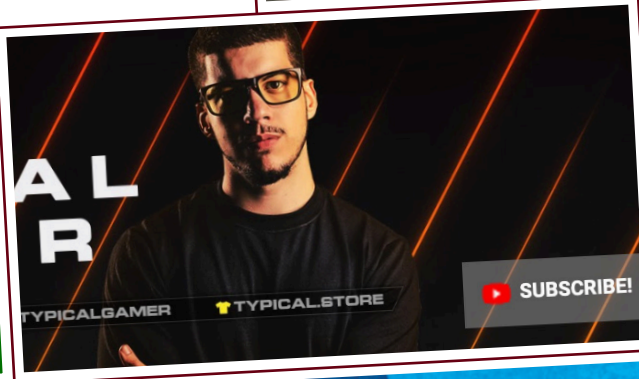
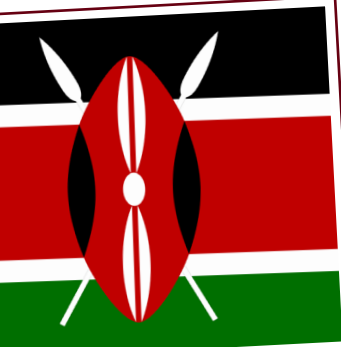


ELON JOURNAL

OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN

COMMUNICATIONS



Fall 2019

VOLUME 10, NO. 2



ELON
UNIVERSITY

School of Communications

Joining the World of Journals

Welcome to the nation's first and only undergraduate research journal in communications.

The website of the Council on Undergraduate Research lists more than 200 undergraduate research journals nationwide (http://www.cur.org/resources/students/undergraduate_journals/).

Some of these journals focus on a discipline (e.g., Journal of Undergraduate Research in Physics), some are university-based and multidisciplinary (e.g., MIT Undergraduate Research Journal), and others are university-based and disciplinary (e.g., Harvard Political Review).

The Elon Journal focuses on undergraduate research in journalism, media and communications.

The School of Communications at Elon University is the creator and publisher of the online journal. The first issue was published in spring 2010 under the editorship of Dr. Byung Lee, associate professor in the School of Communications.

The three purposes of the journal are:

- To publish the best undergraduate research in Elon's School of Communications each term,
- To serve as a repository for quality work to benefit future students seeking models for how to do undergraduate research well, and
- To advance the university's priority to emphasize undergraduate student research.

The Elon Journal is published twice a year, with spring and fall issues.

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A Celebration of Student Research

I am so proud that Elon University is home to the nation's only undergraduate research journal in communications.

This twice-a-year publication provides opportunities for our students to extend themselves beyond the classroom and investigate new areas of interest tied to their fields of study. Through research, our students further develop critical thinking skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities and intellectual independence.

This journal reflects what we enjoy seeing most in our students – continued intellectual maturation.

Complemented by video introductions featuring the student authors, these articles make us aware of the solitary hours that students spend in research, as well as the untold hours in which students and teacher-mentors work together to revise a paper for public consumption. These relationships and experiences often transform a student's future career path, making these projects truly life-changing.

This journal is a celebration of undergraduate research, as well as a celebration of learning, critical thinking and exploration.

Dr. Rochelle Ford, APR
Dean, School of Communications

Editorial Board

More than 30 faculty members in Elon's School of Communications served as the Editorial Board that selected eight undergraduate research papers for the fall 2019 issue.

From more than 100 research papers written in advanced School of Communications classes, 22 papers were submitted to the journal by Elon communications students through the encouragement and mentoring of capstone teachers and other professors in the school.

Professors who served as the Editorial Board were Bill Anderson, David Bockino, Vanessa Bravo, Lee Bush, Naeemah Clark, David Copeland, Vic Costello, Brooks Fuller, Kelly Furnas, Kenn Gaither, Jessica Gisclair, Don Grady, Ben Hannam, Sana Haq, Anthony Hatcher, Dan Haygood, Denise Hill, Jooyun Hwang, Laura Lacy, Byung Lee, Alex Luchsinger, Barbara Miller, William Moner, Phillip Motley, Tom Nelson, Jane O'Boyle, George Padgett, Glenn Scott, Kathleen Stansberry, Jessalyn Strauss, Amanda Sturgill, Hal Vincent, and Qian Xu.

Thanks also go to Bryan Baker and Mitch Herndon, who recorded the website's student introductions; Associate Dean Kenn Gaither, who reviewed articles to help ensure the quality of the journal; and Tommy Kopetskie, who proofread articles, designed the online publication, and updated the publication's website.

Editor's Note

The current issue of the Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications is the 20th since the publication's inception in 2010. While much has changed since then – the first-generation iPad had just been released that spring, and Instagram was still months away from its public debut – there are striking similarities in research streams between past and present.

Young scholars in the spring of 2010 were beginning to grapple with the implications of social media, as are Elon Journal researchers nearly a decade later. In the current issue, there is a particular concentration focused on how organizations use social media to engage consumers or muster support for causes. Fletcher Rowe's examination of how the corporate entities of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter each make use of all three platforms; Gilbert Schultz's study of YouTube channel banners; and Jill Watkins's comparison of aid organization strategies on Instagram each examine how these platforms can be employed effectively. While not strictly speaking a social media study, Ashlyn Sawyer's article on how Corporate Social Responsibility may influence buying behavior also sheds light on companies can mold perceptions in a hyperconnected world.

Back in 2010, the first student researchers published in the Elon Journal were curious about how groups were portrayed by both journalistic and fictional means, concerns that are also addressed in the current issue. Molly Herman-Gallow's study of adoption in film, Ian Kunsey's exploration of female representations in cinema, Cammie Behnke's examination of press coverage surrounding African elections, and Kimberly Asin Wilson's analysis of how presidents address refugee issues each demonstrate that communications have a powerful influence on how citizens may see people unlike themselves.

Please enjoy the work of our student scholars in the fall 2019 edition. May the next decade of the journal be as intellectually fruitful as the past one.

Harlen Makemson
Professor
Editor, Elon Journal

Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications

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Hopeless Republics: An Exploration of International Media Frames in Coverage of African Elections

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Journalism
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements in
an undergraduate senior capstone course in communications

Abstract

Countries in Africa have long endured underreported or sensationalized news coverage as images of violence, poverty, and corruption often dominate the international press. Coverage of election processes in the developing world also portrays the continent as hopeless and incapable of democratic elections. This study explored news frames in presidential election coverage in Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe by three renowned international news organizations: CNN International, BBC World News, and Al Jazeera. The study applied a two-step content analysis by identifying keywords, sources, news frames, and visual elements like images and videos, in 135 news articles. The author concluded that repetitive news frames of violence, corruption, and regression versus progression reinforce audience perceptions that democracy in these countries is unachievable. Additionally, the author found repeated elements, sources, and narratives of the state of democracy in the sampled African nations across each international network, prolonging stereotypes and narratives that these African countries are hopeless republics.

I. Introduction

On May 11, 2000, the British magazine *The Economist* published a series of controversial articles in an issue titled “Hopeless Africa.” The cover’s artwork featured a civilian holding a large gun in the center of the continent’s layout. One of the articles inside the edition described the continent as one that is ravaged by disease and poverty whose “few candles of hope are flickering weakly” (“The Heart of the Matter,” 2000). It also asserted that Africa is especially susceptible to corruption, brutality, and despotism, suggesting “the world might just give up on the entire continent.” Eleven years later, the publication changed its tone on Africa and published a special report titled “Africa Rising,” with a cover featuring an illustration of a boy flying a rainbow-colored kite in the shape of the continent. In an article titled “A Hopeful Continent,” the publication lists foreign investment as an avenue for salvation (“A Hopeful Continent,” 2011).

The magazine’s contrasting reports reveal two recurrent perceptions of Africa in the news media. The first narrative portrays Africa as a continent plagued by chaos, disease, violence, and corruption. In the second narrative, Africa is portrayed as an emerging region with significant improvements in economy, security, and democracy. Regardless of which narrative is applied, such broad, sweeping depictions of a continent run the danger of systematically reproducing stereotypical, racist and colonial representations of

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Africa (Nothias, 2016). These news frames underscore a lack of depth in understanding the many issues involved in international development, and they can lead audiences to generalize Africa as one country rather than a continent that is rich in diversity and home to 17 percent of the world's population ("World Population Review," 2019). Concerns about simplistic and negative representations are especially at play when international news networks cover elections in Africa. These perceptions date back to the age of colonialism, where colonists used terms like "tribes" and "savages" for the purpose of dehumanizing African natives (Wa'Njogu, 2009). Cook (2013) suggests that these terms follow a Westphalian model, which privileges Western elites and the Eurocentric nation state and their notions of power, ideology, and democracy. The Westphalian paradigm thus separates developing countries from the elite and immortalizes news of African elections in two frames: one captures a move toward a resurgent continent, while the other focuses on social and economic despair (Sy, 2017). While news media have an obligation to report on international conflict, Cook concludes that a lack of analysis and historical context in stories on African election conflict perpetuates the idea that Africa cannot achieve the standards of democracy that the West demands, thus advancing a Eurocentric narrative of power (2013).

This study investigates trends in the framing of news coverage of elections in three African nations by three global news services: *CNN International*, *BBC World News*, and *Al Jazeera*. The author applied a comprehensive content analysis to examine the frequency of frames used in recent coverage of elections in Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, and explored the narratives that those frames convey.

II. Literature Review

As background for this study, the author researched scholarly works to determine common frames used by international media when covering African conflict. These previous studies offer historical context that provide crucial understanding in recognizing how the various media frames are applied.

Framing Theory in African Conflict

Serving as one of the most common theories in mass communications, framing theory "selects some aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item prescribed" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The chosen frames place a certain level of meaning on events, which influences audience members' decision-making processes and overall grasp of information. Additionally, media frames provide boundaries around a news story, determining what is newsworthy and what is not (Eze & Elegbe, 2018). In international reporting on conflict in Africa, news frames are often repeated. Research shows that conflict and scandal attract one-sided and repetitive framing, which can be detrimental to an audience's understanding of global issues (Lecheler, Keer, Schuck & Hänggli, 2015). Additionally, news consumers who are exposed to a specific positive or negative news frame tend to search again for this frame and are more likely to discard competitive frames later on (Lecheler, Keer, Schuck & Hänggli, 2015).

One of the most common and incessant news frames for events – especially those involving conflict or politics in Africa – is the so-called third world construct. Common during the Cold War era, the term *third world* refers to any or all of the underdeveloped countries of the world, especially in Asia or Africa that are collectively identified by ideology, ethnic background, or disadvantaged status (Greene, 1980). Subsequently, the term suggested "a world divided into adverse camps-- 'us' versus 'them'" (Greene, 1980, p.14). Within the third world construct are several other news frames, including violence, corruption, economic consequences or benefits, terrorism, human-interest, and regress versus progress.

The violence frame is used to display bombings, post-election riots, sexual assault and rape, war, genocide or religious unrest, among others. It is common that high threshold events, especially political events characterized by violence, are more likely to be featured in the news (Demarest & Langer, 2018). In fact, authors William Hachten and James Scotton (2007) observed that 50 percent of American television coverage of the developing world portrays violence. These frames not only convey the often-inaccurate idea that these countries are plagued with violence, but also may also spur Western nations to offer humanitarian aid (Cook, 2013). Similarly, corruption framing underscores the presumed political and social instability of African democracies. Words describing civilians as "poor" or "impoverished" and political figures as

“oppressive” and “autocratic” are routine in coverage. Nothias (2018) observed that media representations of political conflicts in African states involve negative stereotypes and themes of “ancient hatreds” and “tribalism” to further highlight corruption. Corruption framing may also emphasize a terrorism frame, particularly on stories in regions north of the Sahara and along the Horn of Africa. While terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in West Africa do pose credible threats, this frame may cause non-African audiences to infer that terrorism is a widespread problem across the continent (Lecheler, Keer, Schuck & Hänggli, 2015).

Other frames may appeal to foreign interests, such as those describing economic consequences and benefits, which focus on the economic impact on a group or individual (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Kalyango (2011), who completed an analysis of Ugandan civilians’ reactions to conflict coverage by the West, found that a focus on the downfall of African economies consistently reinforces American ideals and policies. The human-interest frame, also known as “human impact,” refers to an effort to personalize, dramatize, or “emotionalize” the news, in order to capture and retain audience interest (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96). Finally, stories on African conflict often carry a frame of regress versus progress. This refers to the continent’s tendency to either regress in oppression or rise to become a democracy. Kalyango suggests the frame pits the African struggle against the Western world’s dominance and influence, which asserts the West’s authority over the developing world. Harth says this frame “promotes the idea that Africans are isolated from global processes and cannot fix their own political or economic systems unless they are provided foreign aid” (2012, p. 11).

The Role of Colonialism in Coverage

Coverage of Africa is known to systematically produce colonial representations that assert Western dominance. This idea is known as Afro-pessimism, which is defined as a consistently negative view that Africa is incapable of progressing economically, socially, or politically (Evans & Glenn, 2010). Afro-pessimism can be presented in language, ideology, or stereotypes that are symbolic of colonialism’s social, political, and cultural exploitation of Africans until the continent’s decolonization in the twentieth century. The framework for Afro-pessimism presents itself in three ways. First, African countries and its residents are systematically referred to as “tribal” or “ethnic,” which categorizes Africa as “the other.” Second, Africa is presented as one homogenous entity, which results in a false understanding that Africa is one country. Third, Africa can only rely on Western voices for aid (Nothias, 2016). These representations reveal “a tendency to rely on simple, all-encompassing descriptive and analytical language to frame the reporting of the conflict – focusing on tribal and ethnic issues to the virtual exclusion of broader and deeper analyses of factors involved” when it comes to media coverage (Somerville, 2009, p. 527). When the framework for Afro-pessimism is applied to news coverage, audience members may infer that the stereotypes and messaging of various frames apply to Africa as a whole.

Africa in the News

Not only is the reporting on Africa sensationalized, stereotypical, or sometimes falsified, but it also is minimal and often selective. A 2008 investigation of content in foreign news found that Africa represented just 4 percent of coverage in contrast to 76 percent of coverage focusing on North America and Europe. It concluded that Africa is the least covered continent (Wilke, Heimprecht & Cohen, 2012). Another study shows that the American news media devote less time to developing countries than the news media of any other major world power (Dorman, 1986). A justification for this narrow coverage is the costs of newsgathering abroad. After the end of World War II, the number of foreign correspondents decreased from 2,500 to 430. Today, only major news organizations post correspondents overseas. Dorman suggests that as a result, correspondents hop from crisis to crisis, a practice that led to the coining of the term “parachute journalism” (1986, p. 421).

Elections in Africa

As this study examines coverage of African elections, some background on the continent’s electoral processes is important. While many African countries have been able to hold free and fair elections, others have experienced a more chaotic process. Two of the main concerns are election rigging and post-election violence. In a study of Nigerian media and electoral violence, Oboh (2016) found that most of the cases of election fraud occur near the tail end of a voting exercise. Electoral violence follows and occurs for several reasons. First, it hinders people from voting. Second, it prevents a certain candidate from campaigning. Third, it is a public cry of discontent with election results. Finally, it can be a means to overturn the results of an

election by the opposition. The author chose to explore news frames in election coverage in Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, which all held presidential elections within the past three years.

Located in West Africa, Nigeria has a population of over 190 million people, making it the most populous country in Africa. The oil-rich nation has one of Africa's largest economies, although it faced an economic crisis in 2014 that caused spikes in unemployment and poverty. The country is divided into 36 states and one federal capital territory. Presidents are elected using a modified two-round system. A candidate must receive a majority of the vote and over 25% of the vote in 24 of the 36 states (Election Guide, 2019). The second round occurs when no candidate prevails in the opening round. In 2019, the two major candidates out of a field of 73 were incumbent Muhammadu Buhari and Atiku Abubakar. Buhari had won the presidency in 2015 with 55 percent of the votes. Post-election violence raised concerns among Nigerians and international election observers; major world powers questioned whether Nigeria was capable of holding free and fair elections. Following a tumultuous election in 2007 of irregularities and violence, fears for future elections lingered. Boko Haram, known as the Islamic State in West Africa, also sought to disrupt election processes, creating a deeper divide between Northern and Southern Nigeria.

Kenya boasts East Africa's largest economy and more than 70 ethnic groups. Kenyans have criticized international news media for their coverage of conflict in their country. A CNN executive flew to Nairobi in 2015 ahead of President Barack Obama's visit to Kenya to apologize for his report, which called Kenya a "hotbed of terror" and suggested that Obama might be attacked during his visit (Mutiga, 2015). But elections in Kenya have historically been violent. After Kenya entered multi-party politics in 1992, electoral violence became common, often a result of ethnic divides. These divisions are a consequence of inequalities associated with allocation of resources, which primarily includes land ownership. Other factors that apply to electoral violence and corruption in Kenya include a high youth unemployment rate, human rights abuses, and a highly centralized and controlled government (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

In Kenya's 2007 election, violence erupted quickly after election results came in. An estimated 1,200 people died and nearly 700,000 were displaced. The 2013 election, which international media reported as surprisingly peaceful, gave Kenya a brief respite from the consequences of its past. But Kenya's most recent election in 2017, which pitted incumbent Uhuru Kenyatta against longtime rival Raila Odinga, would bring other problems. Kenyatta originally won 54 percent of the vote, but Odinga refused to accept the result. Subsequently, Kenya's Supreme Court deemed the results invalid due to voter fraud and a new election began within 60 days. Odinga eventually withdrew from the race, giving Kenyatta another win. Kenyatta has been a controversial politician and was a suspect of crimes against humanity for inciting violence during the 2007 election. Human rights abuses and ethnic divisions continue to play a role in Kenya's development.

For over 40 years, Zimbabwe has been under the control of a military-backed regime and an autocratic president. Robert Mugabe, who was the oldest living head of state at 93 years old, led the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF) to victory after years of British colonial rule. But Mugabe's leadership presented decades of challenges for Zimbabwe. Its once robust economy sunk as a result of mismanagement, social services shut down, and the Mugabe regime's human rights abuses crippled hopes for democracy (Latek, 2018). The frustration culminated in an attempted coup d'état amid tensions in the ZANU-PF party. As a result, Mugabe resigned after 37 years as president, which sparked celebrations across the country, and he was replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's former deputy.

In Zimbabwe's most recent election, Mnangagwa was re-elected in a two-round system. Election observers from the European Union initially disputed the election results, citing voter intimidation and a lack of media coverage for opposition parties and candidates. (Banerjee, 2018). While Mnangagwa promised national reconciliation, security, and economic reform, he is also associated with some of the atrocities committed by Mugabe. Known as "the crocodile" for his political shrewdness, Mnangagwa has been accused of planning attacks on opposition supporters after the 2008 election and was the country's spymaster during Zimbabwe's civil war. Post-election violence and ongoing opposition of Mnangagwa continues to leave the country's government in limbo.

III. Methods

Based on the literature review, the author developed the following research questions:

RQ1: How do major news networks portray election processes in Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe?

RQ2: What trends to these news organizations share in their coverage of these elections?

This study applied a qualitative and quantitative content analysis to document the narrative conveyed through international media coverage of elections in Africa from 2010 to present day. The qualitative content analysis focused on the characteristics of language in communication with attention to content or contextual meaning in each article (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A quantitative analysis was used to code news articles into specific categories and measure the frequency of news frames by percentages. Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe were selected for two primary purposes. First, these countries all held a general election within the past three years. Second, they each represent a different region of the African continent: Kenya in Eastern Africa; Nigeria in the West; Zimbabwe in the South. The study coded news articles (comprised of text, video, and photographs) from three widely renowned global news organizations with bureaus worldwide: CNN International, BBC World News, and Al Jazeera. The author also examined other media elements embedded into the articles, including photographs, videos, and the quality of sources.

The three news organizations were selected for this study because they are some of the few news outlets to have foreign correspondents posted throughout Africa. While worldwide coverage of the continent remains shallow, these networks often send correspondents on the scene to follow major events such as civil wars, epidemics, terrorist attacks, and elections.

CNN International launched in 1985 and is now one of the top three global 24-hour news networks. While world headquarters are located in Atlanta, CNNI has 31 international bureaus, with an Africa bureau in Johannesburg, South Africa. Although CNN prides itself on being an international organization, research has shown that audiences perceive CNN as an American network that appeals to American interests. This result is rooted in an idea called the “CNN effect,” which suggests that the network’s compelling images, such as images of a humanitarian crisis, cause U.S. policymakers to intervene in a situation that they may not initially have interest in (Gilboa, 2005). These images and videos often depict war, bloodshed, or disease. But Cook’s research shows that the CNN effect may elicit an opposite response (Cook, 2013). While journalists have an obligation to report on conflict to comply with norms of fairness and neutrality, their coverage further feeds Western interests without sparking any foreign humanitarian action. This result ultimately leaves an audience with permanent images of violence with no possible reconciliation, thus reinforcing the idea that Africa is a hopeless continent.

Unlike CNN, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is a public service broadcaster with programs that are funded by government grants (Teng’o, 2008). The BBC World Service broadcasts through radio, television, and an online platform in multiple foreign bases. In Africa, there are 80 FM radio stations and more than 15 bureaus for newsgathering and production.

The BBC is strict on neutrality guidelines, which means there are few editorials. This does not prevent in-depth analyses through various platforms. Some of these platforms have been banned in African countries, forcing BBC correspondents to operate undercover. In 2001, the BBC had a disagreement with Zimbabwe’s information minister, resulting in the ban of all BBC services in the country. In 2008, the BBC could openly and legally report in Zimbabwe without fear of punishment. Despite its dedication to impartiality in reporting in Africa, Gilboa (2005) found that BBC’s coverage has an influence similar to the CNN effect, concluding that BBC’s coverage of Africa often influences British foreign policy and interests.

Unlike CNNI and the BBC, *Al Jazeera*’s headquarters is in Doha, Qatar. While it is not classified as a Western news organization, it has 21 bureaus around the world, with six bureaus in Africa. The network launched in 2006 and is the Middle East’s first English-language news organization. When on the scene of elections, *Al Jazeera* relies heavily on its correspondents’ reporting, analyses, and perspectives. However, this reporting tends to be parachute journalism, as correspondents are only sent to the scene of the conflict and then leave without follow-up coverage. This approach, according to Musa (2013), has a tendency to raise questions about the credibility of the reports as correspondents’ access to local sources is hindered and their understanding of the local terrain is problematic.

The author selected 15 news articles from each country from *CNN International*, *BBC World News*, and *Al Jazeera*, totaling to 45 articles for each country and 135 articles altogether. All articles were selected at random using search engines from each of the news organizations. The author coded each article for the

following variables: frequency of keywords that portray Africa as violent, corrupt, or hopeless, the frequency of photographs and videos that reflect common media frames of Africa, and the number and quality of sources. The author then calculated these frequencies to compile a list of the top five keywords. The statistics drawn from this study were used descriptively to better understand news framing.

IV. Findings & Discussion

Based on the content analysis, the author discovered several trends in framing. First, nearly half of the news articles included a sentence that suggested these countries' political states are "marred by violence and unrest." Other similar phrases include negative words such as "plague," or "damaged" in headlines or in lead paragraphs.

Second, the articles focus more on the corruption of the voting systems and the candidates than policy. The corruption frame for many of the stories paints these countries as ones that cannot save themselves. Moreover, international observers constantly question the legitimacy of these elections. Fifty-five percent of all articles contained at least one international source from organizations and agencies like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the U.S. State Department, and the United Nations, among others. In one CNN International feature, the journalist writes, "Despite [Uhuru Kenyatta's] popularity at home, he is facing charges of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court over the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, putting the West in a dilemma in its fight for human rights in the continent." Word choice in these articles suggests that the West carries the burden of democratizing Africa. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of the stories ignored presidential candidates' campaigns to discuss fraud in African voting systems. While these allegations are undeniable in some African countries, these news outlets tend to generalize election systems as representative of the entire continent.

Violence, corruption, and terrorism news frames were commonly used in reporting on Nigerian elections. The corruption frame applied to stories on voting delays and violent clashes in the streets after results were announced. The economic frame referred to Nigeria's plummeting economy and growing poverty rates. This was especially evident in *CNNI*'s coverage, which often highlighted the importance of Nigeria's oil industry for the UK and the U.S. *Al Jazeera* and *BBC* were especially concerned with Boko Haram attacks and influence in the country. The most common frame used by all three networks portrayed election violence.

Table 1. Top Keywords in News Articles on Nigerian Elections

RANK	CNNI	AL JAZEERA	BC WORLD NEWS	Total
1	Violence	Violence	Boko Haram	Violence
2	Boko Haram	Security	Militants	Security
3	Security	Democracy	Corruption	Corruption
4	Corruption	Fear	Security	Boko Haram
5	Democracy	Boko Haram	Violence	Militants

Thirty-three percent of all news articles on Nigeria contained at least one image or video depicting bloodshed or violent protests. Additionally, 50% of all articles contained at least one source from a government agency or organization like Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International.

Most of the *CNNI* stories were hard-news stories or breaking news. A violence frame was found in 66% of the articles observed. Headlines and leading paragraphs in *CNNI* articles often portray Nigeria's politics as corrupt and fraught with danger. For example, one *CNNI* article noted that, "In Africa, elections can often be a matter of life and death."

