

# ELON JOURNAL

OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN

# COMMUNICATIONS

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ELON UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL of COMMUNICATIONS

FALL 2015  
VOLUME 6, NO. 2

## 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/](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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## Celebrating Student Research

This journal reflects what we enjoy seeing in our students -- intellectual maturing.

As 18-year-olds, some students enter college possibly wanting to earn a degree more than they want to earn an education. They may question whether communication theory and research have anything to do with their future. But they get excited at studying great ideas and topical issues.

These published articles make us aware of the solitary hours that students spend in research and the untold hours in which student and teacher-mentor work together to revise a paper for public consumption.

This journal celebrates the life of the intellect through undergraduate research. It represents the intellectual maturing that occurs by the senior year, reinforcing all that we think a university should be.

Dr. Paul Parsons, Dean  
School of Communications

## Editorial Board

Twenty faculty members in School of Communications served as the Editorial Board that selected 10 undergraduate research papers for the fall 2015 issue of the *Elon Journal*.

From more than 100 research papers written in advanced School of Communications classes, 24 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 Jonathan Albright, Janna Anderson, Lucinda Austin, Vanessa Bravo, Lee Bush, Naeemah Clark, David Copeland, Vic Costello, Dianne Finch, Michael Frontani, Jessica Gisclair, Don Grady, Ben Hannam, Anthony Hatcher, Dan Haygood, Jonathan Jones, Julie Lellis, Harlen Makemson, Barbara Miller, William Moner, Phillip Motley, Tom Nelson, George Padgett, Paul Parsons, Glenn Scott, Michael Skube, Jessalynn Strauss, Hal Vincent, and Qian Xu.

Thanks should also go to Bryan Baker, who videotaped student introductions to their projects, Colin Donohue, who uploaded the PDF version of this issue and student videos, Associate Dean Don A. Grady, who reviewed articles to help ensure the quality of the journal, and Tommy Kopetskie, who proofread the articles.

## Editor's Note

This edition of the journal provides studies on diverse media topics in the area of public relations, advertising, movies, TV episodes, newspaper coverage, social media and websites.

Three articles dealt with PR/advertising issues. Based on a survey, Limoges discovered three factors that led to the success of 29 U.S. university student-run PR and advertising agencies: an independence workspace, an affiliation with PRSSA and having paying clients. Using Benoit's Image Repair Discourse, Winters analyzed football player Adrain Peterson's statements to see whether he used image repair strategies effectively. Gallagher found that a focus group with 11 female Division I athletes showed positive feedback to advertisements that showed a variety of different body types and focused more on athletic achievement than physical appearance.

Four articles analyzed traditional media content. Vreeland analyzed Wes Anderson's movies to examine how social construction, social stratification and the role of family are expressed through colors. King analyzed nine episodes from ABC's TV series "Scandal" and examined whether character Olivia Pope reflected popular African American female stereotypes in television. Based on a content analysis of 170 newspaper articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* that covered the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games, Alfini found that both papers mostly covered violations of human rights as freedom of expression issues, but terrorism was framed differently as a security issue. Using media framing theory, Blunt content analyzed more than 400 *New York Times* articles between 1930 and 1933 and found Hitler tended to be framed as a non-credible leader, but the frame seemed to be changed after his party won 52 percent of the Reichstag in 1933.

The remaining three articles analyzed social media or websites content. Based on Dunkin' Donuts' Instagram posts, Lavoie suggested that the company failed in creating an image of its brand as being people-oriented, a fun and friendly brand. After analyzed Facebook and Twitter posts on four Southeastern magazines, Black suggested that the publications needed to use local content, multimedia content and advertising bundles to bring in more visitors or advertising revenues. Based on an analysis of the websites for study abroad program at five universities, Aspersion found that the university websites emphasized the power of a local community abroad, the importance of interactive conversations, and personal and academic development for students studying abroad.

These studies reflect hard work of students and their mentors in answering significant communication questions of our time. I hope the articles in this issue will inspire students in future semesters to commit to examining important research questions and submit their papers to this journal.

Dr. Byung Lee  
Journal Editor

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# How University Websites Portray Study Abroad

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## Abstract

*University websites across the country showcase the important underlying values of study abroad: experiencing a “local” culture, creating interactive conversations, and empowering students through personal and academic development. This research examined how universities communicate the benefits and values. Through a rhetorical analysis, grounded in framing theory, this study analyzed the key verbal, visual, and interactive messages of five university study abroad websites. These findings suggest how website communication can influence perceptions of study abroad.*

## I. Introduction

Study abroad has become an important aspect in higher education in the United States, as the phenomenon of globalization has grown increasingly important to how universities equip students for the professional and social world. In 2014, the Institute of International Education proposed the Generation Study Abroad campaign to provide more study abroad opportunities, with the goal of reaching 600,000 students studying abroad by 2019, more than a twofold increase from the 2013-2014 academic year (“Generation Study Abroad,” 2014). As study abroad becomes more relevant and timely for university students, many have begun to evaluate the study abroad experience and its academic, professional, and social outcomes. Intercultural competence has been seen as a valuable outcome for students, and scholars have worked to define and promote intercultural competences within the study abroad setting.

While study abroad has been researched from a social and cultural perspective, not many researchers have examined study abroad through a communication lens. In order for university study abroad programs to be successful, most universities promote study abroad through websites. Recent research has found that some study abroad websites and marketing tools tend to float on the border between promoting educational tourist experiences and authentic intercultural exchanges. According to Erving Goffman’s (1974) framing theory, communication tools seek to shape perceptions and realities on different issues, which means that websites are not neutral texts when it comes to communicating study abroad. In order to form a larger perspective on study abroad marketing, it is necessary to examine the rhetoric and language on university websites and to understand how they compare to intercultural competence frameworks and global understanding.

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**Keywords:** study abroad, international higher education, website communication, interactive media, intercultural competence  
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This undergraduate project was conducted as a partial requirement of a research course in communications.

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## II. Literature Review

The literature below surveyed the status of study abroad; the importance of intercultural competence in study abroad programs; channels used to promote study abroad, especially websites; and the application of framing theory in creating university web content.

### ***The State of Study Abroad***

In order to analyze the marketing efforts of key universities' study abroad websites, it is important to understand the broader historical context of study abroad in the United States. Over the past two decades, U.S. participation in study abroad has more than tripled, with more than 280,000 students studying abroad for academic credit in the 2012-2013 academic year (Institute of International Education, 2014). Currently, almost all universities have study abroad programs or are working to include international programs into their institutions. In 2008, more than 90% of colleges and universities in the United States offered study abroad programs (Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008, p. 1). Study abroad has been an important goal for American universities in promoting internationalization in higher education and has been backed by other parties, such as the federal government, business communities, nonprofits, and major higher education associations ("History and Purposes," 2012, p. 21). President George W. Bush signed the Senate Resolution 308 in 2005, in which 2006 was declared to be "The Year of Study Abroad" and global competency and literacy were assumed to be a responsibility of American educational systems.

Study abroad programs have allowed universities to respond to national and international calls to ensure quality education for U.S. citizens in an increasingly globalized society. Advancing study abroad has potential to make universities more competitive, as 79% of people in the United States believe that students should study abroad in college, according to a 2002 American Council on Education poll ("Designating 2006," 2005). Many studies outline other benefits of study abroad both for students and for the university as a whole. For example, study abroad programs promote American universities in an international context, offering the chance to build global education partnerships (Bishop 2013, p. 399). In addition, studies have shown other positive outcomes, such as increased academic performance (Holoviak, Verney, Winter, & Holoviak, 2011), self-confidence, long-lasting career impact, and professional skills (Franklin, 2010, p. 186). Research has also shown other personal outcomes for students who study abroad, including greater intercultural proficiency, increased openness to cultural diversity, global mindedness, and effective intercultural communication skills (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, & McMillen, 2009, p.174-175). Because these benefits are key selling points of the study abroad experience, it will be important to study how universities portray these benefits to students and the university community interested in study abroad.

While many see the value of study abroad, not many undergraduates participate in overseas education programs. Less than 10% of students study abroad during their degree program, and 71% of the students who study abroad are within the social sciences, humanities, and business disciplines (Institute of International Education, 2014). Even though study abroad programs are catering to the needs of different students, such as offering language immersion programs, courses in different majors, opportunities for internships and service, and extracurricular activities, a variety of other factors may influence students' decisions to study abroad. As colleges and universities continue to value and promote education centered on gaining intercultural experience and preparing students for a globalized world, universities' views on intercultural competence may influence students' desires and decisions during their study abroad process.

### ***Recognizing Intercultural Competence as a Key Aspect of Study Abroad***

As mentioned earlier, intercultural competence has become a buzzword among educators who have focused on increasing intercultural dialogue in the United States and abroad. Intercultural competence has become more significant when examining the influence of study abroad on academics and career advancement. Scholars have discussed various frameworks of intercultural competence and explored ways students can develop it (Deardorff, 2010, p. 87). Many studies formulate definitions and frameworks for intercultural competence (Bennett, 2011; Williams, 2012). Putting together a body of knowledge, the Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U) released its Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric, which offers a definition, glossary of key terms, and framework for evaluating intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes, from benchmark to capstone (2010). The rubric adopts the definition of intercultural competence from scholar Janet Bennett (2008), describing it as "a set of cognitive,

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affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.” The rubric was built upon previous work from developmental models and research of Milton Bennett, Darla K. Deardorff, and Janet Bennett, whose individual works have made important contributions to the study of intercultural sensitivity and competence. Along with the definition for intercultural competence, the AAC&U rubric also outlines key aspects of intercultural competence that can be measured based on student experiences. These include cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, empathy, verbal and nonverbal communication, curiosity, and openness. The AAC&U rubric has been a key development in bringing intercultural competence to the forefront of higher education, giving educators and scholars tools to understand how intercultural competence develops and why it is important.

Other bodies of knowledge also define, simplify, and outline the concept of intercultural competence. Bennett’s work offers some facts on intercultural competence. She specifies that cultural knowledge and contact do not necessarily lead to competence; however, they may reduce stereotypes. In addition, she stresses that intercultural competence doesn’t just happen for most people, rather it must be intentionally cultivated and developed in people, through various means, such as effective program design; competence training; and stimulating learning before, during, and after intercultural experiences (Bennett, 2011, p. 5). Because communication plays a key role in spreading information about intercultural experiences through study abroad, university websites play important roles in the intentionality of cultivating intercultural competence in its students. It has been noted that some university websites specifically mention global competencies (Li, Olson, & Frieze, 2013, p. 74); however, more detail is needed to get a larger picture on how intercultural competence is communicated as a whole. Therefore, looking at the ways universities communicate intercultural competence through study abroad websites will show how intercultural exchanges are visually and textually portrayed, and what values are being promoted to students.

### ***Evaluating the Effect of Study Abroad Marketing***

While many scholars have researched study abroad with an academic or cultural lens, only some have examined the unique context of the study abroad experience from a marketing or communication perspective. Lukosius and Festervand (2013) developed a conceptual framework for marketing study abroad programs and recruiting students. Their framework includes four components that examine 1) the student segments targeted, 2) overall program cost, 3) timing and duration of the programs, and 4) the promotion and marketing of the programs. According to their framework, the promotion of study abroad should be prepared ahead of time and should include an integrated marketing communication plan with multiple outlets for promotion. The framework incorporates social media and website marketing, which continue to be a part of integrated communications plans that universities use to promote study abroad.

As technology and communication tools evolve, universities have promoted study abroad through poster campaigns, advertisements in campus newspapers or magazines, social media, videos, and websites. Due to the ways communication can frame the meanings of experiences like study abroad, researchers have been intrigued by the visual and verbal rhetoric and content found in study abroad publications, both in print and digital forms. Bishop (2013) analyzed three university websites’ study abroad content, concluding that these websites emphasized the cultural immersion aspects of study abroad, the promises for transformative or “life-changing” experiences, and some cultural homogeneity (p. 398). Bishop (2013) argued that the online rhetoric of the websites had potential to frame the study abroad experience, demonstrating how reality can be produced and revealed through communication — making university study abroad websites act like advertisements (p. 410).

Other studies have examined study abroad marketing by non-university organizations, such as Semester at Sea (SAS), a nonprofit travel educational program. Caton and Santos (2009) concluded that SAS’s depictions of cross-cultural interactions through images on its website and printed brochure show evidence of colonialist stereotypes about non-Western cultures (p. 11). The study compared the study abroad marketing materials to tourism marketing and representations of cultural “others,” suggesting that there is much similarity between other tourism organizations and SAS, at least in terms of communication and marketing.

Others analyzed study abroad rhetoric in books or travel guides, genres that do not formally promote a particular university program, but rather offer stories or advice about study abroad. For example, Doerr (2012) examined the discourse of study abroad guidebooks, other important texts in a study abroad experience. Viewing study abroad as “adventure,” the study found that the guidebooks accentuated the

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differences between the host's and student's cultures, creating an unbalanced view of the two societies (p. 265). Overall, cultural hegemony and the incorporation of cultural "others" are large themes in study abroad literature, and will be important when examining the rhetoric of study abroad websites at the university level.

### ***Websites as Marketing Tools***

According to Bishop (2013), the university website is often the first reference for a student when researching study abroad programs (p. 400). She explains that study abroad websites cater to prospective applicants by using verbal and visual imagery to engage student populations. Because websites tend to be the first choice for getting information about study abroad, it is important to view university websites as relevant artifacts of language and communication, crucial to researching study abroad marketing. University websites have served as subjects of research in various studies. For example, Yoo and Jin (2004) evaluated the design and features of the homepages of the top university websites from *U.S. News & World Reports*. Another study also found that university websites were effective in providing useful information for students; however, they could improve features that promote more dialogic, two-way interactions between students and the institutions (Gordon & Berhow, 2009, p. 152).

From a marketing perspective, websites can be seen as promotional outlets set in place in order to achieve a business or organizational goal. Some website scholars explain that all website communication has an ultimate goal: to "achieve positive response action from every visitor" (Sharp, 2001, p. 42). Positive response actions could mean a visitor remaining on the website for an optimum period of time, downloading content from the site, forwarding content to another person, purchasing an item, subscribing for more information, or returning to the website at a later time. When study abroad websites subscribe to this theory, they should strive to engage visitors so they would use the website for information, apply to a study abroad program, or share the information with other people interested in the study abroad process. Because websites are crucial in promoting study abroad to students, it is important to observe how website communication, rooted in the complex nature of university goals and ideologies, plays a role in making study abroad part of higher education. Determining how this communication frames the intercultural aspects of study abroad is the next step.

### ***Framing Theory and Study Abroad Websites***

This research, as well as other studies of website rhetoric and content, is grounded in the framing theory of communication, first outlined by Erving Goffman (1974). He suggested that frames allow individuals to assign meaning to experiences and actions, making framing a way to interpret and communicate reality. Framing is a way to understand the background of each party involved in a conversation or interaction. In communication theory, framing has become a way to adjust the audience's perception and awareness about particular issues, as media and communication outlets can stress certain viewpoints over others ("Framing," 2010). It is important to note that framing has been applied to both organizational communications as well as public relations theory (Johansson, 2007, p. 277), with the emphasis that organizations and publics, such as universities and students, need to establish common frames of reference for them to maintain mutually beneficial relations.

In the case of study abroad websites, universities' online rhetoric may frame students' perceptions and experiences of study abroad, as well as their awareness of intercultural competences gained by an international experience. As with other research on study abroad rhetoric (Bishop, 2013), this analysis of study abroad messages on university websites does not seek to judge the online communication as positive or negative, but rather present the different ways to portray study abroad to students through online channels.

This study aimed at gauging the current state of how universities portray intercultural experiences through study abroad websites. To achieve this goal, this study asked the following research questions:

R1: How do university websites portray study abroad?

R2: How much do university websites promote the intercultural benefits of study abroad?

R3: What other values of the study abroad experience do university websites portray?



### III. Methods

In order to answer the research questions, the author collected online rhetoric from five university websites that promote study abroad. Five universities were randomly selected from the U.S. News & World Report Study Abroad Rankings, which rate study abroad programs based on a number of criteria including academics, cultural interactions, lengths of program, and more (“Study Abroad,” 2015). Out of the 30 universities rated with exceptional study abroad programs, five were randomly selected, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Type, Location, and Enrollment of Five Universities**

University	Type	Location	Enrollment (2014)
Michigan State University	Public	East Lansing, Michigan	50,000
Stanford University	Private	Stanford, California	15,000
St. John’s University	Private	New York City, New York	20,000
Macalester College	Private	Saint Paul, Minnesota	2,000
Centre College	Private	Danville, Kentucky	1,200

While each university created an extensive website for study abroad in a variety of ways, the author analyzed only web pages that offered general information about study abroad, global or international studies, or study away. Through a rhetorical analysis with close reading, the author examined the visual, verbal, and interactive elements on these websites. Elements such as their overall themes, photographic or other visual messages, language and interactive features of the websites were included in the analysis.

### IV. Findings & Discussion

#### ***Content of websites for study abroad programs***

The study revealed many similarities among the five universities analyzed and the ways they promote study abroad. Most of the websites included large photos of students, places, people, and even animals to promote study abroad on their websites. In addition, they all had one or two levels of primary navigation through the study abroad section of the website, with similar content including types of programs, costs, preparation tips, health and safety, important dates, and more. Four out of the five websites included a calendar of events prominently on its study abroad web page. Frequently asked questions and student testimonials from studying abroad were also part of popular website strategies among the universities. Overall, the universities had a variety of verbal, visual, and interactive components to their websites to communicate the study abroad experience and the intercultural competence process.

#### ***The Changing Rhetoric of “Study Abroad”***

The concept of study abroad was termed differently by universities. To name their study abroad departments, universities adopted phrases like “overseas programs,” “study away,” “global studies,” “international studies,” as well as “study abroad.” For example, Stanford University’s undergraduate study abroad program is the Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP). Macalester College’s study abroad program falls under its “International Center,” where they promote the “study away experience.” Michigan State University (MSU) uses the term “study abroad” most often under its “Office of Study Abroad” department. St. John’s University also uses the term “study abroad,” while also referring to “global studies” when promoting its programs around the world.

While the term “study away” encompasses a broader range of places to study, including international and national locations, a “global studies” program can also refer to a similar concept. Studying “overseas” or “internationally” in a rhetorical sense does not include places within national borders. This shows that within the realm of “international” or “intercultural” education, institutions are rethinking what intercultural experiences mean, whether studying abroad should be an international experience or if studying “away”

(within one's own country) could also provide authentic intercultural education. While explaining the presence of buzzwords such as "global competency" and "campus internationalization" involved in the rhetorical frames of college administrations, Reilly and Senders (2009) argued that critical definitions of study abroad and its outcomes should be present in universities' rhetoric (p. 241). In their critique on study abroad, they suggested that universities replace the rhetoric of "internationality" with the idea of "we are all co-inhabitants of a single planet" (p. 250). This view corresponds to terms used on university websites such as "global studies," where studying abroad is seen from a planetary scale.

The various terms for study abroad show how universities communicate study abroad on their websites and how they view intercultural experiences whether study abroad is exclusively international program or a global experience. Much of the language used to define an international or intercultural education evokes a sense of traveling to a different place in order to understand different people on both a local and global level.

### ***An emphasis on the "local"***

Despite the intricacies of study abroad terminology, the university websites also provide a rich look into how these intercultural experiences are portrayed. An important aspect of promoting intercultural experiences on these websites focuses on not only the global, but the local. Looking at key themes on the websites gives insight into the values being promoted on study abroad websites: the value of local experiences. The emphasis on local community, people, and environment is found in language in the pre-departure phase before students travel abroad and while students are abroad. Specifically, several universities promote campus events, such as "Your Global Backyard Field Trip" and "Study Abroad in the 'Hood,'" where students were encouraged to participate in study abroad advising programs or global education programs "right in their backyard." This local emphasis signifies the merging between the local and the global, instilling the idea that forming close connections with the surrounding environment is an important habit when preparing to go abroad and during the actual experience. The emphasis on the local reinforces the idea that intercultural competence is developed through community interaction and must be cultivated intentionally (Bennett, 2011).

University websites also promote the local aspect of study abroad through specific examples of experiences students may have abroad. For instance, St. John's University describes its study abroad programs as a way to merge global and local education:

"Imagine sitting outside the Coliseum under the sunny Italian sky, drawing a piece of history as part of your 'Italian Sketchbook' class. Or maybe you're more interested in Paris's 'Economics of Poverty & Income Inequality' class, through which you'll tackle complex social issues before heading out into the streets to feed the hungry? [sic] No matter the subject, our courses offer you local context—firmly embedded in the host city wherever possible—for understanding the global framework of each discipline" ("Academic and Cultural," 2015).

This particular example focuses on local living and becoming immersed in a new environment. Other websites heighten the local aspect by using strong language to describe cultural immersion as an "invaluable" experience or a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Study abroad scholars have also encouraged students and universities to embrace the local and understand the multiple sides of the cultures in their host cities (Reilly & Senders, 2009, p. 253). As a whole, university websites are balancing two different concepts, globalism and locality, a complex but necessary view for explaining and promoting intercultural experiences. Investing in the local community is one value seen through study abroad marketing on these specific university websites, and it gives a clearer picture on how universities communicate intercultural experiences.

### ***Framing the outcomes of study abroad***

As we compare the rhetoric of university websites to the ideas presented in scholarly research about intercultural competence and global citizenry, it is important to note if and how universities define these concepts specifically on their websites. Out of all five websites, St. John's University specifically mentions "intercultural competence," defines it, and lists its benefits ("Academic and Cultural," 2015). While this definition is not located in a primary part of its study abroad website, it goes into detail about the value of intercultural competence. It also describes its Cultural Mentorship Program as what the university implements to enrich cultural understanding and intercultural competence in students. This web page mentions outcomes

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of intercultural competence, such as heightened empathy, understanding of different worldviews, strong communication skills, and better awareness of one's own culture and worldview.

Other websites specifically outline the intercultural benefits of study abroad. Michigan State University highlights the intercultural outcomes on their website, noting that students “may increase their interests in other cultures, become less ethnocentric . . . develop language skills within a cultural context” (“Why Should I,” 2015). The intercultural benefits here also coincide with views of aforementioned Bennett and Deardorff.

MSU lists the intercultural benefits alongside other advantages of study abroad, including personal, academic/intellectual, and professional benefits. While the intercultural opportunities are an important aspect integrated into the messages of the university websites, often phrases and visual imagery focus on other benefits for students. This includes emphasis on “high academic performance” and “learning experiences,” as well as how study abroad fits into different academic and curriculum requirements. Personal development is also strongly highlighted in the language, with some universities emphasizing that students will receive “personal attention” or students will “deepen awareness of themselves.” The verbal rhetoric often seems to favor noting how students can be transformed personally and academically, which suggests a broader impact than just intercultural benefits. Highlighting some benefits over others is one way that websites can frame the reality of the study abroad experience. This also shows how the personal and academic values of the study abroad experience are key themes in university website communication.

### ***Intercultural experiences promoted visually***

The university websites can also be studied by examining the use of images and graphics on the sites. Visually, they used images that portray different aspects of study abroad: personal development, academic achievement, and cultural experiences. The universities usually incorporated large photos on their websites, often in slideshows across the full page.

Out of the 52 photos examined on the main study abroad pages of these universities, 13 photos showed individual students in various locations around the world, while another 11 photos featured only landscapes or animals. For example, one showed a female student with a big smile and her hands in the air, overlooking a South African landscape. Another featured a female student sitting on a rock overlooking a dry landscape, with blue skies. Photos like these reflect the notion that study abroad is an individualized experience and that universities work to promote the students' personal development. While cultural self-awareness and personal skills like empathy are important to building intercultural competence (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2010), interactions between two or more individuals are needed for authentic intercultural learning. Images that portray individual students solitarily do not relay the message that an intercultural exchange involves two or more groups of people coming together. In the end, students' learning cannot happen solitarily, but rather with others.

Other photos on university websites promoted intercultural benefits further, such as images of student groups and faculty interacting with local people abroad. Out of the 52 images, 9 portrayed students interacting with non-students from a host country. As a whole, many of these images included photos of people in different cultures with various skin colors, dressed in traditional ethnic clothing. The images relate to Bishop's (2013) description that study abroad can promote the message that “travel abroad allows students to encounter welcoming, exotic ‘others’ who willingly provide glimpses into areas of the world previously known” (p. 403). In addition, the images on the website support Bishop's (2013) analysis of learning environments abroad. Only four photos depicted indoor environments, which can lead to study abroad marketing to “deemphasize traditional university learning environments” (p. 403). Promoting images of outdoor environments suggests that study abroad encourages fieldwork, cultural experiences, and learning opportunities beyond the classroom, which may lead to intercultural interactions that develop in various authentic settings.

Taken as a whole, the images on study abroad websites feature bright, positive images and undermine the struggles that students may face while studying abroad, such as culture shock and anxiety. While the visual rhetoric on university websites does represent intercultural reasons for studying abroad, the photos can suggest different realities of the study abroad experience, perhaps framing a more educational touristic experience for students. This suggests that diverse aspects of the intercultural benefits should be promoted to a greater extent on university websites.

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### ***Continuing conversations: interactive study abroad marketing***

The universities incorporate interactivity in their websites, with which users continue the conversation about study abroad. According to Sharp's (2001) theory of positive response action for website communication, websites aim to produce positive actions from visitors such as staying on the site longer, clicking through various information, and engaging with the content (p. 42). The five university websites employ interactivity in the form of interactive maps, blogs, social media boxes, calendars, and videos so that they can continue the conversation about study abroad, especially with students who are in the preparation phase of the study abroad process.

The interactive websites can reinforce the messages of study abroad and the experience that universities are marketing to students. For example, Stanford University displays its global reach in the form of an interactive map on its website. This "Global Explorer" map allows users to see how the university reaches different parts of the world, with clickable red icons to symbolize locations where Stanford students and faculty have studied abroad, conducted research, and organized events ("Explore Stanford," 2015). Interactive websites allow universities to sound less like a sales pitch and more like a community of people coming together. It makes study abroad sound less like a tourism package with a postcard view, a one-sided perspective of an experience. Thus, universities should use this interactive marketing approach to complement a multi-faceted intercultural study abroad experience.

Interactive tools inspire students and other users to come back to the website for updated information. In addition, social media and blog content often promote authentic and user-generated stories to inform and connect with publics. Four of the five university study abroad departments included study abroad-specific social media channels on their web pages. Also, four out of the five websites featured a calendar section with upcoming events to update visitors. Michigan State University includes an "International News" section, with a curated list of recent articles from reputable news sources, such as *The Chronicle*, *USA Today*, and *The Atlantic*. Having a stream of updated information allows website visitors to engage with new content from a variety of sources. Through updating content and reinforcing the idea that many other organizations and groups of people are talking about study abroad, the universities increase the dialogic elements of their websites. The dialogic nature of the websites complements the idea that students gain experience by having engaging conversations with people from a variety of perspectives. The increasingly interactive nature of study abroad marketing creates an environment that encourages students to explore, build connections and learn from others, all crucial parts of an intercultural journey.

By exploring the interactive, visual and textual elements of these websites, this study shows how values like local community, engaging conversations, and students' personal development are part of study abroad website marketing. The rhetorical analysis of these websites shows the various ways in which intercultural experiences and other values are promoted across different universities.

There were several limitations to this analysis on study abroad websites. Among others, the content produced for these university websites cannot be generalized to those of the 30 ranked in the *U.S. News & World Report*, let alone the study abroad programs of all universities.

Considering the evolving interactivity and dynamic nature of digital marketing techniques for study abroad programs, future studies may examine other online artifacts beyond what this study analyzed. The use of Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and other new social media channels is becoming the norm for many universities when marketing their study abroad programs. Research on how study abroad departments use these media to connect with students and other key publics may help understand the marketing landscape of study abroad.

## **V. Conclusion**

In conclusion, university websites can frame the study abroad experience in a variety of ways. An analysis of the textual, visual, and interactive elements used online is important to understand how students view the purpose and benefits of study abroad for personal, cultural, and academic reasons. This analysis determined that universities use several means to communicate study abroad on their websites including the use of images of people and travel destinations; interactive content such as maps, calendars and news; student testimonials; and descriptive examples of study abroad experiences. The websites revealed that

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universities use particular terms to define their study abroad programs, such as “global studies” or “overseas studies,” which provide different rhetorical contexts for promoting intercultural experiences. The study also analyzed to what extent the intercultural benefits of study abroad were featured on university websites. While the intercultural aspects of study abroad are highlighted on the five university websites, only one specifically mentioned scholarly definitions of intercultural competence and its benefits to students. In many cases, the emphasis of personal and academic benefits for students outweighed the intercultural aspects of studying abroad. Other values promoted through the university websites include the importance of getting “local,” providing interactive outlets for conversations, and building global communities. As seen through these particular web pages, study abroad marketing could often promote a postcard view of an experience, highlighting particular outcomes of student experiences over others. A wider study would be necessary in order to draw more generalized conclusions on how university websites portray the intercultural experiences of study abroad.

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# Image Repair and Crisis Response of Professional Athlete Adrian Peterson

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## Abstract

*During the 2014 season, a disastrous year in terms of public relations for the NFL, Adrian Peterson was among those who tainted the league's reputation. Domestic violence was at the forefront of the controversy, and Peterson's child abuse case caused additional damage to the league's image. This qualitative content analysis scrutinized Peterson's attempt to repair his image through the media after receiving public backlash from his child abuse charges. The study found that his media messages used evasion of responsibility and reducing offensiveness as his chief strategies, but their effects were not fully successful.*

## I. Introduction

As the media continue to become further rooted in professional sports, the more personal lives of athletes become exposed. As a result, sports fans become more knowledgeable to the personal lives of athletes and develop opinions on these athletes, whether good or bad. It is inevitable that athletes are exposed to the public when they commit an offensive act, which is why the study of image repair for modern athletes is critical.

While each account is different and carries diverse consequences whether legal or personal, it is up to athletes to repair their own image. If an athlete is caught in a situation that requires image repair, it is important to understand the most effective tactics and strategies used to help mend reputation.

In this case study, Peterson and his child abuse case will serve as an example of an athlete who has committed an offense and has fallen out of grace with the public.

This paper assessed the image repair strategies used by Peterson in his public statements using a variety of image repair theories in public relations.

## II. Background

In a disastrous year in terms of public relations for the NFL, Peterson was amongst those who tainted the league's reputation. Domestic violence was at the forefront of the controversy, and Peterson's child abuse case caused additional damage to the image of the league. Peterson's case began on May 18,

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2014, during the NFL's offseason. While in Texas, Peterson disciplined his son after he pushed his brother during a motorbike video game, according to a police report. Peterson used a switch — a thin branch or rod for whipping — to discipline his son, which caused bruises and lacerations on the boy's back, legs, arms, and buttocks. While back home in Minnesota with his mother, the doctor noticed the injuries during a routine check up. The doctor informed the mother that the injuries were consistent with child abuse, and authorities in Texas were notified (DiMatteo, 2014).

In August 2014, Peterson testified before a grand Jury in Montgomery County, Texas. The jury initially decided not to indict Peterson on charges of child abuse, but in September. Peterson was indicted in Montgomery County and, subsequently, benched by the Vikings for their game against the New England Patriots. During this time Radisson hotels and other sponsors suspended their sponsorship of the Vikings and Adrian Peterson (DiMatteo, 2014). Later in September Peterson was placed on the commissioner's exempt list, which is essentially paid leave (Bien, 2014). He continued to lose sponsors during this time period including Nike and Castrol (DiMatteo, 2014).

In November, Peterson agreed to a plea deal that reduced his felony child-abuse charges to a single charge of reckless assault. This required him to pay a \$4,000 fine and perform community service (Zinser, 2014). Two weeks later the NFL announced that Peterson would be suspended without pay for the remainder of the season. He went on to appeal the suspension, but his motion was denied by the NFL (Vensel 2014, p. 1).

### III. Literature Review

To analyze whether Peterson's strategies were effective, this paper relied on two theories: apology theory and image repair theory.

#### ***Apologia Theory***

Apologia theory has most likely influenced the responses of many athletes in a media crisis. In these situations athletes are presented with an opportunity to respond to the public for their wrongdoings.

When a person or a business fails to live up to certain moral conduct or they fail in any other way, they are expected to defend themselves. The different approaches to this defense is defined as the apologia theory. When one's image is threatened, apologies are utilized to repair the damage to their reputation. Not only does apologia theory allow for a person to be held morally accountable. but it also gives merit to those who expect a higher standard of ethics from the accused. Image repair is accomplished through actions as well as communication and transparency. The media plays a key role in the apologia process for public figures. The media provide a channel for apologia statements to be on the public record and provide public figures with a means for transparent communication with their publics (Borden 2012, pp. 1-2).

For an apologia to be ethical, the guilty party must first admit the transgression if the accusations are truthful. Injury happens not only through harmful consequences but also moral violations, such as a broken promise or unfair advantage. Apologia should be mostly used for the purpose of reconciliation rather than self-interest. Apologizing for an indiscretion out of selfishness will create a hollow and unethical response. Attempting to find the best apologia rather than being strategic by using the most acceptable apologia shows one's attempt to be morally sound (Borden 2012, pp. 2,3,5).

The manner of an ethically ideal apologia begins with an honest admission and avoidance of dishonesty. The apology must be issued as soon as the indiscretion is known and without coercion. Furthermore, it must address all publics that are involved or were affected. Next, it must be performed in the right context, which takes into consideration the location and the medium in which it is expressed. The content of an ethically sound apologia should first acknowledge the wrongdoing as well as fully accept the responsibility of one's actions. The accused must express regret in their actions and attempt to identify with the injured party. This should be followed by a request for forgiveness in addition to pursuing reconciliation with the damaged stakeholder. The accused should not withhold any additional information in regards to the indiscretion and offer an explanation as to why the accused is at fault in the eyes of the accuser. Finally, the accused should offer to make up for their offense in whatever way is deemed necessary (Borden, 2012, pp. 5-6).

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Ware and Linkugel conducted the first prominent work on apology theory in 1973. The purpose of their work stems from the studies of social psychologist Abelson, who wrote, "It is natural for an attack on a person's character to create a response from that person because when the public witnesses an attack on a person's morality, motives or reputation, they expect a response from the accused" (Brown 2012, p. 15). Ware and Linkugel categorized the apology theory into four major categories: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence (p. 15).

Denial strategy involves the accused entity denying that the misconduct ever took place. Clearly, denial strategy is used when the accusations of wrongdoing are false or deceptive (Utsler & Epp, 2013, p. 141).

