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ISSUE OWNERSHIP AND FRAMING OF DIGITAL PRIVACY ON TWITTER

by

ASHIK SHAFI

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

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Advisor   Date

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DEDICATION

To my late father Shafiul Alam, who was the happiest person learning my

admission to PhD program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While finishing this dissertation I am feeling a sense of immense accomplishment and, at the same time, stuck by how little I have pursued the sea of human knowledge. Isaac Newton, at the end of his life, said he was like a boy picking up pebbles, while the great ocean of knowledge lied undiscovered. Like Newton, upon completing this dissertation, I am amused to realize the vast amount of knowledge, literature and discussions in communication studies and other areas that I will never happen to know.

My journey toward this work is distantly inspired by late scientists such as Newton and more directly motivated by many wonderful people around me. To the people who helped in this project: You all deserve smile, sunshine and seashores every day. Including my landlord who thought I became a doctor and thanked me for saving lives.

Let me be more specific.

Dr. Fred Vultee had a difficult job of advising a doctoral student who changed his dissertation topic two times and sent drafts those lacked theoretical foundations—like a chef who has all the ingredient for a cake but do not know how to bake. But Dr. Vultee guided that student, who was me, in choosing the appropriate theories and methodologies, correcting numerous grammatical errors and in revising his drafts. I will forever be indebted to Dr. Vultee's meticulous guidance.

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Now turning on the side of my life that is blissful.

My better half Fariha Mahfuz Orchi was with me in every moment. She has the right to regret marrying a graduate student who did not even use to have dinner together, did not help with home chores or even stayed away when she was sick. But Orchi always inspired me to finish this project. Dear, this is a done project now. I was just kidding when I said I would do another PhD last week.

During the third year of my PhD, I was gifted a clock from God. That clock is Ayaan, my son. I call him a clock because nothing tells me about time and months passing by as he does by growing up. A baby entertains you with each and every move, and gives you a meaning to be in this world. I am thankful to be parent of a beautiful child that added color to our lives.

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It was an eventful time period, from 2012 to 2017, to work on this project with two presidential elections, the so called revitalization of Detroit, the chilling winter of 2014 and a power blackout during Super bowl 2013. As communication scholars, we gain knowledge out of symbolic interactions of different events. Living through an interesting time, surrounded by caring and talented people, and staying at the heart of a historic city, I am extremely grateful to finish my doctoral dissertation and to start a new journey as a communication professor.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, Twitter has risen as a major vehicle for political communication. Twitter is used by politicians to communicate with voters, by journalists to gather and share news stories, by celebrities to converse with their fans, and by activists to inform people about their work (Armstrong & Gao, 2010; Aharony, 2012; Golbeck, Grimes & Rogers, 2010; Vargo, Guo, McCombs & Shaw, 2014). Politicians' tweets are used as news sources by journalists, influencing the news agenda of mainstream media (Parmelee, 2014). News headlines such as "Trump's recent tweet targets Paul Ryan" (Collins, 2016) are prevalent, underscoring the use of Twitter in news dissemination and reception. Once regarded as trivial and used by the young-age population only, Twitter has now been elevated to an important and popular platform for short-text conversations about current news events (Vergeer, 2015).

Although sites such as Facebook and YouTube are popular for social networking and entertainment purposes, Twitter is known for its predominant use in both politics and journalism (Armstrong & Gao, 2010). Most politicians have accounts in major social networking sites, including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (2016). Several distinct characteristics make Twitter popular for political purposes. First, due to the brevity and simplicity of communication on Twitter, politicians can send short and simple messages to their innumerable followers. Due to its 160-character limit, politicians often share a phrase or a short remark via Twitter. Second, tweets can reach a broad spectrum of the population due to Twitter's popularity, and its subsequent adaptability on different devices and ease of reading. Third, a Twitter user can send messages over a long period, regularly, offering a

long-term narrative about an issue. As the social media incorporates mass media features, such as a mass audience, and concentrate upon different sources of information, and interpersonal communication characteristics such as dedicated communication between individuals, there has been a debate whether social media sites are mass communication channels or interpersonal mediums (Chaffee, 1982; Tewksbury, 2005). Testing political communication theories in new media settings may enrich our understanding about the influence of social media on our collective and individual lives.

A wide range of literature has explored Twitter in different political settings. Scholars have looked at use of Twitter by political activists (Choi & Park, 2014), by journalists (Parmelle, 2014) and by supporters' groups (Vargo et al., 2014). Studies have examined the use of Twitter on various situations, such as during election campaigns, (Conway, Kenski & Wang 2013; Golbeck, Grimes & Rodeger, 2010), street protests (Bastos, Raimundo & Travitzki, 2013), televised political speeches (Hawthorne, Houston & McKinney, 2013), and national sports events (Hull & Lewis, 2014). As Twitter functions as a daily narrative, comprising of short texts, an analysis of the tweets regarding a political issue can tell us about the development of the issue rhetoric on different social media platforms.

Politicians often use Twitter for communicating with citizens (Golbeck et al., 2010), establishing relations with journalists and gaining information about politicians, elite citizens, and news media. A large number of followers on social media enables politicians to convey their messages to a major part of the population with no help from the mass media. Studies found that politicians use a variety of media relation tools over

different mediums to promote their agenda, which help influence public opinion and media agenda (Stromback & Kiousis, 2011).

The popularity on Twitter relates to a politician's public image, frequency of using Twitter, and his/her coverage on mass media (Vergeer, 2015), as Twitter's image of a person is connected with his/her larger public image. Twitter reception of a politician does not always correspond with their rank in politics. President Obama had around 75 million followers on Twitter in August, 2016, making him one of the most popular people in the particular medium. Other popular politicians on Twitter include Donald Trump (12.8 Million), Hillary Clinton (6 million), and John McCain (2 million). However, high-rank politicians, such as Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid (360,00), and Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (81,000) has considerably fewer number of followers, which shows that their upper-rank political positions do not corroborate to a high popularity on Twitter. Some politicians are more successful than others in being popular on Twitter and becoming an active use of the medium.

This study contends exploring the use of Twitter over a new political issue for a two-year or more time period, with the intent to provide insights on the way politicians use the medium as a long-term mass communication tool. A study of the rhetorical techniques found in the manner tweets are constructed and of the public relation strategies practiced through Twitter campaigns would improve our understanding of the political use of social media. Although politicians have been found to use Twitter as a public relations tool, to influence public opinion and organize groups of supporters, the characteristics of their political rhetoric in the medium remain relatively unexplored.

This paper explores the rhetoric of tweets about a new political issue—digital privacy. The issue came into public attention in June, 2013, following a massive news breakout on the mass media, revealing controversial data gathering practices by National Security Agency (NCS). The time of writing this paper— years of 2015 and 2016, allowed this study to track different politicians' interpretation of a particular set of events that were related to digital privacy from the day of a major news event, to the maturation of the topic, as a well-known issue of our time. This study further aims to investigate the rhetorical, linguistic, and framing techniques used during conversations about digital privacy by politicians on Twitter, from the period between June 2013 and August, 2016, to relate the assumptions of issue ownership and framing theory, and to infer the use of rhetorical and public relations techniques in modern politics.

Background of digital privacy: A new, non-partisan political issue

Digital privacy has emerged as a major non-partisan issue, and attracted dozens of congressional hearings and court rulings, while receiving widespread coverage on the news media (Cannon, 2013). The issue rose into national prominence during the month of June, 2013 when news about the US National Security Agency's eavesdropping on phone calls and emails were leaked on both national and international news sites. British daily *The Guardian* led investigative journalism on NSA surveillance, and published a series of news reports starting June 5th, 2013, about the secret eavesdropping on Americans' phone calls, internet log information and emails, which paved the way for news reports on the issue for the next three months. Within three to four months, dozens of news reports unveiled the breadth and reach of the surveillance program, and these were

published in major international news sites, such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Der Spiegel*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The report by *The Guardian* triggered an intense discussion on the legal validity of NSA's data collection program, the possible breaches in digital privacy and the need for government spying.

A collection of personal data at a massive scale prompted strong criticism from both journalists and ordinary citizens. Both Republican and Democratic politicians condemned the practice and vowed to pass legislation to stop NSA from gathering personal data. As NSA claimed that they collected private data to tackle terrorism and enhance national security, opinions on NSA varied, from supporting for the sake of national security, to opposing, due to civil rights concern. A survey administered after the news leak found American public to be divided in their opinion on NSA's data collection (57% vs. 44%). The difference in their opinions was, however, not linked with their political identification (Pew, 2013). Public opinion reports suggests that digital privacy is a non-partisan issue and does not fall into any left-right political spectrum. Digital privacy, as an issue, gradually begun from the media, political, and legal events of those denote concern about the personal data of Internet users, a considerable amount of which has been gathered as a part of digital communication for everyday institutions, such as hospitals and workplaces.

Political public relations adopted on social media has been different from face-to-face settings. Politicians use social media to disseminate information, organizing like-minded audience, implore for votes, or to plead for donations (Conway et al., 2013; Shafi & Vultee, 2016). Social media is found to have adapted an anti-establishment stance in

addressing governmental scandal (Qin, 2015). For example, in their coverage of Edward Snowden, social media channels were found to depict him as a hero and fighter (Qin, 2015), although mass-media portrayed him as a traitor and a security threat to the country. Snowden was framed as a whistleblower, a privacy advocate, and a bipartisan activist on Twitter hashtags, but he was presented as a terrorism concern by the mass media. Such evidences invite to explore and investigate the political discussions and conversations on social media, in order to understand how political public relations techniques are applied in new media settings.

Overview of this paper

This dissertation project explored the tweets sent by politicians about digital privacy, since the day of the news-leak, and applied computerized and manual content analysis to explore different variables in tweets. This project is both exploratory and inferential. First, it tries to gather data on common rhetorical appeals, in light of the framing theory of mass communication and the issue ownership theory of political science. Second, this project attempted to relate the use of those techniques with real-life political events, in order to understand how real-life events shape different politicians' comments on digital privacy on Twitter. The literature review provided in this paper presents a background of framing and issue ownership theory, outlines scholarly literature on the political use of tweets, and offers suitable predictions on the application of issue ownership techniques in different politicians' tweets. Scope of this dissertation falls into an intersection of political public relations, crisis communication, and the strategic use of social media.

The central question of this paper revolves around the way in which political elites framed digital privacy after the news leak. It is concerned about the way they interpreted the issue on social media from the day of the news leak, and afterward, and how Twitter's interpretation can be related with actual events. What does the framing of the issue tell about the political rhetoric of a new and non-partisan issue in current time, and what role does social media play in disseminating the politicians' interpretation? In scope, this project is both exploratory and inferential scope. First, this project attempted to discover the common framing techniques used by politicians with regards to digital privacy. Afterward, this paper related its findings with the framing used in issues of same-sex marriage and abortion during the 1980s, explained the changes in the frames, and noted the possible influence of real-life events in framing techniques.

The literature review in the following chapter discusses how issue ownership theory, first outlined by Petrocik (1996), provides a framework on exploring messages by politicians on a new issue. The theory states Democrat and Republican politicians emphasize issues they are perceived to "own," so that the public thinks that those politicians are helpful in handling the issue. The parties focus on issues they are perceived by the public to be good at, such as the Democrats on education and civil rights, and Republicans on defense and national security. This paper uses issue ownership theory to propose that Democrats and Republicans refer to the issues they "own" while posting tweets on digital privacy and would attempt to highlight their party's record in dealing with the same.

Then, literature review discusses the concepts of episodic and thematic framing

(Iyengar, 1994), widely-used in mass communication to understand the different perspectives used to interpret an issue. Episodic framing refers to interpreting an issue or the problems attached to an individual, whereas thematic framing refers to linking the issue with larger problems or collective concerns. Episodic framing of a problem related to poverty would discuss the issue, beginning from an individual's perspective, whereas thematic framing of poverty would refer to a broader economy situation. This paper uses episodic and thematic framing to examine what perspective was the most prominent in the politicians' interpretation of digital privacy in their tweets, and compared it with the previous findings.

The third section of the literature review discusses the historical background of Twitter becoming widely-popular as a versatile medium of mass-interpersonal communication. The section discusses the reasons behind Twitter becoming popular in the news and politics,, compared to its competitors, like Facebook and Instagram, that are more popular for interpersonal communication. Politicians frequently use Twitter for communicating with citizens (Golbeck, Grimes & Rogers, 2010), establishing relations with journalists, and gaining information from fellow minded politicians, elite citizens and news media (Vargo et al., 2014). Journalists give importance to the use of Twitter by prominent personalities, and have used it as a news source (Parmelee, 2014). This project aims to explore the use of Twitter in politics from public relation's viewpoint and explore how different politicians have adopted different rhetorical and communicative techniques to gain a political advantage.

This project used computerized and manual content analysis to gather and analyze

Twitter data. The target population for this study are prominent politicians sending tweets about digital privacy in the last three years. The Twitter accounts of all 100 of the US senators have been chosen as the primary sampling units. Then, a computer script is used to retrieve various tweets from those accounts, and only gather those which were pertinent to the issue of digital privacy. Then, two human coders analyzed these tweets. The results derived from the content analysis were then explained by using descriptive and inferential statistics, and conclusions were drawn, comparing the results with the previous findings.

Findings from this study contributed to the understanding of how issue ownership and framing theories explain the political rhetoric used on Twitter. The findings offer insight into the use of Twitter as a public relations tool and conceptualize the model for the use of Twitter by politicians, in response to a new and important event on the social media, for both short and long-term periods. The issue ownership and framing theories evolved during the 1990s, during the time of strong circulation of newspapers and reception of television, but there was little presence of new media, resulting in the testing of two theories in a social media environment. Application of these two theories in Twitter communication by politicians helped understand how the issues were discussed and interpreted over social media, and their environments were marked by immediate communication, rapid frequency of discussion, and short exchange of messages. Finally, the findings informed about the possible differences in the political rhetoric between Democrats and Republicans in Twitter, and explained the political, technological, and situational causes of such differences.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A discussion of the issues is central to American political culture. We regularly witness news coverage of politicians' contrasting politicians, based on their positions on different issues (Golan & Wanta, 2001). Pick any political news story today, and chances are, those are about a politician's statement on a major issues, such as immigration, defense, or healthcare. Public perception of politicians is found to be associated with the evaluation of politicians on certain major issues (Feldman, 1988). As an example, Donald Trump is widely known for his tough stances on immigration, Hillary Clinton as an experienced diplomat, and Barack Obama as the architect of Affordable Care law. The prominence of such issues on the news media has been found to influence public opinion and government policies (Druckman & Homes, 2004). Focusing on the issues on mass media, rhetoric about the issues by politicians, and the varying public perception of certain issues show how political outcomes depend on the way issues are interpreted, explained, and understood in public life.

The importance of interpretation and perception in politics rose into national limelight during different events of conflict in the US history. The role of the government became a heavily controversial issue after the American Revolution, when the Federalist Party wanted a strong central government, while the anti-federalists opposed the move. Slavery emerged as a bitter political issue during the eighteenth century, and drew strong opposing arguments, eventually developed into the American Civil War. Later, during the first half of the twentieth century, isolationism became a disputed foreign policy, as non-interventionists and interventionists debated on the justification to join the World Wars.

During the 1960s, civil rights was a source of intense political debates. The latter half of the twentieth century saw issues such as abortion and marriage equality, that developed from being unknown topics to familiar political issues, debated in the Congress and subsequently discussed by presidents and prominent politicians. These historic events showed the discussion and rhetoric on political issues, which accompanied important events in many major occasions (Pew, 2016). How an issue is explained, interpreted, or understood by the public has a strong impact on public opinion and subsequent government actions (Kiousis, 2004).

Politicians' interpretation of news issues: Early studies

As mass media technologies like radio and newspaper flourished during the beginning of the 20th century, political scientists realized effect of the media's coverage of events and issues of the citizens. The power of media coverage of events was evident during the First and the Second World War, when mass media was used to sway public opinion in favor of war by the US government. O. W. Riegel, a political scientist of that time, commented that the propagandistic content on American newspapers was so prevalent that the public did not view propaganda as abstract, rather equated it with reality (Riegel, 1935). President Frederick Roosevelt's fireside chats were notable examples of new channels of communication of the politicians with public. Roosevelt's attempt to communicate with the public through his radio chats show established a control over the flow of information and on the public's perception of news events, as politicians noticed.

Among the early scientific studies of public perception news events, Lippmann is known for his clear propositions on the interaction between mass media, real events and

the audience (Lippmann, 1946). He shifted away from the previous assumptions (Dewey & Rogers, 2012, originally published in 1927), that the public is rational and logical in opinions about current affairs. The scholar proposed intermediary role of the mass media in the interactions between news events and the public's mind, and subsequently, coined the phrase "the world outside and the picture in our head. According to Lippmann (1946), the public take heuristic cues from the mass media, forms cognitive bias in processing news information, and acts on the basis of short-term memory. He commented about the perception of politics and news events, which sometimes matters more than the actual event, as the people are not supposed to know about politics first-hand, rather, they know that from the mass media and form a mental image of events and personalities about those who influence their opinion. The image viewed in our mind influences public opinion, rather than the actual political events, and later, ushers in more scholarly research on both the perception and processing of political information about certain issues.

The public perception of political events was found to rely on interpersonal communication and socio-economic factors in the studies done during the period between 1930s and 1960s, an era known as the minimal effect era for mass communication. The Erie County voter study (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet 1968) showed that peoples' voting decisions may be influenced more by their family and friends rather than the mass-media. Large-scale survey data from the 1960s and 70s (Converse, 1962; Nie & Andersen, 1974) revealed that the American public had inconsistencies in their ideological beliefs and political views. Such findings highlighted the role of interpersonal and ideological factors those shape the public's understanding of politics, and suggests a comparatively weaker

effect of the mass-media as well as of politicians.

Publication of agenda-setting model by McCombs and Shaw (1972) concretized a large number of the previous findings on the powerful role of the mass media on public's perception of news affairs (Funkhouser, 1973). The well-known theory of agenda-setting proposed a straightforward effect of the mass media agenda on the public. The theory, after publication, immediately drew attention from scholars, and was explored in hundreds of studies done in different countries and this explored different situations (For a list of settings where the agenda-setting theory was tested in, see Du, 2007). However, a key question remains for the political communication of scholars: How do mass media, politicians, and the public negotiates their agenda in a free flow of information system? Various studies have attempted to depict the role of these three different factors in a combined model. The majority of such studies during the 1970s and 1980s depict a flow of agenda from the politicians to mass media, and then to the public (Rogers and Dearing, 1988).

Since the advent of the Internet, the audience became empowered and were able to have a greater control in the message and process of communication than before. Scholars commented that the effect of the media on the internet public, is in between a powerful and a limited one, or in the middle range (Shehata & Stromback, 2013). A large amount of discussion about political issues happen on social media in the current era (Pew, 2012). Internet slowly developed into web technologies in the 1990s and Web 2.0 was comprised of social and user-generated media in 2000s, allowing users to get connected with each other at an unprecedented scale. As the internet has become a mainstream communication

medium, politicians now heavily use the Internet for most of their communication channels.

The audience are now empowered to publish their own content, communicate with each other, and give feedback to the mass media. These contemporary models of the flow of agenda shows that the politicians now are taking more sophisticated actions to influence the agenda of the mass media and the public (Shehata & Stromback, 2013). Attempts to shape public understanding of certain issues may include propagating a particular frame, viewpoint, or perspective through mass communication channels. To theorize the role of this empowered audience, scholars envisioned the audience as constantly negotiating with the agenda that is forwarded by the mass media, politics, and other interest groups (Albalawi & Sixsmith, 2015).

The concurrent rise of new communication technologies has altered the politicians' ways of communicating with the public. In the current media environment, politicians need not to depend on the mass media to propagate their messages, as new media enables them to communicate directly with their audiences. As the American public is mostly relying on the social media to know and talk about politics (Pew, 2012), new media are becoming influential in shaping the public understanding of political events. Scholars have called for testing mass communication theories in light of new media to outline the current dynamics of political communication (Meraz, 2011; Papacharissi, 2002; Qin, 2015).

The scope of this dissertation encompasses the politicians' interpretation of a new issue on Twitter. The preliminary questions asked are: What types of techniques are used in issue interpretations over new media, specifically on Twitter? What are the current

examples of such activities? How does public relations regarding political issues influence the performance of a party? The upcoming sections discusses the early literature on politician's interpretation of news issues from the 1920s, and then reviews the recent findings from the 1980s. This literature has been drawn from the disciplines of mass communication, political science, and new media studies.

Political parties attempt to mold public discourse about major issues through public and media relations activities, in order to gain an advantage in public opinion (Kelley, 1956). A party tries to interpret an issue in the ways the public would think the party can handle that issue, a phenomenon known as issue ownership (Petrocik, 1996). Mass-media applies media framing in portraying news events that influence public opinion (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The politicians' interpretation and mass media's framing of news events influence the public understanding of news issues, which is discussed in agenda-setting, media framing, agenda-building, and second-level agenda-setting theories. Overall, the politicians' and mass media's interpretation, explanation, framing, and characterization of different political issues shape the public's social construction of political events.

The next section of literature review outlines issue ownership, framing and issuing the evolution theories from political science and media studies, in order to provide a theoretical background of the politicians' interpretation of news issues. Afterward, the following section discusses the implication of the social media in political public relations, specifically in politician-to-citizen communication. The next section presents digital privacy as an example of a new political issue and discusses the types of interpretation techniques that are used by politicians to converse about certain issue on the social media,

specifically on Twitter. The final section argues about issue discussion on the social media that needs further studying to plan a theoretical grounding.

Partisan interpretation of issues: Recent examples

"A typical vice of American politics is the avoidance of saying anything real on real issues."

--- President Franklin Roosevelt (The Outlook, 1912)

As perception is extremely important for public opinion, politicians seek to promote their own perception and the desired perception of political issues through a medley of different activities. This may involve a multifaceted public relations work, involving media relations, public relations, and formal communications. Parties often hire professionals in promoting a rhetoric about a topic which matches with their overall position and ideology (Stromback & Kiousis, 2011). They may include speech writers, communication specialists, press department officials, and polling experts, who help to communicate with both the media and the public and promote the party's position on different issues. The media and public relations activities of different politicians frequently adopt the techniques borrowed from public relations, strategically communicating and maintaining their relationship with the audience, journalists, and stakeholders (Froehlich & Rudiger, 2006).

