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# Editorial Pages and the Marketplace of Ideas: A Quantitative Content Analysis of Three Metropolitan Newspapers

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EDITORIAL PAGES AND THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS: A QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF  
THREE METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPERS

by

Jacob Smith

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Communication

Approved:

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2010

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## ABSTRACT

Editorial Pages and the Marketplace of Ideas: A Quantitative Content Analysis of Three  
Metropolitan Newspapers

by

Jacob Smith, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2010

Major Professor: Dr. Edward C. Pease  
Department: Journalism and Communication

This study was conducted to identify the nature of the content devoted to the 2008 presidential election in the editorial pages of three newspapers. The research sought to discover what percentage of the content was specific to the election, whether this election-centered content focused on the campaign or on specific issues, what issues were covered, and the role in which the author was writing. This study used a comparative quantitative content analysis to examine this content appearing during the final three months of the 2008 campaign in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, three major U.S. metropolitan newspapers with regional focus. The results provided insight into whether a marketplace of ideas exists in the editorial pages of the selected newspapers. Analysis of the election-related material revealed that each newspaper devoted a substantial portion of their editorial pages to the election. However, of that election-centered material, the majority was focused on the campaign, or “horse race,” devoting much less to the discussion of substantive policy issues. The exception was the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which devoted almost 50% of its election-centered material to substantive issues. Only a handful of issues dominated

the issue coverage in each newspaper: money, social issues, and defense/foreign policy. The general format for the editorial pages in each newspaper allowed for only a limited amount of diversity with the role in which an author is writing (i.e. the newspaper's own editorial writers vs. letters to the editor written by citizens). The majority of columns, the portion of the editorial pages where a diversity of authors has the potential to exist, were made up by authors identified by only a handful of roles.

(120 pages)

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Jacob Smith

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## INTRODUCTION

“When men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas – that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out” (Abrams v. United States, 1919).

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Supreme Court  
Justice

In the summer of 1918, Jacob Abrams was arrested, tried, and convicted for violating the Sedition Act of 1918. Abrams and a group of Russian immigrants had distributed pamphlets criticizing the U.S. military’s deployment of troops to Russia. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his famous dissent in Abrams v United States (1919), argued that truth will triumph over “silly... poor and puny anonymities.” It is an argument as old as democracy itself, harking back to the days of ancient Greece. In the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, John Milton, Alexis De Tocqueville, and John Stuart Mill among others proposed that competing ideas and opinions were an essential part of arriving at truth, and essential for a healthy democracy. This marketplace of ideas is the standard by which the modern day editorial pages are modeled. Unlike the hard news pages, the editorial page’s function is to present an assortment of opinions and viewpoints. These pages not only provide the forum for competing arguments, they also help to interpret the events of the day (Mott, 1940).

This is essential. As Thomas Jefferson stated, “whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government” (Jefferson, Lipscomb, Bergh, & Johnston, 1905). Jefferson envisioned a nation of informed voters who could make assessments of the candidates

and issues to make an educated vote (Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2005). A healthy democracy is dependent on informed voters.

But in the 1920s, the traditional marketplace idea was challenged as an effective way of educating the masses. Three years after Holmes delivered the Abrams dissent, Walter Lippmann argued that man's limited exposure and personal experience made arriving at truth difficult. To Lippmann, public opinion was not part of the marketplace of ideas, but something shaped and distorted by the managers of the news. These managers were more concerned with increasing their own power and influence than providing an accurate picture to the public. In 1947, the Commission on Freedom of the Press' report found that the marketplace of ideas was hindered by the modern media context (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). A truthful and complete account of the news was no longer enough to inform; the press needed to do more than just passively report the news, it needed to provide adequate voices to meet the societal needs. The commission offered recommendations for the press with the aim of encouraging a robust marketplace of ideas in the mass media. Two recommendations are of particular interest for this study are providing a forum for comment and criticism and acting as a means of clarifying the goals and values of society.

