* writers and actors) and consumers (*Scandal's* Twitter fans), while recognizing that these positions are not fixed and are in constant transformation.

Convergence Culture

Since my work is based on both social media and fandom, it is important to include the perspectives and research conducted by Henry Jenkins. I will specifically utilize his concept of convergence culture for my analysis to examine the motivations for engagement within *Scandal's* Twitter community.

Jenkins (2006) defined participatory culture as culture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content. He considered social media to be an expression of participatory culture.

For my research though, it's important to move past the participatory aspect of *Scandal's* Twitter community and instead move towards the holistic cultural shift that is occurring within what Jenkins calls the convergence culture.

Jenkins (2006) defines convergence as a word that describes technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes in the ways media circulates within our culture. Convergence is understood here as an ongoing process or series of intersections between different media systems, not a fixed relationship between media producers and consumers. For Jenkins (2006), convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content. He explains that convergence must be understood as both a “top-down corporate driven process and a bottom-up consumer driven process” in which media companies are “learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets, and reinforce consumer loyalties, and commitments” and “users are learning how to master these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact (and co-create) with other users” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 18).

Jenkins was interested in how these shifts in the communications infrastructure have created a paradoxical relationship between the audience and media producers given that each of these groups has the power to produce and distribute content. This new, emerging media ecology has equipped each group with new powers and responsibilities in which both seem to be gaining and losing power and control.

It is within this new media ecology where I place my study. The constant renegotiation of power between media audiences and producers has converged and is actively reshaping our culture. *Scandal's* Twitter community is a creation of the convergence culture that we live in, and one that Jenkins states is operating and interacting, “with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3).

Jenkins explains that the complexities of convergence culture can be a challenge for researchers or society as a whole given that no one group (the producer or audience) is setting the terms and controlling access and participation (Jenkins, 2006).

Characteristics of Online Communities

Many online groups develop a strong sense of group membership, feeling like a community built on real personal connections and meaningful social formations no matter where the members are located physically or in some cases even where they are located throughout history. For this study it's important to highlight some of the common characteristics of online communities found in *Scandal's* Twitter community so that the work could potentially be applied to similar communities for future analyses. For this, I will draw from the work of researcher Baym (2015) whose research focuses heavily on social media relationships and new technologies.

In her book *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, Baym (2015) discusses the characteristics and practices of online communities, specifically identifying five qualities found in both online groups and the many definitions of community outside of online context that help make the term resonate for online context. Baym identifies these qualities as: a sense of space,

shared practice, shared resources and support, shared identities, and shared interpersonal relationships.

Most online groups are not connected by a ‘shared physical or geographical space’, still many group members feel as if they exist in a shared space, even if that shared space is cyberspace. This space functions similarly to a neutral ground within a physical community such as a coffee shop or barber shop where members feel equal (Baym, 2015).

Along with the metaphorical shared space, many online communities develop ‘shared habitual and unconscious behaviors and routine practices.’ Baym (2015) specifically identifies language patterns as an appropriate way to study online communities because of the distinctive patterns which enact and recreate a cultural ideology. She explains that online communities share ways of speaking that capture meanings that are important to them and may not be understood through common sensibilities. This shared language practice could be using insider lingo and literacies such as acronyms and/or specific word choices that would not be understood outside of the group. This shared practice provides members of a specific Twitter community with the opportunity to “speak like a Twitter insider” and help mark the status of group members and help them to forge an identity (Baym, 2015).

Along with language practices, norms of practice are displayed, reinforced, and taught through members’ shared behavior, and are regulated as acceptable and unacceptable behaviors within the community. This is practice, of normative standards, is what Baym states implicates power structures within the online community. She recognizes that hierarchies form within online groups, giving some people more to say than others in creating and regulating behavioral standards (Baym, 2015).

Communities and online communities can also be defined by a ‘sense of shared resources and support.’ Each community member feels as if they have access to a wide variety of help due to the shared common interests and concerns. This is a common characteristic of online fans and hobbyist groups in which their existence is predicated on a desire to organize around common interests (Baym, 2015).

The fourth characteristic is a ‘shared identity’, or for a community a sense of who ‘we’ are and what personalities and roles are assumed within the community. For an online fan group, this could mean taking in the different roles such as expert, resource for answering questions, a troll, a fan, etc. (Baym, 2015).

Online communities also provide the context for forming one-on-one or ‘interpersonal relationships.’ These relationships are sometimes made visible to the group when members post publicly about a shared experience with another member of the group that makes it clear that a personal relationship has formed (Baym, 2015).

Recognizing the characteristics of online communities through the defining characteristics of online communities is important not only for this analysis, but for any study on social media groups because it helps us understand how and more importantly why people behave and exist in certain ways.

The rise of Twitter television, the wildly successful integration of social media into *Scandal*’s viewing experience, and the potential gains for both television networks and fans earned through Twitter engagement, makes *Scandal*’s Twitter community a good text to analyze to see what we can learn. By applying the concepts of power negotiations, convergence culture, and characteristics of online communities as outlined by Hall, Jenkins, and Baym, to an analysis

of *Scandal's* online community we will have a greater understanding into the potential motivating factors behind live fan engagement within this community.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative data to compose a rhetorical analysis of *Scandal's* Twitter community to examine the motivations for engagement within the community in order to see what types of social and cultural implications or patterns may be recognized that social television audiences, and online audiences, could learn from in order to take on a more collaborative role in online engagement in a way that positively benefits them and our culture generally.

In order to examine the community it was important to hear directly from the community itself, which was done so through survey implementation. The survey data was then analyzed using the theoretical framework explained earlier including the concepts of power negotiation, the creation of meaning, and convergence culture.

Survey implementation, ethnography, and social network analysis are a few of the common methodologies that can be utilized when analyzing online communities. Survey methodology was utilized in this study because of its prominent role in the history and development of media and communications research. Additionally surveys are often used when conducting audience research (Hansen and Machin, 2013). An analytical survey was appropriate for this study because my analysis focuses on the motivations and behaviors of my given population, *Scandal's* Twitter community.

Social network analysis was not implemented in this study because even though structures can potentially impact individual motivations, the scope of the study focuses on finding the motivations first. Similarly, ethnography was not a good fit for this study. While I did conduct some basic level ethnography in order to identify popular hashtags and the basic functions of the online community's culture, I chose not to fully immerse myself in order to

remain more objective given the purpose of this study focuses on finding motivations which can be easily distorted in synchronization when talking with a fellow member of the fan community.

The cross-sectional survey was administered using the online survey provider SurveyMonkey. An online survey was a good fit for this study because my target audience is online and it was not realistically feasible to contact or identify them outside of their online engagement given the scope of this research. Respondents can access the survey through any computer, cell phone, or any other device with internet access. This design provides respondents with the ability to stay on whatever second screen device they are using to tweet from while taking the survey. Additionally online surveys are easy to administer via Twitter which is where much of my audience is located and the focus of my research.

The survey questions were designed using a mixed method of both personal inquiries and inquiries based off of Baym's (2015) descriptions of characteristics of online communities and networks outlined previously.

The survey was broken up into eight sections of closed questions organized by topic. The questions were both multiple choice and agreement rating scales. The first two sections of the survey asked questions about users' general television and Twitter practices, and their Twitter practices related to *Scandal*. These questions were asked to determine if these practices were incorporated into users' everyday lives and rituals. Additionally, these responses helped to eliminate some respondents who did not fit the criteria for the survey if they did not identify themselves as a Twitter user and/or a fan of *Scandal*.

The next four sections of the survey were asked in order to examine the motivations of *Scandal* viewers to live-tweet about the television show to see if any common characteristics or behaviors could be identified. Specifically these sections covered the following as potential

motivating factors: the content of the television show *Scandal*, *Scandal's* Twitter community, the influence of *Scandal's* Twitter community, and personal rewards when tweeting about *Scandal*.

The seventh section of questions aimed to identify acceptable live-tweeting behaviors within the community to see if there was a shared understanding of what are perceived acceptable behaviors influencing their tweeting habits. The last set of questions were about the respondents' personal background.

Respondents were selected in terms of their relevance to the research objectives and on a basis of availability and willingness to participate. The non-probability sampling technique, convenience sampling, was utilized in this study because it's the best way to ensure that the sample matches the criteria of the audience necessary for the study.

Participants were determined to be eligible to take the survey if they met the following criteria: (1) 18 years old or older, (2) watched *Scandal*, (3) Live-tweeted or monitored Twitter while watching *Scandal*. It's important to note that this survey was not only for respondents who live tweeted while watching *Scandal* because this would leave out those individuals who only monitor the conversation, or what Baym refers to as the 'lurker' (Baym, 2015).

Data was collected beginning on April 11, 2018 with a general recruitment post to all of my Twitter followers and Facebook friends asking them to take my survey and/or share it with their followers and friends. Following the initial public recruitment I implemented two tactics to solicit survey participants: general recruitment posts on Twitter and Facebook and direct replies to individual users who were tweeting about *Scandal*.

To help identify the sample of *Scandal* fans to send the survey to on Twitter for the study, I ran a few searches using the hashtags #*Scandal*, #TGIT, and #Gladiators on the platform TweetDeck. I chose to use TweetDeck because of my familiarity with it and its capacity to allow

users to track multiple Twitter streams on the same page. I chose to search by those specific hashtags because they are non-episode specific hashtags that are commonly used by *Scandal* fans on Twitter. The search returned tweets that mentioned the hashtags, a majority of which were related to the television program *Scandal*.