Al Jazeera articles primarily applied corruption, violence, and terrorism frames. Nearly 70% of frames portrayed violence from terrorist attacks or post-election riots. Thirty-three percent of images and videos reinforced these frames. Some articles, however, offered in-depth reporting on the importance of Nigerian elections with graphics of the election and voting processes, as well as a detailed list of some of the primary presidential candidates and their parties. Additionally, 60% of the sources are international observers, including agencies and analysts from Canada and the U.S. Examples of *Al Jazeera* articles also suggest that

violence and corruption in the country is inevitable. “Nigeria has a history of election violence,” noted one article prior to the election, and afterward, *Al Jazeera* reported on “allegations of violence, vote-rigging, and voter suppression.”

The *BBC* offered in-depth reporting on the Nigerian election process before, during, and after elections. The network presented more of a policy frame than the previous networks, but still focused their stories on the effects of Boko Haram on the election, rioting after Atiku Abubakar rejected Muhammadu Buhari’s win in the 2019 election, and a lack of progress in Nigeria’s democracy. While the *BBC* didn’t reveal many of its sources by name, 70% of the sources were statements from presidential candidates. The *BBC* also relied on international organizations such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch for any analysis on security situations in Nigeria. Only 20% of images depicted violence and corruption, but the frames were still prevalent in news stories. For example, one 2019 article asserted that “further bloodshed appears almost inevitable,” while a 2011 article chronicled “allegations of blatant rigging and thuggery,” in past elections.

Articles for Kenyan elections focused on election processes in 2013 and 2017. A violence frame appeared in 60% of all articles sampled. Other common frames focused on ethnic tribes in Kenya, crime, and government corruption. “Violence” and “opposition” were the most frequent keywords used in all articles.

Table 2. Top Keywords in Articles on Kenyan Elections

RANK	CNNI	AL JAZEERA	BBC WORLD NEWS	TOTAL
1	Violence	Opposition	Opposition	Opposition
2	Uhuru Kenyatta	Uhuru Kenyatta	Crime	Violence
3	Opposition	Violence	Violence	Uhuru Kenyatta
4	Raila Odinga	Police	Court	Ethnic
5	Democracy	Ethnic	Human rights	Police

CNNI focused on post-election violence and the controversy regarding Uhuru Kenyatta’s victory. In 2017, Kenya’s highest court confirmed that the election results were “invalid” due to voter fraud and called for a new election. Coverage also focused on the role of ethnicity in elections. Stories did not include many photographs, graphics, or videos unless discussing the status of Kenya’s economy. In 37% of the articles, Western sources from international universities and agencies discussed human rights abuses. *CNNI* articles often suggested a failed democracy in Kenya. For example, a 2013 article noted challenges to the election result “on the grounds that it was flawed and marred by technical problems.” In a 2017 article, the murder of a governmental official “renewed concerns about Kenya’s ability to deliver a credible election.”

Al Jazeera included similar frames as *CNNI* in its coverage. Additionally, 60% of images used by *Al Jazeera* depicted violence such as the use of water cannons and slingshots. Words also reflected the violence frame. “Clashes plague the presidential election in Kenya as questions mount over the country’s political future,” noted one such article in 2017.

The *BBC* included several analysis pieces on the state of Kenya’s democracy, and 80% of the articles included at least one Western source, ranging from analysts, to university professors, to international election observers. A corruption frame, focused on human rights abuses and election crime committed by candidates, appeared in 73% of articles. More than half of the images and videos included reinforced the frame.

Election Coverage in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe’s authoritarian history under Robert Mugabe remained a popular topic across all articles. The violence and corruption frames were found in 72% of the articles. Violence framing applied to stories 62% of the stories, followed by economic and corruption frames. The author also found that a vast majority of articles on Zimbabwe’s election processes presented Zimbabwe as a failed democracy.

Table 3. Top Keywords in Articles on Zimbabwe Elections

RANK	CNNI	AL JAZEERA	BBC WORLD NEWS	TOTAL
1	Opposition	Economy	Violence	Violence
2	Police	ZANU-PF	Police	Police
3	Violence	Violence	Allegations	Economy
4	Security	Security	Economy	Security
5	Economy	Tension	Death	ZANU-PF

Violence and police clashes with protestors appeared in 60 percent of the CNNI images and video content. Common sources in stories included the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe's capital and international observers from the European Union. Additionally, *CNNI* articles framed the election in an economic light. "The country is anxious to ensure the elections are considered free and fair to lure back foreign investment and resuscitate its ailing economy," noted one such article in 2018.

Nearly half of *Al Jazeera's* articles were editorials, while the other half included breaking news stories and features. Its articles did not include many visual elements, but still reinforced frames of corruption and regress. For example, one editorial called out "Zimbabwe's objectively problematic and unjust election process," while another asserted that "whoever takes over the reins of power in Zimbabwe is unlikely to change the status quo."

The *BBC* primarily highlighted corruption in voting in their coverage. Over half the articles included at least one image or video showing riots. Western sources were included in 46 percent of the articles, including British journalists and *BBC* correspondents, EU election observers, and human rights representatives. Some of the examples from articles generalize the issues in Zimbabwe politics as a continent-wide problem.

Overall, violence and corruption were the most frequently used media frames for all three countries (Table 4). Some articles used more than one frame, but all three news networks primarily used violence, corruption, and economic frames. The terrorism frame only applied to Nigeria for coverage on Boko Haram (Table 5). While some articles applied a human-interest frame or suggested progress was being made in African democracies, they only make up a small percentage of the articles. Only eight articles out of 135 included content on candidates' policies.

Table 4: Frequency of News Frames for Each Country by Percentage

Country	Economic	Terrorism	Violence	Corruption	Human Interest	Progress
Nigeria	15%	37%	51%	48%	8%	8%
Kenya	22%	6%	62%	60%	6%	8%
Zimbabwe	24%	0%	51%	44%	6%	6%

Table 5: Frequency of News Frames by Percentage

Network	Economic	Terrorism	Violence	Corruption	Human Interest	Progress
CNNI	24%	13%	64%	48%	4%	8%
Al Jazeera	20%	15%	53%	44%	8%	8%
BBC	17%	11%	44%	57%	6%	8%

V. Conclusion

News frames of corruption, violence, and regression that are applied to coverage of African conflict also apply to election coverage. Additionally, the repetitive framing shows that global perceptions of developing countries may not have changed. Moreover, the repetition of visual elements and sources highlights a sense of doubt among international election observers such as the EU and the United Nations. The media's concern over violence and corruption in past elections presents an idea that democracy is nearly impossible to achieve.

This study suggests that the CNN effect transcends *CNN* and reflects foreign policy interests in all three networks. Coverage of African elections further reflects Cook's Westphalian paradigm (2013), which promotes the interests of foreign elites. International news media's use of visual elements and text to encourage humanitarian action serves to heighten the status of foreign powers. The findings also reflect previous studies that suggest news frames reinforce stereotypical, racist and colonial representations of these countries

The framing in election coverage also reveals the amount of importance international media place on stories about African democracies. For example, many of the news articles were all published around the time each election was taking place, demonstrating the use of parachute journalism. This suggests reports on Africa are only newsworthy if it has any impact on foreign powers. Negative representations of election processes and a lack of deep analyses also frame the continent as "the other" and result in shallow reporting of the continent. When these representations are repeated, it is difficult for an audience to challenge those perceptions. While corruption is evident in some democracies, frequent news framing of corruption, violence, and chaos can cause audience members to inaccurately generalize those frames apply to other countries in Africa.

As with any research study, this paper has some limitations. One restriction is the study contained a small sample size of 135 articles. A larger sample size might provide more data that may include content that challenges global perceptions of Africa. However, this limitation may be difficult to navigate, as international coverage of Africa remains scarce. A second limitation is the sample size of countries selected for the study. Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe shared similar election outcomes of alleged election rigging and corruption. An extended study could include countries that held relatively peaceful elections to examine whether frames of violence, corruption, or regression are still present. A third limitation is the paper only mentions framing from international media organizations and does not include reactions from African media or civilians on how they are being covered. This added step for the content analysis could provide a deeper analysis of media frames in African elections.

These limitations also present avenues for further research. A follow-up study could double the sample size and select more countries to observe if negative representations are portrayed in presidential elections that were relatively peaceful. The countries would include a greater variety of election circumstances and locations, including countries above the Sahara. The study could also compare the coverage by international media to coverage by African media outlets to observe similarities or discrepancies in how they report on conflict in the region.

Media misrepresentations can reveal a lack of global understanding of the historical, political, and cultural context of African democracies, and highlight a lack of interest in global development unless it benefits foreign powers. The media should reassess its role in framing these processes and provide solutions rather than perpetuating images of fractured democracies that have no hope of reconstruction.

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Happily Ever After? The Portrayal of Adoption in Visual Narrative Media

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Abstract

Adoption is expanding considerably and with it comes sentiments of happiness, sadness, joy, and everything in between. Visual narrative media, too, has begun to tell the stories of adoptees and adoptive parents. This article examines how adoption is presented in visual narrative media – specifically in the films Lion, Instant Family, and Twinstler – and if these narratives are representative of the real-world nature of adoption. The analyses suggest that the adoption narrative present in each film, though dramatized, is representative of adoption's real-life situations and contexts. Additionally, a stereotype of adoption as being lost and then found was observed in these films, which has the potential to create negative implications for viewers, especially for those who are adoptees.

I. Introduction

Within visual narrative media, there is always a story that is being told through dialogue, actions, and characters. Though there are many stereotypical narratives within the realm of visual narrative media, there are some narratives that are more subtle. One is the narrative about adoption. There are 1.5 million adoptees who live in the United States (Adoption, n.d.). Each of these adopted individuals has a unique story, yet when these unique stories are looked at collectively, an account begins to develop that reveals a greater narrative at work about adoption.

How often, then, is this adoption narrative a prominent storyline in visual narrative media? More importantly, does this narrative have the ability to be constructed in a way that is not representative of the adoption experiences that experts have observed? The real-life adoption narrative for both parties – adoptees and adoptive parents – is complex in a multitude of ways. This research observes several adoption narratives as depicted in three film genres: drama, comedy, and documentary. It then analyzes the extent of the adoption narrative presented in each film and if it reflects dimensions of adoption that are evident in previous research. This study argues that the adoption narrative as found in visual narrative media mirrors the real-world adoptive experience as chronicled by adoption research.

Keywords: Adoption, narrative analysis, visual narrative media, stereotype
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II. Literature Review

The scope of literature centering on adoption is extensive and includes perspectives from all players that comprise the adoption triad: the adoptee, the adoptive family, and the biological family. This literature review, however, primarily focuses on two specific adoption narratives: the adoptee adoption narrative and the adoptive parents adoption narrative. These two narratives are made up of many components, which are further explored in this literature review.

Background on adoption

Adoption is now considered to be a lifelong process as opposed to a single act that has a termination, as described by Zamostny, O'Brien, Baden, & Wiley (2003). There are a variety of adoption types carried out today in the United States: domestic adoptions, public adoptions, international adoptions, and transracial adoptions.

When estimating the number of adoptees living in the United States today, Zamostny, O'Brien, Baden, & Wiley (2003) find that estimates vary and include numbers as low as four million to as high as five million. The total number of children in foster care continues to rise and around 20% of these children are usually available for adoption. Several studies have documented high numbers of physical and emotional problems in foster care children, most likely due to prenatal exposure to alcohol and drugs, abuse, and/or neglect, etc. Since the 1950s, the rates of international adoptions have grown consistently. Most international adoptees are of Asian lineage and usually female. China, Russia, Guatemala, South Korea, and Ukraine, in recent years, have been the leading countries in placing the most children in the United States through international adoption (Zamostny, O'Brien, Baden, & Wiley, 2003).

Research on Adoptive Children

Some scholars, such as Levy-Shiff, contend that the adoption narrative for adoptees begins with developmental psychology. The experiences adoptees go through as an infant and toddler impact their developmental processes as they age, and inferences can easily be made about how the behaviors and emotions adoptees experience during such growth periods are rooted in these past experiences. According to theorists, several key psychological experiences adoptees face include rejection, separation, and loss, and all three have the ability to lead to psychological disorders later in life (Levy-Shiff, 2001).

For adoptees, loss, especially, is felt on numerous levels and can be a driving emotion in their lives for many years, according to scholars. Loss has the ability to be "covert" and emerges slowly and subtly over time. Loss can also apply to an adoptee's physical losses, such as loss of biological parents and origin, and experiencing loss on these varying levels can create barriers and obstacles for adoptees (Levy-Shiff, 2001).

Similarly, Smit (2002) notes that another fundamental part of the adoptee's journey is feeling grief. The grieving process for an adoptee can start as soon as they are adopted, and it is one that has no definite end. The meaning of their adoption begins to pivot around adolescence because adoptees begin to realize that gaining their adoptive family also means they lost a family as a result. Adoptees often mourn not knowing who they are in their entirety and where their biological parents are.

Some scholars argue that identity formation and growth is the most significant aspect to an adoptee's experiences, outlining the two typical avenues by which individuals choose to pursue adoption: open and closed adoption. An open adoption has no concrete barriers that prevent the adoptee, the adoptive parents, and the biological parents from communicating with one another. Because of this, such openness has the ability to increase adoptees' sense of identity. They, through their open adoption, can be presented with closure and the answers to the questions that may have been a mystery for most of their life (Berge, Mendenhall, Wrobel, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2006). Adoptees also, quite often, reflect on their past, and this lends itself to further exploration of their identity and growth. By thinking about specific elements of their adoption, adoptees are able to reflect on the unique life they live and what it means for them moving forward. This preoccupation with their adoption also has the potential to shift family dynamics, as adoptees may begin to experience greater emotional detachment and distance from their adoptive families due to feeling overwhelmed (Kohler, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2002).

One part of identity formation and growth that is prevalent in international adoptees is that of ethnic identity, as scholars have observed. Ethnicity is part of the ego identity and takes shape when an adoptee

initially lacks understanding or knowledge surrounding his or her ethnicity, but later clearly embrace it. By having pride in where they come from, international adoptees are able to develop positive self-esteem and further appreciate their bicultural identity during the times in which they may find themselves feeling incredibly vulnerable (Mohanty, Keokse, & Sales, 2006).

Levy-Shiff (2001) additionally outlines the role that the adoptive family can plan in the adoptee's overall sense of belonging and comfort. When a positive and nurturing family environment exists, it helps to moderate the negative sentiments that come with being adopted. In contrast, a dysfunctional family environment has detrimental affects on an adoptee and can result in maladjustment to his or her new life. By having a family that creates a supportive environment, Levy-Shiff argues, adoptees are able to continue growing emotionally.

Additional scholarship proposes that three adoption identity experiences—being chosen, birthdays, and the adoption triad—create an adoptee's core being and identity. Adoptees commonly feel a sense of pride in being adopted because their adoptive parents chose them. Adoptees, too, consider their birthday to be a celebration that acts as a rite of passage. Though birthdays for some adoptees may represent a time of pondering on where they have come from, others decide to see their birthday as a day that signifies the beginning of another year ahead. Lastly, adoptees often wonder about what contexts within their biological family drove their family to place them up for adoption (Darnell, Johansen, Tavakoli, & Brugnone, 2017). Scholarship also notes that each adoptee experience is unique, and these varied experiences are all legitimate (Lui & Hazler, 2015); and that community with fellow adoptees helps adopted individuals authenticate their own journey and life experiences (Grotevant, Dunbar, Kohler, & Lash Esau, 2000).

Research on Adoptive Parents

For choosing to adopt, the adoption narrative begins with the life-changing transition of becoming parents. Adoptive parents often suffer from fewer negative effects on marital quality than the traditional biological parents' experience, because adoptive parents often have longed to become parents over a long period of time. Because adoptive parents, in general, tend to be older and have been married for a longer period of time, they are able to enter this new stage in life with a strong ability to communicate with one another, vast knowledge of coping strategies that could present to be useful, and a firm grasp on financial security (Ceballo, Lansford, Abbey, & Stewart, 2004).

Adoptive parents do not always receive the family and social support that they desire. Research has found that adoptive parents may even harbor uncertainties about how their extended family members will react to such adoption news. This, in turn, has the ability to make it difficult for such family members to provide assistance and support for adoptive parents in the moments they need it most. When support, assistance, and acceptance is given and provided, there is an overall dynamic of satisfactory familial interactions and experiences (Ceballo, Lansford, Abbey, & Stewart, 2004).

Adoptive parents also struggle with feelings of isolation due to the lack of peer groups who have similar experiences regarding adoption. When no such groups exist for adoptive parents, they are unable to have authentic connections with individuals who can attest to the similar emotions, situations, and circumstances adoptive parents find themselves in. Additionally, immediate or extended family may not always be accessible to adoptive parents physically. Location has the ability to inhibit adoptive parents from receiving proper support and stability (McKay & Ross, 2010).

Adoptive parenthood sometimes involves facing surprises that are not anticipated or planned. Moyer & Goldberg (2017) emphasize that this trend has been extremely evident in adoptions via the welfare system. Many such potential adoptees are considered "special needs" children, which can include the child displaying emotional, behavioral, developmental, or medical conditions that have either been diagnosed or have gone untreated. As a result, adoptive parents via the welfare system have often reported lower adoption satisfaction, increased levels of stress, and a greater need for services that offer support. These specific parents' adoption narratives are defined by their ability to prepare for, adapt to, and take care of their child's special needs (Moyer & Goldberg, 2017).

Research indicates that parents who raise adopted children at an older age may feel as though they are responsible for addressing problems that originated in their child's previous placement history. In the case of international adoptions, parents may endure stressors such as being unable to determine their child's medical and genealogical history, having distrust in existing records, and having to meet their child's medical, developmental, and educational needs based on their child's prior experiences and history. Additionally, new

parents to adoption may not have the desired experience to effectively negotiate and navigate the ups and downs of adoptive parenting (Bird, Peterson, & Miller, 2002).

Research additionally suggests that adoption greatly alters the social and economic dynamics and functions within a family, and these dynamics have the ability to become stressors. Also, adoptive parents may have concerns about bonding with their adopted child, navigating the pressures of instant parenthood, fearing that their child's biological parents could want their child back, and discerning the best time to disclose their child's adoption to him or her (Bird, Peterson, & Miller, 2002).

A study outlined by Shireman & Johnson (1976) suggests that single parents who have adopted are not unlike couples who adopt, and these individuals, in fact, share many of the same characteristics and lifestyles as these couples. These single parents have a solid emotional maturity and a high capacity to meet frustrations head-on and possess the keen ability to pursue an independent life trajectory without being overly influenced by and concerned with others' views. These single parents, too, hold a diverse range of occupations with various incomes and have the desire to experience the nurturing and rewarding part of life that is parenthood.

III. Methods

In this study, a narrative analysis is used to document the adoption narrative, as it is a "way of examining the role of storytelling in understanding identity and social life" (Wong & Breheny, 2018). This adoption narrative provides a dynamic and unique perspective that contributes greatly to the world of visual storytelling and sheds light on a specific narrative that may go unnoticed or untold. The overall research questions include:

RQ1: How is the adoption narrative presented in visual narrative media?

RQ2: Is this narrative representative of the real-life experiences and situations of adoption?

RQ3: Is there a specific stereotype regarding adoption that visual narrative media depicts, and if so, what is it and what are its implications?

The study analyzes three films, *Lion* (2016), *Instant Family* (2018), and *Twinsters* (2015). These films were chosen because each features, at its forefront, an adoption narrative, whether it is from the perspective of the adoptee(s) or adoptive parents. Additionally, these films were chosen because they each represent a different genre of film.

The research aims to qualitatively examine how the adoption narrative – which has been the focus of much research – in visual narrative media reflects to real-life adoption narratives of adoptees and adoptive parents. In doing so, the narrative analysis asks several thematic and guiding questions: What is the premise or the unified subject or purpose of the story? What is the causal relationship in this story? How does the construction of the narrative direct the audience's interpretation of the situation(s) presented? What are the consequences of such an interpretation? What does the narrative reveal about the individual or individuals' identity? What does the narrative suggest about the values of a particular culture?

Additionally, the narrative analysis addresses primary features evident in any narrative as they pertain to each film: setting, characters, narrator, events, causal relations, audience, and theme. The adoption narratives are examined using a narrative analysis worksheet that contains the thematic and guiding questions and primary features of a narrative. This worksheet was completed during the viewing of each film.

Narrative Analysis of Lion

Lion, at its core, is a narrative about a boy who is lost and then found, and this premise is told through the lens of adoption and from the perspective of an adoptee. Saroo lived one life in India as a young boy and orphan, and then, is given another life in Australia with a loving family. While his new life is wonderful, Saroo has a constant desire to answer the questions that plague his mind about his past. The narrative, additionally, addresses the duality adoptees feel when they think about family because they belong to both an adoptive family and a biological family. However, sometimes the yearning adoptees have to know more about their

biological family takes hold of them so firmly that, until they receive the closure they are looking for and are in need of, they may be lost forever and never found.

Though there are many causal and contributing relationships in this narrative, the most identifiable one in *Lion* is the relationship Saroo has with his biological family, specifically with his mother and brother. The memories he has of his mother, in part, inspire Saroo to return to India because he begins to recognize that he longs for closure and to reconnect with his mother so she knows he is safe and happy in his new life. By finally reconnecting with his biological family, Saroo is able to begin accepting his fate of belonging to two families.

Most of *Lion*'s beginning takes place where Saroo's life begins, in India. The narrative is crafted to then transport the audience to Calcutta, the place where Saroo lives as a street child before being taken to an orphanage. In the orphanage, Saroo is still an innocent child; however, it is clear that he begins to realize that the place in which he resides is "very bad" because a fellow orphan tells him. When his adoptive parents, Sue and John, bring him to Australia, Saroo is transported to a new world. Though his home is now in Australia, Saroo realizes a number of years later that he yearns for more. He wants to return back to the place of his past, India.

When assessing this narrative's audience, it is easily a narrative targeted for anyone who wishes to travel on an emotional journey. *Lion* is an all-encompassing story that touches on personal growth, accomplishment, sorrow, and pain that anyone can relate to, adopted or not, but adoptees, specifically, are able to resonate with Saroo's character, because his story and point of view is most understood by this population.

There are many elements of the adoption narrative that are present in the film, however, the majority of the components revolve around an adoptee's experience with his or her identity and growth. Saroo is the narrator and the audience is able to bear witness to his inner conflicts, battles, and struggles with navigating who he is as an Indian-Australian, who he wants to be, and why he wants to reconnect with his birth family.

More than anything, the construction of this narrative reveals the aspects of adoption from the adoptee's perspective, as this narrative addresses the feelings adoptees confront on a day-to-day basis. The uphill battle Saroo struggles with in regards to his adoptee identity in this narrative illustrates that adoptees, though human, have an additional layer to their human experience because they have another life story in addition to the one they are already living. Through this narrative, it is evident that there is more to an adoptee than what meets the eye.

There are, however, traces of how Saroo's adoptive family copes with his desire to reconnect with his biological family. Though Saroo's questions, at times, cause him to feel incredibly pained and fall into an extremely vulnerable and fragile state, his motivation and determination to answer these questions persist, and in the end, the mystery of Saroo's past heals his present.

Narrative Analysis of Instant Family

Because of Pete and Ellie Wagner's strong desire to want to start a family, even though they are quite skeptical about fostering children at first, they are rewarded with three beautiful adoptive children. Their narrative in this film illustrates that families can come together in a multitude of ways, theirs specifically through the foster care system. Additionally, this narrative highlights that even though parenting is not easy, everything parents do for their children is rooted in love and the desire to provide for them. This narrative suggests that parenting biological children is no different than parenting children who have been in foster care; however, these foster children do carry with them more baggage and have potentially faced tumultuous experiences that have affected their ability to trust.

There are many contributing relationships within this narrative that drive its events. The most significant relationship is the one Pete and Ellie develop with their three foster children, Lizzie, Juan, and Lita. Even though this relationship progresses over time, it proves to Pete and Ellie that they are capable of being good foster parents. There are times in Pete and Ellie's relationship with their children, however, when they begin to feel discouraged and unsuccessful as foster parents. The relationship Pete and Ellie create with their foster children eventually leads to Lizzie, Juan, and Lita's adoption.

Pete and Ellie find themselves part of a wonderful support group comprised of additional families who are fostering. It is through this community that Pete and Ellie grow in their confidence as foster parents. Social and communal support in the adoptive parents' life is a crucial element of their adoption narrative. In contrast,

Pete and Ellie receive little to no support from Ellie's family in regards to their decision to foster children, and Ellie's sister even comments that she is happy she and her husband aren't adopting so they can have "their own beautiful children" instead of "rolling the dice of some criminal's kid." Additionally, in this narrative, Pete and Ellie create a positive family environment for Lizzie, Juan, and Lita.

The way in which this narrative is constructed allows its audience to interpret it as a process that has challenges along the way but eventually ends happily. The narrative additionally reveals that, according to Pete and Ellie, what makes adoption successful is that a "cosmic connection" can develop between the adoptive parents and children. This connection doesn't occur overnight, though, and there are moments and times of doubt. Pete and Ellie struggle in this narrative just as much as Lizzie, Juan, and Lita do. The narrative presented in *Instant Family* serves as a reminder that the process of fostering and adoption is not a one-way street and there are multiple perspectives to keep in mind.