Bolstering technique attempts to identify with the audience through a positive common image. The individual being accused of misconduct attempts to remind the accuser or audience of positive parts of their past. In this technique, the accused is not denying guilt but rather trying to cast off the blame that they are receiving. Bolstering is not seen as an effective apology strategy due to the fact that there is an admittance of guilt by not addressing the problem directly (Brown, Dickhaus, & Long, 2012, p. 151).

Differentiation strategy attempts to separate the act from the accused party's character and the public opinion. The person accused tries to illustrate the accusation in a different context, therefore, giving it a new meaning (Utsler & Epp 2013, p. 142). By using differentiation the party at fault is able to suspend judgment momentarily in hopes that future context of the act in question can be seen differently (Brown, Dickhaus, & Long 2012, p. 152).

The fourth apology strategy is transcendence, which tries to portray the transgression as a smaller part of an overall positive situation that is not readily apparent to the public. This is done in hopes that the accusers will try to understand the broader context and view the offensive act in a more positive sense (Utsler & Epp, 2013, p. 143).

### ***Image Repair Theory***

Ware and Linkugel's theory of apology is the foundation of modern day image repair theory developed by Benoit (Utsler & Epp, 2013, p. 143). Image repair theory states, "Because our image is important to us, when we believe that our image is threatened by some attack, we are motivated to take necessary steps to protect it. An attempt to repair one's reputation when faced with allegations is inevitable" (Brown, 2012, p. 16). An attack on one's reputation or image consists of two components: an act must have transpired that is perceived as offensive in the public's opinion and someone is responsible for the indictments. Whether the accusations against a person are true or false, if the public believes them to be accurate, it must be considered an attack against that person's image. (Brown, 2012, p. 16).

Benoit's image repair theory is based on the theory of apology but expands on the topic to create five image repair strategies with subcategories. The first image repair strategy, denial, comes from apology theory. Benoit states that there are two different types of denial, simple denial or evasion of responsibility. Simple denial states that the accused did not commit the act that they are accused of. Evasion of responsibility attempts to shift the blame by arguing that they "were provoked and responded to the act of another, argue defeasibility due to a lack of information or ability, or claim the event was an accident, or that it had good intentions" (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009, p. 168).

Reducing offensiveness is another image repair strategy, which can be employed in multiple ways. One can reduce offensiveness through bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser, or compensating the victim. Bolstering refocuses the attention onto past positive acts to reduce the negative perception (Brown, n.d., 18). Minimization attempts to show that the "act is not as serious as presented". Differentiation tries to prove the act is not as offensive as other similar acts (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009, p. 168). Transcendence paints the act in a more positive circumstance to reduce negative perception. Additionally, the accused can attack the accuser's credibility or compensate the victims of the offensive act (Brown, 2012, p. 19).

The last two image repair strategies are corrective action and mortification. These strategies are often used in unison. The corrective action strategy involves the accused showing commitment to preventing another offensive act from occurring. With mortification strategy the accused admits their responsibility and asks for forgiveness (Brown, 2012, p. 19). All of these image repair strategies are often not used alone but rather in multiple variations. Image repair is complex and dynamic, so every situation is different and must be

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treated as such (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009, p. 169).

Benoit also conducted a study on the appropriateness and effectiveness of image repair strategies and found how audiences perceive them. Mortification and corrective action are perceived as the most effective and appropriate to repair one's image. When an offensive action takes place, the person at blame is expected to apologize to those they offended. If this apology seems sincere, the audience is more likely to forgive them. Corrective action and mortification strategy are the two strategies most aligned with a sincere apology. On the effectiveness spectrum, mortification and corrective action were highest ranked and followed by the strategies of good intentions, accident, and compensation to round out the top five. Mid-level image repair strategies are defeasibility, transcendence, blame shifting, and differentiation. The study also states that denial, provocation, minimization, and bolstering are considered the least appropriate and effective. These strategies were checked for their effectiveness in one situation while the effectiveness and appropriateness of these strategies can vary by situation, so his study cannot be generalized (Benoit & Drew, 1997, pp. 159-160).

### ***Image Repair in Sports***

With an increase of media coverage and athletes interacting with the media in recent years, many studied the subject of image repair for athletes. Image repairs within sports are becoming more important due to the increasing popularity of sports around the world as well as increased media coverage of troubled athletes and fan activism. With these factors on the rise, it is imperative for athletes to understand how to cultivate and defend their positive reputation with their fans and stakeholders (Brown, 2012, p. 20).

Following NFL player Michael Vick's trial for the dogfighting scandal, he issued a statement, which combined the strategies of bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. These combined strategies attempted to reduce the offensiveness of his actions during the scandal, but it is unknown whether these strategies helped repair his image. During NBA player Kobe Bryant's sexual assault case, he used denial strategy as well as mortification to repair his image. He used mortification strategy to apologize for adultery but denied committing sexual assault. Bryant's image repair strategies were successful in part because he was honest and because his accuser had poor credibility. Former MLB player Barry Bonds also tried to use the denial strategy during the BALCO steroids investigation but was not as successful as Bryant when applying a similar strategy. During the Bonds' trial, the evidence was stacked against him and his poor image repair strategy led to further damage to his reputation (Brown, 2012, pp. 22-23).

Although NBA player LeBron James never faced jail time for the TV special *The Decision* in 2010, where he announced, "I'm gonna take my talents to South Beach," he faced immense backlash for his offensive action. By announcing his departure from Cleveland for Miami, he built up immense anxiety among fans everywhere but especially in Cleveland. James faced backlash immediately for the way the announcement was conducted. He did not alert any teams of his decision before the event, and many in sports media felt as though he went about his decision the wrong way (Brown, Dickhaus, & Long, 2012, p. 159). During this situation James attempted to use mortification strategy, attacking the accuser, and bolstering to repair his image. It was found that mortification was the only strategy that improved his image, while attacking the accuser and bolstering only marred his image (Brown, 2012, p. 25).

## **IV. Methods**

Adrian Peterson's statements will be the chief focus of this study. Qualitative content analysis was used as the best way to scrutinize this incident because the statements in media articles are non-biased and the most accurate descriptors of each response.

This study used Benoit's image repair discourse framework to analyze Peterson's statements and how they affect the image repair process. Benoit's image repair discourse, the most recent image repair theory, has been used to analyze many other prominent image repair cases (Utsler & Epp, 2013, p. 147). This discourse is made up of 5 core strategies — denial, evasion of responsibility, reduction of offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification — and 12 subcategories — simple denial, blame shift, provocation, defeasibility, accidental, good intentions, bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking accuser, and compensation (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009, p. 168).

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The Peterson case offered two sources of information: the statement that was addressed to the media and the police report that was released to the media. Peterson has attempted to address the incident and repair his image through these statements. This study analyzed each statement from these two sources to determine which of Benoit's image repair theory was used, even though they were limited. Peterson has been generally silent on the issue, most likely to avoid additional scrutiny on this ongoing incident. The effectiveness of Peterson's image repair strategies were analyzed through Benoit's "Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Image Repair Strategies."

## V. Findings and Discussion

There are two sources of statements that Adrian Peterson made during the timespan of the incident: a police report and a media statement.

### ***Police Reports***

The *New York Daily News* reported part of the police report. According to the report, he used two of the main image repair strategies with four subcategories: evasion of responsibility with the subcategories of accident, good intentions and defeasibility; and reducing offensiveness with transcendence.

According to the report, Peterson believed he did nothing wrong — evasion of responsibility for his offensive actions. This statement demonstrates that he either believes what he did was an accident or that the event in itself was done with good intentions. This statement was paired with a quote from Peterson: "Anytime I spank my kids, I talk to them before, let them know what they did, and of course after" (Myers, 2014). This also demonstrates that Peterson used the reduce offensiveness strategy in combination with evasion of responsibility. In his attempt to reduce offensiveness he used transcendence to paint his actions in a more positive light by claiming that he was simply disciplining his child because he is a good parent.

Next, Peterson stated that he regretted that his son did not cry because it would have indicated that the switch had done more damage than intended (Myers, 2014). This is evasion of responsibility through defeasibility. Essentially he was saying that during the moment he lacked the information to determine whether he took his discipline too far. Peterson continued his evasion of responsibility by stating that he would not have let his child go back to Minnesota to see the doctor knowing his actions were wrong (Myers, 2014). This is also considered defeasibility because it is suggesting he had a lack of information and did not realize he had abused his child.

In the final statement that was released in the police report, Peterson says, "I feel very confident with my actions because I know my intent" (Myers, 2014). During this period, Peterson asserted to his audience that he acted with good intentions and, therefore, did not commit any offensive act. Peterson's strategy is clear in the police report, but his game plan evolved further in the statement to the media by combining additional strategies.

### ***Media Statement***

In September 2014, Adrian Peterson issued his initial statement to the media, a chief statement in his image repair strategy addressing the incident in depth. In this statement Peterson used mortification, reducing offensiveness, evasion of responsibility, and corrective action along with many of their subcategories.

Peterson began his image repair strategy near the beginning of the statement by using the mortification approach. He stated, "I want everyone to understand how sorry I feel about the hurt I have brought to my child" ("Full Statement," 2014). Mortification is a strong beginning to his statement because it is the most honest strategy and has been the most effective in past image repair attempts (Borden 2012). Peterson follows up this strategy by stating that he "never imagined being in a position where the world is judging [his] parenting skills or calling [him] a child abuser because of the discipline [he] administered to [his] son" ("Full Statement," 2014). This statement alluded that this incident was an accident and that good intentions were involved. He hints at his perception of himself as a parent by stating that he is surprised that his discipline practices have caused him to be labeled as a child abuser.

The next portion of his statement applies the evasion of responsibility strategy:

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“I voluntarily appeared before the grand jury several weeks ago to answer any and all questions they had. Before my grand jury appearance, I was interviewed by two different police agencies without an attorney. In each of these interviews, I have said the same thing, and that is that I never ever intended to harm my son. I will say the same thing once I have my day in court” (“Full Statement,” 2014).

By attributing the child abuse to an accidental occurrence, Peterson tried to evade responsibility for his actions. He strived to illustrate his honesty in the issue by saying that he spoke to law enforcement without his attorney. This implies that he believed he had nothing to hide and had good intentions in disciplining his son. He continued his good intentions strategy while providing an additional strategy in the next section of the statement:

“I have to live with the fact that when I disciplined my son the way I was disciplined as a child, I caused an injury that I never intended or thought would happen. I know that many people disagree with the way I disciplined my child. I also understand after meeting with a psychologist that there are other alternative ways of disciplining a child that may be more appropriate” (“Full Statement,” 2014).

He combined defeasibility with his good intentions argument by claiming he didn’t know better and that was the way he was raised. Additionally, he claimed that he had taken corrective action to try to improve or change the way he disciplined his children. He continued his corrective action approach at the beginning of the next section of his statement saying, “I have learned a lot and have had to reevaluate how I discipline my son going forward” (“Full Statement,” 2014). This reinforced his claims to change his way of discipline and hopes to persuade the public and law enforcement that another incident of abuse will be avoided. Continuing to strengthen his image repair, he added the reducing offensiveness strategy:

“But deep in my heart I have always believed I could have been one of those kids that was lost in the streets without the discipline instilled in me by my parents and other relatives. I have always believed that the way my parents disciplined me has a great deal to do with the success I have enjoyed as a man” (“Full Statement,” 2014).

In reducing offensiveness of his actions, he first used bolstering to focus the attention on his past. He tried to illustrate the positive effects of strong discipline that he was subject to in his youth that kept him on the right path. He attributed this type of discipline as the reason for his success as an adult, which was employed to reduce the negative perception of his current actions. Next, Peterson came back to the corrective action strategy and stated, “I love my son and I will continue to become a better parent and learn from any mistakes I ever make” (“Full Statement” 2014). This illustrated his love for his son as the motivation for taking corrective action. The hope is that the audience can relate to the emotion of loving their children, which in turn enhances this strategy as an image repair tool. His statement concluded by repeating some of the strategies that have already been used. He referred back to his evasion of responsibility strategy that claimed he lacked information on a better way to discipline, the incident was accidental, he had good intentions, and he will take corrective action. These strategies were executed by stating that he is not a perfect individual, he hoped to teach his son right from wrong, and his love for his son will drive him to become a better father and person.

### ***Effectiveness of Strategy***

Peterson used a variety of strategies in the statements in response to his child abuse case. Among his many strategies were corrective action and mortification strategy, which Benoit found to be the most effective image repair strategies. In order to issue a sincere apology these strategies are essential and only served Peterson’s statements in a positive way. It should be noted that corrective action and mortification were not used until he issued his initial statement to the media.

The most consistent strategy that Peterson used in both the police report and his initial statement was evasion of responsibility strategy. He constantly tried to remind his audience that he had good intentions, it was an accident, and he didn’t know a different way to discipline. This strategy did not rank as high as mortification or corrective action, but was somewhat effective for image repair. According to Benoit’s “Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Image Repair Strategies” scale, in Peterson’s case, using evasion of responsibility as a main strategy in the bulk of his statements was less effective than if he had used corrective action and mortification strategies as the main points of emphasis.

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Transcendence and bolstering were used to reduce the offensiveness of his actions. Transcendence was ranked as a mid-level strategy, while bolstering was found to be least effective in Benoit's study. In his case, bolstering was the only low ranked strategy that he used and may have only hurt his case minutely according to Benoit's "Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Image Repair Strategies."

## VI. Conclusion

With the Adrian Peterson case being a current and ongoing topic, it was difficult to tell whether his strategy was effective. The length it takes to repair one's image generally varies for each case. Those that have committed offensive actions make multiple statements to repair their image, but it does not immediately restore their reputation. Most of the time it doesn't require words but rather action and time to heal.

Peterson only used one main statement to the media, and his testimony in the police report was also released to the public. Only having one main statement to the media over a course of several months may serve as strategy for Peterson in itself. By being generally inactive in the media, it seems as if Peterson is hoping to be hidden from the public eye so that the healing power of time can begin to take its effect.

In addition, Peterson may also be cognizant that many times in a situation such as this, image repair statements must be paired with actions to fix a damaged reputation. Through his general silence in the media on the subject of his child abuse case, he may be allowing himself time to work on improving his own character as well as showing his commitment to forgiveness through actions.

Benoit's study on the "Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Image Repair Strategies" was used to analyze the effectiveness of Peterson's statements. It was found that Peterson used the strategies of mortification, corrective action, and evasion of responsibility as the focal point of his campaign, which are all high-ranking strategies according to the study. While this is a good indicator of whether Peterson used good strategy, it does not necessarily indicate whether or how much his reputation was protected. The only thing that can be measured is whether damage was done to Peterson's reputation. This can be seen through his loss of six sponsors, including his endorsement with Nike and NFLshop.com, the official gear provider of the NFL, discontinuing the sale of Peterson's jersey (Rovell, 2014).

This case study has limitations because the issue is ongoing, so it is difficult to measure the status of his reputation. This study applied Benoit's case study on "Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Image Repair Strategies" for analysis of this topic, but his case study was not based on a case that is similar to Peterson's situation, nor on multiple cases that bolster a big theory that can be applied widely. Future case studies, such as this one, should allow more time between the onset of the situation and when it is analyzed so that enough information can be collected to determine whether a reputation has been effectively repaired.

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*\*Communications and Mass Media Complete is an electronic site that EBSCO runs to provide communication- and mass media-related content.*

# Psychological Effects of Fitness Advertising on Female Collegiate Athletes

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## Abstract

*In recent decades, research has focused on the powerful effects of advertising on negative body image. While researchers have studied how the general female population reacts to various advertising techniques, little research has been published on how female collegiate athletes are affected by fitness advertisements. This study examined how these athletes respond to fitness advertisements and which tactics generate positive responses. Based on a focus group conducted with female Division I athletes, the study found that resonating fitness advertisements must be realistic and tell a relatable story using action images, regardless of the model's identity.*

## I. Introduction

Media and advertising in the 21st century are unavoidable to consumers. Many research studies have examined the profound effects of advertising and its influence on shifting attitudes, evoking emotions, and modifying lifestyle choices. Not only does advertising play a significant role in the consumption of goods and services, it also has the ability to activate social identities by providing cues to consumers about who they are and what they should be (Horne, 2006).

Numerous studies have also researched the harmful effects of female advertising on body image and self-esteem. Advertisements that use extremely slim and sexualized models have fueled the female pursuit of "ultra-thinness," which is defined by slender hips and a narrow frame (Horne, 2006). Many advertisements have been heavily criticized for objectifying females and promoting sexualized images of models. The skewed idea of the perfect body that is celebrated in many advertisements today has contributed to lowered self-concepts, body shaming, and disordered eating in women of all ages (Bisell & Birchall, 2007).

More specifically, some fitness companies have recently tailored their advertisement campaigns toward female demographics. Since the implementation of Title IX in 1972, the number of female athletes has increased significantly over time and now creates the majority of frequent participants in fitness activities in the United States (Heinecken, 2013). It is also estimated that one in every three women is involved in an organized sport (Grau, Roselli, & Taylor, 2007). Fitness companies are trying to reach this significant target audience through commercials, social media, and magazine print advertisements. Nike, an advertising powerhouse, and other athletic brands use several advertisement strategies, such as hiring celebrity athlete

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**Keywords:** fitness advertising, female collegiate athletes, body image, athlete endorsers, effective advertising methods

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This undergraduate project was conducted as a partial requirement of a research course in communications.

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endorsers and spreading messages that celebrate the physical body.

Many studies have focused on how sport advertising shapes identity and attitude in women. However, the extent to which female athletes respond to advertisements has not been researched heavily. Study of this demographic group's extremely active lifestyles and participation in competitive sports may yield new perspective on athletic advertising. This research aimed to explore how female collegiate athletes respond to athletic advertising targeted toward women, and whether these advertisements have a notable psychological impact on female collegiate athletes. This research also sought to investigate the types of athletic advertisements that evoke the most positive reactions from female collegiate athletes.

## II. Literature Review

### ***Media Representation of Female Athletes***

Advertising has taken a leading role in consumerist culture, and athletic brands have taken full advantage of its powerful effects. Brands have transformed from being businesses that merely sell goods and services into unique identities with reputations and personalities. Advertising is the platform in which those unique brand personalities are shown to audiences (Horne, 2006). One of the most prominent ways athletic brands promote their identities is through the use of celebrity athlete endorsers. Athlete endorsers are paid by brands to appear in advertisements or promote goods and services. Celebrity endorsements have become a primary way to promote brands and professional sports. The "Jordan Effect" is a prime example of how effective celebrity endorsers can be when it comes to purchasing power. Michael Jordan, an NBA legend, was sponsored by several athletic brands and appeared in many advertisements during his career. In 2003, it was estimated that his impact on the global economy was \$13 billion. Horne (2006) also studied professional soccer player David Beckham as a "living ad." The Beckham family is seen as the ultimate goal for families to achieve, demonstrating a vision to the perfect life that everyone wants to strive for. Advertisers have made the public believe that in order to obtain a life like the Beckhams', they must purchase the products that the family endorses.

Although celebrity endorsements are common in the sport industry, recent research has revealed the lack of female athlete endorsers in advertising today. One content analysis examined 169 advertisements in six different types of magazines that contained athlete endorsers. The researchers found that despite women's participation in sports, only 12% of advertisements featured female athlete endorsers. Advertisements that included female athlete endorsers were only printed in traditional women's magazines and nonexistent in men's and teens' magazines. According to the research, "This may pose a potential problem with specific audiences, such as teens and fitness buffs, both of whom are not exposed to many female athlete endorsers in magazines" (Grau, Roselli, & Taylor, 2012).

Another advertising strategy used by athletic brands is the use of the heroic narrative. Peetz (2002) looked at how sport media uses heroes to portray athletic victories and performance. The study defined the historical meaning of myths and provides examples of how sport advertising, specifically Nike, uses athletic heroes to convey messages to audiences. The findings showed that Nike uses masculine strategies to define the meaning of a hero. These strategies have the potential to skew females' perception of how an athletic "hero" should look and behave (Peetz, 2002).

### ***Effects of Fitness Advertisements on Female Self-Concept***

There is an overwhelming amount of research on the psychological effects advertisements have on females. When targeting women, fitness advertisers focus on exercising for vanity purposes rather than competitive sport. According to Horne (2006), appearance and physique are more important to the average woman than having a healthy body. Exercise is marketed "not for physiological fitness or psychological health, but in pursuit of physical perfection" (p. 174).

While it is now more normal for women to be portrayed as strong and successful athletes, females are still commonly presented as a sexual object, which is shown as the reason for their achievements (Smith, 2011). One content analysis found that 81% of women portrayed in advertisements were partially unclothed or sexualized (Grau, Roselli, & Taylor, 2012). Bissel's study (2004) on collegiate athletes' social comparisons

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to elite athletes revealed that sexualized images negatively influenced collegiate athletes' satisfaction with their body.

Decades of research has focused on the powerful effects of advertising on negative body image. While many researchers have studied how the general female population reacts to various advertising techniques, little research has been published on how female collegiate athletes are affected by fitness advertisements. It is necessary to study females participating in college athletics because many fitness brands target this specific audience in their campaigns. This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. How do female collegiate athletes respond to fitness advertising strategies that are specifically targeted toward women?

RQ2. To what extent do fitness advertisements affect the image female collegiate athletes have of their body?

RQ3. Which advertising strategies generate positive responses in female collegiate athletes?

### III. Method

In order to investigate the psychological effects of fitness advertising on college female athletes, a focus group was conducted. This qualitative method was beneficial in generating diverse opinions, yet delving deeper into the motivations and beliefs of these women than a survey. The benefit of focus groups "comes from the interaction among the group members as they elaborate on, question, or challenge each other's statements" (Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009, p. 58). While focus groups do not elicit as in-depth responses received through interviews, they do allow for more variety in responses that may give extensive perspectives.

A convenience sample of 11 female student-athletes was recruited from current Elon University students. The participants, ranging from 18-21 years of age, all had competed on Division I track and/or cross country teams. A moderator guide was created in order to elicit the responses needed to answer the research questions (See Appendix A). Before the focus group began, each participant stated her age, team sport, and what types of media she consumed most frequently. These background questions gave the author personal information that may influence participants' perception of advertisement images. The participants then talked about their favorite workout brand and why they chose to buy its products, which may reveal whether advertising contributes as a conscious motivator in purchasing decisions. The conversation then shifted toward participants' opinions of fitness advertising in general. Eventually the athletes were specifically asked about what kinds of models they saw in advertisements and whether advertisements had a positive or negative effect on collegiate athletes.

Next, focus group members were asked about their perceptions of advertising images created by fitness brands. The athletes were shown four different print advertisements from three different brands: Nike, Under Armour, and Asics. All three companies were featured on "The Forbes Fab 40: The World's Most Valuable Sports Brands (Ozanian, 2014). The four advertisements were selected based on four categories of advertising techniques that fitness brands frequently used to target women: female athlete endorser, celebration of the body, sexualizing the body, and mental benefits of exercise. The group also watched a video commercial in order to study the psychological effects of video and compare effects of print and video advertising strategies. The commercial was created by Under Armour and featured celebrity supermodel Gisele Bundchen (Jardine, 2014). After each advertisement was shown, the participants wrote down their first impressions, what they liked and disliked about each advertisement, and how they felt about their own bodies after viewing each advertisement. Then the group went around the room and discussed each advertisement. The following are the print advertisements shown to the focus group participants:

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Figure 1. Advertisement #1, Celebrating the Body

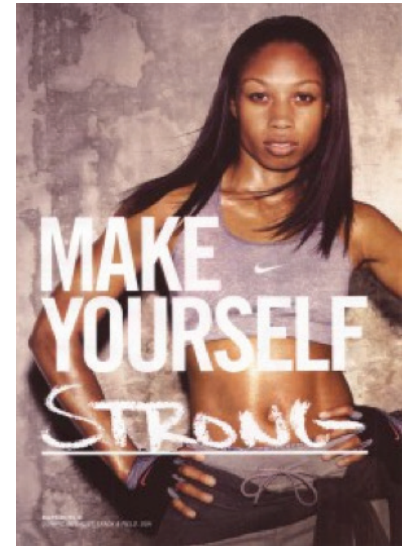


Figure 2. Advertisement #2, Female Athlete Endorser



Figure 3. Advertisement #3, Showing Mental Benefits of Exercise



Figure 4. Advertisement #4, Sexualizing the Body

To discover what advertisement tactics generate positive responses among this demographic, participants' feedback on each print advertisement was coded into positive, negative, or neutral responses. Responses were also categorized based on what the participants noticed in each advertisement. The themes that emerged included body, athletic ability, and product. The findings were used to determine which advertisement received the most "positive" responses and which advertising elements are most noticeable to athletes. This coding also would identify the most successful tactics to target this audience.

## IV. Findings

### ***Responses to Male-Dominated Fitness Advertisements***

When asked about general thoughts on fitness advertising as a whole, participants offered responses that reflected a lack of inclusivity for female collegiate athletes. Many participants immediately thought

of advertisements picturing muscular men performing some sort of intense exercise. For example, one participant mentioned that when she thought of advertisements done by Gatorade, she imagined sweaty, male athletes participating in sports. Consequently, she didn't drink Gatorade even though she's also an athlete.

*"I hardly ever drink Gatorade in its true form . . . I don't know if that's because when they show guys chugging a huge bottle of Gatorade, it's a guy. I would never have a full liter of Gatorade . . . If I saw a girl drinking it, maybe I would be more inclined to do it."*

Another participant mentioned that she didn't focus on advertisements that feature men. She assumed those advertisements were not directed toward her so she ignored them.

*"When I see a commercial and there are guys working out, I just don't focus on that anymore."*

### **Responses to Sport Advertising Targeted Toward Women**

According to the participants, a recent trend for college-aged women is to wear cute, comfortable fitness apparel for more than just exercising purposes. When asked about the fitness advertisements they'd seen featuring women, there was a consensus that fitness brands target the "average" woman and tailor their advertisements to an audience that is "less athletic." Advertisements that target the average woman did not evoke as many positive responses as advertisements that featured women exercising. The participants focused more on functionality than physical appearance when purchasing athletic apparel and viewing fitness advertisements.

*"I just know that when I work out, I don't want to worry about my looks. I want to feel good in what I wear, but I don't want to worry about, like being beautiful as much as getting the job done."*

Regarding why companies struggle to connect with female athletes through advertising, one participant pointed out that companies don't know how to segment women into separate audiences. Brands can either market to the woman who works out for vanity reasons or the "hard core" athlete, but it is nearly impossible to simultaneously connect with both audiences.

*"They market more to men because with females I feel like they don't know what to do . . . You can market to the person who goes to the gym but doesn't really work out, or you can market to the hard core athlete."*

### **Authenticity in Fitness Advertising**

Models in fitness advertisements affected participants' responses depending on not only who they are, but also how they are portrayed. Advertisements that pictured non-athletic celebrities received mostly negative feedback from the group. Participants were less inclined to believe the advertising message if a celebrity was pictured. One participant brought up how she saw a Nike advertisement that featured actress Lea Michele exercising. She didn't understand why Nike would sponsor Lea Michele because she's not known for her athletic abilities, and just thought "she looked stupid."

When asked for opinions on seeing high fashion models, such as Karlie Kloss and Gisele Budchen, in advertisements done by Under Armour and Nike, most participants agreed it was "intimidating."

*"It's pretty intimidating to see a model in those clothes because what are you telling people, to become a model to look like Gisele? Because that's unrealistic because they have no clue what's going into her diet, which is probably very little."*

*"I think it sets unrealistic goals and making people focus too much on looking good when working out."*

When the group actually saw an Under Armour commercial featuring Budenchen, the participant's perceptions changed. The video commercial featured Gisele intensely punching a boxing bag by herself, while real, negative comments about her were pictured on the walls of the gym she was in. The intent of the video was to show that Budenchen was "fighting" off the negative comments by becoming stronger, regardless of what the public said about her. Many participants felt like the commercial was fierce, inspiring, and relatable.

*"Girls are tough too. Very realistic as far as working out goes (hair up, sweaty). She doesn't care what people say, positive or negative. She's going to do what she wants to be fit and look good."*

*"Powerful ad. Definitely changed my view of her."*

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*"I find this really inspiring because she is fighting off all the mean comments. It is sending the message for the audience to do what they want and that staying strong and being fit is more important."*

For female athletes, the model portrayed wasn't as important as the action and the authenticity of the advertisement. Who a model is, of course, has an impact on the participants, but whether a model is realistically portrayed while she participates in physical activity proved to be more significant in eliciting positive responses.

Regarding what types of advertisements were motivating, respondents preferred seeing professional athletes in advertisements than professional models. One participant said, *"I follow most good runners on social media who are sponsored by New Balance, Nike, Under Armour . . . Seeing people who are actually good at their sport works much better for me."* Another student athlete brought up an Under Armour commercial featuring Misty Copeland, a professional ballerina. Even though this participant did not dance ballet, she still believed the advertisement was effective because she identified the ballerina as being like her, an athlete.

*"I was really inspired by that. I never thought of dancing as that hard core, but if you look at her body, she's so fit and that is inspiring to see how hard she works at her sport and to get to that level. I think it was cool that they played on the whole 'female athlete' thing."*

The use of professional female athletes in advertisements, however, was not the only component to what focus group members considered to be an effective advertisement. Female athletes needed to see the athlete or model portrayed in a realistic athletic setting. Participants said they could tell if a model was posing or "faking" exercises, which made the advertisement less appealing. For example, Advertisement #2 pictured American track and field sprint athlete Allyson Felix, who has won several Olympic medals and championships in the 200-meter dash. The focus group participants not only recognized her, but also viewed her as a role model because they participated in the same sport as Felix. However, the advertisement itself received mixed reviews. Some participants appreciated that a female Olympian was shown in a fitness advertisement, saying the advertisement was "inspiring because of the model" and that "it's nice to see an actual talented runner." In contrast, other participants believed she looked "posed" and "too done up."

*"I didn't appreciate how she (Allyson Felix) was used because she was just there . . . She just stood out because [sic] who she is, not what she was doing."*

*"It looks silly when her hair is perfectly down."*

Regardless of Felix's success as an athlete, the advertisement still looked unrealistic to participants because Felix was posed as a model instead of an athlete. Even when a successful athlete like Felix is posing like a model, the advertisement still looked unrealistic to female athletes. This specific audience wanted to see professional athletes in action so they could become motivated by their abilities rather than their physical appearance.

### ***Sexualizing the Female Athlete in Advertisements***

While many fitness advertisers focus on the effects that exercise has on the physical appearance of the body, female collegiate athletes are more motivated by how their bodies perform than what their bodies look like (Heineken, 2013). Advertisement #4 received the most negative responses of the advertisements shown during the focus group study. Although the fitness model was performing an abdominal exercise in the advertisement, participants felt that her facial expression, lack of clothing, and angle of the photograph all contributed to a "sexualized" image. One participant's first impression was that the advertisement "seems to promote sex appeal more than the personal desire to better yourself." Many found it hard to believe the model was really working out. Participants could not relate to the advertisement because most believed the model didn't look like she was exercising. For example, the model's hair in Advertisement #4 looked professionally done, while female athletes usually put their hair up during a workout. As one participant mentioned, "The ad was a little too 'modely' to seem athletic. I mean, who works out with their hair down?" Another participant said, "I feel like this ad isn't for me." She did not feel connected to the advertisement because she thought it was targeted more for men to admire than for women to admire. According to participants, the model looked strong and physically fit, but they also thought that it was impossible to achieve her body, making the advertisement unrealistic.

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### **Telling Relatable Stories Through Fitness Advertisements**

Print advertisements with a story resonated most with focus group participants. Advertisement #1 included copy that promotes positive body image by creating a relatable story of a runner who embraces her “Thunder Thighs.” Many participants appreciated the empowering message. For example, one of them wrote, “I love the athletic build and the message that goes with it. It really seems to promote stability in the body rather than minimizing space.” Although most participants reacted positively to Advertisement #1, some couldn’t relate to the ad.

*“I like that it takes pride in something that is usually unwanted because everyone seems to strive for a thigh gap but this ad embraces larger thighs, which probably helps give girls confidence.”*

*“The ad tells a relatable story. I think it’s a little sassy, but it works with their goal.”*

Feeling a disconnect between the athlete’s personal lives and the story told in Advertisement #1, the participants were not personally impacted by the message, although they acknowledged the probability that some women find the story relatable.

Advertisement #3, however, told a story that was relatable to female athletes and runners, specifically. They understood the woman’s struggles and the benefits that running provides physically and psychologically.

*“I liked it a lot . . . . I thought it was unique because it related to me as a person . . . . It was interesting and very creative.”*

*“That was my favorite ad. I love running because I run when I’m stressed, so the ad relates to me.”*

*“I like this naturally because I’m a runner. It should motivate people to run and shows that benefits go further than physical ones.”*

### **Fitness Advertising and its Effects on Body Image**

The focus group participants all had different views and perceptions of their own bodies. Some felt more content than the average person. One participant said, “I rely on my abilities as a runner to feel good about my body image.” Others expressed difficulty managing a positive body image as an athlete. Another participant responded, “I think because we’re so competitive . . . you’re going to be harder on yourself for your own self image. Athletes are more in tune with their bodies because you’re constantly comparing yourself to other athletes in your own sport.” Two track runners also described their conversations during practice: “Every day during warm up, we complain about our legs being too thick, our legs being too strong . . . . You want to be muscular, but at the same time you don’t want to look too thick.” Despite the various perceptions of self-image, the athletes all agreed that fitness advertising showed a lack of diversity in regard to body shape and size. The words “skinny,” “tiny” and “fit” were used to describe the kinds of bodies they saw in fitness advertisements. Participants also mentioned that athletes have so many different, successful body types, but only one type of body is portrayed in the media.

*“Track has so many different body types within one team. You’ve got the distance girls, who are tiny, but you’ve also got the throwers who are so strong . . . . They don’t depict that in ads though.”*

As runners, some participants received pressure from parents and coaches to look a certain way. One athlete described how her father’s perception was skewed by the media of what runners should look like and pressured her to look like a stereotypical athlete:

*“A lot of what I hear from [sic] my sport is from my dad, who has definitely only been revealed to the sport through magazines such as ‘Runners World’ . . . . He has this concrete view of what a successful runner should be and should look like. I think the way media portrays us, it just really hammers it in him, and I still get that pressure from him.”*

The focus group participants would rather see advertisements that show a variety of different body types in order to be inclusive to all athletes.