I spaced my recruitment tweets out throughout different times of the day so that I wasn't flooding fans' social media streams with the same request. I purposefully chose to not recruit respondents at the same time of day every day because I wanted to increase the likelihood that I was reaching different group of potential respondents. I also used hashtags in my recruitment requests to increase the chances that other fans would be able to find my survey if they were searching for *Scandal*-related hashtags.

I chose to devote a majority of my recruitment time using this method because I was able to target individuals who fit the criteria I was looking for in my study: fans of *Scandal* and tweets about *Scandal*. I also noticed within the first day that this method of recruitment resulted in an immediate uptick in survey respondents following each wave of requests.

Using the common language of the fandom community in my mass recruitment posts and my searches to identify fans for direct recruitment was an important tactic to help ensure that the respondents were a good representation of the larger fandom.

I did not have very much success with recruitment on Thursdays while *Scandal* was airing live which was surprising to me. I thought that with more fans engaging at the same time that there would be a higher likelihood of responses, but that was not the case. Instead I noticed that fewer people were responding while *Scandal* was airing live and I yielded a greater number of results when *Scandal* was not airing live. This leads me to believe that the group was engaged in the program and social chatter and did not want to take the time to do the survey while

watching *Scandal*. Additionally due to the high volume of tweets *Scandal* commands it is possible that there was too much conversation taking place too quickly, meaning that my tweets were quickly lost among the chatter.

The survey period closed on April 25, 2018, with 122 respondents who at least partially completed the survey. I discarded 13 responses based on their general Twitter habit responses in which they indicated that they did not meet the criteria. My final survey sample was 109 respondents.

It's important to note that the series finale for *Scandal* aired on April 19, 2018. The survey implementation dates were selected due to the approaching series finale when the likelihood was high that the community engagement levels would be high as well. I purposefully chose to keep the survey open and continue recruitment through April 25, 2018 to have two full weeks of data of the weekly television show: one week that included the build up to the finale and another that included both the finale as well as community members' realization that the show was never coming back. Additionally I felt that the *Scandal* community would continue to talk about the series finale on Twitter in the days following its airing and the survey could help respondents reflect on their motivations and practices. Allowing the survey to remain open any longer than two weeks would have presented the challenge of fading memories as respondents would have struggled to recall their live-tweeting practices. Interviews were not conducted for similar time-associated reasons. Given that the series ended and live engagement would have ceased, too much time would have passed following data collection, clean up, and review for respondent memories to remain pure and accurate.

The following are a few of the sample recruitment posts, which included common hashtags that *Scandal* viewers commonly utilized:

Twitter: As we reflect on our time together over the past seven seasons, please consider helping a fellow #gladiator out with my research study on #*Scandal* for my thesis. We went #overacliff together, please help me tell the world why!

Thanks! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPJY27C>

Facebook: Hey everyone I need some assistance with data collection for my thesis! If you watch *Scandal* and live tweet or monitor Twitter, please take part in my survey. If you don't please share it with everyone you know! :) Thanks!

Following the collection and clean-up of the data, the results were measured quantitatively in order to identify the significant trends or phenomena of the group that could provide insight into their motivations to be a part of this online community. The results were then analyzed qualitatively using the theoretical concepts of power negotiation, the creation of meaning, and convergence culture and the findings were reinforced with primary data from Twitter to explain the results and discuss the greater social and cultural implications of the findings.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter reports on the survey data collected from *Scandal*'s Twitter community for this study. As mentioned in the previous section, the questions were designed using a mixed method of both personal inquiries and inquiries based off of Baym's (2015) descriptions of characteristics of online communities and networks. For this section, the data was briefly analyzed to look for results that may provide insight into potential motivations for engagement. In this section I will briefly review some of the significant findings from each section of the survey.

General Television and Twitter Habits Related to *Scandal*

The first few sections of the survey asked questions about respondents' general television viewing and Twitter usage habits, and how those habits associated with *Scandal*. In this section, the results reveal that the respondents were spending time on Twitter discussing *Scandal* and engaging with *Scandal* accounts outside of the show's one-hour airtime.

When it comes to the time spent on Twitter discussing *Scandal*, 21.91% reported spending between three and seven hours a week engaging with or sharing *Scandal*-related content, and 5.71% reported spending more than seven hours a week doing the same.

A majority of respondents reported following *Scandal*-related Twitter accounts. Interestingly, 79.21% of the survey respondents reported following at least one of the show's actors/actresses and 68.63% reported following the show's official Twitter account.

Scandal's Content

The next section of the survey asked questions about the show's content to determine if it motivated fan engagement on Twitter. Survey results indicate that the show's content influenced respondent interactions and engagement.

More than 60.60% said that they felt compelled to read or tweet about, or in reaction to, *Scandal's* storyline and 68.68% felt compelled to read or tweet about, or in reaction to, *Scandal's* characters.

Only 23.47% of respondents reported engaging more often when *Scandal's* storyline is similar to real-life news stories. I found this particularly interesting because Rhimes often wove real-life stories into *Scandal* and her own personal Twitter feed, which some survey respondents follow.

This data again alludes to a desire to connect to other fans in the network due by wanting to keep the conversation within the network itself. If you are tweeting about a real-life scenario, it is likely that you are engaging outside of *Scandal's* Twitter network because you are basing the conversation on the issue which could bring outside conversation into the network. The results of this section will be analyzed by applying the concepts of power negotiations and the creation of meaning to look for motivating factors for engagement.

Scandal's Twitter Community

This section of the survey asked questions about respondents' feelings of connectivity and common practices of communities. The responses in this section indicate a sense of real connectivity within the group as well as a sense of shared identity as witnessed through the adoption of the show-term 'gladiator' by the group.

When it comes to feeling connected, a majority of respondents, 82.89%, said that being on Twitter while watching *Scandal* made them feel connected to other audience members and fans. Slightly less, 78.95%, said that being on Twitter while watching *Scandal* made them feel connected to *Scandal's* cast and crew.

Interestingly, 52.94% said that they felt the same connections to others on Twitter as they do while watching *Scandal* with people in the room and 82.35% liked that Twitter provided them with the opportunity to interact with others about *Scandal* without being in the same physical location together. A majority of the respondents, at 82.36%, felt that Twitter is the best way for them to connect with other fans.

More than half, 57.65%, of the respondents said that they felt compelled to use or search for episode specific hashtags used by *Scandal's* official Twitter account or the show's cast and crew. Similarly 57.64 % said that they will likely use or search for hashtags that are promoted by *Scandal's* official Twitter account or the show's cast and crew.

Nearly 71.77% of the respondents reported a desire to engage with others on Twitter by comparing reactions or predictions. Yet a smaller number, 49.41%, said that they felt compelled to respond to other people's questions proposed on Twitter. This could indicate the feeling of significance of the group as a whole, instead of the individuals. It's much easier to scroll through a Twitter feed and determine the general consensus/sentiment of the group, but it's much more difficult to respond to individuals, especially when there is high amount of social chatter, like what happened when *Scandal* aired. Additionally, the successful existence of this community on Twitter may have been driven by the quick response like structure of the social media platform, a concept that will be explained by applying concepts of convergence culture.

Nearly 64.70% of the respondents reported that they felt that *Scandal's* Twitter community had a closer relationship to *Scandal's* cast and crew than those who are not on Twitter while watching the show. This response seems to indicate that the community provides them with something unique that viewers who do not engage on Twitter do not have access. Additionally 69.41% said they believe that tweeting live provided them with the best chance for *Scandal's* cast and crew to read their tweets.

When it comes to the show's usage of the term 'gladiator', 82.35% agreed and 45.88% strongly agreed, that that the term includes or is also referring to *Scandal's* Twitter community and nearly half of the respondents at 48.24% strongly agreed with the statement "I consider myself a *Scandal* 'gladiator'." Additionally, 71.77% said that using the hashtag #gladiators while watching *Scandal* was a good way for fans to identify one another.

The results of the community section of the survey offer potentially significant findings for an analysis of the motivating factors for engagement. I will draw from the concepts of power, the creation of meaning, and convergence culture to explain how the results outlined provide a greater understanding of the group's shared behaviors.

