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Conservative Media and Political Socialization: Immigration, Gay Marriage, and Abortion as Presented by Fox News, the Wall Street Journal, and CNN

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CONSERVATIVE MEDIA AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION:
IMMIGRATION, GAY MARRIAGE, AND ABORTION AS PRESENTED BY FOX NEWS,
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, AND CNN

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College of Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

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Abstract

This study addresses the political socialization of politically conservative individuals and how political ideologies seem to coalesce among individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The main issue that this study aims to tackle is the impact of conservative media on the political socialization of conservative individuals and how media as an agent of socialization might influence them to support ideas that are not to their benefit economically. For instance, conservative individuals from various backgrounds wholeheartedly support the same free market principles. However, the negative effect that capitalism has had on the liberty of middle and lower class citizens of the United States and abroad is typically ignored by conservative media. The idea behind this is that most issues within conservative ideology have an economic component and are based on certain themes (xenophobia, paranoia, et cetera) that identify with certain types of conservatives. Most importantly, the economic component to social issues allows all types of conservatives from various socioeconomic backgrounds to agree on both economic and social issues. What influence might these themes have on political and economic beliefs? What particular themes are being presented? Are these messages contributing to a false consciousness among careless conservatives?

In order to answer these questions, this study will employ a content analysis approach by analyzing news from Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal*, and CNN. Only content covered from December 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012 will be used. The reason for this is that all issues that are important to conservatives are discussed in depth during this time because of primary elections and the focus on the Republican frontrunner for the presidential election. Each media outlet will be analyzed and coded according to their coverage of three social issues (immigration, gay marriage, and abortion). The analysis will focus on particular themes in regard to an emergent theme approach. This study will also apply a theoretical framework based on Georg Lukacs and Karl Marx's work on false consciousness.

This study is important because the regularity of these inconsistent beliefs is hindering real political process. For example, there are United States citizens labeling President Obama as a socialist and communist. Most politicians and U.S. citizens are so enamored with their ideology that they see very little room to compromise. Additionally, there are more inconsistencies within the political ideology of modern conservatives than what are addressed in this study, which is cause for additional research.

Introduction

With the condition that the United States economy is in one could argue that it is becoming increasingly important for individuals to become more aware of economic policies and ideologies. It should be fairly evident that the way capitalism is operating at the moment is not to the overall benefit of the United States' economy or middle and lower class citizens (Alperovitz 2005; Wright and Rogers 2011; Greider 2003; Giddens 1994; Hutton and Giddens 2000). However, it seems that it is becoming increasingly popular for people to simply align with the ideology of their chosen party and neglect pursuits of knowledge about why they believe what they do (Giddens 1994; Frank 2008). For example, this study aims to focus on current conservative ideology and how conservatives may be influenced to adopt an ideology that contributes to a false consciousness as evidenced by political messages in conservative media outlets. The main interest of this study lies in the issue that many conservatives are supporting politicians, ideas, and legislation that are seemingly against their own economic interest (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). In 2008, twenty-five percent of individuals making less than \$15,000 and thirty-seven percent of individuals making \$15,000-\$30,000 voted Republican in the Presidential election (CNN 2008). What role do conservative media have in this? Are media outlets presenting specific messages? If so, what messages are they presenting? Are these messages contributing to a false consciousness among viewers? Before going any further, it is important to note that there are many agents of political socialization, but this study is only focusing on media as an isolated agent of socialization.

This study is important because it pertains to economic beliefs that are affecting the condition of the United States economy. Good or bad, one could argue anything that directly or

indirectly influences the state of a country's economic system should definitely be studied. The people who are holding these inconsistent beliefs are voting for and electing politicians who are enacting policies that are against the best economic interests.

How is it that less privileged conservatives are in agreement with more privileged conservatives on economic issues? The Republican Party has a history of favoring the upper class in many regards. It has pushed everything from a flat tax under the idea of fairness to giving tax breaks to corporations. Would the average Republican benefit from a flat tax or a corporate tax break? The answer is probably no. So how is it that less privileged individuals are being convinced to support policies that either do not affect them at all or actually hurt them economically? The idea behind this study is that certain social issues are framed by conservative media outlets in ways that both privileged and non-privileged conservatives can agree with economically. What this means is that social issues within conservative ideology almost always have an economic component to them that support and perpetuate capitalist ideology.

In order to delve more into this issue, a content analysis will be used for this study. This research technique was inspired by past experience with relevant literature and familiarity with the media outlets. Fox News, CNN, and *The Wall Street Journal* will be analyzed according to how many times immigration, gay marriage, and abortion are mentioned and how each issue is framed within each media outlet. These three particular issues were utilized because it was believed that each of these issues would have an economic component within them and because Republicans have a history of focusing on social issues (Courtwright 2010; Grindstaff 2006). The reason that three different media outlets were used is to compare multiple articulations of issues and the economic components behind them. Fox News was used to analyze the political framing geared toward conservatives from modest socioeconomic backgrounds, whereas *The*

Wall Street Journal was used to analyze the political framing for economically privileged conservatives. CNN was used because it is regarded as a centrist and non-partisan news source and has a wide reach. Additionally, demographic information will be utilized in order to demonstrate that both Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* cater to particular segments of the conservative population according to their age and income.

In order to provide a more succinct way to describe Wall Street Journal readers and Fox News viewers, this study will utilize the terms conscious conservative and careless conservative. These two terms are an expansion of the idea of “philosophical conservatism” by Anthony Giddens (1994) and Thomas Frank (2008). They argued that philosophizing has become much more important than the current state of the economy for conservatives. “Philosophical conservatism” could be attributed to the fact that there is the mentality that the economy will prosper if given the proper time and conditions. The idea of “philosophical conservatism” is far too broad to describe the ideology of the conservative electorate. Due to this, this study will expand upon this concept into a two-part typology that consists of both careless and conscious conservatives.

As defined by this study, a conscious conservative is an individual who has a deep understanding of economic systems, but does not necessarily agree with how modern capitalism operates. Conscious conservatives will also typically be older white men. Their articulate understanding of capitalism leads them to believe that the modern conception is not what it should be. They would likely believe that, if capitalism was to work the way it should, all individuals would have liberty. Examples of these types of conservatives would include individuals like Ron Paul, Milton Friedman, or Philippe Van Parijs. These individuals believe in liberty, but do not ascribe to modern capitalism. It is anticipated that *The Wall Street Journal* will

appeal to these types of conservatives due to its history of being an economic newspaper that focuses on capitalist perspectives.

Careless conservatives are individuals who perpetuate a type of conservatism that is blind and uninformed in terms of political and economic issues. Fox News appeals to this type of conservative due to its history of presenting conservative viewpoints (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). A careless conservative is one who has very little understanding of economic systems but ascribes to modern capitalism anyway. This individual will likely be a large supporter of individual liberty and is unlikely or unwilling to understand the inconsistency of believing this and supporting capitalism at the same time. The inconsistency in their ideology leads them to support politicians, legislation, and ideologies that are to their economic detriment. A careless conservative will also likely have an intermediate or low economic status, and it is likely that he or she will have varying levels of education too. Like conscious conservatives, careless conservatives are also mostly older white males. It is this type of conservative that is the main focus of the study. How is it that both conscious and careless conservatives agree economically when it is apparent that conscious conservatives are reaping most of the benefits of conservative economic ideology?

According to the arguments of this study, one should anticipate varying levels of economic interest among these media outlets within the issues of immigration, gay marriage, and abortion. One should expect that *The Wall Street Journal's* main focus for each issue will likely be economic, whereas CNN will probably have very little economic discussion within each of these issues and present a non-partisan perspective. However, based on past literature, it is anticipated that Fox News will present far more stories about these social issues than both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*, but will find ways to interject economic ideology into each issue

that will coincide with the capitalist ideology that is presented in *The Wall Street Journal* (Courtwright 2010; Grindstaff 2006). However, the frequency at which these issues will have an economic discussion will be far lower than *The Wall Street Journal*, but will likely be much more frequent than what is presented on CNN. These economic components will be mentioned frequently in order to remind viewers that the economy is important for that particular social issue.

In reviewing archives from each news source, there will be several major themes within each social issue that will be of importance. Based on the idea that Fox News deliberately focuses on political and social fears (Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Zernike 2011; Diamond 1995), close attention will be paid to paranoia and xenophobia themes within immigration and their connection to economic issues. For instance, are viewers being presented messages about immigrants taking jobs away from Americans? Are they being presented stories about how much taxpayer money is used for healthcare, education, and other services for immigrants? It will also be important to look for themes regarding border security. Are viewers being presented with ideas about increasing spending for border security or the construction of additional border fencing? Concerning abortion and gay marriage, it was anticipated that there would be discussions about taxation and overbearing government (Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008; Dunn and Woodard 1996). In regard to gay marriage, are Fox News viewers being presented with the idea that issues of gay marriage are a distraction from economic concerns? Last, abortion will likely be framed around the idea that tax payer money is being wasted on funding abortions. One can argue that there will be major discussions on Fox News about Planned Parenthood and its connection with taxpayer money. It is also anticipated that Fox News will criticize other media outlets (Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

If these themes are found in Fox News, they will likely mirror parts of stories published by *The Wall Street Journal*. It is expected that Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* will see eye to eye on taxes with each social issue because of *The Wall Street Journal's* focus on economic issues and the anticipated economic component to social issues on Fox News. However, CNN will likely have very little in common with both Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* other than reporting on the same general stories because CNN presents news in a non-partisan fashion and are not known for focusing on economic issues.

Because the research question of this paper is so specific, there is very little in the way of research that directly relates to it. The theoretical framework of this study pertaining to class consciousness and the subsequent content analysis will adequately tackle the research questions. Additionally, the literature review will synthesize literature by point of interest in order to provide an excellent background to related literature. The first half of this literature review will cover previous research concerning how capitalism affects liberty. In particular, it will cover how modern capitalism is incompatible with individual liberty and freedom, which creates the groundwork for why there are inconsistencies within conservative ideologies. The second half will deal with the agents of political socialization and how it pertains to economic ideology. In essence, the second half of the literature review will cover the nuances (eg. innovation, labor, consumer power) of capitalism and how they are perceived by conservatives.

Literature Review

There is a considerable amount of rich information concerning inconsistent political beliefs, but it does little in the way of addressing how conservatives are being socialized into

supporting ideologies that are against their own economic interest (Alperovitz 2005; Wright and Rogers 2011; Greider 2003; Giddens 1994; Hutton and Giddens 2000). This study aims to fill that gap. However, in a more general sense, sociologists and social scientists have done extensive research on political socialization. Additionally, there has been specific research on media and political socialization. Some of this research has even focused on Fox News as an important agent of socialization for conservatives (Zernike 2011; Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

Among sociologists and social scientists there is a general consensus that capitalism has increased the personal and economic freedom of affluent members of society, yet restricted personal and economic freedom of middle and lower classes citizens (Alperovitz 2005; Rogers and Wright 2011; Greider 2003; Giddens 1994; Hutton and Giddens 2000). Conversely, there has been a rich history of proponents for capitalism as a source of freedom for everybody. Economic and political freedoms are seen as facilitators of personal freedom (Friedman 1962; Dunn and Woodard 1996; Giddens 1994).

The following sub-chapters will detail the relevant literature point by point. The first half of the sub-chapters will deal with the inconsistencies between supporting conservatism and modern capitalism, while the second half of the sub-chapters will describe the different agents of political socialization for conservatives.

Ronald Reagan: The Great Communicator and Modern Conservatism

Whether capitalism is the most appropriate or effective economic system is not a concern for this research. What is at issue is the positive philosophizing about the potential of capitalism while ignoring the current apparent pitfalls (Giddens 1994; Frank 2008). Additionally, it appears that philosophizing has become much more important than the current state of the economy.

Positive philosophizing could be attributed to the fact that there is the mentality that the economy will prosper if given the proper time and conditions. Both Anthony Giddens and Thomas Frank have actually renamed this brand of conservatism as “philosophical conservatism.”

Consider Ronald Reagan and his economic policies. The United States’ economy was already suffering when Reagan took office. The country was experiencing a recession, unemployment was at all-time highs, and inflation was out of control (Krugman 1991; Cowan 1981). In order to combat this Congress enacted several pieces of legislation that deregulated markets and cut taxes (i.e. Economy Recovery Tax Act of 1981 and Tax Reform Act of 1986), thus giving corporations and businesses more freedom to operate how they see fit. However, the economic freedom of businesses and business owners did not translate and the “rising tide that lifts all boats” passed up the working and lower classes. It turned out that the markets only greatly benefited those who were already affluent (Giddens 1994). The economic climate of the United States changed completely. Since the 1950s the United States had utilized highly developed manufacturing plants and high income tax rates on the wealthy to support a prospering economy. The focus on domestic manufacturing and high incomes tax rates on the rich changed with Reagan’s fiscal and economic policies. Businesses laid off domestic workers while they offshored and outsourced their jobs. Income tax rates for the rich eventually fell to 35 percent (Reich 2007).

According to Will Hutton in *Global Capitalism* (2000), Reagan’s economic policies came about due to a kneejerk reaction to the Soviet Union. The collapse of the former Soviet Union provided a reason to foster extreme neo-liberal thinking. Hutton cites Edward Luttwak’s idea of “turbo-capitalism” to explain the almost instantaneous transformation of corporations due to deregulation. According to this idea, corporations became more powerful, the standard of living

increased, yet inequality widened among Americans. Deregulation during the Reagan era set a precedent for how corporations could now behave. The deregulation of everything from worker safety standards to checks on proper business behavior allowed companies to act as they saw fit, which allowed corporate executives to hire and fire workers when they pleased, shell out bonuses when convenient, and outsource labor. Individual freedom was transformed into economic freedom (Gray 1998).

Fast forward to the present day and Reagan is now one of the most liked presidents and has now become a veritable deity within the Republican Party and among conservatives (Courtwright 2010). Many have virtually forgotten about how his economic policies affected the liberty and freedom of the middle and lower classes because his social policy was seen as a success to most people. The increased economic freedom of businesses and the wealthy has helped to shadow everything because the average person was distracted by real and perceived concerns over social issues (homosexuality, abortion, immigration). They were convinced that these social concerns were more important (Courtwright 2010). The precedence that social issues took over economic issues is not all that surprising due to the fact that the average citizen of the United States can more easily understand or debate social concerns than economic issues because economic knowledge require much more education. In order to take advantage of this, Reagan's economic and social policy was perpetuated under the idea of "saving society" (Courtwright 2010).

A Foundation of Inconsistent Ideology

One can start by looking at how the average person views politicians and government in order to arrive at a better understanding of inconsistent political ideology. Resoundingly, most

Americans distrust politicians and government (Patterson 2001; Wills 2002; CNN 2008). This view is shared with both the left and the right. However, there is one part to this equation that separates the left and right and it is how they view government. The right sees government as something that interrupts their daily lives and hurts their freedom and liberty due to taxes, regulations, and so forth (Dean 2007; Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008). The left sees government as something to facilitate the improvement of daily life. Taxes and regulations are seen as protections of liberty and freedom. On the surface, it might seem that it is the left that is more inconsistent with their ideology due to distrust of politicians, yet trusting in government (Alperovitz 2005, Frank 2008). The right might be more consistent with their distrust of all things government, but it is the ideology and lack of knowledge behind the distrust that creates many inconsistencies with the economic ideology among its party base and leaders.

Consider school vouchers as an example of the distrust that conservatives have with government. Conservatives are known for abhorring the Department of Education. For example, they see it as an excess branch of government and a failure concerning the education of United States citizens. In order to solve this perceived issue it is routinely recommended by conservatives and Republicans to abolish the Department of Education and establish a system of school vouchers that could be used at private schools (Greider 2003). One must keep in mind that Republicans and conservatives see large government as an interference with freedom and liberty (Dean 2007; Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008). Yes, citizens would likely have more freedom to choose what schools they would like their children to attend if a system of school vouchers was implemented. However, if the Department of Education is abolished and the size of the federal government is decreased, who is going to maintain a massive nationwide school voucher

system (Greider 2003)? Would not the organization that oversees this program be very government-like and bureaucratic?

As a broader example, consider the entire political process for conservative and Republican politicians. Their first step is that they must run for a political office, which seems reasonable enough. If one wishes to become a politician, one must seek employment within the government. However, conservatives distrust government as a whole and see it as a failure (Frank 2008). There is the idea that government must be shrunk. They are pursuing jobs that they likely believe should not exist in its current state (Dean 2007)?

Grover Norquist, one of the Republicans biggest champions of dismantling government once stated, “I’m not in favor of abolishing the government. I just want to shrink it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub” (NPR: Conservative Advocate 2001). Conservatives must run for office in order to dismantle government. Does one truly think that businesses and corporations within unregulated markets will protect the interests of citizens before the government? According to conservatives, this is an easy answer. As Ronald Reagan so famously stated, “The best minds are not in government. If any were, business would steal them away.”

Last, one must consider the first moves of conservatives once they enter the political arena. The average person probably would assume that taxes would be lowered and the scope of the federal government would be decreased (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Alperovitz 2005). However, one of the first moves that conservatives make (especially if they controlled Congress) is to expand the federal government for national security reasons (Dean 2007). If the federal government is expanded, this ultimately means that taxes will either be raised or programs will

be cut. Additionally, it is much easier to persuade the general public that tax increases for national security issues is of utmost importance.

The party platform of the Republican Party is not to decrease the size and scope of the federal government, but rather mold and shape it into their own world view. The federal government funding universal healthcare or allowing same-sex marriage is an extreme overstepping of boundaries in the eyes of most conservatives. However, when it comes to things like sex education, homosexual rights, abortion, or equal rights amendments, the federal government is almost always the first avenue conservatives think to use (Dunn and Woodward 1996).

What does a Republican senator or congressperson do when he or she wants mandatory religious sex education and prayer in public schools? Each contacts Republican colleagues and attempts to garner enough support to pass federal legislation in support of it. For instance, in May 2012, Republican Representative Tim Walberg of Michigan introduced H. Res. 662 to allow prayer in public schools and encouraged his colleagues to begin holding public prayers during school board meetings (Kasperowicz 2012). What do a Republican senators or congresspersons do when they disagree with same-sex marriage or abortion? They create legislation to create a federal ban (e.g. Defense of Marriage Act). Charles Dunn and David Woodard make no qualms about this. In their book *The Conservative Tradition in America* (1996) they openly note that conservatives use the federal government to support their own cultural ideas, yet distrust the federal government as if no irony or cognitive dissonance exists in their argument. They write that most conservative ideology follows a capitalist pattern in that markets exist free of government intervention and that local communities should have more power in solving problems than the federal government.

Their ideology has become compartmentalized. Dunn and Woodard also admit that it is possible to be a conservative and not have an intellectual understanding of the ideology. They explained their own compartmentalization without even having to mention that it exists. This certainly explains why some academics have gone so far as to say that conservative ideology is malleable (Frank 2008).

Economic Freedom = Personal Freedom

As previously stated, conservatives generally believe that capitalism and free markets lead to pure personal and economic freedoms. Specifically, this ideology is rooted in traditional economic liberalism. According to economic liberal scholars like Milton Friedman, Friedrich Hayek, and George Stigler, the presuppositions about capitalism and freedom are very true due to the fact that they see freedom of exchange as being equitable within this system. Markets are only going to exist if there are individuals who buy products created within these markets because individuals ultimately dictate what the market does (Hayek 1949). Businesses within specific markets only create products that people want. If businesses created products that consumers did not need or want, the fact that consumers would not buy them would be proof that a market for those products does not exist. In the eyes of economic liberal scholars this is an equitable process because people receive the goods and services they want or need and the businesses receive capital in return (Friedman 1962, Hutton and Giddens 2000, Dunn and Woodard 1996). Unfortunately, many markets and businesses do not currently operate in equitable ways within capitalism, which creates an immediate inconsistency between ideology and reality (Hutton and Giddens 2000, Greider 2003, Alperovitz 2005, Giddens 1994). This belief is so important to conservatives that one of the most popular conservative think-tanks,

International Freedom Foundation, was only concerned with promoting the idea that individual freedom can be obtained through capitalism and the free market (Thomas 2008).

