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# Testing the Effects of Partisan Bias on Racial Framing of Presidential Candidates: Coverage of Barack Obama and Herman Cain by Fox and MSNBC in 2011

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**Testing the effects of partisan bias on racial framing of presidential candidates:**

**Coverage of Barack Obama and Herman Cain by Fox and MSNBC in 2011**

**By**

**Xin Xue**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

Major: Journalism & Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:

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**Ames, Iowa**

**2012**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examines interactions between racial bias and partisan bias in the coverage of two opposing Black candidates on two opinion cable television programs-- “The O’Reilly Factor” on Fox and “The Rachel Maddow Show” -- on MSNBC from Sept. 1, 2010 to Jan. 3, 2011, the time period when both Barack Obama and Herman Cain were considered leading candidates prior to the Iowa caucuses. To study racial bias, the author created three racial frames – minority interest, racial strategy, and racial attributes. A generic “conflict” frame was also used. A total of 243 segments from both programs were content analyzed.

Results indicate that at least one of the racial frames appeared in about one out of five segments. The generic conflict frame was present in virtually all segments studied. In support of partisan bias, results showed that Fox’s “The O’Reilly Factor” treated Barack Obama much more negatively than did MSNBC’s “The Rachel Maddow Show.” Similarly, Fox’s program was much more positive about Herman Cain. These results provide strong evidence that a partisan bias was operating, and suggest that it influenced racial bias. Rather than racial bias being used in general to cast Black candidates in a negative light, the findings suggest that racial frames were used opportunistically to support a favored candidate or criticize the opposition candidate. Both opinion programs used more minority interest frames when covering the candidate of color who belonged to the Political Party that each cable network supported.



## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

*I understand there may be a temptation among some to think that discrimination is still felt in America... But make no mistake: the pain of discrimination is still felt in America... Yes, if you are African American, the odds of growing up amid crime and gangs are higher; Yes, if you live in a poor neighborhood, you will face challenges that someone in a wealthy suburb does not; But, that's not a reason to get bad grades, that's not a reason to give up on your education and drop out of school. No one has written your destiny for you. Your destiny is in your hands--- and don't you forget that.*

*-President Barack Obama, address to the NAACP*

*centennial convention, July 16, 2009*

Civil rights and voting rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s has been considered as a landmark in the United States in helping African-Americans to register and vote much more freely (Pohlmann, 1999, p. 160). Furthermore, the number of Black elected officials also has increased dramatically. In 1965, there were fewer than 500 Black elected officials in the country. By 1998, the number had grown to more than 8830 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2000). Although large numbers of African-Americans have been successfully elected to government positions in the United States, Black candidates vying for the presidential nomination have been few. Major party African-American candidates for president of the United States did not run in primaries until the 1960s. From Shirley Chisholm (1968) to Herman Cain (2011), there have been just seven African-American

candidates to run for a major party's nomination for presidency. Only Barack Obama has run successfully.

The increase in Black candidates over time has spurred new scholarly interest in the intersections of race and political news to better understand implicit, explicit, and counter-stereotypical messages and their effect on public opinion. For instance, Tali Mendelberg (2001) investigated change and continuity in electoral communication about inequality, particularly racial inequality in the United States. She contends that politicians and voters may express resistance in more subtle forms than before (Mendelberg, 2001, p. 275). In fact, the effect of news messages is related not only to White voters' stereotypical attitudes about black candidates, but also to African American voters' attitudes about Whites, which is about *“their own perceptions of racial group identification, the degree to which they generally espouse identity politics as a preferred political strategy, and their perception of candidates' positions with respect to their own racial belief systems and ideology”* (McIlwain & Caliendo, 2011, p. 3).

News coverage of presidential elections plays a powerful role in any society in which citizens receive, select and use candidate information to direct their voting (Fico F. & Cote, W., 2002). In the context of racial political communication, the news media can be often considered as the fourth branch of government since the news media influence the description and interpretation of campaigns as well as the performance assessments of the elected candidates (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2007). Race, racism, and race-based political messages by mass media have a strong effect in shaping public opinion and the voting decisions of Americans (McIlwain & Caliendo, 2011, p. 4).

Despite the massive proliferation of political news outlets in the last two decades, one can see that television still remains people's number one source of national and political news (Pew Research Center, 2011). It plays an integral role in informing citizens about political hot topics, but further, in framing how these campaign issues should be thought about by the audience. Members of the public not only watch political news or opinion programs on TV, but also pay attention to actual political events such as inaugurations, political debates, or State of the Union addresses. The national survey conducted by Pew Research Center (2011) showed that 66% of Americans consider TV as their main source of news, compared with 41% who say they get most their national and international news online. Looking back to the 2008 presidential election, 68% of people viewed television as their main source of election information compared with 36% who relied on the Internet (Owen, 2010). Hence we can see that people still rely on TV more than the Internet as a source of political campaign information.

In the field of television, cable news is unique from other political news outlets in its choice of format and content. Since the birth of CNN in 1980, followed by MSNBC and Fox News in 1996, cable networks have committed themselves to being 24-hour sensational and ideological news providers. One cannot deny the great social effect caused by the swift development of cable networks. Today, the three biggest representatives are FOX, CNN and MSNBC, which account for the biggest market in political news. A survey by Pew Research Center (2012) showed 36% of Americans say they got campaign news on cable networks, which has been the top regular source for electoral news in 2012, compared to local TV news (32%), network news (26%), Internet (25%) and local paper (20%).

Cable networks have also received the most criticism for news bias by the public. One form of bias, called partisan or ideological bias, is the result of different political orientations that cause cable networks to support the positions of a political party or ideology (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). There has been significant erosion in the believability ratings of several news organizations including MSNBC, CNN and Fox News, and no more than a third say they can believe all or most of the contents provided by major TV stations, despite high audience ratings (Pew Research Center, 2010). Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2008) reported that MSNBC, which explicitly positioned itself in prime time as "*a leftward-leaning analog to the Fox News Channel*" had little negative coverage of Obama during the 2008 presidential election. On the other hand, Fox reported both more negatively toward Obama and more positively toward John McCain and Sarah Palin. President Obama's aides in 2009 criticized Fox News, saying it was *more of an arm of the Republican Party than a practitioner of conventional journalism*. The aides were also trying to dissuade other news outlets from following Fox in news coverage that was viewed by the White House as *a distraction from the governing priorities*" (Harwood, 2009).

Although academic researchers have looked closely at partisan bias and have generally given the news media good marks for balance, fairness and objectivity, there has been less consideration of what happens when partisan bias intersects with coverage of race. For example, when the candidate is of the same political party that your cable station supports, does this change how they characterize the candidate's race? The 2011-12 presidential campaign years offer a unique opportunity to examine this question. In 2011-12, Herman Cain, an African-American, was a Republican candidate for president while Barack

Obama, an African-American, was a Democratic candidate for 2012 re-election. By examining the coverage of these two candidates by Fox and MSNBC, it will be possible to test the effect of partisan bias versus possible racial bias. To test the effects of partisan bias on racial framing, this study conducted a content analysis of two opinion programs, one on Fox News and the other on MSNBC.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines the relationships between partisan bias and racial bias in news opinions for Fox News and MSNBC during the 2011 debate season leading up to the Iowa caucuses.

This chapter examines how partisan-slanted cable networks frame racial messages in political communication. The research questions are outlined in the final section.

### **Racial Stereotypes in Political Communication**

African- American history begins in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and includes slavery, racism, reconstruction, development of the African- American community, participation in the great military conflicts of the United States, racial segregation and the civil rights movement. Given America's tumultuous racial past, many people perceived Barack Obama's election as signifying arrival at a "post- racial" America, where the United States is considered to be void of racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice. However, theories of modern racism suggest that racism continues although it has become more subtle, symbolic, nuanced and implicit (Campbell 1995; Henry & Tator 2002). This tendency may be exacerbated by pressures to be seen as politically correct, conveying messages in ways that will not be seen as racist (Mendelberg, 2001). Some scholars, for instance, Ashburn- Nardo, Livingston and Waytz (2011), conclude that although the election of Barack Obama is an indication of progress, it does not symbolize the beginning of a "post- racial" America due to the continued existence of both explicit and implicit bias.

The scholarly research about the relationship between Black politicians and the news media in the United States begins in the late 1970s. Conyers and Wallace (1976) surveyed

the newly elected class of Black officials, asking their motivations for seeking office and investigating their opinions about who had helped or hurt them in their pursuit of political careers. The Black elected officials expressed no contentions with how mass media treated them, and said the media actually provided some degree of help for them rather than posing barriers. Chaudhary (1980) analyzed election coverage of winning candidates for U.S. Congress, state senators, state representatives, mayors, and council members from 19 daily newspapers for cities with large Black populations. The results indicated that Black candidates received significantly more coverage in longer articles than Whites; however, White candidates received better placement (on the front page and above the fold).

Barber and Gandy (1990) were concerned about equity in coverage and balance in treatment. They assessed media coverage in nine major metropolitan daily newspapers between 1979 and 1983. The discriminant analysis reveals that blacks were more frequently named in headlines than whites. Black representatives were more likely to be cited on local matters, while their White counterparts were more frequently quoted on the topics of congressional, national, state and international affairs.

Arnold Gibbons (1993) investigated news coverage of Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. Gibbons found that news media emphasized race and ethnicity of Jackson and suggested that racial stereotypes held by the whites worked against Jackson's election. Sylvie (1995) conducted a study spanning 23 years (between 1967 and 1990) of four Black mayoral candidates. He found that each got more coverage than his White counterpart. Better than expected, they also received as much prominent coverage. Reeves (1997) examined the frequency, pattern, and tone of the news coverage of the 1989 New

York and Seattle mayoralty elections by the *New York Times* and the *Seattle Times*. The study provides evidence that employment of racial language by the print press was prominent and substantial and racialized coverage can be problematic. Terkildsen and Damore (1999) investigate newspaper coverage of congressional contests throughout the United States occurring in 1990 and 1992. They found that Black candidates received less coverage than Whites. However, the extensiveness of the coverage depends on whom the Black candidates were running against. When a Black and a White candidate run against each other, the amount of coverage didn't differ statistically. In general, Whites gained 1.5 times as much coverage as candidates of color.

Based on previous research of news media, one can conclude that racial bias has not disappeared over time, but continues in both explicit and implicit ways, which may help prime negative racial attitudes among voters, and in turn adversely affect the Black candidate in the election contest.

### **Partisan Bias of Fox News and MSNBC**

In the United States, early cable networks began with CNN during 1980, then Financial News Network in 1981, and CNN2 in 1982. CNBC was launched in 1989, taking control of FNN after two years. By 1997, the cable news industry rapidly expanded, including MSNBC, Fox News Channel, and specialty channels including ESPNNews, Bloomberg Television and Fox Business Network (Carlson, 2003, p.6).

The Fox News Channel was launched on Oct. 7, 1996, by Australian- American Rupert Murdoch, a well-known conservative media mogul. In the same year, he hired former NBC executive and Republican political consultant Roger Ailes as the founding CEO of Fox



News. Despite this obviously conservative leadership, Fox's initial goal was to present news from a purely objective standpoint. In 1996, Ailes asserted, "We are going to be basically a hard- news network, providing straight, factual information to the American people so that they can make up their own minds with less "spin" and less "face time" for anchors" (Morris, 2005). However, many researchers have asserted that Fox News has a strong pro- Republican slant (Harwood, 2009; Domke, 2001; Morris, 2005). During the course of the 2000 presidential election, some pundits accused Fox News of distorting facts in an effort to help Texas Governor George W. Bush win the 2000 Presidential Election. *The New Yorker magazine* first reported that Fox put John Ellis, the first cousin of Texas Gov. George W. Bush, in charge of the "decision desk" for Election Night returns' analysis and projections. Ellis told the magazine that he talked often with his cousin George Bush and Jeb Bush (the governor of Florida) on Election Night. In a July 3, 1999, op-ed for the *Boston Globe*, he wrote: "I am loyal to my cousin, Gov. George Bush. I put that loyalty ahead of my loyalty to anyone outside my immediate family... There is no way for you to know if I am telling you the truth about George W. Bush's presidential campaign because in my case, my loyalty goes to him and not to you." Another illustrative example of the partisan bias of Fox News is the 2003 invasion of Iraq. During the early stages of the Iraq conflict, FNC had as much as a 300 percent increase in viewership with an average of 3.3 million viewers daily. BBC News commented, "Fox News' diet of conservative commentators and unashamedly patriotic frontline reports from Iraq was a particular ratings winner" (BBC News, 2003).

