THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FRAMES IN A

WEB 2.0 MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

by

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DEDICATION

With love and gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to my mom who has supported me enormously throughout my entire life and especially throughout my college career. She has been my rock when things seemed impossible and she graciously continues to encourage me in everything that I set out to accomplish.

Through God's merciful guidance I am able to have discernment in the path that I am supposed to take in my journey through life. I dedicate my life and my life's work to Him who makes me whole and loves me unconditionally.

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ABSTRACT

With the gaining popularity of social media for the promotion of political campaigns, a hole exists in research where framing of the candidates in a Web 2.0 media environment is concerned. This quantitative content analysis probes existing presidential campaign frames to discover how they have evolved from previous elections. Findings offer insight into how the audience engages with the frames presented on Facebook by FOX News and Huffington Post Politics. The most salient frames presented by both outlets are identified and user comments are tracked to find how the two-way communication model contributes to the framing of presidential candidate

I. INTRODUCTION

Frames of political elections have been studied in the past in regard to television and print material. With recent advancements in the reach of media involving Web 2.0 or social media platforms, there is a hole in research that needs to be investigated. Social media are changing how people consume news by adding the two-way communication model and framing is now in the hands of the media as well as the general public. Discovering how frames are evolving on social media platforms will be valuable in order to learn how to organize frames in ways that appeal to the social media audience.

The 2016 presidential election year is especially interesting with the structure of the Republican and Democratic parties being challenged more than they have ever been in recent history. Trump's being a businessman and a media personality rather than a politician provides some interesting dynamics in how he is framed in the media. Since Hillary Clinton ran in the previous primary election, it will be interesting to find how the frames regarding her differ in this election. With the rise in popularity of Facebook as a news source and the untraditional dynamics of this election, this research aims to track the evolution of frames in order to contribute to the knowledge base and provide a reference point for further investigation

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rise of Web 2.0

With television losing popularity and the rise in use of the internet, consumers of news content are depending more on media websites, blogs, social networking sites (SNS) and apps on their mobile devices. Political news is found on both web 1.0 and web 2.0 platforms and there is much distinction between the two. Web 1.0 is a one-way communication model as opposed to Web 2.0 platforms, which form a hybrid that offers news along with real-time reactions and comments from consumers (Hermida, Lewis, Zamith, 2015). Basically, a Web 1.0 communication model is media presented as newspapers, magazines, television and radio where there is no room for feedback from the audience. A Web 2.0 model is a platform where news or information is disseminated to the public and the audience has a means to return feedback. Web 2.0 lets the sender and receiver engage in a continuous dialog with no regard to time or place.

Social media use among adults has skyrocketed in the last 10 years from 7% in 2005 to 65% in 2015 (Perrin, 2015). Social media have also become a popular outlet for 68% of the millennial generation in the United States to read the news and be active in political conversation (The Media Insight Project, 2014). With the broad scope and space for various narratives, there are unlimited numbers of stories pertaining to news, non-news and disinformation on social media platforms. This raises serious issues pertaining to risks not only in swaying opinions about certain individuals in the presidential race but also security of the nation. The fact that most millennials find their news on Facebook raises some significant concerns (The Media Insight Project, 2014). Ceron (2015) found that news consumption on Web 2.0 sites was linked with lower trust in political

institutions as opposed to Web 1.0 consumers who demonstrated higher political trust. Disinformation can lead to unnecessary violence as one study found when inserting a false story into Facebook, which went viral. The repercussions of this misinformation led to violent protests in several Italian cities (Mocanu, 2015).

With the increasing popularity of social media and Internet in the last decade, many have wondered if the ease of availability in finding political information online has led to more political engagement. Xenos and Moy (2007) found that although the Web offers wider opportunities for participation, those who were predisposed to engage in politics and civic engagement had a stronger association with political discussion and participation online. Since the Internet is brimming with information on every topic, individuals will search for what interests them the most and may bump into other topics along the way.

Facebook

In the last decade, signing up for and using social networking sites has become commonplace around the world. The most notable SNS to date is Facebook, which was launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg who was a student at Harvard University. Facebook began as a private networking site limited to the Harvard campus. As Zuckerberg gained more funding and notoriety, many universities, businesses and high schools began to implement the networking site for students and employees in order to easily connect with each other (Phillips, 2007).