There are several falsehoods about the creation and perpetuation of personal freedom under capitalism (Alperovitz 2005; Wright and Rogers 2011; Greider 2003). However, it goes without saying that capitalism has done an excellent job at extending freedom for many people which could be anything from the freedom to purchase a variety of products at a cheap price to the creation of successful businesses due to deregulation. Nonetheless, capitalism has inhibited the freedom of many and often times the extension of freedom for some also contributes to the erosion of freedom for others (Alperovitz 2005; Wright and Rogers 2011; Greider 2003).

Previously reviewed literature suggests the idea that capitalism and individual liberty are not compatible for many individuals. Capitalism has contributed to inequality due to coercion by those who already have liberty and freedom (Parijs 1995; Schweickart 1996), which undermines the very idea of liberty (Walker 1981; Reiman 1988). According to this literature there cannot be equality in liberty if there is not economic liberty (Reiman 1988). If this is the case, why do more people not recognize this? One can start by looking at how individuals are defining capitalism and other economic systems. One's definition certainly dictates how well they understand how economies operate. According to C.F. Taeusch (1935), "There is much more of condemnation and defense than there is of definition and description. This is, of course, a common human trait – to base inferences and judgments upon matters which are not clearly defined or understood." Many conservatives are simply supporting capitalism and writing off all other economic systems as inherently inferior due to their lack of understanding concerning economics. Many individuals simply do not have working definitions for capitalism and other economic systems, which leads to the second half of this review of literature. How are conservatives aligning themselves with

capitalist ideology if they do not have a working definition of it? How it is that they are being politically socialized into this way of thinking when it is not in their best economic interest?

Liberty, Freedom, and Consumer Power

One must look at what is truly important to those who consider themselves conservative. One can easily conclude that conservative ideology rests on two basic concepts: liberty and freedom. However, this is not any different from those who consider themselves liberal. What liberal-minded individual is going to state that he or she does not feel liberty and freedom are important? What differentiates them is the degree at which they value these ideas and how they interpret them. Conservatives are more likely to see freedom or liberty as being synonymous with individuality. Conversely, liberals are likely to equate freedom or liberty with general welfare (Wright and Rogers 2011).

As previously mentioned, conservatives greatly value the idea of personal freedom, an idea that is uniquely engrained in capitalist rhetoric. Those directly involved in the inner workings of a capitalist market are very well aware of this due to the fact that they perpetuate this idea to their benefit. Why else would conservative politicians have such a great relationship with business and not the federal government (Dean 2007)? Those outside of the market latch onto the idea that capitalism and freedom are intertwined because they are led to believe that they have individuality and autonomy within capitalism as a consumer (Wright and Rogers 2011). For most people living in capitalist democracies, individuality is seen as being very much related to personal freedom (Wejnert 2010). Additionally, these same people see capitalism and democracy as being intrinsically tied, which means that both democracy and capitalism are as equally important when it comes to personal freedom (Hutton and Giddens 2000, Thomas 2008).

As consumers, individuals see themselves as dictators of the direction of free market economies. Consumer power translates to a better economy, more innovation, and better products (Friedman 1962, Dunn and Woodard 1996). However, some argue that the dominance that consumer power has over the market is merely a myth. They contend that consumers are constantly being told what to buy through advertisements, commercials, and so forth. They are being sold products that they likely would have never thought of buying. How much power do consumers have when they are influenced into buying certain products? Those reaping the benefits of capitalism have successfully created false autonomy among consumers (Wright and Rogers 2011, Hutton and Giddens 2000, Luttwak 1999). Some scholars also argue that consumers do not have a systematic voice when it comes to speaking up about corporate behavior. Most consumers either do not realize that they lack a systemic voice or they simply do not care about having that systematic voice and corporations take advantage of this. Most corporations are simply manipulating their own customers (Hutton 200). Consumers are not choosing what they want. They are limited to choosing what is offered to them by businesses who have already decided what consumers need. Once markets have been cornered corporations assume that customers will pay their prices. Free markets almost always become “unfree” because the largest businesses are allowed to become monopolies (Luttwak 1999) or at least be part of an oligopoly.

One must contemplate several questions when considering consumer freedom. How much freedom does a consumer have if markets are monopolized? How much freedom does a consumer really have if every personal computer they have to choose from comes preinstalled with a Windows operating system? How much freedom does a consumer really have if a cable provider buys out every other provider in an area? How much freedom does a consumer have if

corporations are allowed to create localized monopolies through eminent domain? Are consumers directly involved in these instances? According to academics, the answer is simply no. All individual economic decisions made by consumers are within the confines established by those who already have liberty and freedom (Schweickart 1996). Consumers cannot even fight back because they lack the resources to fight corporations and big business (Luttwak 1999).

Robert Reich (2007) offers a slightly different perspective in his work *Supercapitalism*. He notes that consumers are fairly limited in their purchasing power. He makes no qualms about the idea that those who are in power are those who give consumers their choices. However, Reich makes the point that consumers do not have power in choosing certain products but power in deciding which store they are purchasing products from. He uses the example of Wal-Mart and Target to make his point. Reich postulates that if Wal-Mart assumes that consumers will automatically pay their prices that they will find themselves trapped. American consumers are more concerned about price than quality, according to Reich. If Wal-Mart raises their prices, consumers will simply go to Target or another larger retailer for groceries and goods. According to Reich, corporations are “just playing the game” as far as capitalism is concerned. Although he does not come out and state it, he is making the point that there are certain checks and balances with corporate behavior. Corporations are bound by the rules of competition.

One argument that is perpetuated about capitalism and contributes to political socialization is that it raises the standard of living for everybody and that it is a great equalizer when it comes to the welfare of citizens all over the globe (Greider 2003, Friedman 1962). This argument preys on the individuality conscious consumers and the historical, social, and economic ignorance of its proponents. It has become an extension of the American Dream ethos. In the eyes of proponents wealth leads to economic freedom, which creates an overall sense of

freedom and liberty (Wright and Rogers 2011). In essence, those who have money are seen as having more knowledge, which grants them power.

Last, individuals are not only consumers with regard purchasing power in capitalism, but they are also consumers of media. It is just one more important facet to consumer capitalism. According to Nielsen, roughly 290 million people own at least one television and the average person watches almost thirty-three hours of television a week (2011). Seventy-five percent of people also report that they watch national or cable news daily (Pew Research 2010). Like material consumption, consumers of media are also led to believe that they dictate the content. Media consumption is seen through the plethora of ways that individuals can participate with various media outlets. For instance, consumers now have the ability to share particular news articles and stories on social network sites like Facebook and Twitter (Pew Research 2010). Information concerning media consumption is incredibly important because it indicates the extreme interest that individuals have with media, which makes it vital to the rest of this study because it provides a reason for discussing political socialization and conducting a content analysis of media outlets. The role of media and political socialization will be discussed in pages twenty-eight through thirty-one.

“Haves and Soon to Have”

Due to the fact that many are politically socialized into believing that capitalism is an economic equalizer, most Americans see themselves not as poor, destitute, or even middle class, but as future millionaires. Conservatives seem to believe this more fervently than any other group. For instance, Republican Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels released a video response to President Obama’s 2012 State of the Union address in which he discussed the growing disparity

between the rich and the poor in the United States. Governor Daniels responded by stating, “As Republicans our first concern is for those waiting tonight to begin or resume the climb up life’s ladder. We do not accept that ours will ever be a nation of haves and have nots; we must always be a nation of haves and soon to have” (USA Today 2012). This statement is an example of how well Republicans have been able to frame issues into something accessible to both the party base and average citizens. President Obama benignly referenced the poor as “have nots” and was attempting to relate with those who are underprivileged. His innocuous term was then framed by Governor Daniels into something that he believed was offensive by once again evoking the idea that Americans need to fantasize about being millionaires and renaming “have nots” to “soon to have(s).”

The obsession that many Americans have with the rich and the “culture” that is associated with them acts as one of the main agents of socialization in regard to the idea of “soon to haves.” They are so enamored with the rich that they see them as experts and intellectuals (Luttwak 1999). The obsession with celebrities is why one sees individuals like Donald Trump as a contributor for Fox News and voicing his “analysis” of the current political and economic climate (Fox News 2012).

If one believes in the American Dream and is certain that hard work and intellect breed success, it is assumed that these wealthy individuals must have followed the traditional, hard-working pattern (Luttwak 1999). Attribution theory does well to explain this line of thinking. Most people in this country are not rich. In fact, the population is becoming poorer as a whole. Additionally, Americans work more hours for less pay than any other developed country in the world. Astonishingly, Americans work 50 percent more than Italians, French, and Germans (Prescott 2004). A scenario is created whereby the average American sees themselves as either

not working hard enough or not being smart enough. The “facts” that the average citizen sees permits no other conclusion in their mind. How else could the average person explain the vast riches of people like Donald Trump or Mitt Romney? In their mind individuals like Trump and Romney have worked harder or have extra insight.

Americans see themselves as future millionaires and buy into the idea that working longer and harder will eventually pay off. By garnering the support of the middle and lower classes, the rich can manipulate the system that allowed them to gain a vast amount of wealth. The rich realize that their economic condition would not be the same without the support of those who are not as well off economically (Luttwak 1999), which gets to the heart of the present study. How could an individual with a considerably lower status and income than that of affluent conservative politicians even think about supporting a politician who is going to keep him or her in a destitute or impoverished state? The United States has become a “country of winners for winners.” The middle and lower classes are so convinced of their future riches that they desperately wish to identify with the rich, which causes them to ignore politicians who may try to represent their interests (Luttwak 1999).

Tradition

According to Anthony Giddens (1994), the political socialization process for conservatives is distinctly rooted in tradition. It is not surprising that tradition would be a key component due to the fact that “traditional values” are a main focus of conservatives. Additionally, an ideology rooted in values that are deemed traditional is much easier for a person to identify with and latch onto. The idea is that these values have passed the test of time (Giddens 1994). This emphasis on tradition has recently become much more important because

of an obvious “detraditionalization” and secularization of the United States. This emphasis took hold during Reagan’s presidency and has provided a reason and platform for fundamentalism (Giddens 1994).

Giddens’ idea about tradition explains a couple of aspects about conservatism (i.e., negativity and brand awareness). First, conservative politicians make a conscious effort to frame their ideas in a negative light, which could be anything from not cooperating or being flexible with liberal policy writers or unbridled malice (Courwright 2010). For instance, conservative pundit Bill Bennett once stated, “You could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down. That would be an impossible, ridiculous, and morally reprehensible thing to do, but your crime rate would go down” (Tapper 2005).

Conservative media have perpetuated many of these negative frames through even reframing mainstream media, distorting the truth, and attacking liberal ideology (Jamieson and Capella 2008). The negative framing really goes behind personal attacks and encompasses any distortion of facts and deliberate attacks on political opponents. According to Jamieson and Capella, it is Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal*’s editorial section (namely James Taranto) that are responsible for upholding the conservative establishment and negative political framing. They deliberately frame issues in an antagonistic manner and rally against the “liberal media.” Jamieson and Capella also recognize that there are conservative players in the mainstream media periphery that are also important in negative political framing (2008). For instance, after Georgetown University student Sandra Fluke testified in court about describing a need for Georgetown’s private insurance plan to cover contraception, Rush Limbaugh lambasted her by referring to her as a “slut” and stating, “She’s having so much sex she can’t afford the contraception. She wants you and me and the taxpayers to pay her to have sex. If we are going to

pay for your contraceptives and thus pay for you to have sex... we want you to post the videos online so we can all watch.” What should have been discourse concerning whether or not contraception should be covered by her private insurance turned into discourse about contraception and promiscuous sex (Duell 2012).

The one caveat to Giddens’ argument of a tradition of conservative negative framing is that he only stated extreme examples of negative framing. One must assume that he was generally speaking, but chose one of the most extreme examples as evidence in order to make his point seem much more dramatic and important. Although Giddens might be accurate in his assessment of negative frames, it is important to note that liberal commentators and politicians are also prone to vicious comments like those of Gingrich and Bennett. Liberal pundits Ed Schultz and Keith Olbermann have both been caught making similar comments. Schultz stated during the 2008 election that Laura Ingraham was a “right-wing slut.” Olbermann has remarked that conservative commentator S.E. Cupp “should have been aborted by her parents” (Powers 2012). Giddens made it seem as if liberals or democrats were not likely to engage in such behavior due to the fact that he neglected to even mention similar behavior by liberals. As evidenced above, it is certainly inaccurate to suggest that only conservatives engage in such behavior. However, there is a difference in that these liberals (i.e., Olbermann and Schultz) are not framing issues negatively. They are just simply using negative language without any reference to a particular frame.

Second, brand awareness is extremely important in determining what type of conservative a person is (Courtwright 2010). For instance, it has become extremely popular for conservatives to align themselves with Ronald Reagan. Who is and is not a Reagan conservative has had a great influence on the political socialization process (Courtwright 2010). Many

Republican politicians are personally branding themselves as “Reagan Republicans” in order to appeal to the party base. During the 2012 election cycle, Newt Gingrich referred to himself as a “Reagan populist conservative.” Not surprisingly, Gingrich started making these references shortly after many conservative pundits and politicians expressed uneasiness about his possible nomination. He then shifted his association with Reagan as being “the outsider who scares the Republican establishment” (Condon 2012). The irony here is that the “Republican establishment” is the institution that created the “brand” he is defending himself over. This quarrel between conservative pundits and Gingrich was a battle over the Republican brand. Gingrich speaks so matter-of-factly and with so much bravado that most savvy conservative commentators were very much aware that he does not appeal to the party base and that he is not much like Reagan. However, if the brand is so important to conservatives they may align with it regardless of whether or not it fits with their ideology. It did not matter to Gingrich as to whether or not he truly is anything like Reagan. What mattered is that Gingrich needed to appeal to the party base and that was the shortest route to do so.

Political Framing, the Family, and Education

As noted earlier, one tool that has been utilized by powerful conservatives is that of political framing. According to George Lakoff, political frames “are mental structures that shape the way we see the world.” With this in mind, how are conservatives using this to their advantage in persuading individuals to adopt an ideology that does not necessarily benefit them? Ideas about social issues coalesce and meld with ideas about the economy. As stated earlier, people are more likely to understand social issues due to the fact that no previous knowledge or insight is needed to understand them, as opposed to economic issues.

Rick Santorum's *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good* (2006) is one example of merging social issues with economic issues. Santorum's main focus is to outline and dissect what he calls a "natural family" (households headed by a husband and wife). He basically takes an antiquated approach in defining what a family is and makes a case for the husband being the provider and the wife as the housekeeper and nurturer for the children. He states that the "natural family" is dependent on several forms of capital (social, economic, moral, cultural, and educational).

Not surprisingly, Santorum is afraid of the state of the "natural family." He sees the family as being under attack by liberals due to abortion, same-sex marriage, and social welfare programs. In his mind, abortion destroys families because children are no longer deemed important, same-sex marriage makes a mockery of "traditional marriage," and welfare causes families to become dependent on the government and no longer care about obtaining economic capital (Grindstaff 2006). By this point, the frame is becoming much more solidified. He then takes the approach that individuals must be self-sufficient and responsible in regard to a free-market economy. His approach is that of a parent teaching his or her child lessons in how to save money, which is where the "natural family" and the economy become more intertwined. Santorum argues that the head of the family household must be in control and a disciplinarian, yet teach responsibility and not dependency. He suggests that children should only be dependent on their parents for basic necessities but more independent and self-sufficient as they grow. He uses this idea to dismiss welfare. He sees it as a crutch that allows people to be dependent their entire lives. His idea is to discipline welfare recipients and encourage a "pick yourself up by your bootstraps" kind of work ethic. His approach is very much akin to the "tough love" approach to child rearing (Grindstaff 2006).

In true conservative fashion, Santorum utilizes the “abortion is murder” and “same-sex marriage is destructive to the modern family” frames (Grindstaff 2006). However, the critique on welfare is where he truly begins to meld his social and economic ideas. Although it is never explicitly stated, the melding of social and economic issues is how modern conservative ideology becomes more accessible. Economic ideas are presented in such a way that they mirror how social ideas are dealt.

It would be an incredible disservice to this issue to ignore the fact that this ideology is finely crafted. Whether one follows this ideology or not should have no bearing on understanding that intertwining social and economic issues in order to garner support from average citizens is nothing short of genius. However, how is it that conservative politicians can convince citizens of lower economic status to adopt their ideology when they would likely benefit from social welfare programs? One must consider the importance of political framing. Conservative politicians like Rick Santorum are not framing the issues on the premise the economy is in decline. They are basing their frames on social issues ideas, which are much more accessible to the average person. The average person needs no previous education to be convinced that the “natural family” is in decline.

Another factor in the socialization process of conservatives (namely social conservatives) is the mistrust of higher education. There is a movement of anti-intellectualism within the Republican Party, which somewhat goes against the grain with what many scholars have stated. As previously mentioned, Americans as a whole are awestruck by those who they consider intellectuals and experts (Giddens 1994). However, it is also supposedly possible to support conservative ideology without having an intellectual understanding of it (Dunn and Woodward 1996). Initially, this does not make much sense. How is it that an individual can admire those

who they consider intellectuals, yet neither see themselves as being intellectual or needing higher education? The answer is fairly evident after some consideration of the following quotation by Rick Santorum: “President Obama once said he wants everybody in America to go to college. What a snob. There are good decent men and women who go out and work hard every day and put their skills to test that aren’t taught by some liberal college professor trying to indoctrinate them. Oh, I understand why he wants you to go to college. He wants to remake you in his image. I want to create jobs so people can remake their children into their image, not his” (Selway and Homan 2012). It is important to note that this quotation is from a man who has three college degrees. How is it that a well-educated person can state that with such conviction? Once again, it has been framed in such a way that an issue that seemingly has little to do with the modern American family somehow becomes intertwined with the idea that it is a threat to the state of families.

Much like the idea that the modern family is under threat, many conservatives like Rick Santorum and Bill O’Reilly are very keen on using the idea that the country as a whole is under threat. Savvy politicians and pundits have noticed the power of this idea to socialize people into a conservative ideology. In order to have a larger reach, this idea is utilized in a couple different ways, past and present.

One idea that is perpetuated is that the United States economy is under constant threat from Asian markets, which is very much like what occurred during the Red Scare with the Soviet Union (Hutton and Giddens 2000). During the Red Scare the United States was in a race to be superior culturally, technologically, and economically compared to the Soviet Union. It was believed that the Soviet Union would have somehow overtaken the United States otherwise.

Today, it is believed among a vast amount of conservatives that Asia, specifically China, is poised to conquer the United States in regard to our culture and economy (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Although it is not quite apparent, it is important to consider what is occurring in regard to the socialization process that leads to this belief. As previously mentioned here, democracy and capitalism are seen as being synonymous in the United States (Hutton and Giddens 2000, Thomas 2008).

One must keep in mind the connection with democracy and capitalism when considering the schema Americans have for China. Much like the Soviet Union during the Red Scare, China has its own brand of Marx/Lenin inspired communism. If history has taught Americans anything, it is that there is an obligation to detest communism. Considering this and the real and perceived threats from China, conservatives have used this to drum up support, thus creating a xenophobic ideology and party base. Encouraging antagonism toward communism and China is a very successful socialization tool due to the fact that capitalism and democracy are vital American institutions and the backbone of American culture and conservative ideology has stressed a “victimology” facet to their ideology (Frank 2008). The idea that Americans, especially conservatives, are constant victims of foreign markets, overbearing government rule, among other concerns has become a basis of conservative ideology. The idea of constant victimization has been part of the conservative ethos for quite some time and has contributed to a fetish of xenophobia. Much like how Marx stated that capitalism had necessitated fetishism of commodities, conservatives have necessitated a fetishism of xenophobia in that they relate to other conservatives and outsiders in relation to their xenophobic political beliefs (Diamond 1995). It has even reached a point now where many conservatives believe that illegal immigration contributes to job loss (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). The correlation between job

loss and illegal immigration has become so important that 80% of Tea Party members claim that illegal immigration is a very serious issue (Zernike 2011).