Bill O'Reilly, the host of *The Factor*, admitted in front of an audience of millions during the 2011 GOP debates, "When we launched in 1996 we had less than 20 million

*potential viewers. We were simply not on most cable systems because powerful companies like CNN and NBC didn't want us on. But we persevered and now FNC crushes CNN, MSNBC, and CNBC in the ratings. The reason for that is two-fold. First, Fox News is the only TV news network that gives equal credibility to the conservative point of view. That appeals to millions of conservatives who want their opinion respected, not sneered at by arrogant elitists. You fill in the name” (O'Reilly, 2011)*

MSNBC was launched by NBC executive Tom Rogers on July 15, 1996, evolving from simple news and analysis into an opinion programming emphasis for a targeted partisan audience in recent years. A seven- year survey of cable channels by the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that “*MSNBC is moving to make politics a brand, with a large dose of opinion and personality*” (The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007).

In addition to the changes in its programs’ style, MSNBC was gradually viewed as a social liberal counterpart to the more conservative Fox News Channel. Two illustrative examples of this are the United States invasion of Iraq and the hiring of Keith Olbermann.

MSNBC, which launched just three months prior to Fox News, was born as collaboration between Microsoft and NBC with General Electric as its parent company. NBC, which broadcasts the Nightly News with Brian Williams, attaches great importance to objectivity. Like Fox News, MSNBC began with the attempt of creating an objective 24-hour news channel to rival CNN. However, after several years, MSNBC had been also accused of having biased news coverage to attract liberal and progressive viewers.

MSNBC hosts Chris Matthews and Keith Olbermann once openly criticized the Iraq war, and criticized Republican President George W. Bush many times. Phil Griffin, hired as president

of MSNBC in 2008, admitted, “What we are doing is targeting an audience” and “In television, and in particular cable television, brand is everything.” Griffin believed that product differentiation, namely partisan differentiation, was the key to MSNBC’s viability. In the fall of 2008, MSNBC had a new channel slogan called “the Power of Change” which was viewed as supporting Obama’s “change” rhetoric (Huffington Post, 2008).

The “Big three” cable networks—CNN, Fox News Channel, and MSNBC--have been criticized by various scholars in the field of social science. Bae (2000) shows there are significant differences in the types of stories among cable news shows and between cable news and network news. Another study compares coverage of national issues on Fox News to other new media outlets as well as several traditional outlets such as news wires. They found that Fox’s coverage showed a “consistently pro- Republican slant” (Groeling & Baum, 2007). Coe (2008) asserted that, “*Cable news programs have begun to take more explicitly partisan positions.*” Cable news accelerates this shift to ideological news by changing simple newscasts into more opinion- oriented programming. The Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism reported that 83% of stories on cable news included opinion from the host (the Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006). In a later study, Chalif (2011) used a quantitative content analysis to conclude that cable news broadcasts on MSNBC and FOX News have a significant partisan slant, with MSNBC leaning liberal and Fox News leaning conservative.

### **Framing Theory**

The current study will examine the interplay between partisan bias and racial bias in opinion programs on Fox and MSNBC by using framing as a theoretical framework. Framing

has roots in psychology and sociology. Psychologists Kahneman and Tversky (1979 and 1984) examined how different decision-making scenarios influence subjects' choices and attitudes in an experimental design. On the other hand, Goffman (1974), a sociologist, argued that individuals apply interpretive schemas to classify information and explain them meaningfully. Goffman (1974) defines frames as embodiments of "the principles of organization which govern events" (p. 10).

Tuchman (1978) elaborates on the news framing process in her book, *Making News*. However, a more succinct definition of framing came from Entman (1993). To him, "*frames define problems (i.e., they determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values); diagnose causes (i.e., they identify the forces creating the problem); make moral judgments (i.e., they evaluate causal agents and their effects), and suggest remedies (i.e., they offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects)*" (p. 52).

Pan, Zhongdang and Kosicki (1993) suggest that framing is involved in the processes of encoding information, interpreting information, and retrieving information. In fact, Norris (1995) defined news framing as an information process: "*The core of framing is to prioritize certain facts and issues over others in a news story; thus, it shows a certain interpretation from different orientations*" (p. 358). McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) suggest that framing is the same as second level agenda-setting, which aims to determine how audiences think about an issue rather than the topics they think about (the first level agenda-setting).

Over the years, scholars such as Tuchman (1978), Bennett (1995), and Edelman (1993) have conducted studies that focused on media frames. On the other hand, Iyengar

(1990 and 1991) and Gamson (1992) have examined audience frames. Despite these empirical and theoretical works, framing research still lacked clarity in terms of causes and effects. To fill this research gap, Scheufele, in 1999, integrated the fragmented framing studies into a model that stipulates four key framing processes: frame building, frame setting, individual-level consequences and societal-level effects. Figure 1 presents Scheufele's (1999) model of framing research.

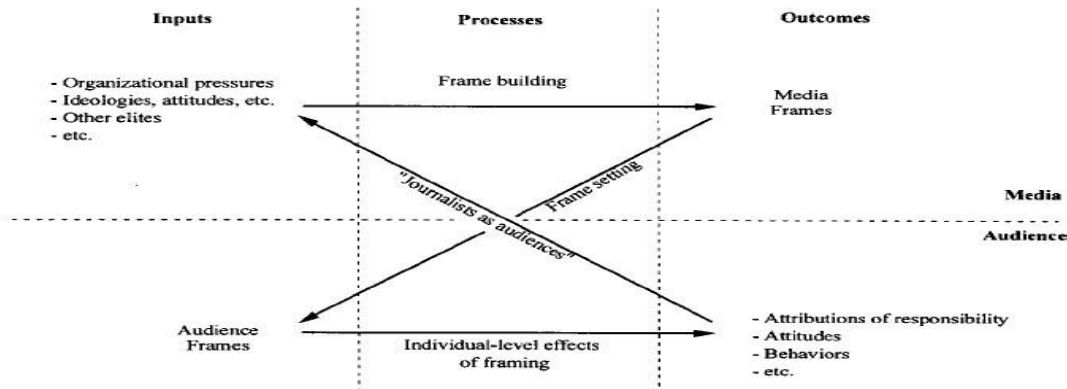


Figure 1. A process model of framing research (Scheufele, 1999, p. 115)

### Racial Framing

Joe R. Feagin (2010) defines the racial frame as “*the overarching worldview encompassing important racial ideas and beliefs, terms, images, emotions, inclinations, and interpretations and determining a way of being, perspective on life, and language and explanations that help structure, normalize, and make sense out of society. White racial framing is as much, if not more, subconscious than conscious (thus a “hidden” barrier)*” (p.45). The contemporary racial frame contains not only cognitive stereotypes, prejudice and

discrimination, but also some “nonlinguistic” parts such as “radicalized emotions,” “images,” and even “smells” (p.93). In general, these elements of a racial frame function as an “organizing principle,” which are used to interpret social reality.

Scholars interested in exploring how the news media report Black and other candidates of color suggest that racial references will be translated into racial readings, racial readings will translate into racial perception, and racial perception will be translated into racial decisions. Gross, Harvey and Low (2009) explore the role of racial themes in media coverage of the 2008 presidential election by coding for a number of potential racial references which may be appearing in campaign coverage of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today*. The study shows that between a fifth and a third of the stories included racial references. They concluded that racial references were not dominant in the news, but a substantial portion of the sample did contain racial references, and front page stories were more likely to refer to at least one racial reference than non-front-page stories. Reeves (1997) also assessed the role of race by counting the number of specific racial references appearing in the coverage. He categorized racial references in “reference to either the race or ethnicity of a mayoral candidate, politician, or celebrity; a racial or ethnic group in the electorate; or race as it pertained to election campaign strategy” (p.53). The results indicate racial references were prominent. Terkildsen and Demore (1999) examine press coverage of African- American candidates by measuring attributions of candidate race and racial references to the voting population. Different from Reese (1997), the research also coded photographs of the African –American candidate as nonverbal cues to examine the attribution of candidate race. One can notice that the previous studies measured racial

framing by counting the frequency of racial references. Chliendo and McIlwain (2006) decided a racially framed story appears only when it mentions the race of candidates, the race of voters and a photograph of the candidates. All of three elements must be satisfied at the same time.

In various ways, Reeves (1997), Gibbons (1993), Terkildsen and Demore (1999), and Caliendo and McIlwain (2006) suggest the existence of racial framing towards candidates of color. However, this study argues that the prominent appearance of racial references alone does not equal racial framing. McIlwain and Caliendo (2011) confirm this standpoint and point out racial references have the potential to become racial frames, but they do not necessarily constitute racial frames. A racially framed news story or candidate within it, in their estimation, is one in which racial references are not merely present but pervasive (p.106).

McIlwain and Caliendo (2011) investigate the pervasiveness of such references in news stories about minority candidates throughout eight election cycles between 1992 and 2006 by using a variety of measurements including the frequency of racial references and the degree of racial framing in headline, section and stories. They found that racial references appear in news stories infrequently overall. One more mission of their study was to determine how prominent these racial references were in the campaign coverage and whether their salience could be referred to as a racial frame. In contrast to other studies, McIlwain and Caliendo measure racial framing according to story length, nonracial content, campaign news, photographs, and character content. They found that the proportion of racial references

included in the samples was relatively small. The degree of racial framing was even lower when all the factors mentioned above were considered.

Squires and Jackson (2010) used a computer technique called the concordance method and textual analysis exploring how racial issues were addressed in newspaper and news magazine coverage of the 2008 Democratic primaries. They found that there are few references to Barack Obama's biracial heritage (Squires & Jackson, 2010). It's worth noting that Squires and Jackson restrict their study to print media, which limits the generalizability of their study.

The previous studies give us valuable insights for racial framing research, but most of these studies were focused on hard news rather than editorials or opinion programs that present more subjective comments. Furthermore, they simplify the methods of their framing research by searching for a variety of keywords, phrases or racial references to discern how race is included, instead of developing specific racial frames, which would give us deeper and more objective insights. Thus, the limitations of prior studies offer a unique space to identify racial- specific frames in television reporting during the period leading up to the Iowa caucuses. Although Gross, Harvey and Low (2009) presented and offered valuable evidence of racial cues, they just simply counted the frequency of possible references and discussed how race was primed. This makes it difficult to see how visible each racial reference was in the data used in 2007 and 2011.

### **Generic News Frames and Issue-specific Frames**

In the review of previous research, there are two types of news frames identified-- issue- specific frames and generic frames.



*Issue specific news frames.* This type of frame refers to specific topics or news events (de Vreese, 2001, p. 108). Issue- specific frames allow for investigation of the framing of particular events in detail. For instance, the *Cold War* frame prevails in U.S. international news before 1989; the victim- perpetrator frame interprets the news on violence (Reese, 1995). Another example of issue- specific frames is an analysis of online news in China towards the 2004 presidential election by Han (2007). The study proposed a *Military consequences* frame due to an increasing tension between Mainland China and Taiwan during that period of time (Han, 2007). Jasperson (1998) focused on media frames about US national budget deficits in the press. And four news frames (‘talk’, ‘fight’, ‘impasse’, and ‘crisis’) were also identified.

*Generic news frames.* Generic frames are general and not limited to a specific topic. They could be applied to research which focuses on different cultures, or different topics. Generic frames give researchers more possibilities for making comparisons (de Vreese C., 2003, p. 30). However, with generic frames it is not possible to examine an event in fine detail. Several prior studies have identified common media frames. For instance, Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) identified several different types of frames used in U.S. news coverage: conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) analyzed five national newspapers and television news stories in the period surrounding the Amsterdam meetings of European heads of state in 1997. They identified the following frames: attribution of responsibility frame, conflict frame, economic consequences frame, morality frame and human interest frame (p. 94). Such frames can be

categorized into generic frames which could be applied to compare different framing processes.

Based on discussions above, the current study will include four racial frames. Of them, the conflict frame is a generic frame, which emphasizes the disagreement between individuals or different parties. The other three are issue-specific frames, which were identified because they can only be applied to the specific topic of racial-related issues. Specifically, they are: (1) racial attributes frame, (2) racial strategy frame and (3) minority interest frame.

### **Racial Frames**

#### Racial attributes frame

Reeves (1997) conducted a content analysis of print news coverage of the New York and Seattle mayoralty elections in 1989. He defines a racial reference as “*at least including one reference to the race or ethnicity of the mayoral candidates, the race of governmental leaders, officials, or celebrities; racial or ethnic groups in the electorate; and race as it pertained to a campaign issue or strategy*” (p.56). Gross, Harvey and Low (2009) learn from Reeves (1997), but further subdivide such racial references into nine individual categories, “*Mentions or references to Obama’s own racial background; mentions or references to race of supporters and opponents; references to race within polling results; references to racism; references to racial policies; references to the “Bradley effect;” references to prominent “radical” black leaders; references to Reverend Wright and implicit racial references.*”

Based on Reeves (1997) and Gross, Harvey and Low (2009), a new issue- specific frame called a racial attributes frame, will be used in this study. This frame includes material

mentioning the race of Black candidates, their ancestries, or their family members' race. In the case of this study, the racial attributes frame includes material that mentions or discusses the race of Barack Obama or Herman Cain, their ancestries or their family members' race. It might be an explicit description of a candidate as Black, African-American or minority, or it might be more implicit, such as a reference to a politician's country of origin.