The adoptive parents' identity in this narrative reveals that they are very new to parenting and even though they don't understand right away all of the difficulties Lizzie, Juan, and Lita are presented with, they learn over time that it is OK to not know everything and that every aspect of parenting, especially parenting foster children, comes with time and patience. More importantly, it is evident through Pete and Ellie's character development and identity that they are ready to embrace being adoptive parents for the long run regardless of their children's history with the welfare system.

Narrative Analysis of Twinsters

This narrative is largely about becoming complete by identifying the missing pieces of life that one may not even consider to be absent in the first place. Sam and Anaïs are two individuals who are both distinctly similar yet incredibly different. They forge a relationship that will span their lifetimes out of a friendship that was created in a matter of seconds. As twins, they rely on each other after 25 years to learn more about their identity as Korean adoptees. They grow together with the person whom they may never had met had life gone differently. This narrative reveals the beauty in and mystery of life's trajectory and how one instance can change and shape the future. It is early on in this narrative that Sam and Anaïs' relationship becomes solidified, and for the rest of its duration, their relationship is what drives the narrative forward. They can't imagine their lives without one another and recognize that, even though they were separated at birth, they have an unimaginable love for one another.

The relationships Sam and Anaïs have with their Korean foster moms, too, can be considered contributing relationships in this narrative, especially for Anaïs. When she reconnects with Moon Eui Soo, her foster mother, something within Anaïs moves her to feel an overwhelming sense of completeness. Meeting her foster mother heals Anaïs from the brokenness she has felt for so long as a result of her adoption and allows her to see the beauty in where she comes from and what she has been given.

This narrative's setting transitions between Los Angeles and France. Sam is from Los Angeles and Anaïs is from France. However, there is another significant setting in this narrative: Korea. This is the country in which Sam and Anaïs were born and the country that contributes to their physical appearance. It is the country that they both feel a mysterious connection with and return to. Travelling back to Korea provides Sam and Anaïs with a sense of their origins and backstory and reminds them of their roots, despite the fact that they didn't grow up in Korea for most of their life. More importantly, journeying back allows Sam and Anaïs to face their complicated past and challenges them to find the meaning in and significance of their adoption story.

The element defined in an adoptee's adoption narrative as "preoccupation with adoption" is seen through Sam and Anaïs' desire to want to know more about their past and why they were given up for adoption. Additionally, in this narrative, it seems as though Sam and Anaïs are involved in an open adoption, as they begin to learn more information about their birth mother from various sources. It is evident in this narrative, too, that Anaïs struggles with her identity as an adoptee more so than Sam. Navigating her own adoptee identity is a challenge for her throughout this narrative, and it is not until she meets Sam that parts of Anaïs' adoptee identity begin to fall into place. Both Sam and Anaïs are the wonderful products of a supportive and loving family environment, which grants them two drastically different adoption narrative experiences. Sam views her adoption as something positive, whereas even though Anaïs could not love her family more, she still finds it hard to accept the circumstances surrounding her adoption. Anaïs, specifically, feels emotions of abandonment and grief and even considers the day she was adopted as the beginning of her life. Sam, on the other hand, considers her story of adoption to be a joyful one, in part because of the

surplus of people in her life who have contributed to her happiness and success.

The most significant aspect of Sam and Anaïs' identity within this narrative is that both women have identities that have been influenced by different adoption experiences. Sam is cheerful throughout the film, whereas Anaïs battles a more significant internal struggle that deals with her determining what it means to come from a past that is filled with abandonment and neglect. At the end of the narrative, though, Anaïs reconciles with her ambivalent emotions about being adopted. By returning to Korea and reconnecting with her foster mother, she is provided with a sense of closure to a story she didn't initially want to revisit. Both Sam and Anaïs mature to the point where they want to write a letter to their birthmother. This last portion of the narrative demonstrates that Sam and Anaïs have grown significantly into their identities as Korean adoptees, and it is largely in part due to each other. They are now able to move forward in life as sisters who were once separated at birth but are now reunited and can continue pondering what it means to be a Korean adoptee.

IV. Discussion

First, the basis of this discussion draws on the narrative analyses of each film against the research presented in the literature review. There are multiple features within each narrative that are representative of the existent adoption narrative research.

In the case of *Lion*, character is the feature that is most significant in representing the adoptee's adoption narrative. Saroo's character development visually depicts the struggles and many emotions adoptees face, especially those who are international adoptees, and how overwhelming an adoptee's preoccupation with his or her adoption can be. In more than one instance in this narrative, Saroo confronts sentiments of grief, loss, and confusion regarding his identity and past. Because of this lack of closure he feels, Saroo becomes overly obsessed with his adoption, and his desire to reconnect with his lost family becomes so extreme that it impacts the relationships he has with those in his immediate family. Because he yearns to know more about his family and past and isn't able to, Saroo enters into an internal identity crisis, where he is challenged to face both the identity he was born with – Indian – and the Australian identity that has been a large part of his life. His identity crisis encapsulates, as well, the aspect of the adoption narrative for adoptees that focuses on the ethnic identity.

In the case of *Instant Family*, the most significant features are that of characters and causal relationships. The varying relationships between all of the main characters in this narrative drive the story forward and specifically shed new insight into the lives of parents who adopt through the welfare system. According to research, the adoption narrative for parents who choose to adopt through the welfare system often includes facing unexpected trials and tribulations, largely in part due to the foster children's past in the system. This aspect of the adoption narrative is illustrated through Pete and Ellie's relationship with Lizzie, Juan, and Lita. There are moments in the narrative when Pete and Ellie are confused about how best to handle situations regarding their children, and sometimes these parental stressors grow to be too much. Pete and Ellie's responses to all of these situations illustrate the complexity of the adoptive parents adoption narrative and how children from the welfare system can easily provide foster parents with challenges that call on them to establish skills that create and foster a positive family environment. Additionally, something unique about *Instant Family*'s narrative is that real-life statistics are woven into characters' dialogue that reflect the true nature of the foster care system. Karen shares with the foster parents that "over half a million children are in foster care" and the system is "overloaded and doesn't need more children." By incorporating legitimate statistics regarding the state of the foster care system in this narrative, *Instant Family* is still a narrative of fiction but also one that revolves around data.

What is most significant about the narrative presented in *Twinsters* is that it highlights how important it is for adoptees to have a supportive community to foster positive sentiments of belonging. This strongly correlates to the sense of belonging that is fundamental in an adoptee's adoption narrative. Sam and Anaïs are given the gift of each other, and they thrive in one another's presence and grow as Korean adoptees. They realize they both share similar life experiences, even though they have grown up in separate countries, and this creates an inherent adoptee connection that only continues to flourish throughout the course of the narrative. The Korean conference Sam and Anaïs attend together, specifically, is one example of the types

of events that exist for adoptees to expand their communities. When Sam and Anaïs return to Korea for the conference, they also rediscover parts of their pasts because they are able to reconnect with their foster mothers. These interactions describe the open nature of their adoption. By having the chance to interact with them again, the questions Sam and Anaïs have been wondering for so long about their pasts begin to grow clear, and a sense of clarity washes over them. Not only is the importance of openness in adoption to adoptees explored in the literature, it is also a significant plot point in the *Twinsters* narrative that describes an already real-life story.

In each film, the adoption narrative is presented in a way that favors one point of view over another. In *Lion*, Saroo's point of view is favored, which allows for a greater understanding and compassion to develop between Saroo and the audience witnessing his story. In contrast, *Instant Family* heavily favors Pete and Ellie's point of view, as the narrative presented focuses mainly on their transition to parenthood and the obstacles they face and the victories they celebrate. *Instant Family*, however, does include the perspective of the eventual adoptees, Lizzie, Juan, and Lita, but not to the same extent as Pete and Ellie's. When both of these perspectives come together in this narrative, they create a more wholesome picture of what the adoption process looks like from multiple angles, which includes the adoptee and the adoptive parents.

Twinsters is slightly different, as it is a documentary from the start. Instead of being based on true events, like *Lion* and *Instant Family*, this narrative *is* the real story; therefore, it has no fictional elements to it. However, this is not to say that the narrative presented does not include elements of drama. Even in documentaries, drama exists, and there are multiple times in Sam and Anaïs' narrative when they are overcome with emotion. This, in turns, reminds viewers that these people are very much real-life and not characters shaped by screenwriters, and thus, their narrative *should* focus extensively on their point of view. At the same time, *Twinsters* presents a varied adoption narrative, as Sam and Anaïs view their adoption in different ways. So, though *Twinsters* is one cohesive adoption narrative from the adoptee's perspective, it also incorporates an element of varied perspective.

All three of these narratives have one distinct perspective throughout their entirety, and they very much are reflective of the real-life situations of adoption. Saroo's perspective in *Lion* addresses the overall themes of adoptee identity transformation and growth, especially in the form of preoccupation with adoption, experiencing, understanding, and coping with grief and loss, and what it means to navigate an ethnic identity. Pete and Ellie's perspective in *Instant Family* addresses the elements of the adoption narrative for parents that include having a strong marriage, effectively communicating, embracing a strong and supportive social community, and navigating the uncertainties and imbalances of the child welfare system. In *Twinsters*, Sam and Anaïs' perspective touches on the elements of the adoptee adoption narrative that relate to a sense of belonging, closure and acceptance through open adoption, and the ethnic identity.

Some depictions of adoption can have possibly hurtful implications. The visual narrative media observed in this paper create a stereotype regarding adoption involving being lost and then found, both for adoptees and for adoptive parents. In the case of *Lion* and *Twinsters*, Saroo, Sam, and Anaïs, are initially lost because a piece of them is missing. Yet, when Saroo reconnects with his biological mother and sister, and when Sam and Anaïs reconnect with their foster mothers and travel back to Korea, all three find the answers to the missing pieces of their lives that allow for them to become complete. In the case of *Instant Family*, Pete and Ellie are lost in a different way, as they sense a void in their marriage, and they are unsure of how to address it. When confronted with the possibility of fostering, they become found because they are not only able to create something that fills that void, a family, and they also find their calling as adoptive parents. In a similar manner, they also provide a new life for Lizzie, Juan, and Lita who are lost in the endlessness and toxicity of the child welfare system, and so, the children also become found.

While each of these characters became "found" in their own way, the adoption narrative may not manifest itself in this manner for every adoptee and adoptive parent. Some may stay lost forever and not have the opportunity to ever become found. It is possible that this stereotype feeds adoptees with a sense of false hope that they may be able to become "found" too when, in actuality, it is not possible or would take extraordinary effort. Some adoptees and adoptive parents may have narratives that will always be incomplete and comprised of sadness and longing.

The overall findings of this study suggest that the adoption narrative, as found in visual narrative media, mirrors the real-world adoptive experience. Nonetheless, the specific adoption stereotype of being lost and then found that these narratives create does reveal a possible discontinuity within the research, in that not all adoptees may be able to receive closure and acceptance.

V. Conclusion

This paper sought to identify and analyze how the adoption narrative for adoptees and adoptive parents is constructed in visual narrative media and if it is representative of the real-life components of adoption. The narrative analyses of *Lion*, *Instant Family*, and *Twinsters* vary in their own way, but all incorporate similar themes and motifs that center on the adoptee and adoptive parents' adoption experiences. Findings indicate that *Lion* very much emphasizes the setbacks adoptees encounter as they navigate the dual identity of being from one place and living in another, ethnic identity, and the grief, loss, and pain that adoptees often feel. *Instant Family* is a narrative that encompasses the different dimensions of foster care and parenthood, which both eventually lead to adoptive parenthood. *Twinsters* explores elements of the adoption narrative for adoptees that revolve around a sense of belonging, the notion that not all adoptees are the same, acceptance and closure, and ethnic identity.

In all three films, the adoption narrative is often explored extensively through one perspective, whether through the adoptee or adoptive parents. This single perspective has the potential to create a specific stereotype of being lost and then found. This stereotype could have negative consequences for viewers, especially if they are adoptees. They may be encouraged by the stories of Saroo, Pete and Ellie, or Sam and Anaïs, and not realize that their adoption narrative may not have the same "happily ever after" ending.

Several limitations affected the scope of this research and its findings. The chosen films represent just a small portion of such works; analysis of other films featuring adoption may have brought about different results. In addition, the adoption narrative for biological parents was not explored and could be a focus of future research.

In this study however, it is clear that *Lion*, *Instant Family*, and *Twinsters* incorporate elements of beauty, tragedy, and hope that all contribute to the films' adoption narrative and the adoption narrative for adoptees and adoptive parents as a whole. From what was observed, it can be concluded that when films present an adoption narrative, it often aligns with the real-life situations and experiences of adoption that have been researched thoroughly and that many encounter. At the same time, these adoption narratives will more than likely contain elements of drama, suspense, and romance that are quintessential to any fictional piece. When all of these elements come together, they can create a narrative that is impactful, inspirational, and crucial to the world of visual storytelling.

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Representations of Women in Popular Film: A Study of Gender Inequality in 2018

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Abstract

While much attention has been drawn to the lack of diversity in Hollywood, many minority groups still lack equal opportunities in the film industry. Roles for women, in particular, have grown slowly, leaving developed female characters far below proportionality. This study looks at the representation of women in the top-five grossing live-action movies directed by men and the top-five grossing live-action movies directed by women in 2018. Based on background quantitative data as well as a qualitative content analysis, this paper found that portrayals of women are much more positive in movies directed by women and that female directors frame female characters much more positively. These positive portrayals are largely affected by the presence of a critical actor behind the scenes.

I. Introduction

Even in the rapidly changing media landscape of the 21st century, movies have remained an integral part of American popular culture. While methods of consumption have changed, millions of Americans still flock to theaters every year to see stories played out on the silver screen, with the U.S. domestic box office grossing \$10.7 billion in 2018 (Statista, n.d.). Concurrently, the Academy Awards, the world's most prestigious cinematic awards, draws millions of viewers each year. The sustained prevalence of film in popular culture positions the medium as a key cog in American society and popular culture (Simonton, 2004).

Yet, even in the year 2019, many Americans are not proportionally represented in film. These inadequacies in cinematic representation both on screen and off screen have prompted a number of social movements over the past few years, including the #OscarsSoWhite campaign. The movement, which centered on the lack of racial diversity among Oscars nominees, resulted in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences vowing to “double the number of women and people of color in the Academy’s membership by 2020” (Reign, n.d.). The #MeToo and “Time’s Up” movements shifted the focus to promoting awareness and advocacy for sexual assault victims—especially women. Yet even with these social outcries, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the film industry as a whole still do not adequately represent women on and off screen. Stereotypic portrayals and the lack of complex female roles remain common in Hollywood and the media as a whole (Milburn, Mather, & Conrad, 2000).

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These negative depictions have implications that reach far beyond the entertainment industry. Because the role of film in popular culture and society, “motion pictures largely reflect prevailing cultural attitudes about gender roles, norms, attitudes and expectations” (Simonton, 2004, 781). In the same vein, depictions of minority groups in film and the media can be influential in the dissemination of stereotypes (Bazzini, McIntosh, Smith, Cook, & Harris, 1997). This dual cause-and-effect often results in a vicious cycle as societal stereotypes influence primarily male filmmakers who in turn create art that adds to said stereotypes (Simonton, 2004). While this is not the end-all-be-all of misrepresentation in media, this cycle is important to consider when evaluating portrayals of minorities in film.

Although representations of women in film have improved in recent years, this growth has been mitigated by the fact that there has only been a 3% increase in female employment in the 250 top-grossing films since 1998 (Lauzen, 2018b). The lack of significant progress is arguably most evident in the Academy Awards nominees and winners, with just one woman awarded “Best Director” in the 91-year history of the awards. In 2019, in the midst of social change and the #MeToo movement, zero female directors were nominated for “Best Director” and zero female directors were nominated for “Best Picture.” Additionally, each of the top 30 grossing movies in the U.S. in 2018 were directed by men (Box Office Mojo, n.d.). Through this research paper, the top-five grossing live-action movies directed by men and the top-five grossing live-action movies directed by women in 2018 were analyzed to better understand how women are depicted in popular film and how behind-the-scenes representations affect these portrayals.

II. Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the current representation of women in Hollywood, critical mass theory and critical actor theory, as well as a discussion of male and female stories, all of which seek to analyze how women’s roles in the film industry affect their representation on screen.

Current Representation in the Film Industry

A vast pool of prior research, empirical and otherwise, proves the existence of sexual discrimination in Hollywood. The term “actress” itself is laden with subtle sexism, as the suffix “-ess” implies that the roles of actor and actress differ as performed by men and women (Simonton, 2004). While not intentionally malicious, this small difference points to inherent discrimination in the film industry. Discrimination theory bases itself upon the idea that “members of a certain group are preferred, even when the work of these group members is indistinguishable from that belonging to another group” (Lauzen, 2012b, 311). By differentiating, and seemingly preferring, male actors from female actors, the film industry shows its discriminatory tendencies.

By employing these tendencies, the film industry discourages women from entering the field and thus influences decisions to hire male workers instead of female workers (Lauzen, 2012b). “This has led inevitably to a situation in which the films... are most often written, directed, and produced by men” (Orwin, 2002, 271). This is evident by the vast amount of quantitative research conducted on employment in the film industry. In 2018, women accounted for only eight percent of directors at the helm of the top-250 grossing films in the United States, down one percent from 1998 (Lauzen, 2018b). Additionally, one in four films employed either zero women or one woman in the roles of director, writer, producer, executive producer, editor, and cinematographer. Only one percent of films employed ten or more women in those roles, compared to 74 percent of films employing ten or more men (Lauzen, 2018b).

In addition to this lack of proportionality, “the cultural devaluation of women is reinforced by the fact that they do not receive star billing as often as men” (Lincoln & Allen, 2004). According to Lauzen’s “It’s a Man’s (Celluloid) World” report, only 36 percent of all major characters in 2018’s top-100 grossing movies were women (Lauzen, 2018a). While that number is up nine percent from 2002, female stars appear in far fewer films than their male counterparts and thus infrequently become movie stars (Lincoln & Allen, 2004). In this way, films inherently tell audiences that “men are more important, in all kinds of contexts, than women” (Lincoln & Allen, 2004).

These issues have a clear solution: give female filmmakers more, and equal, opportunities. When women are hired as directors and writers, more female characters are employed (Sutherland & Feltey, 2017). “In films with at least one female director and/or writer, women comprised 43 percent of all speaking characters,”

a number much more proportionate to the U.S. population than the 32 percent of female speaking characters present in films with exclusively male directors and writers (Lauzen, 2018a). This disparity shows the effect that employing female filmmakers has on gender representation. However, female filmmakers tend to face far more unjust criticism than men when they are given positions (Kennedy, 2010).

One of the most prominent of these criticisms is the idea that female filmmakers present more of a financial risk than male filmmakers. When faced with large budgets, studio executives tend to fall back on directors who have had box-office hits in the past (Lauzen, 2012b). These directors are often male. This presents a bit of a paradox in which women are not hired for positions that require them to have previous jobs to prove their worth.

In reality, films that employ at least one female director, executive producer, producer, and/or writer garner approximately the same domestic box office sales as do films with exclusively male representation in those roles (Lauzen, 2008). Despite this, women are rarely afforded the same resources and budgets as men. This can partially be attributed to the emergence of the superhero genre—generally the highest-grossing movies in modern day Hollywood. Since the mid-2000s, when these films became widely popular, the genre has been dominated by male directors. Until 2017's *Wonder Woman*, directed by Patty Jenkins, no woman had directed a movie released by Marvel or DC, the two preeminent comic book studios in the film industry. While this trend seems to be changing with the upcoming releases of Cathy Yan's *Birds of Prey*, Patty Jenkins' sequel to *Wonder Woman*, Cate Shortland's *Black Widow*, and Chloé Zhao's *The Eternals*, the lucrative, high-budget genre has largely benefited men, leaving women to contend with small budgets and less box office influence.

In 2018, these super hero movies and other "action" films accounted for 34 percent of the year's box office gross (The Numbers, 2018). Additionally, all nine superhero movies released in 2018 were directed by men. This disparity present in the superhero genre alone can partially explain why films directed by women do not have budgets as large as movies directed by their male counterparts. While the sample size is small, women have succeeded at the box office when placed at the helm of big budget superhero films. Both *Wonder Woman* and *Captain Marvel*, the only two modern superhero movies directed by women, have grossed over \$800 million, with budgets over \$120 million.

The disparity between gender representation in the director's chair also carries over to the Academy Awards. The Oscars hold a great deal of importance in the film industry. On the surface, it appears as though women are granted the same number of awards, with one Oscar for best actor and one Oscar for best actress, as an example. Yet women are rarely, if ever, nominated for other awards - only one woman has won "Best Director" in the 91-year history of the Academy. Outside of "Best Actress" and "Best Actress in a Supporting Role," only 15 women earned nominations out of a total 107 nominees in 2015 (McCarthy, 2015). This issue is compounded when considering the makeup of the Academy. In 2018, 69% of voters in the Academy were male (Statista, 2018). This number is down from 77% in 2015, partially in response to the #OscarsSoWhite movement. Even still, the lack of representation in the awards and in the Academy has serious repercussions. With men winning most of the awards at the film industry's most prestigious ceremony, the Academy places more importance on male filmmakers, thus granting them more opportunity.

Critical Mass and Critical Actor Theories

Mass social movements such as #OscarsSoWhite and #MeToo have begun to shed light on this issue. In addition, a number of prominent figures in Hollywood have pushed for "inclusion riders," or stipulations included in contracts that guarantee a certain level of gender diversity on set (Dwyer, n.d.). Even still, progress has been slow. To add to that, very little academic research has been done regarding possible solutions to gender inequality in the industry. Because of this, this literature review examines two gender equality theories prominent in politics and applies them to film. These theories do not intend to be all-encompassing solutions to gender representation, but seek to shed light on how roles behind the scenes can influence portrayals on screen.

Referring to an irreversible turning point, critical mass theory states that representation in film is dependent on numeric designation. Some scholars in this area suggest a certain proportion of representation – perhaps 30% – is necessary before a minority group can see real change within the film industry (Dahlerup, 2006). According to the theory, a considerable minority is much more likely to make an impact than a few token individuals (Childs & Krook, 2009). Once a critical mass has been achieved, women will theoretically be able to push for substantial changes and legislation. In addition, a greater focus on feminist issues can result in men and women in the industry paying more attention to women's issues (Childs & Krook, 2006).

Critical mass theory has its weaknesses. It does not account for institutional pressures that may compel women to conform to masculine practices (Childs & Krook, 2009). Essentially, increased numbers of women in the film industry may facilitate coalitions, but sheer numbers do not guarantee equal on-screen representation, as women are not guaranteed to represent other women in gender issues.

This complication of the critical mass theory can be seen in Academy Award-winning director Kathryn Bigelow. Despite becoming the first and only woman to win an Oscar for “Best Director” for her 2008 film *The Hurt Locker*, Bigelow has been extremely resistant to discuss gender politics in the industry (Lauzen, 2011). Unlike many women in Hollywood, she made her name directing and producing action and war films such as *Point Break* and *Zero Dark Thirty*. In essence, Bigelow attempted to fit into the “male-dominated business of film directing by distancing herself from gender issues, while simultaneously aligning herself with traditionally male-identified traits, including toughness and the desire for control” through her tough on-set attitude and intense subject matter (Lauzen, 2011, 147). Bigelow’s position and refusal to address inequality and gender politics in Hollywood show the inadequacies of critical mass, as not every individual in a group is willing to advocate for change (Lauzen, 2012a).

Critical Actor theory, on the other hand, suggests a different solution to gender inequality in the industry. The theory rebukes critical mass, citing that individuals, not the mass, bring about change. Essentially, change depends on the acts of individuals within minority groups. According to the theory, critical actors are those who push forth change and inspire others to join in. Critical actors do not need to be a part of the minority group, with men playing a crucial role in the advancement of equality (Childs & Krook, 2009).

These two theories will be used to filter this study’s analysis of the films at hand, considering both the number and agency of women in each film analyzed. With five of the films helmed by men and five of the films led by women, critical mass and critical actor theories will be used to evaluate how, and if, these filmmakers address inequality and promote feminist issues, and whether or not the mass or the individual most contributes to these causes.

Male Versus Female Stories

The inadequacies of Critical Mass theory suggest the need for women in Hollywood goes far beyond simple representation. Diversity in filmmaking also diversifies the type of stories told. Typically, women tell inward stories, in contrast to the very outward, masculine hero’s journey (Orwin, 2002). While it is important for women to be able to tell a varied degree of stories, feminist films “explicitly or implicitly challenge, rather than subscribe to, dominant representations of female identity,” thus differentiating itself from traditionally masculine films (Hankin, 2007, 60).

While men can, and sometimes do, tell female stories successfully, they often fail to empower women. Male filmmakers who are perceived to be unbiased still fail to tell truly feminist stories (Sutherland & Feltey, 2017). Compared to filmmakers like Sofia Coppola, male filmmakers almost never tell truly successful female stories (Kennedy, 2010). One of the foremost examples of this failure is the Bechdel Test, which tracks whether or not two female characters with names talk to each other about something other than men in a film (Sutherland & Feltey, 2017). This test, along with other benchmarks of feminist film, were used to determine whether or not women’s stories are represented in the films analyzed.

III. Methods

A qualitative content analysis was used to examine female roles in the selected films. This method was selected due to the complex nature of portrayals in film. While quantitative findings provide context for the study, a qualitative content analysis better lends itself toward the nuances found within the representations in each film.