Modern political public relations include communicating with the audience by using certain strategies and practices traditionally used by corporate organizations in the occasions of business communication (Painter, 2015). Scholars have defined political public relations as management activities, where organizations aimed for influencing

public opinion, actions to build and maintain relationship with important personalities and public(s), and to promote their reputation for gaining political advantage (Stromback & Kiousis, 2011). Studies explored political public relations as a framework, while exploring politicians' media relations (Froehlick & Rudiger, 2006). Politicians apply public relations techniques to promote a favorable view of themselves and influence the public's thinking and opinions about the current issues.

While communicating about politics, politicians strategically chose different rhetorical techniques, which included vocabularies, referring to other events and persons, and the use of emotion in their speeches to gain a political advantage (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990). A party considers the opinion of important interest groups, the development of recent news events, and provide a history of a party's ideology before taking a position about an issue. To get political advantage, a politician chooses certain descriptions consistent with the interpretation made by their own party position, previous records, and what is deemed different from the terminology employed by an opposing party (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990).

A study of the presidential rhetoric found that the rhetoric shaped public perception of national issues and influenced an evaluation of the presidential candidate (Druckman & Holmes, 2004). Using different channels of communication and rhetorical techniques, politicians aim to shape up how political issues are understood by the public. An analysis of past election campaigns have found that politicians have applied a variety of media and public relation activities, such as information subsidy events for journalists like press release, social media messages, arranged press conferences, interviews with journalists,

and media coverage of political activities, to influence the public and the mass media's perception of politicians' performance (Stromback & Kiousis, 2011).

Vocabulary used to describe illegal immigrants by both Democrats and Republicans and their like-minded media show that political rhetoric symbolizes different ideologies of the parties and their attitudes toward immigration. Democrats and Republicans use different terminologies to describe the people who are non-US citizens and do not have legal immigration status. Conservative politicians and journalists describe this group of people as illegal aliens, which suggest that immigrants are "alien" and foreign to the US culture (Mehan, 1997). Liberal politicians and journalists, on the other hand, describe that particular group of people as undocumented workers, which suggests that a lack of correct immigration status is due to the ineffective processing of documents. It suggests a soft attitude toward immigrants (Mehan, 1997). Differences in vocabulary in describing illegal immigrants suggests that the two parties have different sentiments toward a particular group of people, and shows how politicians attempt to influence the understanding of political issues for the public (Cohen, 1995). The Republican Party use terms such as undocumented workers, which would surprise their supporters, and signal a fundamental change in the party ideology and belief about the role of immigrants in the US.

As an example of modern political public relations work, the Obama administration spent around $ 700 million to promote the marketing of the Affordable Healthcare Act and enroll users into the new healthcare plan. The marketing effort consisted of advertising, marketing, public relations and community events, advertisements in newspapers,

promotional tours, YouTube video campaigns, and niche marketing (CBSDC, 2013). The administration aimed to improve the media coverage of the law, public understanding of the nuances of healthcare packages, and it was targeted to dispel misconceptions. This is an example of political public relations' work regarding a specific issue, where a political organization tried to influence the media agenda, public understanding of the topic, and refuted the opponent's claims and competing statements.

Issue evolution: The historic case of abortion

As an old political issue, abortion exemplifies how parties change their rhetoric after altering their position on a controversial topic (Adams, 1997; McKenna, 2006; Williams, 2011). Although the Democratic Party is now officially pro-choice, and Republican Party pro-life, it was opposite during the 1960s, when the issue surfaced for the first time. During the 1960s, survey results found that the Republicans, including party leadership and voters, were pro-choice, although there was a sizable group of pro-life voters (Williams, 2011). The Republican Party had the support of high and middle income whites, a section African-Americans, and women. Enjoying the support of high-income women, the Republican Party in the 1960s supported abortion rights on the grounds of personal liberty of women and limiting the government's intrusion into personal life. On the other hand, the Democratic Party's leadership was mostly aligned with pro-life voices. The party had its supporters' base in the working class population, including factory workers, many of whom could not afford the cost of abortion for a woman in their family, and did not like having abortion legally available for anyone.

The rise of feminism and the feminists' support for abortion rights, and the

opposition of Catholic churches in the 1970s helped to realign the party positions regarding abortion. Williams (2011) details that both parties attempted to win the highest number of votes, which led to the Democratic Party agreeing with the feminist movement as well as the liberal cultural activists on abortion rights. As the Republican Party was in a weak electoral position during that time, they took a pro-life position to win Catholic voters, and shifted their orientation about the issue. During the Republican National Convention in 1976, although 40 % of the party delegates considered themselves to be pro-life, the party officially promised an anti-abortion amendment to constitution (McKena, 2006; Williams, 2011).

When the parties changed their position on abortion during the 1980s, their rhetoric and framing of the issue altered. The Republican Party, backed by high income and highly educated women in the 1960s, stated that abortion was a private matter for the citizens, on which there was no room for government actions. The party supported abortion rights on the grounds of big government. But during the realignment on the issue in the 1970s, the party interpreted abortion as a moral issue, and used religious terms to oppose it. Democrats, on the other hand, had originally opposed abortion on the grounds of financial loss and threat to the health of women, as many of the female supporters of the party hailed from working-class families who could not afford abortion procedures. During realignment, the party presented abortion as a feminist and progressive issue, tied it with women's right over their body, and attempted to win the support of feminist activists and the young population. Democrats drew the issue towards anti-war, progressive, and feminist movements, which swept the nation during the 70s. This shows the supporters of

a party and developments in the political trends that influence a party's rhetoric, which often end in changing its formal orientation with regards to an issue.

From a historical perspective, rhetoric has been at the core of political persuasion. In the eighteenth century and earlier, speech was the main way of communication with voters, where politicians witnessed the development of speeches that were rich in vocabulary, memorable, and appealed to a higher social strata (Bizzell & Herzberg eds., 1990). Abraham Lincoln spoke in a language which could be understood by 8th to 12th grade education, higher than current president Donald Trump's language standard, of 6th grade (Schumacher & Eskenazi, 2016). Lincoln and his challenger in the 1860 election, Stephen Douglas, during their famous Lincoln-Douglas debate, spoke for no shorter than eight hours in front of a crowd, who patiently listened to their speeches.

Politicians of the current era have many communication channels, such as social media, mass media, and televised speeches to reach out to the public. Politicians' interpretation of different political issues in today's networked media environment disseminates through many networks at a fast speed. It is imperative to explore what, and how these politicians interpret issues about new media networks to understand the way their rhetoric influences the public's understanding of news issues.

Given the importance of the issue interpretation by politicians, this project explores the original theory of issue ownership by Petrocik (1996) and discusses its recent developments. The theory, as described on the upcoming section, explains the relationship between issue interpretation by politicians and their public approval. This paper also utilizes the framing theory of mass media, and applies certain concepts of episodic and

thematic framing (Iyengar, 1994) on the politicians' interpretation of news issues. The two theories provide a background to discuss the application of issue interpretation techniques on a social media setting, and overall, the fit of traditional mass media theories on new media environments.

Issue ownership theory

As political parties promote their positions on different issues, the public opinion gains perception of link between different political issues and parties. The public perception of attachment of particular parties with specific issues is found by studies dated back in the 1970s (Jackson, 1975; Pomper, 1972). For example, when an American citizen faces a repeated exposure to Republicans being vigilant about national security, it may make him/her think Republicans care about national security more than other parties. On the other hand, repeated exposure to vociferous Democrats talking about civil right may make a citizen thinking Democrats are sincerer about the issue than their opponents. The Issue Ownership theory, as outlined below, tests these assumptions and presents empirical findings on perceived salience of certain issues and public evaluation of parties.

Issue ownership theory (Petrocik 1996) states that the perceived prominence of an issue "Owned" by a political party results in the creation of positive public opinions about them. The theory states that American public views political parties to "Own" some issues, that is, to handle a particular issue more than the rest. The public views Democrats and Republicans to "own" different issues. The issue ownership theory suggests that it is politically advantageous for different parties to emphasize the issues they are perceived to own. Republican and Democratic parties, during an election campaign, may offer their own

partisan solutions for the problems in public limelight, and attempt to highlight the beneficial aspects of their overall campaign planning, as opposed to their opponents. The parties try to relate the issues not "owned" with "owned" issues in their political messages, to make the public think that parties can handle both not-owned issue and owned ones. The theory suggests that parties try to give an "advantageous interpretation" of the problems through strategic interpretation of the issues, although they both may talk about certain core concerns (Petrocik, 1996, pp. 3).

The theory predicts Democrats and Republicans would emphasize their own issues during an election as to draw public support. According to the theory, public think of a party positively when issues "owned" by it are prominent on public mind, because the party seems to be more capable of dealing with these issues than its opponents (Petrocik, Benoit & Hansen, 2003). A political party would try to relate a new political issue with one or more "owned" issues, so the public think that party is the most capable of handling the new issue as much as the owned issues.

Patrick (1996) found that during the 1980 presidential election year, it was a period for Republicans' issues being prominent in politics, and also witnessed an increased approval rating for the Republicans, whereas, the Democrats' issues were witnessed as an increased approval for Democrats. Petrocik (1996) showed that when a Democrat-owned issue was the most prominent on the media, public approval went high for Jimmy Carter, the Democratic presidential candidate in the election. When a Republican-owned issue was prominent on the media, public approval for the Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan, grew higher. Democrats were perceived to own issues such as education, civil

rights, and women's issues, and Republicans are supposed to own issues of defense, social order, and the role of the government. Prominence of any party "owned" issue in the media results in a higher public approval for the party as the public judged politicians on the basis of their performance on certain issues that were emphasized through the media.

Issue ownership cues substantially affect citizen's perception of politicians and ultimately, vote choice. Citizens are found to evaluate politicians mentioning own party's issues as ideologically more extreme and more partisan than politicians who mention opposition party's issues (Banda, 2016). Citizens generalize politicians' ideological extremity and partisan attitude even on issue the politicians do not discuss. These cues, Banda (2016) argues, could be small but have impact on voters across the board. The effect of perception of a party owning the most important issues on citizens voting for that party were found outside of the US, namely in Norway (Karlsen and Aardal, 2014) and Canada (Belanger & Meduid, 2008). These international studies show issue ownership effect happens not just in two-party dominated system, but also in multi-party political system as well.

Whether a party-owned issue is salient or not has been measured with both self-report (Belanger & Meduid, 2008) and media coverage of the issue (Petrocik, 1996). Perceived salience can rrise out of the self-interest of an issue to an individual, or prominence on the issue. Perceived salience may be of two dimensions: It may include how much an issue is important for an individual, and how much an individual thinks about an issue being prioritized by a party (Brag, 2004). Studies demonstrate perception of salience has been an important condition in issue ownership by being a significant predictor of vote

choice (Belanger & Meduid, 2008; Brag, 2008). The perception an issue being prioritized by a party and the issue being important to an individual result in the individual supporting the party on that issue (Brag, 2004).

Measurements of perceived ownership of an issue includes wording such as a party doing a good job of dealing with an issue. It signifies the capacity of the party of handling the issue. Whereas capabilities may refer to a party's past records of handling issues, competence refers to their present skills and talent on confronting an issue. Measurement of issue ownership that asks how the party is better qualified to handle an issue, which suggests a party's competence, has been found to predict issue ownership in a stronger way than measurement that tests a party's capability of managing an issue (Therriault, 2015). Competence may be understood by reading comments from experts who support party actions regarding an issue, whereas capabilities are understood by knowing the party's history of dealing with the issue.

How did the political parties use to issue-own cues in their public communication messages? Analysis of political advertisements, debates and press releases found a consistent present of such cues in past communication materials. Political parties have been found to use issue ownership technique as a campaign tool, influencing their own public perception. An analysis of election campaigns from 1952 to 2000 (Petrocik, Benoit & Hansen, 2003) shows that Republicans have mentioned Republican issues more than Democratic issues (1077 vs 479) in nomination acceptance speeches, and in TV advertisements. Democrats mentioned Democratic issues slightly more than Republican issues in advertisements. Republican issues are found to be more numerous than

Democratic issues in their own television ads, and vice versa for Democrats. A similar issue ownership effect was found in congressional campaigns (Brazeal & Benoit, 2008), and for public opinion on unemployment issues in European countries (Jakobsen & Listhaug, 2012).

As an example of issue ownership in contemporary political communication, Mitt Romney was attacked by Barack Obama during the 2012-presidential debate for the former's criticism of healthcare laws, requiring employers to provide insurance coverage for using contraceptives. The issue was a Democrat-owned issue, and was uncomfortable for a Republican. Candidate Romney rebutted the criticism by saying he did not believe that bureaucrats in Washington or employers should tell women if they need to have contraception or not, although he said he believed women should have access to those (Bowers & Greenberg, 2012). In this way, Romney tried to attach women's health issue with the role of the government, which is commonly seen as a Republican-owned issue, and be perceived as capable of handling them. As the debate was broadcasted live on television, it was viewed by numerous people witnessing Romney recapturing a Democratic issue.

The ownership of issues by different political parties can be traced back to the realignment of American politics in the late 1960s. During the time, famous conservative Barry Goldwater opposed the civil rights bill and helped the Republican Party to win votes of a large number of Southern whites who were formerly Democrats, ultimately causing the realignment of the two parties supporters' groups (For details on the realignment of parties in the 60s, see McVeigh, Cunningham & Farrell, 2014; Hammerback, 1999. Since

then, the Democratic Party has been known as the champion of civil rights and education, and the Republican Party is known to be strong on national security and defense, and tough on immigration, as shown through public opinion surveys (Petrocik, 1996). The issue ownership theory suggests that the two parties would emphasize these issues during an election in order to draw public support. It states that the public think of a party positively when issues "owned" by it are prominent on the public mind, because the party seems to be more capable of dealing with these issues than its opponents. The issue ownership theory also suggests that a political party would try to relate a new political issue with "owned" issue, so that the public thinks that the particular party is the most capable of handling both of them.

Influence of mass media in issue ownership:

Media play an important role in the issue ownership process by perpetuating politicians' partisan interpretation of political issues. Coverage of political on mass media showed the media tend to give positive coverage to a party when the news story discusses an issue the party owns (Hayes 2008). Democrats benefit from news coverage of social welfare topics, where the tone of the news story is positive on them. Similarly, Republicans receive favorable coverage on stories related to defense and tax (Hayes, 2008). News media, thereby, gives incentives to the politicians in maintaining a perceived ownership over different issues.

Regarding relation between aggregate news coverage and public approval of parties, coverage of party-owned issues on the *New York Times* was found to predict the approval ratings of presidents from the same parties (Holian, 2006). On the other hand, the

coverage of opposition-owned issue negatively predicted the ratings. Positive ratings of Ronald Reagan increased when Republican issues, such as national security and taxation, were prominent on the media (Holian, 2006). Ratings of Bill Clinton increased when Democratic issues, such as civil rights and education, were in the national spotlight (Holian, 2006). Issue ownership often works side-by-side with media agenda and influence the public in a way in which an agenda-setting process works (Jakobsen & Listhaug, 2012).

Mass media act as a stage where parties perform to uphold their suggested ownership of issues (Walgrave, Lefevere & Nuytemans, 2009). If a challenging candidate addresses an issue owned by an incumbent, and the candidate receives ample media coverage, s/he may recapture the perceived ownership of the issue from his opponent. The public may change their opinion on the issue and view it as being owned by the challenger rather than the incumbent. The public may get an impression that the incumbent is not serious about the issue, although he owned it originally, and now the challenger is more capable of handling it. Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans (2009) termed this as the media exposure effect and argued that a politician, once perceived as the owner of an issue, needs to maintain their ownership through both media and public relations activities to not to lose it.

Public perception of a party-owned issue is the strongest when the public does not have personal significance with the issue, and these issues are in competition with each other regarding their prominence (Walgrave et al., 2012). Personal association to an issue, known as associative dimension of issue ownership, and may interfere in its perceived important for the public and lessen the influence of partisan interpretation. The associative

dimension is similar to the concept of need for cognition in agenda-setting literature, which states that one's personal relevance with a news issue influences his perceived need to pay attention to the related news. A low need for cognition toward a news event may lead to a weak effect by the media agenda.

Issue trespassing and its effect on the campaigns

What happens when a party emphasizes upon its opponents' issue? Addressing an opponent-owned issue is known as "issue trespassing", which is found to be used by Democrats more than Republicans (Meeks, 2015; Dulio & Trumbore, 2009). Such acts may create a confusion among the voters as it makes them judge party-issue relationship in a way that is contrary to tradition. Issue trespassing acts have been found to contribute to the decline of a party's approval ratings (Meeks, 2015). Scholars found Democratic candidates to be more likely to discuss both their own and Republican-owned issues during campaigns, whereas Republicans have been less likely to discuss their opponents' issues (Damore, 2004). Democrat were found to engage in issue trespassing in TV advertisements in 2006's mid-term elections, but the likelihood was conditioned by the politicians being incumbent versus the challenger (Dulio & Trumbore, 2009). The competitive standing of the candidates, their partnership, and the tone of their campaigns influenced the probability of discussing the opponents' issue (Damore, 2004).

Lack of data about issue trespassing in non-election periods urges testing the assumptions of issue ownership besides election campaigns. In a non-election situation, engaging in issue trespassing may be fruitful for the parties, especially when the particular issue is well-known to be a non-partisan issue, as the public may not be judging the

politicians based on traditional partisan history. Issue trespassing may be successful for a politician to establish his credibility on the issue when s/he has a firm background, and the public is ready to think about the issue in non-partisan terms.

The sources of issue ownership besides political partisanship are found to be related to attitudes on issues, perceived performances of societal development, and perceptions of representation of different population groups by political parties (Stubager & Slothuus, 2012). Attitude refers to the voters' feeling on the issue, and is measured by a range of left-wing to right-wing feeling of the respondents. Perceived performance of societal development indicates the voters' negative-to-positive perception on the overall performance of the government. Perception of representation indicates how the public think the parties represent all quarters of a population. The three sources are found to be nearly equal in their strength of predicting issue ownership (Stubager & Slothuus, 2012). Dissimilarities between the voters and party priorities have been found to negatively affect issue ownership (Van der Brug, 2004), suggesting that the process weakens as the voters lose trust on the party.

Issue evolution: Change in issues' partisan orientations

Issue positions, contrary to popular beliefs, do not stay rigid or fixed. Positions of political parties and politicians on different issues evolve into a response to their opinion about their voting blocs, together with related political events (Stimson, 2004). The concept of issue evolution by Stimson (2004) suggests political parties to choose their position on new political issues, based on the position of their opponent, and on the appeal of their position to the largest number of voters. Political parties change their issue positions to

attract the highest number of voters while maintaining their traditional supporters' bloc. Changes in positions often include the reorientation of positions, change of interpretation of issues, and the differences in interest groups that support different parties. The theory of issue evolution explains the different factions in a party who may differ in their opinion and hold different perspectives regarding an issue. Stimson (2004) argued that a party formulates its position on political issues through competing stances from different factions within the party, media framing, and public perception of issues. Positions of competing parties and related interest groups, opinion of the loyal vote banks, and real-life events related to the issue influence some changes in the party positions about certain issues.

As an example, the Democratic Party used to oppose any federal civil rights bill while it enjoyed the support of Southern whites. However, the party lost their support when the Democratic President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 signed the civil rights bill. Southern whites turned to the Republican Party whose leader Barry Goldwater opposed the civil rights bill on grounds of personal liberty and small government. Stimson (2004) showed that a correlation between Republican Party identification and opposing school segregation was consistently negative until 1964, when it took a positive turn, and since then, remained as such. This change of public opinion regarding the issue shows how the party's stance and supporters' opinion regarding major political issues are realigned, depending on the position of the competing party.

Another example of the change in partisan orientation on a prominent issue, was when Republicans supported banning abortion, with opposition from Democrats during the 1980s. Although many Republicans were pro-choice, and many Democrats were pro-life

about abortion at that time, the parties did not push abortion as a political issue. However, during the 1980s, candidates individually presented their abortion views in the elections, aligning both Republicans and Democrats into pro-life and pro-choice positions, respectively. The realignment of parties on abortion took place more slowly than on racism or women's rights. The examples showed how the candidate and the party positions on issues can change, responding to different real-life events, and altering the original dimensions of the issues.

The left-right dimension regarding political issues, however, may not be applied for all issues, but for the issues that had a moral undertone and were directly related with governmental actions. Issue can be divided into two "dimensions", based on their political orientation: the first dimension of issues refers to traditional issues, such as abortion rights, immigration, and taxing (Stimson, 2004). Such issues construed the primary line of division between the Republicans and the Democrats and signified left-to-right political spectrum. The public perceived those issues on a left-to-right dimension, with the left being associated with the Democrats and the right with the Republicans. The "second dimension of issues" are less politicized, such as poverty and crime, which are not perceived in the traditional leg-to-right political dimension, and are viewed as local and nonpolitical issues.

How does the public test politicians and perceive the media agenda when they promote an issue interpretation of their choice? The theory of second-level agenda-setting of the mass media suggests attribute agenda of politicians, such as issue attachments and personality traits, significantly influencing their public perception (Golan, Kiousis & McDaniel, 2007; Kiousis, Bantimaroudis, & Ban, 1999). Issue attributes, as explored by

Golan et al. (2007) refers to the salience of issues on a politician's advertising during an election campaign. They found that issue salience on politicians' advertising during the 2004 presidential election influenced public perception of the candidates' attachment with issues, supporting the assumption that issue interpretation by politicians influence the public perception of issues.

The new media environment allows politicians to communicate with the audience directly without the help of mass media. Here, politicians have a chance to employ their preferred interpretation of political issues on social media sites, such as Twitter, and use several distinct features of the medium, including immediacy, simplicity, multimodality, and interactivity. Politicians who want to emphasize upon their capacity of handling the issue, can suggest a link with an issue they are perceived to own. If they want to highlight an opponent's lack of capability of handling the issue, they may suggest a link between the new issue and an opposition-owned issue. They may highlight several aspects of the issue on Twitter that fits with their preferred narrative and partisan interpretation. In that way, Twitter has ushered in new avenues of communicating for politicians, including the application of issue ownership techniques.