Another aspect of the racial attributes frame in this study is about intelligence and incompetence of Black candidates. Black Americans have been viewed as less intelligent and creative than White Americans for hundreds of years (Feagin, 2010). The achievements of individual African-Americans such as Bill Cosby or Barack Obama are often framed as "exceptional" for their group or described as having "transcended race" (Andrews 2001; Entman & Rojecki 2000). Beyond this, the character of Black candidates might be negatively related to social stereotyped images of historical radical leaders or ordinary Black Americans by mass media (Feagin, 2010). Different media may employ the racial attributes frame differently.

#### Racial strategy frame

McCormick and Charles (1993) argue that Black candidates can diffuse the polarizing effects of race and increase support among Whites by avoiding race specific issues and focusing on issues that are perceived as racially transcendent, avoiding direct appeals to the Black community, and projecting a non- threatening image. Squires and Jackson (2010) note that the term "race card" enjoyed more mentions than any other term. Such a term intends to describe racial gamesmanship (and illegitimate appeals to race) or tactics. In the age of equality, politicians often resort to more subtle uses of race to win elections. One early

argument has been that Black candidates have to use a “deracialized” voting strategy in order to gain more support outside the Black community (McCormick & Charles, 1993). For instance, Feagin (2010) argues that Barack Obama mostly avoid directly discussions of racism issues for almost the entire 2007- 2008 campaign (p.181).

Patterson (1993) argues that the cable news focus on the horse race rather than matters of substance places too much attention on front-runners in the race, and focuses on reporters rather than candidates. McIlwain and Caliendo (2011) established a *racial competition model*, which asserted that horse-race-type coverage would have a strong effect on the degree of racial framing. Although this overall model didn’t significantly affect levels of racial framing, one of the variables in their model-- the presence of horserace coverage-- did significantly influence racial framing (p.124).

Because of the evidence of the importance of this type of coverage, the current study developed a racial strategy frame. The racial strategy frame can be presented by media organizations in various forms, which refer to candidates’ racial strategies, or racial tactics by parties. It may include references to racial policies, for instance, affirmative action, welfare or food stamps. The media might also describe or analyze the causes or predictions of Black candidates’ racial strategies.

#### Minority interest frame

The Minority Interest Frame intends to address the question: how do Fox and MSNBC describe Black voters, interest groups or their communities if the race of voters is mentioned?

The minority interest frame is based on human interest, and brings a human face or an emotional angle to the coverage of an event, issue or problem. The stories may use adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring, sympathy, or compassion. Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) defined this as the “human impact” frame and found that it was a common frame in the news. In political communication, when race erupts in the news, mainstream framing practices reinforce the sense that people of color are culturally or personally deficient and/or that Whites have been unfairly implicated in racial disparities (Gresson 1995; Squires 2007). Moreover, other scholars have shown how certain social agendas and policy measures, such as welfare, affirmative action, and immigration have been related to people of color, even though it seems like a color-neutral expression (Entman & Rojecki 2000; Iyengar 1990). The current study limits this frame to African-American groups, rather than Latino or Asian Americans. Prior studies have used the minority interest frame to include references or discussions about the personal lives of minority African-American communities or voters. It also refers to the good or bad situation of Black citizens, for instance, unemployment, poverty, crime, violence or how Black individuals and groups are affected by issues, problems or policies.

#### Conflict frame

The generic conflict frame has been used by many researchers (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Entman 1993 and Han 2007 ). This frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, institutions, or countries in the news coverage (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). Entman and Rojecki (2000) emphasize that the mainstream media rarely report on areas of racial agreement; they prefer conflict. Many scholars analyze negative

stereotypes, an emphasis on racial conflict, and depictions of the electorate as divided racial blocs when Black politicians and/or racial politics are at issue (Entman & Rojecki 2000; Peer & Ettema 1998). When race is involved in the political news, Black and White Americans are described as antagonists with few overlapping interests (Entman & Rojecki 2000). Similarly, Shah and Thornton (2004) conclude that news coverage that involves Blacks or other minority groups deploys frames that underscore intergroup tensions, differences and hostility and enhance White norms. Based on previous literature, the conflict frame refers to conflicts among individuals, parties, groups, institutions or media outlets concerning any racial matters or policies. The conflict frame may be presented by hosts, guests or other news sources.

Although a main objective of this study is to examine racial framing in the coverage of candidates of color, it is still important to capture whether the coverage involving Black candidates in each opinion program on Fox and MSNBC uses the conflict frame dominantly since previous studies (e.g. Patterson, 1993; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2007) mainly focus on general campaign news rather than the stories in the opinion programs. Thus, this study measures the conflict frame as a generic frame, which may include not only racial conflict, but also other forms of disagreement/ conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries.

The study addresses two main research questions to ascertain how the partisan bias of Fox News and MSNBC interacted with racial biases when candidates were of the parties supported by the networks.

### **Research Questions**

- 1. Were the four frames (racial attributes frame, racial strategy frame, minority interest frame and the conflict frame) employed in coverage of Barack Obama and Herman Cain by Fox and MSNBC during the months leading up to the Iowa caucuses in 2011? If so, what frames were activated, and what was their tone?**
- 2. Are the two networks (FOX and MSNBC) different in framing the two candidates? What is the difference in their tone towards two candidates?**
- 3. Do the networks (FOX and MSNBC) switch frames used and/or tone when the candidate is of the same political party as that supported by the network?**

## CHAPTER 3. METHOD

This study aims to test the effect of partisan bias on racial framing through comparing patterns of racial framing and the tone between Fox and MSNBC and within each cable network. The time period for the study is the months leading up to the Iowa Caucuses in 2011

### Two Opinion Programs

The cable TV opinion programs selected for analysis were “The O’Reilly Factor” (Fox News), and “The Rachel Maddow Show” (MSNBC). The two elite cable networks Fox News and MSNBC were selected because they represent two very different partisan biases.

“The O’Reilly Factor” was launched in October, 1996. It’s also called “The Factor,” which is a talk show on the Fox News Channel hosted by commentator Bill O’Reilly. The program has become well-known since 2007 and had been the most popular on U.S. cable news show for nearly 100 consecutive months by March 2009 (Stelter, 2009). O’Reilly discusses current hot political issues with guests. The program airs weeknights at 8 p.m., 11 p.m., and 5 a.m. EST. “The Rachel Maddow Show” is a news and opinion television program that debuted on Sept. 8, 2008. It airs weeknights on MSNBC at 9 p.m. EST. The show made MSNBC competitive at that time slot and had nearly twice as many viewers as her predecessor, Dan Abrams in 2008 (Baird, 2008).

Media coverage of the two major parties’ primaries usually begins in September before the year of presidential primary. The Iowa Caucuses is the first important test of a candidate’s strength. This study examined coverage from Sept. 1, 2011, to Jan. 3, 2012. This timeframe usually includes intense coverage of candidates prior to the Republican



presidential primaries. For this study, only transcripts of the text used in the broadcast will be examined, not the actual video.

### **Sampling**

Transcripts for the chosen programs were obtained by using Access World News for all of the episodes of “The Bill O’Reilly” and “The Rachel Maddow Show” during the selected period. In Access World News system, there were a total of 85 episodes of “The Bill O’Reilly” show and 82 episodes of the “The Rachel Maddow Show” in the given time period. Each episode that contained at least three mentions of either Barack Obama or Herman Cain was selected. And each chosen episode was then divided into different segments, programming between “commercial breaks,” for further analysis.

After this step, there were a total of 85 episodes (529 segments) on Fox and 80 episodes (520 segments) on MSNBC which contained at least three mentions of Barack Obama. There were 46 episodes (307 segments) on Fox and 34 episodes (206 segments) on MSNBC which contained at least three mentions of Herman Cain. Almost all the programs mentioned Barack Obama at least three times. However, “The O’Reilly Factor” referred to Herman Cain in about half of its episodes, while “The Rachel Maddow Show” included at least three mentions of Cain in 40% of the episodes. This means “The O’Reilly Factor” covered Herman Cain slightly more often than “The Rachel Maddow Show.” One reason may be that Fox News devoted more attention to the 2012 Republican primary than MSNBC.

Next, the study identified each segment including at least three mentions of either Obama or Cain. In total, 516 segments were collected. In “The O’Reilly Factor” 43.9% of the total segments mentioned Barack Obama at least three times and 23.5% of the overall

segments referred to Herman Cain at least three times. The distribution of the segments is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The distribution of segments in each show

	Episodes with three mentions of each candidate	Total collected segments	Segments containing at least three mentions of each candidate
<b>O'Reilly Factor</b>			
Obama	85 (100%)	529	232 (43.9%)
Cain	46 (54%)	307	72 (23.5%)
<b>The Rachel Maddow Show</b>			
Obama	80 (98%)	520	171(32.9%)
Cain	34 (41%)	206	41 (19.9%)

In “The Rachel Maddow Show,” 32.9% of the segments included at least three mentions of Barack Obama and 19.9% of the segments contained at least three references to Herman Cain. Results show that Obama’s name was mentioned almost three times as often as Cain on Fox, and about 50% more on MSNBC.

The large number of 232 segments mentioning Obama at least three times on “The O’Reilly Factor” and 171 segments on “The Rachel Maddow Show” led to a decision to choose a sub-sample for further comparative analysis. One segment per day was selected from both Fox and MSNBC. An online random number generator was used to make the selection from each program. There should be 85 segments from Fox and 80 segments from MSNBC. However, irrelevant segments that had nothing to do with the campaign were removed. Nine irrelevant Obama segments were removed from “The O’Reilly Factor” and 22 segments concerning Obama were removed from “The Rachel Maddow Show.” Furthermore, four irrelevant segments about Cain from “The O’Reilly Factor” were removed. The final

study included 243 segments from the two cable networks. Table 2 shows the distribution of these segments.

Table 2: Breakdown of segments gathered by different sources

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>O'Reilly Factor</b>			
Obama	76	52.8	52.8
Cain	68	47.2	100.0
Total	144	100.0	
<b>The Rachel Maddow Show</b>			
Obama	58	58.6	58.6
Cain	41	41.4	100.0
Total	99	100.0	

### Research Design

The first research question was, “*Were racial frames employed in coverage of Barack Obama and Herman Cain by Fox and MSNBC during the months leading up to the Iowa caucuses in 2011? If so, what frames were activated during each period and what was their tone?*” To answer this question, a content analysis of transcripts was conducted to assess which racial frames were used in news media accounts of the 2011 period leading up to the Iowa Caucuses. The four racial frames discussed earlier were examined in the content analysis. Note that the study only focuses on the transcripts of two opinion programs, rather than actual video.

The first three racial frames were developed by the author of this study. The conflict frame is a generic frame that has been used by many scholars in previous studies. Each frame includes five questions. Each question was coded present or absent for every episode: if present, coded 1; if absent, coded 0. The presence of these indicators was added

and the average score for each frame was computed as a measure of visibility. Thus, visibility values for each ranged from 0.00 (frame not present) to 5.00 (frame present for every attribute (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Mean scores and standard deviations of the visibility of news frames will be reported. Table 3 shows the items for each frame.

The racial attributes frame relates to the race or ethnicity of black candidates. The media could explicitly or implicitly refer to the racial attributes frame in many ways. Based on the previous studies (e.g. Reeves, 1997; Gross, Harvey & Low, 2009; Feagin 2010; Andrews, 2001; Entman & Rojecki, 2000), this study developed five items for the racial attributes frame. Media coverage may directly mention the race of black candidates, or indirectly refer to it. For example, the host might mention birth origin, religious affiliation, or the citizenship of Black candidates ( item 2 of the racial attributes frame), relate Black candidates to some Black leaders such as Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton (item 3 of the racial attributes frame), connect Black candidates to stereotyped images of African- American people (item 4 of the racial attributes frame), or talk about their leadership and intelligence in relation to their race (item 5 of the racial attributes frame). All five items provide different aspects or angles to investigate the racial attributes frame, which may be employed by news media overtly or covertly.

The racial strategy frame can also be used by media in several ways. Previous studies (e.g. McCormick & Charles ,1993; Squires & Jackson, 2010) help develop the racial strategy frame for the current study. Racial strategy, also called the “race card,” has been used by large number of presidential candidates in various ways for political elections. In order to win enough votes, Black candidates might highlight messages about racial issues such as

welfare, food stamps and affirmative action via campaign advertisements, speeches, tours, addresses or press conferences. News sources then cover these topics. For instance, during the 2007- 2008 campaign, Senator Obama engaged in discussion of affirmative action and used his famous March 2008 speech, dealing with racism in the U.S society, to signal his standpoints toward racial issues. Although Barack Obama refrained from direct discussions of all kinds of racism issues, he still gained the support from almost all Black voters and a majority of other voters of color (Feagin, 2010). Mass media might view his discussions of racial issues like affirmative action and welfare as racial strategy (item 1 of the racial strategy frame), his campaign activities as racial strategy (item 2 of the racial strategy frame), the analysis of racial issues/activities by Obama (item 3 of the racial strategy frame), the projection of his stance on race matters if elected (item 4 of the racial strategy frame) or the reaction of White/Black voters towards the actions of Barack Obama (item 5 of the racial strategy frame).

