Running Head: YOUTUBE PRESIDENTIAL CLIPS

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES'

VIDEO CLIPS ON YOUTUBE

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty

of the Department of Communication

of Southern Utah University

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In his seminal book *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan taught the familiar adage "the medium is the message" which means "the way information is presented is at least as important as the information itself" (Rogers, 2000, p. 125). With media previously, "[t]he message, it seemed, was the 'content' as people used to ask what a painting was *about*. Yet they never thought to ask what a melody was about, not what a house or a dress was about" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 13). Addressing this observation, McLuhan's medium theory dictates that media shape the world around us by shaping our perceptions and attitudes, because the content has become the medium. As a direct fulfillment of this innovative school of thought, the web site YouTube.com (hereafter YouTube) has emerged to become the most influential message in media today because of the medium itself: the Internet. In fact, media professor Christian Christensen has said that YouTube could become more than just another video-sharing web site: "YouTube has started out as a fascinating example of how new technology can alter our conceptions about what media is, and can be" (Christensen, 2007, p. 40). Even though the messages presented on the web site are not necessarily unique or revolutionary, the medium itself has become the message. Accordingly, YouTube has moved beyond its initial status as another insignificant web site into one of the most popular (and even important) web sites in cyberspace (Collins, 2006, n.p.; Grossman, 2006, p. 64).

Definition of YouTube

For those not familiar with this phenomenon, YouTube is "a place where 65,000 mostly homemade, often offbeat, digital clips are uploaded daily to be shared online" (Collins, 2006, n.p.). It has also been referred to as a surveillance system, a spotlight, a

microscope, and a soapbox: it is a surveillance system because cell phone videos posted

on YouTube have worn away "the distinction between amateur and professional

photojournalists"; it has been called a spotlight because its videos can be "kept…in the

news for days"; it is a microscope because it allows the viewer to view "world news in

extreme close-up…"; and it is a soapbox because YouTube is considered a "social force"

(Poniewozik, 2006/2007, pp. 63-64). YouTube, still fairly new at a little more than two

years old, has already changed the Internet in ways that are astounding to media scholars

and political pundits alike; more and more viewers are basing their opinions, political and

otherwise, on the videos presented on YouTube (Poniewozik, 2006/2007; Fernandez,

2006; Kurtz, 2006).

RATIONALE

Because YouTube has made such an impact on the online community, *Time* magazine, among other publications, has called the web site the most important invention of 2006 (Grossman, 2006; Evensen, 2006). Explaining why, *Time* columnist Lev Grossman (2006) said: "The rules are different now, and one Web site changed them: YouTube…YouTube created a new way for millions of people to entertain, educate, shock, rock and grok one another on a scale we've never seen before" (p. 64). This appearance of unscripted 'real life' videos added a level of credibility to the web site that may be reflected by the amount of viewers YouTube has each day, estimated at over 100 million videos streamed daily, with an average of 70,000 more videos actually uploaded to the site (p. 64). These estimates were given nearly two years ago, and the numbers at the writing of this paper are likely higher.

Though derided simply as the Internet equivalent of "America's Funniest Home Videos" by some critics (Creamer, 2007, p. 1), YouTube has also proven to be a legitimate corporation: In 2006, YouTube was purchased by media giant Google for 1.65 billion dollars (Collins, 2006; Creamer, 2007). Becker, Grossman, Higgins & Romano (2006) wrote about the subject shortly after it happened. Quoting media consultant Tom Wolzien, the article stated: "YouTube has been fascinating…but until someone put a financial model behind it, it wasn't particularly a threat to anybody. With Google, YouTube will have that model" (p. 14). This summarizes what many of the articles state about YouTube: the little video-sharing Web site that was once viewed as having a "garage-band attitude" (p. 14) is now considered a legitimate corporation.

Because of the popularity and accessibility of YouTube, politicians have accordingly learned to post their platforms and messages to the public on the web site and viewers have responded (YouChoose). On YouTube, one may view each message and the number of each viewing is then recorded directly beneath the clip. Accordingly, one can quantifiably measure the number of viewings of each clip and gauge their respective popularity with the public. Likewise, one may view comments posted by respective viewers: In some cases, as a condensed political blog.

In July of 2007, YouTube was again brought to the country's attention for its connection to the political debates. In addition to its already extensive coverage in the nation's media for its entertaining-yet-amateur video clips, it was now being covered for the decision to dedicate a portion of its web site to "YouChoose," a viral forum for the presidential candidates to discuss their platforms. This was an important opportunity for presidential candidates given YouTube's negative political history: Tan (2007) has stated that in the 2006 nationwide elections, at least two candidates lost directly as a result of uncomplimentary clips posted on YouTube (p. 4). Details of this assertion will follow later in this study.

Initially, perception of the influence of YouChoose has been positive: "70% of voters believe YouTube can get out the vote in the 2008 election—and influence the result" (Tan, 2007, p. 4). Therefore, a political analysis of YouTube is relevant and important to the political atmosphere of 2007 and 2008.

Critiques of YouTube

As with popular web sites like MySpace, despite its many praises, YouTube is not without criticism. There are some who feel that the age group to which YouTube appeals

is a hindrance: "Some find little that is substantive among the rampant quirkiness. 'YouTube is just another form of self-indulgence and immediate gratification that is enslaving…teens and 20-somethings,'" (Collins, 2006). However, YouTube has emerged as an essential organization capable of influencing important opinions: those of the public. It is no longer simply a web site aimed at presenting random and quirky non-sequiturs to entertain bored young adults; YouTube has emerged as an essential tool for education and research, advertising, political campaigns and political accountability. It is a web site that has taken control, in many ways, of impressionable minds because of its accessibility. Likewise, as we will see, it also emphasizes real, frank interaction and dialogue that caters to the public's interests.

Much media attention has been given to another web site, MySpace.com. This web site has become popular with America, especially young adults, as a means to meet and socialize with others and accordingly, YouTube has been compared to it as just another trendy new site. However, from a solely financial viewpoint, the significance of YouTube surpasses that of MySpace. In contrast to Google's 1.65 billion offered to buy YouTube, MySpace was bought by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation for only $580 million: half of YouTube's offer (Collins, 2006).

Creamer (2007), however, has raised the question that perhaps Google spent its money poorly when acquiring YouTube. Given the copyright issues the web site has had with major media companies like Viacom, Creamer implied that perhaps the investment was not worth the money (p. 1). He concluded that advertisers are not as interested in buying user-generated Web time as has been declared by other media types (p. 2).

Perhaps predictably (as YouTube can be viewed as a threat to television), television executives have also contributed to disparaging YouTube. In a panel for several television executives, Investment Officer Rino Scanzoni said regarding YouTube's business model: "A model based on content piracy and mediocre user-based content has severe limitations. Ultimately they're going to need to have a legitimate content that's going to drive advertisers to support it" (Hampp, 2007, p. 27). *Time* has joined the television vs. YouTube debate itself: "Does YouTube aspire to become TV? These days TV should be so lucky as to become YouTube" (Poniewozik, 2006/2007, p. 64).

The Influence of YouTube

Irrespective of its criticisms, it is difficult for advertisers at least to deny the marketing power of the web site. Klaassen and Atkinson (2007) cited ad market company eMarketer's estimate that the online video market in 2007 would be $775 million (p. 1). Further, 123 million viewers in the United States alone have viewed 7.2 billion videos online (p. 1). Out of all of the Internet video sites, YouTube is the most popular, with 992 million videos posted (p. 1). Additionally, it is estimated that by the year 2010, advertisers will have spent $2.5 billion exclusively on online advertisements (Becker, et al., 2006, p. 15) and many of those advertisements will be placed exclusively on YouTube. Thus, YouTube's marketing power is due to the fact that people will continue to visit the web site because the medium of the Internet is extremely accessible to the rest of the world.

Why has YouTube proven itself as a web site worthy of $1.65 billion? The answer is not only the free advertising for products, music groups, television networks

and movies; it is also the political forum that, in many cases, makes or breaks the

candidate. Amateur videos of campaign speeches, questionable comments and actions of

political candidates have all played a very significant role in the most recent American

elections. When they are posted on YouTube, the public has proven itself to pay attention

to these videos and use them in making its opinion. These videos, which are mostly

negative toward the candidate, have played a role in raising a politician's level of

accountability that was much less common before: "In a world where cell phones are

cameras and video recorders, every word that you utter (or text), and every nap you take,

can and will be used against you on YouTube" (Fernandez, 2006). Accordingly, if the

actions of these politicians are used to their detriment, it usually proves a loss in public

respect or a loss in the elections.

The impact of YouTube in the election of the incumbent Senator Conrad Burns

from Montana, for example, has become apparent: more than 130 videos were posted

about him, most of which were unflattering. The videos did not have a particularly slick

appearance, either: "No fancy production values here—just a straight-on camera shot of

the senator falling asleep during a congressional hearing important to Montana. That

video alone received more than 100,000 views" (Fernandez, 2006). Burns ultimately lost

the election, beginning assertions that the clips and the election result were seemingly

connected. Likewise, Senator George Allen of Virginia received much attention over the

video posted of him during the heat of the 2006 nationwide elections; in the

aforementioned video clip, Allen was speaking candidly at a small gathering of his

supporters. As Allen spoke, he was videotaped by a man who was sent by Allen's

opponent. Allen referred to the cameraman multiple times as "macaca" and told him

"welcome to America." Because the cameraman was an Indian American, the comment was interpreted to be racially insensitive. This video clip was widely disseminated throughout YouTube and, along with another clip showing the same incident, has received over 700,000 views as of July 2008. Allen also lost the election (Fernandez, 2006). As a potential explanation, Fernandez gave this important distinction between YouTube and another important medium, the television: "…while TV emphasizes perception, control and centralization, Internet-driven politics is about transparency, distribution of effort and, most important, empowerment and participation—at whatever level of engagement the consumer wants" (p. 19A). Partly because of this fact, politics is one of the main allures of the web site. It has become so popular to the viewers and has made such an impact in politics, there has been a separate term coined: "YouTube politics." This term, applied to politics, is unique because it represents a "new twist on the old game of gotcha" (Farhi, 2006). Thus, politics present one of the reasons for the mainstream success of YouTube.

Another reason for the success of the web site is the viewers, effectively coined "the YouTube generation" (Collins, 2006, n.p.). The users of the web site have added significance because they have acted upon what they have gleaned from YouTube. Even viewing a video is considered an action by marketers and experts alike.