Framing theory: Application in issue discussion

Framing theory in mass communication explains how social norms, values, culture, and economic relations affect news gathering and production (Gitlin, 1978). It suggests that news media emphasize specific values, present solutions, point out the blame, and promote a worldview to the audience by making decisions over the salience and presentations of information (Entman, 1991; Min, 2007; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele,

1999). The theory suggests that mass media narrate events and issues from a particular viewpoint, assert blame, promote moral judgment, and suggest solutions. This specific definition should also go to Entman (1993), because in his words: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation." The frames that politicians use to present issues to their audiences may include promoting a particular view, suggesting a relationship between the actors involved in an event, and presenting a connection between the events described with some other related events.

Early studies on framing was inspired by the sociological concept of symbolic interaction and construction of social reality (Gitlin, 1978). Approaching how people derive meaning out of contexts emerging from the organizations they belong to, Goffman (1974) coined the term "framing", and mentioned the "frames of references" used in people's deconstruction of social reality. In his book "Frame analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience," Goffman stated that people take cues from their surrounding organizational structure to interpret the meaning of events and those "organization of experiences" are applied by evaluating everyday occurrences. Studies sociologists investigated how the symbols of contemporary news events, such as nuclear reactors, missiles, and electricity constitutes of everyday culture (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Garrison, 1988). Media play a role in aggravating the power of symbols by repeating certain messages on a daily basis.

Media framing has now transformed into the study of creation of cultural messages,

terms used by journalists, and the study of emphasis on news stories (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). A meta-analysis (Borah, 2011) concluded that framing studies involved the study of frame production, cognitive processing, and sociological reception of media messages, and the factors those intervene in the process of framing. Borah (2011) stated a number of philosophical roots of framing, which left the concept in "Still a 'fractured paradigm'. But 'double life' of frames and its roots in various disciplines makes it impossible to be otherwise (pp. 257)".

This dissertation project explores the rhetorical frames used in politicians' tweets on digital privacy issue as a way to study how politicians use partisan framing in their discourse on recent issues. Politicians' use of issue reference is a part of frame production in the first step of cascading activation of frames, as described by Entman (1993). The networked nature of media ensures that the frames built by politicians can quickly be propagated through a lower strata of politicians, news media, and political supporters. Scholars have mentioned that studies need to investigate the process of frame production by politicians on different media channels to understand how different frames are transmitted through social and interpersonal media channels (Borah; 2011; Burch, Federick & Pegoraro, 2015). To investigate public relation tactics in Twitter's framing of digital privacy, this researcher applies episodic and thematic framing, proposed originally by Iyengar (1994). Addressing how politicians use Twitter as an issue framing tool can help to understand the utility of this medium during the discussion of news issues and give guidance on the reception of frames on the social media.

Iyengar's thematic and episodic framing

In many occasions of our personal life, we are presented a choice with a pro and con scenario: risk versus gain in investment, mortality versus survival in medical surgery, or a discount versus cutback while purchasing a product. The concepts of thematic and episodic framing utilizes such dual ways of presenting a problem (Iyengar, 1990). Thematic and episodic framing is through presenting a particular problem in light of an individual's responsibility, when compared to presenting as a collective responsibility. In Iyengar's word, thematic framing of news might comprise of information bearing general trends (p. 22), whereas episodic framing might cover the problem in terms of personal experience. Thematic framing refers to relating a news event with a broader, and more collective concern, and discussing the historical and ideological root of the problem. On the other hand, episodic framing suggests connecting a problem in terms of its concerns with persons involved, and discussing individualized solution for it.

According to Iyengar (1990), a TV report, narrating the story of a homeless person, would be the example of episodic framing, and a report on national statistics on poverty would exemplify thematic framing. Experimental effect of the two framing showed that each of them causes the viewer to suggest a different solution to poverty. Episodic framing may cause the readers to hold individuals responsible for being poor, but thematic framing make the readers think about external factors, such as national economy, social security, or the employment indicators responsible. Iyengar stated opinion about responsibility having consequences for the government, since people who think that national factors cause poverty are likely to disapprove of the ruling government.

To test the responses to the two types of framing, episodic framing elicited more

emotional response than thematic framing in the case of making a persuasive appeal to the readers (Gross, 2008). Episodic framing has been found to evoke stronger response than thematic with regards to both positive and negative emotions (Aaroe, 2011; Springer & Harwood, 2015). From a reader's point of view, episodic framing may focus on a personal example, like an anecdote or a person's story, which resonates with his/her emotion. Thematic framing may make the reader think in a more collective term and look at the overall scenario.

Although issue ownership has been termed as a framing by scholars (Jerit, 2008; Petrocik, 1996), it has not been experimentally tested. In the pioneering study, Petrocik (1996) termed issue ownership as "framing" by politicians. During campaigns, the politicians' rhetoric consists of framing of issues in light of ownership, that is, using different framing elements for self-owned as well as for opposition-owned issues (Jerit, 2008). Whereas framing has been studied as the techniques or strategies applied in political campaigns, ownership has been used as a perspective, although the previous literature suggests ownership as a separate framing element.

Episodic and thematic framing in political messaging

In most of the studies on episodic/thematic framing, the subject has been viewed as a media frame, that is, a frame embedded within media messages. However, framing as a concept has been approached by both individual and media frames (Scheufele, 1999). In his categorization of approaches to framing studies, Scheufele (1999) stated that frames can be studied as either media frame or individual-level frame, with the example of the latter being rhetoric used in social movements, political campaigns, or development of

communication. For example, a politician may give a speech on cutting food stamp benefit, which may discuss the cost of food stamps compared to the benefits gained. By doing that, he may try to emphasize that food stamps are not cost-efficient, and hence, should be removed. Individual-level frame focuses on analyzing rhetoric, verbal and linguistic elements from powerful sources of information, namely a politician, an orator, or a preacher.

This study contends that although episodic/thematic messages have been traditionally studied as a media frame, they may be approached as an individual-level frame through political messages. In political public relations on social media platforms, episodic framing of a media event can be used for informative purposes, and it may mention a politicians' real-life activities, such as congressional meetings, bill proposals, and votes. Thematic framing can be used for discussing the political interpretation of the event by relating it with ideologies and noting its relations with other political issues.

When politicians use Twitter to communicate with an audience, interpreting an event with episodic framing may include a politician speaking of the persons involved with the issue, where individuals or organization are blamed for a problem and related political events such as a congressional meeting, or a TV interview in the Tweet may be mentioned. Discussing an event with thematic framing may include relating the problem to a bigger social and cultural context, discussing ideology, history, and the background of the issue, and mention national and collective thoughts related to the event on Twitter. For example, when talking about immigration, discussing a particular incident in the US-Mexico border, or a congressional meeting on immigration, could be counted as episodic framing. On the

other hand, discussing how immigration is related with the broader theme of national security and American history could be counted as thematic framing.

Social media has opened up new avenues for issue framing activities by allowing novel forms of communication, including instant contact with a large group of followers using multimedia technologies. Politicians now employ an extensive resource of online communication, including dedicated manpower and active social media accounts, as a part of public relations work (Heaney, Newman & Sylvester, 2011). Studies about issue ownership, therefore, need to examine the communication strategies and rhetoric used on new media settings. The upcoming section presents unique characteristics of Twitter as a political platform media and discusses the issue interpretation techniques used on Twitter as a part of a discussion of the political issues on social media.

Use of Twitter by politicians: A mass-medium of short text

Twitter is currently used by around 500 million users who send 340 million new tweets every day, and is one of the most visited websites. Around 23% of the US population, including 37% of those between 18-29 years of age are reported to have a Twitter account (Duggan et al., 2014). The site is specifically known for its "Trending" features on important news events, such as national elections, the Super Bowl, the MTV awards, or controversies such as the legalization of same-sex marriages, as well as for its simplicity of use and shortness of messages, and features like number of "Followers" and "Following users", It is widely-used for political, journalistic and civic purposes, when compared to Facebook, that is popular for maintaining interpersonal networks.

Users of Twitter have been found to be different in terms of political ideology and

demographics than rest of the US population. Twitter users have been found to be more liberal (Mitchell & Hitlin, 2013). After the 2012 election, 77% of the tweets posted were positive about the outcome of the election, which was different from the nationwide polls that found only 52% of Americans were happy about the election outcome, and 45% reported to be unhappy (Mitchell & Hitlin, 2013). During California's same-sex marriage ruling in February 2012, about 46% of tweets expressed positive reaction compared to 33% in the opinion polls. Only 8% of the tweets expressed negative reaction, although 44% of the public were not happy with the results (Mitchell & Hitlin, 2013).

Social media users are reportedly inclined toward negative information, as opposed to mass-media audience, who prefer professional and objective news information (Van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2013). In a crisis event, negative framing and wording spreads quickly through social media, whereas mass-media use more neutral wording and focus on structural problem rather than "panic attack" (Van der & Verhoeven, 2013). Twitter users were reported to have framed Edward Snowden as a whistleblower hero, who brought up important issues of digital privacy. Compared to that, mainstream news media termed Snowden as a traitor who broke the law (Qin, 2015). These findings suggest that Twitter, and in general, social media, although largely reflective of the public opinion, should be marked for being a liberal platform, and with an inclination toward negative reaction.

As Twitter is now used in many sectors for various purposes, several perspectives exist while studying the medium. A number of political communication scholars has approached Twitter as a tool for political public relations, which they use to communicate with voters, urge them to vote, and propagate information (Conway et al., 2013; Golbeck

et al., 2010). This perspective highlights Twitter's use as a mass communication device where a handful of persons disseminate messages through the channel for a larger group of mass audience. Studies exploring Twitter's use by partisan followers have approached the use of Twitter as a social network that is separate and distinct from real-life networks (Siegel, 2013; Vergo et al., 2014). This approach views the Twitter network with a unique system of communicative norms and practices that is not similar to mass-to-audience or interpersonal networks. The third approach viewed Twitter as a personal medium (Armastrong & Gao, 2010; Qin, 2015), where citizens expressed their opinions out of habit and individual will. The approaches of mass communication, distinctive network sphere, and personal network suggests Twitter to be counted both as a mass and interpersonal communication tool for scholars.

Due to Twitter's popularity in both politics and popular culture, it has been equally studied by communication scholars and political scientists. Studies from communication studies and socio-technical perspective viewed Twitter as a medium for expression, self-publication, and community building, where users actively use the medium to seek gratification (Chen, 2011; Greer, 2011; Kim et. al, 2016; Quan-Haase, Martin & McCay-Peet, 2015). Political communication scholars viewed Twitter as a tool used in political campaigns, and as a part of the technology-mediated political process. The upcoming sections in this literature review explain the two approaches of studying Twitter in greater details and underline a blended mass-personal approach.

Interpersonal approach in studying Twitter

Scholars have studied the users' perceived gratification (Quan-Haase et al., 2015),

parasocial satisfaction (Greer & Ferguson, 2011), and the perceived bond of connection (Chen, 2011) in different studies about the interpersonal use of Twitter. Scholars have viewed Twitter as a platform where the users express their thoughts, connect with peers, or fulfill goals of satisfaction. As Twitter is more used in politics and journalism than for interpersonal communication, some of these studies include the use of Twitter for political purpose. Interpersonal studies have used and gratification, and diffusion of information theories while looking at the process of communication on Twitter (Quan-Haase et al., 2015).

Twitter's dual nature as an interpersonal communication channel and a mass communication tool suggests that its influence on the audience may be greater than the traditional mass media, as interpersonal and mass communication effect may complement each other. Interpersonal and mediated channels have been viewed to complement each other, often giving the audience a double dose of information (Chaffee, 1982; Chaffee & Mutz, 1988). As the social media is marked by selective reception of information, tweets from a politician may reinforce his perception among audience, as these tweets may complement certain messages received from the mass-media. Chaffee and Mutz (1988) noted that while mass media effects are easy to observe and report in the research studies, interpersonal effects are often too indirect and latent to be measured, making the distinctive effect of Twitter on the audience hard to determine.

Users of Twitter seek a "sense of camaraderie", which is the desire to bond with other users (Chen, 2011). Gratification of Twitter use may differ among people from different professions, as one's identity on Twitter is closely linked to his/her professional

identity. Journalists have been found to use Twitter to get news and ideas, meet new people, share interesting stories, communicate with the public, get attention from others, be popular, or even to get feedback about their own work (Kim et al. 2016). The findings regarding the gratification sought by Twitter users is similar to that found in the users of other types of social media (Chen, 2011). Literature suggests that as Twitter is a platform of users for sharing their thoughts and also keep in touch with other users, the professional purpose of using Twitter determine the specifics of those motivations.

Twitter could be investigated as a channel of communication that negotiates with different technologies and means of interpersonal interaction, rather than a self-enclosed medium (Madianou & Miller, 2012). The users, according to Madianou and Miller (2012), chose the right communication medium on the basis of affordability rather than discrete technologies. The medium was chosen on the basis of its social, moral, and emotional consequences.

Theorists have identified several principles of new media, e.g., numerical representation, modularity, automation, and variability (Landow, 2006; Manovich, 2001). Modularity refers to being able to be divided into smaller units. New media products, such as a digital video recording, can be divided into video, audio, character, background, and other modules. Automation refers to the products influencing one another without any human agency. Variability refers to the retrievability, scalability, and hyperlinks within a new media product (For details on the principles of new media, see Manovich, 2001). Features of Twitter are good examples of these principles. Modules in it may include the different features of a Twitter user's homepage, such as profile message, text in the tweet,

photos and videos, the number of retweets and favorites. Twitter interactions, such as retweeting and liking someone's tweet, is automatically shown in real-time. Tweets are retrievable, and contains links to other users, making it variable. As Twitter is considered to be a versatile and easy to use medium, and it has been approached from a number of perspectives.

Political and public relations approaches in studying Twitter

The political communication approach investigates how Twitter is used as a tool for the politicians to send messages to the public, and as a platform for voters to exchange ideas. Whereas the interpersonal approach draws its essence from sociology and looks at personal expression, self-promotion, and social networking in Twitter, the political approach draws concepts from political science and journalism and investigates communication among politicians, the public, and the role of Twitter as mass communication. Several characteristics have made Twitter popular for political conversations. First, due to the brevity and simplicity of communication on Twitter, politicians can send their messages in a clear and easily understandable way. Tweets are short, often containing a succinct phrase rather than a full sentence. Second, tweets can reach a broad spectrum of the population due to its simplicity and adaptability on different devices. Third, a Twitter user can send a large number of messages over a long period, offering a long-term narrative of an event.

Information and sharing news about activities were the two most frequent types of content published on Twitter by the members of Congress in 2009, which amounted around 70% of all type of content (Golbeck et al., 2010). Events such as requesting an action,

fundraising, official business, external and internal communication made up the rest of the content. Members of Congress used Twitter as an information bulletin, advertising their activities and personality to the audience. Tweets sent by politicians were found not to make a sincere effort to interact with the audience (Conway et al., 2013). Politicians, during the 2012 presidential election, were found to not to engage in meaningful dialogue in their tweets, but rather, use Twitter to attack other candidates (Conway et al., 2013). Mitt Romney was found attacking Barack Obama in his tweets. Although politicians were found to follow and reply to ordinary users, they did not engage in conversations with the public on Twitter. Rather, replies were usually given to attack political opponents. Politicians sent many more tweets during important political events, such as Super Tuesday, than on the other days.

Twitter exerts pressure on journalists covering politics by being a major source of news. Journalists' news gathering process, in the current social media era, include surveying the social media messages of politicians (Moon & Hadley, 2010). They pick up tweets by politicians and use them as a source in the news, allowing politicians to influence their media agenda (Broersma & Graham, 2012). Tweets from politicians have agenda-building influence over the mass media, due to its use by journalists as a news sources (Parmelee, 2014).

As a widely-popular social media tool, Twitter is both a source of news information, and a platform for the dissemination of messages among like-minded political activists (Vargo et al., 2014). Supporters of political candidates tend to have similar agendas among themselves on Twitter (Guo & Vargo, 2015). Both short and long-term uses of Twitter

need to be considered by understanding its use in political public relations. Politicians have been found to use Twitter primarily to inform the public about current issues (Aharony, 2012). They use Twitter to let people know about their activities, stances on issues, and their opinion regarding news events. Building a relationship with the public and the mass-media have been reported as secondary purposes (Aharony, 2012). Politicians reportedly employ Twitter as a strategic public relations application, a media monitoring tool, and as a platform for personal networking (Frame & Brachotte, 2014). Use of Twitter in politics include cultivating a positive persona, expressing personality traits on social media, such as posting pictures of family events, getting involved in outdoor activities, or ordinary daily activities (Shafi & Vultee, 2016).

Social media posts serve the function of expressing identical information, informing about presence and sharing content with audience from the user (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Among the many different functions of various tasks within social media use, the identity of the user is revealed by posting their demographic and geographical information. Users also need to find content which is sharable on social media to start conversations ((Kietzmann et al., 2011). As examples of their political stance on Twitter, users often reveal political messages on their Twitter profile photo, as well as on their description and tagline. Political use of Twitter differs from interpersonal use of the medium, in terms of its purpose, as the former facilitate a politician-public exchange of information, whereas the latter may target human interaction.

Different social networks are known for their various levels of hierarchy and connectivity among its users. Scholars have found that in most types of social media, the

networks have a few "hubs", held by a few number of very active users (Meraz, 2009; Bastos et al., 2013). Some popular and traditional big media, such as *Washington Post* or *New York Times* occupy an overwhelming majority of hyperlinks in their blogs (Meraz, 2009), higher than the links between citizen-to-citizen network. Such large media sites act as "elites", or "hubs" at a social media network, and are able to set issues and attribute several agenda across different partisan groups in the 2012 election (Vargo et al., 2014).

Supporting the findings of elite users, news agenda in Twitter posts about partisan news outlets, such as Fox News and MSNBC, were highly correlated with that of the Democratic and Republican supporter's Twitter posts (Vargo et al., 2014). It indicates towards the influence of elite users who influence the attribute agenda of news issues on social media networks. During the Iranian and Venezuelan elections crisis in 2009-10, and the Arab Spring in 2011, users with a few connections were found to be capable of generating highly-propagated messages and controlling the majority of opinions, regardless of the activities of the rest of the users (Bastos et al., 2013).

Meraz (2011) extended her findings on the interpretation of issues on social networks into how left, right, and moderate blogs interpret media information, and concluded that ideological blogs rarely follow traditional media agenda. Personal blogs are increasingly competing with mass media, in exerting their influence over the mass media, and often offer their own interpretation of news issues. The news audience embraces the influence of personal blogs and the decaying role of traditional media as the media network has started to incorporate a personalized, hybrid version of news. Elite media outlets dominate the front end of a long list of media choices, and does not influence the media

agenda of personal blogs, or non-mainstream sites. It is personal blogs that erode the influence of the mass media in social and informational networks.

This elite group of social network users have formed a new class of individuals who communicate with their followers directly. This allows for a new hierarchy of network which is outside of politicians-journalists-public nexus in traditional media. The elites also may act as digital gatekeepers in the network, (Bastos, Raimundo & Travitzki, 2013). There can be more than one class of elite users, or multiple hubs, in case of large online communities, for example, regarding civic activism and local events (Choi & Park, 2014). Several popular Twitter users were found to be unpopular outside their network, but they dominated in their own network and were accountable for the diffusion of messages inside a larger social network.

Social network elites, besides being well-established and connected, are found to be more active on both online and offline politics (Gil de Zuniga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012). As online political activities are found to be strongly-related with offline political activities (Liu & Fahmy, 2011), politicians who are active on social network regarding a political issue are likely to be involved with the issue in real-life, which could be demonstrated by their involvement in Congressional activities, membership in Congressional committees, and their role in promoting a resolution or bill.

Issue interpretation and discussion on Twitter

As it is the Twitter users' habit to check their social media feeds after notable news events, politicians take advantage of social media to communicate with the public in a mass scale. President Barack Obama sent a Tweet with a picture of him hugging wife Michelle

Obama with the caption "Four more years" on the evening of November 6th, 2012. The tweet was retweeted over 500,000 times by the end of the day, making it the most retweeted photo post of all time. The event shows a spike of use of Twitter after an important national event. As Obama tried to give his followers a message of personal success and relief, the tweet showed him as capable person who have just secured the highest position of power in the US, and also being a loving husband.

Issue ownership process on the social media have been found to follow patterns similar to that in the mass media (Hosch-Dayican, Aarts, Amrit & Dassen, 2013). Issue ownership effect on social media settings was explored in the Netherlands, where the population reported an association between political parties and political issues, which were found to follow a chronological pattern of tweets mentioning the same issues (Hosch-Dayican et al., 2013). The study, done on the occasion of Netherland's 2012 parliamentary elections, shows the effectiveness of Twitter as a medium in issue ownership process. The tweets sent by the Dutch population demonstrated issue ownership by mentioning the name of the parties and citing particular issues (Hosch-Dayican et al., 2013).

Issue interpretation and framing on new media may consist of selective presentation, focus on particular controversy regarding an issue and emphasize on the information that is supportive of the party. Twitter users may choose to give a partisan interpretation of issues to present their preferred party in a positive role. As an example of the difference of issue interpretation on social media, right and left-wing blogs have been found differing in their framing of two controversial issues— US attorney Alberto Gonzales's 2007 hearing and Petraeus Report on Iraq in 2007 (Meraz, 2011). Left-leaning

and right-leaning blogs were found to have different attributes and frames for the events. Twitter users, in a similar way, were likely to use partisan cues and frames to discuss a new political issue, portraying their supporting political party positively and their opponents negatively.

