

DOES THE MEDIA SEND MIXED MESSAGES?

A CASE FOR COMPETITIVE FRAMING

by

SEAN MITCHELL

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2011

Copyright Sean Mitchell 2011
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

Based upon the work of John Zaller, the way people receive information can at least temporarily affect their opinions. Considering that most people get at least some of their information from broadcast/print news outlets, the way in which those organizations present, or frame, the information is incredibly important. The news media can activate predispositions by how they provide and/or do not provide information. This in turn can affect how the public feels about a news topic.

This dissertation builds upon the work of Zaller, Druckman, Kahn and Kenney, and other leading researchers to show that different media sources use different framing techniques in their coverage of news events. Whereas previous studies into competitive framing have concentrated primarily upon political campaigns, this dissertation analyzes how the media uses various framing techniques in covering an issue. The analysis concentrates on the broadcast/print news media coverage of President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour to promote his Social Security initiative during the spring of 2005.

The analysis of competitive framing within the "Length", "Placement", "Frame Strength", and "Tone" variables is included. In a more traditional study, Length and Placement might be thought of as "agenda setting" rather than as framing variables; however, the fact that this study is on a major Presidential initiative means that the news media is expected to cover the issue. How much they cover it and where they place the coverage is a result of their own gatekeepers' perceptions of the importance level, or weight, relative to other stories. The interest

here is with the actual content of media coverage. Specifically, this study examines whether or not there is variation in the way a political topic is framed within various news outlets. That is, in framing political issues, do various news outlets engage in “competitive framing.”

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Alternate News Programs	Those news programs not carried on one of the three networks
ABC	American Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcast News Media	Televised news programs (network, public, and cable)
Cable News	News programs televised on stations available only on cable
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CNN	Cable News Network
Commercial Broadcast	Televised programs that are paid for by commercials inserted at different times during the programs
Competitive framing	The way in which a writer/editor chooses to frame a news story through a variation in style, technique, and importance level (weight), including the determination of who and what is covered and who and what is omitted. This variation in style, technique, and/or importance level (weight) among and within the various news outlets resulting in a dispersed pattern.
Editorials	“Opinion-based” stories written by the newspaper’s editorial staff and/or “letters to the editor” located on the Editorial Page.
FOX News	FOX Cable News Network
Framing	“The words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker (e.g. a politician, a media outlet) uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 100)
Gatekeeper	“Someone who makes decisions about what passes through the various gates separating potential media contents from their audience” (Perry, 2002, p.64).
Hard News	All coverage that is traditionally considered to be a straightforward, “fact based” story located somewhere in the newspaper other than on the Editorial Page.

Network News	News programs televised on one of the three networks (ABC, CBS, AND NBC)
Non-Network News	All televised news programs other than those on one of the three primary news networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC)
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
PBS	Public Broadcasting System
Print News Media	Newspapers
SME	Subject Matter Expert – People and/or organizations considered experts on Social Security

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank those professors who helped me through this long journey, from undergraduate to PhD, especially those who were kind enough to participate on my committee. I consider them both my mentors and my friends. In fact, of all of those on my committee, Dr. Gonzenbach is the only one that I have not known for the better part of a decade. He is indeed a rare individual for being kind enough to help. While we met for the first time on the morning of my defense, his comments and suggestions on my proposal were extremely helpful.

When I first started to pursue my PhD in 2004, I met Dr. Borrelli when he taught research design. He was incredibly talented in making research “seem” easy to accomplish. Fortunately, or unfortunately as the case may be, I later found that it was not as it appeared.

I met Dr. Baldwin in the spring of 2000 when I took his Public Administration class. The experience was so enjoyable that it lead me to pursue, and eventually obtain, an MPA. I believe I took every class he taught.

I met Dr. Cassel a year later in 2001 when I took her Political Parties and Elections class. It would have been one of my favorite undergraduate classes if it had not been tainted by finding out why class was cancelled the morning of September 11th. Dr. Cassel is not only a great teacher, but one of the kindest and most patient people I know. She taught me Quant One and Two, and that is all that needs to be said.

She became Co-Chairman of my committee when Dr. Cotter retired. With her knowledge of Public Opinion, she was the only person I thought would be appropriate in helping

me complete this project. Luckily, she agreed to become more involved with the project, and I sincerely thank her for helping me.

Most importantly, I want to thank Dr. Cotter whom I met in 2000 when I took his Southern Politics class. I made an A- , but I forgave him because, at the time, I thought it was the best class I had ever taken. He introduced me to V.O. Key that semester, the first of many that made me admire political scientists. Later on in my senior year, he introduced me to John Zaller whose premises are the starting point for this study.

Dr. Cotter has been invaluable to me working as the Chairman of my committee, including over a year on his own time after he retired. I truly believe that without his continued commitment this dissertation would never have come to fruition.

Lastly, I want to thank my parents for their love and support as well as the University Of Alabama for providing me with the best years of my life.

Roll Tide!!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	1
Framing and Policy Issues	2
Framing Dimensions	3
Literature Review	7
Framing and Opinion Formation	7
Competitive Framing Based Studies	11
Research on Framing	19
When and How Framing Affects Occur	19
Accessibility and Weights of Considerations Used in Forming Opinions	22
President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days"	24
Social Security Background	24
President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days" Tour	27

Timeline of Media News Dissemination	33
CHAPTER TWO – METHODOLOGY	46
Procedure	49
Coding of Variables	61
Definition of Variables and Categories	63
Analysis	65
CHAPTER THREE - BROADCAST NEWS MEDIA INTRODUCTION	68
Broadcast Data Information	69
Length Variable	71
Placement Variable	76
Frame Strength Variable	80
Tone Variable	85
Multivariate Analysis	90
Broadcast News Media Conclusions	96
CHAPTER FOUR - PRINT NEWS MEDIA INTRODUCTION	104
Print Data Information	104
Length Variable	106
Placement Variable	112
Frame Strength Variable	116
Tone Variable	120
Multivariate Analysis	125
Print News Media Conclusions	130

CHAPTER FIVE - BROADCAST/PRINT NEWS MEDIA COMPARISON	139
Introduction	139
Length Variable Comparison	141
Placement Variable Comparison	143
Frame Strength Variable Comparison	145
Tone Variable Comparison	147
CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSIONS	149
Attitude Changes	150
Gate-Keeping	150
Niche Markets	152
Broadcast vs Print Observations	153
Going Public	154
Original Contribution	154
Areas for Future Research	157
REFERENCES	159
APPENDICES	165
Appendix A – Consent Form	166
Appendix B – Sample Instructions	167
Appendix C – Checklist	168

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER THREE

Table 3-1 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Length	75
Table 3-2 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Placement	79
Table 3-3 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Frame Strength	84
Table 3-4 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Tone	89
Table 3-5 Broadcast Media (Placement Multivariate Analysis)	95
Table 3-6 Broadcast Media (Frame Strength Multivariate Analysis)	95

CHAPTER FOUR

Table 4-1a Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Editorial Print Media Length	111
Table 4-1b Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Length	111
Table 4-2 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Placement	115
Table 4-3 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Media Frame Strength	119
Table 4-4a Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Editorial Print Media Tone	124
Table 4-4b Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Tone	124
Table 4-5 Print Media (Placement Multivariate Analysis)	129
Table 4-6 Print Media (Frame Strength Multivariate Analysis)	129

CHAPTER FIVE

Table 5-1 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Length	142
Table 5-2 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Placement	144
Table 5-3 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Frame Strength	146
Table 5-4 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Tone	148

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER THREE

Figure 3-1 Comparison of Occurrences on the Broadcast Media Outlets 70

CHAPTER FOUR

Figure 4-1 Comparison of Occurrences in the Print Media Outlets 105

CHAPTER FIVE

Figure 5-1 Comparison of Occurrences Between the Broadcast and Print Media 140

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Individuals' preferences or opinions are affected by the way in which information received is presented or "framed" (McGrath, 2007: 278; Gross and D'Ambrosio, 2004: 19; Zaller, 1992: 272). Framing -- "the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker (e.g. a politician, a media outlet) uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience" (Chong and Druckman, 2007, p. 100) -- affect opinions by influencing the accessibility and weights of considerations used in forming opinions (Nelson and Oxley, 1999: 1043; Nelson and Kinder, 1996: 1073; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997; Chong & Druckman 2007; Druckman 2001b).

Because of its influence on individuals' preferences, framing is "one of the most important concepts in the study of public opinion" (Druckman, 2001b, p. 1041). As a result, previous researchers have examined when and how framing affects are most or less likely to occur (Sniderman and Theriault, 2004; Chong, 1996; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Higgins, 1996; Bless, Fiedler, and Stack, 2004; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Rabin, 1998; Tversky and Kahneman, 1981).

The research conducted here addresses another, in some ways more basic, framing related topic. In particular, the interest here is with the actual content of media coverage. Specifically, this study examines whether or not there is variation in the way a political topic is framed within various news outlets. That is, in framing political issues, do various news outlets engage in

“competitive framing” (Druckman and Parkin, 2005: 1030; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Entman, 1993; Zaller, 1992: 185).

Competitive framing is important because its absence suggests that opinion will be formed on the bases of a limited set of considerations. The occurrence of competitive framing, however, suggests that citizens are presented with a variation of considerations to process in forming opinions. As a result, opinions may reflect a more complete reflection of values and interests. Furthermore, competitive framing is important because research has shown that “contrasting frames have a statistically significant impact when compared to one another” This means that if “one side can establish the relevant terms of debate over an issue, it can successfully persuade individuals to support its position” (Chong and Druckman, 2007, p 102). In addition, previous “framing studies... have neglected the fact that frames are themselves contestable” and have “restricted attention to situations in which citizens are artificially sequestered, restricted to hearing only one way of thinking about a political issue” (Sniderman and Theriault, 2004, p. 141-142).

Framing and Policy Issues

Most of the existing research into framing in the media has looked at elections and evaluated how the various news outlets framed their coverage of a particular candidate. This study uses a different approach by examining the occurrence of competitive framing in the media’s coverage of a policy issue. That issue is Social Security Reform. More specifically, this study examines the occurrence of competitive framing involved in President George Bush’s 2005 proposal to reform Social Security. This proposed reform involved the creation of individual accounts similar to the 401K plans currently held by so many working Americans. This issue was chosen for study here for three reasons.

First, Social Security reform is a high salience issue¹. Thus Bush's reform proposal generated a considerable amount of media coverage, providing an adequate amount of information that can be used to study the occurrence of competitive framing.

Second, this issue had a short life whose beginning and end can be measured with some accuracy. Specifically, shortly after presenting his reform plan in his State of the Union Speech in January of 2005, President Bush and the members of his Administration went on a "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour. During this period, the President, Vice-President, Assistant Secretaries, and Assistants to the President made presentations in support of the proposal at 166 stops in 40 states. As will be shown, public concern with Bush's proposal essentially ended with the completion of the 60 day tour.² The reference period was extended to 74 days³ for the broadcast news media because the time constraints imposed due to a set time frame per broadcast resulted in a much lower number of observations during the 60 days of the tour.

Finally, President Bush's proposal was controversial. Thus it offers a likely opportunity for competitive framing to occur, at least across if not within various news outlets.

Framing Dimensions

In examining the occurrence of competitive framing in the news media, this study will analyze both broadcast news programs and newspapers. Framing can be examined along a large

¹ Social Security reform is a high salience issue in that virtually everyone cares about the outcome. Fiona Ross states that "Social Security is a near-universal program, covering 90 percent of Americans and providing benefits to over 48 million recipients. It is the main means of survival for two-thirds of the elderly. It is responsible for lifting 46.8 percent of its aged beneficiaries out of poverty. For over 30 percent of the aged, Social Security is their only source of income" (2007, p. 422).

² During the 60 day period, the Bush proposal did generate a considerable amount of press coverage. However, two other stories, the death of Pope John Paul II and the ordeal and death of Terry Schiavo, also competed for attention. Pope John Paul II was ill during the month of February culminating with his death on April 2, 2005, and the election of Pope Benedict XVI on April 20, 2005. Ms. Schiavo was in a coma from 1990 until her death on March 31, 2005. Her parents filed suit to block her husband from removing her from life support. The case received national attention during the reference period including a Federal Law signed by President Bush and a Supreme Court appeal. The feeding tube was finally removed on March 18, 2005, and Ms. Schiavo died thirteen days later on March 31, 2005.

³ The 74 day reference period was comprised of one week before the "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour; the tour itself; and one week after the tour ended.

number of dimensions. Here attention is focused on four characteristics: (a) Length, (b) Placement, (c) Frame Strength, and (d) Tone. These dimensions were analyzed in Kahn and Kenney's (2002) study of news coverage of election campaigns.

Both the broadcast and print news media can send a signal to their viewers/readers as to the importance of a story, policy, or issue by how often it is covered during a given period of time and the length of the coverage. In other words, the news media can frame a story by the "length" of its coverage (Scheufele & Tewsbury, 2007; Kahn & Kenney, 2002). The importance of the length of the stories with which a policy or issue is covered is emphasized by Donald Chong and James Druckman who state that "frequent exposure to a frame will increase the accessibility and availability of considerations highlighted by the frame" (2007, p. 111).

In a similar fashion, the news media can frame an issue by where the "Placement" of the coverage is located (Kahn & Kenney, 2002). Where a story is placed during a news broadcast or in a newspaper sends a message to the viewer/reader as to the importance of the issue being covered. For example, stories placed prominently on the front page of a newspaper are "much more likely to be read than articles buried near the back of the newspaper" (Kahn & Kenney, 2002, p.383). Therefore, both the broadcast and print news media can send a signal to their viewers/readers as to the importance of a story, policy, or issue by where it is covered in the broadcast⁴ or where it is placed in the newspaper.⁵ In the case of the broadcast news media, it can "lead" with a story, use it as a "teaser", or mention it in passing later in the broadcast. Again, viewers are conditioned to look for the more important stories early in the broadcast. In many cases the news anchor will start the broadcast with something like, "Our lead story

⁴ Placement categories within a news broadcast are based upon an equivalent conversion of the newspaper location categories used in previous studies (e.g., Kahn and Kenney; and Druckman).

⁵ Placement categories within a newspaper are based upon the categories used in previous studies (e.g., Kahn and Kenney; and Druckman).

tonight.....” This tells the people watching the broadcast to listen closely because the most important event or issue of the day is about to be covered. Important stories are often used as “teasers” at the beginning of the broadcast in order to keep the viewers from changing the channel or leaving the room during commercials. The event or issue will be referenced with no details, but the promise that coverage is coming later in the broadcast. The teasers are usually mentioned at the beginning before the lead story. Just like with the “lead” story, viewers are conditioned to regard stories used as teasers as important. Coverage of events and issues covered during the middle and end of the broadcast, but not meriting a “teaser”, are not considered as important.

The print news media can send messages to their readers as to the importance of an issue by where they place the coverage in the newspaper. They can place a story on the front page, or “bury” it somewhere in a little-read section. Stories reported on the front page of the newspaper are considered by the reader to be the most important events of the day. On the other hand, readers generally consider a story that is mentioned in passing somewhere buried deep within the paper to be of little consequence.⁶

Framing an issue, additionally, can alter the way broadcast and print news media present stories by varying the “Frame Strength,” through source credibility (Scheufele & Tewsbury, 2007; Druckman, 2001; Kinder, 2007; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Kahn & Kenney, 2002). By

⁶ It should be noted that in a more traditional study, Frequency and Placement might be thought of as “agenda setting” rather than as framing variables; however, the fact that this study is on a major presidential initiative means that the news media is expected to cover the issue. “Thus, under special circumstances presidents move issues onto the agenda of other institutions and focus attention, especially when the issue is important to them and constitutes a major presidential initiative” (Edwards III & Wood, 1999, p. 342). How much they cover it and where they place the coverage is a result of their own perception of the importance level, or weight, relative to other stories. Furthermore, Robert Entman has made the case that combining priming and agenda setting with framing under a “conceptual umbrella” would “advance understanding of the media’s role in distributing power, revealing new dimensions and processes of critically political communication” (2007, p. 164).

varying the credibility of the sources used when presenting an issue the weight attached to arguments being made can be altered.

Chong and Druckman “loosely define a frame’s strength as increasing with the persuasiveness of a given frame. Weak frames are typically seen as unpersuasive, whereas strong frames are more compelling” (2007, p. 103). They state a strong frame “comes from a credible source, resonates with consensus values, and does not contradict strongly held prior beliefs” (2007, p. 104). A credible source results in a strong frame (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). The more credible the source used in a news story, the more likely it is to influence the audience. This is generally someone who can be classified as a “subject matter expert” or SME. Put simply, a story based upon a known and credible authority provides a strong frame, while one based upon unreliable sources or one that is strictly opinion-based can be considered a weak frame. Druckman, in an earlier work, also put forward the concept of source credibility. He states that “perceived source credibility appears to be a prerequisite for successful framing” (2001b, p.1061).

Finally, previous research has shown that the media can also frame an issue through the “Tone” of the coverage (Dijkstra, Schakenraad, Menninga, Buunk, & Siero, 2009; Kahn & Kenney, 2002). In other words, the broadcast and print news media can present their coverage in such a way as to frame the issue in a positive light, negative light, or in a strictly neutral way.

In sum, this study will examine whether competitive framing, both within and across different news outlets, occurred in the coverage of President Bush’s Social Security reform proposal. The remainder of this chapter will review the existing research literature concerning framing. This chapter also contains a more complete description of the events occurring during Bush’s “60 stops in 60 days” campaign.

Chapter Two describes the data and analyzes methods used in the study. Chapter Three presents the results of the analysis for broadcast news outlets. Chapter Four presents the same information for the print news media. Chapter Five compares the findings for broadcast and print news outlets. Chapter Six presents a summary of the results.

Literature Review

Framing and Opinion Formation

In 1992, John R. Zaller, one of the leading researchers in the use of competitive framing to influence public opinion, wrote *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. In his introduction to the book, Zaller stated that the book was “an extended argument about how people form political preferences” (p. 1). He also stated that the “dynamic element in the argument.... is coverage of public affairs information in the mass media” (p. 1). It is his work and assumptions that formed the basis of this research.

Zaller puts forward the theory that “the more autonomous segments of the elite use the media to generate public pressure” (1992, p. 272). His working assumption is that “elite communications shape mass opinion” (1992, p. 268). He also expresses that he does not believe individuals have only a single opinion on a subject; rather that individuals “construct opinion statements on the fly as they confront each new issue”, which is based on all easily accessible considerations (1992, p. 1).

Part of his work resulted in the construction of a model that is primarily based upon four premises. These are:

- “1. Individuals differ substantially in their attention to politics and therefore their exposure to elite sources of political information.
2. People react critically to political communication only to the extent that they are knowledgeable about political affairs.
3. People rarely have fixed attitudes on specific issues; rather they construct preference statements on the fly as they confront each issue raised.

4. In constructing these statements, people make the greatest use of ideas that are the most immediately salient to them. Usually these are the ideas that have recently been called to mind or thought about since it takes less time to retrieve these or related considerations from memory and bring them to the top of the head for use (Zaller, 1992, p.1).

Zaller believes the public forms “considerations” in response to elite discourse (political communications) in the mass media. Often, this discourse consists of multiple, frequently conflicting streams of persuasive messages. Zaller believes that when polled, individuals respond based upon “the mix of positive and negative considerations available in the person’s mind at the moment of answering a question” (1992, p.51.) According to Zaller, the “public’s feelings are, in their unobserved state, unfocused and frequently contradictory;” therefore, “elites regularly attempt to frame issues in a manner helpful to their causes” (1992, p.95). Political leaders “regularly attempt to play on the contradictory ideas that are always present in people’s minds, elevating the salience of some and harnessing them to new initiatives while downplaying or ignoring other ideas” (Zaller, 1992, p.96)

Probably the most important contribution made by Zaller in *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* was the development of the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) Model and its assumptions. The RAS Model uncovers a thought process for the formulation of opinion at a particular time based on a three step process. First, people receive (R) new information on a subject/topic from a source. The ability to process this information is reliant on their knowledge of the area. Next, they choose to accept (A) or reject the information based on the predispositions that they can connect with the information at the time it is presented to them. Lastly, before they respond, they sample (S) from all connecting information on the subject/topic they have received in the past, drawing on the information that is freshest in their minds first and formulate an opinion. As Zaller states, “opinion statements . . . are the outcome of a process in

which people receive new information, decide whether to accept it, and then sample at the moment of answering questions” (1992, p.51).

For the research being considered, all three, and especially the latter two areas, are greatly affected by the media. In the reception stage, the media gives one new information to process and can affect the amount of information that can be gathered from the amount of past coverage. In the acceptance stage, the inclusion or absence of information (framing) in what is being processed can affect which predispositions are being connected to the topic. Competing framing can come into importance at this stage, “dominant and countervailing messages can have different effects in different segments of the population, depending on the citizens’ political awareness and ideological orientations, and on the relative intensities of the two messages” (Zaller, p. 185). Lastly, the media can affect your sampling through its choice to “play up” a story giving one frame predominance over another on recently recalled information.

Assuming Zaller’s research is valid and his conclusions are correct, the way in which the media covers an event or reports on a political issue will have a direct bearing upon the way people feel about the event or issue. In other words, people form their “considerations”, to a great extent, as a result of what they hear on the news broadcasts and read in the newspapers.

Therefore, based upon Zaller’s work, the way people receive information affects their opinions. Considering that most people get at least some of their news from media/news outlets, the way in which those organizations present, or frame, the information is incredibly important. Through the use of predispositions, the information provided and/or not provided by a media/news outlet can, at least temporarily, affect how the public feels about a news topic.

Zaller’s conclusions on framing seem to be supported by some of the leading researchers in the field. For example, Thomas Nelson, Zoe Oxley, and Rosalee Clawson seem to agree with

Zaller's ideas as they apply to the media's framing of events in order to mold public opinion. They state that "research on issue frames represents a potentially important recent return to the study of the effects of communication content on opinion" (1997b, p.222). They further state that "in political communications research, framing typically has been depicted as the process by which a source (a newspaper or television news story, or perhaps a single individual) defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or political issue, and outlines a set of considerations purportedly relevant to that issue" (1997b, p.222). Furthermore, they contend that "there are important psychological differences between a frame and a standard persuasive argument" (1997b, p.225), and demonstrated this fact through an experiment to gauge public opinion of welfare based upon how it was framed.

William Gamson and Andre Modigliani state that "a frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue" (1989, p.3). Finally, Robert Entman goes a step further by stating that "fully developed frames typically perform four functions: problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment, and remedy promotion. That is, frames introduce or raise the salience or apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way" (2007, p.164).

This calls into play the individual's perception similar to the classic question: Is the glass half full or half empty? For example, a pharmaceutical company might promote a drug by saying "4 out of 5 doctors recommend this drug." If they promoted the drug by saying "20 percent of doctors would not recommend this drug," far fewer people would buy it, yet the two statements say exactly the same thing.

Tversky and Kahneman performed an experiment in 1992, where they gave respondents scenarios about an outbreak of a disease (first framed in a survival format where lives are saved,

next framed in a mortality format where lives are lost). In each case, the majority of the respondents chose the option that presented the least risk even though it was a different option each time depending on whether it was framed in a survival format or mortality format. Druckman duplicated this experiment in 2001, and added a third scenario which combined the survival and mortality frames. In this case, the respondents seemed to be neutrally risk averse. This seems to indicate that the frame does influence the respondent's decisions.

Druckman expresses the opinion that “framing constitutes one of the most important concepts in the study of public opinion” (2001b, p. 1041). Druckman also draws from a presentation made by Paul Sniderman and Sean Theriault when he quotes them as stating, “Our worry about the nefarious possibilities of framing is just that they can become freewheeling exercises in pure manipulation” (2001b, p. 1041).

Donald R. Kinder states that “frames suggest how politics should be thought about, thereby encouraging citizens to understand events and issues in particular ways” (2007, p.156). He puts forth the belief that issues and events are “always subject to interpretation; they can always be read in more than one way” (2007, p.156). As a result, Kinder believes that “by defining what the essential issue is and suggesting how to think about it, frames imply what, if anything, should be done” (2007, p.156). This implies that not only public opinion, but public action, can be influenced by framing.

Competitive Framing Based Studies

Previous research into the effects of competitive framing has fallen primarily into one of four areas: a laboratory setting; exit polls on election day; alternate data sources such as surveys conducted via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) or using the National Election Study (NES) responses; and coding actual stories in the news media.

Of these, experiments done in a laboratory environment provide the greatest control over the dissemination of information and the way it is framed. Berinsky and Kinder studied framing effects by looking at the Crisis in Kosovo in a laboratory setting with paid participants randomly divided into three groups. The groups received several articles about the Kosovo crisis: one group received articles without emphasis; one received articles framed to emphasize the humanitarian aspects of U.S. involvement; and one received articles framed to emphasize the risk to America. The “findings suggest that ordinary citizens’ understanding of politics depends in systematic and intelligible ways on how information is presented to them” (2006, p. 654).

Brewer and Gross studied framing effects by looking at the use of school vouchers. Undergraduate students at George Washington University were recruited for the study and randomly divided into four groups. The groups read a story about school vouchers: the control group read an article with just facts; one read an article with a pro-voucher equality frame; one read an article with an anti-voucher equality frame; and one read an article with both the competing pro and anti-voucher equality frames. The results showed that participants who did not receive a voucher equality frame drew weak negative associations between egalitarianism and support for school vouchers. The group given the anti-voucher equality frame drew stronger negative associations between egalitarianism and support for school vouchers. Finally, those who were given the pro-voucher equality frame drew positive associations between egalitarianism and support for school vouchers. The responses of the group that read both the pro and anti-voucher versions were similar to those of the group that received neither (2005).

Nelson and Oxley studied framing effects through two laboratory experiments: one a proposed land deal in South Florida and the other a proposed family cap for welfare. In the first, undergraduate students read mock articles about a land deal in Southern Florida. The articles

covered the same information except that one framed the issue as an economic gain with new jobs and revenue while the other framed the issue as an environmental risk to endangered species. The results showed that the students who read the pro-economic development frame were more likely to vote for the measure than the ones who read the pro-environmental frame. The second experiment was conducted in the same manner as the first experiment, but this time the issue was welfare reform. In this case, the mock articles described an option for a “family cap” on welfare so that mothers who have additional children would not be able to get additional welfare for them. The issue was framed as either personal responsibility (people should not depend on the government) or affecting innocent victims (children are unable to care for themselves). Nelson and Oxley determined that in both studies “framing did significantly affect judgments about the importance of different beliefs within each policy domain” (1999, p.1059). In this case, the students who read the version discussing the innocent victims were more supportive of protecting children than enforcing personal responsibility (1999).

Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson studied framing effects by looking at how framing affected tolerance for a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) rally in a small Ohio town. The participants were shown a 7 minute news clip with the last two minutes of the clip covering the KKK rally in two competing frames: one version framed the KKK rally as a free speech issue while the other framed the rally as a potential danger showing confrontations between Klansmen and police. The results showed that the participants who viewed the freedom of speech frame were more tolerant of the Klan rally (1997).

Nelson and Kinder studied framing through four experiments dealing with group centric issues: assistance to the poor (Freeloader Frame versus Budget Deficit Frame), federal spending to fight AIDS (Blame the Victim Frame versus Cancer Research Frame), and preferences for

blacks in hiring and promotion (Unfair Advantage Frame versus Reverse Discrimination Frame). They created two competing framing effects for the three issues, and these then became part of the 1989 National Election Study (NES). The fourth experiment was conducted using students at the University of Michigan, and studied the issue of affirmative action. They found that public opinion on these issues depended to a great extent on how the respondents felt about the groups affected by the issue (1996).

Another frequently used research technique is utilizing exit polls on election day or random computerized calling surveys. This method still offers researchers control of the dissemination of information, but not control of the participant groups. This was used by Druckman and Bolsen when they studied the effects of framing by looking at two new technologies: carbon-nanotubes and genetically modified foods. They conducted the research by utilizing an exit poll on Election Day in 2008. Four groups were used. The control group only received facts about the technologies with no pro or con frames included; a second group received a pro frame; a third group received a con frame; and a fourth group received the competing pro and con frames in addition to the control group's facts. Among other findings, Druckman and Bolsen found that "facts do not significantly enhance the power of frames" when facts are presented alone, and negative frames displayed larger effects than positive frames (2010, p.12).

Druckman also studied the effect of competing frames on a proposed state-funded gambling casino in Illinois by utilizing an exit poll. The participants were asked to rate their support for a state-funded casino. Competing frames were introduced by varying the wording of the question. The issue was framed in a positive manner (economic) or in a negative manner (social problems). The results showed that only strong frames (whether pro or con) influenced

opinions. The results also showed that “simultaneous exposure” to two strong frames (one pro and one con) “did not significantly move respondents” which suggest that the “frames counteract one another” (2010, p. 112).

Hansen conducted his experiment via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). He studied the effects of competing frames as it pertains to the amount of money spent on public education in Denmark. Respondent groups were established and each received different data in the form of various arguments. The design was set-up to test the effect of framing in a manner to push opinion in a positive direction, a negative direction, and in both directions simultaneously. The results showed that positive frames pushed public opinion in a positive manner while negative frames pushed public opinion in a negative manner.