With the editorial pages representing a forum for the marketplace of ideas in the newspaper, understanding what issues are given exposure and how they are presented can give insight into how the public is served. If Jefferson's ideal of a well-informed voter is the ultimate goal, then examining the health of the marketplace of ideas during an election season is instructive. With this in mind, how much of a newspaper's editorial pages deal with the election? What issues are covered and how much was each covered? How many voices were given a platform to be heard? How much diversity in authorship is provided? How does this marketplace vary in different newspapers? How robust is the marketplace of ideas in the

editorial pages as they comment on the presidential election? These questions are at the heart of this research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The modern mass media marketplace is a vastly different environment than it was even 20 years ago. The advent and rise of the Internet has provided immeasurable amounts of information and opportunities to people everywhere. Anyone with a computer and Internet connection can take part in the dissemination of information that can be accessed by thousands in a matter of seconds. In this way, the Internet may be the key that unlocks the door to a fuller marketplace of ideas. In today's media market, however, the sheer amount of information may be overwhelming to the consumer and in itself perhaps an obstacle in the marketplace.

History has yet to tell us how older forms of media will fare against the new electronic media. Newspapers may be the most vulnerable. The newspaper industry has been struggling with lower readership and the economic recession of 2009, but readership has been declining for decades (Farhi, 2008). But newspapers still provide some of the most comprehensive news coverage and prestigious journalistic work (Just et al., 1997). Editorial pages are an integral part of the newspaper in providing analysis and opinion. They cultivate connections within the community and help determine and reflect its values by the reciprocal trading of ideas among social, economic, and political leaders and citizens within the community (Mott, 1940).

The "marketplace of ideas" is a metaphor used to describe how the press functions in a democracy. The marketplace of ideas proposes that the press provides abundant sources of information to encourage discussion of current issues. Truth is illuminated as the issues compete in the marketplace (Hofstadter & Metzger, 1969). A prototype of this concept can be seen in ancient Greece. Athenians linked the practice of democracy with free speech, believing

the proper implementation of democracy must include widespread political participation in assemblies through the use of *parrhesia*, or frank speaking. To speak with *parrhesia* was to be in opposition to, find fault with, or argue with another individual. Parrhesia was held in high regard for its ability to shed light on that which is right or just (Monoson, 2000).

Greek literature glorified this process in the accounts of Aeschylus, Euripides, Demokritos, and Demosthenes. This speech wasn't necessarily protected; fines and public humiliation followed speech at times. Demosthenes believed that democracy is in trouble when no one speaks out truthfully and critically in the assembly (Monoson, 2000). Although this idea has roots in ancient Greece, it came to fruition during the Age of Enlightenment in Europe (Schmuhl & Picard, 2005).

During this era, intellectuals and philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries developed the philosophy of the natural rights of man. The writings of Englishman John Locke provided one of the most prominent expositions of this concept (Cahn, 2002). He argued that man is born in a state of nature and is rational, tolerant, and happy; man is entitled to enjoy the rights of life, liberty and property. Individuals know what is best for themselves and must be free to pursue their own wants and needs. Reason is the compass that will guide them to truth. Locke also saw the importance of a social contract to protect the natural rights of man (Cahn, 2002). Reasoned thought and tolerance are at the center of his notion of the rights of man. Locke viewed free speech and expression as an extension of reasoned thought. Tolerance of the opinions of others and the freedom to express oneself are vital components in the quest for life, liberty and happiness. He wrote, "We should do well to commiserate our mutual ignorance, and endeavor to remove it in all the gentle and fair ways of information, and not instantly treat others ill as obstinate and perverse because they will not renounce their own and receive our opinions" (Vogt, 2008, p. 73).

The right of man to use reason to arrive at truth also was the basis for John Milton's argument for the freedom to express opinions. Milton was a staunch opponent of censorship by the state-sanctioned Church of England. After experiencing difficulty publishing pamphlets on his opposition to strict Puritan doctrine, he wrote *Areopagitica* which criticized licensing laws. He believed poor or malicious ideas are spread more easily when there is no check on the validity of opinions expressed; therefore, freedom of expression is essential so that truth will emerge in free and open debate (Trager & Dickerson, 1999). He wrote, "And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play on the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" (Trager & Dickerson, p. 46). Thus, Milton provided one of the first arguments for freedom of expression in the press, and his ideas closely resemble those underlying the marketplace of ideas in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America. Both Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson were influenced by the ideas of Milton's self-righting process and the concept of an open marketplace of ideas (Art, Richardson, & Weimann, 2006).