Facebook works by storing meta data from users in data centers in Santa Clara, California. Stored data form a "social graph" that makes connections between friends, users, photos, events, and advertising on the social networking site (Good, 2002). Meta

data are congruous to a card catalog in a library and refers to the storing of information about a specific topic that can be searched and retrieved (Good, 2002). By storing meta data on large servers that are accessible to the public, Facebook allows users to retrieve and share data that others have stored for the intention of making connections and forming an interactive online community.

By 2006 anyone with an email address could register for an account on Facebook and connect with anyone in the world who also had an account. To date, Facebook has 1.71 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2016). The implications of reaching a large audience through Facebook are recognized by politicians, media, corporations, sales and marketing gurus and just about anybody who wants to get an opinion or information to the public.

Facebook has become an important tool for those who are running successful political campaigns to push their message and raise awareness. Using such social media sites has proven beneficial in organizing rallies, creating a community that backs the candidate, and raising awareness about a candidate that gets less media attention (Bekafigo, 2013). Bode & Bode (2016) found that social networking sites act as a form of passive learning where the user stumbles upon information incidentally, which is more easily assimilated into memory. In most circumstances, consumers are directly presented with information and can choose to avoid it altogether or take it in. While viewing social media, one is passively subjected to the opinions or stories posted by friends in their newsfeed.

Framing Theory

Since the 1970s when framing was popularized by the sociologist Erving Goffman,

the concept has been a mainstay in research relating to sociology, mass communication, and politics (McQuail, 2000). The foundation of framing theory lies in the observation that individuals are in a constant struggle to understand and interpret their life experiences and make sense of the world (Scheufele, 2007). Goffman referred to framing as "a social framework or mental schema that allows users to organize experiences" (Ardèvol, 2015, p. 423). Frames are a necessary part of presenting issues to the public through journalism, print, and television news media. They lend to organizing fragmentary items into developed schemata so that the individual can make sense of vast amounts of information.

Many definitions of framing have been presented throughout the years. Entman describes framing as a way to "select some aspect of a perceive reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Tuchman creatively describes framing theory as a picture frame that the media present the story in. The viewer's attention is drawn toward the inside of the frame and leads them to ignore the information outside the picture frame (Tuchman, 1978). Reese lays out a working definition of frames as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (Reese, 2001, p. 11).

The framing model has been characterized into micro-constructs and macro-constructs. Macro-constructs refer to the way in which journalists fit information similar in nature within a specific schema that relates to the topic so that the audience can easily make sense of the information presented (Scheufele, 2007). Micro-constructs within

framing are the way in which people use the information presented to them (Scheufele, 2007). These distinctions within the framing model explain how framing is not only valuable to the media in organizing mass amounts of complex information but also to the audience in making sense of the information and applying it to everyday life.

Over 30 years of research has found that framing involves "selection" and "salience" where a certain issue in reality is focused on and made more prominent during various means of communication (Entman, 1993). From a psychological constructivist approach, framing is the means of recognizing a wide range of information and assigning it to cognitive categories. Frames must present a pertinent, well-structured and persistent order to be accepted by the routes of cognitive process.

Information processing and its relation to schema development have been studied in cognitive research in the Elaboration Likelihood Model or ELM. ELM describes the attitude that a person has toward presented information, which is processed either by the central route or the peripheral route. The central route involves careful contemplation of the message before it is accepted. Once accepted, the information is applied to an existing schema and the chances of the attitude being changed are low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). When information is less relevant to an individual, the peripheral route is more active in organizing the message. The peripheral route involves less thought and analysis leading it to be more easily change at a later time (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

Framing has been linked with other theories pertaining to research in communication such as agenda setting and priming where much debate has arisen between scholars regarding the similarities. Agenda setting is divided into two levels: the first level derives from the media's role in telling us what to think about and the second

level tells us how to think about it (Balmas & Sheafer, 2010). Similarities can be distinguished between second level agenda setting and framing. Some scholars argue that frames are a separate concept that exist in the realms of culture independent of agenda setting. Framing, agenda setting and priming are closely related but they also are very different in the information that can be ascertained from their separate uses. Priming and framing theories are utilized in research of attitudinal effects that mass media have on the individual. Some researchers label these theories as "negation models". This means that media can have a strong effect on an audience but the attention of the audience is a large factor in how they remember and apply the message.