Coding actual media coverage for the way in which it frames certain variables is a research technique that does not provide control over the dissemination of information; however, it does offer the advantage of using “real world” data rather than stories with manipulated framing. For example, Iyengar studied framing effects by identifying every network news broadcast from 1981 through 1986 that referenced poverty, homeless, hunger, and several other key words. He found that the stories fell into two distinct categories: describing poverty as a social outcome and the other described poverty in personal terms of particular victims. Iyengar concluded that “the experimental and survey evidence together demonstrate clearly that beliefs about who or what is responsible for poverty vary considerably, depending on how poverty is framed” (1990, p.34).

Gamson and Modigliani studied framing effects by analyzing news coverage of nuclear power on the network news broadcasts, in news magazines, and in editorial cartoons over a limited period of time. They concluded that “only by methods that elicit more of the interpretive

process will we be able to see the extent to which different media packages have become part of the public's toolkit in making sense of the world of public affairs" (1989, p. 36).

Kahn and Kenney studied the press coverage of 60 senatorial campaigns across 3 election years. Paid coders were used to categorize certain variables within the actual media coverage while the 1988-1992 National Election Studies/Senate Election Studies (NES/SES) was used for data on respondent's evaluations of Senatorial candidates. The results show that "in races receiving a great deal of coverage, endorsed incumbents fare far better with potential voters than nonendorsed incumbents" (2002, p. 391).

Druckman and Parkin studied the 2000 Minnesota Senatorial race using actual media coverage and exit polls. Paid coders were used to categorize certain variables within the actual media coverage while exit polls were used to determine the effect of the media coverage upon voters. Results provided "concrete evidence that relative editorial slant can influence voters" (2005, p. 1047).

Along this line, Robert Entman studied bias and determined that there are three primary types: distortion bias, content bias, and decision-making bias. Based upon his research, he feels short of physical coercion, the way to influence "what people think" is to tell them "what to think about" (2007, p. 165). He goes on to state that "any given set of perceived facts can yield news that slants toward one side, the other side, or even (as in the journalistic ideal) neither side" (2007, p. 167).

Zaller, however, would seem to urge caution when evaluating the results of experiments that are based upon personal interaction (exit polls and laboratory). He states that "political communications, if internalized, become considerations in a person's mind" (1992, p. 266). He goes on to state that "when asked their opinions in surveys, people respond on the basis of

whatever considerations are most immediately salient in their minds. The reason that their survey responses are unstable from one interview to the next is that what is at the top of a person's head varies stochastically over time" (1992, p. 266). This means that while laboratory experiments where interviews and/or questionnaires are used right after the dissemination of information are very good at determining the immediate reaction of the respondents, the researchers should also be aware that those responses are probably temporary and would probably change if the experiment were repeated with different frames.

Furthermore, Zaller's research into "one-sided" messages versus "two-sided" messages has a direct bearing on the influence of competitive framing. Zaller points out that one-sided messages can influence the public because there are no counter-frames to provide alternative information that could affect predispositions. As evidence of this fact, Zaller references the 1974 elections in Brazil. He states that early in the election period, only government candidates were allowed access to the media. This allowed the government candidates to pull so far ahead in the polls that the government allowed the opposition candidates limited access to the media for a few weeks before the election. Once two-sided messages were introduced through competing frames, the lead that had been maintained by the government candidates quickly evaporated. Some of the government candidates found themselves in close races while others lost the election (1997, p. 307).

In other words, as long as the public was subjected to information framed in only one way (a lack of competitive framing), they were told what to think by the elites, in this case the government. However, when the public was exposed to competitive framing through two-sided messages, the voters were provided with an opportunity to reweigh their predispositions.

Zaller also points out the importance of varied messages to elites. He states that “intraindividual predispositions toward resistance cannot, by themselves, explain very much. In order to have real effect, they must be nourished by exposure to a countervailing information flow. When people are exposed to two competing sets of electoral information, they are generally able to choose among them on the basis of their partisanship and values even when they do not score especially well on test of political awareness. But when individuals are exposed to a one-sided communication flow,, their capacity for critical resistance appears quite limited” (1997, p. 253). In other words, as long as the elites are providing competitive frames to the electorate, the voters will weight their predispositions based upon their partisanship and will resist the frames that are counter to those predispositions. However, if competitive framing is absent, their ability to resist the one-sided messages is limited. This was demonstrated by the previously discussed elections in Brazil.

In addition, Zaller provides a justification for competitive framing in an open society by stating that “a few specialists do not constitute a viable check on political authority. It is too easy to ignore, jail, or otherwise silence them. Their only hope of being effective is to publicize and politicize whatever disagreements arise, so that the masses of ordinary citizens can weigh into the debate” (1997, p.332). It would seem, then, that it is the responsibility of the elites to ensure that competitive framing exists in order to present both sides of an issue to the electorate so that they will be informed. In this way they can enter the debate through the political pressure they can bring to bear, and ultimately, the ballot box because “it is the collective ability of citizens in a democracy to pressure leaders in useful directions and, when necessary, to remove the leaders” (1997, p.332). Zaller goes on to state, “Given the continued existence of competition among partisan elites for public support in the current American political system, I

do not see this as particularly problematic. The real problem is guaranteeing the existence of an equally vigorous competition among opposing ideas” (1997, p. 332).

The body of this research indicates that how a story is framed does indeed influence how the public perceives it, if only temporarily. However, in addition to framing a story to influence viewers/readers, the source of the frame can also have a bearing on how the coverage is perceived.

Research on Framing

When and How Framing Affects Occur

Previous research has shown that the public’s preferences or opinions are affected by the way in which information received is presented or “framed” (McGrath, 2007: 278; Gross and D’Ambrosio, 2004: 19; Zaller, 1992: 272). This is due at least in part because “in modern society, ordinary citizens must rely on others for their news of national and world affairs” (Kinder, 2007, p. 155). “How ordinary citizens come to understand a political event or policy issue may depend, at least in part, on how the issue is framed” (Gross & D’Ambrosio, 2004, p. 1).

As previously discussed, the broadcast and print media may frame the news by using certain considerations that may influence the opinions of their viewers/readers (McGrath, 2007; Gross & D’Ambrosio, 2004; Druckman & Nelson, 2003, Jerit, 2008; Jerit, 2010; Kinder, 2007; Groseclose & Milyo, 2005; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Druckman, 2001; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Zaller, 1992; Nelson & Kinder, 1996; Nelson & Oxley, 1999). In fact, “a framing effect is said to occur when in the course of describing an issue or event, a speaker’s emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their

opinions” (Druckman, 2001b, p.1042). It is pertinent to this research because when and how framing affects occur is directly related to the variables being studied.

The fact that some framing, whether intentional or not, occurs virtually every time a news story is covered in the media answers the question of when framing occurs. The question of how framing occurs has been the subject of much research resulting in several different proposed methods; however, only four are the focus of this analysis. The occurrence of framing through the length of the frame; the placement of the frame; the strength of the frame; and the tone of the frame will be addressed in this research.

It should be noted that the length of the stories and placement are sometimes thought of as agenda setting; however, this research treats length and placement as framing considerations (Edwards III & Wood, 1999; Entman, 2007; Zhou & Moy, 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). “Framing and agenda setting have been portrayed as inherently connected” (Zhou & Moy, 2007, p.81). In fact, many researchers believe “framing is simply a more refined version of agenda setting” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p.15). Regardless, the unique situation provided by President Bush’s “60 Stops in 60 Days Tour” placed an expectation of coverage on the media’s agenda such that the gatekeepers at the different media outlets treatment of story length and placement can be thought of as framing variables.

As previously discussed, previous research has shown that the more the public is subjected to stories about an issue in the broadcast and print news media, the more important the issue seems. In other words, the viewers/readers of media news seem to believe that the more coverage an issue receives, the more important the issue is. This means that the broadcast and print news media can frame a story/issue not only by how often they cover it, but also by how long the stories are. The media can cover the issue extensively, occasionally, or they can choose

to not cover it at all. They also can send a message to their viewers/readers by running very short stories or long detailed ones. Whether the coverage is extensive or non-existent, it frames the issue. Inherently, the longer the stories are the more predispositions will be brought to the forefront in opinion formation.

Also, as previously mentioned, where a story is placed during a broadcast, or in a newspaper, sends a message to the viewer/reader as to its importance. If prominence on the front page is indicative of an important story, it stands to reason that being buried somewhere in the paper is indicative of a marginal story. This should also apply to the broadcast media with “lead stories” and those buried during the broadcast.

Furthermore, the strength of the frame sends a message to the public. In other words, since the public has to believe someone in order to form opinions about things that are uncommon to them, they will depend upon sources that they deem to be credible for their information. This means that while media/news outlets are using framing techniques in order to influence public opinion, it is not always a form of manipulation. Druckman states that in many cases, it is “because citizens delegate to credible elites for guidance” (2001b, p.1061). He came to this conclusion by studying two scenarios where the issues were couched either as “government expenditures or humanitarianism” (2001b, p. 1047). He also added two sources, one considered credible (Colin Powell), and one that was considered to be non-credible (Jerry Springer). His conclusion from the results was “strong support for the source credibility hypothesis” (2001b, p. 1050). This supports Zaller’s contention that “information or cues about the person providing a message greatly affects how people respond to it” (1992, p. 275).

Chong and Druckman also studied source credibility by developing a model that provided a series of predictions, some of which pertained to frame strength. These predictions include: the

more knowledge a person has on a topic the greater the frame's influence; well-established predispositions will attenuate the effects of the frame; strong beliefs can be accessed to override the given argument; the length of a frame makes arguments more accessible in time and number; weak frames will be ignored by "motivated individuals", however, strong frames will be accepted; both weak and strong frames will be accepted by people with "low motivation;" and people who lack motivation will be more greatly influenced by a strong frame over a weak one in a competitive situation (2007, p.111). The body of this research indicates that the strength of the frame used does indeed influence how the public perceives it.

Finally, the tone of a story can influence viewers/readers. As previously discussed, a story may be framed in a positive, neutral, or negative tone. A neutral frame can also be created by combining positive and negative frames to present an overall neutral framing affect.

Accessibility and Weights of Considerations Used in Forming Opinions

Just as how framing occurs in the broadcast and print news media has been the subject of previous research, the affect of the accessibility to, and the relative weights of, the frames have also been studied extensively. In order to fully understand the affect of framing in the news media, it is not enough to just know how framing occurs. One must also understand how framing works.

It is pertinent to this research because the accessibility of considerations and the process by which an individual goes through a reweighting of his/her considerations based upon the frames to which he/she is exposed has a direct relationship to competitive framing. If competitive framing exists in the news media, a variety of frames are presented and viewers/readers will accept those that reinforce their existing beliefs; however, if there is a lack of competitive framing, viewers/readers may change their beliefs by reweighting their

considerations to be more in line with the frames that are being presented to them through the media.

Previous research has examined this question by looking at the accessibility of considerations and the relative weight of those considerations (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004; Dijkstra, Schakenraad, Menninga, Buunk, & Siero, 2009; Coleman & Banning, 2006; Kinder, 2007; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Kinder & Nelson, 2005; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Nelson & Kinder, 1996; Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Higgins & King, 1981). “Accessibility refers to the likelihood that an available consideration will be activated for use in an evaluation Put another way, the available consideration stored in long-term memory is brought to mind when forming an evaluation. Increases in accessibility occur through ‘passive, unconscious processes that occur automatically and are uncontrolled’ (Higgins & King, 1981, p. 74)” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p.104). This manifests itself in the fact that viewers/readers of the news media are more likely to favor frames that agree with their existing values (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Chong & Druckman, 2007). “....Framing effects depend on predispositions. People are not unthinking consumers of frames; thus, their emotional responses are not completely at the mercy of media frames. Rather, their emotional reactions are conditioned by both predispositions and the information available in a given frame” (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004, p. 21).

Of course, the process of accessing “stored” considerations alone does not explain the effect of framing in the news media upon public opinion. Competitive framing, or the presentation of competing frames, can change public opinion (Scheufele & Tewsbury, 2007; Jerit, 2009; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Kinder, 2007; Brewer & Gross, 2005; Nelson & Oxley, 1999). “In the case of an existing belief, the framing effect results from

a reweighting of the set of prior beliefs associated with the object; on the other hand, if the communication promotes a new belief about the object, the framing effect is produced by the recipient's accepting the new consideration and giving it priority in his or her overall attitude. Therefore, frames, in communication, exercise influence by emphasizing the primacy of certain considerations over others" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p 107). In other words, viewers/readers will reweight their beliefs to accommodate the new considerations presented to them through the news media (McGrath, 2007; Jerit, 2009; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981; Entman, 2007; Nelson & Kinder, 1996; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Nelson & Oxley, 1999).

Furthermore, viewers/readers will be more receptive of the considerations that they deem to be the most salient (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Since considerations have to be pre-existing and accessible in order to affect the opinion of viewers/readers, then frames that are presented frequently and in a consistent manner will have the best chance of altering those previous opinions. "Individuals deviate further from their values when they receive uncontested single frames than when they receive balanced frames" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 106) As a result, a lack of competitive framing will have the best chance of changing the opinion of the public through a reweighting of considerations.

President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days"

Social Security Background

When the Social Security Act of 1935 was passed, the plan was for workers to have a percentage of their wages put into a trust fund and basically held for them until they retired (retirement age was initially set at 65). In fact, the Social Security Administration website explains the plan in the following way:

“From 1937 until 1940, Social Security paid benefits in the form of a single, lump-sum payment. The purpose of these one-time payments was to provide some "payback" to those people who contributed to the program but would not participate long enough to be vested for monthly benefits. Under the 1935 law, monthly benefits were to begin in 1942, with the period 1937-1942 used both to build up the Trust Funds and to provide a minimum period for participation in order to qualify for monthly benefits.” (Social Security Administration, Historical Background and Development of Social Security, 2003, p. 25).

The lump sum payments ranged from \$.05 to \$58.06 with the first payment going to Ernest Ackerman for \$.17 (Social Security Administration, Historical Background and Development of Social Security, 2003, p. 25).

Ms. Fuller, a legal secretary, retired in November of 1939 and began drawing her benefits in January of 1940. Up until she retired, Ms. Fuller had contributed a total of \$24.75 to Social Security. Her first monthly check was for \$22.54. Ms. Fuller died in 1975 at 100 years old after receiving monthly benefits for over 35 years. Not only was her first check almost equal to her total contribution, she collected a \$22,888.92 return on her \$24.75 “investment” (Social Security Administration, Agency History, 1996, NA).

According to the Social Security Administration, virtually no changes were made to Social Security until 1950. Since that time there have been numerous amendments to the Social Security Act increasing/adding benefits. These increases resulted in additional amendments in order to keep it solvent. For example, amendments in 1972 introduced automatic Cost Of Living Adjustments (COLAs) tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to make sure that benefits would keep up with inflation (Social Security Administration, Historical Background and Development

of Social Security, 2003, p. 31). The Trustee's Report of 1975 predicted that the Social Security Trust Fund would be exhausted by 1979. This was addressed by an amendment in 1977 that increased the contribution percentage (Social Security Administration, Historical Background and Development of Social Security, 2003, p. 32).

A financing crisis in the early 1980s led to the creation of a bi-partisan commission appointed by President Ronald Reagan in December of 1981. The commission was headed by Alan Greenspan with members appointed by President Reagan, Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neill, and Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker. Greenspan and the commission were able to put together a package of changes (such as raising the retirement age and increasing employment taxes, among others) that formed the basis of an amendment in 1983 intended to solve Social Security's insolvency "until the turn of the century"; however, the amendment would not solve the system's "long-term structural problems" (Cannon, 1991, p 214). There were a series of amendments through the 1990s aimed at fixing Social Security; however, none of them corrected the structural problems within the system.

President George W. Bush addressed Social Security reform in his first Inaugural Address and made it a "recurring theme" in many of his early speeches. In fact in February of 2001, President Bush presented his plan to appoint a Presidential Commission to recommend ways to reform Social Security and put it on a firm financial footing once and for all. The President gave the Commission three principles to follow when developing its recommendations. He insisted that the benefits being paid to the current recipients and those nearing retirement age be preserved. Their plan had to return Social Security to a sound financial footing, not just a short-term fix. Finally, he insisted that the new plan had to offer personal savings accounts to younger workers who wanted them. The final report of the Presidential Commission was

released in December of 2001. At this time, President Bush again stated his intent to reform Social Security (Social Security Administration, Historical Background and Development of Social Security, 2003, p. 38).

In an effort to explain his plan for Social Security reform to the public, President Bush launched the “60 Stops In 60 Days” tour. It was this all out effort by the President and members of the Administration that he hoped would persuade the public. For 60 days, the President and his Administration concentrated as exclusively as possible on this issue.

By taking this single issue, it is possible to conduct media research during a given period of time; the 60 days of the “tour”. As a result, media coverage of President Bush’s Social Security plan from March 3 through May 1, 2005, was analyzed. These dates correspond with the beginning and end of the “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour to promote the plan.

President Bush’s “60 Stops in 60 Days” Tour

Long before being elected president, George W. Bush was a proponent of Social Security reform and personal accounts. In fact, according to Lewis Solomon, “In June 1999, when he announced his candidacy for the Republican Presidential nomination, he unequivocally stated: ‘And we should trust Americans by giving them the option of investing part of their Social Security contributions in private accounts’” (2005, p.135).

After being elected in the 2000 election, President Bush began to prepare for Social Security reform. Without a solid bi-partisan mandate for reform during the election, President Bush created a bi-partisan Commission to Strengthen Social Security (CSSS), or simply referred to as the “Commission,” in May 2001, to “generate reform options” (Ross, 2007, p. 423). The Commission’s interim report released in August of 2001, stating that “the time to act is now,” (Solomon. 2005, p. 142) was not well received by opponents of reform. In fact, “protestors,

organized by the AFL-CIO, gathered outside one of the Commission's meetings in a Washington, D.C. hotel ballroom, and chanted 'Hey, hey, ho, ho, Bush and Wall Street have to go'" (Solomon, 2005, p. 143). The interim report did, however, legitimize President Bush's desire to reform Social Security.

Several events combined to thwart any attempt at Social Security reform during Bush's first term. By far the biggest was the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The resulting War on Terror became the primary focus for the Administration.

The second occurred in December of 2001, as the Commission met for the last time. Just as it was issuing its final report, the Enron Corporation⁷ admitted that it had intentionally misrepresented its financial position and was about to file for bankruptcy. Even more devastating to Bush's reform plan than the affect the company's failure had on the stock market was the image of the Enron employees on television talking about their worthless 401K retirement plans (Solomon, 2005, p. 148). This made the idea of private accounts as part of Social Security seem even less appealing to the plan's opponents and gave the Democrats a new talking point. As Lewis Solomon points out, "Democratic congressional leaders seized upon the corporate and accounting scandals and the sharp stock market decline in an attempt to frighten voters" (2005, p. 149).

Based upon the slumping stock market, the Republicans in Congress believed that a Social Security reform plan that was based upon private accounts would be a major political liability going into the mid-term elections. As a result, Social Security reform was taken off of the table for a while (Solomon, 2005, p. 148).

⁷ At the time, Enron was the world's largest energy trader.

While the President had to temporarily retreat from his plan to reform Social Security, he never gave up on the idea. In the 2004 election, President Bush was re-elected and Republicans remained in control of the Congress. President Bush saw his re-election as a mandate and brought his Social Security reform back to the forefront. In his 2005 State of the Union address, President Bush declared that Social Security reform was his “top domestic policy goal, and personal accounts would be the cornerstone of that reform” (Brady and Volden, 2006, p.1). Proclaiming, “Our society has changed in ways the founders of Social Security could not have foreseen,” he promised to listen to “anyone who has a good idea to offer.” His intention was to avoid promoting any specific proposal, but he “insisted on some general principles that included personal accounts and no payroll tax increase” (Ceaser, Busch, & Pitney, 2009, p. 40).

In the State of the Union Address, President Bush stated,

“As we fix Social Security, we also have the responsibility to make the system a better deal for younger workers. And the best way to reach that goal is through voluntary personal retirement accounts. Here is how the idea works: Right now, a set portion of the money you earn is taken out of your paycheck to pay for the Social Security benefits of today's retirees. If you're a younger worker, I believe you should be able to set aside part of that money in your own retirement account, so you can build a nest egg for your own future. Here is why the personal accounts are a better deal: Your money will grow, over time, at a greater rate than anything the current system can deliver. And your account will provide money for retirement over and above the check you will receive from Social Security. In addition, you'll be able to pass along the money that accumulates in your personal account, if you wish, to your children and or grandchildren. And best of all, the

money in the account is yours, and the government can never take it away” (Bush, 2005, p. 5).

On February 2, 2005, barely a month after President Bush presented his plan for Social Security reform in his State of the Union speech, Stephen C. Gross (the Chief Actuary for the Social Security Administration) testified before Congress as to the condition of the Social Security System in general, and the trust fund in particular. In his testimony Mr. Gross addressed the problems being faced by the Social Security Administration in his opening remarks by stating:

“In the 2004 Trustees Report, the intermediate projections indicate that the annual excess of tax income over program cost will begin to decline in 2009, and in 2018 cost will exceed tax income. At that point the accumulated trust fund assets of about \$2.3 trillion in present value will begin to be used to augment tax income so that benefits scheduled in current law will continue to be paid in full.

If no changes are made, it is projected that the combined Trust Fund assets would become exhausted in 2042 and the program would no longer be considered to be solvent. This means that we would no longer be able to fully pay benefits scheduled in current law on a timely basis. Instead, we would be able to provide 73 percent of scheduled benefits with continuing tax revenues. After 2042, program cost is projected to continue growing faster than tax income. By 2078, 68 percent of scheduled benefits are expected to be payable.” (Social Security Administration, Social Security Testimony Before Congress, 2005, NA).

Mr. Gross went on to explain that the shortfall was primarily a result of women choosing to have fewer children. This reduction in the number of children (from 3.3 per woman in the

period up to 1965 down to 2.0 children per woman starting in 1972 and carrying forward) results in fewer people working and paying into Social Security while more people are retiring and drawing Social Security benefits. In fact, the reduction in the number of children per woman and the ratio of workers per retiree run in parallel. Since 1975, the ratio has been 3.3 workers per retiree; however, according to Mr. Goss, this will begin to decrease starting in 2010 and will reach 2 workers per retiree by 2040. This is just two years before the assets of the Trust Fund are projected to be exhausted (Social Security Administration, Social Security Testimony Before Congress, 2005, NA). The message Mr. Goss was trying to convey was that Social Security had to be reformed or retirees would face the consequences. A month later, the “60 Stops In 60 Days” tour began.

The “Tour” became necessary due to events that occurred after the President’s State of the Union speech. Once Bush put Social Security reform back at the top of his agenda, the Democrats in congress responded by calling private accounts “risky”. They also began to concentrate on the fact that Bush’s plan to add personal accounts would cost Social Security up to two trillion dollars. Due to events such as the 9/11 attack and the resulting War on Terror, Bush was already running a budget deficit. As a result, the Democrats began “framing the debate in terms of the budget and fiscal responsibility” as a way to “defeat the proposal” and give them an advantage in the next election (Brady and Volden, 2006, p. 1).

The individual private investment accounts that were at the center of the President’s reform plan were also at the center of the debate. Allowing workers to invest some of the money that would have normally gone into the Social Security Trust Fund was often framed as “robbing Social Security” (Lind and Tamas, 2006, p.10).

No Democratic Senator or Congressman ever endorsed the President's reform plan. Congressman Allen Boyd of Florida did endorse private investment accounts, but he never endorsed the President's version (Brownstein, 2007, p. 304). Fiona Ross points out that "the President's proposal was opposed by a unified coalition of Democrats, unions, and the AARP, who argued that comparatively limited changes would secure the solvency of the program and that structural changes were both unnecessary and incurred much larger problems" (2007, p.426).

As Brownstein points out, "in Social Security the White House finally encountered an issue on which Congressional Republicans were unwilling to move without at least some support from Democrats to provide political cover" (2007, p.304). According to Mycoff and Pika, "it fell to President Bush to provide Congressional Republicans with 'cover,' that is, generate a groundswell of public support for the reform effort and for Bush's specific proposals that would reassure nervous legislators" (2007, p.229). This resulted in the "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour.

As the President pushed for reform, the opposition changed its stance. "Democrats changed their policy frames when they switched their rhetoric from the 'crisis' to 'challenge' of Social Security in January 2005" (Ross, 2007, p. 438). Referring to a CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll taken in February 2005, Ross states that "between January and February 2005, the number of Americans believing that Social Security required 'major changes' within two years dropped by 11 percentage points from 49 percent to 38 percent." She also points out that a CBS/*New York Times* poll taken the same month 'reported that just 15 percent of Americans agreed that Social Security was in crisis. Ultimately, "by May 2005, 49 percent of Americans claimed that Bush was trying to dismantle the program" (2007, p. 438). In fact, the President's ratings on his handling of Social Security were lower than on any other issue (Ross, 2007, p.

436). “Less than two weeks before the close of the Administration’s 60-day tour,64 percent of Americans ‘disapproved’ of the president’s handling of Social Security, more than double the 31 percent who approved” (Ross, 2007, p. 426).

In retrospect, President Bush should have known that a Republican being able to reform Social Security was an uphill battle. Ross points out that “actors who enjoy higher levels of trust, as Druckman has shown, have a higher capacity to frame policy problems.” From January to May 2005, polls showed that voters trusted Democrats to handle Social Security by a 2 to 1 margin over either President Bush or Congressional Republicans (2007, p. 435), and the Democrats adopted the position that the current system did not need to be reformed, just “tweaked”.

The President’s chances of getting Congress to pass Social Security reform legislation were finally crushed due to a natural disaster. Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast on August 29th. This shifted the agenda and increased budgetary pressures (Mycoff and Pika, 2007, p. 224). Social Security reform legislation was never introduced.

Timeline of Media News Dissemination

The media was well aware of the President’s intention to change Social Security when he made it a signature goal in his State of the Union address of 2005. This in and of itself garnered some attention, and mobilized groups, both for and against the initiative, prior to President Bush’s “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour. Congress had been in recess during the two weeks leading up to the tour, and Republicans took advantage of the time by participating in a series of town hall meetings in their home districts.

The President and several high ranking members of the administration embarked on a campaign-style tour designed to create a dialogue with the American people. The tour intended

to push for changes to the Social Security system in order to make it solvent as well as the addition of “private” or “personal” accounts.

Once the President and members of the Administration began holding Town Hall meetings to explain the details of the President’s Social Security reform initiative, the opposition began to organize. A coalition of Democrats, the AFL-CIO, and AARP came together against personal accounts being part of Social Security reform.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Allan Greenspan testified before Congress urging legislators to do something to fix Social Security and encouraging them to make personal accounts part of that fix. The Democrats took the position that personal accounts, or private accounts as they preferred to call them, would destroy Social Security rather than reform and save it. Since the Republican Congressional leadership refused to back away from personal accounts as part of the initiative, the stage was set for a confrontation over Social Security reform.

AARP came out against the reform initiative by starting a multi-million dollar ad campaign against personal accounts. This anti-personal accounts campaign was countered by a pro-personal accounts ad campaign launched by USA Next, a conservative group. The AFL-CIO began to organize protestors to show up at the Town Hall meetings being held by Republicans. Protestors were alerted about the events by email and then bussed to the events by anti-Bush organizations such as Moveon.org and USAction, a liberal advocacy group. These protests became so raucous that Republican leadership urged lawmakers to start holding lower profile events.

While the Republicans were emphasizing the fact that Social Security would run out of money by 2041, the Democrats began to stress the fact that this left plenty of time to reform the

system without making any major changes. As both Democrats and Republicans held speaking events and interviews stating their views concerning reform, the polls showed that the voters trusted Democrats more than Republicans where Social Security was concerned. The polls also showed that the majority of the public did not think Social Security was in crisis.⁸

As the tour was approaching the end of the 60 days, groups opposed to the President's reform initiative, backed by the entire Congressional Democratic leadership, held a "National Day of Unity" to protect Social Security from personal accounts. By the end of the tour, the polls showed the majority of Americans disapproved of the president's handling of Social Security. With an upcoming mid-term election, Republicans were not willing to go forward with partisan legislation on an initiative that the voters did not want. No legislation was ever introduced.

A timeline showing how the information concerning the President's "60 Stops in 60 days" was disseminated in the news media during the tour follows:

03/03/05

Administration getting ready for the "60 Stops in 60 days" tour. The President, Vice-President, cabinet members, and other officials will make appearances around the country. Greenspan meets with Congress and again states his support for President Bush's plan of private accounts as part of overhauling Social Security. Greenspan states, "Go slowly, but fix Social Security."

Congress returns after a recess where they heard complaints from voters about Social Security changes.

Senator Grassley, who will write a bill on Social Security, suggests on Wednesday to put private accounts to the side for now. He states, "Maybe we ought o focus on solvency and bring people to the table just over what do you do for the solvency." Greenspan tells the Congressional House Budget Committee, "I fear that we may have already committed more physical resources to the baby boom generation in its retirement years than our economy has the capacity to deliver." As far as dropping private accounts, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay states, "Why would we do that? What we ought to stop doing is negotiating with ourselves." Senator John Sununu says, "I think it's a terrible idea. If you exclude that, you're not going to be able to implement a system that is sustainable in the long-run."

⁸ Actual percentages are in the President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days" Tour section of this chapter

03/04/05

Bush speaks in New Jersey and Indiana in an attempt to convince voters that the Social Security system is broken.