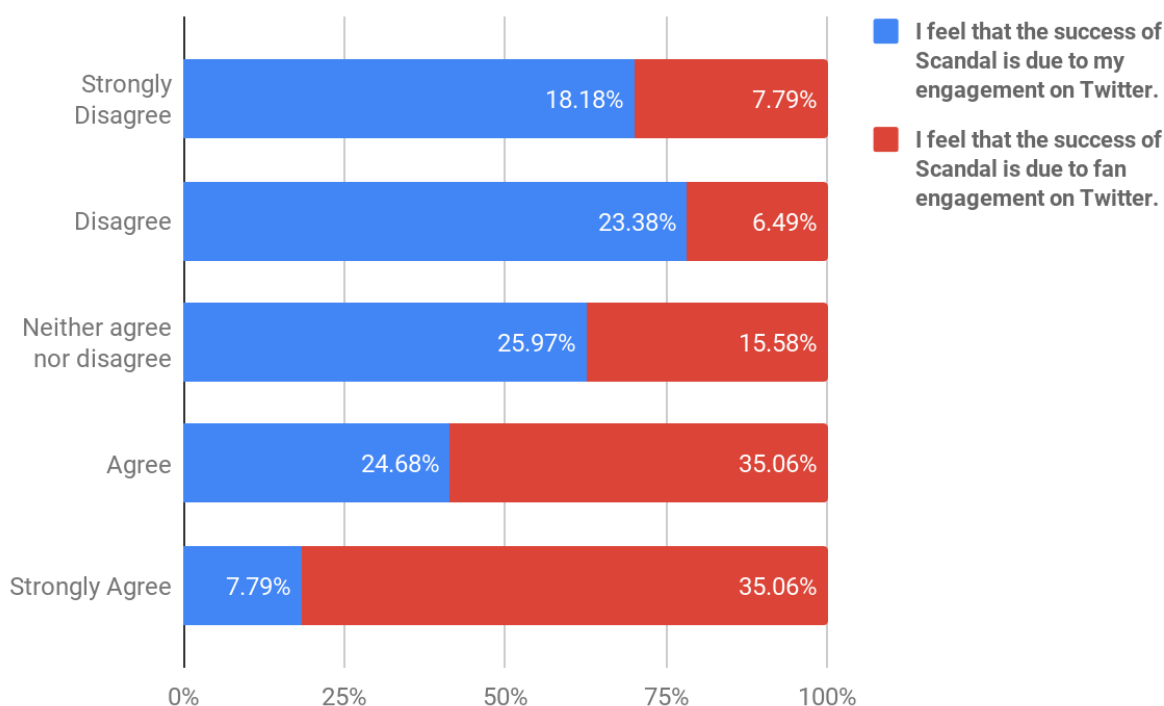
Potential Influence of *Scandal* and the Community

When it comes to the question of whether or not *Scandal's* Twitter community has influenced the program's success or content of *Scandal*, the responses seem to indicate a perceived understanding of the power of the group as a whole versus the power of the individuals who make up the group.

When asked if they agree with the following statement "I feel that the success of *Scandal* is due to my engagement on Twitter" only 32.50% were in agreement, of which only 7.79% said

that they strongly agreed. Interestingly when rephrased as “I feel that the success of *Scandal* is due in part to fan engagement on Twitter” 70.20% were in agreement (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Similar responses were found when asking about the respondent’s potential influence on the show’s content, writers, and actors compared to the perceived power and influence over the group. More than half at 61.03% disagreed with the statement “I feel that I have the ability to influence the show’s content through Twitter feedback”. And 48.05% felt similarly about their individual lack of influence on *Scandal’s* writers, actors, and producers.

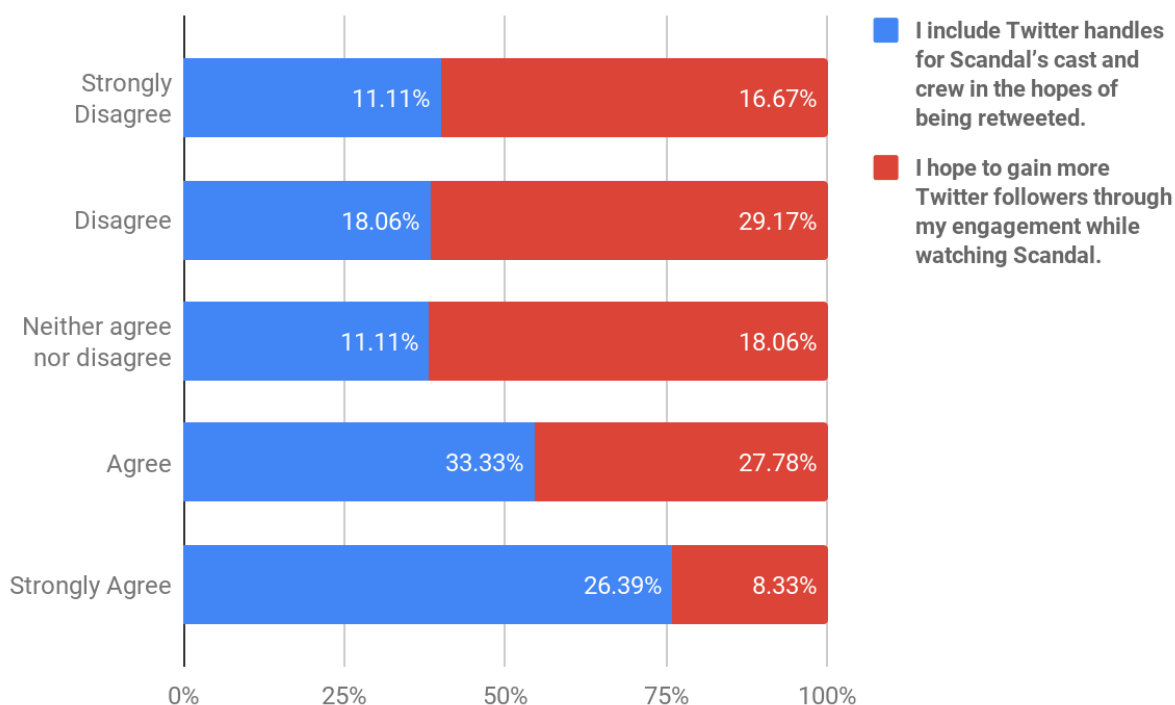
When asked the same questions, but replacing the word “I” with “fans” 29.87% said that fans have influenced the show’s content because of Twitter feedback and 46.75% said that *Scandal’s* writers, actors, and producers can be influenced by fan tweets.

Questions regarding the perceived influence of *Scandal's* Twitter community offer significant insights when looking for motivations. By analyzing the data from a power relations perspective we can analyze the various power negotiations at play within this community that may influence or motivate engagement.

Personal Rewards When Tweeting About *Scandal*

The next section of the survey asked questions related to perceived personal rewards or potential gains from being a member of *Scandal's* Twitter community. The results of this section again seem to indicate that respondents find the connections with others in *Scandal's* Twitter network rewarding.

When asked questions related to *Scandal's* cast and crew, 59.72% said that they included Twitter handles for *Scandal's* cast and crew in their tweets in the hopes of being retweeted, but only 36.11% said that they hoped to gain more followers by engaging on Twitter while watching *Scandal* (Figure 2). This seems to indicate that the connectivity to others within *Scandal's* community is the motivating factor for engagement, and that the engagement is not driven by a desire for increased social capital.

Figure 2

More than half, 55.56%, of the respondents reported feeling that they are granted insider information from *Scandal's* cast and crew by following along on Twitter, and 66.66% said that they were excited at the thought of Shonda Rhimes or Kerry Washington reading their tweets. A majority of respondents, 81.95%, reported enjoyment from reading tweets from *Scandal* fans. Similarly 83.33% said that they enjoyed following along on Twitter to see what other fans created such as memes and new hashtags.

The results offer profound insights into potential motivating factors for engagement and by applying the concepts of power negotiations and the creation of meaning I will explain how the feeling of being rewarded is generated by engaging on Twitter.

Live-Tweeting/Live-Viewing Practices While Watching *Scandal*

The final section of the survey asked questions related to users' live-tweeting and live-viewing behaviors and practices. The results of this section seem to indicate a shared understanding of live-tweeting practices including common language use.

When asked questions related to tweeting and using the show's hashtag, the results indicate a strong connection between the two with 79.71% agreeing with the statement "*Scandal* or show-related hashtags should be used while live-tweeting" and 76.81% said that the hashtags promoted on *Scandal's* official Twitter account or on commercials should be used while live-tweeting. Additionally, 59.42% agreed that it was important for them to include hashtags promoted from *Scandal's* official Twitter account when tweeting live. The shared practices and language of the group help to make the interactions meaningful and may have influenced engagement behaviors.

Interestingly when it comes the respondents' thoughts on live-tweeting and spoilers, the results were mixed and only 27.54% said that they structured their live tweets in a way that prevented or limited spoilers. When asked whether or not they agreed with the statement "I do everything possible to avoid all social media if I cannot watch *Scandal* live," the results were mixed with 25.00% strongly disagreeing and 27.94% strongly agreeing.

Nearly half, 44.92%, of the respondents said that they are less likely to tweet if they don't watch *Scandal* live and 50.72% felt that their engagement on Twitter motivates them to watch *Scandal* live.

A shared understanding of how the community believes it should behave can offer significant insights into an examination of motivations. By using the concepts of negotiated

power and the creation of meaning, I will explain how this data offers insight into the motivations for fan engagement within this convergence culture.

As stated previously, an analysis of the quantitative data alone is not very significant, and in fact could be deemed useless to a communications researcher given that it's focused on one community and would be difficult to apply to others. By applying the theoretical concepts of power relations, the creation of meaning, and convergence in the analysis of the data we draw conclusions that may be applicable to other online communities and therefore useful in future research.

Chapter 6: Analysis

The Fluctuation of Gladiator Power

The first significant finding is that fans may have been motivated to interact within this community due to the constant renegotiation of power between *Scandal's* audience and producers in which neither side has full power. This unique status motivated fans by allowing them to voluntarily opt-in to engagement with the content of their choosing, rewarded them with access to celebrities, and offered the feeling of sameness through the creation of a shared identity. While at the same time created a scenario in which the traditional power structures of the producers also earn real gains through their association with fans in this Twitter community.