The minority interest frame was developed based on the human interest frame by the previous studies (e.g. Scheufele, 1999; Lindsay & Mogensen, 2002; Aiken, 2003; Neuman, Just & Grigler), which has been defined as the “human impact” frame, showing a human face or an emotional angle to the news coverage of an event, issue or problem. The minority interest frame in this study addresses how Black individuals are inserted into the campaign news involving candidates of color. The coverage might mention the social condition of African- American people in the area of jobs, education, wealth, or other fields (item 3 of the minority interest frame), connect Black people with negative images such as violence, crime or sexual promiscuity (item 4 of the minority interest frame), discuss how Black people had

been affected by an issue, problem, or policy (item 2 of the minority interest frame), employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate emotional feelings (item 5 of the minority interest frame), or provide historical references to the development of the American-American community (item 1 of the minority interest frame).

The generic conflict frame has been researched by various scholars (e.g. Semetko, 2000; Entman 1993; Han, 2007). This frame focuses on disagreement/ conflict between individuals, groups, institutions, or countries in news coverage. All items for this frame except the third one were developed by previous studies. Since one of the objectives is to examine whether Fox and MSNBC have a strong partisan bias, this study added an item, “*Does the segment include disagreement or criticism towards/among media outlets on their stands or opinions?*” to investigate whether cable networks often overtly or covertly show disagreement or criticism towards other media outlets and how they express their opinions about this.

Table3. The items of three issue- specific racial frames and the generic conflict frame

Frames	Items for each frame
<b>Racial attributes frame</b>	Does the segment refer to the race of Black candidates, their ancestries or their family members, or physical characteristics, such as skin color and facial features?
	Does the segment mention, discuss or debate birth origin, religious affiliation, or citizenship of Black candidates?
	Does the segment connect Black candidates to Jesse Jackson, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, Reverend Wright or other prominent Black leaders?
	Does the segment explicitly or implicitly relate the characters of the Black candidates to the emotion- laden or stereotyped images of Black Americans that have been polished, established, proclaimed, and circulated by Whites over 400 years?
	Does the segment refer to the Black candidates’ intelligence, leadership or achievements overtly or covertly in relation to their

	race?
<b>Racial Strategy Frame</b>	Does the segment view kinds of racial matters such as discussions of affirmative action, welfare, food stamps issues as racial tactics/political strategy to win over White/Black voters?
	Does the segment consider the campaign advertisements or some planned campaign activities by black candidates as a part of gamesmanship to gain support from White/Black voters?
	Does the segment mention, describe or analyze the reasons why black candidates focus on particular racial policies/issues? Include activities like speeches, tours, addresses and press conferences.
	Does the segment infer or predict black candidates' stance on race matters in case black candidates are successfully elected in terms of their racial standpoint during the campaign?
	Does the segment refer to or describe the reaction of White/Black or other groups of voters towards racial tactics employed by black candidates?
<b>Minority Interest Frame</b>	Does the segment provide historical references to slavery, racism, reconstruction, development of the African-American community, military conflicts of the United States, racial segregation or civil rights movement?
	Does the segment show or discuss how Black individuals and groups are affected by the issue, problem or policy?
	Does the segment mention, describe or analyze the social conditions of African American people in the areas of jobs, wealth, welfare, education, housing, or other socioeconomic opportunities?
	Does the segment connect violence, crime, laziness, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, or other negative images with Black Americans as a group?
	Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy- caring, sympathy or compassion?
<b>Conflict frame</b>	Does the segment reflect conflict between parties/individuals/groups/countries?
	Does one party-individual-group-country criticize another?
	Does the segment include disagreement or criticism towards/among media outlets on their stands or opinions?
	Does the segment refer to winners and losers?
	Does the segment mention the reason(s) for the conflict/disagreement?

If the answer to the first research question indicates that there is a lot of coverage employing the three racial frames, then clearly racial framing was important in the campaign. If there was little racial coverage, race would seem to be not very important.

To test the second question, “*Are the two networks (FOX and MSNBC) different in framing the two candidates? What is the difference in their tone towards two candidates?*” a statistical t- test will be used to compare the visibility of each racial frame between Fox and MSNBC in the period of time.

In addition to counting the number of times each racial frame occurs, each segment’s tone towards race in general and the tone towards each of the two Black candidates was classified as favorable, neutral or unfavorable. According to Reeves (1997) and Gibbons (1993) who measure the tone of their classified references, a favorable news item includes any story that identifies mainly positive aspects of frames. Conversely, an unfavorable item focuses mainly on negative aspects about the specific frame. A neutral item does not make any unfavorable or favorable references towards frames. The following are three examples for coding the tone.

#### **Tone toward candidates**

- An unfavorable item towards Obama:

*O’ REILLY: This is not a partisan analysis. When President Obama took office, I knew he was an income redistribution guy. In fact, I challenged him on that in our first interview during the 2008 campaign. But once elected, I decided to give the President a chance to see if his economic vision, big government management of the economy could turn things around. Well, we all know things have gotten worse, not*



*better. American voters are angry, frustrated and again, many of them are scared.*

*Jimmy Carter faced that back in 1980. You can look up what happened to him (Sep. 16, 2011, the O'Reilly Factor).*

- A neutral item towards Cain:

*O'REILLY: He's a straight talker. His 999 deal is at least creative. It makes people think. It was a brilliant stroke to introduce that. I like a lot of what Herman Cain brings to the table.*

*INGRAHAM: Ok.*

*O'REILLY: But when he was on with me, he didn't really know much about foreign affairs, foreign policy. That's going to be important coming up. So I've got to be honest about those situations (Sep. 29, 2011, the O'Reilly Factor).*

- A favorable item towards Obama:

*MADDOW: They decided to go there anyway because North Carolina is really important to them -- really important specifically to Barack Obama's re- election effort. In the 2008 presidential election, you may remember that the day before Election Day, then-candidate Barack Obama's grandmother, the woman who had raised him, died in Hawaii. And that night, the night before election day, election eve with the on-air countdown clocks already ticking down the number of hours before the first polls would open, Barack Obama went to North Carolina and he stood in the rain at the University of North Carolina and he gave his closing arguments, in a sense for the whole 2008 election. It was a powerful, personal moment because it was one of the only times he has ever been seen to cry in public when he was talking about*

*his grandmother. It was also a powerfully emotional political moment because here it was the night before the presidential election and the Democratic candidate is in the South -- because there are multiple Southern states that are within reach for the Democrat on Election Day (Oct.3, 2011, the Rachel Maddow Show).*

**Tone towards race:**

- An unfavorable item:

*MILLER: Well, listen, here's what I would say. If it's been 45 years since the Great Society started, are black people in this country any better off, for God's sake?*

*O'REILLY: A little bit.*

*MILLER: Billy, some of those unemployment figures.*

*O'REILLY: It all comes down to education. Not race.*

*MILLER: I'm saying, why don't black America leverage the other side a little?*

*O'REILLY: So you think that black America doesn't use the power it has, because they take it for granted and say, look, it's either me or one of these Republican guys who hate you. And Waters branded Tea Party racists and all of that. (Sep.28, 2011, the O'Reilly Factor).*

- A neutral item:

*O'REILLY: What I see the President and the Democratic Party doing is this: they have put together, they have consolidated their strength, which is labor, which is the minority vote, particularly African-American. The Hispanic vote is still not defined but probably will go to some extent for President Obama. It's just a matter of how*

*big, right? And hard core liberals in the media. That's the team that they have assembled* (Nov.4, 2011, the O'Reilly Factor)

- A favorable item:

*HARRIS- PERRY(GUEST): Woo-hoo! Blame yourselves poor people of America! Do it for Herman Cain! Do it for the nice middle class people applauding in the audience! Well, this is the face of poverty in America. This is who's poor in our country: children -- particularly Latino and black children. Last year, a year after the great recession, one in five kids in America lived in poverty. Four of every 10 African-American children. Where I live in New Orleans, most of the young, black children are poor.* (Oct. 21, 2011, the Rachel Maddow Show)

To examine the third question “*Do the networks (FOX and MSNBC) switch frames used and/or tone when the candidate is of the same political party as that supported by the network?*” patterns of coverage of the two different candidates by each network will be examined. A t- test will be used to compare the visibility of news framing and tone within each cable network.

If results indicate that the racial frames (visibility) or tone were relatively similar in 2011 across candidates for each network, this would mean that racial frames were applied in a relatively equal way despite the fact that the candidates (Obama and Cain) were of different parties. Partisan bias may be not operating. However, if the visibility of racial frames change dramatically, and/or the tone changes dramatically, this would provide evidence that partisan bias was operating. Partisan bias might be expected to have a strong effect on racial framing.

The following four examples indicate how the results might be interpreted for several

of the possible outcomes concerning the last two research questions. These examples are illustrative, and do not indicate the full range of possible outcomes.

1. **If each cable network is significantly different in its use of and tone of racial frames towards two candidates during the 2011 period of time, this could be taken as evidence that partisan bias by each network is operating.**
2. **If the racial frames used by the two cable networks do not differ in type or tone , partisan bias would not seem to be influencing the coverage of race.**
3. **If the coverage of racial frames by Fox and MSNBC is significantly different between Obama and Cain, this would be an indication that partisan bias is influencing the coverage of race.**
4. **If the coverage of Obama and Cain within an election cycle by the two networks is very similar in terms of the types of racial frames used and tone, it might suggest that coverage is due to differences in personalities/histories of the two candidates, and not to either racial bias or partisan bias.**

### **Intercoder Reliability and Data Analysis**

Two coders, including the author, were trained to code each of the program segments from Fox and MSNBC for occurrences of racial bias and tone. The coders are graduate students in the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University. Disagreements were addressed and the coding adjusted until acceptable levels of agreement are reached. A pretest of the coding protocols was conducted. The coders independently and simultaneously coded approximately 20% of the sample. Inter-coder reliability was

calculated using Cohen's Kappa. The average Kappa values reached 0.89 for “The O’Reilly Factor” and 0.91 for “The Rachel Maddow Show,” which are considered strong agreement.

The data generated will be analyzed using SPSS 20.0. Independent samples t-tests will be used to compare results. The breakdown of the intercoder reliability results by newspaper is detailed in Appendix II.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This study aims to test the effects of partisan bias on racial framing through comparing the visibility of racial framing and the tone towards two African American candidates between Fox news and MSNBC and within each cable network.

A total of 243 segments from Sept. 1, 2011, to Jan. 3, 2012, for all of the episodes of “The O’Reilly Factor” on Fox and “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC comprised the study’s sample.

### Presence of News Frames and Tone

Cronbach’s alphas were computed to measure the internal consistencies of the items that comprise each frame. The initial alpha values were .48 for the racial attributes frame, .86 for the racial strategy frame, .66 for the minority interest frame, and .16 for the conflict frame.

To satisfy an alpha score of .60, item 2 and item 4 from the racial attributes frame were omitted, which improved its reliability to .64.

*Item 2: does the segment mention, discuss or debate birth origin, religious affiliation, or citizenship of Black candidates?*

*Item 4: does the segment explicitly or implicitly relate the characters of the Black candidates to the emotion- laden or stereotyped images of Black Americans that have been polished, established, proclaimed, and circulated by Whites over 400 years?*

These two items fail to occur together with the other three items to measure the same general construct. Measuring visibility of news framing as a scale requires a relatively strong intercorrelation among test items. The alpha value of .16 for the conflict frame means the

five items measure several unrelated latent variables, rather than the same general construct. Logically speaking, it should be omitted due to the extremely low alpha value. However, the conflict frame has been viewed as the most common and dominant frame in the campaign news by various studies (e.g. Semetko, 2000; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2007). Such a frame could help us better understand the level of its significance in covering candidates of color between two partisan-slanted cable networks. Although all the items of this frame are all examples of conflict, such as conflict between parties/individuals/groups/countries, criticism between parties/individuals/groups/media outlets, winners and losers, or the reason for the conflict, they might not necessarily be expected to occur together to measure the same general construct. In order to avoid the problem of low alpha value, the conflict frame was finally measured as a “score” rather than as “a scale”. Measuring the conflict frame as a score does not require items in it to correlate highly.

Table 4 lists the distribution of each frame in all samples. Based on the results shown in Table 4, the conflict frame was present in all segments. The minority interest frame was next (15.3% of “The O’Reilly Factor” segments and 14.1% of “The Rachel Maddow Show” segments), followed by racial attributes (7.6% of “The O’Reilly Factor” segments and 3% “The Rachel Maddow Show” segments) and the racial strategy frame (6.9% of “The O’Reilly Factor” segments and 5.1% “The Rachel Maddow Show” segments).