Grossman (2006) speculated about YouTube's popularity from a psychological viewpoint: "YouTube had tapped into something that appears on no business plan: the lonely, pressurized, pent-up video subconscious of America" (p. 64). Whether this assessment is correct and YouTube is another vent for America's subconscious is questionable. However, it is certain that the more straightforward and unfiltered the

information is on YouTube, the greater the reward; YouTube consumers tend to favor

these videos and view them multiple times until, in some cases, the user has moved to

iconic status. As *Time* magazine put it, "[t]he way blogs made regular folks into

journalists, YouTube makes them into celebrities" (Grossman, 2006, p. 65). These

"regular folks" have achieved this level of celebrity because of the medium of presenting

information in an amateur way, complete with shaky camera and no microphone. This

presentation appeals to the public because it relates to what some journalists believe is the

need for the unfiltered, un-"glossed-over" truth:

> The idea of a top-down culture, in which talking heads spoon-feed passive
>
> spectators ideas about what's happening in the world, is over. People want
>
> unfiltered video from Iraq, Lebanon and Darfur—not from journalists who visit
>
> there but from soldiers who fight there and people who live and die there…The
>
> yardstick on YouTube is authenticity…That's why politicians have suddenly
>
> started to act like real human beings in their campaign ads, and why some—like
>
> Senator George Allen of "Macacagate" fame—have been busted for getting a
>
> little too real. (Grossman, 2006, p. 65).

 As such, YouTube has created a paradigm shift of sorts in the world of journalism.

Still, certain messages are better presented than others on YouTube. In the

medium of movies, high definition, technically immaculate film is the norm: it can take

hours to reach its climax, and even though it may take hours of tension to reward with the

denouement, YouTube is quite different: "Web video is like a pop single: an attention-

getting hook is important. [Michael J. Fox's] baring his frailty was particularly YouTube-

friendly because the medium rewards authentic, *vérité* captured moments" (Poniewozik,

2006, p. 74). Consequently, some of the web videos on the site have ulterior motives: Michael J. Fox, as mentioned, starred in a 2006 video that also functioned as an endorsement of Missouri Senate candidate Claire McCaskill. In the ad, he defended stem cell research to help sufferers of Parkinson's disease, like himself. Shortly afterward, conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh accused Fox of exaggerating the effects of the disease. The results of the airing of the clip on YouTube were substantial:

> …this short TV spot may have done more than any other to show YouTube's potential as a political force…[The Michael J. Fox] scuffle shows YouTube's potential to preach to the unconverted. About 2 million people watched the Fox ad on YouTube [that] week, and more than 600,000 the rebuttal. That pales before a TV audience—until you realize that this means some 2 million people are watching political ads on purpose…In a past election, viewers might have seen the controversial ads only if they lived in Missouri or caught them on the news. Now they can find them, in full, at their leisure. (Poniewozik, 2006, p. 74).

After Limbaugh's criticism of Fox, a man who is popular with many Americans, McCaskill ultimately emerged victorious in the elections. Though these events may only be seemingly connected, a possibility exists that Fox's video, and the subsequent backlash, was a large factor in the election result.

Due in part to this amount of publicity, political messages have evolved to become more YouTube-friendly. Julie Supan, the senior marketing director for YouTube was quoted by *Washington Post* staff writer Howard Kurtz as to why YouTube is important in the political playing field:

YouTube is a campaign game-changer, shifting the dynamics of how to reach

voters and build intimate relationships…[it] levels the playing field, allowing

well-backed and less-known candidates to reach the same audience and share the

same stage. (Kurtz, 2006, p. C01).

While in past election years, where the lower-tiered candidates may have been

known by name only, YouTube has now given a face to each candidate to be shown to all

of America. In addition, each candidate now is given equal space and equal time to give

their platforms to potential voters. While each of these candidates made television

appearances throughout their campaigns, the quantity of these appearances paled in

comparison with the so-called top-tiered candidates. Thanks to YouChoose, Sam

Brownback, Chris Dodd, and Duncan Hunter, for example, while all have since dropped

from the presidential race, have each achieved the same exposure as the frontrunners. In

short, politics have been irreversibly changed:

…in 12 short years the Internet has grown to include more than a billion users

worldwide and has empowered ordinary citizens to become engaged, active and

highly influential participants in democracy, instead of passive consumers of

campaign rhetoric. (Fernandez, 2006).

Because of this recognition and accessibility, YouTube has become an icon of popular

culture; because of this immense popularity, politicians are learning that in order to

survive an election, it is imperative to take advantage of the web site (Fernandez, 2006).

Accordingly, in the current presidential race, candidates like Hillary Clinton, John

Edwards and Mitt Romney have posted exclusive YouTube video clips as early as in the

spring of 2007.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because of the relative newness of the topic, the small amount of literature written about YouTube remains limited to magazines, Internet publications and some trade journals. *Time* magazine, for example, the most conspicuous literature about YouTube, identified the web site as responsible for changing the face of contemporary politics (Grossman, 2006). This declaration, with a combination of the newfound prevalence of political blogs and podcasts, is bringing political campaigns into a new generation of influence that is taking some by surprise (Palser, 2006; Oravec, 2005). Noting this, politicians, advertisers, and news groups have spent a significant amount of time and resources on the World Wide Web (Palser, 2006; McKeown & Plowman 1999; Davis, 2005). This review of the literature published and posted about YouTube will provide a brief background of the web site, and then will examine YouTube as an influential site for advertising, education, and politics. Finally, it will examine the Internet's place in leadership and politics.

Background of YouTube

Accounts differ on which video YouTube first aired: *Time* magazine claimed that the first video was of a simple trip to the zoo, while another source stated that it was a video of the founder's cat (Grossman, 2006; Collins, 2006). Although initially these videos were somewhat unspectacular, everything changed when the site first posted the Saturday Night Live video short "Lazy Sunday." According to media expert Rand Fishkin, "That single video actually took [YouTube] from obscurity to fame overnight" (quoted in Collins, 2006). Now, from the inconsequential video of a cat, the site has

evolved to a massive amount of viewers who stream and upload videos on the site everyday (Grossman, 2006).

Advertising

The popularity of YouTube has presented a great opportunity to some organizations to provide its message to the public. Advertising on the site is essential not only because of the size of its audience, but because of its repeated viewing habits. Some companies take this fact very seriously: in August of 2006, for example, the Australian company Foster's beer announced it would devote 100 percent of its American ad budget to the Internet (Palser, 2006). *Time* magazine has mentioned why advertising on YouTube has become so important: "It already has partnerships with NBC, CBS, Universal Music, Sony BMG and Warner Music. And come on—it's the one place on the Net where people willingly, knowingly click on ads…" (Grossman, 2006, p. 65). Advertisers have learned that they must take advantage of this unique medium to get their message to the public.

Regardless of its popularity, YouTube still is criticized for its "content piracy" (Hampp, 2007, p. 27) regarding the video clips uploaded by users without the express consent from advertisers. However, this fact appears to be generally downplayed by advertisers; the cost of the "content piracy" seems to be outweighed by the benefit of being advertised to a large group of consumers (Palser, 2006, p. 90). Television networks have also adopted a similar philosophy: CBS spokesperson Dana McClintock, for example, has said: "If we feel that [the video clip] has a greater benefit promotionally and financially than it does a detriment to us in terms of copyright violation, then we'll leave it [on the Web site]" (Becker, et al., 2006, p. 15).

YouTube's impact has become apparent not only to advertising firms, but also to non-governmental organizations, television networks, campaigns and political candidates. The mindset of these collective companies has seemingly reverted to an adapted form of Darwinism: it is the 'survival of the fittest', or 'take advantage of YouTube in order to survive.'

Education

YouTube has been utilized by different organizations as an educational tool because it is appealing for several reasons: videos are easy to create and can be distributed at no cost or almost no cost—additionally, web sites like YouTube allow hosting to be free, since it permits uploads by its consumers for free (Clark & Stewart, 2007, p. 478). Further, it was also found to be a more popular video web site than competitors like ClipShack, Yahoo! Video and MotionBox by a staggering margin (p. 480).

The Office of National Drug Policy, a governmental organization, has taken to uploading videos on YouTube to educate the masses, not only to distribute its message, but also to stay current. In its official statement, the ONDCP said the following: "We know that in order to remain effective communicators in this new information age, public institutions must adapt to meet the realities of these promising technologies" (ONDCP, 2006). Further, they explained that the utilization of YouTube is essential for institutions to adapt: "This ground-breaking effort will enable ONDCP to reach more Americans online and illustrates how public institutions can adapt to meet the rapidly changing nature of today's communications field" (ONDCP, 2006). Clark & Stewart (2007) have mentioned that the Internet "is now the first information source for students" (p. 480).

Therefore, according to the student demand, coupled with the potential of YouTube to reach a young audience may elevate its status from being solely a content-sharing web site into an important educational tool.

Leadership and Language

Leadership in politics has been disseminated throughout the Internet on an international scale; however, in contrast to the purpose of this study, much of its analyzed format in the past has been parody (Mikula, 2003). Many of the most popular (and controversial) videos clips on the Internet have been political parodies of candidates like Barack Obama and Rudy Giuliani. In fact, two video parodies of these candidates on YouTube have garnered a total of more than 5.5 million views—no small feat on the web site.

Political leadership has also been parodied on a national scale and is widely recognized through the efforts of comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert (Bennett, 2007). Possibly because of the popularity of their programs, candidates have also begun to shift to forms of humor and even parody (Teinowitz, 2007). For example, Hillary Clinton, along with former President Bill Clinton have parodied the recent television show *The Sopranos*, while candidate Bill Richardson has used humor in his television ads as well (Teinowitz, 2007, p. 3). Additionally, candidate Mike Huckabee has used celebrity Chuck Norris to endorse him in a popular web clip, where he (Huckabee) parodies Norris throughout the video.

Studies have also been conducted researching each candidate's leadership mentions in a variety of contexts. A seminal analytical approach to the use of language in campaigns was proposed in the form of Benoit's Functional Theory of Political

Campaign Discourse (Brazeal & Benoit, 2006; Benoit, Stein & Hansen, 2005; Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006). This theory posits that "campaign discourse has only three functions (acclaims, or positive statements; attacks, or negative statements; and defenses, or refutations of attacks)" (Benoit et al., 2005, p. 361) and those functions have been studied in contexts such as press releases, debates, and television spots (Cho & Benoit, 2006; Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006; Stein, 2005). The theory also states that the candidate's discourse will only address two topics: "policy (issues) and character (image)" (p. 361). Those topics are divided further into sub-topics: the policy topic is subdivided into past deeds, future plans, and general goals, while the character topic is divided into personal qualities, leadership ability, and ideals (Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006, p. 213). Even after developing the theory, Benoit has also used grounded theory as a means of better understanding the character topic in Functional Theory (Benoit & McHale, 2003). That study yielded a typology of further dimensions of character: morality, drive, sincerity, and empathy (p. 328).

Frequent findings have emerged from these studies, indicating that in debates, the incumbent acclaimed his or her successes much more than attacks his/her challenger (p. 209), and that "ideals would…form the basis for more acclaims than attacks" (p. 219). These findings have been replicated in others of its kind as well (Benoit & Airne, 2005; Lee & Benoit, 2005).