Fear, Fox News, and Media's Role in Political Socialization

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, individuals are not only consumers of material goods, but are also consumers of media. Due to the fact that individuals are also consumers of media, media acts as a critical agent of socialization. Consumers of print and cable news are constantly experiencing the effects of political socialization processes. News is becoming more interpretive, which means that certain worldviews or political ideologies are being presented to viewers (Patterson 1994). Additionally, media outlets are presenting very brief reports of news and are sometimes reducing entire issues to sound bites or episodes, which reduces the ability of viewers to become well-informed about particular issues. However, although viewers might be less informed about issues, media do have an influence on one's ideology and how they think about politics (Entman 1989). Robert Entman even goes as far as to claim that particular media messages do have an influence on the political ideologies of viewers and that they attempt to shape the thoughts of viewers by presenting specific worldviews (1989). Nevertheless, viewers do have some autonomy in this situation. They still have the ability to find different news sources. Although viewers still have this ability, they tend to stick to news that confirms their own interests (Markus and Zajonc 1985). Because individuals are watching news and media that are presenting information that is relevant to their interests they are more likely to have their views shaped by that particular media (Entman 1989). Individuals resist information that completely challenges their worldview. However, people are very flexible with new information that is seemingly within their personal ideology, even when that information may appear to be inconsistent to outsiders (Axelrod 1973). The notion that people are flexible with their ideology

is particularly important for this study and helps to explain Fox News as an agent of political socialization.

There is no denying the Fox News is popular among conservatives and that it is an important tool for conservatives to get their messages heard. There is also no denying that Fox News has a conservative slant to its presentation of news. (Ackerman 2001). However, what are some of the specific messages that are being sent to Fox News viewers? What influence might Fox News have on political socialization? According to Skocpol and Williamson (2012), Fox News is the most important agent of socialization within media for conservatives and that their main approach is to use fear.

Fear is the one major component to Fox News' presentation of news. Examples of fear as a tool for the presentation of news could be anything from the fear of immigrants taking jobs away from Americans to the federal government raising taxes or organizations like Planned Parenthood "stealing" taxpayer dollars. Fox News is certainly an important social movement organizer for conservatives. Additionally, Fox News pushes a specific world view to their audiences. Over half of all Fox News viewers identify themselves as conservative and nearly all Fox News' regular viewers of primetime programming identify as conservative (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). The idea that Fox News presents a specific world view demonstrates that Fox News is essentially conservative news for conservative viewers. Additionally, the average ages of a Fox News viewer is 65 and only 2% of the viewership is African-American (Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

Concerning fear as a socialization tool, Fox News plays with an ideology that is dictated by fear. It is an ideology that fears overbearing government and thrives on xenophobia and

paranoia. Fox News is very clever in that they use these fears as an approach to the presentation of news. Furthermore, Fox News uses these fears to paint the picture that the United States is in decline (Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Zernike 2011).

As an example of Fox News' utilization of fear as a socialization tool, consider Fox News' Tax Day Tea Parties. On April 15, 2009, The Tea Party organized rally across the country to protest overbearing taxes. Essentially, these were rallies for individuals who were fearful of the federal government and its power to over-tax individuals. What does Fox News do with this information? Ten days prior to the rallies, Fox News began to give coverage of the planning and actually urged viewers to participate. Everybody from Greta Van Susteren to Sean Hannity were scattered all over the United States on April 15th to cover the rallies. During the coverage of these events, the banner on the screen displayed "FNC TAX DAY TEA PARTIES" (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Fox News had absolutely no qualms about supporting these events. These were not simply Republican events. These were events of conservatives fearful about the federal government's taxation power and Fox News took advantage of it. Fox News even went as far as to grant a satellite interview with Mary Rakovich, who held her own Tax Day protest in Fort Myers, Florida. Roakovich's rally consisted only of herself, her husband, and one other person (Zernike 2011).

Another tool that Fox News uses to perpetuate fear is the use of acknowledging the viewer. During a content analysis, Skocpol and Williamson (2012) noticed that both anchors and commentators frequently referenced Fox News viewers. Fox News reminds their viewers to be fearful. For instance, Bill O'Reilly once stated, "The American media will never embrace the Tea Party. Why? Generally speaking, they look down on the folks, they think *you* are dumb." Glenn Beck also once claimed that critics are out to "belittle and dismiss *you, the viewer.*" There

is constantly a battle of us versus them (Skocpol and Williamson 2012) It is the Fox News viewer against the CNN viewer. It is the Fox News viewer against government regulation. It is the Fox News viewer against President Obama. There is always something for the Fox News viewer to be fearful of and Fox News is there to personally remind them about it and that they need to do something about it.

The conclusion of this review of literature marks the point at which theory becomes important to this study. The following chapter will detail the theoretical framework behind this study and will outline the importance of class consciousness with regard to the research questions. Additionally, the study-specific concepts of careless and conscious conservatives will be clearly defined.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this study rests on several concepts. The first of these is Karl Marx's idea of false consciousness, which is of utmost importance to the theoretical framework of this study because it provides an explanation for why some conservatives support an ideology that is against their best economic interest. The idea of false consciousness arose out of Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, which was detailed in his work *Capital*. He argued that, because capitalism focuses on material gain, that misleads those who are not directly benefiting from the means of production. According to George Ritzer (2008), Marx aimed to "restore the dialectic between the subjective and the objective aspects of social life" (pg. 140).

Marx's original idea is far too general for the particular subject of this paper. However, there are neo-Marxian theorists who expanded upon the original idea of false consciousness beyond a fetishism of commodities. For example, Georg Lukacs (1923) uses false consciousness

as a basis for his concept of reification. Instead of focusing on only the economic aspect of people's lives, Lukacs included social structures as well, which is exactly why Lukacs' work serves as an excellent theoretical background for this paper.

According to Lukacs (1923), "Man in capitalist society confronts a reality 'made' by himself (as a class) which appears to him to be a natural phenomenon alien to himself; he is wholly at the mercy of its 'laws'; his activity is confined to the exploitation of the inexorable fulfillment of certain individual laws for his own (egoistic) interests" (pg. 135). Lukacs saw this as being unique to capitalism due to the fact that people are bound by a social class that is outside of their realm of control, yet are compelled to seek material gain. Individuals then see their own economic standing in a subjective manner, instead of objectively. Lukacs argued that there was a distinct connection between class consciousness and economic position.

Much like Marx, Lukacs suggested that individuals had a sense of false consciousness and did not truly understand their economic standing and exploitation. It is not until the revolutionary stage of the progression toward communism that individuals finally understand their exploitation under capitalism. Lukacs also argued that the bourgeoisie could develop a class consciousness before the proletariat because they understood the laws of capitalism and viewed them objectively. However, the proletariat would have a much more difficult time gaining class consciousness due to the fact that they see capitalism subjectively.

Lukacs' ideas about class consciousness can easily be applied to the research at hand. As defined previously, conscious conservatives have a working knowledge of capitalism and understand where they fit in terms of social class, which is much like what Lukacs postulated with the bourgeoisie. They understand how capitalism operates (or should operate), thus having

gained true class consciousness. Conversely, careless conservatives only have a slight understanding of what capitalism actually is and where they belong socioeconomically, thus creating a false consciousness.

Based on this theoretical background and literature review of this study, one should expect to see certain themes appear within the content analysis. Because most Fox News viewers are likely to be careless conservatives, one can anticipate finding content on Fox News that will keep viewers distracted from the true reason for their own economic situation, while managing interject vague discussions about the external processes of capitalism and the US economy. For instance, it is anticipated that Fox News will present xenophobic frames while reporting on immigration. These xenophobic frames would be an initial distraction for the viewer. Once the frame is established, the economic component will be applied in order to truly distract the viewer from their real economic condition. In this case, they will likely discuss the idea of taxes and immigrants draining society by taking advantage of healthcare, public assistance, and public education. The reason the viewer has a modest economic standing is not due to the processes of capitalism and the US economy; rather, it is due to somebody taking their tax dollars. There is just enough economic discussion to keep viewers interested, but not enough to make them informed about economic processes.

As for conscious conservatives, they will likely mirror what Lukacs stated about the bourgeoisie and class consciousness. The evidence for class consciousness will be seen within *The Wall Street Journal*. Most of the news will be presented from a capitalist perspective and very little will be said in the way of social issues. Because these individuals have obtained class consciousness they will likely not care to discuss social issues very often due to the fact that they would not pertain to their personal economic standing.

It is anticipated that CNN will not display any specific themes that relate to either careless or conscious conservatives, which is unlike Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal*. CNN will likely present their news and information in a non-partisan manner and refrain from presenting specific ideological preferences. All things considered, CNN should have a much more different approach to the presentation of news than both Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* because of their neutral approach.

Methodology and Data Collection

This study utilized an exploratory research approach with an emphasis on an emergent themes technique. This approach was chosen due to past experience with relevant literature and familiarity with the media outlets. To answer the research questions, a content analysis of news from Fox News, CNN, and *The Wall Street Journal* was conducted. Fox News was chosen for its history of supporting conservative ideology that coincides with the definition of careless conservatives (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). *The Wall Street Journal* was selected due to its focus on capitalist economic issues that corresponds with the idea of conscious conservatives (Jamieson and Capella 2008). CNN was chosen for its wide reach and non-partisan approach to the presentation of news.

The reason for conducting a content analysis was due to the fact that it is the most appropriate method to discover what specific messages are being presented to viewers. This method provides the ability to dissect and analyze framing and emergent themes, which are incredibly important to political socialization. Due to prior knowledge of relevant literature, any theme that can be tied back to the literature will be noted. Last, utilizing a content analysis as the

primary research technique allows the researcher to discover underlying themes, which will uncover any fundamental differences among media outlets.

Demographic data also provide additional reasons for choosing Fox News, CNN, and *The Wall Street Journal*. It offers insight into the specific audiences of each organization. Additionally, this data will be used to make more definitive conclusions about the specific audiences of each news organization.

Most staunch conservatives are men, but Fox News' audience is evenly split between the genders (Pew Research Center 2011; National TV Spots 2012). Data also show that over half (fifty-four percent) of staunch conservatives and nearly half (forty percent) of libertarians prefer Fox News. Additionally, staunch conservatives make up the largest demographic of viewers and listeners of Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh. Last, fifty-six percent of staunch conservatives believe that immigrants are threatening traditional American values. Sixty-eight percent actually believe that immigrants are a burden on the country and that they are taking jobs and taking advantage of healthcare (Pew Research Center 2011). Fox News viewers also have an average household income of \$59,400 (Huff 2009), while *The Wall Street Journal's* readers have the highest average household income of all newspaper print publications at \$135,740 (Mediamark and Research and Intelligence 2009). Sixty percent of all of *The Wall Street Journal's* readers are also in top management positions within their careers (Mitchell 2011). Additional demographic information could not be found for *The Wall Street Journal* so conclusions cannot be drawn about educational attainment and breakdown of household income. However, according to National TV Spots, Fox News and CNN have roughly the same percentage of viewers who have attended college at forty-four percent and forty-three percent, respectively. Additionally, they have similar results when it comes to household income. Fifty-three percent of Fox News

viewers make at least the median national household income and CNN claims fifty-four percent of their viewership at or above the national median household income.

Data were analyzed according to how many times immigration, gay marriage, and abortion are discussed, and how each issue is framed within each media outlet. It can be argued that these three topics are some of the most important issues to conservatives based on the previous literature. Additionally, it is believed that each of these topics will have an economic component to them. Concerning each of these topics, there is the possibility of frames dealing with both social and economic components in conjunction. It is because that each of these issues has the possibility of being important both socially and economically that they were chosen for this particular study, which is important because the research questions deal with the presentation of news and the socialization into an ideology that against the best economic interest of many individuals. The economic component (or lack thereof) in each of these topics is necessary for reaching conclusions to the research questions.

Only archived videos from Fox News and CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* articles from December 1st, 2011 to May 31st, 2012 were used for this analysis. This method is the most appropriate due to the fact that it is nearly impossible to read and watch everything released by the three organizations during the six month time span. During the archival searches for each news organization, the same search strings were used (“immigration,” “gay marriage,” and “abortion”). These three search strings were used because it was anticipated that these topics would have both social and economic components in regard to conservative ideology (Courtwright 2010; Grindstaff 2006). While analyzing the archives, very close attention was paid to how each news organization was framing particular ideas and issues. A total of 395 Fox News archived videos (232-Immigration, 98-Gay marriage, 65-Abortion) were analyzed. 124 archived

videos from CNN (43-Immigration, 72-Gay marriage, 9-Abortion) and 302 archived videos *The Wall Street Journal* (121-Immigration, 121-Gay marriage, 60-Abortion) were also analyzed. Each of these videos had at least a portion dedicated to one of the three topics.

Several themes that are anticipated based on the previous literature. First, immigration themes concerning paranoia, xenophobia, job loss, taxes, and negativity were of particular interest based on the importance of these issues within the literature review (Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Zernike 2011; Diamond 1995; Dean 2007; Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008; Dunn and Woodard 1996). It was anticipated that these themes would have intertwined social and economic components (Courtwright 2010; Grindstaff 2006). Concerning abortion and gay marriage, it was anticipated that there would be discussions about taxation and overbearing government (Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008; Courtwright 2010; Dunn and Woodard 1996). These three issues of immigration, gay marriage, and abortion were directly drawn from the literature in chapters 3-1, 3-6, 3-7, and 3-8, which discussed the importance of political framing and the shifting of conservative ideology into more social issues. It was also anticipated that Fox News would criticize other media outlets (Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

Additional themes were also added as they became apparent in the archives. These additional themes were not necessarily always economic in nature. Many of these additional themes actually had very little to do with economics, but were incredibly important to this study as they were still emergent themes that dealt with the issues at hand.

As each theme was found within each issue it was coded according to its frequency. For instance, if national security was mentioned or discussed fifty times within the six-month span of the archives, “national security” was coded 50. Additionally, themes were only coded if they

were either discussed as part of an argument or the main topic of a news segment. Any theme or issue that was only mentioned in passing was not included as part of the data. Each of the three issues were separated into either “thematic” or “neutral” categories. The thematic category refers to the themes that were coded and the neutral category represents any instance where the issue was presented in a neutral fashion without any theme. Each news organization was analyzed and coded according to this procedure within the following tables (Figures 1-3). The format for each table for the three news outlet will be identical to one another.

Figure 1. Immigration

Theme

Frequency

National Security/violence/defense	
Job loss	
Improves Economy/entrepreneurship	
Distrust of government	
Liberal political stunt	
Blame media	
Cultural superiority	
Positive story/human interest	
International issue	
Total # of discussions	Thematic- Neutral- Total-

Figure 2. Gay Marriage

Persecuted for conservative belief	
Liberal political stunt	
Gay agenda	
Hurts children	
Hurts economy	
Economy more important issue	
Destruction of culture	
Blame media	
General support for “traditional marriage”	
General support for gay marriage	
Human interest	
Total # of discussions	Thematic- Neutral- Total-

Figure 3. Abortion

Waste of tax payer money	
Evoked communism/China	
Media bias	
Liberals are pro-abortion	

Support for pro-life	
Support for pro-choice	
Total # of discussions	Thematic- Neutral- Total-

As shown on Figure 4, Mill’s method of difference (*A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*) will be used to differentiate between the two types of conservatives. According to Mill (2002), “If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former, the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon.” Using Mill’s method of difference will demonstrate a relationship linking the holding of inconsistent beliefs concerning capitalism and liberty, an individual’s understanding of economics, and the fact that individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds have similar beliefs concerning capitalism. It is anticipated that the messages displayed by *The Wall Street Journal* will coincide with the definition of conscious conservatism and the messages displayed by Fox News will coincide with the definition of careless conservatism.

Figure 4. Conservative Typology

	Conservative Ideology	Supports Capitalism (modern or otherwise)	Believes in individual liberty	Knowledgeable about capitalism
Conscious	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Conservatism				
Careless Conservatism	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Data Analysis

Before delving into data collection for this study there were research questions pertaining to the idea that careless conservatives support the same economic ideology as conscious conservatives despite the negative effect it has on their own economic. What role do conservative media have in creating support for conservative economic ideology? Are media outlets presenting specific messages? If so, what messages are they presenting? Are these messages contributing to a false consciousness among viewers? Based on prior knowledge of the media outlets, it was anticipated that there would be varying levels of economic interest among Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal*, and CNN within the issues of immigration, gay marriage, and abortion. *The Wall Street Journal's* main focus for each issue would be economic, whereas CNN would probably have very little economic discussion within each of these issues and present a non-partisan perspective. However, it was anticipated that Fox News would present far more stories about these social issues than both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*, but would find ways to interject economic ideology into each issue that would coincide with the capitalist ideology that is presented in *The Wall Street Journal*. Additionally, it was anticipated that most economic discussions on Fox News would likely be anecdotal and would present social issues with an economic component that is much less articulate and more accessible than *The Wall Street Journal* or CNN. Having said that, what influence might these economic and social themes have on political and economic beliefs among conservatives? What emergent themes within each of these issues might be important in regard to political socialization?

While reviewing archives from each news source, several major themes within each social issue were of interest. Pertaining to immigration, close attention was paid to paranoia and xenophobia themes and their connection to economic issues (Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Zernike 2011; Diamond 1995; Courtwright 2010; Grindstaff 2006). Additionally, it was also important to look for themes regarding border security. Were viewers being presented with ideas about increasing spending for border security or the construction of additional border fencing? In regard to gay marriage, were there themes concerning taxation issues and economic benefits? Is gay marriage deemed a distraction from real concerns? Last, were viewers being shown stories about tax payer money being used for abortions?

Once the data were collected, they were analyzed in order to see if there was any connection between the economic themes on Fox News with the stories that were being reported on CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. According to the analysis, there were very few similarities between Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* on all three issues of immigration, gay marriage, and abortion. Thus, one can only suggest that both Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* appeal to very specific types of conservatives. The following section will delve into an analytical description of specific themes that were uncovered from each media outlet and what they could possibly suggest concerning the presentation of news to specific segments of the population.

Immigration

Immigration was by far the most discussed issue for both Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal*. In a time span of six months between December 1st, 2011 and May 31st, 2012, Fox News aired 232 discussions concerning immigration. *The Wall Street Journal* was not too far behind with a total of 121 articles or discussions. CNN had a meager total of forty-three stories

in the entire six month span. In order to more accurately describe the disparity between these numbers, there are three separate months where Fox News aired more stories and discussions than CNN's entire six month total. For the months of December, April, and May, Fox News had totals of 45, 58, and 51 respectively. There were nearly two separate stories or discussions on Fox News every single day for the months of April and May. The following sub-chapters will detail the emergent themes found within the topic of immigration for all three news organizations. Each sub-chapter will also only deal with one particular news organization at a time.

Fox News

Immigration was certainly the most important issue of the three for Fox News. In fact, there was so much discussion about immigration on Fox News that there were several themes that emerged over the six month time span, many of which were unique to Fox News. The following sub-chapters will detail each theme that emerged on Fox News.

Fox News: Arizona Fetish

In order to make sense of the numbers for April and May one must remember what particular issues arose during this time. In regard to domestic issues, Arizona's immigration law hearing and the accusations that Sheriff Joe Arpaio and his staff were engaging in racial profiling were fairly important immigration issues. During these two months Fox News reported on both the Arizona immigration law and Joe Arpaio a total of 17 times. Jan Brewer was frequently interviewed on Fox News in which she always plead her case concerning her immigration law. The law was rarely critiqued by the interviewer and each interview was basically a pulpit for Governor Brewer to speak her mind and garner support. These interviews date back several

months from when the debate was first sparked. Fox News either showed sympathy for what she went through or commended her for being a hardnosed politician who fights against the federal government for states' rights.