*“I appreciate seeing different body types and the athletic looking person versus the stereotypical model when modeling athletic clothes.”*

*“It’d be cool to see an ad with a team showing all different body types. The muscular build, the smaller build . . . and they’re all successful. That’d be really cool.”*

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## V. Conclusions

According to the study done by Grau, Roselli, and Taylor (2012), male athletes are portrayed far more frequently than female athletes in sport advertising. When prompted about fitness advertising, the female athlete participants in this study immediately thought of athletic men and were disappointed at the lack of female athletes shown in the media. To them, advertisements featuring men are not effective because those advertisements aren't relatable; therefore, they ignore those types of advertisements. Participants also responded negatively to sexualized advertisements, believing that the sexualized and posed images of models were "unrealistic" and ineffective. These responses are in line with what Heineken found in his study, where Division I athletes responded negatively to sexualized and glamorized images (2013).

That professional male athletes are seen more in advertising than professional female athletes, according to the analysis of Grau, Roselli and Taylor (2012), "may pose a potential problem with specific audiences, such as teens and fitness buffs, both of whom are not exposed to many female athlete endorsers in magazines" (p. 58). What they failed to discover is that a female athlete endorser is not enough to be resonating with another group of consumers, such as professional athletes. While featuring a female professional athlete is a step in the right direction, this study revealed that a realistic portrayal of the athlete is needed to appeal to female athletic consumers. For example, the Allyson Felix advertisement was not resonating with the female participants because she was posing like a regular model instead of what she's known for, a heroic athlete, even though she is a professional track athlete.

To effectively evoke positive emotions from female collegiate athletes, an advertisement should tell a realistic story that is relatable to athletes. Female athletes lose focus on fitness advertisements that look posed or unnatural. They want to see a real athlete going through the same struggles and successes that they face every day. Achieving the "perfect" body is not a goal for a female Division I athlete. Her goal is to use her body to perform well in her sport, regardless of whether it looks physically appealing.

While it is important to show realistic body types, female collegiate athletes want to see athletes who are successful, regardless of their body shape and size. Based on the participants' reactions to different fitness advertisements, this study also demonstrated that athletic ability is more important to athletes than physical appearance. Female athletes relate to stories that are about performance and benefits of exercise than stories about celebrating physical appearance, which is why they responded more positively to Advertisement #3 than Advertisement #1. Picturing a successful college team in an ad would not only promote athletic achievement, but it would also show the many different body types that can be successful in a sport.

### ***Limitations and Further Research***

While this study revealed some perceptions of fitness advertising on female collegiate athletes, more research needs to be conducted to further test the findings. The focus group, which consisted of 11 college females who competed in the same sport, is not large enough to make a generalization to all female collegiate athletes. Also, many external factors could influence their perceptions of advertisements, such as family life or levels of self-esteem. Further research could be conducted with female athletes from other sports or from diverse universities, using more variables, including participants' self-esteem or family background.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Appendix A

### Moderator Guide

#### **Media & Advertisements (5 minutes)**

- What media channels do you use the most? (Social media, Internet, TV, magazines)
- Where do you see most advertisements? (billboards, commercials, magazines, commercials, athletic events, radio)

#### **Sport Brands and Purchasing Power (15-20 minutes)**

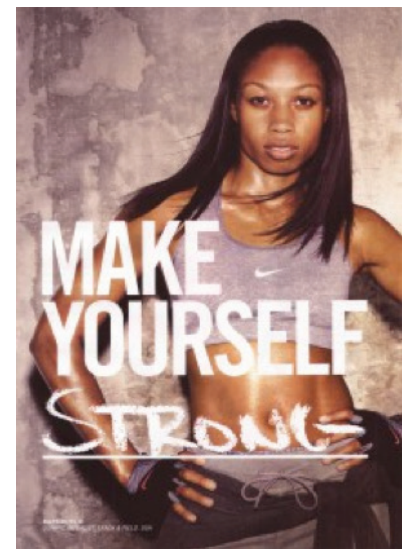
- What brands do you wear to work out in? Why?
-



- What are your favorite brands? Why? (Because of reputation or goods?)
- When you think of good advertisements, what companies come to mind? Explain and give an example.
- Think of an athletic advertisement you've seen recently. How did you feel about it? Why did it resonate with you?
- What company does a good job targeting athletes?
- In sport advertisements, do you see more males or females featured? Why do you think that is? Which would you rather see?
- What do you think of sport advertisements directed toward females?
- Gisele Bundchen is featured in one of Under Armour's commercials (which we will view later in the session) and Nike recently hired Karlie Kloss as sponsor. Both are famous models and are not athletes. What do you think of these company's decisions to hire them? Do these professional models inspire you to perform better or buy these brands?

### Perception of Sport Advertisements (25-30 minutes)

For this exercise, I'm going to show four print advertisements and one commercial. I want you to write down your initial thoughts and feelings of each one. Write down anything that comes to mind: how you feel, what stands out, what you like, what you don't like.



- (Go over each advertisement) What was the message of each campaign?
- Which was your favorite? Why?
- Which one was your least favorite? Why?
- Which one motivated you in your sport the most?
- Think about the clothes
- What do you think about the positions and clothes on each model? Similarities or differences in each ad?

**Motivating Factors in Advertisements (10 minutes)**

- What motivates you to do better in your sport? (Teammates, family, intrinsic rewards performing better)
- After seeing these ads and thinking back on past advertisements you've seen throughout the years, do you think these advertisements motivate you to perform better in your sport? Why or why not?
- Do you think sport advertisements are helpful or harmful to performance?
- What would you rather see in sport ads: celebrities, professional athletes, collegiate athletes, models, or no picture of a female at all?

**Closing (5 minutes)**

- We've come to the end of our discussion. Is there anything else that you would like to add before we end?
  - Before we leave, we would love if you could go around and share what you believe was the most important topic discussed here.
  - Thank you all so much for participating in this focus group. Your opinions will be very valuable to this research project on female collegiate athletes perceptions of sport advertisements.
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# Color Theory and Social Structure in the Films of Wes Anderson

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## Abstract

*Filmmaker Wes Anderson has developed a distinct aesthetic style that is easily recognizable through his use of striking color palettes. The purpose of this research was to draw conclusions about social stratification, social construction and the role of family as they relate to color palettes in Anderson's films. Relying on the auteur theory, the research related Anderson's personal experiences with those of his characters and aimed at discerning the importance of color as it connects to social structure.*

## I. Introduction

Since the turn of the 20th century, cinema has been embedded cross-culturally as a social lens through which societal norms and values are portrayed. Cinema's effectiveness hinges on many factors that can make a particular story powerful. Unique screenplays, popular actors, state-of-the-art cameras, lighting and sound design all play large roles in the value of a production. Blockbuster films do well at the box office for their promotional appeal, yet *le septième art*, the seventh art as cinema is commonly known, is deeply rooted in artistic interpretation. Aesthetic input is arguably the most powerful tool a director has in establishing a specific tone and connecting it to the hearts of his or her audience. Directorial style transcends the art of moviemaking in itself. Often times, it becomes a defining generational trait or a way of life. Such is the case with American filmmaker Wes Anderson and his whimsical color palettes.

Cinema as a microcosm of contemporary societal structure has an innate power to shape the perception of those who are exposed to it. Of all the elements of visual design, color may be the most difficult to understand in how it psychologically affects humans. According to Yumibe (2012), "Through its sensual appeal, color can move the mind and emotions of a spectator. This understanding of the interconnection of the senses, intellect, and emotions is also, broadly construed, synesthetic in nature" (p. 32). This synesthesia, or response involving more than one sense, is common among viewers of Anderson's films.

What an audience experiences through diegetic space on screen is a sensory combination of actions and sound set in color to mimic real life. The implementation of color in an image creates certain psychological responses in the brain, causing viewers to relate colors to specific objects and emotions (Gegenfurtner & Sharpe, 2000, p. 317). Colors carry significant meaning in society, whether consciously acknowledged or not.

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**Keywords:** color theory, production design, Wes Anderson, media effects, social commentary  
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This undergraduate project was conducted as a partial requirement of a research course in communications.

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Anderson follows a common aesthetic “guideline” in portraying themes that are intrinsically similar in value. “[His] films are cinematic dollhouses: their wonder is in the perfection of their recreation of the larger world outside their frames” (Austerlitz, 2010, p. 382). Anderson meticulously crafts his visual imagery for the screen so that an audience recognizes the intent of his work as a director, a distinct directorial style that has garnered him fame and notoriety in recent years.

## II. Background

The use of color over the course of film’s history is both controversial and misconstrued. Dyes and other methods of manual color correction have been used since the advent of the medium itself in the late 1800s (Yumibe, 2012, p. 2). Applied coloring in the silent film era as it relates to the correction and control of “natural” color in contemporary cinema is imperative in discerning the high aesthetic value of color in movies. Both applied coloring on acetate film in the early 20th century and the grading enhancements of digital video are rooted in one common goal: the manipulation of a perceived reality.

The advent of digitalization is both lauded and scrutinized by many critics and historians. Specifically, the astronomical differences of post-production processes in celluloid film versus modern digital cinema are taken into consideration. In his book *Digital Visual Effects in Cinema: The Seduction of Reality*, Prince (2012) relates digital cinema as having enhanced effects on psychological comprehension among film viewers (p. 4). The process has become streamlined. In moments, a modern film editor can alter the reality of what a camera captured in live-action filming. “Visual effects are coextensive with narrative film, and digital tools have made them more expressive, persuasive, and immersive” (Prince, 2012, p.4). This “seduction of reality” is more easily achieved in digital cinema, relying strongly on color correction and lighting enhancements to create ultra-reality.

In the framing and composition of an image, the balance of visual weight is imperative to an environment’s sense of stability or instability (Hurbis-Cherrier, 2012, p. 50). Production designers have much to consider in the creation of an environment. They must establish tone, evoke a certain style, consider their temporal and spatial settings, and discern how actors will work in conjunction with their surroundings. Production design is a delicate piece of the puzzle, for visual aspects are the most significant in creating film perception and comprehension among audiences.

Color, however, is the most psychologically misunderstood visual component in digital media (Block, 2008, p. 136). In the BBC film *Do You See What I See? The Science of Color Perception*, neuroscience and evolutionary biology point toward specific moods and reactions associated with colors (Robinson, 2011). These perceptions driving the responses are culturally constructed and engrained in a human’s collective memory over time. Without knowing, one may sense a certain predisposition toward particular colors or have negative visceral responses to other colors. The film’s narrator, Samantha Bond, relates that “perception is key” (Robinson, 2011) in considering sustained exposure to one color or group of colors.

Anderson’s routine production designer, Adam Stockhausen, says that he breaks down the nuances of his scripts into component pieces and studies imagery that will associate with particular aspects of the production in the context of Anderson’s color palettes (Gobar, 2015). This meticulous attention to color and detail often comes across on screen as an overwhelming use of one or very few colors. His color palettes are moved to the “projective foreground” in the mind of a viewer, thus rendering it a dominant factor in his films (Yumibe, 2012, p. 116).

Intense visual effects are common in cinema of the postmodern era, where films are widely considered social commentary. The advent of computer-generated imaging (CGI), along with the growing presence of three-dimensional screenings, has made it easier than ever before to generate perceived reality. This has, in turn, caused a variety of research to be done on visual strain among viewers. Pölonen, Salmimaa, Aaltonen, Häkkinen, and Takatalo (2009) conducted research on the discomfort of viewers in the presence of visual effects. Many viewers were affected by elements of visual strain. Some said these elements enhanced the experience of viewing a film while others found it detracting (p. 462). This evidentiary support contextualizes the psychological aspects of exposure to hyperbolic visual effects in cinema, something that characterizes the style of Anderson.

In his book *Sight, Sound, Motion; Applied Media Aesthetics*, Zettl (2011) stresses the importance

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of stylized aesthetics in film. He presents research on how production design can influence aesthetic color perception and the ways in which color can create a desired psychological comprehension in an audience (p. 55). Humans adapt to various color signals in film, and these signals tend to cue us in to a certain focus or theme. Saturation and color mixing can be additive or subtractive in terms of content analysis. The relativity of color with objects in the diegetic space can influence the way viewers perceive an environment (p. 63). Lighting and color temperature also play a large role in establishing a mood or tone in film, and surrounding colors (contrasting or similar) can establish relationships between otherwise unlike objects. Zettl also relates color energy as it applies to the juxtaposition of light and color, thus rendering an aesthetic energy that elicits psychological responses based on color (p. 67). For example, Zettl states that the over-presence of red can create a sense of excitability among viewers or a feeling of desire. Green may soothe while yellow can allude to positivity or cheerfulness.

The interplay of Anderson's light and color with his characters and other objects produces fascinating visual effects in the eye of an observer. Gegenfurtner and Sharpe (2000) claim that humans segment objects in our minds and perceive them to carry meaning based on their inherent color. The perceived magnitude or importance of a "visual modality" is influenced by its surroundings. Thus, viewers segregate objects from one another on screen and make assumptions as to their relation based on visual components alone (p. 337). Rhythm and pace of visual design create a pattern that emphasizes emotional response in the viewer that mimics that of contemporary society (Hurbis-Cherrier, 2012, p. 460). Such repetition of colors can establish mental biases toward colors in relation to certain nuances of society that a viewer might find displeasing, such as patriarchal power or laziness, two themes we find often in Anderson's films.

The following case study attempts to examine the use of color palettes in the framework of the aforementioned affectations of color in the following Anderson works: *Rushmore* (1998), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004), *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014). Through these films, the analysis attempts to discern how color production and design are used in character development and in the establishment of social structure in Anderson's movies. By viewing these films and studying their psychological connections to perceptions of color, these distinctions can be made.

### III. Theoretical Framework

The analysis of this paper is based on the *auteur* theory, otherwise known as *auteurism*. This type of post-modern cinema has an unwavering distinctive voice. Such films created by an *auteur*, or author, bear messages that act as social critique through the eyes of a director. Every aspect on screen is a direct representation of how a director perceives it in the context of his or her life. Through personal biases, *le cinéma d'auteur* underlines the point of view of a director as a means of expression. The director authors the film itself in manipulating the presentation of his or her content so that an audience may interpret it in a specific way.

Alexandre Astruc, a French director from the 1950s, was one of the first to practice this directorial style. He coined it as *le caméra-stylo*, a French term alluding to the use of a camera as a pen. As an author would use a pen to write his or her emotions, a director cathartically use films as a means of self-reflection (Orgeron, 2007, p. 44). In turn this creates a style unique and recognizable of the director, just as is the case with Anderson and his films. Admittedly, Anderson is a fan of Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut (Seitz, 2013, p. 244), who are pioneers of this method in addition to Astruc. Citing this theory, the analysis reveals that Anderson writes and directs films that directly pertain to his experiences, thus utilizing color as an expression of society through his personal lens.

### IV. Analysis

#### ***Color Production and Design***

Unquestionably the most laborious efforts in Anderson's films lie with the production and scenic designer. From the lavish hotel in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) to the unassumingly intricate submarine in *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004), his production design is unmitigated extravagance. Anderson,

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working closely with designer Adam Stockhausen, comes into a production with a specific color palette in mind and they work off of what colors work well in contrasting the presence of these colors. An interview with Stockhausen revealed the following about the process behind *The Grand Budapest Hotel*:

The funny thing is, we started with all this pink, and I think this would be true of any color—if you use too much of it, you stop seeing it because it’s everywhere and you start taking it for granted. So, we found that we had to add in yellows and different colors to kind of cut it back so you could see it more. (Grobar, 2015)

Studies show that audiences have poor color memory (Block, 2008, p. 159) when reflecting on short-term memory associated with digital media. By intensifying certain colors, Anderson creates an immediate association with his films. When hearing the title of a particular Anderson film, often times it evokes certain colors: Pink, purple and red associated with *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, for example. This play on contrast and affinity, or similarity of tone, makes his films easily recognizable. As aforementioned, visual cues such as brightness, shape, stereo-disparity and color facilitate the distinction of the observer (Gegenfurtner & Sharpe, 2000, p. 337).

As we have seen, color plays into sensual appeals that affect emotional distance with the intrigue of a story. Yumibe (2012) characterizes this as an educational influence while citing Wallace Rimington’s *Colour-Music*: “Color, like music, is both precious for its own sake and as an educative influence. It can also stimulate the imagination and develop other mental faculties; can give pleasure and refreshment to the mind, and increase the responsiveness of the sense to which it appeals” (Yumibe, 2012, p. 34).

Anderson plays with color in his set and production design in order to create a fantastical world unlike that known to the viewer. In an interview with BBC, Anderson says of his film *The Royal Tenenbaums*: “I am from Texas, but there were so many New York movies and novels which were among my favorites and I didn’t have an accurate idea of what New York was like. I wanted to create an exaggerated version of that imaginary New York” (Mayshark, 2007, p. 126).

This also appears in the pastel-hued sea creatures in *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004). Anderson gives audiences a glimpse of a seemingly perfect world of “dollhouse perfectionism” (Austerlitz, 2010, p.454) that juxtaposes the somber tone of his content. This brings about a certain perceived irony in his filmmaking when associating characters and the context in which they perpetuate their “type.” Owen Wilson, a close friend and reoccurring player in the game of Wes Anderson cinema, said in a commentary, “It’s a world that Wes Anderson creates . . . slightly artificial, but I think within that world the emotions and feelings are very real” (Mayshark, 2007, p. 117).

### ***Color as a Social Commentary***

Anderson is a talented individual in that he can manipulate sound and image to transport an audience to other continuums. He is an “unrepentant hipster” who uses exuberant color tied to somber themes, creating “whiplash juxtaposition” for the audience (Austerlitz, 2010, p. 382). This visual modality is magnified by the contrast of what you see on screen with the action that is happening. Just as Truffaut does, Anderson tends to suffuse dark material with humoristic interactions. This is apparent especially in the childish bickering between Royal Tenenbaum (Gene Hackman) and his ex-wife’s suitor (Danny Glover) Henry Sherman after Richie (Luke Wilson) tries to kill himself.

The characters in Anderson’s films often appear in multiple of his works. Bill Murray, Angelica Huston, Owen and Luke Wilson, Adrien Brody, Jason Schwartzman and Tilda Swinton all appear in at least 2 of his 10 films. Anderson grew up in Texas and went to high school with the Wilson brothers, calling upon them to act in and write numerous films and short films (Seitz, 2013, p. 31). His mother was an archaeologist, just like the character of Etheline Tenenbaum (Angelica Huston), and his father was not very present after divorcing his mother, just like the character Royal Tenenbaum (Gene Hackman) in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001).

Much of Anderson’s films, in keeping with the *auteur* theory, is a self-reflection of his childhood (Mayshark, 2007, p. 115). His stylistic choices and thematic elements of his original screenplays are portrayed through his lens as if he were a character. Mayshark (2007) states that the filmmaker has an avid fascination with recurring themes and interconnectivity in his films (p. 116). Social structure is one such large focus, as well as familial structures and intergenerational bonds and rivalries. Much of his work focuses on parents’ relationships with their children.

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Mayshark (2007) also remarks that Anderson tends to portray a specific social niche of eccentric affluence. These characters are precocious and immature, “but not, on the whole, badly intentioned” (p. 116). Problematic fathers also tend to be a central theme to Anderson’s work as a whole, while mothers are less of a presence (in fact, many have died as a precursor to his films). This is evident in the case of Steve Zissou (Bill Murray) in *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004), Royal Tenenbaum, and Herman Blume (Bill Murray) in *Rushmore* (1998). On the topic of fatherhood, Zissou says to his illegitimate son, Ned: “I hate fathers and I never wanted to be one.”

It is interesting that all of these male characters wear red, as if to evoke a certain boyish dominance. Zissou has his documentary crew wear red headwear as he does (refer to *Figure 1*), for in this case red represents the overcompensation of his insecurities about filmmaking. In *The Darjeeling Limited*, the three sons on the quest to find their mother find themselves at their father’s funeral, with whom they were not close. His red vintage automobile is the only item that connected him and his sons. Chas Tenenbaum, Royal’s son played by Ben Stiller, wears a red Adidas tracksuit from his adolescence until adulthood. As we come to know his two younger sons, Ari and Uzi, they wear the exact same suit. Max, Herman Blume’s son in *Rushmore*, wears a red hat to his prestigious private school as he yearns for the affection of his father.



*Figure 1.* Steve Zissou with his film crew in red caps.

Red seems to be a color of longing, having deep-rooted issues attached in the realm of fatherhood. In the case for these three fathers, they are a main source of conflict in their families. “Even more than most directors, Anderson uses costumes as an extension of his characters” (Mayshark, 2007, p. 125). Colors and costuming foil the neurotic personalities associated in his films. The sense of self-importance garnered by these three fathers has caused them to be ostracized in some way by their families. Mayshark (2007) states that their emotional maturity lags behind their perceived triumphs in society (p. 116): Royal and Herman are wealthy businessmen; Zissou is a semi-accomplished marine documentarian. For them, red is a color of power and security, though it also evokes a sense of boyish enthusiasm. Red in *The Darjeeling Limited* appears most vibrantly in the father’s car – the item about which he cared most (refer to *Figure 2*). After his death, his sons both covet and resent the car because of the void it represents in their lives and how they could never live up to the esteem of the vehicle itself.

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Figure 2. The father's red car in *The Darjeeling Limited*.

This reversion back to childlike dependency is common in the themes of Anderson's work. Critics fault him for neglecting character development in light of fantastical set design, though his characters offer viewers a sense of restraint juxtaposed with their lavish settings. Monsieur Gustave (Ralph Fiennes) in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) is a character of refined elegance, running the nicest hotel in the fictional republic of Zubrowka (refer to *Figure 3*). Though, his films do tend to center on childhood, both "literal and prolonged" (Orgeron, 2007, p.42) and the need to create communities in the face of familial abandonment. It is worldly communities, i.e. Jamaica and Africa, in which Margo Tenenbaum and her mother separately go searching for themselves after they separated from the family. Monsieur Gustave, a man who trained for years without a family to become the concierge of the hotel, finds solace in Zero Moustafa, the immigrant lobby boy also without a family who later becomes his most trusted friend.

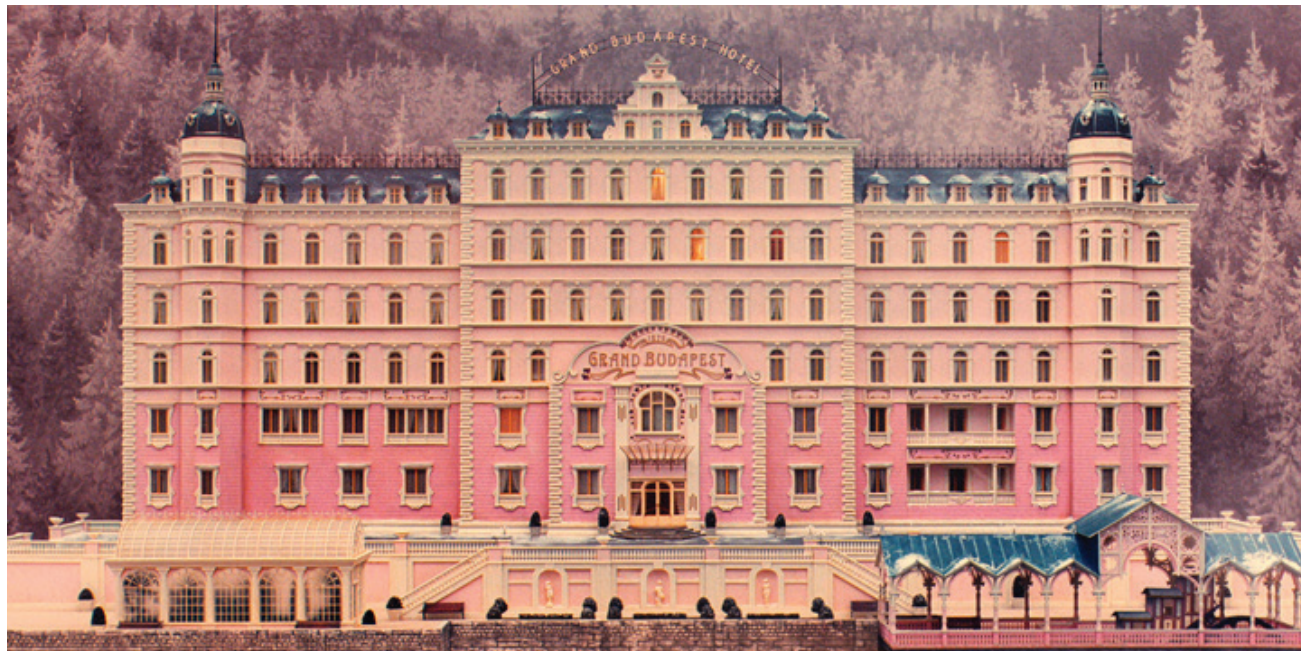


Figure 3. Image of the Grand Budapest Hotel

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Anderson constantly positions himself around the concept of youth. In *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, M. Gustave sleeps with older women as a boyish conquest for wealth. *Moonrise Kingdom* is a film that centers on the concept of lost youth and the rediscovery of it in young love. The “moonrise kingdom” is the refuge for which Sam and Suzy, both adolescents, are looking. Yellow is often a color of optimism in the films of Anderson, which is apparent in the uniforms of the scouts in this film. Yellow is also symbolized in many of his films as a color of peace. For example, the sky in *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* is yellow when the foxes are happiest. The submarine of Steve Zissou is yellow, one of the only things that brings him happiness until he finds the yellow sea creature he had been searching for (refer to *Figure 4*).



*Figure 4.* Steve Zissou with his film crew.

Color can establish a mood that is in keeping with the action or environment a director wishes to portray on the screen. It brings about this fairy tale-like existence in Anderson’s films because his levity often times contrasts grim situations. The hospital room is bright and bustling with family members after Richie Tenenbaum tries to commit suicide. Here Anderson plays with the stress that society places on mental factors—in darkness he presents us with light as a sort of childish optimism.

In *The Darjeeling Limited* when the young Indian boy dies, his funeral rites are set against glimmering golden light, stark white vestments and a vibrant town in the background. Socially, the three white protagonists stick out as irreverent Americans. Often times he uses whiteness as a framework for social stability (Dean-Ruzicka, 2012, p. 26). We also see this in the familial structure of the Tenenbaum family. Anderson uses deep, rich colors to highlight the color of the characters’ white skin, as we see in the scene with Royal at the dinner table. “As in *The Royal Tenenbaums*, colors in the film serve to highlight and reinforce the whiteness of the main character” (Dean-Ruzicka, 2012, p. 36). For non-white characters, Anderson tends to use neutrals to accentuate their skin.

Likewise, characters of color often portray second-class citizens of society. Kumar Pallana, a reoccurring actor in Anderson films, typically portrays an elderly ethnic man who does not seem to comprehend everything going on. He acts often as a foil for the disillusioned older white gentlemen in his films. This is one such case in *The Royal Tenenbaums*, as Pallana’s character, Pagoda, provides a sense of stability and unwavering gumption for the isolated Royal (see *Figure 5*).

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Figure 5. Royal Tenenbaum positioned alone at the dinner table.

## V. Conclusion

In this post-modern era of cinema, its societal functions and stressors are heavily scrutinized. Anderson offers unto viewers a “childlike absorption in the all-too-adult bittersweetness of the world” (Austerlitz, 2010, p. 382), neglecting reality and projecting fantasy. This notion directly correlates to the reasons why his darker screenplays are treated with brilliant color palettes and humoristic undertones. These colors are intentional and represent facets of society, such as *patria potestas* (power of the father), but also signify a boyish reverence for the unstoppable imagination of youth. The color he uses brings about a feeling of irony and optimism.

It is said that Anderson tends to draw upon inspiration from his favorite artists—J.D. Salinger, Truman Capote, and Orson Welles—and incorporate facets of their work into his. Welles’ *The Magnificent Ambersons* was adapted to be *The Royal Tenenbaums*, though the outcome of his work is positive in nature unlike that of his counterparts (Mayshark, 2007, p. 128). Anderson reverts back to a state of childlike optimism in his films, crafting these ultra realities that suit the needs of his characters and the outcome he would like to have seen as a child from his favorite works. The use of color in his set design and his costuming is masterfully engineered to engrain itself into the minds of an audience and establish a certain mood for a film. His characters are social indicators, often times of a broken family that sews itself back up. Anderson’s *auteur* style hinges on his experiences as a child. Without disappointment in his own adolescence, he would have never been able to craft these extravagant stories. That is what his films are, in fact. *Rushmore* is presented as a play in five acts. *The Royal Tenenbaums* is a book narrated by Alec Baldwin – as scenes change, the proverbial pages flip. *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* is a present-day self-reflection of his filmmaking and the chaos it brings (Austerlitz, 2010, p. 382). *The Grand Budapest Hotel* is presented as a fable. In an interview, Anderson speaks to the quirkiness of his characters:

“I find certain kinds of behavior entertaining, I like the idea of people taking their extreme feelings and acting out on them. So I don’t know if I’d really make that much of a distinction between which one’s an adult and which one’s a child, and what does it mean for this person to do this, this person to do that. I guess I just go on a case-by-case basis.” (Seitz, 2013, p. 296)

In contemporary filmmaking, it is not uncommon to push limits in order to exact a desired psychological response. Filmmakers such as Abdellatif Kechiche (*Blue is the Warmest Color*) and Darren Aronofsky (*Requiem for a Dream*) are widely known for their unmistakable styles, but what sets Anderson apart is his ability to treat pertinent topics with levity and brilliant set design, exacting a style unmistakably “Andersonian” (see Figure 6).

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Figure 6. Color palette used in *The Darjeeling Limited*.

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# Do African-American Female Stereotypes Still Exist in Television? A Descriptive Character Analysis of Olivia Pope

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## Abstract

*Scandal*, the first network drama in decades to star an African-American woman, reaches millions of viewers on a weekly basis. This study examined if main character Olivia Pope is a reflection of popular African-American female stereotypes in television. A sample of nine episodes was used to quantitatively measure whether Pope exemplifies the “Mammy,” the “Jezebel,” or the “Sapphire.” Analysis showed that although Pope embodies characteristics of all these stereotypes, they are presented in a different way than what is commonly seen on television.

## I. Introduction

African-American Actress Kerry Washington stars in *Scandal*, a primetime network television drama. *Scandal* follows the story of Olivia Pope, a prominent Washington, D.C., fixer, who handles crises and public relations for her high-level political clients while also dealing with her own indiscretions. One of the unique central themes in *Scandal* is the portrayal of “an African-American woman as the successful manager of a firm, employing a racially diverse group of people, but without using the potential racial dynamic as a central trope” (McKnight, 2014, p. 184).

Pope was chosen for this study because she is leading the “progressive shift in the representation of Black female characters in mainstream television” (Mask, 2015, p. 8). Unlike most African-American women seen today on television, the character played by Washington is both dark-skinned and beautiful, while also romantically and sexually desirable (Everett, 2015, p. 37). Pope differs from other strong African-American television characters, such as Claire Huxtable on *The Cosby Show*, who portrayed another prominent African-American television character, and was a lawyer, a mother, and was equated to June Cleaver or Margaret Anderson (Pixley, 2015, p. 30). As a character, Huxtable was criticized as being too perfect for any real person to live up to (Pixley, 2015 p. 30). According to Mia Mask, Pope represents a new kind of multidimensional character who has rarely been seen before on television (Mask, 2015 p. 7). Mask goes on to say that unlike unrealistic or unrelatable characters, characters like Pope have “lives that reflect the emotional breadth, psychological depth, diasporic range and multivalent variance” (p. 7).

A character like Pope is a first for primetime television. Even though she appears to be a new kind of character, this study examines if she still follows old stereotypes that have been used to describe African-American females portraying film and television characters for decades. This study looked at selected

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*Scandal* episodes and analyzes the Pope character against those frequently used African-American female stereotypes.

This study is important in today's society because stereotyping African-American women can have damaging effects. Hudson (1998) notes, "Stereotypes simultaneously reflect and distort the ways in which Black women view themselves (individually and collectively) and in which they are viewed by others" (Hudson, 1998, p. 249). Media depictions of characters can form certain opinions of entire racial and gender groups regardless of their merit. *Scandal's* popularity has resulted in the character of Pope to be widely exposed. As a result, she is now another character that African-American women can be compared to, so consideration of information about the stereotypes Pope exemplifies can help determine if those comparisons will be positive or negative.

## II. Literature Review

*Scandal* is the third network television drama created by screenwriter and producer Shonda Rhimes. It premiered on the American Broadcasting Company network in 2012. Rhimes is known for creating "complex, driven, powerful and flawed women who anchor her dramas" (Everett, 2015 p. 38). Her characters and storylines attest to the immense popularity of her shows. Pixley (2015) reported that *Scandal* was the 12th most watched network television broadcast and the second most viewed primetime network drama, according to a 2013 Nielsen poll. This level of success surrounding a television drama starring an African-American female is largely unprecedented. According to the *The Hollywood Diversity Report* on the 2011-2012 season, actors from a racial or ethnic minority only had 5.1 percent of starring roles in broadcast comedies and dramas (Erigha, 2015, p.10). Kerry Washington is now recognized as the first African-American female lead on a network drama since Teresa Graves starred in *Get Christie Love* in 1974 (Evans, 2014).

As a character, Pope has been described as revolutionary (Everett, 2015). Mask (2015) describes her character's life as being "full of contradictions and innumerable complexities, the likes of which we haven't seen in Black women's lives as represented in mainstream culture" (p. 5). This study looks at whether or not Pope's character still adheres to recurrent African-American stereotypes in television. The stereotypes this study chose as a framework of analysis are the Mammy, the Jezebel, and the Sapphire. These stereotypes have been used to describe African-American women since slavery and are still much apparent in today's society (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The Mammy can be described as being the caregiver. This stereotype stems from slavery when African-American women raised the children of their masters. She is seen as being "cold and callous, even neglectful of her own children and family while being overly solicitous toward Whites" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 89). Physically, the Mammy is seen as being dark-skinned, unattractive and overweight (p. 89). Ladson-Billings equates the character of the Mammy as being similar to the character of "Aunt Jemima," who is the iconic maternal figure on the pancake box (p. 89). Ladson-Billings goes on to list early film actresses who clearly represent the Mammy stereotype, such as Hattie McDaniels, Louise Beavers, and Ethel Waters (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The Jezebel is another popular stereotype used to describe African-American women. The Jezebel can be traced back to the Bible, since Jezebel was the name of a queen who turned her husband King Ahab's heart away from worshiping God. Today, the Jezebel is better known as a promiscuous, manipulative seductress (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Physically, the Jezebel is seen as being very attractive and often Mulatto. According to Ladson-Billings (2009), examples include Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne, and Halle Berry as actresses who often play the role of the Jezebel.

The Sapphire is the African-American women who are seen as being "stubborn, bitchy, bossy and hateful" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 89). The name of the Sapphire comes from the character Ernestine Ward portrayed in *The Amos 'n' Andy* television show in the 1950s. This stereotype, which has been used again and again as the character of a "mad Black woman," continues to sell.

