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CAUSING A RUCKUS: RACIAL FRAMING IN POLITICAL BLOGS
DURING THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Dedication

With humility, love, and appreciation I dedicate this dissertation to my two children, JamesDavid and SeanTaylor. Through this journey of my lifetime, you were patient, funny, and simply amazing. Despite the significance I placed on this goal, you never had to remind me of the most important and most satisfying role in my life: being your mom.

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Abstract

This investigation seeks to observe and examine the presence of racial framing during the 2008 presidential election. Twelve hypotheses were advanced for this study observing explicit and implicit racial framing, racial stereotypes, and modern racism. A content analysis examined five conservative blogs, five liberal blogs, and two national circulation newspapers for this study. Utilizing framing analysis, it was predicted that both explicit and implicit racial framing would be consistently present in political blogs and mainstream media during the 2008 presidential campaign. A chi-square analysis was utilized to interpret the data and a post-hoc examination was employed to further identify potential variations within the study data. The explicit and implicit interpretations are based on Mendelberg's (2001) racial appeals. In addition, the investigation predicted that conservative media would be more likely to embrace racial framing than liberal media. This investigation also examined the political blogs and mainstream media for racial stereotypes and modern racism. Several key and surprising results were found in this study. There was no significant difference in the presence of explicit racial framing in either conservative or liberal blogs. The findings confirmed that conservative blogs were more likely to contain implicit racial framing than liberal blogs and mainstream media. The liberal mainstream media embraced both implicit and explicit racial framing with unexpected frequencies, according to the study results. Consistent with previous research, conservative blogs were most likely to include racial stereotypes and modern racism.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The 2008 United States Presidential election was a historic event with the induction of the first Black¹ president of the United States. President Obama was not the first Black American to run for president (e.g., Jesse Jackson, Lenora Fulani, and Shirley Chisholm), but unlike the previous Black presidential candidates, Obama was nominated by a political party based on his success in the Democratic primaries. Commentaries on his campaign tactics were focused on his strong oratory skills, and savvy use of Internet technologies. Unsurprisingly, Obama's campaign tactics rarely delved into the significance of race. Lopez (1994) argues that Obama had never been inclined to lead the brigade on the question of race in America. Although the Obama campaign avoided discussing race for most of the presidential campaign, the topic of race was still discussed, hypothesized, and blogged about throughout the presidential primaries and election. The goal for this study, then, is to identify how race was framed in the media during the 2008 presidential campaign. Understanding how the media depicts discussions of race can enlighten us as to how race is being perceived by the public (Entman, 1992).

It has been suggested that it is no longer important or necessary to consistently focus or report on issues of race because, as a result of electing a Black president, racial challenges have ceased to be a concern for most Americans and the racial gaps have been removed (McWhorter, 2008). Those who believe race in the United States is no longer an issue insist that we have as a nation answered Rodney King's plea of "can't we all just get along?"² and are on the verge of a post-racial society. For example, in 2008, Rudy

¹ In this study, I will use Black and African American interchangeably throughout this study when referring to individuals of African heritage and ethnicity born in the United States. When referring to people, groups, or proper nouns, I capitalize the B in Black and W in White.

Giuliani suggested that with an Obama victory, “we’ve achieved history tonight and we’ve moved beyond . . . the whole idea of race and racism, separation and unfairness (Williams, 2008, *Decision NBC News Transcript*, p. 4). In addition, Howard Fineman (2008) argues that “by electing a mixed-race man of evident brilliance, moderate means and a welcoming smile, we would finally cease seeing each other through color coded eyes” (p. 2). Even Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates appeared to take in the media’s musing of a post-racial society, when he expressed shock and bewilderment at being arrested² outside his house. It can be argued that the McKissack (2008) idea of a post-racial society has been generated and pursued by and through the media even though a post-racial America is pure fiction (Iwelea, 2009). In fact, one would only need to remember recent events taking place around the country. For example, the Jena 6, the prosecution of the Duke Lacrosse team, the Rutgers basketball team, the continuous debate on race-based admissions, the chaos of Hurricane Katrina, racial profiling, poverty, and the rising Black prison populations suggest that race still matters in the United States. Consequently, it is important to continue the inquiry into how the media discusses and depicts the issue of race. Because we live in a race-conscious environment it is evident the media continues to set the news agenda that affects public opinion. News outlets in the United States are caretakers of the information that decides what is news and who presents it (Littlejohn, 1999). In addition, Metzler (2009) argues that the media, which is at present still predominately White, unfortunately “lacks the vocabulary or the comfort to discuss the real issues of race” (p. 29) and inevitably relies on stereotypes or racial exclusion to extend the conversation. How race is understood influences the

² Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates was arrested for allegedly trying to break into his own house after he had trouble opening a jammed door. Although he provided identification to the police officer, he was arrested and was believed to be the victim of racial profiling.

overall condition of and acceptance of Blacks in this society and the media plays a significant part in how race and Blacks are framed for the public. Hence, race in the media remains a salient topic for academic research.

With a focus on new media, this study will identify and observe race in political blogs and mainstream media during the 2008 presidential campaign.

Media Influence

Entman and Rojecki (2001) believe that the media, specifically television, continues to be a primary source for society's experiences on race and racial issues. In addition, the mass media is a key component to how the public views, perceives, and participates in political campaigns. The exact way in which this occurs is debatable. Research has found that the media frames political content using both explicit and implicit communication that can be either visual or textual (Hutchings & Valentino, 2004). Explicit racial appeals, which are appeals that specifically talk about color and/or stereotypes (Mendelberg, 2001), have become socially and politically unacceptable and are rarely found in the content of political campaigns or in mainstream media campaigns. Mentioning or calling someone "Black" is an example of an explicit racial appeal. Another example would be to state that Black women are "loud and argumentative." The first example uses Black as a descriptor; the latter example stereotypes the behavior and character of Black women.

The 2008 presidential campaign included several explicit racial references. For example, a White restaurant owner sold t-shirts with a caricature of Curious George, a cartoon monkey, with a caption that said "Obama in 08." Another explicit example during the 2008 presidential campaign occurred when Clinton supporter Andrew Cuomo

referred to the Obama campaign strategies as being “shuck and jive” (Parks & Rachlinski, & Epstein, 2008, p. 213). And finally, Obama’s race was often mentioned, but the race or gender of the other candidates was less likely to be mentioned (Caliendo & McIlwain, 2006; Reeves, 1997).

However, the literature does suggest that the majority of the racial messages in political content are framed by implicit appeals (Domke, 2001; Mendelberg, 2001; Philpot, 2008). Green (2009) observes that the media influences political communication via implicit visual and verbal cues embedded in the mass-produced content. Nevertheless, it has been difficult for researchers to provide real-world implicit examples because the meanings are veiled implications in a word or phrase in the media content. For example, phrases such as *urban area* and *inner city* have covert or hidden meanings. The terms *inner city* or *urban areas* are utilized to characterize neighborhoods that have been designated as being populated mostly by Blacks and that have become casualties of reduced financial subsidies and diminished economic growth. Furthermore, the dialogue of race has been subdued and disguised in current political conversations. In fact, Edsall and Edsall (1991) suggest that the political discussion of race has changed and morphed into other discussions, which are difficult to identify and negotiate. They suggest that race “is no longer a straightforward, morally unambiguous force in American politics; instead, considerations of race are now deeply imbedded in the strategy and tactics of politics in competing concepts of the function and responsibility of government, and in each voter’s conceptual structure of moral and partisan identity” (p. 1). This study examines the imbedded implicit media strategies employed to frame race by observing

select political blogs and mainstream media for the existence of implicit and explicit racial communication.

For years, researchers have examined the media's presumed powerful effects. The mass media saturates its audiences with content that can be accurate or inaccurate, nuanced or stereotypical, packaged as news or presented as entertainment (Cortes, 2003). An ongoing research theme has been the continued claim that the media is an agent of socialization, shaping and influencing individuals' societal and political views. Boorstin (1961) suggests that the media has become a "pseudo-environment" because it provides consumers with so much information about both the past and current world in which they live. The media sometimes provide individuals with the only image or representation they have as they consider or experience their environment (Armstrong & Neuendorf, 1992). It then becomes imperative to examine how the media frames the news, people, and events taking place in our society (Entman, 1992, 1993; Waymer, 2009). Domke, McCoy, and Torres (1999) contend that race-focused media portrayals can play a role in the social interaction of citizens and their subsequent political decisions, and Kinder and Sanders (1996) argue that "public opinion" on the issue of race "depends in a systematic and intelligible way on how the issues are framed" (p. 165). Thus, society's insight and awareness of race are mainly constructed by how the media frames the concept. Appropriately, it becomes important to identify how the media frames the issue of race.

According to Entman and Rojecki (2001), "Frames are the organizing concepts that reside in media texts and public discourse which allow both the originators and the recipients of the message to make sense of the information conveyed" (pp. 48–49). A frame is a central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and

meaning to a diverse array of symbols (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992).

Journalists use framing to write about the world, and the public relies on these interpretations to make sense of the world (Gitlin, 1980). These media frames can signify perceived importance for a particular topic and work towards helping the individual know “how to think, feel, and decide in a particular way” (Entman, 2007, p. 164).

A framing effect occurs when an event focuses or centers on a subset of characteristics and then that framing of characteristics causes participants to focus on those particular considerations when forming their opinions or perceptions (Chong & Druckman, 2007a).

Emerging Media

A main goal of the media is to communicate and inform the citizenry. Until recently, television, newspapers, and radio were the most influential media vehicles for news and political information. Recently, a new medium has emerged for citizen rhetoric and information in the political landscape: blogs. Blogs can be defined as online journals or diary entries on various subjects, written by a single author or group of authors, presented in chronological order of dated posted. There are several different genres or types of blogs, including entertainment, news, political, and educational blogs. In the last few years, the blogosphere, which is the combined community of blogs on the Internet, has increased in popularity and in size. The blogging phenomenon has arrived and has quickly become an important tool in the political elites’ toolkit. While there is an increasing amount of research on the political blogosphere, there is very little literature on racial framing and new media, specifically the political blogosphere. Essentially, most of the limited research on racial framing and politics in political communication has

been conducted concerning television and visual messages. With the popularity and increased presence of political blogs, it is necessary to diversify and add a textual presence in research focusing on blogs and political communication.

Political blogs should be investigated for several reasons. First, blog readership and activity has more than doubled since the 2004 elections (The Pew Research Center, 2008), and blogs were widely used in the 2008 campaign. Blogging, once seen as an elite activity in 2004, was considered a “must have” during this presidential election (2008). Blogs are especially popular among everyday citizens because of their accessibility and low start-up costs. Any citizen with the minimum tools and the desire to be heard can have a voice on the political blogosphere (Kaid & Postelnicu, 2007). The accessibility and dynamic increase in popularity in political blogs illustrate the necessity to examine the blogs for content.

Second, political blogs encourage freedom of expression. Due to this, racial framing and racial appeals may be more evident in blogs as opposed to mainstream media. Blogs lack the traditional gatekeepers of major television networks and print media. They have been equated with the “new talk radio” but without the restrictions imposed by the Federal Communication Commission (Nevius, 2004). Because of its accessibility, and lack of formal guidelines and constraints, the Internet provides an environment in which group and individual biases, stereotypes, and prejudices can exist and flourish (Glaser, Dixit, & Green, 2002). For example, Evans, Garcia, Garcia, and Baron (2003) conducted an Internet study on hate crimes and found that the confidentiality of the Internet makes it easier to communicate feelings and opinions that are not usually condoned in mainstream media channels or in everyday conversation.

Blogs provide an accessible opportunity for people to express their political and racial beliefs.

Finally, there is an absence of research on race and political blogs. Several studies have focused on race and Hurricane Katrina in the weblogs (Brock, 2008; Sommers, Apfelbaum, Dukes, Toosi, & Wang, 2006), but Nakamura (2006) points out the scarcity in Internet research focusing on race. Brock (2008) argues that there are some instances of Internet research focused on race but that there are many more discussions and analyses on gender and sexuality. This study hopes to augment this nascent area of scholarship by examining the racial framing found in political blogs and observing several comparisons with the racial frames found in other forms of traditional media.³

The purpose of this study is to identify the implicit and explicit racial framing in political blogs during the 2008 presidential election in political blogs and newspapers. In the following chapters, I will present the theoretical foundation and methodology for this study. Chapter 2 begins by examining blogs, particularly political blogs. In Chapter 3, the theoretical perspective of framing will be discussed, and Chapter 4 will present an overview of race in the media. Chapter 5 will introduce the methodology for the study, Chapter 6 will present the results and Chapter 7 will cover the discussion and areas for further research.

³ *Traditional media* and *mainstream media* will be used interchangeably in this study. *Traditional* or *mainstream media* refers to television networks, cable news programming, radio, newspapers, and magazines.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The consumption of blogs is often avid and occasionally obsessive. But more commonly, it is utterly natural, as if turning to them were no stranger than (dare one say this here?) picking one's way through the morning's newspapers. The daily reading of virtually everyone under 40—and a fair few folk over that age—now includes a blog or two, and this reflects as much the quality of today's bloggers as it does a techno-psychological revolution among readers of news and opinion. (Tunku Varadarajan, 2007)

Out with the Old In With the New

Not too long ago, the different mass communication media could be tallied in one breath: newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. However, today with our consistently expanding and changing technologies and new media systems, it would take more than a single utterance and unending patience to acknowledge and understand the many different channels and platforms available to disseminate news and information to the public

Americans have changed how they obtain their news and information. Ito (2003) explains that globally we are in a time of broad and encompassing changes in how we network, converse, and convey information. The technological advancements have modified how people gather their news and political information. The Pew Research Center (2008) states that the Internet has surpassed traditional print media as a primary source of news and information. However, the report also indicates that television remains the public's primary source for news and information. We are in the midst of an

information transformation, and media consumers are altering their preferences and sources for news. More than 92 million Americans search the Internet daily for news, information, entertainment, or other social activities (2008). The Pew Research Center (2008) also reports that during the 2008 presidential campaign, over a quarter of Americans reported using the Internet to locate information about the campaign and the candidates online.

There is much discussion in academic and political environments regarding the recent influence of the Internet on the political landscape. Political scientists have questioned the possible effect that emerging new media technologies could have on members of the American public and their political experiences (Hindman, 2007). Other researchers believe the new technologies will open up participative opportunities for the public and offer everyday citizens “admission to the political realm” (Grossman, 1995, p. 6). Finally, some scholars indicate caution is advisable when discussing the importance of this new medium. Barber (1998) advises remembering that the Internet is a channel of communication, and that any real change is based “not on the quality and character of our technology but on the quality of our political institutions and the character of our citizens (pp. 588–589). Bimber (1998) also warns that while the Internet has definitely transformed the political landscape, other mass media did not begin to really demonstrate their full political influence until decades after development, so caution is suggested when drawing conclusions on any long-term societal or political influence. Yet, there is no disagreement that blogs have established different points of access to the political landscape. They have provided media elite and consumers with the forums to share information, communicate outside of their original communities, and take part in a

participative democracy (Tremayne, 2007). Blogging has transformed into a universal and collective force in how the public views and interprets its world. Evidence suggests that the blog experience has become a significant tool in the political communication arsenal, and yet there is little research on blogs and the issue of race and minorities and politics (Bichard, 2006; Drezner & Farrell, 2008; McKenna & Pole, 2008). As race continues to be a bellwether for American society, it is critical that researchers examine the role and influence of race in the blogosphere as blogs continue to be utilized as channels for political dialogue and discussion. This chapter will examine blogs and their influence on the political environment. First, the chapter briefly reviews the growth of the Internet. Tracing the origins of the Internet provides insight into the creation of the blogging phenomena. Next, this chapter looks at blogs, the different genres of blogs, and their emerging influence on the political landscape. The last section of the chapter examines the status of current literature on political blogs. This chapter provides significant rationale and justification for studying political blogs, particularly blogs written during the 2008 presidential election.

Introducing the Groundwork for the Blog

Traditional media has been consistently preparing the public for the evolution and public acceptance of new media communication technologies (Lenier et al., 1997). With the cultivation and proliferation of multiple forms of mass communication, the public has been eager to welcome a system that possesses all the mainstream media capabilities and more in one location.

In fact, scholars have been preparing this new technology for decades. Kline and Burstein (2005) believe that hieroglyphics, the Gutenberg printing press, and the penny

press newspapers are natural antecedents of modern day blogs. The printing press helped process regular updates for all citizens, not just the elite, on everyday occurrences and information. Hewitt (2005) indicates that the evolution of printing press technology and the evolution of the Internet are similar in that the societal and economic transformation that resulted from these technologies affected the course of modern-day society.

Political revolutions were assisted by the ease and affordability of this new invention, the printing press, which made possible the distribution of one of the most important writings for freedom and sovereignty, *Common Sense*, written by Thomas Paine. In fact, Kline and Burstein (2005) acknowledge that although current blogging rhetoric can be despicable and narrow-minded, they would raise no alarms when compared to the passionate, partisan, and deliberate rhetoric about politicians and government officials found in 19th century newspapers and print publications. As with the printing press, blogs have been instrumental in bringing about civic responsibility and activism in average citizens. For example, the evolution of Moveon.org and NetRoots has been responsible for encouraging citizens to activism and participation in government and politics. These activist organizations, which originated on the Internet, have been responsible for several recent political incidents of change (Hindman, 2007).

The progression of other technologies, including television and radio, also transformed the look and perspective of the media landscape. For instance, Gillmor (2004) suggests that the profits from advertising turned mass media into big business, and in that transformation, it lost its controversial edge and moved towards a more centrist perspective. Talk radio and cable political television evolved around the mid 80s and

found their niches with a viewing public that had become displeased with what they perceived to be biased media and news coverage (Johnson & Kaye, 2004).

Traditional media also paved the way for dialogue and introspection to take place on the Internet, specifically in political blogs. The arrival of the Internet was just the beginning of the deluge of technological innovations that would follow.

The Internet Cometh

The development of the Internet represents one of the most organized and enduring investments in information and communication research (Lenier et al., 1997). The origins of the Internet identify an affiliation between government, academia, and industry in creating and developing this technology. Now the Internet has expanded to include a global landscape and its influences and effects are observable in political, technical, informational, and social environments.

In 1946, Vannevar Bush (Miller & Slater, 2000) worked in partnership with the United States military on a project called the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET). Bush, a technological visionary, provided America a glance into the future of technology in an article he wrote decades ago. Bush (1945) put in writing his ideas of a new useful technology:

Consider a future device for individual use, which is a sort of mechanized private library and file. It needs a name and to coin one at random, “memex” will do. A memex is a device on which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. A special button transfers him immediately to the first page of the index. Any given book of his library can thus be called up

and consulted with far greater facility than if it were taken from a shelf. As he has several projection positions, he can leave one item in position while he calls up another. (p. 4)

The ARPANET project, which eventually progressed into what we now refer to as the Internet, went online in 1969 (Miller & Slater, 2000). It was initially developed to serve as a communication network system in preparation for a military attack against the United States. Hence, the Internet was created as precautionary measure against the advancement of the cold war. Packet-switching, a major development in the groundwork of the Internet, was invented by Leonard Kleinrock in 1961 (Lenier et al., 1997). Packet-switching works to deliver data across an assortment of dispersed networks. Pieces of data are broken up into discrete chunks, and a label is attached before sending the data off across networks to be reassembled at the other end (Chadwick, 2006, p. 41). The crucial aspect is that various chunks of data do not have to follow the same route and will find an available route to their targets. This flexibility made the packet-switching system very appealing to the government (Chadwick, 2006). The new packet-switching technology was first put into place through a communication network of four major universities: the University of Southern California, Stanford Research Institute, the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the University of Utah. This group combined to initiate the first Internet research communication network. Later, other computers joined to forge a functional Host to Host network protocol (Lenier et al., 1997). Additional Internet applications continued to develop during an era of technological innovations, such as the first well-designed e-mail program in 1971. There would be other innovations during this era, yet electronic mail would have the most impact because it offered a new model for

business and interpersonal communication and collaboration (Chadwick, 2006; Lenier et al., 1997).

Looking for ways to provide more accessibility and freedom within the ARPANET system, Robert Kahn and Vinton Cerf developed an open architecture system in 1974 that supported making this system more user-friendly. They invented the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), a format and procedure for handling unlimited amounts of data (Chadwick, 2006). This new format allowed flexibility within the network. Cerf and Kahn (1974) believed that individual networks could be designed and developed separately and that they could contain their own interfaces. Each network would be created based on its own environment, and there would be no limits to the type or the geographic scope. This flexibility was fundamental because it opened up unlimited possibilities for connections throughout the world.

Despite these advancements and increased utilization, the ARPANET system was still accessible to only a select few, including defense contractors and elite research universities (Chadwick, 2006). The connectivity and foundation were in place, but the system lacked software and tools to provide access to the public. The World Wide Web (WWW) would start a new era in access and communication.

The World Wide Web was first mentioned by an amateur computer novice, Ted Nelson, in 1975, but it was Tim Berners Lee (Berners-Lee, Hendler, & Lassila, 2001) who would officially brand and introduce the World Wide Web to the Internet (Chadwick, 2006). The WWW focused on hypertext, which facilitated the sharing of materials and files with other computers located in different places so the files could be uploaded to other different locations. This new technology was utilized to create

computer software applications including Mosaic in 1993 and later Microsoft's Internet Explorer (Chadwick, 2006; Hudson, 1997; Lenier et al., 1997). The applications that compose the Internet today include the World Wide Web (WWW or Web), Electronic Mail (E-mail), File Transfer Protocol (FTP), and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). In fact, it was this very open system of networks and communication that championed free speech and creative expression, and challenged dominant belief systems, that paved the way for the evolution of other forms of Internet communication, including the weblog (Hudson, D., 1997; Meyers, Hudson, & Pausch, 2001). The Internet provided the possibility for a two-way communication opportunity while initiating platforms for more citizen participation in the national and political landscape (Meraz, 2007).

Research points out that the Internet is also a sanctuary for dissimilar points of view (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). The Internet has made it much easier for political groups to convey their cultural and political ideas to the masses (Chadwick, 2006). In fact, sites that encourage the expression of racial and gender bias have surged on the Internet because it lacks any clear-cut regulations and supports a nameless environment. Melican and Dixon (2008) conducted a study of news on the net, and they inferred a link between scores on the modern racism scale and individual perceived credibility of non-traditional Internet sources. Chroust (2000) suggests that groups that have been barred from traditional modes of political participation have begun to utilize the Internet to influence politics by shaping a very receptive youth culture (p. 116). For instance, in the United States, associates of conservative military groups have been early adopters of the Internet's free and open communication environment. These groups utilize the Internet

for the easy accessibility, low cost, lack of regulatory guidelines, and the ability to conduct concealed communications (Whine, 2000).

Governance and the Internet

Fewer regulations, open borders, and anonymity are reasons suggested for the growth and expansion of the Internet. One of the essential features of the Internet is that it “overcomes all barriers of territorial distance and borders (Scholte, 2004, p. 75). After almost forty years of self-governing, the Internet is facing increasing pressures from politicians, law enforcement agencies, and regulatory units to regulate terms and conditions regarding who and what can be transferred over the Internet. Johnson and Post (1996) developed their version of a cyberspace reality, and their work has been utilized in shaping the regulatory debate on the Internet in the United States. Their idea of self-governance suggests that modern territorial law is focused on four basic tenets—power, effects, legitimacy, and notice—which do not apply to the Internet environment, and as a result have no authority on the Internet. Consequently, with all the freedom and lack of regulatory controls, there are few areas where specific guidelines and laws have been implemented. However, in recent years, several agencies have demonstrated some control and influence over Internet governance, specifically The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). ICANN is a private unit empowered to oversee registration of domain names, but it has also evolved into a quasi-judicial authority with no real legitimate power (Chadwick, 2006; Mueller, 2002). ICANN was mainly developed to ease domain and intellectual property concerns on the Internet. Kern, Just, and Crigler (1997) state that the public was receptive to the influx of

technological changes and fixated toward new media as one of their primary sources of news and information. Blogs have become an essential part of those changes.

The Blog Defined

During the last several decades, there have been substantial developments in Internet and publishing technologies on the World Wide Web. One of the newest entries to arouse interest among media elites and consumers has been the advent of the blog. In 2004, the term *blog* became the most sought-out word in the online Merriam dictionary (Perlmutter & Schoen, 2007). Academics, journalists, and media elites have proposed numerous blog definitions. For example, Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz (2004) define a blog as “frequently updated WebPages with posts typically in reverse-chronological order” (p. 1143). The many definitions differ faintly, but there is commonality in the descriptions or components that make up a general blog. Initially, Jorn Barger, creator of the Robot Wisdom blog, developed the term *weblog*. In 1997, he defined it as a web page where web loggers can post or organize any information they find interesting (1999). For the purposes of this study, a weblog (blog) will be defined as an online journal or diary that is published on the Internet. A single author usually writes the blog paragraphs or posts daily, although some blogs have several contributing authors. They are arranged in reverse chronological order and in most cases include hyperlinks or blogrolls that connect to other blogs with similar content (Drezner & Farrell, 2004; Herring, Kouper, Scheidt, & Wright, 2005; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; Sroka, 2006; Walker, 2005).

Initially, blogs were created or adapted through the creativity of amateur online artists, mostly using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), the basic language for

building websites (Blood, 2002). In 1999, Pyra Labs developed blogger.com as a simple and easy-to-use template to assist online writers with weblog publishing. It was not until the introduction of this free publishing software (Blood, 2002; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; Sroka, 2006) that we witnessed an explosion in blogs published on the Internet. This free software allows consumers to establish a blog with preworked templates and free access on the site. Blood (2002) emphasizes that because Blogger.com was simple, required no real technological expertise, and was available to Internet users at no cost, it became the most utilized blogging publishing tool and thus changed the blogging and Internet landscape. Internet access, a computer, and a personal commitment were all that was necessary to become a bona fide blogger. Technorati (2009) indicates that bloggers create over one million posts every day. Blogs have become part of the larger media network.

There are thousands of blog genres on the Internet. Blogs have been written on topics far beyond the scope of this study, ranging from personal fitness, to religion, to entertainment, to academic integrity, to tenure protocol. Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, and Wright (2005) classify blogs in several categories. Personal diaries or online journals focus on occurrences and points of interest for the individual blogger. Although the personal diary is the most common type of blog found on the Internet, it is rarely discussed or utilized by media elites and has the fewest instances of networked links (Herring et al., 2005; Tremayne, 2007). The filter blog evaluates or follows external and public events. Filter blogs often focus on news and political matters (Tremayne, 2007)

The most current *State of the Blogosphere Report* (Technorati, 2009) reports that as many as four out of five bloggers are individual or personal bloggers who write about

their own concerns and happenings. In addition, the report also mentions that every six months, the number of blogs found on the blogosphere increases two-fold with no sign of diminishing (Technorati, 2009; Xifra & Huertas, 2008). No communication channel, not even television, has grown at such a substantial pace.

Blogs have made a crucial impact on the communications landscape. Andrew Sullivan (2002), author of *The Daily Dish*, a popular and well trafficked site, is a blog activist. He argues “The phenomenon is real. Blogging is changing the media world and could, I think, foment a revolution in how journalism functions in our culture” (A4). Bichard (2006) suggests the increasing popularity of blogs is interesting because they offer consumers a form of contributory communication and intimacy that differs from traditional forms of mass media. They offer participants the freedom to get involved in arguments, do some investigative journalism, and furnish a response in an efficient and low-cost exchange (Sullivan, 2002). Lawson-Borders and Kirk (2005) explain that it is this authentic voice—“keeping it real”—that is one of most appealing functions of participating in the blogosphere. Blood (2002) maintains that two of the greatest strengths of blogs as communication sources are their ability to sort out and distribute information to a global audience and their ability to remain apart from the traditional mass media.

Some suggest blogs have revolutionized popular culture, business, and politics (Sroka, 2006; Sullivan, 2002). The ease of entry and distribution make them popular and accessible to most consumers. In addition, there are no prerequisites, guidelines, or licenses needed to begin publishing on the Internet. Yet, the lack of credibility causes

scholars and researchers to be less than positive in their assessment of the functionality and influence of blogs.