Politicians' interpretation of news events on Twitter follow public relations tactics used for other media channels. Interpretations may include making a reference to the related news events, citing both related fact or statistics, expression of emotions, and value statement or posting any photo or video that visually influence the audience. Politicians may apply issue ownership process in their social media messages by referring to the issues they are thought to own when talking on any neutral or non-partisan issue. Twitter messages may include framing techniques, such as episodic versus thematic framing, which may include making a reference to any specific incident (episodic) or to the broader issue (thematic). Twitter allows only 140 characters, which amount to around 15 words, to express one's opinion. Twitter users may provide a straightforward connection between certain issues and the political parties in those short sentences, establishing an issue ownership phenomenon.

Digital Privacy: A new and non-partisan issue

To test how politically-involved groups describe news issues on Twitter, this study chose a non-partisan and non-ideological issue of our current time—digital privacy. Issue ownership theory states that political groups would attempt to relate news issues with the issues they are perceived to be comfortable to deal with. Issue evolution theory explains how party position on different major issues changes in response to political events. This

project tests the two theories by noting how political ideologues converge on a non-partisan issue on Twitter over the course of time. According to the issue ownership theory, both parties are expected to frame the issue of digital privacy in a way that strengthens their overall party position in politics. As a new issue, the issue is likely to be utilized and discussed by both parties. This section outlines a brief historical development of the issue, presents the current development, and explains the different partisan interpretation of the issue.

The concern regarding privacy has risen in the forefront after a news leak incident on NSA surveillance in June, 2013 (Bennett, Clemen & Milberry, 2012). The leaked news about NSA surveillance was published in *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* and it spurred a range of discussion by the public, civil right activists and lawmakers on the legality of the activities and its potential harm to civil liberties. As intrusion into digital privacy is directly related with exchanging information on the internet, writers and bloggers were vocal about their privacy concerns, prompting a large number of expressions on internet forums, social media, and blogs.

One of the earliest instance of government surveillance was seen in the First World War, where the government agencies set up logistics to intercept postal mails of private citizen. Historian Lon Strauss, in his research work on WW1 era surveillance, narrated that the post offices were used as a gatekeepers of censorship, as the post masters would open any publication that would seem supportive of Germany or even were overly pacifist (Diepenbrock, 2014 quoting Strauss). The US Espionage Act of 1917 gave the government legal power to use public logistics for surveillance purposes.

During the Second World War, the US government set up the Office of Strategic Services, which, for the first time, designed a centralized method of data gathering from private citizens. The office tracked anti-government and pro-German and Japanese activities in the country and reported back to the US president's office (Hadley, 2013). This organization later contributed to formation of FBI and NSA, which set up a more elaborate mechanisms of surveillance during the 1960s and 1970s.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the NSA eavesdropped on civil right activists, Vietnam War dissenters, and leftist intellectuals (United States, 1976). As allegations of government surveillance spread, a Church Committee was set up in the US Senate to review allegations of intelligence abuse by security agencies. The committee in its report found that the FBI had rounded up around 26,000 individuals, seized over 130,000 letters, and intercepted millions of private telegrams (United States, 1976).

In the 1990s, government surveillance included sophisticated technologies and involvement of many large technology corporations, such as Microsoft, Apple, Google and Verizon, building massive facilities such as the NSA data center in Utah, and liaisons of a number of inter-governmental agencies, such as the GCHQ of the UK and Australia's DSD (McCutcheon, 2013). Surveillance activities have also been facilitated by different laws, originally drafted to combat terrorist threats, such as the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, Protect America Act of 2007, and Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (McCutcheon, 2013). The public concern about the government's intrusion on their privacy has been voiced as a fear of overreaching government, breach of privacy as a civil right, and abuse of big data as a human right violation (Carah, 2014).

Scholars have termed digital privacy as a nonpartisan issue that falls in the middle of a left to right political spectrum (Cannon, 2013; Electronic Privacy Information Center, n.d.). There have been bipartisan efforts in the Congress to pass laws that would protect citizen's privacy (Cannon, 2013). Survey results show that the partisan difference on the perception of NSA data collection program is modest (Pew, 2013). A higher number of Democrats were found to approve of the NSA data collection (57% vs. 44%), and they believed the government have listened to their phone calls (27% vs. 23%), or believed that the Supreme Court does not provide adequate limits on government's data collection (59% vs. 51%) than the Republicans. The population groups who had opposite opinion on the legality of NSA data collection were found to not being different in their opinion about major political issues (Pew, 2013), which suggests that the American public's opinion on the issue of digital privacy are independent of their opinion on party politics. It suggests that Americans mostly consider the issue as a non-political, and non-partisan issue, although the issue is highly debated by political parties.

The public concern on the government's intrusion on privacy has been voiced as a fear of overreaching government, breach of privacy as a civil right, and abuse of big data as a human right violation (Carah, 2014). Scholars have categorized privacy into three types: Physical, informational, and organizational (Craig and Ludioff, 2011). Whereas physical and organizational privacy are usually explicitly protected by law, such as the fourth amendment of the US constitution, informational privacy is comparatively more difficult to protect, because of the citizen's reliance on information medium and technologies. Scholars have found that the perception of surveillance increases self-

censorship by Internet activists and users, increases uncertainty and tension, make the users vigilant self-scrutinizers, and decrease the political efficacy of the users (Trottier, 2012; Wang & Hong, 2010). Surveillance by the government has been found negatively influencing anti-government expression and dissident political opinions and interest in recent major news issues (Wang & Hong, 2010; Yesil, 2014).

Rationale for this study

Although issue ownership is a frequently-used communication technique by politicians, the phenomenon has not been extensively explored in media studies. The issue ownership process in the social media has been even less explored. This study aims to look into the theory in social media settings to extend the conclusions that social media remains as effective as mass media while manifesting the issue ownership effect (Hosch-Dayican et al., 2013). However, in doing so, this study aims to focus on issue ownership techniques, rather than the process. Social media has been found to be used as a strategic public relations tool in political campaigns (Shafi & Vultee, 2016), although the nuances of its use need more attention from scholars. This study aims to extend the findings by looking at the techniques, strategies and characteristics of issue ownership as a public relations technique on social media. This study explores if the techniques of using social media by politicians is applied in the case of issue interpretation. As previous studies have underscored the strategic use of social media by politicians in election campaigns, its possible application for issue ownership communication would extend to the original conclusions on the theory.

Second, this study investigates the demographics and political factors of tweeting

about digital privacy in the US senate. Although scholars have studied social media posts by politicians during election campaigns, the most of those studies investigated political candidates, rather than legislators. Although Tweets from acting politicians have reportedly influence journalists' agenda (Parmelee, 2014), exploring how do, members of a legislative assembly on a regular basis use Twitter to talk about an ongoing issue has been overlooked in the scholarly literature. Pew Research found around 46% of Americans use Twitter on a daily basis (Greenwood, Perrin & Duggan, 2016), that include daily interactions with prominent personalities on Twitter. This study contends exploring demographic and political factors of Twitter users inside a legislative assembly can provide us insight into regular social media by acting politicians, as opposed to looking at social media use only during important occasions.

Third, this study is likely to provide some directions in a politicians' interpretation of a new issue by using social media. Stimson (2004) outlined how politicians defined and described the emerging issue in light of their partisanship and political strategy. This study attempts to extend the findings by examining certain techniques that politicians used to describe new issues of digital privacy on Twitter. In doing so, this study used the concepts of hierarchical social network by Meraz (2009) and explored how politicians' background, seniority, involvement with digital privacy issue, and congressional activities influences their Twitter statements on digital privacy.

CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Scholars have found support for issue ownership theory in a several different studies (Meeks, 2015; Petrocik, 1996; Walgrave et al., 2009; Walgrave et al., 2012). However, unlike many other well-known political communication theories, such as agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), or spiral of silence ((Noelle-Neumann, 1974), issue ownership has not been tested in the case of non-election settings, or in social media communication. This study attempts to test the assumption of the theory in Twitter setting to examine the established communication theories in new media situations. Testing old media theories in today's social media settings provides a chance to update the existing knowledge in light of a rapidly-changing media world.

The literature review section explains how issue ownership theory (Petrocik, 1996) explains political parties emphasizing the issues they are perceived to "own" during their presidential campaigns. The theory predicts the way in which Republicans and Democrat politicians would associate a new issue with the issues they "owned" to gain advantage in their public approval. Politicians' efforts of issue ownership function, as a public relations technique, where political parties attempt to influence the perception of capacities of the parties regarding different issues, is noted. In addition, the concept of issue evolution (Stimson, 2004) shows how new and non-partisan issues develop into partisan issues over time, through the discussions in Congress and statements by political elites.

This study selected digital privacy as an example of a new and emerging issue to test the assumptions of issue ownership and framing theories. Selecting the recent issue of digital privacy allows exploring how issue ownership processes work for both new and

non-partisan issues, as opposed to the better established political issues. In addition, this project examines how politicians interpret the issue over different time periods, and use framing techniques to promote partisan viewpoints on it. The main question in this study is the way in which politicians mention different issues while discussing digital privacy on Twitter. How do politicians' framings of the issue on Twitter change over time? Do politicians change their rhetoric of issues in response to the issues' media coverage? How do Republicans and Democrats differ in their framing and reference to certain issues in their tweets on digital privacy? This project addresses these concerns by analyzing the frequencies of tweets, as well as the characteristics and attributes present in the tweets on digital privacy.

This project attempts to investigate the techniques rather than the effect of issue ownership and issue framing. Techniques refers to the messages, and strategies of applying issue ownership, including politicians sending messages over social media channels. Effect refers to the outcome of issue ownership on public opinion. As this study focuses on the nature of political communication on social media settings, it focuses on the specifics of rhetorical elements, strategies, and the tactics of political public relations on Twitter settings.

This study explores how Republicans and Democrat senators discussed the issue of digital privacy from the beginning of the news leak in 2013, using issue ownership and framing. The basic assumption of the issue ownership theory is Democrats and Republicans will refer to their "own" issues than others while discussing a new political issue. The operationalization of the variables section detailed the list of Democrat, Republican, and

the performance issues were originally conceived by Petrocik (1996) and later confirmed by more studies (Meeks, 2015). Assuming that the Republicans are likely to associate digital privacy with issues such as national security, social order, and big government, whereas Democrats with civil liberties, influence of corporations and education, these hypotheses are offered:

H1a: Republican politicians would associate digital privacy more with Republican-owned issues, such as national security, social order, and big government, than other issues in their tweets.

H1b: Democrats would associate digital privacy more with Democrat-owned issues, such as civil liberties, influence of corporations and education, than other issues in their tweets.

Issue ownership theory assumes that the Democrat and Republicans politicians will be different in the issues they will mention the most while discussing digital privacy. Scholars have found that the two parties differ in rhetorical elements, which is applied in election campaigns (Lowry & Naser, 2010; Benoit et al., 2013). Analysis of the speeches given by presidential candidates in the last election campaigns have found Democrats refer to policy and Republicans to personality and character most of the time (Benoit et al., 2013). In the past presidential elections, Democrats have used numeric terms, contemporary concerns, and ethnic diversity more, and religion and morality less than the Republicans (Lowry & Naser, 2010). In light of partisan differences in political rhetoric, the Democrats and Republicans are likely to differ from each other in their interpretation

of digital privacy, given the political controversy related to the issue. Therefore, the following hypothesis is offered:

H2: Democrats and Republicans would be different in their frequency of referring to the issues of civil liberty, influence of corporation, education, national security, big government, social order, foreign affairs and economy in their tweets those discussed digital privacy.

News stories on digital privacy came in forms of "news bursts" starting June, 2013, to the rest of that year. Dozens of news stories appeared in different national and international news sites in June 2013. The first burst of stories appeared on *The Guardian* from June 9 to June 30, and the subsequent bursts on *The Washington Post* on July 6, on *The Guardian* on August 1 and 2, on *The Wall Street Journal* on August 20 and 23, on *The Guardian* again on September 30 and October 4 and on the *Washington Post* on October 30 (Electronic Frontier Foundation, undated). There had been occasions of news reports throughout 2013 on the extent of NSA surveillance. Starting from July 31, as the issue became a matter of discussion in the US Congress, with a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on June 31, order of release of court documents by the Office of the Director of NSA on August 21, and the government's releasing of FISA court documents on September 17, the number of news revelation on the NSA surveillance dwindled. Between November 2013 and March 2014, several discussion and hearing events took place at the Supreme Court of the US, at the Senate Judiciary Committee, and by the Attorney General (Electronic Frontier Foundation, undated).

This timeline of news revelation and actual events on NSA surveillance shows when surveillance news was first revealed in 2013, politicians attempted to use Twitter to inform their immediate reaction and reveal their parties' position on the issue. Later, when there were a series of congressional hearing and court ruling on the issue, politicians used Twitter to inform about their political activities to common audience. They used Twitter to inform about events, such as attending of a meeting at the Congress, a press conference, or a voting decision. Politicians need to adapt to the demands of different time periods, so that they can maintain using Twitter to self-promote, uphold their positive image to the public, and improvise communication strategies (Conway et al., 2013).

This study draws the findings of politicians' use of Twitter from interpersonal and mass-political perspectives. Literature review section of this paper mentions the users' tweet to have a perceived bond of connection with fellow users (Chen, 2011), and to have parasocial satisfaction of communicating with an intended audience (Green & Ferguson, 2011). Politicians have used Twitter to inform and sharing news about their activities, and interact with audience (Golbeck et al., 2010). Bridging the findings about interpersonal and mass-political use of Twitter and the theories about mass-interpersonal character of network media, this study contends the politicians' attempt to supplement mass media information with self-promotion messages (Chaffee & Mutz, 1988). Messages in the tweets revolve around news and real-life development on an ongoing event, as politicians attempt to reach out to the media-consuming audience through a direct, interpersonal channel.

Framing strategies help politicians uphold an intended portrayal of news events. Episodic framing has been found to be correlated with arousing emotional appeals and

thematic framing, with logical appeals to the readers (Aaroe, 2011; Springer & Harwood, 2015). The literature on interpersonal and political use of Twitter by politicians and effect of episodic and thematic framing suggests that they are likely to interpret the NSA surveillance issue in a thematic frame at the beginning of news leak in June 2013, as it allowed the politicians to interpret the issue in collective term, link it with the overall partisan orientations, and with other political issues. Beginning in January, 2014, when The Congress, House Judiciary Committee, and the White House got involved in dealing with the issue, politicians were likely to interpret the issue in episodic framing, which allowed them to refer to specific political events and inform audience on real political activities. Therefore, these hypotheses are offered:

H3a: Both Democrats and Republicans would use thematic framing more than episodic framing in their tweets from June, 2013 to December, 2013.

H3b: Both Democrats and Republicans would use episodic framing more than thematic framing in their tweets since January, 2014 and onward.

With regards to the in-group dimensions of politicians, this paper utilizes the concept of elite influence, as outlined by Meraz (2009). The concept states a group of social media users who act as the main hub in a social network and remain well-connected with the rest of the users. Meraz (2009) demonstrated that elite bloggers and online news sources exert influence over other bloggers by presenting an issue agenda. Elite users are also likely to be active in their realm in offline settings, as online political activities have been founded to be strongly related with offline activities (Liu & Fahmy, 2009). Existence of elite users

has been documented in both large networks that discuss national issues (Vargo et al., 2014) and small networks that focus on local events (Bastos et al., 2013).

Incorporating the findings on relationship between offline and online political activities by Liu and Fahmy (2009) and elite users (Meraz, 2009), this study assumes that the US senators' offline activities on digital privacy are likely to predict the extent of their Twitter activism on the issue. Popularity and the overall activities of the senators on Twitter are likely to influence the frequency of tweets on a single political issue. Overall, the senators' congressional activities on digital privacy, their number of followers on Twitter, their overall activities on the social media, and party ideology are likely to impact their frequency of sending tweets on the issue. This led to asking the following research question:

RQ1: How are Senators' Twitter popularity, frequency of using Twitter and their real-life involvement with digital privacy related with the frequency of tweeting on the issue?

This paper looks into how and why politicians' interpretation and framing of digital privacy changed after June 2013, and how they relate to the major mass media and political events. The period in which the public think of an issue as the country's top agenda has been found to be between three to six months (Stone & McCombs, 1981). After this period, the top public agenda is found to change. The issue of evolution theory by Stimson (2004) mentions the rhetoric about a political issue influences its ideological dimensions, and this often lead to political parties switching their stances. The literature review discusses how pressures from interest groups and communication framing led to the Democrats and

Republicans switching their stances on abortion. Changes of political parties' stances on such issues have been explored as an interaction of public opinion, activities by related interest groups and government policies.

This study attempts to explore if the politicians' rhetoric of digital privacy on Twitter changed over time, and possible relation with actual media events. As changes in public agenda is often due to a politician's public relations activities, it can be assumed that they would alter their interpretation of digital privacy in every three-months' period, as noted by Stone and McCombs (1981), to adapt to a discussion of the issue on the mass media and developments in national politics. Discussion of digital privacy in the US Congress was accompanied by various events that were related to the issue, such as news revelations, Supreme Court rulings, new bills and testimonies in the Congress and reports of public opinions on the issue. This study explores how the real-life, media, and legal events are related with the senators' discussion of digital privacy in the Congress, and asks the following research question:

RQ2: How did the issue references and episodic/thematic frames of digital privacy in tweets by politicians change in every three months from June 2013 to August 2016?

CHAPTER 4: METHODS

This project uses content analysis as the method of inquiry. Content analysis is applied in media research to discover quantitative information embedded in different mass media content and is defined as a "systematic technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding content analysis" (Stemler, 2001). It is useful to explore a variety of new media content, such as social media sites, user-generated content, chatrooms, blogs, websites and not to mention different types of mass media (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014). Value of content analysis as a research method in inquiring social media content has been confirmed in several studies (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014; Vargo, Guo, McCombs & Shaw, 2014).

The method of content analysis can discover mentions, references, elements of different political rhetoric and tone in the tweets. In addition, metadata derived from the tweets provided information on date and time of posting the tweet. This study gathered data on professional affiliation and demographic information about the senators separately using a dependable encyclopedia and official resources from the Congress. In the following section, this study provides details about sampling procedure, retrieval and selection of relevant tweets and operationalization of variables for content analysis work.

Sampling

Tweets sent by politicians on digital privacy make up the population of this study. As this project aims to explore tweets sent by politicians regarding digital privacy, all tweets pertaining to the issue sent by any US politicians would form a theoretical "population" from which a sample need to be chosen. To use a smaller sample from the

population, this study uses purposive sampling,. Purposive sampling is used when the researcher aims to analyze content from a specific population group ((Parmelee, 2014). In this study, purposive sampling was used to first select all acting US senators as primary sampling units.

This study selected the US senators as representatives of elite politicians due to their influence on the rest of the politicians and on journalists and policy makers. Among many levels of politicians, Senators are known as prestigious and powerful, second only to the US president. The US Senate is considered as one of the most powerful legislative assembly and are major subjects of attention from the news media and government watchdogs, given their historic influence and well-known prestige. Statements given by Senators get plentiful coverage in the news media and exert influence in the public understanding of political issues. Under these considerations, this study chose list of contemporary US senators as the primary sampling units, as a mean to explore the dominant political discourse on digital privacy.

This study obtained a list of senators from the official website of the US Congress at . Afterward, the this studyd collected official Twitter accounts of the senators using Internet search engines. Once the official Twitter accounts of the members of the congress have been finalized, the tweets from those accounts were downloaded using a free online service called greptweet.com. The company, according to their official statement, gathers request for fetched tweets, and sends a request to Twitter through its Application Programming Interface (API). All senators in the 114th Congress were found to have Twitter accounts.

To gather the related tweets, this study first collected all the available tweets from the politicians and saved on a digital format on a computer. Afterward, tweets containing the words "Privacy", "NSA" and "Surveillance" were selected. Because this study limits itself in discussion of digital privacy as a political issue, the tweets concerning those three words best capture the related posts. Afterward, this author read each of the tweets to determine if a tweet was on the recent issue of digital privacy related to the NSA surveillance. If a tweet discussed something that is not pertinent to the NSA surveillance incident at all, it was excluded from the sample. In total, some 28 tweets were discarded by this researcher for their lack of relevance to digital privacy. Retweets, or the tweets in which the user forwards another person's post adding little of his own, were excluded from the sample.

Trimming batches of tweets with R language

This study contends that the new programming language R, as used in this project, can be a versatile tool for future computerized content analysis due to its versatility in performing almost all kinds of statistical and textual analysis, its application in a variety of platforms such as in social statistics, social media data, and data visualization and its ease of being operated in any computer platforms. R was used in this study to screen raw data into data with desired sample, which were tweets containing keywords related to digital privacy. A computer script, written using R base package subset original 320,00 tweets, collected through API request to Twitter, into some 1259 tweets containing digital privacy related keywords. Each of the tweet files was subset one by one with the help of the script, then compiled into a combined list and given to the coders for content analysis. The R code

was prepared with help from a graduate student majoring in Computer Science. The exact programming script is provided in the appendix section.

The first three lines of code, as shown in Appendix C, is used to read the CSV file containing senators' tweets downloaded from Grephtweet.com. The fourth line creates a loop in the file directory so that the same command is repeated for all the files. In this way, this researcher did not have to repeat the procedure for the 100 different senators' tweet files. The fifth and sixth lines transforms the textual data from the tweets into vector data. Lines seven and eight discard all lines of tweets containing the keyword "RT", and selects tweets containing the keywords "Privacy", "NSA" and "Surveillance". The subset tweet lines contained some metadata, which are deleted in the next line of command. Finally, the tenth line creates the new file containing the related keywords into computer directory.

The R code in this study did not code the collected tweets. Trained human coders performed the actual content analysis work. This project used R language to trim the large amount of downloaded tweets into a few hundred tweets those contained the relevant keywords, and into a list that is suitable for human coding. Computerized processing trimmed around 320,000 tweets into some 1259 tweets in little amount of time, making the data subset process easy and having little measurement error.

Variables

Variables explored in this study includes characteristics of the politicians who tweeted about digital privacy, and about content of tweets. *Characteristics of politicians* is a "Metadata" about the Twitter user those may include political affiliation, official post, number of years in service, number of years in a party and demographic data about the

politicians. These characteristics are collected to determine if the identity and political qualifications of the politicians affected their framing of digital privacy. As stated by Meraz (2009), elite social media users influence the rest. This study expect to find a hierarchical influence within the senators regarding their messages and proposed attributes on digital privacy on Twitter.