Milton laid the foundation for arguments supporting freedom of speech to follow in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1720 and 1723, the *London Journal* ran a series of essays written under the pen name "Cato." The "Cato Letters," as they came to be known, discussed theories of liberty, representative government, and the freedom of expression (Emery & Emery, 1984). Several of these essays argued that freedom of speech is an essential element of a free government, and Cato viewed freedom of speech as an almost sacred privilege (Trager & Dickerson, 1999). Truthful criticism of the government should not be subject to penalty of the law. The letters argued that, like Milton's *Areopagitica*, when expressed freely, truth prevails over falsehood. Public truths should not be kept secret, and every man ought to know that which concerns all: "The World has, from Time to Time, been led into such a long Maze of

Mistakes, by those who gained by deceiving, that whoever would instruct Mankind, must begin with removing their Errors; and if they were everywhere honestly apprized of Truth, and restored to their Senses, there would not remain one Nation of Bigots or Slaves under the Sun: A Happiness always to be wished, but never expected” (Jacobson, Trenchard, & Gordon, 1965, p. 46). Cato’s writing on liberty and freedom of the press was printed in pamphlets and newspapers circulated throughout the colonies. Cato’s letters were extremely influential in the colonial press of America.

The “marketplace of ideas” in the press developed alongside economic theories of the free marketplace of goods and services in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Schmuhl & Picard, 2005). The feudal system and monarchies had set the terms in which goods and services were distributed, but the democratic revolutions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries ended that system. As individuals gained increased rights in commerce and trade, market-based economies began to take hold. A central theme to market-based economic theories was that unrestrained competition in the marketplace, the interplay between producers and consumers, would result in both economic and social benefits.

In *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith (1998) argued that the unseen hand of exchange in a marketplace is what stimulates production and demand, trade and commerce, and that a marketplace provides a self-correcting pruning effect for unnecessary services. Individuals are motivated by self-interest, and they will naturally choose goods and services that are beneficial to them. Products of poor quality or little use must either improve or be replaced by a competitor. Competition among those providing needed services leads to tailoring those services to better meet the needs of the consumer (Smith). The result is a diversity of goods and services from which the consumer can choose; thus, the more competition in the marketplace, the more consumers benefit. Similarly, beliefs and opinions, like economies, benefit from



competition that demands the refinement and clarification of ideas. Ideas that provide little value to mankind will die out, leaving the stronger or more truthful ideas to grow. As the philosophy of the natural rights of man and the necessary freedom of expression of those rights increased, calls for freedom of the press followed. In the American colonies, cries for liberties afforded to the press grew alongside resentment of the Crown.

For most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, press laws in the American Colonies echoed that of England (Cornwell, 2004). Licensing, prior restraint, and punishment for speech considered licentious was practiced by the governing representatives from England. As the practice of licensing began to disappear in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, newspapers increased in numbers. Circulation was low, but newspapers were read by many in the communities they covered. In these early newspapers arguments for freedom of the press were championed, with early arguments focusing on protecting the press from prior restraint and decriminalizing seditious libel (Cornwell). In addition to Cato's letters, the trial of John Peter Zenger in 1735 increased cries in the circulating pamphlets and newspapers for more freedom. Zenger was arrested and tried for seditious libel for printing criticisms of New York Royal Governor Cosby in the *New York Weekly Journal*. Zenger's Lawyer, Andrew Hamilton, successfully persuaded the jury to acquit Zenger despite his guilt of seditious libel according to the law. The jury was convinced on the grounds of the truthfulness of the statements, despite being instructed by the court that the truth or falsity of the statements were irrelevant. It was a significant development for freedom of the press in the Colonies. Although truth as a defense was not codified in Common Law at the time, the Zenger trial set a precedent as an effective defense against libel charges (Cornwell). Newspapers and pamphlets played a prominent role in changing public opinion and support during the tensions in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. It was the newspapers

that circulated Thomas Paine's writings and arguments from both sides of the coming revolution.

Within the context of these events and ideas, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution arose after the country had achieved independence. Concepts such as the natural rights of man, arriving at truth through reason, protection against tyranny of government, and free economic markets guided the founding fathers in writing law. The Bill of Rights was adopted into the Constitution to ensure protection for individual rights from the federal government to reconcile differences between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The first of these clauses, the First Amendment, expressly limited Congress's ability to pass laws regulating the press and speech:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

The First Amendment and the various state constitutions regarding freedom of the press were written in the spirit that truth would prevail when openly discussed and argued. Freedom from prior restraint and freedom to criticize the government were essential in preventing tyranny.