President Bush rejects the idea that his campaign to fix Social Security by creating private accounts in Social Security is in trouble stating that it is still early. He states, "I've got a lot more work to do." He also encouraged both parties to come forth with ideas to fix Social Security. Senate Democrats seemed unworried. They said they would work with the President on Social Security if he would announce that he rejected private investment accounts that are financed by payroll tax revenues.

MoveOn.org, a liberal group, announces that it is sponsoring a nationwide contest for an internet ad to attack the administration's proposal to restructure Social Security.

On Thursday, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez wrote an op-ed for *La Opinion* courting Latinos. He urges a revamp due to "the disproportionate dependence of Latino retirees on Social Security."

FOX News interviews Andrew Card, President Bush's Chief of Staff, on changes to Social Security

03/05/05

Democrats launch protests, testimonials, and advertising to counter the President's plan.

President Bush promotes his personal accounts and how the system goes broke in 2042 while Democrats push their mantra "Fix it, Don't Nix It."

In Westfield, New Jersey on Friday, President Bush in his first stop states, "I like going around the country.....I'm going to keep telling people we've got a problem until it sinks in."

03/06/05

In response to President Bush's claim that Treasury Bonds are not the same as a Social Security Trust Bank holding money in everybody's name, the ranking Democrat on the House Social Security Subcommittee states, "these bonds are real. Retirees can rely on them. The administration doesn't dare say otherwise too loud because it would cast suspicion on all other U.S. Treasury bonds held around the world."

03/07/05

Bush has visited 11 states promoting his proposal and will be in four more states this week.

Treasury Secretary Snow plans to be on the road two days a week over the next two months.

VP Cheney plans a series of town hall meetings in California. Senate Democrats went to four states on Friday and Saturday to oppose Bush's Social Security reform plan. While in New York, Harry Reid states, "Instead of talking about ways to save Social Security, Republicans are talking about a plan that will destroy it."

Democrats express displeasure with Joe Lieberman. He angered Democrats by expressing a willingness to work with the President to change Social Security. Joe Lieberman states, "There is a whole attitude out there 'just say no!' In other words, let the President sink with his proposal. 'We are winning!' But we are not winning because victory here is to solve the Social Security problem."

Senator Chuck Grassley plans to introduce a Social Security bill today including a proposal to create individual investment accounts; however, he also wants to raise the retirement age by a year. Senator Barbara Boxer states, "If privatization stays on the table and Social Security is turned into a gamble, I don't see us getting anywhere because none of us in the Democratic Party, at least none that I know, is willing to do that."

03/08/05

While the President and other officials are involved in the 60 appearances in 60 days, an outside group called "Progress for America" (Pro Group) makes its biggest national ad buy thus far of \$2 million for television ads supporting the President's plan.

The Social Security debate starts and is going the way the Democrats want, with President Bush on the defensive, Republicans in Congress are divided, and Democrats are united in opposition to the centerpiece of Bush's plan, voluntary personal accounts. Some Democrats worry that they have nothing to offer other than opposition to private accounts. Harry Reid sends a letter to the President signed by all but three Democrats in the Senate that they would work on a big bi-partisan solution, but they asked Bush to "unambiguously announce" his rejection to personal accounts in the system.

03/09/05

Congress opens hearings today on the President's proposal for Social Security reform. The head of GAO tells Congress Social Security is not in "immediate crisis," but agrees it should "be addressed sooner rather than later"; however, he did not like private accounts.

House Ways and Means Committee takes up Social Security. Jim Angle states, "Committee Chairman Bill Thomas says this is the first time Congress has examined Social Security in detail in more than 26 years, and he argued it's about time."

Lindsey Graham said Republicans "made a strategic mistake" by initially focusing on a proposal to create individual investment accounts because it makes bi-partisan support for Social Security reform harder to find.

03/10/05

The President in Louisville trying to convince seniors that the plan will not affect them.

The President is on a two day tour of four Republican states that he won in November; however, he is finding that even in "friendly territory", his plan is going to be a hard sell.

The President is in Kentucky and Alabama.

Charles Rangel says the insistence for the private accounts is "the number one issue that stops us from dealing with this in a bi-partisan way."

03/11/05

On FOX, VP Dick Cheney is interviewed by White House correspondent Carl Cameron.

On CNN, Low Dobbs states, "The President is facing opposition from Democrats, Republicans, and many senior citizens." Bush is in Memphis, Tennessee and the past two days in Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, and Louisiana.

Bush points out that the hole in the safety net will create a crisis for the young while reassuring seniors that "the government will pay you what we said we'd pay you." Because of the negative connotation to "private", Republican leaders have banned it for personal use. Senator Mel Martinez says, "there's a \$20 fine for using the phrase 'private accounts'. If you take it back really fast, it's only \$10."

According to a *Washington Post* survey of senators, the opposition to individual accounts for Social Security in the Senate is so great that supporters may not be able to bring it up for a vote. Democrats Bush has been trying to persuade have come out against him as long as there are accounts (Senators Carper and Landrieu), or if accounts mean "heavy borrowing" (Senators Conrad, Lieberman, and Pryor).

03/12/05

In Memphis, Tennessee, President Bush is invoking praise on FDR to say we need changes for his vision to survive. Bush states, "And so the discussion today is to build on what Franklin Roosevelt put in place. Franklin Roosevelt did a good thing when he set up Social Security. It has worked." However, he goes on to state, "the math has changed since Franklin Roosevelt was the President." Bush invited representative Harold Ford, Jr. who favors private accounts separate from the system as add-ons, but was not impressed. Ford states, "the President didn't allow any other points to be raised. That wasn't a conversation. It was more of an echo."

03/15/05

On FOX, Lindsey Graham is Interviewed over Social Security.

CNN interviews Sen. Chuck Hagel from Nebraska, the first person to actually introduce a bill on Social Security.

The business coalition "Compass" targets AARP with a new poll and advertising campaign. Compass says a poll of senior citizens shows that a majority of AARP members support private investment accounts for younger workers, as long as it doesn't affect their own benefits. That is exactly what President Bush has been promising since the beginning of the campaign. Marty Davis, an AARP spokesman, rejects the validity of the poll saying it is flawed and politically motivated. At the same time, the AFL-CIO announces that it will increase its efforts against the President's proposal by organizing protests, town hall meetings, and other events in Washington and other cities on March 31st.

03/16/05

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recommends a bi-partisan commission like the one he headed in 1983 as a way to develop a fix for Social Security.

03/17/05

FOX interviews Bill Thomas, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Due to loud protestors at open town hall meetings, House Republican Conference Chairwoman Deborah Pryce and other GOP leaders are urging lawmakers to hold lower profile events this time by going to newspaper editorial boards, luncheons, Senior Citizen Centers, and Chamber of Commerce meetings as well as local businesses. Many protests are coordinated through email and bussed in by anti-Bush organizations. Senator Ted Kennedy and other liberals oppose denying benefits to the wealthy for fear of changing the image of Social Security from a "quasi-pension system" to a welfare program.

AFL-CIO persuades two investment firms, Edward Jones and Waddell& Reed, to quit one of the groups backing Bush's plan. The union is now looking at Charles Schwab and Wachovia. They are also pressing the Securities Industry Association to withdraw from Compass which is the main business coalition backing personal Social Security accounts.

Congress is about to go home for a two week Easter recess. President Bush states, "I urge the members ... when they go home to talk to their constituents, not only about the problem, but about solutions."

03/18/05

Terri Schiavo's feeding tube is removed. President Bush is in Florida stumping with his mother, Barbara Bush. (Broadcast coverage on FOX)

03/19/05

Bush campaigns with his mother, Barbara Bush, in Florida. In referring to making sure Social Security will be there for her grandchildren, Ms. Bush states, "I'm here because your father and I have 17 grandchildren and we want to know, is someone going to do something about it?" Representative Debbie Shultz states her belief that Barbara Bush's appearance was a sign of desperation on the part of the White House and suggested that Republicans who backed Bush's plan might pay a price in next year's Congressional elections. Representative Shultz states, "It's interesting that he has now needed to call in the reinforcements, and has brought his mother into Florida because certainly she engenders more trust than the President does."

03/20/05

On the average, Afro-American men get two to four years of retirement benefits while white Americans get 10 to 12 years of benefits. This is only because those who reach 65 have a life expectancy of 79.6 which is still two years less than a white man that lives to 65. In reality, many Blacks will never see a Social Security check.

03/22/05

On NBC, Campbell Brown says, "While the political world has been riveted by the Schiavo case, President Bush has been on the road continuing his tour to promote changes in Social Security." The President is in Albuquerque trying to calm seniors' nerves.

On CNN, Lou Dobbs states, "AARP and Rock the Vote are teaming up in an effort to educate younger workers about what the AARP calls the consequences of those private accounts."

USA Today conducts interviews with people who came to hear President Bush at the convention center in Tucson on Monday revealed confusion about eligibility for the personal investment accounts that are the centerpiece of his plan. President Bush will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico which will be his 17th state of the tour.

The "Private" versus "Personal" battle increases as President Bush complained that "privatization is a trick word intended to scare people." Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader, interrupted a reporter who asked about "personal accounts" by stating, "It's privatization." He went on to add that "personal accounts" was "the Republican term."

VP Cheney and House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas both spoke on Monday in Bakersfield, California promoting personal Social Security accounts as a safe and smart way to shore up Social Security.

03/23/05

Trustees of Social Security and Medicare release annual financial forecast predicting benefits will overtake taxes in 2017 and Social Security will run out of money in 2041. (Broadcast coverage on ABC).

President Bush is in Albuquerque with Pete Domenici and John McCain. He warns Democrats, "I believe there will be bad political consequences for people who are unwilling to sit down and talk about the issue."

Senator John McCain was with President Bush on Monday and Tuesday for stops in New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado as AARP has increased television and radio ads against Social Security reform. McCain accused opponents of wanting to wait until 2042 to fix the problem and addressed the AARP directly by stating, "I want to say to our friends in the AARP, and they are my friends, come to the table with us. We not only have an obligation to seniors, but we have an obligation to future generations."

03/24/05

Social Security will be unable to pay full benefits in 2041, a year earlier than previously estimated according to the Social Security Trustees Fiscal Report. Nancy Pelosi states, "Today's trustees' report reinforces one basic reality. In its current form, Social Security will be able to pay full benefits until 2041." The trustees also said that Social Security expenses would begin exceeding payroll tax revenue in 2017, a year earlier than estimated last year. Representative Nancy Pelosi flatly contradicts Republican efforts to manufacture a "crisis" in Social Security to justify a privatization plan that is "unaffordable, unnecessary, and unwise."

03/25/05

Progressive indexing being proposed by President Bush. According to Allan Hubbard, the Director of Bush's National Economic Council, states, "the President likes it because it is more favorable to lower income people than to higher income people."

On ABC, Peter Jennings states, "Now we change to Social Security - one thing about the Schiavo case, it's pushed a lot of important news to the side." Bush has now gone to 18 states in a blitz. John Cochran states, "But the Terri Schiavo case consumed most of the media oxygen."

03/28/05

The AFL-CIO plans protests outside of the offices of supporters of privatization such as Charles Schwab and Wachovia.

03/31/05

TERRI SCHIAVO DIES

04/01/05

The nation's labor unions plan on staging demonstrations in New York, Washington, San Francisco, and over 70 other cities in an attempt to stop the President's Social Security reform plan. The demonstrations are part of an effort that labor has mounted by packing Congressmen's town hall meetings with union members, pressuring investment firms to stop backing the President's proposal. They have also collected tens of thousands of signatures to reject his call for personal Social Security investment accounts.

04/02/05

POPE JOHN PAUL II DIES

04/03/05

Senator Grassley who had been at a rally in Iowa earlier in the week states, "There is not the significant momentum it takes to get a bill through the Senate."

4/5/2005

The President is in West Virginia to visit the Social Security Trust Fund which is a "filing cabinet with records of how much surplus the system has on the books which turns out to be \$1.7 trillion." Bush explains how the government does not keep the money or invest it, but buys Treasury Bonds so the money can be spent on other things in the budget. President Bush says, "It spends it on things like defense and education." (Broadcast coverage on FOX)

04/06/05

At a speech at West Virginia University at Parkesburg, President Bush states, "The government is making promises to younger Americans that it cannot keep."
FDR Library blocks a Social Security forum run by a coalition of women's organizations. The library's director said, "If you cannot provide at least one speaker who will speak on the features and merits of the administration's plan for Social Security, then I must ask that you find another venue for your program." The library in Hyde-Park, New York is under control of the National Archives and records Administration.

President Bush toured the Bureau of the Public Debt, the home of the Social Security Trust Fund, where a four drawer filing cabinet contains \$1.7 trillion in government bonds representing the surplus payroll tax collections being held on behalf of future Social Security recipients. At West Virginia University at Parkersburg, President Bush states, "There is no Trust Fund. Just IOUs that I saw first-hand that future generations will pay either in higher taxes or reduced benefits or cuts to other critical government programs." In response, Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi sent a letter to President Bush stating that it is "simply wrong to suggest that the Social Security trust Fund does not exist, or that the securities held by the Trust Fund are merely pieces of paper."

04/07/05

Secretary of the Treasury John Snow does a series of radio shows from the Treasury Department with more than 25 radio hosts from around the country talking about the future of Social Security. He states, "Unfortunately, the safety net is now frayed."

04/09/05

The President is back from the Pope's funeral in Rome, and is resuming the "60 Days" campaign. Rosaling Jordan of NBC said, "But the administration's campaign has been overshadowed by the deaths of Terri Schiavo and Pope John Paul II."

04/12/05

Julian Bond, Chairman of the NAACP, and Dennis Courtland Hayes, its Acting President and Chief Executive, state their belief that the President should address the underlying health reasons that the life expectancy for Black men is shorter than for white men rather than using it as a reason for private accounts.

04/15/05

FOX interviews Robert Pozen, a Democrat who was on the President's commission to strengthen Social Security. He is proposing "a progressive mix for wage and price indexing." Bush is in Ohio, his 21st state. The VP is in New Jersey doing a town hall. Bush may be willing to compromise with add-on accounts instead.

04/16/05

Bush stumps in Ohio.

04/19/05

ELECTION OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

04/19/05

Bush in South Carolina with Lindsay Graham and Jim DeMint.

Bush addresses a joint session of the South Carolina Legislature where he states, "Telling younger workers they have to save money in a 1930s retirement system is like telling them they have to use a cell phone with a rotary dial. If young people are confident they can improve their retirement by investing in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks, the government should not stand in their way."

04/20/05

On CNN, Kitty Pilgrim interviews Senator John Sununu who has a bill with Paul Ryan to solve the Social Security problem.

04/21/05

Senator Chuck Grassley, after being unable to get any cooperation from Democrats on a Social Security bill, is working on a partisan one. He states, "If my partisan approach doesn't come around to a bi-partisan coalition, nothing's going to happen."

The stock market down more than 9% in the last six weeks showing the volatility of personal accounts.

04/22/05

Senator Grassley states he will try to produce a Social Security bill with the support of Republicans alone while admitting it is a risk, and that he would need some Democratic support "once the bill reaches the full Senate if not sooner." Greenspan back in front of Congress urging them to do something "sooner rather than later."

04/24/05

Opposition groups and the Democratic leadership in Congress will hold a rally to mark a "National Day of Unity" to protect Social Security from reform. Business groups are countering with supporters of private accounts organized by Alliance for Worker Retirement Security. They are planning a Capitol Hill rally on Tuesday at the same time opponents will be gathering.

04/25/05

The President invites a small group of Republican Congressmen to his living room to talk about Social Security. This was one of dozens that Bush has held over the last few months, all in an attempt to lobby support for his initiative.

04/26/05

The campaign is winding down. Bush states, "I've been to 23 states explaining the problem. If you've retired, if you were born prior to 1950, the system will take care of you."

The Senate Finance Committee starts discussions over reforming the Social Security system. So far the Committee has been divided. Senator Grassley of Iowa states, "Most of the committee members simply wish the issue would go away."

04/27/05

First full debate by the Finance Committee did not look good for Republicans. The 20 person panel is made up of 11 Republicans and 9 Democrats. The Democrats are united and need only one Republican to defect to block. Republican Senators Olympia Snowe of Maine and Craig Thomas of Wyoming are both questionable. Democrats refer to the President's proposal as incomplete, and one that would divert money from guaranteed Social Security benefits to allow individuals to invest Social Security funds in stocks and bonds. Senator John Kerry states, "Bush's proposal would hurt solvency by claiming tax dollars needed to pay guaranteed benefits to retirees. Where's the President's plan? We've been wasting three months on private accounts without any real discussion of solvency."

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley told reporters after the hearing that he is determined to press forward with Social Security legislation even if it leaves his committee with only GOP votes.

Bush visits Galveston County which had the option of opening personal retirement accounts two decades ago and says "Others could learn from the experience." However, results have been mixed. It has had a greater return than Social Security percentage wise, but only been really successful for higher wage earners. The rate of return with Social Security is geared so low income workers get more.

04/28/05

PRIME TIME PRESS CONFERENCE

04/29/05

President Bush held a prime time news conference and "doubled down" on his bet. He continues to press for private accounts while adding a proposal that would cut Social Security spending by \$3 trillion over 75 years openly defying the long-time belief that proposing cuts in the beloved program is bad politics.

The Social Security debate in Congress is dead-locked. To start discussion, the President is considering limiting benefits through "progressive indexing" which essentially gives higher wage earners less money in retirement relative to what they paid in by tying high income earners to increases in prices rather than wages. Bush states, "This reform would solve most of the funding challenges facing Social Security." Bush also adds the ability for those afraid of the stock market to let their personal account consist entirely of Treasury Bonds.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi tells Democrats not to attend a bi-partisan meeting with Republicans and AARP on the issue this week, insisting "the one thing we have to have on Social Security is a united front."

PBS interviews Pozen who served as a member of President Bush's commission to Strengthen Social Security along with Gene Sperling, former National economic advisor to President Clinton, now a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

04/30/05

President Bush attends his final event of the "60 Day" tour at the Fairfax County Community Gym with a crowd of about 500 invitees at the James Lee community Center. President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days" campaign to promote his Social Security proposals ends tomorrow and the Treasury Department marked the occasion by sending out a list of statistics, among them: 127 cities visited by administration officials, and more than 500 radio interviews given by administration officials.

Bush criticized the Democrats as offering no alternative to his plan to change Social Security, a still-emerging proposal to which he added details during a nationally televised news conference.

05/02/05

VP Dick Cheney is in Smyrna, Georgia.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

The research concentrates on the coverage of the Social Security issue within selected broadcast and print media outlets during the 60 day period of the tour.⁹ The six broadcast news programs selected for the study are: *ABC World News Tonight*; *CBS Evening News*; *NBC Nightly News*; *FOX News Special Report*; *Lou Dobbs Tonight* on CNN; and *PBS News Hour*. These programs were selected because they are the ones considered to be the “news” programs for their networks/cable channels. ABC, CBS, and NBC, as the major networks, are represented by their nightly evening newscasts. FOX, while certainly a major network, does not have a network-wide evening news program¹⁰; therefore, there are only three network programs in this study.

With the number of people who now get their news from the all-day cable news networks, CNN and FOX News were added in order to make the sample truly representative. *Lou Dobbs Tonight* on CNN¹¹ and *FOX News Special Report* were selected because they were considered to be the premier “hard news” programs on their respective news channels during the reference period. Most of the other programs on CNN and FOX News fall into the “news commentary” or “news entertainment” categories of programming. Even though editorials are

⁹ News broadcast were covered for the 60 days of the tour plus the week before and after the tour for a total of 74 days.

¹⁰ Some FOX affiliates provide their own local evening news.

¹¹ On November 12, 2009, Lou Dobbs resigned from CNN and his show has subsequently been replaced by *John King, USA*.

being included in the selected newspapers, television news programs that primarily offer news commentaries and/or the “lighter side” of news were eliminated from the study. It should be noted that *Lou Dobbs Tonight* was broadcast at 6:00PM CST, while the other major news broadcasts in the study start their news at 5:00PM CST.¹² CNN runs the show *The Situation Room* from 3:00PM until 6:00PM to compete with the other broadcasts. MSNBC and the other cable news networks were eliminated because the number of viewers is insignificant. For example, according to the Pew Research Center, during the reference period, MSNBC had less than half of the viewers of the cable news broadcasts that were included (2006, NA).

According to a survey conducted in December of 2005, by The Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism, during the reference period people got their news from the following sources:

CNN	24 percent	
FOX News	22 percent	
ABC	16 percent	
NBC	16 percent	
CBS	12 percent	(Network TV, 2006, NA)

As a result, the selected news broadcast outlets selected for the research comprise more than just a sample, but form the basis for virtually a complete study. *The PBS News Hour* was added in an attempt to include all significant nightly non-cable news broadcasts to the study. According to The Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism, the viewership of the PBS broadcast was impressive. Not only was it accessible in 98 percent of households, but it was regularly viewed by over three million viewers nightly with up to eight million additional

¹² While the networks begin their news block at 5:00PM CST, local news broadcasts comprise the first thirty minutes of the block with the national coverage beginning at 5:30. Since local news varies by market, only the national feed was included in the study.

viewers tuning in at least one night a week (2006, NA). It should be noted that PBS also airs their hour long news at 6:00PM like CNN.

The newspapers analyzed are: *USA Today*; *The Wall Street Journal*; *The New York Times*; *Los Angeles Times*; and *The Washington Post*. These newspapers were selected because they were the top five newspapers in reported circulation in 2005. The daily and Sunday circulation numbers for these five in 2005 are:

Rank	Week Day Circulation	Sunday Circulation
1. <i>USA Today</i>	2,281,831	None
2. <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	2,070,498	None
3. <i>The New York Times</i>	1,121,623	1,680,582
4. <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	907,997	200,065
5. <i>Washington Post</i>	740,947	1,000,565

(Burrelles Luce, 2005, NA)¹³

These five newspapers provide an excellent sample to analyze because they are the most influential due to their size, circulation, prestige, and name recognition.

This study concentrates on both the editorial and non-editorial content of the selected newspapers. The influence of a newspaper’s editorial stance on its coverage of the news is an area that has been widely debated. Kahn and Kenney state that “the newspaper industry collectively assures Americans that news coverage is professionally produced and is free from bias. In fact, one of the ‘canons of journalism’ of the American Society of Newspaper Editors is ‘a clear distinction between news reports and opinion’” (2002, p.381). Furthermore, most large newspapers maintain a separation between the editorial staff and the news staff (Kahn & Kenney, 2002, p.381). However, after conducting their research, Kahn and Kenney found that despite the rhetoric, it “seems inevitable that the views of the editors will shape the content of the news” (2002, p.391). Based upon the findings of this previous research, and the fact that there is

¹³ Based upon circulation numbers accumulated by the Audit Bureau of Circulations

no clear consensus one way or the other, it was determined that both editorials and hard news should be included in this analysis; however, due to the lack of a consensus of opinion, editorials and hard news stories are considered separately.

For the purposes of this study, “hard news” is defined as all coverage of the President’s Social Security initiative during the reference period that is traditionally considered to be a straight-forward, “fact based” story located somewhere in the newspaper other than on the Editorial Page. Editorials are defined as “opinion-based” stories written by the newspaper’s editorial staff and/or “letters to the editor”¹⁴ that are located on the Editorial Page.

The transcripts of all nightly news broadcasts for each news program in the study were located using the communications databases available electronically on-line through the University of Alabama library website¹⁵.

The daily editions of all of the newspapers in the study were also located using the communications databases available electronically on-line through the University of Alabama library website¹⁶.

Procedure

The variables analyzed are based upon the work of Druckman (2007) as well as Kahn and Kenney (2002). Once the transcripts for all programs during the reference period were located in the aforementioned communications databases, they were downloaded and printed. Each

¹⁴ Letters to the Editor are independent editorial commentaries written by individuals and/or organizations that are not officially affiliated with the newspaper. These are usually written in response to previous editorials and are selected by the editorial staff for publication.

¹⁵ All broadcast news transcripts were acquired using Lexis/Nexis Academic. Searching under network and news title for each day in the study provided complete transcripts in segment order for the reference period.

¹⁶ The editions of *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal* were acquired using the Lexis/Nexis Academic database. The editions of the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* were acquired using ProQuest Newspapers database. Searching the words “Social Security” in each day’s edition by date provided every article with the key words included. These articles were then read for content and were included or excluded in the study based upon whether or not they met the criteria of the study.

transcript was read in its entirety and any story that mentioned Social Security in the context of changes to the current system, or the President's "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour, were identified and noted. Each broadcast was reviewed to determine the Length, Placement, Frame Strength, and Tone¹⁷ of the stories within that day's program that pertained to the Social Security issue as a predominant theme. These variables were used by Druckman and Kahn and Kenney in their studies on media bias.

A Master Data Collection Table was constructed with separate lines for each pertinent story. Columns were used for the variables¹⁸ Each pertinent story during each broadcast was listed on a line in the table along with the date. Following a similar categorical breakdown to that used by Druckman and Parkin, and Kahn and Kenney, each story was analyzed, coded, and placed into one of three categories¹⁹ based upon the "Length"; one of five categories for "Placement"; one of three categories for "Frame Strength"; and one of three categories for "Tone".²⁰ Once the coding was complete, each pertinent story had been assigned to a category in all four of the variables.

¹⁷ Even though Druckman and Kahn and Kenney included a frame focus in their research, this dissertation does not require one. Their research centered on an election where the character, policies, and issues of the candidates allowed for an analysis based upon the focus of the frame used. Since this study is centered on a policy, the frame focus is unnecessary.

¹⁸ Columns were used for: date; number of words; Length value; placement; placement value; frame strength; frame strength value; tone; and tone value.

¹⁹ In their research, Druckman and Parkin and Kahn and Kenney used the number of paragraphs as their method of measuring Frequency whereas the word count was used in this study. This was done to adapt to the inclusion of the broadcast media which is an oral format rather than a printed one..

²⁰ Druckman describes the methodology of framing for media articles on page 467 of "Media Matter; How Newspapers and Television News Cover Campaigns and Influence Voters." Druckman and Parkin outlined three values on page 1037 of "The Impact of Media Bias: How Editorial Slant Affects Voters". Kahn and Kenney discuss coding for tone on page 393 of "The Slant of News: How Editorial Endorsements Influence Campaign Coverage and Citizens' Views of Candidates".

The competitive framing techniques chosen for this study were analyzed within, the media news outlets.²¹ The major techniques of framing selected for analysis in this research are: Length, Placement, Frame Strength, and Tone. Each story identified as pertinent was coded into one of the categories within each of the four variables being analyzed. Multivariate analysis was included within the broadcast and print news media by looking at “Tone” within the “Placement” and “Frame Strength” variables.

Evaluation and coding of all broadcast and print news stories included in the study was done by the author, who serves as the Master Coder. By having the same person code all stories, there is consistency in the coding across all media sources. However, while this “single coder” approach is sufficient for the objective variables, “Length” and “Placement”, it is not sufficient to confirm consistent coding of the subjective variables. “Length” and “Placement”, as objective variables, do not require “verification” by an outside sample group of coders. The word count in a broadcast transcript or newspaper story provides an absolute value. Also, where a story runs during a news broadcast (as shown by the transcript), or where the story is placed in the newspaper is not open to misinterpretation. Intercoder reliability was only used for the subjective variables of “Frame Strength” and “Tone.”

The first step in the analysis was to determine the “Length”. Kahn and Kenney, in their study of political campaigns, found that the length of the story was important because “the number of paragraphs written about the candidates is by far the most powerful factor influencing the number of attributed criticisms” (2002, p. 384). This same logic should be transferrable to a policy or issue.

²¹ For the purposes of this research, “within” media news outlets refers to analysis of framing techniques within a specific, individual broadcast news program or newspaper.

In this study, Length refers to the word count of the stories pertaining to Social Security reform, regardless of the context, that are reported during the news broadcast or printed in the newspaper. In some studies, the frequency with which stories occur during a broadcast or in a newspaper is used as a measurement variable for competing frames; however, simply counting the number of times a Social Security reform story appears does not provide a basis for the meaningful analysis required by this study. In order to make the Frequency variable relevant, the number of words in each story was counted, and the story was then placed into one of three categories based upon the word count for a Length variable rather than a simple occurrence measured by frequency. As a result, the Length variable shows the word count category so that a differentiation is shown and the data can be analyzed.

Three categories were used in this study due to the low number of observations, especially in the broadcast news media. While not optimal, this provides enough data points for some statistical analysis and maintains a logical duration of time dedicated to coverage. The categories were established to single out the short snippets (quick recaps and short direct comments) of 500 words or less and the longer stories (more extensive coverage) of more than 1000 words. The category in between serves as a marker that is neither a quick overview nor an extensive dedication of coverage. So for the purposes of this study the categories will be as follows: the first category consists of stories with 500 words or less; the second category consists of stories with 501 to 1000 words; and the third category consists of 1001 words or more.

Since the word count is objective rather than subjective, it is not open to misinterpretation; therefore, no verification of coder accuracy was required. As a result, no intercoder reliability measurement was calculated.

The next variable studied is “Placement” and refers to where the story airs during the broadcast or where it is placed within the newspaper. This variable is divided into five categories modeled after those used by Kahn and Kenney (2002).²² Kahn and Kenney state that “many newspaper readers are attracted to stories because of the content of the headlines or the placement of stories. Front page stories, for instance, are much more likely to be read than articles buried near the back of the newspaper” (2002, p.383). In their study, they went even further and differentiated between headlines and front page stories (Kahn & Kenney, 2002, p.383-384).