Framing, which has its roots in psychology and sociology research, describes how an issue in the news is presented which leads to how it is understood by the audience. For example, different modes of presenting an issue can have an effect on how people make decisions about an issue or a person. On a micro-level, "framing is a tool to reduce the complexity of an issue and at the macro-level, framing describes how people use the information and features presented to form impressions about the issue" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12).

Agenda setting is based on how an individual stores information in their memory as well as how that information is processed and used in later decisions. The area of interest in agenda setting research is the amount of time that the message is processed and the attention the individual pays to that information. Basically, agenda setting refers to whether we think about the issue or not and framing refers to how we think about the issue. Maxwell McCombs, one of the fathers of agenda setting theory, refers to framing as a "more refined version of agenda setting," which is labeled as "second-level or

attribute agenda setting (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Framing and agenda setting theory work together to fit pieces of the information puzzle together and make up how a message is presented to and interpreted by the audience. Agenda setting is applied to find out which pieces of the message need to be altered in order to have a greater effect. Framing on the other hand can be applied to find out how the message is having an effect on the audience as well as the influences they have on agenda setting.

Van Gorp points out that frames are "part of culture" and "not encompassed in media content" as well as "text and frame must be seen as independent of each other" (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 63). There is much research that draws the theories of framing, agenda setting and priming together in order to demonstrate a well-rounded study. For example, Entman neatly combines all three theories for political research stating that "it is through framing that political actors shape the texts that influence or prime the agendas and considerations that people think about" (Entman, 2007, p. 165). Following from this interpretation, one can see that these theories can be experimented with in tandem, thus effectively drawing in many views on one topic. Many types of frames exist and need to be defined as to what topic or type of news they will be implemented.

The news media and politicians depend on frames to appeal to constituents and audiences in order to tell a story and further their agendas. In the arena of politics, "The outcome of polls depends on the way the question is asked, so will the outcome of elections depend on who is more successful in framing what the question is about and the media can frame an issue in ways that favor a particular side without showing an explicit bias, and that defining the terms of a debate takes one a long way toward winning it"

(Reese, 2001, p. 95-96). It is a well-known fact that the media relish any dramatic conflict between the presidential candidates during elections. The candidate that presents more extreme views and behavior will always gain more media attention (Sisco & Lucas, 2015).

Framing research has been conducted using either qualitative or quantitative methods as well as using both methods in a single study. Researchers constantly point out that framing research is difficult due to the ambiguity of lengthy qualitative descriptions of the frames that do not lend to construction of patterns (Reese, 2001). On the other hand, quantitative methods reduce emotions and broad structures to numbers that lend little to what makes an issue interesting (Reese, 2001). It seems that a combination of both methods in a study can bridge the gap between critical analysis and the behavioral content.

Past research of framing has been focused on the use of frames in television and print media. However, with the decline in television viewership and a transition to Web 2.0 outlets, there is new hole in data that needs to be filled. New research is required to find how frames are evolving to be compatible within the social media environment. A gap in data also exists in how consumers of Web 2.0 news interpret these frames and how they are applied in the world outside of social media.

Frame evolution has been investigated in the arena of political science and communication in two ways: in its relation to public opinion and through content analysis of media resources (Fowler, Gollust, Dempsey, Lantz & Ubel, 2012). Chong (2006) found that frames evolve over time to compensate for changing attitudes due to education level of the audience, changing opinions of the elites and the motivation level of the

audience (Chong & Druckman, 2007). It has been acknowledged that framing is a process that evolves over time and that the way a frame changes depends on its competition and the collective changing of values in a society (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Framing the elections

Past analysis of periodicals as well as television news coverage have revealed many frames that are relevant in reporting of the presidential election. These frames are the horse race, issue, political activity, gender stereotype, experience, viability and race frames. The horse race frame refers to which candidate is winning or losing at any specific time in the election. In research of periodicals and television news coverage, this frame has proved to be the most popular (O'Gara, 2009). Issue frames include proposals for problems and the candidates position on the issues. Political activity frames have to do with campaigning, seeking support, and debating. The gender stereotype frame includes comments about physical appearance and role in family life. Political or personal life experience and credibility are explained within the experience frame. The viability frame is discussion about the likelihood of a candidate being elected. Racial impacts on voter decisions or preferences is described within the context of the race frame (O'Gara, 2009).