Content in the Tweets are the second group of variables operationalized and is the central focus in this study. This study attempts to explore attributes and framing of digital privacy issue, and public relations techniques demonstrated by politicians by content analyzing the tweets. Previous studies of issue ownership on social media measured mention of an issue by counting mention of related keywords, such as "Immigration" (Hosch-Dayican, Aarts, Amrit & Dassen, 2013). This study aims to explore and investigate the tweet content to provide insight into issue ownership techniques, and public relations techniques on social media. Details of the operationalization of the two types of variables are specified below:

Profile of the politicians: This study operationalizes political data about the senators selected in the sample. It includes partisan affiliation of the politicians (Democrat, Republican and Independent), seniority or number of years spent in the Senate, official position, such as chairman of any committee and demographic data including gender, age and race. To collect political data on the senators, this study uses reference sources such as the website of the US Congress..

Content in the tweets: As the focus of this study, different content in the tweets include mention of major political issues and framing of digital privacy on the tweets. The

reference to different political issues are explored as a way to investigate issue ownership theory as discussed in the literature review. The mention of person and events indicates the use of episodic and thematic framing. Below is description of operationalization of this group of variables:

Mention of political issues: According to issue ownership theory, politicians associate fringe political issues with the issues they are perceived to "Own" in the public mind to gain political advantage (Petrocik, 1996). The theory states that the Democrats are more likely to associate digital privacy with the issues they are perceived to be good at dealing with, such as education and civil liberty, whereas the Republicans are likely to associate digital privacy with issues such as defense spending and role of the government. Issues such as economy and foreign relations are performance issues, which are not perceived to be in either camp. This study operationalizes Democratic, Republican and Performance Issues as a way to investigate issue ownership in the politicians' tweets.

Offline and Twitter activity on digital privacy: Meraz (2009) underscored hierarchy in social networks that is characterized by a small group of users being more connected and influential than the rest. Liu and Fahmy (2009) found that online political participation is connected with offline participation, suggesting that the senators active on Twitter about digital privacy are likely to be involved with the issue in real life. This study tested the assumption that senators' Twitter activism on digital privacy will be related with their offline activism on the issue, and measured offline and Twitter activity on digital privacy.

To test this assumption, this study measured the senators' offline activism on digital privacy by counting the number of times they sponsored any bill in the US Senate in current

114th and previous 113th Congress. This study counted that frequency through a series of steps. First, a list of relevant bills related to digital privacy submitted to the US Senate in the two congressional assemblies were identified through searching the website of the US Congress (www.congress.gov). This study searched the keyword "Privacy" on the Congress website, selected bills that originated in the Senate and bills those focus on the issues of privacy in digital communication, surveillance and government surveillance. This process yielded a list of 24 bills, which is shown in Appendix B. They were different types of bills brought in the Senate in response to the NSA surveillance news scandal.

Senators' congressional activism on digital privacy issue is operationalized by counting their frequency of sponsoring and co-sponsoring related bills in the Congress. Two points are added for sponsoring a bill and one point for co-sponsoring. Sponsoring is given more points than co-sponsoring because sponsoring refers to senators being the main vocal for the bill but co-sponsoring refers to supporting the original sponsor (The American Legion, Undated). The original sponsor continues his/her activities for the bill whereas the co-sponsors may refrain from pursuing additional activity. This study operationalized senators offline activities on digital privacy by adding their scores for sponsoring and co-sponsoring the bills listed in appendix B.

This study operationalized Senators' Twitter activity on digital privacy by counting their total number of Tweets containing the keywords "Privacy"/"NSA"/"Surveillance". The previous sections detailed the process of downloading and trimming the selected Tweets using www.grephtweet.com and R. One frequency is given for each Tweet, adding up to senators' total number of tweets.

Issue Ownership: This study conceptualizes the issues of civil rights, education and limited role of corporation as Democratic issues (See table 1), as per the original coding scheme by Petrocik (1996). The Democratic Party is a strong supporter of civil rights and emphasizes education for national development. The party is also well-known for its position against corporate domination of American economy. As the issues of digital privacy is related to civil rights, education regarding the privacy and protection of data online, and negative efforts by the technology corporations to intrude into users' data, it is assumed that the Democrats, in light of the issue ownership theory, will try to associate digital privacy with these three issues.

_____Insert Table 1 here_____

Issues of big government, national security and terrorism and social order are conceptualized as Republican issues (See Table 1). Big government has been a major issue in the campaigns by Republican politicians (Merkey, Undated). They are also perceived to be a party capable of managing national security and is perceived to want to maintain the traditional American social order. Therefore, this study assumes that the Republicans, in light of the issue ownership theory will try to associate digital privacy with these three issues to be perceived as politically capable of managing the issue.

This study conceptualized the issues of foreign affairs and economy as the examples of performance issues, or issues which do not fall on any partisan camp, rather are through to be indicator of performance of the government, as originally presented by Petrocik (1996). A detailed coding scheme for the variables is listed in Appendix A.

Episodic and thematic framing: This study explores the use of episodic and thematic framing used in tweets. According to Iyengar (1994): "The episodic category ... consisted of stories that depicted issues predominantly as concrete issues or events, while the thematic category included stories that depicted issues more generally either in terms of collective outcomes, public policy debates or historical trends. (pp. 18)." Based on this conceptualization, this study operationalizes episodic framing in the tweets when a reference to a specific event is made in regard to digital privacy. The specific event may include a a press conference, a congressional meting or a talk show. Thematic framing in the tweets is operationalized by references made to any collective outcome, concern or historical trend regarding digital privacy. The operationalization captures the framing of digital privacy as a legal or procedural event (episodic) versus an ideological or collective issue (thematic).

Inter-coder reliability: Three graduate students of mass communication worked as coders for this study. This author posted print advertisements at his workplace and social media posts at Facebook group of his department asking for coders. The coding work for this project was supported by a grant from the author's affiliated institution. This project hired two graduate students of communication and one undergraduate student of political science as research assistants, trained them with on the coding protocol and determined inter-coder reliability prior to work as coders. Two of the coders coded approximately 40% of the content each, whereas the other coder coded the remaining 20%.

To test the reliability of the existing coding index, a list of some 110 tweets were compiled by selecting every fifth tweet from the first 25 alphabetically listed Senators.

Around 30 tweets were selected to test inter-coder reliability for each of the three coders. Inter-coder reliability was calculated with this author and each of the three coders seperately The Scott's Pi statistics of inter-coder reliability for the three coders were found to be between 75 to .83 for episodic framing . 72 to .85 for thematic framing, .73 to .92 for civil liberty, .95 to 1 for influence of corporations, .78 to .88 for national security, .88 to 1 for foreign affairs. In the first round of test, the Scott's pi was less than .60 for social order and big government. After the first found of test, the author discussed with the coder, and made more detailed instruction on the coding sheet till repeats of the reliability test reached more than .70 for social order and big government. Once interceder reliability was achieved, the coding work was allotted to the coders.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

This project used quantitative data analysis techniques including descriptive statistics and regression to test the hypothesis and answer the research questions. As this project serves as one of the first studies to explore issue ownership activities by politicians on social media, descriptive statistics provides valuable information on identities of Senators active in discussion, and the senators' frequencies and patterns of tweeting. Besides exploring the main actors and types of behaviors in conversation, this project attempts to test influence the senators' party position and social media popularity in their conversation on digital privacy. Inferential statistics provides insight on such, and show impact of the senators' length of serving in the Senate, frequency of their social media activities, popularity on social media on frequency of sending tweets.

————————————————————-Insert Table 2 here————————————————

The senators posted 1257 tweets in total, (M=15, SD = 37, Min = 1, Max = 303, Range 302, Skewness = 5.99, Kurtosis = 41.67). There was a wide disparity in senators' Twitter activities regarding digital privacy (See the boxplot in Figure one). Out of 81 senators, 15 senators sent only one tweet, whereas three senators sent over one hundred tweets. The high dispersion shows several senators have been much more vocal on this issue than the rest.

81 out of 100 current senators sent at least one tweet regarding digital privacy between June 2013 and August 2016. Out of them, 39 are Democrats and 42 are Republicans (See table 2 for a list of demographic characteristics). The findings show more Democrats tweeted about digital privacy than Republicans compared to share of seats in

the Senate. Democrats have been minority in the current 114th legislation of the US Senate with 44 senators against 54 Republicans. The findings show around 7% (3) of Democrat senators and 28% (12) Republican senators sent no tweet on the issue. The comparison shows the number of Republican senators quiet on digital privacy is roughly four times than their Democrat counter parts. The five senators who sent the highest number of tweets on digital privacy are Patrick Leahy (D), Rand Paul (R) and Ron Wyden (D), Dean Heller (R) and Ed Markey (D).

—————————————-Insert Table 3 here———————————

—————————————-Insert Figure 1 here———————————

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of frequency of references to different issues and framing techniques by Democratic and Republican senators. It shows that Democrats sent almost twice the number of tweets in total than Republicans did (N = 776 & 481). A Democrat senator sent an average 23 Tweets, compared to 11 tweets by Republicans. However, Democrats were highly dispersed in their frequencies compared to their counterparts (SD = 60.94 vs. 20.5). Senator Ron Wyden sent 273 tweets, which was the highest among Democrats. Senator Rand Paul sent 108 tweets, which was the highest among Republicans, but fewer than Senator Wyden by a wide margin.

Regarding reference to issues, civil liberty (M = 11 & 6.4), national security (M = 11 & 6.36), and big government (M= 3.78 & 2.56) were, in average, the top three issues referred by both the Democrats and Republicans. The similarity between references by Democrats and Republicans suggests that although the two parties tweeted about digital privacy in different frequencies, the proportion of references were nearly equal (See figure

2). Regarding foreign affairs, Republicans were found to send more tweets in total and in average than Democrats. Big government was another issue where Republicans' average number of tweets sent was close to Democrats (M = 2.56 v 3.78).

Z score on frequency of mention of different issues was calculated to examine how much the Democrats and Republicans differ in their average frequency (dispersion) of mentioning different issues. Z score shows how much a value in a data series is away from the mean. For Democrats, Z score of their frequency of mentioning different issues was the lowest for Civil Liberty (11.5), Economy (12.1) and Influence of Corporations (12.2) , meaning the Democrat Senators referred to these issues in more equal proportions than other issues. The Z score for Democrats was the highest for National Security (28.3) and Social Order (17.1), meaning Democrats were more unequal in their frequency of mentioning these two issues. For Republicans, Z score was lowest for the issues of Foreign Affairs (9) and Influence of Corporations (13.2), and highest for National Security. It suggests that Republican senators mentioned Foreign Affairs and Influence of Corporation in a more equal and National Security in lesser equal proportion than other issues. Implication of these difference in dispersion of mentioning for the two parties are discussed in the conclusion section.

H1a and H1b stated the basic presumption of issue ownership theory, that is, Democrats would refer more to issues of civil liberties, influence of corporation, education and Republicans to national security, social order and big government than other issues when discussing digital privacy. To test the hypothesis, frequencies of references to different issues were compared (see figure 2a and 2b). The results show issues of national

security and terrorism (35%), civil liberty (28%) and big government (11%) have been the most and foreign affairs, economy and education the least mentioned by Democrats. Therefore, the results lend to only partial support for H1b, as Democrats seemed to trespass into Republican issues. The results show the most referred issues have been national security and terrorism, civil liberty, and big government have been the most and education, foreign affairs and economy the least referred issue for Republicans. As two of the most referred issues are considered Republican owned issues, the results provide support for H1a. Data also points at comparatively fewer issue trespassing efforts by Republicans.

————————————————-Insert Figure 2a and 2b here————————————————

H2 proposed senators from the two parties would differ significantly from each other regarding mention of issues in discussing digital privacy. Figure 3 depicts a comparison between the frequencies of references to six different issues and two different types of framing in tweets sent by Democrats and Republican Senators. Democrats referred to the Democrat-owned issues of civil liberty and influence of corporations more than Republicans, which supports issue ownership efforts. Republicans were found to be referring to the issues of big government and social order issues fewer times than Democrats, which disproves Issue Ownership theory for them. Democrat senators referred to national security, a strong Republican-owned issue, noticeably higher frequencies than their counterparts. It negates issue ownership effect and lends support toward issue trespassing activities for Democrats. Overall, the issue references in the Tweets are seemed not to be related with consistent party positions, but seem to be spontaneous efforts from the senators and responses for news events.

A t-test between frequencies of Democrats and Republicans on their total number of tweets mentioning different issues was not found to be statistically significant (t = .63, df = 14, p = .53). This suggests the two major parties were not different in their frequency of references to issues, which does not provide support for H2.

———————————————-Insert Figure 3 here———————————————

This project aims to explore how senators used episodic and framing techniques as events on digital privacy unfolded along news events. Descriptive statistics on frequency of using episodic and thematic frame (see Table 3) shows both parties used episodic framing more than thematic framing (Democrats = 476 vs 392, Republicans = 353 vs 146). Theoretically, episodic framing is often used to refer to a single political event whereas thematic framing to discuss ideological issues. Difference between average frequency of episodic and thematic framing was meagre for Democrats (M = 12.68 vs 10.6), but large for Republicans (M = 8.61 vs 3.56). It shows while Democrats used both types of framing in nearly same frequencies, Republicans noticeably used more episodic framing than thematic framing.

Hypothesis 3a suggests Senators would primarily use thematic framing in the first sixth from the start of digital privacy as an issue, which is June 2013 to December 2013. Hypothesis 3b suggests that since the sixth month, episodic framing would be more popular than thematic framing. To look the hypothesis 3a and 3b, frequencies of using episodic and thematic framing were plotted against time with three months of interval periods (See figure 4b). The time period of three months is chosen because studies found (Stone & McCombs, 1981) top media agenda stays on the top of public mind for three months till it

subsides into a secondary agenda. This study plotted the time period of June 2013 to August 2016 in a three-month interval against frequency of using the two types of framing.

The time-series plot shows at the beginning of new leak on digital privacy around June 2013, senators used noticeably more episodic framing than thematic framing (See figure 4b). During August, 213, when there was a widespread public debate about the validity and justification for NSA data collection, the number of Tweets using episodic framing soared to 91, from 51 in May. Use of thematic framing, however, did not increase in the same manner. It does not lend support for hypothesis 3a that proposed episodic framing would be used more than thematic framing in the early days of the news leak.

This study compared means of tweet frequencies of episodic and thematic framing in three month intervals from June, 2013 to March, 2014. A paired-sample T-test was conducted to test the assumption that thematic and episodic framing were used in different frequencies by senators during the June, 2013 to the beginning of 2014. Paired sample T-test is used when data from a single sample group during different occasions or time periods are compared (Hsu & Lachenbruch 1996). Differences between the frequencies were found to be not significant ($t = 1.99$, $df = 3$, $p = .14$, $CI = -12.4, 54.42$). The results suggest that senators did not use the two types of framing in significantly different frequencies, which reject the assumptions of the H3a.

Hypothesis 3b suggests after January 2014, senators would use episodic framing more than other types of framing. Figure 4b shows episodic framing were only occasionally used more than thematic framing. From March, 2014, the Senators used more episodic framing, but it changed into using thematic framing from May, 2014 to May, 2016, when

episodic framing become the most frequent. In recent times, from 216, the two types of frames were used in near equal frequency. Therefore, the data does not lend support for H3b, rather suggests use of the two types of framing in the tweets varied due to something else.

A paired-sample T-test was conducted to test difference between episodic and thematic frequency in senators' tweets from January, 2014 to October, 2016 period, which is one of the assumption of H3b. In the T-test, means of frequencies between two types of framing in the two and half year period in three month intervals were compared. The T-test statistic was not found to be significant ($t= -.62$, $df = 10$, $p = .54$, CI = -13, 7.71), suggesting that senators did not significantly differ in their frequency of episodic and thematic framing during the aforementioned time period. The findings reject the hypothesis of H3b that claimed the senators would significantly use episodic framing more that thematic framing.

The total number of tweets took couple of sharp rises in last three years: one immediately after the news leak during June to December, 2013, another during the media debate around March, 2014 about the legal basis of surveillance, and another during march 2015 during the bill in the congress limiting NSA's authority.

RQ1 asked how the senators' offline and Twitter activism and their popularity on Twitter affect their frequency of tweeting. The previous section on variable detailed the operationalization of the senators' offline and Twitter activism. In addition, the senators' popularity of Twitter was measured in their number of Twitter followers, and party identification and gender data of the senators were collected.

Senators studied in this project had sent an average 5452 tweets in total (not the ones sent only regarding digital privacy, but tweets sent on any topic) and had 143193 followers by the time of collecting data in this study in August, 2016. The Senators were highly dispersed in their number of Tweets sent (SD = 6619, Min= 431 , Max = 5,61,00), and number of followers (SD = 381982, Min = 2741, Max = 244,00). Senators Bernie Sanders (D), Cory Booker (D), Marco Rubio (R) and Elizabeth Warren (D) were the top four in number of Twitter followers, while Cory Booker (D), John Cornyn (R), Bernie Sanders (D) and Kristen Gillbrand (D) sent the highest number of Tweets.

To explore RQ1, this study conducted an ordinary least square regression, taking frequency of tweets as the dependent variable (See Table 4). Results show senator' offline activities on digital privacy significantly predicted frequency of tweeting (β = .509, df = 74, p <.01). Their Twitter popularity (β = .001,, df = 74, p = .545), overall activities on Twitter (β = .073, df = 74, p = .923) or demographic characteristics were not significant predictors. This model explained 29% of the variance ($F_{(6,74)}$ = 5.04, p <0).

————————————-Insert Table 3 here————————————

RQ2 asked about change in the issue references and framing in the tweets. To answer the questions asked in RQ2, frequency of thematic/episodic framing and references to issues of national security, civil rights and big government were plotted against time (See figure 4a and 4b). This researcher chose three months of time as the interval in the time-series plot because national public agenda reportedly change in a three to six month period (Stone & McCombs (1981). The figures 4a and 4b show references to civil liberty and national security peaked during the first six months of the news leak, and then subsided

down. References to big government was steady during the entire time. References to national security declined at the beginning of 2014, but again sharply increased during the end of 2015. Overall references to the three issues decreased rapidly along with overall frequency of tweeting by December 2013, although only reference to national security taking a sudden increase in early 2015.

———————————————————-Insert Figure 4a and 4b here———————————————

The fluctuations in the number of Tweets can be explained in media and political activities regarding the issue. News leaks and public debates occupied a large amount of time from June to December 2013, which witnessed the biggest spike regarding all kinds of issues. However, in the subsequent days, news prominence of the issue subsided but Congressional and Supreme Court activities increased. Under a public outcry, Congress took attempt to amend the Patriot Act and also plan new laws, attempting to stop the data collection efforts (See appendix C for a list of bills on digital privacy discussed in the Senate). During that time, politicians' tweet reflected the ongoing debates on digital privacy going in the Congress.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study adds to the understanding of how American politicians discuss and interpret a new issue on Twitter over a three-year time period. The findings, altogether, present new understanding of the application of issue ownership and framing techniques on digital privacy, reveal the characteristics of the US senators being vocal on the issue, and provide new understanding of the political public-relations on social media settings. Results from content analysis of the senators' tweets, as outlined in the previous chapter, demonstrate that the senators vocal on mass media and in real-life politics about digital privacy remained active on Twitter throughout the time. Democratic senators referred to national security, perceived as a Republican-owned issue, more than other issues, while mentioning digital privacy, revealing issue trespassing efforts by them. Timeline of applying such episodic and thematic framing shows the former was used at the beginning of the issue, whereas the latter gained popularity midway. The findings propose that politicians, through a hierarchy of social network, apply personalized and non-partisan approach to public relations, especially when conversing about a recent political issue on social media.

Discussion and conclusions derived from results are presented in next three sections. First, this study analyzes the exploratory findings and explains the identities of senators vocal on digital privacy. Second, this section explains differences among Republican and Democratic senators with reference to different issues. Third, this chapter outlines the relationship between actual events and media coverage of digital privacy, and discusses how the senators changed framing and references to other issues since 2013.

Rhetoric and discussion terminologies on an issue influences its public perception and understanding. This study put forward the discussion about a new issue on Twitter, the characters of the discussants, rhetorical and referral elements in the discussion, and the relation between rhetoric and real-life events. Addressing suggestions for future research, this study proposes that traditional public relations theories should be reexamined in light of the new media setting to understand characteristics of issue interpretation and conversations in W 2.0 era.

Who tweeted about digital privacy? Identity of the senators

Although a large majority of the senators sent at least one tweet about digital privacy, they did not post with the same frequency. A few senators were highly active, sending dozens of tweets each month. However, a majority of them sent only a few tweets in the three-year time period (See table 1). Five senators who sent the most number of tweets are: Patrick Leahy (D), Rand Paul (R), Ron Wyden (D) Ed Markey (D), and Dean Heller (R). They sent around 600 tweets in total. Some 15 senators sent no tweets on digital privacy. This shows that whereas some senators had been extremely vocal on Twitter on the issue, the majority of 100 senators had been vocal occasionally, and around one-third were almost quiet.

The senators who were active on Twitter have been involved with digital privacy issues in their real-life as well. A look at their political activities in the congress shows that several senators have been active on the issue of digital privacy throughout their political career, and headed senate committees on technology, civil rights, and terrorism. For example, Senator Leahy (D) was the head of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy,

Technology and the Law in 2011, and arranged for a congressional hearing on electronic medical records in 1994. Ron Wyden was involved in different legislative committees on the internet and technologies in his career, and is well-known for playing a strong role against the controversial SOPA and PIPA bills of 2011. Rand Paul had been vocal at the US Senate about civil liberty and was among the few politicians who criticized the USA Patriot Act passed in response to the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Senator Ed Markey co-authored several bills regarding internet technologies during the early 1990s, which opposed monopoly of large corporations in information industry. The background of the senators highlights that the politicians becoming vocal about any issue on social media are likely to have record of ongoing and records on the issue. It shows that they have used Twitter to inform the audience on related political activities.