Tremayne (2007) defines the blogosphere as a classic social network with components that make it attractive to study for academic researchers, politicians, and media consumers. It has been described as both an opportunity for knowledge and insight, and a public rumor mill inhabited by adolescents. It is available in text, easy to find, and archived on the Internet, and it gives access to other network information. Previously, media consumers who wanted to participate in the national discussions had no consistent platform to display their ideas, but with the blogosphere, average citizens can fully participate in the national conversation. An exciting aspect of the blogging phenomenon has been the blog's ability to transform media audiences from consumers of media to originators (Dominick, 1999; Papacharissi & Fernback, 2002). This became apparent after 9/11. Because of the events of 9/11, blogs provided a collective space for millions of Americans who were searching for a place to find information, share their feelings, and keep in contact with loved ones. Tremayne (2007) argues the online journalism phenomenon officially began after 9/11. Yeomans (2006), a social research consultant, explains that "this collective tragedy demanded a forum to be shared by people all around the world who wanted to talk about what happened with anyone because it was the only way of making any sense of it" (para. 9). Gill (2004) suggests that 9/11 was the catalyst that developed the genre of political blogs and increased citizen participation.

Blogs provide media audiences with online participatory ownership in the nation's democratic dialogue and have emerged as a possible way to contribute to the

democratic process. Hacker and van Dijk (2000) refer to this phenomenon as a digital democracy, and they explain that a digital democracy reflects the degree to which new media technology has increased political democracy and encouraged citizen participation. According to Kline and Burnstein (2005), bloggers are transforming the political process itself—and more important, the ordinary citizen’s relationship to it, in ways that seem likely to lead to a more representative and participatory American democracy (p. 5). Everyday citizens now have the choice to become part of the process and public debate. Balnaves, Mayrhofer, and Shoesmith (2004) argue that blogs on the Internet get around conventional gatekeepers and allow more of the public to engage in open and public discourse. Bowman and Willis (2003) describe these online discussions as “distributed discussions,” which individuals can link to and participate in online (p. 23).

Kline and Burnstein (2005) believe that political bloggers have brought back some partisan identity to the media, similar to the press during the 19th century. Political blogging has developed a more engaged and informed citizenry necessary for the continued performance of the political process. Moore (2003) refers to the social community of bloggers as a “new superpower that demonstrates a new form of emergent democracy” totally different from the current status of democracy (p. 3). Moore contends that ideas are usually presented by elites and government officials, but with the new superpower, considerations and actions are taken on by each individual, from her or his own particular perspective and commitment. In addition, it is also argued that political bloggers supplement the viewpoints and jargon of their political parties with their own political ideology (Wallsten, 2004). Moreover, political bloggers employ links on their blogs and in their posts to provide the audience with similar information.

Finally, political bloggers have contributed to increased political activism. The most concrete example is the development of Netroots. Netroots is the coordinated activism of the political left via blogs and other forms of communication and online media that first became active during Howard Dean's presidential campaign. It has been called one of the most significant mass movements in American politics. This liberal progressive group saw a need to organize right after the 2000 presidential election, so they organized online and used their numbers to help elect Democratic candidates. In 2006, Netroots was being sought after by all levels of political campaigns and the government. Its numbers and influence continue to increase, and it has been instrumental in several recent political incidents. It has gotten so large and influential that there is a yearly conference of Netroots, and politicians on every government level attend to make political contacts (Armstrong & Zuniga, 2006).

The blog has made a mark on the online public, specifically in the political stratosphere, but it must be pointed out that the very dimensions of promise that make the blog so popular are the exact reasons it has not received universal acceptance. Blood (2002) argues that "the weblog's greatest strength [is] its uncensored, unmediated, uncontrolled voice [and this voice] is also its greatest weakness (p. 2). The blog is not tied to a set of standards and procedures that the mainstream media follows in its pursuit to provide the public with objective and complete information. The conflict is evident in the political blogging community.

The Political Blogosphere

The knack for and capability of utilizing online communication are vital in the modern political landscape (Scott, 2007). As the blogosphere has expanded, almost

every newspaper, opinion, or political publication has developed a coexisting blog to supplement its publications or websites (Farrell & Drezner, 2008). This expansion, according to Kelly (2008), has helped change the political environment and how media and political elites coexist in the new media political landscape. Because there are few barriers prohibiting access to the Internet and blogging tools, any individual can contribute his or her voice to the public conversation.

Campbell (Campbell, V., 2009) proposes that the ever-increasing literature on American politics and blogs hints at blogs' growing significance to the political environment. However, even though the influence of blogs extends beyond their immediate audience and readers, political blogs are read daily by just a fraction of the American public compared to traditional media (Adamic & Glance, 2005). Rainie, Fox, and Fallows (2003) found that only 4% of Americans using the Internet actually reported using a blog for information or news. Yet, many believe in the influence and credibility of political blogs, and there are several reasons for political blogs' reputed authority. First, some blog authors have high levels of expertise and knowledge in policy and political matters. Secondly, some blog authors have personal contacts and networks with media and political elites. Finally, because blogs are more immediate than mainstream media, their framing of news or political events has been utilized as a first source by mainstream media (Farrell & Drezner, 2008). Elite or A-list political blogs help frame political debates and national focus. For example, several events have demonstrated the influence of blogs on the political landscape

Consideration of political blogs' increasing influence began with the resignation of Senator Trent Lott as Senate Majority Leader. Celebrating the birthday of former

Senator Strom Thurmond, Senator Trent Lott waxed nostalgic in favor of Thurmond's former Dixiecrat and segregationist history. Senator Lott declared, "I want to say this about my state: When Strom Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either" (Mercurio, 2002, para. 4). This tribute to Senator Thurmond did not receive any major attention from the mainstream media. But after the incident was reported in an online news report, the blogosphere was alight with posts, rants, and commentary from both liberal and conservative bloggers. Those blog posts and discussions in the blogosphere forced the mainstream media to rethink its decision to investigate the incident (Farrell & Drezner, 2008; Tomaszewski, Proffitt, & McClung, 2009). After the public outcry, Senator Lott issued an apology and later announced he would not seek another term as Senate Majority Leader.

Another example of the blogosphere's influence took place when CBS's news magazine, *60 Minutes*, reported presumed inaccuracies in President Bush's military service. The broadcast reviewed memos supposedly written by President Bush's commanding supervisor, but within minutes of the broadcast, bloggers began to decry the authenticity of the documents (Adamic & Glance, 2005; Farrell & Drezner, 2008; Scott, 2007). The blogosphere got involved researching the authenticity of the memos, including one post by the blogger "Buckhead" who argued that the print style conflicted with the print and type of that particular era (Wallsten, 2004). Interestingly enough, reports claimed that the author of the aforementioned post did not have any print or typography experience. However, it was his association with the Republican Party and his previous blog credibility that lent credence to his questions about document

authenticity. The public request for authentic documentation increased, and when CBS was not able to provide additional documentation, Dan Rather, the correspondent in the story, apologized publicly and later resigned his post on CBS news.

Finally, the presidential campaign of 2004 also illustrated the power and influence of the political blogosphere. The 2004 presidential election was the first time that a political campaign actively made use of the interactive characteristics of the Internet and blogs to communicate with the American public. Howard Dean introduced his Blog for America, which encouraged interactive citizen communication and received thousands of individual responses and comments while he was active in the campaign (Scott, 2007). In 2003, Dean went live with Blog for America, which contained featured sites, links, and information on campaign events. Presidential politics and political campaigns would never be the same. Other important features of Dean's Blog for America included a comment section that allowed visitors to contribute remarks to the candidate or the campaign. In addition, the site included a track-back section that provided visitors with links to other sites that referenced a particular post found on the blog. Furthermore, Dean was a frontrunner in using his blog site to fundraise for his campaign. He went from concentrating on several large campaign donors to uniting a nation of supporters who made much smaller contributions. In fact, Dean's Internet fundraising template was modified and utilized during the 2008 presidential campaign (Peddycord, 2008).

President Obama raised over 87% of his campaign funds from social networking utilizing Dean's initial Internet strategy (Peddycord, 2008). Dean had over 55,000 supporters in his grassroots campaign, and Blog for America allowed Dean's campaign to interact with his Internet supporters immediately, make changes, and respond to news

reports and rumors more quickly. In addition, Dean's online campaign arsenal incorporated a blog that was created specifically to target hard-to-reach younger voters. The Dean campaign elevated Internet campaigns, and specifically blogs, to a new status position because of the online strategy and skillful use of the blogosphere. Soon after, other candidates put into operation citizen discussion groups on their websites and further illustrated that blogs influence the political landscape and presidential campaigns. No political campaign would ever look the same (Rice, 2003; Scott, 2007).

Political blogs have had an influence on the general political landscape. They have not only influenced political campaigns, but they also provide countless opportunities for the public to find blog sites that mirror and nourish ideas and viewpoints similar to their own. However, the ability to find and follow similar ideas and views may have contributed to the public's lack of desire to look for dissenting viewpoints. Sunstein (2001) maintains that the expansion of the Internet has fused an isolation of dissenting rhetoric with the increase of more left-leaning and right-leaning ideological blogs. With this option to choose blogs that reflect their own ideologies, individuals are less likely to search out content containing different ideas and viewpoints on topics of interest or concern.

Ideology and Fragmentation

For decades, scholars have been debating about liberal and conservative thinking in traditional media. Liberal and conservative labels are believed to have significant influence on the public's political attitudes and actions (Conover & Feldman, 1981; Klingemann, 1979). One of the outcomes of innovative technologies on the Internet has been the polarization of user ideas and viewpoints. Whereas mainstream media tries to

provide objective coverage of news, particularly in political campaigns, political blogs have no desire to remain objective and instead do just the opposite: political bloggers make no secret of their partisanship or their ideological bias. According to Sunstein, (2001), “The most striking power provided by emerging technologies [is] the growing power of consumers to filter what they see” (p. 5). He also suggests that there are perils for a democracy when the public chooses to avoid media content dissimilar to their own and instead consistently chooses those that favor their particular point of view. In the political blogosphere, the most popular political blogs are the blogs that are defined and identified by political ideology.

The basis of a political ideology is a connection to a particular set of beliefs or a specific vision that connects a group of people or a society. John Locke’s political philosophies were pivotal in designing America’s political foundations and ideologies. Locke (1690) argued in the *Second Treatise* that the laws of nature create a natural parity among individuals and that every human being is justified in expecting, as a natural heir, the right to “life, health, liberty and possession” (para. 171). His works were seminal in providing the foundations for unifying systems and groups under similar ideals.

Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008) state that for over 200 years, our political belief systems have been classified according to a left-right dimension, otherwise known as liberal or conservative. Although there have been questions about liberal and conservative ideologies since the Middle Ages, there continues to be debate among scholars as to whether or not people can be organized by political ideology (Baker, 2005; Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008; Conover & Feldman, 1981). Often credited with explicating discussions of liberalism, Locke wrote of individuality and natural rights

belonging to every citizen. Called the Father of Conservatism, Locke was instrumental in discussing what would be referred as the conservative ideology.

Originating during the late 18th century, ideology can be defined as “the way a system . . . or even a whole society . . . rationalizes itself” (Knight, 2006, p. 16). Based on this right-left continuum, the right-wing or right-leaning facet characterizes politics that are conservative in nature and move towards maintaining the status quo and a hierarchical governing system, while the left-wing or left-leaning facet represents egalitarian ideals and social change (Jost et al., 2008). More specifically, the liberal-conservative continuum has two main components, advocating versus resisting social change, and rejecting versus accepting inequality (p. 128). These components coincide with a similar definition provided by Lipset, Lazarsfeld, Barton, and Linz (1962) over four decades ago. They explain

[that] by left we shall mean advocating social change in the direction of greater equality—political, economic or social; by right we shall mean supporting a traditional, more or less hierarchical social order and opposing change toward equality. Illustrating little change in the basic structure of either of these political ideologies. In modern campaigns this is usually done by implicit communication using “social issues with veiled overtones. (pp. 1134–1135)

Maccoby (1968) proposes several other manifestations of the liberal and conservative typologies. He indicates that one facet [liberal] “has an aversion to violence, dislikes sterile and rigid order and rejects being mechanized, and the other facet [conservative] suggests a person would be rigidly ordered, mechanical and unalive” (p. 2). Furthermore, recently interpretations of ideological traits have embraced open-mindedness (liberal)

versus closed-mindedness (conservative). Carney et al. (2008) conducted a study of the differences that exist in the left-right ideological continuum. They derived a taxonomy of the traits theorized to be related with liberal (left-wing) and conservative (right-wing) ideologies. Among the many traits, they found that liberals (left-wing) tend to be open-minded, impulsive, indifferent, individualistic, slovenly, and life-loving, whereas conservatives (right-wing) are inclined to be reliable, parsimonious, concerned with rules, closed-minded, conscientious, and intolerant. In another study, Jost et al. (2008) examined traits associated with left/right political orientation. They recognized there are marked differences in the traits for the two political ideologies. Their findings suggest that conservatives have preferences for conventionality, traditional values, and orderliness in comparison to disorder, adaptability, parity, and equal rights associated with liberalism.

In addition, some researchers acknowledge a link between race and political ideology (Carmines & Stimson, 1989; Domke, 2001). Converse (1964) states that the public usually does not make their political decisions based on an unclear ideological paradigm; instead, he suggests, the majority of citizens make decisions in most matters “in terms of their expected favorable or unfavorable treatment of different social groupings in the population (p. 216). Furthermore, Converse (1964) argues that the public’s perception on racial issues is similar to their decisions on other related policies and “that this consistency seemed to revolve around a general like or dislike for Blacks” (p. 235). In that same vein, Carmines and Stimson (1989) state,

Race is thus a prominent, if not dominant connotation of the ideological labels liberal and conservative. . . . If we ask simply, what do we know if someone

avows a position on the liberal-conservative continuum, we answer that more than anything else we know that person's views on race. (p. 133)

Jackman and Muha (1984) explain that dominant groups use political ideology to maintain power over other groups in society. In a study of race and political ideologies, Burdein (2007) found that although conservatives communicate about issues on an ideological platform, implicitly they activate racial considerations. She also discovered that the traditional concepts of work ethic and individualism are related to racial perceptions.

Yet, other researchers argue that there is no clear relationship between race and ideology. Instead some suggest that political ideology is based on what people believe to be the proper responsibility of government. Likewise, Sniderman and Carmines (1997) say the composition of the conservative framework is more structured and more principled, which accounts for conservatives' support of policy issues and does not show a linkage with race or racism.

This research seems to disagree with other literature that suggests a relationship between the new racism and conservatism (Gilbert, Fiske, & Lindzey, 1998). This new racism has been referred to by several different labels, such as *modern racism*, *symbolic racism*, and *aversive racism*. The underlying concept suggests that this new form of racism has replaced the old-fashioned racism that was more obvious and deliberate. Sears, Henry, and Kosterman (2000) state that this new or symbolic racism has four major themes; discrimination is no longer a problem for Blacks in this country; Blacks don't follow the conventional core of American values, specifically the observance of a good work ethic, listening to authority, and impulse management; Blacks continue to

make demands for individual considerations; and finally, Blacks continue to receive special handling from government agencies and within government policies (p. 77–78). Kinder and Sears (1981) contend that “symbolic racism is a blend of anti-Black affect and traditional American values embodied in the protestant ethic” (p. 416).

Entman (1990, 1992, 2001) found that local television news, while backing away from obvious displays of overt racism and bias toward Blacks, indirectly encourages modern racism with normal crime and political coverage. Entman (1992) found in studies on local and network news that as the local news continued to cover crime news, Blacks were seen as physically threatening, which correlates with the anti-Black effect of modern racism. In addition, political coverage that illustrated Black leaders as more demanding of special attention and special government considerations, and the increase of Black anchors and reporters, which indicated discrimination was no longer a problem, activated the modern racism tenets in White viewers.

Melican and Dixon (2008) conducted a study on new media credibility and found that individuals who saw nontraditional Internet sources as more credible than traditional media and also scored higher on the modern racism scale. Melican and Dixon suggest that the new media provides many opportunities for the public to reinforce previously held perceptions, and that individuals with more racist beliefs may choose not to seek out sites to dispel their current perspectives. Other scholars see no direct link between a new racism perspective and ideological concerns. Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell (2000) argue the validity of a link between modern racism and ideology and suggest that political perspectives instead of race affect Whites’ policy preferences. Sniderman and Piazza (1993) state that “a quarter century ago, what counted was who a policy would

benefit, Blacks or Whites; now ideological differences over racial public policies represent genuine differences of political outlook rather than covert racism (p. 13).

There have been limited studies conducted on the political blogosphere in this area of research. Adamic and Glance (2005) observed elite blogs and links to other partisan blogs, and they discovered partisan fragmentation, with conservative bloggers most apt to link to other conservative blogs. Hargittai, Gallo, and Kane (2008) examined whether political bloggers would link to blogs with viewpoints similar or dissimilar to their own. The researchers found that both conservative and liberal bloggers linked most often to blogs that represented philosophies and ideas similar to theirs. Hargitti, et al. also found that bloggers left both positive and negative comments on blogs similar and dissimilar to their own ideological perspectives.

As indicated earlier, mainstream media⁴ strives for objectivity and diverse content; however, traditional media venues are consistently called to task about the bias in their news and political content. According to a recent report conducted by The Pew Research Center (2009), 60% of Americans believe that news organizations are politically biased in their news coverage. The report also details which mainstream media Fox News outlets are believed to most accurate. Republicans favor the *Wall Street Journal* and, while Democrats feel that CNN, MSNBC, and the *New York Times* provide the most accurate news reporting.

The concern for this study is the racial framing in political blogs during the 2008 presidential campaign. A large number of the blogs in the political blogosphere are either conservative or liberal, so consequently, whether the ideological affiliation of a blog

⁴ Mainstream media (MSM) and Traditional media will be used interchangeably in this study. When using mainstream media or traditional media, I am referring to the popular media including television, newspapers, cable television, radio, and magazines. This does not include the Internet.

influences how it frames race is an important area of research. There is no current research that identifies political communication in blogs via ideological association and racial framing. While the current research examines whether ideological fragmentation or polarization is probable in political blogs, it does not consider the issue of race and political ideology. This study will add to this area of scholarship.

The Intersection between the Blogosphere and Traditional Media

There has been much in the literature regarding the relationship between political blogs and mainstream media, although initially there was little connection between the two groups. David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times* writes (2005),

Many bloggers—not all, perhaps not even most—do not seem to worry much about being accurate. Or fair. They just want to get their opinions and their “scoops” out there as fast as they pop into their brains. One of the great advantages of the Internet, many Web lovers have told me, is that it’s easy to correct an error there. You can do it instantly, instead of having to wait until the next day’s paper. But the knowledge that you can correct errors quickly, combined with the absence of editors or filters, encourages laziness, carelessness, and inaccuracy, and I don’t think the reporter’s privilege to maintain confidential sources should be granted to such practitioners of what is at best pseudo-journalism. (p. E14)

Bloggers, however, insist they are a new type of journalist, offering hard-hitting, comprehensive detail verification and analytical reporting which has been absent recently from mainstream media. Another link between bloggers and mainstream media is that many of the authors of the elite political blogs have been involved in some aspect of

traditional journalism (Farrell & Drezner, 2008; Tremayne, 2007). For instance, during the 2004 presidential election, Markos Moulitsas Zuniga, author of Daily Kos, was utilized as an expert for several publications, based on the following of his highly popular blog.

Jenkins and Thorburn (2004) disclose several areas of distinction between mainstream media and political blogs, including objectivity, credibility, and networking. In democratic systems, media and politics are connected. The media provides information on national policy and political referendums for the public; it also provides opportunities for the political elite to offer feedback and spin their various perspectives. Despite the “mediatization of politics,” the consensus suggests that the media’s most fundamental task in the democratic process is to provide an “enlightened understanding” for the public (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Takens, Ruigrok, van Hoof, & Scholten, 2008; White, 1950). This is the gatekeeping role of the media; gatekeeping provides an understanding of the events that are taking place in an objective and reliable manner and is one of the professional standards or norms of traditional media. Traditional media has been obligated to uphold these standards, especially in political campaigns; however, political blogs have not followed the same journalistic credo. Blood (2002) does not think bloggers should have to adhere to the same norms and traditions as mainstream journalists because they do not often meet the same journalistic qualifications. Brian Williams, *Nightly News* anchor on NBC, acknowledges those distinctions in a lecture he gave to journalism students. He said,

You’re going to be up against people who have an opinion, a modem and a bathrobe. All of my life, developing credentials to cover my field of work, and

now I am up against a guy name Vinny in an efficiency apartment in the Bronx who hasn't left the efficiency apartment in two years. (O'Gorman, 2007)

Because of easy access and no self-editing, political blogs do not meet the journalistic norm of gatekeepers: however, the free flow of information, and lack of formal hoops to maneuver through, have made the blogosphere the free-for-all arena of participative democracy that is changing the landscape. In fact, it is that free flow of information that attracts people to blogs. True, the overt partisanship and lack of objectivity does not meet traditional journalistic norms: however, many blog users find this defiance and reluctance to fall in with the "media machines" all the more evidence of the blogs' credibility and the newsworthiness of the medium (Andrews, 2003; Regan, 2003).

Another major distinction between mainstream media and the political blogosphere is the networking capacity and blog reliance on hyperlinks (Farrell & Drezner, 2008). The networking usefulness of blog activity provides in-depth coverage on an external event and additional sources and information for the consumer. A blog network can be set up through links by either a permanent blogroll included on the blogger's site or by including hyperlinks in individual posts. *Blogrolls* are defined lists of blogs that are permanently situated on the blogger's site and viewable through a clickable link for the reader (Drezner & Farrell, 2004). Hyperlinks and blog site statistics or blog site views are crucial for blogging success on the Internet because bloggers need viewers and readers to visit their sites. Blood (2002) advises that the "most reliable way to gain traffic is through a link on another weblog" (p. 98). For instance, a reader choosing to visit another site through a hyperlink may visit a site he or she has not previously viewed,

and from that initial visit may continue to read and visit the new site. This new allegiance may not have been possible if the author had not included the hyperlink in the original post. However, the links provided in individual posts are not always linked to alternative blog sites, but could include traditional media websites or video or audio files. Bloggers, then, prefer to be added as a permanent link on a blog site to increase the possibility of more consumer visits.

Because networking is the main exchange on the blogosphere, serious bloggers utilize several search engines or trackers to track daily visits and citations regarding their sites (Drezner & Farrell, 2008). For example, TruthLaid Bear and Technorati provide traffic and content analysis, free options, and site counters that bloggers can utilize to monitor site activity. In addition, most of the material for political blogs has been developed and created based on information found through mainstream media publications and broadcasts (Eveland & Dylko, 2007). In individual posts, bloggers link to mainstream media websites, which often acknowledge reliance on traditional media for information while encouraging consumers to compare and editorialize the content.

Mainstream media venues have recently begun to include blogger citations and reports from blogs and other websites in their published or broadcast content. These collaborations can provide credibility and increase readership opportunities for bloggers, continuing, alas, the uneasy camaraderie and intersection between the two media sources. Both traditional media and political blogs provide interpretative frames for the audience to evaluate. This study will utilize both traditional and new media to identify racial framing.

Status of Scholarly Blog Research

Since the initial development of the Internet, researchers have been interested in its influence on political communication (Hargittai et al., 2008). With the expansion of new media, the literature on blogs and the blogosphere has increased in recent years. Although the majority of current academic research concentrates on filter blogs, there is surprisingly little research on the intersections of politics, race, and blogs. This section will review the current trends in literature on political blogs.

There are several different blog types discussed in the literature. Herring et al. (2005) conducted a study on the various blog genres. They (2005) concluded that over 70% of the blogs available to sample on the blogosphere are personal or individual blogs, but they found that most of the research conducted on blogs has been concentrated on filter blogs. In a similar study on blog genres, Herring et al. (2007) presented one of the first longitudinal content analyses on blogs. Their focus was to determine the stability and consistency of blogs and blog authors to provide insight into the very nature of blogging and predicting and understanding trends.

McKenna and Pole (2008) observed the activities of political bloggers. Their findings illustrate that political bloggers spend most of their time drawing attention to their own blog content and information on other blogs, or to information found in mainstream media. In addition, McKenna and Pole determined that political bloggers spend less of their time fact-checking and even less on activist and humanitarian activities.

As more consumers flock to blogs for information and news, scholars are also examining audience motivations and the levels of credibility in blogs. Armstrong and McAdams (2009) conducted a study that examined whether gender cues would influence

audience perceptions of the credibility of blogs. They found that gender was an influence on perceived credibility with male blog authors being assessed as more credible sources.

There is limited research that examines the relationship between political blogs and mainstream media. For instance, Drezner and Farrell (2004) conducted a study among mainstream media journalists and political blogs. They found that the mainstream media journalists regularly read political blogs and utilize them as sources for story ideas and information. McCoy-Roth (2004) conducted a survey among mainstream media journalists and found that over 52% of the journalists believe that political blogs have “a great deal” of influence on how a story is put together and covered (p. 244). K. Wallsten (2007) conducted a content analysis on A-list and less popular blogs. He found no relationship between media coverage and blog discussions on a majority of issues. In addition, K. Wallsten (2007) determined that there was a bi-directional relationship between mainstream media and political blogs instead of the unidirectional effect of either blogs on mainstream media or vice versa. Specifically, bloggers get information from mainstream media and decide whether or how they will frame or advance the information in their blog posts, while mainstream media looks to political blogs for updates and current information and, based on citizen response and interest, decides whether or not to cover an item. In another study examining political blogs and mainstream media, Sweetser, Golan, and Wanta (2008) examined whether political campaign advertisements and candidate blogs were successful in influencing the news agenda of mainstream media. They found evidence of an intermedia effect within some of the new media tools, including blogs. They also determined that traditional media still

tell people what to think about and that blogs are reactionary, albeit in real-time; because they are updated so often, blogs decrease salience time lag in reference to news or issues.

While there is expanding literature on varying topics within the political blogosphere, there has been very little research that looks specifically at the conservative and liberal ideologies of the blogs and blog authors. In one study, Adamic and Glance (2005) compared the interaction and structure of liberal and conservative blogs. They found that networking and providing links to other similar blogs is done more frequently in conservative blogs, leading to what they believe is audience fragmentation. Ackland (2005) completed a similar study and found like patterns of networking across liberal and conservative blogs. Similarly, Hargittai et al. (2008) also focused on audience fragmentation and liberal and conservative blogs. Specifically, they questioned whether the reliance on similar ideological viewpoints would develop a fragmented society. Their study examined both quantitative and qualitative data, and they discovered that well-read political bloggers were more likely to link to content that shared their ideological and political views. However, based on the ten-month review in their study, they did not find any evidence to support the perception that isolation is increasing on the Internet. Although research on the landscape of political blogs is increasing, there are some areas that remain lacking in scholarly pursuit, specifically political ideology and its influence on racial framing. Drezner and Farrell (2008) indicate that while additional research in some areas does little to clarify debates, what additional research does provide is a thorough body of evidence that can clarify the concerns of scholars in the field. This study will add to general body of literature on political blogs and specifically on political blogs and race.

CHAPTER 3: FRAMING AND THE MEDIA

Overview

Media scholars overwhelmingly agree that much of what the public knows about news, politics, and other national issues is obtained through mediated sources (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Stuart Hall (2003) emphasizes that “the media are . . . part of the dominant means of ideological production. What they ‘produce’ is precisely representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work” (p. 90). In addition, the framing process has been acknowledged by media elites as a political strategy. According to the Matt Bai of the *New York Times* (2005), the framing process begins early:

Even before the election, a new political word had begun to take hold of the party, beginning on the West Coast and spreading like a virus all the way to the inner offices of the Capitol. That word was “framing.” Exactly what it means to “frame” issues seems to depend on which Democrat you are talking to, but everyone agrees that it has to do with choosing the language to define a debate and, more important, with fitting individual issues into the contexts of broader story lines. (p. 1)

Framing literature should be augmented to include the expanding examinations of diversification in frame types incorporated to represent to the public news, political campaigns, and candidates (Parmalee, 2002). In this study, framing is the theoretical lens incorporated to identify and observe the racial frames created in political blogs during the

2008 presidential election. The first section in this chapter begins with an overview of some of the principal origins of framing.