Table 5 reports the distribution of the three issue-specific racial frames overall (racial attributes, racial strategy and minority interest) for each cable network. A total of 22.9% of the segments in “The O’Reilly Factor” referred to at least one racial frame, and 16.2% of the segments in “The Rachel Maddow Show” include at least one.

Table 4: The presence of racial frames and the conflict frame

Frames	O'Reilly Factor		The Rachel Maddow Show	
	N	% of segments which include each racial frame	N	% of segments which include each racial frame
Racial attributes frame	11	7.6	3	3
Racial strategy frame	10	6.9	5	5.1
Minority interest frame	22	15.3	14	14.1
Conflict frame	144	100	99	100

Table 5: The presence of issue-specific racial frames\*

Frames	O'Reilly Factor		The Rachel Maddow Show	
	N	% of segments which include at least one racial frame	N	% of segments which include at least one racial frame
Obama	16	21.1	10	17.2
Total	76	100	58	100
Cain	17	25	6	14.6
Total	68	100	41	100
<b>Both</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Racial frames include the racial attributes frame, racial strategy frame and minority interest frame.

The means and standard deviations for the visibility of racial frames and the mean scores for the generic conflict frame are shown in Table 6. Both opinion programs had similar trends of mean distribution for the four frames. Specifically, the conflict frame has the highest mean scores (M=3.78 in “The O’Reilly Factor” and M= 3.70 in “The Rachel Maddow Show”) compared to other news frames. After that, minority interest was the second



highest (M=0.24 in “The O’Reilly Factor” and M=0.29 in “The Rachel Maddow Show”).

The racial attributes frame was the least frequent frame (M=.13 in “The O’Reilly Factor” and M=.03 in “The Rachel Maddow Show”). In summary, “The O’Reilly Factor” had higher mean scores in the usage of racial attributes, racial strategy and conflict frame than in “The Rachel Maddow Show.” But the latter has a higher visibility of the minority interest frame than the former.

Table 7 reports the means and standard deviations for the tone towards race and two African American candidates. The results suggest that “The O’Reilly Factor” treated Barack Obama extremely negatively, but was much more positive about Herman Cain. By contrast, “The Rachel Maddow Show” covered Herman Cain negatively while portraying Barack Obama more favorably.

With regard to the tone of race, “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC has more positive tone towards race than “The O’Reilly Factor” in general. Notice that the two programs treated race similarly and almost neutrally when covering Herman Cain. However, when portraying Barack Obama, “The Rachel Maddow Show” treated race much more positively than “The O’Reilly Factor” on which the tone towards race was still neutral.

Table 6: The mean scores of the four frames\*

Frames	O’Reilly Factor		The Rachel Maddow Show	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Racial attributes	0.13	0.471	0.03	0.172
Racial strategy	0.17	0.742	0.11	0.587
Minority interest	0.24	0.650	0.29	0.824
Conflict	3.78	0.832	3.70	0.762

\*Each items was coded as 1=Present, 0=Absent. The presence of items for each frame was added. The visibility of the first three frames thus range from 0.00 (frame not present) to 5.00 (all items are present). The score of the conflict frame ranges from 0.00 (no item is satisfied) to 5.00 (all items are satisfied).

Table 7: The mean scores of the tone\*

Tone	O'Reilly Factor		The Rachel Maddow Show	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tone towards candidates				
Obama	-0.95	0.225	0.88	0.329
Cain	0.41	0.525	-0.80	0.401
Overall	-0.31	0.787	0.18	0.908
Tone towards race				
Obama	-0.16	0.375	0.64	0.497
Cain	-0.12	0.332	0.17	0.408
Overall	-0.14	0.351	0.50	0.513

\*If unfavorable, code -1; neutral, code0; favorable, code1.

### Difference in News Frames and Tone between Fox and MSNBC

A series of independent samples t-tests was conducted to compare the means for visibility of the frames in the two opinion programs. Overall, the results shown in Table 8 confirm that the racial attributes frame was more prominent in “The O’Reilly Factor” than in “The Rachel Maddow Show” ( $p=.000$ ), whereas the differences in the other three frames were not statistically significant.

In addition to the overall use of each frame between two programs, the use of the frames differed between the topic of Barack Obama and that of Herman Cain. In the segments with the topic of Barack Obama, racial attributes ( $p=.006$ ) and minority interest frames ( $p=.009$ ) were significantly different between the two programs. The conflict frame ( $p=.051$ ) was not statistically significant but close to the borderline ( $p=.05$ ).

“The O’Reilly Factor” used more racial attributes and conflict frames when referring to Barack Obama, but fewer minority interest frames than “The Rachel Maddow Show.”

Among the segments about Herman Cain, the racial attributes ( $p=.009$ ) and minority interest

( $p=.033$ ) frames were more visible in “The O’Reilly Factor” than in “The Rachel Maddow Show.” Each program used the minority interest frame more when covering the candidates of their political party. Besides, “The O’Reilly Factor” used the racial attributes frame more in coverage of both candidates than “The Rachel Maddow Show.”

Table 9 reports the results of the tone reflected by the two programs. In general, the two programs differed statistically in the tone of both race ( $p=.000$ ) and each candidate ( $p=.002$ ). When the topic was about Obama, “The O’Reilly Factor” reflected a more negative tone towards Barack Obama ( $M=-0.95$ ) than in “The Rachel Maddow Show” ( $M=0.88$ ). In contrast, when the topic is about Herman Cain, “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC treated Herman Cain less favorably ( $M=-0.80$ ) than “The O’Reilly Factor” on Fox ( $M=0.41$ ).

Table 8. Results of independent samples t-tests showing differences in the presence of frames on two cable networks

Frames	The O’Reilly Factor (N=144)	The Rachel Maddow Show(N=99)	t-value	df	Sig
	Mean (SD)	Mean(SD)			
<b>Racial attributes</b>					
Obama	.11(.478)	.02(.131)	1.362	132	.006
Cain	.15(.466)	.05(.218)	1.268	107	.009
Both	.13(.471)	.03(.172)	1.913	241	.000
<b>Racial strategy</b>					
Obama	.26(.971)	.16(.721)	.710	132	.145
Cain	.07(.315)	.05(.312)	.399	107	.449
Both	.17(.742)	.11(.587)	.701	241	.168
<b>Minority interest</b>					
Obama	.24(.630)	.41(1.009)	-1.244	132	.009
Cain	.25(.677)	.12(.400)	1.099	107	.033
Both	.24(.650)	.29(.824)	-.526	241	.219
<b>Conflict</b>					
Obama	3.96(.682)	3.64(.742)	2.611	132	.051
Cain	3.57(.935)	3.78(.791)	-1.184	107	.273
Both	3.78(.832)	3.70(.762)	.770	241	.902

Table 9. Results of independent samples t-tests showing differences in the tone towards race and two African candidates\*

Frames	The O'Reilly Factor (N=144)	The Rachel Maddow Show (N=99)	t-value	df	Sig
<b>Tone towards each candidate</b>					
Obama	-0.95(.225)	0.88(.329)	-38.170	132	.004
Cain	0.41(.525)	-0.80(0.401)	12.753	107	.000
Both	-0.31(.787)	0.18(.908)	-4.454	241	.002
<b>Tone towards race</b>					
Obama	-0.16(.375)	0.64(.497)	-5.283	31	.016
Cain	-0.12(.332)	0.17(.408)	-1.702	21	.574
Both	-0.14(.351)	0.50(.513)	-5.519	54	.000

\*If unfavorable, code -1; neutral, code 0; favorable, code 1.

### Difference in News Frames and Tone within Each Network

According to the results shown in Table 10, racial frames were relatively similar within “The O’Reilly Factor” with the exception of the racial strategy frame (.001). “The O’Reilly Factor” used more racial strategy frames when covering Barack Obama than Herman Cain. The conflict frame also occurred more often when the topic was Barack Obama (M=3.96) than when the topic was Herman Cain (M=3.57). However, Table 12 shows the tone switched dramatically when the program covered different African- American candidates (Obama M=-0.95; Cain M=0.41) while the tone toward race doesn’t differ statistically. In other words, Fox treated Barack Obama much more negatively than Herman Cain.

Table 11 shows “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC used the minority interest frame much more for Barack Obama than for Herman Cain. Table 13 shows the tone toward each candidate was significantly different, although the tone towards race was still not. “The

Rachel Maddow Show” treated Herman Cain more negatively (M=-0.80) than Barack Obama (M=0.88).

Table 10: Results of independent samples t-tests showing differences in the presence of frames covering two candidates within Fox

Frames	Obama (N=76)	Cain (N=68)			
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	t-value	df	Sig
Racial attributes	.11(.478)	.15(.466)	-.530	142	.349
Racial strategy	.26(.971)	.07(.315)	1.539	142	.001
Minority interest	.24(.630)	.25(.677)	-.121	142	.868
Conflict	3.96(.682)	3.57(.935)	2.857	142	.003

Table 11: Results of independent samples t-tests showing differences in the presence of frames covering two candidates within MSNBC

Frames	Obama N=58	Cain N=41			
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	t-value	df	Sig
Racial attributes	.02(.131)	.05(.218)	-.896	97	.073
Racial strategy	.16(.721)	.05(.312)	.887	97	.082
Minority interest	.41(1.009)	.12(.400)	1.755	97	.000
Conflict	3.64(.742)	3.78(.791)	-.916	97	.992

Table 12: Results of independent samples t-tests showing differences in the tone towards race and two African- American candidates within Fox\*

Frames	Obama	Cain			
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	t-value	df	Sig
Tone towards race	-0.16(.375)	-0.12(.332)	-.339	34	.498
Tone towards candidates	-0.95(.225)	0.41(.525)	-20.565	142	0.000

\*If unfavorable, code -1; neutral, code0; favorable, code1.

Table13: Results of independent samples t-tests showing differences in the tone towards race and two African-American candidates within MSNBC\*

Frames	Obama	Cain	t-value	df	Sig
Tone towards race	Mean (SD) 0.64(.497)	Mean (SD) 0.17(.408)	2.058	18	.063
Tone towards candidates	0.88(.329)	-0.80(.401)	22.908	97	0.046

\*If unfavorable, code -1; neutral, code0; favorable, code1.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

This study aims to (1) identify whether racial frames underlie the campaign coverage of candidates of color for Fox News and MSNBC; (2) ascertain differences between “The O’Reilly Factor” and “The Rachel Maddow Show” in the use of racial frames and their tone; and (3) probe whether frames and/tone changed when the candidate is of the same or a different political party as that supported by the network.

The study used framing methodology to examine differences in frame and tone usage between Fox and MSNBC. It tries to reveal whether racial frames were activated in the coverage of Barack Obama and Herman Cain, and if so, to assess the differences in the presence of frames and tone between cable networks as well as within each cable network. The threefold purposes of this study are: (1), to improve framing methodology for issue-specific racial matters; (2), to analyze the news frame campaign coverage of two African American candidates on partisan-oriented cable networks; (3), to examine the effects of partisan bias on racial framing of presidential candidates.

### News Frames

The study used four news frames: (1) racial attributes frame, (2) racial strategy frame, (3) minority interest frame, (4) conflict frame. The first three are issue-specific racial frames developed for this study. The conflict frame was identified as a generic frame based on the results of previous studies (e.g., Semetko, 2000; Entman, 1993; Han, 2007).

### Visibility of News Frames

The first research question asks whether the predefined frames were activated in the coverage of Barack Obama and Herman Cain by Fox and MSNBC during the months leading

up to the Iowa caucuses in 2011. The findings show that the four frames can in fact be detected in the coverage of the two opinion programs. Overall, the most common frames were, in order of predominance, conflict, minority interest, racial strategy and racial attributes.

The predominance of the conflict frame on both cable networks agrees with the results of previous studies. This frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions in news coverage (Semetko, 2000). Farnsworth and Lichter (2007) and Patterson (1993) found that the conflict frame was the most common and that horse race coverage dominated election campaign news, mainly framed in terms of conflict. Although the findings demonstrate that the frequency of use of the conflict frame wasn't statistically different between Fox and MSNBC whether the topic was Barack Obama or Herman Cain, the mean score in each program was relatively high ( $M=3.78$  in "The O'Reilly Factor" and  $M= 3.70$  in "The Rachel Maddow Show").

When the segments were about Barack Obama, the conflict frame was used somewhat more frequently in "The O'Reilly Factor" than "The Rachel Maddow Show." The reason may be Barack Obama was both the current president in the U.S. and the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party during the period of time captured by the analysis. The program supported the general views of the Republican Party by criticizing President Obama, who represents the Democratic Party. Similarly, the reason why "The Rachel Maddow Show" used more conflict frames when covering Herman Cain than "The O'Reilly Factor" might be because Herman Cain was a candidate for the Republican Party primary. Because of the differences between programs, it would seem that partisan bias was operating strongly.



Table 14 shows examples about how use of the conflict frame differed between the two cable networks.