*Scandal's* immense popularity can prove Pope to be one of crossover characters, those who are "rooted in a specific tradition with a specific audience, [but can still] appeal to multiple subcultures without losing their original audience" (Erigha, 2015, p. 10). This study examines whether a crossover character like Pope can exist without the use of African-American stereotypes: again the Mammy, the Jezebel and the

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Sapphire. It is important to note that these stereotypes may be embodied in an individual character separately or simultaneously.

### III. Methods

As of April 2015, *Scandal* has aired 69 episodes within the four seasons since the series premiered. A sample of nine episodes was chosen to analyze Pope's character against the framework of recurrent African-American female stereotypes in mainstream television. In order to analyze the wide spectrum of episodes, every eighth episode up to the most recent episode aired was selected. This method produced one episode from the first season, three episodes from the second and third season each, and two episodes from the fourth season.

For this study, the author watched all nine episodes in their entirety through Netflix and Hulu. The author made note whenever the character Pope exemplified a popular African-American female stereotype: the Mammy, the Jezebel, and the Sapphire. The author counted how many times the actor exemplified one of the three stereotypes.

### IV. Analysis and Discussion

The author analyzed nine selected episodes of *Scandal*. Within those episodes, the author looked for specific examples of when the character of Pope exemplified the Mammy, the Jezebel, and the Sapphire. The author found 15 examples of Pope portraying the Mammy character during the nine sampled episodes. Pope acts as the Mammy since her entire company of Pope and Associates is based on helping and caring for the rich, White and powerful. She consistently acts as an unrelenting advocate for her clients. She redefines the role of the caregiver because she is being personally sought out and paid to do so, even though she is still caring for rich White men and their children as Mammies did during slavery.

For example, during season 2, episode 17, titled "Snake in the Garden," Hollis Doyle, a rich White lobbyist for a Texas energy company, seeks out Pope's services in order to find his kidnapped daughter. Pope genuinely does not like Doyle and has had countless issues with him. Pope still takes on the case and works tirelessly for Doyle even when her associates were against helping him because in the words of Pope "even the devil loves his kids" (Rhimes, 2012).

One of *Scandal's* major themes involves the illicit interracial relationship between African-American Washington, D.C., fixer Pope and the White married Republican president of the United States Fitzgerald Grant. This overarching theme alone already paints Pope as the Jezebel. Pope contradicts the Mammy stereotype: "Black women are considered unattractive and unmarriageable . . . [and] are rarely depicted as objects of desire on television" (Warner, 2015, p. 18). Pope is already more closely related to the Jezebel since Pope is portrayed as being a beautiful and desired character by many. There were only four instances where Pope truly embodied the Jezebel and acted as a seductress. There were 10 instances of the opposite where powerful men tried to seduce her. In addition to her affair with the president, Pope is also seduced by Captain Jake Ballard, who worked in the intelligence department at the Pentagon and later acted as commander for a top-secret CIA subdivision called B6-13. These two powerful White men continuously tried to seduce Pope. During season 3, episode 2, titled "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," the president of the United States admits his love for Pope and his willingness to do anything for her, even if it means divorcing his wife and leaving office (Rhimes, 2012).

Pope runs a very highly regarded crisis management firm in *Scandal*. She and her associates refer to themselves as being "gladiators in suits." The term gladiator in this way attests to "the level of professionalism, dedication and execution that Olivia Pope embodies" (Evans, 2014, p. 8). As a gladiator, she also embodies the Sapphire, since in media "Black women are often portrayed as loud and/or angry" (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, & Stevenson, 2014, p. 92). In all of the sampled episodes, Pope is shown taking charge of situations whether it involves talking back to political officials, throwing out the director of the CIA, or threatening the U.S. Attorney's Office. In the pilot episode of *Scandal*, titled "Sweet Baby," Pope is introduced in a scene where she stands up to Ukrainian mobsters (Rhimes, 2012).

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Through analyzing nine sampled episodes of *Scandal*, the author has concluded that Pope possesses qualities from all three popular African-American television stereotypes. However, she reflects different aspects of the stereotypes. Her Mammy qualities show that she is good at her job since she is always supportive of her clients, regardless of how much power they may have. Her affair with the president paints her as a Jezebel, but she tries repeatedly to end the relationship, only to have the president continue to entice her. She may be portrayed as a Sapphire for yelling at high-level political officials, but unlike the Sapphires of the past, Pope has the education and the expertise to confidently go up against these high ranking officials.

## V. Conclusion

In 2012, *Scandal* premiered on the American Broadcast Company network to 7.33 million viewers (Bibel, 2012). In 2014, *Scandal's* 4th season premiered to 11.96 million viewers. (Kondolojy, 2014). *Scandal's* popularity has not been affected because African-American women held a starring role in a mainstream network television drama. Pope does embody characteristics of the Mammy, the Jezebel, and the Sapphire, but she does so in ways that are not often seen in today's mainstream media.

This study has its limitations. Only 9 out of the 69 episodes that have aired were sampled. Future studies may sample more episodes for more accurate analysis. A similar study can be conducted by analyzing Rhimes' newest primetime television show, *How to Get Away With Murder*, which also stars an African-American female, Viola Davis.

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# Human Rights Framing in U.S. Newspaper Coverage of the Sochi Olympic Preparations

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## Abstract

*Every two years, the global spotlight shines on the Olympics and the nation hosting the worldwide event, particularly the country's record on human rights. This project looked at how two American newspapers, The New York Times and The Washington Post, examined human rights in Russia in their coverage of the Sochi Games before their start in order to determine and analyze the framing of this mega-event to a U.S. audience. This paper analyzed content in 170 articles published in the two years leading up to the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games.*

## I. Introduction

Every two years, the global spotlight shines on the Olympics and the nation hosting them. The Games provide an example of a “mega-event,” which means a globally recognized occurrence of “short-lived collective cultural actions” that are perceived to have “extra-ordinary status” based on their large scale and scope (Xi, 2013). These mega-events attract media engagement from around the globe, and their host nations have long used such events as opportunities to reframe their national narratives and achieve greater status in the international community (Roche, 2000; Black, 2006). In addition to international recognition, mega-events give nations the chance to appease and unify their domestic population and “instill pride and loyalty” (Xi, 2013). Nations compete for the daunting task of hosting the Olympics in the hopes of reaping these benefits, but host nations also face great risk. Winning the right to host does not guarantee achieving these goals. If a host nation does not meet international expectations, the result can dramatically set the nation back in its quest for international prestige and domestic unity: “A failed event with all the world watching can render a government politically vulnerable at home and abroad” (Giffard & Rivenburgh, 2000, p. 10). This paper seeks to explore this tension between the potential gains and the possibility of a globally visible failure, one of the most pressing issues modern Olympic hosts face, through the case of the most recent Olympic host, Sochi, Russia.

The Olympic Games are inextricably linked to human rights. According to the charter of the International Olympic Committee, “The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play” (International Olympic Committee,

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2014). Therefore, by hosting the Games, a host country invites examination and often criticism of its human rights record. This project looks at how American newspapers examined human rights in their coverage of the Sochi Games before their start in order to determine and analyze the framing of this mega-event to a U.S. audience.

## II. Literature Review

This paper reviewed literature on framing theory and how newspaper coverage has been affected by their own countries' relations with the Olympic host countries in general and in association with human rights issues.

### ***Framing Theory***

Since McCombs and Shaw (1972) developed the agenda-setting theory, scholars have been examining the salience of media coverage. They defined agenda setting as the selection of particular information to convey a story over other information, which they suggested could shape the public's perception of what is important. Entman (1993) later expanded upon this theory, widening the view to the concept of media framing, which addresses journalist actions of selecting certain parts of a perceived reality to communicate and "promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p.52). Scheufele (1999) took the idea even further by developing a process model of framing that demonstrates the interdependent relationships between the frames set by the media and the frames demanded by the audience. The concepts of framing and agenda setting form the basis of journalism research as studies like these reveal the ways in which media producers intentionally or unintentionally convey messages to their audiences, which in turn influences the events and information that audiences perceive as newsworthy or pertinent to their lives.

### ***Framing and Public Opinion***

Using framing theory to analyze international news coverage, researchers revealed a correlation between negative media coverage and negative public opinion of each nation. Besova and Cooley (2009), for example, examined United States and United Kingdom print coverage of nine nations and revealed a correlation between the tone of the news coverage, whether it depicted a foreign nation in a positive or negative light, and the public's opinion of the nation. Wanta, Golan, and Lee (2004) arrived at a similar conclusion through an analysis of U.S. broadcast coverage, although the authors found a correlation only between negative coverage and negative public opinion.

### ***Narratives of Mega-Events***

As mentioned before, mega-events attract international coverage and, therefore, magnify a host nation in the international community. Black (2006) analyzed the narratives these host nations constructed and packaged to spread to the global community. For example, he found that, in hosting the World Cup in 2010, South Africa sought to combat its previous global narrative, which defined the country as a developing nation on the world's poorest continent still struggling to overcome the effects of apartheid. Xi (2013) similarly focused on the symbolic significance of mega-events for host nations, but limited the study only to how this symbolism affected the nation's image domestically. The study analyzed China Central Television's broadcast of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics focusing on both the performance and how it was framed through the details that the cameras chose to highlight. Through this analysis, the study determined the modes with which this "media ritual" communicated a narrative of pride in a national Chinese identity to its people.

Recognizing the symbolic importance these events hold to their hosts, Adranovich, Burbank, and Heying (2001) have defined the idea of "the mega-event strategy," which host nations and cities adopt in order to stimulate and justify development. Analyzing the Olympic bids of Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Salt Lake City, the research found that all three cities used rhetoric focused on economic growth and image enhancement on the global stage to promote themselves to the IOC. The study also acknowledges the risks of this strategy, calling it extreme: "Because it is contingent on bringing an external event to the city . . . it requires the city

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to obtain the external event, and stage it in such a way as to achieve the city's goals of attracting sponsors, tourists, and positive publicity" (Adranovich et al., 2001, p. 117). Giffard and Rivenburgh's (2000) study exemplifies the risks associated with this strategy because when the Western media covers media events in developing nations, the coverage is much more likely to be negative than positive.

Looking specifically at Olympic coverage, Dai (2006) found that U.S. framing of Olympic coverage of a particular nation changed depending on the cordiality of the relationship between that nation and the United States. Yao (2010) arrived at similar conclusions through his examination of American coverage of four Olympics hosted by nations that had been in conflict with the U.S. government, the USSR in 1980, South Korea in 1988, Spain in 1992 and China in 2008. Coverage tended to focus on political frames, especially during the 1980 Moscow Games and the 2008 Beijing Games (Yao, 2010). Framing strategies are not static, however. Examining frames used in U.S. media coverage of the 2004 Athens Games, Zaharopoulos (2004) found that the U.S. media changed their framing tactics as the Games progressed, favoring conflict frames before the Games began while favoring positive frames while the Games were played.

### ***Framing and Human Rights Coverage***

Other scholars applied framing theory to Western coverage of human rights violations. Caliendo, Gibney, and Payne (1999) found increases in human rights violations led to increased media coverage of those violations but that some countries did not follow this pattern. Heinze and Freedman (2010) also revealed uneven coverage showing that Western newspapers tended to focus on the Middle East and parts of Russia while paying little attention to Latin America, Europe, and the North Caucasus. Neier (1996) and Ramos, Ron, and Thoms (2007) focused on the political and economic implications of these disparities in coverage. Neier (1996) revealed that U.S. media was less likely to criticize nations deemed of "geopolitical or economic significance," citing past U.S. relations with Russia and China as examples.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States was reluctant to criticize human rights abuses in Chechnya in order to support the growth of Russian democracy (Neier, 1996). This pattern repeated itself with China. The U.S. media was less critical of China's human rights record when looking to grant the nation most-favored-nation status in the hopes that maintaining trade would be a more effective way to encourage better treatment of its people. The opposite occurred however, as China as an economic power has been able to put pressure on nations that criticize its human rights practices (Neier, 1996).

On the other hand, Ramos et al. (2007) found nations with lower per capita GDPs tended to receive more critical press coverage. Another group that frequently received negative coverage for their human rights practices is the so-called "declared enemies" of the United States. "Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria are all on Washington's list of countries that have supported terrorism, and the United States has been willing to denounce their gross abuses of human rights" (Neier, 1996, p. 96).

Cassara (1998) provided insight into how human rights stories are covered. Results showed that human rights stories tended to be longer than an average story and were often supplied by newspaper staff members or stringers in the affected region rather than wire services.

Similar trends were appearing in broadcast news as well even though "networks are relying on less expensive, and often less experienced, freelancers and independent contractors as well as video news agencies" (Hachten, 2005, p. 128). These findings have major implications about the breadth and quality of the modern day newsgathering and reporting system.

Additionally, with the increasing prominence of terrorism, human rights have fallen out of the global spotlight (Black & Bezanson, 2004). In the modern era, foreign news is usually covered only when events abroad are believed to have a domestic effect: "Now the consensus in the news business appears to be that you can rely on international news to turn a profit only when it is actually domestic news. The most certain way to become domestic news is through a U.S. military intervention" (Hachten, 2005, p. 124). This leads to greater coverage of wars, international conflict and business and less coverage of human rights. When the news does cover foreign news, the stories often reinforce stereotypes: "Stories from Colombia were often about drugs; in Germany about neo-Nazis" (Hachten, 2005, p. 126). This type of coverage provides a limited view of the actual situations and people within these nations.

### ***Human Rights and the Olympics***

Human rights do play an interesting role in the Olympics as the International Olympic Committee

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promotes human rights in its charter, yet must balance these tenets with a commitment to remaining apolitical, even while cooperating with nations with restrictive regimes (International Olympic Committee, 2014). Many scholars have, therefore, analyzed the effects of the Olympic Games on human rights. Liu (2007) found the rapid democratization in South Korea while hosting the 1988 Seoul Olympics and the effects of South Africa's 28-year ban from the Games. These examples were used to argue that Olympics can be used as an incentive to improve nations and spark human rights reform. This incentive works through the prominence of the Games and international pressure due to them. "There is no question that the visibility and significance of the Olympic Games opened the playing field to all South Africans, regardless of race. More than international condemnation or charters, the Games create a logical opportunity to bring about reform in a way that is widely visible," Liu (2007, p. 220) wrote. Heinze and Freedman (2010) also found that the hosting the Olympic Games led to increased human rights coverage: "Before the Beijing Olympics of 2008, mass media reports on China specifically focusing on human rights tended to be more sporadic than continuous" (p. 500).

Black and Bezanson (2004) examined the effects of the Seoul Olympics as well as their implications for the then upcoming Beijing Games in 2008. They argued that while the international media scrutiny that came with being an Olympic host nation contributed to South Korea's transformation from an authoritarian government, the transformation is also due to rising expectations from their increasingly Westernized population. A comparative analysis revealed a similar situation with the Chinese population leading up to the Games, but with significant differences because of China's economic power and the increased importance of the Olympic Games to corporate sponsors, both of which the researchers argued could discourage many nations from speaking out in opposition to China or its Games.

U.S. media cannot help but to focus on human rights issues because of the relationship between the United States and Russia during the time period leading up to the Games. Yao (2010) and Dai (2006) found that the nature of Olympic coverage changes based on the relationship between the United States and the nation of interest; and during 2013, the United States had a tense relationship with Russia because, among other things, the nation granted asylum to a U.S. fugitive Edward Snowden, who was deemed as national security threat. These tensions may have contributed to increased human rights coverage and criticism in conjunction with Olympic coverage.

Using Caliendo et al.'s (1999) definition of human rights, which "focuses solely on government-sanctioned physical abuses of citizens," this research examined the ways that U.S. media frame Olympic preparations in the host city of Sochi, Russia, for the 2014 Winter Games. Although researchers have often considered global interactions, the author focused on only two elite U.S. newspapers known for international coverage. She looked into the issue of how human rights issues, including abuses, were portrayed in that coverage. This analysis is pertinent to examining how key U.S. media players inform their audiences about Russia when the nation is emerging in the post-Soviet era through a prominent role in the international community, while facing global criticism over its human rights records (Giffard & Rivenburgh, 2000; Neier, 1996).

### **Research Questions**

Drawing on the previous research, this paper sought to answer these questions:

RQ1: How deeply *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* report news on the Sochi Winter Olympic Games in the years leading up to the 2014 Games?

RQ2: How were human rights in Russia addressed in this coverage?

RQ3: What other frames were formulated to cover issues that are not related to human rights issues?

RQ4: How was their coverage in RQ3 affected by human rights issues?

RQ5: Does the nature of the Olympic coverage reflect the political relationship between Russia, the host nation, and the United States?

### **III. Methods**

This study relied on a content analysis of U.S. newspaper coverage of the Olympics when Russia

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prepared for hosting the Games. The analysis sought to identify the prominent frames, especially focusing on the human rights situations in Russia as identified in the Amnesty International reports. Content analysis deals with “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” that can be applied to “written text, transcribed speech, verbal interactions, visual images, characterizations, nonverbal behaviors, sound events, or any other message type” (Neuendorf, 2002, pp. 1, 24).

This paper examined articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* because they represent major competing newspapers covering national and international issues. These articles were selected through searches in the ProQuest database, using search terms “Russia” and “Olympics.” Articles were excluded when they did not address the Sochi Games. The sample included news articles and editorials published in 2012 and 2013 — the two years preceding the Games. In total, this paper ended up coding 170 articles, 93 from *The Times* and 77 from *The Post*.

These 170 stories were divided into three types based on how much they dealt with human rights issues. If a story dealt with only human rights issues, it was classified into Pure Type A: Pure Human Rights Issues; if it dealt with human rights issues along with another issue that is not related to human rights issues, it was classified into Mixed Type B; and if it dealt with one issue that is not related to human rights issues, it was grouped into Pure Type C: Pure Non-Human Rights Issue. For in-depth analysis later, Mixed Type B was sometimes combined with Pure Type A, and other times, with Pure Type C, depending on the purpose of further analysis.

### ***Olympic Focus***

To answer RQ1 on how deeply each newspaper covered the Sochi Olympic Games, the author coded all articles into three categories: (1) whether the Olympics was the *primary* focus in the article; (2) a *moderate* focus; or (3) a *minimal* focus. If the main topical frame was about the Games, an article was coded as primary focus, category 1. In this case, articles may touch on the Olympics and other issues, but these articles were judged to be published because of the Olympics, not other issues.

In other words, the Olympics was of the primary interest to newspapers, so these articles would not have been published without the Olympic Games in Russia.

Moderate focus, category 2, was assigned if articles referred to the Olympics as being somehow linked to other events. The games could have been mentioned several times, but still, the Olympics were not the main focus of the article. Such an article might have been written even if the Olympics was not scheduled, yet the fact of the upcoming Olympics played a large enough role in the piece that their mention was significant to the story.

Minimum focus, category 3, was assigned if the Olympics was mentioned only in passing, almost as an aside. Minimal focus included cases where the Olympics was mentioned only once or where the reference to the Olympics occurred several paragraphs down from the top of the piece, so these articles could still have been written even without the Sochi Olympics.

### ***Human Rights Issues***

To answer RQ2 on how two newspapers addressed human rights in Russia, the research paper analyzed only when they dealt with human rights issues entirely (Pure Type A) or partially (Mixed Type B). To detect what kind of frames the two newspapers used to cover human rights issues, the author reviewed relevant literature below.

Many scholars have studied mass media’s coverage of human rights issues. Caliendo et al. (1999) studied *The New York Times* coverage of human rights violation. Ramos et al. (2007) studied what influenced mass media’s coverage of events and abuses in explicit human rights. They examined coverage of news media in Northern hemisphere, such as *Economist*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *Guardian*, *Le Monde* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Heinze and Freedman (2010) studied how mass media distorted public perceptions about human rights using *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian* and the *Financial Times*.

Following the footsteps of the three studies above, this study also reviewed the Amnesty International’s *Annual Reports* since it offered appropriate benchmarks for human rights by “highlight[ing] issues of global concern in an ongoing, regularly updated format. The reports covered a wide range of states, aiming at an overall proportion between the frankness of its condemnations and the gravity of the abuses that have

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occurred” (Heinze & Freedman, 2010, p. 497). Additionally, Ramos et al. (2007) have shown that Amnesty International, the largest international rights group in the world, has some influence in shaping the media’s agenda on human rights. Themes and events mentioned in the Amnesty International *Annual Reports* were used to design the frames for this study.

First, coverage of the human rights situations in Russia was coded into four categories, depending on how critical each article was with the human rights issues: (1) the critical category, (2) the neutral category if human rights violations were examined but not explicitly or implicitly criticized, (3) the superficial category if the human rights situation was passingly mentioned, and (4) the positive category if human rights were mentioned to describe that the country has improved in their situation.

Second, articles on human rights issues were divided into seven frames, depending on each article’s theme: 1) the freedom of expression frame that deals with free speech, free press, and the right to petition or otherwise express oneself; 2) the violence or threats frame that deals with government or police-sanctioned aggression or the threat of aggression; 3) the unenforced laws frame that covers citizens not receiving fair trials or other legal protections that they are entitled to; 4) the women’s rights frame that deals with the oppression of women; 5) the forced eviction frame that describes the government-sanctioned relocation of residents because of the Olympic Games; 6) the labor exploitation frame that describes unfair or exploitative labor practices; and 7) the government negligence frame that describes situations in which the government should have intervened to prevent a human rights situation. When articles had more than one frame, they were coded into multiple frames.

### ***Other topics than human rights issues***

To answer RQ3 on non-human rights topics and RQ4 on how coverage of these topics was affected by human rights issues, Pure C Type articles were checked for their frames, along with Mixed Type B articles or separately from them. These articles were divided into eight frames with each article coded into one dominant frame.

1) The security frame deals with the safety and security within Russia. It includes articles on terrorist attacks within the country, threats in the North Caucasus, and the security of the Olympic Games.

2) The Olympic preparations frame deals with the ways that Russia or Sochi was preparing to host the Olympic Games. This included articles on the Olympic infrastructure, the torch relay, and snow plans for the area.

3) The U.S.-Russia relations frame focuses specifically on the relationship between the two countries, how one country or its people were responding to the other or how Russia was interacting with American companies. This frame includes articles about possible boycotts of Sochi, Edward Snowden’s asylum in Russia, and President Obama’s meetings with Vladimir Putin.

4) The Russian interior frame, focusing on internal issues within Russia, includes articles about elections in Russia, features on Russian cities, and the death of a Russian crime boss.

5) The tourism frame includes articles about Sochi as a tourist destination or where to stay or what to see in the city.

6) The IOC frame focuses on the IOC and their reaction to any issues facing the Games.

7) The Russian international relations frame focuses on Russia’s relationship with other nations than the United States. This includes articles about Russia interacting with other nations in its neighboring region or Europe.

8) The sports frame focuses on the athletes or athletic aspect of the Games. It includes those about drug testing, other world championships or tournaments, and features on specific athletes.

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## IV. Findings and Discussion

### *Overall Olympic Coverage*

The Olympics was most likely to be mentioned passively. As Table 1 shows, the minimal category accounted for 42% of the coverage, followed by 38% for primary and 19% for moderate. This pattern was consistent across both newspapers.

In *The New York Times*, 43% of articles mentioned the Olympics passively, followed by 37% for primary, and 20% for moderate. The three categories accounted for 42%, 40%, and 18% of articles each in *The New York Times*.

**Table 1: Importance of the Olympic Games in newspapers' coverage**

	Primary	Moderate	Minimal	Totals
<i>The New York Times</i>	34 (37%)	19 (20%)	40 (43%)	93
<i>The Washington Post</i>	31 (40%)	14 (18%)	32 (42%)	77
Total	65 (38%)	33 (19%)	72 (42%)	170

These findings reveal some important trends in coverage. First, both U.S. papers often took similar approaches. The largest proportion of articles published by both newspapers contained minimal mentions of the Olympic Games. In both papers, a large part of the coverage was not specifically about the Olympics, but still the editors and reporters made the editorial decision to mention the Games. These similarities persisted, although a majority of stories were originated by the staff instead of wire services, indicating the editorial direction of the two papers.

### *Coverage of Human Rights Issues*

Among the total 170 articles, 112 covered either purely human rights issues (64 articles under Pure Type A) or partially (48 articles under Mixed Type B), as shown in Table 2. This subsection analyzed articles under only these two types, excluding 58 articles under Pure Type C, which dealt with only topics other than human rights issues.

In terms of the portion of articles that were assigned to human rights issues, *The New York Times* had 58 articles out of 93 — 34 articles (37%) under Pure Type A, and 24 articles (26%) under Mixed Type B. *The Washington Post* has a higher ratio of 39% and 31%, respectively.

**Table 2. Presence of Human Rights Issues in Articles**

Type	<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>The Washington Post</i>		Both Papers	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Pure Type A	34	37	30	39	64	38
Mixed Type B	24	26	24	31	48	28
Pure Type C	35	38	23	30	58	34
Total	93	100	77	100	170	100

\*Note. Because of rounding, the sum of some categories might exceed 100%.

In terms of attitudes toward Russia through articles that covered human rights issues, these newspapers were different. *The Post* was more likely to overtly criticize Russia or cover its human rights in a critical way as evident by adopting the critical frame for 59% of its articles, while, *The Times* was more likely to cover human rights in a neutral way by adopting the neutral frame for 38% of its articles. *The Times* even published one article that mentioned improvements in human rights violations. This difference between the two papers might be because *The Post's* sample included more editorials and thus was more likely to have articles that



demonstrated an overt opinion about Russia's human rights. On the other hand, *The Times* tended to cover human rights issues more superficially than *The Post*. Since critical coverage has a correlation with negative public opinion (Besova & Cooley, 2009; Wanta et al., 2004), this difference might be explained by the difference in the characteristics of their readers: *The Post's* readers might tend to disapprove of Russia's human rights more than *The Times'*.

**Table 3: Attitude of newspapers in coverage of human rights**

	Critical	Neutral	Superficial	Positive	Total
<i>The New York Times</i>	20 (34%)	22 (38%)	15 (26%)	1 (2%)	58
<i>The Washington Post</i>	32 (59%)	15 (28%)	7 (13%)	0 (0%)	54
Total	52 (46%)	37 (33%)	22 (20%)	1 (1%)	112

Articles that covered human rights violations were divided into seven frames, as shown in Table 4. Among them, freedom of expression was the most common type, appearing in 87% of the articles. There was not much difference between the two newspapers in this area. *The New York Times* kept freedom of expression coverage at 88% of human rights coverage, the largest proportion; so did *The Washington Post* with 85%.

The next most common type of human rights coverage was violence/threats, appearing in 15% of the articles covering human rights. This frame made up 12% of the coverage in *The Times*, and 19% of the human rights coverage in *The Post*.

The third most common type of human rights coverage differed for each paper. For *The Times*, it was unenforced laws, which made up 12% of their coverage, actually tied for second place with violence/threats frame in *The New York Times*. For *The Post*, it was labor exploitation, which made up 13% of its coverage.

**Table 4: Human rights violation coverage by frames**

	Freedom of Expression	Violence/Threats	Unenforced Laws	Women's Rights	Forced Eviction	Exploited Workers	Government Negligence	Total*
<i>The New York Times</i>	51 (88%)	7 (12%)	7 (12%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	58
<i>The Washington Post</i>	46 (85%)	10 (19%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)	4 (7%)	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	54
Total	97 (87%)	17 (15%)	11 (10%)	1 (1%)	7 (6%)	10 (9%)	5 (4%)	112

*Note.* If articles are counted for all categories, their sum exceeds the total because some articles had multiple frames.

In both papers the most popular months to publish articles on human rights — and the Olympics in general — were August and December 2013. These periods were the time for major news stories: An anti-gay propaganda law was passed in July in Russia, and December was the month closest to the start of the Sochi Winter Games.

Overall, both papers had fairly similar coverage of human rights violations. Freedom of expression made up the vast majority of coverage in both *The Times* and *The Post*. These articles dealt mainly with the discriminatory LGBTQ legislation or the suppression of protests. The anti-gay propaganda law illegalized any form of "gay propaganda" that could be seen by or made available to anyone under the age of 18; and the Pussy Riot punk band members were arrested after their anti-government performance in a church. The prominence of these two issues in the newspapers is particularly interesting because Amnesty International pointed out these two cases in its report though these were only matters that the newspapers and the Amnesty International were commonly concerned about.

The newspapers began to publish articles about the law starting July, a little later than the Amnesty International, which reported in April 2013 that the anti-gay propaganda law came into effect. This topic then dominated the two papers' coverage through August and continued to receive significant coverage throughout

the rest of the year. The Pussy Riot coverage, on the other hand, spiked at the time of their arrest and the time leading up to their releases from prison. This style of coverage makes sense because the incident with Pussy Riot was well suited to episodic, event-style coverage, while the aftermath of the anti-gay propaganda law was suited for more thematic coverage examining the ins and outs and overarching implications of the law or in-depth human interest coverage focusing on those affected by its implementation (Iyengar, 1991).

The focus on freedom of expression was probably because of the nature of the journalism profession, whose members appreciate personal freedom. According to Andsager and Miller's (1994) study, journalists were more likely than the general public to support both media rights and freedom of expression and consider them to be integral to the maintenance of the liberty promised by the American government. For example, the Society of Professional Journalists cites the following rights in its mission statement: ". . . to maintain constant vigilance in protection of the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press" (Society of Professional Journalists, 2015).

But there were also differences between the NGO and the newspapers: For example, in their dealing with problems in the North Caucasus, Russia's unstable region that had long harbored separatist movements. The newspaper articles about the North Caucasus mainly dealt with the insecurity in the region and how the region related to the security of the Olympic Games, rarely mentioning human rights. In contrast, the Amnesty International Reports for 2012 and 2013 mentioned a number of forced disappearances occurring in the region. As security increased in the region to accommodate for the upcoming Olympic Games, the NGO noted that the local and federal governments increasingly violated human rights or poorly treated the people in North Caucasus.

The newspapers covered the increases in security in the region mostly as a response to terrorist attacks and bombings but did not often mention human rights. These findings are consistent with those of Heinze and Freedman (2010), who found that human rights in the North Caucasus often received little coverage from the Western press. Additionally, these findings matched the conclusions of Black and Bezanson (2004), who found that human rights violations tend to take a back seat in coverage when the United States is concerned about terrorism. The U.S. tried to help Russia combat any possible terrorist attack as it was preparing to host the Olympic Games.

### ***Coverage of non-human rights issues***

There were 58 articles that dealt with only one frame that is not related to human rights issues (Pure Type C) and 48 articles that dealt with human right issues and non-human right issues (Mixed Type B). For further analysis, only 106 stories under Pure Type C and Mixed Type B were divided into eight frames, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Topical Frames for Articles on Non-Human Rights Violation**

8 Frames	<i>The New York Times</i>			<i>The Washington Post</i>			Both Papers		
	Mixed Type B	Pure Type C	Combined	Mixed Type B	Pure Type C	Combined	Mixed Type B	Pure Type C	Combined
Security	1 (5%)	10 (29%)	11 (19%)	2 (8%)	3 (13%)	5 (11%)	3 (6%)	13 (22%)	16 (15%)
Russia Interior	4 (17%)	5 (14%)	9 (15%)	2 (8%)	4 (17%)	6 (13%)	6 (13%)	9 (16%)	15 (14%)
U.S.-Russia Relations	6 (25%)	4 (11%)	10 (17%)	15 (63%)	6 (26%)	21 (45%)	21 (44%)	10 (17%)	31 (29%)
Russian International Relations	1 (4%)	2 (6%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	4 (4%)
Olympic Preparations	3 (13%)	9 (26%)	12 (20%)	4 (17%)	7 (30%)	11 (23%)	7 (15%)	16 (28%)	23 (22%)
IOC	3 (13%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	4 (4%)
Sport	6 (25%)	4 (11%)	10 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (13%)	4 (7%)	10 (9%)
Tourism	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	3 (3%)
Subtotal	24	35	59	24	23	47	48	58	106

According to the combined result for both papers, articles about U.S.-Russia Relations were the most common frame, making up 29% of the total coverage, followed by Olympic Preparations (22%), Security (15%), and Russia Interior (14%). When all the articles mentioning human rights were excluded, however, the top ranks were changed in Pure Type C. The top four in this Pure Type C were in the order of Olympic Preparations (28%), Security (22%), U.S.-Russia Relations (17%), and Russia Interior (16%). Even though combined statistics shared the same three top frames – U.S. – Russia Relations, Security and Russia Interior, analysis of only the Pure Type C saw a shift in their rank orders. The stories on U.S. – Russia Relations were heavily covered in the context of human rights issues, so the issue of U.S. – Russia Relations was shifted from No. 1 frame in combined statistics to No. 3 frame in the Pure Type C. The other two frames accordingly go up by one rank in the Pure Type. (Refer to last three columns in Table 5.)

The lowered ranking of U.S. – Russia Relations implies that human rights were often considered salient in articles dealing with the relationship between the two countries. Meanwhile the fact that Olympic Preparations articles made up the largest proportion in the Pure Type C demonstrates that editors and reporters less often saw human rights as salient to telling the story of Russia's Olympic preparation. Instead, these stories tended to focus only on the torch race or solely on Olympic construction, not necessarily the work exploitation and forced evictions that came along with it.

When the same kind of analysis was done by newspapers, Olympic Preparation, Security and U.S.-Russia mostly occupied the top three categories for each of these two newspapers, although some differences in their rank orders existed between them. In the case of *The New York Times*, Olympic Preparations (20%) was No. 1 frame under combined statistics, followed by Security (19%) as No. 2, and U.S. – Russia Relations (17%) and Sports (17%) tied for third place. When articles mentioning human rights were excluded by analyzing only the Pure Type C, the pattern changed. The most prominent frame became Security (29%), followed by Olympic Preparations (26%), and Russia Interior (14%), which moved up its rank and beat U.S. – Russia Relations (11%) and Sports (11%). (Refer to columns 2 – 4 in Table 5.)

In the case of *The Washington Post*, the top four frames under combined statistics were in the order of U.S. – Russia Relations (45%), Olympic Preparations (23%), Russia Interior (13%), and Security (11%). When only Pure Type C articles were analyzed, the most prominent frame became Olympic Preparation (30%), followed by U.S. – Russia Relations (26%), Russia Interior (17%), and Security (13%). (Refer to columns 5 – 7 in Table 5)

There was one frame that was not affected by human rights issues. All three tourism stories were covered by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* purely from the standpoint of tourism.