Politics

The first study of its kind measuring the amount of political influence in the media was conducted between 1940 and 1944, by Lazersfeld, Berelson and Gaudet. They had chosen to test "how and why people decided to vote as they did" in the presidential

election between Roosevelt and Willkie (Lazersfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1968, p. 1;

Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 72). In their book "The People's Choice," they thoroughly

tested an entire county in Ohio that had proven to mirror the voting patterns of the rest of

the United States (Lazersfeld et al, 1968, p. 3). After extensive polling, they found that

the media of the time that was used in the campaign "activated the indifferent [voter],

reinforced the partisan, and converted the doubtful" (Lazersfeld, et al, 1968, p. 101). This

study paved the way for future studies to examine the role of the media as tools of

political influence.

     Starting in 1996, the World Wide Web became an integral part of presidential

campaigns: Both presidential candidates Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, in an effort to reach

out to and communicate with voters, began using the Internet in ways it had not been

previously used. Quoting Negroponte's study, McKeown and Plowman (1999) agreed

that the Internet was an emerging way to "move away from a 'push' distribution of

information…to a 'pull' distribution, in which individuals access only the information

that interests them" (p. 322). Logically, the fact that this information was willingly being

accessed because the consumer wanted to read it indicates a progression from a decade

earlier, when individuals were receiving loads of information only because the network

may have felt it necessary to show them. McKeown and Plowman (1999) speculated that

the Internet would become the preferred way to share political information: "An

advantage of these sites for the user is that their access does not require knowledge of

complex programming languages or command structures, resulting in relatively easy

access" (p. 321). Partly because of this, McKeown and Plowman concluded that

candidates used the Internet more than the traditional forms of media (e.g. television).

This issue has become increasingly more important, prompting further research. Davis (2005) wrote that politics on the Internet "came a long way" in 2004 from its previous participation in campaigns (p. 241). In contrast to McKeown and Plowman, Davis argued the first significant use of the Internet as a political tool occurred in 2000, though it proved disappointing because of the public's lofty expectations (p. 241). He stated that its utility would only increase in 2008, though he was reluctant to predict how much (p. 244). Benoit and Hansen (2004) also agreed that the Internet is becoming an increasingly more important source of political information: "Cable television and the Internet have dramatically changed the information available to voters" (p. 164). They concluded that the emergence of new technologies, e.g., the Internet and cable television, has shifted the source of political information for voters (p. 171).

Andrew Barry offered up one explanation why the Internet has become part of one's civic responsibility: "interactive and networked technologies have come to be seen as a key resource in the making up of citizens. New technology is reckoned by many to play a critical part in the revitalization of democracy…Interactive technology is expected to produce active citizens" (Barry, 2006, p. 163). Part of this interactivity is perpetuated through the new interaction of politics and the Internet: when viewing a political debate on television, for instance, the viewer has little opportunity to interact. In contrast, however, "while reading a story on the Internet or watching a streaming video of an interview with a journalist or a politician, a citizen can shoot an e-mail off to a federal agency or make a monetary contribution to the politician" (Mayer, 2008, p. 300).

Park and Choi (2002) wrote that the Internet is an "effective political campaign tool" because it allows for the candidates to target specific audiences (pp. 36-37). Focus

groups may prove to be a valuable way to test the influence of the Internet on the political

views of individuals; Park and Choi did so, testing the Media Richness Theory with focus

groups. Ultimately, the factors most common in the results were interactivity and

personalization (pp. 39-40). Interestingly, the findings confirmed some of those of

Lazersfeld, et al., from 60 years before; the web sites for the candidates seemed to

reinforce preconceived notions of those candidates rather than change them (p. 41).

The Internet continues to be an essential facilitator of politics: The presidential

debates of 2007 and 2008 were intertwined more closely with the Internet than any

previous election year. However, evidence suggests that the Internet was already essential

in understanding politics in the presidential debates of 2004. Dalrymple and Scheufele

(2007) chose to analyze the influence of the Internet upon its users during 2004 and they

found that "users of online newspapers [had] higher levels of both integrated and

differentiated knowledge, even after controlling for print newspaper and television use"

meaning that, tentatively, "online newspapers…[could] promote a more in-depth

understanding of political issues than traditional news media" (p. 96). Accordingly,

YouTube has taken this approach to promote an understanding of the current presidential

race by allowing its users to post online questions for the candidates. In fact, as of July

2007, there was an average of 200 videos submitted daily for the debates (Guthrie, 2007,

p. 12).

Because YouTube allows for so many videos on its system, political videos are

common on the site; and like most media, there is an agenda present in many of the

videos posted on YouTube. Palser (2006) documented a case involving the media

agenda-setting theory in action. In 2006, a relatively unknown YouTube user posted a

video titled "Al Gore's Penguin Army," which parodied Gore's global warming documentary "An Inconvenient Truth." This video has, to the point of this writing, received 578,710 views and has instigated venomous comments toward Gore's political leanings. Only later was it discovered that the "amateur" video had actually been uploaded from "a computer registered to DCI Group, a Republican public relations firm whose clients include Exxon" (p. 90). This occurrence demonstrates that ulterior motives in a video can be beneficial to the user from which the video was posted.

In the summer of 2007, television news network CNN utilized YouTube's political clout by partnering with the web site to co-sponsor the presidential debates. The debates have proven to be an exciting format for political discussion. Referring to these debates, CNN news anchor Anderson Cooper said: "The Internet has this remarkable ability to connect groups of disparate people who formerly didn't have a community…I think anything that does that and brings people to the political process is a good thing" (Guthrie, 2007, p. 12). YouTube users have proven this assertion to be true by sending 5,000 video questions to the Republican candidates in the November 2007 debate.

The majority of the articles written about this area of study indicate an increase in political information from the increase in technology. As evidenced in studies like Park and Choi's, the focus of these articles has been on each candidate and how he or she has embraced new media. However, there exists a void in studies that showcase technology for its adverse effect; in other words, these new technological mechanisms can also function to *dissuade* voters from, rather than *persuade* them for one candidate's cause. The analysis made of the candidates' videos in this study will not specifically test the effect of the videos on the public; however, it is possible that the ultimate winner of the

2008 election may reflect some of the public's attitudes that were originally gleaned from that candidate's campaign videos and strategies.

The intent of this study is to utilize the medium of YouTube to discover the common characteristics as well as discrepancies between each presidential candidate's choices of rhetoric as given through his or her video clips. This rhetoric will be quantifiably measured through a content analytic approach of leadership-related utterances. These video clips will be provided on the YouChoose portion of YouTube, an entity dedicated to each candidate in order to reach out to voters and share his/her respective messages and platforms.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although there is a fair amount of literature about YouTube, few peer-reviewed journals have included academic analyses of the utility of YouTube through a political context. YouTube is one of the most popular new sites on the Internet and yet there has been little to no academic research conducted about videos on the web site. The purpose of studying leadership qualities in presidential candidates on YouTube is significant because the medium presents the text of analysis in a unique way. A study to conduct this analysis, therefore, is necessary. The following research questions have been proposed:

RQ1: What common characteristics of leadership are defined by the presidential candidates?

RQ2: Which characteristics occur most frequently in the study?

RQ3: Is each candidate's definition or perception of leadership dependent upon their party affiliation?

RQ4: Which of the characteristics found in the video clips are commonly shared between parties?

RQ5: How does the frequency of leadership traits differ between each candidate's introduction and farewell video clips given on YouTube?

These questions will be addressed in the results and discussion sections of the study.

METHODS

Grounded Theory

In order to answer the first research question, a grounded theory analysis was utilized to develop categories from which candidates' mentions of leadership traits would be coded for the content analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined grounded theory as "a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (p. 24). Since the objective of grounded theory is to "build theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study" (p. 24), it is crucial for the researcher to accurately and openly analyze the artifact.

This method "served at the front of the 'qualitative [research] revolution'" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 249) and is considered one of the top five traditions of qualitative research, in terms of its popularity and frequent use (Creswell, 1998, p. 5). This approach functioned best with the purpose of this study because it allowed for the extraction of theory from much textual data. Likewise, because the medium is still relatively unanalyzed, grounded theory allowed for a new research direction of the medium as a political text.

To effectively utilize grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommended that the researcher use sampling, coding, and the writing of memos in his or her analysis (pp. 11-12). There are different ways of coding an artifact, including open coding and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). With open coding, the researcher "fractures the data" in order to identify common themes or categories; with axial coding, the researcher puts the data back together beyond the properties and dimensions determined solely through the open coding (p. 97). The findings of the grounded theory analysis of

this study were yielded through an open coding approach, specifically through a "line-by-line analysis" of the candidates' videos (p. 72), thus identifying common themes. Following the open coding, the data was reassembled through the aforementioned axial coding. The coding procedures employed in this study have ultimately resulted in an analysis of the candidates' utterances to discover common characteristics and strategies throughout the videos.

Content Analysis

In order to answer the second research question, a content analysis was conducted once the grounded theory analysis was complete. A content analysis, as defined by Holsti (1969) is "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (quoted in Riffe, et al., 2005, p. 24). This approach, "a nonobtrusive, nonreactive measurement technique" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005, p. 38), was necessary to determine the frequency of the occurrence of each characteristic. This method of research is a valuable tool to glean quantitative findings from texts. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were utilized to conduct the study. The results of the content analysis will be the basis of the discussion section of this study.

Texts used in the Analysis

The selection of which candidates to include in this study was made by YouTube; these candidates have also traditionally been recognized as the only serious candidates for the presidency, and most were likewise invited to participate in major debates throughout their campaigns. Accordingly, the only introduction video clips analyzed were posted by candidates that were originally included on YouChoose. The introduction videos were

chosen specifically by each candidate as the particular clip from which the American people would make its first impressions. Consequently, the selection of each of these videos by each of the candidates was critical, because the candidate would also be telling the voters indirectly what he or she perceived to be the most important points in his/her platform. Thus, it was felt that each of these introduction videos would be a good indicator of each candidate's leadership characteristics for the purpose of the grounded theory analysis.

To complete the grounded theory portion of the study, each candidate's farewell video was also coded. When these videos were analyzed, some adjustments in the methodology became necessary: Because YouChoose did not specifically include farewell videos from the candidates that withdrew from the race, an exploration was conducted through YouTube to find each candidate's farewell video. Unfortunately, after extensive searching on the site using the qualifiers of the candidate's name and "drops out," "withdraws," "farewell," "speech," "concedes," and in some cases the date the candidate gave his or her withdrawal speech, some of the candidates had no video posted; this included Duncan Hunter, Fred Thompson, and Sam Brownback. In fact, Thompson and Brownback's only farewell videos were brief public statements explaining their decision in about thirty seconds or less. Also, Brownback had had an introduction video posted on YouChoose, but a short time later, Brownback withdrew his name from the candidacy and his video was promptly pulled as well. Thus, his introduction video was not coded.

While most of the farewell videos were the candidate formally withdrawing his or her name from the candidacy, some of them were videos in the form of political ads made

specifically for the Internet, while others were interviews on news broadcasts. Despite the format, they were all coded as the candidate's farewell video because they included the reason the candidate chose to withdraw from the presidential race; they each still included leadership trait utterances.

It should also be noted that Mike Gravel did not formally have a farewell video; he chose to continue running in the Libertarian party rather than drop out of the race. However, this was still coded as a farewell video because it marked the end of his bid as a presidential candidate for the Democrat party; he had been listed originally on YouChoose as a Democrat candidate for his introduction video.