The same scenario also played out with Sheriff Arpaio. Fox News managed to portray him as a crusader despite the claims that he was responsible for racial profiling. For instance, on May 10, 2012 during Special Report with Brett Baier there was a seven minute panel discussion (consisting of three conservative Fox News correspondents or commentators) on Sheriff Arpaio based on an online poll that Fox News conducted. The poll asked, "Is Sheriff Joe Arpaio a crusader or self-promoter?" Respondents only had the option of choosing either "crusader" or "self-promoter." Ninety-seven percent of respondents voted "crusader", while roughly three percent voted "self-promoter." It took the panel less than 20 seconds into the discussion to begin blaming President Obama and liberals for the entire issue. Charles Krauthammer began this discussion by stating that he was unsure of whether or not Sheriff Arpaio is a crusader or a self-promoter but had no qualms with blaming President Obama. After explaining his uneasiness with labeling Arpaio he stated, "Look, I don't know the merits of the case...But clearly is (sic) what is happening here is the administration is ginning up an issue on the eve on an election that it knows it is gonna (sic) help or thinks it is gonna (sic) help with one particular constituency." One only needs to see this quotation to understand that Krauthammer believed that Arpaio was a crusader. He was somehow unsure of whether or not Arpaio was guilty of racial profiling, but was certain that the issue was being politicized by the left. Instead of actually addressing the issue of racial profiling, he defaulted to talking points about liberals only using this issue to drum up support from Latinos. This theme was constantly repeated and rehashed throughout numerous discussions of immigration on Fox News.

Fox News provided an ample amount of data that helped to explain the political framing behind immigration. According to most on Fox News you are either a “crusader” or a “self-promoter.” Those in favor of more strict laws, rules, and regulations concerning immigration are glamorized and deemed “crusaders.” Those who simply do not care or might oppose stricter enforcement regarding immigration are deemed “self-promoters.” In their minds, if an individual opposes stricter enforcement, they must have an ulterior motive and are certainly liberal.

Fox News: Liberals and the Latino Population

The idea that liberals are only concerned with immigration to appease Latinos and get their vote is a theme that was constantly repeated in discussion about immigration. It was mostly referenced within the issue of Arizona’s immigration issues, but also arose out of discussions concerning Latino voting patterns. According to Fox News stories and debates, any discussion of immigration by liberals is ultimately political.

It is apparent from analyzing Fox News broadcasts that this theme was incredibly malleable. It even appeared in discussions concerning abortion and gay marriage and the only difference between each discussion was that liberals are supposedly pandering to a different set of individuals. However, this theme was frequently repeated in regard to immigration. Fox News mentioned this theme a total forty-eight times during the six month time span.

Although Romney and other conservatives received a pass on immigration and the Latino population from Fox News, liberals certainly did not. For instance, on April 24, 2012 during Fox News’ morning news hour, reporters focused on the Arizona immigration bill hearing. Arizona Governor Jan Brewer was interviewed in order to get her perspective and the interviewer made no qualms about agreeing with Governor Brewer. Immediately into the interview Governor

Brewer states, “You know, I believe that it’s a political stunt that they’re (Democrats) performing today at the Senate hearing.” The interviewer responds with, “You say it’s political and you may be right about that when you look at the votes on this and the influence on the election. Potentially, this may be an effort to court the Latino vote.” Governor Brewer is then very quick to agree with the opinion of the interviewer. Once again, it is important to note that this is a Fox News anchor who is supposed to be “fair and balanced” during the presentation of standard news, but he somehow manages to interject his opinion.

What is extremely interesting about the obsession that Fox News has with liberals politicizing the Latino vote is that there is also constant conversation about how Romney and Republicans are going to get support from the Latino community. Regardless of whether or not liberals actually pander to Latinos for vote, Fox News makes sure to remind their viewers that liberals only care about this population to get more votes. However, when Romney states the importance of gaining votes within the Latino community it is a topic that is seriously discussed and there is never a mention of Romney pandering to Latinos.

Similarly, Fox News commentators, correspondents, and anchors constantly suggested that Romney should select Marco Rubio or other fringe Latino politicians as his running mate in order to gain support from the Latino community. For instance, during Fox News’ midday news hour on April 6, 2012 there was an in-depth discussion on who would be Romney’s best pick for vice president. Bob Cusak was brought on for this discussion as the only individual to give insight on the issue. The very first point he made was that Romney needs to get more support from the Latino community. Cusak stated, “I think you’ve gotta look obviously at Senator Marco Rubio and I think a sleeper is the governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Fortuno.” Not once during his exchange with the Fox News anchor was the issue of pandering mentioned.

Another great example of Fox News allowing the idea that Romney should focus on the Latino vote is during an episode of *The Five* on March 30, 2012. The panel of five discussed an interview that Juan Williams did with Marco Rubio. Juan Williams, the only liberal on the panel, led the discussion with a monologue concerning what he specifically talked about with Rubio during an interview and openly admitted that immigration and the vice presidency nomination dominated the conversation. One of the panelists immediately responds with, “He (Rubio) should do it (accept vice-president nomination) for the party’s sake... Rubio brings the Latino vote.” The panelists then went into a detailed discussion about how conservatives should have an easier time gaining support from Latinos due to their being more socially conservative and religious than most liberals. They then referenced the economy and stated once the economy turns around that conservatives will be able to get their support.

Political framing showed its true form in discussions concerning immigration. When liberals have support from Latinos in a down economy it is because liberals have destroyed the economy and increased the size of government, which means that Latinos are being taken care of by the government. Although that this was not explicitly stated, it was implied by the panelists because they agreed that when the economy recovers that they will be more likely to support conservatives. It is the idea that conservatives are here to save the economy to help Latinos. Aside from what Juan Williams discussed, the panelists made very few references to immigration policy, which is truly what is hurting Latino support for conservatives.

Fox News’ approach to presenting news in regard to perceived issues with liberals and the Latino population is unique in that it *The Wall Street Journal* and CNN almost completely neglect to even report on it. The most damning evidence against Fox News is that they are actually reporting their opinions on these issues. This occurs through either blatantly stating it or

making a point vicariously through conservative correspondents and commentators. This very much unlike the approaches of both *The Wall Street Journal* and CNN, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Fox News: Paranoia and Xenophobia

Aside from blaming liberals for immigration issues, themes of paranoia and xenophobia are the next important tools for framing issues on Fox News. Out of 233 discussions on immigration there were forty-eight discussions concerning liberals and a total of forty-three related to xenophobia or paranoia (Figure 5). Based on the previous literature, it was expected that this would be one the most important and frequent frames on Fox News and it certainly turned out to be. This theme was framed in three different ways (national security and defense, job security, and cultural superiority). It was not all that surprising to find framing around national security and job security, but the cultural superiority was very surprising. However, it is incredibly important to note that all of these xenophobia frames were mentioned at varying frequencies. General cultural superiority was only found four times while national security themes appeared thirty times and job security themes only nine times (Figure 5). Although comments about cultural superiority were only mentioned sparingly, it is still incredibly surprising considering cultural superiority never appeared in the previous literature and this is such a strong personal conviction that individuals hold.

An example of how Fox News is framing immigration issues out of fear and paranoia occurred on February 16, 2012. As part of their standard news hour, they had a “Fair and Balanced” discussion about increasing militia border patrol along the United States Mexico border. The discussion consisted of the Fox News anchor, Julie Myers Wood (former Secretary

of Homeland Security), and Republican Arizona Senator Sylvia Allen. The discussion began with Allen and why she believed that militia should patrol the border. She immediately began painting the picture that Arizona is dealing with an incredible amount of drug violence. Her argument was that the violence is “seeping” into the state and that they are now “having beheadings and finding body parts.” Wood was then given the opportunity to respond and expresses concerns about militia members having less training than traditional border patrol officers and that these militia members might be more likely to shoot and kill somebody attempting to cross the border.

Before she even ended her argument she was interrupted by the Fox News anchor with the response, “But based on the senator’s answer prior to that she seems to have considered all that.” He gave her absolutely no chance to respond to his claim and he abruptly moved on to another question for Senator Allen. At this point in the interview it was clear that the Fox News anchor was on the side of Senator Allen. It became more apparent as he led into his next question by stating that 4 out of every 10 undocumented workers come to the United States by way of Arizona. Once he was about to finish, Julie Myers Wood tried to voice her opinion, but he chose to default to Senator Allen once again. After she has finished ranting about border violence and how Hezbola is now helping Mexican drug cartels the Fox News anchor states, “You make some very valid points” and then proceeds to blame “Washington” as the cause behind Arizona’s trouble due to a lack of help. He then deferred to Julie Myers Wood who made the same argument as before. Once again, he interrupted her before she could finish and then allowed Senator Allen to make a rebuttal before ending the discussion.

This is a prime example of Fox News anchors voicing their own opinions during what is supposed to be “Fair and Balanced” coverage of standard news. The ironic part to that entire

discussion is the fact that the subtitle for the archived video is “Fair and balanced debate on proposed plan to secure state boundary.” This discussion was hardly balanced and again highlights the fact that Fox News anchors are expressing their political opinions to their viewers by blatantly stating them or vicariously through conservative guests.

The biggest issue with Fox News perpetuating the idea that Americans are losing jobs to undocumented workers is that this argument is always made in passing. Statistics are never mentioned or shown, yet the argument is basically accepted as true. It is almost as if this issue is treated as common sense. Every single time it is mentioned it is stated matter-of-factly. For instance, twice in March 2012 Dr. Rob Sobhani was brought on the air to explain how to fix the United States immigration system in five steps according to his book “Press 2 For English.” During both interviews he stated that illegal immigration is increasing unemployment for Americans. Not once did he back up his claim with data or evidence, but instead simply stated, “The impact of immigration on our job market is very acute... Once again, this is not a social issue. It impacts American jobs.” In both interviews the Fox News anchors appeared awestruck and enthralled by the arguments he is making. Not once did they question anything he stated or even ask difficult questions. Interestingly, his five points were presented differently in each interview.

Job loss is certainly an economic issue and viewers are being presented misinformation about economics. The misinformation about job loss is a perfect example of Fox News presenting information to careless conservatives who know very little information about economic principles. However, this somewhat goes against the research questions in that this economic discussion has very little to do with supporting the capitalist ideology of conscious

conservatives. Nonetheless, this still evidences that Fox News is presenting information to a specific set of conservatives.

The discussions of cultural superiority were by far the most surprising theme found in Fox News. It was expected that there would be xenophobic discussions but not quite to this extent. They were expressed either by extensions of an interviewee's opinion or directly stated. For instance, Neil Cavuto had a discussion on April 24, 2012 about the fact that fewer Mexican undocumented workers are now coming to the United States. He mentioned the argument that Mexicans are now going back to Mexico because it is improving economically and claimed, "I don't buy the argument." He stated, "I've been to Mexico. It's a lot worse (than the United States)." Cavuto was essentially saying that since the United States is such a better country than Mexico that undocumented workers would never think of going back home.

Another instance of cultural superiority occurred March 7, 2012 by way of hyper-patriotism. Once again, this example was provided by the panelists of Fox News' The Five. On this particular episode they were interested with a story concerning two Texas high school basketball teams and the report that one team chanted "USA! USA!" after beating a predominantly Latino team.

They immediately conjured up the idea that these kids were simply being patriotic. The only panelist to not make this argument was Juan Williams, which was not that surprising considering his political leanings. The others made the argument that this chant is used in international sporting events and that they do not see an issue with what occurred. Williams frequently stated to them that this instance was far from being an international event and that the chant was antagonistic. One panelist went as far as to simply state, "This is just what people do."

Another panelist then piped in and smugly asked the question, “When did it become racist to become patriotic?”

These panelists seemed to have such an extreme obsession for patriotism that they simply did not realize how insensitive their remarks were. It was as if their argument was, “Well, these kids were white American patriots. What other choice do they have than chant about the magnificence of the United States? The United States is a better country anyway.” Additionally, by the panelist stating that “This is just what people do,” they are admitting that this occurrence was likely offensive. However, it was so important to them to be “patriotic” and see the white students as “patriots” that they were willing to ignore the insensitivity of the chant.

Fox News: Monetary Issues

According to the literature review, monetary issues are where the coalescing of social and fiscal issues might occur (Santorum 2006; Grindstaff 2006). However, the data paint a much different story. According to the previous literature, it was expected that Fox News would be discussing immigration and its cost to tax payers. However, it was rarely brought up. When the issue was even mentioned or discussed, very rarely was the argument backed up with data or evidence. Any evidence that was mentioned was said in passing as if it should just be assumed to be true. For instance, it was not out of the ordinary for contributors to just simply state that it was costing tax payers money.

According to many at Fox News, undocumented workers are essentially living off of tax payer money. The typical arguments that were made were that undocumented workers are taking advantage of healthcare and public education. For example, Judge Jeanine Pirro made no qualms about stating her opinion on her television show. During a discussion about Arizona’s

immigration bill she even led into a question by stating, “If the feds aren’t doing their job and the people of the state of Arizona are suffering the cost of education, hospitalization, and social services for the illegals, don’t they have the right to pass a law...that mirrors federal law?” It was simply mentioned in passing without any sort of evidence for her claim. It was almost as if that since her opinion was within a question that it was assumed to be true. It was also stated in such a way that the individual answering her question could not address her claim without making it seem like they were dodging the question.

The Wall Street Journal’s monetary focus was much different from Fox News’ in that *The Wall Street Journal* tended to focus on entrepreneurship among immigrants and how it helps the economy. This was actually the most frequent theme with *The Wall Street Journal* in regard to immigration. Entrepreneurship was discussed a total of fourteen times out of twenty instances of migrant labor improving the economy. It published articles on everything from the United States need to compete for immigrants to a plan for entrepreneur visas. There was even an article concerning how immigrants “turbocharge” United States trade.

Fox News: Global Issues and Human Interest

Of 232 discussions about immigration on Fox News, not a single one of them was about an international issue. Every single immigration discussion on Fox News was domestic. According to both news outlets, these issues are incredibly pressing. Fox News completely neglected to report on a single international issue. One cannot help wondering if this has anything to do with the hyper-patriotism that was discussed earlier in this paper. However, Fox News actually aired quite a few human interest stories. They aired a total of 18 discussions or stories that were either human interest or something positive about immigration.

What is truly interesting about the positive discussion and human interest stories from Fox News is that 8 out of the 18 stories or discussions were aired on Fox News Latino. The presentation of these human interest stories was quite different between Fox News and Fox News Latino too. Fox News Latino tended to air human interest stories and discuss polls that were conducted on the Fox News Latino website. Very rarely were conservative viewpoints expressed on Fox News Latino. The issue of immigration was always lightly discussed and expressed in ways as to not offend their audience.

However, when Fox News presented positive discussions or human interest stories, it took a slightly different approach. For instance, there was an episode of The Five that aired on March 21, 2012 about a Fox News Latino poll that showed that 66% of Latinos thought the United States was the best country to live in. They begin their discussion about how patriotic Latinos are and how great it is that they love the United States. However, they somehow manage to turn the discussion in a very condescending direction. One panelist begins a discussion about how Latinos are “religious...hard working...patriotic...These are Eisenhower Republicans and they just don’t know it.” Immediately after that another panelist smugly states, “But they will get it!” To add insult to injury, an additional panelist states, “The democrats string them along with false promises of comprehensive immigration reform.” A topic that initially started out as a positive discussion somehow transformed into a condescending discussion about how Latinos are Republicans and just do not know it because Democrats deceive them.

Fox News: Is the Federal Government Good For Anything?

A theme that is repeated endlessly by Fox News is that the federal government is to blame for something. Fox News has framed the issue in such a way that the federal government

is the cause for most of the United States' immigration issues. Not once do either CNN or *The Wall Street Journal* express this perceived issue. This particular frame is the most blatant out of all that have been previously mentioned in this paper. Fox News has no issue with explicitly expressing its opinion on this matter.

Fox News does not even try to hide the fact that it is blaming the federal government for immigration issues. Many of the titles of archives spell out how much disdain they have for the federal government. For instance, one particular archived video is titled "Why is Team Obama making it so hard to hire highly-skilled foreign workers?," whereas another has the title "DEA Helping Drug Cartels?" The most ridiculous example of these video titles is "Government Gone Wild: ICE." In every one of these videos the anchors, commentators, pundits, and et cetera rant about how government is out of control. According to them, the federal government does not care about helping states and only wants to do things their way. Why would they have time to help states like Arizona when they are supposedly busy with helping drug cartels and preventing highly-skilled foreign workers from finding jobs in the United States?

One of the best examples of Fox News placing blame on the federal government for immigration issues is the discussion about a hotline for detained immigrants that was created by the White House. It dominated Fox News' morning and afternoon news hours on December 30, 2012. Somehow, they also manage to interject the immigration debate with this issue by bringing on Sheriff Paul Babeu of Pinal County, Arizona to offer his insight on the issue. Like what was found earlier in this paper, the Fox News anchor basically allows the guest, Sheriff Babeu, to state whatever he pleases without even referencing another perspective.

What was set up as interview and discussion turned into more of a conversation about one side of an issue. For example, the Fox News anchor leads into the story by playing the automated response that callers received when dialing the I.C.E. Hotline. The anchor then asks Sheriff Babeu, “What do you make of this development?” He responds with comments like “They are doing everything for the people who are breaking the law” and “We are doing the job that the federal government fails to do, which is protect our country.”

As with any professional interview, the interviewer will typically reference something from the interviewee’s response and find a way to segue into more questioning and discussion. The interviewer basically does not reference anything Sheriff Babeu stated, which gives the viewer the impression that what he is stating is the correct perspective on the issue. It presents him as the lone authority on the issue.

The interview continues with more ranting from Sheriff Babeu about how the federal government has failed his state and the rest of the country with its ineptitude. For instance, later in the interview he states, “240,000 illegals, just in this state, ... have been apprehended. That’s one out of every three that come through so how is it the border is more secure than ever? Why don’t you help the good guys?” Once again, the interviewer makes no reference to what he said. The segment concludes with absolutely no discussion as to what the hotline actually is or does. It was somehow turned into a one sided discussion about how the federal government has failed the “good guys.” The very end of the segment was also interesting in that the anchor thanks Sheriff Babeu for his “insight” on this particular issue.

The second discussion concerning this issue involved Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly with contributors Alan Colmes and Mike Gallagher. Just like the previous interview the

discussion starts with the automated response that is played when calling the I.C.E. Hotline. Kelly interrupts the clip before it even finishes and Gallagher smugly laughs as Kelly mocks the hotline by pretending to call President Obama. In the meantime, Alan Colmes sits quietly and seemingly befuddled by the actions of his colleagues.

She begins the interview by deferring to Colmes and asking him whether or not he believes the hotline is a good idea. He states, "I'll tell you why it's a good idea. It's called civil liberties and for..." Before he can even finish his second sentence he is interrupted by Gallagher who unleashes one loud burst of laughter. Through the rest of Colmes response Gallagher smugly grins and attempts to clean up the saliva that erupted from his mouth during his burst of laughter. Nonetheless, Colmes continues on and states how the hotline actually helps families who have been affected by family members who have been arrested for illegal immigration. Colmes also takes a jab at Gallagher by claiming that conservatives should be behind this idea due to the fact that they are concerned with "family values." He also references Gallagher's smug and dismissive behavior as a way to ignore the issue.

After Colmes concluded his response Kelly defers to Gallagher who begins by saying, "We need to develop phone banks for shop lifters...bank robbers." Colmes then interrupts Gallagher and is quickly silenced by Megyn Kelly. It is at this moment where Kelly, who is supposed to simply present the news and moderate discussions, displays her ideological preferences. Gallagher is allowed interject basically as he pleases but Colmes is to stay quiet. After Colmes quiets from his interruption, Gallagher explains how this hotline is a waste of taxpayer money due to the fact that it will pay federal employees to work the hotline 24/7. Kelly shows her ideological preferences for a second time by backing up Gallagher's claim and going into more detail concerning the amount of workers needed and their language requirements. Not

once did Kelly add support for any of Colmes' arguments. The interview then concludes as Colmes begins an explanation of what the hotline actually is. He states that it is only for individuals who have been falsely arrested. Kelly shouts that under those guidelines illegal immigrants would be able to call the hotline too. Colmes and Gallagher then shout back and forth to themselves as Kelly ends the discussion all together.