According to Hall (2013), power is not fixed, but instead negotiated and in constant transformation. He further states that negotiation acknowledges the unequal power relations involved in the production of definitions and identities, but at the same time recognizes that the struggle and negotiations that exists from subordinate groups. I will briefly outline three examples of this negotiation and constant transformation within *Scandal's* Twitter community.

Content Engagement

First, as mentioned previously, *Scandal* writers are known for adding real life content into the show's storyline. When asked about tweeting behaviors in relation to *Scandal's* storyline when it is similar to real-life news events, less than a quarter of the respondents reported engaging more often when *Scandal's* storyline is similar to something happening in real life. This implies an active selection process by the audience even though the producers still have the power in terms of the actual creation of content.

Although *Scandal's* writers selected the topics of discussion through the creation of the episode and the corresponding social media marketing materials, the fans were selecting how, and if, they were discussed on Twitter. Again, when looking at this relationship from a power negotiation perspective, this could be explained as fans were exerting their power, but I believe this analysis must also recognize the fact that producers will always have some power due to the fact that they are creators of the show itself. Additionally it's worth recognizing that *Scandal's* lead character was based off of a real person, former Deputy Press Secretary for George H. W. Bush, Judy Smith. Similarly to *Scandal's* main character Olivia, Smith is credited with guiding presidents around potential controversies or 'fixing' situations. In a 2014 interview, Smith revealed that she would often work with Shonda Rhimes to come up with story ideas for *Scandal*, sending notes on scripts and even assisting on set (Burton, 2014).

The show, characters, and storylines were all based off of a real person, who helped to craft the show's storylines based on her personal experiences, therefore it would be logical to say that every episode of *Scandal* was based off a real-life storyline. Respondents' belief that they actively chose what content to discuss on Twitter indicates power within *Scandal's* Twitter community that was never fully owned by either the fans or *Scandal's* creators. This is significant when looking at the Twitter interactions within the community and their integration into the greater public sphere. Fans' discussion of the show, which was based on an actual person and featured storylines on real public issues, integrated the show-driven conversations into the greater public sphere.

Celebrity Association

The second indicator of the power negotiations at play within *Scandal's* Twitter community can be identified by exploring the respondents' desire to be associated with the celebrities in this community. Survey respondents acknowledged a desire to be associated with *Scandal's* celebrities publicly. While this might be a motivating factor for many fans to engage, what makes this community unique is the public recognition by *Scandal's* celebrities of their need of the fans for success. This mutual recognition of the want or need of the other is another example of the continual shifting of power within this community as explained by Hall (2013).

Respondents said that they included the handles of cast and crew in the hopes of being retweeted, but this practice was not done to gain more followers. This response is incredibly significant when analyzed through the lens of power negotiations. As mentioned previously, the act of including an individual's handle in a tweet is a practice on Twitter that allows someone to direct a tweet to a specific individual via their Twitter handle. This means by including Kerry Washington's handle @KerryWashington in a tweet, users can direct public messages right to her. It's important to note that users can hypothetically send a direct message, or private message, to Kerry as well, but the public aspect of this interaction is significant when we move to the second portion of the question regarding retweeting.

The fact that respondents said that they want to be retweeted, but not to gain followers, indicates that they wanted to be publicly associated or recognized with *Scandal's* cast and crew on Twitter. While this likely has no tangible value to the fan, it potentially increases their social capital and perceived social clout. The practice of Kerry Washington retweeting a fan's tweet, implies significance of either the content of the tweet, what the fan said, or the fan themselves,

depending on the situation. Therefore fans can influence their power potential by associating with *Scandal's* established power structures.

Markwick & boyd discuss this practice in their research on celebrity tweeting practices stating, “Fans @reply to famous people not only in the hope of receiving a reply, but to display a relationship, whether positive or negative. If fans receive @replies back, they function as a mark of status and are publicized within the fan community” (Markwick and boyd, 2011, p.145).

The results seem to indicate that access to *Scandal's* cast and crew, or connections to celebrities, was a motivator for their engagement on Twitter, but in order to better examine why this is a motivation and how this access could be a characteristic that helped to make this community meaningful, it's important to look at the practices of *Scandal's* cast and crew to identify how they made these interactions feel rewarding to fans.

Markwick and boyd's (2011) identify various celebrity practices on Twitter which I believe are extremely helpful in explaining and examining the power negotiations within *Scandal's* Twitter community. According to Markwick and boyd (2011), celebrities often reveal what appears to be personal information to create a sense of intimacy between themselves and a follower, publicly acknowledge fans, and use language and cultural references to create affiliations with followers in an effort to maintain their celebrity status while creating the illusion of equality.

The practice of public recognition and fan maintenance requires constant interactions with fans. Celebrities mention fans to perform connection and availability, give back to loyal followers and manage their popularity (Markwick and boyd, 2011). This is a practice that is easily identifiable within *Scandal's* Twitter community by doing a simple search through any of *Scandal's* cast and crew's Twitter accounts.

One example I found demonstrates the practice of fan maintenance and recognition as well as the fan reaction to the public recognition, offering the perception of a rewarding experience for the fan:

“@kerrywashington YOU HAVE CHANGED TELEVISION FOREVER AND I AM SO LUCKY TO BE LIVING IT! Thank you for being such an incredible role model ❤️👊🇺🇸 #Scandal” (Valderrunten, 2018).

Replying to @martinval95: “Thank you for being in our #Scandal family. Xo” (Washington, 2018).

Replying to @kerrywashington: “THIS MADE MY ENTIRE YEAR!!! My birthday is Sunday. ❤️THANK YOU FOR THIS!!!! 🤔😭” (Valderrunten, 2018).

Another practice identified by Markwick and boyd (2011) that can be found in the practices of *Scandal*'s celebrities on Twitter that help to recirculate power is the process of affiliation or the public performance of a connection between practitioners and fans by using similar language, words, cultural symbols, and conventions. As previously mentioned, *Scandal*'s traditional marketing strategy is full of show-specific jargon, hashtags, and icons that create linguistic ties between *Scandal*'s celebrities and its fans. This practice emphasizes the connection between the celebrity and the fan around a common topic that both groups are equipped to discuss on Twitter. These interactions are a part of a constant process in which both sides are rewarded and rewarding the other through the interactions.

Equal Access

The process of affiliation and interactions between fans and celebrities with *Scandal's* Twitter community leads me to a third significant indicator of potential motivations, and that is the illusion of access and sameness that this social media platform provides.

The survey results indicate an acknowledgement of the power differentials between fan and *Scandal's* cast and crew, but the mechanisms and characteristics of Twitter help to chip away at the awe of celebrity by providing the same access to them as you would have with one's real-life acquaintances and friends. Having this type of access to celebrities' thoughts, pictures, and interactions, over a period of time may create an equally valid feeling of 'knowing' them (Markwick and boyd, 2011).

Respondents stated that they believed the access that Twitter provides to *Scandal's* cast and crew afforded them a greater closeness to the celebrities than the *Scandal* fans that do not engage on Twitter. Twitter also allows for the creation of a sense of closeness and familiarity between fans and celebrities. Fans often respond to celebrities on Twitter the same way they would as if he or she was a personal acquaintance.

Additionally, survey results indicate that just the thought that Kerry Washington or Shonda Rhimes could be reading their tweets is exciting to fans. The feeling of excitement that fans receive when engaging on Twitter with *Scandal's* cast and crew helps to reinforce the unequal power differentials between them. Fans' display of deference creates a mutual recognition of the status imbalance between themselves and celebrities.

The Creation of Meaningful Gladiators

The second significant finding is that fans may have been motivated to engage due to the community's shared identity, shared language use, and shared practices. The conscious meaningful actions of members of *Scandal's* Twitter community helped to build a greater sense of community and connectivity by establishing a set of shared community characteristics.

According to Hall (2013), meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity and with whom we 'belong', and meanings are what regulate and organize our conduct and practices through the establishment of rules and conventions to governance and order within a given culture. *Scandal's* Twitter community was made meaningful and therefore encouraged engagement through the development of a shared understanding of the group's identity, shared language use, and the shared practices that established a set of rules and conventions for the group. I will briefly outline a few examples that highlight how this community was made to be meaningful to its members.

Shared Gladiator Identity

Scandal's Twitter community was made meaningful due in part to the strong sense of a shared identity which is most directly linked to the show term 'gladiator'. Survey data indicates that respondents felt connected to one another through engagement on Twitter, noting that they had a shared understanding of the group's identity as witnessed through the adoption and usage of the show-term 'gladiator' by the group. A majority of respondents said the term 'gladiator', what Olivia Pope and her team of 'fixers' at Olivia Pope and Associates called themselves, is also a name, or identity, for *Scandal's* Twitter community. Further, more than half of the respondents considered themselves to be gladiators. These results reveal a sense of shared

identity amongst the community itself, blending the identity of fictitious characters with real-life people.

The term gladiator first is mentioned in the first episode of *Scandal* when one of Olivia's employees, Harrison, explains to their newest team member that Olivia Pope and her team of fixers are like gladiators in suits, specifically stating, "I'm a gladiator in a suit because that's what you are when you work for Olivia you're a gladiator. In a suit, do you want to be a gladiator in a suit?" (Rhimes and McGuigan, 2012).

Over the years the term gladiator was often used on the show as a motivational tool for members of Olivia's team to get each other through tough times, often used to remind one another how strong the group was and how important it was to stick together.