The length of the video was also taken into consideration: Chris Dodd's farewell video included a portion of his speech, but was edited to a very short length. When Hillary Clinton withdrew her name from the candidacy on June 7, 2008, her campaign posted a 30 minute video of continuous coverage from CNN. Because the majority of the other candidate's videos were only within the five to ten minute range, the inclusion of Clinton's full video would have skewed the results and given her comments undue emphasis. Therefore, a video of an edited portion her speech was chosen that fit within the aforementioned time range (eight minutes). It was felt that as she gave her motivations for running for the presidency and her endorsement of the final Democratic candidate, Barack Obama in her speech, it would be adequate for the analysis.

Next, only the farewell videos on YouTube were analyzed; the specific endorsement videos were not analyzed, unless they were the same as the video where the candidate announced his or her withdrawal from the race. While certain candidates spent the majority of their farewell video clip endorsing another candidate, those same

leadership characteristics the candidate used to endorse the other were still included in the study. This decision was made based on the fact that the characteristics mentioned by the candidate withdrawing from the race to endorse another were chosen specifically because they showcased the other candidate's leadership qualities. It is likely that if the withdrawing candidate saw those qualities as indicative of true leadership ability, then so would the American public.

Finally, only individual utterances were analyzed from candidates that related specifically to characteristics they felt were indicative of their ability to lead the country. While some of the candidates like Rudy Giuliani and John McCain specifically mentioned leadership as a skill, for example, others only described the strength of their respective characters. Incidentally, Benoit's Functional Theory states that personal qualities, leadership ability and ideals (values or principles) are all sub-topics in that candidate's discourse about his or her character (Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006, p. 213). The methods utilized here, however, differ somewhat from Benoit's assumptions: This study analyzes the candidates' campaign messages in the race to be the party nominee (and ultimately president); therefore, the motives of each candidate for their words and videos are fundamental to their success. In the context of a presidential race, any utterance by a candidate would be made to help the candidate appear to be a good enough leader to be elected, and then convince the voters of that image. Therefore, whenever a candidate makes any utterance relating to character, *if it is favorable,* it will be interpreted to be a leadership trait. Likewise, the purpose of every video placed on YouTube by the candidate is to appear as a leader deserving of the presidency. Thus, though not all character utterances may be related to leadership abilities in an everyday context, the

uniqueness of the YouTube medium requires that each candidate's leadership motives dictate their character utterances.

As a result, all occurrences of Benoit's concepts of personal qualities, leadership ability, and ideals were consolidated into leadership traits. Consequently, the majority of the candidates' arguments were interpreted to be a reference to their perception of a leadership characteristic as well.

Conversely, not all utterances were included where the candidate acclaimed his or her favorable characteristics or made promises about his/her future plans; only utterances that were not policy-driven were included. While these particular utterances may have fit the criteria for inclusion in this study, they were specific to policies that in many cases were partisan and did not accurately reflect that candidate's leadership characteristics. For example, if a candidate were to try to persuade the viewer to vote for him or her by saying he/she would reduce greenhouse gas emissions or build a wall along the Mexican border to discourage illegal immigration as president, it would not be included in the study as an utterance. For the purposes of this study, leadership traits were analyzed that were generalizable and that had the potential to be analyzed in different contexts. An appealing image is indicative of good leadership characteristics, and if the clip was overly policy-driven, it was not coded for the study.

Coding Procedures

When the videos were analyzed via grounded theory, many categories emerged. These categories became the basis of the coding units, or "analysis units," indicating that each category would be analyzed with the purpose of answering the research questions that had been proposed (Riffe, et al., 2005, pp. 71-72). The entirety of leadership trait

mentions by candidates' introduction and farewell videos on YouTube was analyzed, and thus the content was not sampled.

When the time came to conduct the content analysis, it became apparent that some utterances would need two or sometimes even three separate codes. Since it was necessary that these utterances be mutually exclusive in order to facilitate replicability, (Riffe, et al., 2005), some adjustments to the methodology became necessary: if a candidate made an utterance that could be classified into several different categories, the coder would first examine the frequency of the traits. If the same trait was repeated multiple times along with a single other trait, the trait that was repeated the most would be coded for the same utterance multiple times.

In other circumstances, however, certain utterances would contain single mentions of more than one distinct trait. In order to eliminate double coding in these situations, precedence was given to the trait that was clearly emphasized more by the candidate. If the traits were emphasized equally, however, or if the coder could not determine which trait was emphasized, precedence would be given to the first trait mentioned in the utterance. This was decided upon because if the candidate did not specifically emphasize a leadership trait, by implication the most important trait would be spoken first.

Intercoder Reliability

Because reliability testing between coders is crucial to report a sound content analysis, a coder reliability test was assessed and conducted using Cohen's *kappa* formula (Riffe et al., 2005, p. 151). Before this test was calculated, however, ten percent of the texts were coded by a trained coder. Reliability was tested on total utterances in all

16 categories, and not on party distinctions or the differences between the introduction and farewell videos.

According to Landis and Koch (1977), values of *kappa* between .61 to .80 indicate "substantial agreement," while values over .81 are considered "almost perfect" reliability between coders (p. 165). Reliability for the categories was calculated at .90, and was thus considered acceptable for the study.

ANALYSIS

Results of Grounded Theory Analysis

The grounded theory analysis of these clips provided sixteen categories of leadership traits mentioned by the candidates. In order to include them in the study, each had to be mentioned at least more than one time and at least by more than one candidate; each trait needed to be able to cross over party lines to avoid partisan or policy-driven utterances. The study yielded the following categories of leadership traits, in the order of their frequency: advocate for the people, moral accountability, courage, unification, persistence, crisis management, change, hard work, diplomacy, foresight, experience, service, belief in/love of America, optimism, family, and hope. Each of the categories and their respective frequencies are illustrated in Table 1, following the conclusion portion of the study.

After the categories were initially chosen, some adjustments became necessary. In addition to avoiding the analysis of policy-driven utterances, common categories were created among the candidates that may not have been expressed specifically by each candidate. For example, one of the most frequently occurring traits in the study was 'courage.' This was coded when a candidate specifically mentioned the word courage; this was also coded for other mentions about overcoming adversity. More examples of the criteria for selecting other traits will be provided later as each category is defined. In addition to each definition, each category will also be illustrated with excerpts from the candidates' videos.

Additionally, certain candidates' video clips were very policy-driven, but it became apparent that the candidate would use leadership traits that were exhibited

through his or her adherence to that policy. For example, Tom Tancredo's video announcing his withdrawal from the presidential race dedicated its entirety to the policy of stopping illegal immigration, thus not providing any codable utterances. However, Tancredo's account of how he pursued legislation to stop this occurrence despite opposition provided several examples of being an advocate for the people, or the champion of a cause.

Advocate for the People

As with Tancredo, a trend emerged frequently among the other candidates' utterances that they would continue to fight for their supporters, even though their presidential campaign had come to an end; this was coded as the candidate being an advocate for the common man. In Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath,* the protagonist Tom Joad functions as an advocate to the common man when he makes the statement: "I'll be ever'where—wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever there's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there" (Steinbeck, 2002, p. 419). A similar promise was shared by many of the candidates to their supporters, thus ensuring their image as an advocate for the cause of the common man.

For example, in her farewell speech, Hillary Clinton shared an utterance that was interpreted to be the advocate trait: "We fought for all those who've lost jobs and health care, can't afford things, who've felt invisible to their president." Likewise, Joe Biden simply told his supporters "we will be there for you," then, elaborating later, said:

I want to make it clear to whoever's the nominee…that they keep the commitment to our men and women who are still in harm's way…As long as they are present

to care for them, to spend the billions of dollars necessary…I will be their worst

nightmare if they do nothing.

By using this strategy, Biden was presenting himself as a champion of the cause of

justice. In his farewell speech, John Edwards also reassured his supporters in a similar

fashion:

I've spoken to both Senator Clinton and Senator Obama—they have both pledged

to me, and more importantly through me to America, that they will make ending

poverty central to their campaign for the presidency. And more importantly, they

have pledged to me that as President of the United States, they will make ending

poverty and economic inequality central to their presidency. This is the cause of

my life.

Like Biden, Edwards also presented himself as a crusading figure by using the same

strategy. Mitt Romney summed up the trait well when he made the following statement:

"I'll fight alongside you for the things we believe in." Fred Thompson's video clip

likewise said: "[Thompson is] ready to fight for us [and] our families." As a guiding

principle, this trait was applied to utterances that mentioned fighting for something,

standing up for something, or being perceived as a "hero." In his endorsement speech for

John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, for example, twice referred to McCain as a hero.

In the same vein, 'advocate' was also coded when a candidate would speak of

his/her "crusade," or "cause." In his farewell video, Tom Tancredo told how he

"dedicated [his] public life to warning the nations of the perilous consequences of

America's willingness to live with massive uncontrolled illegal immigration" and

believed in the cause (or "crusade") so much that he decided to become a candidate for

President "to force all presidential candidates to take a firm stand on the most critical

domestic issue America faces." Fred Thompson fought as an attorney for a then-obscure

woman's case against scandal and harassment "when no one else would," taking on "the

entire Tennessee power structure" and ultimately landing the Governor in jail. John

Edwards repeatedly mentioned his campaign's "cause": that he looked the cause of

working people "straight in the eye" even when his party "began to turn away." He also

said that economic justice was his cause. Edwards concluded his farewell speech by

stating: "Their [the working people's] cause is our cause, their struggle is our struggle,

their dreams are our dreams." Since a candidate's cause or crusade is implicitly

understood as his/her quest to accomplish something he/she believes in to bolster the

people, each utterance was coded as the advocate trait.

Candidates also used this category as a political tool; Edwards, for example, used

many advocate utterances to distinguish himself as the candidate that worked specifically

for the cause of the people. As such, the frequency of Edwards' advocate utterances led

the rest of the candidates by double the amount of the candidate with the next most

utterances (with sixteen advocate utterances total to Kucinich's eight).

Courage

Adhering to the traditional concept of courage, whenever a candidate spoke of

showing bravery in the face of trying or perilous circumstances, it was coded as

'courage.' Republican candidate Mitt Romney gave an excellent example of the

traditional definition of courage when he said that he desired to see the next president not

"retreat in the face of evil extremism." In addition to this concept of courage, this term

was also applied to each candidate's statement that said he or she worked to overcome

resistance or an environment that would otherwise hinder political progress. The narration of Barack Obama's introduction video, for instance, states that his parents divorced when he was two years old and that he only saw his father once more before he (his father) died. Likewise, when he was running for the Senate, he succeeded, despite being "outspent by a margin of six to one." Fred Thompson's introduction video mentioned that he achieved the first college degree of his family, while Mike Huckabee stated that his mother—who was the oldest of seven kids—grew up in a house with dirt floors and outdoor toilets. Age was also taken into consideration when coding for courage: for example, Hillary Clinton achieved much in her youth, and was appointed to a prestigious position when she was only 29 years old. These utterances were coded as courage because each enhanced the desirability of those candidates' future political achievements, and the courage that it took each of them to transcend trying circumstances.