Framing Origins

Initially, framing was nurtured in cognitive psychology (Bartlett, 1932) and anthropology (Bateson, 1972). Eventually it was advanced in the sociological and psychological research traditions. Goffman (1974) defines a frame as “the principles of organization which govern the subjective meanings we assign to social events” (p. 11). For Goffman, the frame helps structure experiences and guide our actions. Goffman distinguishes framing as being “primary frameworks” or “schemata’s of interpretation” to help persons “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large (p. 21). Goffman believes that frames are structures which assist individuals in organizing information or their perceptions of reality. Framing, then, can be seen as providing the context or background of an experience, or support with evaluation and clarification of an event. Several disciplines in particular have added substantially to this academic area of research including psychology (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) and social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000). Gamson and Modigliani (1987) explain that a frame can also be thought of in media discourse as a “central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning” to the events that are related to a particular news story or event (p. 143). They also describe catchphrases, depictions, metaphors, exemplars, and visual images as the most commonly utilized tools for frame identification.

Kahneman & Tversky (1979, 1984) found that framing is capable of influencing an outcome or a decision based on the manner in which a particular event or occurrence

is presented. Their seminal work in framing and its effects led to the development of prospect theory. According to Tversky and Kahneman (1981), individuals make decisions based on their understanding of what they perceive as the possible result of their decisions. The decision, or “decision frame, is thus based on the individual perception of the situation” (p. 453). Specifically, individual perception is developed from a frame that is controlled and created by the dominant power or group and based on the individual’s needs, habits or personal choices. Alternative frames can and are developed based on individuals. Using mathematical equations to differentiate human behavior, Kahneman and Tversky (1984) discovered that variations in individual choice and outcome are based on the manner in which the options are framed and on the expectations of the decision maker. In practice, this explanation seems to characterize framing as an organizing structure that provides context and that can, along with an individual’s personal objectives, undoubtedly influence how that person will evaluate a communication.

Benford and Snow’s (2000) work on social movement organizations (SMO) examines the importance of frame development and individual evaluation in social movements. Snow and Benford (1988) utilize Goffman’s (1974) interpretation that frames are the outline for understanding. Developing frames in social movements means directing attention and consideration to the main issue of the movement to develop a group of supporters. The frames are developed and processed to recruit and to mobilize members and to link member interests with the interests and outcomes of the particular movement. Developing the right frame is key in the interpretative process and important for goal fulfillment (Allen, 1994; Benford and Snow, 2000; Cress & Snow, 2000).

Media Framing

As framing research has continued to expand in the field of communication, diverse definitions and characterizations have also continued to accumulate. Nelson Oxley and Clawson (1997) explain framing as “the process by which a communication source constructs and defines a social or political issue for its audience (p. 221). Similarly, Reese (2001) states that “frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world (p. 11). Entman (1993) emphasizes that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation (p. 52). Tankard, Henrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) add that “a frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is though the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (p. 11). Finally, Gitlin (1980) says that

[f]rames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters. The frames are used as instruments to handle the information for professionals and media elites so that they can package it for their audiences. (pp. 6–7)

Gitlin maintains that media frames are components of the media elite toolkit which are necessary to prepare and process information for the public, in effect functioning as a bridge between the media’s actual issue and the public’s awareness.

Although the various characterizations of framing have created a very diverse area of scholarship, the varied definitions and identities have also created a disjointed

exemplar for the framing concept. Some researchers (de Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999) contend that a concise and less fragmented conceptualization should be employed with the concept of framing. Yet, it is this very nature of framing, according to Reese (2001) that makes the framework so appealing to researchers. D'Angelo (2002) maintains that the framing paradigm does not require a transformation but believes that communication scholars have toiled jointly to explicate a complex process. The broad sphere of framing theory requires that we are clear and succinct in our research inquiries that connect the line between scholarly research and practical applicability. Although there remains much inconsistency within the framing literature, the consistent stream of research on framing and media effects will certainly work towards cementing a less fractured framework and more constant field of study. In light of the various definitions of media framing, for the purposes of this study, media framing will be defined as ideas or labels that organize and emphasize specific aspects in media content to increase saliency of the requisite or proposed perspective.

Framing Effects

The interest in the framing approach and its effects has remained a growing area of scholarship in media research (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997; Scheufele, 1999). Van Gorp (2007) states that framing effects are possible because framing is one type of communication within a communication. The frame denotes a link between several related elements in the active content so a topic can be identified or understood (Bateson, 1955, p. 1972). This metacommunication facilitates the message content's organization and structure. Decision makers assign meaning to the content not

simply based on the obvious information provided but also through the implicit content that can sometimes flow between the lines.

Druckman (2001) points out that a framing effect occurs when, in the course of describing an issue or event, a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions (p. 1042). Rabin (1998) states that a framing effect occurs when there are two plausibly equivalent statements of a problem [that] lead decision makers to choose different options" (p. 26). Nelson, Willey, and Oxley (1998) explain that framing effects work through a cognitive process in which individuals consider the significance of considerations regarding the frame being represented. A schema is a "cognitive structure that corresponds to some knowledge about a concept" (Fiske & Taylor, p. 98). Price and Tewksbury (1995) argue that previous research has focused on outcomes but has failed to take into consideration the cognitive responses of the participants. They state that a major mechanism in how framing works is the "applicability of ideas and feelings" (p. 5). Price acknowledges that individuals do not depend exclusively on media dominated frames, but they "have the capacity to introduce their own thought and draw out basic implications on their own" (p. 496). Tversky and Kahneman (1981), in their work on framing, illustrate that individual presentation and the position of information influences evaluation and individual choice. Framing controls the information we have about various concepts, and frames are fundamental to how individuals perceive and evaluate different messages.

Types of Political Frames

The public's political opinions are often the result of personal self-realization that is influenced by a frame developed by the media (Veenstra, Sayre, Shah, & McLeod,

2008). Most often, the literature on framing and political communication has focused on the framing of candidates and politicians and the political outcomes (Chong & Druckman, 2007b) or how the framing of particular a policy or political perspective affects the public (Veenstra et al., 2008).

Scholarly research on types of framing can be categorized in two areas of research: issue-specific frames and generic frames (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; de Vreese, 2005; Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009; Scheffele, 1999). Issue-specific frames focus on the more specific or detailed aspect of the news content under consideration. The focus on issue-specific frames offers the advantage of thorough, more comprehensive analysis, but the disadvantage is that it is difficult to generalize or make comparisons. This does cause complications for the study of media frames because issue-specific frames most often provide little in generating scholarly evidence, so it becomes necessary to develop a different frame for every frame study because previous studies can provide no applicability for generalization (de Vreese, 2005; Hertog & McLeod, 2001). Shah, Watts, Domke, and Fan (2002) concentrate on issue framing in their study exploring whether the public's political preferences are influenced by media frames. They focus on three specific frames: the economy, general policy, and the Clinton and Lewinsky scandal during President Clinton's presidency. Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) observed media coverage of the woman's movement and detailed five different issue frames in the content. From their study, they observed a sex role frame, a feminism frame, a political rights frame, an anti-feminism frame, and an economic frame. Finally, Yao (2008) examined and compared the environmental frames found in Sierra Club newsletters and in national and regional newspapers.

Generic frames are the opposite of issue frames in that they can apply to different issues and contexts throughout the media spectrum. De Vreese (2005) differentiates generic frames into two groups. One group of generic frames specifically focuses on political coverage and campaigns. The second group of generic frames centers on news frames that are structural and indicative to the media. In an instance of generic framing, Entman's (1991) study on the Korean Air Lines Flight 007 and Iran Air flight 655 examines how each case was framed, although both were tragic examples of military force. Pan and Kosicki (1993) examined an abortion rally to distinguish the framing commonalities found in all news sources. Other types of generic media frames include thematic and episodic framing (Iyengar, 1991). Thematic framing focuses on the general message effect or the big picture. For example, thematic framing would focus on the country's startling unemployment figures or universal health care concerns, whereas episodic framing would focus on one specific individual who is recently unemployed or experiencing health care concerns and unemployment. Episodic framing, then, is concerned with how a message ultimately affects the attitudes, perceptions, and behavior of an individual. (Tewskbury & Scheufele, 2008). Gross (2008) explains that episodic frames are more compelling and more emotionally engaging. Iyengar's (1991) work has examined episodic frames and their ability to help individuals understand political news on television. Media elites tend to utilize episodic frames more often because they provide more drama and draw individuals into the story or event (2008). In fact, studies have found that episodic framing is utilized more often than thematic framing in news and political coverage (Iyengar, 1991). Ben-Porath and Shaker (2007) focus on episodic framing and ethnicity in observing the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Finally, there is

communication literature which suggests that the race of the person captured in an episodic frame can affect the influence of the frame for some individuals (Gross, 2008). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) have found some evidence to suggest there may be differences in the effects of the episodic frame based on the individual's race. Gross (2008) has noticed that characteristics highlighted in a frame may cause different emotional or cognitive responses to individual features. For example, Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) have found different responses to episodic framing when focusing on White violent crime and on Black violent crime.

Another type of frame utilized quite often in political coverage is the more general strategic frame. This frame is employed in general reporting of campaign coverage as the media works to report on the campaign with disengaged objectivity (Kerbel, Apee, & Ross, 2000). Journalists work to include the results of a campaign in general to create a sense of balance in their coverage of the "horse race." Kerbel et al. (2000) argue that the strategic frame is probably "the safest way for journalists to cover an election and maintain balance and distance" (p. 11).

The online environment also provides media and political elites with various framing opportunities. Yoon and Joseph (2005) examined framing and the online experience. They found that candidates are better able to specifically frame their public images while also framing a response against the other candidates. The candidate is able to proactively address and frame a perspective while remaining positive and on the offensive. Hence, a political blog can be a useful and unique tool in the political practitioner's toolkit.

While there is an extensive amount of literature on types of framing and political communication, research on racial framing is limited. The next section will examine the research in this area.

Media Framing and Race

Kinder and Sanders (1996) argue “that public opinion on race depends in a systematic and intelligible way on how the issues are framed” (p. 165). Research on how media constructs frames focusing on race or on the outcome of media content focused on race is rare in communication literature. Kellstedt (2003) conducted an extensive study on racial framing and race. He examined all stories involving race found in *Newsweek* magazine from 1950–1994. He explains that racial framing in the media highlights either an egalitarianism or individualism perspective and that the media does not use overt rhetoric in racial framing but is instead subtle and covert in its representations. Kellstedt argues that the most influential messages are those that affect the integrity of the American value system. Finally, he finds that racial framing in the media that centers on certain core American values has helped shape the policy preferences of the public.

Richardson (2005) conducted a study on framing and race, specifically concentrating on affirmative action and the United States Supreme court ruling in the *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003) and the *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) cases at the University of Michigan. Richardson conducted a content analysis to examine how newspaper editorials framed the two cases and whether the racial population of the newspaper community and staff affected how the cases were framed. Richardson discovered that newspaper editorials from the 1960s until the mid 1990s contained frames of no preferential treatment; however, editorials examined during 2003 contained frames that focused on

diversity, specifically if the newspaper community and staff were racially mixed. Gandy and Li (2005) investigated ways in which journalist's frame stories that assist the public in understanding social issues and disparity. They found that, systematically, the newspaper reports held Blacks responsible for their status, suggesting institutional racism and thus showing the need for informing and training journalists with more diverse perspectives. Entman and Bell (2006) observed the framing of a presidential initiative on race. During his presidency, President Clinton developed an initiative on race to begin repairing racial bridges. This study examined newspaper reports with critical, supportive, or substantive frames on the race initiative. Entman and Bell (2006) observed that the coverage given to the presidential initiative did little to engage or motivate the public to consider the possibility of initiative's mending racial differences.

Reeves (1997) examined the racial framing in the biracial mayoral campaign between David Dinkins and Rudolph Giuliani. He (1997) found that 18% of the content on Dinkins and his campaign were considered to be negative. In addition, Reeves (1997) found that over 68% of the media content made either reference to the race of Dinkins or to the race of voters in his campaign. In another study, Orey (2005) examined the media framing of the first Black mayor elected in Jackson, Mississippi. A content analysis was conducted in the state's largest newspaper (the *Clarion Ledger*). Contrary to previous literature, Orey did not find that the *Clarion Ledger* engaged in racial framing. Although 23 % of the stories did explicitly mention race, crime and drugs were identified as the top two key issues. Orey suggests that this is because of the high crime and drug rates in that community during these elections. The literature suggests that framing crime in news content can be a racial code word or cue to trigger Whites' racial perceptions. Caliendo

and McIlwain (2006) examined the framing of minority candidates in majority and minority voting districts. The results indicate that in both voting districts, racial references were the norm in biracial campaigns. In addition, they found that in biracial elections, the media was more inclined to accentuate a racial frame or focus on substantive policy issues when reporting on minority candidates. Associating minority candidates with particular policy issues increases the opportunity for voters to make decisions on policy based on their perceptions that the policy is specifically correlated with Blacks.

Finally, Harris-Lacewell and Junn (2007) conducted a study to observe the racial and religious framing of candidates Barack Obama and Alan Keyes in the 2004 Illinois senatorial campaign. They found that when Barack Obama was framed as a multicultural candidate, he was seen as more positive and garnered more success among Black voters. There was no difference in Whites' assessment of Obama with either the multicultural frame or the Black frame. Finally, Mason (2009) examined racial framing in geographically diverse newspapers during the 2008 presidential campaign. He observed the differences in how Obama was referred to compare with other candidates. Mason (2009) found no differences in how Obama was framed or how his constituency was framed.

Most of the literature on racial framing specifically examines explicit racial framing but rarely examines the implicit racial framing in various contexts and its potential influence on citizens and voters. This study will add to this limited area of scholarship by identifying both the explicit and implicit racial frames in media content.

Political Communication and Race

The framing of race that takes place in politics and racial campaigns is frequently achieved through code words and metaphors that are sometimes in actuality difficult to decipher or understand (Bigg, 2008). Andrew Taylor, a political science professor, argues that race is fundamentally at the core of presidential campaigns. He states, "The issue of race is there in political campaigns and not just this one. People talk in code. It is the 800-pound gorilla in the room that is ignored by mutual agreement so it never gets dealt with head on" (2008, Para. 5). Similarly, Hurwitz and Peffley (2005) contend that current politics have seen an increase in more inconspicuous methods to frame racialized communication. These subtle forms of communication work to allow the media and political elites to connect social political issues with social groups (Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002). Hence, it becomes important to study how the media use words and phrases and policy to integrate and frame race in the content of political communication

Tankard (2001) claims that "much of the power of framing comes from its ability to define the terms of a debate without the audience realizing it is taking place" (p. 97). Veiled expressions and word choice allow the media to initiate racial thinking and attitudes without essentially bringing in the "race card" (Domke, 2001; Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino et al., 2002). The use of code words developed during the height of the Civil Rights Movement because the decriminalization of segregation and discrimination made explicitly displays of prejudice and racism inappropriate. During this time, both liberal and conservative politicians and the media reorganized and established other nonracial ways to include race in their discourse (Edsall & Edsall, 1991; Valentino et al., 2002). Specifically, racial codes give elites and the public ways "to communicate about

issues that have racial implications” (Gilens, 1996; Hurwitz & Pelfrey, 2005; Mendelberg, 2001; Wheelock & Hartman, 1994). For instance, Wheelock and Hartman (1994) examined whether coded racial language has an impact on the passing of policy legislation. They conducted a content analysis on the term *midnight basketball* and policy legislation. They found that *midnight basketball* injected race into the discussions of the policies being debated without explicitly mentioning race. More importantly, Wheelock and Hartman found that the indirect linkages regarding crime and criminal behavior connected to images previously held by the public. Adapting code words to social and public policy assists in suppressing Whites’ apprehensions about continuous government attempts to advance racial inequality (Mendelberg, 2001).

In her theory of racial appeals, Mendelberg (2001) introduced research on implicit and explicit racial appeals. She discusses the methods in which implicit racial appeals have been transmitted into the political communication process. For example, the Willie Horton political advertisement created by the Republican Party during the 1988 presidential campaign became a symbol for implicit racism. Willie Horton was a seasoned criminal who had been freed from prison through an early release program. When he was released, he terrorized a White woman. Bush’s presidential campaign utilized the RNP-produced advertisement of this incident by exploiting a picture of Horton, never once explicitly mentioning race but emphasizing other things such as the fact that Dukakis was flexible on crime and criminals. It was Jesse Jackson who argued that the Bush campaign had played the race card by playing to the fears and stereotypes of Blacks held and believed by Whites for decades (Mendelberg, 2001). The racial frame was implicit in the content without specifically discussing race or anything about the

individual. This is the key to understanding the difference between an explicit and implicit racial message. van Dijk (1988) states, “Whereas the racial slur, the graffiti, or the old movie may be blatantly racist, many other present-day types of talk may communicate racism in a more veiled way” (p. 18). Valentino, Hutchings and White (2002) add to Mendelberg’s thesis in their work on sorting out specific types of symbols that are influential in framing racial points of view. Their study discovered that they were able to initiate racial views through television advertisements without any real racial descriptions in the content.

Recent studies on race, prejudice, and the media also investigate the subtlety of implicit appeals (Messaris & Abraham, 2001). Terkildsen and Damore (1999) observed the political coverage of biracial elections during the 1990 and 1992 voting cycles and concluded that the media brings race to the center of a campaign through the consistent focus on candidates’ race. Domke (2001) conducted research on racial cues and political ideology, and his results indicate that racial cues not only produce a correlation between racial perceptions and political ideology but also can prompt individuals to become more focused in their political philosophy. Caliendo and McIlwain (2006), in their study of nine biracial congressional contests, examined whether the media perform a racial agenda-setting role by building race as the most significant issue of consideration in a political campaign. The next section will examine how race is configured into both explicit and implicit political communication

Explicit Racial Communication.

Mendelberg (2001) explains that a message appeal is racially explicit if it utilizes “racial nouns or adjectives to endorse White prerogatives, to express anti-Black

sentiment, to represent racial stereotypes or to portray a threat from African Americans” (p. 8). An example of explicit racial communication can be found during a campaign for governor in 1920. John Parker, a candidate, explained to his constituency his thoughts on the Negro in politics. He said, “The participation of the Negro in politics is a source of evil and danger to both races and is not desired by the wise men of either race or by the Republican Party of North Carolina” (quoted in Hutchings & Jardina, 2009, p. 7). It is rare to find explicit communication of this form in current political messages. Hutchings and Valentino (2003) conducted a study which attempted to examine whether explicit racial appeals are still effective. They argue that there are two different types of explicit racial messages. The first explicit message reinforces negative stereotypes about Blacks, and the other shows a difference in how Blacks and Whites perceive political content. They suggest that while the first option is definitely against the norm of equality posited by Mendelberg, the second option might succeed in keying into Whites’ racial attitudes. However, it seems that it is the endorsement of an individual’s own prerogatives which makes the appeal racial.

Implicit Racial Communication.

Implicit racial communication and attitudes have been associated with political values and voter selection. Cunningham, Nezlek, and Banaji (2004) found that those individuals who held to right-leaning political ideologies associated Blacks with bad and Whites with good on the Implicit Attitude test (Burdein, 2006). According to Mendelberg (2001), an implicit racial appeal is best understood when understanding something else. She explains that an implicit appeal would send the same message as an explicit appeal but without utilizing the racial nouns and adjectives the explicit message

contains that make it recognizable as a racial reference. Implicit racial appeals can have an effect on public choices in political elections (Jost, 2006). Domke (2001), in a study on racial cues and priming, found racial cues utilized by elites could influence citizens' racial understanding and contribute to their political judgments.

Yet, Hurwitz and Peffley (2005) maintain that there is still a great deal unknown about racially coded messages or implicit appeals. Most of the research in this area has concentrated on visual images and pictorial racial cues, and rarely on text or print images (Entman, 1992, 2001; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, White, & Hutchings, 2002). The current status of any presentation of race in video or print has become taboo, and thus any racialized communication or discussion of race is unquestionably more subversive and takes place mostly at the level of code words or in words or phrases that are mainly nonracial in nature (Hurwitz & Peffley, 2005).

Most of the literature investigating implicit racial political communication has been focused on political advertisements or other forms of video. Rarely has this research observed text for both implicit and explicit political communication. In addition, the literature on racial framing and new media has also been limited. This dissertation will add to scholarship concerning new media and racial framing in mass communication research.

Framing and New Media

Media and political scholars have long discussed the impact of new technologies on the media and political messages. Pavlik (2007) states that new media will alter how news and information is framed in the future. The availability of other resources when writing and preparing information changes the environment and allows the journalist to

extend and bring more contexts to the content for the consumer. For instance, websites and blogs, in addition to the source information or post, include hyperlinks, comments, video, and audio, which can assist in the interpretation of the story and in the framing process. These sources allow the media elite to create more connections and provide more multidimensional scope of the actuality (Pavlik, 2007).

Hypertext, utilized in blogs and websites, is one of the new media tools with the potential to affect how news and information is framed in the digital environment. Hypertext or links are pointers included in a post or on a website that provide the reader with another source, or additional information on the previous written content. Fredin and David (1998) conclude that the collaboration of media or hypermedia is excellent in providing a more contextualized experience in news and information. Fredin and David explain their perspective in an example included in their research.

On a website such as CNN interactive, a typical news story about the 1996 presidential elections had links to stories on the same topic that were done earlier in the campaign. The earlier stories in turn were linked to candidates' home pages and platform positions. Some news stories were linked to home pages of relevant federal agencies, to home pages of interest groups or to enormous on-line news archives such as Lexis/Nexis. The result is a massive and interconnected information network. The fact that massive repositories of information are only a few mouse clicks away offers richness to hypermedia that set it apart from traditional media. (pp. 35–36)

Hypertext as a new media framing tool provides media elites the opportunity to build a bigger picture frame than previously available through traditional broadcast and print

organizations (Pavlik, 2007). Hence, it provides the public with a more complete context of the information. A recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2008) indicates that for most Americans, the Internet has replaced traditional print media as their choice for news and information.

Other new media tools, which place the content in an expanded and more contextualized frame, are omnidirectional image video and Object-Oriented video (Pavlik, 2007). Omnidirectional image video gives viewers the ability to navigate the video. Object-Oriented Video is additional video provided in the story to provide background or connection or to give the story substance. These tools allow the media elite to provide a complete and extended frame of the content. This dissertation examines political blogs to determine the use of these tools in the framing of race in the 2008 political campaign. Ansley and Sellers (2007) write that the blog is creating a new paradigm in the influence of media consumers. Consequently, the blog and other tools in the new media toolkit also have the potential to provide the public with the opportunity to reject the media penchant for framing events and occurrences, by linking to different views and perspectives that differ from the framed content of that particular message.

Framing research provides a two-fold perspective that can be engaged in either constructive or unconstructive terms. As in social movement (Snow & Benford, 1988), framing research can initiate a collective perspective that can be utilized to change social and civil wrongs in society. On the other end of the spectrum, framing can be utilized to manipulate and deceive individuals in how they perceive an issue or perspective. The goal of this study is to identify racial framing in political blogs. The political presence on

the Internet, and specifically in blogs, demands that scholars examine this content to observe how the issue of race is conveyed.

CHAPTER 4: RACE AND THE MEDIA

The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses (Malcolm X).

Communication scholars and other researchers have inundated media literature with studies on race and politics; however, the literature on the media's role in the evolution of racial politics has been limited and insufficient. Kellstedt (2003) states that literature detailing the media's part in the coverage of race and politics after the Civil Rights Movement is all but absent from scholarly review. Still, it would be difficult to locate a race or media scholar who would not acknowledge the influence the media has had on how race is understood in the United States. The images portrayed by the media act as a socializing agent for race with the public. This is especially true when individuals do not have any opportunities for direct or interpersonal contact with difference. For example, Shapiro and McDonald (1992) argue that the media, specifically television, can wield influence on individuals who have had minimum or no direct exchange with others and are without any additional tools to appraise new experiences. Similarly, Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Bentar (1992) found that White college students lacking direct experiences with different ethnicities were influenced in their racial attitudes and perceptions by the media. Consequently, without that direct contact, the media can function as a substitute learning source for the public to gain information about different groups (Fujioka, 1999). These media portrayals matter because "the media are widely believed to possess agenda-setting power and the power to

make certain considerations more salient in the public's political evaluations" (Kellstedt, 2003, p. 155). Because of the vast power the media has on the public's opinion of race, research was conducted to determine the media's role. In 1968, the Kerner Commission⁵, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson, found that the media was irresponsible in the ways in which it portrayed Blacks. The report indicated that the "media have failed to analyze and report adequately on racial problems in the United States and, as a related matter, to meet the Negro's legitimate expectations in journalism" (para. 14). The commission observed that the holistic Black experience was not being offered to the public, only stereotypical images based on snippets of crime and poverty reports.

For now, the media will continue to play a primary role in how the public perceives Blacks in America. The media's interpretation has influenced the overall condition and status of Blacks and often the political perspectives of White Americans. Initially, images and depictions of Blacks were based on early biological classifications of race. This chapter first will briefly examine the conceptualization of race currently in this country. Next, the chapter will examine stereotypes and their effect on Black media images.

Race Defined

Academics within several fields of study continue to grapple with finding a cogent way of interpreting the concept of race (Bobo & Fox, 2003; Winant, 2000). In fact, the overwhelming amount of literature and the massive amounts of experimental research and data only serve to illustrate the quandary of constructing a clear and theoretical framework on the subject (Winant, 2000). First, Du Bois (1897) defined race

⁵ The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which was better known as the Kerner Commission Report, was the outcome of an advisory committee appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to examine the causes and influences of the riots across America in 1964–1967.

as “[a] family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life” (p. 75–76). Du Bois’ definition allows for a common bond between individuals with similar history; however, it is more in line with a definition of culture or groups. His inclusion of “common blood and language” is problematic because it alludes to a biological connection and does not allow for social construction or malleability of race. Delgado and Stefanic (1995) suggest that race is “a notion of a distinct biological type of human being, usually based on skin color or other physical characteristics” (p. 153). This definition does not mention a common history and is too focused on biology. Omi and Winant (1994) explain that in its most basic definition, race is defined as “a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies” (p. 172). Omi and Winant’s (1994) definition of race negates the idea that race is a biological entity and instead insists, “Race is a very real social classification that has both cultural ramifications as well as enforces a definite social order” (pp. 54–55). This definition clearly suggests that race is not an illusion but a real, definite entity that has an influence on social and political systems.

Yet, as the struggle continues to provide a tentative framework of race, some scholars suggest that the mere mention of race remains a critical marker of America’s social conversation, and, despite being reworked, revamped, or exorcized, its identity cannot fully escape its historic baggage and associations in this country. Much of the identity and reality of the concept of race is based on the categorization and classification of individuals by their physical composition and phenotypes, but with no actual genetic

legitimacy. Yet, this early conceptualization influenced how the concept of race developed in society. The next section discusses this historical development of race.

Historical Development of the Conceptualization of Race

The construction of race has taken several paths that have had a direct and lasting effect on how we still view race in America. History has documented that the term *race* was an English idiom utilized between the 16th and 18th centuries as a folk term (Allen, 1994; Hannaford, 1996; Smedley, 1999). It was not until the end of the 17th century that it was utilized as a false scientific scheme based on labeling individuals according to phenotype, such as hair type, cranial measurements, and language (Boas, 1906; Du Bois, 1897; Feagin & Booher, 1999; Machery & Facher, 2005; Winant, 2004). The very idea of dividing people into categories seems to indicate a societal rather a scientific foundation of race that originated with White Europeans. In the early 1700s, Johann Blumenbach formulated the first typology of race; Caucasoids occupied the most prominent rung of the ladder, followed by Mongrels and then Negroids. This classification began a “divine” or “natural order” justification for the subordination of Blacks and for the partiality towards those whose skin was defined as “White” (Johnson, Rush, & Feagin, 2001). Research on colonization reveals that Whites developed principles or frameworks that provided authority for their dominance, usually by embellishing their physical and intelligent superiority (Cox, 1948; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). This process of demoting Blacks to a less-than-human standing provided the rationale for colonists to continue to condone slavery and other mayhem as appropriate justice for Blacks. This Darwinistic classification would remain even into the 21st century (Johnson et. al., 2001).