From a political marketing view, framing of the political candidate in the media can make or break an election. Cognitive representation of a candidate "includes two main elements: the issue presented by the candidate and the personal characteristics creating his or her image" (Falkowski & Michalak, 2014). Researchers are at odds about how the voter decides which aspect of a frame drives electoral behavior but, according to the

economic model, research has shown that voters choose issues and benefits over image (Falkowski & Michalak, 2014).

Over the years, the most substantive issues involved in partisan politics have proven to be taxes, jobs and the economy, health care, terrorism, and education (Arbour, 2014). Although both Democrats and Republicans talk about these same issues, it is the context in which they approach them that differs. For example, a hot issue in the last decade has been terrorism which Republicans approach with a heavy idealism on militarization and a defensive strategy while Democrats focus more on homeland security or an offensive strategy (Arbour, 2014).

One of the most notable issues that has evolved over the years is abortion rights. Beginning in the 1970s, the issues of pro-choice or pro-life were not definitively linked to one party or the other. In the 1980s, party activists began to polarize the issue and around the 1990s, the frames were divided by partisan lines with pro-life appealing to Republicans and pro-choice to Democrats (Carmines, Gerrity, & Wagner, 2010).

As women began to participate in the presidential elections, the gender stereotype frame entered the presidential race. As an issues of the gender stereotype frame, feminism has several types including "choice feminism" as Sarah Palin was cast, "neo-feminism" that Obama played on and "second-wave feminism", which highlighted Hillary's political image (Sisco & Lucas, 2015). These frames of feminism differ greatly in their message to the audience with second wave feminism elucidating more of an anti-male sentiment and less sexy image. Choice feminism represents the conservative female and neo feminism appeals to the younger generations who believe that we have surpassed the goals of second-wave feminism (Sisco & Lucas, 2015).

The media landscape has undergone drastic changes in recent years with the increasing popularity of social networking sites like Facebook. Web 2.0 or SNS have bridged a gap in the communication aspect of political elections. Candidates and constituents can now interact with each other and give moment-to-moment feedback on issues. When a candidate uses Facebook to reach constituents, there is a formula that makes the profile more successful in recruiting followers.

According to research, when the profile is strategically planned in a manner that rallies constituents together to promote community, the candidate will be successful in gaining more followers and securing more votes (Pennington, 2013). The downfall of many SNS campaigns lies in the lack of effort and creativity to reach out and request feedback from constituents. Successful campaigns have proven that asking for a "like" on Facebook, encouraging communication between supporters, and basically asking for comments on policy issues are key to rallying more support, especially when it comes to young voters (Douglas, Raine, Maruyama, Semaan & Robertson, 2015).

In the past, presidential candidates have benefited from targeting the younger generation of voters by posting pictures of their community involvement. Candidates who depict an interest in the community on their profile were proven to have more support on Facebook with more shares and likes (Douglas et al., 2015). In Douglas' (2015) study of Facebook campaigns, six community based themes emerged: "Evidence of Action, Emotional Engagement, Candidate Presence, Responsiveness to Citizens, Community Assessment, and Community Support". These themes allowed the constituent to feel more personable with the candidate and engage on a more intimate level ultimately

leading to more support.

The journalistic approach to Facebook has been very different from newspaper or television journalism. Posting on SNS tends to warrant more attention when the issue is presented in the form of an opinion rather than facts (Serafeim, 2012). Unlike the one-way communication model of newspapers and television, SNS require that a dialog develop, which engages the audience unlike newspaper or television media.

Audiences use social media as a way to connect and feel that they are part of a community, to find news and to see what their peers are saying about issues that interest them. It seems that the most important aspect to a successful Facebook campaign is a strong approach in building personal relationships with the constituents by being personable in language rather than informative about policies and issues. Audiences want to be engaged in meaningful dialog rather than only having access to a link leading to a candidate's web page or headline news story (Douglas, et al., 2015).