Based upon these distinctions, this study used five categories within the Placement variable. Category One, during a news broadcast, is for stories that are covered somewhere other than the first segment, immediately after a break, or used as a teaser. Category One in newspapers is for stories located somewhere in the newspaper other than the front page or first page of a section. These are typically the “filler” stories that are normally viewed as somewhat unimportant when compared to the rest of the stories during the broadcast or in the newspaper. They are often “buried” somewhere where they are easily overlooked.

Category Two is for stories covered immediately after the return from a break during a news broadcast. Typically, this means the first story covered after they return from the commercial. Category Two for newspapers is for stories on the first page of any section other than the front page. This can be the front of the sports section, business section, etc.

For Category Three, broadcast news stories covered before the first break, but not the “lead story” nor the “teaser,” were used. In newspapers, this category is for stories that are located on the front page below the fold. For Category Four for news broadcasts, “teaser” stories

²² This is the only one of the categories where the divisions were slightly different for newspapers and news broadcasts. The other three were the same for both.

were used. Teaser stories are the ones mentioned in the opening of the broadcast, but not covered as the “lead story.” In newspapers, Category Four is for stories that are on the front page above the fold, but not the headline story.

Finally, Category Five is the lead story on a news broadcast or the headline story in a newspaper, and is the most likely to be viewed or read (Kahn & Kenney, 2002, p.383). This is the broadcast news story typically introduced by the news anchor as “Our lead story tonight,” or the bold headline in the newspaper.

The transcripts of the news broadcasts and the editions of the newspapers in the study were reviewed to determine where within the broadcast/newspaper the stories were placed, and they were scored accordingly. Determining the Placement for the newspapers required an additional step. While the downloaded printouts of the stories indicated which ones were located on the front page, they did not indicate the location on the front page. Since three of the “Placement” categories are based upon where the story is on the front page (headline story, above the fold, or below the fold), it was necessary to obtain actual printouts of the front page of all editions that had a Social Security story located somewhere on it.²³

Once the photos of the front pages were obtained, they were reviewed to determine where on the page the pertinent stories were located. The “Placement” category was then established following the methodology listed in the “Category Assignment” section, and this numeric value was placed in the “placement value” column.

²³ Photocopies of the pertinent front pages of *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* were obtained from the History and Genealogy Department of the Los Angeles Public Library. Photocopies of the pertinent front pages of *The Washington Post* were obtained from the Washingtoniana Division of the Public Library of the District of Columbia. Jpegs of the pertinent front pages of *The New York Times* and *USA Today* were obtained from the newsstand.com website.

As with the Length variable, the Placement variable is objective rather than subjective, and is not open to misinterpretation; therefore, no verification of coder accuracy was required. As a result, no intercoder reliability measurement was calculated.

The next variable is “Frame Strength,” and refers to the level of credibility within a story. In other words, Frame Strength refers to the story’s sources. This variable, along with the values and definitions, conforms to the work of Chong and Druckman (2007). They state that “an experiment can employ strong frames exclusively, weak frames exclusively, or a mixture of strong and weak frames” (2007, p.104). They also state that the “strongest frame will exert the greatest influence on individual opinion,” and that “a frame’s strength increases when it comes from a credible source” (2007, p.104).

Chong and Druckman “loosely define a frame’s strength as increasing with the persuasiveness of a given frame. Weak frames are typically seen as unpersuasive, whereas strong frames are more compelling” (2007, p. 103). They use three categories of frame strength with a strong frame on one end and a weak frame on the other. They also state that there is a category in between that is comprised of a combination of strong and weak frames. They state a strong frame “comes from a credible source, resonates with consensus values, and does not contradict strongly held prior beliefs” (2007, p. 104). This is generally someone who can be classified as a “subject matter expert” or SME. If a story based upon a known and credible authority provides a strong frame, then a story based upon unreliable sources or one that is strictly opinion-based provides a weak frame. The category that falls in between is normally based upon reliable, but unnamed sources. For the purpose of this study, those stories that employed a relatively even mix of strong and weak sources as well as the ones based upon reliable but unnamed sources were placed in the moderate category.

Category One is a “weak” frame. Stories with this value are not based upon “hard” facts, but upon opinion and innuendo. Editorials, commentaries, and human interest stories fall into this category. For example, on March 22nd, NBC ran a story about President Bush’s attempts to calm Seniors who did not like the idea of changing Social Security. No “hard facts” were used. Due to the absence of identified sources, the story was scored as having a “weak” frame strength.

Category Two is a “moderate” frame. Stories with this value are still considered credible because they are supposed to be based upon facts; however, in this case, the facts are often provided by unnamed or anonymous sources. For example, on May 1st, CBS ran a story featuring two short one line quotes from President Bush (in favor of the reform) and one from Senator Richard Durbin (opposed to the reform). These quotes were the only information in the story that came from a known source. The rest of the story provided information about how benefits were to be calculated in the new proposal; however, no sources for the calculations are given. As a result, this story was scored as having a “moderate” frame strength. In addition, a story that is virtually an even mix of strong and weak frames is also considered to have a “moderate” frame.

Category Three is a “strong” frame. Stories with this value are considered to be the most credible because they are supposedly based upon facts taken from credible written documents or provided by a “credible source.” A credible source is usually a named and known person who is considered to be an expert in the field. For example, on March 4th, FOX ran an interview with President Bush’s Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, discussing the President’s Social Security

Initiative. Since he was the President's Chief of Staff, he was considered an expert on the President's plan and, therefore, the story was scored as having a "strong" frame strength.²⁴

The final variable is "Tone." This variable, along with the categories and definitions, conform to the work of Kahn and Kenney (2002) and Druckman and Parkin (2005). Category One is "negative" and refers to stories that are predominantly negative with little or no positive viewpoints (Kahn & Kenney, 2002, p.393; Druckman & Parkin, 2005, p.1031). Stories with this value present the issue in a negative light so that it appears to be the "wrong thing" to do. The NBC story on March 22nd, previously discussed as an example of a "weak" frame strength, is also an example of a story with a "negative" tone. The story stressed the opposition of the seniors to the reform initiative supposedly balanced by the statement that younger workers were "generally warm to the idea of personal accounts." The story was scored as having a "negative" tone.

Category Two is "neutral" and contains roughly the same number of positive and negative viewpoints toward the issue. Stories in this category generally present some positive points as well as some negative ones. In other words, a story with a neutral tone attempts to provide a balanced position by giving both sides of the issue a "fair shake." For example, on April 26th, PBS ran a story that covered the "pros" and "cons" of the President's initiative. The story contained excerpts from President Bush (pro), Senator Chuck Grassley (pro), Senator John Kerry (con), Representative Nancy Pelosi (con), Peter Ferrara²⁵ (pro), and Peter Orszag²⁶ (con). Due to this balanced approach to the issue, the story was scored as having a "neutral" tone.²⁷

²⁴ For this study, high ranking officials in the Bush administration along with those who would get to vote on the legislation were also considered to be experts.

²⁵ Peter Ferrara was a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Policy Innovation.

²⁶ Peter Orszag was with the Brookings Institute.

²⁷ For this study, the default is "neutral". A story was considered neutral until it was shown to be unquestionably positive or negative.

Category Three is “positive” and refers to stories that are predominantly positive toward the issue with little if any negative point of view included. Stories with this value present the issue in a positive light so that it appears to be the “right thing” to do. An example of this kind of story is one that points out the advantages of implementing the plan to reform Social Security while pointing out very few, if any, of the flaws in the plan. However, it should be noted that for the purposes of this study, the one exception is “private accounts”. If a statement was made in favor of making changes to the system, while at the same time refusing to do so until private accounts were taken off the table, it was treated as “neutral” rather than “positive”. The FOX interview of Chief of Staff Andy Card on March 4th, previously discussed as an example of a strong frame strength, also serves as an example of a “positive” tone because President Bush’s Chief of Staff was understandably strongly in favor of the President’s reform initiative. The story was scored as having a “positive” tone.

The process for scoring each story for the tone variable consisted of identifying each sentence within the story as being either positive²⁸, neutral²⁹, or negative³⁰. Once all of the sentences in the entire story were classified, the number of positive, neutral, and negative sentences was used to determine the amount of coverage within each category within the story. If one of the categories as defined in the “Definition of Variables and Values” section was dominant, the story was placed into that category with one exception. If the amount of positive and negative coverage within the story was determined to be approximately the same³¹, the coverage was deemed to be offsetting and the story was determined to be neutral. As a result,

²⁸ The sentence was in favor of changing the current social security system. It did not have to endorse the President’s proposal.

²⁹ The sentence contained statements that were neither in favor of the status quo or change.

³⁰ The sentence was opposed to any change to the current system.

³¹ In order to validate the subjectivity required to make this determination, inter-coder reliability analysis was conducted

stories that were predominantly neutral, and stories with a “relative balance” between positive and negative coverage, were scored as neutral.

Unlike the Length and Placement variables, the Frame Strength and Tone variables are subjective rather than objective, and, as a result, require an independent test to validate the original scoring of the values by the Master Coder. In order to provide inter-coder reliability, a sample group of coders was assembled.³² On a given night, the Master Coder gave the sample coders the definitions for the frame strength and tone categories along with a brief discussion of coding procedures. Once the Master Coder reviewed and explained these definitions and procedures to the sample group, they were given the transcripts of ten news broadcast stories chosen at random³³ from the researched observations along with a scoring sheet. They scored each of the transcripts by determining which of five frame strength variables best applied and which of five tone categories best applied³⁴. Subsequently, the five categories were collapsed to the three primary categories for final analysis. Once the sample group finished coding the stories, their scores for each story were compared to the original scores assigned to the same stories by the Master Coder. This comparison of test coder scores and Master coder scores provided a percentage of the time that the scores assigned by the sample testers and the Master Coder agreed for each story tested. These individual story percentages were then averaged³⁵, and the resulting percentage serves as the basis of the inter-coder reliability measurement for the broadcast news media.

³² For the broadcast news media, an undergraduate class at the University of North Alabama was used as the sample group of coders. The class represented a random sample in that the students came from a variety of different majors and had enrolled in the class without even knowing who the instructor was.

³³ Data Set was chosen through a random number generator based upon the total number of observations without repeats

³⁴ The printed directions given to the sample coders consisted of five categories for frame strength and five for tone; however, the scoring sheet only called out the three primary distinctions. The coders were told to specify the level on the continuum of five.

³⁵ The individual scores for each story were rounded.

Another sample group of coders was assembled to test the inter-coder reliability within the print news media in the same manner as that used to test the inter-coder reliability in the broadcast news media.³⁶ The same process as previously described for the broadcast news media was repeated for ten stories³⁷ in the print news media.³⁸

Once the individual variables were analyzed, a multivariate analysis was performed by looking at the “Tone” variable breakout within the “Placement” and “Frame Strength” variables for each broadcast and print news outlet in the study³⁹. This table was populated with the number of stories by “Tone” within the “Placement” variable and the percentages were calculated for each category within the “Placement” variable. This procedure was then repeated for the “Frame Strength” variable.

Once a Master Data Collection Table was completed for each of the broadcast media outlets in the study, a subset table for each variable within each outlet was created from the Master Data Collection Tables. Separate tables were created for the “Length”, “Placement”, “Frame Strength”, and “Tone” variables.

³⁶ A different class at the University of North Alabama with the same demographic make-up as that used for the Broadcast News Media was used.

³⁷ The number of data points for the print media was sufficient to allow for the random selection of two stories within each outlet.

³⁸ The inter-coder reliability was calculated in the same manner as that used by Kahn and Kenney in “The Slant of the News: How Editorial Endorsements Influence Campaign Coverage and Citizens’ Views of Candidates (2002, p. 382). Kahn and Kenney achieved individual variable levels from 88 percent to 94 percent (2002, p.382). Druckman and Parkin achieved individual variable levels from 83 percent to 97 percent (2005, p.1038). The current research achieved variable levels for the Broadcast media from 73 percent to 87 percent for Frame Strength and 73 percent to 90 percent for Tone, while the variable levels for the Print media range from 69 percent to 86 percent for Frame Strength and 79 percent to 90 percent for Tone. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico suggest that correlations that exceed .80 indicate sufficient reliability (1998, p. 133).

³⁹ Editorials were not included in the multivariate analysis because all editorials in the newspapers in the study were located on the editorial page and were considered to be a weak frame strength by the definition used for the purposes of this dissertation and defined within this chapter.

Coding of Variables

Once the individual variable tables were created, the scores given by the Master Coder for each story were added together and divided by the number of observations to calculate the mean [$\bar{x} = \sum O/N$]. The mean was then used as the expected value [E]. The actual numerical score assigned to each story by the Master Coder served as the observation [O]. The mean was used for the expected value because the purpose of the study is to determine whether or not the broadcast news media used competitive framing in its coverage of the Presidential initiative during the reference period. If competitive framing is present, the stories will be dispersed. If competitive framing is absent, the stories will be clustered around the mean. It is important to remember that the question is whether or not the stories are clustered or dispersed; therefore, it does not matter whether the mean is at the high or low end of the scoring range or somewhere in between.

Using the observations and the expected value (the mean of the observations), the chi square for each variable was calculated. This was done by subtracting the expected value from the observed value for each story [O-E]. This result was then squared and divided by the expected value [$(O-E)^2/E$]. Once these calculations were performed for each story, they were added together to determine the chi square [$\chi^2 = \sum (O-E)^2/E$]. Using the chi square and the degrees of freedom, The “P” Value was determined.⁴⁰ The significance of the “P” value to the study is outlined in the “Analysis” section.

For some news outlets, the number of observations provided such a small data set that for some variables, some categories (cells) contained sampling zeroes and/or fewer than five

⁴⁰ The “P” Value was calculated using an on-line Statistical Tables Calculator developed by Vassar. There are four Degrees of Freedom for the “Placement” variable and two Degrees of Freedom for the “Frequency”, “Frame Strength”, and “Tone” variables.

observations. In these cases, the Yates' Correction for Continuity was applied⁴¹ before the chi square and "P" value was calculated. This was done by subtracting ".5" from the [O-E] result before it is squared and divided by the expected value [(O-E-.5)²/E].

The questions of whether or not there is variation in the way a political issue is framed within various news outlets and whether or not various news outlets engage in "competitive framing" was also addressed using the Master Data Collection Table inputs. The percentage of coverage within each variable category was used in conjunction with the chi square and "P" Value to compare the coverage in each variable by outlet and by the media industry as a whole. As with the chi square and "P" value, the significance of these percentages is discussed in the "Analysis" section.

The procedures for the print news media data collection were the same as those for the broadcast news media with slight modifications. Once each daily edition was located in the aforementioned communications databases, a search was run on the words "Social Security" and all stories within that edition containing these words were identified and printed. A table was set-up for each newspaper following the same structure as outlined for the broadcast media outlets, but with a column added to identify editorials. Each story was identified as either an editorial or "hard news" story.

The analysis and scoring for the "Length", "Frame Strength", and "Tone" variables were conducted in the same manner as that used for the broadcast news media outlets. The variation between the two procedures occurred in the placement scoring.

⁴¹ The Yates' Correction for Continuity is used for small data sets where cells with sampling zeroes and cells with fewer than five observations are present. Yates is applied by subtracting an additional .5 from the difference of O - E, prior to squaring and then dividing by E. This reduces the size of the calculated chi-square value.

When a Master Data Collection Table was completed for each of the print media outlets in the study, the same procedures were followed as those used for the broadcast media to build the individual tables for each variable within each print media outlet in the study.

Definition of Variables and Categories

The scoring of Social Security reform broadcast and newspaper stories during the reference period was intended to reflect the Length (including word count), Placement, Frame Strength, and Tone of the pertinent story/article. Each story was coded and placed in one of the categories within each variable.

For the Length variable, the scoring scale referred to the category into which the story was placed based upon the word count. A story with over 1000 words was assigned a “3”. A story with between 501 and 1000 words was assigned a “2”. And finally, a story of up to 500 words was assigned a “1”. These categories apply to both the broadcast and print news media.

For the Placement variable, the lead story during the broadcast or the headline story in a newspaper was assigned a score of “5”. A “teaser” during the first segment of a broadcast or a story on the front page of a newspaper above the fold was assigned a score of “4”. A story run during the first segment of a broadcast (other than the lead story or teaser) or on the front page of a newspaper below the fold was assigned a “3”. The first story back from the break during the broadcast or on the first page of any section of the newspaper other than the front page was assigned a “2”. Finally, a story “buried” somewhere during the broadcast or in the newspaper was given a score of “1”.

For the Frame Strength variable, a story with a strong frame strength was assigned a “3”. A story with a moderate frame strength was assigned a score of “2”. Finally, a story with a weak

frame strength was assigned a score of “1”. These categories apply to both the broadcast and print news media.

Finally, for the Tone variable, a score of “3” was assigned to stories that were determined to be positive toward the issue. A score of “2” was assigned to stories that were determined to be neutral toward the issue, or presented a balanced viewpoint. A score of “1” was assigned to stories that were determined to be negative toward the issue.⁴² Since the proposal was presented by President Bush, stories that support the proposed reform were considered positive while stories that opposed the reform initiative were considered negative. Again, these categories apply to both the broadcast and print news media.

The category placement and scoring for each variable was done independently. In other words, a story may have been placed in the first category for one variable and in the second category for another. Also, it is important to understand that the numbering scheme used in coding the stories is immaterial to the study and to the results. What is important is that the stories are coded and placed in the various categories within each variable on a consistent basis.

The primary focus of this study is whether or not competitive framing is present. As a result, it is only important whether the scores being studied are clustered or dispersed. Whether the score is high, low, or in between is irrelevant. If they are clustered, regardless of where on the scale, competitive framing is absent. If they are dispersed, regardless of where on the scale, competitive framing is present.

⁴² This study modified the 1-0-(-1) point assignment used by Kahn and Kenney (2002), and used a 3-2-1 scoring scale. A modification of this numbering scheme was also used by Druckman for coding the tone of media content in his research (Druckman & Parkin, 2005, 1040).

Analysis

The purpose of this study is to examine the occurrence of competitive framing regarding a political issue. It specifically examines if competitive framing occurs, within different types of media outlets (i.e. broadcast and print).

In order to analyze the variables, a hypothesis was developed and tested. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the expected and observed results. When determining whether or not the broadcast and print news outlets being studied are using competitive framing, no significant difference in the expected and observed results would indicate that the results are clustered and there is an absence of competitive framing. As a result, the null hypothesis states that there is a lack of competitive framing present and therefore the stories will be clustered. Using the mean of the observations as the expected value, a chi square and “P” value was computed for each variable individually in order to test the null hypothesis.⁴³

It is important to remember that it does not matter where on the scale the observations fall, it only matters where they fall in relation to each other. An even distribution across all categories within a variable is not expected, but rather a more clustered distribution will occur unless competitive framing is present. If competitive framing occurs, the observations will be dispersed. If competitive framing does not occur, the observations will be clustered.

The scoring of the pertinent stories placed them into one of five categories for the “Placement” variable and one of three categories for the “Length”, “Frame Strength” and “Tone” variables.⁴⁴

⁴³ In cases where a category had sampling zeroes or categories with fewer than 5 observations, the Yates’ Correction for Continuity was applied before the chi square and “P” value were calculated.

⁴⁴ The “Frequency”, “Frame Strength”, and “Tone” variables were originally scored using five values; however, due to the low number of relevant stories in the broadcast media during the reference period, using five values spread the data to the point that meaningful analysis was virtually impossible. Furthermore, the overlap in values within the

As previously stated in the “Procedures” section, once the observations and expected values were determined, the chi square was calculated. Based upon the Chi Square and Degrees of Freedom (There are four Degrees of Freedom for the “Placement” variable and two Degrees of Freedom for the “Length”, “Frame Strength”, and “Tone” variables), the “P” Value was calculated. If the “P Value” was less than 5 percent (.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and the stories were considered dispersed. If the “P” Value was greater than 5 percent (.05), the null hypothesis was accepted and the stories were considered clustered. Five percent was used because a “P Value” of less than 5 percent is small enough that chance alone could account for it. If, however, the “P Value” is greater than 5 percent, something other than chance has been involved in the results.

If the scores assigned to the stories are clustered, competitive framing does not exist and the news outlet is presenting the issue in a limited way. If the scores are dispersed, competitive framing is present and the news outlet is presenting the issue in various ways.

While the chi square and “P” value are used to determine whether or not a news outlet exhibits the presence of competitive framing within a specific variable, the “P” value is inadequate to support the question of whether or not the media speaks with one voice due to the “P” value’s inability to address directions and/or a preponderance of coverage within certain categories. The reason is that a news outlet can have a concentration of its coverage in one or two categories and still exhibit the presence of competitive framing based upon its “P” value. In other words, a news outlet can have dispersed coverage, but that coverage can be concentrated in one category or another in relation to the media as a whole.

“Frame Strength” and “Tone” variables made consistent scoring extremely difficult. The remaining three values are distinct and far easier to code consistently without scorer bias becoming an issue.

For example, CNN and FOX both exhibit the presence of competitive framing for the “Tone” variable; however, they do not cover the President’s Social Security Initiative in the same way. CNN had 56 percent of its total coverage scored as negative while FOX had 7 percent of its coverage scored in the negative category. On the other hand, FOX had 36 percent of its coverage scored as positive compared to 13 percent for CNN.

CHAPTER THREE

Broadcast News Media Introduction

The amount of coverage any one story receives within the broadcast news media is subject to the time constraints imposed by the length of the news broadcast. For example, the CNN, FOX News, and PBS news broadcasts in this analysis are one hour long, while the referenced daily news broadcasts on ABC, CBS, and NBC are only thirty minutes in length. As a result of this restriction, no one issue receives an inordinate amount of coverage. In most cases, extensive coverage is not possible unless the story involves something monumental such as major breaking news or a national disaster.

With these restrictions in mind, many of the broadcast news outlets in the study did not have enough coverage of the President's Social Security initiative during the reference period to initially calculate a chi square and "P" value for all variables being studied.⁴⁵ As a result, the Yates' Correction for Continuity was applied in order to obtain a useable score, and the chi square and "P" value were calculated.

PBS's coverage of the Presidential initiative during the reference period was less than expected. For one thing, the PBS broadcasts are one hour long. As a result, it would seem reasonable to expect an increase in coverage over the network news broadcasts due to having

⁴⁵ When the variable categories that contain sampling zeroes or fewer than five observations were eliminated from consideration, there were not a sufficient number of variable categories left to perform the calculations for some of the variables.

twice as much time to cover the day's news. Also, one would expect PBS to concentrate more on a hard news story like a Presidential initiative than would the networks where the lines between entertainment and news are often hard to distinguish.

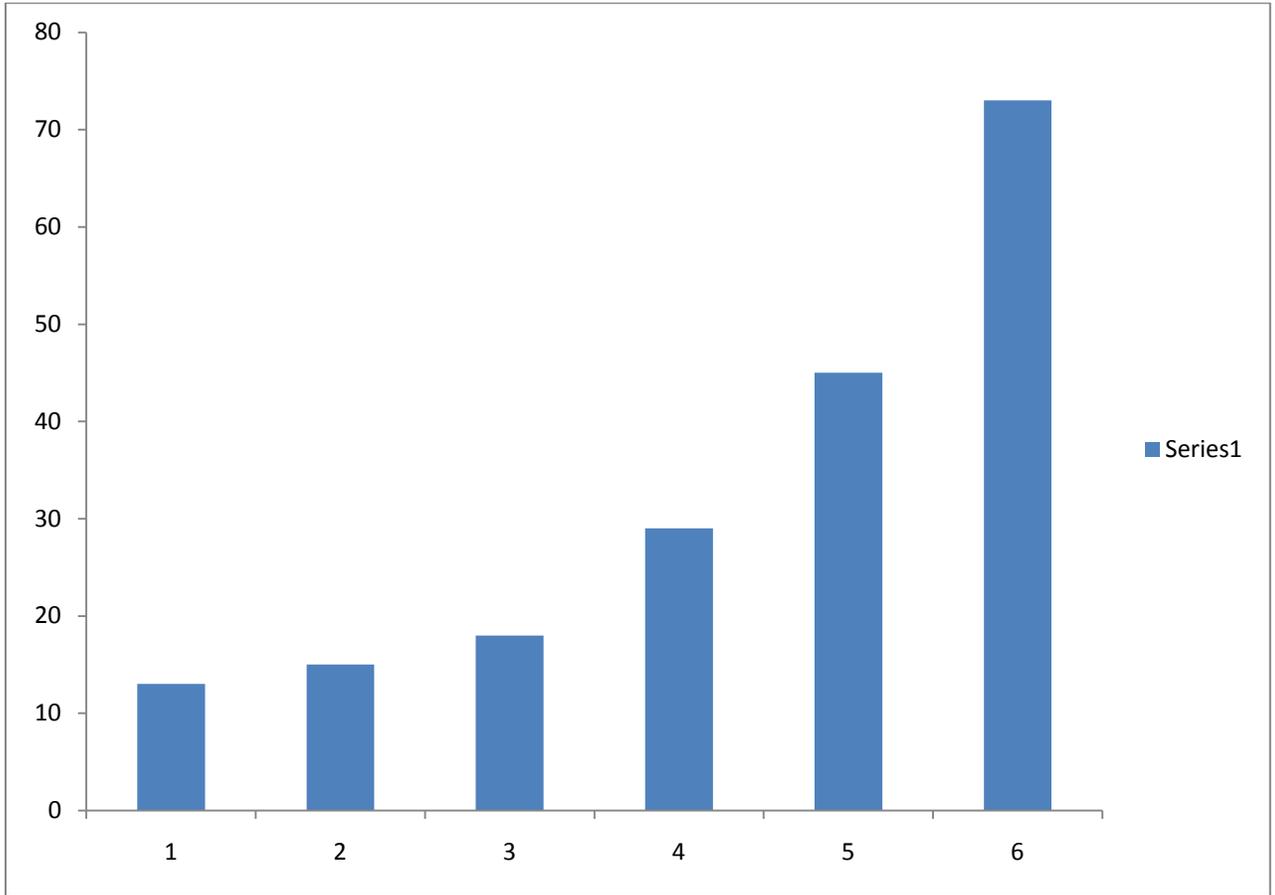
The cable news broadcasts on CNN and FOX show increased coverage during the reference period as one would expect. As previously stated, the cable news broadcasts are an hour long. The cable news networks also carry news and commentary all day every day. This provides more venues to cover the news than the network news broadcasts and/or PBS. In other words, there are more opportunities to "spread" coverage of different stories throughout the day. As a result, one would expect more hard news stories on a Presidential initiative on the cable news broadcasts in the study than on either the network news broadcasts or PBS.

The FOX cable news broadcast in the study had the most coverage of the President's "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour. While it is true FOX, as an hour long news broadcast, had twice as much time to cover the news as did the network news broadcasts, it carried over 4 times as many Social Security related stories as NBC (73 to 18) which had the most pertinent stories of the three network news broadcasts in the study. One possible reason for this increased coverage rests in the fact that Brit Hume, who determined what was covered during *Special Report* at the time, was located in Washington, DC. As a result, he possibly was more focused on political stories than his counterparts at the other news programs in the study.

Broadcast Data Information

The data collection approach was described in detail in Chapter Two. The number of pertinent stories by broadcast media outlet is shown in Figure 3-1.

FIGURE 3-1 COMPARISON OF OCCURRENCES ON THE BROADCAST MEDIA OUTLETS



#	NEWS BROADCAST	# OF STORIES
1	<i>ABC World News Tonight</i>	13
2	<i>CBS Evening News</i>	15
3	<i>NBC Nightly News</i>	18
4	<i>PBS Nightly News</i>	29
5	<i>Lou Dobbs Tonight</i>	45
6	<i>FOX News Special Report</i>	73

Length Variable

The length of the stories used by the broadcast news media to cover a story or issue is an indication of its importance; however, importance is determined by each individual broadcast news media outlet individually. As previously discussed, one can assume that each network and cable news outlet being studied makes its own decision as to what should be covered during any given broadcast. This variable was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of three categories based upon the number of words in the story.

The word count categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by length: Category One is 500 words or less in length; Category Two is between 501 and 1000 words; and Category Three is 1001 words and greater. The definitions of these values are more fully explained in Chapter Two. These results are shown in Table 3-1.

Once all pertinent stories that aired during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and “P” value were calculated. If the “P” value was less than “.05”, the null hypothesis was rejected and the length variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the “P” value was greater than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the length variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

One would expect the broadcast news outlets to cover the President’s Tour each day based upon how it ranks compared to other news stories. When there are new developments in on-going stories of the period, or other breaking news events, one would expect the President’s tour to have minor coverage at best. On a slow news day, however, one would expect the President’s tour to have more prominent coverage. As a result, one would expect coverage of news stories pertaining to the President’s Social Security Privatization Plan to vary greatly over the reference period.

For example, when Terry Schiavo died on March 31st, no Social Security stories were carried on the broadcast news shows in the study for the following week. When Pope John Paul II passed away on April 2nd, NBC, CNN, and FOX resumed coverage of the President's tour a week later; however, there was no coverage on ABC, CBS, and PBS for over two weeks after his death.

On the other hand, when President Bush held a prime time press conference near the end of the "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour, it warranted a lead story either that night and/or the next on all broadcasts in the study. In fact, an inordinate amount of the total coverage during the reference period occurred within three days after the press conference: roughly 33 percent of ABC's total coverage; 20 percent of CBS's total coverage; 22 percent of NBC's total coverage; 17 percent of PBS's total coverage; 20 percent of CNN's total coverage; and roughly 10 percent of FOX's total coverage.