For the purpose of this study, the top-five grossing live-action movies directed by men and the top-five grossing live-action movies directed by women in 2018 were analyzed. These ten films were chosen because of the influence that high-grossing movies have on the industry and its audiences. Because they earn the most money, they are often the most influential, given that they are exposed to the most people.

The films analyzed in this study are *Black Panther*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, *Deadpool 2*, *Mission: Impossible – Fallout*, *A Wrinkle In Time*, *Blockers*, *I Feel Pretty*, *The Spy Who Dumped Me*, and *On the Basis of Sex*. These films deal with a wide range of subject matter and genres and will

give a sense of how women are portrayed in popular films directed by men and women.

In this analysis, minor quantitative background data was also used to gauge how films with varying levels of budgets, gender representation behind the scenes, and other contexts may affect representations on screen. Quantitative analysis in this study is comprised of domestic and worldwide gross, budget, the number of women in key roles behind the scenes (director, writer, producer, executive producer, editor, cinematographer) as defined by Lauzen, female protagonists, top-billed female characters, and whether or not the film passes the Bechdel Test (Lauzen, 2018). This information was used to supplement the qualitative content analysis.

Each film was viewed in its entirety and coded. The representations and roles of women in each, as well as their connotation, the agency and actions of women, and notable quotes in each film were recorded. After viewing each film, these coded results were then analyzed and filtered into trends. All of these results were then examined through the quantitative elements discussed earlier to further search for patterns and to analyze the following research questions:

RQ1: How do the films in question portray women?

RQ2: How does gender representation behind the scenes influence gender representation on screen?

RQ3: How does Critical Mass theory and Critical Actor theory impact representations on screen?

IV. Discussion

At the surface level, the five male-directed movies performed far better at the domestic box office than the five movies directed by women, as seen in Table 1. *Black Panther* was the top overall grossing film in 2018, with just over \$700 million earned at the U.S. box office, while the top-grossing female-led film, *A Wrinkle in Time*, placed 33rd overall, with just over \$100 million gross sales. Additionally, *A Wrinkle in Time* was the only movie directed by a woman in 2018 to make over \$100 million at the U.S. box office. The remaining live-action male-directed movies ranked two, four, six, and eight overall. Meanwhile, the remaining live-action, female-directed films placed 47th, 59th, 83rd, and 96th at the box office. Furthermore, male-directed films had much larger budgets than female-directed films. Table 1 demonstrates the issue of women generally directing fewer high-budget movies than men (Lauzen, 2008).

Table 1: Box Office Performance and Budget

Title	Domestic Gross	Worldwide Gross	Budget
Male-Directed			
<i>Black Panther</i>	\$700,059,566	\$1,347,071,259	\$200,000,000
<i>Avengers: Infinity War</i>	\$678,815,482	\$2,048,709,917	\$321,000,000
<i>Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom</i>	\$417,719,760	\$1,309,484,461	\$170,000,000
<i>Deadpool 2</i>	\$324,591,735	\$785,046,920	\$110,000,000
<i>Mission Impossible – Fallout</i>	\$220,159,104	\$791,107,538	\$178,000,000
Average	\$468,269,129	\$1,256,284,019	\$195,800,000
Female-Directed			
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	\$100,478,608	\$132,675,864	\$100,000,000
<i>Blockers</i>	\$59,839,515	\$93,665,491	\$21,000,000
<i>I Feel Pretty</i>	\$48,795,601	\$88,426,082	\$32,000,000
<i>The Spy Who Dumped Me</i>	\$33,562,069	\$42,898,313	\$40,000,000
<i>On the Basis of Sex</i>	\$24,622,687	\$18,348,761	\$20,000,000
Average	\$53,459,696	\$75,202,902	\$42,600,000

In measuring on-set roles, this research considered the six roles noted by Lauzen in her research: director, writer, producer, executive producer, editor, and cinematographer (Lauzen, 2018). Production design was also considered in this research. As seen in Table 2, in the five films directed by men, women made up 13% of these positions, compared with 37% in films directed by women. *Blockers* was an outlier among female-directed films with just 17% representation. Among male-directed films, *Black Panther* was an outlier with 31% representation. The next highest percentage associated with a male-directed movie was 11%. The highest representation among all films was found in *A Wrinkle in Time*, with 60% of key roles filled by women. The movie, as stated, was the highest grossing female-directed film and the only female-directed film to surpass \$100 million at the box office.

Table 2: Gender Representation in Key Roles Behind the Scenes

Title	Total Female	Total	Percent
Male-Directed			
<i>Black Panther</i>	4	13	0.31%
<i>Avengers: Infinity War</i>	1	16	0.06%
<i>Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom</i>	1	11	0.09%
<i>Deadpool 2</i>	2	19	0.11%
<i>Mission Impossible – Fallout</i>	1	12	0.08%
Average	1.8	14.2	0.13%
Female-Directed			
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	6	10	0.60%
<i>Blockers</i>	3	18	0.17%
<i>I Feel Pretty</i>	8	24	0.33%
<i>The Spy Who Dumped Me</i>	7	16	0.44%
<i>On the Basis of Sex</i>	4	12	0.33%
Average	5.6	16	0.37%

The number of on-screen roles for men and women also differed greatly depending on director. As seen in Table 3, all five female-directed films featured a female protagonist, while none of the male-directed films featured a woman as its main character. In female-directed films, women accounted for 67% of top-billed characters compared to 20% in male-directed films. Additionally, all five films helmed by women passed the Bechdel test, which is defined as two named female characters speaking about something other than a man. In comparison, three of the five films directed by men passed the Bechdel test, with *Deadpool 2* and *Mission: Impossible – Fallout* not fitting the criteria.

Table 3: Gender Representation On Screen

Title	Protagonist	Top Billed	Bechdel Test
Male-Directed			
<i>Black Panther</i>	Male	2 Male 1 Female	Yes
<i>Avengers: Infinity War</i>	Male	3 Male	Yes
<i>Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom</i>	Male	2 Male 1 Female	Yes
<i>Deadpool 2</i>	Male	2 Male 1 Female	No
<i>Mission Impossible – Fallout</i>	Male	3 Male	No
Total	0 Female/5	3 Female/ 15	
Average	0%	20%	
Female-Directed			
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	Female	3 Female	Yes
<i>Blockers</i>	Female	2 Male 1 Female	Yes
<i>I Feel Pretty</i>	Female	3 Female	Yes
<i>The Spy Who Dumped Me</i>	Female	1 Male 2 Female	Yes
<i>On the Basis of Sex</i>	Female	2 Male 1 Female	Yes
Total	5 Female/5	10 Female/15	
Average	100%	67%	

These figures show that live-action movies directed by men generally outperform movies directed by women at the U.S. box office. That said, the five films directed by men in this study had budgets averaging \$153 million more than the five films directed by women. *Black Panther* and *Avengers: Infinity War* each had budgets higher than all five female-directed movies combined, with each exceeding \$200 million. Additionally, high-grossing movies directed by women involved more women behind the scenes and included more female characters than high-grossing movies directed by men. While the quantitative portion of the research does not necessarily provide any groundbreaking revelations, it gives context to the portrayals of women on screen.

After viewing the ten movies in question, a number of trends can be observed concerning the portrayals and roles of women in popular film.

Male and Female Stories on Screen

When reviewing related literature, it was noted that female stories typically differ from stories told by their male counterparts. As defined earlier in this paper by Hankin, feminist films “explicitly or implicitly challenge, rather than subscribe to, dominant representations of female identity,” thus differentiating themselves from traditionally masculine film (Hankin, 2007, 60). In terms of the ten films in question, a trend emerged regarding the types of stories being told. Generally, in the five movies directed by women, the directors subvert traditionally male stories and turn them into feminist ones.

While *A Wrinkle in Time* is not necessarily an overtly male or female story in a traditional sense, it acts as a representation of equality. The protagonist of the film, Meg, is a strong and independent young girl with a strong intellect and a passion for science, a representation rarely found in Hollywood. Almost all the ancillary characters are also female, including three all-knowing, magical characters who guide Meg on her journey to find her missing father (DuVernay, 2018). While the content of the film is not overtly feminist, the magical characters, played by prominent and famous women (Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, and Mindy Kaling), all maintain their feminine qualities while playing roles typically filled by men (DuVernay, 2018). In doing this, the film challenges traditional depictions of femininity.

The film also subverts the expectations of a blockbuster. As mentioned, high-grossing movies in the United States, at least in 2018, tend to be directed by men. By making a traditional blockbuster and filling 60 percent of the key crew positions with women, the director of *A Wrinkle in Time*, Ava DuVernay, subverts the expectations of a male blockbuster. The film had a budget of \$100 million, \$60 million higher than the next film

directed by a woman, making it a clear outlier. Both its high budget and high total gross make it more akin to a traditional popular movie. In doing so, the film and DuVernay display an ideal where women can direct mass-appearance projects with injections of feminist film.

The other female-directed films subvert male stories in a more direct way. *Blockers* and *The Spy Who Dumped Me* take traditionally male stories and inject them with clear feminist ideologies. *Blockers* challenges the traditionally male story of losing your virginity in high school, found in movies such as *Superbad*, a raunchy, masculine comedy about two male high school seniors trying to have sex before graduation (Cannon, 2018). Even though *Blockers* has the lowest number of women in key roles behind the scenes among the five female-directed films examined, director Kay Cannon turns the film into a female-driven feminist story. While the film is still, in many ways, a raunchy popular comedy, it contains overt feminist qualities and uses its platform to convey a distinct message. At one point, the father of a girl who decides to lose her virginity on prom night is challenged by his wife for his traditional views of female sexuality (Cannon, 2018). In a telling moment, the woman points out that men losing their virginity is celebrated, while women losing their virginity is seen as taboo and a loss of innocence. Moments like these, and the agency of women in the movie, make *Blockers* an overtly feminist story.

In the same vein, *The Spy Who Dumped Me* subverts the trope of a masculine espionage thriller. The film opens with male-on-male gun violence and a traditionally handsome male lead. When the film introduces its two main characters Audrey and Morgan, played by Mila Kunis and Kate McKinnon, they are generally helpless and without agency, as the actions of men influence their decisions, or lack thereof, as Fogel (2018) notes. Throughout the course of the film, Audrey and Morgan are tied up in an international plot to recover a flash drive containing vital intelligence information. But, by the end of the film, they are not reliant on men to save them and have complete agency over their actions and decisions. This evolution can be seen in a main plot device used throughout the movie. The McGuffin, or an object that drives the story forward without having much or any significance, of the film is a small flash drive containing vital intelligence. At the start of the film, the drive is hidden in a fantasy football trophy, a symbol of masculinity and men's control of the plot thus far. Toward the end of the film, Audrey hides the flash drive in her vagina, a comedic yet clear symbol of femininity and her newfound agency (Fogel, 2018).

The two other movies directed by women also challenge typical portrayals of women and femininity. *I Feel Pretty* follows a female protagonist who struggles with her body image and points out the importance of sexuality and appearance that society forces upon women (Kohn & Silverstein, 2018). *On the Basis of Sex* also deals with traditionally feminine themes and follows the true story of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her struggles with systemic gender inequality (Leder, 2018). The five male-directed films, on the other hand, all deal with men and their stories. While films like *Black Panther* contain strong female characters and more representation behind the scenes, they are still about men and their problems. Based on these ten movies, it can be assumed that men, at least in popular film, almost exclusively tell male stories, while women choose to tell female stories.

Agency of Women

Another distinct pattern that arose from the ten movies analyzed was the differing depictions of agency among female characters in movies directed by men and women. Through qualitative analysis, it was found that women have much less agency, or the capacity to act, in movies directed by men than in movies directed by women. In the male-directed movies, women often need saving or fail to act in high-stakes situations, and are often manipulated by men. In *Deadpool 2*, a movie which does not pass the Bechdel test, women almost never take action and frequently need saving. The film centers around the lewd superhero Deadpool and his quest to protect a young superhero from Cable, a time-traveling super-soldier. The film's plot is kickstarted by the death of Deadpool's girlfriend Vanessa. Without superpowers, Vanessa is helpless and dies within the first fifteen minutes of the movie. While her death acts as the inciting incident of the movie, her character does nothing besides move the plot forward. Even female superheroes in the film rarely have agency. Domino, a strong, independent female character, does have some agency in the film (Leitch, 2018). However, her "superpower" is simply that she is lucky, limiting her ability to directly act in the film. Whether this element is intentional or not, it is representative of the lack of agency women have in the film.

In addition, among the films analyzed, the majority of characters with superpowers tend to be men, thus making the characters with the most agency male. While there are some strong female characters, they rarely have the same god-like powers that their male counterparts do. Characters like Black Widow, Gamora,

and Nebula do not possess the same classical “superhero” powers that men do (Russo & Russo, 2018). Men are constantly the ones to show true, unbridled strength in these movies. Actions like Thanos’ snap, which wipes out half of life in the universe, and Thor’s crucial rampage in the climactic battle scene, in which he wields a legendary weapon that can control thunder and lightning, are rarely, if ever, replicated by women (Russo & Russo, 2018). Even in a movie such as *Black Panther*, where female characters generally have agency, men, specifically the king of the fictional country Wakanda, and his rival and challenger to the throne, are the only characters with traditional superpowers (Coogler, 2018). The absence of these powers among female characters is a prime example of the lack of agency they have in many popular male-directed, live-action movies.

In the five films directed by women, however, females almost always have agency and the ability to act. At the end of *A Wrinkle in Time*, the protagonist Meg completes the final task and saves her father alone without the aid of male characters (DuVernay, 2018). In *On the Basis of Sex*, Ruth Bader Ginsburg wins her final case because of her own actions and merits (Leder, 2018). Throughout the movie *Blockers*, the three main characters’ parents, two of whom are men, try to stop them from losing their virginities, thus taking agency away from them (Cannon, 2018). By the end of the film, all three characters realize that they must stop trying to make decisions for their daughters, showing the flaws in limiting female agency.

In contrast, *The Spy Who Dumped Me* arguably centers on female agency. The film starts with the main character Audrey stuck in a job she doesn’t want after being dumped by a man, two actions relatively out of her control. The story quickly turns into a classic espionage thriller. For the first portion of the movie, only men have guns and take action, often protecting or threatening Audrey and Morgan. However, the first major turning point of the film comes when Audrey shoots and kills someone who tries to attack her. After this action the two gain agency in the story as they constantly outwit male assassins. Regardless, the men around them, especially Audrey’s ex-boyfriend and the titular spy, constantly attempt to take control of situations that the two are in and feel the need to save them. In the end, Audrey and Morgan end up defeating and outsmarting Audrey’s ex-boyfriend who turns out to be the villain of the story, displaying ultimate agency on their part (Fogel, 2018). The film subverts both the traditional spy thriller genre and the idea that women lack agency in such films.

The Role of Critical Mass and Critical Actor Theories

Agency plays another key role when it comes to portrayals of women in these ten films—the agency of critical actors behind the scenes. Background quantitative data presented earlier was conducted, in part, to assess the role of critical mass theory and critical actor theory in the films analyzed. While critical mass has been criticized, as discussed in the literature review, the number of women working behind the scenes in movies does seem to play a role in on-screen representations. As noted earlier, women comprised 13% of the crews on male-directed films that were analyzed, compared to 37% on female-directed films. These numbers may have a role in the depictions of women on screen. The one male-directed film with more than 11% representation behind the scenes, *Black Panther*, has the most positive across-the-board depictions of women of the five male-directed films.

While critical mass theory may play a role in these positive depictions, critical actor theory is possibly more indicative of positive portrayals of women across the ten movies. While *Black Panther* certainly did benefit from a large number of women involved behind the scenes, a large part of that was because of a critical actor. Director Ryan Coogler actively sought women to fill behind the scenes roles during development of the movie. The film, which featured women in four out of thirteen key behind-the-scenes roles, falls in line with the gender diversity of movies directed by women. Notably, of the ten films analyzed, *Black Panther* was the only film to feature a female cinematographer. Acclaimed costume designer Ruth E. Carter also cited that Coogler “fostered an environment where women could thrive,” displaying his role as a critical actor (Richards, 2019).

This diversity behind the scenes and the role of Coogler as a critical actor is evident on screen. Women in the movie, unlike in many other male-directed movies, have a great deal of agency. Many of the warriors of the fictional nation of Wakanda, where the movie is set, are incredibly strong women (Coogler, 2018). Additionally, women in the film are rarely tied to men. Many male-directed films use women to service male characters. Deadpool’s girlfriend Vanessa in *Deadpool 2*, Ethan Hunt’s ex-wife in *Mission: Impossible – Fallout*, and Iron Man’s wife Pepper Potts in *Avengers: Infinity War* are all generally one-note characters that exist solely to give their male counterparts emotional stakes. This is not the case in *Black Panther*. When

asked at the beginning of the movie, King T'Challa's ex-girlfriend Nakia refuses to stay in Wakanda just for him. Toward the end of the film, once the people of Wakanda have turned against each other because of the actions of the villain Killmonger, Okoye, another Wakandan warrior, tells her boyfriend that she would kill him "For Wakanda? No question" (Coogler, 2018). The women in the film are truly independent, unlike those found in many other male-directed superhero films. While these positive depictions should not be completely credited to Ryan Coogler, his role in hiring women to fill behind the scenes roles and his fostering of a positive on-set environment certainly played a part in forming on-screen depictions, thus making him a critical actor.

The immense success of *Black Panther* is an indication that Hollywood studios' aversion to risk when it comes to diverse casts and crews in high-budget movies is at least somewhat misguided. While Coogler showed his ability to create a successful blockbuster in 2015's *Creed*, his role as a critical actor in *Black Panther* and the film's domestic-gross at the box office shows that gender and race diversity are not liabilities.

Like Coogler, many of the female directors use their platform to promote gender equality in film, making them critical actors. Ava DuVernay used her large budget to tell a mass-appeal story with injections of feminist film in *A Wrinkle in Time* (DuVernay, 2018). While *Blockers* featured the lowest percentage of women in key roles behind the scenes, director Kay Cannon subverted a classic male story to make a feminist film (Cannon, 2018). *On the Basis of Sex* portrayed a critical actor on screen with Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Leder, 2018). While often acting alone and not in critical mass, these female directors are able to enact positive change towards gender equality.

V. Conclusion

Depictions of women on screen are often dependent on roles behind the scenes. Female directors tend to hire more women in key roles and depict women in a more positive light than men. All five movies directed by women could also be classified as female stories, with plots directly subverting traditional male stories. While there are strong women in many of the five films directed by men, women in these movies tend to have less agency than in the movies directed by women. Films directed by women were also much more likely to feature a female protagonist and to pass the Bechdel test.

With all of that said, *Black Panther* shows that a male director can act as a critical actor just like many of the female directors did. The movie's depictions and number of women in key roles behind the scenes closely mirror that of a female-directed film. *Black Panther's* success at the American box office highlights that inclusive films can succeed. That said, male-directed films, despite their lack of gender equality on screen and behind the scenes, still receive higher budgets.

This research suggests the need for more critical actors in popular film. The highest-grossing movies directed by a man and by a woman each featured a prominent critical actor at the helm in Ryan Coogler and Ava DuVernay. The financial success and representations of equality of both *Black Panther* and *A Wrinkle in Time* show that critical actors can make a difference in Hollywood. More prominent figures pushing for inclusion riders in the industry could make a difference as well. Above all else, however, the financial success of these films could demonstrate to studio executives that diversity sells.

The research also displays the clear gender gap still present in the film industry. Aside from *Black Panther*, the next four highest-grossing live-action films directed by men featured just nine percent of women in key roles behind the scenes. In addition, only two of the four remaining movies passed the Bechdel test. These two elements, along with the general lack of female agency, dominance of male stories, and lack of critical actors in the films, display the inequality in Hollywood both on screen and off screen.

To expand upon this research, more films should be studied. While a vast amount of quantitative research exists in regard to gender equality in 2018 films, not much qualitative analysis exists. Because of limited resources, this research was restricted to a relatively small sample size. Future studies could also expand upon more specific elements of the representation of women in popular film or focus on another subsection of the film industry such as independent cinema, where women and female stories are more prominent.

Along with a small sample size, this study was limited in its lack of multiple coders. Because a lone researcher analyzed all ten films, the qualitative findings could contain unchecked biases. Including multiple

watchers of each film could confirm findings and help to eliminate bias in future research. Due to time limitations, each film could also only be watched once. Watching each movie multiple times in future studies could shed light on more subtle, nuanced portrayals of women. Regardless, the research shows the effect that gender representation behind the scenes has on portrayals of women on screen.

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Social Synergy: How Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram Use Integrated Marketing Communications

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Abstract

Many companies use social media to gain awareness and create relationships with their audience, which includes social media platforms themselves. The tactics behind the use of these platforms come from the overall theory of integrated marketing communications. This study explored how major social media companies Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram employ different social media channels in a strategic way. Through a content analysis, this exploratory research determined which integrated marketing communications tactics were used and how many times they were posted in 2018. Overall, the study found that @Facebook, @Twitter, and @Instagram used different tactics and methods based on the medium they are use and the type of content they share. These findings may contribute to research concerning social media strategy and the strategic use of several social media platforms for a company or brand.

I. Introduction

Throughout the past decade, social media has become a key component of the communications field, becoming a key avenue to get out information and content quickly and effectively. According to social media management platform Hootsuite, 3.48 billion people now use social media, which is 45% of the total world population. Within that, 90% of brands use social media to increase brand awareness, maintaining anywhere between four and 10 social media profiles. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are three of the most used social media platforms in the world (Newberry, 2019, p. 1). More specifically, there are more than 1 billion monthly active Instagram users, 2.32 billion monthly active Facebook users, and 321 million Twitter monthly active users in 2019 (We Are Social, Hootsuite, & DataReportal, 2019).

These robust numbers demonstrate the significance of the social media industry and these platforms more specifically. Each platform actually has “meta” social media accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In other words, social media companies use their respective social media channels to showcase their own branded content. This closely relates to the concept of integrated marketing communications, which uses several channels to support an overall campaign or brand. This study explores how Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter each uses these different social media channels and how they relate to integrated marketing communications.

Keywords: Social media marketing, integrated marketing communications, synergy
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II. Literature Review

What is integrated marketing communications?

Integrated marketing communications is a simple concept that has been used across several communications fields. It is a strategic way to organize and control the promotional mix to produce an overall message and brand that is unified, customer focused, and achieves the goals of the organization (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Integrated marketing communications has a particular focus on strategy as opposed to how content is created. This concept can include a combination of print material, television ads, websites, and more. It is the strategy behind the combination of tactics that makes integrated marketing communication so effective. This includes planning, execution and evaluation of all channels to optimize the impact of each channel's differences (Reid, Luxton, & Mavondo, 2005).

There are specific aspects of the idea that need to be highlighted before it can be applied. Integrated marketing communications is a sum of several "communication options." or many forms of communication that are related directly to the client and brand. These options are then broken out into categories and broad types. Print materials, advertising, and video are all examples of these broader types (Keller, 2001).

When putting together these varying communications options, there are different qualities of the content and strategy that can be in place for higher impact. First, the coverage of the communication option should be considered, or how many people are reached by each channel and how much overlap exists among these channels. Next, contribution needs to be analyzed to showcase exactly how each channel performs and adds to the desired response of the consumer when others are not revealed to them (Keller, 2001).

Following that, the commonality of the content on the channels should be considered, or how similar the content and message is across these platforms. For some, the strategy could be to post the same thing across all channels, while for others it could be using different complementary content, which is important because it creates linkages between the communication channels. It is also important to note that the strengths in one option should also help to negate the disadvantages of another.

Application to Social Media

Integrated marketing communications applies to social media in a very specific way. For many communications professionals, integrated marketing communications would mean putting together different types of media like radio, print, television ads, and more. However, in the case of social media, integrated marketing communications applies to each social media channel. The strategy emphasizes the identification of what type of media channels to use, while the tactical dimension is exactly which channels would be used, the schedule, and more (Reid, Luxton, & Mavondo, 2005).

Social media has an important relationship with consumers because it is interactive, ever changing, and the consumer can be in control. Social media often is seen as a more trustworthy source of information about products and services than corporate-sponsored communications. In other words, consumers like to see how others review and use the product as opposed to reading about them on platforms owned by the company. Furthermore, social media has become a "hybrid" of technology and media that allows users to curate instant communications in different formats with global reach abilities (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). If companies make their social networking sites overly commercial, this might make users turn away if it feels just like advertising. This is because it "violates social networking's intrinsic qualities of socialization and trust" (Miller and Lammas, 2010, p. 5).

It is also important to note that with communication strategies, consumers want to feel special. By offering products, info, and exclusive deals that are available only to a subset of consumers, an emotional connection can be fostered. This often happens when certain content and features are only available on a single social media platform (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). These features and content can be cross-promoted in other places to draw the consumer to that particular social media channel.

Another aspect of integrated marketing communications is showcasing causes important to consumers. If users are emotionally connected to these causes, they will share them with others. Posting about these causes may grab the attention of viewers and create a closer connection with them (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). This can be done with commentary on social issues, company policies, and current events.

Integrated marketing communications has a goal of making a strong connection with the consumer or the follower, as opposed to just a one-off sale with one-way communication (Papazolomou and Melanthiou, 2012). An important aspect of integrated marketing communications is that it is implemented over a long amount of time, so communications specialists need to stay committed to it to gain the benefits from it (Papazolomou and Melanthiou, 2012).