The construction of race also provided a legal focal point. In the *Hudgins vs. Wright* case of 1802, three enslaved women sued the government for their freedom in Virginia based on the maternal lineage provision (Lopez, 1994). At the time, if a slave's mother was free, the child was free. Freedom was granted to those who could establish their maternal lineage as White or Native American. In this case, these women argued that their mother was of Native American descent, which made her a free woman, and subsequently would make them free. However, because the mother had passed away and there was no legal document showing any relationship with the mother, presiding Judge Tucker considered other factors to determine lineage. The lineage and race of these enslaved women rested on their physical characteristics of hair, complexion, and nose type. Judge Tucker (1806) ruled that a person was considered Black if they had "a flat nose and wooly head of hair" and Native American if they had long "silken hair and a thin, pointed nose" (qtd. in Lopez, 1994, p. 3). Hence, freedom was granted based not on facts or evidentiary proof of ancestral lineage but instead based on physical features and phenotype. However, it may have been Thomas Jefferson's writings about the inadequacies of the "Negro" that set in motion the universal acceptance of raced-based biology (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). In *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), Jefferson explained his rationale for standing up for slavery and called on scientists and scholars to correlate his convictions regarding Blacks. This paved the way for a rash of scientific inquiry documenting biological differences and preferences. Although there were scholars, academics, and citizens who immediately began to dispute any correlation of intelligence to physical biology, it was too late to stop the damage done to the image of Blacks. Even Congress has been slow to reject the connection between race and biology.

In a 1988 statute, *racial group* was defined as “a set of individuals whose identity as such is distinctive in terms of physical characteristics or biological descent” (p. 1093). Finally, according to Gates, (1992) evaluating race as a concept of the physical and biological sciences was akin to an Aesop’s fairy tale; unfortunately, the stories have been most difficult to rewrite according to more common reality.

Omi and Winant (1994) maintain that there is no basis for a biological construction of race and that any similarities or differentiation of human groups is completely subjective. They argue (1994) that

[e]verybody learns some combination, some version, of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation. Race becomes “common sense”—a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world. Throughout the history of man, people have assigned identity based on race, both as a means of distinguishing one group from another, but more importantly as a means of control. The dominant culture assigns identity to minority groups as a means of separating them, therefore diminishing their existence, and ultimately as a means of maintaining control over them. (p. 7)

The biological view of race continues to affect the images and perceptions of Blacks. Feagin (2006) states that although there have been sweeping changes concerning race in America, the remainder of complete White dominance initiated during enslavement remains.

The biological view of race has been supplanted by a social construction perspective. Social construction has been defined as a process of endowing a group or

concept with a name, a delineation, or a reality (Delgado & Stefanic, 1995, p. 155). The social constructionist view of race suggests that the totality of race does not happen in a vacuum; instead, many different social environments and concepts make up the concept of race (Machery & Faucher, 2005). Omi and Winant (1994) employ racial formation as a means to understanding the social construction of race. They define racial formation as “the sociohistorical process by which categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed” (p. 55). The authors suggest that racial formation either occurs at the macro level, which includes the far-reaching scope of systemic influences, or at the micro level, which includes everyday interactions and experiences. The channel in both processes is usually some form of government or institution that determines the landscape for racial relations. Racial formation is understood by analyzing the various events in history to determine the specific development of identities and characteristics of race.

Other scholars like Appiah (1994) disregard both the biological and social conceptualization of race. Instead, he argues that academics and scholars do more harm by continuing the discourse on race and instead prefers to substitute *culture* for *race*. While the effort to develop an all-encompassing definition of race remains in a state of flux, it is clear that early definitions and conceptualizations have contributed to the development of many of the images and stereotypes of Blacks that remain pervasive in the media today.

Race, Stereotypes, and the Media

The social construction of race includes the creation of codes and symbols to convey racial supremacy and position (Winston, 1982). The Black images etched into the media landscape were not produced to provide audiences with authentic portrayals of Blacks, but were mainly created to program and illustrate their behaviors and habits. It was crucial for the mass media to identify and establish these Black characterizations because by circulating these negative depictions, the mass media continued to provide justification for Whites to deny Blacks citizenship and equal privileges and to honor the code of segregation (Bogle, 1999). There is a good quantity of research in communication studies as well as in psychology, political science, and sociology that concentrates on the images and stereotypes of Blacks in the media (Dates & Barlow, 1993; Entman, 1992; Gandy, 1997; Gorham, 1999, 2006; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003). Moreover, empirical studies point to the proliferation of stereotypical images that construct and emphasize negative perceptions and intolerance in society (Armstrong & Neuendorf, 1992; Dixon, 2006, 2008, 2009; Fife, 1974; Gorham, 2006; Mastro & Troop, 2004). Lusky (1964) defines a stereotype as “a conception of a group of people as possessing, each of them, certain characteristics that are believed to be inherent in the group” (p. 450). Stereotypes allow individuals to correlate certain practices and behaviors with certain groups or populations. Some scholars consider the most efficient use of stereotypes to be the time-saving feature they provide (Allport, 1954; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Lippman, 1952; Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994; Tajfel, 1969). They are a means of simplifying the informational burdens for individuals, and they operate as shortcuts to help make important decisions. Devine (1989) explains that a

stereotype is automatically accessible when met with stereotypical images or incidents. The more a shortcut is used, the more available it is as a shortcut to interpretations. Allport (1954) observes that “stereotypes were socially supported, continually revived and hammered in by our mass communication” (p. 200). For instance, in 1954, Allport was sure that the continuous connection of Blacks with crime in media images would have a negative influence on how Blacks were perceived in society. He warned “[that] so frequently to associate the Negro with crime is bound to leave a lasting effect on readers particularly if this association is not offset by news items favorable to the colored group” (p. 201). These media shortcuts have helped to create distortions and negative images of Blacks. Gorham (1999) argues that racial stereotypes have the “capability to manipulate our interpretations of media content in a way that supports dominant racial myths and classifications that originated in the past” (p. 244).

Several studies present considerable evidence that the media continues to show stereotypical portrayals of Blacks (Armstrong & Neuendorf, 1992; Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003; Entman, 1992). These studies show that Blacks are portrayed as lazy, deviant rule breakers (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 1992). Some of the older stereotypes found in various media—including the Mammy, Tom, and Coon characters—have been updated and remain well-entrenched in current media representations of Blacks. However, more recently, in addition to stereotypes of Blacks as inferior, lazy, dishonest, comical, and ignorant, other images include welfare queen, gangster rapper, and the porno chick that can be found in most rap videos (Littlefield, 2008). Entman and Rojecki (2001) maintain that the replication of these media depictions can be a powerful influence on individual political perceptions and racial attitudes, while also promoting notions of

racial inferiority. Continued scholarly research is necessary to identify the relationship between Black stereotypes found in media representations and the insights of the dominant group. With the continued advancement of new media, it becomes necessary to extend the research to images that are framed in online content.

Media Representations

Greenberg, Mastro, and Brand (2002) note that media representations of Blacks have continued to cause concern despite the Kerner Commission implications over forty years ago. Gray (2000) observes that the media, specifically popular television, has remodeled but has not made any real structural changes in how Blacks are depicted. He states that in the television landscape, America's diverse environment maneuvers within a carefully identified collective, structural, and economic perception that maintains the integrative principles of racial communication. Television and other media consistently produce unconstructive images and provide little opportunity of repairing or addressing those representations (Graves, 1999). However, the media had help in legitimizing these images and realities. Pilgrim and Middleton (2001) argue that

Ministers preached that God had condemned Blacks to be servants. Scientists measured Black heads, brains, faces and genitalia, seeking to prove that Whites were genetically superior to Blacks. White teachers, teaching only white students, taught that Blacks were less evolved cognitively, psychologically and socially. The entertainment media, from vaudeville to television, portrayed Blacks as docile servants, happy-go-lucky idiots and dangerous thugs. (Para. 6)

As the stereotypical portrayals received more exposure and validation, the images went from unreal to practical for White audiences (Winston, 1982). Radio was a major culprit

in cultivating these negative images. *Amos and Andy*, a popular radio show about Blacks, which was voiced by White actors, created a network of Black caricatures and ridiculousness originally found in the traditions of minstrel shows and vaudeville. Unfortunately, this program helped to broaden the chasm between the reality of Black life in America and the unrealistic portrayals (Bogle, 2001; Winston, 1982). There was an inherent “need to truly believe in these images” as a justification for inhumane treatment and discrimination (Ellison, 1966, pp. 45–46).

Until the early sixties, the Mammy, Tom, and Coon depictions were the most prevalent Black images in television, radio, film, and print. The traditional mammy character was a slave, usually a generously-sized woman, who worked for the master in the big house. She was unattractive, usually unmarried, and her focus was always maintaining order for the White family (Bogle, 2001; MacDonald, 1992). In 1939, the most famous example of a mammy portrayal was Hattie McDaniel's' Academy Award-winning performance in *Gone with the Wind* (Bogle, 2001). In the 1980s, several media scholars contemplated whether Oprah Winfrey owed her colossal success to her likeness and relationship to the historical mammy stereotype (Hudson, 1998). Initially, Oprah was portrayed as a warmhearted and comforting, sexless, nurturing, and always happy and satisfied Black woman. However, those early comparisons all but disappeared, particularly with Winfrey's multi-billion dollar media empire. Most recently, situational comedies such as *Meet the Browns* and *House of Payne*, and films with the hugely popular Madea character, have reintroduced the more modern mammy stereotype to media audiences all over again (Perry, 2009; Svetkey, Watson, & Wheat, 2009).

Bogle (1999) describes the Tom stereotype as a “socially acceptable Good Negro [who despite being] chased, harassed, hounded, flogged, enslaved and insulted, kept the faith, never turned against their White masters and remained hearty submissive, stoic, generous, selfless and oh-so-very kind” (pp. 5–6). This stereotype was named for the main character in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Larson, 2006). Bogle (1999) believes that Sidney Poitier, a popular Black actor in the early 1950s, was so successful because most of his roles were modeled after the Tom stereotype. However, his portrayals included an intelligence and class that had not been present in other depictions. He never went against the White order of superiority, but instead cultivated and preserved it with class and self-respect (Bogle, 1999).

The comedic coon stereotype was seen as the most humiliating and harmful characterization. Bogle (1999) describes this version as “lazy, no-account, good-for nothing, forever-in-hot water, a natural born comedian, sneaky and unreliable” (pp. 41–42). This stereotype was popularized through several film and television portrayals including the *Amos and Andy* program. Later depictions of the coon stereotype could be found in sitcoms such as *Good Times*, *Fresh Prince*, *Martin*, *The Chappelle Show*, *Meet the Browns*, *House of Payne*, and *I Hate Chris*; in reality shows including *Flavor of Love*; and big screen movies such as *Friday* and *Hustle and Flow*.

Fortunately, the explicit reiteration of such images is no longer extensive; however, other negative images and depictions have replaced the older stereotypes with the same intensity. Blacks are now commonly portrayed as thugs, gang bangers, promiscuous whores, and violent criminals, and are primarily associated in the media with issues such as welfare mothers, teen pregnancy, single mothers, public housing

projects, low IQ scores—all attempting to create images of Blacks and Black family life in America (Berry, 1998, para. 13).

Black Images in Television News

Local television news provides many Americans with their daily dose of news and other information. In fact, despite the expansion of the Internet, television is still the primary source for information (The Pew Research Center, 2008). For example, approximately 68% of Americans continue to get their news from local television (The Pew Research Center, 2009). Parenti (1992) argues that the news media remains a powerful influence for most Americans. He states that “our notion of what a politician, a detective, a corporate executive, a farmer, an African or a Mexican-American is like, what rural or inner-city life should be, our anticipations about romantic and sexual experiences, crime and foreign enemies, bureaucrats and protestors, police and prostitutes are all heavily colored by our exposure to the news media (p. 4). It is suggested that because of the overwhelming dependence on local television news, this medium may be a dominant force in manipulating opinions of race throughout the country (Entman, 1990; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003). Moreover, the local news media is quite often an influential source for racialized communication (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978).

Research suggests that local television news misrepresents and stereotypes Blacks and other people of color (Campbell, 1995; Dates & Barlow, 1993; Entman, 1992; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Larson, 2006; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). In addition, Larson (2006) observes that Blacks receive more attention on news programs than any other racial group. Local television news follows a pre-programmed manuscript, which reports

crime and illustrates that criminal offenders are mostly nonwhite (Entman, 1990, 1992; Dixon, 2000, 2008; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). van Dijk (2000) posits that continuing the exploitation of Black images in television news “creates in-group cohesion for the elite and maintains dominance over people of color (p. 48). In addition, Dixon (2003) states that in local television news, “the message appears to be that Whites are the authoritative voice of reason, whereas Blacks are the source of crime and chaos” (p. 137). The negative images consistently portrayed in the local news media maneuver the direction of racial discourse in the media and in society. Littlejohn (1989) argues that the mixture of language, framing, rhetoric, and repetition produced in television news has a lasting influence on an individual’s perceptions over time. Research is expanding in the area of television news and race.

Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) conducted a study on the impact of the crime script on viewers. Their investigation found that exposure to the racial facet of crime-related content increases Whites’ backing for more penalizing criminal policies and increases their negative attitudes towards Blacks. Similarly, Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckman (2002) examined the interface of exposure to local crime news and neighborhood context. They discovered that when White participants were exposed to racial stereotypes in crime stories on the local news, they were more supportive of tougher polices to deal with crime, had negative attitudes regarding Blacks, and sensed isolation more from Blacks as a group.

Dixon (2008) conducted several studies on images of Blacks in the media, examining both local and television news. Dixon (2008a) investigated whether exposure to overrepresentation of Blacks as criminals in local television news affects perceptions

of Blacks and of crime. Interestingly, he found that exposure to overrepresentation of Blacks as criminals is positively associated with the attitude that Blacks are violent.

In another study featuring network news, Dixon (2008b) conducted a survey to observe if exposure to network news had an effect on the racial perceptions and attitudes regarding Blacks. His results imply network news exposure does perpetuate Black stereotypes of poverty and violence.

Local television news is produced to inform but also to influence and affect public opinion, and it provides the public with many perspectives, including those on race. Research has investigated the social ramifications of the depictions of race and racial stereotypes cultivated through local television news. Television remains the primary source of news and information, yet the Internet has also become a channel for the public to get information. Research about how the new media frames race and discusses racial stereotypes is limited. This study will add to the scholarly research on new media and race by identifying those discussions and racial frames in political blogs.

Research Hypotheses

In an effort to identify explicit and implicit racial framing in political blogs during the 2008 presidential election, this study proposes a set of hypotheses. These hypotheses focus on components of the content in political blog postings and traditional mainstream media articles.

Blogs have become the latest entry in new media to affect the political landscape. Weblogs (blogs) are diaries or journals, written by one or more authors and reported in chronological order on the Internet, and the blogosphere is the collective community of all types of blogs. According to Technorati (2008), the number of blogs has doubled in

the last two years. The inventory of topics available on the blogosphere includes news, entertainment, and politics. Political blogs are the focus of this study. Although political blogs are read by a small fraction of the United States population, their influence reaches further because of their relationships with mainstream media (Adamic & Glance, 2005). Many organizations and mainstream media outlets have added blogs to their multimedia offerings and political campaigns at every level and have incorporated blogs for intrinsic campaign purposes and for public responses; hence, blogs have become a staple in social communication (Drezner & Farrell, 2008; Welch, 2003).

There are mixed views concerning the importance and influence of political blogs on politics and public perception. Blogs have masterminded several events that point to their supposed significance, including several media scandals, the 2004 presidential election, legal outcomes, and international affairs (Drezner & Farrell, 2004),

It is suggested that the blogosphere provides more political segmentation than traditional media, and research contends that the political blogosphere is mostly fragmented along the conservative and liberal ideological continuum. In addition, political blogs usually contain linkages that connect them to blogs of similar ideas. Moreover, it has been argued that race and political ideology are interrelated. In that vein, Carmines and Stimson (1989) claim that when people state their political ideologies, they are also providing their views on race. Yet, other researchers argue that there is no clear relationship between race and political ideology, but instead that policy choices have more to do with the framework of the particular ideology and not race.

Framing theory has increased in mass media research, and the literature on political blogs and news frames is expanding. However, there is a dearth of research on

political blogs and how race is discussed or framed. Explicit communication about race in the media is rare but still exists, specifically the mention of a person's race, whereas implicit racial communication has succeeded explicit racial communication when political elites and the media discuss race or topics that are racially motivated. Racial stereotypes continue to exist in the media, and old-fashioned stereotypes have been reconstructed. In addition, other stereotypes, more modern yet just as degrading, have been added to the media representations of Blacks.

It is thought that conservative political blogs and traditional media include more explicit and implicit racial framing, more racial stereotypes, and more instances of modern racism than liberal blogs and traditional media. Per the aforementioned evidence, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

H1: Conservative blogs contain more explicit racial framing than liberal blogs.

H2: Conservative blogs contain more explicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media.

H3: Liberal blogs contain more explicit racial framing than liberal mainstream media.

H4: Conservative blogs contain more implicit racial framing than liberal blogs.

H5: Conservative blogs contain more implicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media.

H6: Liberal blogs contain more implicit racial framing than liberal mainstream media.

H7: Conservative blogs frame more racial stereotypes of Blacks than liberal blogs.

H8: Conservative blogs frame more racial stereotypes of Blacks than conservative traditional media.

H9: Liberal blogs frame more racial stereotypes of Blacks than liberal mainstream media.

H10: Conservative blogs frame more instances of modern racism than liberal blogs.

H11: Conservative blogs frame more instances of modern racism than conservative traditional media.

H12: Liberal blogs frame more instances of modern racism than liberal mainstream media.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this investigation was to identify racial framing in political blogs and mainstream media during the 2008 presidential campaign. To accomplish this, content analysis was utilized as the methodology. The goal was to discover the nuances of racial framing inherent in the media selected for this study during the 2008 presidential campaign. Matthes and Kohring (2008) admit that frames are quite abstract and sometimes difficult to categorize and code in research using content analysis, yet if done correctly, content analysis can extract the appropriate data.

Content analysis as a research tool for mass communication can be traced back to Berelson (1952), who describes it as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). Similarly, Neuendorf (2002) defines content analysis as “the summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on scientific method including an observance of the standards of objectivity/inter-subjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability and hypothesis testing” (p. 33). More recently, Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2007) define quantitative content analysis methodology as follows:

A 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 consumptions. (p. 25)

In analyzing political blogs and mainstream media, and to realize the objective of this study, Riffe, Lacy, & Fico’s (2007) definition was utilized as a methodological directive.

There are several reasons to utilize content analysis as the primary methodology. First, content analysis is an inconspicuous method that does not influence the research data in any way. Second, content analysis focuses directly on the actual messages present in the media content. Finally, content analysis allows for the overall management of large amounts of uncategorized and indefinite data for inclusive inspection (Herring, Scheidt, Kouper, Wright, & McMillan, 2005; Krippendorff, 2004; Meraz, 2007; Weber, 1990). In contrast, content analysis as a methodology also presented some problematic issues for this study. For instance, content analysis was time consuming and subject to concerns of reliability and measurement. It was possible, however, by following the guidelines and procedures, to work with this chosen method for this study.

Reliability and consistency were the primary concerns of designing this study around political blogs and mainstream media. McMillan (2000) recommends several principles to consider when completing content analysis, including developing a concise set of hypotheses or research questions, precisely defining the sampling frame, establishing the units of analysis and creating a valid and reliable codebook, and expertly training the coders to the data. Several studies incorporating McMillan's principles in analyzing blogs were consulted for this study (Herring et. al., 2005; Herring et. al., 2007; Meraz, 2007).

Framing Measurement

There are several measurement guides that have been created as a method for measuring the frames in news and information content. Ghanem (1997) developed a guide that includes the use of subtopics, the character of the content, how the content is presented graphically, and detailed information in the material. From this measurement

guide, an explicit racial frame was constructed that includes the mention of political candidates and voters, the use of photographs or video, and the mention of substantive policy issues (Caliendo & McIlwain, 2006; Reeves, 1999; Terkildsen & Damore, 1999). In addition, a framework was developed to analyze the implicit racial appeals communicated in blog and mainstream media messages (Barnard, 2007; Burdein, 2007; Kellstedt, 2003; Mendelberg, 2001). This prior research was utilized in this study for identification of the implicit and explicit frames of this study.

Data Sampling

The blogosphere, which is defined as a neighborhood of blogs synchronized and existing within a platform called the World Wide Web (WWW), is constantly shifting and growing. In Blood's (2002) analysis of the status of blogging, she found less than thirty influential political blogs. Today, Technorati (2008) reports indexing over 130 million different blogs since 2000. Examining blogs is a new area of scholarly research; consequently, the methods of assessment are also in the early stages of exploration (Hargittai, Gallo, & Kane, 2008). K. Wallensten (2007) argues that the most difficult aspect of using blogs for research is deciding on which blogs are appropriate to sample. Although much research has been conducted on political blogs, there are currently no clear-cut or approved criteria for blog selection; hence, the decision about how to select the sample for this study was indeed vexing and problematic.

Currently, there are only a few blog search engines that have been utilized in academic research. If blogs are necessary to define an academic population, the search engines currently provide very different sets of information. If feasible, devising a blog search integrating several blog engines provides the most valid and reliable results for the

researcher's needs (Hearst, Hurst, & Dumais, 2007; Thelwall & Hasler, 2006). To determine the sample for his study on political blogs, Scott (2007) utilized the rankings of fellow political bloggers and industry appraisals. McMillan (2000) suggests that researchers can also use online and offline directories, online ranking systems, search engines, and traditional media websites to determine a sample of blogs for research. Sundar, Edwards, Hu, and Stavrositu (2007) examined online directories for their study of online mental health blogs. Meraz (2007) utilized a similar strategy in her work examining agenda setting and the networked blogosphere. Hence, this current study also adopted this multi-method strategy used in these previous studies for choosing political blogs for the sample in this dissertation. The search engines chosen to aid in selecting the sample of blogs were Bloglines, BlogPulse, and Technorati.

Most search engines employ a "most popular" or top 100 list of available blogs gathered from the three search engines. The top twenty blogs from each of the search engines' top lists were selected for this study, and then they were organized on spreadsheets by their rankings and/or popularity. Several elements automatically removed a blog from consideration for this study. First, those blogs that were not characterized as political in nature were automatically removed from the list, including personal diaries, consumer, or celebrity blogs. The next component isolated was language; any blog which posted in a language other than English was removed from consideration. Finally, blogs which had any affiliation with a mainstream media outlet were also automatically removed from consideration for this study. After fulfilling those mandatory guidelines, each blog was then reviewed to verify its functionality, verifying the blog's accessibility from different computer systems and inspecting it for regular

planned system-downtimes. The blogs were also verified for accessible archives. The data retrieved for this study was over two years old, so trouble-free and available archival access was a necessity for the success of this study. Finally, the political identification for each blog had to be verified. None of the search engines employed for this study specified an ideological identification for all of the blogs, so it was necessary to establish the political affiliation before selecting the top five blogs from the list. Technorati was the only search engine that categorized the blogs by political affiliation.

Earlier studies have made use of several methods to confirm the political ideology of blogs (Hargittai, Gallo, & Kane, 2008; Merez, 2007; Wallsten, 2007). K. Wallsten (2007) suggests several ways to establish the political identity of a blog, and those were employed in this study. First, blogs were checked for self-identification of political ideology, and several blogs did have sections that specified the blog's political preferences. That was the preferred manner of classification, but not all of the blogs chose to self-identify. Reviewing the blog headings and other content on the blog templates, including what other blogs were included in the blogrolls, was another method of identifying the blog's political identity for this study. Blogs often included political affiliation in the blog titles, or the various networks that a blog linked to could provide a clue for the researcher. A final technique used to identify political affiliation of the blogs was to test the actual blog content for exact mentions of the affiliation or check the author's personal statements.

Once the political affiliation was confirmed for each of the blogs in the list, the top five conservative and top five liberal blogs were selected by comparing the ranking, authority, and functionality of the blogs. Employing several search engines to identify

the sample ensured that the selected blogs were the top elite blogs in the blogosphere. It is important to note that these rankings changed almost daily, and the blogs rated the most popular or most influential for this study may have changed during the last several months of the study.

There are two very distinct types of political blogs existing on the Internet that were sampled for this study. First, there are blogs associated directly with a traditional media websites (Meraz, 2007). Examples include ABC (Political Punch), CBS (Public eye), CNN (AC360), Fox News (Gretawire), *Newsweek* (The Ruckus) and the *New York Times* (The Caucus). The second type of blog is independent of the mainstream media and is usually written by one or more authors, although some of the authors may have been associated with mainstream media at one time. The second category of blogs was chosen for this study. For the purpose of this study, the blogs chosen for identification were autonomous from any mainstream media organization.

Employing the aforementioned selection criteria, a total sample of 10 blogs were chosen and included in this study. The selected blogs were Hot Air (conservative), Power Line (conservative), Ace of Spades (conservative), Little Green Footballs (conservative), Michelle Macklin (conservative), Talking Points Memo (liberal), Think Progress (liberal), Crooks and Liars (liberal), Eschaton (liberal), and Feministe (liberal). These top blogs have previously been reviewed and utilized in other academic research (Meraz, 2007). The mainstream media sampled in this study were chosen for several reasons: highest rankings in national newspaper circulation, availability of archival materials to sample, and appropriate balance of political ideologies. The mainstream

media chosen for this study included the replica version of *The New York Times* (NYT) and the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ).

The *New York Times* was chosen because it is often feted as one of the most highly regarded and trusted newspapers in the United States. It frequently commands a leadership role and largely leads in setting the media agenda (Gilberg, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1980). In addition, regularly, the *New York Times* strongly influences the news agenda for smaller media markets and is called the nation's authority in reference to its influence around the country (Mnookin, 2004). Finally, the *New York Times* is considered to espouse a more liberal philosophy.

The *Wall Street Journal* is another newspaper with national circulation. Its main focus is financial and economic news, but it does cover national politics and economic issues. In a recent survey conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (2008), the *Wall Street Journal* scored the highest in believability and credibility ratings compared with ten other print media outlets. Lastly, it was chosen for this sample because of its more conservative perspective.

The period from February 10, 2007 to November 5, 2008 was selected as the time period for this analysis. This date was based on the date that Barack Obama officially announced his candidacy for president of the United States on February 10, 2007; the issue of race became official in the presidential campaign at that time.

The blogs were randomly selected into one of five groups with one blog each and one mainstream newspaper each. Each blog group was sampled approximately four times a month for an approximate total of 2,247 blog posts.

The mainstream media sources were sampled every other day of the sample period for a total of 642 transcripts. A search was conducted on LexisNexis to verify availability of all mainstream media transcripts.

Neunedorf (2002) states that the unit of analysis is an identifiable message by which the variables for a study are measured. It is this component that was compiled for this study to assess the research questions and test the hypotheses McMillan (2000) makes clear that when analyzing Web material, researchers should be specific in defining the unit of analysis and should specify it in the study. The unit of analysis for the framing in political blogs is individual blog posts and newspaper articles.

The articles and the blog posts are described in three different ways. The posts are described as an editorial or opinion of the author about a certain issue or concern; a personal statement from the author regarding an issue or a random concern (usually found only in the blog posts); news and information only (only the news item and additional remarks from the author); and news and information wherein the author posts a news item and then provides a personal comment or opinion (Reeves, 1997).

The unit of analysis for the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* is any article that contains the search string of words *presidential campaign* on the first page of the replica version of the newspapers on the sample date.

Coding Categories and Variable Selection

A racial frame has been constructed in several studies. Reeves (1997) conducted a multimethod investigation of the 1989 mayoral campaign of David Dinkins and Rudolph Giuliani by analyzing survey data and the *New York Times*. Caliendo and McIlwain (2006) observed racial appeals and framing of minority candidates in the

Senate and House of Representatives elections in 2004. Utilizing this previous research on racial framing, several variables were identified for examination in this study.