Likewise, an utterance was coded as courage whenever a candidate faced opposition from his or her own party when pursuing legislation that eventually proved to be the correct decision. This category was also applied to any candidate that stated he or she followed his/her convictions despite perhaps sounding unpopular. Mike Gravel mentioned several times in both of his videos that his ideas "made [him] no friend of either political party" and that those ideas made him "a bit of a maverick" even in his own party. Barack Obama voted against the Iraq war, even though he was "alone among the major candidates." Joe Biden stated in his introduction video that he "would not truncate what [he] believed needed to be said" and Dennis Kucinich told his supporters that he stood against the Iraq war, even though he "saw that leaders in DC, many in [his]

own party, were intent on continuing the war." These utterances are coded as courage because, by implication, each candidate had the courage to pursue his or her ideals against much resistance.

Unification

'Unification' was coded for promises that the candidates would bring both political parties to work together; when applied to each candidate's farewell speech, 'unification' was applied to the admonishment to unite each party collectively to support its candidate. Barack Obama, in particular, made use of this trait frequently, making the utterance nine times in only one video clip coded, thus leading all of the candidates. Most of his claims of unification were made in statements like "there's not a liberal or conservative America, there is only the United States of America…We are one people…All of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes…All of us defending the United States of America." Mike Huckabee made similar assertions in his introduction speech by speaking about what he coined "horizontal politics": "Where everything is left or right, Republican or Democrat, Liberal or Conservative," but implored the American people to instead ask: "Which candidate will lift them to a higher place?" Ron Paul also spoke of unification when he told his supporters: "Let us all stick together in this great cause of liberty." These utterances were all coded as unification because they invited Americans to work together.

Hillary Clinton also used the unification trait when her husband related her history of working with both parties. She also committed to working together with Obama to achieve one of her causes, in effect attempting to unite the party. Richardson's video clip asserted that his "life's work has been bringing people together" and Dodd stated that his

party was "united in the belief that this nation needs change." Edwards repeatedly spoke of "one America," or his desire to transform of the nation.

Unification was also coded for candidates that sacrificed their campaign ambitions for the good of the party. In Giuliani's endorsement of McCain, Giuliani said that they both believed in "building a stronger and broader Republican party," with the end goal of "break[ing] through the red state and blue state divide." Thus, though Giuliani had ceased his run for the nomination, he had projected his ambitions upon McCain for the good of the party. According to the utterances, Romney, Tancredo, and Huckabee adopted similar strategies: Romney told his supporters that if he continued to run for President, he would "forestall the launch of a national campaign" thus making it easier for the opposition to win. Summarizing his motivations, he said: "I feel I have to step aside for our party." When Tancredo withdrew from the race, he summarized his intentions in a similar manner: "I fear that remaining in this race, when I know I can't win, could contribute to the nomination to one of those pro-amnesty, open-border candidates." In his farewell speech, Huckabee committed to his supporters that he would "do everything possible to unite" the Republican Party, and that it was important to him to not dwell on losing the race, but "turn our attention to…what must be: a united party."

All unification utterances were coded as leadership traits because with each utterance, the candidate was essentially problem-solving to the American people; he or she was committing to them that he/she could transcend divisions and accomplish his/her goals regardless.

Moral Accountability

When a candidate's video clip stated that he or she had a strong sense of values and delineated his or her favorable character traits, those utterances were coded as 'moral accountability.' Giuliani said "a leader is…a person of conviction" and is also committed "to what they believe is right for the future of their country." When endorsing McCain, he told of McCain's will, honor, integrity, and character. The narration to McCain's introduction clip was similar to Giuliani's words, when it stated that McCain had "the integrity to deal with tough issues." Huckabee also endorsed McCain by saying he had "run an honorable campaign, because he is an honorable man." He echoed that sentiment that his own campaign had been conducted with honor as well and that he would "rather lose an election than lose the principles that got [him] into politics in the first place." Clinton spoke of Obama's "strength" while Thompson's video clip mentioned the "heartland values he still carries with him today." Likewise, in his days as an attorney, Thompson "put honesty first" and as a candidate had "character." Speaking of his platform, Kucinich said "it's about integrity, truth, standing up for what's right." Perhaps Bill Clinton's comment about Hillary Clinton best describes this aspect of moral accountability: "She is the best combination of mind and heart, of leadership ability, and the feel of the human consequences for the decisions that a leader makes." Moral accountability in this respect could also be synonymous with the familiar expression 'moral compass.' In other words, paraphrasing Clinton, the candidate understands the human consequences for his or her decisions.

The candidate's mentions of doing something because it is right, and not because he or she is being watched or pressured were also coded as moral accountability. For

example, Clinton's early life as a caring individual before she became a senator, as well as "long before the cameras ever showed up [and] long after the cameras will be gone" was interpreted to fulfill these criteria. In his introduction video clip, Gravel spoke of some of his accomplishments with the following addendum: "I did those things because they were right, not because they would get me reelected." Thus, essentially, a candidate expresses that he/she will hold him/herself accountable to their own values, rather than sacrificing what they hold most important for power.

Likewise, when a candidate spoke of faith, it was also coded as moral accountability. Huckabee mentioned in both of his videos that he had "kept the faith" and McCain said that while he had been a prisoner of war, faith sustained him. Also, when a candidate made Biblical references in his/her video clip, it was also coded as moral accountability: Huckabee acknowledged twice in his farewell speech that he was citing Biblical references, while Kucinich also referenced the Bible in his farewell speech twice—citing the same scripture as Huckabee about fighting the good fight, as well as the reference "the truth will set us free"—though he did not acknowledge that either comment was referencing the Bible. In either case, a Biblical reference warranted a code as moral accountability because its utterance framed the candidate as a faithful person.

Finally, when a candidate either directly or indirectly mentioned conviction, it was also coded as moral accountability. For example, Biden told his supporters: "I know that I was doing what I was doing because I believed so many of you believe it" and Kucinich said that in Congress and in his campaign he told the truth, these were both interpreted to be examples of conviction. Likewise, when an anonymous Obama

supporter said that Obama "seem[ed] to be speaking from his heart," that was also interpreted as conviction, and ultimately moral accountability.

Persistence

'Persistence' was used to code any utterance where the candidate said he or she kept working, persevered, or continued to work. In short, the trait applied to a candidate that achieved successes, while refusing to give up. Chris Dodd, in his introduction speech, stated that "it took [him] seven years to pass the medical leave act." By stating the amount of time it required to pass legislation for which he was proud, Dodd was telling his potential voters of his persistence as a leadership trait. Obama was continuing to "work on issues that touch our life," while Clinton "[did not] give up," and "kept plugging away making progress day in and day out." Even when their respective campaigns had ended, certain candidates portrayed persistence by continuing on. Hillary Clinton said: "Today I'm going to count my blessings and keep on going"; Bill Richardson admitted that "there will be another day" for him; Joe Biden said "I ain't going away"; while Ron Paul spoke of "the next phase" of his campaign even though his official presidential campaign had ended. Persistence was likely seen as desirable in a leader because it allowed them the strength to solve the challenges of the office.

Incidentally, Dennis Kucinich used this leadership trait for more immediate political purposes than solely acclaiming the successes of his presidential campaign; he used his persistence utterances multiple times to make his bid for reelection as a Congressman. For example, he stated he could "continue to fight" for the issues he touted in his campaign as a US Congressman. He also mentioned that "the fight for economic rights is a lifelong endeavor" implying that he could only accomplish that sufficiently if

he were to be re-elected. In this respect, persistence proved to be a political tool in more than solely the presidential race.

Persistence was also used to summarize some of the character traits candidates stated about themselves or those they were endorsing: 'tenacity,' and 'perseverance' were among those traits. For example, while endorsing John McCain, Rudy Giuliani said in his farewell speech that McCain "displayed his tenacity" when his campaign experienced a surprise resurgence to propel McCain to lead the Republicans in the race. This utterance was coded as such because though McCain's campaign was "way behind," it surged "way ahead" because of Giuliani's perception of McCain's persistence. Likewise, Giuliani stated that McCain had the "perseverance to get great goals accomplished." In this respect, persistence was used by the candidate to indicate the candidate's ability to succeed in future leadership endeavors.

Lastly, persistence was also applied to several other mentions. McCain spoke of surviving as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, and his strategy for survival was coded as persistence: his faith in God, faith in country, and faith in his fellow prisoners. Mike Huckabee mentioned pursuing his dreams several times throughout both of his video clips, saying that "American dreams are still alive" while Clinton said that Obama had "lived the American dream." Each of these utterances were coded as persistence because each candidate had had the determination to pursue what may have seemed like unrealistic goals at the time.

Diplomacy vs. Crisis Management

The traits 'crisis management' and 'diplomacy' both emerged early in the coding. While both traits were accurately depicted in certain utterances, a discrepancy arose when

a candidate mentioned the war in Iraq; the term 'diplomacy' was only applied to the end

product of diplomatic negotiations, i.e. restoring America's reputation, healing its image,

and restoring peace. Additionally, the codes were not chosen from candidate utterances

of that specific trait: For example, where one candidate said that he or she would focus on

making allies and not enemies it was coded as diplomacy. When a candidate would make

a claim that he or she would end the war in Iraq and/or send the soldiers home, it was

coded as crisis management. The difference in code occurred because while one was

referring to diplomatic relations, the other referred specifically to undoing damage from a

crisis that was occurring. In short, crisis management would be coded when the candidate

would mention the *process* of restoring order, such as ending the war, as opposed to the

end product of diplomacy, such as the results of that restoration of order. Consequently,

the candidate's use of the word 'peace' was a crucial determiner of whether diplomacy or

crisis management would be used; any mention of peace would garner a 'diplomacy'

classification.

'Crisis management' was also coded for all general mentions of dealing with

tough challenges in leadership. For example, both of Richardson's videos mentioned

hostage negotiations, which was negotiated as crisis management rather than diplomacy

because of the smaller scale of the challenge; diplomacy was only coded for the end

product of crises on an international scale. Biden stated that he could "deal with crises,"

while Giuliani said McCain "can be trusted in times of crisis," and "is prepared to be

president in a time of great peril." Romney's introduction video said that he had the

ability to "solve…nearly impossible problems." Each of these utterances was coded as

crisis management, because each displayed a leader who was capable of making important decisions in difficult circumstances.