One example for Barack Obama is about his “the American Jobs Act.” “The O’Reilly Factor” portrayed Barack Obama as “the biggest spending president in history” who was “spending another half trillion dollars in order to create more jobs” (Oct. 6, 2011). However, “The Rachel Maddow Show” supported president Obama’s Jobs bill saying it was “the right thing to do right now” to reduce the unemployment rate (Oct. 18, 2011). In fact, “The O’Reilly Factor” not only showed strong dissatisfaction towards Barack Obama in all aspects of political issues, the show itself employed the conflict frame more often in the coverage of Barack Obama than for news about Herman Cain. On the other hand, “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC also criticized Herman Cain for various issues such as his 9-9-9 tax plan and sexual allegations. For example, on Oct.19, 2011, Maddow in her program satirized Herman Cain’s analogy saying, “They often involve food and it all sounds very, very digestible even when it doesn't actually make sense” (Oct.19, 2011). In contrast, “The O’Reilly Factor” said Herman Cain might be “a leader of superlative quality” (Sept. 28, 2011). Notice that even though “The O’Reilly Factor” supported Herman Cain, the host also cast doubt on his lack of experience on foreign matters (Sept. 28, 2011). This might be one reason why the tone towards Herman Cain between two programs was not significantly different ( $p=.054$ ) even though it’s close to the borderline. Another reason might be Herman Cain’s sexual harassment events throughout the time chosen by this study. A series of negative events about Herman Cain made the gap of tone towards him between the two programs much smaller.

Another phenomenon is that both programs used the conflict frame to criticize the media outlets which support the opposition Party. “The O’Reilly Factor” considered other media outlets (e.g. MSNBC, CNN, or New York Times) as “liberal media” in many episodes. For example, the show said the reason why CNN and MSNBC’s ratings didn’t improve was because they are left wing media, but “America is a center-right country” (Nov.7, 2011). However, “The Rachel Maddow Show” considered Fox News Universe as “a closed information loop on the Republican side” which “allows for these characters to sort of come into existence and to flourish and they don't actually have to do anything significant with their public lives” (Nov. 11, 2011).

Table 14: Examples of conflict frame in the sample

Frames	O’Reilly Factor (N=144) Examples	The Rachel Maddow Show (N=99) Examples
<b>Conflict frame</b>		
Barack Obama	O'REILLY: The problem for Mr. Obama is spending another half trillion dollars in order to create more jobs. That's what he wants to do. As the national debt approaches \$15 trillion, the CNS News Service reports that the Obama Administration has added more debt in less than three years than every President from George Washington to Bush the Elder added. Think about that three years versus 204 years. To be fair the debt analysis has not considered the inflation factor but everybody should be getting the message: Mr. Obama is the biggest spending president in history. (10/6/2011)	MADDOW: So, voters are as close as they get to unanimous. That keeping teachers and firefighters and cops on the job is the right thing to do right now. Is there anybody else who is opposed to this along with these Republican senators and Ben Nelson? I mean, are economists as a group saying that this is a bad idea or something?  BERNSTEIN (GUEST): No, I mean, you can always find some economist to say something bad about anything. But, overall, it's widely recognized that the president's

	jobs plan in total is what's needed to start nudging the unemployment rate in the right direction. (10/18/2011)
O'REILLY: Do you think that the vast majority of the American public, not just FOX News watchers, because I think, you know, most people watching tonight will agree with you. I certainly do. But I look at CNN and MSNBC's ratings every night. I compete against them. All right? And for 10 years -- 10 years, a decade -- they haven't moved an inch. In fact, they're worse now than they were 10 years ago. All right?	KORNACKI (GUEST): It seems to be because if you look at all these previous examples, you can kind of point to a moment where each one really kind of, you know, hit the peak and collapse... ...You know, with Herman Cain now, it's the sexual harassment. You know, it's tough to gauge the impact of the attacks on the 9-9-9 plan because the sexual harassment stuff came so quickly. But, I think, you know, there's a cable news universe, this FOX News universe, which really -- it's like a closed information loop on the Republican side now that's really emerged in the last decade. It allows for these characters to sort of come into existence and to flourish and they don't actually have to do anything significant with their public lives. They don't have to be in office. They don't have to pass laws. They don't have to have any real driving policy rules. They're characters. And that's what we've really seen this year, is each character has got a shot. And when each character gets treated briefly like a candidate, they fizzle, except, you know, Mitt Romney is sitting there.
Herman Cain	GOLDBERG (GUEST): Right... I think people tune in to political opinion shows largely to get their own views validated. America is a center-right country. So, they're not going to get a lot of their views validated with hosts on MSNBC, who aren't really liberal but are left wing. It's the same reason that Air America went under. They just -- we don't -- Americans don't really want to hear that kind of stuff.
	I think CNN is slightly different. They are a legitimate news organization, as you suggested. But, and I don't mean this to not be kind. I really don't. But in an entertainment culture, they're dull. They're just plain dull. There's no pizzazz over there. And I don't think people want to tune in, certainly not in prime time, to watch something that's dull.
	O'REILLY: OK, but there are 20 percent of the American public that identify themselves as liberal. You would think that those 20 percent would then want the product that our competing networks turn out, which is largely a left-wing product.
	MADDOW: But that's the big question. Does this apply to

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MSNBC much, much more so than CNN.  
(11/7/2011)

O'REILLY: The next president of the United States has got to be, as I say in "Killing Lincoln," an excellent leader. A leader of superlative quality. Now, Herman Cain might be that.

MILLER: I think he is. I didn't think "might." That's why I'm on board. I think he is.

O'REILLY: The deficit of Mr. Cain is he doesn't have the experience. You're going to have Putin back running Russia. You've got these guys in China who are just waiting, waiting to hammer you. You need somebody in there with the experience and the frame of reference to deal with those guys. I don't know if it's Herman.  
(9/28/2011)

Mitt Romney as well? I mean, Mitt Romney has been running for president permanently for longer than -- definitely longer than people have known what Herman Cain's name is.

KORNACKI: Right.  
(11/11/2011)

HERMAN CAIN (R),  
PRESIDENTIAL

CANDIDATE: If I am fortunate enough to become the Republican nominee, it's going to be the problem solver who fixes stuff... ..This is an example of mixing apples and oranges. The state tax is an apple. We are replacing the current tax code with oranges... ..Take a loaf of bread. It does have five taxes in it right now.  
(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Herman Cain's character on the Republican candidates' debate show is like the anti-intellectual "I don't have to explain anything folksy guy" where things rhyme sometimes, and they often involve food and it all sounds very, very digestible even when it doesn't actually make sense. (10/19/2011)

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The use of racial frames was infrequent overall. All three racial frames combined accounted for just 22.9% and 16.2% of the samples in each cable network. Among them, the minority interest frame was most visible compared to the other two racial frames for each cable network (but the mean scores for the minority interest frame were low (M= 0.24 on Fox; M= 0.29 on MSNBC)). The racial strategy frame was even less frequently used,

followed by the least used frame of racial attributes. These low levels of coverage suggest that race was not a major campaign issue at least in terms of volume of coverage.

When considering tone, each network was significantly more negative about the candidate of the opposite political party. Fox was much more negative about Barack Obama as a candidate, and MSNBC was much more negative about Herman Cain. This supports an interpretation that partisan bias was operating.

Fox was significantly more negative about Barack Obama than MSNBC ( $p=.004$ ). MSNBC was more negative about Herman Cain than Fox ( $p=0.000$ ). In general, “The O’Reilly Factor’s” tone towards both candidates was significantly more negative than “The Rachel Maddow Show” ( $M= -0.31$  in “The O’Reilly Factor” and  $M=0.18$  in “The Rachel Maddow Show”). This suggests “The O’Reilly Factor” on Fox covered the candidates more negatively no matter which political party they belong to.

With regard to the tone towards race, the two programs differed significantly from each other overall ( $p=.000$ ). We find that “The O’Reilly Factor” treated race almost neutrally (when the topic is Obama,  $M=-0.16$ ; when the topic is Cain,  $M=-0.12$ ; overall,  $M= -0.14$ ), which was not significantly different when covering the two different candidates. However, the tone towards race in “The Rachel Maddow Show” tended to be positive when the topic was Obama ( $M=0.64$ ), which is significantly different from “The O’Reilly Factor.” When covering Herman Cain, the tone towards race in “The Rachel Maddow Show” tended to be neutral ( $M=0.17$ ), which was not significantly different from “The O’Reilly Factor.” Although the tone towards race within “The Rachel Maddow Show” when covering different candidates was not significantly different ( $p=.063$ ), the mean score directions indicate a more

positive score when covering Barack Obama and a more neutral score when covering Herman Cain.

“The O’Reilly Factor’s” nearly neutral treatment of race ( $M=-0.14$ ) in comparison to “The Rachel Maddow Show” suggests conservative Republicans are cautious on minority issues. In contrast, “The Rachel Maddow Show” seemed to be more open to talk about various racial issues such as the social conditions of African- American people in the areas of jobs, wealth, welfare, education, voting rights, or other socioeconomic situations with a relatively favorable tone.

### **The Effects of Partisan Bias on Racial Framing**

The second research question examined differences in racial framing in coverage of two candidates between Fox and MSNBC. When the topic was Barack Obama, there was a significant difference in the usage of the racial attributes and minority interest frames, and also a difference in the tone between “The O’Reilly Factor” and “The Rachel Maddow Show.” “The O’Reilly Factor” used more racial attributes, but fewer minority interest frames than “The Rachel Maddow Show” when covering Barack Obama. In contrast, “The Rachel Maddow Show” employed the minority interest frame more frequently to support Barack Obama, but used fewer racial attributes frames during the period. For Herman Cain, the study also found a significant difference between the two programs in the usage of racial attributes and minority interest frames.

In summary, Fox used more racial attributes frames no matter which candidate of color (Obama vs. Cain) they covered. However, it used the minority interest frame more than “The Rachel Maddow Show” when referring to Herman Cain. We can conclude that both

opinion programs employed more minority interest frames when covering the candidate of color who is a member of the same political party they supported. Thus, the results could be taken as evidence that partisan bias by each network may be operating.

Table 15 provides examples of each racial frame found in the sample, which shows differences in racial frames between “The O’Reilly Factor” on Fox and “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC. Examples show how partisan bias influence racial framing.

The racial attributes frame was used by “The O’Reilly Factor” in several ways. The first example for the racial attributes frame in “The O’Reilly Factor” not only associated the race of two candidates with their partisan leanings, but also clearly stated the program’s political stance in politics. Bill O’Reilly expressed his dissatisfaction about being called “a racist” due to his interruption and criticism towards Barack Obama in the interviews. O’Reilly took Black candidate Herman Cain as an example to support his idea that if people thought he was a racist, then individuals who criticized Herman Cain were also racists. It implied that people who condemned him and Herman Cain were Democratic. This point was supported by his saying that “I haven't heard one conservative say that the attacks and the mocking of Herman Cain is racist” (Oct. 28, 2011).

Another typical example for the racial attributes frame is that the minister Reverend Wright was negatively connected to “media bias” on Barack Obama by Fox News contributor Bernie Goldberg, and Bill O’Reilly implied consent (Dec. 22, 2011). On the other hand, the program defended Herman Cain by referring to “highest profile African- American activists” Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. It’s not difficult to understand O’Reilly was

implying that the two Democratic black leaders often defended blacks at the cost of getting involved with controversy, but not Herman Cain (a Republican) (Nov. 4, 2011).

In contrast, “The Rachel Maddow Show” discussed Rick Perry as a “racist” who hosted friends and allies at his family's West Texas hunting camp, named "Niggerhead." Maddow connected this “racial” issue to Rick Perry’s insinuation of president Obama’s “faked” birth certificate in order to imply Rick Perry was “a racist” (Oct. 28, 2011). When talking about Herman Cain, “The Rachel Maddow Show” reacted negatively to his “black walnut is staying power” analogy by saying, “Staying power. It doesn’t exist anymore. It is one thing to be a gaffe-prone inexperienced candidate, but the gaffes are too perfect” (Nov. 28, 2011). The negative comments only about the opposing candidate provides evidence of partisan bias in both programs.

Although differences in the racial strategy frame were not statistically significant between “The O’Reilly Factor” and “The Rachel Maddow Show,” examples show uses of the racial strategy frame were different between two programs. Partisan bias was operating. In one example shown in Table 15, O’Reilly described what the “philosophy” of president Obama and the Democratic Party was and why Black voters had always voted for the Democratic Party for the past several years. In their opinions, it’s all due to their commitment to wealth redistributions and “entitlement spending” (Sep. 20, 2011). However, “The Rachel Maddow Show” condemned the change of the voting rules by North Carolina Republicans, which would make it harder for minority voters and students to vote.

It is worth noting that “The O’Reilly Factor” used the racial strategy frame significantly more when covering Barack Obama than Herman Cain despite the fact that the



frequency overall was low. The reason might be that current President Obama and the Democratic Party has received support from minority voters for the past several years, which gave them an opportunity to comment on their racial strategies.