It is apparent that Fox News does not have an issue with blaming the federal government for anything and everything. Anything contrary to their viewpoint is ignored in order to the frame the issue in a conservative light, which is evidenced by the fact that the I.C.E. Hotline is primarily used for individuals who have been falsely arrested. Simply because some illegal immigrants would fall under that category is enough for them to raise issue with it and the federal government for even considering the idea.

CNN

CNN's coverage of immigration issues was vastly different from Fox News' coverage. CNN reported on several of the same issues that Fox News did, but the manner in which they were presented was quite different. For the most part, CNN tended to focus on simply reporting immigration issues and airing human interest stories.

CNN did give some airtime to the news surrounding Arizona's immigration battles. They aired five separate stories about Arizona during the six month span. Like Fox News, CNN also interviewed Arizona Governor Jan Brewer. However, CNN only interviewed her twice, which is significantly less than Fox News. Additionally, CNN did not let Governor Brewer dictate the interviews like she did on Fox News. CNN had much more control over the interviews and did

not allow her to set the tone. There was also minimal coverage about Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio and the allegations of racial profiling.

In regard to xenophobia and paranoia, CNN did not report on a single story that reflected these themes. There was absolutely no mention from CNN about border security being a problem, immigrants taking jobs away from Americans, overbearing government, or the United States being culturally superior to other countries. These issues did not seem to exist within the confines of the CNN's newsrooms.

CNN did have a few economic discussions in regard to immigration. There were a couple segments on entrepreneurship among immigrants. Out of forty-three total discussions concerning immigration, three of them were about how immigrants help improve the economy. CNN also refrained from airing any stories concerning the negative effects of immigration on the United States economy. There was mostly discussion on how United States business owners are investing in immigrants and how to encourage immigrant entrepreneurship.

Global issues and human interest stories were some of the most frequent themes found within discussion of immigration on CNN. There were a total of five international stories and eleven human interest stories. Although CNN rarely had similarities with Fox News on what issues to report on, they still covered quite a bit of information pertaining to immigration. What differentiates them from Fox News is that they tended to focus more on international issues. CNN even sent reporters and investigators to Israel for a human interest report and to show what the issue was truly like. Three out of the five international stories that CNN aired were concerning France's immigration issues. The other two issues were about Israel's issue with African immigrants.

Outside of international issues, CNN tended to focus on human interest stories. It was by far CNN's most popular way of approaching immigration discussions. Out of a total of forty-three stories about immigration, eleven of them were human interest pieces. They covered everything from a married gay man facing deportation to a luche libre organization using Arizona's immigration debate as a wrestling narrative.

The Wall Street Journal

There was not much variety in the way that *The Wall Street Journal* reported on immigration. The most frequent articles and stories that were published pertained to the economy and immigration. However, its approach to economic issues within immigration differs from that of Fox News. Fox News tended to have a negative view of immigration in regard to the economy. *The Wall Street Journal* had the opposite view and saw immigration as a catalyst for a growing economy.

Like CNN and Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal* covered the issues surrounding Arizona's immigration reform. It published a total of five articles about the issue, which is the same amount as CNN and significantly less than Fox News. *The Wall Street Journal* did not interview either Jan Brewer or Joe Arpaio. Instead, they simply reported on the issues and did not interject an ideological slant to the issues.

The one point that *The Wall Street Journal* made over and over was that there is a connection between entrepreneurship and immigrations. There were articles on everything from immigrants coming to the United States to start a business to businesses taking advantage of migrant labor. Eighteen of the 121 stories that were published about immigration dealt with the

positive aspects of immigration on the economy. There was not a single instance from *The Wall Street Journal* about the negative effects of immigration.

The Wall Street Journal also made absolutely no effort to frame immigration issues with xenophobia or paranoia. There were no discussions or articles about Americans losing jobs from immigrants, immigrants being a drain on society, border security, or cultural superiority. *The Wall Street Journal* was much more like CNN in this regard.

Although *The Wall Street Journal* differed from Fox News in several ways, it did cover the same themes on occasion. *The Wall Street Journal* did publish two stories about liberals attempting to gain support from the Latino community in order to gain more support. However, this theme only emerged twice and both of these instances occurred in opinion pieces.

Overall, *The Wall Street Journal* tended to simply report on immigration issues when they arose. It published a total of 121 articles about immigration and not even twenty of those articles dealt with any emergent themes. The only frequent themes that emerged were the positive aspects between the economy and immigration.

Immigration-Anecdotes and Summary

There are two very important anecdotes to be made about the content concerning immigration. First, there were differences in using the terms “illegal immigrant” and “undocumented worker.” CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* mostly used the term “illegal immigrant” while occasionally using “undocumented worker” as a replacement. However, Fox News never uses the term “undocumented worker” unless it is on Fox News Latino, said by a liberal contributor, or part of a discussion on what is the correct term to use. Second, Bettina

Inclan, who is the RNC Director of Hispanic Outreach, serves as an excellent example of the compartmentalized language about immigration that occurs on Fox News

On April 30, 2012 O'Reilly has a discussion with an activist concerning whether or not it is okay to say "illegals." Immediately, O'Reilly asks the activist, Monica Novova, if she came to the United States legally, which did not really have much to do with the discussion. They then go into a discussion about the legitimacy of using the term "illegals." O'Reilly even seems to get satisfaction from saying it. He admits to using the term "illegal alien" "all the time." Novova then makes the claim that Fox News Latino does not use the term "illegal immigrant," which seems to be true according to the data that were collected for this paper. O'Reilly then turns the discussion to immigration reform after basically conceding her point. He ends the segment by complaining to her that her campaign is demonizing people like him who use those terms and that she does not even know what she wants. At the end of his segment he smugly states, "I'm very surprised that I gave you the opportunity to define for millions of people what you want the law to be and you can't." Novova responds with, "We're here to talk about the "I word" today." O'Reilly quickly replies, "No we're not. You're gonna talk about what I wanna talk about. This is my program."

O'Reilly did not even want to discuss the very issue that he had a complaint about. The irony is that he stated in the beginning of his segment that he feels that this campaign is a deliberate distraction by the far left to make people forget about the economy. However, during the discussion he deliberately changed the topic at hand with discussion concerning immigration reform.

Bettina Inclan is an excellent example of how Fox News and Fox News Latino have different language in regard to immigration. Not once does Bettina Inclan state the term “illegal” on her appearances on Fox News Latino. However, she has absolutely no qualms with stating it on Fox News. The most important aspect to all of this is that she has a comfortable position at Fox News and uses it as a pulpit to state whatever she pleases. *The Wall Street Journal* reached out to Inclan to discuss immigration reform and she refused the offer, which evidences how she is only comfortable stating her opinions on Fox News.

Fox News contributors are influenced to behave in only ways that benefit Fox News. They are to use certain language according to specific audiences and they are to remain quiet outside of what is discussed within the confines of Fox News.

In summary, Fox News took a much more thematic approach to the presentation of news than both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. Fox News had a much more nuanced approach and was very much dissimilar to the other news media outlets. Neither CNN nor *The Wall Street Journal* presented any of the same themes within immigration that Fox News did. Instead, both tended to focus on non-partisan presentations of news, international issues, or human interest stories.

Concerning Fox News, there were several themes that were uncovered. Fox News had three main themes when presenting news on immigration (fetishism of Arizona, liberals and the Latino population, and distrust of government). Fox News essentially acted as a personal megaphone for Governor Jan Brewer and Sheriff Joe Arpaio. CNN interviewed Governor Brewer twice, but did not allow her to rant like she did on Fox News. *The Wall Street Journal* neglected to even interview her. Fox News also tended to focus on how liberals are not as strict with border

control and immigration due to them wanting to gain support from the Latino community. There was not a single instance of this theme that appeared in either CNN or *The Wall Street Journal*. Last, Fox News consistently presented news and opinions that were negative about the federal government. They were particularly critical of the federal government's response to Arizona's immigration legislation and the lack of support from the federal government for border security. Once again, this theme failed to present itself in either CNN or *The Wall Street Journal*.

Fox News also dedicated much of their discussion of immigration with themes of monetary and human interest stories. These themes were not as frequent as the three that were previously mentioned. However, they were discussed enough to indicate that there was a pattern of discussion about them. Nonetheless, Fox News was concerned about the monetary issues behind immigration. There were multiple monetary issues that they were concerned about, but the two of the main issues were immigrants taking advantage of tax payer social welfare programs and the lack of money dedicated to border security. Neither of these themes appeared in CNN or *The Wall Street Journal*. It is also interesting that *The Wall Street Journal* neglected to discuss these themes because they are an economic magazine. One would anticipate that they would cover such themes and issues if they were actually a problem. Instead, *The Wall Street Journal* tended to focus on the idea that immigration helps the economy.

Concerning human interest stories, this is the only theme where Fox News was similar with another news organization. *The Wall Street Journal* neglected to publish any human interest stories on immigration, but CNN actually presented several. Fox News and CNN occasionally even aired news on the same human interest stories

Overall, Fox News displayed many more dissimilarities than similarities to CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. Fox News were much more thematic in their approach than both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. It also tended to focus on more negative aspects to immigration. Conversely, CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* took a more centrist approach to their presentation of immigration issues and neglected to show any ideological slant.

Gay Marriage

The issue of gay marriage became increasingly important due to President Obama coming out in support of it. Because of President Obama's statement each news organization gave incredible attention to the issue. There was very little difference between each news outlet in terms of how often they discussed the issue. In the six month time span, Fox News reported on gay marriage ninety-eight times, *The Wall Street Journal* 117 times, and CNN seventy-two times. It was surprising to find out that *The Wall Street Journal* had reported on the issue the most due to the fact that it is primarily an economic newspaper. Another interesting fact about this is that most of these discussions and stories occurred only in the month of May. Fox News had sixty-five discussions in May, CNN had fifty-six, and *The Wall Street Journal* had sixty-eight, which truly shows how much time was spent discussing this issue after President Obama's announcement. Discussions of gay marriage in May alone counted for more than half of all discussions for each news outlet. One can easily conclude that this was a significant issue for each organization. What differentiates the three news outlets is that all three took very different approaches when covering this issue, which provides more insight as to who their audience is.

Fox News

By far, Fox News had the most complicated and convoluted approach to reporting on gay marriage. The discussions were constantly surrounded around ideas of conservatives being

persecuted for their anti-gay marriage beliefs, liberals using the issues to gain support from the gay community, destruction of culture, the economy being a more important issue, and media bias. Very rarely did anybody on Fox News represent a pro-gay marriage stance.

The more frequent talking point was that liberals and President Obama only support gay marriage in order to get more votes from the gay community. Out of 98 total conversations about gay marriage, 25 of them were dedicated to blaming President Obama or liberals for something. Their position on this was incredibly blatant and it was obvious that this is exactly what they wanted their audience to hear. For instance, some examples of headlines for archived gay marriage video include: “How President Obama played the press perfectly on gay marriage announcement,” “How the Democratic Party lost its way,” “Politics of gay marriage not working out for Obama,” and “Did President Obama play the press on gay marriage.” These negative titles appear over and over in the archives.

Fox News: Liberals and the Gay Population

If the video titles were not obvious enough, the content expressed within the video should make up for it. For instance, Fox News ran with the idea that President Obama coming out for gay marriage was a political move. Interestingly, neither *The Wall Street Journal* nor CNN mentioned this idea. Nonetheless, there was constant discussion among Fox News panelists about President Obama’s perceived political shift. For instance, Rich Lowry, editor of National Review, was invited on Fox News on two separate occasions to provide insight on the matter. They lead into both discussions with a poll from the New York Times that found that 67% of the population believed that President Obama shifted his belief on gay marriage for political reasons. There is no denying that this is an important poll number and that it should probably be a topic of

discussion. However, Fox News neglected to provide an honest discussion of this poll. Instead, they merely aired partisan dialogue under the guise of insight. This is where Lowry's role in all of this is incredibly important.

On March 15, 2012, Lowry was invited on Fox News' Bias Bash, which is programming dedicated to "bashing" the liberal media bias and mainstream media in general. Before any discussion has even started viewers already know where the programming is headed. Because the discussion is supposed to be about President Obama's political shift and the point is to "bash" mainstream media, viewers already know that they are going to be seeing a conservative point of view on this issue. The "bashing" of the mainstream media was seen numerous times with several different topics. As predicted, Lowry was allowed to display his conservative views as insight.

It was immediately evident that Rich Lowry was going to be given the freedom to espouse his opinions as fact when he began to bash the New York Times and CBS for publishing their poll on page A-17. There is even a moment where he stresses that it was not only on page A-17, but that it was also beneath the fold. As he makes this point the Fox News anchor sarcastically grunts, "Huh!" to indicate that they expected the story to be buried. Lowry then states, "That's another instance where the New York Times is kind of acting to protect its readers from any negative information about the President." The Fox News anchor then later ends the discussion with the idea that if liberals and the New York Times feel as if President Obama is a much better politician than Romney and they are not afraid of defeat that " they'll put that (the poll) on the front page."

On May 15, 2012 during Fox News' morning news hour, Lowry is brought on once again to provide insight once again. Not surprisingly, he reiterates the same exact points that he made the day before. The same poll was mentioned again and he repeated the fact that it was printed below the fold on A-17. This time he states everything with much more conviction while smugly laughing throughout. It bears reminding that he is appearing on Fox News' morning programming, which is supposed to be dedicated to the simple reporting of daily news. Nonetheless, during this interview he even adds more body to his original argument from the day before. He now states that he feels that it was much more of a political move on President Obama's part by simply hiding how he truly felt about gay marriage. The Fox News Anchor does not dispute anything and moves on to a discussion of a poll concerning whether or not voters are less likely to vote for President Obama after shifting his opinion.

Lowry also does his best to divert the discussion by claiming that President Obama is trying to distract people from the economy and "shoving this (gay marriage) at us," which was an argument that was also made by Fox News correspondents and anchors for both immigration and abortion. The anchor very briefly displays his opinion by replying, "Yeah, it did seem a little strange. And the economy according to these polls is still the number one issue." The interview then fades out into a discussion concerning the importance of discussion about the economy. The irony in all of this is that Fox News has clearly neglected having economic discussions and has focused on presenting social issues like gay marriage in a very partisan manner.

It is important to note that Rich Lowry attempted to divert the discussion with the idea that the economy is more important because that was a common talking point found within the issue of gay marriage. There were eleven instances where the topic of gay marriage was

interrupted with a discussion of the economy. The issue that many Fox News correspondents had was that they felt that there was no use in discussing gay marriage when the economy is so poor.

Fox News: “It’s the economy, stupid.”

The idea that the economy is a more important issue than gay marriage was discussed a total of eleven times during the six month time span. Oddly enough, these discussions rarely dealt with anything other than anecdotal evidence and a miniscule amount of discourse concerning economics. More often than not, the discussions of gay marriage that segued into discussions about the economy dealt with either media bias or liberals.

In an archived video from May 18, 2012, Fox News hits all of their major talking points in regard to gay marriage and the economy. This particular segment was part of their mid-day news hour and included a discussion with Judith Miller and Kirsten Powers, who are both Fox News contributors. They begin the discussion with a Fox News poll that showed 45% of registered voters believe they are worse off economically today than four years ago. Kirsten Powers provides her analysis by stating that Mitt Romney will need to do more than rely on the popular opinion of the economy to beat President Obama. She did not really express any partisanship in her analysis. However, when it was Judith Miller’s turn to analyze the poll she immediately begins taking shots at democrats, President Obama, and the media for trying to distract the public from economic issues. She stated, “It’s amazing when the President dominated the news this past couple of weeks with social issue agendas; the important ones like gay marriage. But the fact of the matter is that poor Romney was back out there trying to get the country back on track in terms of getting people to worry about what he wants them to worry about, which is the economy.”

The conversation shifted immediately after Judith Miller brought up the idea that economic issues have been overshadowed by social issues like gay marriage. The Fox News anchor then poses the question, “Does media coverage reflect what’s really important? I mean, the Washington Post... devoted that huge article to Mitt Romney’s behavior as a high school student.” Kirsten Powers responds with, “Well, the idea that the media is ever focused on the things that are important...is a major issue. Are they really focused on the things in the world that are the most important things?” Once again, they are placing the blame on media for how certain issues are being presented.

Fox News: Fox News vs. The “Liberal Media”

The most telling aspect about their criticism of other media outlets is that Fox News presents themselves as the only source for legitimate news. In reference to the previous sub-chapter, Powers basically went as far as to say that Fox News is the source for global news. However, there are only a handful of times within the issues of immigration, gay marriage, and abortion that Fox News made any mention of news outside of the United States. The most important aspect to all of this is that because they present themselves as the only news source that provides real news is that by saying this they are pushing a conservative viewpoint as the only true perspective. Additionally, this paints the picture that because Fox News is conservative and the only true news source that all other media outlets are both liberal and incompetent. One must ask, “If the economy is a more important issue than gay marriage, why continue to discuss gay marriage?”

However, Fox News is not the only media outlet guilty of showing partisanship while reporting on news about gay marriage. Although CNN does not go to some of the extremes that Fox News does, they did an excellent job at rivaling them with liberal viewpoints.

CNN

Considering all three issues discussed in this research, gay marriage is the only issue where CNN blatantly expresses their opinion. Every single story concerning gay marriage was a human interest story, an interview or story concerning a politician, activist, or celebrity who supports gay marriage, or an avenue to express pro-gay marriage ideas. Not once does a CNN anchor or correspondent argue against gay marriage and when they are not stating support for gay marriage they do a decent job at simply reporting the issue.

CNN frequently reported and discussed gay marriage from a liberal perspective. Twenty of the seventy-two discussions that were aired supported a liberal stance on gay marriage. CNN even borrowed a few tricks from Fox News in that it would sometimes support gay marriage vicariously through the pro-gay marriage guests interviewed. Anchors and interviewers typically would nod and agree while pro-gay marriage individuals were providing their side of the discussion, which was apparent during interviews with everybody from Clay Aiken to prominent civil rights leaders. However, when anti-gay marriage proponents were interviewed the anchors would immediately begin to defend gay marriage. For instance, during an interview on May 10, 2012, Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, Solidad O'Brien criticized every single thing he said. During the entire interview she appeared noticeably uncomfortable and almost irritated with everything Tony Perkins was saying. She constantly interrupted him and never allowed him to complete his arguments. In all actually, this is not very different from what

occurs on Fox News' primetime programming (The Factor, Hannity, and et cetera). O'Brien interrupted and talked over her guest much in the same way that Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity do.

Roughly two weeks after the initial interview with Tony Perkins, he was invited back on CNN. Once again, he was interrupted and talked over by the anchor who presented pro-gay marriage points of view. Although Solidad O'Brien was not involved in this interview, the same format remained. On two separate occasions during the interview, the anchor stated, "It's about love" and "This is about rights." Just like the previous interview, liberal viewpoints were explicitly stated during standard news hours. As an interesting side note, during the interview Tony Perkins mentions that there is "overwhelming evidence in social science" that gay marriage harms children and families.

The most important part to CNN's presentation is that anchors were blatantly giving their opinions during CNN's regular news hours. The presentation of opinions even occurred much more frequently than on Fox News with this same issue. It is obvious that CNN is catering their news on this issue to a liberal audience. There is absolutely no denying this. Surprisingly, CNN's programming on gay marriage was the most partisan presentation of any of the three issues with all three news sources.

Although both CNN and Fox News presented left and right viewpoints concerning gay marriage and they had roughly the same amount of discussions about it, there were a few distinct differences between the two. CNN simply did not try to hide their liberal viewpoint most of the time, while Fox News made some sort of effort part of the time. Additionally, CNN did not focus at all on other media outlets or placing blame for anything on anti-gay marriage supporters.

Conversely, Fox News made several efforts to distract viewers from the issue and shift the discussion to the economy.

The Wall Street Journal

Concerning the issues of gay marriage, *The Wall Street Journal* simply does not take a partisan approach in reporting them. Actually, one could argue that *The Wall Street Journal* just does not care about gay marriage and that it is not an issue. Out of 121 stories in the six month time span, 117 of them were either basic reporting or human interest stories. A number of these stories were actually about the positive aspects of gay marriage. Only four of the 121 were against gay marriage and blamed the issue as a political stunt by liberals.