Douglas, et al. (2015) found that participants in their SNS study were not particularly interested in politics but tended to inadvertently stumble across political stories rather than seek them out. Gaging from analysis of public Facebook feeds and through focus groups, it has become apparent that from time to time one will likely stumble upon political geared posts in a news feed. Due to "native user" habits and the dependence on group mentality, interests in political posts on Facebook are piqued for viewers if the post has many likes or comments (Douglas, et al., 2015).

The use of SNS in the 2012 presidential election was a huge turning point for how the media, public and candidates interact. No longer did the public have to wait until after the debates to see how the media would respond. Individuals could also comment in real

time over the duration of the debate. Media outlets were referring to the 2012 election as the "election of memes" due to the increase in sharing of witty comments overlaid on relevant photos (Edgerly, Thorson, Bighash & Hannah, 2016). Memes, a picture or photo with text, have become a popular, low cost and low effort form of political speech that can easily be shared and go viral to reach a large audience. Memes are basically the political cartoons of the millennial generation.

Edgerly, et al., (2016) found that in 42% of their sample of political Facebook posts, there was a mixture of text along with a link or a video. A majority of the posts were text alone and surprisingly only 14% of those posts were linked with a picture. Most of the image and meme sharing was found to be initiated by political advocacy organizations who designed them specifically to be easily sharable and travel widely to reach millions of Facebook users (Edgerly, et al., 2016).

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the importance of framing in audience evaluations of issues and people as well as the emergence of social media as a mainstay of news media, this study proposes the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the dominant frames presented by Fox News and HuffPost Politics in Facebook posts for the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates during the general election of 2016?

RQ2: How have the dominant frames of presidential candidates evolved since previous presidential elections?

RQ3: How does the Web 2.0 two-way communication model contribute to the framing of presidential candidates by Huffington Post and FOX News Facebook?

IV. METHOD

This thesis uses a quantitative content analysis of messages presented by HuffPost Politics and FOX News through Facebook. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2014) define quantitative content analysis as the "systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014, p. 25).

It is well known through research that FOX News is conservative in its views towards positive representation of the Republican party. Baum & Groeling (2007) found this to be the case where FOX news "demonstrated a clear and strong preference for news stories that benefited the party that most closely associated with their own ideological orientations" for the right or conservative party (Baum & Groeling, 2007, p. 20). Huffington Post, described by Nussbaum (2007), is well known for its liberal leaning towards positive Democratic representation. FOX News and HuffPost Politics were chosen for analysis due to the consistency of their posts related to the presidential election as well as their popularity in number of followers.

All posts, pertaining to the election or not, were gathered from both outlets for a two-month time frame including the months of August and September 2016. A data scraping program at Quintly.com was used to collect all of the posts. Within those two months, constructed weeks were used for the sample. Seven days in each of August and September were randomly selected using a website that generates random dates for a

selected time period (True Random Number Service, 2016).

A total of 963 posts were collected from both FOX New and Huffpost Politics for the constructed weeks. 467 posts did not contain frames relevant to the presidential election leaving 496 posts to be coded. The months of August and September are relevant due to Trump's nomination by the GOP and the DNC nomination of Clinton at the end of July 2016. The posts were coded depending on how the story was framed by each news outlet. In order to probe into RQ1, a Chi square test for independence of attributes will be performed to find if there is a relationship between frames and outlets.

Through a literature review, frames developed and utilized by the media in previous elections were identified. The current content analysis will probe those same frames, as well as emerging ones, to identify the evolution of frames. On Facebook, "popular" posts are denoted by the number of comments shared by users. These "popular" posts were collected in order to analyze which frames that users are most often reacting to. All results combined reflect how frames have evolved since previous elections, identify the dominant frames present in the 2016 presidential election and illustrate how the Web 2.0 model contributes to how frames are presented to the public. In this study the Web 2.0 model is defined as the amount of user comments per Facebook post.