Change

Whenever a candidate spoke of change, using new policies, or giving the country a new direction, it was coded as 'change.' In his farewell speech, Dennis Kucinich mentioned that entered the race "to bring a totally new perspective and direction to the office of president," while Ron Paul spoke repeatedly of "the changes of this revolution" referring to his presidential campaign. He also spoke of a hope that his campaign "signaled a change in direction for our country" and would "change our country for the good." While introducing his campaign, Huckabee mentioned that he had "innovative new ways to deal with foreign and domestic policy problems," while a supporter of Barack Obama mentioned that Obama was an appealing candidate because he was "the first person that's offered something different," while he also "[brought] a new face of leadership around the world." Joe Biden mentioned that he could "change the state of the nation," and Chris Dodd reiterated that America needed and wanted change. John Edwards invited the American people to "speak up for change" and the narration in Mitt Romney's clip told the people that he offered "new leadership." Change was coded as a leadership trait because in order to present meaningful change to a nation, the candidate would need innovative ideas and have the power and ability to have them accomplished. The context was also essential with this code, because when a candidate mentioned that he or she would "change the state of the nation" it was coded as diplomacy, rather than change.

Hard Work

Because 'work' is mentioned so many times and in so many contexts by the candidates, 'hard work' was coded only for any candidate's utterance stating that he or she "worked hard" to accomplish something. "Hard" is the qualifier in this code, because the inclusion of this word with 'work' makes the accomplishment more desirable and implies that the candidate was determined and persistent. Though the utterance may have been coded as another trait, if it specifically mentioned hard work, it was coded as such.

Huckabee, for example, explained that he "came from humble beginnings" then "worked hard." Dodd claimed that he "achieved results through hard work." Huckabee also appealed to those Americans who "work hard at their jobs," and stated that his campaign gave voice to these people, as did Edwards. Clinton invited her supporters to "work hard" for Obama's cause. Hard work was coded as a leadership trait because it is necessary in order to succeed in a democratic society.

Foresight

Anytime a candidate spoke of the future, it was coded as 'foresight.' This included any mention of the future of the political party, the American people, or the nation. This includes Clinton's statement that as president she would "pursue a cleaner energy future," and even when she withdrew her candidacy, she stated that her work was not finished: "You'll always find me on the frontlines of democracy fighting for the future." She also promoted Obama's cause by saying he had inspired many people "to become…invested in our common future." Richardson invited all candidates to remain positive in their campaigns by speaking of the future rather than attacking each other. Edwards used his experiences of hearing children speak of their concern for the planet's

future to elaborate upon his own platform, Giuliani stated his similarities with McCain by mentioning they both "share[d] a similar vision for the future of our party" and Romney foresaw the nation's "glorious future." In each of these utterances, the candidates demonstrated their assurance to the voters that they were mindful of the potential consequences of their decisions. For this reason also, foresight is interpreted as a leadership trait.

Finally, when a candidate spoke of history being made, it was also coded as foresight. In Edwards' farewell speech, for instance, he explained his decision, in part, by saying: "It's time for me to step aside so that history can blaze its path…we know that the Democrats will make history." These utterances were coded as foresight because Edwards referred to his decision shaping future events.

Experience

When a candidate mentioned that he or she was prepared or qualified to lead, the utterance was coded as 'experience.' Richardson's introduction video stated that he had "more international experience than just about anyone else in the 2008 field," while Biden had "a depth and breadth of experience in national security issues that no one else possess[ed]." In McCain's video clip, it was stated that he was "best prepared and qualified to meet the challenge" of leading the nation. This utterance indicated, like Richardson's, that McCain had had achieved much experience which would serve him well as president.

Also, when a candidate referred to the duration of time that he or she had been in a leadership position, it was also coded as experience. Biden spoke of visiting Iowa "since 1974" to garner the citizens' support for his candidacy, which was coded as

experience because it indicated the amount of time he had worked to accomplish his goals in a leadership capacity. Bill Clinton mentioned in Hillary Clinton's introduction video that she had "spent a lifetime caring, working and delivering" and she spoke of serving in the Senate in her farewell speech. The first utterance was coded as leadership because of the her "lifetime" of leading and gathering experience, while the second utterance was coded as such because by mentioning her time in the Senate, Clinton was telling America of her experience in leadership.

Finally, experience was also coded for mentions of results or some notable legislation for which the candidates were responsible. Giuliani spoke of his achievements as mayor of New York and that he had "a record of producing and getting results," while Dodd "achieve[d] results through hard work" and thus "pass[ed] the medical leave act." These utterances indicated leadership aptitudes, because they indicated to the voters that each candidate had had experience achieving results and, by implication, he could continue to do so as the next president.

Service

Utterances were coded as 'service' when a candidate mentioned or implied that he or she worked for the people, or that they originally turned down the prospect of public office so that they could work among the people. In their introduction clips, Obama and Clinton both stressed that they turned down lucrative job offers or public office initially so that they could work with people. The narration of Fred Thompson's introduction video claimed that though Thompson was "not a professional politician…[he had] a lifetime of service to our nation." This utterance is notable because Thompson's "lifetime of service" is what distinguished him from the bureaucratic DC politician stereotype.

Service was also coded for mentions of sacrifice by the candidates. Huckabee was the candidate with the most mentions of sacrifice; for example, he spoke of those who believed he belonged in the presidential race: "These are the people who gave me a voice over these past 14 months. It was their sacrifices… those are the folks who gave me a voice and I only pray to God that I could give them a voice." Biden made a similar statement: "So many of you have sacrificed for me, I feel so indebted to you." Although at first glance, utterances about the sacrifices of campaign supporters may appear to be about those people, they are actually about the candidate himself; by mentioning the sacrifices of unselfish people across America, the candidate is acclaiming the importance of his/her candidacy and message as something for which it is worth sacrificing one's time and efforts.

Belief in/Love of America

The grounded theory analysis revealed that on occasion the candidate spoke of his or her love of the nation, or the belief in its values or potential. For example, when Clinton concluded her farewell speech, she mentioned her "deep and abiding love for our country"; when Biden announced his reason for running for president, he spoke similarly: "The reason to do this, the reason to make the effort…is because we really, really, really do believe in this country…I believe to the bottom of my being in the unmatchable unlimited potential of the American people." Likewise, Romney explained his motivation thus: "I entered this race because I love America." Romney also stated his belief in "the people of America, the source of this land's great strength." In a rare coded utterance from Sam Brownback, he exclaimed that he would leave the race "with great love for [his] country." Thus, according to the candidates, their love or belief in America

motivated them to join the presidential race. This was interpreted as a leadership trait because it indicated that the candidate wanted to protect and help his or her country because of his/her deep love for it.

Optimism

When the candidate made utterances relating to the terms 'optimism,' 'optimistic,' or 'positive,' they were coded as optimism. For example, both of Richardson's videos spoke of optimism, one stating that he led in optimism, while the other included the following statement about optimism: "Voters want to see us [the candidates] be positive about the country…" Richardson then urged "all candidates to try to stay as positive as possible." Giuliani's introduction video also stated that he was an example of "optimistic leadership," as well as Huckabee's introduction video. Clinton also stated that she shared Obama's optimism. These utterances were coded as leadership traits because the candidate was attempting to commend his or her character as favorable, and if the candidate's character is perceived as such, it is easier to garner support from the people (Brazeal & Benoit, 2006).

Family

'Family' is a leadership trait coded to each utterance relating to the family of the candidate, or making an appeal to families throughout the nation. Bill Richardson, for instance, stated that because he was withdrawing from the race, he would spend more time with his family. John Edwards mentioned his family immediately after officially announcing he was suspending his campaign. Mitt Romney said that his family had "given [him] a great deal to have a shot of becoming a president." Barack Obama asserted that his family was the "biggest blessing" of his life, and "most important" to

him. These utterances suggested a leadership trait because they indicated to America that the candidate had traditional priorities and an internal support system.

Hope

'Hope' was coded for any specific mentions of the trait hope. In the closing moments of his farewell speech, Romney, for instance, said that "America must always remain as it has always been, the hope of the Earth." Obama's candidacy provided to his supporters "a sense of hope in a time when things [were] not going that well." Biden received "great hope" from his supporters, while Edwards said his campaign would always be there to bring hope to the people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Hope is considered to be a leadership trait because, ideally, a politician should enhance the quality of life of his people. Hope is a manifestation of the desire to have that quality of life, and if the candidate is able to instill that hope in the people, his or her level of support will be greater.

Results of the Content Analysis

For the next phase of the research, a content analysis was conducted to measure the frequency of the aforementioned common leadership traits. Each of the categories delineated in the analysis section was utilized to code the video clips. Because excerpts of the candidates' videos have already been provided to illustrate each category, only the frequencies will be reported in this section.

As demonstrated in Table 1, of the sixteen leadership traits already mentioned, 'advocate' was the most common among the candidates, with 39 mentions, or 14% of total mentions. 'Moral accountability' was next with 38 mentions (also 14% of total mentions). 'Courage' was next in frequency with 35 mentions (12%), followed by

'unification' with 30 mentions (11%). 'Persistence' occurred 23 times (8%), while 'crisis

management' occurred 20 times (7%). 'Change' was next with 15 mentions (5%),

followed by 'hard work' with 13 mentions (5%), 'diplomacy' with 12 mentions (4%),

and 'foresight' and 'experience' with 11 mentions each (4%). 'Service' was next with 10

mentions (4%), then 'belief in/love of America' with seven (2%), and 'optimism' also

with seven. Finally, 'family' had six occurrences (2%), then 'hope' had four (1%). A *chi*

square statistical test was also performed on the results ($X^2 = 1.5$ [df = 13], p > .05 [N.S.]).

The frequencies of these traits differed by political party: 'Advocate' was a

dominant Democratic leadership trait, with 29 of the 39 total mentions being made by

Democratic candidates (74% of the total). This also presents the greatest numerical

difference between each party for traits, though there existed a greater margin between

parties with 'diplomacy': Democrats mentioned this trait 11 times to the Republicans'

one time (92%). The most common trait among Republican candidates was 'moral

accountability,' which was mentioned 22 of the 38 total times it was coded in the study

(58%). The Democrats made more mentions of leadership traits that the Republicans in

every category, except for moral accountability (42% of total mentions) and belief in/love

of America (43% of mentions). The Democrats also made more utterances overall: Of the

281 total utterances of leadership traits analyzed in the study, 178 were made by the

Democratic candidates (63%), while only 103 (37%) were made by the Republican

candidates. A *chi* square test was also performed on the findings in order to test the

differences in frequencies of party-specific traits ($X^2 = 80.66$ [df = 81], p > .05 [N.S.]).

Each of these findings is illustrated in Table 2.

The frequencies of the traits also differed depending on whether it was the introduction video or the farewell video. Some candidates, particularly the eventual nominees, only had an introduction video to code, while others had only a farewell video. Overall, 15 introduction videos and 14 farewell videos were coded. Out of those videos, 12 introduction videos and 13 farewell videos yielded results that were content analyzed. In total mentions, the farewell videos outnumbered the introduction videos 176 to 105 or 63% of the total. In particular, the advocate trait in the farewell videos drastically outnumbered the trait in introduction videos 37 to two, or 95% of the total utterances of the trait. The margin between videos was also large for diplomacy, though the trend was reversed: there were ten mentions of diplomacy in the introduction videos to only two in the farewell videos, or 83% of the total mentions. The farewell videos outnumbered the introduction videos in all categories with the exception of diplomacy (83%), experience (82%), service (70%), and optimism (58%). Finally, the findings were also tested with the *chi* square ($X^2 = 107.33$ [df = 110], p > .05 [N.S.]). Each of the data is also illustrated in Table 3.