Social Media Platforms + Their Functions

Each social media platform has its own main functions and content. Facebook is a social media network where videos and more personalized content is posted. Instagram is ideal for higher resolution photos, quotes, and the use of the 24-hour Stories feature. Twitter is ideal for keeping up with the news, sharing gifs, and reading more word-centric content (Lua, 2017). Content must be optimized for each specific platform and must keep the “social” aspect of social media foremost in mind. The content should provide a way to generate discussion or at least provide an open forum or comments section.

Those posting content on social media often see great success with one platform and very limited success with another. This is due to the different types of content that are optimized on each channel and how that translates to different audiences. Cori Amato Hartwig, a content creator with over 100k followers on Instagram explains: “When I post on Instagram, I can expect about 2,000 likes a post. With Twitter, I expect about two retweets and 20 to 30 likes.” This is because this particular creator’s content does not translate as well on Twitter than it does on Instagram. She said that Twitter rewards faster social relevancy and Instagram offers more flexible evergreen content (Farokhmanesh, 2018).

III. Methods

This study will examine how integrated marketing communications is showcased in social media by actual social media platforms. Based on the previous literature, the study asks the following questions:

RQ1: How frequently did Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram post on social media platforms in 2018?

RQ2: What type of content did Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram post on their social media accounts across platforms in 2018?

RQ3: To what extent were integrated marketing communication tactics present on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram’s social media channels?

In order to answer these questions, a content analysis was performed on social media posts by @Facebook, @Twitter, and @Instagram on the platforms Facebook.com, Instagram.com, and Twitter.com in 2018. A content analysis was adopted to identify how many posts were created in 2018 across each social media platforms’ social media channels, while also analyzing a collection of these posts for themes of integrated marketing communication. Using systematic sampling, the first post of each of the 52 weeks in 2018 were selected for analysis. If there was not a post that week, that week would be skipped. Out of a total of 2,600 posts in 2018, 323 posts were systematically chosen for analysis in this study.

After posts were selected, they were coded for specific elements that relate directly with integrated marketing communications. These included the incorporation of a logo, call to action copy, company news, and duplicate posts. When looking for signs of integrated marketing communications, these four elements were selected for coding because of their ability to showcase a particularly engaging strategy that goes across social media channels. These four types of content were chosen because they include different elements that go beyond a simple social media post on one channel. This content that is being coded is either branded with a logo, leading followers somewhere else related to the company, informing the followers about company news, or reinforcing information and content from other channels.

First, a logo is a simple, clean way for a social media platform to brand its content across other social media platforms. Logo use may suggest the company is trying to remind users to return to its site, or as a branding element that reminds users exactly which social media platform content they were scrolling through.

Next, “call to action” copy was identified. Each post’s captions were analyzed for text intended to draw

the social media user back to the company's social media platform. This could include providing a link to a specific social media platform, or directly stating to the viewer a call to go to their social media platform. No matter how it is done, a call to action directly integrates one social media platform with another.

Content regarding company news was also identified and coded. Whether it was about a software update, their platform, or other internal news in the company, this is another vital part of how companies showcase themselves across social media platforms. Finally, duplicate content also was coded. In order for something to be considered duplicate, the content needed to be seen on at least two of the three platforms. Duplicating content is a tactic that is used to showcase the connection between social media content platforms and to create synergy between them. It could also be a tactic to make sure that audiences across all platforms see their content. Examples of each aspect of the content analysis are provided in figures 1-4:

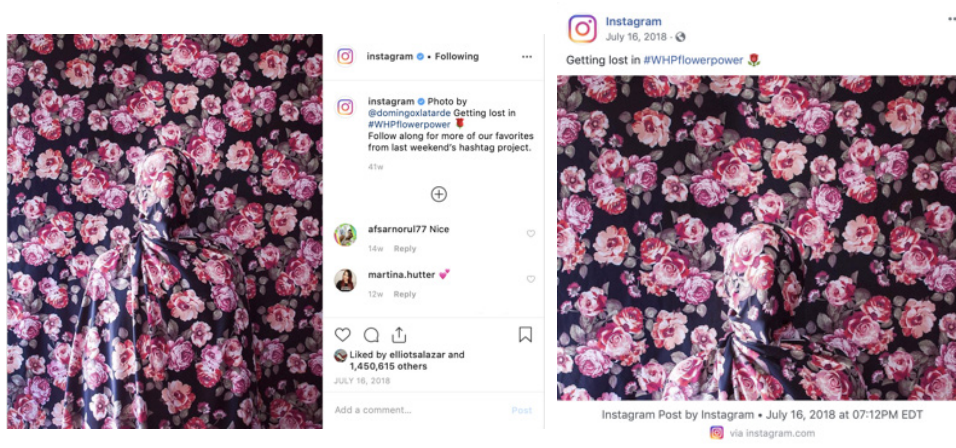


Figure 1. DUPLICATE POSTS: A post from @Instagram on Facebook.com and Instagram.com

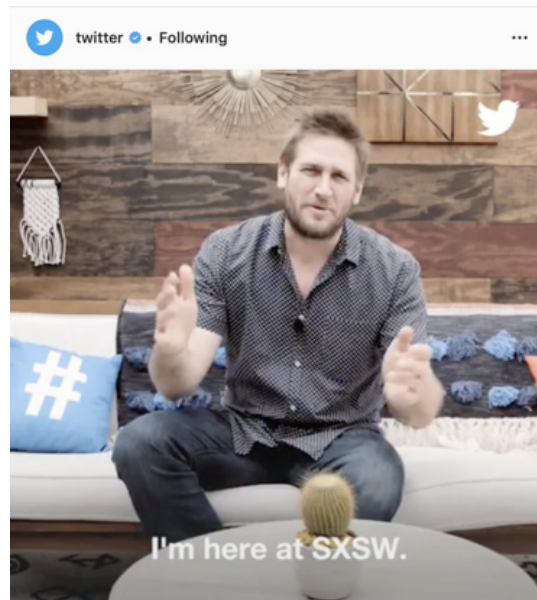


Figure 2. LOGO: @Twitter showcases a Twitter logo in their content on Twitter.com



Figure 3. COMPANY NEWS: A company post from @Facebook on Twitter.com



Figure 4. CALL TO ACTION COPY: @Instagram directing followers back to Instagram.com

IV. Discussion

The first steps involved counting all of the social media posts of @Instagram, @Twitter, and @Facebook on all three of the platforms. There were 2,600 posts in total from the three platforms across the three channels (Table 1).

Table 1

Company	Instagram			Facebook			Twitter		
Platform	On IG	On FB	On TW	On IG	On FB	On TW	On IG	On FB	On TW
Sum of posts	642	595	748	40	139	228	30	16	162
Average posts/week	12.35	11.44	14.38	0.78	2.67	4.38	0.58	0.31	3.12
Overall average/week	12.72			2.6			1.30		

Instagram posts the most across social media, with an average of 12.72 posts a week in 2018. Facebook follows Instagram with an average of 2.6 posts a week, and then Twitter with 1.3 posts a week. It is also important to note that the majority of the content from all three of these platforms were posted on Twitter.

These numbers indicate there is a difference in how companies will post on social media. The nature of Twitter necessitates shorter content, thus allowing companies to post more often on social media. These numbers showcase that these companies don't post the majority of their content on their own platform. For example, Instagram actually posted most often on Twitter. The medium affects the message, an important aspect of integrated marketing communications theory.

Next, content from each social media company's three social media channels were analyzed for whether it included a logo, call to action, company news, or duplicated information across platforms. The analysis of Twitter is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Twitter on Instagram				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	12	11	0	1
No	0	1	12	11
Total #	12	12	12	12
% Yes	100%	92%	0%	8%
Twitter on Facebook				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	13	10	5	1
No	2	5	10	14
Total #	15	15	15	15
% Yes	87%	67%	33%	7%
Twitter on Twitter				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	13	19	21	1
No	33	27	25	45
Total #	46	46	46	46
% Yes	28%	41%	46%	2%

Overall, Twitter used all of these integrated marketing communications tactics except for duplicating content. First Twitter used its logo frequently on Facebook (87%) and Instagram (100%), but less frequently on its own channel (28%). There was frequent call to action copy that suggested and directed viewers back to Twitter (92% on Instagram, 67% on Facebook). Twitter most often posted company news on Twitter (46%), and then would occasionally post news on Facebook (33%). Finally, duplicate content was rare across all the channels.

In contrast, Facebook used all of the integrated marketing communications tactics, except for duplicating content (Table 3). First, Facebook used its logo frequently on Facebook (59%) and Instagram (72%), but infrequently on Twitter (15%). There was limited call to action copy except on Twitter.com, where @Facebook included it in 83% of the posts. Facebook frequently posted company news on Twitter (83%), but only occasionally on Facebook (23%). This is a common theme because Instagram is seen as a much more visually oriented platform.

Table 3

Facebook on Instagram				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	13	1	0	3
No	5	17	18	15
Total #	18	18	18	18
% Yes	72%	6%	0%	17%
Facebook on Facebook				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	23	11	9	6
No	16	28	30	33
Total #	39	39	39	39
% Yes	59%	22%	23%	16%
Facebook on Twitter				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	6	29	33	5
No	34	11	7	35
Total #	40	40	40	40
% Yes	15%	73%	83%	13%

When analyzing Instagram's use of social media (Table 4), it is interesting to note that the company used its logo in less than 2% of all posts. However, call to action copy guiding users back to Instagram.com was high on all channels (including more than 80% of the posts on Facebook and Twitter). Instagram posted company news infrequently, but when it did, it went on Twitter (19%). Instagram is the only company that posted its company news on Instagram, but it was still only at 6% of the total. Duplicate strategies were used the most by @Instagram, with 70% across all three channels.

Table 4

Instagram on Instagram				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	0	28	3	40
No	52	24	49	12
Total #	52	52	52	52
% Yes	0%	54%	6%	77%
Instagram on Facebook				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	0	42	5	36
No	51	9	46	15
Total #	51	51	51	51
% Yes	0%	82%	10%	71%
Instagram on Twitter				
	Logo?	Call to action?	Company news?	Duplicate?
Yes	1	44	10	44
No	51	8	42	8
Total #	52	52	52	52
% Yes	2%	85%	19%	85%

After looking at the data from all three platforms on the three channels, it is clear that each of the social media platforms use integrated marketing communication tactics differently. Twitter used all of these integrated marketing communications tactics except for duplicating content. This is most likely because Twitter is a word-based medium and would end up creating different visuals for Instagram, copy for Twitter, and a combination of the two for Facebook. Facebook posted about company news and used its logo frequently, while not posting duplicates or call to action copy as often. This may be because Facebook is the leading social media platform and is focused on keeping its billions of users informed with branded messaging. Instagram did not use its logo frequently and rarely posted company news, but often used call to action copy and duplicate content. This may be because Instagram is a visual medium and the strong photography can resonate across channels.

Overall, all three social media platforms showcased logos, call to action copy back to their native platform, shared company news, and posted duplicate content. However, they did so in very different ways. The main types of content on their native platform isn't always optimized for the other channels they are posting on.

V. Conclusion

This study sought to identify if and how social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram used integrated marketing communications over three social media channels. A content analysis of 323 posts discovered that all of the social media platforms included these integrated marketing communication tactics, but in ways that were specifically catered towards their individual brand and type of content. The findings in this study can be used when companies and social media platforms are planning social media in a cross-promotional context. This study also explains the theory and ideas behind integrated marketing communications with social media particularly in mind.

There are several limitations to this study that are important to recognize. First, the "stories" feature on Instagram and Facebook were not incorporated when looking for social media content. These provide 24-hour windows for social media platforms to showcase information. Because this content is deleted after such a short time, it could not be factored into this study. Next, it is important to note that any of the social

media accounts could have deleted or archived content from 2018. Finally, this study looked specifically at @Facebook, @Twitter, and @Instagram, but each social media platform has several official social media accounts (like @TwitterVideo) across each channel. These were not incorporated into this study, but definitely could be in the future.

For future extensions of this study, all of the posts from a year could be studied as opposed to just the first of each week. Also, the 24 Stories feature could be implemented into the research. Also, interviews and surveys with employees at each of these social media platforms could give insight into the strategy behind the particular channels. It would also be worth including other social media platforms into this study, such as Reddit, Tumblr, Pinterest, and Snapchat.

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Consumer Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility Campaigns: The Impact on Organizational Reputation and Buying Behavior

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a growing trend in corporate communications as more organizations are committing to philanthropic and social efforts as an integral part of their business models. Using an online survey, this study examines the relationship between CSR and organizational reputation and consumer buying behavior. More specifically, a CSR campaign conducted by Starbucks is used to understand the impact on perceptions of reputation, potential changes in behavior, and differences in responses based on age groups. Key findings of this study include that CSR campaigns have the ability to improve organizational reputation; however, it is more likely for CSR campaigns to positively impact perceptions of organizational reputation than consumer buying behavior.

I. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a growing trend in the communications world. From social media posts to earned media coverage, organizations have committed to philanthropic and social efforts as an integral part of their business models. These CSR initiatives can help an organization's image by showing its values as opposed to just highlighting skills and abilities (Kim, 2013). Additionally, consumers may reward socially responsible businesses with their purchase behavior, and businesses can shift consumer beliefs, attitudes, and intentions with proactive CSR campaigns (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006). As business mindsets are shifting, studies have shown a positive relationship between the inclusion of CSR initiatives and improved financial performance (Waddock & Graves, 1997).

In the case of Starbucks, the corporation has published an annual "social responsibility report" since 2002 to highlight its sustainable efforts as well as its commitment to responsible actions following reputational failures (Global Responsibility Report Goals & Progress, n.d.). In its *Global Social Impact 2017 Performance Report*, the introduction refers to the arrest of two African-American men who were waiting for a friend at a Philadelphia Starbucks. In response to this incident, Starbucks created a CSR and crisis communication initiative in which the organization closed more than 8,000 U.S. stores on May 29, 2018 so staff members could participate in racial-bias training (Global Responsibility Report Goals & Progress, n.d.). While this response received mainstream media coverage, other CSR campaigns, such as Starbucks' commitment to hiring 25,000 veterans by 2025, have less awareness beyond owned media channels. The purpose of these

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CSR campaigns can be to improve public image and increase news coverage, but organizations should also consider how the response from the audience regarding CSR campaigns may influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. As prominent companies like Starbucks commit to more frequent CSR campaigns, it is worthwhile to dedicate research to the potential impacts and reactions by consumers toward specific initiatives.

The purpose of this study is to determine if CSR campaigns have an impact on consumer attitudes in regard to either reputation or buying behavior. In terms of reputation, studies show that organizations with established credibility through CSR are likely to have less detrimental reputational effects following a corporate crisis compared to those with negative CSR associations (Kim, 2013). Consumers have often chosen to boycott socially irresponsible companies but have not shown increased likelihood to change their buying behavior for companies that are socially responsible. However, there is a stronger relationship between the knowledge consumers have about specific CSR efforts and changes in buying behavior (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).

Furthermore, this study will analyze differing responses to CSR efforts among demographic groups. If corporate social responsibility does indeed provide the opportunity to both improve reputation and increase buying behavior, then corporations should prioritize the development of CSR campaigns. Since the Millennial generation has an increased affinity for social activism among corporate actors, understanding the buying behavior and attitudes of specific demographic groups can help maximize targeted corporate communication efforts (McGlone et al., 2011).

Many studies have focused on campaign content analysis and in-depth interviews to understand the extent and value of CSR from both the business and consumer perspective. However, this study will use an isolated example of a CSR campaign conducted by Starbucks and survey methodology to gather data related to consumer opinions. Participants in this study were provided with background information regarding the Starbucks CSR campaign and asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their existing buying habits and reputational perceptions. This study also collected demographic data to understand the direct impacts of CSR awareness on various consumers.

II. Literature Review

As CSR continues to grow in public awareness and importance in business, it is important to examine the reach of these practices. Identifying working definitions of CSR establishes necessary context for designing the survey instrument used in this study. Additionally, previous research concerning the relationship between CSR and Millennials, organizational reputation, and consumer buying behavior will shape this study.

CSR has been defined as “the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce, their families, the local community, and society at large” (McGlone, Spain, & McGlone, 2011). Other definitions capitalize on the “social” aspect of CSR and qualify it as “a company’s commitment to minimizing or eliminating any harmful effects and maximizing its long-run beneficial impact on society” (Mohr et al., 2001). The first, more comprehensive definition referenced is more relevant to this study as it includes a simple and clear view of the CSR concept.

The Millennial generation has been identified as having been born between 1979 and 2001, between 1980 and 2000, or between 1982 to 2002 (McGlone et al., 2011). Millennials are categorized as a generation that prioritizes social issues, and studies have found this age group expects organizations to not only commit to philanthropy but also to incorporate CSR into business models (McGlone et al., 2011). As employees, a majority of Millennials care about how the company they work for addresses social and community involvement. As consumers, Millennials expect organizations to be active members of the community and commit to social values that are represented both internally and externally (McGlone et al., 2011). While the existing research identifies qualities of the Millennial generation regarding CSR, there are no studies that focus on the habits of other demographics concerning organizational reputation and buying behavior based on CSR campaigns. This research hopes to obtain data from other age groups that could indicate differences in their relationship between CSR and organizational reputation and buying behavior.

Corporate reputation is also becoming a more prominent interest, but just as with the research

regarding Millennials, consistent definitions are difficult to come by (Barnett, Jermier, & Lafferty, 2006). For this study, reputation is defined as “the way key external stakeholder groups or other interested parties actually conceptualize the organization” (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2010). Based on previous studies, the public has identified that they have little trust in big businesses, and therefore socially responsible practices can have a large impact on organizational reputation (Mohr et al., 2001). Consumers consistently prove to have a more positive reputational perception of a company if it contributes to a cause they care about. Additionally, consumers that are socially and politically active are even more inclined to associate a positive reputational image with organizations that execute CSR campaigns (Mohr et al., 2001). In times of corporate crisis when organizational reputation is at risk, companies with established CSR associations are more likely to suffer less reputational damage due to their position as a company with “virtue-related dimensions” as opposed to just “skill-focused dimensions” (Kim, 2013). This existing research is helpful to this study, as the Starbucks case was created in reaction to a corporate crisis and further establishes the company’s commitment to socially responsible practices.

Existing research has found a positive correlation between CSR initiatives and a company’s financial performance. A key feature is the ability of CSR campaigns to influence buying behavior among consumers. For this study, consumer buying behavior is defined as a pattern of activities involving the “purchase and use of goods and services which resulted from the consumers’ emotional and mental needs and behavioral responses” (Stallworth, 2008, p. 9). Previous research has suggested that, for some consumers, CSR may be influential in purchasing a product, paying higher prices for a product, trying a new brand, or switching brands (Mohr et al., 2001). In general, a gap exists in CSR research regarding specific target demographics, especially age groups, and their responsiveness to CSR as related to reputation and buying behavior. This research will benefit both consumers and corporations in better understanding the scope of CSR initiatives as well as the effectiveness of campaign tactics.

III. Methods

Specifically, this study uses a CSR campaign conducted by Starbucks to evaluate consumer opinions on organizational reputation and buying behavior. In 2017, Starbucks announced a goal of hiring 25,000 veterans by 2025. This campaign began after the company was under fire earlier that year for announcing its plan to hire 10,000 refugees in the next five years (Taylor, 2017). The hashtag “Boycott Starbucks” began circulating on social media as customers thought that the corporation was hiring refugees instead of veterans. Despite Starbucks’ response in which they corrected that assumption, the chain’s reputational perception from consumers fell by two-thirds only one month after the refugee hiring announcement (Taylor, 2017). The news of the CSR campaign to hire 25,000 veterans by 2025 came after the reputational “crisis” and is present on Starbucks’ owned media channels.

This study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: Are CSR campaigns effective in improving organizational reputation and consumer buying behaviors? Can Starbucks improve its reputation and consumer buying behavior with a CSR campaign?

RQ2: Does the relationship between CSR and organizational reputation and buying behavior differ by age group?

This study employed an online survey using the *Qualtrics* platform, allowing distribution through the internet to a diverse audience. The research design is similar to a study conducted by Ramasamy and Yeung (2009). Surveying the general public, with a focus on Millennials, provided the opportunity to examine responses from various demographic groups. This research employed a volunteer sample in which participants were able to opt-in to the online survey. A link to the survey was distributed through the researcher’s social media channels including Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Based on the nature of the researcher’s social media following, there was a strong likelihood that a majority of respondents would be college students, however, the research was not limited to that population as the Facebook and LinkedIn platforms allowed for older age groups to access the survey.

Data were collected from March 22, 2019 to March 31, 2019, resulting in 192 responses. A total of 153 responses with completed demographic information was analyzed in this study. The size of the response is comparable to the returned sample reported by Ramasamy and Yeung (2009), in which they received 136 survey responses in Shanghai and 121 responses in Hong Kong.

For the purpose of this study, the independent variable is the Starbucks case, and the dependent variables are organizational reputation and buying behavior. Survey questions were developed in order to measure these variables. The survey was constructed similarly to the study by Ramasamy & Yeung (2009), in which the survey included statements such as “I would pay more to buy products from a socially responsible business,” “I consider the ethical reputation of businesses when I shop” and “I avoid buying products from companies that have engaged in immoral actions.” These statements were used to measure responsiveness to CSR, buying behavior, and perceptions of reputation in relation to CSR campaigns.

The definition of organizational reputation for this study is “the way key external stakeholder groups or other interested parties actually conceptualize the organization” (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2010). Before the example CSR campaign conducted by Starbucks was presented to the participants, questions measuring reputation and buying behavior were asked. Regarding reputation, participants were asked to evaluate the values of the company and their opinion of Starbucks’ reputation using a numerical scale from 1-5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best).

Once the Starbucks CSR campaign and relevant background information were introduced (Figure 1), further questions measuring reputation and buying behavior were included in the survey. To measure perception of reputation in relation to the CSR campaign, a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was utilized to measure favorability of Starbucks’ reputation following the information about their CSR initiative. Additionally, participants were also asked to choose from qualities such as convenience, cost, quality, CSR initiatives, and donations to charity, that may increase their likelihood of having a favorable opinion of Starbucks’ reputation.

Figure 1: Background and goals of Starbucks’ CSR campaign

Many companies, such as Starbucks, have made commitments to “give back” through CSR campaigns and initiatives. The example below illustrates Starbucks’ CSR campaign in which they have committed to hiring 25,000 veterans by 2025. Utilizing this example, please respond to the following survey questions.

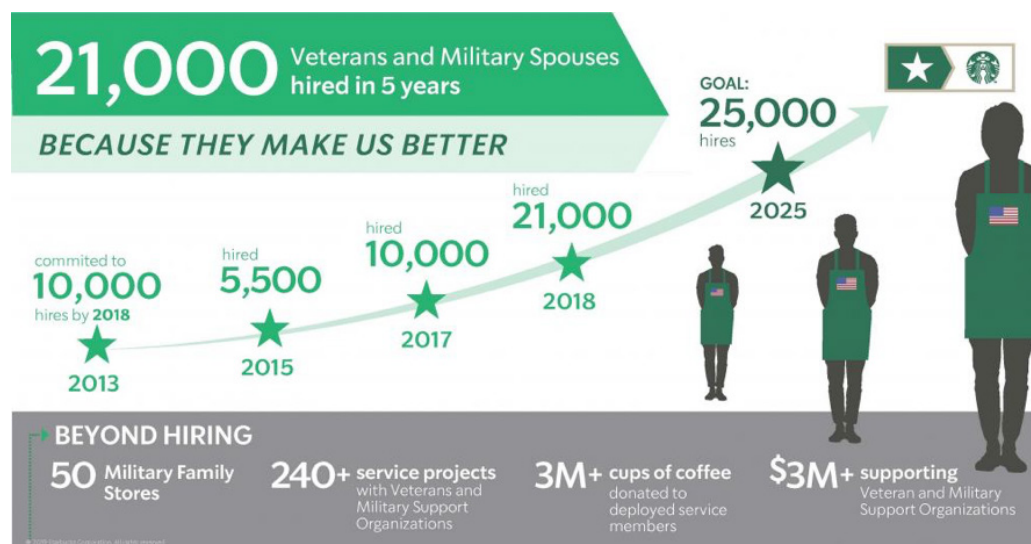


Image source: <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2018/starbucks-hires-twice-as-many-veterans-as-its-2018-commitment/>

Consumer buying behavior is defined as a pattern of activities involving the “purchase and use of goods and services which resulted from the consumers’ emotional and mental needs and behavioral responses” (Stallworth, 2008). In order to measure existing buying behavior, respondents were asked how often they purchase products from Starbucks each month. To gain perspective on buying behavior as related to the CSR campaign, participants recorded their likelihood to purchase products from Starbucks as well as their likelihood to choose Starbucks over a competitor based on their response to the CSR. Participants were also asked to consider a list of qualities (convenience, cost, quality, organizational reputation, CSR initiatives, donations to charity) and respond based on the choices that increase their likelihood of purchasing Starbucks products.

By employing a variety of question styles beyond simply the Likert scale format as seen in the study conducted by Ramasamy & Yeung (2009), as well as including an example campaign to create the basis for the participants’ responses, the research design allowed for a wide range of data to fully understand the factors that play into consumers’ perceptions of reputation and their buying behavior.