## V. Conclusion

Overall, the results revealed that *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* followed similar patterns through their coverage of the Olympics in Sochi. The Olympics was most likely to be mentioned passively, rather than the main topic of articles when the Olympics was covered.

Human rights issues were the dominant topic for the two newspapers, and they were covered mostly through the frame of violations of freedom of expression even though *The Post* was more critical toward Russia than *The Times*. The emphasis of newspapers on freedom of expression violation was the same with the *Annual Reports*. But the two groups sometimes differed on terrorist attacks because the former looked at them through the frame of security while the latter did through human rights violation.

Future studies could compare how newspapers covered Olympic Games differently, depending on the characteristics of countries. Some countries have respected human rights, others have not. Some countries like Canada and the United Kingdom, both U.S. allies, could be compared with other countries, like Brazil, which is set to host the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016, or China, which hosted the Beijing Olympics in 2008, to examine how U.S. newspapers covered their respective Olympics based on Olympic host countries' relationship with U.S.

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# Unrecognized Potential: Media Framing of Hitler's Rise to Power, 1930-1933

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## Abstract

*In an effort to understand how Americans regarded Adolph Hitler's influence in Germany and beyond as he navigated the country's political landscape, and ultimately established the Third Reich, this research examines his portrayal in American media in the early 1930s. The research uses media framing theory to assess newspaper coverage of Hitler published in The New York Times, The Christian Science Monitor, and The Washington Post between 1930 and 1933. An analysis of more than 400 articles revealed "credible" frames that focused on his persuasive appeal, popular support, and political clout.*

## I. Introduction

In 1930, Adolph Hitler had been absent from American media coverage for nearly five years. Following his release from prison in 1924, he received only brief and infrequent mentions in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*, papers that had carried hundreds of articles about him when he tried and failed to overthrow the Bavarian government the previous year. But in 1930, just three years before he would be appointed chancellor, Hitler once again attracted the attention of the American press as his popularity rose amid the most devastating economic downturn in history. This research examines Hitler's portrayal in American media in the early 1930s in an effort to understand how Americans regarded his influence in Germany and beyond as he navigated the country's shifting political landscape and ultimately established the Third Reich.

This research uses media framing theory to evaluate coverage of Hitler published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Christian Science Monitor* between January 1930 and April 1933. Nearly 3,500 articles appearing in the three papers contained at least brief mentions of Hitler, but far less offered substantial information about the perceived scope of his political influence. An analysis of more than 400 articles revealed "credible" frames that focused on his persuasive appeal, popular support, and political clout. It also revealed "non-credible" frames that undermined his perceived influence by emphasizing his nonpolitical background, his Austrian heritage, and the idea that his party's relative popularity within Germany would fade before he could effect any lasting change. The majority of articles published prior to his appointment as chancellor in January 1933 contained non-credible frames, a trend that continued throughout his first month in office. But after the Nationalist bloc earned a slim majority in the Reichstag following the elections held in early March 1933, the number of articles containing credible frames increased, suggesting

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that he was consistently framed as a credible power only after it was suspected that Germany's system of parliamentary democracy would soon end.

## II. Background

Hitler entered politics at the end of 1918 after recovering from the injuries he incurred while serving in the Bavarian List Regiment during World War I. His success in the German army and, later, German politics, would have been somewhat unforeseeable during his childhood and early adolescence, which he spent in a small Austrian town across the Bavarian border. There, he was exposed to Georg Ritter von Schönerer's ideology of pan-German nationalism and embraced the idea that the two countries should unite and become one Reich.<sup>1</sup> But his Austrian citizenship would prove a contentious issue as he rose to power in Germany, and many American journalists drew attention to the discrepancy between his background and his politics in ways that often framed him as a non-credible power.

At sixteen, his political inclinations began to take shape. He developed a love of Germany and a hatred of Austria-Hungary, where Germans were outnumbered four to one by other nationalities. He spent his time studying politics while pursuing his goal of becoming an artist, but the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts rejected him twice, and he failed to make a living by selling rather crude paintings and drawings upon moving to Vienna in 1908.<sup>2</sup> Much like his non-German citizenship, his brief and unsuccessful career as an artist constituted a key component of the non-credible frame and continued to appear in news coverage through the beginning of 1933.

In Vienna, Hitler was poor and unsuccessful by most standards, but his time there was nonetheless of critical importance to his political success. While there, he studied closely the successes and failures of Austria's three major political parties and learned to inculcate the masses using propaganda and what he called "spiritual and physical terror," a tactic meant to coerce a populace into mental and physical submission by exploiting human weakness.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the frenzy of Austrian politics, Vienna also exposed Hitler to extreme anti-Semitism, a sentiment he quickly internalized. In 1913, he packed his few belongings and took his ideas to Germany, and American journalists noted his nationalistic, anti-Semitic leanings when he entered politics five years later. Descriptions of his expert use of propaganda and immense oratorical skills, which he further developed after leaving Austria, often appeared in articles that framed him as a credible power.

Hitler's skill at rallying the masses with propaganda and oratory did not develop until after World War I and the revolution that followed it, two events that greatly influenced his political and racial ideas and rendered much of Germany fertile ground for extremism.<sup>4</sup> The political climate in Bavaria proved especially contentious — the right and left, both vying for influence, competed for control over the state. Hitler began attending courses in "political insurrection" taught by the German army, and during one lecture, he spouted an anti-Semitic tirade that earned him a job as an educational officer with the army in 1919.<sup>5</sup> It became his responsibility to generate support for the anti-Republican movement while honing his oratorical skills.<sup>6</sup> In September of that year, he was ordered to assess the influence of the German Workers' Party, a small reactionary group that became the National Socialist German Workers' Party (later shortened to "Nazi") in summer 1920. There, Hitler verbally attacked a professor who suggested Bavaria should secede and form a South German nation with Austria, and the party leaders invited Hitler to join their movement and develop the party's propaganda and nationalist and anti-Semitic ideology. Within a few years of joining, he became well known in nationalist circles as the "German Mussolini," a catchphrase that often appeared, in various forms, in American news coverage of Hitler's political activity. Articles that contained frames that supported his credibility generally likened his political wherewithal with that of Mussolini, while those that contained non-credible frames often described him as a "would-be Mussolini" or a man who was attempting to imitate the Italian fascist leader.

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1 William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 6; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 27-37, 51.

2 Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (New York: Knopf, 1922), 7-10, 20.

3 Kershaw, *Hitler: A Biography*, 31-33, 36-37, 42; Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 22-23.

4 Kershaw, *Hitler: A Biography*, 47.

5 Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 35.

6 Ibid.

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The party grew in influence, and Hitler became its de facto leader in 1921 amid the political and economic turbulence that followed the German Revolution and the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, with its war guilt clause and 132-billion-mark reparations bill. Party membership increased from about 1,100 in June 1920 to about 20,000 in early 1923, the year Hitler tried and failed to overthrow the Bavarian government.<sup>7</sup> Though unsuccessful, his attempted coup and subsequent trial for treason earned him a considerable amount of coverage in *The Times*, *The Post*, and *The Monitor* in 1923 and 1924, when he was convicted of high treason and sentenced to five years in prison. Prior to his trial in 1924, the credible frame was slightly more prevalent than the non-credible frame, but after his conviction in the spring of that year, the non-credible frame dominated coverage, for reports often presented Hitler's failure to overthrow the Bavarian government as evidence of his lack of political skill and frequently emphasized his Austrian heritage and his artistic background as proof of his supposed incompetence.<sup>8</sup> The amount of coverage he received dropped precipitously after he was released from prison at the end of 1924, and when he reemerged in the U.S. press at the end of the decade, many articles contained the same non-credible frame components that appeared frequently after his trial.

Hitler's reappearance in American media in 1930 coincided with the devolution of Germany's political and economic stability, which invigorated the Nazi party and heightened his popular support. The Great Depression left Germany reeling; the flight of foreign capital and rising unemployment rates undermined the consensus of Republican forces that had sustained the country's nascent parliamentary democracy during the golden years of the Weimar Republic.<sup>9</sup> Hitler again attracted the attention of foreign correspondents as they scrambled to cover the resurgence of extremist groups in Germany and whether the polarization of the Reichstag would result in the repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles. Between 1930 and 1933, a succession of three conservative German chancellors — Heinrich Brüning, Franz von Papen, and Kurt von Schleicher — ceded certain government responsibilities to Hitler in an attempt to harness his appeal to the masses and control his radical impulses, thereby increasing his prominence on Germany's political stage.<sup>10</sup>

Such concessions, coupled with the Nazis' growing representation in the Reichstag, emboldened Hitler to demand his appointment as chancellor twice in 1932. Though President Paul von Hindenberg refused to acquiesce, he ultimately agreed to the appointment in January 1933 following Schleicher's resignation from the post. A new cabinet, deliberately formed to include only two Nazi members in addition to Hitler, was installed in an effort to check the new chancellor's dictatorial aspirations. But the plan, which Papen devised with the intention to keep governmental power in the hands of the conservatives, proved woefully shortsighted. Within days of his appointment, Hitler set in motion a plan to dissolve the Reichstag and hold new elections in which the Nazis could gain a majority. The elections, held March 5, 1933, didn't give the Nazi party a decisive majority in parliament, but a bill passed March 23 proved conducive to that aim. The Enabling Act drained the Reichstag of its legislative and diplomatic power and gave it instead to the Reich cabinet for four years.<sup>11</sup> With this, Hitler legally gained absolute control over the government and began laying the groundwork for the establishment of his single-party totalitarian state, a shift the American press covered extensively.

Several scholars have examined media coverage of Hitler's rise and the formation of the Third Reich, particularly in relation to coming of the Holocaust. Andrew Henson, in his comparison of American and British news coverage of the Nazi Party between 1922 and 1933, concluded that the Western press failed to recognize its true strength and influence in the years preceding Hitler's appointment as chancellor.<sup>12</sup> Gary Klein, who examined how the internal dynamics of *The New York Times* affected its coverage of Hitler's first two months in office, asserted that the paper failed, by the standards of the time, to provide an accurate picture of what was happening in Germany.<sup>13</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, in her seminal study of the coming of the Holocaust in the American press, argued that the failure of the press to accurately assess and convey the

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7 Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, 80.

8 Katherine Blunt, "Yesterday's News: Media Framing of Hitler's Early Years, 1923-1929" (paper presented at the American Journalism Historians Association annual meeting, St. Paul, Minnesota, October 9-12, 2014).

9 Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 136-138.

10 Ibid., 185-187.

11 Ibid., 198.

12 Andrew Henson, "Before the Seizure Of Power: American and British Press Coverage of National Socialism, 1922 to 1933" (Master's thesis, Clemson University, 2007), 165-167.

13 Gary Klein, "When the News Doesn't Fit: The New York Times and Hitler's First Two Months in Office, February/March 1933," *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly* 78 (2001), 128.

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plight of European Jews, combined with Americans' disbelief of the atrocities that did make the papers and the Allied governments' interest in downplaying such reports, ultimately fostered a widespread sentiment of indifference as the Nazi regime exterminated millions.<sup>14</sup> Finally, Leff's analysis of *The Times'* coverage of the Holocaust between 1939 and 1945 concluded that the paper's internal dynamics, as well as the supposed incompetency of its European correspondents, resulted in inadequate coverage of one of the most significant tragedies of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup>

These studies frequently attempted to gauge the accuracy of news coverage stemming from Germany, as well as the beliefs and motives of the journalists delivering the reports, in an effort to determine whether the American press could have done more to warn the public about the dangers of the Nazi regime. Each scholar took into account, to various degrees, the challenges of reporting from Germany as the Nazis gained power and the effects of widespread anti-Semitism on U.S. press coverage, and each provided useful context for this study. But the conditions in which foreign correspondents in Germany lived and worked render it enormously difficult to impute their motives, beliefs, and sympathies at the time of reporting, and the accuracy of a news article can be determined only in hindsight. This methodological analysis of Hitler's appearance in the American press seeks not to assess why the media made certain decisions while reporting on his rise and how they could have done better, but rather what they did report and how their coverage may have influenced public opinion. In order to situate this study in historical context, several factors must be understood, including the limited availability of information to American journalists in Germany in the 1930s, the pervasiveness of American anti-Semitism amid reports of atrocities against Jews, and how that sentiment might have affected *The New York Times'* editorial decisions.

As Hitler rose to power, it became increasingly difficult for foreign correspondents to gauge and then convey the state of the country to their readers at home. In the early 1930s, the political landscape in Germany became harder to navigate, and some of the first reports of Hitler's intentions for Germany were met with skepticism from newspaper editors and readers alike.<sup>16</sup> The situation grew more complicated as the Nazis tightened their control over the media, and the German authorities frequently denied the accuracy of foreign correspondents' reports. Reporters accused of publishing false or unapproved information faced the threat of imprisonment or expulsion from the country, a prospect that inevitably affected whether their articles conveyed the extent of their knowledge or suspicions.

Reporters who successfully avoided the wrath of the regime found the newsgathering process immensely difficult. Louis Lochner, who was appointed chief of the AP bureau in Berlin in 1928, wrote a number of letters to his children explaining the challenges and frustrations he faced while trying to deliver the facts. "I don't suppose anyone in America can realize what it means to go through a revolution — and that is what the present upheaval in Germany is," he wrote in April 1933. "One must establish entirely new connections, adopt new methods of treating the news, get acquainted with new laws — and cool one's heels for hours while the new men are getting organized."<sup>17</sup> Two months later, Lochner found it increasingly challenging to circumvent the propaganda dispensed by the administration. "You have no idea how difficult it is to get news nowadays," he wrote in June 1933. "One must establish connections with all sorts of people, because the official news sources are so one-sided, and often there is something that the German papers simply aren't allowed to print."<sup>18</sup> The restricted availability of information, coupled with the constant threat of expulsion for writing pieces unfavorable to the regime, undoubtedly affected the correspondents' ability channel the full extent of their observations into their dispatches.

News reports regarding Hitler himself generally stemmed from speeches he delivered publicly, information released by the administration, and reporters' observations of his behavior at rallies and other events. Foreign correspondents were often placed near him at mass meetings, and during the Nuremberg rallies, Hitler requested that the press cars be placed between his car and his advisors' car.<sup>19</sup> Beyond that, access to Hitler was largely restricted. He didn't grant many private interviews, and when he did, he avoided

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14 Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 278.

15 Leff, *Buried by the Times*,

16 Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986) 15-16.

17 Louis Lochner, "Round Robins from Berlin: Louis P. Lochner's Letters to his Children, 1932-1941," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 50 (1967) 294.

18 *Ibid.*, 302.

19 Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 27.

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answering the interviewers' questions by making speeches similar to those he made at public meetings and rallies.<sup>20</sup> Hans Von Kaltenborn, a CBS Radio correspondent, secured his first extended interview with Hitler in August 1932 through Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, Hitler's foreign press chief and Kaltenborn's classmate at Harvard. Hanfstaengl relished his power to keep reporters waiting in the hope of gaining access to Hitler, who continually postponed personal interviews until he grew tired of resisting the requests of his foreign press chief.<sup>21</sup> Kaltenborn estimated that only about twelve foreign reporters had been granted access to Hitler in the years prior his interview, which he and Lochner conducted together. The men asked Hitler a series of questions, including some regarding his perspective on Jews and whether his political aspirations aligned with those of Mussolini, a comparison that appeared in both credible and non-credible frames. Hitler responded as though delivering a speech and often failed to fully answer the questions at hand.<sup>22</sup> Upon arriving in Paris several days later, Kaltenborn found a message from Lochner that read, "Hanfstaengl very anxious that you should cable nothing to America regarding Hitler's comment on Jews."<sup>23</sup> Kaltenborn suspected that Hitler issued the request himself, for Hanfstaengl had been present throughout the interview and hadn't raised objections during that portion of the conversation.<sup>24</sup> Such anecdotes demonstrate the difficulty of gleaning information from a man with a strong aversion to interviews and an inability to converse in a casual manner. They also reveal Hitler's desire to control information involving himself and his party.

Despite Hitler's supposed desire to retract his comments on German Jews, he made no secret of his anti-Semitism while delivering speeches to the public, and the violence the Nazi party inflicted upon Jews even before Hitler assumed power was the subject of numerous reports from Berlin. But how Americans would have regarded such reports was likely influenced by the degree to which anti-Semitism pervaded the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. American anti-Semitism remained less vitriolic than European anti-Semitism until the end of the 1800s, but during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the racial and socio-economic bases of anti-Jewish sentiment in the United States became much more pronounced. Government officials, scientists, the media, and the general public adopted the belief that Jews were a separate race with distinct mental and physical characteristics.<sup>25</sup> America's Christian underpinnings, which had long played a role in fostering anti-Semitic sentiments, influenced the shift, as did the large influx of European Jewish immigrants who entered the country after 1890.<sup>26</sup>

The tide of American anti-Semitism rose dramatically during the Depression. As widespread instability called into question the efficacy of economic liberalism, the hatred associated with the Jewish stereotype intensified.<sup>27</sup> The number of Jews who held federal government positions increased under Roosevelt, giving way to conspiracy theories that Jews were running the government and influenced the president to implement the New Deal, which then had many opponents.<sup>28</sup> Such beliefs only fueled the rise of anti-Semitism in the 1930s, and by the end of the decade, a series of public opinion polls shed some light on the depth of anti-Jewish sentiment in America. In 1938, at least 50 percent of Americans had a low opinion of Jews, 45 percent thought they were less honest than Gentiles in business, 24 percent thought they held too many government jobs, and fully 35 percent believed European Jews were responsible for the violence and oppression they were facing.<sup>29</sup> Though the three papers included in this analysis ran wire stories by the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* that delivered at least some information about the persecution of Jews in Germany, most of their coverage focused on whether the instability of the German government would affect its ability to repay its war debts or upset the stability of Western Europe. Even if these papers had given more space to the plight of Jews in Germany, it is unlikely these reports would have substantially altered the perspectives of the many Americans who thought little of Jews or professed indifference on the matter.

Such widespread animosity toward Jews somewhat influenced the nature of coverage published in *The Times*, which provided the most information on Hitler and his party since he emerged on the political

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20 H. V. Kaltenborn, "An Interview with Hitler," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 50 (1967) 283.

21 Ibid., 283-284.

22 Ibid., 286-287.

23 Ibid., 290.

24 Ibid.

25 Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 58.

26 Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 59.

27 Quoted in Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 108.

28 Ibid., 109.

29 Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 127.

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scene in 1923. *The Times*, founded in 1851, became known as an objective, trustworthy news source only after Adolph Ochs, the son of Jewish-German immigrants, purchased it in 1896. Acutely aware of the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism in America, Ochs did not want *The Times* to be perceived as a Jewish newspaper and kept a close eye on the editorials and letters to the editor printed in the paper, especially those regarding Hitler's rise.<sup>30</sup> Ochs remained *The Times*' publisher until his death in 1935, though he occupied the role only nominally during his last two years. He oversaw the appointment of reporters to the paper's Berlin bureau as Hitler began to mold his National Socialist party in the 1920s and ultimately made Guido Enderis, a Milwaukee-born journalist who covered World War I for the Associated Press, the bureau chief in 1930.<sup>31</sup> In 1933, Ochs ceded the majority of his responsibilities to his son-in-law, Arthur Hayes Sulzberger, also a Jew. Sulzberger shared his father-in-law's desire to ensure the newspaper remained impartial to all social and ethnic groups, especially the Jews. He would not tolerate any suggestion that *The Times*' Jewish ownership affected its news coverage and struggled to provide coverage that satisfied the paper's Jewish and non-Jewish audiences.<sup>32</sup> The fact that *The Times*' publishers worried that extensive coverage of issues facing Jewish communities in the United States and abroad would negatively affect the paper's reception underscores the prevalence of American anti-Semitism as Hitler rose to power.

### III. Methodology

Scholars have long recognized the power of media — from propaganda to news reports — to inform and shape public opinion. Grounded in cognitive psychology and sociology, media framing theory offers a way to determine how the content and organization of media texts and images affect cognitive processing of information. Goffman posited that individuals employ a multitude of frameworks, or “schemata of interpretation,” to “locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms.”<sup>33</sup> Though Goffman didn't focus exclusively on media effects, his work demonstrated that frames exist within language and communication texts. Gitlin and Tuchman used Goffman's conception of frames to determine how news media provide a sketch of reality for media audiences.<sup>34</sup> Their work formed the basis of media framing theory, which acknowledges media's effect on public opinion while taking into account the factors that influence individual interpretation. Like other social constructivist theories, it attempted to strike the middle ground between the hypodermic and minimal effects models. Several subsequent studies determined the particular effectiveness of news frames related to sociopolitical issues,<sup>35</sup> leading Gamson and de Vreese to argue that news media “dominate the issue culture for most people on most issues” and contribute to the shaping of public opinion and political socialization.<sup>36</sup> Gamson and Modigliani clarified the role of frames in shaping public opinion by defining them as interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue while emphasizing the complexity of the process by which journalists and individuals construct and derive meaning.<sup>37</sup> Entman further honed the meaning of media frames by defining them as aspects of a

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30 Gary Klein, “When the News Doesn't Fit: The New York Times and Hitler's First Two Months in Office, February/March 1933,” *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly* 78 (2001), 142; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 124.

31 Lauryl Leff, *Buried by the Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 55, 67.

32 Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 20.

33 Erving Goffman, *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974), 21.

34 Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 1; Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978).

35 Russell Neuman et al., *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

36 Claes de Vreese, “News Framing: Theory and Typology,” *Information Design Journal* 13 (2005): 51-62; William Gamson, “A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion,” *Symbolic Interaction* 11 (1988): 161-174.

37 William Gamson and Andre Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach,” *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1989): 2-3.

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perceived reality that are made salient to the receiver in a communicating text.<sup>38</sup>

This study uses Pan and Kosicki's linguistic approach to determine the presence and prevalence of certain frames within the articles included in this analysis. The linguistic approach, which identifies and analyzes how the syntactical, scriptural, thematic, and rhetorical dimensions of a news text affect its message, offers an objective and comprehensive method of frame analysis. For example, syntactic elements, such as headlines and attributions of facts to sources, and rhetorical elements, such as lexical choices and depictions, could serve to support themes established by the organization and presentation of facts within a story. This approach identifies the various components of the credible and non-credible frames and examines how they shifted over time.

Although the selection of newspapers may seem somewhat narrow, it is possible to gain considerable insight into how Hitler was framed in American media using these sources. Of the three dailies included in this study, *The Times* offered the most coverage of Hitler and Europe in general. Its circulation numbers grew considerably throughout the 1920s, and on average, its weekly and Sunday circulation numbers topped 430,000 and 760,000, respectively, between 1930 and 1934.<sup>39</sup> *The Monitor* had achieved a daily circulation of about 120,000 at the start of the 1920s, and the number grew throughout the decade.<sup>40</sup> Though *The Washington Post* failed to achieve the same influence by the start of the 1930s,<sup>41</sup> *The Post*, as well as *The Times* and *The Monitor*, carried stories provided by wire services including the Associated Press and United Press International. At the end of World War I, the Associated Press supplied news to about 1,200 newspapers, a number that grew in the years preceding World War II.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, United Press International had 745 newspaper customers, and between 1923 and 1935, the number grew from 867 to 1,300 worldwide.<sup>43</sup>

Search criteria entered into the ProQuest historical newspaper database yielded every news article, news analysis, letter to the editor, and editorial regarding Hitler published in the *Times*, the *Post*, and the *Monitor* between 1930 and 1933. Because the search produced thousands of results, this analysis is limited to coverage of significant events and shifts that occurred during this period, including Reichstag and regional elections, widely-covered speeches and rallies, Hitler's entry into the presidential race in 1932, and his appointment as chancellor in 1933. The study also includes articles that carried headlines that supplied a substantial amount of information about Hitler and his party, for such detailed headlines indicated that Hitler's activities were among the most significant points of the articles. This analysis is limited in scope. Between 1930 and 1932, Hitler appeared in about 2,100 articles, the bulk of which appeared in 1932. Coverage of Hitler's activities skyrocketed following his appointment as chancellor; he appeared in approximately 1,000 articles during the first three months of 1933. In the interest of efficiency, the sample analyzed in this study is limited to articles published before and after significant events.

## IV. Discussion

Like the fall of the Reichsmark less than ten years earlier, the Depression was just the opportunity Hitler needed to reinvigorate faith in his party and his promises to elevate Germany to its former glory by repudiating the punitive Treaty of Versailles and halting reparations payments. In March 1930, Hindenburg signed into effect the Young Plan, an economic agreement between Germany and its creditors that contained a 60-year reparations payment schedule and reduced foreign oversight of the country's economy. Despite the fact that the plan outlined relatively low payments, anti-Republican forces rallied the impoverished masses by claiming it would further impede Germany's economic recovery. During the first several months of the year, Hitler appeared in a small number of articles that explained his opposition to the plan, but provided little information about the scope of his influence following his near-absence from U.S. press coverage by the end of the 1920s.<sup>44</sup>

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38 Robert Entman, "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43 (1993): 51.

39 "Adolph S. Ochs Dead at 77; Publisher of Times Since 1896," *The New York Times*, April 9, 1935.

40 Steven Vaughn, *Encyclopedia of American Journalism* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 99-100.

41 *Ibid.*, 576; *Advertising & Selling* 29 (Advertising and Selling Co., Inc., 1920), 33.

42 Vaughn, *Encyclopedia of American Journalism*, 508.

43 *Ibid.*, 555.

44 "Young Plan Arouses Debate in Reichstag," *The New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1930, 6; "Hindenburg Signs Young Plan Law," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1930, 8.

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Hitler's appearance in the American press remained somewhat sporadic until July of that year, when it became clear the discontented masses were rallying behind the Nazis and other extremist parties. An article published in *The Monitor* at the beginning of the month noted that a party more radical than the National Socialists, headed by "Germany's would-be Mussolini," had formed in Germany and could erode Hitler's power by encroaching on some of his support base.<sup>45</sup> Though the article's thematic elements and lexical choices — the "would-be Mussolini" could lose power — undermined Hitler's political wherewithal and the potency of his party's influence, other analyses published throughout the month promoted his credibility by acknowledging his growing popularity. An article published in *The Times* in mid-July predicted that the Nazis would more than quadruple their representation in the Reichstag in the September elections, for the party's "skillful tactics" had earned it success in state and local elections, as well as a steady flow of funding.<sup>46</sup> The article noted that the party appealed not only to youth on the extreme right, but also "all bourgeois parties" that blamed their suffering on the parliamentary system. Quantification of the number of seats the party could gain in the election supported the proposition that Hitler's base of support was growing, as did the background information explaining the party's rise. An article published in *The Times* two days earlier contained similar rhetorical and thematic elements, as did one published the following month.<sup>47</sup> The variations in theme and focus among the pieces that mentioned Hitler and his party at this time demonstrated that credible and non-credible frames often appeared simultaneously within a sample of articles, though the prevalence of each depended on the circumstances underlying the coverage.

On September 14, 1930, the Nazis earned six million votes and 107 seats in the Reichstag, more than twice the projected number.<sup>48</sup> The fascists' massive gains resulted in a surge in coverage of Hitler and his growing popularity, some of which explained in detail his political comeback following his failed attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government in November 1923. A subhead of an article published in *The Times* the day after the election — "Hitler, Party Founder, 'Man Without a Country,' Came Back after Year in Jail for Coup" — summarized the theme of the piece. It opened with an explanation of "the German Mussolini's" key political goals, including the unification of Germany and Austria, the repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles, the restoration of Germany to its former geopolitical status, and the expulsion of all Jews from the country.<sup>49</sup> It then segued into a brief description of Hitler's rise to prominence, beginning with points that often served to undermine his credibility throughout the 1920s, including his non-German citizenship, his attempt to become an architect or artist, and his failed coup. But in the following description of his comeback, "one of the most remarkable in modern European politics," the writer compared Hitler's oratorical ability with that of Kerensky, Trotsky, Briand, and Mussolini, thereby heightening his credibility through use of a simile — a rhetorical structure — that likened Hitler to political leaders with a great deal of influence.

Lengthy analyses published in *The Times* near the end of the month used the same rhetorical, thematic, and lexical elements to explain his comeback, and a flurry of post-election articles highlighted the aforementioned aspects of Hitler's politics as reasons why the Fascists' massive gains posed a danger to the stability of both the German Republic and Western Europe.<sup>50</sup> The syntactical elements of these articles, which contained detailed information about his political influence and policy goals, framed Hitler as a credible power by providing background, relaying episodes, and quoting sources that suggested his party's newfound strength could rival that of the Republican government. An article in the special features section of *The Times*, accompanied by a photo of Hitler titled "Il Duce," stated that the most important factor in Hitler's rise to prominence was Hitler himself, a leader of the "young generation" who "may or may not prove the author of a new war of revenge." To illustrate his persuasive appeal, the writer recounted an episode first recorded in

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45 "Ultra-Radical Party Forms in Germany," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 5, 1930, 1.

46 "Big Fascist Gains due in Reichstag," *The New York Times*, July 22, 1930, 12.

47 P.J. Philip, "Briand Union Plans Faces Many Snags," *The New York Times*, July 20, 1930, E4; Guido Enderis, "Extremists Likely to Gain in Germany," *The New York Times*, August 18, 1930, 1.

48 Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 138.

49 "Fascists Glorify Pan-German Ideal," *The New York Times*, Sept. 15, 1930, 2.

50 Guido Enderis, "Hitler would Scrap Versailles Treaty and Use the Guillotine," *The New York Times*, Sept. 26, 1930, 1; "German Republic Shakes in Landslide of Radical Ballots," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 15, 1930, 1; Guido Enderis, "Moderates Shape Coalition to Hold Power in Germany," *The New York Times*, Sept. 16, 1930, 1; Clarence K. Street, "League is Uneasy over German Vote," *The New York Times*, 3; Carlisle MacDonald, "Paris Press Warns of German 'Menace,'" *The New York Times*, September 16, 1930, 3; Henry Kittredge Norton, "Germany's Future Also Contains Key to Europe's Peace," *The Washington Post*, September 12, 1930, 13.

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early 1923 in which a communist and a German general walked “fraternally” to enroll in the Nazi party after hearing one of Hitler’s speeches, an anecdote that clearly spoke to his popular support and oratorical skill and suggested that he had again achieved the same level of perceived influence as he had in 1923, at the height of Germany’s hyperinflation crisis, prior to his attempted beer hall putsch.<sup>51</sup> The “German Mussolini” catchphrase, iterated in both the article and the photo, conveyed more credibility than the “would-be Mussolini” catchphrase used earlier in the year, for many Americans held Mussolini’s political accomplishments in high esteem in the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>52</sup> Though most articles containing the “German Mussolini” catchphrase did not portray Hitler as a man to be held in the same esteem, the comparison likened him a man who wielded great influence.

But most articles published during and after the September elections did not lend as much credibility to Hitler’s influence. All three papers included in this analysis published editorials that framed Hitler’s surge in influence as a temporary phenomenon indicative not of his political prowess, but rather the sorry state of German political and economic affairs. *The Post* wrote that Hitler had been able to recruit the votes of those turning to “radical doctrines and quack remedies” to solve the Republic’s problems, but the gains the Nazis and Communists earned in the elections boosted their combined representation in the Reichstag to only 183 out of 575, rendering it a clear minority in the German parliament.<sup>53</sup> It concluded that “the nature of the radicals’ gains suggest they are temporary.” The next day, *The Monitor* discounted the lasting significance of the Nazi gains, “heralded by a somewhat overanxious foreign press as a dire omen for the eleven-year-old republic.”<sup>54</sup> It acknowledged that the Nazis’ gains gave Hitler more influence, but that his party’s makeup of “youthful, impressionable voters” would not enable him to achieve great influence in a country governed by more seasoned, moderate elements. Following an inflammatory speech Hitler gave during the trial of three Reichswehr officers accused of high treason, *The Times* wrote that “if it be true that a watched pot never boils, the menace of Adolf Hitler has been grossly exaggerated.”<sup>55</sup> Editorials published in *The Post* and *The Monitor* at the end of the month contained similar descriptions, *The Monitor* going as far as to caution readers not to take Hitler seriously, for “the Fascist chieftain is not a Prussian possessed of a native German gravity, but rather an imaginative Austrian with a keen sense of the dramatic and instinct for knowing the type of trumpet call that will rally his largely youthful followers.”<sup>56</sup> The descriptors used in each of the articles and editorials, combined with the quantification of Nazi votes and political representation, served to frame Hitler as an alien agitator whose success in the recent elections would likely be short-lived.

Others subscribed to the idea that Hitler’s influence would soon fade, and the temporary nature of his popularity proved the theme of many articles published in the weeks following the election. *The Times* carried a wire story by the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* in which Einstein averred that Hitler’s success in the elections were no cause for despair, for the “Hitler vote is only a symptom, not necessarily of anti-Jewish hatred but of momentary resentment caused by economic misery and unemployment within the ranks of misguided German youth.”<sup>57</sup> Einstein, whose thoughts and opinions on political and scientific matters appeared frequently in the press throughout the 1930s, had by then established a reputation as a man of intellectual influence, making his insight more likely to be taken seriously.<sup>58</sup> In a less intellectual analysis of Hitler’s electoral gains published on the front page of *The Times*, the president of the Berlin Astrological Society predicted that Hitler would “experience his great hour within the next two or three years, but in that moment,

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51 Joseph Shaplen, “Hitler, Driving Force in Germany’s Fascism,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 1930, XX5; “Hitler New Power in Germany,” *The New York Times*, January 21, 1923, XX12.

52 John Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), 59.

53 “The German Elections,” *The Washington Post*, September 16, 1930, 6.

54 “German Elections Clear the Air,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 17, 1930, 16.

55 “Hitler’s Rhetoric,” *The New York Times*, September 27, 1930, 11.

56 “Fascism in Germany,” *The Washington Post*, September 28, 1930, S1; “Hitler Speaks,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 29, 1930, 14.

57 “Fascists Walk out of Berlin Council,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 1930, 9.

58 Between 1930 and 1933, Einstein appeared in more than 2,000 articles in *The Times*, *The Post*, and *The Monitor*. See, for example, Albert Einstein, “Einstein Sees Arms Injuring Nations,” *The New York Times*, January 21, 1930, 5; “Einstein Says Mussolini Is All Right for Italy, but Not for Rest of Europe,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 26, 1930, 3; “Einstein Lauds Joy of America in Work,” *The New York Times*, January 1, 1931, 13; “Einstein Advocates Economic Boycott,” *The New York Times*, February 28, 1932, N4.