As identified in previous research of political elections, a handful of dominant frames have been persistent. For this content analysis, seven frames will be focused on including the horse race, issue, political activity, gender stereotype, experience, viability, and race frames. When the post includes any language, images or videos containing aspects of the frames being investigated in this study, it will be coded with a number 1- 7 according to the code book (Appendix 1).

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V. FINDINGS

The analysis shows that 32% of posts on Fox and Huffpost were framing the

Republican party, 13% were focusing on the Democratic party and 6% included both

parties in the post.

Table 1: Frequency of posts per party by both outlets combined

Political Party	Frequency	Percent
None	467	49%
Republican	312	32%
Democrat	125	13%
Both	59	6%

To answer RQ 1, the most popular frames present in posts by both outlets were the

experience and the political activity frame at 16% for both frames. The issue frame was

the third most prevalent frame at 12%. In past research of the 2008 presidential election

as well as previous presidential elections, the horse race and viability frames proved to be

the most salient.

Table 2: Frequency of posts per frame for both outlets combined

Frames	Frequency	Percent
No Frames	467	49%
Experience	158	16%
Political Activity	153	16%
Issue	118	12%
Horse race	25	3%
Race	27	3%
Viability	13	1%
Gender Stereotype	2	.2%

Table 3: Total percent of posts for each frame by Fox News and Huffpost Politics

Frames	FOX News	Huffpost Politics
Experience	13%	19%
Political Activity	17%	15%
Issue	10%	14%
Horse race	1%	4%
Race	.2%	5%
Viability	0%	2%
Gender Stereotype	0%	.4%

Given the differences in each outlet's presentation of frames, further elaboration of RQ1 was explored which is presented in Table 3. A crosstabulation between frames and outlets showed interesting differences between the frames presented by Fox News and Huffpost Politics.

Out of 419 posts by FOX News, 59% did not contain a frame that was relevant to the 2016 presidential election. The most salient frame presented by FOX News was the political activity frame at 17% followed by the experience frame at 12% and the issue frame at 10%. Out of 544 posts by Huffpost Politics, 40% did not contain frames relevant to the election. At 19%, the experience frame was the most posted followed by the political activity frame at 15% and the issue frame at 14%. The two outlets contrasted in their posts where FOX News accentuated the political activity frame and Huffpost Politics utilized the experience frame most often.

This study also found a significant association between frames and outlets in posts focusing on candidates of each party, X^2 (7) = 64.064, p < 0.001 revealing that the posts are likely not at random and there is possibly a reason each outlet is posting specific frames. Further research is needed to find if and why the outlets are framing the

candidates in a systematic manner. The political activity frame was most salient in posts by FOX News in framing the republican candidate. Huffpost utilized the Issue frame most often in relation to the republican candidate but closely followed with the political activity frame. When framing the democratic candidate, FOX news utilized the experience frame most often while the political activity frame was most salient with Huffpost.

Table 4: Percent of frames posted for republican candidate's party per outlet

Frames	FOX News Republican	Huffpost Politics Republican
Experience	10%	2%
Political Activity	61%	24%
Issue	27%	25%
Race	1%	11%
Horse Race	1%	2%
Viability	0%	2%
Gender Stereotype	0%	.4%

A Chi-Square test for the relationship between the frames, outlet and candidate found that the variables were significantly different between posts for republicans, X^2 (6) = 49.150, p < 0.001 and democrats, X^2 (6) = 26.654, p < 0.001.

Table 5: Percent of frames posted for democratic candidate's party per outlet

Frames	FOX News Democrat	Huffpost Politics Democrat
Experience	55%	27%
Political Activity	25%	36%
Issue	21%	13%
Race	0%	2%
Horse Race	0%	8%
Viability	0%	13%
Gender Stereotype	0%	2%

The second research question addressed how the dominant frames of presidential candidates have evolved since previous elections. Findings from this study show that the experience and political activity frames are the most prevalent frames on the Web 2.0 platforms for the 2016 presidential election. Research of the dominant frames in print media during the 2008 presidential election between Obama and McCain showed that the viability frame was most salient (O'Gara, 2009). Since previous elections, the way that the public consumes media messages has evolved from a one-way to a two-way communication model. The users of SNS sites can choose which posts they want to react to. When the user choses to engage or comment about the frames presented, the news outlet can gain a better understanding of what people are looking for in a news story. The news outlet can quickly tailor their SNS messages to appeal to the desires of the user.