DISCUSSION

Common Characteristics of Leadership

The first research question asked which common characteristics of leadership were defined by the presidential candidates on YouTube. The sixteen leadership traits were generally centered around the following leadership characteristics: the willingness to serve the candidates' constituents; the candidate's preparedness to serve as a leader based on his or her experience, hard work and persistence; the desire to work diplomatically, whether on a political, domestic, or international scale; and the character and courage that would indicate his/her moral accountability and his/her desire to be an advocate for the American people.

An important factor in the candidates' concepts of leadership characteristics is the frequency of the utterances. Essentially, each of the candidates chose the same leadership traits, but some chose to mention certain traits more frequently. By implication, when a candidate frequently states that he or she has certain leadership traits, he/she is most likely saying he/she has more of that particular trait than the competition. Thus, the frequency of these mentions is important to the voter: The more one is mentioned, the more the voter will associate it with the candidate. Further, when the voter looks for that trait in other candidates, he or she will notice that they are lacking. For example, it appears that the common theme of the candidates is that of being an advocate. It is likely that when the candidate is forming an exploratory committee, he or she is watching the others to see what they say and do; accordingly, the candidate will try to "outdo" the competition.

Each category in this study is a leadership trait because each is expected to instill a trust in the people in that candidate's planned direction for the country. Ultimately, foresight is one important example of leadership because the voter desires to know that the nation will be in a better condition when the leader ends his or her presidency than before. This can occur if the leader is intelligent, determined, and capable of following his or her foresight. Because the presidency is widely conceived as the most important job in America, the people also prefer to know that the candidate would succeed at the job. In essence, running for the position of presidency is similar to participating in a job interview, with the American people being the boss; when the candidates give leadership traits and examples of their successes, they are simply applying for the job.

These leadership traits are also commonly mentioned by the candidates because they epitomize the essence of Democracy. In a democratic society, the people are accountable of deciding who will lead them; the democratic society also functions as a meritocracy, where the people desire that a man or woman who have had to overcome adverse circumstances and have had to work hard to achieve success should be rewarded by achieving the right to govern and lead. Since the popular conception of the United State of America is that the country is the 'land of opportunity,' (Holt, 1988, p. 61) it is important for those running for the presidency to take advantage of this ideal. Perhaps traits like 'persistence,' 'courage,' and 'hard work' are mentioned so commonly by the candidates because of this ideal. Ultimately, it is important for the voters to hear these leadership traits to maintain the essence of a democratic and a meritocratic society.

The Frequency of the Characteristics

The second research question asked which common characteristics occurred most frequently in the study. It is worth mentioning here that when the *chi* square was calculated for the categories, none of the results of the content analysis were statistically significant. Because of the large amount of categories (16) gleaned from the texts, the likelihood of significance decreased more than would have a study analyzing fewer categories. However, the objective of the study was not to achieve statistically significant results, but rather to develop the categories and understand the distributions in terms of frequencies.

That being stated, the four traits that occurred more than 30 times each were 'advocate,' (with 39 mentions, and 14% of total mentions) 'moral accountability,' (with 38 mentions, 13% of the total) 'courage,' (with 35 mentions, 12% of the total) and 'unification' (with 30 mentions, 11% of the total). It appears from the results of the videos on YouTube that the candidates chose to emphasize these particular traits more than others such as service or experience; it is possible that the candidates wanted to focus their attention on traits like courage and persistence to emphasize their embracing of the American dream, and having a "rags-to-riches" story.

Perhaps the voters also want to vicariously live their candidate's success story, and would therefore vote for that candidate. Further, the candidate may make these mentions more frequently than others (i.e. diplomacy, for example), because their life stories are more relatable for the people. It is likely that the American people want to hear more about these stories of character and overcoming adversity than more abstract impersonal issues like diplomacy.

Other traits like crisis management, for example, were mentioned twice as many times (20 mentions) as traits like service (ten mentions). This could be the case because of current events like the Iraq war; when a candidate states that he or she can succeed in handling a crisis on a broad level like the war, he/she is telling the people that he/she is capable of overcoming a crisis on a smaller domestic level as well.

The most common leadership trait is that of the candidate being an advocate for the common man. The frequency of this characteristic may be indicative of the political atmosphere of the nation at the time of the election; as mentioned, certain candidates like Biden, Edwards and Kucinich presented themselves to their supporters as champions in the cause of justice, with Edwards and Kucinich specifically mentioning 'justice' and 'injustice.' This is a significant trend because each Democratic candidate has moved one step beyond simply delineating their platforms; he or she has framed the current administration as corrupt, unjust and unwilling to accept the plights of those Americans who suffer. For example, though John Edwards' introduction video had no codable utterances (no words were spoken), it was filled with images of perceived failures of the Bush administration, including President Bush's banner reading "mission accomplished" during the Iraq war, and citizens of New Orleans holding "help us" signs after Hurricane Katrina. To overcome this injustice, the candidate presents him/herself as a crusading hero, or a champion of rights that have been violated. This trait appears to be appealing to the candidates, because it was adopted by candidates in both political parties. However, when the trait is mentioned by candidates in the Republican Party, it appears more frequently referring to the war (Giuliani), personal beliefs (Romney), illegal immigration (Tancredo) or families (Thompson). Even though the respective focuses of each

candidate differ, the frequent appearance of this trait indicates that the American people are in need of a protector.

Moral accountability, courage, and unification were the second, third, and fourth most frequently mentioned leadership traits, respectively. It is likely that these traits were among the most mentioned traits because they enhance the product of the advocate trait: that candidate should be perceived as a hero. As an example of this assertion, McCain was called a hero twice in Giuliani's exit video. Whenever a candidate would mention courage in the respect that he or she overcame a difficult situation, he/she is commending his/her ability to make correct decisions. As such, in order to effectively protect the American people, that candidate would need to be held accountable for his or her decisions, and have the courage to make the right choice, even when the options available may not be desirable. Unification comes into the findings as an important trait because in order to achieve victories, the candidate needs to have the enthusiasm to bring together factions. Perhaps many Americans see party lines as petty and detrimental to the candidate's success. Thus, that candidate would want to assure the people that he or she will not be hindered by partisanship.

Another important factor in the results of this study is the medium; YouTube is a recent development, and though it has widespread appeal and is viewed accordingly, there is a core audience that visits the site. Therefore, the medium is facilitating the emergence of a new perception in politics: That of the postmodern constituency. YouTube is notorious for its short, amateur and sometimes controversial videos, defying more traditional media that is more orderly, predictable, and often censored. Because of this, the potential voters have perhaps adjusted to the postmodern flavor of the medium

and have become more postmodern themselves. Accordingly, this medium is defining a

generation that is wielding more power as voters now than ever before and it appears that

each candidate is accordingly adapting his/her message. It is possible that when the

candidates chose which video clips to be posted to personify their platforms, they chose

more character-related clips to relate better to the YouTube generation. This may be, in

part, why the most frequently mentioned traits are more character-driven than experience-

driven.

Characteristics and Party Affiliation

The third research question asked whether each candidate's definition or

perception of leadership traits was dependent upon his or her party affiliation. According

to the results, the answer is 'yes': The Democrats mentioned every category more

frequently than did the Republicans, save 'moral accountability.' Some of the categories

were even mentioned by the Democrats by a two-to-one margin or more. It is possible

that the Republicans made less overall utterances in order to respectfully abstain from

detracting from the leadership abilities of President George W. Bush, a fellow

Republican. This might be the case because when a candidate makes an utterance, that

candidate is not only acclaiming his or her leadership traits, he/she is attacking the other

candidates as well (adaptation of Benoit et al., 2005). If the Republican candidate

acclaims himself too frequently, by implication he is attacking President Bush's image as

a leader. Therefore, the results may reflect this phenomenon.

As mentioned, the only trait spoken of more frequently by the Republicans was

moral accountability. Initially, it was one of the most frequently appearing leadership

traits (30), with Republicans making twice as many utterances (21) than the Democrats

(9). However, when the original leadership trait 'conviction' was combined into the moral accountability trait, interestingly, the Democrats increased dramatically, bringing the total to 22 (58%) for Republicans and 16 (42%) for the Democrats. Much of this difference can be attributed to Democratic candidate Dennis Kucinich; he mentioned conviction five times to three other candidate's mentions of conviction once. Much of these utterances were the candidate saying that he told the truth. It is possible that Democrats made so many more conviction utterances than the Republicans because it was a political measure to contrast the American people's perceptions of President Bush and themselves. Many Democrats during President Bush's tenure questioned if President Bush had lied about the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq to necessitate an invasion of the country. To this end, the presence of more conviction utterances by Democrats than Republicans may be due to the fact that they want the people to trust them to avoid a similar situation as president.

Other traits may also be used as a Democratic strategy for contrast; for instance, the Democrats mentioned diplomacy 11 times (92%) to the Republicans' one time (8%). This occurred because Democratic candidates like Bill Richardson and Hillary Clinton accounted for more than half of the total diplomacy utterances (58% of the diplomacy mentions). However, it is likely that the dominance of the Democratic Party is due to more than just two candidates' utterances; it also contrasts the party's stance on the Iraq war with the Republican Party, but more specifically, the Bush administration.

It is possible that Republicans used more utterances of moral accountability than Democrats because many potential voters who tend to vote Republican are considered a God-fearing people. After all, as Brazeal and Benoit (2006) stated: "Citizens cast their

votes for the candidate that appears preferable" (p. 404) and part of this perception stems from that candidate's image or character (Benoit et al., 2005, p. 361). Contrastingly, the Democrats made many more utterances of advocate than the Republicans, likely because many potential Democratic voters are concerned with personal rights. Hence, many Republican candidates mentioned faith, while the Democrats frequently mentioned fighting for the middle class. Likewise, Democrats mentioned service more frequently (80%) than the Republicans (20%). This may be due to the Democrats' strong preponderance for advocacy; if one wishes to be perceived as an advocate for the people, frequent utterances of service will strengthen that perception.

Commonly Shared Characteristics

The fourth research question asked if any of the characteristics were commonly shared between parties. While all of the categories were mentioned at least once by both parties, no category was mentioned the equal amount of times by both parties. However, the traits mentioned the closest number of times between each party were: Persistence, with ten mentions by Republicans to 13 mentions by Democrats; change, with seven mentions by Republicans to eight mentions by Democrats; belief in/love of America, with four mentions by the Republicans and three by the Democrats; and optimism, with three mentions by Republicans to four mentions by Democrats. These characteristics of leadership were commonly shared by both parties because persistence is a desirable trait to have in a leader. As mentioned, the current political atmosphere most likely dictated these results, rather than solely the American people's desire for certain leadership attributes in a president. In this situation, it appears that persistence in achieving change is critical. With the public perception of the Iraq war almost unanimously downbeat, a

change by either party appears to be needed. Though the Democratic candidates spoke more openly against the administration, the Republicans were also separating their policies somewhat with those of President Bush, though more implicitly than their counterparts.