With the limited time available to cover all of the day's national news during a thirty minute daily news broadcast, one would expect the three network news programs in the study to provide coverage of the President's Social Security reform proposal primarily through short stories, thereby creating an absence of competitive framing. After the Yates' Correction for Continuity was applied and the resulting chi square and "P" value were computed, ABC showed a lack of competitive framing due to having 92 percent of its coverage in category one with 500 words or less. CBS also showed the lack of competitive framing with all of its coverage with either 500 words or less (40 percent), or between 501 and 1000 words (60 percent). Even though NBC statistically shows the presence of competitive framing, it has 83 percent of its coverage in the first category with 500 words or less. With the preponderance of coverage on the networks

made up of 500 words or less, this concentration is indicative of how much importance the network news broadcasts placed on the President's Social Security initiative tour.

On the other hand, the expanded length of the news programs on PBS, CNN, and FOX (one hour broadcasts) should provide the opportunity for more in-depth (longer) stories. Therefore, one would expect a wider variety in the length of the stories during these broadcasts resulting in the presence of competitive framing.

The three longer broadcasts (PBS, CNN, and FOX) did statistically exhibit the presence of competitive framing based upon their "P" values; however, as with the network broadcasts, most of the coverage consisted of stories with fewer than 500 words.

FOX had the most dispersed coverage with 47 percent, 23 percent, and 30 percent in categories one (500 words or less), two (between 501 and 1000 words) and three (greater than 1000 words) respectively while CNN was the least dispersed with 64 percent of its coverage in category one with fewer than 500 words. PBS was evenly split between short stories and long ones with 41 percent of its coverage in categories one (500 words or fewer) and three (more than 1000 words).

When all of the broadcast news programs in the study were combined and analyzed, the broadcast news media as a whole demonstrated the presence of competitive framing. Furthermore, comparisons between certain outlets within the broadcast news media (based upon their concentrations in certain categories) provide some interesting results. For example, the two cable news networks, CNN and FOX, differ in the length of the stories they carried pertaining to social security. Sixty-four percent of CNN's coverage consisted of stories of 500 words or less while 53 percent of FOX's coverage consisted of stories of greater than 500 words.

With the exception of ABC and CBS, the individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, certain events, such as Presidential press conferences, dictate specific coverage patterns for the media outlets. As previously stated, an inordinate amount of the total coverage during the reference period occurred within three days after the President's prime time press conference: roughly 33 percent of ABC's total coverage; 20 percent of CBS's total coverage; 22 percent of NBC's total coverage; 17 percent of PBS's total coverage; 20 percent of CNN's total coverage; and roughly 10 percent of FOX's total coverage. In spite of the outside influences, the individual outlets each exhibited strong concentrations in one or two categories.

Table 3-1 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Length

	Scale	ABC* #	CBS* #	NBC*	PBS	CNN*	FOX*	COMBINED BROADCAST MEDIA
< 500 words	1	92%	40%	83%	41%	64%	47%	58%
500 to 1000 words	2	8%	60%	17%	17%	29%	23%	23%
> 1000 words	3	0%	0%	0%	41%	7%	30%	19%
Number of Articles		13	15	18	29	45	73	193
Mean Scale		1.1	1.3	1.2	2.0	1.4	1.8	1.6
Chi Square		4.975	5.077	6.000	18.167	19.464	38.767	74.925
"P" Value		0.0830	0.0790	0.0498	0.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

EXHIBITS A LACK OF COMPETITIVE FRAMING

Placement Variable

While it is true that how often an issue is covered is often a result of time limitations imposed upon the broadcast news program, a story's placement within the broadcast is an indication of its overall importance when compared to the other stories of the day. As previously stated, "many newspaper readers are attracted to stories because of the content of the headlines or the placement of stories" (Kahn and Kenney, 2002, p.383). Again, importance is determined by each individual broadcast news media outlet individually. As before, one can assume that each network and cable news show in the study makes its own decision as to where an individual story is placed during any given broadcast. One of the main factors controlling this decision is where the story ranks when compared to the other competing news stories of the day.

The placement categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by where and how they are covered during the broadcast: Category One is a story "buried" somewhere within the broadcast other than in the first segment; Category Two is the first story covered after the broadcast returns after a commercial break; Category Three is a story during the first segment of the broadcast other than the lead story; Category Four is a "teaser"; and Category Five is the lead story. The definitions of these values are more fully explained in Chapter Two. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3-2.

Placement was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of five categories based upon where the story aired during the broadcast. Once all pertinent stories that aired during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and "P" value were calculated. If the "P" value was less than ".05", the null hypothesis was rejected and the placement variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the "P" value was greater

than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the placement variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

One would expect stories concerning the President’s Social Security initiative to be placed in a variety of “spots” within a broadcast news program because it had to compete with other ongoing major news events and “breaking news”. As a result of the daily “competition” for air time, one would expect the majority of the Social Security coverage to be placed in a variety of locations during the broadcasts. In addition, the cable news networks (CNN and FOX) have the ability to cover breaking news whenever it happens. As a result, one would expect the CNN and FOX news programs in the study to have the ability to place their coverage of the Social Security initiative more prominently throughout their broadcasts.

With the exception of PBS, all of the broadcast news programs in the study had stories in all five categories (PBS covered no Social Security reform stories as First Back)⁴⁶. In fact, over half (55 percent) of PBS’s coverage was scored as Teasers and another 24 percent was scored as somewhere in the first segment other than the lead story or teaser for a total of 79 percent of its coverage in the two categories; however, even with this heavy concentration in consecutive categories, PBS still exhibited the presence of competitive framing.

In fact, only CBS exhibited a lack of competitive framing and had 33 percent of its coverage as the lead story during the broadcast. While ABC and NBC both exhibited competitive framing, ABC had 54 percent of its coverage during the first segment of the broadcast while NBC had 78 percent of its coverage during the first segment.

FOX had 23 percent of its coverage in stories that are scored as teasers and another 49 percent broadcast immediately after a commercial break for a total of 72 percent in two of the

⁴⁶ While PBS did have some stories covered after the break, they were all mentioned at the beginning of the broadcast and, therefore, they were scored as “teasers”.

five categories; however, due to the number of observations in the other categories, FOX still statistically exhibits competitive framing. On the other hand, CNN had 16 percent of its coverage scored as teasers and 11 percent scored as the lead story for a total of 27 percent in the top two categories; however, once again, due to the number of observations, CNN exhibited competitive framing.

Once each of the news broadcasts in the study was analyzed individually, their results were combined and the same analysis was run on the broadcast media as a whole. In this case, combining the observations from all of the news programs in the study resulted in dispersed coverage across the five categories with slightly more stories in the first story back category. As a result of this dispersed coverage, the broadcast news media as a whole exhibits competitive framing. Since all of the broadcast news programs in the study, with the exception of NBC, exhibited the presence of competitive framing, it is not surprising that the broadcast news media as a whole also exhibited the presence of competitive framing.

Unlike the Length variable, CNN and FOX are similar in the placement of the stories they carried pertaining to Social Security. There were, however, more stories scored as teasers during the FOX broadcast than during the CNN broadcast (23 percent to 16 percent respectively) while CNN had more lead stories than FOX (11 percent to 8 percent respectively).

Table 3-2 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Placement

	Scale	ABC*	CBS* #	NBC*	PBS*	CNN	FOX*	COMBINED BROADCAST MEDIA
Buried	1	31%	7%	11%	10%	22%	14%	16%
First Story Back	2	15%	20%	11%	0%	38%	49%	31%
First Segment	3	31%	27%	28%	24%	13%	5%	16%
Teaser	4	15%	13%	22%	55%	16%	23%	25%
Lead Story	5	8%	33%	28%	10%	11%	8%	13%
Number of Articles		13	15	18	29	45	73	193
Mean Scale		2.5	3.5	3.4	3.6	2.6	1.8	1.6
Chi Square		9.600	8.571	10.053	11.081	28.923	28.923	74.925
"P" Value		0.0477	0.0728	0.0400	0.0260	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Frame Strength Variable

Chong and Druckman state that “an experiment can employ strong frames exclusively, weak frames exclusively, or a mixture of strong and weak frames” (2007, p.104). They also state that the “strongest frame will exert the greatest influence on individual opinion,” and that “a frame’s strength increases when it comes from a credible source” (2007, p.104). Based upon these observations, it is important to study how the broadcast news outlets present their coverage.

Unlike “Length” and “Placement”, “Frame Strength” is not dependent upon what is happening with other on-going major stories of the day or with breaking news. In other words, the “Frame Strength” variable depends strictly upon how the story is presented, not how often or where it is placed. One would assume that the broadcast news media covers a “short term” story (one that will be covered one time) differently than it does a major news story covered over a period of time (such as the reference period being used). When a story is of the short term, breaking news type, the news programs are often forced to go on the air with the story using whatever sources are available; however, when a story covers a longer period of time, the news outlets are able to spend some time developing the story, or series of stories pertaining to a particular topic.

With the President’s “60 Stops in 60 Days”, the broadcast news programs knew they had an extended period of time in which to develop credible sources for in-depth stories as well as time to develop stories of the human interest variety. Between responding on short notice to cover breaking news on the tour and developing these more in-depth stories that could be aired virtually any time during the tour, the news programs could take advantage of a variety of framing techniques. As a result, one would expect the broadcast news programs in the study as a whole to exhibit competitive framing for the “Frame Strength” variable.

The frame strength categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by the strength and qualifications of the presentation. Category One is a “weak” story (one based upon opinion, innuendo, and/or human interest); Category Two is a “moderate” story (one based upon supposedly credible, but anonymous, sources, or a story with a combination of weak and strong frames strengths); and Category Three is a “strong” story (one based upon credible documentation and/or Subject Matter Experts). These categories are more fully explained in Chapter Two. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3-4.

Frame Strength was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of three categories based upon the source of the story aired during the broadcast. Once all stories were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and “P” value were calculated. If the “P” value was less than “.05”, the null hypothesis was rejected and the frame strength variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the “P” value was greater than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the frame strength variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

Each of the news programs in the study had at least some coverage in all three categories; however, the network broadcasts (ABC, CBS, and NBC) had 23 percent, 20 percent, and 28 percent of their observations respectively in the moderate category. In other words, the coverage was composed of either stories based upon strong credible sources, or stories based upon personal opinion and/or human interest.

Of the network news programs, CBS was the most evenly dispersed with 40 percent of its coverage in both the strong and weak categories. NBC, while having concentrations in the strong and weak categories, had the most evenly dispersed coverage across all categories with 39 percent of its coverage scored as weak, 28 percent scored as moderate, and 33 percent scored as

strong. In spite of the concentrations, all three of the network broadcasts did exhibit competitive framing.

Of the alternate news programs⁴⁷, CNN was the most equally divided between the weak and strong categories with 49 percent of its coverage scored as weak and 42 percent scored as strong. While FOX also had a concentration of weak and strong coverage, it had over half of its coverage scored as strong with 56 percent and 34 percent scored as weak. PBS was almost the opposite of FOX in its coverage with 55 percent of its coverage scored as weak and 38 percent of its coverage scored as strong. It should be noted that CNN, FOX, and PBS each have a standing panel of journalists and contributors who comment on the major stories of the day during each broadcast. Since these panelists are “general” in their backgrounds rather than Social Security experts, when they comment on Social Security, the story has to be scored as having a “weak” frame strength because it is personal opinion. With these additional stories scored as weak, CNN, FOX, and PBS all exhibited competitive framing.

As before, once each of the news broadcasts in the study was analyzed individually, their results were combined and the same analysis was run on the broadcast media as a whole. There were stories in all three of the categories with the majority of the coverage falling once again into the weak and strong categories. The broadcast news media as a whole exhibited competitive framing.

CNN and FOX differed in the frame strength of the stories they carried pertaining to Social Security. CNN had 49 percent of its coverage in the weak frame category as opposed to 34 percent for FOX. FOX, however, had 56 percent of its coverage in the strong frame category

⁴⁷ For the purposes of this study, alternate news programs are those not carried on one the three networks.

as opposed to 42 percent for CNN. CNN and FOX had relatively the same number of stories in the moderate frame category with 9 percent and 10 percent respectively.

Table 3-3 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Frame Strength

	Scale	ABC*	CBS*	NBC	PBS*	CNN	FOX	COMBINED BROADCAST MEDIA
Weak	1	54%	40%	39%	55%	49%	34%	43%
Moderate	2	23%	20%	28%	7%	9%	10%	12%
Strong	3	23%	40%	33%	38%	42%	56%	45%
Number of Articles		13	15	18	29	45	73	193
Mean Scale		1.7	2.0	3.4	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.0
Chi Square		7.129	7.875	10.053	18.117	21.500	28.418	84.500
"P" Value		0.0283	0.0195	0.0400	0.0001	< .0001	< .0001	< .0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Tone Variable

As with the Frame Strength variable, the “Tone” variable depends strictly upon how the story is presented and is not dependent upon any of the other variables being studied. More than any of the other variables, “Tone” provides the greatest opportunity for the individual broadcast to frame an issue or story in such a way as to influence their viewers’ opinions of that issue. For that reason, the broadcast news programs that primarily offer opinion and commentary were eliminated from consideration for inclusion in this study. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, the news programs selected are the ones considered to be the “hard news” programs on their respective networks and cable outlets.

The tone categories were established to differentiate the individual stories based upon the position taken by the news outlet during the broadcast: Category One is a “negative” story (one that presents the President’ plan as the “wrong” thing to do); Category Two is a “neutral” story (one that presents both pro and con arguments as well as those stories that have no leaning either way); and Category Three is a “positive” story (one that presents the President’s plan as the “right” thing to do)⁴⁸. These values are more fully explained in Chapter Two. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3-6.

Tone was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of three categories based upon the tone of the story aired during the broadcast. Once all pertinent stories that aired during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and “P” value were calculated. If the “P” value was less than “.05”, the null hypothesis was rejected and the tone variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the “P” value was greater than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the tone variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

⁴⁸ All statements favoring changes to the present system that would prolong the life of Social Security in any form were also included in the ‘Positive’ category.

All of the broadcast news programs in the study had some coverage in all categories. PBS had over half of its coverage, or 52 percent, in the neutral category. It also had balance between the positive and negative categories with 21 percent and 28 percent respectively. As a result, PBS exhibited competitive framing

FOX was the only other news program in the study with over half of its coverage in the neutral category with 58 percent. Even though FOX exhibits competitive framing, with 36 percent of its coverage scored as positive and 7 percent of its coverage scored as negative, its coverage is more positive than negative.

Unlike FOX that had most of its coverage scored as positive or PBS that had most of its coverage scored as moderate, CNN (as the other alternate news source) had most of its coverage scored as negative. In fact, CNN has over half of its coverage scored in the negative category with 56 percent. Furthermore, it has 31 percent of its coverage scored in the neutral category, and 13 percent scored in the positive category. CNN exhibits competitive framing.

The network news programs (ABC, CBS, and NBC) in the study all had a concentration in the negative and neutral categories with 15 percent, 20 percent, and 6 percent of their coverage respectively in the positive category. ABC had most of its coverage scored as negative with 62 percent of its coverage.

Both CBS and NBC are more dispersed between the negative and neutral categories than ABC. CBS has equal coverage in the weak and neutral categories with 40 percent of its coverage in each while NBC has 50 percent of its coverage in the negative category with another 44 percent in the neutral category. All three network broadcasts exhibit the presence of competitive framing.

Once each of the news broadcasts in the study was analyzed individually, their results were combined and the same analysis was run on the broadcast media as a whole. There were stories in all three of the categories with the majority of the coverage falling into the weak and neutral categories with 32 percent and 46 percent of the coverage respectively; however, there was still 23 percent of the coverage in the positive category. The combined news media as a whole had more coverage in the neutral category than in the positive category or the negative category. It also exhibited competitive framing.

The two cable news broadcasts are different in the tone of their coverage. CNN was more negative in its coverage of the President's Social Security reform initiative than was FOX with over half of its coverage scored as having a negative tone (56 percent to 7 percent respectively). FOX had most of its coverage scored as having a neutral value with 58 percent of its stories scored as neutral in tone. This compares to 31 percent of CNN's coverage being scored as neutral. FOX again had more positive stories toward the President's initiative than did CNN with 36 percent of its coverage being scored as positive as opposed to 13 percent for CNN.

The individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, certain events, such as Presidential prime time press conferences, normally dictate the inclusion of representatives from both political parties in the coverage who usually represent opposite views of the issue in question. In spite of the outside influences, the individual outlets each exhibited strong concentrations in one or two categories. For example, CNN's coverage was more negative leaned toward the negative while FOX leaned toward the positive. The network broadcasts exhibited the presence of competitive framing even though there was a concentration in two categories for CBS and NBC, and only one category for ABC. All three of the network news programs had more negative coverage

than positive with 62, 40, and 50 percent negative coverage respectively as opposed to 15 percent, 20 percent, and 6 percent positive coverage respectively. Only PBS and the combined broadcast news media showed approximately equal coverage in the positive and negative scoring.

Table 3-4 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Broadcast Media Tone

	Scale	ABC*	CBS*	NBC*	PBS	CNN	FOX	COMBINED BROADCAST MEDIA
Negative	1	62%	40%	50%	28%	56%	7%	32%
Neutral	2	23%	40%	44%	52%	31%	58%	46%
Positive	3	15%	20%	6%	21%	13%	36%	23%
Number of Articles		13	15	18	29	45	73	193
Mean Scale		1.5	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.6	2.0	1.9
Chi Square		6.667	6.750	10.053	7.311	14.375	10.857	54.489
"P" Value		0.0357	0.0342	0.0400	0.0260	0.0010	0.0044	< .0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Multivariate Analysis

Multivariate analysis was conducted for the “Tone” breakout within the “Placement” and “Frame Strength” variables. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, the news programs selected are the ones considered to be the “hard news” programs on their respective networks and cable outlets. Even with the elimination of openly stated opinions⁴⁹, as previously stated, one cannot eliminate the personal unspoken opinions of news broadcasters and producers. Therefore, one would expect that the multivariate analysis will tend to show that the coverage is concentrated in the negative or positive categories. Unlike the previous analysis which used chi square and “P” values, the percentage of coverage was the measurement used. No chi square or “P” value was computed. The results of the analysis for Tone within the Placement variable are shown in Table 3-5 while the results of the analysis for Tone within the Frame Strength variable are shown in Table 3-6.

Within the Placement variable, the majority of all “Lead” category stories on the network news broadcasts were either neutral or negative. For example, neither ABC nor NBC had any positive lead stories during the reference period while CBS had twice as many negative stories in this category as positive ones. CBS also had the same number of negative and neutral stories with 40 percent each. NBC had more neutral stories than negative (60 percent to 40 percent) while ABC had 100 percent of its lead coverage in the negative category.

The stories scored as “Teasers” were predominantly neutral with ABC having 100 percent of its stories in the neutral category. NBC had 50 percent of its teasers in the neutral category with 25 percent in both the negative and positive categories. CBS had its coverage in

⁴⁹ FOX, CNN, and PBS all have nightly panels whose members state their personal opinions.

this category divided between negative and neutral stories (50 percent each) with no positive teasers.

The majority of the stories scored in the “First Segment” category were primarily negative in tone. Half of ABC’s stories in this category were negative with an equal number of neutral and positive stories (50 percent to 25 percent and 25 percent respectively). CBS had three times as many negative stories as neutral ones (75 percent to 25 percent) with no positive coverage while NBC had four times as many negative stories as neutral (80 percent to 20 percent) with no positive coverage.

Both NBC and ABC had 100 percent of their coverage in the “First Back” category scored as negative while CBS had twice as much neutral coverage in the category as positive (66 percent to 34 percent) with no negative stories. The “Buried” category was mixed by outlet with CBS being 100 percent positive; NBC 100 percent neutral; and ABC predominantly negative with 75 percent.

While the network broadcasts were similar in their coverage of the Social Security issue, the non-network broadcasts were more varied in their coverage. For example, the majority of FOX’s coverage in all categories was positive and neutral with very few stories coded as negative. Half of the “Lead” category stories (50 percent) were positive with only 33 percent coded as negative and 17 percent neutral. Positive coverage accounted for 59 percent of the “Teaser” category with the remaining 41 percent being neutral. There were no negative teasers. There were three times more neutral “First Segment” category stories than positive (75 percent to 25 percent). There were no negative stories in this category. There were approximately twice as many neutral “First Back” stories as positive (61 percent to 31 percent) with only 8 percent

negative. The stories in the “Buried” category were predominantly neutral (90 percent) with only 10 percent positive and no negative coverage.

By contrast, the majority of CNN’s coverage of the Social Security issue was negative. The majority of the “Lead” stories (60 percent) were negative with neutral and positive coverage accounting for 20 percent each. Neutral stories accounted for 43 percent of the “Teaser” category coverage with negative and positive stories accounting for 29 percent each. The majority of the coverage in the “First Segment” category was coded as having a negative tone (67 percent) with neutral and positive stories accounting for 17 percent each. There were three times as many negative stories in the “First Back” category as neutral (76 percent to 24 percent) with no positive stories in the category. In the “Buried” category, half of the coverage (50 percent) was scored as having a neutral tone with negative and positive coverage accounting for 30 percent and 20 percent respectively.

PBS (the only publicly funded broadcast) appears to be the most dispersed in its coverage. There were twice as many neutral “Lead” stories as positive ones (66 percent to 34 percent) with no negative stories in the category. The number of negative and neutral “Teasers” were similar (44 percent to 38 percent respectively) with 19 percent positive coverage. The majority of the stories in the “First Segment” category were neutral with 71 percent of the coverage while the negative and positive stories accounted for 14 percent each. PBS had no stories in the “First Back” category. There were twice as many neutral stories in the “Buried” category as positive ones (66 percent to 33 percent). There were no negative stories in the category.

With the exception of CBS, the individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, after certain events,

such as a Presidential prime time press conference, one might assume the presence of a lead story. As a result, this could dictate specific coverage patterns for the media outlets that might run contrary to their normal tendencies. In addition, due to the limited amount of time allotted to a broadcast, events such as the death of the Pope and the election of a new Pope relegated the President's tour to minor coverage if there were time to cover it at all. In spite of the outside influences, the individual outlets each exhibited strong concentrations in one or two categories.

As with the "Placement" variable, the multivariate analysis concentrated on the "Tone" breakout within the "Frame Strength" variable. While the tone of the stories scored as having a "Strong" frame strength were evenly divided among negative, neutral, and positive (33 percent each) at ABC, the majority of the coverage at the other network broadcasts were negative. CBS had half (50 percent) of its coverage in this category scored as negative with 33 percent neutral and only 17 percent positive. NBC had five times the number of negative stories as neutral (83 percent to 17 percent) with no positive coverage in the category.

ABC had twice the number of negative stories in the "Moderate" frame strength category as neutral ones (66 percent to 33 percent) with no positive stories in the category. The majority of NBC's coverage in the category was negative (60 percent) with 20 percent in each of the neutral and positive tone categories. CBS was evenly divided in the category with 33 percent in each of the negative, neutral, and positive tone categories.

In the "Weak" frame strength category, NBC had six times as many neutral stories as negative ones (86 percent to 14 percent) with no positive coverage in the category. CBS had half (50 percent) of its coverage in the neutral tone category with 33 percent in the negative category and 17 percent in the positive. The majority of ABC's coverage in the category was negative (72 percent) with 14 percent in both the neutral and positive tone categories.

FOX and PBS had most of their coverage in the “Strong” frame strength category in the neutral tone category. While FOX had over four times as many positive stories as negative ones (41 percent to 9 percent), half (50 percent) of the stories in the category were neutral. PBS had 64 percent of its coverage in the category scored as neutral with positive and negative stories contributing 27 percent and 9 percent respectively to the coverage in the category. CNN, on the other hand, had almost twice as many negative stories in the category as positive ones (47 percent to 26 percent) with 26 percent of the coverage in the category being scored as neutral.

FOX had 52 percent of its coverage in the moderate frame strength category scored as neutral with six times as many positive stories as negative ones (41 percent to 7 percent). CNN also had half (50 percent) of its coverage in the category scored as neutral with both positive and negative stories contributing 25 percent each. PBS had all of its coverage in this category scored as neutral.

In the “Weak” frame strength category, FOX had 73 percent of its coverage scored as neutral while positive and weak stories accounted for 23 percent and 5 percent respectively. PBS had 44 percent of its coverage scored as negative while the neutral and positive stories accounted for 38 percent and 19 percent respectively. CNN had no positive stories in the category while 68 percent of the coverage was scored as negative and 32 percent scored as neutral.

The individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, after a prime time Presidential press conference, the outlets are more or less expected to include SMEs (their most qualified analysts along with elected officials from both parties) rather than their “generalists” or “street interviews” in their analysis of the event. In spite of the outside influences, the individual outlets each exhibited strong concentrations in one or two categories.

Table 3-5 BROADCAST MEDIA (PLACEMENT MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS)

CATEGORY	ABC			CBS			NBC			NETWORK COMB			PBS			CNN			FOX			NON-NETWORK COMB		
	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos
Lead Story	100%	0%	0%	40%	40%	20%	40%	60%	0%	45%	45%	9%	0%	66%	34%	60%	20%	20%	33%	17%	50%	36%	29%	36%
Teaser	0%	100%	0%	50%	50%	0%	25%	50%	25%	25%	63%	13%	44%	38%	19%	29%	43%	29%	0%	41%	59%	23%	40%	38%
First Segment	50%	25%	25%	75%	25%	0%	80%	20%	0%	69%	23%	8%	14%	71%	14%	67%	17%	17%	0%	75%	25%	29%	53%	18%
First Back	100%	0%	0%	0%	66%	33%	100%	0%	0%	57%	29%	14%	0%	0%	0%	76%	24%	0%	8%	61%	31%	30%	49%	21%
Buried	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	43%	29%	29%	0%	66%	33%	30%	50%	20%	0%	90%	10%	13%	70%	17%

Table 3-6 BROADCAST MEDIA (FRAME STRENGTH MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS)

CATEGORY	ABC			CBS			NBC			NETWORK COMB			PBS			CNN			FOX			NON-NETWORK COMB		
	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos
Strong	33%	33%	33%	50%	33%	17%	83%	17%	0%	60%	27%	13%	9%	64%	27%	47%	26%	26%	9%	50%	41%	23%	44%	33%
Moderate	66%	33%	0%	33%	33%	33%	60%	20%	20%	55%	27%	18%	0%	100%	0%	25%	50%	25%	7%	52%	41%	9%	54%	37%
Weak	72%	14%	14%	33%	50%	17%	14%	86%	0%	40%	50%	10%	44%	38%	19%	68%	32%	0%	5%	73%	23%	38%	48%	13%

Broadcast News Media Conclusions

Concentrations in different categories within the individual broadcast news outlets (based upon their individual programming decisions), in relation to their counterparts, result in more dispersed coverage for the media as a whole⁵⁰ than for the outlets individually. For example, the Placement variable is dispersed with 16 percent, 31 percent, 16 percent, 25 percent, and 13 percent across categories one through five respectively. The Frame Strength variable is dispersed with 43 percent, 12 percent, and 45 percent across categories one through three respectively. Finally, the Tone variable is dispersed with 32 percent, 46 percent, and 23 percent across categories one through three respectively.

The majority of the outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing for all variables; however, they had concentrations of coverage in certain variable categories. Since these concentrations vary from one outlet to another, it appears that the programming decisions as to how to frame the story were made individually and not as a group. As a result, the conclusions drawn from the research, while mixed, could in part be explained by events out of the control of the individual outlets. Confirmation of this contention is seen in the fact that the concentrations of coverage vary from outlet to outlet which is indicative of independent decision-making processes⁵¹.

The overriding contention is based upon the tenants of John Zaller's R-A-S Model discussed in Chapter One. Zaller's research showed that individuals, when surveyed, will base their responses upon a "sample" of the pool of information to which they have been exposed (1992, p.51). In addition, the more recently received information is more readily accessible and

⁵⁰ Due at least in part to the time limitations imposed by a regularly scheduled broadcast, the Frequency/Word Count category shows a concentration in stories of less than 500 words for the industry as a whole with 58% in Category One.

⁵¹ Examples of these concentrations are provided later in this section.

influences their responses to a greater degree. As a result, the broadcast news media has the ability to influence public opinion through its coverage of news events and current issues.

This observation, based upon the analysis, leads one to conclude that the broadcast news source that an individual chooses to watch will have an influence upon his or her opinions concerning the issues of the day. The study also shows that an individual viewer who watches the network news programs (ABC, CBS, and NBC) will be exposed to a different type of coverage than one who watches the alternative news sources (PBS, CNN, FOX).

This can clearly be seen by looking at the type, and amount, of coverage of the President's "60 Stops in 60 Days" Social Security Reform Tour. It should be noted that as the President's tour was winding down, the polls showed that his proposal of privatization was not being that well received by the voters. According to an *ABC/Washington Post* survey, by the spring of 2005, only one-third of Americans approved of the President's handling of Social Security (Ross, 2007, p. 436). In fact, the number of Americans who believed Social Security required "major changes within two years" dropped by 11 percentage points (49 to 38) from January to February 2005 alone (Ross, 2007, p.438). As a result, even some politicians in the President's own party turned against the idea. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa was interviewed on PBS on 16 April 2005, and stated "You know, none of the 535 members of Congress, including all 100 Senators really want to deal with Social Security" (Ross, 2007, p. 426). This could also have had some bearing on the type of coverage given to the reform initiative.