The Wall Street Journal takes a completely different approach than CNN or Fox News on this issue. It very rarely showed any partisanship and did more to simply report on what is currently going on with the issue. Occasionally, it printed positive stories about gay marriage, but not frequently enough to really give it consideration in this study. Out of all three news sources, *The Wall Street Journal* spent most of its time simply reporting on the issue. Examples of simple reporting included everything from the constant discussion about what President Obama was going to do after Vice President Biden came out in support of gay marriage to how Mitt Romney gained support from evangelicals after President Obama's announcement.

If anything, this evidences that Wall Street Journal readers are likely more concerned about what is going on with the economy. However, not once do they publish anything mentioning that the economy is a more important issue, which is completely different from what was seen with Fox News. Fox News constantly brought up the idea that any discussion about gay marriage was a waste of time when the economy is in such a poor shape.

Gay Marriage- Anecdotes

The one anecdote that needs to be made is how Fox News handled the situation surrounding President Obama and his opinion concerning gay marriage. Before President Obama expressed his opinion and Vice-president Biden stated his case, Fox News had constant discussion about how President Obama will not even consider changing his stance because it would not help him politically. However, when he did come out in support of gay marriage Fox News immediately began discussion about how this was a political move to garner support from homosexuals and the far left.

On May 7, 2012 during The O'Reilly Factor, Michelle Fields, Juan Williams, and Bill O'Reilly had a lengthy discussion about how President Obama will not express his support for gay marriage because it would not help him politically. Fields states early in the discussion that "there is no way he is going to endorse gay marriage." O'Reilly somewhat disagrees but feels that President Obama would not gain support regardless of the decision he makes about gay marriage. Juan Williams then suggests that President Obama will hesitate to come out for gay marriage because of the African-American vote, and Bill O'Reilly experiences an epiphany. He suddenly felt like he understood why President Obama would not express his support.

Once President Obama came out in support for gay marriage, Fox News immediately changed its perspective. The previous argument was completely disregarded, and the discussion transformed into how President Obama changed his mind for political reasons. Fox News' shift in its argument against President Obama certainly displays the extent to which it will blame the President and Democrats in order to appease their audience and send a consistent message.

As far as similarities and differences between the news organizations go, there is not much difference between this issue and immigration. Fox News was very thematic in their approach and consistently presented a conservative ideological slant. However, *The Wall Street Journal* simply reported on gay marriage issues without any biases. However, CNN and Fox News did display similarities with how they presented gay marriage issues

CNN and Fox News took almost the same exact approach in presenting gay marriage news. The only differences are that CNN reported from a liberal perspective and Fox News was much more thematic. CNN made no qualms about where they stood on the issue of gay marriage. They were actually much more blatant with their ideological slant than Fox News and even borrowed some of Fox News' tricks (e.g. anchors siding with commentators during a debate). However, CNN did not focus on particular themes like Fox News. Like immigration, Fox News blamed liberals from trying to get support from specific communities (e.g. gay community). Additionally, they blamed the media and liberals for supposedly attempting to distract the public with the issue of gay marriage in order to discontinue discussion about the state of the economy.

Overall, all three media outlets had separate presentations of gay marriage. Fox News presented from a conservative viewpoint, CNN presented from a liberal viewpoint, and *The Wall Street Journal* simply reported on the issue without any ideological bias. The only similarity was the Fox News and CNN took the same approach in expressing ideological preferences pertaining to gay marriage.

Abortion

Abortion was by far the least discussed issue out of the three, which is not all that surprising. Aside from the debate about religious institutions being forced to pay for contraceptives, there really has not been much of a reason to bring up abortion in the news. Fox News discussed abortion sixty-five times in six months, while CNN only discussed it a total of nine times and *The Wall Street Journal* sixty times. Again, Fox News interjected conservative points of view into the issue. Unlike the issue of gay marriage, CNN took a slightly different approach to reporting on abortion. Most of the discussion occurred on Piers Morgan Tonight from a liberal perspective, but during standard news hours the reporting was non-partisan. Lastly, *The Wall Street Journal* mostly stayed true to its roots and reported on abortion in a non-partisan manner. However, abortion did seem to be the one issue where conservative viewpoints were routinely seen. In terms of articles against abortion, they actually had a one man wrecking crew in James Taranto, which will be explained later in this chapter.

Fox News

Abortion was absolutely the least important issue to Fox News. It was only discussed sixty-five times and there were only a handful of ways that they framed the issue. When they did express any biases they really only expressed them in general terms. For instance, they would simply criticize the act of abortion and leave it at that or they would evoke obscure frames that were rarely repeated. This type of discussion and presentation was found a total of 13 times, which makes it the largest theme that was found. However, there were several other instances where the issue was framed in a conservative light.

Aside from general pro-life rhetoric, there were seven instances where communism was evoked and the United States was compared to China for allowing abortion. Next, with six

instances, Fox News once again blamed the media for pro-choice ideology. Lastly, the idea that abortion wastes tax payer money was discussed three times. As a side note, there were two instances where there were discussions concerning the “fake” war on women and one instance where there was a discussion concerning how liberals are using abortion as population control.

At a glance, all of this framing does not seem to show very much. Out of sixty-five discussions, most of these frames were only discussed about five times a piece. However, once all of the frames are totaled together it paints a different picture. Thirty-four of the sixty-five discussion about abortion were from a conservative perspective. Although the particular frames tell little by themselves, once the frames are collected it shows that the framing of this issue and the presentation of it is very nuanced and from a conservative point of view. Rather than dwelling on particular frames, most time was spent on presenting the issue in a very compartmentalized manner.

Before jumping into the compartmentalization of the framing of abortion, it is important to go over the content that simply promoted pro-life ideology. In these instances there was not any repeat use of particular frames. Rather, anchors and contributors stated anti-abortion rhetoric without referencing particular frames that blamed the media or described pro-choice proponents as being pro-abortion, but instead used frames that were rarely repeated.

For instance, on February 13, 2012 during Fox and Friends with Peter Johnson Jr., who is typically brought on to give his conservative spin on particular issues, likened abortion to a “war on babies.” This is hardly unlike Johnson to do this. He is routinely brought on Fox and Friends to provide his brand of conservative spin to the major issues of the day. Nonetheless, on this

particular segment he was invited to give his insight on the issue of Catholic institutions being forced to provide contraception and “abortion inducing drugs.”

The discussion began as the Fox and Friends anchor gave a monologue concerning this particular issue. During his monologue he described how the Obama administration had made a compromise with Catholic readers. What is interesting about this is that he gesticulated (air quotes) while he stated the word “compromise” in order to display his disgust for the Obama administration’s attempt at working something out with the Catholic Church. At that moment, it was apparent that this discussion was going to be from a conservative perspective.

Once the monologue was concluded, The Fox and Friends anchor deferred to Johnson, who immediately began a tirade against the federal government. He stated,

“What the federal government is saying... ‘We are going to decide who is Catholic enough...so nuns you’re not going to be wanting these abortion drugs. You’re exempt. But your other Catholic organizations you’re not so exempt. Social services, hospitals...colleges, we’ll make it easy for you. We’re still going to be handing out the abortion inducing drugs and sterilizations and they’re going to be free, which is a wonderful feature of this administration; more free stuff. You don’t have to be part of that. So just close your eyes priests, nuns, bishops, and your flock. We’re just gonna hand this stuff out anyway so you don’t have to have it on your conscious.’”

He set the tone for the entire discussion and hit all of the usual talking points with everything from blaming the federal government to the idea of “abortion inducing drugs.” Before going any further, it is important to note that when Johnson and others on Fox News reference “abortion inducing drugs,” they are talking about Plan B and other emergency contraceptives, which actually do not induce abortion. Nonetheless, Johnson continues his rant by changing gears and explaining the perspective of nuns and priests. He claims that their opposition to the contraception compromise is that it is a “war on babies or a war on the unborn.” He then goes into an argument that “it’s a violation of the Constitution and it not only hurts Catholics, but people of all faiths.” The Fox and Friends anchor then agrees with an emphatic “Sure!”

This entire segment truly shows how Fox News approaches the discussion of abortion in general. The topic allows them to express their views concerning the federal government, religion, and science. They even go as far as to create frames that are simply not true. The “abortion inducing drugs” that they refer to are hardly that. Plan B and other emergency contraceptives simply prevent conception. The issue is also framed around the idea that this is not a “war on women,” but a “war on babies or a war on the unborn.”

Fox News: “We are now China.”

Other than making general pro-life arguments, Fox News also focused on particular frames. One frame that they seemed to focus on quite a bit was the idea that abortion is causing the United States to become like China or at least Communist. This frame was used a total of 7 times during the entire six months.

An excellent example of this occurred twice on the O’Reilly Factor. The first of these examples occurred on May 29, 2012. The segment’s topic was dedicated to the undercover video

that exposed a specific Planned Parenthood for allowing individuals to undergo sex-selection abortions. For the first minute of the segment they show undercover video of a woman discussing her own plans for a sex-selection abortion with a Planned Parenthood employee. Once the clip ended, O'Reilly's reaction was, "My question is: Are we now China in this country? If Planned Parenthood is advising women to abort because of gender choice, then we are China. You should remember that the next time a politician or a famous person endorses Planned Parenthood." Before any discussion had even occurred he had made the leap that the United States was like China due to the fact that one employee of a Planned Parenthood in Austin, Texas was going to allow a woman to have a sex-selected abortion.

Two days later on May 31, 2012, O'Reilly discusses the very same topic and once again likens the United States to China and Communism. However, this time it is much more blatant and is one of the main focuses of the entire segment. The beginning of the segment even displays a graphic of the Chinese flag, a small stick figure, and the title "One-child policy." He starts his monologue by discussing China's one child rule. He stated, "If the sonogram shows a fetus to be a girl, it is often aborted. Now that is happening here."

This difference between this segment and the previous is that O'Reilly supports his argument with a completely different undercover video of a Planned Parenthood clinic in New York also allowing sex-selection abortion. He also discussed how the House did not pass a bill denying sex-selection abortion and that President Obama did not condemn the practice. He then wraps up his monologue with, "Gender-based abortion is now legal in America" and defers to Laura Ingraham, who is a right-wing radio talk show host and staunch pro-life advocate. It is important to note that she is not only a contributor for Fox News but also fills in for Bill O'Reilly on his show. They both go back and forth complaining about Democrats and their "extremist

positions.” O’Reilly ends the discussion with a complaint about how Fox News is the only news station even reporting on the issues. He stated, “So unless you’re watching the Fox News channel or listening to Laura on the radio...you don’t know anything about this. The left-wing media and Dan Rather just said, ‘Oh no, not us’. Why didn’t CBS cover that, Dan?” Once again, and for good measure, Fox News takes a shot at other news organization and paints itself as the only source for real news and true journalism.

Fox News: Media Bias and the Left Wing Media

Another frame that has appeared in every other issue with Fox News is that the media is either ignoring certain news or is presenting a liberal bias. This frame was found a total of 5 times and basically mirrors what O’Reilly stated in regard to sex-selection abortion. An example of this occurred after a Republican Presidential debate on February, 25 2012. The segment included Fox news anchor, Jon Scott, and Jim Pinkerton, who works for *The American Conservative Magazine*.

The entire segment revolved around a clip in which Newt Gingrich criticized CNN’s John King for asking questions about birth control when President Obama was not once asked the same questions in 2008. Gingrich stated, “I just want to point out you did not once in the 2008 campaign...not once did anybody in the elite media ask why Barack Obama voted in favor for legalizing infanticide.” After clip had ended Scott asks Pinkerton whether or not it is a good strategy for Gingrich to target the media. Pinkerton felt that it was not really either helping or hurting him, but that it has “brought up a major dynamic,” which is the “Democrats and the media” and how they “gang up against Republicans.” John Scott then criticizes CNN for asking questions that were not about the economic problems of the United States or President Obama.

The discussion is then shifted to a five person panel that is made up entirely of conservatives. Moments into the discussion a graphic displays on the screen and reads, “Soaring Gas Prices: Are media shielding Obama from blame?” What gas prices have to do with anything that is being discussed is unknown, but the subtitle gives the impression that the media, in fact, is shielding Obama from criticism. Shortly after this graphic is displayed, Pinkerton once again enters the conversation and states, “When the contraception issue came up the Democrats said this is a contraception...religious zealotry issue. The Republicans said it’s a religious freedom issue and oddly enough the mainstream media sided with the Democrats.” An unnamed contributor then adds, “It’s amusing to see how the media approach religion. When it favors a liberal agenda, for example, choice on abortion; they’re all for it. They welcome religious voices in. But when it has questions about abortion or contraception and then the New York Times can write an editorial about quote ‘Rick Santorum’s religious fanaticism.’ When religion serves liberal ends, it’s good. When it’s against them, it’s bad.” This statement ends that portion of the discussion and then the topic changes to which presidential candidate received the most positive attention after the debate.

Frankly, this level of criticism against the media is somewhat odd. It is hard to understand the mental gymnastics behind all of it. How is it that a major media outlet can openly criticize “the media” when it is actually part of the institution they are complaining about? Fox News has the largest viewership out of any media outlet, which would actually make them the largest component to “the media” (Bibel 2012).

Fox News: Abortion and Taxes

Another frame that was mentioned several times was the idea that tax payer money is being used for abortion. Particularly, it was an issue with Planned Parenthood receiving federal money. This particular frame was only seen on The O'Reilly Factor and Hannity. Not a single instance of this frame was mentioned or discussed outside of this show or even on Fox's other primetime programming. Because of this the generalizability is fairly low. However, because it was mentioned several times it is worth including in this analysis.

This frame was mentioned or discussed a total of four times and three of the four occurred on The O'Reilly Factor. Additionally, it was only mentioned during the last week of May when the contraception mandate was being pushed by the White House. All three discussions on The O'Reilly Factor were about Planned Parenthood and the one discussion on Hannity was concerning the contraception mandate. Two of the three episodes have already been previously covered and the third (May 30, 2012) simply rehashes the points made on May 29, 2012 in O'Reilly's "Talking Points" segment.

Like in the other two segments, O'Reilly resented the fact that his tax payer money was being used to pay for abortions. However, he adds much more to his argument in this particular segment. He adds, "There is no question that Planned Parenthood is a pro-abortion outfit, which has been in trouble for years. Undercover videos have documented underage abortions, abortion advice associated with prostitution and now gender selection." Planned Parenthood is no longer a women's health clinic, but a 'pro-abortion outfit' according to O'Reilly. He also attacked President Obama for supporting the "pro-abortion movement." Once again, he compares the entire situation with China.

What made this segment so interesting is that O'Reilly even acknowledges a statement made by Planned Parenthood claiming that gender-selection abortions are against their policies. However, he feels that this statement means little because it is very similar to previous statements that have been announced in regard to other undercover stings. Lastly, O'Reilly wraps up his argument with the claim that \$500 million goes to Planned Parenthood from the federal government. Yet he neglects to mention how much of that money actually goes to abortions.

On May 31, 2012 Sean Hannity made the same exact arguments on his show Hannity. However, Hannity places much more focus on the issue of taxes. The subtitle for this particular segment is, "Should tax dollars continue to fund organization (Planned Parenthood)?"

He begins the discussion with a short monologue expressing how the "battles rages on over your tax dollars supporting abortions." He goes on to state that they have undercover footage of "how exactly your money is being used at clinics all across the United States." Fox News then air the same clips that were shown on The O'Reilly Factor and then segue into a discussion with Democratic strategist and Fox News contributor Chris Hahn and Penny Nance of Concerned Women for America.

Hannity begins the discussion with Chris Hahn and immediately starts with complaints about how much money is given to Planned Parenthood and how the entire situation with sex selection abortion sounds like China. Knowing that Hahn would disagree with him, he smugly asked him, "Doesn't this offend you in any way? ... The idea that we are going to give \$480 million to Planned Parenthood and you see that kind of advice..." Hahn attempts to answer and Hannity gestures with his hand to keep him quiet and states, "No! No! No! Stop. I'm asking because to me that shocks the conscience. That sounds like China!" Hannity then allows Hahn to

give his answer without interruption. The conversation then shifts to Penny Nance and Hannity reiterates, “I find this so shocking to the conscience and then when you look at the money we give to Planned Parenthood, tax payer dollars, it makes it that much more worse.”

The topic completely shifts when Penny Nance enters the discussion. She states, “This is outrageous what happened today. This is the deliberate subtraction of women from society and this is the real war on women, not the made up version that the Democrats came up with.” Chris Hahn then speaks up and claims that “not a dime” of federal money goes to fund abortion. Nance emphatically responds, “That’s outrageous! Do you not know anything about business at all?” The discussion then coalesces into an indecipherable mess and Hannity quickly disrupts it in order to change the conversation to a discussion concerning the contraception mandate.

Hannity begins his discussion about the contraception mandate with Chris Hahn, who barely has the opportunity to voice his opinion without being interrupted by either Sean Hannity or Penny Nance. Hahn persistently attempts to get a word in, but Hannity abruptly stops him and defers to Nance. Somehow, she shifts the conversation back to abortion and exclaims, “Do you not believe this is a war against women? You don’t understand the ultimate violence against women in the womb.” Hahn then responds, but not 5 seconds into his rebuttal Hannity quiets him with a stern, “Stop. Stop.”

The discussion takes another change with a clip of Representative Sheila Jackson Lee stating that she feels the next step against women is dragging them out of clinics and shouting over their womb. As the clip ends Hannity states, “Now this is the problem. I know you Democrats are desperate... so you gotta (sic) scare grandma and you gotta (sic) scare old people and you gotta (sic) start this phony war on women... If you want to go to Planned Parenthood,

the government should not give 487 million tax payer dollars when we are going broke to pay for abortion or abortion services or any of these things.” Hahn responds, “\$487 million for family planning so people do not have children they cannot afford.” Hannity replies, “How about you and your liberal friends like Chuck Schumer, why don’t you guys raise the money for this? Why don’t you step away from contractors and tax payers?”

In the last few seconds of the segment, Hannity quiets the panel and makes the claims, “You can get birth control pills for \$9. A condom is not that expensive. I actually looked into it.” Hahn responds, “This is about having government in a place where it does not belong and I think no woman wants to see that happen.” The segment ends with Nance proclaiming “And my tax dollars where it doesn’t belong by the way. A million dollars a day plus.”

During the entire discussion Hahn was barely given enough time to make his points. Twice he was told to stop, while Nance was given complete freedom to say whatever she pleased. Additionally, it was repeated that \$487 million goes to Planned Parenthood. Not once is the point made of how much of that actually goes to abortion. Planned Parenthood is involved mostly in family planning, not abortion. Hahn made the claim that absolutely no tax payer money goes to abortion, but neither Hannity nor Nance addressed that issue.

CNN

Out of all three issues, abortion is by far the least reported and discussed topic on CNN. Additionally, abortion is the least amount of reporting and discussion by any issue with all three media outlets. CNN almost gave the impression that it is no longer an issue. There were only a total of 9 discussions concerning abortion and five of them were from pro-choice perspectives. However, there are two interesting discussions and segments that occurred that are important in

regard to how both Fox News and the *The Wall Street Journal* handled the topic of abortion. First, there is a stark difference with how CNN and Fox News handled the topic of sex-selection abortion. Second, CNN rarely showed partisanship, but when they did it typically occurred with Piers Morgan. The partisanship displayed by CNN was very similar with *The Wall Street Journal* and James Taranto, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Before delving into how CNN handled the topic of sex-selection abortion, it bears reminding that O'Reilly stated on May 31, 2012, "So unless you're watching the Fox News channel or listening to Laura on the radio...you don't know anything about this. The left-wing media and Dan Rather just said, 'Oh no, not us.' Why didn't CBS cover that, Dan?" Actually, both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* reported on the issue. Additionally, CNN reported on this issue May 31, 2012 on *The Situation Room*, which actually airs before *The O'Reilly Factor*. CBS may not have reported on it, but CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* certainly did.