In *Democracy in America*, Alexis De Tocqueville marveled at the freedoms of the press afforded in the young United States, and the marketplace of ideas they produced. "The more I observe the main effects of a free press, the more convinced am I that, in the modern world, freedom of the press is the principal and, so to say, the constitutive element in freedom" (Tocqueville, Mayer, & Sandage, 2007, p. 191). Tocqueville mentions the press directly in only two chapters in this work, but his appreciation for its impact was made abundantly clear. The

first of these chapters, "Freedom of the Press in the United States" (Chapter 3, Part Two, Volume I), explains why press freedom is necessary. Tocqueville is forthcoming about his hesitation to praise the press, however: "I admit that I do not feel toward freedom of the press that complete and instantaneous love which one accords to things by their nature supremely good" (Tocqueville et al., p. 180). But, he goes on, "I love it more from considering the evil it prevents than on account of the good it does." The problem with freedom of the press is that it cannot prevent abuse at the hands of those who write; he said writers, at times, behave in ways that abuse liberty by spreading falsehoods, but limiting freedom of the press is a fruitless alternative. Tocqueville believed there are only two possible options with the press: complete independence or entire servitude of thought.

Tocqueville maintains that to create a more orderly press, a government could bring devious writers before juries or permanent magistrates. But the ideas of these writers will be exposed to jurors and the public through the proceedings of the court; a thought once obscure will then be repeated many times. Another option is for writers to be arrested. But their words, already written, are still available to the public. Writers may also be subject to censors. But it only takes the word of a single strong-minded writer to reach an assembly. In order for government to create an orderly press, all freedom of speech must be abolished. To Tocqueville, a problem that may have started as a writer's abuse of liberty would lead to a populace "beneath a despot's feet" (Tocqueville et al., 2007, p. 181). Tocqueville believed that when each individual is given the right to rule society, the ability of that individual to choose between differing opinions must be ensured.

Tocqueville also focuses on the idea of centralization: "The effective force of any power is increased in proportion to the centralization of its control" (Tocqueville et al., 2007, p. 184). The press in France was concentrated in two ways. Press operations were centered in Paris, the

capital. The press there worked and wrote within the same circles. The opposite occurred in America. The press was decentralized. There was no press capital; “enlightenment and power” were dispersed throughout the country (Tocqueville et al., 2007, p. 184). As a result, no one group or individual had a monopoly on thought or information. In Europe, the newspapers had power and influence as their numbers were relatively small and published from the same location. Tocqueville believed that the way to defuse this power and influence was to increase the number of newspapers. This was seen in America. He observed, “There is hardly a Hamlet in America without its newspaper. Of course, with so many combatants, neither discipline nor unity of action is possible, and so each fights under its own flag” (Tocqueville et al., p. 185). Newspapers in America may have been for or against an administration or idea, but they used a “hundred different” ways to attack or defend it. Thus, multiple voices compete for public acceptance. In this way, powerful waves of public opinion did not manifest themselves as a majority that impinged on the rights of the minority. He believed that the individual must be exposed to a diversity of opinions or must be exposed to no opinion at all. Because the press is not centralized in a single location or with a single group of journalists, a number of voices can be heard. A diversity of viewpoints is important to a healthy democracy, and in Tocqueville’s opinion, a diversity of viewpoints would materialize and expand in a free marketplace of ideas.

Similarly, in *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill wrote a passionate defense of freedom of speech and the importance of competing opinions. Like many libertarian thinkers, Mill argued the individual should be free from the constraints of the state in issues relating to self, mind and body. For Mill, the right of the individual is absolute and the only reason power should constrain the rights of the individual is to prevent the harm of others. He believed freedom of opinion and the freedom of expression were necessary to find truth and to clarify an individual’s ideas. The

significance of diverse opinions and a healthy marketplace of ideas are essential for progress.

Mill states:

- “... if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility.”
- “... though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any object is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.”
- “... even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth; unless it is suffered to be, and actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds.”
- “... the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled, and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good, but cumbering the ground, and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience.” (Mill, 1909, chap 2)

To Mill, everyone comes to the marketplace with ideas and opinions. Through discussion, ideas are exchanged and compete with one another. Consumers compare their ideas with those of others and choose the best from among them. Beneficial ideas thrive in the marketplace, while poor ideas eventually die out. To Mill, ideas should be expressed without constraint (unless injurious to others) regardless of whether that idea is true or false. If the idea is true, or has elements of truth, society benefits. If the idea is false, society can benefit from understanding the opposing view and gain greater insight into its own position.