IV. Findings

Data were collected from the general population with the predication that there would be a large proportion of Millennial respondents due to the survey being distributed on the researcher’s social media channels. Approximately one-third of respondents could be considered Millennials: 25% of respondents (n=38) were ages 18-24, and 5.9% (n=9) were 25-34. In addition, 17.1% of the respondents (n=26) were ages 35-44, and 24.3% (n=37) were 55-64. More than 80% of respondents were female (n=122), and 96% of those surveyed were white (n=146). Just under one-third of respondents had earned a Bachelor’s degree (n=54).

Prior to being instructed to answer questions based on Starbucks’ CSR campaign, a majority of respondents reported a positive opinion of the company’s reputation. Out of 153 responses, about one-third of respondents (31.4%, n=48) gave Starbucks a rating of 4 out of 5 on reputation. Just under one-quarter of respondents (22.8%, n=35) gave Starbucks’ reputation the highest score of 5.

To gauge initial buying behavior, participants were asked how often they purchase products from Starbucks each month. Almost half of the respondents (47.7%, n= 73) indicated that they purchase products from Starbucks “1-3 times a month.” About one-third of respondents (29.4%, n=45) reported that they purchase products from Starbucks “0 times a month.”

After participants were presented with the Starbucks CSR campaign, they were tasked with choosing all the qualities that would make them more likely to have a favorable opinion of Starbucks’ reputation, from a list of factors such as products, services, socially responsible initiatives, or reputation of the organization. A nearly equal proportion of respondents chose “product quality” (52.9%, n=81) and “support of local charity” (52.8%, n=80). More than 40 percent of respondents chose “direct donation to charity” (42.5%, n=65) and “CSR initiatives” (41.2%, n=63).

When considering demographics in relation to buying behavior and the CSR campaign, 26.3% of respondents in the 18-24 age group (n=10) agreed with the statement “this CSR Campaign makes me more likely to purchase products from Starbucks,” and 34.2% of respondents in that age group (n=13) said “somewhat agree.” Additionally, 10.5% of respondents in the 18-24 age group (n=4) agreed with the statement “this CSR campaign makes me more likely to choose Starbucks over a competitor,” and 21.1% percent of respondents in that age group (n=8) said “somewhat agree.”

V. Discussion

For the initial question regarding Starbucks’ reputation, the mean response was 3.58 on a five-point scale. More than half of the participants (n=83, 54.2 %) responded with a ranking of 4 or 5 in regard to their initial perception of Starbucks’ reputation. This indicates that many of the participants already had a positive view of the Starbucks organization prior to being asked about its CSR initiative. The most common response to the statement “This CSR campaign increases my favorability of Starbucks’ reputation” was “agree” on a

seven-point Likert scale (Table 1). Nearly three-quarters of respondents (n=113, 73.9%) responded in the “somewhat agree” – “strongly agree” range to this statement based on the CSR campaign. These responses indicate that even though many participants already held a positive view of Starbucks’ reputation, the CSR campaign still could influence an increase in positive perception of organizational reputation.

Table 1: The CSR campaign increases the favorability of Starbucks’ reputation

Field	Frequency (%)
Strongly disagree	5 (3.3%)
Disagree	5 (3.3%)
Somewhat disagree	2 (1.3%)
Neither agree nor disagree	27 (17.8%)
Somewhat agree	42 (27.6%)
Agree	50 (32.9%)
Strongly agree	21 (13.8%)

A majority of participants did not frequently purchase products from Starbucks prior to this study. Approximately three-quarters of participants (77.1%, n= 118) responded they only purchase products from Starbucks 0-3 times a month, indicating that there was room for growth in their buying behavior. After participants were presented with the Starbucks CSR campaign, the most common response to the statement “This CSR campaign makes me more likely to purchase products from Starbucks” was “Neither agree nor disagree” on a seven-point Likert scale. Additionally, “Neither agree nor disagree” was also the most common response to the statement “This CSR campaign makes me more likely to choose Starbucks over a competitor (i.e. Dunkin Donuts, etc.)” on a seven-point Likert scale.

However, a higher proportion of participants responded “somewhat agree” or “agree” to the statement “This CSR campaign makes me more likely to purchase products from Starbucks,” than to the statement “This CSR campaign makes me more likely to choose Starbucks over a competitor (i.e. Dunkin Donuts, etc.)” This suggests that while participants may intend to purchase more Starbucks products due to the CSR campaign, they may not use CSR as a deciding factor when presented with choices between competing brands. The findings indicate that Starbucks is more likely to see improvements in organizational reputation than buying behavior based on CSR campaigns.

Those in the 18-24 age group were the most likely to be positively influenced by CSR campaigns. A majority of respondents in this age group said either “agree” or “somewhat agree” to statements regarding the CSR campaign’s positive impact on organizational reputation and buying behavior. These results coincide with the study by McGlone et al. (2011) that found that Millennials expect companies to be socially responsible and are likely to reward them for it. However, in this study, the 18-24 age group was not as enthusiastic about the statement “this CSR campaign makes me more likely to choose Starbucks over a competitor.” This could indicate that the “convenience” and “location of store” qualities are more important, and that CSR campaigns are not as effective at influencing competitiveness as they may be with affecting organizational reputation and buying behavior.

VI. Conclusion

This study employed an online survey to explore the relationship between a CSR campaign, organizational reputation, and consumer buying behavior, while considering potential differences in response among demographics. Starbucks was used as an example to directly examine consumer perceptions of a CSR campaign in relationship to reputation and buying behavior. Results suggest it is possible to positively improve both organizational reputation and buying behavior through CSR campaigns, especially among the 18-24-year-old age group, but it is more likely to see improvement in reputation than buying behavior due to the prioritization of convenience and store location. These findings suggest that Millennials and Generation Z will be the most effective group to target with CSR campaigns to improve organizational reputation and buying

behavior. These results imply that even companies with limited resources could potentially see improvements through CSR campaigns. This research is important for corporate communications efforts because it indicates that CSR may be a more effective tactic for improving organizational reputation than consumer buying behavior.

Just like any other research, this study has limitations. A major limitation was not requiring the respondents to enter their demographic information which eliminated a number of survey responses from being included in the analysis. In future research on this topic, it could be beneficial to define organizational reputation for the participants to confirm they understand this concept, as this may not be a commonly understood term among the population. Defining organizational reputation could improve consistency in the responses that could help generate more definitive conclusions. Additionally, in order to be certain that no bias exists towards a specific brand, future research could use an experimental design with fictitious companies to eliminate preexisting assumptions and focus more precisely on the impact of CSR. Future research should also utilize a random sample to recruit participants as opposed to the convenience sample employed in this research to increase credibility of the findings.

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How YouTube Streamers Present Their Brand on Channel Banners

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Abstract

Livestreaming, or the practice of playing video games online for an audience in real time, has become a popular, multibillion-dollar industry in the past decade. "Streamers" often use a brand to promote their channels on YouTube and attract an audience. This study uses content analysis of YouTube channel banners to uncover what strategies are employed by streamers to create their brands. Findings of this study suggest that streamers often use similar colors and gaming genres on their channel banners. Moderately sized channels are more specialized in displaying gaming genres than larger and smaller channels, implying there is a path of specialization which channels follow to become popular.

I. Introduction

"Streaming" has become a popular pastime for video game players on online media platforms, such as YouTube, in recent years (Jia, Shen, Epema, & Iosup, 2016). Streaming can be defined as the process of uploading live videos which are watchable in real time by an audience, with "streamers" being those that produce this content (Jia et al., 2016). Streaming has become an industry which has resulted in some streamers becoming micro-celebrities who can make millions of dollars a year by playing video games. Possible revenue outlets for streamers include placing advertisements on their videos and donations from dedicated fans of the channel (Zhu, Yang, & Dai, 2017). A rise of the prosumer, or those that produce and consume content, has allowed YouTube to become a viable and profitable form of media production (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2016). An example of one of these channels would be GameXplain, a channel that has 1.1 million YouTube subscribers. The job of the people who run the channel is to make content and play games based around Nintendo franchises.

Due to the rise in revenue via streaming, it is important to understand what methods these streamers are using to gain subscribers and promote their channel as a brand (Zhu et al. 2017). Since Streamers are acting as micro-celebrities, essentially giving their self-image a "brand," and displaying the channel's personality, they also have a strategy for branding their channel (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2016). Traditional branding literature defines a brand as a name, term, symbol, or any combination of the three meant to act as an identifier for a good or service (Avis, 2009). However, few efforts have been made to see how the traditional definition of a brand can be employed to understand streamers' branding strategies on YouTube. Streamers may use different branding strategies, such as the channel banner on their main YouTube channel page, to display the channel's

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personality and attract subscribers.

While past studies have explored how companies can make an approachable brand personality, and others have examined the functionality of streaming sites like YouTube (Anderson, 2017; Levy & Luedicke, 2012), there has been no research combining both brand and video game streaming on YouTube. To fill this gap, this study uses content analysis to look at the design of channel banners as a branding strategy used by streamers to appeal to their potential subscribers. This study provides insight into what choices these creators make by analyzing color choices, gaming elements, genre, and rhetorical appeals in their channel banner, which leads to a better understanding of the common ways gaming YouTubers brand themselves.

II. Literature Review

While livestreaming and uploading of video game playthroughs has been rising in popularity and profitability over the past 10 years, only platforms and various topics (other than branding) of content creators, such as eSports and how streams are narrated, have been studied.

Research by Anderson (2017) has found that there are quite a few methods that streamers can use to promote their branding. These include the channel icon, banner, and live chat. The channel icon allows streamers to feature a picture or logo that represents what their channel is about. Another way that the channel can be promoted is through the channel banner, a thumbnail (or image) that is displayed on the main channel page and is one of the first things new visitors see when visiting the channel, which will be the point of study in this research on streamer branding. This channel banner can display a variety of topics about the channel, such as logo, what games are played, color scheme, and more. Finally, live chat allows streamers to directly promote their brand and ideas to followers and potential followers of the channel by creating a dialog with them. An additional study confirms Anderson's analysis, finding that the channel icon and channel page are important resources for content creators to promote content on their channels (Gross, Wanner, Hackenholt, Zawadzki, & Knautz, 2017). While these studies highlight what streamers can use to help brand their channels, neither study examined the effectiveness of these strategies or how streamers were specifically using them.

Research has also been conducted on gaming genres. A study by Faisal and Peltoniemi (2018) coded video game titles to determine how these games were classified based on genre. The study found the common use of 23 genres, with the most popular including role playing games (RPGs), simulation, sports, adventure, and racing (Faisal & Peltoniemi, 2018). This research sheds some light on how streamers might classify their channels by genre as a streamer might indicate that a particular genre is a part of their channel's brand, through featuring it on their logo or channel banner. It also informs how video streaming platforms, such as YouTube, might classify the videos that video game streamers are uploading.

How streamers and uploaders use narration to present themselves on their channel has also been a point of study. Kerttula (2016) examined how streamers narrate their streams, describing multiple categories including reflective and story narration. The former occurs when a streamer is narrating their gameplay, describing past experiences they have had with the game. The latter describes the action in the game or something about the game itself (i.e., describing the graphics) as they play the game live. Another study found that gaming uploaders are much more likely to upload videos of them winning in a particular game than videos of them losing (Jia et al., 2016).

Some studies have researched streaming revenue generation. One such study describes how some streaming platforms provide for ways that viewers can donate to streamers using platform-specific currency. One of these currencies is "bits" on Twitch, which users pay real world money to buy, and then donate to their favorite streamers (Anderson, 2017). Zhu et al. (2017) found that most streaming platforms or video uploading platforms make it easy and clear to users how to donate to their favorite gaming content creators. Streams of eSports, or the competitive playing of certain video games, often result in viewers feeling encouraged to donate to their favorite teams or streamers to help them gain equipment to continue competing in eSports events (Gerber, 2017). Some of these teams even have logos or team colors, similar to that of a sports team to reflect their brand. This widespread use of donations to streamers is important to highlight, indicating that streaming is becoming a popular and lucrative pastime in entertainment media. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly important to understand how streamers brand themselves to gain revenue.

While streaming video game content has been studied in a variety of ways, it has not been studied in

terms of how these streamers and uploaders have been designing aspects of their brands.

Past literature has also defined how branding has been considered in a traditional and modern sense, which provides insight on strategies streamers potentially use. According to Avis (2009), a traditional definition of brand is “a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors” (p. 2). However, a brand is more than just a logo or design. Brand personality is the idea that a brand conveys a value system to form a relatable connection with the public (Levy & Luedicke, 2012). However, as the current study employs content analysis to examine the design of channel banners, the above definition will be adapted for this study to define brand, but focusing only on the design elements including signs, symbols, and designs.

Brands also operate rhetorically, often appealing to *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. *Ethos* is the ethical or endorsement side of advertising, *pathos* is the emotional side, and *logos* is the logical side (English, Sweetster, & Ancu, 2011). Each of these is important in advertising as they can draw in different audiences and can convince these audiences to support the brand. A recent study examined viral videos on political candidates on YouTube, finding that most viewers preferred a video with *ethos* or *logos* appeal instead of *pathos*, opting to make a logical or ethical conclusion in political choices rather than an emotional one (English et al., 2011). This study illuminates how these appeals can be analyzed on a video uploading/streaming platform and that appeals are an important part of brand strategy. Another study observed the color choices made by a company on their product packaging and discussed how different colors indicate different expressions of a brand's design (Mohebbi, 2014). For example, brands that have packaging with green coloring indicate growth, generosity, or health. Meanwhile, packaging with pink coloring usually indicates love, joy, or innocence. This study is important as it indicates how color is related to the way a brand is trying to present itself. Streamers, therefore, could choose certain colors to represent their brand on their channel banners to indicate a certain expression for the channel.

Finally, there have been studies on “micro-celebrities,” or social media influencers that have created self-branding strategies (Khamis et al., 2016). These influencers often use their own personality to create a brand personality and engage their audience based on their own, personal views, making them similar to the background of streamers.

Additional past research has focused on brand comparisons, or the examination of elements among multiple brands and their effects on why consumers may support certain brands over others.

One study explored how consumers compare brands and understand a brand's personality and design, which encourages them to buy the product (Koll, von Wallpatch, & Kreuzer, 2010). The study found that when picturing a brand, a consumer tends to base their “reviews,” or stories, on the functionality of the product, or how beneficial it is to them. However, the consumers also used imagery to describe the brand, which emphasizes that the way the brand displays itself, or its brand strategy, is also important to the consumers (Koll et al., 2010). While the study does not give details or break down what imagery is important to the consumer (such as colors associated with a brand), the study demonstrates that consumers can make a conscious choice to buy a product based on its brand design. Similarly, a design choice within a channel banner, like logo or color scheme, might encourage potential followers to make a conscious choice to watch a channel. However, what these elements are have yet to be uncovered by academic research.

Gandhi (2014) conducted a poll to understand consumer comparisons between the Coca-Cola and Pepsi brands based on consumer interactions physically with the brand and product, or through advertising. The study found that almost uniformly, although sometimes by a small margin, Coca-Cola was seen as the superior brand due to how it displayed itself as sincere and competent in the brand's advertising. While this study was more focused on brand personality than logos and designs, it still showcases that there are elements of brand that create more appeal for consumers to buy a product over another. This could indicate that there are reasons why viewers choose a certain streamer's channel to watch over another.

These two cases demonstrate how there are elements of brand strategy that consumers prefer or better associate with than others for certain products. While this has been observed between major companies in competition, like Pepsi and Coca-Cola, it is a topic that has been skirted when comparing smaller scale cases like “micro-celebrities” on any social platform, including YouTube.

To address the gap that can be seen from the pertinent literature, this study examines what brand strategies streamers use to promote their channel and how popularity of the channel relates to these strategies. Popularity will be based upon subscriber count, or the number of “consumers” that channel has. If a channel has more subscribers, it will be operationalized as more “popular.” This topic of study is important because it is still a new area in entertainment

media but is highly lucrative. This research will help those in the field of communications better understand what strategies are being used by gaming content creators to attract followers and what causes the more popular creators' brands to be chosen in comparison to other creators' brands. Therefore, the questions this study addresses are:

RQ1: What brand strategies do streamers use to design their brands through the use of the channel banners on YouTube?

RQ2: What brand comparisons can be found among the channels, and, most importantly, the more popular channels?

To understand brand strategies, channel banners are analyzed with the following variables: color scheme, appeals, gaming genre, and channel logo presence. These categories will help determine what elements streamers use in their channel banners to appeal to potential audiences. Brand comparisons are analyzed by comparing the brand strategy variables to the variable of subscriber count (operationalized as popularity) to see if channels with more consumers have similar strategies. Popular brands may have some important channel banner elements in common in terms of brand strategies, as suggested by the literature on brand comparison. By coding and analyzing these categories, this study will help illuminate what methods are popular among streamers to promote their brands and what leads these brands to popularity.

III. Methods

This study uses content analysis to examine the design elements of streamer channel banners on YouTube to understand the brand strategies used to promote streamer brands. As this study is strictly on the use of logo, appeals, genres, and colors, it was logical to do this study as a content analysis to focus on the design elements on the banners themselves.

For this study, the sample is channel banners of video game streamers on YouTube. These banners can be found by clicking a channel icon either below a streamer's video or by clicking on a channel suggestion while browsing YouTube. A sample of 100 channel banners was taken for this study. Snowball sampling was used to find these 100 channel banners. A new Google account was created to ensure that no bias based on past searches was present in the results. Using this new account, the YouTube gaming page was used to collect the sample. Clicking on the first available channel, snowball sampling commenced by screenshotting that channel banner and then using the recommended channels, provided by YouTube on the right side of the channel, to continue the search. The first of these recommendations was clicked, that channel banner was screenshotted, and the process continued another 98 times. This sample was taken over one day.

The banners were coded using logo, elements, number of subscribers, color, gaming genre, gaming elements, and appeals as coding categories. The channel's "logo" for this study is defined as the element from the channel icon, which sits to the bottom left of the channel banner on the channel's main page. If the logo is repeated in the channel banner, it is counted as being in the channel banner. Name of the channel is included in this coding category as it is often a major part of traditional branding or even included as part of the logo itself. If the name of the channel, displayed next to the channel icon, is repeated in the banner, it is counted as present.

The number of subscribers for a particular channel can be found to the bottom right of the channel banner on the channel's main page. This data is important to collect for each channel banner because it will give a sense of how popular a channel is. The following range of codes for this variable has been chosen for this study:

0-10K or "Tiny Channels"

10K-500K or "Small Channels"

500K-1M or "Midsized Channels"

1M-10M or "Big Channels"

10M- or "Huge Channels"

The color of a channel banner was determined by finding the dominant color on the banner. A dominant color for this study is defined as the color that takes up the largest proportion of space on the banner. For

example, if one color takes up 30% of the banner and other colors take up 5% each, the color that is 30% will be the color that is coded. If there is no dominant color, then the banner is coded as 0. The colors used in the study by Mohebbi (2014) are those coded in the color variable for this study, as the list used for that research is exhaustive and mutually exclusive.

The gaming genres for this study come from the study by Faisal and Peltoniemi (2018) that conducted extensive content analysis of the most prominent gaming categories. Most of these genres are straight forward and do not require defining such as puzzle games, where players attempt to solve a puzzle, or a shooting game, where players use a gun to aid them in reaching an objective. However, some do need to be defined. God is a genre that allows the player to control actions in a video game setting, such as *The Sims*, where the player runs a virtual family. Arcade is a genre that contains classic video games originally found in an arcade, such as *Space Invaders* or *Pac-Man*. This list is useful because it exhibits the possible ways gaming genre can be defined and found within a YouTube banner. Each of these genres will be coded individually as sub variables in which each genre will be coded as either present (1) or not present (2). If no gaming genre is present, the category for each subcategory will be coded as 0. If the genre is indeterminable, each subcategory will be coded as 3. This will provide for variation in the banners if multiple gaming genres are present.

The gaming elements variable was coded by looking at the channel banners once the sample was collected. Many of the banners have some form of gaming elements, like a video game disc or cartridge, a video game controller, or even a person playing a video game or holding a controller. This category could reveal useful data if multiple streamers are using these elements.

The definition of appeals for this study will be based on the study by English et al. (2011) on viral political videos. This has been chosen because their definitions of these three appeals are exhaustive and mutually exclusive and can be used to code channel banners for these elements. *Ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* are coded separately for each banner as multiple could potentially be present. Numerical counting of each coding category was used to determine the prominent features of color, gaming genres, appeals (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*), gaming elements and logo presence as categories.

IV. Findings

Through the coding of 100 different YouTube streamer channel banners taken on April 1, 2019, some interesting findings are evident. Each research question is answered in depth to fully understand what strategies these streamers are using to develop their banners and what comparisons can be made among the channels based on popularity or subscriber count.

Brand Strategy

















From an analysis of the data, numerous similarities can be found among channels in terms of the gaming elements, color, and logo elements categories. Secondly, across the dataset, action/adventure games, role playing games, and fighting games were found to be the most popularly displayed genres on the channel banners.

Table 1: Gaming Elements

Code	Count of Banners
No Gaming Elements Present	46
Game Console Only Present	0
Game Controller Only Present	3
Game Cartridge Only Present	0
People/Person Present	45
People/Person Holding a Controller Present	2
Multiple Elements Present	4

Table 1 details the gaming elements present among the channel banners. It is important to point out the strong presence of a person or people on the channel banner. Forty-five of the 100 channel banners had some depiction of a person on their banner, occasionally used to create a sense of *ethos*. These streamers want to create a personal connection with their audience, thus putting a depiction of themselves, or a human avatar, on their banners. Meanwhile, the other elements were almost non-existent. No banners had just a console present or just a cartridge present and very few banners had some depiction of multiple gaming elements (4) or humans holding a controller/cartridge/console (2). While almost half of the banners had humans as an element, 46 did not have any of these gaming elements present at all. The findings were almost entirely split between human presence and nothing.

Table 2: Color

	Code	Count of Banners
	No Dominant Color Present	8
	Red	5
	Blue	22
	Green	10
	Yellow	3
	White	11
	Black	9
	Gray	10
	Orange	6
	Brown	8
	Pink	0
	Purple	7
	Indigo	0
	Violet	0
	Magenta	0
	Rose	0
	Other	1

Perhaps one of the most interesting finds of this study is the use of color in channel banners. As shown in Table 2, the most dominantly coded color by a wide margin was blue, with 22 of the 100 channel banners having the color as the dominant color. This was followed by white at 11 out of 100, and green and gray as the dominant color on 10 of the 100 banners. Meanwhile, colors like pink, indigo, and violet are not used at all on the sampled channel banners. The only exception to this was purple, being dominant on seven of the 100 channel banners.

Table 3: Logo elements

Code	Count of Banners
No Logo or Channel Name Present	23
Logo, but Not Channel Name Present	4
Channel Name, but Not Logo Present	33
Both Channel Name and Logo Present	40

Logo elements also reveal an interesting trend. As shown in Table 3, 40 of the 100 channel banners depict both the channel's logo and the channel's name. Meanwhile, 33 channel banners depict the name of the channel on the banner, but not the logo. Only four channels feature solely the logo on the banner. While 23 banners have no depiction of their logo or brand name on their banner at all, the majority have at least some depiction or another, emphasizing the importance of streamers showcasing their brand front and center for new visitors on their channels.

Table 4: Comparison of Present Gaming Genres

Code	Count of Banners
Channel Banners with No Gaming Genre Present	35
Action/Adventure	54
Shooting	31
RPG	43
Strategy	27
MMORPG	18
Simulation	1
God	2
Sports	1
Racing	3
Fighting	41
Platforming	12
Puzzles	11
Music	1
Family Games	19
Children's Games	11
Virtual Life	3
Flight	3
Arcade	9

In terms of gaming genre, the most used were action/adventure followed by role playing games and fighting games (see Table 4). Multiple genres could exist on any one banner. This has some interesting implications. As action/adventure and fighting games, such as *The Legend of Zelda* and *Street Fighter*, tend to have a lot of excitement and energy in them, most likely these banners are designed to create similar feelings.

Appeal	Present/Not Present	Count of Banners
<i>Ethos</i>	Present	35
	Not Present	19
<i>Logos</i>	Present	7
	Not Present	47
<i>Pathos</i>	Present	19
	Not Present	36
No Appeals at All	N/A	46

The final important finding is the use of the *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* appeals. Across the channel banners, *ethos* was the most popular appeal with a total of 35 banners appealing to it (see Table 5). Many channels opted to put famous video game characters on the banner like Mario and Zelda, for example, to appeal to an audience and what characters would feature on the channel through the games being played. Other more famous YouTubers put themselves on these banners as a way to emphasize themselves as a brand. The second most used appeal was *pathos*, with 19 banners using it. These channels often had something exciting or sweet on their banner, whether it was an action scene with explosions, or a person cuddling *Pokémon* characters. They opted to try to get potential subscribers to feel either excited or charmed in order for subscribers to buy into that channel's brand. Finally, *logos* was the least used with only seven banners containing the appeal. A banner with a statement to appeal to *logos* like "New streams everyday" was rare.

Brand Comparison

It is also important to understand differences between more and less popular channels. Most interesting is that channels having up to 10 million subscribers all tend to use a wide variety of colors, with some banners sampled in this group having 10 different colors across the banners. However, after the 10-million subscription mark, the variety drastically reduces to around six colors per banner. In addition, colors that are used among the most-popular sites (often blue and green) exude trust, relaxation, confidence, and quality to consumers (Mohebbi, 2014).