One example of this can be viewed in season three when Abby Whelan, a member of Olivia Pope's team says to Olivia, "You don't get to run, you're a gladiator. Gladiators don't run. They fight. They slay dragons. They wipe up the blood and stitch up their wounds and they live to fight another day. You don't get to run." (Dusen, Mohamed, and Szwarc, 2014).

Alongside the show's developing gladiator narrative came the integration of this show term on Twitter. It's unclear whether or not fans first adopted the term for themselves or if the cast publicly identified their fans as gladiators, but throughout the life of the show both parties used the term to identify other members of the community.

Washington, Rhimes, and other cast members regularly referred to their Twitter fans as gladiators:

"Thank you #Gladiators. THANK YOU FOR TUNING IN !!!!! <3 See ya next week!...." (Washington, 2017).

The term was also used as a hashtag to identify other fans, and still utilized through the conclusion of the show as noted in the survey results:

“A moment of silence for no #*Scandal* tonight and the many nights to come until September. We can get through this my fellow #Gladiators ☹” (Charlita, 2013).

It's not uncommon for fans to adopt names for themselves or be referenced by a certain name that is associated with the show that they are a fan of such as Fox's *Glee* fans calling themselves Gleeks. What is unique is that *Scandal*'s fan identity was built from the show's narrative, enabling the fans to feel integrated into the storyline, blending real life and fiction in a way that felt natural to fans, therefore reinforcing the sense of identity.

Shared Language

The second identifiable marker of the creation of meaning within *Scandal*'s Twitter community is the shared language use within its members. The creation of a shared language within *Scandal*'s online community can be traced back to the beginning of the program's integration of Twitter. *Scandal* was one of the first shows ABC actively promoted on Twitter with plot-related hashtags such as #WhoShotFitz which was incorporated following the assassination attempt of President Fitzgerald Grant in 2012 (Weinstein, 2014). Each season ABC and *Scandal*'s social media team developed strategic plot-specific hashtags to help build buzz around the show's storylines such as #DrunkMellie, #Olitz, and #WhoIsQuinn. ABC also incorporated hashtags into their traditional marketing efforts by including hashtags in commercials promoting *Scandal* as well as the rest of its Thursday night primetime line up.

Survey responses indicate a strong desire to incorporate these hashtags and shared language into their engagement within *Scandal's* Twitter community. Respondents said that they felt compelled to use or search for episode specific hashtags used by *Scandal's* official Twitter account or the show's cast and crew and that they will likely use or search for hashtags that are promoted by *Scandal's* official Twitter account or the show's cast and crew. Additionally, a majority of the respondents said that using the hashtag #gladiators while watching *Scandal* is a good way for fans to identify one another. This is significant in that it further reinforces the shared identity as previously discussed.

Responses offer further insights into the community's shared language by taking it a step further past recognition of the shared language itself and moving towards the recognition of how the language should be used. A majority of respondents said that *Scandal* or show-related hashtags should be used while live-tweeting and that the hashtags promoted on *Scandal's* official Twitter account or on the show's commercials should be used while live-tweeting. Additionally, most respondents said that it is important for them to include hashtags promoted from *Scandal's* official Twitter account when tweeting live.

These results are in line with Baym's (2015) identification of shared practices of online communities in which the communities develop shared habitual and unconscious behaviors and routine practices. According to Baym (2015), online communities share ways of speaking that capture meanings that are important to them and may not be understood through common sensibilities. Shared practice could be using insider lingo or words that would not be understood outside of the group. Shared practice provides members of a specific Twitter community with the opportunity to speak like a Twitter insider.

It's important to recognize that the process of creating the shared language is not just a function of *Scandal's* creators and social media team, it was a shared process with fans. Rhimes recognized the significance of allowing the fans to help establish the shared language of the group. In a 2018 interview with the LA Times Rhimes said:

I remember ABC coming to us for another show and saying, 'We want to test hashtags' And me going, "You can't test hashtags." They're formed by the community. They form their own hashtags. We don't test a hashtag. It doesn't make any sense and not really being able to explain what happens online on Twitter is so spontaneous and authentic (Villarreal, 2018).

Rhimes' recognition that *Scandal's* Twitter community had the ability to define its own language is an important characteristic of the group and yet another example of the constant renegotiation of power occurring within this network. The community used the language introduced by traditional marketing efforts as well as self-created language, blurring the lines of ownership to adoption of practice. The survey results indicate a recognition of adopting the language promoted by ABC's traditional marketing efforts, but at the same time Rhimes' recognition of the power of *Scandal's* Twitter community to produce language and meaning is an example of recognition of the constant transformation of the positions of power and the usage of this language makes it meaningful to both parties.

Shared Practice

Finally, when examining a given culture to identify how meaning is being created, it's important to analyze the different practices within that culture to see if they are incorporated in a way that makes them valuable. As mentioned previously, according to Hall (2013) meaning is produced whenever we incorporate cultural things into the everyday rituals and practices of daily life and in this way give the value or significance.

Both the survey respondents and *Scandal's* cast and crew made their Twitter community meaningful by devoting time to the engagement on a ritualistic basis. When asked about the amount of time that the respondents devoted to tweeting, retweeting, liking, or reading *Scandal*-related content *Scandal* and engaging with *Scandal* accounts on Twitter outside of the show's one-hour timeslot, survey respondents reported spending between 60 to 420+ minutes weekly engaging. This means that some respondents devoted more than seven hours a week to *Scandal's* Twitter community, a timeframe that is more than six times the length of the weekly primetime drama itself.

The meaning created through this practice can be identified by fans' recognition of the loss of this practice expressed on Twitter as shown in the following examples, two months after the show's series finale in April 2018:

"I need another season of #*Scandal*...I don't know what to do on Thursdays" (Fox, 2018).

"I miss #*Scandal* Thursdays..." (Southern City Girl, 2018).

Value and meaning can also be found in the fact that cast and crew practiced ritualistic weekly live-tweeting. In a 2016 interview, Washington discussed the crew's commitment to regularly engaging with *Scandal's* Twitter community stating, "Thursday nights are intense in Shondaland. We're very committed to that community" (Jarvey, 2016). *Scandal's* cast and crew often prompted the ritualistic engagement on Twitter:

"Tonight. It's time. #Gladiators... Join us. It's #SCANDAL. It's #TGIT. Watch with us. Tweet with us. It's our world." (Rhimes, 2018).

The practice of live-tweeting aids in the production on knowledge of the group by making the engagement significant. When traditionally perceived powerful individuals such as Kerry Washington or Shonda Rhimes make engagement with fans a ritual and regular practice, they are helping to create meaning.

Along with the devotion of time to engagement, *Scandal's* online community developed rules and practices that helped make the live viewing and tweeting experience meaningful. The survey results seem to indicate a shared understanding of live-tweeting practices including behaviors that benefit those who watch *Scandal* live.

Most social media platforms have developed associated social norms and preferred etiquette when using them. For Twitter, one such rule is for users to structure television tweets in a way that prevents spoilers for viewers who do not watch the show live. A 2013 Mashable article about Twitter etiquette states, "Do you really want to be the one who ruins the *Breaking Bad* finale for your friends? Even though Twitter is inevitably littered with spoilers, don't be the jerk who posts them" (Hiscott, 2013). Interestingly, the survey results indicate that this is not a common practice of *Scandal's* Twitter community and very few said that they structured their live tweets in a way that prevents or limits spoilers.

To explain this, we need to revisit the concept of a shared group identity and how it creates meaning. In her work on the shared identity of online groups, Baym (2015) states that a group's shared identity fosters in-group norms and resistance or opposition of outgroups. I believe that *Scandal's* Twitter community's lack of concern about ruining the show for those not watching live is a practice of resisting the outgroups, further solidifying the group's identity as one that practices live viewing and tweeting. To be clear, I am not saying that *Scandal's* Twitter fans are purposefully attempting to alienate themselves from others or are not open to accepting

new members into the community. What I am saying is that I believe the group's shared identity is so strong, that the notion that someone would not be watching live is not even a thought that can be comprehended. The social norms adopted by the group were to tune in live and tweet live. In fact, the survey results revealed that nearly half of the respondents said that they are less likely to tweet if they don't watch *Scandal* live.

I think that it's important to recognize one additional related practice of *Scandal's* cast and crew relative to live-tweeting. As mentioned earlier, *Scandal's* crew regularly live tweeted while the show was live. The first live airing of *Scandal* on the east coast takes place hours before the west coast. In order help keep the practice of live engagement meaningful no matter where fans are located, *Scandal's* crew often instructed fans to log of if they could not watch the show live. Both Shonda Rhimes and Kerry Washington have included warnings to fans who were unable to watch the show's first primetime airing live, telling fans to "log off" social media if they were unable to watch *Scandal's* during its east coast airing:

"YO! East coast, Central and EVERYONE who can't watch live... GET OFF THE INTERNET. #ScandalWarning #Scandal" (Washington, 2015).

"WEST COAST GLADIATORS: Get off Twitter. Get off. Right now. NOW." (Rhimes, 2013).