Difference in the frequency of tweeting among senators, abstinence of 15 senators from tweeting, and intense activities by dozens of senators show how they prioritize personal view over partisan attachment over the issue. The senators took a cautious approach and waited till digital privacy matured into a non-partisan issue before expressing their political opinion. Their personal experience and ideology contributed to the approach taken in interpreting digital privacy that was often dissimilar with their own parties' positions. This suggests a break from partisan politics by acting politicians, and indicates at a heightened role of individuals.

Being a senator is considered to be more prestigious than a representative, and is counted as one of the highest positions as a lawmaker. There are only 100 senators compared to 432 members of the House, which gives the former more power per person

than the latter. There has been three US president who were senators during their presidential election: Barack Obama, John Kennedy, and Warren Harding. Unique capacities of the US Senate, such as no time limit of discussion on bills, acting as a judge in an impeachment proposal brought by the House, and the power to confirm all presidential appointments of executive officials makes it a prominent political body in the Government.

This study did a census on the US senators by collecting data from each of the 100 senators in office. Doing a census makes the results free from sampling error, generated by collecting a sample from a population. Census of the senators gives a picture of how all the senators engaged in Twitter activities on a new issue. However, the findings may not entirely be generalized to other political bodies due to the unique characteristics of bipartisanship in the Senate. First, it is common for the members in the US Senate to vote against their party's position, as the Senate functions as a non-partisan forum of deliberation. Numerous senators have been found to vote against their own party on the issues of Iraq War and gun rights (New York Times, 2013). Democratic senators from a red state and Republican senators from a blue state voted against the bills that were drafted by their own party congressmen (NY Times, 2013). However, voting in party line is common in the House. The governors from different states in the US, who are nominated by parties, usually follow both national and state party's agenda. Findings from this study show that the senators borrowed the opposition party's rhetoric in describing digital privacy, which may not be applicable for the Representatives in the House or Governors, as the latter two are less likely to follow any rhetoric other than their own party's.

Nevertheless, this study shows that in a deliberative forum such as the Senate, members may express opinions in a cross-party or bi-partisan tone, when a new issue is developed in the non-partisan route.

Previous studies exploring the US senators' social media activities found them to greatly differ in their level of activities, and most them are not regular on the social media or give feedback to their followers (Straus et al., 2016). The senators possess many Twitter followers, yet, several do not have their social media accounts professionally managed. Straus et al. (2016) found the senators' popularity on social media to be predicted by their number of days on social media and their accounts being run by members of their staff. An analysis of the Facebook page of US senators found that the majority of them have options for the audience to comment and post reaction (Kim, Park & Im, 2015). Their Facebook pages had sharable materials and were open to the readers for two-way communication. Senators seem to have high disparity in their presence on social media, although they have a reputation for allowing online discussion.

The findings from this study corroborate with the previous findings of senators being highly unequal in social media use (Straus et al., 2016). As some of the senators are seemed to be very active on Twitter, both generally and on digital privacy, most others was quiet. Among the senators this study collected data from, almost all had identical information on the accounts, such as profile picture and a tagline denoting their identity. The number of followers on their Twitter page has been found to predict their likelihood of using episodic framing on digital privacy, which is not surprising, given the similar relations previously found (Kim et al., 2015).

Issue ownership theory: Democrat and Republican references in tweets

This study examined references used in the senators' tweets to examine the assumptions of issue ownership theory in social media settings. The findings revealed evidence of issue ownership by Republicans, but reverse ownership, also known as issue trespassing (Norpoth & Buchanan 1992; Meeks, 2015), for Democrats. Republicans referred to national security, an issue they own, more than any other issues. Democrats referred to national security the most, followed by civil rights, and the role of the government. The two parties were not found to be different from each other in their references to other issues, although Democrats were found to refer to Republican-owned issues more than their own.

Lack of moral and ideological dimension in digital privacy assisted in slowing growth of partisan rhetoric. Digital privacy did not evoke moral judgment, or a left-to-right political spectrum, like many past issues, e.g., abortion or same-sex marriage, and the parties did not have a clear agenda on what ideological rhetoric to apply. This lack of a clear partisan stance allowed politicians to declare their stance on the issue individually, and employ social media to communicate with their voters. As the senators acted individually in expressing their thoughts on social media, the collective partisan agenda regarding digital privacy did not match with the historic party positions on the topic.

Issue ownership studies earlier have found evidence of ownership references on the issues of environment and crime (Tresch et al., 2015), and on established issues, such as defense and education (Petrocik, 1996; Brazeal & Benoit, 2001). Evidence of a lack of partisan rhetoric in the senators' tweets, and incidents of issue trespassing show that

politicians are less likely to apply issue ownership techniques in case of nonpartisan issues than for those with moral or ideological dimensions. For moral issues, such as abortion, political parties appeal to their voting blocs, align themselves with organized interest groups, and frame the issue in light of an ideology that contrasts with that of their opponents (Stimson, 2006). Same-sex marriage, social security, care of veterans and foreign aid are examples of other issues which have moral overtones, and are value-dependent. Such issues have been established in the political arena, on which the party orientations are well-known. Politicians are likely to apply issue ownership messages in their discussion, as they would be keen to maintain own voting bloc. For example, Democrats would want to attract the liberal voting bloc by appealing toward civil rights in their discussions on same-sex marriage. Parties are less attentive in winning opposite voting blocs than preserving their loyal voting blocs regarding issues with moral overtones, since public opinion on such issue may not change fast.

However, regarding non-partisan issues, the parties may be unwilling to apply issue ownership, and be adventurous to trespass to oppositions' issue to attract floating voters. In case of new issues, politicians may attempt to attract as much supporting opinion as possible, and may often not be limited in partisan ownership in all of his messages. Specially, Senators and Members of the House may be less partisan in their approaches due to the history of the Senate acting as a bi-partisan chamber that deliberates over recent issues. Senate elections generally are not known to be as much party-based as presidential elections, where the politicians' records and profile influence popularity. Advertisements during past Senate and House elections has been found to be weak in issue ownership effect

(Sides, 2006), where Democratic and Republican candidates were found to refer to the opposition-owned issues more than their own. This study contends that on occasions where the partisan theme is weak, politicians are more likely to come out of issue owning messages.

For a new issue, its background may impact how the politicians converse and chose their issue ownership messages. For digital privacy, both Democrats and Republicans have been involved in allowing private data collection on citizens, making it hard for either party to blame each other, or oppose the entire practice of data collection. Earlier events, related to digital privacy, spanned time periods of both the Bush and Obama presidencies with the legal base of the NSA surveillance grounded in the USA Patriot Act of 2001 during Bush regime. Later, the Obama administration made no radical change to the act, and let NSA collect private information of citizens, until in 2013, when news media revealed the infamous practice, and prompted the government to postpone the efforts. Republicans found themselves in problematic territory to find a reason to blame the Obama government for breaching digital privacy after the news leak in 2013, because both Democratic and Republican administrations patronized mass data collection efforts earlier. Democratic Party, responding to public outrage on the 2013 news leak, asserted that the data collection efforts was initiated by the Bush administration. The mutual responsibility for collecting private data of citizens foreshadowed formation of a bipartisan congressional committee in December, 2013, to oversee NSA's data collection. The committee eventually proposed amendment of the Patriot Act and a halt to the data collection in 2014. Started as an anti-

government issue in 2013, the issue quickly evolved into a bipartisan issue within a year, bringing together Republic and Democratic lawmakers in the same committees.

Findings from this study suggest that politicians discussing an emerging non-partisan issue may not be interested to only refer to issues they are perceived to own. If the new issue has noticeable moral dimension, such as abortion or education, then issue ownership can be an efficient tool for politicians. Petrocik (1996) in his studies, selected the issues which were traditional partisan issues, such as education and foreign policy, and found public opinion is swayed in favor of the party thought to own the issue's media emphasize. However, regarding new, emerging and non-partisan issues, politicians may not engage in traditional issue ownership, and rather be interested to seek newer grounds to shape public opinion.

Lastly, politicians may not be willing to refer to only owned issue on social media, given the medium's personalized nature. The majority of the issue ownership studies has explored traditional media, including advertisements (Sides, 2006), presidential speeches (Benoit et al., 2013) and press releases. The parties follow the techniques of public relations when communicating in traditional media (Stromback & Kiousis, 2011), which appeals to a politics-inclined audience. However, given the young age and political apathetic nature of social media users, political adopt personalized and conversation-styled messages (Golbeck et al., 2010). They are less willing to apply traditional and partisan rhetoric on social media, and is rather willing to use non-partisan rhetoric that do not use issue ownership framing. Future studies should compare substances and rhetoric of political

public relations in the social and mass media to further understand the impact of social media in political dialogues.

Hierarchy in Twitter discussion network

Hierarchy in social media discussion networks has been documented by studies on blogs, Twitter discussions, alternative news sites, and political news forums (Meraz, 2009; Bastos et al., 2013; Vargo et al., 2014). A few active and influential social media entities have been found to dominate the agenda for social network users by becoming the most prominent source of information for rest of the users (Meraz, 2009). Regarding the characteristics of elite group, studies have outlined that their size of audience, number of like-minded followers, and socio-economic position may determine the elite's identity and strength of ties with smaller networks.

The different intensity of using Twitter by senators on digital privacy indicates towards a hierarchical online political sphere where a small group of politicians dominates conversation on a new political issue while others remain timid. The results suggest politicians who have a background on an issue that is prominent on the media are more likely to share real-life information and thoughts on the issue than other politicians. Those who do not have such a background may post only a few messages to show they are coping up with recent events, but decrease activities after a certain amount of time. The former group of politicians are likely to be perceived by the audience as "voices" regarding the issue, and could be authoritative sources on the topic.

Data analysis shows that senators' activities in the US Congress predicted their Twitter activities on digital privacy, while controlling for their overall Twitter popularity,

activities, and party identity. The findings show that offline activism can be a factor in formation of elites in online networks, as offline activities act as information sources, enhances credibility of the users, and provide an online narrative of real life. Senators who sponsored, co-sponsored, or discussed bills and were members in Senate committees had the chance to inform voters about their daily activities on digital privacy. The senators who were not involved with the issue in the Congress often stated opinions and thoughts, but did not provide a continuing narrative about the development of the issue. As Twitter often acts as a short-text narrative on current events, findings in this study suggest that first-hand involvement with an event or issue can assist the narrator to be establish as an authority amid the multitude of voices in social media.

The findings support the concept of elite users on social media by Meraz (2009), and contends personal involvement of a politician elevates them in position of elites on social media discussions. Whereas Meraz found that the elites on blog discussions often include popular journalists, top-level politicians and celebrities, this study found experience and records with an issue can promote a politician as a dominant spokesperson on social media. Persons with a long history of involvement with political protest were in Iran and Venezuela were found to be center of social media activists' network (Bastos et al., 2013). This study extends the findings, by suggesting when a new political issue develops, politicians who has a personal history with the topic may take a more pivotal role in social media discussions than the others.

Broadly, impact of personal involvement, experience and expertise on persuasiveness is derived from the concept of ethos in rhetorical studies. Ethos refers to an

element in a persuasive appeal, and means a persuader's background, expertise, or goodwill on the topic he is speaking on (For a discussion on ethos, see McCroskey & Young, 1981; Rosenthal, 1966). A suitable background and demonstration of goodwill is essential for a person while making a successful persuasive claim where the audience needs to be assured of such qualities. The concept of ethos can be applied to understand why senators who spent a significant amount of effort on digital privacy were also active on Twitter about the issue.

The five top senators who tweeted much more than others also tweeted for a much longer period. For example, Patrick Leahy (D), Ed Markey (D) Ron Wyden (D) and Dean Heller (R) sent tweets on the issue in January, 2016, December, 2015, August, 2016 and October, 2015 respectively. Sending tweets after almost two years after the issue shows that they are keeping the public updated on Twitter, as they had been involved in the actual events on the topic. Concept of ethos suggests the senators have established their attachment with digital privacy, and had been using their pertinence with the issue to campaign over Twitter for a long period. It shows Twitter to act as a short-text narrative for the politicians who want to offer a continuous commentary on any single issue and needs to be used, along with real-life activities.

Factors behind the changes in frequency of tweeting

The timeline of tweets (Figure 3) show the senators sent a large number of tweets at the beginning of the news leak, and then, the frequency gradually dwindled. Frequency of tweets sharply rose to around 100 tweets in June, 2013, when the news of NSA surveillance was published in *The Guardian*, and remained high till the end of 2013 year,

but decreased into fewer than 20 in beginning of 2014. The frequency again increased up to 90 tweets in the middle of 2014, and then, finally reduced to the level of around 20 tweets, where it stayed for the most of the period from 2014 to 2016. Looking at frequency of media coverage, it is found that there were several news stories published on in June to September, 2013 about NSA surveillance, which stayed high till May, 2014. Afterward, the news coverage decreased and focused most on legal battles and congressional hearing on the issue.

Although this study did not do a statistical time series correlation to determine a causal relationship between the two, visual comparison of the data suggests that Twitter activities of the senators closely followed the amount of relevant media coverage. The results show that politicians adopted an "I am in it" approach when the news first broke out, showing their involvement with a major news issue. They attempted to inform the public about their immediate reaction on the topic, increase their social media presence by writing in popular hashtags, and building a perception of being active. However, as the flow of news subsided, the senators chose a more cautious approach, considered partisan positions, and individual background on the issue. After around one and half year from the news leak, only a few senators, as mentioned above, remained vocal about the issue, whereas most others became quiet.

Politicians sending more tweets on eve of an important political event, such as the Super Tuesday party primaries, or national elections, than other times, is common (Conway et al., 2013; Vergeer, 2015). By doing that, politicians show that they are "keeping up" with recent political events by sending messages on social media, even if those events

might not be their primary political interest. The literature review discussed the role of identify discloser and sharing information as a building bloc of social media use (Przybylski et al., 2013). Politicians may enhance their reputation of their identity on Twitter when they associate themselves with prominent news events. Besides reputation, such activities also bolster their perceived presence, as their tweets are often the subject of news in the mass media (Parmelee, 2014).

Studies have found that issue ownership by political parties affect public opinion in the same way as media agenda does. This study did not explore public perception of digital privacy, which if done, could have told whether politicians' issue ownership or trespassing are related with the changes in public opinion. However, literature on digital privacy show that the issue remained as a non-partisan issue until now. Events such as Apple's iPhone user data controversy, and Russian hackers attacking US government sites in 2016, show that the references explored in this study, such as influence of corporation and national security, are still relevant.

Evolution of digital privacy as an issue

Twitter conversations reveals that Democrats and Republican senators discussed digital privacy in similar terms and often used each other's rhetoric. Democrat-owned issues of civil rights and influence of corporations and Republican-owned issue of national security were among the top three referred issues by both the parties. Figure 3b portrays a time-series plot of the three issues, and shows politicians from both parties referred national security throughout the period. The issue was prominent at beginning of the news leak in 2013, lost prominence from the mid-2014 to mid-2015 period, but again came into

prominence in late 2015. The prominence of national security is coincided with an increase of terrorist attacks in the Western world in 2015 (Datagraver, 2016).

The issue of civil liberty was highly prominent in the tweets in the beginning of the issue and remained the most prominent until the beginning of 2016. The data shows that senators viewed digital privacy as attached to civil liberty for a large amount of time since the news leak. The results are not surprising, since privacy, as a right, has been protected under the fourth amendment of constitution, which guarantee that no citizens can be arrested or disturbed without a warrant. Right to privacy is protected under the same laws that broadly protect the citizen's civil rights in case of encounter with law enforcement (Westin, 1968). The drop regarding civil rights are a part of the decline in overall Twitter activities on the issue that faded away in three years.

References to big governments were found in 11% of tweets by Democrats and 13% by Republicans. Digital privacy started with series of news reports on government's intrusion on citizen's private intrusion, which made big government an obvious concern in future discussions. Figure 3b informs that the references to big government sharply increased from December 2013 to March, 2014, which was the time when the Congress discussed the news leak, and formed committees to amend the US Patriot Act to stop digital surveillance. References to big government declined in the mid-2014, and did not increase to the level of the issues of civil liberty or national security.

Findings from this study can be compared with the evolution of issue of abortion to understand how he political parties change their rhetoric regarding new political issues over time. Stimson (2004) has outlined how partisan position and rhetoric on abortion

transformed during the 1980s in response to the pressure from various groups, namely feminist activists, church leaders, and students. Democrat and Republican attempted to capture votes from different demographic groups and ultimately switched their position on abortion. In case of digital privacy, past history of bi-partisan effort, blaming both parties for the breach of privacy and the attachment of a Democratic and Republican-owned issue ultimately helped it to move into the center of political spectrum.

This study adds to Stimson's (2004) discussion on the issue of evolution and contends politicians' social media rhetoric which influences their public understanding of political issues and often set a course of political debate on those topics. In the current networked society, Tweets, Facebook posts or YouTube videos do not stay within the personal realm of the communicator, but propagate through social networks, and, in a similar fashion, to the mass media. Social media acts as a place for deliberation, where competing rhetoric of an issue often leads to a newer definition of an issue (Dahlgren, 2005). This study proposes that social media rhetoric could be counted as a single force that contribute to the evolution of issue, alongside the self-interest and group factors those Stimson (2004) mentioned.

Twitter interpretation of issues works in several different ways to shape public discourse on issues. First, Twitter posts by politicians are frequently picked up by news media and used as news sources, or themes (Parmelee, 2004). Twitter as a news source increased during early 2008, when the medium became popular among politicians (Boresma & Graham, 2013). Among different politicians, presidents and congressmen are reported to be the most popular sources on Twitter (Moon & Hadley, 2014). As journalists

has routinized using Twitter sources, rhetoric of political issues have a greater chance of being transmitted into mainstream media. Second, politicians' tweets are regularly shared by their followers (Vargo et al. 2014), allowing message in the tweets to propagate within the followers' networks. Third, tweets act as public memory of events. Old tweets can be retrieved using the search functions, or through API request. Whereas tweets act as a report of contemporary affairs, they become a part of the public memory of the past, and are often remembered (Gloviczki, 2015). For example, a Twitter posts with a photo of Barack Obama hugging Michelle Obama after the results of the 2012 election, had become an iconic image of that time. Tweets influence the public understanding of politics by becoming the source of news reports, by being shared in politically-inclined networks, and by becoming a part of the public memory of past events.

Twitter as a mass-personal device for politicians

This study assumed that politicians will behave on social media in a similar way they have been found to act on mass media regarding issue ownership, which is present issue owning cues when discussing a new issue (Petrocik, Benoit & Hansen, 2003). Those assumptions were based on the findings that social media agenda closely follow mass media ones (Meraz, 2009, 2011). Politicians' use of Twitter suggested that the medium is used as an effective tool to influence journalists' and public agenda, making this study assume that a political use of Twitter will overwhelm a personal use.

However, the results show referring to the issues owned by opposing parties was common in tweets. Figure 1 shows politicians from both parties using similar reference terms: with civil liberty, national security, and big government being in the top three

categories. As two of these issues are Republican-owned and one Democrat-owned, the results suggest that politicians from either party should use the opposition party's political rhetoric. They did not stay with their own partisan interpretation of the issue. Texts in the tweets show politicians using all six issues explored in the study in different frequencies.

The findings suggest the senators used Twitter as a personal medium (Marwick, 2011) rather than as a party propaganda tool, although partisan rhetoric occupied a few number of tweets. They communicated to their online audiences as more of an individual social media user rather than as a politician and expressed a personal view, rather than partisan, to their audiences. The literature review discussed three approaches in studying Twitter: As a mass medium, as a user-network and as a personal medium. Previous studies have discussed uniqueness of masspersonal use of social media to address the audience, tone in messages and perceived situation of receiver (Carr & Hayes, 2015; Frame & Brachotte, 2014). Politicians have been found to use Twitter as a masspersonal device, where the audience is addressed as an individual who is a follower and remains connected (Aharony, 2012; Conway et al., 2013; Vergeer, 2015). This study adds to personal media approach of studying Twitter, and states politicians who hold office, such as Senators or cabinet members, may find it appropriate to use Twitter as an individual rather than as a party official. Using as personal media may include addressing the audience in second person, inform about actual physical events to the audience, or urge for any imperative action.

Politicians reportedly use social media to update their followers about daily activities and to inform concerned parties about reaction about ongoing political issues

(Conway, Kenski & Wang, 2013; Golbeck, Grimes & Rogers, 2010). The brevity of social media may not allow them to interpret and elaborate a political stance on issues, as much as social media allows to express an instant reaction on political events. Thereby, mediums such as Twitter is used as a journal of daily activities and reaction for politicians, where expressing ideology-ridden opinions are contained. This is one of the possible reason of absence of issue ownership effect on Twitter as this study finds and that is contradictory to use of issue owning messages in presidential advertisements, debates and speeches found in previous studies (Benoit, 2007; Benoit et. al., 2013). As the purpose of using mass and social media has been found to be dissimilar, the presence of issue owning messages in the two types medium is, unsurprisingly, different.

Senators those who were active on the issue of digital privacy tweeted significantly more on the issue than others. The senators who tweeted the most amount of time in fact tweeted about the issue as political events on the issue gradually unfolded in the Congress, and ended up tweeted for a much longer period of time than others. Thereby, as digital privacy grew as a bi-partisan issue, the senators' posts regarding the issue started reflecting bi-partisan perspectives on the issue. The tweets reflect the senators' attitude on digital privacy over the two years of period, when the issue gradually moved from a partisan issue to a bi-partisan one. Among the studies those found issue ownership cues in political messages, the most of those collected data during national or congressional elections, when the partisan polarization remains high and partisan opinions overwhelms other types of opinions (Sides, 2006). However, as this study collected data during a two-year time period when no national election took place, the senators' tweets reflect sentiment of regular

congressional activities, when the partisan cues in messages are fewer in numbers than the time of a national election.