Another interesting finding is that Midsized channels (from 500,000 to one million subscribers) have less variation in the kinds of genres they display than other sized channels.

This suggests that channels become more specialized in a particular genre or set of genres to "stand out" as a channel once they become Midsized, but once they gain more subscribers and grow into a Large or Huge channel, they are able to "branch out" again and have slight variation in their genres, as they have already captured their large audience. It would appear that gaming genre barely varies among YouTube streamers, but when it does vary, it tends to be the more popular channels that can afford to do so, or smaller channels still trying to establish their brand.

Brand comparison among all the YouTube channel banners by popularity is interesting, as it shows that there is less color variation among larger channels, but blue is still solidly the color of choice among all channels, and that there is slight variation in gaming genre among smaller channels and larger channels, just not Midsized channels. This could have some further interesting implications about how streamers create their brand.

V. Discussion

The findings of this research suggest practical implications about what brand strategies streamers use to create their channel banners. First and foremost, the findings indicate that blue, white, and green are the most predominantly used colors by streamers. These colors are might be chosen by streamers because they see other streamers using them, but these choices might subconsciously come into play due to color theory. Blue, according to Mohebbi (2014), signifies "tranquility, trust, [and] confidence" (pg. 100). Based on this definition of color theory, streamers are trying to make potential audience members feel as though they are trustworthy and relaxing to watch. The color blue is used to exude confidence to emphasize that viewers can be

confident that streamers know what they are doing. Hence, based on color theory, it is understandable why blue is such a popular color choice among streamers. Meanwhile, the second color choice, white, emphasizes ideas of youth, cleanliness, truth, and humility (Mohebbi 2014). In other words, streamers are trying to emphasize that their streams are new and that audiences should be able to expect what they are seeing advertised on the channel banner. These two colors both try to create a sense that the audience can trust the brand and that it is of a superior quality to other channels, which is understandable why, overall, they were used more than the other color choices.

Meanwhile, there is also a heavy focus on the gaming genres of action/adventure games, fighting games, and role playing games within the channel banners. This would also tie in directly with the use of appeals, as *ethos* and *pathos* were most common. Having action/adventure and RPG genres allows for streamers to include famous video game characters (*ethos*) and exciting or cute moments/scenes (*pathos*) on their channel banners, allowing streamers to pull audience members in. These appeals may help generate more viewership instead of just stating factual information about the channel through *logos*. These findings were present across all of the popularity groups, meaning that less popular and more popular channels had similar results in terms of color and logo elements.

These findings suggest that streamers create brands using similar elements for their branding strategies. While this is not necessarily something that can be confirmed quantitatively alone, the implication that streamers create similar brands is present in the data. Streamers appear to have developed a culture, understanding, or *ethos* of some sort concerning what a “good” streaming brand is.

There also is a clear indication that channel banners become more specialized as a Midsized channel and display fewer genres. This implies that there is almost a normalized “formula” on how to grow your channel on YouTube. Once streamers realize they need a “focus,” they create one to grow their channel and make themselves stand out. Again, it is unclear if this is a conscious choice, but if streaming can be described as a microculture, there does seem to be an implied rite of passage to becoming a successful channel.

VI. Conclusion

This study provides insight on what strategies are employed by streamers to create their brands. In this study, some of their techniques employed have been examined, including color choice, use of appeals, and gaming genres preferred. This research helps to expand understanding the modern practice of streaming video games in the field of communications, especially in terms of branding.

The limitations of this study are that the study only sampled 100 channel banners, and there are thousands of streamers on YouTube alone. As such, these findings cannot be generalized to streaming as a whole. Nevertheless, it does suggest some implications that would be worth analyzing in a larger study in the future. A second limitation is that this study was coded by a single individual. Due to this, the full accuracy of the data collected cannot be confirmed as there is no presence of intercoder reliability.

However, more can be done in terms of examining what strategies are being used in the future through studies of larger sample sizes and qualitative interviews with streamers. A larger scale, quantitative study, of a similar focus would be pertinent to more confidently generalize the results to streaming as a whole. In addition, future study could examine how streamers are promoting their brands on platforms outside of YouTube, such as Facebook and Twitter, to attract and expand their audience by acting as social media influencers.

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Aid Organizations on Instagram: Do Government-Funded Groups Differ from Non-Government-Funded Groups?

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Abstract

The relationship between aid organizations and social media has been a prominent topic of discussion among scholars and aid critics. This study investigates the Instagram accounts of aid organizations that operate through donations and aid organizations that are government-funded. A content analysis driven by Robert Entman's Framing theory and using a "perception" coding method by Russmann and Svensson compared the Instagram accounts of Peace Corps (representing government-funded aid organizations) and Habitat for Humanity (representing non-government-funded aid organizations). It was hypothesized that the two Instagram accounts would differ, as non-government-funded aid organizations would use Instagram as a platform to gain donations while government-funded aid organizations would focus on brand recognition. However, this study found that both organizations, whether seeking donations or not, focused on the same aspect throughout Instagram: volunteerism.

I. Introduction

Effective and ethical humanitarian aid has been a topic of discussion since the early 1960s when aid organizations began forming and multiplying worldwide, and the need to respond to an array of devastation became unavoidable. For the government, this came in the form of creating government-funded aid organizations, such as Peace Corps, to carry out aid. For the average individual, this came in the form of volunteering or donating money, time and/or resources to aid organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity. As aid volunteers of both government-funded aid organizations and non-government-funded aid organizations increased by the thousands, so did its appearance on social media.

Today, humanitarian aid is essential for many individuals and communities around the globe. Meanwhile, social media has become an organizational necessity that aid organizations are now relying on. To raise awareness – and oftentimes donations – successful aid organizations are present on several social media platforms. However, there is a significant lack of research addressing the ways in which aid organizations present themselves on social media platforms– specifically Instagram.

This study explores the similarities and differences between the Instagram accounts of government-funded aid organizations and non-government-funded aid organizations, specifically focusing on how each

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account frames its content to appeal to Instagram followers. This study analyzes the Instagram account of Peace Corps (representing government-funded aid organizations) and Habitat for Humanity (representing non-government-funded aid organizations) to draw conclusions based on prior research and specific methodology.

II. Literature Review

The relationship between aid organizations and social media has been a prominent topic of discussion among scholars and aid critics. Aid organizations rely on the use of social media for overall brand awareness and donation success, making it increasingly important to analyze how aid organizations are presenting themselves via one of social media's most popular platforms: Instagram. This literature review focuses on multiple aspects pertaining to aid representation on Instagram: Framing theory, necessity vs. ethics, and positive appeals vs. negative appeals.

Framing theory

Framing theory suggests that media can impact the ways audiences think about a certain topic or issue based on the strategic facts that are presented. More specifically, framing is defined by one of its most prominent researchers as “the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation” (Entman, 2007, p.164). Entman concludes that the power of framing in the media is underestimated, arguing that framing has the power to seriously impact one's way of thinking, and is therefore used by not only the government (which Entman specifically focuses on in this research study) but by organizations seeking public attention and/or a specific reaction from a desired audience (Entman, 2007).

In addition to these findings, previous researchers have focused on framing from the perspective of not only those who are sending out the framed message, but also from the receiver's perspective, the message itself, and the culture surrounding the message (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). More specifically, Ardèvol-Abreu found that the reliance and lack of restriction on technology and the ability to see an abundance of framed content can be both manipulative and informative, sometimes simultaneously (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015).

Social media and aid organizations: necessity vs. ethics

Social media has become an essential aspect of successful aid organizations, especially those who rely on donations. Therefore, it is important to analyze how the relationship between aid and social media has transformed and adapted to the digital age.

Researchers have conducted studies regarding aid organizations' interactions with social media and suggest that such platforms are an effective approach for addressing both the logistics and the ethics of aid. Specifically, some scholars conclude that the natural, open communication that social media fosters allows for transparency between organizations and donors (Seo, Kim & Yang, 2009). Other scholars similarly suggest that social media is bridging the gap between donors and aid organizations, decreasing ethical concerns regarding transparency within the giving-receiving relationship (Richey, 2018). Richey elaborates by suggesting that social media has been inevitably looped into everyday humanitarianism. In other words, aid work is now equally as important on an iPhone screen as it is on the ground.

However, some researchers disagree entirely. Cottle and Nolan (2007) argue that social media has negatively impacted aid organizations. They suggest that aid organizations putting money, time, and resources into social media runs counter to their ethical missions in the first place, and therefore should be heavily scrutinized. While Cottle and Nolan do not deny that aid organizations need to use social media, they suggest that the ways in which aid is presented through these platforms needs to be further examined.

While scholars still continue to debate whether or not social media is enhancing or destroying the ethical missions of aid organizations, they can agree on one critical point: social media is not going anywhere, and aid organizations' use of social media is not going to decline any time soon. In order to keep brands recognizable and donation rates up, aid organizations are not only persuaded to use media, they now absolutely depend on it (Cottle & Nolan, 2007). Therefore, the following question arises: how do aid organizations present themselves effectively on a specific social media platform?

Instagram: positive vs. negative appeals

Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media platforms. Averaging 1 billion users worldwide, organizations can simply no longer pass Instagram off as a mere millennial obsession and are now treating the platform as a tool (Benedek, 2018; Statista, 2018). Because Instagram includes images, pictures and videos, this platform plays a new and important role in online communication (Russmann & Svensson, 2016). In fact, Instagram is now an active factor in reaching primary goals for aid organizations around the world.

Through surveys of communications representatives at 75 different non-government organizations (NGOs), researchers have found that the two most important and effective functions of Instagram include promoting the overall image or brand of an organization and encouraging fundraising (Seo, Kim, & Yang, 2009). With this in mind, an important factor to consider and analyze is how to promote these two functions in an Instagram feed.

While no research has specifically studied how NGOs use Instagram, researchers have previously looked at aid organizations' online advertisements and focused on the users' willingness to donate based on two common types of image-specific posts: positive appeals and negative appeals (Erlandsson, Nilsson, & Västfjäll, 2018). These researchers analyzed whether or not donors react to negative advertisement appeals (such as a sad, struggling child who receives aid) or to positive advertisement appeals (such as a smiling child enjoying life who also receives aid). They found that, while donors generally enjoy the positive appeals more than the negative appeals, the negative ones are more likely to produce donations. They argue that this is due to a guilt effect that is produced when shown a negative image. In other words, no one likes to feel guilty, so to alleviate that feeling, users will feel they must donate.

In addition to this finding, previous research discovered that individual morals and ego-focused emotional appeals played the largest role for philanthropists when making donation decisions (Xu, 2017). Therefore, it is essential for aid organizations to understand their audiences to strategically post content that will affect the ways their organization is viewed and to encourage their followers to take action, whether that action is donating or passing along a message. This finding directly emphasizes the importance of framing theory for aid organizations.

While donation response based on image appeals is telling, it becomes clear that there is a critical comparison missing from prior research. Previous research focuses on aid organizations seeking donations and how they present themselves through media— but what about aid organizations that are government-funded and are not seeking public donations? Government-funded aid organizations such as Peace Corps provide similar aid compared to non-government-funded aid organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. However, there is no research comparing social media accounts (and, specifically, no research involving only Instagram accounts) of aid organizations that seek donations, and those which do not.

Therefore, this study aims to address the following questions:

RQ1: What are the major differences and similarities between how government-funded aid organizations (GFAOs) versus non-government-funded aid organizations (NGFAOs) present themselves on Instagram?

Based on prior research, this study includes the following hypotheses:

H1: Non-government-funded aid organizations (NGFAOs) will actively and consistently seeking donations via Instagram, while government-funded aid organizations (GFAOs) will not.

H2: Both non-government-funded aid organizations (NGFAOs) and government-funded aid organizations (GFAOs) will focus on promoting brand recognition via Instagram.

This research will not only support future studies on this topic, but it will also inform scholarship on how differing aid organizations communicate via Instagram. This study will act as a place of reference for aid organizations attempting to communicate through their own Instagram accounts. Using this study, aid organizations will be able to understand how two widely known and respected aid organizations are specifically framing themselves on Instagram and will be able to adapt their own accounts based on the findings of this study.

III. Methods

This study conducts a thorough content analysis of the Instagram content of Peace Corps (representing GFAOs) and Habitat for Humanity (representing NGFAOs). Content analysis study allows for emergence of common themes and patterns between two sectors that seem unlike, such as GFAOs and NGFAOs (Evans, McBride, Queen, Spyridakis, & Thayer, 2007).

Peace Corps and Habitat for Humanity were chosen for analysis due to their positive and widespread reputations and the similarity in their rates of posting. While Habitat for Humanity focuses on building homes for those in need, Peace Corps focuses on engaging communities through the following sectors: agriculture, environment, economic development, health, education, and youth in development. Although the two organizations' aid actions differ, they were selected for analysis due to the similarity in their main objective: sustainable development (Habitat for Humanity, 2019 & Peace Corps, 2019). Due to an imbalance in Instagram followers between accounts, this study will not be comparing the number of likes or comments between sites.

This study analyzes a sample of 25 posts from each account between April 1, 2018 and April 1, 2019. A random number generator produced 25 numbers between 1-100. These 25 numbers were used to sample posts corresponding to the chronological order of publication (the number "6" being the sixth most recent post from April 1, 2019, for example). This study uses a *perception* category coding method from previous Instagram research, which breaks image coding into three sections: the "perspective" of the picture (does the picture aim to represent the organization in a professional/official or a casual manner?), the "broadcast" of the picture (does the picture spread an organizational view or standpoint?), and "mobilization" (does the picture imply a call to action, such as donations?) (Russmann & Svensson, 2016).

This study also codes Instagram captions via *in-vivo coding*, or taking direct quotes and assigning them to a section of data (King, 2008). Out of the 25 posts randomly selected from each account, the 10 most-liked posts are selected for caption analysis. This study uses in-vivo coding to discover overarching themes, similarities, and differences between Peace Corps' (representing GFAOs) and Habitat for Humanity's (representing NGFAOs) posts.

IV. Findings

Table 1

Organization	<u>Perspective</u> Casual (C) vs. Professional (P)	<u>Broadcast</u> Org. Standpoint (OS) vs. No org. Standpoint (NOS)	<u>Mobilization</u> Call to Action (CTA) vs. No Call To Action (NCTA)
Habitat for Humanity	C: 9 P: 16	OS: 19 NOS: 6	CTA: 3 NCTA: 22
Peace Corps	C: 21 P: 4	OS: 16 NOS: 9	CTA: 0 NCTA: 25

Analyzing the "perspective" of an Instagram photo determines whether or not the photograph aims to represent the organization in a professional or casual manner. This study identifies a photograph as "professional" if it either has the organization's logo or title (if you can see "Habitat for Humanity" or "Peace Corps") in the photograph, or if the photograph directly enhances or portrays the organizational mission. If these traits are not portrayed in the photograph, then the photo is deemed "casual."

This study found that 16 of the 25 photos from Habitat for Humanity's Instagram feed are professional, while nine out of the 25 selected are deemed as casual photos (Figure 1). In addition, four out of 25 photos from Peace Corps' Instagram feed are professional, while 21 out of the 25 selected are casual photos. This means that 64% of the randomly selected photographs analyzed on Habitat for Humanity's Instagram feed are viewed as professional, while only 16% of the photographs analyzed on Peace Corps'

Instagram feed are viewed as professional.

This study found that Habitat for Humanity and Peace Corps used professional photographs very differently. For example, 15 out of 16 of Habitat for Humanity's professional photographs were coded as professional due to the presence of "Habitat for Humanity" and/or the Habitat for Humanity logo somewhere in the image (Figure 1). On the other hand, the Peace Corps logo was barely presented throughout the studied photos. Instead, Peace Corps posted professional photographs through images that enhance the organizational mission (Figure 2). This may be because Peace Corps' volunteers do not have a uniform, while Habitat for Humanity volunteers are given t-shirts to volunteer in, making the logo much more visible on volunteers.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

These findings may be due to a number of factors. Habitat for Humanity may seek to display the organization more professionally due to reliance on donations. Posting more professional than casual photographs may be a tactic to help increase donations and to display that they are a trustworthy organization to give to. On the contrary, Peace Corps may want to keep Instagram casual to show its applicability to a wide range of volunteers.

Broadcast

Identifying the "broadcast" of an Instagram photo is determined based on if the photo aims to spread an organizational view or standpoint.

This study found that 19 of the 25 (76%) randomly selected photos from Habitat for Humanity's Instagram feed are broadcasting an organizational standpoint. In addition, 16 out of 25 (64%) randomly selected photos from Peace Corps' Instagram feed are broadcasting an organizational standpoint.

Further analysis of the broadcast functions of both organizations' Instagram feeds reveal a striking similarity. Habitat for Humanity broadcast three main organizational themes: 14 photos broadcast volunteerism (see Figure 3 for example), three photos broadcast public figures, and two photos broadcast the importance of donating. Peace Corps also broadcast three main organizational standpoints: 12 photos broadcast volunteerism (see Figure 4 for example), three photos broadcast feminism, and one photo broadcast organizational advocacy for malaria prevention.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

While there is not a significant overlap between five out of six of the broadcasting themes, volunteerism is an organizational broadcast that both Habitat for Humanity and Peace Corps preach to Instagram users frequently. This suggests that, while the main difference between these two organizations is how they are funded, their main similarity is clear: neither organization can function without volunteers, and both organizations are willing to broadcast that via Instagram.

Mobilization

Determining the “mobilization” of an Instagram photo is based on if the photo presents a direct call to action.

This study found that three of the 25 (12%) randomly selected photos from Habitat for Humanity’s Instagram feed present a call to action within the photograph; none of the 25 randomly selected photos from Peace Corps’ Instagram feed do so. Determining the direct mobilization of an image without analyzing the accompanying text may be one reason why the percentages of mobilization for each organization are so low.

The fact that both Peace Corps and Habitat for Humanity have very little mobilization presence on their Instagram feeds may be because they are not attempting to use Instagram as a call-to-action platform. Instagram may be, as it is for many organizations, a platform to share and promote the recent actions of the

organization instead of a platform to change the behavior of its viewers. The lack of mobilization may also suggest that both organizations are close to achieving organizational goals and are not seeking external or public assistance at this time. This may be due to a steady or heavy number of volunteers for both organizations.

Due to the fact that Habitat for Humanity is a NGFAO, the three call to action images found during analysis come as no surprise, as two of the three of the call to action messages lead viewers to a site to donate. However, these overall findings reject H(1), which hypothesized that NGFAOs would be heavily using Instagram to gain donations.

Caption Analysis

Of the 25 randomly selected photographs from each organization's Instagram feeds, 10 photographs with the most likes were chosen to for content analysis of their captions.

The themes that emerged from Habitat for Humanity's Instagram captions include: volunteering in exotic places is fun, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity can be done in many forms, Habitat for Humanity believes every child deserves a home, Habitat for Humanity appreciates their volunteers, donating to Habitat for Humanity is important and worthwhile, and public figures enjoy volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. Themes that surface from Peace Corps' Instagram captions include: volunteering leads to adventure, volunteers connect with the community members they are serving, volunteering allows for growth and confidence, volunteers enact change in communities worldwide, and volunteering with Peace Corps can be done in many forms.

The results reinforce the broadcasting findings. Both organizations' captions focus heavily on the life of a volunteer and the positive impact it has on both the volunteer and the organization. Once again, volunteerism is the main factor that both organizations attempt to push in both their Instagram images and captions.

One of the biggest differences noted between the two organizations' captions is Peace Corps' use of direct quotes from their volunteers about their experiences. Of the 10 captions analyzed on Peace Corps' Instagram account, half use direct quotes from volunteers as a caption, while Habitat for Humanity do not use direct quotes in any of the analyzed captions. This may be because Peace Corps volunteers volunteer for two years and, therefore, the organization has a wide range of time to receive meaningful quotes, while Habitat for Humanity volunteers stay involved for a much shorter period of time.

V. Discussion

Through the analysis of Habitat for Humanity, this study was able to uncover how NGFAOs represent themselves on Instagram. Through the images and captions analyzed, this study found that common themes of NGFAOs' Instagram feeds are, in no particular order, brand promotion, volunteerism, and displaying public figure volunteers.

This study found that NGFAOs present their title and/or logo often, increasing brand recognition and, therefore, confirming the second hypothesis. Commonly using the organization's logo makes the Instagram feed appear more professional rather than casual. This may be due in part to the fact that, as organizations seeking donations, NGFAOs may want to give off a trustworthy and organized aesthetic throughout their Instagram feed. However, this study found that NGFAOs are not using Instagram as a primary platform to receive or promote donations, rejecting the first hypothesis. While NGFAOs do attempt to promote donation participation, it is clearly not the primary goal. Through analyzing the broadcasting of images and through the analysis of captions, this study found that NGFAOs promote the power of volunteering throughout Instagram most frequently.

After analyzing Peace Corps' Instagram content, this study is able to discuss findings on how GFAOs represent themselves on Instagram. The main themes of GFAOs Instagram representation include the power of volunteering and the cultural exchange and knowledge gained from volunteering.

GFAOs' Instagram content represents much more cultural diversity than NGFAOs. This may be because GFAOs have more reliable funding than NGFAOs, and therefore GFAOs are able to send selected

volunteers to more countries around the world. This study also found that GFAOs do not present their logos on Instagram nearly as much as NGFAOs, but instead focus more on the landscapes and the community in which volunteers actually give their time. This specific finding addresses the hypothesis that GFAOs and NGFAOs would equally seek to promote brand recognition. While both sectors aim to promote their brand via Instagram, NGFAOs emphasize their brand much more than GFAOs.

VI. Conclusion

This study explored the similarities and differences between government-funded and non-government-funded aid organizations on Instagram. This study found more similarities between government-funded and non-government-funded aid organizations than originally hypothesized. Much of previous research suggested that non-government-funded aid organizations would be seek donations via Instagram to stay in business but, while donation-seeking was present, it was by no means the main goal of the Instagram account. In fact, the findings showed that the majority of non-government-funded aid organizations and government-funded aid organizations' Instagram feeds were focused on the same thing: highlighting their volunteers. This allows the study to conclude that both government-funded aid organizations and non-government-funded aid organizations use Instagram primarily for brand recognition and to inform their followers of recent organizational activities rather than a donation-seeking platform.

The major limitation of this study was that only two Instagram accounts were analyzed through content analysis. In addition, only 25 posts from each Instagram account were selected to analyze and, therefore, generalizations made throughout this study may not be representative of all aid organizations on Instagram. With more time and resources, researchers could ideally select multiple government-funded and non-government funded aid organizations Instagram accounts to analyze instead of just one account from each sector.

This study lays a solid foundation for future research to examine whether or not volunteerism increases or decreases based on the Instagram methods of government-funded and non-government-funded aid organizations. This could be conducted though a qualitative study to incorporate interviews and focus groups from those who follow certain aid organizations' Instagram accounts.

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The Framing of Refugees and Refugee Status Through U.S. Presidential Discourse

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Abstract

The topic of refugees and asylum seekers in the United States has come to the forefront as the Syrian conflict continues and Central Americans journey to the country's southern border. This study analyzed the framing of refugee status and refugees by U.S. presidents since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 until September 11, 2018. Using framing theory, a qualitative content analysis evaluated the U.S. presidential discourse of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump on refugee status and refugees in a total of 72 speeches collected from their respective administrations' official websites. This research shows that Bush's and Obama's references to refugee status and refugees were very similar, emphasizing a national responsibility to assist, while Trump focused on the alleged conflict they could bring to the United States. The topic of how political leaders frame the issue of refugee status and of refugees in the U.S. is not only relevant, but urgent, as the lives and livelihoods of generations of people are impacted by the president's decisions.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand, through a framing analysis what the last three U.S. presidents have communicated through their official discourse about refugees and refugee status in the United States. The study also analyzes if those communications through presidential discourse changed over time, both within each of these presidents' respective terms and from president to president. The timeframe for the study starts on September 11, 2001, the day of the terrorist attacks that took the United States by surprise and changed the country's approach to immigration, and it finishes on September 11, 2018, to include 17 years of presidential discourse.

Refugees, in simple terms, are defined by the United Nations Refugee Agency (the UNHCR) and the 1951 Refugee Convention as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR Emergency Handbook, 2018). As part of the United Nations, the United States has historically agreed to accept refugees in times of crisis (Zong and Batalova, 2015). Through presidential transitions, the number of refugees accepted per year to the United States and the benefits available to them each time have varied (Davis, 2017). This is especially noticeable after the recent transition

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of power from Barack Obama to Donald Trump. An average cap of 70,000 refugees during the Bush and Obama administrations has been lowered to 30,000 in fiscal year 2019 (U.S. Department of State).

How political leaders talk about refugee status and refugees is not only relevant, but urgent, as the lives and livelihoods of generations of refugees in the United States are impacted, in real life, by leaders' perception of the issue.

II. Literature Review

This section describes framing theory, addresses important legal definitions concerning immigration and refugee status, and reviews previous studies that have analyzed presidential speeches.

Framing theory posits that communicators "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Regarding refugees and refugee status, this study analyzes the generic frames and the issue-specific frames used by three different U.S. presidents. A generic frame is one that can be applied to any issue or situation to see if it is present or not in the content communicated, while an issue-specific frame is a frame that is specific to a certain issue or situation. The five generic frames, as described by DeVreese (2005), are Conflict, Human Interest, Responsibility, Morality and Economic Consequence.