The explicit racial appeal variables include explicit racial framing in article or blog titles, explicit racial framing in article or blog content, and the mention of the race of the political candidate in the specific media.

Previous framing research examines implicit communication, racial cues, or codes words that have been observed in visual media images. Kellstedt (2003) conducted a study on media framing of race in terms of individualistic or egalitarian values and suggested that type of rhetoric is very difficult to quantify in any research. He conducted a pilot study of his primary sources and created a dictionary of keywords that would be available to code. He also utilized the themes from modern racism to pull out keywords and phrases, such as *the same protection under the law*, statements focusing on discrimination, or statements about earning received benefits. In the same way, Barnard (2007) conducted a pilot study to examine how newspapers handle implicit race communication. In addition to the code words that had been discussed in previous research, Barnard found sufficient word content to complete his observation. For instance, he came across *integration, gangs, Al Sharpton, Hurricane Katrina, urban area, inner city, social conflict, projects, and diversity* (p. 20).

Utilizing Burdein's (2007), Kellstedt's (2000) and Barnard's (2007) research, a sample was created to acquire content for the implicit code words for the study. A sample of ten random blogs and newspapers was chosen, and a list of implicit appeals for this study includes *inner city, urban areas, poverty, welfare recipients, welfare queen, poor, food stamps, federal aid, federal policies, crime, violence, Al Sharpton, Jesse*

Jackson, Jeremiah Wright, community organizers, Acorn, drugs, real America, patriotism, civil rights, Hurricane Katrina, quotas, law and order, underclass, cotton picking, ominous, NAACP, low-income, diversity discrimination, integration, impoverished, social problems, busing, and integration health disparities. The variables in the study that were coded for implicit racial framing include implicit racial framing present in article or blog titles, and implicit racial framing in article or blog content.

Coding and Intercoder Reliability

Initially, three graduate students and the primary researcher were scheduled and trained to code the content for this study. Riffe, Lacy, & Fico (2007) advise that the key to accurate coding is clear and concise operationalization of the categories. This necessitates creating exact instructions for the coding process. Holsti (1969) gives several requirements that lead to satisfactory coding instructions, including generating definitions that indicate the purpose of the research, and being independent and deriving from a single classification principle (p. 101). The coders were trained online for this study. They were sent an initial package, which included the coding instructions, sample blogs, and information for the online tool. In addition, there were several articles and dissertation abstracts by Mendelberg (2001), Caliendo and McIlwain (2006), and Meraz (2007) provided to the coders. These documents were included because they are similar in focus and methodology to this study. Skype was utilized for the online training sessions. During the first one-hour session, access was given to the online tool, coding guidelines were thoroughly explained, and several examples were provided. The second one-hour session provided an opportunity for the primary researcher and the individual coders to go through the calendars, find every blog in the study, access them, find the

archives, and locate several blogs on the calendars. The final task during the last hour session was to code two blogs. This exercise gave the initial coders the opportunity to experience the online tool as a coding document, maneuver within the blog, comment, and ask questions.

Intercoder reliability was the final element to establish. Neuendorf (2002) argues that without the establishment of responsible intercoder reliability, the content analysis measures derived from the study data are useless (p. 141). The sample required for reliability rating is 10% of the full study cases sample or a minimum of 50 of the items to be coded (Landis & Koch, 1977). For this study, 10% of the study sample was chosen and an intercoder reliability analysis using Cohen's Kappa was conducted to determine the consistency between the coders for this study. Cohen's Kappa is widely used among communication scholars to assess reliability and is especially recommended for nominal data (Lombard, 2003). The intercoder reliability assessed for this study was $Kappa=0.896$ with a range of .255 to 1.00 within the variables in this study. Landis & Koch (1977) suggest that with Kappa, anything above .70 would be an acceptable rate for intercoder agreement. The study did not incorporate the variable with $Kappa=.255$ into the results of this study.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

The primary goal of this study was to identify the presence of racial framing in political blogs and mainstream media. The findings for each of the hypotheses and research question are reported below. A total of 2,247 blog posts and mainstream media articles were analyzed for this study (see Table 1). There were 1,074 media classified as conservative or right-leaning and 1,173 were classified as liberal or left-leaning. As a reminder, the five conservative blogs in this study were *Ace of Spades*, *HotAir*, *Little Green Footballs*, *Michelle Malkin*, and *Powerline*, and the five liberal blogs were *Crooks and Liars*, *Eschaton*, *Feministe*, *Talking Points Memo*, and *Think Progress*. The *New York Times* represented the liberal mainstream media and the *Wall Street Journal* represented the conservative mainstream media.

The first hypothesis predicted that conservative blogs would utilize explicit racial framing more often than liberal blogs. A chi-square analysis tested this hypothesis. The blog political ideology category was one variable, and frequency of explicit racial appeals in the (1) blog title, (2) blog content, and (3) mentions of political candidate's race were the other variables. As indicated in Table 2, conservative blogs utilized explicit racial appeals in the blog titles 5.9% ($n = 49$) of the time while it was included 5.6% ($n = 44$) of the time in liberal blogs. Regarding the actual content, conservative blogs made use of explicit racial appeals in the content 15.3% ($n = 127$) of the time compared to 13.7% ($n = 107$) of the time in the content of liberal blogs. In addition, conservative blogs mentioned the political candidate's race 6.7% ($n = 56$) of the time in contrast to 5.2% ($n = 41$) of the time found in the liberal blogs. Based on the chi-square results of the blog titles ($\chi^2 = .05$, $df = 1$, $p = .821$), the blog content ($\chi^2 = .81$, $df = 1$, $p = .367$), and the mentions of

political candidate's race ($\chi^2 = 1.58, df = 1, p = .209$), the results were not statistically significant.

The second hypothesis focused on a comparison between the conservative political blogosphere and conservative mainstream media. The objective of this hypothesis was to determine if conservative blogs indeed were more likely than conservative mainstream media to use explicit racial framing. To find out if this hypothesis was supported by the study data, a cross-tabulation with a chi-square analysis was produced. The results (see Table 3) indicate that conservative blogs contained explicitly racial appeals within the titles 5.9% of the time ($n = 49$), while conservative mainstream media included explicitly racially appeals within the titles only 2.5% ($n = 6$) of the time. When comparing the actual content in the two different media, the conservative blog content contained racially explicit framing 15.3% ($n = 127$) of the time, while conservative mainstream media content included explicit racial framing 7.9% ($n = 19$) of the time. Mentions of political candidates by race in the conservative blogs occurred 6.7% ($n = 56$) of the time, while mentions of a candidate's race by conservative mainstream media occurred 12.4% ($n = 30$) of the time (this is in the opposite direction hypothesized). Based on the chi-square results for conservative blogs and mainstream titles ($\chi^2 = 4.48, df = 1, p < .034$), media content ($\chi^2 = 8.77, df = 1, p < .003$), and explicit mention of a political candidate's race ($\chi^2 = 8.17, df = 1, p < .004$), this hypothesis was supported.

The third hypothesis predicted that liberal blogs would be more likely to make use of explicit racial framing than traditional liberal media. To test this hypothesis a chi-square analysis was conducted. The chi-square analysis presented in Table 4 shows that

liberal blogs utilized explicit racial framing in titles 5.6% ($n = 44$) of the time, compared to 10.2% ($n = 40$) in mainstream media. The overall blog content was framed as explicitly racial 13.7% ($n = 107$) of the time by liberal political blogs compared to 29.2% ($n = 114$) of the time by liberal mainstream media. Explicit racial references to a political candidate's race occurred in liberal blogs 5.2% ($n = 41$) of the time, while liberal mainstream media referred to a political candidate's race 21.1% ($n = 82$) of the time. The chi-square results of the data for blogs and mainstream titles ($\chi^2 = 8.30$, $df = 1$, $p < .004$), content ($\chi^2 = 40.81$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), and mention of a political candidate's race ($\chi^2 = 68.70$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) indicate there is a difference in the explicit framing between liberal political blogs and liberal mainstream media but the hypothesis could not be supported (i.e., the results were significant in the opposite direction predicted).

The fourth hypothesis predicted that conservative political blogs would contain more implicit racial framing than liberal political blogs. To find out if a difference existed between implicit racial framing in conservative and liberal blogs, a cross-tabulation with a chi-square analysis was conducted. According to the results presented in Table 5, conservative blogs contained implicit racial framing in blog titles 19.8% ($n = 165$) of the time compared to 11.8% ($n = 92$) of the time in the liberal blog titles. Reviewing the results for the blog content, conservative blogs were more likely to include implicit racial framing 26.8% ($n = 223$) of the time when compared to liberal blogs, which included the implicit racial framing 17.3% ($n = 135$) of the time. Based on this chi-square analysis for the media titles ($\chi^2 = 19.59$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and the media content ($\chi^2 = 21.25$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), this hypothesis was supported.

The fifth hypothesis determined if conservative blogs would be more likely to cover more implicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media. To test this hypothesis, a chi-square analysis was executed to determine whether there was a difference between the two groups in terms of implicit racial framing. The results shown in Table 6 indicate that conservative blogs contained instances of implicit racial framing in the blog titles 19.8% ($n = 165$) of the time, whereas conservative mainstream media titles contained implicit racial framing 2.5% ($n = 6$) of the time. In the media's actual content, conservative blogs expressed implicit racial framing 26.8% ($n = 223$) of the time compared to 4.5% ($n = 11$) of the time in conservative mainstream media. The chi-square results for the media titles ($\chi^2 = 42.16, df = 1, p < .001$) and the media content ($\chi^2 = 54.50, df = 1, p < .001$) suggested that conservative political blogs were more inclined to contain implicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media. This hypothesis was supported.

The sixth hypothesis proposed that liberal blogs would be more likely to use implicit racial framing than liberal mainstream media. To consider this, a chi-square was produced to determine whether there was a difference between the two groups and their instances of implicit racial framing. According to the analysis (Table 7), liberal blog titles were implicitly racially framed 11.8% ($n = 92$) of the time and liberal mainstream titles were implicitly racially framed 9.2% ($n = 36$) of the time. The content contained in liberal blogs was implicitly racially framed 17.3% ($n = 135$) of the time compared to 32.7% ($n = 128$) of the time in liberal mainstream media. Based on the chi-square results for media titles ($\chi^2 = 1.75, df = 1, p = .185$) and media content ($\chi^2 = 35.87, df = 1, p <$

.001), this hypothesis was not supported (i.e., the results were significant in the opposite direction expected).

The seventh hypothesis predicted that conservative blogs would be likely to frame racial stereotypes of Blacks and/or African Americans more often than liberal blogs. A chi-square was conducted to test this hypothesis. Reviewing the chi-square analysis found in Table 8, conservative blogs included racial stereotypes of Blacks/African Americans 13.5% ($n = 112$) of the time compared to liberal blogs, which contained racial stereotypes for Blacks/African Americans 9.0% ($n = 70$) of the time. Based on these findings ($\chi^2 = 8.19$, $df = 1$, $p < .004$), this hypothesis was supported.

The eighth hypothesis projected that conservative blogs would be more likely to frame racial stereotypes than conservative mainstream media. To evaluate this hypothesis, a chi-square test was processed. As revealed in Table 9, the chi-square analysis showed that conservative blogs framed racial stereotypes 13.5% ($n = 112$) of the time contrasted with 5.4% ($n = 13$) of the time for the conservative mainstream media. The results ($\chi^2 = 11.93$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$) did indicate a statistical difference. As anticipated, this hypothesis was supported.

The ninth hypothesis predicted that liberal blogs would be more likely to frame racial stereotypes of Blacks/African Americans than the liberal mainstream media. To test this supposition, a chi-square analysis was performed. Observing the findings depicted in Table 10, liberal blogs framed racial stereotypes of Blacks/African Americans 9.0% ($n = 70$) of the time compared with liberal mainstream media, which framed racial stereotypes of Blacks/African Americans 13.8% ($n = 54$) of the time. Based on the findings obtained from the chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 6.51$, $df = 1$, $p < .011$), there was a

noted statistical difference in how these two groups framed racial stereotypes, but the hypothesis could not be confirmed or supported because the difference was in the opposite direction.

The tenth hypothesis expected that conservative blogs would be likely to contain more occurrences of modern racism than liberal blogs. To test this, a chi-square analysis was selected. The analysis, illustrated in Table 11, showed that conservative blogs included modern racism occurrences 4.9% ($n = 41$) of the time compared to 3.1% ($n = 24$) of the time in liberal blogs. The chi-square results ($\chi^2 = 3.60$, $df = 1$, $p = .058$) implied that there was a near significant statistical difference in the presentation of modern racism in conservative blogs compared to modern racism found in liberal blogs.

The eleventh hypothesis inferred that conservative blogs would be more likely to frame occurrences of modern racism than conservative mainstream media. A cross-tabulation with a chi-square analysis was conducted. The findings indicated that conservative blogs contained modern racism 4.9% ($n = 41$) of the time compared to conservative mainstream media, which had no actual occurrences of modern racism. The results, shown in Table 12, indicated a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 11.09$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), and this hypothesis was supported. Note that this test used the Yates' continuity correction because one of the cells had less than five observations (Siegel & Castellan, 1988).

The twelfth hypothesis predicted that liberal blogs would be more likely to contain occurrences of modern racism than liberal mainstream media. A chi-square analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis. The chi-square results, reported in Table 13, specified that 3.1% ($n = 24$) of liberal blogs included occurrences of modern racism

compared to 6.9% ($n = 27$) of liberal mainstream media. The chi-square results ($\chi^2 = 9.22$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) found a statistical difference in how these two media frame modern racism; nevertheless, the hypothesis was not supported (i.e., in the opposite direction of the prediction).

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the study will be reviewed. This section will be organized as follows: explicit racial framing, implicit racial framing, racial stereotypes, and modern racism. The next section addresses the findings, relevant limitations to the study, and directions for future research. In cases of nonsupported hypothesis, alternative explanations and post hoc analyses will be posited. The final section will include limitations of the study and concluding remarks.

The primary findings from this study reveal that explicit and implicit racial framing are consistently present in political blogs and mainstream media. These findings have social implications. Blogs, specifically political blogs, increased remarkably in popularity and influence during the last decade and in particular during the 2008 presidential campaign (The Pew Research Center, 2009). When considering the simplicity of initiating a blog, the number of citizens participating in political blogs, and the extraordinary influence political blogs have had on recent events (e.g., Trent Lott, Jena 6), it is evident that political blogs have become a powerful force in the political landscape and merit increased research attention from the academic community. The findings of this study suggest that race still matters in the United States and it is being discussed and channeled online through political blogs and mainstream media.

Explicit Racial Framing

The first three hypotheses examined explicit racial framing in political blogs and mainstream media. As discussed in the literature review, explicit racial appeals utilize a noun or adjective to express anti-Black sentiments (Mendelberg, 2001). Currently, explicit racial appeals are not a popular method for discussing race, but they can still be

found today in various media outlets. Several findings related to these first three hypotheses warrant additional mention. First, hypothesis one predicted that conservative political blogs would more likely include explicit racial framing than liberal political blogs. However, the study results indicated that explicit framing in conservative blogs was not statistically different from explicit framing in liberal blogs. Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported. The results found in this hypothesis were different than in past research (Mendelberg, 2001). Since the hypothesis was not supported, it was important to provide alternative explanations to determine other elements that may have been influential in the non-supported confirmation. Additionally, based on these results, a post hoc analysis was completed to investigate possible variations within the data. Specifically under consideration was the overall tone of the blogs.

An alternative explanation for the lack of support of this hypothesis may be correlated with an increase in size and influence of the liberal progressive blogosphere. As previously mentioned, the progressive blogosphere has increased in size, popularity, and readership during the last several years. Previous studies (Armstrong & Zuniga, 2006; Bowers & Stoller, 2005; Treymayne, 2007) indicate the initial dominance and popularity of the conservative blogosphere. The reason? 9/11. In the years following September 11, 2001, conservative war bloggers and 9/11 bloggers dominated the blogosphere, leaving little room or movement of expression for the progressive bloggers, who were deemed “anti-American” or “unpatriotic.” With the Bush administration advocating the Patriot Act and other means of rationalizing red flag activities, progressives went into a self-imposed hiding. Slowly and steadily, liberal and progressive bloggers organized after the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, became

more visible, and asserted their presence in the blogosphere by playing a more significant role for bloggers who had little voice. As it stands now, liberal bloggers have more choices and options than in years past, now claiming several of the most popular and visited political blogs in the blogosphere (Technorati, 2009). Political blogs such as Daily Kos, Talking Points Memo, Think Progress, and Huffington Post have projected the liberal agenda onto the blogosphere, often intersecting with popular “mainstream” media shows (e.g., *Rachel Maddow*, *Countdown with Keith Olberman*). In addition, a progressive group of bloggers on Netroots has seen its influence and visibility increase within the political landscape on the Internet. Over time, the liberal blogosphere has increasingly become a significant force in the political landscape by including diverse opinions and influential online communities (Kaid, 2009; Farrell & Drezner, 2008).

The political blogosphere as a whole is remarkable given readers’ strict allegiance to the ideological fragmentation of the blogosphere. Thus, it would appear logical for both conservative and liberal bloggers to pursue an agenda of putting their party in the White House. As discussed earlier, blogs involve less than 4% of the population as regular consumers, but they were considered an integral part of the 2008 presidential campaign (Owen, 2009; Technorati, 2009). Blogs provided up-to-date information and safe environments for citizen participation, and they were seen as a reputable source for campaign information (The Pew Research Center, 2008, 2009; Technorati, 2008, 2009). The 2008 presidential campaign had the obvious racial component, thereby making race a central and dominating theme to be dissected and theorized during the election process. It appears reasonable, then, that liberal bloggers, in an attempt to promote their political agenda, would do so with an increased presence on the blogosphere. Armed and ready,

their posting, responding to, and identifying racial issues in their blogs caught many by surprise.

In terms of the first hypothesis, the data does not suggest that conservative blogs have a smaller presence in the blogosphere. Quite the contrary—the conservative political blogosphere was in full force during the 2008 presidential election. What had not been projected was the similar ferocity displayed by liberal bloggers in this study. Data suggests, via a content analysis, the similarities in explicit racial framing in conservative and liberal blogs. Those similarities were further explained in the post hoc analysis focusing on the tone of the overall blogs.

The literature on media quality or tone has been limited in the area of race and political campaigns. For instance, Reeves (1997) conducted research on a biracial mayoral campaign and examined the overall tone for the content found in the *New York Times* and the *Seattle Times* newspapers. He found that 18% of the articles that referenced race were negative in overall tone.

Jeffries (2000) conducted a study on Douglas Wilder and the historical race for governor in Virginia. His findings indicate that over 25% of the articles found in the *Washington Post* about Wilder were considered to be negative when compared to his opponent Marshall Coleman, who was White.

Watkins (2001) analyzed the Million Man March and found that the tone of the language and the narratives surrounding the event had an effect on how the public perceived the occasion. Reeves (1997) argues that the tone of a racial message especially during political campaigns may possibly effect voters' perception and candidate selection. Reeves and the other studies focused on racial framing were observing biracial

elections and utilized similar methodological procedures (content analysis). In addition, framing as well as the tone of a racial message may affect public opinion (Avery, Peffley, & Glass, 2000). For this reason, it seemed worth exploring; so post hoc tests were conducted on the overall tone of the media and the tone of content that included explicit, implicit, racial stereotypes and modern racism for this study.

The first post hoc test examined the overall tone of conservative and liberal blogs. The question was whether conservative blogs' overall tone was more negative than liberal blogs. A chi-square analysis was performed to produce the analysis. The results found in Table 14 indicate that 8.1% ($n = 67$) of conservative blogs were seen as positive overall, 57.5% ($n = 478$) were seen as being negative overall, and 34.5% ($n = 287$) were considered to be neutral overall. The tone in 8.1% ($n = 63$) of liberal blogs was seen as positive, 51.9% of the blogs ($n = 406$) were seen as negative, and 40% ($n = 313$) of the blogs were thought to be neutral overall. The chi-square results ($\chi^2 = 5.570$, $df = 2$, $p = .062$) determined that there was no statistical difference in the overall tone for conservative and liberal blogs. More specifically, statistically, conservative blogs were not considered any more negative than liberal blogs.

Throughout this section examples of blogs and mainstream media that have been coded will be presented. It is important to be able to recognize the various types of racial framing in actual blog and mainstream media content.

For example, the title of a progressive liberal blog, Feminste, was coded as racially explicit (2008, September, 28). The blog was entitled "The Mortgage Crisis: Blame the Brown and Black People." Another example of the coded material for liberal

blogs in this study was found in Talking Points Memo, a popular elite liberal blog (Marshall, 2007, September 24). It was titled "Don't Miss that Meme":

The RNC just shot off an email building on the slur. With the headline "Razzle Dazzle," the email continues the theme that Obama is just another black fancy-pants with a slick smile and the ability to turn a nice phrase but without the candle-power or stick-to-it-iveness to actually get things done. (para. 3)

The content was coded for an explicit racial mention of the race of a political candidate.

Finally, here is a final example of liberal blogs, found in Crooks and Liars, another popular blog. The post entitled "Worst Excuse Ever" (Benen, 2007, August, 5) was coded as racially explicit content:

About a month ago, Florida State Rep. Bob Allen (R), a co-chairman of John McCain's presidential campaign in the Sunshine State, ran into a little trouble with the law. He was arrested in a public park after allegedly offering to pay to perform oral sex on an undercover police officer. Not a good career move. Josh Marshall notes today, however, that ol' state Rep. Allen can explain everything. [I]t turns out that Allen revealed the true reason for the alleged park-john-offer in a tape-recorded statement he made just after his arrest. "This was a pretty stocky black guy, and there was nothing but other black guys around in the park," said Allen, according to this article in the Orlando Sentinel. Allen went on to say he was afraid of becoming a "statistic. OK, let me get this straight. Allen was in a public park, late at night. For some reason, he's afraid of black people. As a result of this irrational fear, he wanders into a bathroom, where he offers another man \$20 to perform oral sex. In other words, Allen thought he might be attacked by some

“stocky” black men, and **this** is his first instinct? . . . I guess this raises the question of whether if you thought you were about to get mugged by a group of stocky black guys, your first plan of escape would be to try to give one of them a blowjob.

This blog post was coded racially explicit because of its anti-Black sentiment and dissemination of Black stereotypes. The blog post appeared to be in response to another incident and was an opportunity for the author to recap and editorialize the occurrence in their blog. However, analyzing the blogger's intent was beyond the purview of this study. The goal of this study was to identify and examine the racial appeals and not evaluate the blogger's objective for including the content in the post.

As discussed in the literature review, Armstrong and Neuendorf, (1992) found that White college students lacking direct experiences with different ethnicities were influenced in their racial attitudes by the media. Consequently, the presence of a racial appeal could conceivably have an influence on individual racial attitudes. Mendelberg (2001) argues that this is more often true for implicit than explicit racial appeals. It has been determined that when an appeal is recognized as being racist, it loses its capacity to have any effect on public opinion (Mendelberg, 2001). However, Terkildsen and Damore (1999) argue that

[e]mphasizing race in these contests, either visually or in print, provides a powerful cue for both prejudiced and non-prejudiced citizens. For the prejudiced, race will prime their racial values, while for non-prejudiced voters, race will likely cue stereotypical processing unless an alternative belief system is activated. (p. 684)

Whether the simple mention of an explicit racial appeal has an effect on individual opinion continues to be debated. Research in communication on explicit racial appeals specifically in textual media is limited and this study will add to that area of scholarly literature.

Conservative blogs were also coded for explicit racial framing. For instance, Ace of Spades, a conservative political blog, was coded for racially explicit content in a blog entitled “Barack, the Magic Negro,” (Ace, 2007, March 13):

I do think there's something to the idea of Obama's appeal partly grounded in whites' subconscious belief, caused by watching too many Hollywood movies, that if they just elect an nice, avuncular black man like Obama, he'll step out of the shadows to "help us get our swing back" and maybe even help us through prison. (para. 3)

Another conservative blog analyzed for this study was HotAir. In this example, the blog post (Allahpundit, 2007, July 13,) was titled “Sharpton to Obama: Just Because You're Our Color, Doesn't Make You Our Kind,” was coded for explicit racial content:

~~Exit~~ Entrance question: Seriously, how much is Obama paying him to say this crap? It's like a Sister Souljah moment in reverse. Herald the dawn of the age of meritocratic identity politics. “I think the identity politics should not be based on race,” said the Rev. Al Sharpton, a 2004 presidential candidate. “It should be based on agenda and policy—who stands for our best interests. We cannot put our people’s aspirations on hold for anybody’s career, black or white.”. . . Without naming Obama, Sharpton added that “just because you’re our color doesn’t make you our kind.” He pointed to President Bush’s secretaries of state, Condoleezza

Rice and Colin Powell, as examples of African-Americans who he said haven't necessarily worked in the interest of the African-American community. (para. 1)

These blogs were coded as racially explicit based on the usage of nouns and adjectives to refer to Blacks and discuss anti-Black sentiment.

The 2008 presidential election was different in many ways, including creating different media platforms and various groups expanding their political presence. Liberal blogs seemingly use their posts as an opportunity to forward their agenda and sometimes act in response to racial messages and news items, as demonstrated in the previous examples. The data in this study confirms this. With a larger online base than previously indicated, and with a political agenda to support, advocate, and circulate, it is feasible to conclude that during the election, despite previous research discussed in this literature review on the initial dominance of the conservative bloggers, the liberal blogosphere was active and participatory, which correlated with increased opportunities for explicit racial framing (Bowers & Stoller, 2005).

The objective of the second hypothesis was to determine if conservative blogs were more likely to engage in explicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media. The findings from this study partially supported this hypothesis. Specifically, explicit racial framing, in the blog titles and actual media content, supported the research hypothesis. However, explicit mention of the race of political candidates in conservative blogs and conservative mainstream media was unsupported. An alternative explanation will be provided for these findings. These findings were consistent with research on conservative ideology (Converse, 1964; Kinder & Sanders, 1996) and political blogs (Adamic & Glance, 2005). A predominant characteristic of the conservative party is its

views and perspectives on race (Carmines & Stinson, 1989). In mainstream media, those views are susceptible to regulations or watered-down explanations. However, one of the main reasons the public congregates to the political blogosphere is because of the freedom of expression and opinionated conversations that the blogosphere can offer the public (Bloom, 2005; Xifra & Huertas, 2008). A participative democracy is also a primary motivation for the public to choose to participate in political blogs. The Internet, as discussed in the literature review, has made it much easier for bloggers and political groups to share their agendas and express their objectives to the masses.

An illustration of explicit racial content coded in conservative blogs was found in Little Green Footballs, entitled "New Black Panther Party on Obama Site-Approved by Campaign?" (Ace, 2008, March 20):

Barack Obama's campaign web site has a section where supporters can register and form groups (like a mini-MySpace), and Fox News reported yesterday on a group started by the New Black Panther Party, which of course embarrassed the Obama campaign into removing it. They issued a statement (typically blaming Fox News for pointing it out) that says they have no control over the groups that are formed: My.BarackObama.com has been at the core of our bottom-up organizing strategy. The tools available have been put to work by a community of supporters that is bigger and more powerful than anything presidential politics has ever seen. Evidently, Fox News didn't think it was a big deal that hundreds of thousands of ordinary Americans are participating in the democratic process creating groups and local events in communities all across the country. But they did think it was a big deal that one random person on the Internet, without the

knowledge of the Obama campaign, posted a profile in the system with the image of the New Black Panther Party on it.

When we were alerted of the existence of this page, we pulled it down. Yet even after we pulled the page, Fox News continues to disingenuously and prominently feature this “story” on their homepage.

OK, fair enough. That’s actually why I didn’t make a big deal of this, because I know from first-hand experience how easy it is for jokers to misuse these kinds of “social networking” systems. But now BKGodfrey at Yellow Limes has a twist that makes it more interesting. He registered and started a group at my.barackobama.com, and at the end of the process he received this message: “This group will be published online once it is approved by a site administrator.”

The statement above claims that the New Black Panther Party group was established “without the knowledge of the Obama campaign.” So who is approving those groups, if not the Obama campaign?