Nonetheless, there are stark differences with how CNN and Fox News handled the issues of sex-selection abortion. Like what was previously mentioned in this thesis, Fox News took a very conservative approach in reporting on it. There were complaints on everything from Planned Parenthood being a waste of tax payer money to how this is causing the United States to become like China. None of these arguments were ever mentioned on CNN. CNN simply reported the issues and provided explanations for the legislation that was presented by Republicans on this very issue.

There is also one very important issue with how CNN and Fox News reported on the undercover Planned Parenthood stings. On four separate occasions Fox News aired footage from the stings. Not once were the faces concealed on these videos. However, when CNN showed

various clips from the stings the faces were always concealed. It is difficult to arrive at a conclusion for why this possibly happened, but it would not be a stretch to suggest that Fox News neglected to do this as an act of shaming the Planned Parenthood employees.

Another point of interest with CNN and abortion is that they expressed pro-choice points of view 3 out of 9 times that abortion was discussed. Two of these instances occurred on the Piers Morgan Tonight. Piers Morgan Tonight also dominated abortion discussion with 5 total discussions.

Morgan seemed to have an obsession with asking conservative guests if they would allow their daughter to have an abortion if she was raped. His obsession was seen in interviews with Kirk Cameron, Ron Paul, and Rick Santorum. He always attempted to be delicate with this line of questioning, but it did not prevent the interview from becoming uncomfortable. He was also careful as to not come out and proclaim that he is pro-choice, but his questioning made it fairly apparent from what perspective he was coming from.

There was actually one instance in which a CNN contributor openly stated that she was pro-choice. This occurred May 21, 2012 during a discussion of a Chinese anti-abortion activist with Irin Carmon and Representative Chris Smith. When asking Representative Smith a question she simply stated that she was coming from a “pro-choice perspective.” However, she was very careful in her question with trying to not sound as if the issue of abortion is black and white, which is incredibly different from how the issue is handled by some of Fox News.

The Wall Street Journal

The Wall Street Journal showed more partisanship with abortion than either gay marriage or immigration. Abortion was covered 60 times and 15 of those stories were from a pro-life

perspective. Aside from those 15 instances, they reported on abortion in a non-partisan manner and simply reported on the daily news as it appeared. Three articles actually focused on international abortion issues. Conversely, there were absolutely no discussions from either CNN or Fox News on international abortion issues.

By far, the most interesting aspect to all of this is the partisanship that was displayed by *The Wall Street Journal*. Their approach was incredibly similar to CNN's. Standard reporting was non-partisan and opinion articles were always conservative. In particular, there was one op-ed writer who was almost completely responsible for every anti-abortion article that appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* and that was James Taranto. Every pro-life article that was written was published in the opinion section, as well.

James Taranto seemed to have anti-abortion fetish much in the same way that Piers Morgan had an obsession with issues of rape and abortion. 11 of the 15 articles that were pro-life were written by Taranto. Almost every article seemed to have the same formula. He always made sure to at least blame Obama and the Democrats for something, refer to liberals as pro-abortion, and fault feminism for ruining society.

Taranto makes absolutely no effort to hide his true feelings on abortion and it is clearly evident from the titles of his articles. Some of his titles include "Fear and Feminism," "Sexual Socialism," and "Big Sister is Watching You." The extent to which he focuses on these frames rivals anything else that was seen with gay marriage and immigration and the other news networks.

An excellent example of one of Taranto's typical articles appeared in a January 6th, 2012 issue with the title "Mourning in America: Pro-abortion extremism lies behind the 'weird' attack

on Rick Santorum.” It is immediately clear from what perspective Taranto is writing from simply by reading the title. Nonetheless, his premise for this article is that there is a pro-abortion movement that will not rest and that their modus operandi is to constantly mock Rick Santorum and other staunch anti-abortion advocates.

Shortly after stating his motivation for writing the article he jumps into his characteristic anti-feminist ranting. He targets the feminist website Jezebel for an article by Erin Ryan, who criticized Santorum for having a stance on abortion that would not allow women to abort a fetus under any circumstance. Taranto responds to this with, “One could plausibly claim that Santorum is extreme in his opposition to abortion based on his actual positions. That Ryan felt compelled to go beyond this and smear him as an extremist shows that she is extreme to the point of utter outlandishness.” He completely blows Ryan’s article out of proportion to the point that he believes she is actually smearing Rick Santorum.

Another example of Taranto’s anti-abortion perspective by way of anti-feminism was published on February 3, 2012 under the title “Big Sister is Watching You: Totalitarian feminism and the smearing of Susan G. Komen.” Early into his article he compares Planned Parenthood’s actions with Susan Komen to how Israelis were treated by Egyptian officials in the old regime. He then claims that *The New York Times* “exemplifies feminism’s gradual transformation into a totalitarian ideology.” He goes on to state that “neutrality on abortion is portrayed as opposition to “women’s health... This is also why purportedly pro-choice feminists can hate Sarah Palin and her daughter for choosing not to abort their children.” Once again, he uses the argument that those who are “pro-abortion” are out to smear those who are anti-abortion. His paranoid argument is repeated several times over in multiple articles. It is almost as if he is not simply anti-abortion but, also that he feels threatened by women.

It would be an incredible error to apply Taranto's ranting to the rest of *The Wall Street Journal*. Aside from his articles, they did an excellent job at simply reporting news on abortion. Not once outside of the opinion section of the paper did anti-abortion opinions appear.

Abortion- Anecdotes and Summary

The only minor anecdote to be made is that basically the only times that any of the news outlets expressed partisanship with this issue was with opinion articles (*The Wall Street Journal*) or on primetime programming with political commentators (CNN and Fox News). Fox News seemed to be the most partisan out of all three organizations, but the majority of their news about abortion was from a non-partisan perspective. Aside from opinion pieces and programs, CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* strictly reported on abortion from a neutral perspective.

Overall, there were various similarities and differences among the three news organizations. Once again, Fox News presented from a conservative viewpoint, whereas CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* presented without any ideological slant, for the most part. Like the other two topics, Fox News' presentation of abortion was theme-driven. They evoked the idea that the United States was becoming more like China due to same-selection abortion. They were also critical about liberal media bias and the idea of tax payer money going to abortion. None of these themes appeared in either CNN or *The Wall Street Journal*.

CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* did show some minor similarities to Fox News. Both organizations had individuals that displayed ideological biases. CNN presented a liberal slant with Piers Morgan and *The Wall Street Journal* presented a conservative viewpoint with James Taranto. The only similarity that CNN had with Fox News is that both presented ideological perspectives, but CNN did not do this with quite as much regularity and Fox News. *The Wall*

Street Journal showed ideological similarities with Fox News. James Taranto was consistently critical of liberals and abortion, which was in line with Fox News' stance. However, Taranto is only one man, which means that it would be dangerous to apply his perspective to the overall perspective of *The Wall Street Journal*. Unlike *The Wall Street Journal*, Fox News differs in that it has a variety of individuals who are critical of abortion.

General Anecdotes

These general anecdotes have mostly to do with the fact that there are many components to the presentation of news on Fox News that do not necessarily fit within the previous chapters. The first point of interest with Fox News is that viewers are routinely told that they are more important. This is evidenced by the fact that they are constantly told that mass media is to blame for something and that they are reporting on a story that no other media outlet is reporting on, even when that is not true.

Fox News viewers are also constantly told they are being victimized. It is never explicitly stated that they are victims of something. However, they are frequently told that the United States is under threat from dangerous immigrants and the border is not secure, conservatives are being persecuted for their anti-gay marriage and abortion beliefs, the federal government is wasting your taxes on abortion, and et cetera.

Discussion panels and guests on Fox News are typically conservative. Take the program *The Five* for instance. The panels are always different for each episode, but there are always four conservatives and one liberal. Additionally, the liberal contributor is routinely mocked and ridiculed. Juan Williams seems to be the only liberal contributor who is respected on the show. Because of this Fox News viewers are constantly inundated with conservative talking points and rhetoric. The majority of politicians who appear on Fox News are conservative too. Although the

Fox News anchors interviewing these politicians might not be displaying partisanship, the viewer only hears the perspectives on conservative politicians.

Fox News viewers were also not presented honest discussion during the GOP primaries. There was rarely policy discussion, rather discussions were dominated by talking points and which candidates are fighting with each other. It was not until Romney solidified the nomination that policy discussion arose. There was even moment on January 5th, 2012 on The O'Reilly Factor where Bill O'Reilly admits that it is not Fox News' intent to debate the nominees. He devoted an entire Talking Points segment to how he was going to treat the candidates fairly and not debate them if they appeared on his show. He affirmed this stance after responding to a letter that claimed he was too harsh on an earlier interview with Rick Santorum. He claimed that the interview was not a debate and that he is not interested in "party politics."

Last, there is a smugness that is often displayed on Fox News that is rarely seen on CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. Not surprisingly, much of the smugness appears on Fox News' primetime programming. For instance, The O'Reilly Factor has a segment called "Watter's World" in which a Fox News contributor tracks down liberals in public and questions them about current events. More often than not, what is edited into the clip is a series of people responding with uneducated answers. Every single instance of the segment was devoted to make liberals seem uninformed or unintelligent.

Another excellent example of smugness that was not previously mentioned in the analysis also occurred on The O'Reilly Factor on March 15, 2012. One particular segment was critical about an advertisement from moveon.org that claimed the GOP was waging a "war on women." The Factor invited both Gretchen Carlson and Margaret Hoover, who are both conservative Fox News employees. Hoover actually agrees with the message of the advertisement and toward the

end of the segment O'Reilly looks straight at her and states, "Woman are more (sic) smarter than that."

Discussion and Conclusion

The research questions for this study were concerned with what messages conservative media is sending to their audiences and what influence that might have on political socialization. What effect might particular messages have on political and economic ideology? What particular messages are being presented? Are these messages contributing to a false consciousness among careless conservatives? These research questions were based on the theoretical framework provided by Georg Lukacs and his work on false consciousness.

Based on this theoretical background and the research questions of this study, it was anticipated that certain themes would appear within the content analysis that would confirm Lukacs ideas about false consciousness and the struggle between the subjective and objective. Since most Fox News viewers are likely to be careless conservatives, it was anticipated that content on Fox News would keep viewers distracted from the true reason for their own economic situation. This content would then coalesce with vague discussions about the external processes of capitalism and the US economy. Economic discussions would be intertwined in social issues, thus providing a minor capitalist component in each issue of conservative ideology.

As for conscious conservatives, it was anticipated that they would mirror what Lukacs stated about the bourgeoisie and class consciousness. The evidence should have been found in *The Wall Street Journal* because most of the news would be presented from a capitalist perspective with very little said in the way of social issues. Because conscious conservatives have class consciousness it was expected that *The Wall Street Journal* would likely not care to

discuss social issues very often due to the fact that they would not pertain to the economic standing of their readers.

Immigration-Fox News

Fox News' presentations of immigration had several minor themes that focused on the economy, but they were dwarfed by frames that were concerned with either xenophobia or the political motivations of liberals. There were only eight instances of immigration being framed around job loss and only one instance of the idea that immigration improves the economy. Fox News was far more concerned with themes that dealt with border security, distrust of government, and liberal political stunts. Those three frames alone constituted 119 of the 232 discussions about immigration. This truly evidences how little of a factor economics was in relation to immigration.

Based on the previous literature, it was expected that national security would be a major theme for Fox News (Dean 2007). The first major theme that emerged on Fox News dealt with Arizona and its trouble with border security. Fox News provided ample airtime for Governor Jan Brewer and Sheriff Joe Arpaio to tell their side of the story. They allowed both individuals to dictate the interviews and use airtime to present their conservative viewpoints. Additionally, Fox News presented ample discussion about these issues. A large portion of these discussions had an ideological slant. For instance, the discussion about whether or not Sheriff Arpaio is a crusader provided an avenue for Charles Krauthammer to criticize the Obama administration and very carefully show his support for Sheriff Arpaio. Much of these discussions surrounded the idea that national security must be taken more seriously.

Another theme that emerged out of the content analysis was Fox News' focus on liberals and their connection to the Latino population. Repeatedly, Fox News presented news on discussions concerning the idea that liberals are only trying to appease Latino in order to get their support. For example, Fox News aired an interview with Governor Brewer concerning the Arizona immigration bill hearing. Governor Brewer complained about the Democrats approach to the hearing and stated that everything they were doing was a political stunt. In response, the Fox News anchor stated verbatim, "Potentially, this may be an effort to court the Latino vote."

One interesting issue with Fox News' preoccupation with liberal and the Latino population is that they criticized Democrats for attempting to get support from Latinos, but there was frequent discussion about how Mitt Romney should select Marco Rubio as his running mate. This topic was always seriously discussed and almost always presented a conservative ideological slant. Overall, forty-eight of the 233 discussions concerning immigration were about the issue of liberals and the Latino population.

Based on the research conducted by Skocpol and Williamson (2012) it was anticipated the Fox News would focus on themes of paranoia and xenophobia. This particular study corroborates most of the results that Skocpol and Williamson found. Based on their research, it was argued that xenophobia and paranoia would be important themes for Fox News and it turned out to be mostly correct. Forty-three of the 233 discussions followed a paranoia or xenophobic theme.

Fox News expressed xenophobia and paranoia through the use of discussion about national security, job security, and cultural superiority. Discussions about national security were the most frequent with a total of thirty instances. Although Fox News tended to focus on national

security, violence, and defense in regard to xenophobia themes, there was also coverage concerning job security and cultural superiority. Like previously mentioned, it was anticipated that Fox News would make job loss an issue in regard to immigration, but this issue turned out to be of little importance compared to others. Surprisingly, there were only eight instances of job loss being discussed. Based on the literature and prior knowledge of the subject, it was anticipated that there would be discussions about how immigrants are a burden on the job market due to the idea that they take jobs away from Americans. However, this simply was not the case. Additionally, discussions of cultural superiority were only seen four times. Although there were not many instances of these themes, they are still important to this study due to the fact that they were both unexpected.

An additional general theme that emerged during the content analysis dealt with broad monetary issues with immigration. It was suggested that monetary concerns would be an issue with immigration based on the work of Santorum (2006) and Grindstaff (2006). It was anticipated that there would be discussions about tax payer money being wasted on illegal immigrants using social welfare programs. Many Fox News anchors and correspondents made this exact argument and were not bashful about expressing it. However, the arguments that were made were never corroborated with data or evidence. Every argument that was made in regard to immigrants being a drain on the economy was supported with anecdotal evidence.

Although Fox News was very concerned with immigration issues, there was not a single instance of discussion or news about global immigration issues. Every single discussion about immigration was in regard to the problems that the United States is facing. There was not even discussion concerning how other nations are dealing with illegal immigration.

Last, there was a major theme on Fox News concerning the federal government. There was frequent discussion about how the federal government is to blame for many of the issues with immigration policy and illegal immigration. Blaming the federal government was one of the more visible themes that Fox News expressed, which was evidenced by some of the titles of their archived videos (e.g. “DEA Helping Drug Cartels?” and “Government Gone Wild: ICE”). Many at Fox News had no qualms with expressing their conservative viewpoints on this issue.

Immigration- CNN

For the most part, CNN tended to focus on simply reporting immigration issues and airing human interest stories. CNN provided a minimal amount of airtime to the news surrounding Arizona’s immigration battles. They aired five separate stories about Arizona during the six month span.

CNN did not report on a single story that reflected xenophobia and paranoia themes. There was absolutely no mention from CNN about border security being a problem, immigrants taking jobs away from Americans, overbearing government, or the United States being culturally superior to other countries. However, CNN did have a few economic discussions in regard to immigration. There was a small amount of discussion concerning entrepreneurship among immigrants.

CNN tended to focus on global issues and human interest stories. There were a total of five international stories and eleven human interest stories. Three out of the five international stories that CNN aired were concerning France’s immigration issues. The other two issues were about Israel’s issue with African immigrants. Human interest stories were by far CNN’s most

popular way of approaching immigration discussions. Out of a total of forty-three stories about immigration, eleven of them were human interest pieces.

Immigration- *The Wall Street Journal*

The Wall Street Journal had very little variety in the way it reported on immigration. The most frequent articles and stories that were published pertained to the economy and immigration. Instead of blaming immigrants as a drain on the economy, *The Wall Street Journal* actually focused on how immigrants have a positive contribution to growing economies. It consistently mentioned a connection between entrepreneurship and immigrations. There were articles on everything from immigrants coming to the United States to start a business to businesses taking advantage of migrant labor.

Additionally, *The Wall Street Journal* also published articles about the issues surrounding Arizona's immigration reform. It published a total of five articles about the issue and simply reported on the issues and did not interject an ideological slant to the issues. There was not a single instance of *The Wall Street Journal* expressing an ideological slant with the presentation of these issues.

The Wall Street Journal also made absolutely no effort to frame immigration issues with xenophobia or paranoia. There were no discussions or articles about Americans losing jobs from immigrants, immigrants being a drain on society, border security, or cultural superiority. However, *The Wall Street Journal* did have some material concerning liberals and immigration issues. In particular, they published two stories about liberals attempting to gain support from the Latino community in order to gain more support. Nevertheless, this theme only emerged twice and both of these instances occurred in opinion pieces.

Gay Marriage- Fox News

Fox News took a much different approach to gay marriage and the economy. They did not try to intertwine the two issues. Rather, they blamed gay marriage as a distraction from the poor economy. They directed this blame toward liberals and mass media. Out of ninety-eight discussions concerning gay marriage, forty-five of them were concerned with blaming liberals for the issue or claiming gay marriage as a distraction. The interesting part to all of this is that when it was claimed that issues concerning gay marriage were a distraction from the economy, very rarely was there an economic discussion after the claim was made.

Like immigration, Fox News presented the viewpoint that liberals are taking part in political stunts to gain support from a particular community. In this case, Fox News accused liberals of supporting pro-gay marriage policies only to get extra support. Twenty-five of the ninety-eight discussions about gay marriage were dedicated to blaming liberals for something in relation to gay marriage. There was frequent discussion about how President Obama only made his opinion on gay marriage public in order to get votes from the gay community. However, there was actually discussion on Fox News prior to President Obama's public statement that he will refrain from making his opinion known because it would hurt him politically. They immediately changed their tone once he came out in support of gay marriage.

Fox News also attempted to detract from discussions of gay marriage by trying to interject discussions about the economy. Frequently, Fox News would air a discussion concerning gay marriage and a panelist or anchor would mention that the economy was a far more important issue to discuss. However, when the discussion would shift to the economy there

was very little honest discussion with data or evidence. Every economic discussion dealt with either anecdotal evidence or a poll that was conducted.

Last, one theme that emerged on Fox News was that of liberal media. Fox News consistently blamed the liberal media for something in regard to gay marriage. They frequently blamed mass media for distracting people from the economy with discussions of gay marriage. Fox News presented themselves as the only source for legitimate news.

Gay Marriage- CNN

CNN frequently expressed pro-gay marriage ideology. Twenty of CNN's seventy-two stories about gay marriage showed support gay marriage. Outside of these twenty instances, CNN essentially presented stories about gay marriage without any ideological slant. However, the twenty instances that supported gay marriage were very ideologically slanted, which is much different from CNN's presentation of immigration and gay marriage. CNN mostly remained non-partisan in the presentation of those issues.

Aside from the fact that CNN presented pro-gay marriage viewpoints, it was surprising that anchors were openly expressing their opinions. Solidad O'Brien and other anchors frequently talked over guests that were anti-gay marriage. They essentially bullied their guests during the interviews. CNN simply did not try to hide its liberal ideological slant on the issue of gay marriage. Considering the idea that CNN is supposed to be a non-partisan news source, it was shocking how blatantly pro-gay marriage CNN anchors and correspondents were.

Gay Marriage- *The Wall Street Journal*

Concerning gay marriage, *The Wall Street Journal* simply did not care much about the issue. They published 121 articles about gay marriage and 117 of them were from non-partisan perspectives. They simply reported on the news and issues surrounding gay marriage and refrained from interjecting and ideological slant. However, *The Wall Street Journal* did publish four articles that were anti-gay marriage, but they were from the opinion section.