Regarding legal aspects of refugees, it is important to note that the majority of U.S. legislation before 1980 was simply a reaction to migration flows generated by global events such as WWI or the U.S. involvement in Cuba (USCIS, 2018). Before 1980, the United States reacted to events and managed immigration flows via quotas (Migration Policy Institute, 2013), as opposed to creating preemptive structures and systems that supported resettlement to the United States no matter the specific circumstances.

The Refugee Act of 1980 created several institutions such as the Office of Refugee and Parole within the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). In the context of accommodating for an influx of migrants from the Vietnam War, the Refugee Act of 1980 adopted the United Nations' definition of refugee, created the first statute for asylum, and increased the number of refugees admitted annually (USCIS, 2018).

The USA Patriot Act, created in response to the 9/11 attacks, redefined terror and the legal grounds to deny the entry of individuals to the United States if suspected of being associated with terrorism. The attacks also influenced the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and the breaking down of the INS into the following three organizations: the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (USCIS, 2018), which in turn increased a national focus on deportations and possible terror threats.

The refugee resettlement process today follows these general steps: The fiscal cap in the number of refugees admitted to the United States in any given fiscal year is set by the U.S. president. Then, as decided by the United Nations and the USCIS, refugees selected to resettle in the United States, through an intensely rigorous vetting processes (Park et al., 2017), are transported by the International Organization for Migration to the U.S. territory. There, NGOs that partner with the U.S. government then pick up the refugees from local airports and place them in apartments, thus beginning the official 90-day timeline of resettlement (Cepla, 2018). Apart from setting the yearly fiscal cap and distributing a sum of a little over \$900 per refugee (Edwards, 2012), the entire process of resettlement is left to the assigned agency (Cepla, 2018).

Numerous scholars have examined the role of the U.S. president in information distribution: how it is framed, when it is given out and under what contexts is the information given. Paletz and Entman (1980) connect the figure of the president to the concept of nationhood, arguing that the figure of the president is representative, and that the president can use his actions and voice to accomplish his own goals. People across the globe are focused on the president and what is spoken. A president can plan conferences or speeches intentionally to promote a narrative that then gets picked up as a media priority (Paletz, Entman, 1980).

Entman (2003) notes that information often flows down from the person with the most political power, often the president. As is the case with natural waterfalls, information is disseminated wider as the story falls from its original, higher source. However, while more information can be added down the line, the

creation and promotion of ideas is most strongly concentrated with those on top. Entman describes the use of tools by the Bush administration, following 9/11, to change strategies when, originally, the media pushed back on some of Bush's framing of the issue (Entman, 2003). Related research has examined George W. Bush's response to the 9/11 attacks, the power his speeches had across the nation and the globe, and, most importantly, it highlights the significance of September 11, 2001 as a turning point for public opinion about immigration (Scheufele, Nisbet, & Ostman, 2005).

Drawing from the literature presented in this section, the present study helps fill a gap in the literature by focusing, in particular, on presidential speeches about refugee status and refugees, using framing theory and framing analysis as its theoretical base. It does so by examining the following research questions:

RQ1: How has the topic of refugees and the issue of refugees coming to the United States been framed in the administrations of George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump?

RQ2: How has the U.S. presidential discourse about refugee status and refugees been impacted by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001?

RQ3: Was the presidential discourse in alignment with the existing legislation about refugees at those times?

III. Methods

For this study, generic and issue-specific frames related to refugees and refugee status were analyzed in the 72 presidential speeches included in this research. This study also analyzed the context of the presidential discourse for each speech, meaning where and when each speech was given, the keywords used, and the tone of the discourse. Examples of occasions that were coded include press briefings, State of the Union Addresses, executive orders, official conversations between leaders, and official remarks.

The speeches identified from the official archived websites of the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations and from the present official website for President Trump. They were chosen for their mention of one or more of the following keywords: refugee, refugee status, asylum, asylee, immigration reform, terrorism, and/or travel ban. In some cases, if the full transcript was not on the administration site, it was located elsewhere. Campaign speeches were not taken into consideration. Each speech was presented between September 11, 2001 and September 11, 2018. A coding book and coding sheets were developed following the example of other framing studies (Besley, 2005; Fiss et al., 2005; Entman, 2003).

The discourse was coded to document what generic frames were salient, such as *conflict*, *human interest*, *responsibility*, *morality*, and *economic consequence* (DeVreese, 2005), and further, what issue-specific frames were being used in any given speech, such as *terrorism*, *safety/well-being*, *taking of resources/expenses*, *jobs/workers*, *freedom and repatriation*, *dehumanization*, *criminalization*, and finally, *assimilation*, with the purpose of comparing and contrasting the speeches over the years within any given term and from president to president. The coding book included categories such as the location where the speech was given, the purpose/occasion, total speech length (by paragraphs), section of speech that was relevant to the topic (by paragraphs), generic frames present, issue-specific frames present, relevant exemplary quotes, keywords used, and speech tone. Each speech was read carefully, several times, and coded for content indicating a framing of the subject of refugee status and, in the greater context, of immigration reform.

To ensure reliable results in the coding, before coding all the 72 speeches, a subsample of 20 percent of the speeches (15 speeches in total) were selected and coded both by the author of the study and a secondary coder, which in this case was a student hired and trained by the author. The results of both coders were compared, and the level of intercoder reliability (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken 2002) was measured. The first round of intercoder reliability measurement concluded with an overall level of 91.5 percent agreement, and most categories reached acceptable intercoder reliability levels, but not all. For that reason, further refinements in the codebook and the codesheet were made before proceeding to code again the subsample of 20 percent of the speeches and then, later on, the rest of the presidential discourse collected. At that point, the author of this study coded the other 57 speeches on her own.

IV. Findings

This section is outlined first by president, in chronological order, from President George W. Bush to President Trump, then by the top two or three generic frames found per president. When a generic frame is present across terms in the same contexts within the same presidency, the secondary section is not included.

President George W. Bush

U.S. President George W. Bush was inaugurated on January 20, 2001, just eight months before the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States by 19 militant members of al-Qaeda, an extremist group that associated itself with Islam (Bergen, 2003). From the three presidents included in this study, Bush was the one who spoke the least on the subject of refugees and resettlement to the United States during his time in office. The tone of his discourse when referring to immigrants, and refugees in particular, was clearly positive though he had recently faced a devastating attack on U.S. soil during his first term in office. He remained consistent in his references to refugee resettlement, describing this process as a necessary and positive aspect of the U.S. international assistance, distinguishing refugees from violence or threats to national safety (Bush 2001, November 10; Bush 2003, January 28; Bush 2003, February 26).

Responsibility. This generic frame refers to a problem that has a clear party (individual or group) causing or solving the problem in discussion (DeVreese, 2005). Bush spoke of the strength that the United States holds in the international order and thus the great responsibility the United States has to share the country's *freedom* and strength with other countries and peoples experiencing terror or repressive regimes. For example, he said in the State of the Union address on January 28, 2003:

America is a strong nation, and honorable in the use of our strength. We exercise power without conquest, and we sacrifice for the liberty of strangers. Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity. We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone (Bush 2003, January 28).

This type of message was emphasized on several occasions. Bush used a similar word choice and themes to discuss the United States responsibility as a nation, but also the personal responsibility that U.S. citizens have to ensure the safety and well-being of others who rely on the support of the United States. He said, "A threat to all must be answered by all ... The security of our nation and the hope of millions depend on us, and Americans do not turn away from duties because they are here. We have met great tests in other times, and we will meet the tests of our time" (Bush 2003, February 26). Bush spoke about the responsibility to have laws that reflect remembrance, laws that are just and kind across the globe. He emphasized the ability to maintain laws that are accepting of immigrants and that allow to keep the nation and its citizens safe. He did not conflate the idea of immigrants with the idea of terror, or associated the term immigrant with the term "threat," but he instead separated the two in the call to action (Bush 2004, January 7).

Human interest. *Human Interest*, which is, as defined by DeVreese (2005), the emphasis of the human story or experience tied to the topic being discussed. In several of his speeches, Bush would include a detailed and emotionally riddled description of the trauma and human challenges faced by those experiencing and being displaced by violence abroad. Bush maintained the thread of humanity, framing the issue of assistance as something that should be done and even prioritized when responding to threats.

It is presumptuous and insulting to suggest that a whole region of the world-- or the one fifth of humanity that is Muslim-- is somehow untouched by the most basic aspirations of life ... In our desire to care for our children and give them a better life, we are the same. For these fundamental reasons, freedom and democracy will always and everywhere have greater appeal than the slogans of hatred and the tactics of terror (Bush 2003, February 26).

President Bush also focused on the goal of giving freedom (*freedom* issue-specific frame) to those who are experiencing terror, along with the importance of viewing such individuals as human beings with shared goals and hopes for safety and wellbeing (*safety/well-being* issue-specific frame).

Economic consequence. During his second term in office, Bush used the generic frame of *economic consequence*. Bush denounced the practice of economic isolation, or protectionism, as disastrous to any nation and to the world (Bush 2006, January 31). Bush claimed that assisting refugees and being a leader in immigration reform is a way to ensure the safety and well-being not just of those displaced by conflict, but also of the sovereignty and economy of the United States. During his 2006 State of the Union address, Bush stated:

The road of isolationism and protectionism may seem broad and inviting- yet it ends in danger and decline. The only way to protect our people, the only way to secure the peace, the only way to control our destiny is by our leadership-- so the United States will continue to lead (Bush 2006, January 31).

Bush emphasized that isolation would impede the country's leadership and success globally. Beyond saying that immigration reform would not hurt the United States, Bush outlined how the economy of the United States relies on immigration and immigrants, and how immigration reform would be positive for the country. He said, "We hear claims that immigrants are somehow bad for the economy-- even though this economy could not function without them. All these are forms of economic retreat, and they lead in the same direction- toward a stagnant and second-rate economy" (Bush 2006, January 31). President Bush associated immigrants with growth and evolution, and he also associated the refusal to accept immigrants with decline and stagnation.

President Barack H. Obama

The speeches during President Obama's first term rarely mentioned refugees or immigration reform, instead, they were focused on economic reform considering the 2008 economic recession and a housing crisis (Havemann, 2009). The subjects of immigration reform and refuge-seeking individuals were much more salient in his second term in office, yet, throughout both terms, President Obama spoke positively in regards to the U.S. role in supporting refugees globally (Obama 2009, December 10; Obama 2014, November 20).

Responsibility. The most salient generic frame from President Obama's administration was that of *responsibility*. Referencing Emma Lazarus' poem at the Statue of Liberty, Obama said, "Let us remember these words. For it falls on each generation to ensure that that lamp— that beacon — continues to shine as a source of hope around the world, and a source of our prosperity here at home" (Obama 2010, July 1). Obama framed the issue of refugee assistance as a generational *responsibility* for the United States as a global force of hope.

Human Interest. President Obama also highlighted human progress as an incentive to actively assist refugees and asylum seekers displaced by war and conflict (Obama 2009, December 10). He shared some iterations of the United States' migrant-led history as a way to frame the issue positively. He stated that, at its foundation, America is simple. It can be defined by "E pluribus unum," which Obama translated as "out of many, one." With this in mind, he used inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "ourselves" to connect the audience to the shared narrative, "Our nation is a nation of immigrants, a nation of shared ideals" (Obama 2011, May 10). He explained, as well, why immigrants historically were and still are, presently, interested in resettling within the United States.

That's why millions of people, ancestors to most of us, braved hardship and great risk to come here -- so they could be free to work and worship and start a business and live their lives in peace and prosperity. The Asian immigrants who made their way to California's Angel Island. The German and Scandinavians who settled across the Midwest. The waves of Irish, and Italian, and Polish, and Russian, and Jewish immigrants who leaned against the railing to catch their first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty. This flow of immigrants has helped make this country stronger and more prosperous (Obama 2011, May 10).

Morality. *Morality* is a frame that highlights a description or interpretation of an event through religious principles (DeVreese 2005). The use of this frame was salient throughout his second term. Obama (2013, November 25) presents the frame of *morality* through the use of key words such as “ideals,” “creed,” and “enduring principles.” He outlined, “What makes us American is our shared belief in certain enduring principles, our allegiance to a set of ideals, to a creed, to the enduring promise of this country” (Obama 2013, November 25). Obama identified a set of principles that are, in his words, fundamental to the American people (as mentioned in Obama 2013, November 25; and Obama 2014, July 16). Obama further stated that his beliefs do not poorly impact his pride or his love for America (Obama 2016, September 20). Connecting his beliefs to the responsibility of assisting those in need to find the *safety/well-being* they can no longer find in their home nations encapsulates the salient themes Obama used.

President Donald J. Trump

President Trump has almost exclusively spoken on immigration reform and the U.S. role for refugee assistance using a negative tone, with the exception of one speech where he highlights the issue of refugee assistance positively (Trump 2017, May 21). Trump was also highly repetitive in each speech, an example being in a meeting for the signing of the Space Policy Directive, on June 18, 2018, “Immigration is the fault, and all of the problems that we’re having ... I say it’s, very strongly, the Democrats’ fault. They’re obstructing. They’re really obstructionists. And they are obstructing” (Trump 2018, June 18).

Another notable difference in the Trump administration is that the speeches available on the official presidential website are archived as prepared, or as written originally, whereas the speeches for Obama and Bush were more consistently archived in their websites as delivered, including any interruptions by audience members, the president’s response, or tangential comments from the prepared-in-advance remarks (see, for instance, Trump 2017, May 21; Trump 2017, June 26). This is significant because, as is the case for the occasions of mass communication included in this study, the majority of the discourse had an audience present, whether members of the cabinet, other world leaders, or a group of citizens, situations in which questions are expected and outbursts can influence the direction of the speech.

Conflict. The frame of *conflict* is defined by DeVreese (2005) as the indication of a conflict between parties, whether individuals, groups, institutions or countries (DeVreese, 2005). Since his first days in office, Trump’s narrative has been consistently focused on tightening or eliminating an alleged lack of thorough, comprehensive practices within the refugee assistance program due to “risk” and “conflict” (Trump 2017, January 27; Trump 2017, October 8). In a quote taken from Executive Order 13679, Trump explicitly connected refugees, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the risk of conflict coming across the U.S. national borders (Trump 2017, January 27). He went on to state that due to “deteriorating conditions” in specific countries, the United States has a responsibility to protect itself from *conflict* and *terrorism* by no longer accepting individuals seeking refugee status and asylum from specific countries, because it is too risky.

Trump often framed the issue of national security in a specific, conscious way, by repetitively connecting refugee status seekers with not only the conflict of their home countries, but also with the conflict that could be to the United States.

The United States will not be a migrant camp, and it will not be a refugee holding facility. It won’t be. If you look at what’s happening in Europe, if you look at what’s happening in other places, we can’t allow that to happen to the United States — not on my watch (Trump 2018, June 18).

Responsibility. In his case, Trump presented the concept of *responsibility* as a sense of the safety and security of the United States within its borders (Trump 2017, February 10; Trump 2017, September 19). Trump often spoke of the danger that comes with accepting immigrants from “high-danger zones,” and he said that the foremost obligation of his administration is preserving the “greatness” of the United States. In an address to Congress in 2017, Trump presented his stance as a universal and widely shared perspective in an effort to solidify his travel bans and to raise support for his zero-tolerance immigration stance. He claimed,

But then the quiet voices became a loud chorus as thousands of citizens now spoke out together, from cities small and large, all across our country. Finally, the chorus became an earthquake, and the people turned out by the tens of millions, and they were all united by one very simple, but crucial demand: that America must put its own citizens first. Because only then can we truly make America great again (Trump 2017, February 28).

To contextualize this statement, Trump made references to the “lawless chaos” of the current U.S. immigration structures that allow “radical Islamic terrorism” and the “bad ones” to enter into the country and harm “American victims” (Trump 2017, February 28). By using expressions such as “we have to” and words such as “should” recurrently, President Trump tried to connect his desire to create stricter immigration laws with a notion of shared *responsibility* among U.S. citizens.

Economic consequence. In many ways, Trump has focused on the “costs” associated with refugee resettlement processes during his speeches, whether associated with danger or with financial strain (Trump 2017, February 28; Trump 2017, September 19). To establish this frame, he repeated terms early in his presidency such as “lower-skilled” and “countless dollars.” One particular example from about a month into his term in office was his address to Congress on February 28, 2017. He said,

Switching away from this current system of lower-skilled immigration, and instead adopting a merit-based system, we will have so many more benefits. It will save countless dollars, raise workers’ wages, and help struggling families—including immigrant families-- enter the middle class. And they will do it quickly, and they will be very, very happy, indeed (Trump 2017, February 28).

Here the president not only connected the current immigration system to low-skilled workers and expensive resettlements, while ignoring the economic contributions of immigrants to the U.S. economy, but he also created a hierarchy of immigrants who are welcome and those who are not.

In a 2018 speech to border patrol agents in Sterling, Virginia, he referenced, again, the money the U.S. has spent on aid. He said, “So we give them billions and billions of dollars and they don’t do what they’re supposed to be doing. And they know that. But we’re going to take a very harsh action” (Trump 2018, February 2). Through his consistently negative tone and the “contextualization” of the generic frame of *economic consequence* (in other words, by talking about the economic consequences in different ways based on the context and the audience of the speech), Trump links the generic frame of *economic consequence* to the issue-specific frames of *safety/well-being*, *terrorism*, and the *criminalization* of immigrants to the U.S.

Commonalities and disparities among presidents

This section looks at recurring vernacular phrases and similarities or disparities in how each president framed what was salient through their definition of the problem, the chosen context each offered and in what tone, and the proposed calls to action.

Nation of immigrants, nation of laws. George W. Bush and Barack Obama often used the same and classic phrase, “Ours is a nation of immigrants. We’re also a nation of law” (Bush 2006, October 26; Obama 2009, June 25; Obama 2010, July 1) to reference the United States. Not only were they referring to the origin of the United States, but they were also using this statement as both a charge for more comprehensive immigration laws and a call for empathy for the situation of immigrants traveling to the United States. “We define ourselves as a nation of immigrants -- a nation that welcomes those willing to embrace America’s ideals and America’s precepts” (Obama 2011, May 10). Both Obama and Bush used this idea as a call to action, normalizing the influxes of immigrants as the world eases in and out of war, a goal in stark contrast to that of Trump. In a speech to salute “Heroes of Immigration and Customs Enforcement” held on August 20, 2018, Trump said, “Everyone here today understands a vital truth: that America is a land of opportunity because we are a nation of laws. For America to be a strong nation, we must have strong borders” (Trump 2018, August 20).

God-given and inalienable rights. A notable change in vernacular from President Bush’s to President Obama’s administration can be seen in the way each contextualized human rights. When discussing the United States’ *responsibility* in offering assistance to refugees based on their human rights,

Bush always mentions their “God-given rights” (Bush 2003, January 28; Bush 2006, January 31; Bush 2004, January 7; Bush 2007, May 4). While *morality* was not one of Bush’s most salient frames, this reference to God-ordained rights framed the issue of refugee assistance in light of a higher power’s design. Obama, on the other hand, made the transition throughout his two terms in office from using the phrase “God-given rights” to “inalienable rights” (Obama 2011, May 10; Obama 2014, November 14; Obama 2016, November 16), separating rights from a prescription to a specific higher power.

Refugees: Consequences of terrorism or cause? In the beginning of 2017, there was a notable shift in the framing of refugee resettlement to the United States as the presidential administration of Barack Obama turned over to Donald Trump. While Presidents Bush and Obama both emphasized making a distinction between refugees and the causes of terror, President Trump often conflated the two, even saying that refugees create conflict and terror through destabilizing countries (Trump 2017, January 27; Trump 2017, September 19). Where Bush and Obama defined refugees as consequences or victims of terrorism and conflict, Trump stated that refugees can cause and perpetuate conflict and terror in unsuspecting countries.

Deteriorating conditions in certain countries due to war, strife, disaster, and civil unrest increase the likelihood that terrorists will use any means possible to enter the United States. The United States must be vigilant during the visa-issuance process to ensure that those approved for admission do not intend to harm Americans and that they have no ties to terrorism (Trump 2017, January 27).

While Trump often compared refugees and asylum seekers to criminals, gang members, and rapists (Trump 2017, February 28; Trump 2017, September 5; Trump 2018, August 20), Presidents Bush and Obama would highlight their humanity and rights. While Trump emphasized tougher vetting of and even the suspension of refugee resettlement from specific countries, mentioning “the wrong people” and “infiltrating the U.S through immigration” (Trump 2017, February 7; Trump 2017, February 28), Bush set a different tone: “to inflame ethnic hatred is to advance the cause of terror. The war against terror must not serve as an excuse to persecute ethnic and religious minorities in any country” (Bush 2001, November 10). It is interesting to note that both a Republican and a Democratic president stood firmly against the association of refugees with causes of terror and pushed against fear-mongering. Trump has done the opposite since his first days in office and throughout the following two years.

V. Conclusion

Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump all gave relevance to issues related to refugee status and assistance to refugees in the United States, but each framed these issues in distinct ways, especially in the case of Donald Trump.

Notably, while Bush and Obama are affiliated to different political parties, which today tend to have highly contrasting views regarding immigration topics, the two presidents’ discourse regarding refugees was not that different. The framing analysis conducted for this study revealed that Bush’s and Obama’s discourse were similar in the frames they privileged and the topics they prioritized. The discourse of Bush, compared to that of Trump, fell on the complete opposite side of the spectrum, although both presidents belong to the Republican Party.

It is interesting that the generic frame of *responsibility* was one of the two most-used frames across all terms and across all presidencies, but meant different things from one president to the next. While both Bush and Obama used this frame to refer to the U.S. national *responsibility* to respond to refugee crises, to receive refugees on national soil, and to assist them in their resettlement process, Trump tied the *responsibility* frame to the issue-specific frames of *criminalization* and of *safety/well-being*, to create a narrative where the U.S. national *responsibility* is not to help refugees, or to solve international crises, or to open its doors to foreigners, but to prioritize self-preservation, to reject alleged criminals, and to guarantee the safety of U.S. citizens.

For Bush and Obama, the second most salient generic frame was that of *human interest*, where the focus was the refugees’ personal stories of struggle and their need to receive justice. Trump’s most salient

frame, on the other hand, was the generic frame of *conflict*, where he connected the issue of immigration to the notion of fear – fear of conflict being generated by people coming through the U.S. borders and fear of the spread of terrorism as a result of resettlement processes of refugees.

Bush was intentional, following 9/11, to not blame any member of the Islamic faith for those acts of terror, and to explicitly support others abroad who were victims of terrorism. In the same breath, however, he lowered the fiscal cap of refugees by 10,000 the following year (in 2002), to a limit of 70,000 refugees, maximum, which was maintained for the following five years. Obama, during his administration, spoke very highly of assistance, and in his last year in office he raised the fiscal cap significantly, to 110,000 refugees, which is the highest cap set within this study's timeframe and within recent U.S. history. This increase, however, never came to completion.

When power transitioned to Trump just a few months later, he used Executive Orders to undermine Obama's targets. In 2017, the number of refugees actually resettled to the United States was half of the set cap for that year. The following years, Trump remained consistent, lowering the cap number time and again, until reaching a cap of 30,000 in 2019.

In summary, the caps and numbers of refugees actually resettled to the United States per fiscal year between 2003 and 2018 seem to indicate that, regarding refugees, Bush kept his discourse positive, but the numbers of refugees resettled went down in 2002 and 2003 (not surprising after what happened on 9/11) or remained somewhat steady after 2004. President Obama also kept his discourse positive but the refugee cap numbers remained steady (in his first term) or slightly lower (in his second term), while the numbers of actual refugees resettled to the U.S. fluctuated during his first term in office and increased during his second term. In his second term, the Obama Administration received almost the maximum number of refugees allowed by the cap, between 2014 and 2016).

Trump, in stark contrast, strongly reduced the caps and even more the number of refugees actually brought to the country, taking them to historical lows. His negative discourse and his consequential actions to drastically lower the number of refugees arriving to the United States were aligned. These findings are significant because, as previous scholarship indicates, presidents' words matter. Refugee resettlement numbers, as well as the resources allocated to support them, are parameters that are dependent on the decisions of the standing president in consultation with Congress.

In summary, the point of view of the president of the United States can have an impact on the point of view of the nation's citizens on a given issue. Moreover, the president's framing of the issue through his discourse has real-life implications. As an iconic figure and a global leader, the president of the United States has influence, and words matter: They change the lives, for better or worse, of thousands of human beings who request refugee status or asylum to the United States.

With the popularization of social media platforms and with the ways in which the dissemination of information is changing, one limitation of this study is related to the availability of speeches collected for the analysis, in particular for the case of Trump's communications. The primary way in which Donald Trump communicates his own thoughts and narratives to the public is through Twitter, and this creates both a limitation and an opportunity. Particularly in Trump's case, it would be important to analyze not only speeches but also social media content. An additional limitation is that not all presidential speech transcripts were available.

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First, I must thank my God, who was a refugee fleeing the wrath of a king. This truth and example lays the foundation for the work that I do and inspires me to stay steady in seeking truth, evaluating what I believe, and advocating for those most vulnerable. Next, I must thank my family new and old. And, finally, Associate Professor Vanessa Bravo, let me begin by saying how grateful and appreciative I am for your time and dedication to my academic and personal pursuits. Thank you.

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