For the minority interest frame, both programs used it most often compared to the other two racial frames. Partisan bias also influenced the uses of this frame for both cable networks. For instance, “The O’Reilly Factor” used the minority interest frame believing the reason why Black people are poor is “they take everything for granted” and “Black America doesn’t use the power it has” (Sept. 28, 2011). However, “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC denounced Herman Cain on his “Blame yourselves poor people of America,” demonstrating that the poor in the U.S. are children, especially Latino and Black children. The examples suggest that racial frames were used as a tool for divisive political debates between two partisan-slanted cable networks.

When covering Obama, “The Rachel Maddow Show” used the minority interest frame more frequently to support the current president for various issues such as tax cuts, job creation, health, education and his position on foreign policies. During the study period, Republican- controlled states passed new laws one after another restricting early voting and requiring voters to show photo ID at the polls. “The Rachel Maddow Show” criticized this right away saying “if Republicans can’t beat the president on the economy, then they will beat him on the rules of the game” (Sept. 11, 2011). It mainly discussed how individuals and groups are affected by such new voting laws. For example, 96 year-old Dorothy Cooper’s voting experience had been changing throughout her whole life. And the Republicans in

Tennessee make it harder for many Tennesseans like Dorothy Cooper to vote, because they don't have a photo ID at all (Oct. 10, 2011).

Notice that the two networks employed both the racial strategy frame and the minority interest frame for the "Voter ID Law" topic. In the racial strategy frame, MSNBC explained that the reason why Republicans began to pass this law was because they attempted to prevent minority and young voters from voting for Barack Obama. From the standpoint of Rachel Maddow, this political action was viewed as "a gamesmanship" or "a strategy" aiming to make it easier for Republicans to win in some important states.

In the minority interest frame, both opinion programs discussed this topic by referring to the voters. For instance, when explaining why voters should show photo ID, O'Reilly said, *"You have to have an ID to buy wine. But what is that---beverage suppression? Come on, you have to have an ID to buy beer. And you don't want an ID to vote. Well, that's suppression"* (Dec.6, 2011). O'Reilly also asked Hill, "Are you saying that most felons are black and brown; is that what you are saying?" Hill answered "Well, most people who are incarcerated are black and brown, that's a fact. But people who get targeted tend to be poor black and brown people." (Dec. 16, 2011). Although Hill was trying to explain a fact, he actually implied social conditions of the African- American group in the United States and connected negative images with this community. On the other side, MSNBC emphasized how minority and young voters were affected by the new ID law and more often provided historical references to the developments of voters' rights.

Table15: Examples of racial frames appearing in the samples

Frames	O'Reilly Factor (N=144)	The Rachel Maddow Show (N=99)
	Examples	Examples
<b>Racial attributes</b>		
Obama	<p>O'REILLY: But here is an interesting thing, I haven't heard one conservative say that the attacks and the mocking of Herman Cain is racist. Have you heard one?</p> <p>CONWAY: No. Because we don't look -- we don't look at people through that lens. We look at people according to (INAUDIBLE) politics.</p> <p>O'REILLY: That's right. But isn't that fascinating? Every time you criticize Barack Obama or mock Barack Obama you are racist.</p> <p>CONWAY: Bill anytime --</p> <p>O'REILLY: I was a racist -- I was a racist for interrupting him in my interview just like I just interrupted you. All right.</p> <p>CONWAY: Of course. And I don't think you're a sexist. I think you are charming and very fair. Bill let me say this, when we so much any of us question as did Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden of all people. (CROSSTALK)</p> <p>O'REILLY: Racist, you're all racist.</p> <p>CONWAY: Barack Obama's fitness and qualification to be president you are met with derision or charges of racism. They are asking if Herman Cain can spell the word Iraq and everybody is talking. (10/28/11).</p> <p>GOLDBERG: Let's say the Republican candidate has some crazy pastor in his background who either said bigoted things or just plain nutty things. The media, rightly, rightly will find that minister and expose him. No problem. But they didn't do that with Barack Obama and his crazy</p>	<p>MADDOW: N-word, racial epithet, that name -- you know the one, that offensive one. It's hard to cover this stuff. And after all that initial and very tense and awkward flurry of initial attention right at the beginning of the month, the whole story about Rick Perry hunting and entertaining people at a place named for the n-word, the whole controversy went away quickly. And so, now, Rick Perry is free as of this week to move on to insinuating that President Obama faked his birth certificate and secretly isn't American -- as in don't worry, America, we haven't had our first president yet because Barack Obama secretly isn't really the president (10/28/11)</p> <p>MADDOW: Do you think that Rick Perry moving on to Barack Obama secretly isn't really president birtherism, birth certificate controversy thing, is that important, is that</p>

minister did they? They didn't jump on that story until they had to, until Fox and other stations started running the videotapes with -- with Reverend Wright's most outrageous statements.

So that's how -- that's how the bias is going to work this time around. It won't be blatant. It will be subtle, a lot of times the audience won't even catch it, but it'll be out there.

O'REILLY: All right. Because that will be a theme for the President trying to convince people to vote for him is that, look, the economy is not my fault. You know, I inherited this. And we did the right moves. We made the right moves.

(12/22/11)

a separate issue, is that also part of a race issue with him?  
SILVERMAN (Guest): I think it's just -- I'm always amazed by the nerve of the Republican Party. And I just feel like it's hilarious when I hear it. It's hilarious to me, on one hand. Then on the other hand I remember the, you know, Bush/Kerry election and Bush/Gore election and it wipes the condescending smile off my face. I think that it has to be taken seriously that there's a chance that people like this are popular.

(10/28/11)

O'REILLY: But here is an interesting thing, I haven't heard one conservative say that the attacks and the mocking of Herman Cain is racist. Have you heard one? Every time you criticize Barack Obama or mock Barack Obama you are racist. (10/28/11)

MADDOW: The guy who's actually leading the polls right now on the Republican side for the first time ever, Republicans have an African-American as their national front-runner. Now, there's this weird thing in that Herman Cain is ahead in all of the polls. Right now, he is leading nationally but nobody says that they think that he will win. But he is ahead. Does that factor in to how you see race in the Republican Party and the Rick Perry racism issue?

MADDOW: According to Herman Cain, he's black walnut and not just any black walnut. He's Haagen-Dazs blog walnut which does not exist anymore. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) CAIN: If you're Haagen-Dazs black walnut, you don't go away. All right?

Cain

O'REILLY: As you may know Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton are two of the highest profile African-American activists in the country and they often get involved with controversy especially defending blacks when they come under fire. But not in the case of Herman Cain. (11/4/2011)

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Some of these other flavors of the month have no substance, you know? Black walnut has staying power. (END VIDEO CLIP) MADDOW: Staying power. It doesn't exist anymore. It is one thing to be a gaffe-prone inexperienced candidate, but the gaffes are too perfect. Black walnut, noted for its staying power, it doesn't exist anymore. (10/28/11)

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### Racial strategy

Obama	<p>O'REILLY: What I see the President and the Democratic Party doing is this: they have put together, they have consolidated their strength, which is labor, which is the minority vote, particularly African-American. The Hispanic vote is still not defined but probably will go to some extent for President Obama. It's just a matter of how big, right? And hard core liberals in the media. That's the team that they have assembled. (11/4/11)</p> <p>O'REILLY: Why then does the Democratic Party continue to rack up huge numbers in the African-American communities, the Hispanic communities, the poorer precincts in America go Democrat almost exclusively.</p> <p>CROWLEY (Guest): Because their philosophy and the stated philosophy of this President, which he told us point-blank in 2008 when he was running when he said to "Joe the Plumber". I think when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody. The party and this President are committed wealth redistributionists. (9/20/11)</p>	<p>MADDOW: North Carolinians would have to show ID that they have never before had to show in order to vote. It's estimated that 500,000 North Carolina voters do not have that form of ID -- 500,000. And, yes, those 500,000 are disproportionately minority voters and poor voters and students, voting groups that disproportionately vote Democratic. Now, remember, when Barack Obama won it last time, he won by 14,000 votes, largely on the strength of early voting and voter registration drives. Looks like that won't happen again. Not if North Carolina Republicans change all the rules about those things. Republicans wanting to make sure a Democratic victory like that does not happen again, wanting to make it harder to vote and harder to register to vote. (10/3/11)</p>
Cain	<p>O'REILLY: Herman Cain is rising in the polls primarily because he's a straight talking guy. On CNN yesterday, Mr. Cain analyzed why the vast majority of Black</p>	

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Americans always vote Democratic.  
 O'REILLY: Now, Mr. Cain's opinion does have back up. In the year 2000, blacks voted 90 percent for Al Gore; 2004, they voted 88 percent for John Kerry; 2008, they voted 95 percent for Barack Obama... I think everybody understands that Black Americans vote for the Democrats because of entitlement spending. I think they all have that.

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### Minority interest

Obama	<p>O'REILLY: You have to have an ID to buy wine. But what is that-- beverage suppression? Come on, you have to have an ID to buy beer. And you don't want an ID to vote. Well, that's suppression.          HILL (Guest): I don't think, I don't think it's necessary. And it's not just voter suppression, it's spreading misinformation whether or not felons can vote.          O'REILLY: Felons can't vote in many states.          HILL(Guest): In very few states that's actually very untrue. Most state felons can vote. And in states where they can vote usually it's a very short window. But that type of misinformation is what keeps poor people out and it's what keeps black and brown people out. And Republicans tend to win by the margin --          O'REILLY: Are you saying that most felons are black and brown is that what you are saying?          HILL: No I'm saying the community is getting --          O'REILLY: That's outrageous. Media matters, hello, did you just hear that.          HILL(Guest): Well, most people who are incarcerated are black and brown, that's a fact. But people who get targeted tend to be poor black and brown people.          O'REILLY: So coming up a serious point that the Obama administration is making</p>	<p>MADDOW: In Tennessee where you may remember our story about 96-year-old Dorothy Cooper suddenly finding it hard to vote after Republicans in Tennessee passed a bill that says you can't vote unless you show an ID that hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans don't have. In Tennessee, the story of Dorothy Cooper is not just an infuriating story anymore. Now, it is a rallying cry the state Democratic Party trying to rally voters against how much harder Tennessee Republicans have just made it to vote there. (10/10/11)</p>
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	an attempt to contact local Black leaders to get them in and to get the vote out. (12/6/11)	
Cain	<p>MILLER: Well, listen, here's what I would say. If it's been 45 years since the Great Society started, are black people in this country any better off, for God's sake?</p> <p>O'REILLY: A little bit.</p> <p>MILLER: Billy, some of those unemployment figures.</p> <p>O'REILLY: It all comes down to education. Not race.</p> <p>MILLER: I'm saying, why don't black America leverage the other side a little?</p> <p>O'REILLY: So you think that black America doesn't use the power it has, because they take it for granted and say, look, it's either me or one of these Republican guys who hate you. And Waters branded Tea Party racists and all of that. (9/28/11)</p>	<p>HARRIS-PERRY(Guest): Woo-hoo! Blame yourselves poor people of America! Do it for Herman Cain! Do it for the nice middle class people applauding in the audience! Well, this is the face of poverty in America. This is who's poor in our country: children -- particularly Latino and Black children. Last year, a year after the great recession, one in five kids in America lived in poverty. Four of every 10 African-American children. Where I live in New Orleans, most of the young, Black children are poor. (10/21/11)</p>

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While it seems that partisan bias was influencing the usage of racial frames, there were significant differences in usage of the racial attributes frames between the two programs according to the t-test results. However, the low frequency and visibility of these frames overall provide evidence that both opinion programs were very cautious in mentioning racial

attributes of Black candidates. This study suggests that partisan bias was operating and that it had an effect on racial framing.

The third question is to examine whether the frames and/tone switched when each cable network covers a candidate from another political party. Within “The O’Reilly Factor,” the racial strategy and conflict frames were used significantly more often when covering Barack Obama than for Herman Cain. The reason why the racial strategy frame was more prominent is because the Democratic Party the president belongs to has had a mutual support relationship with Black voters in the last several decades. This also explains why Herman Cain complained “black voters are brain washed” in September 2011. When looking at the tone, there was a similar pattern in the tone of race within Fox, but a statistical difference in the tone towards two candidates. Such results provide strong evidence that partisan bias was a root cause in covering Black candidates, rather than racial bias.

Within “The Rachel Maddow Show” on MSNBC, only the minority interest frame was significantly different between Barack Obama and Herman Cain. Other frames did not show any remarkable differences between the two candidates. The tone towards race was not significantly different between the two candidates. The tone towards two candidates was significantly different. Partisan bias of MSNBC seems to be the main factor in covering black candidates.



## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

### **Evidence of Racial Bias**

One of the objectives in this study was to investigate whether cable networks employ racial frames when covering campaign contests that involve candidates of color. To do this, measures for several racial frames were developed and applied to the two opinion programs. Underlying the study is a concern that racialized news information might negatively influence election of black candidates by translating racialized messages to audiences.