Abortion- Fox News

Fox News was far more concerned with simply supporting the idea of pro-life and blaming the media for being pro-choice than anything else. Those two themes made up nineteen of the sixty-five discussion about abortion. However, when the economy was interjected into the discussion it either pertained to tax payer money being wasted on abortion or that the United States is becoming similar to China.

During many discussions about abortion, Fox News contributors and correspondents utilized a couple different frames. For instance, when presenting general pro-life view points, correspondents would mention “abortion inducing drugs” and the “war on babies.” The “war on babies” was unique in that it was sparingly used, but “abortion-inducing drugs” were consistently discussed. Not once in these discussions do they explain what these drugs are. The issue is that the drugs they are referencing are actually emergency contraceptives that basically prevent conception. They do not induce abortions.

Outside of general discussions of pro-life viewpoints, Fox News frequently compared the United States to China. These conversations were reserved to The O’Reilly Factor and Hannity, but they reiterated the same points. Both O’Reilly, Hannity, and their correspondents discussed how the United States is becoming similar to China because Planned Parenthood exists. There

was even lengthy discussion about sex-selected abortions, which allowed them to draw even more similarities to China. The emergent theme also corroborated the previous literature concerning the power of evoking Communism as a socialization agent (Hutton and Giddens 2000, Thomas 2008).

In relation to Planned Parenthood, there were several discussions about how the left wing media is ignoring the issue of sex-selected abortion and the use of tax payer money for abortions. The issue with this is that the claim was made that only Fox News was covering these stories, but there were actually several instances where CNN was reporting on them around the same time. Additionally, not once was there data mentioned that supported the claim that tax payer money was being used for abortion. There were only general claims that \$487 million dollars of tax payer money was being used for Planned Parenthood. The issue is that Planned Parenthood does much more than simply practice abortions.

Abortion- CNN

Abortion was by far the least reported issue on CNN. There were only a total of nine discussions during the entire six month time span. Four of these discussions did not have an ideological slant, while five presented liberal perspectives on the issue. Although Fox News stated that they were the only media outlet reporting on sex-selected abortion, CNN covered the issue. The five instances of pro-choice presentations were only presented on Piers Morgan Tonight. Because of this the ideological slant cannot be attributed to the entire news organization.

Abortion- *The Wall Street Journal*

Not once did *The Wall Street Journal* mention any economic issues with abortion. However, *The Wall Street Journal* did publish several articles that presented pro-life viewpoints. Most of those discussions occurred in opinion articles though. Outside of opinion pieces, *The Wall Street Journal* never displayed partisanship and simply reported on the daily news concerning abortion.

Similarities and Differences

Fox News was considerably different in the content and presentation of news than both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. There were only minor instances of Fox News being similar in any way to CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. Although *The Wall Street Journal* is a conservative media outlet, it actually showed more similarities to CNN than Fox News.

One of the differences between Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* is that they rarely agreed on economic issues. Both organizations each had eight discussions about job loss in regard to immigration. However, *The Wall Street Journal* was much more concerned with the idea that immigrants stimulate economies. Eighteen of *The Wall Street Journal*'s 121 stories were concerned with this idea, while Fox News mentioned it only once in 232 discussion.

Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* also showed similarities and differences in regard to gay marriage. Fox News was extremely concerned with blaming the media and getting the discussion back to the economy, but neither of those themes or frames were found within *The Wall Street Journal*. Out of 121 discussion, three were human interest, four discussed political stunts by liberals, and the rest were simple non-partisan reports and stories about gay marriage.

Concerning abortion, Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* showed vast differences. Not once did *The Wall Street Journal* mention any economic issues with abortion, while Fox

News made several claims about taxes and communism. Both organizations showed far more support for pro-life ideology. However, most of those discussions occurred in either primetime programming or opinion articles. Outside of opinion pieces, *The Wall Street Journal* never displayed partisanship and simply reported on the daily news concerning abortion.

CNN showed far more similarities to *The Wall Street Journal* than Fox News. In regard to abortion and immigration, CNN was much more similar to *The Wall Street Journal*. Both organizations did a wonderful job at presenting these issues in a non-partisan manner. Both of these organizations even reported on international issues with abortion and immigration. There was not a single instance where Fox News reported or discussed an international story about immigration, gay marriage, or abortion.

CNN did have quite a few similarities with Fox News in regard to gay marriage. CNN frequently expressed pro-gay marriage ideology, while Fox News presented the opposite. Twenty of CNN's seventy-two stories about gay marriage showed support for gay marriage, while Fox News had several different anti-gay marriage frames.

Conclusion

There were several different research questions involved in this particular study based on the idea that individuals are supporting ideologies that are against their own economic interest. It is obvious that people are socialized into believing particular ideologies and that there are numerous agents of socialization. For the purposes of this study, conservative media were analyzed as main agents of political socialization. What influence might these themes have on political and economic beliefs? What particular messages are being presented? Are these messages contributing to a false consciousness among careless conservatives?

There were particular themes that were expected based on the previous literature. It was anticipated that xenophobia and paranoia would be a major theme, along with national security in regard to immigration (Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Zernike 2011; Diamond 1995; Dean 2007; Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008; Dunn and Woodard 1996). Concerning abortion and gay marriage, it was anticipated that there would be discussions about taxation and overbearing government (Alperovitz 2005; Frank 2008; Courtwright 2010; Dunn and Woodard 1996). It was also anticipated that Fox News would criticize other media outlets based on Skocpol and Williamson's (2012) research. Additionally, several themes emerged during the content analysis. For instance, some of the major themes that emerged focused on blaming liberals for various issues and comparing the United States to China.

Concerning the presentation of the themes, there were stark differences between Fox News and CNN, which evidences the idea that Fox News is presenting specific themes to a particular audience. With the exception of gay marriage, CNN's approach was non-partisan. Because most of their news was presented in a non-partisan manner, CNN was used to compare against Fox News. Overall, one could even go as far as to say that each organization had a different ideology or philosophy in regard to how news should be presented.

Fox News' philosophy for the presentation of news rested on the ideas of xenophobia, victimization, and responsibility. There was a frequent preoccupation with paranoia about immigration, which verifies the research conducted by Skocpol and Williamson (2012). There was concern for national security and the idea that somehow tax payer money is being wasted. In regard to victimization, there were repeated presentations about who is being victimized in relation to immigration, abortion, and gay marriage. For instance, the citizens of the United States are victims of weakened national security and border patrol. Tax payers, women, and

babies are victims of liberal political motivations concerning abortion. Lastly, conservatives are persecuted for their anti-gay marriage beliefs and Fox News is a victim of the mass media choosing to ignore the economy in favor of gay marriage issues. Additionally, their philosophy seemingly dictates that there are constant issues of responsibility. What this means is that there is a focus on who is to blame for certain issues. For instance, Fox News consistently blamed liberals and mass media for either having political motivations that were opposite of conservatives or causing Americans to be distracted from more serious issues.

This philosophy is vastly different from both CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*, which evidences the idea that Fox News is presenting specific information to a specific group of people. Neither organization focused on themes around xenophobia, victimization, or responsibility. Instead, they focused on simply reporting issues. They even spent time on international issues, which Fox News typically ignored.

Demographic data for conservatives provide even more evidence for the idea that Fox News caters their information to a specific segment of conservatives. It was anticipated that both organizations would consist of mostly male viewers due to the fact that most staunch conservatives and libertarians are white men (Pew Research Center 2011). Although data shows that most conservatives are men, Fox News viewer demographic data shows that viewership is split evenly between men and women (National TV Spots 2012). Data shows that over half (fifty-four percent) of staunch conservatives and nearly half (forty percent) of libertarians prefer Fox News. Additionally, staunch conservatives make up the largest demographic of viewers and listeners of Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh. Lastly, fifty-six percent of staunch conservatives believe that immigrants are threatening traditional American values. Sixty-eight percent actually believe that immigrants are a burden on the country and that they are taking jobs and taking

advantage of house and healthcare (Pew Research Center 2011). This explains why there was discussion on Fox News about border security, China, and et cetera.

Fox News viewers also have an average household income of \$59,400 (Huff 2009), whereas *The Wall Street Journal's* readers have the highest average household income of all newspaper print publications at \$135,740 (Mediamark and Research and Intelligence 2009). Sixty percent of all of *The Wall Street Journal* readers are also in top management positions within their careers (Mitchell 2011). Additional demographic information could not be found for *The Wall Street Journal* so conclusions cannot be drawn about educational attainment and breakdown of household income. However, according to National TV Spots, Fox News and CNN have roughly the same percentage of viewers who have attended college at forty-four percent and forty-three percent, respectively. Additionally, they have similar results when it comes to household income. Fifty-three percent of Fox News viewers make at least the median national household income and CNN claims fifty-four percent of their viewership at or above the national median household income.

In regard to ideology, eighty-four percent of staunch conservatives strongly disapprove with President Obama's job performance and seventy percent have an unfavorable opinion of him (Pew Research Center 2011), which helps to explain why so much time was devoted to blaming President Obama and the government for so many different issues. According to Pew Research, ninety percent of staunch conservatives also feel that "government is almost always wasteful and inefficient."

Aside from demographic data, there is also information concerning how informed Fox News viewers are in relation to viewers of other news organizations. Based on recent research,

Fox News viewers actually know less about current news and events than individuals who do not watch any media at all. CNN viewers had an average knowledge of current political events, just behind talk radio, The Daily Show, Sunday Show, and NPR. NPR listeners were by far the most informed participants in the study and on average could answer twice as many political questions correctly than Fox News viewers. 75% of those who identified as Republican watched Fox News, while only 51% of self-identified Republicans watched CNN. Additionally, only 36% of Democrats admitted to watching Fox News and 60% viewed CNN (Cassino, Jenkins, and Woolley 2012).

All of these data suggest that both *The Wall Street Journal* and Fox News present news to specific types of conservatives. *The Wall Street Journal* publishes news that is of importance to those who are in upper income brackets and are involved in business management. This explains why there was a focus on entrepreneurship in regard to immigration and minor discussion about gay marriage and abortion. Those two social issues are of little importance to their readers, thus they spend more time simply reporting on social issues and discussing economics when important.

Fox News presents information that is important to those of modest incomes and education. Although Fox News viewers are told that they are more informed, they are actually the least informed viewership or listenership of all the major media outlets (Cassino, Jenkins, and Woolley 2012). Fox News viewers are also neglected economic discussion and news. They are constantly distracted with conservative rhetoric about the downfalls of mass media and the political moves of liberals.

The one definite conclusion that can be made from the data is that each news organization presents information to specific segments of the electorate. What truly evidences that Fox News is presenting information for specific viewers and ideologues is the sheer fact that they are reporting issues that are completely ignored by CNN and *The Wall Street Journal*. For instance, Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* have completely different perspectives in regard to monetary issues although both are conservative news sources. Being that *The Wall Street Journal* focuses on economics, it would make sense that it would report on immigrants wasting tax payer money if it was an issue. However, this simply is not the case. The lack of data provided by Fox News for its perspectives and the complete disregard for the issues that *The Wall Street Journal* reports on indicates that Fox News has actually framed out any economic component to this social issue. Fox News is framing the economic component almost completely out and focusing more on themes like national security. However, the cost for national security is never brought up, which is not surprising based on the literature concerning conservatives' preoccupation with national security and defense (Dean 2007). Conservatives rarely take issue with expanding the federal government's role for national security. However, there was enough economic discussion to remind viewers that the economy is important with this particular issue.

Additionally, the presentation of these topics suggests that each organization targets different parts of the electorate. All things considered, it can be suggested that Fox News presents information that is important to careless conservatives and *The Wall Street Journal* presents information that is important conscious conservatives, which is directly in line with Figure 4 of the methodology and Mill's method of difference. The difference between the two types of conservatives and the news organizations they choose to view follow the information in Figure 4. Fox News rarely has economic discussion, but *The Wall Street Journal* has much more

consistent and in-depth economic discussion. Additionally, Fox News pitches issues to those with less education, which also suggests that these individuals have lower incomes.

Overall, Fox News is very thematic in the way it approaches the presentation of news. This thematic approach allows it to present specific ideas, which perpetuates its specific world view. This is vastly different from *The Wall Street Journal* and CNN. Neither of these organizations utilized a thematic approach. The issues that were presented by Fox News were much different from that of *The Wall Street Journal*, means that there are different issues for each media outlet. The different issues that were presented among the media outlets suggests that they each have different segments of viewers experiencing far different agents of socialization.

Fox News' thematic approach essentially neglected economic discussions. However, *The Wall Street Journal* presented economic issues and discussed them in detail when appropriate. Essentially, Fox News ignored economic issues, while *The Wall Street Journal* focused on the economic aspects of the issues. The difference in the presentation of economic issues suggests a connection with the typology of this study. Based on the definitions of this study, careless conservatives are far more focused on social issues, rather than economic issues. It can be suggested that Fox News is presenting their worldview to careless conservatives, whereas *The Wall Street Journal* is presenting issues and information that interest conscious conservatives. As mentioned earlier, careless conservatives are likely to have a false consciousness, while conscious conservatives are more likely to have class consciousness. Because Fox News presents information and themes that are almost devoid of economic discussion, what influence might this have on viewers? Fox News is sending messages to those who have a false consciousness. Their average viewer has a modest income and education. Due to the fact that Fox News neglects legitimate economic discussions, it can be suggested that their viewers are distracted from their

own economic concerns, which contributes to a false consciousness. However, Fox News presents enough economic discussion through tax issues and general economic concerns that viewers are reminded that the economy is important with social issues. Additionally, most of the economic discussion focused on who to blame for the poor economy (i.e. “Washington”, liberals, immigrants, and so forth). In essence, it can be argued that Fox News’ thematic approach to the news contributes to the viewers’ political socialization by distracting them from real economic concerns, which perpetuates a false consciousness among them.

Limitations

As with any research concerning political ideology, it is important to remove all ideological biases before conducting the research. As important as it is to remove ideological biases, there is always a possibility of personal ideology making its way into research. Thus, the most important limitation is the possibility of researcher bias. It is possible that during the data collection that particular themes and frames within each issue were given more attention due to their importance in the hypothesis. However, during data collection there was close attention paid to each theme. The amount of time spent on each issue was dependent how many instances there were of each within each news organization’s archives.

Additionally, it is possible during the data collection that certain themes and conclusions were drawn due to ideological biases. Coming from a politically progressive viewpoint, it is possible that certain conclusions and analyses were made from that perspective. However, the likelihood of this is low due to the fact considerable time was spent in this paper about CNN’s liberal perspective concerning gay marriage. A second person to code would have certainly improved the reliability of the data too.

Last, it is hard to make definite conclusions from only a content analysis. One can only describe what certain viewers are being exposed to, which decreases the generalizability of this study. A mixed methods approach with both a content analysis and interview data would be ideal due to the fact that it would provide more insight into to what conservatives truly believe and how that compares to the news they are viewing. Initially, this was the particular plan for this study, but very few individuals were willing to be interviewed. Not enough respondents were willing to participate in this study. When most conservatives were approached about participating they were willing to take part. However, when they found out that they would be discussing their economic ideology, most refused to participate. Aside from interviews, surveys are also another option with future research as they would also the researcher to discover certain political behaviors and attitudes.

These limitations are also cause for further study. This topic is incredibly important because it will be difficult to progress economically in the United States when individuals are supporting policies that only benefit a small segment of the population. It is because of the importance of economic progression that additional research methods (interviews and surveys) and data should be applied to this existing research in order to draw more solid conclusions.

Appendices

Appendix A: Tables

Figure 1.-Immigration Template

Theme	Frequency
National Security/violence/defense	
Job loss	
Improves Economy/entrepreneurship	
Distrust of government	
Liberal political stunt	
Blame media	
Cultural superiority	
Positive story/human interest	
International issue	
Total # of discussions	Thematic- Neutral- Total-

Figure 2.-Gay Marriage Template

Persecuted for conservative belief	
Political stunt by liberals	
Gay agenda	
Hurts children	
Hurts economy	
Economy more important issues	
Destruction of culture	
Blame media	
General support for “traditional marriage”	
General support for gay marriage	
Human interest	
Total # of discussions	Thematic- Neutral- Total-

Figure 3.-Abortion Template

Waste of tax payer money	
Evoked communism/China	
Media bias	
Liberals are pro-abortion	
Support for pro-life	
Support for pro-choice	
Total # of discussions	Thematic- Neutral- Total-

Figure 4.

	Conservative Ideology	Supports Capitalism (modern or otherwise)	Believes in individual liberty	Knowledgeable about capitalism
Conscious Conservatism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Careless Conservatism	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Figure 5- Fox News: Immigration

Theme	Frequency
National Security/violence/defense	30
Job loss	8
Improves Economy/entrepreneurship	1
Distrust of government	41
Liberal political stunt	48
International issue	0
Blame media	4
Cultural superiority	4
Positive story/human interest	18 (Fox News Latino:8)
Total # of discussions	Thematic-154 Neutral-78 Total-232

Figure 6-Fox News: Gay Marriage

Persecuted for conservative belief	9
Political stunt by liberals	25
Gay agenda	1
Hurts children	1
Hurts economy	1
Economy more important issues	11
Destruction of culture	4
Blame media	9
General support for “traditional marriage”	1
General support for gay marriage	4
Human interest	0
Total # of discussions	Thematic-66 Neutral-22 Total-98

Figure 7- Fox News: Abortion

Waste of tax payer money	3
Evoked communism/China	7
Media bias	6
Liberals are pro-abortion	2
Support for pro-life	13
Support for pro-choice	0
Total # of discussions	Thematic-31 Neutral-34 Total-65

Figure 8- CNN: Immigration

Theme	Frequency
National Security/violence/defense	8 (All concerning Arizona)
Job loss	0
Improves Economy/entrepreneurship	3
Distrust of government	1
Liberal political stunt	2
Blame media	0
Cultural superiority	0
Positive story/human interest	11
International issue	5
Total # of discussions	Thematic-30 Neutral-13 Total-43

Figure 9- CNN: Gay Marriage

Persecuted for conservative belief	0
Political stunt by liberals	0
Gay agenda	0
Hurts children	0
Hurts economy	0
Economy more important issues	0
Destruction of culture	0
Blame media	0
General support for “traditional marriage”	0
General support for gay marriage	20
Human interest	7
Total # of discussions	Thematic-27 Neutral-45 Total-72

Figure 8- CNN: Abortion

Waste of tax payer money	0
Evoked communism/China	0
Media bias	0
Liberals are pro-abortion	0
Support for pro-life	0
Support for pro-choice	5
Total # of discussions	Thematic-5 Neutral-4 Total-9

Figure 9- *The Wall Street Journal*: Immigration

Theme	Frequency
National Security/violence/defense	0
Job loss	0
Improves Economy/entrepreneurship	18
Distrust of government	0
Liberal political stunt	2
Blame media	0
Cultural superiority	0
Positive story/human interest	3
Support for conservative ideology	4
Total # of discussions	Thematic-27 Neutral-94 121 (33 international)

Figure 10- *The Wall Street Journal*: Gay Marriage

Persecuted for conservative belief	0
Political stunt by liberals	4
Gay agenda	0
Hurts children	0
Hurts economy	0
Economy more important issues	0
Destruction of culture	0
Blame media	0
General support for “traditional marriage”	0
General support for gay marriage	0
Human interest	3
Total # of discussions	Thematic-7 Neutral-114 Total-121

Figure 11: *The Wall Street Journal*: Abortion

Waste of tax payer money	0
Evoked communism/China	0
Media bias	0
Liberals are pro-abortion	3
Support for pro-life	15
Support for pro-choice	0
Total # of discussions	Thematic-18 Neutral-42 Total-60

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Integrity

September 21, 2012

Jeffrey McKay
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

Dear Mr. McKay:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract to address the political socialization of politically conservative individuals and how political ideologies seem to coalesce among individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds. After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study is a content analysis of publicly available data it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bruce F. Day'.

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director
Office of Research Integrity

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