Capella and Jamison (1997) describe how the media frames have been evolving due to the requests of their readers and viewers. According to journalists, in the past, publics were more

concerned with the horse race frame (Capella & Jamison, 1997). According to this content analysis, the experience and political activity frame were most often presented by news outlets. The political activity and experience frames also received the most comments by users.

In the 1996 presidential campaign, Domke (1997) found that the media abandoned the horse race frame and focused more on each candidate's character within the experience frame. Domke (1997) postulates that this was because the race was not as interesting as the questionable character of the candidates. This also seems to be the case

for the 2016 election between Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton. The horse race fame is largely irrelevant to this election, possibly due to the closeness of the race and the mostly unchanging status of the polls throughout the election season (Cox & Jones, 2016).

To answer RQ3, how Web 2.0 communication contributes to the framing of the candidates by both outlets, an independent T-test was performed. In this study the Web 2.0 model is defined as the amount of user comments per Facebook post. It was found that there was a significant difference between comments or two-way communication between posts for republican and democratic parties. There was a significantly greater amount of comments on posts about the democratic candidate (M= 8009.28, SD = 23315.366) than comments on posts pertaining to the republican candidate (M = 3815.37, SD = 9690.055), t(435) = -2.659, p < 0.001.

Table 6: Mean comments per frame across both outlets

Frames	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
No frame present	1950.62	467	4151.154
Horse Race	1371.24	25	2864.340
Issue	2219.59	118	3975.089
Political Activity	8903.97	153	16268.939
Gender Stereotype	401.00	2	113.137
Experience	3599.54	158	18254.154
Viability	446.15	13	389.491
Race	682.30	27	858.491
Total	3284.72	963	10637.192

Table 7: Mean comments per frame per political party

Frames	Mean Total	Mean Republican	Mean Democrat
Horse Race	966.78	1399.60	425.75
Issue	2458.84	2198.83	3382.45
Political Activity	9557.13	8435.92	12858.47
Gender Stereotype	401.00	481.00	321.00
Experience	3783.10	1051.25	8352.73
Viability	451.90	534.75	396.67
Race	682.30	707.12	37.00

As stated previously, the users of SNS tend to be interested in how political candidates are active in the community. The political activity frame is based on the candidates' campaigning and their activities to gain support. A comparison of means of the data revealed that the political activity frame received the most feedback ($M = 8903.97$, $SD = 16268.939$) from users than any other frame. The experience frame received the second greatest number of comments ($M = 3599.54$, $SD = 18254.154$). These frames were also, respectively, the most presented frames by the two media outlets. Either the media outlets have found that these are the frames that the users desire or the users are predominantly responding to the frames that are presented most often.

VI. CONCLUSION

After comparing data from this study to results from previous research, it is apparent that the dominant frames change in each election depending on the candidates and the type of media they are presented on. In past elections, television and print media have been the main source of data collection and the horse race frame was the most dominant. The horse race frame provides an interesting way for the viewer or reader to interpret the news in a way much like a sporting event. Over the course of this content analysis, the candidates remained extremely close in numbers yet their character and experience were questionable. This fact likely pulled consumers interest away from the horse race frame.

On the other hand, both candidates were very active on the campaign trail. With so many issues of immigration, employment and terrorism, Americans were listening closely to what each candidate was promising. According to past research into the use of SNS for elections, there is a formula for political campaigns. This formula places supreme importance on creativity in creating an online community where constituents feel like they are in a personal dialog with the candidate. Facebook users were able to watch live streaming videos of the candidate's speeches on the campaign trail while commenting in real time. This created an intimate connection to the event and created a space for open dialog between constituents promoting community. Links leading back to descriptions of policy and issue stances on candidate's websites are mundane now that the Web 2.0 model has caught on.

Experience was a significant frame in this election due to the questionable nature Hillary's handling of confidential emails that were leaked as well as the questionable

competency of Trump's ability to be presidential. Issues are always important in presidential elections but with the increasing threats of terrorism around the globe, increasing expenditures in health and education, as well as the concerns about immigration, Americans were finding this frame exceptionally relevant.