In the United States, the marketplace of ideas has been cemented in the 20<sup>th</sup> century conversation of the press with the help of many prominent Supreme Court decisions. The highest profile argument for the marketplace of ideas was delivered by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in his 1919 dissent in *Abrams v. United States*. He wrote “... the ultimate good is better reached by free trade in ideas – that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market” (*Abrams v. United States*, 1919). Since this time, half of the justices who have served on the Court for at least a year have referenced the metaphor at least once. It has been used to reinforce arguments in most areas of First Amendment cases since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hopkins, 1996).

The press has seen its role and purpose transform throughout history (Emery & Emery, 1984). Before the printing press, handwritten newsletters were passed among European merchants discussing subjects as diverse as economic conditions, wars, and social customs. These newsletters were relatively private and reached a small segment of merchant society. But with the advent of the printing press in the 1450s, pamphlets and news-books covering political and social events began appearing. By the 1600s, regularly published newspapers were established. The *Corante* appeared in England in 1621, *The Gazette* appeared in France in 1631, and *Publick Occurrences* appeared in the American colonies in 1690 (Emery & Emery, 1984). These early newspapers gave a voice to those connected in circles of power. But the growing use of pamphleteering gave a voice to those who previously had no outlet for expressing their views. This allowed for a greater diversity of opinions from sources other than those in power. The marketplace had begun to expand.

The newspaper in Colonial America began as a way for press owners to advertise their trade shops (Schudson & Tifft, 2005). Over time, newspapers came to include some limited local commentary and gossip as well as political and economic news obtained from European

newspapers. Initially, local political news rarely found its way into these weekly journals, as complaints from local officials was bad for business (Schudson & Tifft). But political news became important as the conflict between the Colonists and the English arose and pamphleteering was an important part of the patriot movement. Works such as Paine's *Common Sense* were reprinted over and over again. Once independence was achieved, newspapers played an active role in the ratification of the Constitution. In the years that followed, partisan newspapers became the representatives of political factions and official political parties, primarily between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists vying for control of the government.

Newspaper editors of the 1820s and 1830s were at the center of political organization. The Jackson-era mass party system and newspaper editors were the most influential forces behind political debate (Pasley, 2001). The struggles between the Hamiltonian Nationalists and the Jefferson Republicans necessitated that both sides use the press to sway public opinion to their policies. After 24 years of Republicans in power, opposition arose rallying around Andrew Jackson. This opposition was focused on grassroots efforts to gain support and newspapers were the method used by local Jacksonian political leaders. Meanwhile, political parties hoping to compete with the Jacksonians began newspapers of their own. This represented a shift in the dynamics of the frontier printer. Instead of newspapers coming from and expressing the views of the local printer, competition between parties led to local party leaders starting or taking over control of their local printing presses.

The partisan press battled for political power by arguing their perspectives through the newspaper. Editors without direct local competition usually found adversarial newspapers nearby (Baldasty, 1984). Circulation of these newspapers was not large, unlike the penny press

that arose later, but readership was not reserved to those who subscribed. Local reading rooms and taverns offered copies to the public, increasing access to opinions.

At the height of the partisan press's dominance in the American marketplace, newspapers went through a dramatic transformation (Schudson & Tiftt, 2005). Industrious editors began to develop ways to make money and increase circulation in their newspaper businesses. The average cost of the papers dropped from 6 cents to 1 cent, and instead of subscriptions only, newsboys aggressively sold newspapers on the street. The penny papers battled for the first access to local news (Schudson & Tiftt). Their reporters were assigned to cover specific topics and specific geographic areas. The owners and editors also began to actively solicit advertisements, and took advantage of new technologies such as the telegraph and the steam-driven press. The penny press would come to redefine American journalism, seeking to appeal to a wider audience with simpler and more colorful writing. Human interest pieces were included and covered issues thought to appeal to the working class, focusing less on politics.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the close association between the parties and the press began to wane (Schudson & Tiftt, 2005). Newspapers, especially those centered in New York City, emerged as intensely profitable businesses. Most New York dailies employed over 100 workers, and advertising became a more important source of revenue. Competition for news and readers increased as the use of less elaborate language, larger headlines, and colorful illustrations widened the audience. The most successful publishers of this era were Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst whose *New York World* and the *New York Journal*, respectively, became the personification of printed sensationalism. Political movements also changed the party allegiance of newspapers. Political reformers urged educational political campaigning, hoping to allow voters a chance to make an informed choice between candidates, not party



allegiance. Newspapers began distancing themselves from political parties, and reporters became more independent and new journalistic practices developed to meet the needs of modern publication.