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even as it happened to Napoleon I and Napoleon III, power will be wrested from his hands by others.”<sup>59</sup> The article was published at a time when interest in astrology and fortune telling skyrocketed amid the uncertainty and discontent of the Depression era, and such a prediction likely resonated in the minds of readers who believed clairvoyants could determine the future.<sup>60</sup> The former head of the Reichsbank, in a widely printed interview given during a visit to the United States, asserted that the Nazi gains in the elections indicated economic, rather than political, instability and that Hitler should not be taken seriously.<sup>61</sup> The consistency of the “temporary influence” theme supported the proposition that the Nazi party posed little threat to German stability, and the range of individuals it was attributed to illustrates a widespread belief in the final months of 1930, despite the his portrayal as a credible power during and immediately after the September elections.

Germany struggled under its reparations burden in the first months of 1931 as the winter season taxed its resources and unemployment continued to rise. In January, articles that offered insight into or speculation on Hitler's strength noted that the Nazis' ability to make further inroads into the government was likely contingent on Brüning's ability to check the growth of the unemployment rate and avoid a serious clash with the extremist elements in the Reichstag. Several analyses emphasized the growing threat of fascism in the wake of Hitler's electoral gains four months earlier and posited that extremist factions — particularly the Nazis — would gain more traction if Germany's situation didn't improve, mirroring themes found in earlier articles that framed Hitler's successes as a result of widespread unrest rather than his political skill.<sup>62</sup> But come February, the Reichstag agreed to approve the national budget by a majority of nearly 100 votes, despite the Nazis' demands to dissolve the Reichstag because the budget allowed for reparations payments to continue.

The American press framed the passage of the budget as an indication of Brüning's strength and the Nazis' relative weakness by emphasizing the solidarity of the moderate elements and emphasizing that the Nazis were but a minority in parliament despite their gains in September.<sup>63</sup> Following the institution of a rule to curb obstructionism in the Reichstag, the Nazi and Nationalist representatives walked out and refused to participate in a foreign policy debate. The dramatic exit resulted in several articles and editorials that framed the Nazis as “spoiled children of politics” unfit for parliamentary rule who, despite their numerical strength, likely stood little chance in the face of more powerful moderate elements.<sup>64</sup> Similar to post-election coverage in September 1930, the lexical choices and rhetorical elements found within these articles lent credibility to the moderates at the expense of the radicals, demonstrating that Hitler's strength was often assessed in relation to that of the Republican governmental elements.

Articles consistent with the non-credible frame continued to appear throughout the spring and early summer, a period marked by relative stability within the German government and few significant occurrences that drew attention to Hitler and his party. Exceptions included two narrative pieces by Sisley Huddleston, a British journalist who wrote for *The Monitor*. A front-page article published in March documented his visit to Hitler's “magnificent headquarters” in Munich, where he “radiates his influence over the whole of Germany.” He described Hitler as “one of the most remarkable men of our time” who had risen in 1923 from failure to triumph less than ten years later on the basis of popular appeal and oratorical ability. Though Huddleston did not speculate on the duration of his influence, the descriptors he used to describe Hitler and his party's

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59 “Astrologer See Fate like Napoleons' for Hitler,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 1930, 1.

60 Elizabeth Connor, “Astrology is Not Extinct,” *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific*, 55 (1943): 227-228.

61 “Schacht Discounts Hitler's Orations,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 3, 1930, 2; “Schacht, Here, Sees Warning in Fascism,” *The New York Times*, October 3, 1930, 12; “Schacht Hits Talk of German Revolt,” *The Washington Post*, October 3, 1930, 7.

62 Kendall Foss, “Pendulum Swings to the Right in Reich,” *The New York Times*, January 4, 1931, E4; Harold Callender, “Economic Crisis in Germany Sways the Reich's Destiny,” *The New York Times*, January 18, 1931, 127.

63 “Brüning Demands Reichstag Do Duty,” *The New York Times*, February 6, 1931, 9; P.J. Philip, “France Welcomes Brüning's Victory,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 1931, 7; “Brüning Gains Reichstag Vote in Budget Measure,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 9, 1931, 1.

64 “Reichstag Fascists Walk Out and Plan Weimar Parliament,” *The New York Times*, February 11, 1931, 1; “Common Sense in Germany,” *The Washington Post*, February 12, 1931, 6; “Hitler Stages an Exit,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 14, 1931, 20; Guido Enderis, “Reichstag Expects Nationalists Back,” *The New York Times*, February 25, 1931, 9.

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strength supported credible subframes found throughout the piece.<sup>65</sup> The second piece, published in July, described Huddleston's experience at one of Hitler's mass meetings. It quantified Hitler's gains in the Reichstag elections the previous year and noted that thousands attended the meeting to hear him speak. Huddleston described in great detail how Hitler, "truly eloquent," had his audience at rapt attention, underscoring his popular appeal and oratorical ability with lexical choices and descriptions of episodes that supported the credible frame.<sup>66</sup> But such pieces appeared alongside a number of articles and editorials that undercut Hitler's credibility by pointing either to the strength of the Bruening government or Hitler's lack of political acuity. Three editorials published in *The Monitor* and *The Times* throughout the spring stated that the "sober procession" or "fighting attitude" of the Bruening's government would temper the threat of an extremist takeover or even "submerge" the Hitler movement.<sup>67</sup> A review of Wyndham Lewis's book *Hitler*, published in *The Monitor* in May, stated that Lewis credited Hitler with a "profundity of thought which he certainly does not possess" and that the book would be of value to a reader only if he or she knew "something about Hitler before reading" and took Lewis with "many grains of salt."<sup>68</sup>

The number of articles containing the credible frame rose briefly in October, when Foreign Minister Julius Curtius resigned. His departure prompted Bruening to dissolve his cabinet and create a stronger one that could oppose Hitler and Hugenberg, leader of the German Nationalists, after the Reichstag reconvened midmonth. In the days preceding the Reichstag's vote on the new cabinet, the Nazis and Nationalists held a rally in Bad Harzburg during which Hitler and Hugenberg demanded immediate control of the national government and declared a "war" on Bruening. The succession of political events left correspondents and editorial writers struggling to determine what the shifts would mean for the balance of power in Germany. Articles immediately following Curtius's resignation and the dissolution of the cabinet noted the moment of instability might allow Hitler to wield greater influence in the Reichstag.<sup>69</sup> Some articles and editorials published after the formation of the new cabinet contained a similar theme, particularly those that noted the widespread support Hitler received at the Bad Harzburg rally. A UPI article that ran in *The Post* on October 12 described the "deafening ovation" the "dapper, ambitious Adolph Hitler and the powerful Dr. Alfred Hugenberg" received from the 600 Germans who attended the rally and heard the leaders' call for the overthrow of the national government.<sup>70</sup> The next day, an editorial in *The Post* called the rally "a startling demonstration of the strength and determination of the element that is opposing Chancellor Bruening."<sup>71</sup> The description of the two leaders, coupled with the quantification of their popular support, underscored the proposition that Hitler could capitalize on the government's moment of weakness to achieve his aims.

But the formation and subsequent approval of the new cabinet resulted in coverage that suggested the Bruening government could effectively stem Hitler's aspirations, echoing a theme found earlier in the year and again illustrating how Hitler's portrayal in the press often depended on the perceived stability of the German government. An article headlined "Action in Reich Thwarts Hitler and Hugenberg" noted that after the cabinet's first meeting, "the turbulent activity of the Nationalists and the Fascists seems less menacing" and the question of whether Hitler and Hugenberg could take over the government had been postponed.<sup>72</sup> The lexical choices used in the headline — a powerful syntactical framing element — effectively summarized a theme reiterated in the piece. The day before the Reichstag reconvened, *The Times* ran a piece by Enderis that noted that "rhetorical thunderbolts" let loose at the Bad Harzburg rally "failed to disturb the equanimity of the Chancellor or more sober Reichstag elements" and served to heighten the moderates' sense of responsibility as they prepared to vote on Bruening's new cabinet.<sup>73</sup> In regard to Hitler and Hugenberg's intention to introduce motions to revoke support of the new government, dissolve the Reichstag, and hold

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65 Sisley Huddleston, "World Watches Hitler's Rise in Reich," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 27, 1931, 1.

66 Sisley Huddleston, "In the Citadel of Hitler," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 16, 1931, 14.

67 "Germany's Tactics," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 24, 1931, 20; "Hitler's Ebb Tide," *The New York Times*, April 3, 1931, 23; "Political Effect in Germany," *The New York Times*, June 23, 1931, 24.

68 "Hitler Explained," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 1931, 15.

69 "Curtius Resigns," *The New York Times*, October 7, 1931, 20; "German Cabinet Fall Looms; Curtius Quits," *The Washington Post* (United Press International), October 7, 1931, 1;

70 "Nationalists Declare War on Bruening," *The Washington Post* (United Press International), October 12, 1931.

71 "Germany's New Test," *The Washington Post*, October 13, 1931, 6.

72 "Action in Reich Thwarts Hitler and Hugenberg," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 10, 1931, 10.

73 Guido Enderis, "Bruening Faces Test in Reichstag Today," *The New York Times*, October 13, 1931, 1.

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new elections, the article stated that “government leaders and the bulk of the moderate press are convinced that the nationalists’ defiance will dissipate into political puff and smoke.” The syntactical elements and lexical choices used in the piece supported the proposition that the opposition forces posed no great threat to Bruening’s new cabinet by framing Hitler and Hugenberg as little more than fiery orators incapable of carrying their movements to fruition. Although a handful of analyses and briefs covering Hitler’s rise and his party’s gains in regional elections lent him some credibility in late 1931,<sup>74</sup> the majority of article and editorials published throughout the remainder of the year supported the idea that the German government could keep Hitler in check and that his political influence would eventually fade.<sup>75</sup>

Just prior to the Bad Harzburg rally, Hindenberg met Hitler for the first time. Details of the meeting were not made public, but the relatively small amount of coverage it received portrayed Hindenberg as patriarchal, practical head of state and Hitler as a young, illogical party leader. The day before the meeting, *The Times* published a piece that noted Hindenberg was expected to “impart to his visitor some candid advice on the futility of propaganda for a ‘Third Reich’ while the second is still under repair.”<sup>76</sup> The same day, an Associated Press story printed on *The Post’s* front page stated that Hindenberg intended to “talk bluntly to the fiery ‘Nazi’ leader, who is young enough to be his son.”<sup>77</sup> The idea that Hindenberg was to speak “candidly” or “bluntly” to a much younger man about the “futility” of his propaganda for the Third Reich undermined Hitler’s credibility by portraying Hindenberg as older and wiser, a theme that endured after the two men met. *The Times’* article about meeting stated in its lede that Hitler “unfolded his chimerical plans for the Third Reich” in the “coldly practical atmosphere of President von Hindenberg’s office.”<sup>78</sup> The use of “chimerical” and “practical” — contrasting descriptors — reinforced both the notion of the Third Reich’s “futility” and Hitler’s lack of political experience in the face of the Field Marshal. This theme resurfaced, alongside others that emphasized the temporary nature of Hitler’s influence, in the first months of the following year, when the press began to speculate on whether Hitler would run against Hindenberg in the presidential elections in March.

A quick succession of political shakeups in Germany kept the American press occupied in 1932. The presidential elections in March and the runoff in April resulted in a narrow but decisive victory for Hindenberg, who dismissed Bruening as chancellor in May and gave Papen the position. The appointment of a new

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74 Harold Callender, “The Nazis Click Their Heels and Wait,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 1931, 79; “Nazis Battle Foes as Hitler Declares he can Keep Order,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 1931, 1; “Nazis Score in Anhalt,” *The New York Times* (Associated Press), October 26, 1931, 7; “Hitlerites Win Seats in German Elections,” *The Washington Post* (Associate Press), October 26, 1931, 1; “Hitlerites Gain Again,” *The New York Times* (Associated Press), November 9, 1931, 4; “Hitlerites Sweep Election in Hesse,” *The Washington Post* (Associate Press), November 16, 1931, 1; Guido Enderis, “Nazi Vote Alarms Reich Government,” *The New York Times*, November 17, 1931, 9; Harold Callender, “The German Crisis as Seen from Germany,” *The New York Times*, November 29, 1931, XX1; Harold Callender, “Hitler Replies to Some Fundamental Questions,” *The New York Times*, December 20, 1931, XX5; Webb Miller, “Hitler’s Rise Pictured as Reparations Peril,” *The Washington Post* (United Press International), December 28, 1931, 1.

75 “Hitler’s Challenge is Met by Groener,” *The New York Times*, October 13, 1931, 10; “Reich Defense Leader Defies Ministry’s Foes,” *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), October 13, 1931, 1; “Real Leaders,” *The New York Times*, October 15, 1931, 19; “Bruening’s Victory,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 1931, 11; “Reich Upholds Bruening Rule and Adjourns,” *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), October 17, 1931, 1; “Promises to Crush Violence in Reich,” *The New York Times*, October 20, 1931, 8; “Another Hitler Threat,” *The New York Times*, November 17, 1931, 24; “The Future of Hitlerism,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 3, 1931, 16; “A Hitler Flurry,” *The New York Times*, December 7, 1931, 18; “Unable to Pay on Young Plan, Germany Avers,” *The Washington Post*, December 8, 1931, 1; “Price and Pay Cuts Decried in Germany, Hitler to be Curbed,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 1931, 1; Guido Enderis, “Bruening Threatens to Use Reich’s Army,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 1931, 12; “German Voters,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 1931, 24; “Hitler Aids German Plan,” *The Washington Post*, December 11, 1931, 6; George Bernhard, “Tactics of Hitler,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 1931, E1; “Hitler Words and Votes,” *The New York Times*, December 17, 1931, 22; “German Fascism,” *The Washington Post*, December 27, 1931, M6.

76 Guido Enderis, “Bruening Succeeds in Forming Cabinet,” *The New York Times*, October 10, 1931, 8.

77 “Two-Man Rule for Reich Seen in New Cabinet,” *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), October 10, 1931, 1.

78 Guido Enderis, “Hitler Lays Plans before Hindenberg,” *The New York Times*, October 11, 1931, 10.

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chancellor resulted in new Reichstag elections held in July, but the Reichstag dissolved after its first meeting, and new elections were held in November. Coverage of Hitler consistent with the credible frame increased during moments of uncertainty about the future of parliamentary rule in Germany, but at no point throughout the year did the credible frame overshadow the non-credible frame.

At the start of 1932, Hindenberg's term in office was quickly coming to an end. New elections were fast approaching, Bruening asked Hitler for the Nazi's agreement to extend the president's term without holding new elections, a move that required a two-thirds vote in the Reichstag. Hitler refused to forego the elections and instead primed himself for candidacy. In mid-February, Hindenberg announced he would seek another term in office, and at the end of the month, Hitler proclaimed his intention to run against the 85-year-old incumbent. Articles and editorials following the revelation that Hitler would oppose Hindenberg generally discounted Hitler's chance of winning against the venerated field marshal by attesting to Hindenberg's prestige or Bruening's relative strength and emphasizing Hitler's Austrian nationality, which would have precluded him from running had he not been appointed a member of the Brunswick legation in Berlin two days after he announced his candidacy.<sup>79</sup>

Some coverage of Hitler's campaign conveyed his credibility by quantifying his popular support, demonstrated by the number of Germans who attended the campaign speeches he gave throughout the country.<sup>80</sup> Between March 10 and March 14, the day after the elections, a four-part series explaining the meaning of Hitlerism ran in *The Monitor*. The first installment stated that Nazism, which has "permeated every section of the nation," displayed a "capacity for organization unequalled in our times by any except the Bolshevik leaders" and had "evolved into one of the most effective engines of propaganda the modern world has seen."<sup>81</sup> The remaining three framed Hitler as a credible force in German politics by heralding the tenets of Nazism, explaining its wide appeal and predicting that the growth of the party would be "epoch-making."<sup>82</sup> But the themes found in the series, as well as the articles touting Hitler's popular support, all but disappeared after the presidential election and the subsequent runoff.

On March 13, Hitler received 30 percent of the vote, while Hindenberg received 49.6 percent, a fraction less than the 50 percent he needed to obtain an absolute majority and secure the presidency. Though the results necessitated a runoff, most articles and editorials published in the wake of the election pointed to the relatively low number of votes cast for Hitler as an indication that his party's strength paled in the face of the Republican forces.<sup>83</sup> A *Times* article that broke down the results stated that Hitler's 30 percent was "accepted as the first step toward [the Nazi party's] elimination as a powerful political factor in Germany."<sup>84</sup> A 79 Guido Enderis, "Hitler Enters Race for the Presidency," *The New York Times*, February 23, 1932, 9; "Fascist Leader Decides to Try to Run for Presidency," *The Washington Post* (United Press International), February 23, 1932, 1; "Hitler against Hindenberg," *The New York Times*, February 24, 1932, 20; "Hitler Becomes German Citizen by Appointment," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 26, 1932, 1; "German Citizenship Acquired by Hitler," *The New York Times*, February 26, 1932, 9; Harold Callender, "Hitler Now Faces Unpleasant Task," *The New York Times*, February 29, 1932, 10; "Von Hindenberg's Election Forecast," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 29, 1932, 5; "Position at Berlin Growing Stronger," *The New York Times*, February 29, 1932, 25; "Hindenberg or Chaos," *The Washington Post*, March 1, 1932, 6.

80 "Hitler Stirs 20,000 as Campaign Opens," *The New York Times*, February 28, 1932, 18; "15,000 Cheer as Hitler Campaign Opens," *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), February 28, 1932, 10; "Hitler Pledges Sound Policies if Fascists Win," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 29, 1932, 1.

81 W. Horsfall Carter, "Organization Capacity Shown in Rapid Advance of Hitlerism," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 10, 1932, 1.

82 W. Horsfall Carter, "Rise and Fall of Hitler's Power Follows Economic Tide in Reich," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 11, 1932, 1; W. Horsfall Carter, "Hitler Appeal Not in Program but in Criticism of Conditions," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 12, 1932, 1; W. Horsfall Carter, "Socialist Move in Reich Called New Era Mark," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 14, 1932, 1. "Results in Germany Elate Washington," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1932, 1; "Hitler is Beaten where Nazis Rule," *The New York Times* (Associated Press), March 14, 1932, 8; "Hindenburg Far Ahead but Fails at Election; Runoff is Set April 10," *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), March 14, 1932, 1; Guido Enderis, "Hindenberg Enters Runoff Election," *The New York Times*, March 15, 1932, 1; Julius Curtius, "Curtius Say Vote Assures Stability," March 15, 1932, 8.

83 "Hindenberg Wins Primary from Hitler," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 14, 1932, 1;

84 Frederick Birchall, "President has 18,661,136: Lacks Only 168,453 for a Majority of the 37,660,377 Total," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1932, 1.

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*Post* editorial published the same day asserted that the elections results proved “the forces of disintegration, repudiation and reaction . . . are not as strong as their boasts have made them seem” and that “Hindenberg and his government are stronger than the opposition.”<sup>85</sup> Editorials in *The Monitor* and *The Times* expressed the same opinions.<sup>86</sup> The non-credible frame, supported by quantification of Hitler's relatively small amount of electoral support and the proposition that his party's strength had peaked, persisted after Hindenberg was reelected with 53 percent of the vote in the April 10 runoff election.<sup>87</sup>

News coverage of Hitler surged again in late July, just before the Reichstag elections following Papen's appointment as chancellor in May. Since the presidential election, the Nazis had won substantial gains in multiple regional elections, as well as several concessions from the new cabinet, most notably the decision to hold new Reichstag elections so that the party might achieve greater representation.<sup>88</sup> Several articles published just before the elections noted that the results would measure the strength of the Nazi Party, which had by then grown to be the country's single largest, and determine whether the prevailing political attitude in Germany had changed since Hindenberg's reelection.<sup>89</sup> These pieces generally supported Hitler's credibility as a political leader by ascribing significance to the elections and acknowledging that Hitler's gains or losses would have a great impact on the future of the Republic.

But the non-credible frame eclipsed the credible frame after July 31, when the elections produced a Reichstag in which no party held a majority. Despite the Nazi party's substantial gains — the 230 seats it earned more than doubled its representation and rendered it the largest party in parliament — most post-election coverage interpreted its failure to secure a majority as an indication of both the party's decline and the relative steadfastness of Papen's cabinet, as conveyed through headlines that emphasized Hitler's lack of majority and the thematic elements found consistently in the content of the coverage.<sup>90</sup> An analysis of the results in *The Times* stated that the nearly fourteen million votes cast for the Nazis only slightly exceeded the number cast for the party during the April 10 runoff elections, “indicating that the party's progress is slowing down and is possibly near to reaching its climax.”<sup>91</sup> An editorial published in *The Times* the same day asserted that Hitler had been “stopped” with 37 percent of the vote. The results, it argued, proved that the “Hitler tide” had reached its “high-water mark” and that “the role of Mussolini or Lenin is not for him.”<sup>92</sup> Rhetorical elements in both pieces, including the quantification of the lack of majority, supported the proposition that Hitler's popularity was waning, a non-credible frame that appeared with greater frequency after the Reichstag elections in November.

The lack of majority given to any one party following the July elections resulted in the dissolution of the Reichstag in mid-September. In October and early November, as the new elections approached, predictions that Hitler would lose votes appeared in coverage of the situation in Germany, nearly all of which

85 “A Rational Germany,” *The Washington Post*, March 14, 1932, 6;

86 “Hindenberg Wins,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 15, 1932, 16; “German Republicanism,” *The New York Times*, March 15, 1932, 20.

87 Guido Enderis, “Expect Hindenburg To Win By 8,000,000 In Reich Vote Today,” *The New York Times*, April 10, 1932, 1; “The German Duel,” *The New York Times*, April 10, 1932, E1; “Reich Reelects Hitler with Wide Margin,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 11, 1932, 1; “Symbol of Stability,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 11, 1932, 14; Guido Enderis, “13,417,460 Votes for Nazis,” *The New York Times*, April 11, 1932, 1; “Germany Stands Fast,” *The New York Times*, April 11, 1932, 14;

88 Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 160-165.

89 Frederick Birchall, “Reich Reactionaries Due to Gain Heavily in Reichstag,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 1932, 7; “Reich Election to Test Power of Hitler Vote,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 30, 1932, 1; “The German Elections,” *The New York Times*, July 17, 1932, 16; Frederick Birchall, “Reich Votes Today with Strong Trend Toward the Right,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 1932; Edwin James, “The Week in Europe; Germans Vote Today: Elect a New Reichstag,” July 31, 1932, E3, Hugh Jedeli, “Nationalism to Fore in German Election,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 1923, E3, Guido Enderis, “Showdown is Near for German Nazis,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 1923, E3.

90 “Reich Keeps Republican Government,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 1, 1931, 1; “Cabinet Likely to Continue,” *The New York Times*, August 1, 1932, 8; “Hitler Fails to Win Reichstag Majority Despite Big Gains,” *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), August 1, 1932, 1; “Vote Disappoints the German Press,” *The New York Times*, August 2, 1932, 4.

91 Frederick Birchall, “Right Parties Fail to Carry Germany; Nazi Seats Doubled,” *The New York Times*, August 1, 1932, 1.

92 “The German Elections,” *The New York Times*, August 2, 1932, 16.

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reiterated the idea that the Nazi Party had peaked in strength.<sup>93</sup> A piece in *The Times* stated that Germany was “getting tired of the Nazis” and relayed predictions that the party would lose between thirty and fifty of its seats in the Reichstag.<sup>94</sup> The prediction held true: The Nazis lost 36 seats on November 6, reducing their number of representatives to 196. Coverage of the loss produced articles and editorials consistent with the non-credible frame, most of which contained rhetorical and syntactic elements that supported the proposition that Nazism, a temporary phenomenon, was fading quickly.<sup>95</sup> An article in *The Times* asserted the party was “at last in its retrogressive state,” and an editorial published in the same paper the next day claimed that the ebbing of the Nazi tide proved that “the threat of sole control of the country by Hitler is definitely removed.”<sup>96</sup>

Hitler appeared in a relatively small number of articles in the first weeks of January 1933, the month he was appointed chancellor. Elections in the state of Lippe drew the attention of the American press as Hitler campaigned to regain the losses he suffered in November. The subhead of an Associated Press article that appeared in *The Post* characterized the Nazi efforts as “desperate,” and the piece stated that should these efforts failed, Hitler’s claims to the head of the Reich would be considerably damaged.<sup>97</sup> The Nazis won nearly 40 percent of the vote in the state elections, a “minor” victory an article in *The Monitor* implied would not strengthen Hitler’s “waning” cause.<sup>98</sup> The article compared the percentage of votes cast for the Nazis January to the number cast in July, a decrease it highlighted as a reason Hitler would not be able to duplicate the victory on the national level. A story in *The Times* reiterated that idea.<sup>99</sup> An Associated Press article contradicted the theme present in the aforementioned articles by noting that the Nazis’ relatively small gains were “regarded nevertheless as being a refutation of enemies’ assertions that Hitlerism is on the downgrade,” and an editorial published the next day lamented Hitler’s seeming resurgence and the political uncertainty it created at a time of relative stability within the German government under Schleicher, who had become chancellor the previous month.<sup>100</sup>

But articles that portrayed Hitler as a man who could have a significant impact on German political affairs — the theme that most often underlay the credible frame — appeared sporadically until Hitler was appointed Chancellor on January 30, 1933, following Schleicher’s resignation. A complex series of political machinations allowed a party leader widely believed to be on the decline to become the head of a Reich cabinet based on parliamentary majority. The Nazis’ minority representation in the cabinet — Papen’s arrangement — appeared to limit Hitler’s power, a fact the press readily noted. But a number of articles published in the immediate aftermath of the appointment emphasized its significance by acknowledging that Hitler, despite the makeup of his cabinet, had the power to dissolve the Reichstag and set new elections, which could result in substantial Nazi gains.<sup>101</sup> An editorial in *The Monitor* argued that the “deep change” Hitler’s appointment effected throughout Germany could in fact be a positive development if he promoted the interests of the “vast group of sound citizenry” found among his twelve million supporters.<sup>102</sup> Articles and editorials such as these bolstered the credible frame by attesting to the lasting significance of Hitler’s ascension to one of the most important roles within the German government.

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93 Frederick Birchall, “Heavy Loss Likely for Nazis in Polls,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1932, 9; “Tumult in Germany,” *The Washington Post*, October 18, 1932, 6; “The German Campaign,” *The New York Times*, October 23, 1932, E1; Guido Enderis, “Germany Uneasy as Election Nears,” *The New York Times*, October 23, 1932, E3; “Hitler’s 37 Percent,” *The New York Times*, November 6, 1932, E1; Carl Puekler, “Hitler Facing His Acid Test in the Reichstag Election,” *The New York Times*, November 6, 1932, XX3.

94 Frederick Birchall, “New Deadlock Seen in Reich Poll Today; Nazi Losses Likely,” *The New York Times*, November 6, 1932, 1.

95 “Nazis Receive First Big Loss in Reich Vote,” *The Washington Post*, November 7, 1932, 1; “Hitlerism Ebbs,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 8, 1932, 14.

96 Frederick Birchall, “Hitler’s Vote Cut, Communists Gain, in Reich Election,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 1932, 1; “German Prospects,” *The New York Times*, November 8, 1932, 20.

97 “Lippe Vote May Hold Hitler’s Fate Today,” *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), January 15, 1933, 3.

98 “Hitlerites Use Minor Victory To Strengthen Waning Cause,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 16, 1933, 1.

99 “Nazis Gain in Lippe Poll After Big Drive, But Fail to Win Back November Losses,” *The New York Times*, January 16, 1933, 4;

100 “Hitlerism Again,” *The Washington Post*, January 17, 1933, 6.

101 “Hitler Appointed To Chancellorship In German Reich,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 30, 1933, 1; “Poland Sees Reich Showing True Face,” *The New York Times*, January 31, 1933, 3.

102 “Hitler on Top,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 31, 1933, 14.

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But a greater number of articles published after the appointment aligned with the non-credible frame.<sup>103</sup> An article in *The Times* emphasized that the makeup of Hitler's cabinet left him "no scope for gratification of any dictatorial ambition" and that the real governing power in Germany lay in Papen's hands.<sup>104</sup> The article stated that the speed with which the new cabinet was "projected into office is said to have bewildered Herr Hitler even more than its other members and left him cogitating on whether he had been stampeded into taking the Chancellorship on anything but his own terms." The lexical choices used in the piece — "bewildered," "stampeded," — supported the proposition that Hitler's appointment did not endow him with any lasting political influence, but rather curtailed his power and tempered his potential. Another article published in *The Times* the same day opened with the observation that Hitler's acceptance of the position marked a "radical departure from his former demand that he be made the 'Mussolini of Germany' as a condition of his assumption of governmental responsibility" and emphasized his party's waning influence by explaining its internal struggles and charting the decline in the number of votes it had garnered since the last Reichstag elections.<sup>105</sup> The use of "radical departure" contradicted the "German Mussolini" catchphrase that often supported the credible frame in articles explaining Hitler's rise to prominence.

The credible frame heightened in prevalence following Hindenberg's dissolution of the Reichstag at Hitler's request. Hitler could not obtain a workable majority, and most coverage of Hindenberg's decision conveyed that new elections could give Hitler far greater power than he held at the time, which would boost his credibility as a political leader.<sup>106</sup> But not all articles and editorials recognized that possibility. An editorial published in *The Times* framed Hitler as far less powerful than Hindenberg, Hugenberg, Papen, and the Centrist party that refused to support his party in the interest of creating a parliamentary majority.<sup>107</sup> It concluded that come March, when the new elections were to be held, Hitler "may appear to his followers and to the German electorate as a whole to be even more dominated by the enemies into whose arms he has cast himself than he seems today." As the elections neared, *The Times* published another editorial that asserted that the key figures in the German government had appointed Hitler chancellor "to let him expose to the German public his own futility and then get rid of him forever," a statement that again portrayed Hitler as simply a puppet on Papen and Hindenberg's stage.<sup>108</sup>

Only after the March 5 elections did the credible frame appear almost exclusively. Though the Nazis won only 44 percent of the total vote — six percent short of a majority — Hugenberg's Nationalists won 8 percent, giving the nationalist bloc a narrow majority in the Reichstag. Every article and editorial published in the wake of the elections recognized that the Nazi victory foreshadowed the end of German's parliamentary system and marked the beginning of its transformation into a totalitarian state under Hitler, two ideas clearly conveyed in both the headlines and content of the stories.<sup>109</sup> Articles conveying the shift quantified the Nazis' gains relative to the votes they earned in the November 1932 elections and focused not on his political background or personal attributes but rather how the political goal he had for so long expressed might affect the stability of Europe. The passage of the Enabling Act, which transferred legislative power from the Reichstag to the Reich cabinet for four years, resulted in coverage that underscored themes found in coverage of Germany's last diplomatic elections and left no doubt that Hitler, more than any other figure in the

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103 "Hitler's Way to Power," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 31, 1933, 1; "Germany Ventures," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1933, 16; "Editorial Article 1," *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1933, 6; "Centrists Demand Hitler Make Clear his Cabinet Policy," *The New York Times*, February 1, 1932, 1.

104 Guido Enderis, "Group Formed By Papen: Nationalists to Dominate in Government Led by National Socialists," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1933, 1.

105 "Hitler Puts Aside Aim to be Dictator," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1933, 3;

106 "Germany's Reichstag Dissolved," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 1, 1933, 1; Guido Enderis, "Cabinet Made the Issue: Reich's Support to Be Asked for National Concentration," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1933, 1.

107 "Another German Election," *The New York Times*, February 5, 1933, 16.

108 "Plenty of Rope," *The New York Times*, February 19, 1933, E4.

109 "Hitler's Victory in Germany Closes Parliamentary Regime," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 6, 1933, 1; Frederick Birchall, "Hitler Bloc Wins a Reich Majority; Rules in Prussia," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1933, 1; "Dictatorship Now Seen," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1933, 8; "Hitler Winner by Reich Vote; Dictator Near: 17,000,000 of Electorate Express Confidence in Chancellor," *The Washington Post* (Associated Press), March 6, 1933, 1; "Hitler in Power," *The New York Times*, March 7, 1933, 14; "Hitler Vote Stirs Anxiety in France," *The New York Times*, March 7, 1933, 16; "British Sympathy for Reich is Gone: Hitler's Triumph Completes Change From Friendliness to Extreme Distrust," *The New York Times*, March 8, 1933, 10.

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government, controlled the future of the country.<sup>110</sup>

## V. Conclusion

This analysis reveals that the March 1933 elections constituted a tipping point in coverage of Hitler in the American press, and, by extension, readers' understanding of a man who would become one of the most notorious leaders of the twentieth century. None of the three papers included in this study consistently framed him as a credible political power prior to the Nationalist victory in Germany's last free elections, indicating that many of their readers would have had little reason to believe his growing popularity and eventual appointment as chancellor would result in the end of the Weimar Republic and the relative peace it ensured. This research demonstrates that the American press did recognize and convey the popular appeal of Hitler's movement, but tended to assign greater significance to the Nazis' strength in relation to that of the German government. It also reveals that articles that framed him as a credible leader often contained what might be termed "policy" subframes that focused on his political appeal and ideas, while those that framed him as non-credible often contained what might be termed "personalization" subframes that focused on his background and personal attributes more than his political ideas. Because the presence and prevalence of each frame depended on the stability of the Weimar Republic, this research could serve as a springboard for other studies of the relationship between the perceived strength of foreign governments and media coverage of extremist leaders and groups that wish to unseat them.

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110 "Germany's Day of Fate," *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1933, 6; "Hitler Begins Second Stage of New Reich," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 24, 1933, 1; "Quick Action in the Reichstag: Vote Dictatorship for Hitler Regime," *The New York Times*, March 24, 1933, 1; "Four Years Rule Voted by Reichstag," *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1933, 1; "Hitler on Trial," *The Washington Post*, March 26, 1933, 6;

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# Instagram and Branding: A Case Study of Dunkin' Donuts

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## Abstract

*Instagram, a social media app, is becoming increasingly popular as a business and communication tool. Analyzing 12 posts on Dunkin' Donuts' Instagram account, this case study attempted to understand branding through framing theory. The study found that Dunkin' Donuts used its brand name, logo, colors, and images of its products on Instagram to create a strong brand presence. But the company failed in creating an image of its brand as being people-oriented because it scarcely used text, photos, or videos to represent its fans or involve them.*

## I. Introduction

In recent years, social media has become increasingly popular as a business and communication tool. Businesses are recognizing the importance of social media as a way to engage with consumers on a more personal level while being able to implement marketing techniques and further the brand image. In a world of social engagement and connectivity, many well-known brands are using social media to reach and engage their consumers by sharing great content. One of the newest social media tools available to brands is Instagram, a mobile app that allows users to capture and share images and videos with followers (Instagram, 2015). Officially launched in October 2010, Instagram gained 1 million users within its first month, and the app had 300 million active monthly users by April 2015 (Costill, 2014; Instagram, 2015). As a largely visual social media tool, Instagram allows businesses to reach consumers and strengthen its brand in new ways. This case study aimed to discover how Dunkin' Donuts used Instagram to strengthen their brand. This study analyzed Dunkin' Donuts' Instagram account to determine the strategies and elements used to strengthen the brand, attempting to discover if there were frames used by the company on the social media platform.