Within the Web 2.0 media environment, the media are now able to examine feedback from the public in real time. This allows for second to second updates to follow a mood that is produced by the comments of individuals all over the world. Frames can now change frequently to suit the needs of the media in guiding public opinion or the needs of the public in demanding the information they want to consume at that moment.

IMPLICATIONS

Media framing of politics and elections in a Web 2.0 environment can have many implications for candidates, voters and the media. Journalism has quickly evolved into a very different field than it was in the recent past requiring more creativity from those in the field. The formula for a successful presidential campaign has transformed from what they have been in previous years due to social media. Voters can receive up-to-the-second information from SNS like Facebook and Twitter. Users of Facebook expect new stories every couple of hours. Journalists now have to keep up with this demand to provide a constant stream of information that will be accepted and commented on by users. The amount of user engagement or comments a story receives can drive future posting habits by news outlets as well as gain popularity from the public. When a user notices that the posts on the page do not receive attention, they may question the credibility of that outlet.

A supply and demand relationship is evident between news outlets and users. This

makes it all the more important to find out exactly what the users want and provide that to them in order to gain a larger following on SNS and Web 2.0 platforms. Deciphering which frames are most popular is valuable for news outlets. They should be aware of which frames will gain the most attention from users in the competitive Web 2.0 environment. The presentation of the candidates on Web 2.0 outlets can be responsible for driving voter behavior especially with user engagement and comments available to other consumers of the story. With this in mind, it is apparent that social media coordinators and directors for news outlets and the candidates make sure they are posting information that receives a considerable amount of positive engagement so that they are perceived as a credible source by users of SNS.

LIMITATIONS

One notable limitation was that only two news outlets were analyzed for this study. The results may not be an accurate representation for the framing executed by all of SNS and Web 2.0 news outlets. The aim of this research was to focus on the frames themselves, but the data may prove to be more enlightening if the dimension of quality and content of the comments is considered in a qualitative analysis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A more thorough investigation of the evolution of frames could be accomplished by examining more than two news outlets present on Facebook. This study focused on quantitative data only but, a mixed methods or a qualitative study could help fill holes left by examining only numbers. Possibly, a survey or a focus group could provide more insight of the opinions held by Web 2.0 users about the popularity of the frames and which frames they prefer to see more of.

Appendix A: Code Book

[1 -Horse race frame is present in stories where the main focus is who is leading in the polls or the results of the debates.

2 -Issue frame is present in stories where the main focus is on the candidate's stance on policies. An example is: "The bottom line is, there's a definition for illegal. If I do something wrong and it's against the law, it's illegal, I'm punished for it." The "Angel Moms" group, family members of those who have been killed by illegal immigrants, joined Donald J. Trump onstage on Wednesday, and now they are being compared to a "hate group" by some on the left."

3 -Political activity frame is present in stories where the main focus is on campaigning, activities to gain support from voters and fund raising. An example is: "Yesterday at the Great Faith Ministries International Church in Detroit, Donald J. Trump spoke about our nation's need to unite."

4 -Gender stereotype frame is present in stories where the main focus is on the gender of the candidate

5 -Experience frame is present in stories where the main focus is on the perceived level of candidate experience either in their personal life or their qualifications from previous work in the field. An example is: "On "FOX & Friends Weekend," Rudy Giuliani ripped Hillary Clinton for using her concussion as an "excuse" for her mishandling of classified information during her interview with the FBI."

6 -Viability frame is present when the story focuses on the likelihood of the candidate becoming president.

7 -Race frame is present in stories where the main focus is on either the candidate's race as it relates to the election, or as it relates to potential voters. An example is: "I won't stop calling out bigotry and racist rhetoric in this campaign."]

Date: _____

Outlet: Fox or   HuffPost

Political Party Being Framed: _____

Frame:

(the most dominant frame utilized in the story) _____

(1) Horse race, (2) Issue, (3) Political Activity, (4) Gender Stereotype, (5) Experience, (6) Viability, (7) Race (0) no frame present

Phrase: (the term, metaphor, phrase, or complete sentence that define the frame – if applicable)

Comments Per Frame:

_____

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