The creation of meaning through the establishment and adoption of shared identity, shared language, and shared practices helped to reinforce the feeling of connectivity within the group. More than half of the survey respondents said that they felt the same connections to others on Twitter as they did while watching *Scandal* with someone physically in the room them. Baym (2015) acknowledges this strong sense of group membership that exists within online

communities, noting that meaningful social formations and real personal connections can exist no matter where group members are physically. Instead of a local coffee shop where members of a specific community gather, the shared physical space of *Scandal's* community was Twitter. The fact that people can perceive their connections online to be the same as in person is truly significant and another indication of how powerful *Scandal's* Twitter network was. It will be interesting for future studies to explore the strength and staying power of the connections formed within the community while the show was on the air by searching for the common bonds found in the community's identity, language, and practices now that the show is off the air.

The Convergence of Gladiator Culture

The third significant finding is that fans may have been motivated to engage within *Scandal's* online community due in part to the interactions and experiences that were afforded by the culture's convergence on Twitter. The mechanics and structure of this convergence can potentially be a motivating factor for interactions because *Scandal's* Twitter culture existed at a time when the roles of media producers and consumers/audiences were not fixed in terms of the creation and sharing of content.

Fans were motivated to engage within *Scandal's* online community due to in part to the unique convergence within the optimal media system of Twitter that made the engagement successful and meaningful for both fans and producers. The existence of this culture on Twitter provided opportunities for fans to interact with others within the community in real time, provided easy access to what was previously inaccessible to fans, and created opportunities for engagement that empowered fans as a whole.

According to Jenkins, convergence is understood as an ongoing process or series of intersections between different media systems, not a fixed relationship between media producers and consumers. *Scandal's* Twitter community was a unique blend of fans and producers, interacting about a television show on a social media platform, in which all parties had the opportunity to create content, find support, and develop a sense of ownership and power. I will briefly outline a few examples that support the finding of motivations influenced by the mechanics of *Scandal's* convergence culture's existence on Twitter.

Convergence with Other Fans/Celebrities

The connectivity that Twitter affords within *Scandal's* Twitter community is not only significant for fan to celebrity engagement, but for fan to fan engagement as well. Nearly three quarters of the respondents said that they felt compelled to read or tweet about, or in reaction to, *Scandal's* storyline, and even more said that they felt compelled to read or tweet about, or in reaction to an action of *Scandal's* characters. The opportunities to share thoughts or reactions to *Scandal* were made possible through this online community's existence on Twitter. Further, a majority of respondents stated that they liked that Twitter allowed them to interact with others about *Scandal* no matter what they are physically located and they expressed enjoyment in following along on Twitter to see what other fans create such as memes and new hashtags.

This practice can be explained through Baym's (2015) description of characteristics and practices of online communities, specifically her recognition of a sense of shared resources and support within the community. Baym (2015) states that each community member feels as if they have access to a wide variety of help due to the common interests and concerns. This shared sense of space can additionally be identified by once again referencing the group's survey response that expressed pleasure in the fact that Twitter allowed them to interact with others about *Scandal* no matter where they were physically located.

Respondents also reported enjoyment reading tweets from other *Scandal* fans as well as following along on Twitter to see what other fans created, including memes or hashtags. These responses recognize that audience members can create content on Twitter that is desired by other fans. Twitter allows users to bring media more fully under their control and affords the opportunity to interact and co-create, which was identifiable in *Scandal's* Twitter community.

I believe that this fandom existence on Twitter was a critically motivating factor for engagement. As mentioned earlier, Twitter was initially designed to mirror text message functions as a way to offer short, easy to understand conversation. It was never designed to be a tool for in-depth conversation and analysis. This design made it the optimal social media platform to encourage *Scandal* fan engagement.

Convergence of Access

Another significant characteristics of *Scandal's* convergence culture was the ease of direct access to *Scandal's* celebrities offered through Twitter. Survey results indicated that fans felt that they were granted insider information from *Scandal's* cast and crew by being on Twitter and that the thought of *Scandal* crew could possibly read their tweets was exciting to them.

As mentioned previously, part of the appeal of Twitter is the perception of direct access to a famous person with limited barriers to that access. With one click of the “follow” button, fans can have access to their favorite celebrities’ real-time thoughts, opinions, pictures, and furthermore have an easy way to contact that celebrity by tweeting at them using their Twitter handle.

The existence of this culture on Twitter helped to reinforce the feeling of connectivity between fan and producer by reinforcing the perception of access to what was traditionally perceived as inaccessible.

Convergence of Group Power

The convergence within *Scandal's* Twitter culture helped to motivate engagement through the public recognition of the power of the fandom by the traditional power structures and

media creators. Survey respondents seemed to recognize their potential power within what Jenkins (2006) refers to as the paradoxical relationship between the audience and media producers. When asked about their potential power to influence *Scandal's* programming, respondents reported a perception of the power of the fandom as a whole, but not of the individual fan.

Scandal's Twitter convergence culture created the optimal atmosphere for fandom empowerment which was realized by fans early on through the creation of a *Scandal*-inspired clothing line. Fans took to Twitter to ask questions about Olivia's clothing and to express their desire to dress similarly to her:

“@KerryWashington I LOVE #SCANDAL and Olivia's wardrobe! Where does she get her clothes? Brooks Brothers?!? Please tell me! :-)” (Vanessa, 2012).

“Every time I watch #*Scandal* I want to be a gladiator even more. And I want Olivia Pope's clothes” (Stoltenberg, 2013).

Inspired by the consistent requests from fans via Twitter for the details of Olivia's clothes, the show's costume designer Lyn Paolo and Kerry Washington decided to collaborate with The Limited to launch a clothing line inspired by the show. Although this specific clothing line is no longer in existence, since its initial launch in 2014, various other lines have been created and are still being sold. It's worth noting that the line was launched at a store that is accessible and affordable for many, an action that again reinforces the notion of equality of *Scandal's* fans and the show's creators and actors. (Hoff, 2014).

The creation of the *Scandal*-inspired clothing line is a great example of convergence culture and the redefined roles between media producers and consumers. The creation of the line

can, at least in some way, be attributed to fan engagement on Twitter, and although Paolo, Washington, and ABC would likely benefit financially from the creation of these products, the fans benefitted as well by influencing the creation of a commodity that they wanted.

Lastly, when looking at the power potential afforded to fans within this convergence culture we need to revisit the meaning found in the group's shared gladiator identity. In order to analyze the power of the gladiator identity, I think that it's important that we review the historical significance of the world gladiator. A Roman gladiator was an ancient professional fighter who often fought in front of the public as a form of entertainment. Most gladiators were slaves and victims of the corrupt Roman system. A large portion of slaves came from prisoners of war or children of prisoners of war. The Romans dehumanized and punished their enemies by using them as free labor and sometimes that free labor meant being a gladiator (Cartwright, 2018).

The commonality between the historical understanding of the word gladiator and *Scandal's* Twitter community's usage is the implication that the group is fighting for something. Within this specific convergence culture, they fighting for the success of the show itself through the continuous live engagement.

The traditionally perceived influencers empowered the group by identifying their need of the 'gladiators' for the continued success of the program. As mentioned earlier, *Scandal's* creator, cast, and crew were extremely vocal about their shared belief that the integration of Twitter and fan engagement on Twitter are what led to the show's success. What is significant about this though is that they never say that the fan engagement on Twitter helped by influencing the program itself, but instead they seem to empower the group or the community as a whole by publicly acknowledging their importance:

“Thanks for your time and your presence. We love you. And are soooooo grateful. Always. Xoxoxox #Gladiators #SCANDAL” (Washington, 2017).

I think that it’s also important to revisit the history of gladiators, specifically recognizing that sometimes being a gladiator was form of free labor. As mentioned previously, the integration of Twitter conversation into a television show’s marketing strategy can be significant for networks. According Nielsen Social (2015), Twitter activity around television programs is indicative of high viewer engagement. Additionally, networks can also turn to social media to understand how content is performing, and advertisers have noticed paid media placements in highly social programs can significantly boost earned media for their brands (Nielsen Social, 2015).

Generally speaking, it is unlikely that *Scandal* fans were benefiting financially through fan chatter on Twitter, therefore it’s not unreasonable to associate their engagement on Twitter as a form of free labor. *Scandal*’s creators were able to create a shared identity with their fans that empowered the illusion of sameness, when in reality they functioned more like the Roman Empire benefitting off of the free digital labor of *Scandal*’s fans on Twitter.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In conclusion, *Scandal's* Twitter community was a powerful online community in which the show's fans voluntarily opted-in to live engagement. This study placed focus on the motivations behind audience engagement to see what we could learn in order to better equip social television audiences to make decisions on future engagement practices, allowing for more collaboration and control in the engagement process by audience members.

By applying the theories and concepts of power relations, the creation of meaning, and convergence culture when examining the survey results, I was able to uncover a few potential motivating factors for live-tweeting while watching *Scandal*. Audience members were motivated to engage in live-tweeting practices due in part to the constant power negotiations, the creation of meaning through a shared identity, language, and practices, and the experiences made possible by the community's convergence on Twitter.

Scandal's Twitter community was successful due to the shared engagement and power of both the fans and producers. While certain aspects of the relationship may have influenced one more than the other, the relationship was built by the constant push and pull and the recognition by each side of the need for the other. This renegotiation of power, one in which the neither the consumer or producer is never fully in control of the other, is what draws us in as researchers as we try to find out why people are motivated to consume things culturally. The recognition of how traditional power structures influence fan engagement may allow future social television audiences to gain more control within their social communities.