An exemplar from the *Wall Street Journal* (Hajnal, 2007) illustrates how the conservative media was coded for this study. An article entitled "Obama's Extra Hurdle" was coded for explicit mention of a political candidate's race: “The Barack Obama phenomenon has just about everybody asking: Is America ready for a Black president?” (para. 1). Another example from the *Wall Street Journal* demonstrates the range of stories and opportunities for explicit racial framing found in this study. An article by Henninger (2008, February, 21) focused on Obama and race. He stated,

Right now, Barack Obama is the most famous symbolic man in America, and in one area of the nation's life where symbolism still matters. Is this enough reason to make someone president? No. The U.S. presidency now is larger than one thing, though people vote all the time for one thing— judges, gender, abortion, God. . . . One of Obama's most disappointing moments was his comment, in a January debate, on reversing the black dropout rate. His answer could have been phoned in from the teachers union: after-school programs, summer-school programs, more money. He did say something about absent fathers. It fell to Hillary Clinton to suggest more schools like the Eagle Academy in the Bronx, an all-male charter started by the 100 Black Men organization. (para. 8)

To end with, here is a last example, from the *Wall Street Journal* (Kessler, 2008, March 14) entitled "Obama and the Minister":

Hearing Mr. Wright's venomous and paranoid denunciations of this country, the vast majority of Americans would walk out. Instead, Mr. Obama and his wife Michelle have presumably sat through numerous similar sermons by Mr. Wright. Indeed, Mr. Obama has described Mr. Wright as his "sounding board" during the two decades he has known him. Mr. Obama has said he found religion through the minister in the 1980s. He joined the church in 1991 and walked down the aisle in a formal commitment of faith.

The title of Mr. Obama's bestseller *The Audacity of Hope* comes from one of Wright's sermons. Mr. Wright is one of the first people Mr. Obama thanked after his election to the Senate in 2004. Mr. Obama consulted Mr. Wright before deciding to run for president. He prayed privately with Mr. Wright before

announcing his candidacy last year. Mr. Obama obviously would not choose to belong to Mr. Wright's church and seek his advice unless he agreed with at least some of his views. In light of Mr. Wright's perspective, Michelle Obama's comment that she feels proud of America for the first time in her adult life makes perfect sense. Much as most of us would appreciate the symbolism of a black man ascending to the presidency, what we have in Barack Obama is a politician whose closeness to Mr. Wright underscores his radical record. The media have largely ignored Mr. Obama's close association with Mr. Wright. This raises legitimate questions about Mr. Obama's fundamental beliefs about his country. Those questions deserve a clearer answer than Mr. Obama has provided. (para. 1) so the

The preceding blog and article examples were coded for their explicit racial content and for mentions of the race of a political candidate.

Entman and Rojecki (2001) state that the media are a primary source for the public as to how they perceive political campaigns. How this occurs has been debated for decades; however, research does suggest that the media frames the content, using implicit and explicit communication. The results in this study concerning political blogs and mainstream media correlate with that research. Current literature on framing has not extended into political blogs and race, but the results from this study suggest that explicit racial framing is consistently found in both conservative blogs and mainstream media.

As to the area of nonsupport for this hypothesis, which was the number of mentions of a political candidate's race, a possible explanation might be associated with the length and the very nature of the campaign. It has been suggested that the 2008 presidential campaign was one of the most-watched political campaigns in modern media

history (Owen, 2009). Although studies have indicated the online influence of political blogs, these blogs do not usually report news and information (Drezner & Farrell, 2008). With mainstream media committed to reporting the story in the pre-campaign stages, and with the general context of this historical presidential campaign, it just seems reasonable that these elements may have been instrumental in how mainstream media portrayed the presidential campaign, including increased incidents of explicit racial framing. Although not investigated as part of this study, this can also be witnessed in the network and cable political programs that covered the 2008 presidential campaign.

The results from the third hypothesis were interesting but unexpected. Although this hypothesis predicted that liberal blogs would contain more explicit racial framing than liberal mainstream media, the findings were not supported. Instead, the study results indicated that liberal mainstream media would be more likely to include explicit racial framing when compared to liberal political blogs. Recent studies point out that while digital platforms were integral to the 2008 presidential election, mainstream media remained active and sustained a strong presence in the media campaign during the 2008 campaign (Owen, 2009; The Pew Research Center, 2009). This is supported by the data in this study. Media scholars and experts explained that while online media did *establish* a presence in the political landscape, and was instrumental in bringing diverse agendas and platforms to the Internet, mainstream media continued to be recognized as a source for reputable political news and information (Owen, 2009). Furthermore, Owen (2009) implies that although new media was able to establish a foothold in the political environment, the mainstream media managed to remain relevant during this election as the best source for general political news and information

Finally, the 2008 campaign was one of the longest media campaigns in history. The Project for Excellence in Journalism (2009) observes that the mainstream media was present and active in the pre-campaign period, allocating more space to the preelection experience than any other story besides the conflict in Iraq. Predictably, this additional time investment may have yielded a higher percentage of explicit framing than normally expected.

The *New York Times* included characterizations on the candidates, conducted polls on race, and included personality profiles on the candidates and their staffs, struggling to remain and the go-to source for the public for campaign information. An illustration of this would be an article that discussed Hillary Clinton's early insight to racial issues. The article titled "Clinton's Gradual Education on Issues of Race (Leibovich, 2008, 2, February) was coded for explicit racial content:

Growing up in the palest of Chicago suburbs, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton had some of her earliest exposures to African-Americans through field trips. She sat in the back of her father's Cadillac as he detoured through the inner city, cautioning her about the fate of people who, in his conservative Republican view, lacked the self-discipline to succeed. She took a sociology course at Wellesley College that included a trip through Boston's poor areas. On Tuesdays, she went to a housing project in Cambridge to mentor "underprivileged Negroes," as she wrote to Don Jones, her minister back home, who had taken her to hear the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speak in Chicago four years earlier. In a presidential campaign in which race has become a dominant issue, Mrs. Clinton's early brush

with Dr. King has been a recurring theme, invoked as a kind of "a-ha" episode to explain her coming of age on race. (para. 1)

Another example, an article entitled "Seeking Unity, Obama Feels Pull of Racial Divide Obama Starts Bid, Reshaping" (Thompson, 2008, February 12) provides an example of explicit racial framing mentioning the candidate's race:

Questions about Mr. Obama's "blackness," though, quickly threatened to obscure the reasons he believed himself most qualified to become the country's next president. A Rolling Stone article linked him to the militant preaching of his pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr. The story quoted the minister as saying in a sermon, "Racism is how this country was founded and how this country is still run."

Mr. Axelrod said he and Mr. Obama decided to take Mr. Wright off the program for the campaign announcement in February 2007, concluding that the attention would drag the pastor into a negative spotlight and might distract from efforts to portray the senator as a candidate capable of unifying the country.

The day after the rally, which was on the steps of the Old State Capitol in Illinois, Mr. Obama was sharply criticized by African-American academics, media celebrities and policy experts at a conference in Hampton, Va. Among the most often cited was Cornel West, the renowned Princeton scholar. He and others argued that Mr. Obama should speak forcefully about the legacy of racism in the nation and not cast the problems that disproportionately affect blacks as social ills shared by many Americans.

“He’s got large numbers of white brothers and sisters who have fears and anxieties,” Dr. West said at the time. “He’s got to speak them in such a way that he holds us at arm’s length; enough to say he loves us, but not too close to scare them away.” (para. 1)

Unlike any other time in history, voters had choices of how and where they received their campaign information and news. These new media options for the public, according to Nagourney, a reporter from the *New York Times* (2008, November 4), reflect a cultural shift in voters, producing an audience that is at once better informed and more skeptical from reading blogs, sometimes trafficking in rumors or circumspect information. As a result this new electorate tends to be more questioning of what is told by campaigns and often used the Web to do its own fact-checking. (p. 2)

These changes have forced the mainstream media to not only provide the traditional fare of horse race politics and debate coverage, but also to "step out of their self-imposed media boxes and give the readers a menu selection of political content. Liberal mainstream media in this study offered more reader-friendly content, interactive opportunities, and comments on other media, perspectives on negative campaigning, and polls and surveys to the voting public. Conversely, it does seem reasonable that the liberal mainstream media, specifically the *New York Times*, might have had more opportunities to include racial framing in its content during this campaign than what would be normally expected. While the results for this hypothesis were not expected, the findings do focus on the primary objective of this study, which was to identify and demonstrate that explicit racial framing is a persistent practice that is consistently

accessible in both mainstream media and in political blogs. However, the post hoc analysis of this hypothesis may complement the alternative examination.

Again, hypothesis three predicted liberal political blogs would be more likely to include explicit racial framing than liberal mainstream media. A post hoc analysis observed the overall tone for both the liberal blogs and liberal mainstream media. A chi square analysis was conducted to determine the results. The findings detailed in Table 15 show that liberal blogs were 8.1% ($n = 63$) positive overall, 51.9% ($n = 406$) of the blogs were considered to be negative overall, and 40% ($n = 313$) were regarded as overall neutral. Of the, liberal mainstream media articles, 1.8% ($n = 7$) were considered positive, 44.8% ($n = 175$) were considered negative overall, and 53.5% ($n = 209$) were considered neutral overall. The chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 30.40$, $df = 2$, $p = .001$) confirmed a significant difference in the tone of liberal political blogs and liberal mainstream media. These results indicate that liberal blogs were more negative overall than liberal mainstream media. These results would be expected based on the literature on political blogs, ideology, and race (Drezner & Farrell, 2008). The original results from this hypothesis found that liberal mainstream media included more explicit racial framing than liberal blogs. The post hoc tests correlate with the alternative explanation provided for this hypothesis. Specifically, the extended 2008 presidential campaign and the historical context would most certainly offer more opportunities for the media to provide readers with various types of political news and information than what would be expected. We know that the liberal mainstream media institutions have regulations and constraints on content, whereas liberal blogs do not, so it could be assumed that more racial content would be present in the liberal blogs. To explain that area of nonsupport,

the assertion was put forward that much of the content found in the liberal mainstream media was in fact responding to or clarifying an issue or concern; however, there was no opportunity within the purview of this study to investigate that assertion. Post-hoc results were also completed on the explicit racial framing on liberal blogs and liberal mainstream media. The results were similar to the overall post-hoc examination of overall tone. 36.8% of the explicit blog content was considered negative compared to 33.1 % of the liberal mainstream media. In addition, the liberal mainstream media's explicit racial content was considered to be neutral 21.1% of the time compared to liberal blogs with 6.0%. Conversely, based on these post hoc results, it can be surmised that even though racial framing was present in the liberal mainstream media, it was not always considered to be negative in tone. The overall post hoc results indicate that with the liberal mainstream media, 53.5% of its content was neutral overall, compared to liberal blogs that had only 40% neutral content. This finding would correspond with the increased opportunities afforded to the media during this historical presidential campaign. The alternative explanation posed earlier in the discussion of hypothesis three seems appropriate considering the post hoc results.

Implicit Racial Appeals

The research collected on the three hypotheses measuring implicit racial framing appeals yielded results that overall was consistent with previous research. Hypothesis four predicted that conservative political blogs would be more likely to contain implicit racial framing than liberal political blogs. This hypothesis was supported. The fifth hypothesis assumed that conservative political blogs would be more likely to embrace implicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media. The findings revealed that

on average, conservative blogs contain more implicit racial framing than conservative mainstream media, and the hypothesis was supported. The last hypothesis was concerned with implicit racial framing and forecasted that liberal blogs would engage in more implicit racial framing than liberal mainstream media. The results for this hypothesis were significant, but the results were opposite what was predicted, so the hypothesis could not be supported. Implicit racial appeals will be discussed in general for the two accepted hypotheses. An alternative explanation and post hoc analysis will be provided for the areas of nonsupport for this hypothesis.

Implicit racial appeals are a fascinating area of research. Mendelberg (2001) argues that implicit racial appeals are effective because they are in most cases not recognized as having anything to do with race. When they are recognized as being racial, they no longer represent any significance. In fact, implicit racial appeals can be framed and discussed without the message having any outward connection to the issue of race (Domke, 2001). Previous research also suggests that implicitly framed messages can influence racial attitudes during a political campaign (Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002).

This study hypothesized that conservative media would be more likely to include implicit racial appeals than liberal media. The results from this content analysis are consistent with those findings. Burdein (2007) argues that conservatives talk about issues while implicitly provoking racial considerations. Modern political campaigns find conservatives employing implicit communication to cover social and policy issues in buried implications and rhetoric

The issue of race is never far from campaign rhetoric, as was witnessed not only in the blogs and mainstream media but also in television and political talk radio during the 2008 presidential campaign. The key to implicit racial framing is how to include it without being labeled a racist. Burdein (2007) states that implicit indicators allow researchers to delve into real or biased ways of thinking without the individual knowing they are disclosing personal feelings or attitudes. The results from this study on implicit racial framing are consistent with that research. For example, racial framing was utilized consistently by political blogs and mainstream media. As discussed in the literature review, implicit cues can influence the public's racial perceptions and influence their political judgments (Domke (2001). This area of research has not until recently begun to garner academic support, so very little is known, especially in reference to written texts. The few studies in this area have generally been conducted on visual and pictorial images (Domke, 2001; McIlwain & Caliendo, 2006; Mendelberg, 2001; van Dijk, 1988). The research explains that implicit racial cues communicate racism in a more subdued manner, but those cues are difficult to see if you don't know what you are looking for. For instance, consider this post found on the conservative blog Michele Malkin (2008, June 25) entitled "The Acorn Obama knows":

If you don't know what ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) is all about, you better bone up. This left-wing group takes in 40 percent of its revenues from American taxpayers—you and me—and has leveraged nearly four decades of government subsidies to fund affiliates that promote the welfare state and undermine capitalism and self-reliance, some of which have been implicated in perpetuating illegal immigration and encouraging

voter fraud. A new whistleblower report from the Consumer Rights League documents how Chicago-based ACORN has commingled public tax dollars with political projects. Who in Washington will fight to ensure that your money isn't being spent on these radical activities?

Don't bother asking Barack Obama. He cut his ideological teeth working with ACORN as a "community organizer" and legal representative. Naturally, ACORN's political action committee has warmly endorsed his presidential candidacy. According to ACORN, Obama trained its Chicago members in leadership seminars; in turn, ACORN volunteers worked on his campaigns. Obama also sat on the boards of the Woods Fund and Joyce Foundation, both of which poured money into ACORN's coffers. ACORN head Maude Hurd gushes that Obama is the candidate who "best understands and can effect change on the issues ACORN cares about"—like ensuring their massive pipeline to your hard-earned money. (para 1)

This particular blog post was coded as implicit because of its use of *Acorn*, *community organizer*, and *welfare state* as a veiled opportunity to negatively discuss people of color. This content coincides with previous research on implicit racial appeals. As discussed in the literature review, conservatives utilize racial cues and code words to discuss social and governmental issues and express them through indirect implications (Mendelberg, 2001).

Another example of implicit racial framing appeared in the conservative blog, *Ace of Spades* (2008, September 19). The blog was entitled "Barack Obama, Affirmative Action Candidate for President":

The provocative headline is maybe too provocative. What I'm getting at is not the good side of affirmative action, of course. Expanding recruiting and candidate searches to include minorities who might be otherwise overlooked; attempts to compensate for possible unconscious racism in a company or college, etc. What I'm talking about is of course the bad side of affirmative action. The notion that is sometimes put forward that someone is owed a position simply because he is black (or, rather, is not white), and that no criticism of him can be tolerated—again, simply because he is black. (para. 1)

This blog post was coded as implicit because of its references to affirmative action and discriminatory practices in favor of Obama because he was Black.

A blog entry titled "UCLA Violates California's Ban on Racial Discrimination" on the conservative blog Powerline was another example of implicit racial content (Pauk, 2007, 30 September):

California law (Proposition 209) prohibits the use of race as a factor in, among other things, admission to public universities. If this article in the New York Times Magazine by David Leonhardt is accurate, UCLA is violating California law. It's doing so by preferring African-American applicants under the guise of preferring low income students. We know that these preferences are racially based because, according to Leonhardt, as low income black admittees rose last year, the overall number of low income admittees fell. In essence, low income African-Americans took slots that previously had gone to low income students of other races (mostly, it seems, Asians). As Leonhardt, a fan of what UCLA has

done here, puts it: "Looking at the numbers, it's hard not to conclude that race was a factor in this year's admissions decisions."

Leonhardt says that the change in UCLA admissions policy was spearheaded by alum named Peter Taylor who was appointed to lead a task force to figure out how to increase the admission of black students. Taylor made it clear to Leonhardt that he is indifferent as to whether this involves what he calls "civil disobedience." His approach is to do whatever it takes to increase black admissions. If a court objects, "You say, Mea culpa, and you don't do it anymore. In violating the law, UCLA is lowering its academic standards (in fact, it's the lowering of standards for members of one race that constitutes the violation).

According to Leonhardt, the average SAT score for admitted African-American students fell 45 points this year, to 1,738 (out of 2,400—the new SAT adds a writing component). Leonhardt doesn't say whether the old average for African-American admittees, 1783, was already significantly lower than the overall for members of other races, but a glance at my daughter's 2006 guide to colleges indicates that it was. In fact, granting preferences to low income black students, instead of simply preferring blacks regardless of income, will tend to lower the objective credentials of admitted black students. That's because (a) an extraneous factor has been introduced and (b) there's some evidence that low income blacks score lower on tests than middle and upper income blacks. In any case, it's against the law to grant an income based preference to black students but not to students of other races—if that still matters. (para. 1)

This blog post was coded racially implicit because it discussed affirmative action, Blacks, inferiority and discrimination

There are over 150 million political blogs posted a day (Technorati, 2008) in the blogosphere. The blogosphere is open to anyone who can access a computer and has a message to share. Regulations on what is allowed are nonexistent, so the occasion to embrace racial framing is abundant. Research on race and framing implies that implicit racial appeals in political campaigns are based on being able to get the point across, activate racial attitudes without the public knowing the writer or speaker's motives (Caliendo & McIlwain, 2006; Mendelberg, 2001; Reeves, 1997; Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002). Whereas this research cannot respond to whether or not readers were influenced or primed from any of these blog posts or articles, the study has determined that the capability of blogs and mainstream media to influence racial attitudes is indeed present because of the consistent racial framing included in the media content.

Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) discovered that they could initiate racial views in a televised political advertisement without any real racial descriptions in the actual content. The implicit racial appeals were most often subtle ways to indirectly reference racial matters. This research acknowledges that implicit racial framing is present in the political blogosphere.

That hypothesis six was not supported was also interesting. It was predicted that implicit racial framing would be more likely be included in liberal blogs than in liberal mainstream media and that prediction was not supported. Instead, these study results found that liberal mainstream media would be more likely to contain implicit racial framing when compared to liberal blogs. As discussed earlier, liberal mainstream media

participated in one of the lengthiest presidential campaigns in modern political history and additional opportunities for more of all types of content would seem to be reasonable explanation.

An article in the *New York Times* (Kantor, 2007, June 1) offers an example of the implicit racial framing found in the liberal mainstream media:

Cut to the future Mrs. Obama asking her brother to take her new boyfriend out on the court, to make sure he was not the type to hog the ball or call constant fouls. The reel might then show Mr. Obama, an Illinois Democrat, playing with former NBA stars in a tournament fund-raiser for his Senate campaign, and at the family gatherings that always seem to end with everyone out by the hoop next to the garage. Basketball has little to do with Mr. Obama's presidential bid—in fact, he has trouble finding time to shoot baskets anymore—but until recently, it was one of the few constants in his life. At first, it was a tutorial in race, a way for a kid with a white mother, a Kenyan father and a peripatetic childhood to establish the African-American identity that he longed for. In "Dreams From My Father," Mr. Obama described basketball as a comfort to a boy whose father was mostly absent, and who was one of only a few black youths at his school. "At least on the basketball court I could find a community of sorts," he wrote. Craig Robinson, Mr. Obama's brother-in-law, said: "He didn't know who he was until he found basketball. It was the first time he really met black people."

This article was coded racially implicit for its discussion of basketball, a single parent relationship and Blackness or authenticity.

This presidential campaign was unlike any other in modern politics. The mainstream media responded to this historical context with articles and information that ran the gamut of topics. The extended campaign provided more opportunities to expand their coverage into more areas than the traditional horse race fare. Hence, it is permissible that these additional media opportunities would naturally provide more chances for including racial framing in the content than before. The findings from this hypothesis were similar to hypothesis three in that they found liberal mainstream media would include more racial framing than liberal political blogs. As illustrated in Table 7, 32% of liberal mainstream media content included implicit racial framing compared to 17.3% in liberal blogs. With that, the tone of liberal blogs was 51.9% negative overall compared to 44.8% of liberal mainstream media blogs. Conversely, the mainstream media did have numerous opportunities to include implicit racial appeals in the content, but according to the post hoc analysis detailed in Table 15, the content was not always considered to be negative overall. Again, the post hoc analysis was conducted on liberal blogs and mainstream media to collaborate the alternative explanation for this hypothesis. The liberal blog's content was seen as negative 63.4% of the time compared to the liberal mainstream media, which was seen as negative only 56.8%. The liberal mainstream media was coded as neutral 5.8% of the time, compared to the liberal blogs which were seen as neutral 5.6%. Again, these results suggest that although liberal mainstream media may have included more implicit racial framing the content in political blogs was considered negative more often. The post hoc analysis then enhances the alternative explanation for this hypothesis.

Racial Stereotypes

The seventh hypothesis predicted that conservative political blogs would embrace more racial stereotypes in their content than liberal blogs; the eighth hypothesis asserted that conservative blogs would be more likely to contain racial stereotypes than conservative mainstream media; and the ninth hypothesis proposed that liberal blogs would include more racial framing than liberal mainstream media. Hypothesis seven and eight were supported by the data. Hypothesis nine was significant in the opposite direction and therefore was not confirmed. An alternative explanation will be provided for the nonsupport of hypothesis nine.

The results from this study were generally expected and were consistent with past research on race, ideology, and stereotypes (Abraham & Appiah, 2006; Brock, 2009; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Kellstedt, 2000; Kerbel & Bloom, 2005). As discussed in the literature review, the continued proliferation of stereotypes in society provides more opportunities to communicate misunderstanding and racial misconceptions (Dates & Barlow, 1990; Gorham, 1999). The findings from this research indicate that racial stereotypes are consistently present in political blogs. These findings are consistent with Gorham's (1999) argument that racial stereotypes have the ability to manipulate different types of media content and representations by maintaining racial myths and classifications. Allport (1954) was concerned in the early years of mass media about the potential of newspapers to stereotype and influence how Blacks were seen in society. Those concerns were justified (Martindale, 1985). Yet, little is known about political blogs, stereotypical content, and effects. Various studies have outlined racial stereotypes in mainstream media, but online communications have yet to be considered in any detail or rigor (Dates & Barlow, 1990; Dixon, 2000, 2008). Although blogs tend to

have the smallest readership of online communication, they are an inexpensive and mostly trouble-free way to express individual views that have the potential to perpetrate racial misconceptions, especially with the lack of proprietary regulations. As evidenced by this research, stereotypes continue to be present in mainstream media. What is also interesting when considering political blogs is the many opportunities that one blog has to engage in racial stereotypes? The individual reads the initial blog, then there are other blogs referenced through hyperlinks, then there is often also a video or picture that the blog viewer can save or share, so it is possible for one blog to influence through stereotypes and racial framing repeatedly with one single blog post.

For example, Think Progress, a liberal political blog, discussed racial stereotypes in this post, entitled "Stereotypes" (Yglesias, 2007, May 30):

“Given Obama’s racial background,” writes Brendan Nyhan, “the danger is that these attacks will be used to trigger ugly racial stereotypes about him, particularly once Republicans shift from bong jokes to talking about cocaine, which Obama admitted to trying in his first book.” I dunno about this. It seems to me that if you have an African-American candidate who’s admitted to past cocaine use, that attacking him for past cocaine use is less an appeal to ugly racial stereotypes than a straightforward attack on his past drug use. An appeal to ugly racial stereotypes would be implying that a black candidate must have used cocaine in the past because, hey, that’s what those people do. I don’t personally have any problem with the idea that of a president who used cocaine in the past (though, admittedly, the George W. Bush experience hasn’t been very pleasant) but insofar as some

voters do have a problem with it, they're entitled to have a problem with it irrespective of the candidate's race. (para. 1)

This blog was coded for racial stereotypes. Another example, takes a look at the conservative blog, Michelle Malkin, (Malkin, 2007, December 20) and an entry entitled "Hurricane Katrina Rent Subsidies Expire—Along with Houstonians' Patience":

The Houston Chronicle prints a story about Hurricane Katrina families in Texas whose federal rent subsidies have run dry: More than two years after Hurricane Katrina transplanted thousands of New Orleanians into Houston, the lives of the most vulnerable — the unemployed and working poor — are starting to unravel. Once kept afloat on federal rental assistance, these families are losing their benefits and are ending up on Houston's streets, activists and social workers say. The families are going from cheap motel to cheap motel or doubling up in other people's homes, sleeping in armchairs or on floors. Those lucky to have transportation are living in their cars. "We have gone from pillar to post," Hickman said. "I can't see myself living on the streets." The 59-year-old was disqualified from rental assistance after she broke up with her husband who was designated as the head of the household — thus, the sole recipient for FEMA rental assistance. In the last month, a second displacement of hundreds of people has become more pronounced as the process of transferring the FEMA program to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development got under way. The shift between the two agencies has not been seamless with many local landlords, who accepted FEMA money before, opting out of the program that will require tenants to start contributing to their rent payments March 1. So far, 48 landlords

representing 68 properties have said no to the HUD program, said Spurgeon

Robinson, the director of Harris County's Disaster Housing Assistance Program, or DHAP. This has forced hundreds of households with no money to scramble to find security deposits and to move on again. The majority of transplanted Katrina evacuees in Harris County, an estimated 100,000, are not on federal housing assistance and have moved on with their lives, but there is a small minority of people who still are struggling, community activists say.

The newspaper crusaded on behalf of one family—a welfare mother who works part-time and has seven children: Eight months ago, Michelle Mercadel, a part-time cashier, and her seven children—Netchelle, 17, Kiara, 15, Brittany, 14, Gerald Guy, 9, Brea, 6, Reginisha, 5, and Brian, 18 months—moved in with her mother. HUD informed the family that it would have to move out because the apartment was overcrowded. Priscilla Mercadel, who initially had been processed as a one-member household by FEMA, also could not receive a larger housing allowance. “What am I supposed to do— leave my daughter and my grandkids on the street?” said an emotional Priscilla Mercadel, 57, whose eyes were red from sobbing last week. She and her daughter hastily packed their belongings two weeks ago and feared that a security guard would escort them off the property. She had been given a 72-hour eviction notice from the manager at Mira Vista Apartments. The women have been frantically looking for another apartment but haven't found one large enough.

No one came last week. Nor this week. Mira Vista's management and corporate offices in Dallas did not return phone calls to the Chronicle. After the

Chronicle inquired about the Mercadels, Boyd said the county would increase their allowance. What's most interesting is not so much the story, but the reaction to the story. The piece has garnered more than 700 comments so far, with heated debate over the limits of compassion. (para. 1)

Hypothesis nine was not supported but it was found to be significant in the opposite direction; specifically, instead of the predicted outcome that liberal blogs would be more inclined to include racial stereotypes, the results indicated that liberal mainstream media included racial stereotypes more often. This outcome was not expected, but as we discuss the results, it is not unreasonable to consider that the liberal mainstream media was more active and participated in more media framing than may have been originally predicted. The following is an example of racial stereotypes that were coded in the liberal mainstream media. A blog entry found in Talking Points Media (Marshall, 2008, July 31) was entitled "Newton, Race and Karl Rove."

To understand the dynamics of this campaign you have to understand the role of Karl Rove and his protégés who've taken over McCain's campaign. Rove himself previewed the key messages of the campaign early in the year in two vignettes about Obama—first, Obama as the "trash-talking" basketball player who's both cocky and "lazy," and second, Obama as the cocky black guy at the country club with a hot chick on his arm who's looking down at you. These are the themes that are going to be returned to again and again in this campaign. They're what McCain is running on. Obama as a flashy entertainer, the guy reaching above his station, the guy who ends up in video montages with Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. The Rove-McCain line is that none of this stuff is beyond the pale. How

are they supposed to help it if they're running against a guy who's more suited to be an entertainer than a leader and uppity and lazy to boot?