Overall, this study agrees with the conclusions of the previous studies that racial framing was not prominent in the coverage of Black candidates. Results show that racial frames appear in news segments infrequently overall, especially the racial strategy and the racial attributes frames. The minority interest frame is more likely to appear in both cable networks. Of the three racial frames, the racial attributes and minority interest frame use was significantly different between Fox and MSNBC towards the two candidates. This means the two opinion programs employed different patterns of racial framing when covering different candidates of color. Usually, the two opinion programs employed racial frames in order to support their own partisan positions. Although racial frames appeared in a relatively low percentage of the sample and the visibility of each wasn't high, partisan bias actually has an effect on racial framing. The two cable networks covered Black candidates mainly in accordance with their own political stances, rather than racial bias. They employed racial frames differently to support or oppose the Black candidate with the same or opposite political party affiliation of each cable network.

### **Evidence of Partisan Bias**

Cable news is a major source of political information during major political events, such as major parties' primaries and presidential elections and has adopted an opinion-oriented program format over the years which offers hosts much greater space to communicate what they think is important. On the other hand, previous studies showed that there has been greater polarization among the audiences (Morris & Francia, 2010). In fact, MSNBC serves its viewers with Democratic political orientation, and Fox News attracts the audience with Republican tendencies (the Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006).

The comparative analysis in this study shows strong evidence that the two opinion programs on MSNBC and Fox News have a significant partisan slant, with MSNBC leaning left (liberal) and Fox News leaning right (conservative). "The O'Reilly Factor" on Fox was more negative toward Barack Obama and more positive toward Herman Cain. In contrast, "The Rachel Maddow Show" on MSNBC treated Herman Cain negatively, but covered Barack Obama positively. Overall, there was a significant difference in the tone toward the two Black candidates between the two cable networks.

Importantly, the conflict frame was used in almost every segment, which suggests that horse-race coverage was dominant in the campaign news. This agrees with previous studies (e.g. Semetko, 2000; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2007).

The results of this study suggest partisan bias shown by the two cable networks has an effect on racial framing. For example, use of the minority interest frame was apparently influenced by partisan factors in the cable networks. Both programs used minority interest frames to support their partisan position rather than focusing on racial consciousness.

Although the racial attributes and the racial strategy frames were not used frequently, they were also employed according to partisan divide, but not racial bias. “The O’Reilly Factor” used the racial attributes frame more when covering both Black candidates despite the fact that the frequency and the visibility of the frame were very low. However, Fox used a significantly more negative tone for Obama while referring to Herman Cain much more positively. For instance, Bill O’Reilly expressed his satisfaction about being called “a racist” because of his interruption and criticism of Barack Obama. He thought that if people (Democratic and/or “liberal media”) thought he was a racist, then those individuals who criticized Herman Cain were also racist. Then he added, “I haven’t heard one conservative say that the attacks and the mocking of Herman Cain is racist” (Oct. 28, 2011). This case suggested that partisan bias actually influenced how cable networks covered two black candidates instead of racial bias. Another illustrative example is about the racial strategy frame, which was also strongly influenced by partisan bias in both two opinion programs. Fox thought one action by Barack Obama/the Democratic Party was to “rack up huge numbers in the African- American communities, the Hispanic communities; the poorer precincts in America go Democrat almost exclusively” due to a commitment to “wealth redistribution” (Sept. 20, 2011). On the other hand, MSNBC criticized Republicans who were trying to pass a new law which makes it harder for minority and young voters to vote for the Democratic Party (Oct.3, 2011). In this case, the racial strategy frame was employed as a tool to support the political position of both cable networks.

## Overall Lessons Learned

This study finds little evidence to suggest that racialized coverage is a serious problem that might set up a barrier to the electoral success of black candidates. However, the effect of partisan bias on racial framing should not be ignored. Different cable networks use different patterns of racial framing to support their own partisan positions. Racial frames might become a tool used for party debates, rather than a social problem that needs to be solved.

## Contributions of the Study

This study developed measures for three racial frames to investigate the visibility of each issue-specific frame, rather than basing analysis on a variety of keywords, phrases or counting the number of racial references. For instance, Gross, Harvey and Low (2009) examine the role of race in the 2008 presidential election and coded for a number of potential racial references (mentions or references to Obama's own racial background; mentions or references to race of supporters and opponents; references to race within polling results; references to racism; references to racial policies; references to the "Bradley effect;" references to prominent "radical" Black leaders; references to Reverend Wright and implicit racial references). The research concluded that racial references were present although not dominant in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today*. In contrast to their research, the current study draws its conclusion by systematically establishing three issue-specific racial frames based on previous framing research (e.g. Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; De Vreese, Peter and Semetko, 2001; Han, 2007), not simply looking at the frequency of several racial references.

Caliendo and McIlwain (2006) measured racial framing in the coverage of minority candidates throughout eight election cycles by considering various factors such as story length, nonracial content, campaign news, photographs, and character content. These four indexes concerning various factors for measuring racial framing make it cumbersome to be duplicated by other studies. In contrast, the three issue-specific racial frames developed by this study can be conveniently and systematically applied to other research in the topic of race.

Although the other approaches led to similar conclusions, the current study has its own advantages. First of all, through investigating how many items of each frame are satisfied, one can measure each racial frame (the degree of racial framing) by measuring it as a scale. Secondly, after calculating the average visibility of each frame, the study allows us not only to look at the overall pattern and degree of racial framing, but also to compare the visibility of racial frames with each other or across different media outlets.

Concerning tone, Reeves (1997) measures not only the frequency of racial references, but also the tone towards those references. However, his method makes it difficult to separate tone toward a candidate from tone toward race in general. For instance, each reference may include elements of persons, issues, or other aspects. If a racial reference of one story referred to a Black candidate positively, but treated African- Americans negatively as a group, or portrayed a racial issue in a negative way, how would coders classify the tone? In contrast, the current study examines both the tone towards each Black candidate and the tone of race in general.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Because there wasn't a big race-related event during the chosen period (the appearances of both Barack Obama and Herman Cain as presidential candidates), the current study just investigated the campaign coverage involving Black candidates which contains discussions of political issues of all kinds. Future researchers might be able to focus on specific racially- focused events. In that case, a large amount of racialized coverage might emerge about the candidates of color. For instance, during the 2008 presidential election, the Jeremiah Wright controversy was a hot political issue due to the remarks and activities of Barack Obama's former pastor. Intense media scrutiny with racialized coverage occurred during that time. This might give researchers an opportunity to investigate racial framing of specific events.

Since the conflict frame got a low alpha score of .16, this study couldn't measure this frame as a scale like other three racial frames. The items of the conflict frame in this study failed to occur together to measure the same general construct. One reason might be that the study added the item related to the disagreement towards/among media outlets into the conflict frame, which lowered the alpha value. However, when the study omitted this item, the alpha value still remained low. Future studies could help investigate this problem. Future research also could further modify the generic conflict frame into a racial issue-specific frame which would permit examination of racial conflicts between parties/individuals/groups/countries, rather than looking at the conflict elements in general.

Similarly, two items from the racial attributes frame were deleted due to low alpha value, leaving the other three. Future researchers may choose to improve this frame by adding more useful items and making them satisfy the test for internal consistency.

## APPENDIX I. CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SHEET

1. Segment ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Coder: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Source: segment from \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date (year) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Story topic: Obama \_\_\_\_\_ (code1); Cain \_\_\_\_\_ (code 2);
6. Tone towards race in general: \_\_\_\_\_ (if favorable, code1; neutral, code2; unfavorable, code3)
7. Tone towards candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ (if favorable code 1; neutral, code2; unfavorable, code3)

Coding Frames: Each frame includes five questions for coding. Each question is coded present or absent for the individual segment: if present, coded 1; if absent, coded 0. The values of scale for each frame range from 0.00 (not present) to 5.00 (present).

### Racial attributes frame

7. Does the segment refer to the race of Black candidates, their ancestries or their family members, or physical characteristics, such as skin color and facial features?
8. Does the segment mention, discuss or debate birth origin, religious affiliation, or citizenship of Black candidates?
9. Does the segment connect Black candidates to Jesse Jackson, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, Reverend Wright or other prominent Black leaders?
10. Does the segment explicitly or implicitly relate the characters of the Black candidates to the emotion-laden or stereotyped images of Black Americans that have been polished, established, proclaimed, and circulated by Whites over 400 years?
11. Does the segment refer to the Black candidates' intelligence, leadership or achievements overtly or covertly in relation to their race?

### Racial strategy frame

12. Does the segment view kinds of racial matters such as discussions of affirmative action, welfare, food stamps issues as racial tactics/political strategy to win over White/Black voters?
13. Does the segment consider the campaign advertisements or some planned campaign activities by black candidates as a part of gamesmanship to gain support from White/Black voters?
14. Does the segment mention, describe or analyze the reasons why black candidates focus on particular racial policies/issues? Include activities like speeches, tours, addresses and press conferences.



15. Does the segment infer or predict black candidates' stance on race matters in case black candidates are successfully elected in terms of their racial standpoint during the campaign?
16. Does the segment refer to or describe the reaction of White/Black or other groups of voters towards racial tactics employed by black candidates?

### **Minority interest frame**

17. Does the segment provide historical references to slavery, racism, reconstruction, development of the African-American community, military conflicts of the United States, racial segregation or civil rights movement?
18. Does the segment show or discuss how Black individuals and groups are affected by the issue, problem or policy?
19. Does the segment mention, describe or analyze the social conditions of African American people in the areas of jobs, wealth, welfare, education, housing, or other socioeconomic opportunities?
20. Does the segment connect violence, crime, laziness, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, or other negative images with Black Americans as a group?
21. Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy- caring, sympathy or compassion?

### **Conflict frame**

22. Does the segment reflect conflict between parties/individuals/groups/countries?
23. Does one party-individual-group-country criticize another?
24. Does the segment include disagreement or criticism towards/among media outlets on their stands or opinions?
25. Does the segment refer to winners and losers?
26. Does the segment mention the reason(s) for the conflict/disagreement?

## APPENDIX II. INTERCODER RELIABILITIES

Variable		The O'Reilly Factor	The Rachel Maddow Show
		Cohen's Kappa	Cohen's Kappa
<b>Tone towards race</b>		.816	.92
<b>Tone towards candidates</b>		.792	.91
<b>Racial attribute s frame</b>	Does the segment refer to the race of Black candidates, their ancestries or their family members, or physical characteristics, such as skin color and facial features?	.869	1
	Does the segment mention, discuss or debate birth origin, religious affiliation, or citizenship of Black candidates?	Undefined*	1
	Does the segment connect Black candidates to Jesse Jackson, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, Reverend Wright or other prominent Black leaders?	.869	.773
	Does the segment explicitly or implicitly relate the characters of the Black candidates to the emotion- laden or stereotyped images of Black Americans?	1	1
	Does the segment refer to the Black candidates' intelligence, leadership or achievements overtly or covertly in relation to their race?	.838	Undefined*
<b>Racial strategy frame</b>	Does the segment view kinds of racial matters such as discussions of affirmative action, welfare, food stamps issues as racial tactics/political strategy to win over White/Black voters?	1	.828
	Does the segment consider the campaign advertisements or some planned campaign activities by black candidates as a part of gamesmanship to gain support from White/Black voters?	.782	.743
	Does the segment mention, describe or analyze the reasons why black candidates focus on particular racial policies/issues? Include activities like speeches, tours, addresses and press conferences.	.713	1
	Does the segment infer or predict black	.838	.773

	candidates' stance on race matters in case black candidates are successfully elected in terms of their racial standpoint during the campaign?		
	Does the segment refer to or describe the reaction of White/Black or other groups of voters towards racial tactics employed by black candidates?	1	1
<b>Minority interest frame</b>	Does the segment provide historical references to slavery, racism, reconstruction, development of the African-American community, military conflicts of the United States, racial segregation or civil rights movement?	.838	.875
	Does the segment show or discuss how Black individuals and groups are affected by the issue, problem or policy?	1	.773
	Does the segment mention, describe or analyze the social conditions of African American people in the areas of jobs, wealth, welfare, education, housing, or other socioeconomic opportunities?	1	1
	Does the segment connect violence, crime, laziness, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, or other negative images with Black Americans as a group?	.758	1
	Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy- caring, sympathy or compassion?	Undefined*	.773
<b>Conflict frame</b>	Does the segment reflect conflict between parties/individuals/groups/countries?	1	.743
	Does one party-individual-group-country criticize another?	.838	1
	Does the segment include disagreement or criticism towards/among media outlets on their stands or opinions?	.859	1
	Does the segment refer to winners and losers?	1	.886
	Does the segment mention the reason(s) for the conflict/disagreement?	.791	Undefined*

\* "Undefined" appears when two conditions apply simultaneously to the data: 1) both coders have attained 100% agreement and 2) both coders have all selected the same variable value for every unit of analysis.

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