The findings of issue-trespassing messages on tweets underscores the value of Twitter as a channel in political public relations that is distinct than mass media channels. Whereas the senators attempt to take a cautious and traditional approach in their statements on mass media, they make take a more personal and non-political approach on Twitter. Evidence from this study shows that Twitter should be counted as a unique mass personal tool in public relations that may not follow logics of mass communication mediums, and may act as a personal tool for a politician expressing individual opinion rather than partisan. As civil rights and national security are owned by opposing parties, but are both closely tied with digital privacy, such references exert an issue ownership or issue trespassing effect on audience. Politicians have been found to use Twitter as a masspersonal device, where the audience is addressed as an individual who is a follower and remains connected (Aharony, 2012; Conway, Kenski, & Wang, 2013; Vergeer, 2015).

Episodic and thematic framing in tweets: Symbolizing imperative and persuasive appeals

Frequencies of using episodic and thematic framing in tweets varied at different time periods, from June 2013 to August 2016, a timeframe studied in this project. Senators were found to incorporate episodic framing more than thematic framing during June, 2013 to the rest of 2013. Fewer occasions of thematic framing during that period indicates that the majority of tweets did not refer to ideology or national interest when discussing digital privacy. The spike of episodic framing starting from the date of the news leak and reached

its peak in the following six months, indicating that senators tweeted about their regular congressional activities that was related to digital privacy using episodic frames in the opening days of the issue. Those tweets discusses events, such as attending a meeting, a congressional session, or a media event. The senators propagated messages on social media about their activities on nationally important issue to their Twitter followers, rather than expressing ideological statements.

Episodic and thematic framing were used by the senators in similar frequencies from January, 2014, till June, 2014, when the latter surpassed the former, and stayed to be more prevalent for the next six months. Episodic framing became more popular than thematic again during the last half of 2015, until the beginning of 2016, when both began to be used in the same frequency. This was accompanied by a decrease in the number of media coverage of digital privacy and fewer political events related to the topic.

The senator's higher frequency of using episodic framing at the beginning of the issue suggest that they aimed to highlight their political activities to the audience without expressing any ideological statement, because the ideological dimension of the issue was not clear in the beginning. The senators tweeted to share information with their followers they were involved in the senate about a contemporary major political issue. For example, Senator Chris Coon's tweet on Nov 19, 2014 stated: "Frustrated that Senate Republicans filibustered our bipartisan NSA reform bill tonight. Americans\'92 privacy rights deserve better than this." The tweet talked about actual political events that happened over digital privacy in the Senate. However, in the later days, as the issue developed into a bi-partisan issue with themes of national security and civil rights, the senators tweeted only

sporadically, and using ideological wording. Senator Coon tweeted on May 31, 2015: "We need not to sacrifice privacy for security. #USAFreedom Act is a bipartisan solution that balances both.". The tweet presented an ideological dimension of the issue, aimed at persuading fellow senators and audience toward USA Freedom Act.

This study highlights the fact that Iyengar's framing concepts may be applied in analyzing the emphasis on social media messages. Studying episodic/thematic frame as an individual-level frame, and as an independent variable on the social media posts, as noted in Scheufele's (1999) categorization of the approaches to framing, that can lead to understanding the function of the posts. Politicians' purpose of using social media may include sharing information, enhancing reputation, persuading the audience to vote or raising donation (Conway et al., 2013). Approaching episodic/thematic framing on social media messages can led to infer the specific purpose of different social media on different occasions.

Variation of frames in the tweets during the development of the issue of digital privacy suggests that episodic and thematic framing in social media posts are associated with informative and persuasive functions. Previous studies have found that episodic framing influences evoking emotional response from the audience, whereas thematic framing arouse logical response (Aaroe, 2011; Springer & Harwood, 2015). Employment of episodic framing through informative messages often functions to organize the supporters and like-minded voters, and give information about the politicians' face-to-face activities (Springer & Harwood, 2015; Aaroe, 2011). Thematic framing, using persuasion, may function as a tool to influence and persuade the opinion of voters by discussing policy

issues (Frame & Brachotte, 2014). Tweets that primarily focus on organization using episodic framing may utilize intense media coverage of an issue and promote personal activities. Tweets that aim at persuasion may target a long-term, repeated exposure, and may not coincide with the media coverage of related events.

Senators' use of episodic framing at the beginning suggest that they attempt to evoke their followers' emotion and gain support. Senators attempted to garner support of the population concerned about the NSA spying, and wanted to find politicians who can fight for the cause. In the later stages of the issue, a thematic framing was used, that sought logical thinking with regards to digital privacy, and supported the senators' position on different bills related to the issue. In the later stages, between 2014 to 2016, it was mostly the senators active on the issue in Congress posting tweets. They looked for a discussion on the issue on online forums, and hence, wanted their audience to think and express opinion about it. The tweets sent in the later stages discussed the implication and consequence of the NSA spying in collective terms, as seen in thematic framing.

Limitation and future study suggestions

The major limitation of this study is it measured only the techniques of issue ownership, and not the process that includes effect of issue interpretation on the public. This study did not measure if public opinion is swayed by politicians' rhetoric on digital privacy on Twitter. Therefore, findings from this study are limited into public relations techniques by politicians, without knowing the effectiveness of those. Studies have found the issue ownership process on Twitter follow the same trends as in real life (Hosch-Dayican, Aarts, Amrit & Dassen, 2013). Future studies should explore reception of social

media messages by politicians and investigate how different types of interpretation and framing impact public understanding of issues.

This study uses senators to represent politicians, whereas there might be politicians such as cabinet secretaries, attorney general, state governors or party officials who might be influential in shaping political discourse. Although senators are considered a major political group, they function as an exclusive body of lawmakers with little executive power, which is different from state governors and cabinet secretaries. Also, senators are historically more likely to vote against their own party decisions, which is not the case for representatives of the house or state governors. Thereby This study's findings about senators' Twitter activities need to be generalized with limitations.

This project explored Twitter as the dominant social media in politics whereas mediums such as Facebook or YouTube are popular as well. Sites such as Facebook are found to be used by politicians to communicate about personality and character traits, and YouTube for political advertisements. It is possible that issue ownership messages on Facebook may follow different trends than as found in this study. Future studies should replicate the procedure in this study in case of other social media sites.

Systematic error is a common problem in measurements for social scientific studies (Nie-mi, 1993). When a study systematically excludes a portion of the population due to bad measurement, it is known as systematic error. In this study, systematic error may be caused by using the three keywords: "Privacy", "NSA" and "Surveillance" to pull up tweets regarding digital privacy. Although these three keywords seem to yield the most

of the desired tweets, this method excludes tweets those talked about the issue without using these keywords.

Future studies may want to explore the relationship between the theories of framing, issue ownership and second-level agenda-setting further. Currently, issue ownership is thought as a framing strategy from mass media or politicians. However, issue ownership is different from traditional frames used in mass media those involve cultural cues, historical references or moral judgement, and is more based on historic perception of political parties in dealing with issues. Future studies may examine possible link between issue ownership and topologies of media and individual framing, and clarify connections between these concepts.

This study provides an insight on how digital privacy started as a news story and evolved into a bi-partisan issue. More studies on changes in partisan orientation of other emerging issues could led to understanding of issue ownership and individual framing in case of smaller issues. Moral and political dimension of issues influence how politicians discuss the issues, and exploring different issues would help scholars understand why certain rhetoric, such as civil rights and national security for digital privacy issue in this study, dominates others. For ex-ample, future studies may explore solar energy, which is an emerging issue with no definite moral dimensions. The issue is debated in both global warming and energy independence frames, on which conservatives and liberals have mixed opinions. On another example, assisted suicide has recently gained prominence and is debated in civil rights vs. morality frames. These are examples of emerging issues with unclear political orientations and may attract arguments from both parties. Future studies

may track social media posts, mass media coverage and political rhetoric on these issues to understand how issues definition and perception changes over time.

Content analysts have underscored many different computerized technologies see above can assist in content gathering and coding process (Batnum & Owen, 2009). Software such as Ptosuit, AtlasTi, LIWC are specifically made for content analysis work, and can perform work such as semantic analysis, qualitative content analysis and text processing. Most of these software however, do not allow integrating social media data, such as downloading, processing and analyzing Twitter data on same platform. R is special from other platforms because it can perform both textual and numerical analysis in equally powerful way, and in addition, can download data thorough different social media platforms with help of packages those have API integration. R packages are able to import social media data from twitter (Package "twitteR"), Facebook (Package "Rfacebook"), websites (Package "rvest"), and digitally code data using a preexisting dictionary (Package "stringr"). Although it is a powerful and versatile tool that can do almost all of the works as currently existing software, this is comparatively less popular among media and communication scholars. Given availability of social media data, this author commends future media scholars examine the tool and elaborate its usability for content analysis work.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: List of issues owned by the two major parties used in this study

Issues	Ownership	Explanation
Civil liberty	*Democrat*	A long-time and well known Democrat-owned issue
Influence of corporation	*Democrat*	Opposition to corporate interest is a liberal political stance. Breach of digital privacy happens when IT companies comply with government surveillance request, making corporate influence a relevant concern.
Education	*Democrat*	A longtime and well-known Democrat-owned issue.
National security	*Republican*	A longtime and well-known Republican-owned issue.
Big government	*Republican*	A well-known Republican-owned issue. Ronald Regan popularize small government stance of the Republican party by the comment "Government is the problem, not the solution."
Social order	*Republican*	Refers to preserving the existing social order, which is known to be a conservative viewpoint
Foreign affairs	*Performance*	Foreign affairs is one of the major duties of the American President. It is not seen as any party's issue, rather than used as a yardstick to measure politicians' performance.
Economy	*Performance*	A frequently discussed performance issue which is closely related with approval of ruling party.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of senators who tweeted on digital privacy

Characteristics	Frequencies
Number of senators who tweeted	81 out of 100
Partisan affiliation	42 Democrats, 39 Republicans
Descriptive statistics	M = 15, SD = 37, Range = 1, 303
Top five senators who sent the most amount of Tweets	Patrick Leahy (D), Rand Paul (R) and Ron Wyden (D), Dean Heller (R) and Ed Markey (D)

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for use of framing and issue references by Republican and Democrat senators

Variable	Frequency of Tweets		M		SD		Max	
	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep
Total	776	481	19.87	11.45	50.2	18.19	303	96
Civil liberty	411	264	11.10	6.4	34.74	14.4	200	79
Influence of corporation	90	14	2.43	.34	7.13	1.03	40	5
Education	53	30	1.43	.73	3.31	1.67	13	9
National security	410	261	11.08	6.36	14.13	11	117	56
Big government	140	105	3.78	2.56	10.32	5.03	44	26
Social order	114	63	3.08	1.53	6.49	2.94	35	15
Foreign affairs	9	26	.34	.89	.68	2.67	3	14
Economy	30	23	.81	.56	2.4	1.51	13	8
Episodic framing	476	353	12.68	8.61	39.79	17.7	239	96
Thematic framing	392	146	10.59	3.56	36	6.68	217	35

Table 4: OLS regression model showing predictors of tweets on digital privacy by US senators during the 113rd and 114th legislations.

Variables	B	SE B	β
Party (Republican Coded higher)	7.22	8.51	
Gender (Female coded higher)	-9.63	3.30	
Overall Twitter activity	6.46	6.7	0.073
Overall Twitter popularity	7.02	1.15	0.001
Offline involvement	6.6***	1.32	0.509
R^2	.29		
F for change in R^2	5.04***		

Note: *** = $P<.01$

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Boxplot of number of tweets on digital privacy by party identification

Number of Tweets on Digital Privacy
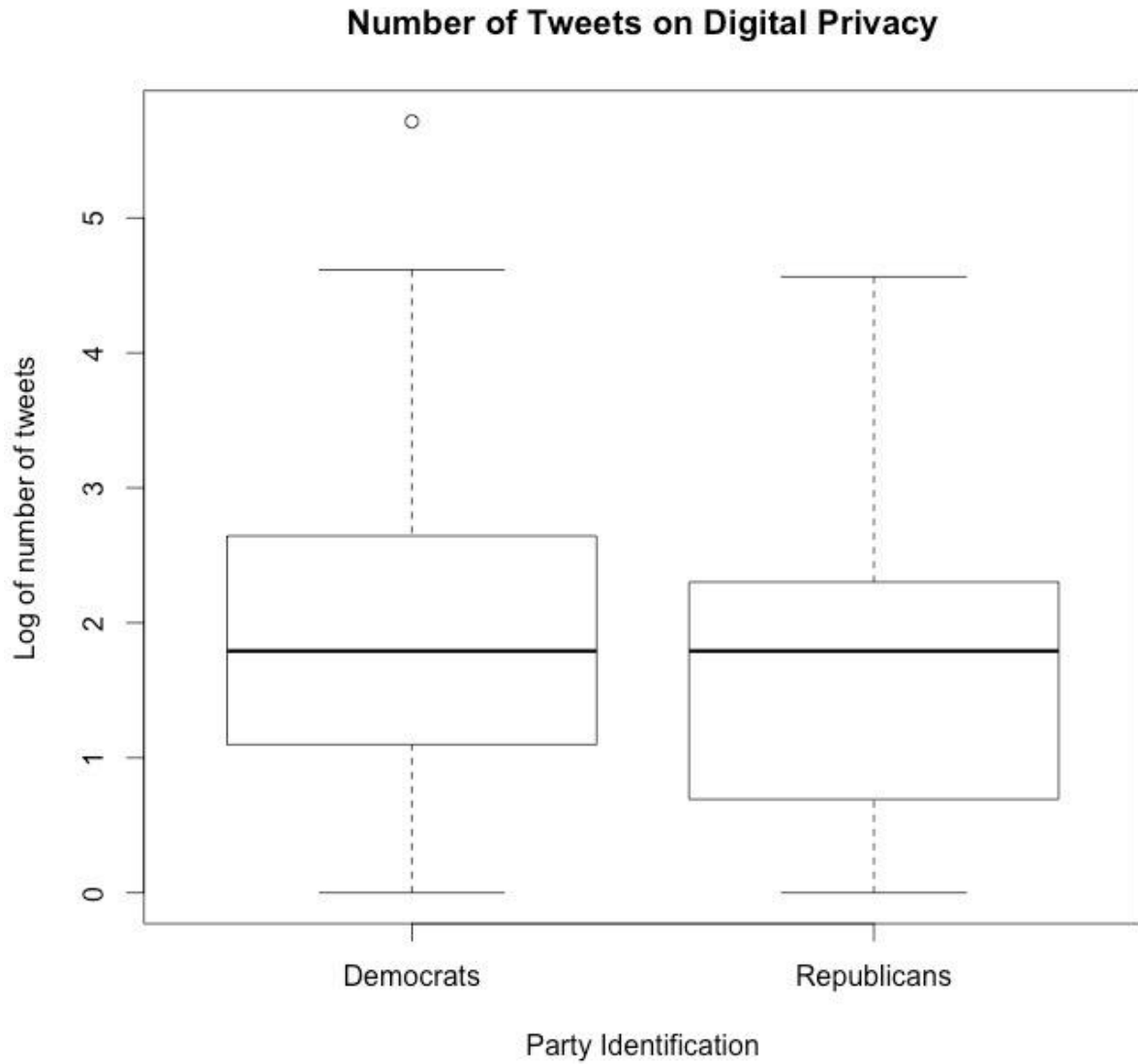
Figure 2a and 2b: Share of different issue mentions in Democrat and Republican senators'
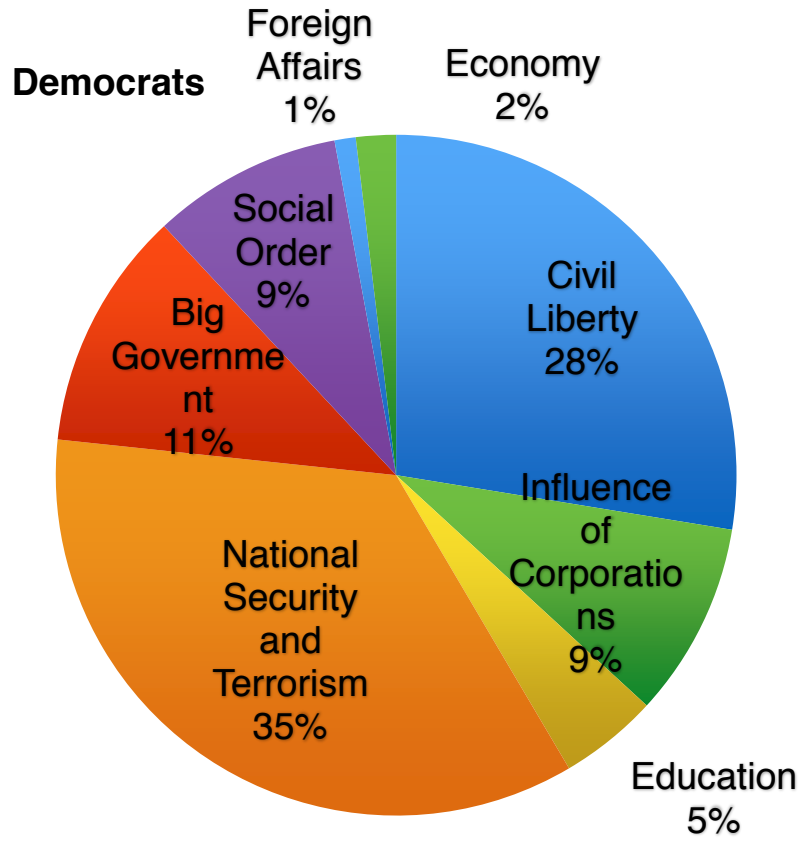*tweets on digital privacy*
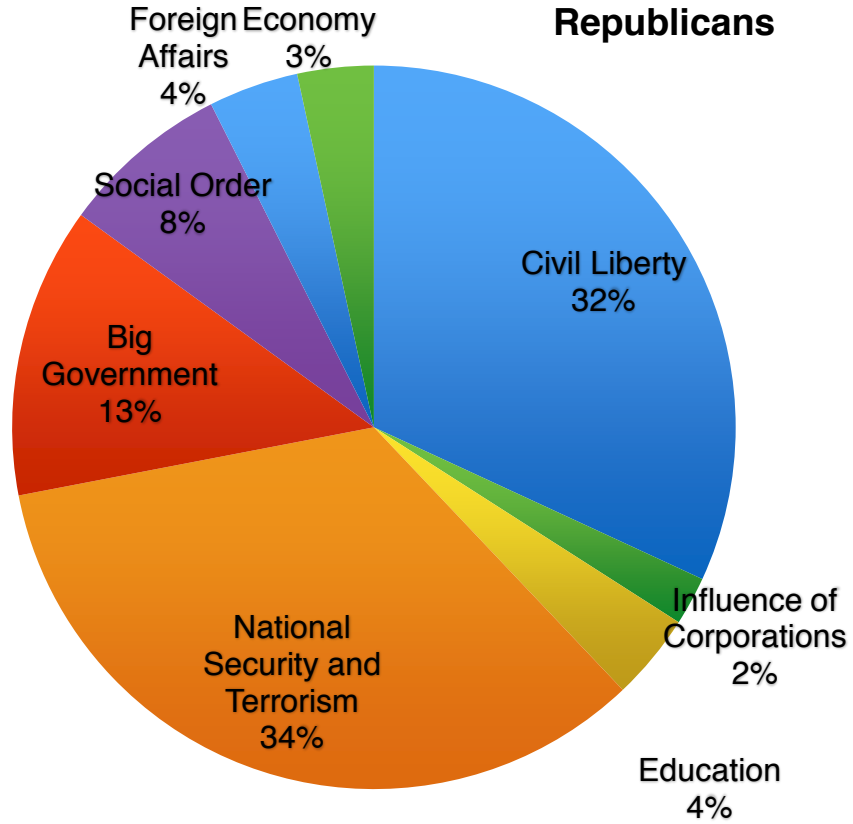
Democrats