Technological advances continued through the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the number of newspapers exploded, peaking in 1910 with around 2,600 daily newspapers (Schudson & Tifft, 2005). As newspapers became more profitable, newspaper chains developed. Media proprietors such as Scripps and Hearst owned dozens of papers and media outlets, and by the 1930s, one-third of the country's newspapers were owned by the six largest chains (Davis, 1992). By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, fears arose over the quality of news and the effectiveness of the marketplace of ideas in the modern media environment. Walter Lippmann believed that the traditional concept of the marketplace of ideas was flawed when it came to news, public opinion, and truth. Leaders allowed certain facts to be known, allowing only one side of an argument to be expressed by omitting or changing pertinent details (Lippmann, 2007). He believed truth was becoming more difficult to obtain as an ever-increasing amount of information and propaganda were dispensed by the press.

Lippmann stated: "You cannot take more political wisdom out of human beings than there is in them. And no reform, however sensational, is truly radical, which does not consciously provide a way of overcoming the subjectivism of human opinion based on the limitation of individual experience" (Lippmann, 2007, p. 249). The marketplace of ideas is limited, Lippmann argued, because individuals have difficulty reaching their ability to be informed. An individual is involved in his immediate environment and his pseudo-environment, the environment based vicariously on the experiences of others. The amount of first-hand and vicarious experience to which a person is exposed each day is rather small. In Lippmann's view,

the press's performance in exposing the individual to the necessary information was falling short.

Everywhere today men are conscious that somehow they must deal with questions more intricate than any that church or school had prepared them to understand. Increasingly they know that they cannot understand them if the facts are not quickly and steadily available. Increasingly they are baffled because the facts are not available; and they are wondering whether government by consent can survive in a time when the manufacture of consent is an unregulated private enterprise. (Lippmann, 2007, p. 2)

Fears that media consolidation would invite government regulation spurred *Time Magazine* founder Henry Luce to form a commission to examine what a free and responsible press should look like (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). Headed by Robert M. Hutchins, president of University of Chicago, the Commission identified three problems with the modern state of the press. First, the development of the press as an instrument of mass communication had decreased the percentage of people who could express their opinions through the press. Second, those who had access to express their opinions were not providing the requisite service that society needed. Finally, if those with access to the press continued on the current path, the government may feel the need to intervene and regulate, or worse, propose to control the press. This final point was of concern to the commission, which saw government control as a great danger to the freedom of the press. To combat these problems, the commission made five specific recommendations about the role of the press. A free and responsible press should provide:

- A truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.
- A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.

- The projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society.
- The presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society.
- Full access to the day's intelligence. (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, 20-29)

The most urgent problem the commission perceived was the increasingly monopolistic character of the media industry, not necessarily the intentions of the government. "Protection against government is not now enough to guarantee that a man who has something to say shall have a chance to say it. The owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which fact, which versions of these facts, shall reach the public" (Siebert, 1956, p. 4-5). They noted that a truthful and complete account of the news is not enough in the modern media environment. Coverage should include analysis, explanation, and interpretation. Instead of the libertarian theory of the freedom of the press that had been the prevailing theory, the commission championed a new social responsibility theory. This theory posited that although man has the ability for rational thought, he is not innately motivated to search for truth. Man is not necessarily irrational, but in a sense lazy. His inherent goal is to satisfy his immediate needs and desires. They believed it was imperative that the press act as an agent to encourage the quest for truth. Instead of passively relaying information to the individual, the press must work at providing the necessary elements to promote reason.

A decade and a half after the commission report, Siebert (1956) contrasted the social responsibility theory with other prevailing theories at the time. He identified and described four theories of the press: Authoritarian, Libertarian, Soviet Communist, and Social Responsibility. In the Authoritarian theory, the individual is perceived to be a dependent being, needing to be led and directed. This is the basis in which most 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century press in Europe operated. The Soviet Communist theory is viewed as an extension of the Authoritarian model. The libertarian theory sees the individual as rational, with the ability to distinguish between truth and error,

and able to choose the better option when faced with conflicting evidence and choices. The press is “a partner in the search for truth” (Siebert, p. 2).