Since the motives of the broadcast news outlets being studied are outside of the scope of this research, no opinion as to why the President's Social Security initiative was covered in this manner will be offered; however, one must consider that just as a media source can influence its

viewers through its coverage, it can also influence its viewers through its lack of coverage. When a change to an existing policy is being proposed, minimizing it by giving it very little coverage sends a message in and of itself.

All of the outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing for all variables with few exceptions. For example, ABC and NBC had the majority of their coverage with fewer than 500 words (92% and 83% respectively). PBS and FOX have coverage spread across the three categories. CNN has 64 percent of its total coverage with less than 500 words and 29 percent between 501 and 1000. These percentages more closely resemble the network coverage than that of PBS or FOX.

It should be noted that 41 percent of PBS's coverage was over 1000 words. This indicates that the depth of its coverage (as measured by the length of the stories) surpassed all other broadcast news outlets in the study.

The broadcast news outlets showed similar tendencies within the "Placement" variable as they did within the "Length" variable. As previously discussed, the combination of a limited broadcast length and two major competing stories during the reference period not only dictated how often Social Security stories were carried, but where they were placed within the broadcast. All but CBS, however, exhibited the presence of competitive framing while all of the non-network broadcast news outlets in the study (PBS, CNN and FOX) showed competitive framing for "Placement."

Of the alternative news broadcasts, CNN was the most evenly dispersed coverage across all five categories. FOX, on the other hand, had a concentration of 49 percent of its coverage scored in the "first back" category and 23 percent scored as a "teaser", for a total of 72 percent of its stories in two categories. Again, as with the "Length" variable, the individual broadcast news

outlets primarily exhibited the presence of competitive framing although with different concentrations of coverage within the categories.

Like the “Length” and “Placement” variables, the “Frame Strength” variable was dispersed for all broadcasts in the study as depicted by the presence of competitive framing. CBS had a 40 percent concentration in both the strong and weak categories while ABC and NBC exhibited a fairly even dispersion across all three categories.

Even though all three of the alternative broadcast news outlets exhibited competitive framing, PBS had 55 percent of its coverage scored as weak and 38 percent scored as strong for a combined 93 percent of its total coverage in two of the three categories. CNN had 49 percent scored as weak and 42 percent scored as strong for a combined 91 percent of its total in two categories. FOX had 34 percent of its stories scored as weak and 56 percent scored as strong, or 90 percent of its coverage in two categories.

The network broadcasts had a large number of “moderate” stories during the reference period. Over 90 percent of all stories covered by the alternative broadcast news outlets were divided between the “weak” and “strong” values. One possible explanation for this is that the broadcast outlets’ separate their panels and lighter human interest content from their more serious news coverage.

The broadcast news media as a whole had the majority of its coverage during the reference period scored as “weak” or “strong.” The combined data indicated that 45 percent of the coverage was scored as strong while 43 percent was scored as weak. They utilize both human interest stories, which show how individuals are affected by the issue, and panels to discuss the issue as well as stories based upon expert opinion and official documents in their

coverage. The first two (human interest and panels⁵²) constitute a weak frame while experts and official documents constitute a strong frame.

The “Tone” variable provided the most interesting results of the four variables in the study. Even though all broadcast news outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing, all but PBS had concentrations in either positive or negative coverage. For example, ABC had 62 percent of its coverage scored as negative while CBS had 40 percent of its coverage scored as negative and 40 percent scored as neutral for a total of 80 percent of its coverage in two categories. Finally, NBC had 50 percent of its coverage scored as negative during the reference period.

While it is important to note that 62 percent of ABC’s coverage was “negative” toward the President’s Social Security reform initiative, it is even more telling to note that 15 percent was scored as positive. The result is that there were over four times as many “negative” stories as “positive” ones in ABC’s coverage during the reference period. CBS had 20 percent of its coverage in the positive category. This means that CBS had twice as many “negative” stories as “positive” ones during the reference period. NBC had 6 percent of its stories scored as positive. This means that NBC had over eight times as many “negative” stories as “positive” ones (50 percent to 6 percent respectively).

Furthermore, while the alternative broadcast news outlets exhibited competitive framing for the “Tone” variable, a closer inspection shows a very similar trend; however, due to the increased number of observations, and, in most cases, the increased number of stories scored as neutral, it is not as readily apparent. CNN for example, had 56 percent of its stories in the negative category, 31 percent in the neutral category, and 13 percent in the positive category.

⁵² Many of the alternative broadcasts have standing panels to discuss the events of the day; however, since these panelists are generalists for the most part as opposed to SMEs, they must be considered a weak source.

CNN exhibited the presence of competitive framing even though it had over four times more “negative” stories than “positive” ones in its coverage.

FOX’s coverage resulted in similar results to CNN albeit from the opposite direction. FOX had 7 percent of its stories in the negative category; 58 percent in the neutral category; and 36 percent in the positive category. The increased number of observations and the large number of “neutral” stories masks the fact that there are over five times as many “positive” stories as “negative” ones in FOX’s coverage of the President’s initiative during the reference period. It is interesting to note that FOX was the only broadcast news outlet in the study to have more “positive” stories than “negative” ones. In addition, FOX and PBS are the only two broadcast news outlets in the study to have the majority of their coverage scored as “neutral” in tone.

Interestingly enough, PBS had the most dispersed coverage of the issue. PBS had 28 percent of its stories scored as negative; 52 percent scored as neutral; and 21 percent scored as positive. The majority of its coverage is “neutral” in tone while the “positive” and “negative” stories are 7 percentage points apart. It should also be noted that even with this dispersed profile, there are more “negative” stories than “positive” ones.

As far as the “Tone” variable is concerned, the broadcast news outlets act individually, at least to some extent. Even while exhibiting the presence of competitive framing, they tend to have concentrations of coverage in one category or another. PBS is the only exception. When the broadcast news media is viewed as a whole, it portrays relatively dispersed coverage. The media as a whole has 32 percent of its stories in the negative category; 46 percent in the neutral category; and 23 percent in the positive category.

The multivariate analysis of the “Tone” variable within the “Placement” variable showed an interesting trend within the coverage on the network broadcasts. CBS was the only network

news program in the study to have any “Lead” stories that were scored as having a “positive” tone while ABC was 100 percent negative in its “Lead” stories. All of the network broadcasts, except for CBS, had most of their coverage scored as negative or neutral in all “Placement” categories⁵³.

While the network broadcasts were fairly consistent in how they covered the issue, the non-network broadcasts were more varied in their approach. For example, the majority of the “Lead” stories were positive on FOX, negative on CNN, and neutral on PBS. FOX was the only one with a majority of positive “Teasers” while CNN had the majority scored as neutral and PBS had the majority scored as negative. The majority of FOX’s and PBS’s coverage in the “First Segment”, “First Back”, and “Buried” categories are all neutral⁵⁴. While CNN had a majority of neutral stories in the “Buried” category, it had the majority of its coverage was negative in the “First Segment” and “First Back” categories.

As far as the multivariate analysis of the “Tone” variable within the “Frame Strength” variable is concerned, the network broadcasts again were very similar in the tone of their stories in each of the frame strength categories. The majority of coverage for all three was negative in all three frame strength categories, but with a neutral presence in the “Weak” frame strength category. The exceptions were ABC in the “Strong” frame strength category and CBS in the “Moderate” frame strength category. In each of these cases, they were relatively evenly dispersed in their coverage across all three tone categories.

The preponderance of the research confirmed the primary contention that the broadcast news media does not speak with one voice. It should be noted that even though competitive

⁵³ CBS had 100 percent of its “Buried” coverage scored as having a “Positive” tone.

⁵⁴ PBS had no stories scored in the “First Back” category.

framing is present within the coverage of the individual broadcast news outlets, their concentrations in different categories show they act as separate entities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Print News Media Introduction

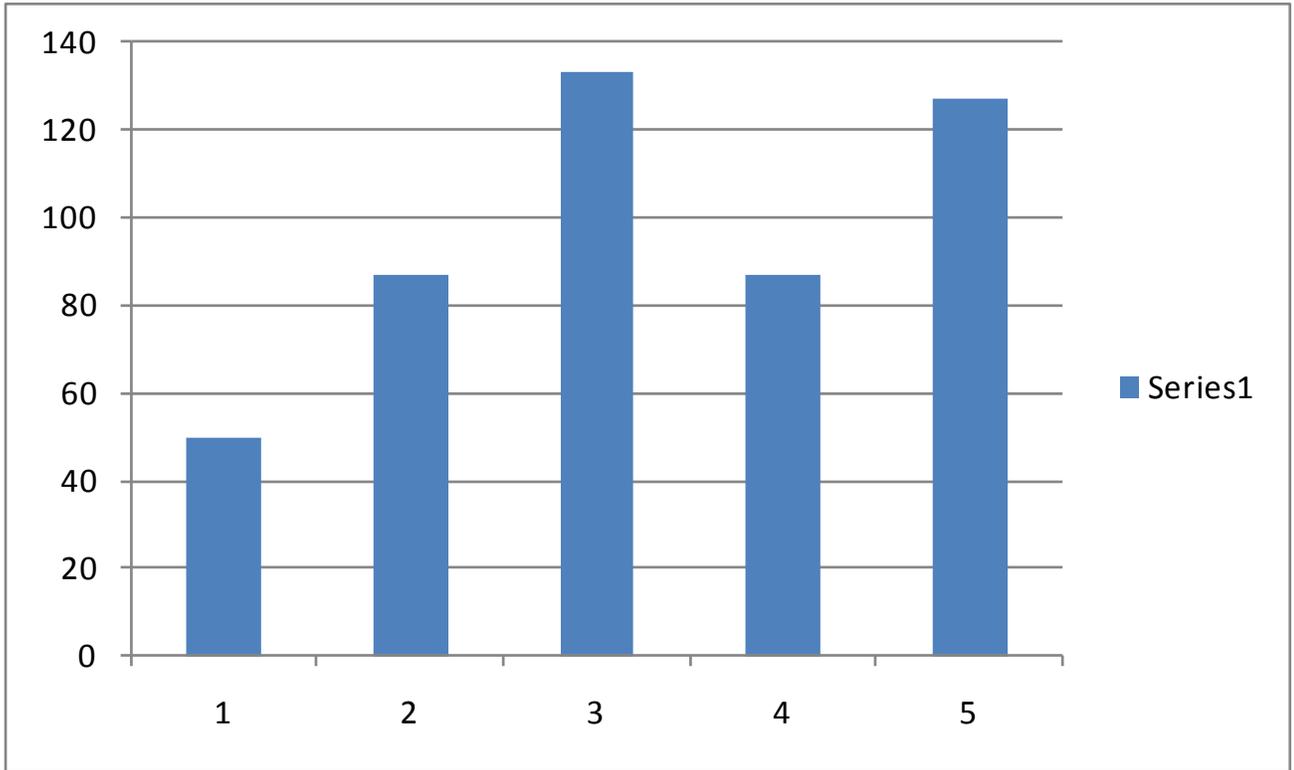
Unlike the broadcast media, the amount of coverage any one story receives in the print news media is not subject to the time constraints imposed by the length of a news broadcast, but rather is subject to a space limitation. While a newspaper has the ability to vary in length from one day to the next, it still has some constraints. While this allows for more complete coverage of an issue or story, no one issue receives an inordinate amount of coverage. As with the broadcast media, in most cases, extensive coverage is not possible unless the story involves something monumental thereby warranting a “special section.”

As mentioned in Chapter Two, editorials are included in this study. The editorials written by the newspaper’s editorial staff and the “letters to the editor” chosen for inclusion are analyzed separately.

Print Data Information

The data collection approach was described in detail in Chapter Two. The number of pertinent stories by print media outlet is shown in Figure 4-1.

FIGURE 4-1 COMPARISON OF OCCURRENCES IN THE PRINT MEDIA OUTLETS



#	PRINT MEDIA	# OF STORIES
1	<i>USA Today</i>	50
2	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	87
3	<i>The New York Times</i>	133
4	<i>The Los Angeles Times</i>	87
5	<i>The Washington Post</i>	127

Length Variable

The length of the stories which the print news media uses to cover a story or issue is an indication of its importance. In addition, the greater the length of the story, the greater the likelihood the reader will activate additional predispositions. As with the broadcast media, this variable was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of three categories based upon the number of words in the story.

The word count categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by length, and the category definitions are consistent with those established for the broadcast new media: Category One is 500 words or less; Category Two is between 501 and 1000 words; and Category Three is greater than 1000 words⁵⁵. Category One was created to differentiate the short overviews while the more in-depth coverage is differentiated in Category Three. The definitions of these categories are more fully explained in Chapter Two. These results are shown in Tables 4-1a and 4-1b.

Once all pertinent stories that were printed during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and “P” value were calculated. If the “P” value was less than “.05”, the null hypothesis was rejected and the length variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the “P” value was greater than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the length variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

⁵⁵ Using the same categories allows for direct comparison between the broadcast and print media.

One would expect the newspapers to cover the President's Tour each day based upon how it ranks compared to other news stories. When there are new developments in other on-going stories or breaking news, one would expect the President's tour to have minimal coverage at best. On a slow news day, however, one would expect the President's tour to have more prominent coverage. As a result, one would expect coverage of news stories pertaining to the President's Social Security Privatization Plan to vary greatly over the reference period. However, unlike the broadcast news media where breaking news events can cancel coverage of a story at the last minute (even during the live broadcast), a newspaper reflects the news events and stories of the previous day. Major breaking news events may bump the location and length of the coverage of other issues to a less prominent place in the paper, but not necessarily cancel the coverage entirely.

For example, when Terry Schiavo died on March 31st, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were the only newspapers in the study that carried Social Security stories of greater than 1000 words during the following week. When Pope John Paul II passed away⁵⁶ on April 2nd, only *The New York Times* carried a story of more than a 1000 words within a week of the Pope's death.

On the other hand, when President Bush held a prime time press conference near the end of the "60 Stops in 60 Days" tour, all newspapers in the study ran multiple stories on the Social Security initiative including multiple front page stories.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ This coverage included not only the Pope's death, but the process of selecting a new Pope.

⁵⁷ *The New York Times* carried 6 stories on April 29th with 4 of them on the front page
The Los Angeles Times carried 7 stories on April 29th with 4 of them on the front page
The Washington Post carried 4 stories on April 29th with all 4 of them on the front page
The Wall Street Journal carried 4 stories on April 29th with 4 of them on the front page
USA Today carried 2 stories on April 29th with 1 of them on the front page

Since there is no hard space limitation, one would expect the newspapers in the study as a whole to provide coverage of the President's Social Security reform proposal through hard news stories of varying length. This spread should result in the presence of competitive framing. While one would expect the newspapers to exhibit competitive framing in their hard news coverage, one would expect the editorials to be of a shorter length due to being relegated to the editorial page, resulting in a concentration in the lower categories. This concentration in the lower categories should manifest itself either in a lack of competitive framing for editorials, or a majority of shorter stories.

The New York Times and *The Los Angeles Times* had very similar coverage patterns for their hard news stories. They had relatively the same number of stories with between 501 and 1000 words with 34 percent and 35 percent respectively. *The New York Times* had 2 percent more stories of greater than 1001 words (44 percent to 42 percent) while *The Los Angeles Times* had 1 percent more stories with fewer than 500 words (23 percent to 22 percent).

The Washington Post and the *USA Today* had the heaviest concentration of stories between 501 and 1000 words with 44 percent and 55 percent respectively. The coverage in *The Washington Post* is more dispersed, however, with 21 percent of its coverage with fewer than 500 words, and 35 percent of its coverage with 1001 words or greater. The *USA Today* has 28 percent of its coverage with fewer than 500 words and 17 percent with over 1000 words.

The Wall Street Journal had the most hard news coverage with fewer than 500 words with 64 percent of its stories scored there. (No other newspaper in the study had over 28 percent of its coverage with fewer than 500 words.) This is due at least in part to their short abbreviated stories on the front page. While all of the newspapers exhibited competitive framing in their hard news coverage for the length variable, the amount of coverage by category was different.

The “letters to the editor” in all newspapers in the study fell into the less than 500 words category with the exception of the *USA Today* which had 73 percent of its letters in this category and 27 percent between 500 and 1000 words. None of the “letters” were over 1000 words.

The New York Times and the *USA Today* had very similar coverage patterns for their editorials written by their staffs. They had relatively the same number of stories with less than 500 words with 61 percent and 60 percent respectively. *The New York Times* had 6 percent of its coverage with greater than 1000 words while the *USA Today* had no stories with greater than 1000 words. The two had relatively the same amount of coverage between 500 and 1000 words as well with 33 percent and 40 percent respectively.

Neither *The Washington Post* nor *The Los Angeles Times* had any stories of greater than 1000 words. Furthermore, their editorials of between 500 and 1000 words are very similar (86 percent and 91 percent respectively).

Finally, in regards to editorial coverage, *The Wall Street Journal* was dispersed with stories in all categories. The newspaper had 56 percent of its staff-written editorials between 500 and 1000 words; 20 percent with fewer than 500 words; and 24 percent with greater than 1000 words.

All of the newspapers either exhibited competitive framing for their editorial coverage or had a concentration in shorter editorials. This likely is due to the fact that not only are the letters limited to the editorial section, but are in competition for space with the newspaper’s editorial staff. In addition, there were usually multiple letters to the editor for each topic which further limited the space allowed per letter. All newspapers in the study had over 50 percent of their editorials in one category.

The print media exhibited the presence of competitive framing while the individual outlets had distinct dispersion patterns. The individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, as with the broadcasts outlets, certain events, such as prime time Presidential press conferences, dictate specific coverage patterns for the print media outlets contrary to what they normally would have exhibited if left to their own preferences. As previously stated, when President Bush held a prime time press conference near the end of the “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour, all newspapers in the study ran multiple stories on the Social Security initiative including multiple front page stories. Even though this “forced coverage” resulted in the presence of competitive framing within the individual outlets, they still had concentrations in only one or two categories.

Table 4-1a Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Editorial Print Media Length

	Scale	<i>The New York Times*</i>	<i>The Los Angeles Times*</i>	<i>The Washington Post*</i>	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	<i>USA Today*</i>	COMBINED PRINT MEDIA
< 500 words	1	66%	74%	44%	29%	67%	57%
500 to 1000 words	2	29%	26%	56%	50%	33%	38%
> 1000 words	3	5%	0%	0%	21%	0%	5%
Number of Articles		56	39	45	28	21	189
Mean Scale		1.4	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.2	1.5
Chi Square		24.114	14.585	15.281	7.305	5.586	84.091
"P" Value		< .0001	0.0007	0.0042	0.0259	0.0610	< .0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Table 4-1b Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Length

	Scale	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Los Angeles Times*</i>	<i>The Washington Post</i>	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	<i>USA Today</i>	COMBINED PRINT MEDIA
< 500 words	1	22%	23%	21%	64%	28%	31%
500 to 1000 words	2	34%	35%	44%	17%	55%	35%
> 1000 words	3	44%	42%	35%	19%	17%	33%
Number of Articles		77	48	82	59	29	295
Mean Scale		2.2	2.2	2.1	1.5	1.9	2.0
Chi Square		21.491	13.327	21.152	24.500	6.679	156.333
"P" Value		< .0001	0.0013	< .0001	< .0001	0.0353	< .0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Placement Variable

A story's placement within a newspaper is an indication of its overall importance when compared to the other stories being covered that day. One of the main factors controlling this decision is where the story ranks in comparison with the other news stories that day. It should be pointed out that any given edition of a newspaper covers the news from the previous day. As a result, there is more time to accommodate "breaking news" stories and place them appropriately.

The placement categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by where and how they are covered in the newspaper: Category One is a story "buried" somewhere within the paper other than on the front page or first page of a section; Category Two is reserved for a story covered on the front page of a section other than the front page; Category Three is a story covered on the front page of the paper below the fold; Category Four is a story covered on the front page above the fold; and Category Five is the headline story. The definitions of these categories are more fully explained in Chapter Two. The results of this analysis are shown in Tables 4-2.

Placement was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of the five categories based upon where the story was placed in the newspaper. Once all pertinent stories that aired during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and "P" value were calculated. If the "P" value was less than ".05", the null hypothesis was rejected and the placement variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the "P" value was greater than ".05", the null hypothesis was accepted and the placement variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

The daily “competition” for space within each edition of the newspaper should mean that Social Security coverage in the print news media as a whole will be dispersed throughout the newspaper resulting in the presence of competitive framing.

The exception to the existence of competitive framing is found in the editorials. All editorials in all of the newspapers in the study were found on the editorial page. As a result, all editorials were scored as “buried” which resulted in sampling zeroes in all other Placement categories. As a result, the chi square and “P” value could not be calculated, nor did it need to be. With 100 percent of the coverage in one category, there obviously was no competitive framing present.

All of the newspapers in the study exhibited the presence of competitive framing in their hard news coverage. *The Wall Street Journal* was the only newspaper not to have a headline story on Social Security during the reference period; however, it does have 36 percent of its hard news coverage on the front page with 34 percent of its coverage on the front page above the fold. Even with headline stories, none of the other newspapers in the study had more than 17 percent of its coverage on the front page, with the exception of the *USA Today* with 23 percent. The increased number of front page stories in *The Wall Street Journal* can at least partially be explained by its format. Many stories in the paper are covered on the front page by short stand-alone stories. This approach results in more front page stories than there would have been otherwise. On the other hand, the majority of hard news coverage in all of the newspapers in the study was buried somewhere in the newspaper other than on the front page or the first page of another section.

Having the majority of coverage buried leads to an anomaly in the statistical analysis. While all outlets exhibit the presence of competitive framing based upon their “P” values, the coverage is concentrated in the one category.

Table 4-2 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Placement

	Scale	<i>The New York Times</i> *	<i>The Los Angeles Times</i> *	<i>The Washington Post</i> *	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i> *	<i>USA Today</i> *	COMBINED PRINT MEDIA
Buried	1	74%	81%	77%	61%	72%	73%
Front of a Section	2	9%	6%	10%	3%	3%	7%
Front Page Below Fold	3	9%	6%	5%	2%	10%	6%
Front Page Above Fold	4	5%	4%	7%	34%	3%	11%
Headline Story	5	3%	2%	1%	0%	10%	2%
Number of Articles		77	48	82	59	29	295
Mean Scale		1.5	1.4	1.5	2.1	1.8	1.6
Chi Square		65.333	38.343	66.667	62.971	34.339	242.125
"P" Value		<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Frame Strength Variable

Unlike “Length” and “Placement”, “Frame Strength” is not dependent upon what is happening with other on-going major stories of the day or with breaking news. The “Frame Strength” variable depends strictly upon how the story is presented, not how often or where it is placed. The print news media covers a “short term” story (one that will be covered one time) differently than it does a major news story covered over a period of time (such as the reference period being used). When a story is of the short term, one time type, the news programs are often forced to report the story using whatever sources are available; however, when a story covers a longer period of time, the news outlets are able to spend some time developing the story, or series of stories, pertaining to a particular topic.

With the President’s “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour, the newspapers in the study had an extended period of time in which to develop credible sources for in-depth stories as well as time to develop stories of the human interest variety. Between responding on short notice to the daily news events on the tour covered and written by staff reporters, and developing the more in-depth stories that could be published virtually any time during the tour, the newspapers were able to take advantage of a variety of framing techniques.

The exception to the existence of competitive framing is found in the editorials. The editorials in all of the newspapers in the study, with few exceptions (letters to the editor), were written by the editorial staff which can hardly be considered Social Security experts. As a result, editorials were scored as having a weak frame strength which resulted in sampling zeroes in all other categories. In a few cases, a letter to the editor was written by someone who could be considered a Social Security SME, however, there were not enough to change the results. As with the Placement variable, the chi square and “P” value could not be calculated, nor would it

matter; since, once again, having all observations within one category negated the need for statistical analysis.

The frame strength categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by the strength and qualifications of the presentation. Category One is a “weak” story (one based upon opinion, innuendo, and/or human interest); Category Two is a “moderate” story (one based upon supposedly credible, but anonymous, sources, or one with a mix of weak and strong sources); and Category Three is a “strong” story (one based upon credible documentation and/or known, named sources). These values are more fully explained in Chapter Two. The results of this analysis are shown in Tables 4-4.

Frame Strength was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of the three categories based upon the source of the story printed in the newspaper. Once all pertinent stories printed during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and “P” value were calculated. If the “P” value was less than “.05”, the null hypothesis was rejected and the frame strength variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the “P” value was greater than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the frame strength variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

Within the hard news coverage, *The Los Angeles Times* has more hard news stories scored as weak than scored as strong (65 percent to 25 percent) with 10 percent scored as moderate.

On the other hand, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *USA Today* each had more stories scored as strong than scored as weak. *The New York Times* had 64 percent of its coverage scored as strong as opposed to 22 percent scored as weak. The *USA Today* had 62 percent of its coverage scored as strong and 14 percent scored as weak with 24 percent scored

as moderate. *The Wall Street Journal* had 64 percent of its coverage scored as strong and 3 percent scored as weak. Unlike the other newspapers in the study, it had 32 percent of its coverage scored as moderate. It should be noted that *The Wall Street Journal* included virtually no articles, outside of a front page snippet, without the inclusion of some meaningful statements from SMEs for its coverage of the Social Security issue.

The Washington Post had a balance between weak and strong stories. It had 40 percent of its coverage scored as weak as compared to 46 percent scored as strong, with another 13 percent scored as moderate. Even so, it had almost twice as many “weak” stories as *The New York Times*, yet almost 50 percent less than *The Los Angeles Times*.

Table 4-3 Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Frame Strength

	Scale	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Los Angeles Times</i>	<i>The Washington Post</i>	<i>The Wall Street Journal*</i>	<i>USA Today*</i>	COMBINED PRINT MEDIA
Weak	1	22%	65%	40%	3%	14%	29%
Moderate	2	14%	10%	13%	32%	24%	18%
Strong	3	64%	25%	46%	64%	62%	52%
Number of Articles		77	48	82	59	29	295
Mean Scale		2.4	1.6	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.2
Chi Square		21.967	22.175	33.724	12.381	9.200	103.000
"P" Value		< .0001	< .0001	< .0001	0.0020	0.0100	< .0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Tone Variable

The “Tone” variable in the print news media depends strictly upon how the story is presented and is not dependent upon any of the other variables being studied. More than any of the other variables, “Tone” provides the greatest opportunity for the individual newspaper to frame an issue or story in such a way as to influence their readers’ opinions of that issue. Therefore, while there should be competitive framing present in the “Tone” variable, there will be concentrations in the positive and/or negative categories. Editorials and hard news are evaluated separately.

The tone categories were established in order to differentiate the stories by the position taken concerning the issue within the newspaper: Category One is a “negative” story (one that presents the President’ plan as the “wrong” thing to do); Category Two is a “neutral” story (one that presents both pro and con arguments); and Category Three is a “positive” story (one that presents the President’s plan as the “right” thing to do). These values are more fully explained in Chapter Two. The results of this analysis are shown in Tables 4-4a and 4-4b.

Tone was measured by placing all pertinent stories into one of the three categories based upon the tone of the story aired during the broadcast. Once all pertinent stories that aired during the reference period were placed into one of the categories, a chi square and “P” value were calculated. If the “P” value was less than “.05”, the null hypothesis was rejected and the tone variable exhibited the presence of competitive framing. If the “P” value was greater than “.05”, the null hypothesis was accepted and the tone variable exhibited a lack of competitive framing.

All of the newspapers in the study exhibited the presence of competitive framing for their hard news coverage and for their staff-written editorial coverage.

The *USA Today* had the most hard news coverage scored as neutral with 66 percent. The majority of its remaining coverage is negative with 28 percent compared to 7 percent in the positive category.

The New York Times and *The Wall Street Journal* were very similar in their coverage. Each had more stories in the neutral category with 48 percent and 44 percent respectively. Furthermore, each of the two newspapers had roughly twice as many negative stories (32 percent and 37 percent respectively) than positive stories (19 percent each).

The Los Angeles Times and *The Washington Post* were the only two newspapers in the study with the majority of their coverage not scored in the neutral category. *The Los Angeles Times* was the only newspaper in the study with the majority of its hard news coverage scored in the negative category. It had over 5 times the number of negative stories as positive ones (54 percent to 10 percent) with 35 percent scored as neutral. Furthermore, *The Washington Post* had over 4 times the number of negative stories as positive ones (45 percent to 11 percent); however, it had almost as many neutral stories as negative with 44 percent scored as neutral.

The combined print news media, like the five newspapers in the study, exhibited competitive framing. The combined print news media had more coverage in the neutral category (46 percent) than in the negative category (40 percent) and in the positive category (14 percent); however, there is almost as much negative coverage as neutral.

All of the newspapers in the study exhibited the presence of competitive framing or a concentration of coverage in one category for their editorial coverage; however, that is where the similarity ends.

The Los Angeles Times was balanced in the editorials written by their staff with 55 percent negative and 45 percent positive; however, of the letters to the editor selected to publish,

89 percent were negative and 11 percent were positive. On the other hand, *The Wall Street Journal* had the majority of its staff-written editorials (80 percent) in the positive category while 100 percent of the letters to the editor were positive.