Revisiting the work of Hall (2013) we are reminded that people are considered to be culturally connected when they share the same 'cultural codes' or when they can roughly interpret the world in the same way and can communicate, participate, and share thoughts in

feelings in ways which are mutually understood. *Scandal's* Twitter community's shared cultural codes helped to establish a meaningful network with shared practices, shared language, and a shared identity that motivated fans to continue to interact within the community.

The ritualist, weekly logging in on Twitter to interact with fellow gladiators using show-specific jargon and hashtags, motivated continual engagement by making the community significant while offering a sense of belonging to group members, both belonging to each other as well as belonging to the program itself. The recognition of the processes and practices that helped to create meaning within this community may teach future social television audiences how to become more active and selective in what they want to be meaningful within their lives.

Scandal's Twitter community motivated engagement due to the convergence culture's existence on Twitter. The existence of this culture on Twitter provided opportunities for fans to connect in real time, provided easy access to what was previously inaccessible, and created opportunities for engagement that empowered the fandom.

The success of this network was in part due in part to the ongoing process or series of intersections between different media systems in which the relationship between media producers and consumers was not fixed (Jenkins, 2006). *Scandal's* social marketing campaign was successfully integrated into the Twitter network in a way that reinforced loyalties and commitments, while fans also consumed and repurposed in the campaign for their own gains, making personal connections on Twitter a meaningful and powerful experience. The unique composition of this community, a mix of fans and celebrities interacting through various media systems with seemingly equal opportunities to create content and find connections with others, is truly significant. The recognition of social television fans' ability to exert control over interactions and the creation of content afforded by the community's existence on Twitter may

empower audience members to create similar networks devoted to other things that they find culturally significant.

These findings are significant as we examine what this means culturally. We are currently in an era in which we need to critically analyze our social media use, weighing the potential pros and cons of our personal connections in this digital age. As society struggles to keep up with the evolving social media landscape, studies like this are necessary to offer insight in a time when cultural, societal, and social rules are being rewritten, disregarded, or don't exist. *Scandal's* Twitter network existed at a time culturally when researchers, lawmakers, journalists, media producers, and fans, all struggled to define the terms of the social media participation, with no one group ever fully being in control of the interactions. I believe that the overall success of *Scandal's* Twitter community is due to the time that it existed culturally and by learning about the power relations and creation of meaning within this specific convergence culture, perhaps audiences will be better equipped to collaborate online in a way that's meaningful and significant for them outside of simple entertainment discourses. The findings and patterns found in *Scandal's* public sphere offer unique insights into how the convergence of even the most serious political discourses can become Twitter-mediated pseudo-entertainment.

Chapter 8: Limitations and Future Considerations

Although survey implementation is a common tool to collect data for an analysis on audience/fan motivations and behaviors, the design of this study on *Scandal's* Twitter community motivations includes a few limitations to this specific survey which should be noted for future research on similar topics. I would suggest redesigning the study to limit the focus of the questions to one or two targeted potentially motivating factors, allow for opportunities to follow up with respondents for interviews, and obtain a larger sample size.

The design of my survey included many potentially motivating factors which limited how in-depth I could get with some of the questions without risking respondents not completing the survey due to its lengthiness. Upon further consideration and for future research I recommend limiting the focus to one or two potentially motivating factors that may encourage fans to live tweet. By not limiting my approach to a few potential factors, the results were somewhat scattered and difficult to analyze. Implementing a more targeted approach would allow for a more strategic analysis to build additional research off of.

I would also suggest including an option to have the respondents share their contact information with the data collector. Due to the time constraints of the study, I was not able to do follow up interviews, but after reviewing the data I found that there were additional questions related to the responses that I wanted to follow up on and ask, but I did not have the ability to do so. I would suggest that future research on this topic include a voluntary submission of respondents' contact information so that researchers can follow up as necessary. That said, for this specific survey it would not have been ideal to interview respondents after the survey closed due to the series finale taking place around the same time. As stated in my methods section, interviewing respondents would have polluted the results as memories can fade and the ending of

the show resulted in the ending of live-tweeting, therefore respondents would have needed to rely on the memories of their motivations. Future researchers should consider ways to conduct deeper interviews such as reviewing survey responses to see if interviews are necessary in real time for more accurate responses. This type instantaneous access might be achieved through increased academia-industry collaboration, which in this instance would be a partnership with Twitter and/or SurveyMonkey.

There were time constraints associated with this study due to *Scandal's* looming series finale and time restrictions on recruitment on my end. These factors limited my ability to solicit a large sample size. Due to my full-time job commitments, I was limited in the times of day that I could solicit responses. For future analyses, I would suggest that researchers devote their data collection efforts to this full-time or hire research assistants for increased solicitation efforts. Increased solicitation likely would have yielded an increase in data which would have strengthened the findings and conclusions. Additionally, upon the initial implementation of my survey I learned a few things that improved respondent activity such as not asking for responses while the show was airing live. Devoting efforts to this project full-time or adding more researchers to the team would have allowed for quick changes to survey implementation processes, likely garnering more data.

Finally, this approach can be modified by future researchers and applied to the numerous other fan culture patterns manifesting through social networks such as the BTS A.R.M.Y., a fandom that helped to bring KPOP worldwide, or Taylor Swift's Swifties, a fan base that surged voter registration numbers. Further this approach is not limited to entertainment-based social media fandoms. With the rise in political discourse on social media, future researchers should consider applying this approach to social fandoms of political figures. As the lines of

entertainment and information sharing continue to blur on social media, this type of research would be extremely powerful and should be strongly considered.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

An Analysis of *Scandal* Television Viewers and Motivations for Twitter Engagement

My name is Lyndsay Frank and I am a graduate student working on my master's thesis. For my thesis I'm trying to find out more about the use of Twitter and while watching television. I am specifically interested in learning from individuals who live-tweet or monitor the conversation on Twitter while watching the television show *Scandal*.

For this survey, I am only interested in hearing from individuals who live-tweet, have live-tweeted, or monitor Twitter, while watching *Scandal*. By proceeding with this survey you are identifying yourself as having met this criteria. There are no right or wrong answers to the survey questions. I am simply trying to learn directly from you about your personal experiences. The survey should only take 15 minutes. When presenting my results in my thesis, I will ensure that you cannot be identified as an individual.

You can only take the survey once, but you can edit your responses until the survey closes on April 30, 2018.

Below is the University required consent form. Please review and approve in order to take the survey.

Title of Project: An Analysis of *Scandal* Television Viewers and Their Motivations for Twitter Engagement
Principal Investigator: Lyndsay Frank PI E-mail: lkensingerthesis@gmail.com
Advisor: Nakho Kim, Ph.D. Advisor Telephone Number: 717 948 4353 Advisor E-Mail: nmk5360@psu.edu

You are being invited to volunteer to participate in a research study. This summary explains information about this research.

- The purpose of this study is to find out more about the use of Twitter and while watching television and individual motivations behind such engagement to discover if similarities or differences exist.
- Participants will be asked to complete a one-time online survey. The survey instrument inquires about participants' demographic characteristics, motivations for engagement on social media, and behaviors associated with live-tweeting while watching television.
- The participant's responses will be confidential and we would not collect identifying information such as name, email address, or IP address.
- Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The survey does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. The data will be stored in a password protected file.
- Internet Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying

information such as your name, email address or IP address. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the internet by any third parties.

If you have questions or concerns, you should contact Lyndsay Frank at lkensingerthesis@gmail.com. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at 814-865- 1775.

Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.

Your participation implies your voluntary consent to participate in the research.

If you agree to participate, please click ‘Agree’ below to complete the eligibility questions and the survey if you are eligible.

Agree

Disagree

The first part of the survey examines your general television and Twitter habits, not specifically related to *Scandal*. Please choose the time range that most closely matches your habits during a typical week.

- Approximately how many hours do you spend on Twitter?
- Approximately how many hours do you spend watching television?
- Approximately how many hours do you spend tweeting about, retweeting, liking, or reading television- related content?
- While watching television, approximately how many hours do you spend live-tweeting about the show you are watching?
- Approximately how many hours do you spend tweeting about, retweeting, liking, or reading *Scandal*-related content?

Response choices: Do not spend any time, Less than 1 hour, 1-3 hours, 3-5 hours, 5-7 hours, 7+ hours

This part of the survey examines your general Twitter habits in association with *Scandal*.

- Do you follow the official Twitter account for *Scandal* (@*Scandal*ABC)?
- Do you follow any of the verified Twitter accounts for the actors on *Scandal*?
- Twitter handles: @JOetheMORTON @j*Scandal*p @guillermodiazyo @tonygoldwyn @BellamyYoung @darbysofficial @KatieQLowes @CorneliusSJr @kerrywashington @scottkfoley @georgenewbern @JoshMalina
- Do you follow any of the verified Twitter accounts of *Scandal*'s writers or crew?
- Twitter handles: @shondarhimes @LynPaolo @BeersBetsy
- Do you attempt to follow every official Twitter account associated with *Scandal*?

Response choices: No, Yes, Unsure

- How many accounts (verified or unverified) do you follow mainly to hear about *Scandal*? This would include fans.

Response choices: 0-10, 10-20, 20+

This part of the survey continues to examine your general Twitter habits in association with *Scandal*.