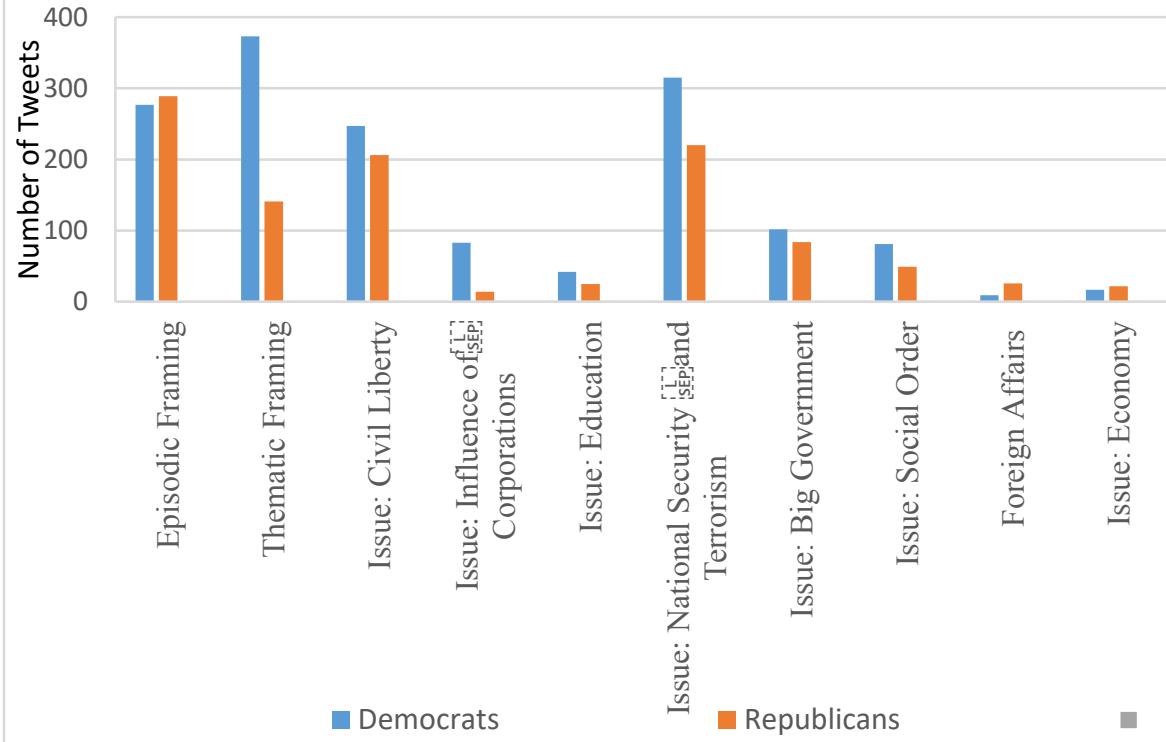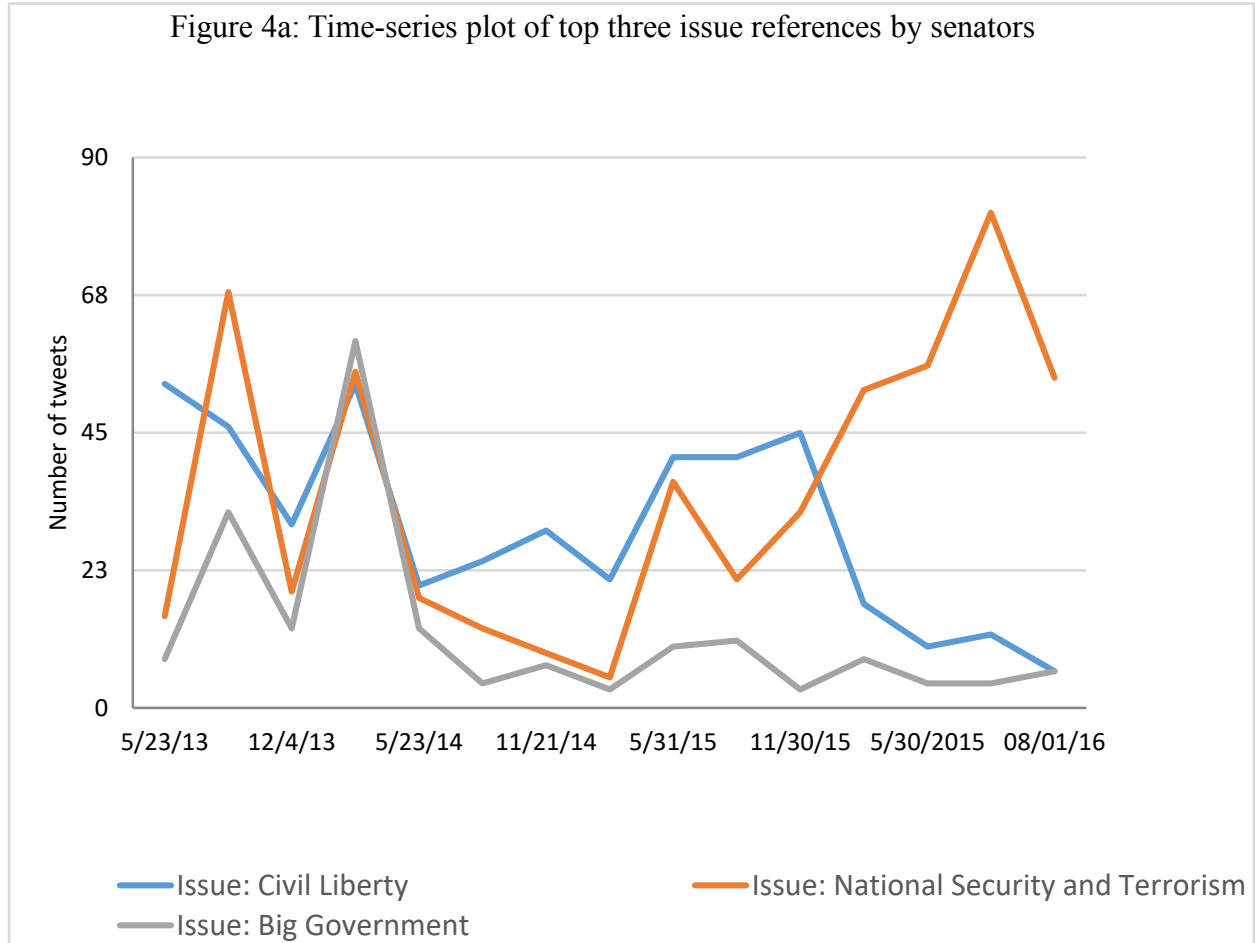Figure 3: Frequency of using framing and referring to issues by Democrats and Republicans

Figure 4a: Time-series plot of top three issue references by senators

Figure 4b: Time-series plot of episodic and thematic framing by senators
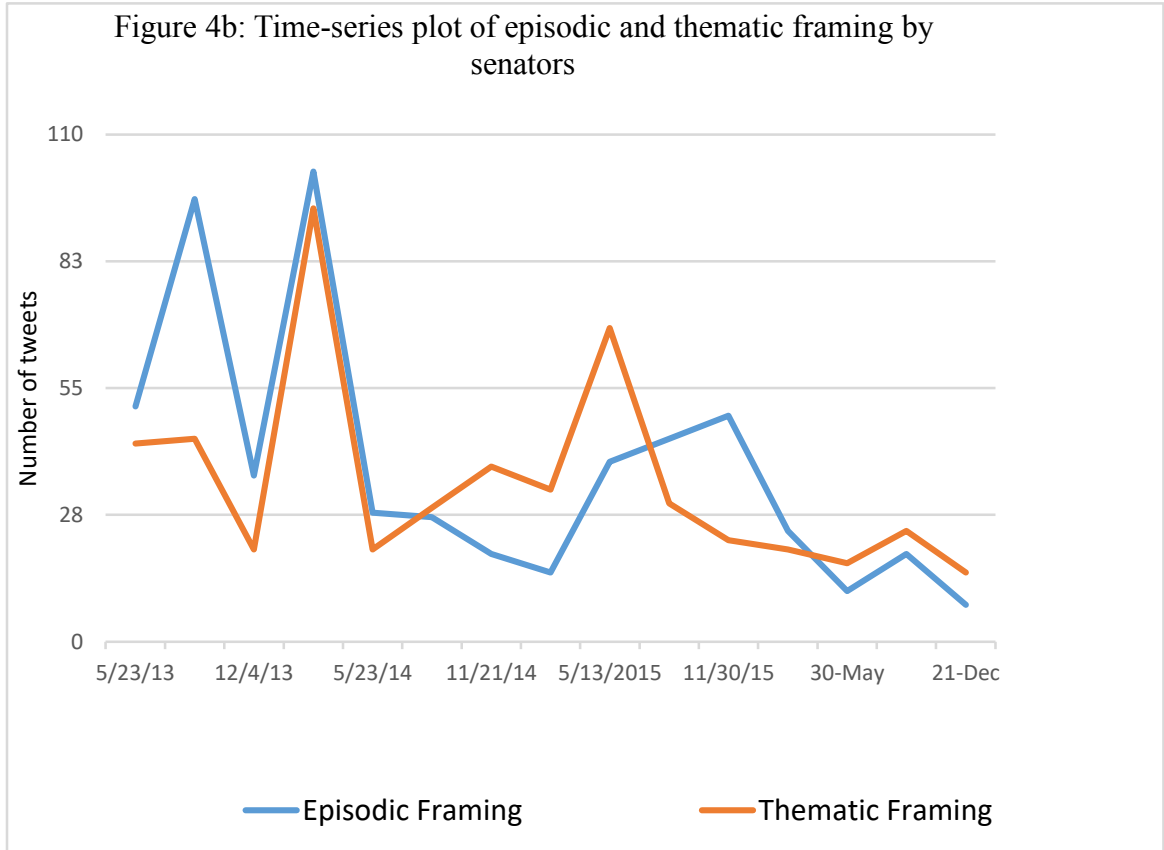
Appendix A: Operationalization of the variables

1) **Profile of the politician**: Write the following information about the politician:

- Party
- Number of years in the congress
- Official post
- Number of tweets posted
- Gender
- Date of the tweet

2) **Twitter variables**:
- Number of favorites and Retweets

3) **Episodic framing:** Code "1" if the tweet refers to any political or news events as the dominant topic. the events can be a press conference, a congressional meting or a talk show. Code "0" if reference to any political or news event is absent.

4) **Thematic framing: Code "**1" if the tweet refers to any collective outcome, concern or historical trend. Code "0" if reference to any collective outcome, concern or historical trend is absent.

5) **Ownership of issues**: This study uses a list of Democratic, Republican and Performance issues explained in the table below. The first column indicates the partisan category of the issue. The second column indicates how the issue is known to the public. The third column indicates specific operationalization of the issue for this study. The fourth column has example of a tweet that mentions the issue from the second column.

Code on the corresponding category of issues if there is any exact mention of the issue. For example, if there is any mention of words such as liberty, security or government, code "1" in the corresponding category. When there is no mention of any of the issues, determine if the tweet indirectly refers to any of the political issues following the coding scheme in the third column and the example tweet in the fourth column.

For each of the main issues presented in the second column, enter 1 for direct or indirect mention, and 0 for no mention. A tweet can be coded in more than one categories.

Table: Operationalization of Issue ownership in tweets on digital privacy

Partisan category of issue	Main issue	Mention in the tweets	Example

Democratic issues	Civil liberties	The tweet mentions words such as rights, freedom or unconstitutional, or may state threat to digital privacy is a breach of civil rights.	I'll fight for every American\'92s privacy & I hope you will stand with me. Take a stand for liberty #BerkeleyForum\ (Rand Paul, Wed Mar 19, 2014)
	Influence of corporations	The tweet mentions the word corporation, consumers or name of any corporate company, or may state that digital privacy is under threat due to influence of large corporations	Today we said no to privacy invading cybersecurity policy requested by corporations. But the fight goes on (Ron Wyden, Jan, 11, 2015)
	Education	The tweet mentions the words education, mass literary, awareness or any other word related to institutional education, or may state education is needed to fight threat to digital privacy	Held a news conference to raise awareness with Idahoans about #CFPB and Americans\'92 privacy. #idpol\'85 http://instagram.com/p/c6-bWjop-L/\(Mike Crapo, August 12, 2013)
Republican issues	National security and terrorism	The tweet mentions security, safety, terrorism, national interest or words derived from these, or may state digital privacy had to be compromised for national security.	We need structural solutions that strike the right balance b/ween personal privacy & ensuring national security @hardball_chris #mepolitics (Angus King, June 07, 2013)

	Big Government	The tweet mentions big government or big brother, or may suggest digital privacy is under threat from an overly powerful government.	Whether it's #IRS, #NSA, #Benghazi, or #Obamacare, one thing is clear. Fed govt is too big, too powerful, and too unaccountable. (Ted Cruz, Mon Jun 10, 2013)
	Social order	The tweet mentions law-abiding, traditional, innocent or similar words or suggest threat to privacy is harming traditional American way of life.	Today I op-posed #CISA because we must do a better job protecting the #privacy of law-abiding Americans. #mtpol (Job Tester, Oct 27, 2015)
Performance issues	Foreign Affairs	The tweet mentions an international event. Indirectly, the tweet may relate the issue of digital privacy with any foreign affairs event.	Info developing on another Russian hack attack. Let's have extradition for criminals stealing Americans' privacy. (Mark Kirk, August 28, 2014)
	Economy	The tweet mentions economy, employment, consumer or job creation, or may relate government's handling of digital privacy with that of economy.	Our bill gives consumers the right to stop #data brokers from using, sharing, or selling personal info. #privacy http://1.usa.gov/1CBzHWg\(Ed Markey, March 05, Thursday, 2015)

APPENDIX B: CODING PROTOCOL

Instructions: Open the text file for the Tweet content, and the Excel file for the coding categories. For each of the categories, list 1 (Present), 0 (Absent) or NA.

1) Cognitive/Emotional frames:

• Cognitive framing: The Tweet presents a full factual or statistical information. The fact or statistics may be cited or copied from other sources. Example: "FISC found NSA knowingly acquires tens of thousands of wholly U.S. communication under 702" (Ron Wayden, Feb 4, 2015). Enter 'C'.

• Emotional framing: The Tweet presents an argument using emotion. It may display emotions such as anger, fear, exuberance, shock, panic or excitement and state strong feeling in reaction to the government surveillance efforts. Example: RT if you're also concerned w/ unprecedented & intrusive surveillance on private American citizens!"(Ted Cruze, un, 11, 2013). Enter 'E'.

If none of these frame is found in the Tweet, enter NA.

2) Thematic and Episodic frames:

• Episodic framing: The Tweet states surveillance or digital privacy an issue to be dealt by any official or organization as opposed to a common public issue. It may mention government organization such as NSA, Pentagon, President Obama and intelligence agencies and states their liability in infringing digital privacy. Example: "The House passed the #USAFreedomAct. Now the Senate should act to end the NSA's unfettered data collection program" (Ted Cruz, May 14, 2015). Enter 'E'.

• Thematic framing: The Tweet states the issue of digital privacy or surveillance as a common public issue, and refers to collective concern, as opposed to being a concern for only particular politicians or government agencies. It may use collectivist words such as American,

we, citizens and such. Example: "RT @MarkUdall: The American people deserve answers on #NSA surveillance. Proud to work" (Ron Wayden, June 28, 2013). Enter 'T'.

If none of these frame is found in the Tweet, enter NA.

3) Ownership of issues: The following group of categories measure if the Tweet the issues of digital privacy with any political issues. Enter 1 for presence and 0 for absence.

a) *Civil Liberty*: The Tweet relates the issues of digital privacy with citizen's civil rights and liberty, and states surveillance is a threat to those. Example: :The fight to protect Americans' privacy rights is far from over though. And we'll keep fighting" (Ron Wyden, une 2, 2015).

b) *Influence of Corporations*: The Tweet relates the issue of digital privacy with the influence of corporation, and states that corporations are liable for surveillance. It may mention negative and infringing role of the corporations. Example: Today we said no to privacy invading cybersecurity policy requested by corporations. But the fight goes on" (Ron Wyden, Jan, 11, 2015).

c) *Education*: The Tweet relates the issue of digital privacy with education, and states educating the citizens and improving digital and computer literacy is a way to face the challenges of surveillance. Example: :Who do you trust on privacy? Wall Street or tech experts?   Our mark-up @accessnow" (Ron Wyden, Oct 20, 2015).

d) *National security and Terrorism*: The Tweet relates the issue of digital privacy with national security, terrorism and terrorist threat. Example: "Security+privacy are both priorities for us and therefore we can't support #CISA as written. We hope to see positive changes go…" (Ron Wyden, Oct 20, 2015).

e) *Big government:* The Tweet relates the issue of digital privacy with big and overreaching government, states the government is overstepping on its legal boundaries. Example: "Whether it's #IRS, #NSA, #Benghazi, or #Obamacare, one thing is clear. Fed govt is too big, too powerful, and too unaccountable. (Ted Cruz, Mon Jun 10, 2013)".

f) *Social order:* The Tweet relates the issue of digital privacy with social order, and states the surveillance is a threat to American traditional life and culture. Example: "Should POTUS

pledge to protect the privacy of law-abiding citizens in #SOTU? Vote." (Ted Cruz, Jan 24, 2014).

g) *Economy*: The Tweet relates the issue of digital privacy with Economy, unemployment and job growth. Example: "NSA snooping, Obamacare disaster & struggling economy are leaving young Americans disillusioned" (Ted Cruz, Jan, 14, 2014)".

4) **Political variables**: For each politicians, enter the following data in the coding sheet.

- Party
- Number of years in the congress
- Official post
- Number of Tweets posted
- Gender

5) Number of favorites and Retweets: Enter the number of favorite and Retweets for each of the Tweets coded.

APPENDIX C : MAJOR BILLS RELATED TO DIGITAL PRIVACY DISCUSSED IN THE US SENATE'S 114TH AND 113RD LEGISLATIONS

Serial	Name of the bill	ID Number	Senate Committee
1	USA Freedom Act of 2015	S1123	Judiciary
2	DIGIT Act	S2607	Commerce, Science and Transportation
3	Secure Data Act of 2015	S135	Commerce, Science and Transportation
4	SPOT Act	S1337	Judiciary
5	Protecting Individuals From Mass Aerial Surveillance Act of 2015	S1595	Judiciary
6	International Communications Privacy Act	S2986	Judiciary
7	Location Privacy Protection Act of 2015	S2270	Judiciary
8	Driver Privacy Act of 2015	S766	Commerce, Science and Transportation
9	Electronic Communications Privacy Act Amendments Act of 2015	S356	Judiciary
10	Consumer Privacy Protection Act of 2015	S1158	Judiciary
11	Data Security Act of 2015	S961	Commerce, Science and Transportation
12	Stopping Mass Hacking Act	S2952	Judiciary
13	Secure Data Act of 2015	S135	Commerce, Science and Transportation
14	Commercial Privacy Bill of Rights Act of 2014	S 2378	Commerce, Science and Transportation
15	Personal Data Privacy and Security Act of 2014	S 1897	Judiciary
16	Freedoms and Privacy Act of 2013	S1701	Judiciary

17	FISA Accountability and Privacy Protection Act of 2013	S1215	Judiciary
18	Restore Our Privacy Act	S1168	Judiciary
19	Personal Data Protection and Breach Accountability Act of 2014	S1995	Judiciary
20	USA FREEDOM Act	S1599	Judiciary
21	FISA Court Reform Act of 2013	S1467	Judiciary
22	Intelligence Oversight and Surveillance Reform Act	S1551	Judiciary

APPENDIX D: R CODE USED TO RETRIEVE RELATED TWEETS FROM A .TXT

FILE

1. fileDir <- "/Users/ashikshafi/Desktop/Dissertation files/tweets downloaded/All tweets/"
2. inputFile <- "tweetsShelby.txt"
3. outputFile <- "tweetShelbySelected.txt"

    #Creating a loop within the file directory

4. for (i in 1:length(files)){inputFile <- files[i] outputFile <- paste0(gsub(".txt","",inputFile),"_output.txt")}

    # Counting text data as array data

5. mydata = read.csv(paste0(fileDir,inputFile), sep = "\n", quote = "", header = FALSE)
6. mydata <- as.vector(mydata[,1])

    #Subsetting the file with related keywords

7. filteredRecords <- mydata[grep('RT',mydata,invert = TRUE)]
8. filteredRecords <- mydata[grep('privacy|NSA|Privacy|Surveillance|surveillance',mydata)]

    #Deleting first 19 characters containing metadata from the each lines.

9. for (i in 1:length(filteredRecords)){filteredRecords[i] <- substr(filteredRecords[i],19,nchar(filteredRecords[i]))}
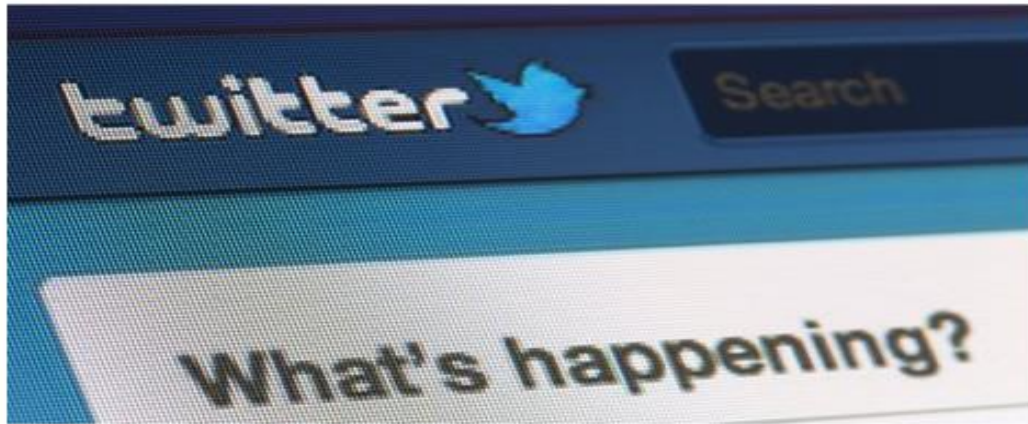
    #Finally, writing the newly created file on directory

10.   write(filteredRecords,file = paste0(fileDir,outputFile))

APPENDIX E: PRINT ADVERTISEMENT FOR HIRING CODERS

Paid Help in Research Project Wanted

A doctoral student is looking for two students to help in a new media research project involving Tweets. The students have to commit around 10 hours excluding a short training, and content analyze a large volume of Tweets on political issues. The project looks at how politicians discussed and framed the issue of NSA surveillance on Twitter.

Communication studies/Journalism/Political Science majors of above sophomore level are specifically welcome. **The work pays $15 per hour.**

If interested, please contact:

Ashik Shafi
Doctoral student
Department of Communication
508 Manoogian Hall
Email: fc0369@wayne.edu
cellphone 3134218135.

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ABSTRACT

ISSUE OWNERSHIP AND FRAMING OF DIGITAL PRIVACY ON TWITTER

by

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The issue ownership theory states political parties tend to emphasize the issues they are perceived to own in a bid to gain an advantage in public opinion. Although tested on different established political issues and in mass communicational settings, the theory has not been sufficiently examined in case of new and evolving political issues and on social media settings. This dissertation project attempts to test issue ownership theory and examine episodic and thematic frames in Twitter conversations of US senators regarding the issue of digital privacy. Combination of computerized and manual content analysis is applied to download and analyze all US senators' tweets related to the issue. Data analysis from 1259 tweets demonstrates meagre issue ownership effort by Republicans, and reverse issue ownership effort, also known as issue trespassing, by Democrats. The senators who were active about the issue in the Congress remained vocal about the issue on Twitter as well. In their tweets, the senators used more episodic frames in the beginning period and more thematic frames in the middle period than other periods during the two-year timeline.

The results suggest the senators, being a member of a deliberative political group, did not follow partisan rhetoric on digital privacy. The mass-personal nature of Twitter is related with the senators exhibiting few issue-owning cues in their tweets. Future suggestions for application of issue ownership on social media settings and for non-partisan issues are discussed.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Ashik Shafi is a visiting assistant professor at Department of English and Communication at Bethany College, Lindborg, KS. His research interests include conversations about politics on social media, impact of mass media on public opinion and modern practices of public relations. He has a Bachelor's degree from University of Dhaka, Bangladesh in Mass Communication and Journalism and a Master's degree from Mass Communications in Texas Tech University. Ashik has published journal article, book chapters and conference papers on new media and communication studies. He also figures out new ways to play with his one and half year-old boy.