The social responsibility theory is an extension of this libertarian theory, expanding on the Commission on Freedom of the Press’ recommendations. This theory was concerned with the expanding role that ownership and money had on the press. There was concern that the numerous small media units were dying as large, concentrated media conglomerates were thriving. With the decline of the small, decentralized media that Tocqueville remarked upon, representation of differing political viewpoints from which the consumers could select also declined. The basis on which the social responsibility theory stands is “that the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it.” (Siebert, 1956, p. 5)

The framers of the United States Constitution envisioned a nation of well informed voters making careful assessments of issues and candidates’ positions and character in order to make an educated vote (Kim et al.). Any form of representative democracy is based on the premise that voters are well informed about policy issues, and that their voting choices are grounded in careful considerations of their own issue preferences and perceptions of candidate issue positions (Kim et al, 2005). This view assumes that citizens are proactive in their pursuit to become well informed. Proponents of the social responsibility theory dispute this view, and call on the press to take a more active role in guiding citizens.

Clearly, the press has an important function in elections. Kahn and Kenney (2002) suggested one role of the press is to disseminate information between the candidates and the citizenry, and candidates traditionally have been largely dependent on the media to distribute

their message (Tedesco, 2001). Graber (1993) suggested that the media provide society a shared political experience that forms the basis for public opinion and engendering action among those in society. Expanding on Harold Lasswell's three functions of the media, Graber identifies four functions of the press in its campaign coverage: surveillance, interpretation, socialization, and manipulation. *Surveillance* gives exposure to selected politicians, institutions, issues, and events, and the media acts as the eyes and ears of the private citizen. The press also serves as an *interpreter* of campaign and election events, placing them in the relevant context while considering potential consequences. The media also function as a method of political *socialization*, allowing consumers to learn the basic political values and orientations of their particular society. Finally, *manipulation* is the process by which journalists act as participants in the political process. Instead of just chronicling the events and proceedings of the news, journalists and editors serve as gatekeepers, taking an active role in what information is given and how it is presented (Graber).

Because newspapers reach a highly diverse audience, they are a particularly important source of political and campaign information. Further, Just et al. (1997) found that when compared to broadcast news, newspapers can provide more in-depth information about presidential campaigns. Researchers have found that those interested in campaign information have more news available in the newspaper than television, and that newspapers devote far less coverage to stories about the campaign trail and provide more analysis and interpretation the events. Newspapers also cover more issue-centered stories than does broadcast news and television news tends to focus more on the candidate, and the drama centered around their campaign, while newspapers are more issue- and policy-driven (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997). McCombs (2004) suggested that political information obtained from reading a newspaper is more easily recalled than information obtained by watching television broadcast news.

Although newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have considerable influence and prestige beyond the communities they serve, other large metropolitan newspapers provide information that targets their particular communities and aims to meet the needs of that constituency. The *Dallas Morning News*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* are three examples of such regionally focused newspapers. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* was founded in 1826 as the *Pennsylvania Inquirer*. The *Inquirer* made a name for itself, and helped itself financially, in the 1840s by securing the serial rights for exclusive publication of several novels by Charles Dickens as well as works by Edgar Allan Poe. During the 1830s, the *Inquirer* was a leading anti-Jackson publication, choosing instead to support prominent Whig Party members. In 1860, William White Harding changed the name to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. In the early 1900s, James Elverson Jr. added a Sunday edition and circulation continued to rise. The paper was acquired by Moses Annenberg who hired new staff and reporters and purchased his own printing plant. Circulation rose from 280,000 to 345,000 within two years. Walter Annenberg sold the paper to Knight Newspapers, Inc. in 1969, and the paper continued to flourish throughout the next quarter of a century. In 2005, Brian Tierney and local investors bought *The Philadelphia Inquirer* as well as the *Philadelphia Daily News* under the newly formed Philadelphia Media Holdings LLC. The *Inquirer* has won 18 Pulitzer prizes.

*The Dallas Morning News* has been in publication since 1885. It began with a circulation of 5,000, and by 1895 had grown to 15,000 covering Dallas and other North Texas cities. Led by G. B. Dealey, the paper thrived through the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dealey championed the development of Dallas through his editorial positions, editorializing for improved city planning and education, and writing in opposition of the Ku Klux Klan. By the time of Dealey's death in 1946, the paper had a circulation of over 100,000, growing to 368,000 by 1985. The

paper won its first Pulitzer Prize in 1986 and has added seven more since. The *Morning News* has been the dominant paper in the area since buying out the *Dallas Times Herald* in 1991; it has been owned by one media company since its inception, A.H. Belo Corp.