- I am mainly on Twitter to read the conversation about *Scandal*.
- I am mainly on Twitter to engage in conversation about *Scandal*.
- I watch *Scandal* in part because of its association with Twitter.
- While watching *Scandal*, most of the time I am also tweeting or monitoring Twitter.
- More than half of my Tweets are related to *Scandal*.
- I tweet or retweet content about *Scandal* more than anything else.

Response choices: No, Yes, Unsure

The next set of questions asks about how the show's/*Scandal*'s content influences your Twitter habits. Please choose the response that most closely matches your feelings.

- I feel compelled to read/tweet about, or in reaction to, *Scandal*'s storyline or plot.
- I feel compelled to read/tweet about, or in reaction to, *Scandal*'s characters.
- I feel compelled to read/tweet about, or in reaction to, the music played on *Scandal*.
- I tweet more often when *Scandal*'s storyline is similar to a real-life news story.

Response choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

The next set of questions asks about *Scandal*'s Twitter community. Please choose the response that most closely matches your feelings.

- I feel the same connections when interacting with others on Twitter as I do while watching *Scandal* with people in the room.
- Twitter is the best way for me to connect with other fans.
- I like that Twitter allows me to interact with others about *Scandal* no matter where we are physically.
- Tweeting live provides me with the best chances for *Scandal*'s cast and crew to read my tweets.
- I feel compelled to use or search for episode- specific hashtags if I discover that it is being used by *Scandal*'s cast and crew or official Twitter account (Example: #WhoShotFitz, #TheSecretIsOut, #WhatTheHuck)
- I will likely use or search for hashtags that are promoted by *Scandal*'s cast and crew or official Twitter account.
- I feel that that the hashtags used to follow the Twitter conversation about *Scandal* are easy to understand even if you don't regularly watch the program.

- I often share my personal reactions or predictions about *Scandal* on Twitter to see if others have similar reactions.
- I feel compelled to respond to other people's questions or comments proposed on Twitter about *Scandal*.
- I feel accountable to other *Scandal* fans on Twitter.
- I feel that *Scandal*'s Twitter community has a closer relationship to *Scandal*'s cast and crew than viewers who are not on Twitter while watching the show.
- I feel that the show term 'Gladiator' includes *Scandal*'s Twitter community.
- I consider myself a *Scandal* 'Gladiator.'
- Using the hashtag #Gladiators while watching *Scandal* is a good way for fans to identify one another.
- Being on Twitter while watching *Scandal* makes me feel connected to other audience members and fans.
- Being on Twitter while watching *Scandal* makes me feel connected to the cast and crew of the show.
- I tweet about *Scandal* to develop relationships with other audience members and fans.
- I tweet about *Scandal* to develop relationships with the cast and crew of the show.
- I am disappointed if I am unable to follow along on Twitter when *Scandal* airs live.
- I am confident that my tweets are being read by other *Scandal* fans if I tweet live.

Response choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

The next set of questions asks about your thoughts on the influence of *Scandal*'s Twitter community. Please choose the response that most closely matches your feelings.

- I feel that the success of *Scandal* is due in part to my engagement on Twitter.
- I feel that I have the ability to influence the show's content through Twitter feedback.
- I feel that *Scandal*'s writers, actors, and producers, want to hear from me in order to make the show better.
- I feel that *Scandal*'s writers, actors, and producers, can be influenced by my tweets.
- I feel that the success of *Scandal* is due in part to fan engagement on Twitter.
- I feel that fans have influenced the show's content because of feedback provided on Twitter.
- I feel that the show's writers, actors, and producers, want to hear from fans and their ideas in order to make the show better.
- I feel that *Scandal*'s writers, actors, and producers, can be influenced by fan tweets.
- I feel that the conversation/feedback about *Scandal* on Twitter has influenced the program in a way that has been beneficial for the general audience, including those who do not use Twitter.
- I feel *Scandal* viewers who do not engage on Twitter have less power to influence the show than fans who do engage on Twitter.
- I feel that it is important to encourage members of the general audience to engage on Twitter if they are not currently doing so.

Response choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

The next set of questions asks about personal rewards when tweeting about *Scandal*. Please choose the response that most closely matches your feelings.

- I feel that I am granted insider information from *Scandal*'s cast and crew by following along on Twitter.
- I include Twitter handles for *Scandal*'s cast and crew in the hopes of being retweeted.
- I hope to gain more Twitter followers through my engagement while watching *Scandal*.
- Twitter provides me with direct access to *Scandal*'s cast and crew.
- I am excited that Shonda Rhimes or Kerry Washington might be reading my tweets.
- I enjoy reading tweets from *Scandal* fans.
- I am confident that my questions about *Scandal* will be answered if I pose them on Twitter.
- My engagement on Twitter about *Scandal* has had a positive effect on my professional life.
- My engagement on Twitter about *Scandal* has had a positive effect on my personal life.
- I enjoy following along on Twitter to see what *Scandal* fans create. (Ex: memes, new hashtags)

Response choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

The next set of questions asks about your live-tweeting/live viewing practices while watching *Scandal*. Please choose the response that most closely matches your feelings.

- *Scandal* or show-related hashtags should be used while live-tweeting.
- Hashtags used by *Scandal*'s official account and commercials should be utilized while live-tweeting.
- Live-tweets should be structured in a way that prevents or limits the possibility of spoilers for those who do not watch the program live.
- Live-tweets are meant for viewers watching *Scandal* live so tweets should not be modified to prevent or limit the possibility of spoilers for those who do not watch the program live.
- Individuals who do not watch *Scandal* live should not bother with tweeting about the program.
- It is important for me to include hashtags promoted from *Scandal*'s official Twitter account when I tweet live.
- I structure my live- tweets in a way that prevents or limits the possibility of spoilers for those who do not watch the program live.
- I feel that my engagement on Twitter motivates me to watch *Scandal* live.
- I am less likely to tweet if I don't watch *Scandal* live.
- I do everything possible to avoid all social media if I cannot watch *Scandal* live for fear of spoilers.

Response choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

The last set of questions asks about your background.

To which gender identity do you most identify?

Male

Female

Non binary

What is your age?

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some high school

High school graduate

Some college

Trade/technical/vocational training

College graduate

Some postgraduate work

Post-graduate degree

Prefer not to answer

Please specify your ethnicity.

White

Hispanic or Latino

Black or African American

Native American or American Indian

Asian / Pacific Islander

Other

Prefer not to answer

What is your marital status?

Single, never married

Married or domestic partnership

Widowed

Divorced

Separated

Prefer not to answer

What is your current employment status?

Employed for wages

Out of work and looking for work

Out of work but not currently looking for work

A homemaker

A student

Military

Retired

Unable to work

Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT POSTS

Here are sample Twitter recruitment posts directed to my Twitter followers, which included common hashtags that *Scandal* viewers utilized:

- Okay #*Scandal* fans! While you're tuning in tonight can you help a girl out with her thesis? Please take a minute to fill out my survey about tweeting and *Scandal*. Thanks! #Gladiators #TGIT <http://surveymonkey.com/r/SPJY27C>
- #*Scandal* fans I'm interested in hearing from you! Please take a few minutes to respond to the following survey for my master's thesis. Your feedback is important! #Gladiators surveymonkey.com/r/SPJY27C

Here are sample Twitter recruitment replies that were sent as direct replies to individuals tweeting about *Scandal*:

- Hey! I could really use your feedback for a survey on #*Scandal* and Twitter engagement for my master's thesis! It will only take a minute. Please consider helping a #gladiator out! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPJY27C>
- Only a few days left #Gladiators before we say goodbye to #*Scandal*! Before we go #overacliff please take a few minutes to respond to my survey on Twitter/*Scandal* for my thesis. Thanks! surveymonkey.com/r/SPJY27C
- As we reflect on our time together over the past seven seasons, please consider helping a fellow #gladiator out with my research study on #*Scandal* for my thesis. We went #overacliff together, please help me tell the world why! Thanks! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPJY27C>

Here are sample Facebook recruitment posts directed to my Facebook friends:

- Hey everyone I need some assistance with data collection for my thesis! If you watch *Scandal* and live tweet or monitor Twitter, please take part in my survey. If you don't please share it with everyone you know! :) Thanks!
- Good morning! Before you head out and about on this beautiful day, please consider helping a girl out with data collection for my thesis! If you watch *Scandal* and live tweet or monitor Twitter, please take part in my survey. If you don't please share it with everyone you know :) Thanks!

APPENDIX C

TWEET DATA

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Valderruten, M. [martinval95]. (2018, March 29). @KerryWashington YOU HAVE CHANGED TELEVISION FOREVER AND I AM SO LUCKY TO BE LIVING IT! Thank you for being such an incredible role model #Scandal [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/martinval95/status/979550853290962944>

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Washington, K. [kerrywashington]. (2018, March 29). Thank you for being in our Scandal family. Xo. [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/kerrywashington/status/979551337309335552>

Washington, K. [kerrywashington]. (2017, May 4). Thanks for your time and your presence. We Love you. And are sooooo grateful. Always. Xoxoxox #Gladiators #Scandal [Tweet] Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/kerrywashington/status/860316474346426370>

Washington, K. [kerrywashington]. (2015, November 19). YO! East coast, Central and EVERYONE who can't watch live...GET OFF THE INTERNET. #ScandalWarning #Scandal. [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/kerrywashington/status/667525284388732928>