## II. Literature Review

The author reviewed literature related to the four integral elements — framing theory, branding, Instagram, and Dunkin' Donuts — in order to provide the background necessary to understand the topic of the paper.

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**Keywords:** Instagram, branding, framing theory, social media, visual branding  
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This undergraduate project was conducted as a partial requirement of a research course in communications.

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## ***Framing Theory***

The purpose of this study was to discover if framing was at work in the company's social media strategy by examining the branding of Dunkin' Donuts using Instagram. Framing theory is based on the idea that "an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p.104). Chong and Druckman defined framing as "the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue" (p. 104). In the field of communications, framing theory provides meaning to events or issues by organizing "everyday reality" (p. 105). The theory shows how mass communication influences individuals and the social world. One important aspect of framing theory is that it implies relationships among the elements of a message because a communicator organized the message (Baran & Davis, 1995). Frames are important in communications literature because they help researchers identify trends, compare media coverage, and examine the variations of messages across media (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Frames also help communicators understand the way in which companies brand themselves. Understanding framing as a relationship among elements of a message relates to how companies brand themselves in traditional media and in social media.

Framing has been used as a theoretical basis for many studies involving media and media effects. This type of literature has focused on framing in terms of how media present current events. De Vreese, Jochen, and Holli (2001) studied the framing of news surrounding the adaptation of the euro as a common European currency. By focusing on both media and audience frames, the researchers were able to determine there were variations in media coverage of the event in different countries, with journalists more likely to emphasize conflict rather than framing it as political or economic news.

Other framing research has been based around understanding the theory itself and its place in media research. Weaver (2007) discussed framing theory and its role in communication research. He found that framing studies were the most popular type of theory indexed by *Communication Abstract* from 1971 to 2005, but were the most abstract. Future research, he concluded, should make an effort to define frames and framing more clearly to help conceptualize the theory.

Researchers can examine variations framed in messages in small stories individually and understand the meaning of issues throughout the stories. This means that framing can be analyzed to study branding on social media by looking at the variations of messages on social media to understand the brand as a whole. McClain (2011) used framing to understand branding in social media. Used framing theory to analyze the framing of news on Twitter, Wasike (2013) wrote, "In a broad sense, framing refers to the selection of certain aspects of reality in order to make them more salient in a bid to promote a desired interpretation" (p. 9). This idea shows that scholars can study the aspects that were chosen to appear on social media sites as explicit choices with desired interpretations and uses to understand branding on Instagram.

Another pertinent study of framing theory, which is related to advertising message construction, is the Message Framing for Brand Communication model (Tsai, 2007). The model in *Figure 1* shows that self-construal, consumer involvement and product knowledge are all factors that determine how effectively the framing of a message will influence attitude toward the advertising, the brand, and purchase intention.



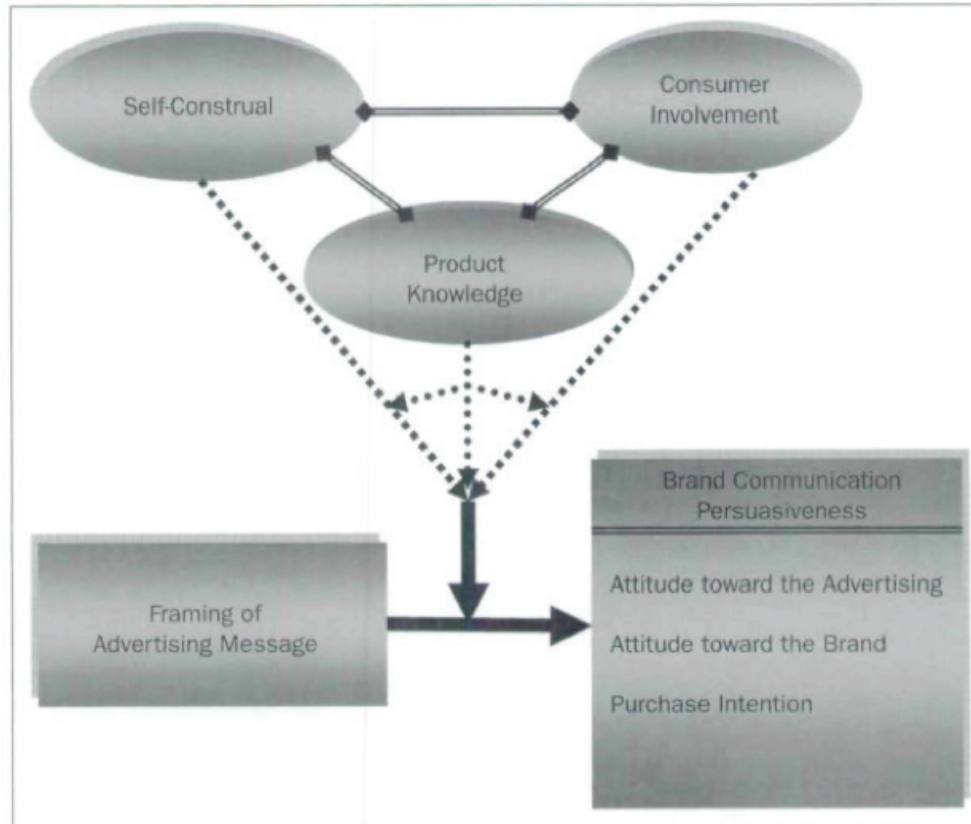


Figure 1. Message Framing for Brand Communication (MFBC) Model, (Tsai, 2007, p. 365)

Tsai (2007) proposed two main frames for advertising: positive and negative framing. Positive framing focuses on the positive outcomes of the product brand, and negative framing focuses on moving away from negative outcomes of the product brand. Positive framing, for example, would exist in a meat product brand advertised as 75 percent lean, while negative framing in the advertising would say 25 percent fat (p. 364) so that consumers would be motivated to become active against a competitor's brand.

## Branding

The goal of branding is to create an emotional connection between a company and its consumers. Branding results from the sum of many different parts, including the brand name, logo, colors, and more. It allows companies to differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded market. The rise of new technology is changing how companies communicate with consumers and in turn how they use branding.

Research on building or maintaining strong brands available to communicators is considerable. Keller (2009), for example, studied new challenges for marketers when it comes to building and maintaining brands. The author proposes a customer-based brand equity model in order to address how brands can be built and maintained through consumer knowledge structures. The model discusses a rational and emotional pathway that consumers may feel when becoming connected to brands. The pyramid model, in Figure 2, features the six brand building blocks, brand salience, performance, imagery, judgments, feelings, and resonance (p. 143). According to the study, these building blocks are necessary to create a connection between a brand and a consumer, in both a rational and emotional way.

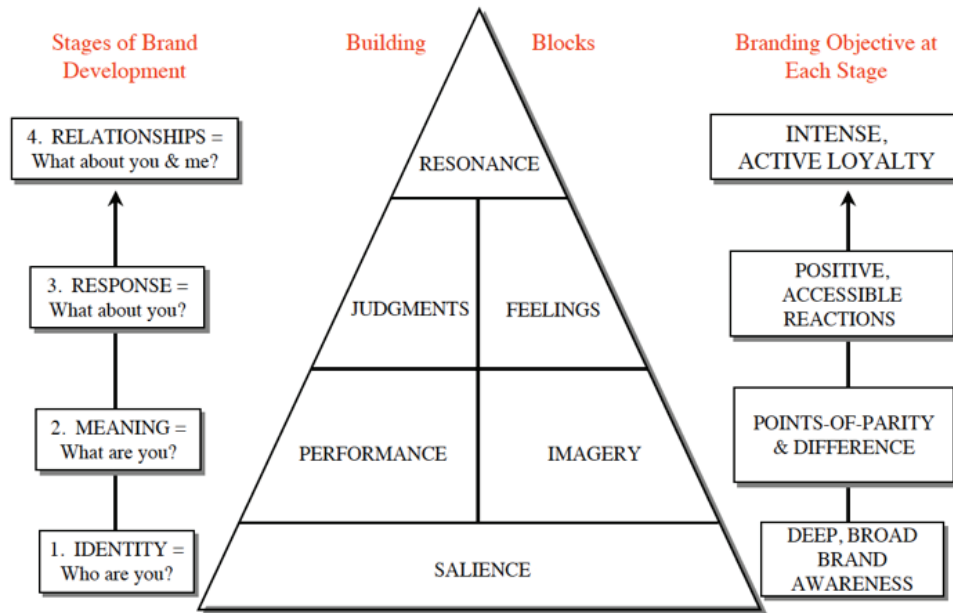


Figure 2. Customer-based brand equity model pyramid (Keller, 2009, p. 144)

Other research studied the role of social media in branding. In “Social Media’s Role in Branding: A Study of Social Media Use and the Cultivation of Brand Affect, Trust, and Loyalty,” North (2011) used cultivation theory as a framework to check if social media impacted advertising outcomes. The research found that a correlation is present between social media use and brand trust and loyalty, linking social media and branding. This study sheds light on the importance and necessity for more research on brands’ presence on Instagram.

### Visual Branding

When studying Instagram, it is important to consider the visual aspect of the social media app. In a thesis titled “Get Schooled: A Visual Social Semiotic Analysis of Target’s Branding using Instagram,” Bevins (2014) used the theory of visual social semiotics to examine Target’s Instagram to “optimize [the] understanding of visual information” (p. 12). Although the Target study focused on one specific back-to-school campaign, its research framework can be applied to the case study of Dunkin’ Donuts Instagram account. One theoretical perspective that this paper’s author adopted was Aaker’s Building Strong Brands Model for the Brand Identity System, which emphasized four different aspects of brands, as shown in Figure 3.

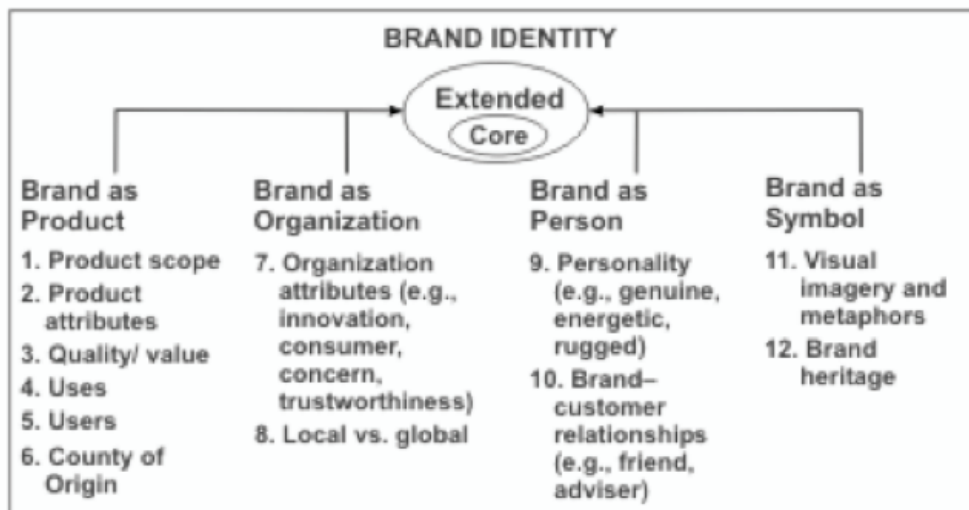


Figure 3. Aaker’s Building Strong Brands Model (Bevins, 2014, p. 19)

Brand as product, the first element of brand identity in *Figure 3*, represents the role of product in building a consumer's association with a brand. Brand as organization emphasizes businesses' focusing on their organization's attributes for branding instead of their product or service attributes. Brand as person also helps consumers relate to the brand personality. Symbols, the final element in the model, provide a visual to the consumer and also drive the meaning behind the brand (Bevins, 2014).

In order to establish a framework for analyzing the Dunkin' Donuts Instagram images, the author consulted visual branding literature and created a list of elements that build a strong visual brand. A blog on Hub Spot featured the "4 Ingredients of Social Media Success," which can be used to strengthen brands' social media presence (Perkins, 2014). The most important tip for branding in this article was a consistent color palette: using the same colors over and over again, whether they are applied to the logo, text, or images. Two to four colors were recommended to be used consistently throughout social media posts (Perkins, 2014). Another article from American Research Group, Inc. (2012) provided 10 rules for effective advertising, which could be applied to social media use by brands. These 10 rules were phrased in the form of questions, such as "Does the ad use basic emotional appeals? Does the ad make the desired call to action a part of the story? Does the ad use symbolic language and images that relate to the senses?"

Next, a 2015 blog on WordStream.com created a list of 10 marketing tips to build a brand on Instagram, providing tangible, observable aspects. The first tip is to build community around an actionable hashtag. A hashtag is an important part of the Instagram experience. It allows users to find images related to a company of their interest and to tag and post their own user-generated content on Instagram. An actionable hashtag makes it easier for a brand to interact with its consumers. The second tip is to find the beauty in the portrayal of a brand (da Cunha, 2015). The way in which a brand portrays its products can play an important role in the branding process and may contribute to the framing of the brand on social media. Finally, Instagram itself offers advice for visual branding. On its company blog, Instagram recommends that its users creatively use the app as a "Canvas for Seasonal Creativity" and upload various season- or holiday-related images to the app. Businesses can embrace this idea for visual branding ("Instagram For Business," 2014).

### ***Social Media/Instagram***

Research on social media as a business and communication tool has seen significant growth in the past decade. Much research has been conducted on the subject, including one discussed in the branding literature above, titled "Social Media's Role in Branding: A Study of Social Media Use and the Cultivation of Brand Affect, Trust, and Loyalty" (Bevins, 2014). The study examined whether or not social media was able to influence people's brand perceptions. The results of the research indicated that a correlation existed between social media use and brand loyalty, with age also playing a factor. The findings of this social media branding research shows that there is, in fact, a link between social media use and branding.

While there is much research about social media itself, Instagram research is still a new topic. Some research focused on Instagram as a social media tool. For example, a paper titled "How Instagram Can Be Used as a Tool in Social Network Marketing" discussed the ways in which Instagram can be utilized to promote brands and maintain relationships with customers. The research also examined how the platform was favored among users as a largely visual medium in which consumers could interact with the brands they follow (Huey & Yazdanifard, 2014). Other Instagram research has focused on understanding what type of content users upload on Instagram. For example, Hu, Manikonda, and Kambhampati (2014) studied Instagram through an analysis of photo content and user types. They clustered a sample of 200 photos uploaded to the app by everyday users and created an eight category-coding scheme, against which photos were analyzed for content. These categories included friends, food, gadget, captioned photo, pet, activity, selfie, and fashion. This study found what content users posted to Instagram and what types of content were the most popular.

### ***Dunkin' Donuts***

According to *Fast Company* (2014), Dunkin' Donuts, and its main competitor, Starbucks, own half of the United States coffee market, with Dunkin' Donuts owning about 24 percent. In 2013, Dunkin' Donuts owned 11,000 restaurants in 33 countries and sold approximately 18 billion cups of coffee a year. Both companies are social media giants, with millions of followers and a large presence on the main social media sites of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. But while Starbucks focuses on a more serious and focused target audience, Dunkin' Donuts targets a fun and casual coffee drinker. Dunkin' Donuts highlights its friendly brand

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identity with a distinct pink and orange logo (Champagne & Iezzi, 2014).

Dunkin' Donuts' communication strategy is heavily focused on the consumers and fans of the brand, encouraging them to tell stories and interact with the brand on social media. This was shown in past campaigns, including the 2013 #mydunkin social media campaign, which encouraged fans to share Dunkin' Donuts moments, with some fans even featured in advertisements. The brand pushes to connect with consumers on social media is an attempt to connect with fans who heavily rely on mobile devices (Kats, 2013). In a 2012 *Adweek* article, Kevin Vine, Dunkin' Donuts interactive marketing manager, was quoted as discussing the company's overall social media strategy:

Our social media strategy is aimed at growing and maintaining a highly engaged global community of Dunkin' Donuts fans. We work to consistently provide meaningful content and promote a two-way dialogue between the brand and our passionate fans. We're a fun brand, and our guests who rely on us for coffee and donuts expect a little fun from us by making Dunkin' Donuts part of their daily lives, either through status updates with pictures or questions or with fun challenges and sweepstakes tied to our marketing calendar initiatives (Sohn, 2012).

The social media campaign leveraged opportunities for fans to engage through sweepstakes, contests, holiday occasions, and more (Kats, 2013). For example, during Halloween 2012, Dunkin' Donuts Instagram account hosted a contest for fans to decorate their cups and post them on Instagram using the hashtag #DresseDD, with the five best cups winning \$100 gift cards (Stampler, 2012). Many similar contests took place on Instagram to engage consumers and get them interacting in the user-generated content process. Vine was quoted as saying:

On . . . Instagram, we're creating and sharing content based on how Dunkin' Donuts fans are already engaging with the brand on these channels as our way of celebrating what makes them special and keeps them running. We also want to surprise and delight them with unique Dunkin' Donuts content through special images and boards dedicated to what's going on in our office, or by sharing special, one-of-a-kind donuts at our restaurants around the world (Sohn, 2012).

Dunkin' Donuts Instagram strategy is designed not only to engage fans, but also to provide content they are generally interested in through unique, joyful, and fun content. Based on the literature review, one research question was asked for this paper: How does Dunkin' Donuts use Instagram to brand itself, especially using framing theory?

### III. Methods

To gather a systematic sample of posts from the Dunkin' Donuts' Instagram account, the author chose a time frame of one year, from April 2014 to March 2015 and selected one post from each month of the year. The first post from the first sample month of April 2014 was selected, followed by the second post from the second sample month of May 2014, and so on. This process produced 12 posts when the 12th photo was selected for the 12th sample month of March 2015.

Instagram posts were divided into the categories of textual elements of captions and visual elements of pictures and videos. The former is composed of hashtags, brand name, product name, a call to action, and season or holiday. The captions were analyzed to see whether they were positively or negatively framed. Visual analysis looked at several categories, such as type of visual, name, logo, color, products, season or holiday, emotional appeal, food, people, activity, and fun/friendly imagery.

### IV. Findings

The author first described two posts as an example below and further analyzed all 12 posts later. The post below from May 2014 is 1 of the 12 sampled posts (Refer to *Figure 4*). The caption beside the image mentions the holiday Cinco de Mayo, a call-to-action verb with "Start your fiesta" as well as the Dunkin' Donuts brand name in "DDs." A Coolatta is a Dunkin' Donuts product name and its price is featured.

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This example shows how Dunkin' Donuts incorporated its textual elements as a crucial part of the branding process.



Figure 4. One of the 12 sampled images from May 2014

Another post below features a sample image from Dunkin' Donuts' Instagram page (Refer to Figure 5). This image features fall imagery in the image of colorful leaves and the lake. The post also features a textual call-to-action using the verb "indulge." Finally, this caption also mentions fall as well as the brand name and brand product in the hashtag #DDHotChoc.



Figure 5. One of the 12 sampled images from November 2014

### Text Analysis Results

Among the 12 posts, 6 (50%) mentioned the brand name in their captions, either in their comments or hashtags, or in both (Refer to Table 1). Four out of the six hashtags refer to Dunkin' Donuts name — two #mydunkin hashtags and two different hashtags including #DD. A Dunkin' Donuts product name was mentioned five times: two references to donuts in general, once to iced coffee, and twice to the specific

products of Dunkin' Donuts' Coolatta and Hot Chocolate beverages. In the text, call-to-actions were used in eight posts. The most common verb used was "share," written twice. Other call-to-action verbs included "show," "indulge," and "spread the joy." Two questions were also used in the comments. Price was mentioned twice: \$1.99 for a small Coolatta beverage and a free donut with the purchase of a beverage. Eight posts mentioned seasons or holidays: Seven of the mentions were specific holidays, including April Fools Day, Cinco de Mayo, National Donut Day and President's Day. There were two mentions of the season fall and one mention of SunDDay, a nomenclature for Sunday created by Dunkin' Donuts.

Analyzing captions based on the branding and advertising framework of positive versus negative framing, the author found all captions used a positive frame, except for one post for April Fools Day. In this negatively framed post, the caption says, "#AprilFools Day is all fun and games until someone wastes a donut." The other photos were all framed in a positive way, calling for fans to share stories and pictures, buy products, and continually engage with Dunkin' Donuts as a brand.

**Table 1. How captions were used in Dunkin' Donuts Posts**

Photo Number	Brand Name	Hashtags	Product Name	Call to Action	Seasons/ Holiday
Photo 1		#AprilFools	donut	Start, \$1.99	April Fools
Photo 2	DDs		Coolatta	Are you ready?; FREE	Cinco de Mayo
Photo 3			donut/beverage	Share	National Donut Day
Photo 4	Dunkin', #mydunkin	#mydunkin	iced coffee	Share	SunDDay
Photo 5	dunk, #mydunkin	#mydunkin		How do you?	
Photo 6				Show of hands	
Photo 7				Indulge	Fall/Pumpkin Season
Photo 8	#DDHotChoc	#DDHotChoc	#DDHotChoc		Fall
Photo 9					
Photo 10	Ddelicious	#NationalOppo- siteDay			National Opposite Day
Photo 11				Spread the joy	President's Day
Photo 12	DD, #DDPerksLove	#DDPerksLove		Start, \$1.99	

### **Visual Analysis Results**

Of the 12 Instagram posts, 11 posts featured still images and 1 post showed a video.

Next, the analysis was focused on the appearance of the brand name, logo, brand colors, and products in the Instagram units. The Dunkin' Donuts name appeared in six posts, usually appearing as part of a product package, whether a donut box or a coffee cup. Some coffee cup images, however, did not have the Dunkin' Donuts name.

Two types of the Dunkin' Donuts logo appeared in the posts, as shown in (Figure 6). The first type of logo appeared in 6 posts; the second logo, which is also used as Dunkin' Donuts' Instagram profile picture, appeared in 4 posts. The brand colors of orange and pink appeared in 11 posts. These colors appeared in the logo as well as food and beverage packaging and as bold text featured in an image.



Figure 6. Two types of logo

Dunkin' Donuts product images were also largely featured on Instagram: Dunkin' Donuts coffee (six times), donuts and pastries (twice), and both coffee and donuts (twice). Prominently featured products were the Dunkin' Donuts Coolatta, iced coffee, and the Dunkin' Donuts line of pumpkin flavored beverages, such as the Latte Pumpkin Crème Brule, Iced Latte Pumpkin Mocha and a pumpkin muffin.

Next, the Instagram posts were analyzed using the classification system that was produced by Hu, Manikonda, and Kambhampati (2014), which consists of friends, food, gadget, captioned photo, pet, activity, selfie, and fashion. Among them, Dunkin' Donuts mainly utilized people, food, and activity. Pictures of people occurred in six posts, but only two posts showed a person's face, with the rest showing hands or the person holding the Dunkin' Donut's products in front of their torso. Only one post did not show an image of food, but instead an image of President Abraham Lincoln and President George Washington made out of coffee beans. Three images showed activities of biking, swimming, and baking. Biking was implied through the image of an iced coffee in the cup holder on a bike, and swimming was implied through an iced coffee next to a pool and a towel.

Next, three pictures featured an emotional appeal. The first image focused on the fear or anxiety associated with not having a donut from Dunkin' Donuts. This was in the form of a prank video, featuring a frustrated and annoyed victim. The second featured a nostalgic element, through use of the "mom's homemade cooking" trope, with the picture featuring a friendly apron and homemade cookies. The third image focused on the joy or happiness that Dunkin' Donuts could provide, especially on a cold winter's day. The image showed a happy woman holding her coffee tightly, with an accompanying caption invoking a call-to-action for fans to spread the joy of Dunkin' Donuts. The posts were also analyzed to see if the photos included a fun or friendly aspect, as described in the overall social media strategy and brand positioning of Dunkin' Donuts on Instagram.

To create fun elements, 10 posts used textual elements, visual elements, or both. Dunkin' Donuts employed a video of a prank, playful comments about products, a playful suggestion to rename fall "Pumpkin season," or other tactics. Two of the most fun examples included a photo of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington made out of coffee beans for President's Day and an Instagram contest to reward fans of Dunkin' Donuts for their dedication.

## V. Discussion

The research question of this study was how Dunkin' Donuts uses Instagram to brand itself. Dunkin' Donuts uses both the textual and visual elements of Instagram together to create a fun and friendly social media experience for the fans of the brand. The brand utilizes its strong brand name and imagery by including its logo, the brand colors and the name when possible. These features occur through both visuals and text, creating a cohesive post, which strengthens the brand. The unique hashtags in six posts further attempt to create a unique fan based environment. Because of their brand centered content, such as #mydunkin, fans can use them specifically to upload and share pictures of Dunkin' Donuts products.

Dunkin' Donuts largely uses seasonal and holiday themes throughout its Instagram posts. Use of popular, mainstream holidays, such as April Fools Day and Cinco de Mayo, along with smaller, brand related holidays, such as National Donut Day and the made-up SunDDay, provides the brand with a safe and trusted

way to create content and gain the audience's attention. Products that complement the seasons, such as the Coolatta for summer and the Hot Chocolate or Latte Pumpkin Crème Brule for fall, help brand Dunkin' Donuts further by showing recognizable and popular products with matching seasonal imagery.

Other research findings suggest that while Dunkin' Donuts uses a multitude of imagery and text to suggest its "fun and friendly" brand, it does so without frequently using emotional appeals. Only three visuals used emotional appeals and only one of them used the emotional appeal of joyfulness or happiness. Even the most fun-oriented visuals, such as the Cinco de Mayo picture featuring a "fiesta," did not include any fun imagery other than the colorful Coolatta products. When analyzed for positive and negative message framing, all of the visuals had positive message framing except for one.

One of the most interesting aspects of the analysis is how little fans play a role in the Instagram posts of Dunkin' Donuts. Even as a people-oriented brand, which claims to engage fans in a fun and friendly way, the brand is lacking in their representation of fans. There were no fan photos shared by the brand on Instagram in the sample. Only two posts showed the faces of people: one man was featured in a prank video and one woman was shown in a post promoting a new Social Hub feature. Various hands and torsos were shown in the picture, but only as a way to display Dunkin' Donuts products. For a people-friendly brand, the actual consumers of Dunkin' Donuts were missing from Instagram.

### ***Interpretation of Findings and Theory***

Dunkin' Donuts has created a strong brand presence on Instagram through its content. The brand's prevalent use of brand name, logo, colors, and products has created a strong sense of visual branding on the social media app. If one were to see an Instagram post by Dunkin' Donuts, one would be able to recognize it as such immediately. Dunkin' Donuts has been able to create its brand on Instagram by creating a connection with fans through Dunkin' Donuts specific visuals. For a people-oriented brand, Dunkin' Donuts showed photos that do not reflect its social media strategy and execution. With only two visuals representing people, one showing a woman's face in a photo and the other the back of someone's head in a video, its visual strategy was not clearly consumer oriented.

At this time, framing theory seems to only be slightly connected to the way Dunkin' Donuts brands itself on Instagram. The biggest "frame" or grouping of messages seems to be simply the use of Dunkin' Donuts products. Out of the 12 posts, 9 featured products. While there were fun and friendly elements throughout, there didn't seem to be any distinct "fun" frames. And while the posts were analyzed for positive or negative message framing, all were positive except for one. These findings suggest that Dunkin' Donuts had no distinct frames or messages featured or implied in Instagram posts and may not apply framing theory to strengthen Dunkin' Donuts brand on Instagram.

## **VI. Conclusion**

In conclusion, Dunkin' Donuts does a strong job of branding itself on Instagram, the social media application rising with popularity as a tool for communicators to engage with fans of the brand through unique and engaging content. By using the brand name, logo, and color, as well as actionable hashtags and product images, Dunkin' Donuts is able to use its brand to post engaging content in order to connect with fans of the brand. And while framing theory does not appear to hold up as a strong theoretical basis for the branding of Dunkin' Donuts on Instagram, the company's use of branding strategies and tactics, both visually and textually, continues to help strengthen the brand on social media.

Limitations of this study include the small sample size of 12 posts and the lack of a different coder for this study. Any additional Instagram research will be helpful for future research because the mobile application is the newest tool for communicators. Research on Instagram as a branding tool would be especially helpful to further understand communication theories and how they are connected to the social media app. Future research on branding and the framing theory should also look at a brand's total social media presence by observing and studying beyond Instagram. By studying multiple social media sites together, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, researchers may examine more evidence about branding to draw a stronger conclusion. Finally, future research should focus on framing theory in the context of social media and branding. Few scholarly articles were available to study the theory in this way, making it difficult to

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draw strong conclusions about its presence in branding on social media.

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# Examining Social Media and Digital Practices among Southeastern Magazines

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## Abstract

*Recent advancements in digital media have had drastic effects on magazines across the country. This research paper addressed those results by examining the digital and social media practices of four city magazines based in the American Southeast to determine what practices are working across social media and digital platforms. Through a content analysis, this study found that city magazines need to use local content, multimedia content and advertising bundles to draw in more visitors or advertising revenues.*

## I. Introduction

City magazines began to appear in American homes in the nineteenth century, but they did not truly flourish until the 1960s and 1970s. In 1981, there were eighteen magazines total in Washington, D.C., Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Today, there are twenty in North Carolina alone (Hayes). Like most print publications today, city magazines face a declining print product, a smaller editorial staff, and pressure for an increased digital presence. This transition has taken time, and the digital presence has slowly taken precedent and developed a steady audience. As a result of this shift, the bulk of a magazine's readership comes not from people subscribing to the magazine or picking it up from a newsstand, but from visits to the publication's website. It is no longer a battle of what article is placed or teased on the front page, but what gets shared on Twitter or Facebook at peak viewing times. Social media has become the new front page for media.

A number of factors will be studied to determine what is succeeding on the digital front for city magazines. The magazines' Twitter and Facebook accounts will be observed, which in theory, should be utilized daily. This paper will analyze the numbers of retweets, favorites, likes, comments, and shares these magazines received through these two social media platforms while considering the difference in the size of their subscribers and social media followers. This paper will examine Twitter and Facebook to determine what type of content is most popular for city magazines and whether adopting certain digital-specific content attracts a more diverse audience to the magazine's website.

Four city magazines will be assessed to determine which digital practices are working for these publications: *Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian*.

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## II. Literature Review

To be a city magazine, a publication must have three characteristics: a focus on the geographic area it comes from, a mix of service and feature writing, and a lasting quality. The last is particularly important, as a magazine's content must still seem fresh three weeks after it was originally printed (Jenkins). City magazines, unlike newspapers and news magazines, are more likely to use a personal tone and use regional vernacular, translating well to social media, which adopts a much more personal tone.

To accurately determine what is exceptional among news organizations' social media accounts, a researcher did interviews with social media editors at the *AP*, *BBC*, *The Huffington Post*, *Mashable*, *breakingnews.com*, and *The New York Times*. Findings included adding value by sounding human and conversational in use of social media tools, adherence to traditional reporting standards, drawing users into the reporting process, and tailoring the use of each social media account so it plays to the specific platform's strength. On Twitter, this can mean retweets or engaging in conversation with users, though it comes with risks. Meghan Peters, community manager for *Mashable*, said it is important to look at the content of someone's profile before engaging with them to verify if the person is reliable to interact with (Craig). These traits, combined with what constitutes a city magazine, provide *Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian* some advantage.

Because city magazines have a specific geographic range they cover, it gives them a defined space to engage with on social media. On Twitter, 39 percent of occurrences – retweeting, favoriting and tweeting at another account – happen within a user's region similar to a mid-size metropolitan area. Hashtags, which are used before a relevant keyword so it is categorized and shows up easily when searched, are also based on geography. When 6,640 tweets were examined in 2012 and 2013, a study found that three of *Charlotte's* top four hashtags were “clt,” “DNC2012,” and “charlotte.” The same study found that some of *Atlanta's* top hashtags were “altdining,” “atlarts,” and “atlmodernism” (Sivek). Hashtags like these showed the mix of service and feature writing a magazine normally produces.

The final trait of a city magazine, lasting content, is where it can fall short on social media. Unlike a daily newspaper or a news website, magazines do not have the personnel needed to tease fresh content on Twitter and Facebook daily. A study of 10 major U.S. magazines, ranging from *TV Guide* to *Real Simple*, found that, on a weekly average, published 61 tweets. Of those, 48 linked back to their websites. The content was usually entertainment or feature related, which are topics with a longer shelf life (Boyle and Zuegner). Following links to website, the next highest percentages of activity were retweets.

### **Demographics**

A review of the magazines' media kits shows who is picking up the magazine and who is visiting the website. In terms of subscription, *Washingtonian* leads with 124,890 subscribers with the median subscriber age at 42 years. That it has the largest number of subscribers among the four is not surprising since it is published in the largest metropolitan area of the four magazines. *Atlanta* has a subscription rate of 68,341 with a median age of 46, and 61 percent of its reader identifying as female (*Atlanta*). *Charleston* has 11,000 subscribers with the median age at 51, and a 9-to-11 male/female ratio (*Charleston*). *Charlotte* has 30,000 subscribers and the highest rate of female subscribers at 65 percent.

The publications offered different digital media kits. *Charlotte* and *Washingtonian* had separate media kits covering their website while *Charleston* and *Atlanta* had the same document to cover both their digital and print version. All four revealed the number of website views and unique visitors per month, but only *Charleston* and *Atlanta* gave a breakdown of demographics, like age and gender, of site visitors. *Washingtonian* led with two million monthly visitors to its website, followed by *Atlanta* with just under one million monthly visitors, *Charlotte* with 370,000, and *Charleston* with 140,000.

*Washingtonian's* online media kit did not divulge age or gender of visitors, but focuses on geography and income (*Washingtonian*). *Atlanta* had a much greater difference in its online and print demographics. Male viewership ratio increases 7 percentage point to 46 percent, and 47 percent of its viewers are aged 18-34 (*Atlanta*). As much as 57 percent of *Charleston's* visitors were under the age of 44, in comparison with its median age of 51 for print subscribers (*Charleston*). *Charlotte* revealed the number of followers and “likes” it receives on social media and the number of total page views in total across the magazine and its two lifestyle publications (*Charlotte*).