Another example of how racial stereotypes were coded in this study was found in the liberal blog Eschaton (Atrios, 2008, March 1). The blog was titled "Generations":

Louis Farrakhan is a very scary black man who everybody assumed had been dead for twenty years, and denouncing him means about as much these days as denouncing Peter Frampton's hair. Now, I would say something like that, wouldn't I just? being as I am a callow and thoughtless Gen X'er with no appreciation for the heated racial politics of the 1970's and the pure rock-n-roll awesomeness of listening to some bell-bottom'ed tit warble into a vocoder for 20 minutes. I used to imagine there would be some generational shift in the media, leaving behind the previous baggage, and things might improve. But from what I can tell you have the perpetually lost in the 60s crowd, the 70s anti-partisan crowd, the 80s Reagan is The Awesome crowd, the 90s Republican Revolution and Bill Clinton's Penis is a WMD Crowd, and then the 00s George Bush's crotch looks awesome in that flight suit crowd.

The above post was coded for racial stereotypes of Black men and violence.

A final example was from an article found in the *New York Times* (Thompson (2008) :

Here was a black woman, a mother, who grew up poor, learned to sleep without heat and rose above that to get an Ivy League education," Professor Ogletree added. "But she was also the kind of woman who would take her shoes off because her feet hurt. She was real from the moment she stepped on stage.

This author was commenting on previous media material, but that type of analysis was not accounted for in this study. However, it does allow for the positioning of the alternative explanation utilized with hypothesis three and hypothesis six as an opportunity to explain why liberal mainstream media might have included more racial stereotypes than liberal political blogs in their content during this presidential election. Specifically, the *New York Times*, which prides itself on being an objective news organization, may have taken the opportunity to respond to racial issues, analyze opinions, or clear up inconsistencies. That would surely increase the opportunities available for liberal mainstream media's racial framing, as would the concern regarding the competition for online bloggers for political news and information. In addition, it is important again to recall the post hoc analysis for liberal bloggers and liberal mainstream media on the overall tone of the media content. Liberal blogs, shown in Table 10, included racial stereotypes within their blogs 9.0% of the time compared to liberal mainstream media at 13.8%. But liberal blog were negative overall 51.9 % of time compared to liberal mainstream media with 44.5% of the time. The post hoc analysis of racial stereotypes indicate that the content in political blogs was considered negative 11.0% while liberal mainstream media was found to be negative 10.0%. Thus, liberal mainstream media did include racial stereotypes more often, but the incidents were not found to be as negative overall. One could surmise, based on the explanation and these results that articles that explained or discussed rumors may have been coded for racial stereotypes, but the overall incident may not have been considered negative.

Modern Racism

The next three hypotheses predicted the presence of modern racism. The tenth hypothesis predicted that conservative blogs would likely have more occurrences of modern racism than liberal blogs; the eleventh hypothesis assumed that conservative blogs were more likely to frame instances of modern racism than conservative traditional media; and the twelfth hypothesis predicted that liberal blogs would be more likely to frame instances of modern racism than liberal mainstream media. These hypotheses were in line with previous research on modern racism (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Kinder & Sears, 1981; McConahay, 1982; Sears, 1988; Sears & Kinder, 1971) and media (Dixon, 2008; Entman, 2000, 1994; Hutchings & Valentino, 2004). Interestingly, hypothesis ten and hypothesis twelve were not supported. This was unexpected. Hypothesis eleven was supported as predicted. An alternative explanation for the unsupported will be offered.

The concept of modern racism was introduced by Sears and Kinder (1971) and was introduced into communication research by Robert Entman (1990, 1992). Modern racism is difficult to represent in visual presentations and even more difficult in text. In his work, Entman (1990, 1992) found that news programs were perpetrating modern racism in regular newscasts that contained crime and political news. Modern racism includes a set of premises: (a) Blacks are no longer discriminated against, (b) Blacks are lazy and don't want to work hard, (c) Blacks receive too many governmental handouts, and (d) Blacks still get more than they deserve (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears et al., 2000).

Modern racism is thought to be found most often in content that is correlated with individualism (Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002). It is often found in media content seeking to influence White attitudes regarding policy issues, and is most often found in

conservative content (Domke, 2001; Valentino & Hutchings, 2004). Previous research on ideology and modern racism shows that modern racism content would be embraced most often in conservative media, whether blogs or mainstream media (Sears & Kosterman, 2000). Yet, hypotheses ten and twelve were unsupported.

Hypothesis eleven predicted that conservative blogs would frame modern racism more often than conservative mainstream media. As discussed in the literature review, the political blogosphere opens to the public an opportunity to mesh with groups who have the same ideals and beliefs, which is one of the positive attributes for the people who utilize them. Although there are no restrictions online or for the political blogosphere, it is reasonable to assume that conservative bloggers would be more inclined and welcome the opportunity to extend their thoughts and ideals in a more covert manner. Mendelberg (2001) explained that it was conservatives in the sixties and seventies who utilized a more covert rhetoric to begin mobilizing White voters. Research indicates that conservatives were more inclined to utilize implicit methods to express their ideas about race (Burdein, 2007; Sears & Kinder, 1971). For instance, an example was found in the blog Michelle Malkin blog (Malkin, 2007, December 22) entitled “Slum Dweller with a 60-inch Television”:

Mixed in with the rent-a-rioters who stormed the New Orleans City Council meeting over public housing were a few homegrown thugs who refuse to be weaned from the public teat without a finger-pointing, racial-epithet-hurling fight. Case in point: That angry lady in the BDS shirt shouting “I will not be treated like a slave!” and “Back up and Shut up! Shut up, white boy! Shut up, white boy!” at a citizen attending the council hearing. Watch closely and note that there is a child

behind her being subjected to her diatribe against the man. She's your tax dollars at work: Right to return? Taxpayers have a right to tell their government to return their hard-earned money being squandered by race-hustling grievance-mongers like the loud-mouthed TV lady. She should turn her jabbing finger towards herself and follow her own advice. (para. 1)

Another illustration of modern racism in this study was found in the conservative blog, HotAir (Morrissey, 2008, 16, July). The blog, titled "McCain to NAACP: Schools, Economics The Key":

Knowing history is important, obviously, and all this makes for good reading. But I need to break it you: blacks who vote for Democrats do not care about this history. The only bit of history they care about is the one that provides excuses and finger-pointing opportunities: ancestors in bondage, great-grandparents and grandparents struggling to gain first class citizenship in this country, etc. They don't care who did what to or for whom in the past. All they care about is who's offering them the most goodies today. Exactly. I get regular e-mails exhorting me to remind readers that Republicans pushed the 13th Amendment into being, which is both true and utterly irrelevant. The Republicans need to sell conservative policies as real solutions, not point to an army of dead Democrats as a reason to support the GOP. Black voters, like all American voters, are interested in policy and how it addresses their needs. McCain has made that argument, and even though Barack Obama will win well over 90% of their votes, McCain has started a real dialogue based on the present and future, not on the past.

These examples do correspond to research on modern racism (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears et al., 2000).

Hypotheses ten and twelve were not supported by this data. Hypothesis ten proposed that conservative blogs would be more likely to exhibit modern racism than liberal blogs. Hypothesis twelve predicted that liberal blogs would be more apt to include modern racism in the content would liberal mainstream media. Both of these were not supported.

An alternative explanation for hypothesis ten seems to be quite similar to several of the other areas of nonsupport in this study. As discussed earlier in this section, the liberal blogosphere increased during the 2008 presidential campaign (Owen, 2009). Previous research that would suggest the dominance of the conservative bloggers was challenged during this election. So, it seems practical that both conservative and liberal bloggers would be involved to the maximum extent to exploit their brand of ideas to the public. It is appropriate, then, that there would no significant difference in liberal and conservative blogs. In fact, it seems that both conservative and liberal bloggers "came to win" and the results seem to allude to that in this study.

Hypothesis twelve focused on the modern racism found in liberal blogs and liberal mainstream media. The results suggested that liberal mainstream media was more likely to include modern racism than liberal blogs. A liberal mainstream media example was found in *The New York Times* (Blow, 2008, August 9) entitled "Racism and Race":

This is supposed to be the Democrats' year of destiny. Bush is hobbling out of office, the economy is in the toilet, voters are sick of the war and the party's wunderkind candidate is raking in money hand over fist. So why is the

presidential race a statistical dead heat? The pundits have offered a host of reasons, but one in particular deserves more exploration: racism. Barack Obama's candidacy has shed some light on the extremes of racism in America—how much has dissipated (especially among younger people) and how much remains. According to a July New York Times/CBS News poll, when whites were asked whether they would be willing to vote for a black candidate, 5 percent confessed that they would not. That's not so bad, right? But wait. The pollsters then rephrased the question to get a more accurate portrait of the sentiment. They asked the same whites if most of the people they knew would vote for a black candidate. Nineteen percent said that those they knew would not. Depending on how many people they know and how well they know them, this universe of voters could be substantial. That's bad.

Welcome to the murky world of modern racism, where most of the open animus has been replaced by a shadowy bias that is difficult to measure. As Obama gently put it in his race speech, today's racial "resentments aren't always expressed in polite company." However, they can be— and possibly will be—expressed in the privacy of the voting booth. If the percentage of white voters who cannot bring themselves to vote for a black candidate were only 15 percent, that would be more than all black voters combined. (Coincidentally, it also would be more than all voters under 24 years old.) That amounts to a racial advantage for John McCain.

And this sentiment stretched across ideological lines. Just as many white independents as Republicans said that most of the people they knew would not

vote for a black candidate, and white Democrats were not far behind. Also, remember that during the Democratic primaries, up to 20 percent of white voters in some states said that the race of the candidate was important to them. Few of those people voted for the black guy.

Some might say that turnout is fair play, citing the fact that 89 percent of blacks say they plan to vote for Obama. That level of support represents a racial advantage for him, too, right? Not necessarily. Blacks overwhelmingly vote Democratic in the general election anyway. According to CNN exit polls John Kerry got 88 percent of the black vote in 2004. Think racism isn't a major factor in this election? Think again.

The article was coded for modern racism. It seems the author discussed modern racism in the article. While this study cannot address intent, the post hoc analysis does very adequately enhance this alternative explanation. The liberal mainstream media in this study, the *New York Times*, included modern racism 6.9% of the time compared with 3.1% for liberal blogs. The enhanced opportunities for the liberal mainstream media to provide political news and information during this election were many, as evidenced by the aforementioned article. The post hoc analysis looking at the modern racism results provided similar results. Liberal blogs with modern racism content were seen as negative 74.1% of the time when compared to liberal mainstream media with 63.5%, Liberal blogs were also seen as neutral 3.0% of the time, while liberal mainstream media had no neutral occurrences. The post hoc results reiterate that not all of the occurrences were negative and the alternative explanation seems quite plausible for this hypothesis. The next section will discuss the directions for future research.

Directions for Future Research

This current study presents several opportunities for additional research. It is apparent that there is much still to be understood in the area of explicit and implicit racial framing. This research examined the presence of racial framing, but had no explanatory capabilities in place, so extending this research would be helpful in discussing whether all racial framing measures the same properties. This would be a logical extension of the current research in this study.

Another logical extension of this current research would be to examine the tone of the messages to detect their influence on individual perceptions.

The findings from this study overwhelmingly suggest that additional research is needed to understand the realistic implications of racial framing in political blogs. Although there is available research on political blogs, there is a dearth of studies that incorporate political blogs and race.

Based on Technorati's (2008, 2009) studies on the blogosphere, there are 150 million posts a day. Political bloggers have unlimited opportunity for influence. The responsibility for accuracy and objectiveness is not a prerequisite of posting in the blogosphere—quite the opposite. If readers have a particular point of view, they can locate similar perspectives in the blogosphere. While this study did not look at blogs associated with mainstream media, it would be interesting to analyze those blogs because they do contribute to the blogosphere, and they generally subscribe to the same journalistic practices held by mainstream media.

This research has determined that blogs contain racial framing. Why should that matter? If readers are offended, they can point and click somewhere else. It is a free,

open environment, which is also the grand promise of the Internet. Generally, bloggers are not concerned with framing inappropriate messages. In most cases, the blog posts are personal diatribes. It can be surmised that without regulatory intervention, bloggers are not going to be receptive to any limitations.

When Gerbner (1976) began his research on violence and television with the Cultural Indicators, regulatory constraints for television were not as stringent as they are today. The industry did not police itself as fervently; however, as the field grew and the apparent negative effects were correlated with a particular media, more regulatory involvement became standard. Very few in the industry envision a regulatory system for the World Wide Web anytime soon. Additional research on race, framing, and political blogs would be helpful in establishing foundations to begin serious investigations on the harmful effects of blogging and the Internet. This study has initiated that process.

Controlled experiments would greatly benefit this area of research. Focusing on the posted content in blogs would provide valuable insight into whether racial framing in political blogs influences racial attitudes.

Multimethod approaches would also broaden the scope of this area of research. It would be useful to quantitatively analyze a set group of blogs for frequency and presence of racial framing, and then qualitatively provide more detailed explanations. It could provide a more comprehensive awareness of how these blogs integrate race into their content.

As the blogs for this study were being analyzed, various hyperlinks linking to different blogs were observed, but they were not in the purview of this study. There is limited research on moderate, independent or minority blogs (Meraz, 2007). Another

opportunity for future research would be to expand the types of blogs that are analyzed for different perspectives and patterns of racial framing.

Finally, this study identified racial stereotypes but disassembling the blogs by racial images and portrayals would allow the researcher more opportunity of interpretation and influence of the content. A mix method approach would seem to work best for this type of research.

Limitations

This research presents some very noteworthy findings, but as with most other studies, several limitations must also be considered.

Sampling limitations. The first limitation to consider would be the sampling procedure for the blogs and mainstream media. Because the number of articles from the mainstream media and the number of postings from political blogs were not equal, interpretations and non-significant results of mainstream media data may have been affected. According to Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2009), the goal of the researcher is to derive an appropriate size sample to represent the population while maximizing individual time and effort. In developing the sampling frame, addressing multiple blogs per date, and assessing some limitations or instituting a random selection within the blogs, would have decreased the blog-to-mainstream media ratio, and may have allowed for a more representative sample of the mainstream media data in the study.

To develop and code the mainstream media content, a search was devised using both LexisNexis and Factiva to retrieve articles from the replica (print) versions of the newspapers using the search string *presidential candidates*. However, Riffe, Aust, and Lacy warn that the distribution of newspaper sampling is not always normal, and trying

to obtain a useable sample by relying mainly on random sampling does not guarantee a sufficient sample. In addition, Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (2009) caution that to choose too few could produce unreliable and invalid results and incorporating too many results could skew the results. Finally, they acknowledged that utilizing a planned and constructed sample delivers a reliable range of content with the consistency necessary in conducting a mainstream media analysis. In retrospect, considering the multiplicity of storylines and agendas available during the 2008 presidential election, expanding a more flexible alternative to story determination and selection criteria would have assisted in acquiring a more equitable base for the study's mainstream media content.

Coding limitations. The original plan for this project was to hire graduate students to assist with the coding of the large quantity of data. Although all individuals were interviewed and trained, all of the coders dropped out of the project due to personal and academic obligations. One coder did partially complete the assigned calendars but eventually dropped out as well. However, in spite of a hard deadline, no additional financial incentives, and no planned alternatives, the data were gathered and coded. However, academic research is not for everyone, even with rewards and financial incentives, so in retrospect, the warning signs were clear and perhaps listening to them as well as my individual instincts would have signaled me to prepare an alternative coding strategy, perhaps organizing a group of alternate individuals who were trained and on reserve to help facilitate the process. Having this plan in reserve might have given me, the primary researcher, additional opportunities to be more observant in the equitable collection of my two groups of data.

Also, the coding apparatus for this research was an online tool available through the University of Oklahoma. The primary motivations for utilizing this tool were that it would be available to the coders who were located in different parts of the country, it was designed to account for large samples of data, and most importantly, it was available to download into a workable SPSS data file. Unfortunately, it was not a tool designed specifically for coding data. The tool was slow and difficult to manipulate, perhaps because there was too much data or because it was a University of Oklahoma site and utilizing it anywhere else would cause significant problems. Meraz (2007) utilizes a system specifically for management and coding data. Such systems have several benefits, including the ability to have the data detached, modified, and accessible in several different formats. Yet, such systems are usually very expensive and the licenses are usually held by departments or universities. So, in hindsight, doing additional research on management systems more specific than survey mechanisms would have been reasonable and recommended. Also, working as a student in the communications discipline, I should have known to not rely on the technology as my only means of organizing data. Developing several suitable alternatives to code, manage, and organize the data would have helped me in maximizing the most important and crucial element—time—and may have increased my data reliability.

The lack of research in the area of racial framing was a limitation in several ways. Although there has been research on implicit and explicit racial framing, very little has been done on textual content and online media. In designing my method, there were past studies to validate my approaches to blog and mainstream media searches. However, having previous studies to confirm the direction of the research would have been helpful

to say the least. Yet, in hindsight, although additional resources may have been helpful and sometimes necessary, I learned several invaluable lessons that I needed to experience for my future research and projects

Methodological limitations. In this research, with the large amount of data, content analysis was the best choice to gather and analyze the data. There were several reasons why this is true. First, the data could be examined in its natural state; no initial preparations were necessary to begin the coding process. Next, it was inexpensive. There were expenses including the coders and mailing expenses, but to code the data, there were no additional equipment or supplies needed to begin the research. Finally, it was flexible and efficient and could be done any time and from any location that had Internet connections. Initially, that was one of the primary reasons for using content analysis; all coders were busy, and being able to work from home, or from their personal computers, was definitely a bonus.

While this method did prove to work well to gather the data for this study, there were also a few limitations. Content analysis is basically a descriptive method, so it was only able to provide analysis for what was actual and present in the data, not inferred. Some of the more crucial answers were not available during this study because of how the data was collected and analyzed. The data was coded and it was placed into a statistical program; there was no flexibility in the interpretation of those results, and the inflexibility may have caused misrepresentation of some of study results. Finally, the process was very time consuming. Each blog had to be analyzed individually and sometimes read several times to completely code for this analysis.

Conclusion

The goal of the study was to identify how race was framed in the media during the 2008 presidential election. There is a shortage in the literature on racial framing and political blogs, so there were no academic works for comparison in this area. This study opened up this area of research in several very significant ways.

First, the study discovered that political blogs contained racial framing during the 2008 presidential campaign. Although Mendelberg (2001) suggests that explicit racial framing was not found as often in political communication, it was consistently found in blogs and in mainstream media in this study. Blogs were a key element in the 2008 presidential election. That is consistent with the results of this study.

Second, the results specified that there was no significant difference in the racial framing in conservative and liberal blogs during this presidential campaign. Liberal bloggers have become a significant voice in the political blogosphere and this would be consistent with the results of this study. However, conservative blogs were found to be more likely to include implicit racial framing than liberal blogs. This was also consistent with earlier research discussed in this area.

Next, liberal blogs were predicted to more likely include racial framing than liberal mainstream media in several of the study hypotheses. It was established that liberal mainstream media was more likely to include explicit racial framing, implicit racial framing, racial stereotype, and modern racism than liberal blogs. Alternate explanations considered the historical component of the 2008 presidential election and the growth of the political blogosphere as explanations for these areas of nonsupport. .

The results from this study indicated that both the conservative and liberal mainstream media were active in racial framing throughout this study. Owen (2009)

explains that because of the duration of the actual presidential campaign, mainstream media found different ways to remain significant, including character analysis, polls, surveys, and breaking news. Mainstream media adapted and developed different platforms to work within for this presidential campaign. Political blogs were instrumental in providing alternatives to mainstream media, providing different options and opportunities for readers to take part in the political blogosphere, but traditional media, according to these results, was consistently responsible for racial framing.

It was also discovered that racial stereotypes and modern racism were included in the liberal and conservative media in this study. Conservative blogs were predicted to include more racial stereotypes and modern racism in their posts, and on the whole, the study data supported that hypothesis.

Finally, race remains a salient topic for academic research based on the results from this study. Although, the various campaigns consciously sought to keep the campaign focus away from race, it was discussed consistently in the blogs and mainstream media, and based on the historical nature of this presidential campaign, it is unclear whether it would have been possible to defer that agenda. This is consistent with Reeves's (1997) research, which surmised that most often it was the media that inserted race into the campaign.

The purpose of this study was to examine racial framing during the 2008 presidential campaign. This study observed political blogs and traditional media. Political blogs were chosen because the political blogosphere is growing and is becoming increasingly influential. There is currently very little research being conducted to examine political blogs and race.

The script for the future of blogging has not been written yet. The Pew Research Center (2010) conducted research on teens and young adults and their Internet use which suggested traditional blog use among that population has declined by approximately 13% between 2006 and 2009. The traditional blog has been replaced for young adults by FaceBook and Twitter. However, the blogosphere continues to grow with over 150 million posts per day (Technorati, 2009). New independent political blogs continue to emerge providing fresh perspectives to the landscape. New technology will be instrumental in determining the future of blogging, specifically the iPad and mobile technology. The future of blogging will continue to hold the promise of participatory citizenship, open debates without restrictions and open access for anyone.

Taken together, the aggregate findings identify the consistent racial framing that occurs in political blogs. For communication scholars, the findings indicate the need for continued effort and activity in this area. For journalists and bloggers, the findings can provide insight to the possible effects of the way the media frames issues. We exist in a country mindful of race, and awed by technology. The media continues to facilitate the news agenda. It is important to continue the inquiry into how all types of media engage and represent race.

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Table 1

Blog and Mainstream Media Names and Political Ideology

Name of Blog	Political Ideology	Frequency of Posts/Article
Ace of Spades	Conservative	145 (6.5%)
Crooks and Liars	Liberal	160 (7.1%)
Eschaton	Liberal	107 (4.8%)
Feministe	Liberal	118 (5.3%)
Hot Air	Conservative	246 (10.9%)
Little Green Footballs	Conservative	145 (6.5%)
Michelle Macklin	Conservative	136 (6.1%)
Powerline	Conservative	159 (7.1%)
Talking Points Memo	Liberal	247 (11.0%)
Think Progress	Liberal	151 (6.7%)
New York Times	Liberal	391 (17.4%)
Wall Street Journal	Conservative	242 (10.8)
	Totals	2247

Table 2

Conservative and Liberal Blogs Explicit Racial Framing

	<u>Title</u>		<u>Story Content</u>		<u>Race Mention</u>	
	Explicit	No Explicit	Explicit	No Explicit	Explicit	No Explicit
Conservative	49	783	127	705	56	776
	5.9%	94.1%	15.3%	84.7%	6.7%	93.3%
Liberal	44	738	107	675	41	741
	5.6%	94.4%	13.7%	86.3%	5.2%	94.8%
Total	93	1521	234	1380	97	1517

Note: This table includes three chi-square findings. Results are included for Explicit Title, Explicit Content and Race Mention of a political candidate found in Conservative and Liberal Blogs

Table 3

Conservative Blogs and Conservative Mainstream Media Explicit Racial Framing

	<u>Title</u>		<u>Story Content</u>		<u>Race Mention</u>	
	Explicit	No Explicit	Explicit	No Explicit	Explicit	No Explicit
Blogs	49	783	127	705	56	776
	5.9%	94.1%	15.3%	84.7%	6.7%	93.3%
Media	6	236	19	223	30	212
	2.5%	97.5%	7.9%	92.1%	12.4%	87.6%
Total	55	1019	146	928	86	988

Note: This table includes three chi-square findings. Results are included for Explicit Title, Explicit Content and Race Mention of a political candidate found in Conservative Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 4

Liberal Blogs and Liberal Mainstream Media Explicit Racial Framing

	<u>Title</u>		<u>Story Content</u>		<u>Race Mention</u>	
	Explicit	No Explicit	Explicit	No Explicit	Explicit	No Explicit
Blogs	44	738	107	675	41	741
	5.6%	94.4%	13.7%	86.3%	5.2%	94.8%
Media	40	351	114	277	82	309
	10.2%	89.8%	29.2%	70.8%	21.0%	79.0%
Total	84	1089	221	952	123	1050

Note: This table includes three chi-square findings. Results are included for Explicit Title, Explicit Content and Race Mention of a political candidate found in Liberal Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 5

Conservative and Liberal Blogs and Implicit Racial Framing

	<u>Title</u>		<u>Story Content</u>	
	Implicit	No Implicit	Implicit	No Implicit
Conservative	165 19.8%	667 80.2%	223 26.8	609 73.2%
Liberal	92 11.8%	690 88.2%	135 17.3%	647 82.7%
Total	257	1357	358	1256

Note: This table includes two chi-square findings. Results are included for Implicit Title and Implicit Content in Conservative and Liberal Blogs

Table 6

Conservative Blogs and Media and Implicit Racial Framing

	<u>Title</u>		<u>Story Content</u>	
	Implicit	No Implicit	Implicit	No Implicit
Blogs	165 19.8%	667 80.2%	223 26.8%	609 73.2%
Media	6 2.5%	236 97.5%	11 4.5%	231 95.5%
Total	171	903	234	840

Note: This table includes two chi-square findings. Results are included for Implicit Title and Implicit Content in Conservative Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 7

Liberal Blogs and Media and Implicit Racial Framing

	<u>Title</u>		<u>Story Content</u>	
	Implicit	No Implicit	Implicit	No Implicit
Blogs	92 11.8%	690 88.2%	135 17.3%	647 82.7%
Media	36 9.2%	355 90.8%	128 32.7%	263 67.3%
Total	128	1045	263	910

Note: This table includes two chi-square findings. Results are included for Implicit Title and Implicit Content in Liberal Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 8

Conservative and Liberal Blogs and Racial Stereotypes

<u>Racial Stereotypes</u>		
	Stereotypes	No Stereotypes
Conservative	112 13.5%	720 86.5%
Liberal	70 9.0%	712 91.0%
Total	182	1432

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Racial Stereotypes and Conservative and Liberal Blogs

Table 9

Conservative Blogs and Media Racial Stereotyping
Racial Stereotypes

	Stereotypes	No Stereotypes
Blogs	112 13.5%	720 86.5%
Media	13 5.4%	229 94.6%
Total	125	949

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Racial Stereotypes and Conservative Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 10

Liberal Blogs and Media and Racial Stereotypes

	<u>Racial Stereotypes</u>	
	Stereotypes	No Stereotypes
Blogs	70 9.0%	712 91.0%
Media	54 13.8%	337 86.2%
Total	124	1049

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Racial Stereotypes and Liberal Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 11

Conservative and Liberal Blogs and Modern Racism

	<u>Modern Racism</u>	
	Modern Racism	No Modern Racism
Conservative	41 4.9%	791 95.1%
Liberal	24 3.1%	758 96.9%
Total	65	1549

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Modern Racism and Conservative and Liberal Blogs

Table 12

Conservative Blogs and Media and Modern Racism

	<u>Modern Racism</u>	
	Modern Racism	No Modern Racism
Blogs	41 4.9%	791 95.1%
Media	0 0%	242 100%
Total	41	1033

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Modern Racism and Conservative Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 13

Liberal Blogs and Media and Modern Racism

	<u>Modern Racism</u>	
	Modern Racism	No Modern Racism
Blogs	24 3.1%	758 96.9%
Media	27 6.9%	364 93.1%
Total	51	1122

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Modern Racism and Liberal Blogs and Mainstream Media

Table 14

Conservative and Liberal Blogs and Overall Tone

	Positive Overall	Negative Overall	Neutral Overall
Conservative	67 8.1%	478 57.5%	287 34.5%
Liberal	63 8.1%	406 51.9%	313 40.0%
Totals	130	884	600

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for Overall Tone and Conservative and Liberal Blogs

Table 15

Liberal Blogs and Liberal Mainstream Media and Overall Tone

	<i>Positive Overall</i>	<i>Negative Overall</i>	<i>Neutral Overall</i>
<i>Liberal Blogs</i>	63 8.1%	406 51.9%	313 40.0%
<i>Liberal Media</i>	7 1.8%	175 44.8%	209 53.5%
<i>Totals</i>	70	581	522

Note: This table includes the chi-square findings for the Overall Tone and Liberal Blogs and Mainstream Media

**APPENDIX A:
INSTRUCTIONS AND BASIC GUIDELINES FOR CODERS**

This study is investigating racial framing during the 2008 presidential campaign. We will be identifying and examining political blogs and transcripts from two national newspapers. In these media, we will be observing explicit and implicit racial appeals, racial stereotypes, and modern racism.