The New York Times and *The Washington Post* were similar in their balance of coverage with regard to their staff-written editorials with 71 percent and 66 percent in the negative category respectively. However, *The New York Times* had 100 percent of the letters to the editor it published scored as negative while 63 percent in *The Washington Post* were scored as negative.

The *USA Today* was the only newspaper in the study with staff-written editorials in all categories and more positive editorials than negative ones. While it had 10 percent in the neutral category, it had over three times as many positive stories as negative ones (70 percent to 20 percent respectively) in its editorial content. It also published more positive letters to the editor than negative ones (55 percent to 45 percent respectively).

With virtually all newspapers in the study exhibiting competitive framing individually for both staff-written editorials as well as for the letters to the editor they chose to include, the print media as a whole also exhibited the presence of competitive framing for its editorial coverage. It should be noted that while staff-written editorials were 54 percent to 40 percent negative to positive, the media as a whole chose to include negative letters to the editor rather than positive ones (72 percent to 26 percent respectively).

The individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, after a prime time Presidential press conference, one would expect the outlets to publish stories based upon documented sources

along with SMEs such as elected officials from both parties in their coverage of the event⁵⁸.

Even though the outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing, they had concentrations in one or two categories.

⁵⁸ Opinions expressed by elected officials from both parties generally offset each other resulting in a neutral tone

Table 4-4a Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Editorial Print Media Tone

	Scale	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Los Angeles Times*</i>	<i>The Washington Post*</i>	<i>The Wall Street Journal*</i>	<i>USA Today*</i>	COMBINED PRINT MEDIA
Negative	1	75%	79%	64%	18%	33%	60%
Neutral	2	9%	0%	4%	0%	5%	4%
Positive	3	16%	21%	31%	82%	62%	35%
Number of Articles		56	39	45	28	21	189
Mean Scale		1.4	1.4	1.7	2.6	2.3	1.8
Chi Square		22.543	18.171	22.537	7.043	10.365	77.163
"P" Value		< .0001	0.0001	< .0001	0.0296	0.0056	< .0001

* YATES CORRECTION FOR CONTINUITY APPLIED

Table 4-4b Chi Square Test of Competitive Framing Based Upon Hard News Print Media Tone

	Scale	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Los Angeles Times</i>	<i>The Washington Post</i>	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	<i>USA Today</i>	COMBINED PRINT MEDIA
Negative	1	32%	54%	45%	37%	28%	40%
Neutral	2	48%	35%	44%	44%	66%	46%
Positive	3	19%	10%	11%	19%	7%	14%
Number of Articles		77	48	82	59	29	295
Mean Scale		1.9	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.7
Chi Square		20.405	13.365	21.518	17.200	4.867	81.971
"P" Value		< .0001	0.0013	< .0001	0.0002	0.0880	< .0001

Multivariate Analysis

Multivariate analysis was conducted for the “Tone” breakout within the “Placement” and “Frame Strength” variables. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, multivariate analysis was only run on the hard news coverage within the print media. As with the broadcast news media, the percentage of coverage by category within the placement variable was the measurement rather than the presence or lack of competitive framing. No chi square or “P” value was computed. The results of the analysis for Tone within the Placement variable are shown in Table 4-5 while the results of the analysis for Tone within the Frame Strength variable are shown in Table 4-6.

None of the newspapers in the study had any negative headline stories. All of the headline stories in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* were neutral while all headline stories in *The Los Angeles Times* were positive⁵⁹. (*The Wall Street Journal* had no headline stories pertaining to Social Security.)

While neutral stories are well represented on the rest of the front page, both above and below the fold, there are more negative stories than positive. *The New York Times* for example had 50 percent of its coverage above the fold (other than “Headline” stories) and 29 percent below the fold scored as neutral while 25 percent above the fold (other than “Headline” stories) and 71 percent below the fold were negative. By contrast, 25 percent of the stories above the fold were positive while there were no positive stories below the fold.

Even though 100 percent of the headline stories in *The Los Angeles Times* were positive,⁶⁰ all other stories on the front page were negative (both above and below the fold). Furthermore, *The Washington Post* had 50 percent of its coverage above the fold and 25 percent

⁵⁹ It should be noted that there was only one headline story.

⁶⁰ Only one story

of its coverage below the fold scored as neutral while 33 percent above the fold and 75 percent below the fold were negative.

On the other hand, *USA Today* not only had 100 percent of its headline stories scored neutral, but 100 percent of the stories above the fold and 67 percent below the fold were neutral as well. The remaining stories (33 percent below the fold) on the front page were negative. There were no positive Social Security stories published on the front page during the reference period.

The *Wall Street Journal* presented a more dispersed front page. While there were no Social Security headline stories, there were more neutral and negative stories above the fold (55 percent and 35 percent respectively) than positive ones (10 percent); however, 100 percent of the stories below the fold were positive.

The lower 2 categories, (front of a section and buried) present a similar breakdown. The *New York Times* had 43 percent of its coverage on a front section scored as neutral while 49 percent of the buried stories were also neutral. There were the same number of front section positive and negative stories (29 percent each), but one and a half times as many buried negative as positive (30 percent to 21 percent).

While there were twice as many negative stories as neutral on the front page of a section (67 percent to 33 percent) at *The Los Angeles Times*, there were no positive stories. The number of buried stories scored as negative or neutral were very similar (49 percent to 41 percent respectively) while 10 percent were positive.

Half of the stories on the front page of a section in *The Washington Post* were negative while the other half (50 percent) were neutral. There were no positive stories. Again, the

number of negative and neutral stories in the buried category was roughly the same (44 percent to 43 percent respectively) with 13 percent positive.

In the lower two categories, *The USA Today* had 100 percent of its coverage on the front of a section scored as neutral and 57 percent of its buried coverage scored as neutral. *The Wall Street Journal* split its coverage on the front page of a section with 50 percent in each of the negative and positive categories. It was also split in its “Buried” coverage with 42 percent being scored as neutral and 39 percent being scored as negative.

The print media exhibited the presence of competitive framing even though the individual outlets had concentrations in different categories. The individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, certain events, such as the death of the Pope and the election of a new Pope, dominated the front page of the newspapers, as one might expect, relegating the President’s “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour to lower profile sections of the newspaper. Even though the outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing, they had concentrations in one or two categories.

As with the “Placement” variable, the multivariate analysis concentrated on the “Tone” breakout within the “Frame Strength” variable. Again, the analysis was only conducted on the “hard news” stories within the newspapers. The majority of the stories that were scored as having a strong frame strength were negative or neutral with a small percent being positive. There was approximately the same number of positive stories in the moderate frame strength category as in the strong category with 4% of positive stories with a weak frame strength. This pattern appears to be consistent across all newspapers in the study.

For example, in *The New York Times*, over half (55 percent) of the stories with a strong frame strength are neutral while the number of negative and positive stories are roughly the same

(24 percent to 20 percent respectively). There are twice as many negative moderate stories as positive ones (55 percent to 27 percent) and 3 ½ times as many negative weak stories as positive (41 percent to 12 percent) with 47 percent being neutral.

The Los Angeles Times had approximately the same number of negative and neutral stories with a strong frame strength (41 percent and 44 percent respectively) with 15 percent positive. There were no positive stories with a moderate frame while 7 percent of the stories with a weak frame strength were positive. By comparison, negative stories accounted for 67 percent of the moderate stories and 73 percent of the ones with a weak frame strength.

The Washington Post had 47 percent of its stories with a strong frame strength scored as neutral while 32 percent were negative and 21 percent positive. There were 7 times the number of negative stories with a moderate frame strength as positive ones (64 percent to 9 percent respectively). There were no positive stories with a weak frame strength; however, the number of negative stories and neutral ones in this category were 55 percent and 45 percent respectively.

The print media exhibited the presence of competitive framing even though the individual outlets had concentrations in different categories. The individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing due primarily to circumstances beyond their control. For example, after certain events, such as a Presidential press conference, one would expect specific coverage patterns for the media outlets, such as front page stories, that might be contrary to their normal preference. Furthermore, front page stories normally are based upon expert opinion⁶¹ and documented sources rather than unnamed sources and innuendo. Even though the outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing, they had concentrations in one or two categories.

⁶¹ For example, SMEs such as elected officials from both parties

Table 4-5 PRINT MEDIA (PLACEMENT MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS)

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<i>The New York Times</i>			<i>The Los Angeles Times</i>			<i>The Washington Post</i>			<i>Wall Street Journal</i>			<i>USA Today</i>			Combined Print		
	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos
Headline	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	86%	14%	
Front Page - Above Fold	25%	50%	25%	100%	0%	0%	33%	50%	17%	35%	55%	10%	0%	100%	0%	36%	52%	12%
Font Pge - Below Fold	71%	29%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	100%	33%	67%	0%	67%	28%	6%
Front of a Section	29%	43%	29%	67%	33%	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	100%	0%	43%	43%	14%
Buried	30%	49%	21%	49%	41%	10%	44%	43%	13%	39%	42%	19%	33%	57%	10%	39%	45%	15%

Table 4-6 PRINT MEDIA (FRAME STRENGTH MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS)

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<i>The New York Times</i>			<i>The Los Angeles Times</i>			<i>The Washington Post</i>			<i>Wall Street Journal</i>			<i>USA Today</i>			Combined Print		
	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos	neg	neut	pos
Strong	24%	55%	20%	41%	44%	15%	32%	47%	21%	39%	39%	21%	22%	78%	0%	32%	51%	18%
Moderate	55%	18%	27%	67%	33%	0%	64%	27%	9%	37%	47%	16%	29%	43%	29%	48%	35%	17%
Weak	41%	47%	12%	73%	20%	7%	55%	45%	0%	0%	100%	0%	50%	50%	0%	54%	42%	4%

Print News Media Conclusions

The individual newspapers are more concentrated in their coverage within certain categories in relation to their counterparts with regard to the chosen frame elements. This results in more dispersed hard news coverage for the media⁶² as a whole than for the newspapers individually. For example, the Length variable is dispersed with 31 percent, 35 percent, and 33 percent across categories one through three respectively. The Frame Strength variable is dispersed with 29 percent, 18 percent, and 52 percent across categories one through three respectively. Finally, the Tone variable is dispersed with 40 percent, 46 percent, and 14 percent across categories one through three respectively. The conclusions drawn from this research confirm this contention due to the fact that the coverage for the broadcast media as a whole shows the presence of competitive framing with more dispersed coverage than that found in the individual newspapers.

The majority of the outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing for all variables; however, they had concentrations of coverage in certain variable categories. Since these concentrations vary from one outlet to another, it appears that the publishing decisions as to how to frame the story were made individually, for the most part, and not as a group. As a result, the conclusions drawn from the research confirm this contention due to the fact that the concentrations of coverage vary from outlet to outlet which is indicative of independent decision-making processes.

As with the broadcast news coverage, the overriding contention is based upon the tenants of John Zaller's R-A-S Model discussed in Chapter One. Zaller's research showed that individuals, when surveyed, will base their responses upon a "sample" of the pool of information

⁶² Based at least in part to the two major competing stories during the reference period, most of the stories in the print media as a whole were "buried" with 73 percent in category one.

to which they have been exposed (1992, p.51). In addition, the more recently received information is more readily accessible and influences their responses to a greater degree. As a result, the print news media has the ability to influence public opinion through its coverage of news events and current issues. As this study shows, however, even though the individual newspapers tend to exhibit the presence of competitive framing, they have concentrations in certain categories. This observation, based upon the analysis, leads one to conclude the newspaper that an individual chooses to read will have an influence upon his or her opinion concerning the issues of the day.

This can clearly be seen by looking at the type, and amount, of coverage of the President's "60 Stops in 60 Days" Social Security Reform Tour. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were very similar in the amount of coverage of the "Tour" with 133 stories and 127 stories respectively. *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Los Angeles Times* each had 87 stories. It should be pointed out that even though the amount of coverage is identical, *The Los Angeles Times* is published seven days a week while *The Wall Street Journal* is only published on weekdays. As a result, it had two fewer editions each week to cover the issues during the reference period. The other weekday publication in the study, the *USA Today*,⁶³ had the least amount of Social Security coverage of any newspaper in the study with 50 pertinent stories during the reference period.

The Los Angeles Times and *The Washington Post*, along with *The New York Times* all had very similar patterns in all groupings within the "Length" variable. They are also similar in their coverage of both hard news and editorial coverage. Their hard news coverage had more stories of over 1000 words with 42 percent, 35 percent, and 44 percent respectively than in other

⁶³ The *USA Today* currently publishes a "weekend" edition. This weekend publication started after the reference period.

categories. However, their staff-written editorials showed diversity with 9 percent, 14 percent, and 61 percent with fewer than 500 words while all of their letters to the editor were 100 percent less than 500 words.

The *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*, acted differently in their approach to covering the Social Security issue. The *USA Today* had 55 percent of its hard news coverage between 501 and 1000 words. Its editorial coverage also showed a concentration in one category with 60 percent of its staff-written editorials and 73 percent of its letters to the editor with fewer than 500 words.

The Wall Street Journal, due to its format, had a different pattern from the other newspapers in the study. Its hard news coverage of the Social Security issue had fewer stories between 501 and 1000 words than its counterparts with 17 percent of its coverage; however, it had 64 percent with fewer than 500 words. This is due, at least in part, to the distinct way the newspaper lays out its front page. *The Wall Street Journal* prides itself on offering small summaries of the day's news on the front page so that busy readers can keep up to date on the news of the day even when they do not have time to read a newspaper cover-to-cover. These "snippets" sometimes serve as lead-ins with the bulk of the story located further back in the paper⁶⁴, and sometimes serve as stand-alone summaries. With this in mind, it is not surprising that there is a concentration in the shorter, less than 500 words coverage. Its staff-written editorials also consisted of longer stories than its counterparts with 20 percent with fewer than 500 words, but over half (56 percent) between 501 and 1000 words. This may be due to the fact that *The Wall Street Journal* is a more business minded newspaper than the others in the study.

⁶⁴ When the front page "snippet" was connected to a story inside the paper, the words for the two were combined and front page credit was given.

As a result, the editors may have placed more emphasis on the story since the President's planned personal accounts would have resulted in increased investment in the stock market.

Although the individual newspapers have the bulk of their coverage concentrated in certain categories, they all exhibit competitive framing in their hard news coverage. As a result of these individualized concentrations in coverage, the combined print news media exhibits dispersed coverage across all length categories with 31 percent with fewer than 500 words, 35 percent between 500 and 1000 words, and 33 percent with greater than 1000 words. The editorial coverage for the print news media as a whole shows a concentration of coverage in shorter staff-written editorials with 37 percent with fewer than 500 words, 56 percent between 500 and 1000 words, and 7 percent with greater than 1000 words. Ninety-five percent of the letters to the editor have fewer than 500 words.

The print news outlets in the study showed similar tendencies within the "Placement" variable as they did within the "Length" variable. As previously discussed, the existence of two major competing stories during the reference period not only dictated how often Social Security stories were printed, but where they were placed within the newspaper edition. All five newspapers in the study showed competitive framing for "Placement"; however, their editorial coverage exhibited no competitive framing at all. This was to be expected since all newspapers in the study placed their editorials on their "Editorial Page" which is located within one of the sections of the paper. This resulted in all editorials being scored as "buried."

Even though they exhibit competitive framing, they still have coverage concentrations in one category. The fact that they have at least a few stories in all categories combined with the large number of observations served to negate the clustering affect that might have otherwise occurred. *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *USA*

Today all have similar scoring breakouts in their overall coverage with the majority of their coverage somewhere in the newspaper other than the front page or the front page of a section (buried) with 74 percent, 81 percent, 77 percent, and 72 percent respectively.

Again, *The Wall Street Journal* is slightly different in the placement of its coverage due, at least in part, to its previously discussed front page format. Due to the placement of the story summaries, 61 percent of its hard news coverage is buried while 34 percent of its coverage is located above the fold on the front page (category “4”).

The combined print media exhibits the same pattern as the newspapers individually for hard news coverage with 73 percent buried. There is enough front page coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*, however, to show a slightly increased amount of coverage above the fold on the front page with 11 percent. Since all of the newspapers individually had all editorial coverage buried, so did the print news media as a whole.

All of the newspapers in the study exhibited competitive framing for the “Frame Strength” variable in their hard news coverage; however, the editorials in all of the papers exhibited a lack of competitive framing with 100 percent of the coverage in the weak category. Editorials, by definition, are primarily written by the editorial staff. These individuals write editorials on a wide variety of topics, and can hardly be considered anything but a weak source. While some “letters to the editor” were written by individuals who could be considered Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) concerning Social Security, there were too few to have any effect on the scoring percentages.

The Washington Post was the most dispersed of the three with 46 percent of its hard news coverage in the “strong” category and 40 percent of its coverage in the weak category. *The New York Times* had the majority (64 percent) of its hard news coverage scored as strong. *The Los*

Angeles Times was the only newspaper in the study to have the majority of its hard news coverage scored as weak with 65 percent.⁶⁵

The *USA Today* had the majority of its hard news coverage scored as strong with 62 percent. While also showing the presence of competitive framing, *The Wall Street Journal* had the majority of its coverage scored as strong over weak with 64 percent and 3 percent respectively. It is not surprising that *The Wall Street Journal*, by virtue of being a “business” newspaper, would have more expert sources for its coverage of a topic like Social Security due to its implications to the overall economy. It should also be pointed out that President Bush was proposing personal accounts for Social Security which would have allowed individuals to invest in the stock market.

Since the hard news coverage of the five newspapers in the study individually exhibited competitive framing, the combined print news media as a whole exhibited the presence of competitive framing as well. The combined hard news coverage had stories in all categories with 29 percent, 18 percent, and 52 percent scored as weak, moderate, and strong respectively. As with the individual newspapers, the over-all editorial coverage was all scored as having a “weak frame.”

Again, the “Tone” variable provided the most interesting results of the four variables in the study. *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* showed the same pattern of coverage for their editorial coverage. The majority of their staff-written editorials was scored as negative with 55 percent, 66 percent, and 71 percent respectively while their letters to the editor were also predominantly negative with 89 percent, 63 percent, and 100 percent respectively. The largest difference between negative coverage and positive coverage

⁶⁵ It should be noted that much of the coverage with a “weak” frame strength was of the “progress report” variety. The stories were intended to update the readers as to the progress President Bush was making on the tour.

occurred in *The New York Times* where the newspaper exhibited nearly a 4-to-1 difference with 71 percent and 18 percent respectively.

While their coverage patterns are similar for their editorial stories, they vary for their coverage of hard news. *The Los Angeles Times*, for example, was the only newspaper in the study with over half of its hard news coverage scored as negative with 54 percent. This was possibly due to the fact that the newspaper's circulation is concentrated in California which is historically a more liberal-leaning state. Although *The Washington Post* had more stories scored as negative than in the other categories, it had almost as many in the neutral category with 45 percent and 44 percent respectively. *The New York Times* had almost half of its coverage (48 percent) scored as moderate.

The staff-written editorials in *The Wall Street Journal* are positive with 80 percent scored that way; however, there is more negative coverage than positive in its hard news with 37 percent to 19 percent respectively. It has more neutral coverage with 44 percent than in either of the other categories. These results could be attributed to the fact that the editors of a business oriented newspaper would tend to support an initiative that would result in increased investment in the stock market while the hard news reflects the hardship of an uphill battle on an issue that was not popular with the public. In other words, it would have been difficult to present falling polls in a positive light.

There are more staff-written positive editorials in the *USA Today* than negative with 70 percent and 20 percent respectively; however, their letters to the editor inclusions are evenly divided between positive and negative with 55 percent and 45 percent. This is due to the fact that in most cases, letters to the editor were generally published in pairs with one letter being positive and the other letter being negative. The majority of its hard news coverage is neutral

with 66 percent; however, it has four times as many negative stories as positive with 28 percent to 7 percent respectively.

The combined news print media exhibited competitive framing for both editorial and hard news coverage. The staff-written editorials were fairly dispersed with 54 percent and 40 percent scored as negative and positive respectively while the letters to the editor selected for publication were predominantly negative with 72 percent. The hard news coverage was 40 percent, 46 percent, and 14 percent scored as negative, neutral, and positive respectively.

The newspapers in the study exhibited competitive framing for all variables for both editorial and hard news coverage. The combined news print media also exhibits competitive framing for all variables in the study. It should be noted that even though the individual newspapers exhibited competitive framing, their coverage generally showed a concentration in certain categories; however, these categories varied from one outlet to another.

The multivariate analysis of the “Tone” variable within the “Placement” variable showed an interesting trend. *The Los Angeles Times* was the only one that had a majority of its coverage in the headline category scored as having a positive tone (100%)⁶⁶. Even though the majority of the headline stories were positive, its coverage in all other placement categories was negative.

The New York Times was neutral in all placement categories except “Below the Fold” on the front page. While it is the only category that is not neutral in tone, the majority of its coverage was scored as negative at 71 percent.

The Washington Post sent mixed signals. While the majority of its “Headline” stories are neutral, the majority of its “Below the Fold” stories on the front page are negative. The “Below the Fold” category was overwhelmingly negative in the three newspapers (71 percent in *The New*

⁶⁶ *The Los Angeles Times* only had one Headline story on Social Security during the reference period.

York Times, 75 percent in *The Washington Post*, and 100 percent in *The Los Angeles Times*). It is also worth noting that positive stories did not comprise the majority of the coverage in any category in any newspaper.

The majority of the coverage in *The USA Today* was neutral in all five placement categories. *The Wall Street Journal* was more diverse in its coverage than any newspaper in the study. It had no headline stories dedicated to the Social Security issue. The majority of its coverage “Above the Fold” on the front page was neutral, yet 100 percent of its coverage “Below the Fold” was scored as having a positive tone. Its coverage in the two lower categories again did not follow any sort of trend. On the “Front of a Section”, it divided its coverage between negative and positive coverage with 50 percent in each category. It was almost evenly divided between neutral and negative stories (42 percent and 39 percent respectively) in the “Buried” category.

It is interesting to note that there were only three instances in the print media where the majority of coverage in any category in any newspaper was scored as having a positive tone. These were the “Headline” stories in *The Los Angeles Times*; the “Below the Fold” on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*; and the even split (50 percent each) between positive and negative on the “Front of a Section” in *The Wall Street Journal*. Possibly more telling is that these were the only instances in the print media where the majority of coverage in any category in any newspaper was scored as having a positive tone, and two of the three instances occur in *The Wall Street Journal*. Even with these similarities in how they covered the issue, the newspapers individually still had concentrations in different categories.

Even though competitive framing is present within the coverage of the individual broadcast news outlets, they all had concentrations in different categories.

CHAPTER FIVE

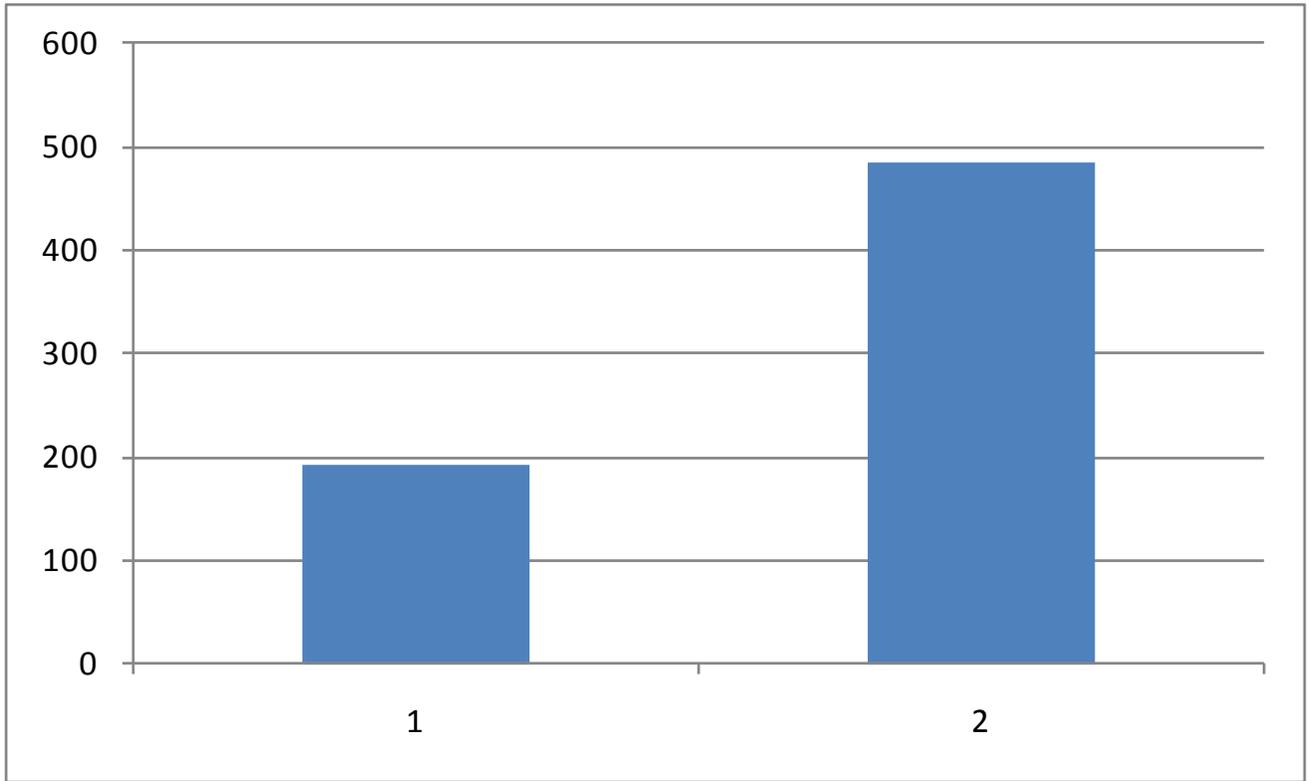
Broadcast News Media / Print News Media Comparison

Introduction

The differences in the broadcast and print media are found in all four of the variables in the study. Although both the broadcast news media and the print news media exhibit competitive framing in all categories in the study, there are many differences between them that should be noted.

For example, the difference in the amount of coverage given to the President's Social Security privatization initiative during the reference period is significant. Again, it should be pointed out that the broadcast media was limited by time constraints placed upon it by having a set length to the news programs in the study. On the other hand, the print media does not have a "hard" limit to the number of pages an edition of the newspaper can have. This side-by-side coverage of the broadcast and print media can be seen in Graph 5-1 on the following page.

FIGURE 5-1 COMPARISON OF OCCURENCES BETWEEN THE BROADCAST AND PRINT MEDIA



#	NEWS MEDIA	# OF STORIES
1	Broadcast News Media	193
2	Print News Media	484

Length Variable Comparison

While both the broadcast and print news media exhibit the presence of competitive framing for the length variable, the length of the stories is longer in the print media than in the broadcast media. There are almost twice as many stories of greater than 1000 words in the “hard news” print media (by percentage) than in the broadcast media (33 percent to 19 percent respectively). At the same time, there are almost twice as many stories of 500 words or less in the broadcast media (by percentage) than in the “hard news” print media (58 percent to 31 percent respectively).

The broadcast media coverage compares closely to the staff-written editorial portion of the print media based upon the expected value (mean) for each classification (1.6 to 1.7 respectively). In this comparison, however, there are almost three times as many stories of greater than 1000 words in the broadcast media (by percentage) than in the print media (19 percent to 7 percent respectively). Also, there are more stories of 500 words or less in the broadcast media than in the staff-written editorial portion of the print media (58 percent to 37 percent respectively). In this case, a comparison of percentages is more telling than the statistical mean, chi square, and “P” value. The statistical comparisons of the broadcast media and the staff-written editorial portion of the print media shows very little difference even though there is a large difference in all three categories. These results are shown in Table 5-1 on the following page.

Table 5-1 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Length

	Scale	Broadcast Media	Print Media (Editorials) Staff	Print Media (Hard News) Ltr to Ed	Combined Broadcast & Print	
< 500 words	1	58%	37%	95%	31%	46
500 to 1000 words	2	23%	56%	5%	35%	32
> 1000 words	3	19%	7%	0%	33%	22
Mean Scale		1.6	1.7	1.0	2.0	2.0
Chi Square		74.925	45.300	15.500	156.333	490.000
P Value		<.0001	<.0001	0.0004	<.0001	<.0001

Placement Variable Comparison

Where the stories are placed is also different for the broadcast and print media. While there may be more pertinent stories in the print media, the majority of them are buried somewhere in the newspaper. In fact, the percentage of buried stories in the hard news portion of the print media is over four times the percentage in the broadcast media (73 percent to 16 percent respectively). At the same time, the percentage of lead stories in the broadcast media is over six times the percentage of headline stories in the hard news portion of the print media (13 percent to 2 percent respectively). Furthermore, 54 percent of the coverage in the broadcast media occurred/was mentioned before the first commercial break⁶⁷ during the news program while 19 percent of the coverage in the hard news portion of the print media was located somewhere on the front page.⁶⁸ Again it should be noted that even though placement varies in all five categories, the statistical mean for the broadcast and print media is the same.

One possible explanation for this may be that a newspaper, due to its unique format, is able to provide regular updates (more stories) with relative ease since it can cover the more mundane events. As a result, however, it may have relegated the stories to a less prominent location whereas the limited time allotted to a broadcast requires it to be more discerning in its coverage (less coverage) and its placement of those stories.

Since all of the editorials in the print media are located on the editorial page, 100 percent of the coverage is buried. This does not lend itself to any type of comparison to the broadcast media. These results are shown in Table 5-2 on the following page.