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### ***Interaction online***

Since its inception in 2006, Twitter has grown into a tool for sharing content, collaboration and breaking news. From November 2010 to March 2011, Twitter has increased across six different age groups. The largest was a 10 percent increase among 25- to 34-year-olds. In this time period, Twitter saw a 6 percent increase among 35-to 44-year-olds. One of the largest changes on Twitter from 2013-2014 occurred among households with incomes of more than \$50,000 a year, which increased from 15 percent to 27 percent. Together, those that made more than \$50,000 a year and 35-to 44-year-olds made up a sizeable portion of the four magazines' audience (Duggan).

Twitter engaged with a much younger and more media savvy audience than Facebook. In fact, Facebook saw an increasingly older audience every year. From 2011 to 2014, three million teenage users left Facebook while the site saw an 80.4 percent growth of users aged 55 and above (Saul). In total, women outnumber men on the website by about 10 percent (Guimarães). The overall demographic of Facebook matched the audience of the four city magazines.

With 64 percent of U.S. adults using Facebook, it is not surprising the website is one of the most popular places to learn about breaking news, especially by those who do not follow the news cycle regularly. Of respondents who said they follow the news less often, 47 percent said Facebook is an important way to receive news, 9 percentage points higher than heavy news followers. Like *Atlanta's* much younger online audience, 34 percent of Facebook news consumers are people aged 18 to 29. People are also engaging with Facebook news pages: 64 percent of news consumers sometimes clicking on a news link and 60 percent sometimes liking or commenting on a story (Mitchell). On Twitter, the most popular time to tweet is between 8:01 a.m. and 4 p.m., with 58.5 percent of content posted then. It was also discovered that weekly magazines do not publish more frequently than their monthly counterparts, which will reuse archived material (Boyle and Zuegner). Though popular, Twitter still ranks second to Facebook in terms of popularity among magazine readers.

Based on an Association of Magazine Media poll, reported that 91 percent of magazine readers aged 18-34 use Facebook; 61 percent, YouTube; and 40 percent, Twitter. Respondents were found to engage in social media while reading a magazine article. Forty-two percent of readers on Facebook and 51 percent of readers on Twitter said they share what they are reading. This research separated respondents into "readers" and "avid readers." "Avid readers," who marked themselves as such on the survey, were considerably higher in terms of interaction with magazines and editors via social media ("Magazine Media Readers are Social").

### ***"MOJO" and word of mouth***

In 2015, 64 percent of American adults own a smartphone, a 35 percent increase since 2011 (Smith). The popularity of these devices has impacted city magazines. Mobile journalism by citizens, known as "MOJO," became a recent phenomenon because of social media and the availability of smartphones. Anyone can now record footage or snap a photo and become a contribution in the news cycle. With magazine reporting staffs shrinking by almost 50 percent since 1985, the need for more people on the ground has increased. Citizen journalists are used for reporting serious incidents, such as the recent rioting in Baltimore, Maryland, and Ferguson, Missouri, but city magazines are more likely to be used to share photos and reviews of restaurants, which relates to the type of content usually published (Waldman).

Word of mouth was found to be the most powerful tool for getting customers engaged with digital platforms. With shares and retweets available on Facebook and Twitter, it was easy for social media users to recommend a product to their friends and followers. With a click of a button thousands of people can see a story teased within a few seconds. The benefits of word of mouth included frequent visitors to a publication's site, with focus on topics to help target a geographic area by seeing who is talking about the magazine's content and where they are (Martin).

The relationship between the digital and print side of the magazine has not always yielded the best results for audience interaction. A study of 522 U.S. magazines found a "negative relationship between the demand for digital and print magazine content" (Martin). Content on websites that had some overlap with a printed edition of the magazine had a 3 to 4 percent reduction in circulation. Magazines that placed an entire edition online lost up to 9 percent of circulation. They have to walk a fine line between giving enough to keep readers interested in the physical product and losing print subscribers. When used effectively, social media can support the print product. It can extend the product, sell to advertisers, and interact with the audience

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(Martin). When used unwisely, social media may prove disastrous for a magazine.

### ***Bundling***

Magazines, more than newspapers, are published in fairly specific genres. This provides advertisers with a concrete idea of the type of content to be expected and whether or not the product benefits from advertising in a city magazine. Historically, magazines have tried to maximize their profits by effectively balancing advertisements and editorial content. The idea behind this is if magazines “force” readers to see advertising, which was traditionally assumed to be a “bad” element to readers, then publishers have to lower the subscription rates for readers and/or see their subscribers’ base shrink. Depken and Wilson found this is not true of the 95 U.S. magazines they studied: Forty-five magazine (46% of 95) actually could increase both advertising and subscription prices, and nineteen magazines (21%) could increase subscription prices even though they lost some subscribers.

*Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian* did not bundle content digitally. Advertisements seemed unrelated to the four magazines’ websites. As in the print product, advertisements appeared in specific locations on the webpage, but when and where they appeared seemed random. For example, an article on *Atlanta*’s website about a chef featured an advertisement about the culinary scene in Hilton Head, South Carolina, as if the two were a bundle. But once the page was refreshed, the advertisement changed to an advertisement focusing on Atlanta Healthcare.

BuzzFeed, an Internet news media company, packages content around advertisements. For a Virgin Mobile ad, BuzzFeed developed a list of reasons on Valentine’s Day to “break up with their carrier.” As a result of this packaging, Virgin saw a 95 percent spike in sales (Rice). With BuzzFeed-style websites becoming popular among younger consumers, magazines can look to digital-only news organizations to not only learn about bundling, but about practices as well.

### ***Implementing digital journalism practices***

BuzzFeed’s a relatively new player in journalism having started in 2006, but it has made a significant impact. It has captured the attention of investors as well as people under the age of 35. Fifty percent of its 200 million-plus yearly visitors are between the ages of 18 and 34. From 2006 to April 2013, venture capitalists invested \$46 million in the company. Other websites like Distractify and Upworthy soon followed, releasing similar content like lists, videos, and gif-heavy text, with the aim to go viral. These websites are popular among people younger than thirty-five. Should city magazines adopt a few of these methods for their digital operation, they could attract a younger audience (Rice).

One of the defining traits of online journalism was the listicle, or a list-based article, usually providing a snappy summary of news or a ranking of something like “The 30 Happiest Facts of All Time,” as seen on BuzzFeed. Ross Hawkes, a senior lecturer of journalism at the United Kingdom’s Birmingham City University, told *The Guardian* “a younger audience is far more comfortable with bullet-pointed information, they’re used to consuming 140-character information, short or visual Facebook updates and receiving a sample of what’s going on.” Another factor toward the popularity of listicles, according to *The Guardian*, is that they have always been around, with magazines, specifically, having used them (Lawlor).

City magazines should avoid using clickbait journalism, a recent movement within the industry, and a popular strategy of BuzzFeed, Distractify, Upworthy, and other publications. The main purpose of clickbait content is “to attract attention and encourage visitors to a particular web page” (Hamblin). It is a modern day yellow journalism, which often used exaggerations to attract the attention of readers, such as headlines like: “17 Facts You Won’t Believe Are True” and “A Curious Monkey Reaches For A Man’s Hand. What Happens Next Is Too Precious for Words,” which intentionally leaves out vital information for the reader (Hamblin). Websites like Distractify and Upworthy, which don’t have a tradition of hard news reporting, can get away with publishing clickbait. Alex Mizrahi, who runs @HuffPoSpoilers, a Twitter account parodying *The Huffington Post*’s use of clickbait, told *The Daily Beast* that clickbait sours when utilized by news organizations like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Associated Press*. “How can you be taken seriously when you leave out the ‘who, what, where, why, [and] how’ when it’s relevant to the news story,” he said. “It’s obvious you can’t fit the whole story, [but] you have to give context. You can’t fall back on the same formulas” (Shire).

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### III. Methods

The author conducted a content analysis to measure the level of interaction with readers that *Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte* and *Washingtonian* had through their Facebook and Twitter accounts. The analysis was conducted over the week of April 10 to April 16, 2015. Each tweet was examined to see whether it had a multimedia element – photo, video, illustration, etc. – attached, the subject matter of the post, and how many favorites and retweets the post received. On Facebook, all posts had visual elements attached so the subject of the post was counted.

Tweets with images were routinely the most interacted with on Twitter. The most popular post of the day was put into one of six categories: entertainment and arts, food and drink, home and garden, sports, event and contest, and vacation. Events and contests were found to be the most interacted post on Twitter and Facebook.

In addition to social media, the websites of the four magazines were inspected to determine if the publications bundled content and if they implemented the use of listicles, quizzes and clickbait headlines.

### IV. Results

In terms of Twitter and Facebook followers and posts, *Washingtonian* had the most, followed by *Atlanta*. Next, *Charleston* had more Facebook likes than *Charlotte*, and their rank was switched on Twitter followers.

From April 10 to April 16, *Atlanta* and *Charleston* utilized Facebook more than Twitter to share content, while *Washingtonian* and *Charlotte* were the opposite. *Charleston* used social media the least, with three Facebook posts and four tweets in a week, and no post for three entire days. In comparison, *Washingtonian*, which was active every day, posted on Facebook 36 times and tweeted 181 times.

Of the content shared on the four magazine's Twitter accounts, the most popular tweet of the day usually included an image or video. *Charleston*, which had the least successful Twitter presence of the magazines, never utilized images and never received more than one retweet and one favorite on a single post. *Atlanta* and *Charlotte* were slightly better in terms of adding visuals, with the former having five days and the latter four days, not including an image or video. *Washingtonian* utilized images the most, with six of its seven most popular tweets including a photo. In terms of video, only *Charlotte* and *Washingtonian* tweeted with a video attachment, with both having done so once during the week.

Across all four publications, unique local content was the most popular on Facebook and Twitter. From April 10 to April 16, the subject matter of the most popular posts included home and contests (7 times each), followed by entertainment and arts (5 times each), food/drink and sports (3 times each), and home/garden and vacation (one time each). *Washingtonian* posted the single most responded tweet. On April 15, a man flew a gyrocopter through protected airspace onto the lawn of the Capitol in order to protest campaign finance laws. In response to the event, *Washingtonian* published an article detailing the history of when people could perform such an act legally. It received eighty-one retweets and forty favorites.

*Atlanta* and *Washingtonian* routinely both shared news and recycled old content on Facebook and Twitter. This could be a simple solution for *Charlotte* and *Charleston* to engage with readers if they were suffering from a lack of information to share with followers. Another easy way to engage in sharing content is by retweeting. While *Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian* are not likely to share people's statuses on Facebook, they are likely to retweet users who have shared content on Twitter. In total, *Washingtonian* retweeted the most, doing so fifty-five times. However, *Charlotte* had the worst ratio of retweets to original posts, retweeting twenty-two times compared to fourteen original tweets.

The four magazines do not implement a pay wall on their websites, so subscribers and non-subscribers can access the same digital content. But some content, such as selected stories, graphics, contests and coupons, are only available through print copies, which provides paying customers with additional material.

To offer a plethora of feature stories as city magazines, they were using "MOJO" for community events like festivals and celebrations. When the Cherry Blossom Festival occurred from March 20 – April 12 in Washington, D.C., the *Washingtonian* found a unique way to cover the event. Twitter, Instagram,

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and Facebook on the website asked people to upload pictures of the cherry blossoms using the hashtag #WashMagPhoto. The magazine accumulated the photos and published them in an article online for people to see their submissions. This made individuals feel like they were contributing to the news cycle, which led them to view other content and share content via word of mouth.

*Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian* have all posted listicles within the two-month observation period. All of them have annual lists ranking the best doctors, restaurants, and businesses in the area and have more localized content as well. *Washingtonian* published a bucket list for the Washington, D.C. area; *Charleston* named the city's 40 most influential visual artists; and *Atlanta* had "5 Stores for Unique Goods." Another popular trend among online-only news organization is developing quizzes for users to take. This can range from supplementing the news cycle with a quiz on "Star Wars" when a trailer for a new *Star Wars* film is released or something seemingly random like "How Many Of These Dog Breeds Do You Know?" Though quizzes are not as popular in city magazines as they are in publications like *Cosmopolitan*, only a smattering of quizzes have been produced by *Atlanta*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian*. *Atlanta* published "How Southern Are You?" and "How Well Do You Know 90s Atlanta." *Washingtonian* quizzed readers on "How Washington Are You," and *Charlotte*, which is published in a banking city, wanted its readers to know about corporate superpower.

*Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, and *Washingtonian* managed to refrain from using clickbait journalism and, as a result, they avoid a possible purge by Facebook. In August 2014, Facebook said it would begin cracking down on clickbait headlines. This change is coming after about eighty percent of people surveyed said they preferred seeing headlines on their News Feed that help them decide if they wanted read the full article before clicking through. Because the nature of clickbait can be subjective, Facebook uses two factors to determine if a post uses it: how much time people spend on the link and the ratio of how many people click on the link compared to the number of comments and shares (Chowdhry). Twitter has not announced a stance on the issue, but there are a number of parody accounts – @UpworthySpoilers, @SavedYouAClick, and @HuffPoSpoilers – to mock the use of clickbait.

## V. Conclusion

The use of social media by *Atlanta*, *Charleston*, *Charlotte*, *Washingtonian* and other city magazines is still relatively new, as social media has only been prominent force for the last 10 years. This study supported that social media has been largely a positive factor for city magazines by giving them wider audience reach for both the physical and digital products. The study found that *Charleston* and *Charlotte* could improve the sharing of their own content, because both websites boast a wealth of stories. Research also showed that users did not often respond to self-promotion on social media platforms unless it directly involves where they work or spend much of their time.

The priority for these magazines, and their genre as a whole, seems to be to attract a younger audience. Mixing existing and new practices of storytelling and multimedia content could possibly accomplish this goal. Listicles, quizzing, and articles that have incorporated interactive images and gifs have proved to be popular among younger news consumers. Multimedia elements, which were routinely included in all four magazines' postings on Facebook, might also be implemented on Twitter regularly. The study found that of the magazines, all but the *Washingtonian* needed to share content more consistently and daily. *Atlanta*, while publishing more than *Charleston* and *Charlotte*, still did not tease content every day. People check their social media accounts daily, so there is an opportunity for content consumption on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis.

Finally, city magazines can follow successful strategies by tracking newly established organizations that younger readers are attracted to. The magazines did a mediocre job of attracting people under the age of 35 to their websites. They needed to avoid pitfalls like controversial clickbait journalism. By implementing these strategies, city magazines can achieve a soft landing into journalism's digital era. Magazines can maximize their use of social media by expanding beyond Twitter's 140-character limit, experimenting with visuals, and capitalizing on its potential as a platform for engaging with readers.

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# An Analysis of Successful Student-Run Public Relations and Advertising Agencies

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## Abstract

*Like other communication-related fields, such as broadcast journalism and print journalism that typically have their own student-led organizations, strategic communications students obtain hands-on experience through student-run agencies, which helps them secure internships and jobs after graduation. This study examined what factors are critical to the success of college student-run agencies, based on a survey sent to university student-run PR and advertising agencies nationwide. The survey identified three major trends that were related to successful agencies.*

## I. Introduction

Across the nation, student enrollment in journalism and mass communication programs has continued to rise in recent years (Becker, Vlad, Tucker, and Pelton, 2006). Notably, enrollment in strategic communications has experienced a significant increase in recent years. Correspondingly, the majority of strategic communications students at Elon University, and those in similar majors at other schools, work at communications agencies after they graduate. While internships can prepare students for work in an agency, most internships are hard to get without prior experience. Like other communication-related fields, such as broadcast journalism and print journalism that typically have their own student-led organizations, strategic communications students obtain hands-on experience through student-run agencies, which helps them secure internships and jobs after graduation.

While student-run agencies have the same goal of preparing students for internships and work after graduation, they are all run very differently. Some work with only on-campus clients, while others work with Fortune 500 companies; some are run from classrooms, while others in their own space; and some operate on a semester-long schedule, while others are run yearly.

It is important for educators and students to understand what kind of agencies will offer the best preparation for students. Thus, this research paper examined only student-run agencies that prepare students for internships and work after graduation. While Bush and Miller's 2011 study found failed agencies that folded within a year had no formal business practices or structure, and did not prepare students for internships or post-graduation employment, the current study found that all the student-run agencies reviewed were successful in preparing students for future work.

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**Keywords:** student-run agencies, public relations, advertising, successful agencies, strategic communications  
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This undergraduate project was conducted as a partial requirement of a research course in communications.

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## II. Literature Review

It's only in the past decade and a half that research began to be published on student-run public relations or advertising agencies. Bush (2009) wrote a seminal paper, which sparked an additional study by Swanson (2011). These two articles as well as other articles dealt with the effect of extracurricular activities on student success, how to start a student-run public relations agency, and university-level public relations education. Described below are the three themes that emerged from the literature: 1) benefits that come with student involvement in extracurricular activities, 2) the purpose of student-run agencies, and 3) how student-run agencies are different from internships or in-class learning.

### ***Benefits of Student Involvement in Extracurricular Activities***

Student involvement outside of the classroom is crucial to student growth. A study in the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* found that involvement in clubs and organizations is essential to the psychological development of students throughout their college careers (Fourbert and Urbanski, 2006). According to this study, students at a midsized public university had consistently higher developmental scores when they were involved on campus than when they were not. Not surprisingly, those who joined or led organizations garnered even higher developmental scores than those who just attended meetings (Fourbert and Urbanski, 2006).

Similarly, another study, "Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education" that was published in the *Journal of College Student Development*, found that student involvement is key to students developmental success (Astin, 1984). Notably, it found that holding a part-time job on campus was one of the most important factors to developmental achievement in university students (Astin, 1984). Most student-run agencies would be considered as a part-time on-campus job because they do not require the hours of a full-time position (which was found to harm a student's developmental success) and are located on or close to university campuses.

Further, research showed that students benefit from involvement in extracurricular activities prior to attending college, particularly media-related ones like student-run agencies. A study published in the *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* found that journalism activities in high school were key to the initial success of students in the job market (Becker et al., 2014).

### ***Purpose of Student-Run Agencies***

The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), which is affiliated with more than 100 student-run agencies across the country, indicated in "The Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education" that professional and pre-professional organizations are "the link between the classroom and their first jobs" (Turk, 2006). In particular, according to the report, student-run firms "allow students to work in groups to tackle real problems and opportunities for local clients" (Turk, 2006). In a handbook for its student-run firms, PRSSA also lists the advantages of working at a student-run firm, such as building client relationships and meeting professionals, learning how to lead and work as a team, creating resume and portfolio material, getting hands-on public relations experience, learning how to balance tasks and handle numerous duties, and applying theories learned in the classroom (PRSSA, 2014).

Bush (2009) found that one of the biggest benefits of student-run agencies is applied learning. While students learn about media pitching, strategic writing, event planning and other similar skills in class, it is in the tactical application of them that students learn the most. Bush also determined that student-run agencies aid the development of students' professional identities through the activities of creating resume and portfolio material. She mentioned higher level benefits, such as learning essential leadership and management skills, increasing professional confidence, motivating employees, and negotiating with clients (Bush 2009). Lastly, Bush's study (2009) echoed PRSSA's findings that hands-on experience at student-run agencies led to student internships and greater job opportunities. This is consistent with another study that found that high school journalism activities were key to the initial success of students in the job market (Becker, Han, Wilcox & Vlad, 2014).

Lastly, the article "The Student-Run Public Relations Firm in an Undergraduate Program: Reaching Learning and Professional Goals through 'Real World' Experience" pointed out "real world" experience as the primary outcome of student-run agencies (Swanson, 2011). The study found that agencies improved students'

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ability to work in teams and develop a professional portfolio, two of PRSSA's goals. Swanson also mentioned a new finding that student-run firms provide staff with a great internal source of networking for internship and job opportunities (Swanson, 2011).

### ***Student-Run Firms Differentiated from Internships or University Classes***

University classroom learning was differentiated from student-run firms that offer students application of class theory and concepts by numerous studies, such as "The Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education" (Turk, 2006), "Student Public Relations Agencies: A Qualitative Study of the Pedagogical Benefits, Risks, and a Framework for Success" (Bush, 2009), and the PRSSA Student-Run Agency Handbook (PRSSA, 2014). Student-run agencies provide students with the application of classroom learning, development of professional skills, and opportunity to learn business processes, which are some of the "most difficult to teach in a traditional classroom setting" (Bush & Miller, 2011). Thus, Bush and Miller (2011) suggested that student agencies may fill a gap in the curriculum. Additionally, student-run agencies differ from classroom learning even in client-based classes, such as capstone courses, because students are not taken as seriously as they are in agency settings and thus are not provided the same level of external motivation (Bush, 2009).

Regarding internships, Bush (2009) found that they are invaluable in applying classroom theory and impacting students' career choice. Since employers expect students to know professional skills before interning, (Bush, 2009) these skills should be acquired beforehand. Internship site managers pointed out a higher degree of professionalism as an area public relations faculty need to develop in their curriculum, as well as better writing skills. A student-run agency provides a safe and welcome environment to practice these skills, especially professionalism because it "is like a sport; one gets better as he/she does it" (Brown & Fall, 2005). Additionally, Neff's study (qtd. in Bush, "Student" 32) found that internships are more task-oriented than process-driven, preparing students less fully than student-run firms for real-world job experience.

## **III. Methods**

Three search terms were used to identify student-run agencies: "student-run public relations agency," "student-run advertising agency," and "university-run public relations and advertising agencies." These terms were selected based on a literature review that suggested that student-run agencies were using these terms to describe themselves. Although the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) publishes a list of student-run agencies, this list was not used solely because PRSSA-affiliated agencies are likely to be similarly structured and are not representative of student-run agencies as a whole.

After the three-term search, the author checked the first 10 pages of search results to compile a total of 37 student-run agencies. Each agency's website was examined to find its activities in relation to its clients and social media pages and determine if the organization met the definition of success as previously defined in this paper. A message was sent to the resulting final list of 29 student-run agencies that explained the context of the project and a link to a ten-question survey on [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com).

The survey was modeled after Bush and Miller's study (2011) with one difference: This study contacted student staff at each student-run agency, while Bush and Miller looked at the issue through the eyes of agency faculty.

The survey had the following research questions:

RQ1. Is the agency focused on primarily public relations or advertising,

RQ2. Does the staff receive course credit,

RQ3. Is the agency affiliated with a university department or with PRSSA,

RQ4. Does the agency have an independent workspace, what formalized processes are required, and how is the agency leadership structured,

RQ5. Are students paid, how long each agency has been existence, what services each agency provides its clients, and what does each agency believes had led to its own success.

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The author received nine responses<sup>1</sup> (32% response rate ) over the 10-day survey period.

## **IV. Findings**

Since this study's results overall echoed the 2011 Bush and Miller study, the author described findings in comparison with the latter study, before discussing three identified trends and their implications.

### ***Agencies Integrating Public Relations, Advertising or Both***

The majority of respondents (56% of nine respondents) indicated that their student-run agency integrated both public relations and advertising. This is consistent with Bush and Miller's study (2011), which found the integration level of 51%. In this study, 44% of respondents identified themselves as primarily public relations agencies compared to 34% in Bush and Miller's study. None of the respondents in this study identified themselves as primarily an advertising agency, compared to 9% in Bush and Miller's study.

### ***Course Credit***

The responding schools were almost evenly split between those that offer course credit and those that do not. In this study, 56% of survey respondents reported course credit for working at their student-run agency, while Bush and Miller (2011) found 49%. This study found that whether agencies offered course credit made no difference in terms of the services offered, structure of the agency or business protocols.

### ***Connection to University***

According to this study, 33% of agencies were affiliated directly with a student organization, such as PRSSA or the American Advertising Federation (AAF); 33% were run by a university communications or journalism department; 22% were completely independent of the university, and 11% were part of a practicum class. On the other hand, Bush and Miller's study found that more than half of student-run agencies were affiliated with a department at the university, while the remaining 40% were affiliated with student-run organizations like PRSSA.

Although small sample size prohibits generalization to a larger population, it is possible that student-run agencies have become increasingly independent of their universities, which gives them greater freedom to produce their own work and operate without restraints from their institutions. Tipping the balance toward student agencies' affiliation with student-run organizations may be attributed to PRSSA's assistance in creation of student-run agencies over the past four years.

### ***Workspace***

In the 2011 Bush and Miller study, only 38% of respondents indicated that they had their own workspace, while 28% shared their workspace with another student group and 34% had no dedicated workspace. This study saw progress in this area with the corresponding percentages of 75%, 12.5%, and 12.5%, respectively.

Bush and Miller found that one of the most important assets to student-run agency success is an independent, dedicated workspace. Their study directly ascribed independent workspace to greater skills application, better understanding of business processes, and greater professional skills. The importance of independent workspace to the success of a student-run agency was recognized in this study by at least one of the respondents, who wrote, "The most important one is DEDICATED SPACE . . . Without dedicated space, the agency will fail."

### ***Business Practices***

As shown in Table 1, this study found that student agencies required or offered the following common business practices: client contacts (100%), time sheets (89%), weekly agency meetings (89%), and client

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<sup>1</sup> Soapbox Agency at Brigham Young University; Idaho, PRactical ADvantage Communications at California State University, Fullerton; Martin Hall Agency at West Virginia University; Happy Valley Communications at the Pennsylvania State University, Main Campus; Creative Consultants at the University of Georgia; Bradley Public

invoicing (78%). In Bush and Miller's study (2011), weekly agency meetings (90%), staff orientation sessions (77%), client contracts (77%), and formal job descriptions (73%) were some of the most common business practices.

On the other hand, this study found less than a half of agencies adopted the following business practices: a competitive application process (22%), client report templates (44%), and required office hours (44%). In Bush and Miller's study, less popular business processes were required office hours (33%), a dress code (32%), billable hours (39%), client planning templates (48%), and time sheets (47%).

Two studies showed a significant difference in some business processes. For example, more than 20 percentage point difference was found in the area of times sheet (42%) and dress code (35%).

**Table 1. Comparison of Two Studies in Business Practices Offered**

Category	Current study	Lee and Bush study
Weekly agency meetings	88.9%	89.6%
Client contracts	100%	77.1%
Staff orientation sessions	55.7%	77.1%
Formal job descriptions	55.7%	72.9%
Graphics software computers	N.A.	69.6%
Client report templates	44.4%	60.0%
External approval process	N.A.	60.5%
Client invoicing	77.8%	58.7%
Competitive application process	22.2%	51.1%
Employee manual	66.7%	50.0%
Client planning templates	N.A.	47.8%
Times sheets	88.9%	46.7%
Billable hours	55.6%	38.6%
Required office hours	44.4%	32.6%
Dress code	66.7%	31.9%

*Notes:* N.A. indicates data that were not available because the survey did not ask respondents about the three business practices.

## Management Structures

All survey respondents in this study indicated that they had account team leaders and faculty advisors. A majority of them had a student director (89%), less than half with a creative team (44%), and only 22% with a new business director. These findings are similar to what Bush and Miller found, such as a very high percentage of student-run agencies with a faculty advisor (100%), account team leaders (90%) and a student agency director (92%), and a low level of a creative team (40%) or new business director (46%).

## Payment

This study found that not a single student-run agency paid all of its staff, but more than half (56%) paid no staff at all, while some paid only their student leadership team (33%). These findings are similar to what Bush and Miller found: one-third (33%) of student-run agencies paid some of their staff. This study found that a little more than half of survey respondents (56%) indicated that their clients paid for their services in this study in comparison with 51% in Bush and Miller's study.

## Years In Existence

The concept of student-run public relations/advertising agencies was a new area of research when Bush and Miller (2011) found that only about half (51%) of agencies surveyed had existed for over four years. The current study found that every student-run agency that responded to the survey had existed for at least

four years and one-third of the agencies had existed for more than ten years.

**Services Offered**

Many respondents in this study indicated that their agencies offered services like social media (100%), press releases (100%), event management (89%), full campaigns (89%), logo development (89%), graphic design (89%), website development (89%) and newsletters (89%) (see Figure 1). These were similar to Bush and Miller’s 2011 findings of popular services that student-run agencies offered. In the current study, less popular services were also offered, including broadcast commercials (22%), blogging (56%), video production (67%) and print advertising (67%).

Bush and Miller (2011) also found a low level of activities in video production (67%) and broadcast commercials (22%), services that are typically offered by agencies with a creative team. This low level can be explained by the lack of creative teams. This study found that only 44% of agencies had a creative team, while Bush and Mill found 40%.

No question was asked about research activities in this study; however, three of the nine respondents wrote “research” when asked to specify if they offered other services outside the list of services they could choose from in the survey.

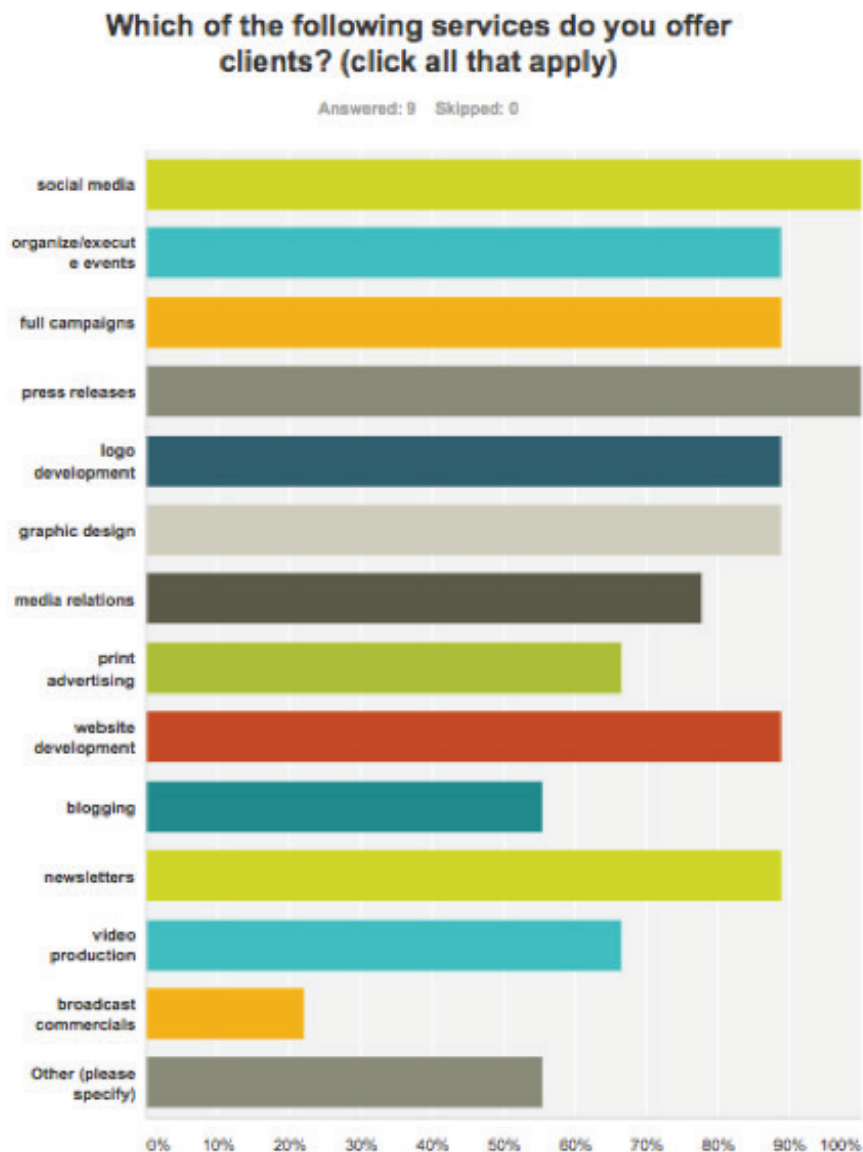


Figure 1. Services offered for clients based on nine respondents



When asked to list what they believed made their student-run agency successful, seven (78%) responded with a variety of answers, including using professional equipment, keeping the staff size between 50 and 60 students, entering professional contests, continued education from guest speakers, partnering with a great PRSSA chapter, and a supportive journalism school. Respondents also mentioned dedicated space, just as Bush and Miller found in their study. Other factors mentioned as crucial to the agency's success included finding passionate students to work at the firm, a dedicated leadership team that works cohesively, and a dedicated faculty advisor with real-world agency experience.

## V. Analysis

Analysis of the survey results identified three major trends: independent workspaces fostered a greater number of formal business practices; agencies affiliated with PRSSA had been in existence the longest probably because of the guidance and support they received; and agencies with paying clients were more targeted in their offered services.

Similar to Bush and Miller (2011), this study found that independent workspaces were related to how well agency staff perceived their agencies prepare them for future success. However, surprisingly, no significant quantitative difference was detected between student-run agencies with a workspace and those without in terms of services offered, except for some business processes, such as a dress code, a competitive application process and client contracts. Agencies with an independent workspace offered 9 business processes out of 12 on average, 1.5 higher than their counterparts, which offered only 7.5 business processes on average.

This study found that agencies, when they were affiliated with PRSSA or other student-run organizations, had been in existence the longest for an average of fifteen years, followed by agencies associated with a university department with six and a half years, and those completely independent of the university with five years. The longevity of agencies in the first category may be attributed to PRSSA, which provides student-run agencies with a plethora of materials that help an agency with sample client contracts, sample leadership structures, and information on how to find and pitch clients.

An interesting finding was that student-run agencies that had paying clients offered 9.4 services on average, a smaller number of services in comparison to agencies without paying clients, which offered 11.5 services. This discrepancy might occur because agencies without paying clients tend to be much less specialized in the scope of their services than their counterparts. For example, agencies without paying clients may be willing to delve into projects even when they do not have much experience, while agencies with paying clients would feel that the work they do must be of the highest quality and do not choose to offer services that they cannot produce on a professional level.

### ***Limitations***

The greatest limitation of this study was sample size. Due to time constraints, the sample size was only nine, not a large enough number of agencies to generalize. Additionally, the study was limited to student-run agencies that were identified using three search terms on Google.com. Agencies that did not use these terms to describe themselves on their website were not sampled. Due to the method of selecting agencies based on the three terms, the resulting agencies were not a simple random sample.

Further research should include formal interviews with faculty advisors and students who work at student-run agencies to discover best practices for student-run agencies and compare the performance of two groups in workplace after graduation: students who had the opportunity to work at student-run agencies and those who did not.

## VI. Conclusion

This study analysed nine successful student-run public relations and advertising agencies nationwide and their responses to questions adapted from Bush and Miller's 2011 study. All the agencies in this study met the main goal of student-run agencies, which is to prepare students for internships and work

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after graduation. Based on this analysis, the author identified three major trends of successful agencies: independent workspaces fostered a greater number of formal business practices; agencies affiliated with PRSSA had been in existence the longest probably because of their guidance and support; and agencies with paying clients were more targeted in their offered services than those without.

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