With each codeable entry, a variable is being coded. Each blog post or newspaper transcript should be coded separately. A list of the blogs and newspapers, and a calendar with the blogs and newspapers to be sampled on that date, should be included in your materials.

This printed code sheet is to be utilized when coding the data online. The online system allows the coder to choose the appropriate option. The data will then be stored and formatted in SPSS format. The online system keeps an accurate record, provides a backup, and transfers the data to SPSS for analysis, thus supporting the reliability of the instrument and the handling of large amounts of data.

If you are unsure about whether something should be coded, please go ahead and code the material and send an e-mail to flippin@ou.edu with the following information:

Type of media

Name of blog or newspaper

Your name

Date

Blog or article title

Date of the post or article

Your question or issue of concern

If there are any other concerns or questions regarding this study, please contact me at flippin@ou.edu. Your willingness to assist with this study is very much appreciated.

Monica Flippin Wynn

Primary Researcher

Causing a Ruckus Coding Sheet*

Coding is mandatory on these items.

Please complete the following information with each post or article item that you code.

1. Your Name

2. Coder Identification Number

Individual Coder Identification Numbers

1 = Monica

2 = Sedelta

3 = Josh

4 = Courtney

5 = Charli

3. Date you coded materials

4. The original date of your selection (the value must be between 02/10/2007 and 11/06/2008, inclusive)

5. Type of Media*

Please select one of the following responses

1=Political Blog

2=Newspaper article

6. Please list the name of the media you are observing.

Please select the responses that apply.

1=Ace of Spades

2=Crooks and Liars

3=Eschaton

4=Feministe

5=Hot Air

6=Little Green Footballs

7=Michelle Macklin

8=New York Times

9=PowerLine

10=Talking Points Memo

11=Think Progress

12=Wall Street Journal

7. If you are coding a blog, is there more than one post on this date?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

3=Coding Newspaper

8. If you are observing a newspaper article, where was this article found?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Front Page/World

2=US

3=Coding a blog

9. What is the political ideology of this blog/article?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Conservative

2=Liberal

The next question asks you to specify the format of the message. Specifically, how the content was presented in the blog post or article. If the content was objective and factual, it should be reported as news/information. If the content was subjective or based on opinion, it should be reported as an editorial or opinion. Finally, if it is a personal statement by or about the author of the blog, it should be reported as a personal statement

10. Based on your observations, how would describe the blog post/article?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Editorial or opinion only

2=News/Information only

3=Personal statement of the author

4=News and opinion

*****Please remember*****

This study is looking at the racial framing of explicit and implicit appeals of African Americans. There are going to be implicit and explicit appeals in reference to other groups and genders. That is not what we are coding, so when you code, race is your only focus. Thank you.

Explicit racial appeals and Blacks/African Americans.

An explicit racial appeal will be coded using Mendelberg's definition. A racial appeal (communication) is explicit if it uses racial nouns or adjectives to endorse white prerogatives, to express anti-Black sentiment, to represent racial stereotypes, or to portray a threat from African Americans. An explicit message uses such words as "Blacks," "race," "racial," or "African Americans" to express anti-Black sentiment or to make racially stereotypical or derogatory statements. Any noun referring to race or ethnicity should be coded.

Mendelberg, T. (2001). *The race card: Campaign strategy, implicit messages, and the norm of equality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

11. What is the title of the blog or article that you are coding? (If there is more than one blog post on this particular day, then successive code sheets should be completed for each post.).

12. Based on your observations, does the blog title contain an explicit racial appeal?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

13. Based on your observations does the content of this blog post or article include any explicit racial appeals?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

14. If the blog post or article contains explicit racial appeals, please specify how many.

15. Based on your observations, does the blog post or article mention the name of a political candidate?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

16. Please list the political candidates mentioned by name in this blog/article.

Please select all that apply.

1=Hillary Clinton

2=John Edward

3=Rudy Giuliani

4=Mike Huckabee

5=Dennis Kucinich

6=John McCain

7=Barack Obama

8=Ron Paul

9=Bill Richardson

10=Mitt Romney

11=Fred Thompson

12=Other

13=No political candidate was mentioned in this blog post

17. If a political candidate(s) was mentioned, does the blog post/article mention the race or ethnicity of the political candidate(s)? *

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

15=Not applicable

18. What is the racial or ethnic classification of the political candidate(s) mentioned in the blog/article?

Please select all that apply.*

1=Asian or Asian American

2=Black or African American

3=Hispanic or Latino

4=Native American or American Indian

5=White or Caucasian

6=Mixed Race

7=Other, please specify

15=Not Applicable

19. If race was mentioned in discussing the political candidates, what was the tone of the discussion?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Positive

2=Negative

3=Neutral

4=NA

20. Based on your observations, does the blog post or article mention a candidate's voters or supporters?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

21. Was the race or ethnicity of the voters mentioned in this blog post/article?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

15=Not applicable

22. What was the race or ethnicity of the voters mentioned in this blog post/article?

Please select from one of the following options.

1=Asian or Asian American

2=Black or African American

3=Hispanic or Latino

4=Native American or American Indian

5=White or Caucasian

6=Mixed Race

7=Other, please specify

15=Not Applicable

*The explicit appeals listed in this study are not exhaustive. If you are unsure about whether something should be coded as an explicit racial appeal, please go ahead and code the material and send an e-mail to flippin@ou.edu with the following information:

Type of media

Name of blog or newspaper

Your name

Date

Blog or article title

Date of the post or article

Your question or issue of concern

What you coded

Implicit Racial Appeals

Here are some examples of implicit racial appeals: inner city, urban areas, poverty, welfare recipients, welfare queen, poor, food stamps, federal aid, federal policies, crime, violence, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, Jeremiah Wright, community organizers, acorn, drugs, patriotism, civil rights, hurricane Katrina, quotas, law and order, underclass, low-income, diversity, discrimination, integration, sound engineering, impoverished, social problems, busing, integration, health disparities, hip-hop, gangsta rap, gangs, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised, affirmative action.

Here are some examples of implicit racial appeals found in text which should help in coding them for this study.

Acorn/community organizer. “As you are no doubt aware, the community organizing group Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) is now under intense scrutiny for recent reports of its involvement in questionable behavior and potentially illegal activity in several states. In addition to the damning video reports of ACORN employees now familiar to most Floridians, just last week the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office announced that arrest warrants were issued for 11 former ACORN employees accused of faking voter registration cards. While it is commendable that ACORN assisted in the investigations that led to the arrests, it begs the question: why were so many people capable of these crimes working for ACORN in the first place”?⁶

⁶ Caputo, M. (2009, September 17). After whore-gate, Rubio wants Crist to investigate ACORN. Naked Politics. Retrieved from Lexis Nexis, October 12, 2009.

“Each ACORN office carries out multiple issue campaigns. ACORN members across the country work to raise the minimum wage or enact living wage policies; eliminate predatory financial practices by mortgage lenders, payday lenders, and tax preparation companies; win the development of affordable housing and community benefits agreements; improve the quality of and funding for urban public schools; rebuild New Orleans; and pass a federal and state ACORN Working Families Agenda, including paid sick leave for all full time workers. Your tax dollars also go toward funding the ACORN Housing Corporation which provides "first time homeowner mortgage counseling and foreclosure prevention assistance, and low income housing development." So here's an organization directly involved in expanding the debacle which has fomented this financial crisis and we find they're fueled by tax revenues. ACORN is also involved extensively in voter registration, bragging on their website that they've "helped more than 1.7 million low- and moderate-income and minority citizens apply to register to vote. Except many of those registrations have been fraudulent.”⁷

“But look, let's call a spade a spade: When Giuliani sneered about community organizers on the "South side" of Chicago, it's pretty clear what he was saying: Obama spent his time rabble-rousing among black people. It's no different than when the RNC called him a "street organizer." A community organizer can be a PTA member or a Christian Coalition lieutenant. Indeed, there's something deeply conservative about the vocation, which informally organizes citizens to demand better, fairer, and wiser treatment from detached government bureaucrats. But that's really not what Palin and Giuliani and the RNC are getting at. Community organizer isn't being used to describe a job but a background.”⁸

Affirmative action/quota system: "Affirmative action" says that you must give someone extra consideration for the same reason. Both are designed to overcome the after-effects of the rampant discrimination that existed up until the recent past. Quota systems are a simplistic and misguided attempt to do so that has been pretty much discarded because, while they are easy to implement, they are essentially a case of the cure being no better than the disease. Affirmative action is much more difficult because it is inevitable that some people are not going to get what they deserve, but then people often don't get what they deserve. The difference is that under affirmative action people don't get what they deserve because they are unlucky rather than because of their skin color or gender. Ultimately unfair? Yes, but so is life in general. Would the country be better off without it? Probably.”⁹

“Now, affirmative action is yet another weapon liberals use to hijack The American Dream and turn it into the American nightmare, complete with rationalized, institutionalized and legalized injustice and payback which have no place in the America our founders dreamed of. This kind of affirmative action is a distortion, yet another ad hoc cocktail devised by liberals to justify their twisted vision of what America should be.

⁷ McQ (2008, October 8). So that's what community organizers do. Right Wing News. Retrieved October 12 from Lexis Nexis.

⁸ Merv (2008, September 5). Community organizer is a racist phrase? PrairiePundit. Retrieved on October 12, from Lexis Nexis.

⁹ Merv (2008, September 30). Affirmative racism and the we're owed mentality. PrairiePundit. Retrieved on October 16, 2009, from Lexis Nexis.

Not content to merely infect and distort a once powerful idea to suit their purposes, liberals have now extended it to suit their social, economic and political agenda. Call them on it and you are a hateful, intolerant, narrow-minded and evil racist. Agree with them on it and you are an enlightened, educated, perceptive visionary who will carry America far. They hijack the concept; they can make their own rules. Well, at least we have the ever-liberal mainstream media ready, willing and able to serve the liberal establishments every need.”¹⁰

“But the real people that need to go are the racial extortionists in this country, such as who exploit the issue of race solely to line their own pockets. Am I the only one who remembers when adulterer Jesse Jackson referred to New York City as Hymietown? Am I the only one who remembers the Tawana Brawley episode where Al Sharpton helped ruin the lives of six white men based on a false rape claim? The extremist liberal media, who has given people like are the modern day versions of Jesus Christ. Whenever one of them screams racism, the media runs to their throne and makes sure to defame anybody that's accused of racism, even if the claims are false.”¹¹

Disenfranchised. “No wonder their national leadership calls itself the DNC. Obama’s largest constituent groups fall under the general umbrella of disenfranchised victims, those who feel they are ethnically or economically handicapped.”¹²

Federal Aid. “With Federal aid declining and the state caught in a deep economic slump, some Mississippi leaders say they fear their state is in danger of falling back into the pattern of poverty and division that prevailed for most of its history. Gov. William Winter said in an interview that progress in race relations in Mississippi, the nation's poorest state and the state with the largest percentage of blacks, could be wiped out if the economic disparity between blacks and whites worsened.”¹³

“The Administration's urban policy report contains other curiosities. It blames Federal aid to cities for undermining the poor's "personal ambitions for self-betterment." Ironically, it is the Administration's safety net, the Federal welfare program (which the Administration wishes to continue), that inhibits the desire to work, particularly since recent and proposed changes in eligibility for food stamps and Medicaid lower assistance to the working poor.”¹⁴

Impoverished. “How do programs like Affirmative Action hold up to Martin Luther King’s dream, hiring someone to meet a quote based on skin color? Helping minority communities and impoverished Americans has become a political selling point with no accountability. Legislators in New Jersey agree education reform is the civil rights issue of our time. Abbot districts were created to address this issue; helping

¹⁰ PA Pundits (2008, October 17.) Obama, the media and ACORN” Affirmative action on steroids. PA Pundits. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

¹¹ Daryl D (2007, April 13). The racial extortion of America. Blogcritics.org. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

¹² PA Pundits (2009, January). Who elected Obama? Retrieved on October 12, 2009.

¹³ Herbers, J. (1982, April 14). Mississippi fears U.S. cuts imperil its fiscal and racial gains. The New York Times. Retrieved on October 12, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

¹⁴ The New York Times (1982, July 1). Using poverty as an excuse to cut federal poverty programs. Retrieved October 12, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

impoverished, mostly minority communities in New Jersey. But where is the accountability.”¹⁵

Inner City. “Someone decided a few years ago to use "inner city" to describe where the "minority" populations live, and the connotation of both words evokes certain negative presumptions, preconceived notions and stigmas. We have so easily incorporated these words into our vocabulary and use them readily without realizing the implications they make. "Inner city" is synonymous with "ghetto" and we react negatively to that word. We need to react strongly to the above-mentioned words as well. When it is necessary to refer to a person's racial or ethnic origin, choose to be called what we are - African-American, black, female or male, Hispanic, Native American, etc., but never, never, never a "minority." We must never accept being called "less than." If it takes two columns or a whole news page to list just who is being talked about, then so be it”¹⁶.

“The fear and actuality of crime and violence in the inner city is ravaging the poor and the urban and suburban middle classes alike.”¹⁷

Gangs. “But in many neighborhoods the gangs are so entrenched that they flaunt their criminal operations. Heavily armed teams deal drugs openly at street corners, using gang "peewees" as police lookouts. The "street tax," or seguro (insurance), is a regular part of a merchant's business expenses on many blocks. Younger gang members mimic these operations by collecting a "tax" from schoolchildren or "tolls" to ride the elevators in housing projects. And violence is even a public-relations tool. After a Chicago Tribune series on gangs, members of gangs not mentioned in the paper called to protest. "They wanted us to help publicize them as the biggest and meanest guys in town," said investigative reporter William Recktenwald. "They can use the clips to recruit 13-year-olds." Last month when a 15-year-old was mistakenly shot to death, the accused killer told police that the hit he bungled had been scheduled in time to make the nightly news”¹⁸

“The title is a take-off on the movie, White Men Can't Jump. It appears that, in addition to deficient basketball skills, White men are also deficient in gangbanging skills. Whites have a very low rate of street gang membership, at least in California. Sadly, that is not true of other ethnic group.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Gendlin, S. (2009, January 19). Martin Luther King Jr., A great visionary but has his dream come true. *Conservatives with Attitude*. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

¹⁶ Words charged with Biased, fuzzy meaning. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Retrieved October 8, 2009 from Lexis Nexis

¹⁷ Farrell, W. C. (2004, December 19). Rebuilding Black Milwaukee must be a two-pronged effort. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved October 8, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

¹⁸ Starr, M. & Maier, F. (1985, January 28). Chicago's Gang Warfare. *Newsweek*. Retrieved on October 16, 2009, from Lexis Nexis.

¹⁹ Lindsay, R. (2007, November 19). White Men Can't Bang. Robert Lindsay. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

Gangsta rap. “O'Reilly's point was that the real middle-class black America is decent and normal, unlike the images found in gangsta rap and the like.”²⁰

“That said, you can't blame all of the violent imagery of rap music on black men. There wouldn't be a glut of hyper violent gangsta rap if there wasn't an audience for it, 70 percent of them being suburban white teenagers. But to understand Rap's popularity in the suburbs, you have to understand the half century long pact that so many radical leftist male intellectuals have had with black men for over a half century, in which all too much of the American leftist racial debate ended up being centered around black men being oppressed paragons of hipsterism, free from any responsibility because of discrimination, with any debate about black women's issues cast aside.”²¹

Jeremiah Wright. “We're watching the rehabilitation, the reconstruction, the rebuilding, the remaking of a man... from bigoted hate-monger to enlightened social critic. Old Media will defend despite his many words over the years because Old Media and are ideologically entwined and connected. It'll be up to New Media to counter that defense. Not just because New Media is opposed ideologically though that can't be denied but because New Media remains enamored with truth-telling. Old Media used to be. Now they're into truth-creation. And now they're into creating a new truth about Jeremiah Wright, led by himself. How quaint. How convenient. How deceptive.”²²

Patriotism. “Mr. Deneen concludes by advocating the "tradition of localism, community, self-government based in limits, a culture of memory and tradition, undergirded by faith and virtue" and "a revival of patriotism... based in places and folkways, not abstraction and expansion.”²³

Poverty/low income/lazy. “Hurricane Katrina forced the nation into a chillingly close encounter with poverty in America. By witnessing images of families left to face hunger, dehydration, disease and violence following a natural disaster, we were also forced to see the unmistakable and bleak divide between the haves and havenots. Katrina revealed more than severe deficiencies in disaster response - it also highlighted government's longtime failure to address poverty.”²⁴

“About a week ago, J.D. over at Get Rich Slowly posted an article about the difference between high income earners and low income earners. Most of the differences between the two that he listed come largely down to personal effort and personal choices. In the comments, many people jumped to the conclusion that poor people are lazy, which is an extremely broad brush, but a fairly reasonable one. After all, if the difference

²⁰ Merv (2007). Media mutters monstrosities. PrairiePundit. Retrieved on October 12, 2009, from Lexis Nexis.

²¹ Lashley, R. (2006, January 23). The Thug Male's Prison. Blogcritics.org Culture. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

²² Rice, R. (2008, April 27). Re-inventing Jeremiah Wright. Brutally Honest. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

²³ The Western Confucian (2009, February 18) Real right Patriotism. Retrieved on October 12, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

²⁴ Reed, D. Johnson, H. (2005. October 16). Plight of Poverty: Is society doing enough to lift the poor out of economic despair. Press Enterprise. Retrieved October 8, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

between high incomes and low incomes is a handful of personal choices and actions, the people not taking them - the people with low incomes - must be lazy, right?"²⁵

"And so steps in Chocolate City, a new documentary that attempts to take on the complex issue from the view of residents pushed out in the name of development. The new movie, first screened last night at the Festival Centre on Columbia Road, follows the story of 400 low-income families of the Arthur Capper/Carrollburg housing projects in Southeast who lost their homes in 2002 to make room for a new, mixed-income development funded in part by a \$34.9 HOPE VI federal grant. Though they were promised the chance to come back, the movie claims, both the number of low-income units to be built and the threshold used to define "low-income" in the new development pushed them out for good."²⁶

Underclass. "The unduckable truth is that the gang crisis is deeply entwined with America's most intractable social failure: the entrenchment of its underclass. Until politicians and the public are ready to attack that problem root-and-branch -- until they are ready, in particular, to make a Herculean effort to improve the life prospects of young black men -- gangs will grow more powerful and more wicked. And, soon, enough, even the Sandifer case will not seem shocking."²⁷

Urban areas. "Aside from social and economic problems that discourage dealerships from locating in urban areas, the long-term trend is toward larger dealerships that many inner cities can't accommodate, says Paul Taylor, chief economist of the National Automobile Dealers Association."²⁸

Welfare, welfare recipients, welfare queens and welfare reform. "Crusading against government excess, Reagan, as a candidate, lampooned a "Chicago welfare queen" who received benefits under multiple identities."²⁹ Acorn is at least as radical as these better-known groups, arguably more so. Yet because Acorn works locally, in carefully selected urban areas, its national profile is lower. Acorn likes it that way."³⁰

"And what about Carol Moseley-Braun, the Senate's very own welfare queen, and her use of campaign contributions to keep a stud on the side in lavish splendor, at public expense?"³¹

²⁵ Trent (2009, August 27). Are poor people lazy? The Simple Dollar. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

²⁶ Austerhuhle, M. (2008, January 25). Chocolate City takes on gentrification. DCIST. Retrieved on October 16 from Lexis Nexis.

²⁷ The Economist (1994, December 17) American Gangs: there are no children here. Retrieved on October 16, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

²⁸ Sawyers, A. (2005, January 331, 2005). Inner -City dealers battle the odds. Automotive News. Retrieved October 8, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

²⁹ Harwood, J. (2009, March 23). For Populism, a return to Economic Roots. The New York Times, Retrieved on October 10, 2009.

³⁰ Sanity, (2008, October 6, 2008). Mighty Obamas from little acorns grow. Dr. Sanity. Retrieved October 12, 2009 from Lexis Nexis.

³¹ Pruden, W. (1993, November 2). Welfare queens need love in the Senate too. The Washington Times. Retrieved from Lexis Nexis on October 10, 2009

“It means getting the message out that you can no longer get something for nothing in this country. It means no more "welfare queens," no more people living off the public dole, no more standing in grocery lines and watching able-bodied men and women using food stamps to buy more and better food than working people can afford.”³²

Implicit text will be coded using the research and definition of definition of Mendelberg.

Study Instructions for Implicit Racial Appeals

What follows is the definition and then some examples of implicit racial communication. If you are unsure, please follow the instructions at the beginning of the coding document.

Implicit racial appeals are appeals that contains a recognizable—if subtle—racial reference. Implicit racial appeals convey the same message as explicit racial appeals, but they replace the racial nouns and adjectives with more oblique references to race. They present an ostensibly race-free conservative position on an issue while incidentally alluding to racial stereotypes or to a perceived threat from African Americans. Implicit racial appeals discuss a nonracial matter and avoid a direct reference to black inferiority or to white group interest. They forego professions of racial antipathy and do not endorse segregation or white prerogatives.

Here are some examples of implicit racial appeals: inner city, urban areas, poverty, welfare recipients, welfare queen, poor, food stamps, federal aid, federal policies, crime, violence, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, Jeremiah Wright, community organizers, acorn, drugs, real America, patriotism, civil rights, hurricane Katrina, quotas, law and order, underclass, low-income, diversity, discrimination, integration, sound engineering, impoverished, social problems, busing, integration, health disparities, hip-hop, gangsta rap, gangs, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised, affirmative action.

Mendelberg, T. (2001). *The race card: Campaign strategy, implicit messages, and the norm of equality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

33. Based on your observations, does the blog post or article include any Black/African Americans Racial Stereotypes?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

24. Based on your observations does the content of this blog post or article include any implicit racial appeals of Blacks/African Americans?

³² Editorial. (1993, December 22). True reform isn't cheap. *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. Retrieved from Lexis Nexis on October 10, 2009.

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

25. If this blog post/article contains implicit racial appeals, please specify how many.
26. Based on your observations does this blog post/article include photos?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

27. If the blog post/article included a photo, what is the subject of the photo?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

15=Not Applicable

28. If the photo featured an individual or a group, what racial or ethnic group was visually represented in the photo?

Please select all that apply.

1=Asian or Asian American

2=Black or African American

3=Hispanic or Latino

4=Native American or American Indian

5=White or Caucasian

6=Mixed Race

7=Other, please specify Black or African American

15=Not Applicable

29. Based on your observations does this blog post/article include video?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

15=Not Applicable

30. If there is a video contained in this material, what does it feature?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=An individual

2=Group

3=Other

4=Does not contain video

31. If the video featured an individual or groups, what racial or ethnic groups were visually represented in the video?

Please select all that apply.

1=Asian or Asian American

2=Black or African American

3=Hispanic or Latino

4=Native American or American Indian

5=White or Caucasian

6=Mixed Race

7=Other, please specify Black or African American

8=Other, please specify

15=Not Applicable

*The implicit appeals listed in this study are not exhaustive. If you are unsure about whether something should be coded as an explicit racial appeal, please go ahead and code the material and send an e-mail to flippin@ou.edu with the following information:

Type of media

Name of blog or newspaper

Your name

Date

Blog or article title

Date of the post or article

Your question or issue of concern

What you coded

Racial Stereotypes

This next question will ask you to list any racial stereotypes for Blacks that are in this blog post or article.

Here are some stereotypes and examples in text that are associated with Blacks.

Blacks are lazy

Blacks are stupid.

Blacks are prone to criminal activity.

Blacks are less intelligent than Whites.

Blacks are comedic, loutish.

Blacks are poor.

Black women are promiscuous.

Blacks are good athletes.

Black women are aggressive.

Black women are loud.

Black men are highly sexual.

Blacks are athletic.

Blacks are musical.

Blacks are good dancers.

Blacks are like the rappers in videos.

Blacks live in ghetto.

32. Based on your observation, if this content contained an implicit racial appeal of Blacks/African Americans, what was the tone of the appeal?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Positive

2=Negative

3=Neutral

4=Does not contain an implicit message.

33. Based on your observations does this blog post/article contain any black racial stereotypes?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

34. If the blog post/article contains Black racial stereotypes please specify how many.

*The Black stereotypes listed in this study are not exhaustive. If you are unsure about whether something should be coded as an explicit racial appeal, please go ahead and code the material and send an e-mail to flippin@ou.edu with the following information:

Type of media

Name of blog or newspaper

Your name

Date

Blog or article title

Date of the post or article

Your question or issue of concern

What you coded

Modern Racism

Modern racism is a subtle, less invasive form of racism. It is not explicit. Here is the definition by McConahay (1986): “The principal tenets of modern racism are these: (1) Discrimination is a thing of the past because Blacks now have the freedom to compete in the marketplace and to enjoy those things they can afford. (2) Blacks are pushing too hard, too fast, and into places where they are not wanted. (3) These tactics and demands are unfair. (4) Therefore, recent gains are undeserved and the prestige granting institutions of society are giving Blacks more attention and the concomitant status than they deserve.” (pp. 92–93)

35. If this content contained racial stereotypes of Blacks/African Americans, what was the tone of the racial stereotypes in this content?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=positive

2=negative

3=neutral

15=Not Applicable

36. Based on your observations, does the blog post have any occurrence of modern racism?*

Please select one of the following responses

1=Yes

2=No

37. Based on your observations, what was the tone of the modern racism occurrence?

1=Positive

2=Negative

3=Did not contain any modern racism occurrences

38. Based on your observations, was race discussed in this blog post or article?*

1=Yes

2=No

39. If race was discussed in this blog post or article, how was it framed?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Positive

2=Negative

3=Neutral

15=Not applicable

40. If race was discussed in this blog post or article, was it referring to

Blacks/African Americans?*

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

3=Race was not discussed in this blog post or article

Policy issues

Policy Issues are top issues of concern to the American people. They include economic, foreign affairs, education, crime, health, social welfare, and the environment. These are different from the topics of the entire blog post or other media. The policy issue can be discussed in the content but not be the main topic or issue of the blog. It may very well be the main topic, but there must be a distinction between a policy issue discussed in the blog and the main issue or topic of the entire blog post.

41. Based on your observations, are any policy issues discussed in this blog post or article?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Yes

2=No

Below is a list of issues or topics that were being discussed in the news during the election. After reading the content(s) for this particular day, please select the primary topic or issue mentioned in the blog. Primary topic means the main focus of the article or blog. It also could be in the blog title.

42. What is the primary topic of this blog or article?

Please select one of the following responses.

1=Crime

2=Education

3=Economy

4=War in Iraq

5=War in Afghanistan

6=Environment

7=Health Care

8=Budget/Taxes

9=Race

10=Homosexual rights

- 11=Technology
- 12=Transportation
- 13=Presidential Politics
- 14=United States Politics
- 15Religion
- 16=Foreign Policy
- 17=Other _____

Networking

Hyperlink or Hypertext is the way different blogs network with each other. Within the blog post, you will find a highlighted word or area; if you click on it, you will be linked to another source.

43. Based on your observations, does this blog post contain embedded hyperlinks?

Please select one of the following responses.

- 1=Yes
- 2=No
- 3=Coding a newspaper

44. If the blog post contains networked hyperlinks, please specify how many.

45. Do the hyperlinks embedded in this blog post link to another blog post, mainstream source, or other source?

Please select from the following responses.

- 1=Blog Post
- 2=Mainstream Source
- 3=Don't know
- 4=Other

46. Was the embedded hyperlink a conservative, liberal or other source?

Please select from the following responses.

1=Conservative

2=Liberal

15=Not Applicable

47. Based on your observations, what was the overall tone of the blog post or article you reviewed?

Please select.

1=Positive

2=Negative

3=Neutral