A love of America and optimism were common traits between both parties as well. In this case, it is possible that the candidates were intent on personalizing their campaigns to the voters. For example, by stating that America is important to him/herself, the candidate is echoing the thoughts of the people. If the candidates truly love their country, then they will do everything possible to maintain their personal liberties and defend the ideals of the Constitution. However, by focusing on one's love for America and saying that that love incited his/her run for office, then the candidate is also deflecting the attention off of him/herself. In that respect he/she will appear to be more humble.

Optimism also is complementary to the love of America trait, and shared almost equally by both parties. Ultimately, optimism by itself is not as powerful of a leadership trait as courage or unification. However, to possess that trait will allow the candidate to appear as having a likeable personality. These traits all transcend party lines, because, like optimism on a bigger level, they enhance their own reputation with the voters by appearing more likeable. The discrepancies between the remaining categories may be due to the traditional causes of the respective party.

Frequency of Characteristics in Introduction and Farewell Videos

The fifth research question asked whether the frequency of leadership traits differed between each candidate's introduction and farewell clips given on YouTube. There are many more leadership traits mentioned by the candidates in their farewell videos (176, 63% of mentions) than their introduction videos (105, 37% of mentions). This could be due to the breadth of each video: brevity in the introduction video is important to the casual YouTube user. A shorter introduction video may attract more prospective voters—those who are still vacillating between the candidates. By the time the candidate made his or her farewell video, he/she had already spent many months in the race, and the voter had most likely formed an allegiance to that candidate. Therefore, the candidate might make his or her last video to summarize his/her candidacy and causes. This could be why the advocate trait, for example, was mentioned considerably more in the farewell videos (37 mentions, 95% of mentions) than the introduction video (two mentions, five percent of mentions).

Foresight was also mentioned more in the farewell videos (ten mentions, or 83%) than in the introduction videos (two mentions, or 17%). By this time in each of the candidate's campaigns, they have likely had a shift in attitude and accordingly are adjusting their perception more to the future than dwelling on their present circumstance.

Persistence was mentioned almost three times more in the farewell video (17 mentions, 74%) than in the introduction video (six mentions, 26%). This also might reflect this shift in perception; the candidate might emphasize his or her desire to continue making important decisions to remain a viable political power.

Though utterances in farewell videos outnumber those in introduction videos, sometimes by a drastic margin, diplomacy, experience, service, and optimism still retain higher frequencies of mentions in the introduction videos. Interestingly, these traits are also among the least frequently mentioned traits of the study. While diplomacy and experience are the fourth- and fifth-most commonly mentioned traits in introduction videos, for example, they are tied for last place in the farewell videos.

Diplomacy is the trait that is more frequently mentioned in the introduction videos by the largest margin (83% of mentions in the introduction video). Perhaps this trait contradicts the trend because it is more abstract than other traits: While diplomacy is important enough to the candidates to garner four percent of total mentions, it still garners less than a similar trait like crisis management (seven percent of total mentions). As mentioned, diplomacy is coded for mentions of peace and the end product of diplomatic negotiation. As an utterance in an introduction video, it is appealing; however, when the candidate exits the race, it seems to lose priority for the candidate. While it is likely this appeared more in introduction videos because the farewell videos had such a prevalence of advocate and moral accountability utterances, it simply appears to be a strategy by the candidate to appear favorable only as a potential nominee for presidency. As the candidate returns to Congress, the Senate, or to being a governor, diplomacy perhaps loses importance because the candidate will not have as much privilege to exercise that diplomacy as in office.

Experience, service, and optimism also appear to lose emphasis in the candidates' farewell messages. Essentially, the overall theme of the farewell videos was the future of that candidate's political ambitions; hence the prevalence of advocate, courage, and

persistence mentions. The candidates' seeming perceptions of diplomacy, service, and experience is that each is too focused on the past, thus defeating the purpose of the farewell video: Which, as evidenced by the frequency of certain traits, is to create a positive viewpoint of the future and those successes the candidate will experience. Therefore, it appears possible from the findings that candidates' success strategies and leadership mentions of introduction videos and ads for their campaigns will focus on past successes, service and experience, while exit videos will focus on the future: Goals, courage, persistence, and a "fighting spirit" to promote their respective causes in their future political endeavors.

The farewell videos also yielded other utterances that were not included in the study, including pride in campaign, supporters, and endorsements. These utterances were all linked to the videos as a means of giving closure to their campaigns. They were not included as traits because they were interpreted more as being cursory mentions relating to the circumstance rather than generalizable leadership traits.

CONCLUSION

Though this study did not aim to give the effects of the candidates' mentions of leadership traits on the voters, it did provide data of which leadership utterances were most frequently made by each of the candidates. The study yielded results finding leadership traits to be frequent in the presidential candidates' YouTube introduction and farewell video clips: The most frequently mentioned leadership traits were 'advocate for the people,' 'courage' and 'moral accountability.' It appears from the results of this study that the leadership traits most frequently mentioned relate to the candidates' characters more than their experience. This may be in part because of the medium of YouTube; it is possible that the candidates chose to use more character-driven utterances because they knew their speech or video would be placed on the site and they wanted to appeal to those users who frequent the site.

It is also likely, from the findings of this study, that political campaign Internet videos in future elections will follow the trend exhibited in this study: The introduction videos where the candidate announces his or her candidacy for president will focus on experience, service, diplomacy and other past successes. However, when that candidate exits from the race, he or she will focus less attention on past successes and put more emphasis on leadership traits conducive for future success: persistence, courage and moral accountability. These will further be accomplished if the candidate is dedicated to being an advocate for the common man and fighting for causes to ensure political relevance.

These findings also confirm, in part, Benoit's Functional Theory; that the candidate's discourse would focus only on two topics: issues and character (Benoit et al.,

2005, p. 361). While Benoit has also found through the use of public polls that issues and policies are more important to the voter for both the presidential and congressional votes (Brazeal & Benoit, 2006, p. 404), this study suggests that candidates used more discourse about character than policy. This contrast to Functional Theory may be due to the YouTube medium as well: Again, this could be explained by examining the common perception of the YouTube audience: That of a "garage-band attitude" (Becker et al., 2006, p. 14) or a postmodern constituency. While not every candidate may hold this perception, it is ubiquitous enough to influence each candidate's choice of message, meaning that character utterances may resonate better with that postmodern audience than those of policy.

Limitations

It is likely that some of the leadership utterances, while not specifically embracing traditionally liberal or conservative ideals, reflected the current political atmosphere and may have been different given a different group of candidates or situation. For example, many of the Democrats spoke of their ability to transcend partisan lines and unite the country. This was likely a common trait because it reflected on a common perception that the President George W. Bush had polarized the country and the candidates wanted to distance themselves from that image. Thus, some of the leadership traits presented in this paper may be conditional only to that particular election. However, the general traits represented in this study have a strong likelihood of appearing again in future similar studies.

The most significant limitation of this study was the fleeting nature of YouTube: The web site does not allow its users to download each video, frequently the site will pull

videos without warning, and those videos will often never return to the site. This poses a new dilemma that is still only appearing as technology develops; that of the ephemeral text. As the analysis of the texts was conducted, videos would frequently be pulled from the site, or reassigned to another section that might severely hinder the possibility of finding the clip again. An effort was made to extract the videos onto a computer using an external site, but unfortunately at least one video was lost; it is possible that more definitive versions of certain candidates' farewell speeches were available for a short time and then lost before they could be extracted for analysis. Though it is likely that were the full video available, the particular use of leadership traits would remain uniform with the partial video analyzed. However, the inability to code the full video for each of the candidates hindered the chance for each of the candidates to be given the equal amount of attention for analysis.

Future Research

There exists several opportunities for future research in politics and YouTube: because each video includes a view count underneath the clip, the following question could be posed and answered by the researcher: Does the frequency of mentions of certain leadership skills transfer into more views of each clip by the voter? This question could perhaps quantifiably measure if certain leadership skills would translate into more views by the prospective voter, and whether a dominance of certain leadership traits translates to more views by the users of the web site. Likewise, a study could be conducted determining if there is a correlation between certain leadership traits on YouTube and Obama and McCain's securing the nominee for their respective parties, then ultimately securing the presidency.

Finally, YouTube also offers a forum for its users to discuss the videos in the 'comments' section underneath each clip; an analysis of their uncensored comments, as a form of a political blog to analyze the leadership traits by the candidates could yield interesting results.

TABLES

Table 1. Overall Frequency of Leadership Mentions by both Parties

Advocate	39 (14%)
Moral Accountability	38 (14%)
Courage	35 (12%)
Unification	30 (11%)
Persistence	23 (8%)
Crisis Management	20 (7%)
Change	15 (5%)
Hard Work	13 (5%)
Diplomacy	12 (4%)
Foresight	11 (4%)
Experience	11 (4%)
Service	10 (4%)
Love of America	7 (2%)
Optimism	7 (2%)
Family	6 (2%)
Hope	4 (1%)
Total	**281 (100%)**

$X^2 = 1.5$ (df = 13), p > .05 (N.S.)

Note: Because of rounding, the numbers may not total one hundred percent.

Table 2. Leadership Mentions between Parties

	Republicans	Democrats
Advocate	10 (10%)	29 (16%)
Moral Accountability	22 (21%)	16 (9%)
Courage	15 (15%)	20 (11%)
Unification	10 (10%)	20 (11%)
Persistence	10 (10%)	13 (7%)
Crisis Management	6 (6%)	14 (8%)
Change	7 (7%)	8 (4%)
Hard Work	5 (5%)	8 (4%)
Diplomacy	1 (1%)	11 (6%)
Foresight	3 (3%)	8 (4%)
Experience	2 (2%)	9 (5%)
Service	2 (2%)	8 (4%)
Love of America	4 (4%)	3 (2%)
Optimism	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
Family	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
Hope	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
Total	**103 (100%)**	**178 (100%)**

$X^2 = 80.66$ (df = 81), p > .05 (N.S.)

Note: Because of rounding, the numbers may not total one hundred percent.

Table 3. Frequency of Characteristics in Introduction and Farewell Videos

	Introduction	Farewell
Advocate	2 (2%)	37 (21%)
Moral Accountability	16 (15%)	22 (13%)
Courage	17 (16%)	18 (10%)
Unification	13 (12%)	17 (10%)
Persistence	6 (6%)	17 (10%)
Crisis Management	8 (8%)	9 (6%)
Change	5 (5%)	10 (6%)
Hard Work	2 (2%)	11 (6%)
Diplomacy	10 (10%)	2 (1%)
Foresight	2 (2%)	10 (6%)
Experience	9 (9%)	2 (1%)
Service	7 (7%)	3 (2%)
Love of America	1 (1%)	6 (3%)
Optimism	4 (4%)	3 (2%)
Family	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
Hope	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
Total	**105 (100%)**	**176 (100%)**

$X^2 = 107.33$ (df = 110), p > .05 (N.S.)

Note: Because of rounding, the numbers may not total one hundred percent.

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