⁶⁷ The lead story (category 5), the teaser (category 4), and the first segment (category 3), all occur before the first commercial break.

⁶⁸ The headline story (category 5), front page above the fold (category 4), and front page below the fold (category 3), all are somewhere on the front page.

Table 5-2 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Placement

<u>BROADCAST</u>	Scale	<u>PRINT</u>	Broadcast Media	Print Media (Hard News)	Combined Broadcast & Print
Buried	1	Buried	16%	73%	64%
First Story Back	2	Front of a Section	31%	7%	12%
First Segment	3	Front Page Below Fold	16%	6%	7%
Teaser	4	Front Page Above Fold	25%	11%	12%
Lead Story	5	Headline Story	13%	2%	5%
Mean Scale			1.6	1.6	1.8
Chi Square			74.925	242.125	594.711
P Value			<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

Frame Strength Variable Comparison

The Frame Strength patterns for the broadcast and print media are similar. The percentage of weak stories in the broadcast media is greater than in the hard news portion of the print media (43 percent to 29 percent respectively). Conversely, the percentage of strong stories is greater in the print media than in the broadcast media (52 percent to 45 percent respectively). These similarities in the percentage break-outs are reflected in the statistical means of the broadcast and print media (2.0 to 2.2 respectively).

The nature of a television news broadcast lends itself to human interest pieces that are set in a “movie trailer” type format where one can see, hear, and possibly identify with the individuals in the story. Newspapers, while not short on human interest pieces, are more likely to provide meaningful sources and statistics. This may be due to the fact it is harder to draw a connection with someone the reader cannot physically see or hear.

As with the Placement variable, all of the editorial content in the print media is classified as having a weak frame strength because the editorials are generally written by the newspaper’s editorial staff. As generalists, they cannot be considered Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) concerning Social Security. There are, in some cases, “Letters to the Editor” that are written by SMEs; however, there were too few during the reference period to affect the percentages. Placing 100 percent of the coverage in the weak category does not provide a basis of comparison to the broadcast media, but it does influence the broadcast media to the overall print media comparison. These results are shown in Table 5-3 on the following page.

Table 5-3 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Frame Strength

	Scale	Broadcast Media	Print Media (Hard News)	Combined Broadcast and Print
Weak	1	43%	29%	53%
Moderate	2	12%	18%	11%
Strong	3	45%	52%	36%
Mean Scale		2.0	2.2	1.9
Chi Square		84.500	103.000	309.688
P Value		<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

Tone Variable Comparison

While the Tone variable patterns for the broadcast and print media are similar, the print media has a more negative tone to its coverage in both breakouts of the print media (editorial, and hard news) than does the broadcast media. The percentage of negative stories in the broadcast media is slightly less than in the hard news portion of the print media (32 percent to 40 percent respectively). The percent of stories in the moderate classification is the same for the broadcast media and the print media with each having 46 percent of its coverage in that category.

The staff-written editorial portion of the print media is more negative in its tone than its hard news coverage. Fully 54 percent of the staff-written editorial coverage is classified as negative while 40 percent is classified as positive. This compares to 32 percent negative and 23 percent positive for the broadcast media. It is interesting to note that the editorial content is either negative or positive with very little in between. Six percent of the staff-written editorial coverage is classified as moderate.

There is more positive coverage in the broadcast media than in the hard news print media (23 percent to 14 percent respectively) while there is more negative coverage in the hard news print media than in the broadcast media (40 percent to 32 percent). They both have 46 percent of their coverage in the neutral category. Not only do the broadcast and hard news print media have the same percent of their coverage in the neutral category, this category contains almost half of their coverage. As a result, the statistical mean for the two are virtually the same (1.9 for the broadcast media and 1.7 for the hard news print media). Even though the percentage breakout within the categories for the staff-written editorial print media differs from the broadcast media and hard news print media, its statistical mean is 1.9 which is the same as the broadcast media. These results are shown in Table 5-4 on the following page.

Table 5-4 Chi Square Test for Competitive Framing Based Upon News Media Tone

	Scale	Broadcast Media	Print Media (Editorials) Staff	Print Media (Editorials) Ltr to Ed	Print Media (Hard News)	Combined Broadcast & Print
Negative	1	32%	54%	72%	40%	43
Neutral	2	46%	6%	2%	46%	34
Positive	3	23%	40%	26%	14%	23
Mean Scale		1.9	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.8
Chi Square		54.489	72.907	44.327	81.971	230.933
P Value		<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

The results from the present research support the hypothesis that there is variation in the way a political topic is framed within various news outlets. That is, in framing political issues, various news outlets engage in “competitive framing.” This is supported by the chi square and “P” Value analysis which showed that the media as a whole also exhibits the presence of competitive framing. In addition, the media as a whole exhibits more dispersed coverage within the variables than do the outlets individually.

Furthermore, even though the chi square and “P” Value analysis showed that the individual outlets exhibited the presence of competitive framing for most of the variables, the concentrations in certain categories within those variables seem to support the contention that outside forces such as the Presidential prime time press conferences and the death and subsequent selection of a Pope were enough to impose certain patterns of coverage on the individual outlets that might be different from the normal patterns that would be exhibited if the outlets were allowed to make their own decisions throughout the reference period. The research showed that the individual news outlets used competitive framing within certain variables in order to adapt to external influences such as competing stories and breaking news events. However, it also showed that with few exceptions, they exhibit a tendency to cluster their stories within certain categories rather than dispersing their coverage evenly over a variety of categories

within the variable. It is possible that without outside forces, the individual outlets may have experienced something at least closer to a lack of competitive framing.

Attitude Changes

Pertinent to this research is Zaller's belief that "changes in the flow of political communication cause attitude change not by producing a sudden conversion experience but by producing gradual changes in the balance of considerations that are present in people's minds and available for answering survey questions" (1992, p. 266). This would explain why analyzing media coverage over an extended reference period such as President Bush's "60 Stops in 60 Days" is pertinent. If attitude changes are indeed a gradual process, then media outlets framing an issue in a consistent way over a period of time have the best chance to influence public opinion concerning the issue. If, as this research has shown, news outlets tend to concentrate their coverage in a limited number of categories, they can change the public's attitude toward issues over a period of time.

Gate-Keeping

These findings would also seem to support the theory of "gate-keeping" within the various media outlets as proposed by Shoemaker and Voss among others. Gate-keepers determine what stories, out of all that are available on any given day, reach their viewers/readers. This gives great power to a relatively small group of editors, producers, and reporters. Housed within this small group of individuals is the power to not only determine if an issue is covered or not, but how it is covered. An issue can be promoted or minimized based upon how it is framed. The fact that each individual news outlet in the study had concentrations of coverage of the Social Security issue in different categories without regard for the other outlets in the media

would seem to indicate that each outlet has its own gate-keepers and makes its own decisions independently.

Also, due to the disparity in the coverage that is exhibited from one news outlet to another, the combined broadcast news media and the combined print news media exhibit the presence of competitive framing. The only outlet comparison that is close to fungent, however, is the nightly news programs from the three network news broadcasts. ABC, CBS, and NBC were remarkably similar in many of the variables studied. This supports the findings of Shoemaker & Voss who stated “ABC, NBC, and CBS often produce very similar views of the world because they operate within the same news environment, are influenced by what other media do, and have a tendency to replicate what they have done before” (2010, p.4). This indicates that viewers who watch the network news broadcasts will receive a similar “influence” and/or “reinforcement”

For coverage that was neither an “influencer” nor a “reinforcer” of opinion, the *PBS Nightly News*, was the most dispersed. When they chose to cover the President’s Social Security “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour, PBS’s coverage was more in-depth (as shown by story length) and less tendentious than any other news media outlet in the study. It should be pointed out that PBS is the only media news outlet in the study that is not dependent upon advertisers for a great part of its revenue. PBS is publicly funded, and as a result, does not have traditional commercials, nor does it depend upon audience share to finance its broadcast.⁶⁹ All of the other outlets in the study depend on advertisements or commercials that are geared toward the demographics of their viewers/readers.

⁶⁹ PBS relies on corporate sponsors and public pledges to help fund its broadcasts.

In addition, the research has shown that whether individual news outlets exhibit competitive framing or not, in most cases, they determine how they will frame their coverage of an issue based upon their own criteria without regard for the stance assumed by the other outlets in the industry.⁷⁰ The only exception to this individualized approach occurs when there is an expectation, or mandate, that the media as a whole will cover an event such as the President's prime time press conference at the end of the "60 Stops in 60 days" Social Security tour. This supports the hypothesis that the media as a whole exhibits competitive framing due to the varying concentrations of coverage in the individual outlets.

Niche Markets

It should be acknowledged that with the exception of PBS, all of the other news media outlets in the study are businesses with stockholders who expect a return on their investments. Furthermore, the media depend to a great extent upon advertising revenue in order to provide that return through dividends. In order to attract advertisers, the media periodically conducts studies to determine the demographics of its viewers/readers. This information is then used by the individual outlets to approach advertisers, who as a matter of course, target certain demographics. Therefore, an outlet's advertising revenues are directly affected by what viewers/readers it attracts. This means that the possibility exists for a media outlet to be successful by finding a niche market of viewers/readers. It should be assumed that this requirement to attract certain advertisers enters into the "gate-keeping" decisions that are made by the individual outlets. If a media outlet has certain demographics upon which it depends for advertising revenue, it stands to reason the outlet will frame issues in a manner that is consistent with the predispositions of its niche market.

⁷⁰ As previously discussed, the three network news broadcast outlets were very similar in their framing of the social security issue during the reference period.

Broadcast vs. Print Observations

Not surprisingly, the print media outlets in the study, due to their nature and format, proved to statistically be better at updating their readers on new developments concerning events on the President's tour than did their broadcast news counterparts. Furthermore, sources used by the print media were generally more authoritative than those used by the broadcast media. This was evident due to higher frame strength scores for the print news media as a whole when compared to the broadcast news media as a whole. This may come from the fact it is easier to call experts for comment as opposed to sending a camera crew to them, or getting them into the studio.

The tone of the coverage, in both the broadcast and print media as a whole, was more negative than positive as it was in nearly all of the outlets individually. Even though "bias" is beyond the scope of this study, it should be noted that based upon the work of Tim Groseclose and Jeffrey Milyo, negative scores in the news media's "Tone" could have been expected due to the public's reaction to the reform plan. They cite the Lott-Hassett paper when they state that "to define unbiased, it constructs a baseline that can vary with exogenous factors" (2005, p. 1195). In other words, if a news outlet had the same number of positive and negative stories on the Social Security reform plan, it is only unbiased if the policy is considered neutral. Since the reform plan was viewed negatively by the public, a neutral story could actually reflect a positive view. In a finding that has a direct bearing upon this research, Druckman, in a follow-on article after studying the Minnesota Senate race in 2000, found that "television news and newspapers differ substantially in the quantity of coverage, but do not drastically differ in terms of content" (2005, p. 476).

Going Public

Additionally, this research confirms previous research on “going public.” Previous work has shown that when a President goes public, he is most effective if he is promoting a concept or idea that already conforms to the beliefs of the public. President Bush hurt his chances of rallying public support for his Social Security reform during his “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour by insisting on personal accounts being included in any Social Security reform legislation. By adding the personal account requirement, President Bush was not promoting an idea that conformed to the public’s existing beliefs about Social Security, but rather a new idea that was portrayed by the Democrats in Congress as risky.

As previously discussed, people tend to be risk averse. Tversky and Kahneman (1992) showed that given a choice, people will choose the option with the least risk attached. In fact, President Bush tried to have his plan referred to as personal accounts rather than private accounts because of the implied connection between private accounts and privatizing Social Security. The President’s task was made even more difficult because he found himself on the wrong side of a partisan issue. As previously discussed, Ross (2007) points out that people trust Democrats more than Republicans where protecting Social Security is concerned. When the President’s reform plan was almost unanimously opposed by Congressional Democrats making it a partisan issue, it was doomed. The President not only was unable to change the minds of the public, but actually saw public support for his handling of Social Security drop during his “60 Stops in 60 Days” tour.

Original Contribution

The original contribution of this research is that it examined the way in which the news media frames an issue as opposed to how it covers an election. Most of the existing research into

framing in the media has looked at elections and evaluated how the various news outlets framed their coverage of a particular candidate. This research has pointed out that there are differences in the media's coverage of a candidate and a political issue. This was particularly apparent in the relationship between editorial and hard news coverage. Previous studies concerning political campaigns done by such researchers as Kahn and Kenney have shown that the editorial policy of a newspaper and the hard news coverage influence each other. This has manifested itself in how a newspaper frames its coverage of a candidate it has endorsed. Some studies have shown that when the editorial section of a newspaper endorses a candidate, the coverage of that candidate is framed in a more positive light. This research, however, shows that there is very little, if any, connection between the way the coverage of this issue is framed in the editorial section and the way the coverage is framed in the hard news section.

There are some possible reasons that this may have occurred. To start, while the editorial coverage was negative, to say the least, there was no official endorsement by any of the outlets covered saying "we endorse doing nothing on Social Security." However, the official endorsement of a candidate by a writer's own outlet could create a vested interest in a particular candidate if only subconsciously.

Next, and most importantly, this study is on a singular issue, Social Security. While there are different ways in which one could cover Social Security, the issue has so many different implications and arguments it would be incredibly difficult to present it as Black and White. The only certainty was that without modification, the system would bankrupt in the future. When Kahn and Kenney, and later Druckman, studied a connection between editorial content and hard news, they used a "frame focus" variable that included an "Issue Frame" among others. This would have allowed an outlet to concentrate on the positive attributes of the endorsed candidate

along with the issues upon which he/she fared best while, at the same time, downplaying weaker attributes and losing issues. In other words, it is not necessarily that the writers acted differently in their coverage due to the endorsement, but may have acted differently in what they chose to cover.

In closing, the use of competitive framing in the media should be thought of as an intricate part of a free society. In all the variables studied, except for Length, variety is essential to providing individuals with an opinion that is the most compatible with their predispositions.

For Placement, consistently burying an issue among the news of the day can make people think little of it. On the other hand, an issue that continuously shows up during the first segment of a broadcast or on the front page of a newspaper can create a priority in comparison to other issues that is not justified.

Furthermore, Frame Strength requires variety because all angles of an issue should be explored. Providing strong frames through the use of credible sources such as “subject matter experts,” for example, are needed for a logical assessment of an issue as well as provide the greatest likelihood for opinion change. This, however, should not negate the use of a weak frame, like a human interest story, which lets one see the real world effect of policy change on people’s lives.

Tone is likely the penultimate element of framing. When someone is forming an opinion, they must be privy to the pros and cons of the argument. The information provided, and excluded, can amount to the manipulation of opinion formation.

Length, unlike all of the other variables studied, is not best served through variety; however, quantity is pointless without variety among the other framing elements. The more information one consumes, the more likely they are to make the correct judgment based on

personal predispositions. Unfortunately, time/space constraints placed on all media outlets will always create a lack of complete information, nor do individuals have the time to learn all things on all issues.

When these and other framing dimensions culminate in a lack of competitive framing, a singular vision can be developed that highlights or marginalizes an issue while telling them the viewers/readers how to feel. This is why oppressive governments control the media and the dissemination of information.

It should also be noted that competitive framing need not be present in any individual media outlet, as long as competitive framing exists through one outlet serving as a counterweight for another, and the individual is aware of its presence. In fact, one may feel more comfortable seeking out the news source that most closely resembles his/her own values in its coverage (thus niche markets).

Areas for Future Research

This research was intended to show whether or not individual news outlets used competitive framing in their coverage of political issues. During the course of the analysis, however, some potential areas for future research became apparent.

While the present research analyzed how the news media outlets covered the President's "60 Stops in 60 Days" Social Security tour, the effect their coverage had on the opinions of their viewers/readers was out of the scope of this study. This is an area that could be analyzed in a future study.

In addition, the research and analysis should be repeated in its entirety using a partisan issue from the Democrat side of the aisle as well as a bi-partisan issue. Since the Social Security reform initiative was a partisan issue for the Republicans, the coverage, and therefore the results

of the analysis, may be influenced by a predisposition toward certain types of framing by media outlets in the study toward partisan issues. In order to test this theory, a partisan issue for the Democrats, such as President Obama's healthcare reform initiative, should be analyzed as to the length, placement, frame strength, and tone of the coverage in the same media outlets. A comparison could then be drawn between partisanship and type of coverage in the media.

Furthermore, the research and analysis could be repeated for a bi-partisan issue where both Republicans and Democrats have very similar views and agendas. Again, it would provide insight into the workings, and possible predispositions, of the news media if a more bi-partisan issue, such as immigration reform under President Bush which enjoyed support from both Republicans and Democrats alike, until public opposition ultimately defeated it, were analyzed. A comparison could then be drawn between bi-partisanship and type of coverage. The results of the three research studies could then be compared to determine if the news media exhibits any variation in framing techniques in its coverage of partisan issues and policies.

REFERENCES

- Bagdikian, B.H. (1983). *The Media Monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Barker, D.C. (2005). Values, frames, and persuasion in presidential nomination campaigns. *Political Behavior, 27*, 375-394.
- Berinsky, Adam J. and Kinder, Donald R. (2000). Making sense of issues through frames: Understanding the Kosovo crisis. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association held in Washington, D.C.
- Bless, H., Fiedler, K., & Strack, F. (2004). *Social cognition: How individuals construct social reality*. Hove, U.K: Psychology Press.
- Brady, David W. and Volden, Craig. (2006). *Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy From Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Brewer, P.R. (2001). Value words and lizard brains: Do citizens deliberate about appeals to their core values? *Political Psychology, 22*(1), 45-64.
- Brewer, P.R. and Gross, K. (2005). Values, framing, and citizens' thoughts about policy issues: effects on content and quantity. *Political Psychology, 26*:6, 929-948.
- Brownstein, Ronald. (2007). *The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America*. NY: The Penguin Group.
- Burrelles Luce (2005). Top 100 newspapers in the U.S. by circulation. Retrieved on April 15, 2008 from http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2005_Top_100List.pdf
- Bush, George W. (2005). Transcript of the state of the union address retrieved on January 12, 2011 from <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/stateoftheunion2005.htm>
- Cannon, Lou (1991). *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*. NY: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster.
- Ceaser, James W., Busch, Andrew E., and Pitney, John J. Jr. (2009). *Epic Journey*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Chong, D. (1996). Creating common frames of reference on political issues. In D.C. Mutz, P.M. Sniderman, & R.A. Brody (Eds.), *Political persuasion and attitude change* (pp. 195-224). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Chong, Dennis and Druckman, James N. (2007). A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments. *Journal of Communications, 57*, 99-118.

- Chong, Dennis and Druckman, James N. (2008). Identifying frames in political news. *Sourcebook for Political Communication Research: Methods, Measures, and Analytical Techniques*, Routledge. Forth coming. Retrieved on December 20th, 2010 from <http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~jnd260/publications.html>.
- Coleman, Renita and Banning, Stephen (2006). Network TV news' affective framing of the presidential candidates: Evidence for a second-level agenda-setting effect through visual framing. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 83:2, 313-328.
- Dalton, Russell J., Beck, Paul A., and Huckfeldt, Robert (1998). Partisan cues and the media. *American Political Science Review*, 92(1), 111-126.
- Dedman, Bill and Doig, Stephen K. (2005). Report to the Knight Foundation. Knight Foundation. Retrieved on May 20, 2010 from <http://powerreporting.com/knight/table1.pdf>.
- Dijkstra, Arie, Schakenraad, Roos, Menninga, Karin, Buunk, Abraham P., and Siero, Frans (2009). Self-discrepancies and involvement moderate the effects of positive and negative message framing in persuasive communication. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 31:234-243.
- Druckman, James N. (2010). Competing frames in a political campaign. In Brian F. Schaffner and J. Sellers (Eds.), *Winning with words: the origins and impacts of framing* (pp101-120). New York: Routledge.
- Druckman, James N. (2001a). Evaluating framing effects. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 22:1, 91-101.
- Druckman, James N. (2005). Media matter: How newspapers and television news cover campaigns and influence voters. *Political Communication*, 22:4, 463-481.
- Druckman, James N. (2001b). On the limits of framing effects: Who can frame? *The Journal of Politics*, 63, 1041-1066.
- Druckman, James N. and Bolsen, Toby (2010). Framing, motivated reasoning, and opinions about emergent technologies. *Journal of Communication*, Forth coming. Retrieved on December 20th, 2010 from <http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~jnd260/publications.html>.
- Druckman, J.N. and Nelson, K.R. (2003). Framing and deliberations. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47, 728-744.
- Druckman, James N. and Parkin, Michael. (2005). The impact of media bias: How editorial slant affects voters. *The Journal of Politics*, 67, 1031-1049.

- Eagly, A.H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College.
- Edwards III, George C. (2003). *On Deaf ears: the Limits of the Bully Pulpit*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Edwards III, George C. and Wood, B. Dan (1999). Who influences whom? The president, congress, and the media. *American Political Science Review*, 93, 327-344.
- Entman, Robert M. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. *Journal of Communications*, 57, 163-173.
- Entman, Robert M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43:4, 51-58.
- Gamson, William A. and Modigliani, Andre. (1989). Media discourse and public Opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95:1, 1-37.
- Groseclose, Tim and Milyo, Jeffrey. (2005). A measure of media bias. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November.
- Gross, Kimberly and D' Ambrosio, Lisa (2004). Framing emotional response. *Political Psychology* 25:1, 1-39.
- Gross, Stephen C. (2005). Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee on February 2, retrieved on April 14th 2008 from http://www.ssa.gov/legislation/testimony_020205.html
- Hansen, Kasper M. (2007). The sophisticated public: the effect of competing frames on public opinion. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30:3, 377-396.
- Hardt, H. (1979). *Social Theories of the Press: Early German and American Perspectives*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Haider-Markel, D.P. and Joslyn, M.R. (2001). Gun policy, opinion, tragedy, and blame attribution: The conditional influence of issue frames. *Journal of Politics*, 63, 520-543.
- Higgins, E.T. (1996). Knowledge activation: accessibility, applicability, and salience. In E.T. Higgins & A.W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 133-168). New York: Guilford Press.
- Higgins, E. T. and King, G. (1981). Social constructs: Information-processing consequences of individual and contextual variability. In N. Cantor & J.F. Kihlstrom (eds.), *Personality, cognition, and social interaction* (pp. 69-121). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Iyengar, Shanto (1991). *Is Anyone Responsible?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jerit, Jennifer (2010). How predictive appeals affect policy opinions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53:2, 411-426.
- Jerit, Jennifer (2008). Issue framing and engagement: Rhetorical strategy in public policy debates. *Political Behavior*, 30:1-24.
- Kahn, Kim F. (1991). Senate elections in the news: An examination of the characteristics and determinants of campaign coverage. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 16, 349-374.
- Kahn, Kim Fridkin and Kenney, Patrick J. (2002). The slant of the news: How editorial endorsements influence campaign coverage and citizens' views of candidates. *The American Political Science Review*, 96, 381-394.
- Kernell, Samuel. (1993). *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. USA: Congressional Quarterly, Inc.
- Kinder, Donald R. (2007). Curmudgeonly advice. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 155-162.
- Kuklinski, James H. and Sigelman, Lee (1992). When objectivity is not objective. *The Journal of Politics*, 54(3), 810-833.
- Lind, Nancy S. and Tamas, Bernard Ivan. (2007). *Controversies of the George W. Bush Presidency: Pro and Con Documents*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Luttbeg, N.R. (1983). News consensus: Do U.S. newspapers mirror society's happenings? *Journalism Quarterly*, 60(3), 484-488, 578.
- McCombs, Maxwell E. and Shaw, Donald (1972). The agenda setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-187.
- McGrath, Conor (2007). Framing lobbying messages: Defining and communicating political issues persuasively. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 7, 269-280.
- Miller, Joanne M. and Krosnick, Jon A. (2000). News media impact on the ingredients of presidential evaluations: Politically knowledgeable citizens are guided by a trusted source. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 295-309.
- Mutz, Diana C. (1995). Effects of horse race coverage on campaign coffers: Strategic Contributing in presidential primaries. *Journal of Politics*, 57, 1015-1042.
- Mycoff, Jason D. and Pika, Joseph A. (2008). *Confrontation & Compromise: Presidential and Congressional Leadership, 2001-2006*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

- National Park Service (2004). The presidents of the United States biographical sketches: Woodrow Wilson. Retrieved on June 14th 2010 from http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/presidents/bio28.htm.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Clawson, Rosalee A., and Oxley, Zoe M. (1997a). Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *American Political Science Review*, 91(3), 567-583.
- Nelson, Thomas and Kinder, Donald R. (1996). Issue frames and group-centrism in American public opinion. *The Journal of Politics*, 58:4, 1055-1078.
- Nelson, Thomas E. and Oxley, Zoe M. (1999). Issue framing effects on belief importance and opinions. *The Journal of Politics*, 61, 1040-1067.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Oxley, Zoe M., and Clawson, Rosalee A. (1997b). Toward a psychology of framing effects. *Political Behavior*, 19, 221-246.
- Perry, David (2002). *Theory and Research in Mass Communication Contexts and Consequences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2006). Cable news prime time viewership. *The State of the News Media 2006*. Retrieved on December 18, 2009 from http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2006/chartland.asp?id=224&ct=line&dir=&sort=&col1_box=1&col2_box=1&col3_box=1
- Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2006). Network TV. *The State of the News Media 2006: An Annual Report on American Journalism*. Retrieved on April 14th 2007 from http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2006/narrative_networktv_audience.asp?cat+2&media=5
- Rabin, Matthew (1998). Psychology and economics. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 36(1), 11- 46.
- Riffe, Daniel, Lacy, Stephen, and Fico, Frederick G. (1998). *Analyzing Media Messages*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Ross, Fiona. (2007). Policy histories and partisan leadership in presidential studies: the case of social security. *The Polarized Presidency of George W. Bush*. Eds. George C. Edwards III and Desmond S. King. NY: Oxford University Press.
- 60 stops in 60 days (2005). *Social Security Information Center* retrieved on Oct 19th 2006 from <http://www.strengtheningsocialsecurity.gov>
- Scheufele, Dietram and Tewksbury, David (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communications*, 57, 9-20.

- Shoemaker, P.J. (1984). Media coverage of deviant political groups. *Journalism Quarterly*, 61, 66-75, 82.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Voss, Tim P. (2009). *Gatekeeping Theory*. NY: Routledge.
- Sniderman, Paul. M. and Theriault, Sean M. (1999). The dynamics of political argument and the logic of issue framing. Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association held in Chicago.
- Sniderman, Paul. M. and Theriault, Sean M. (2004). The structure of political argument and the logic of issue framing. In W.E. Saris & P.M. Sniderman (Eds.) *Studies in public opinion* (pp. 133-165). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Solomon, Lewis D. (2005). *Financial Security & Personal Wealth*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Tversky, Amos and Kahneman, Daniel (1981). The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice. *Science*, 211(4481), 453-458.
- Social Security Administration (1996). Agency history. Retrieved on April 10, 2008 from <http://www.ssa.gov/history/idapayroll.html>
- U.S. Social Security Administration (2003). Historical background and development of social security. Retrieved on April 15, 2008 from <http://www.ssa.gov/history/briefhistory3.html>
- Zaller, John R. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhou, Yuqiong & Moy, Patricia (2007). Parsing framing processes: The interplay between online public opinion and media coverage. *Journal of Communications*, 57, 79-98.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

CONSENT FORM

I am conducting a study on competitive framing in the news media. I would appreciate your help in this research. If you participate in the study, you will be asked to evaluate the transcripts of several news stories that ran during regularly scheduled news broadcasts during 2005. All answers are anonymous. Your name will only appear on this consent form. This project is valuable because it will help us to better understand how the broadcast news media frame news stories.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please print and sign your name below:

Print Your Name

Signature

Date

Appendix B

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS

The following transcripts were randomly selected accordingly to their media source. Please follow the directions listed below in an attempt to achieve consistent grading.

- 1. Read each article and indicate statements/ lines as positive, negative, or neutral.**
Statements that are positive are to be underlined.
Statements that are negative are to be circled.
Statements that are neutral are to be left alone.

- 2. After reading and looking at Step 1. Please indicate what would you think best represents the overall tone of the transcript.**
 1. Very Negative – The vast majority is negative with a small amount of positive statements.
 2. Negative – It is negative but does allow for some positive statements.
 3. Neutral – Overall it is fair to both sides including positive and negative statements
 4. Positive – It is positive but does allow for some negative statements.
 5. Very Positive – The vast majority is positive with a small amount of negative statements.

- 3. After reading how strong did you find the framing?**
 1. Very Strong – The transcript was dominated by useful information from hard news, polls, statements from experts, statements from policy makers.
 2. Strong – The transcript had lots of useful information most of its information from hard news, polls, statements from experts, statements from policy makers.
 3. Moderate – The transcript had an average useful amount of its information from hard news, polls, statements from experts, statements from policy makers.
 4. Moderate Weak – The transcript contained a small amount of useful information from hard news, polls, statements from experts, statements from policy makers.
 5. Weak – The transcript contains very little to no useful information from hard news, polls, statements from experts, statements from policy makers.

Appendix C

CHECKLIST

STORY # 1

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 2

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 3

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 4

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 5

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 6

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 7

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 8

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 9

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____

STORY # 10

1. Your overall impression of the tone of the news story.

Negative ____

Neutral ____

Positive ____

2. How strong was the framing?

Strong ____

Moderate ____

Weak ____