According to *The Dallas Morning News* editorial board's statement of philosophy: "We believe in a progressive conservatism that advocates civil rights, fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship, effective local governments, public accountability and an internationalist foreign policy." Over the past half a century, the newspaper has endorsed Republican presidential candidates, supporting Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956, Richard M. Nixon over John F. Kennedy in 1960, Nixon in 1968 and 1972, Gerald Ford in 1976, Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984, George H. W. Bush in 1988 and 1992, Robert Dole in 1996, and George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* was founded in January 1865 as *The Daily Dramatic Chronicle*, highlighting local, critical, and theatrical affairs. Started by Charles and Michael de Young, 19 and 17 years old, respectively, the *Chronicle* consisted mainly of theater news, advertisements, and local commentary. The paper gained a name for itself by scooping the dozens of competitors with news of the assassination of President Lincoln. The paper's size slowly increased over the next three years. In 1868, the de Youngs, realizing the limitations of the show-business newspaper, replaced the *Dramatic Chronicle* with the *Morning Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* covered the 1868 earthquake and completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. As the city grew, so did the *Chronicle*, writing exposes on the likes of local political orators Chris Buckley and Denis Kearney.

The *Chronicle* was the largest paper on the West Coast in the late 1800s, and its editorials championed investment in Southern California, and promoted Bay-area projects. It continued to cover the important events of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and prospered. In 1935, Paul

C. Smith became the paper's executive editor, emphasizing international news, expanding the Sunday edition, and encouraging his staff to join the Newspaper Guild. In 1948, *The Chronicle's* circulation was at 180,000 and the paper had won several Pulitzer Prizes. However, the paper soon went into decline and had lost close to 30,000 subscribers by 1951. In the Spring of the same year, Scott Newhall was chosen as the executive editor and began a hard-fought circulation war with the city's other daily newspapers. The paper expanded and its staff increased. News services were increased, and by 1965 the paper had a circulation of 363,322. In the 1970s and 1980s, the *Chronicle* continued to grow and increased its coverage of business, technology and the arts. Today, the *San Francisco Chronicle* is owned by Hearst Communications, and has won six Pulitzer Prizes. Each newspaper potentially provides their community the opportunity for viewpoints and opinions to be expressed

The part of the modern-day newspapers where the original marketplace-of-ideas concept may still exist is in the editorial pages. "The newspaper editorial page is where a vigorous political, cultural, and social discussion and debate is most likely to take place and thus is a likely focus of an analysis of newspaper content as evidence of a thriving – or dying – marketplace of ideas" (Hallock, 2007, p. 16) Unlike the hard-news pages of a newspaper, the editorial page provides a venue for arguments, interpretation and the exposure of bias (Mott, 1940). Newspapers identify issues and advocate causes in their editorials, and serve as a public forum for the introduction and discussion of issues of public concern in their letters to the editor and columns (Hynds, 1976).

In the traditional concept of newspaper functions, elements within the editorial pages can play a variety of roles (Mott, 1940). The editorial pages can frame and explain issues and events in language that the community can relate to. They may urge action on behalf of the readers or politicians. They may act as crusaders by running a series of articles on a particular



cause. They may help shape public opinion by influencing leaders in various social, economic, and political groups within the community. The editorial pages may also help develop the newspaper's own sense of responsibility by choosing among subjects that will best serve the development and interests of their community (Mott, 1940). Coifalo (1998) wrote that editorial pages, specifically the op-ed page, are an important part of any newspaper: "It encourages public discourse in an open forum of ideas that nurtures the community involvement so necessary to the effective functioning of government and democracy at all levels" (p. 18).

Each section of the editorial page has a purpose and role in the public forum offering explanation and interpretation of the day's events (Mott, 1940). Editorial pages of most newspapers consist of five parts: editorials, columns, letters to the editor, supplemental data, and cartoons. Although editorial pages differ from newspaper to newspaper, they essentially contain the same components.

Editorials are the opinions or positions of the newspaper on issues and events. The editorial is un-bylined, written by one or more of the members of the newspaper's editorial board which generally consists of the editorial page editor and various editorial writers. They characterize the institutional opinion of the newspaper shaped by the editorial board. Recommendations and endorsements are made on what the board perceives to be in the best interests of the community in which they operate (Mott, 1940). Some editorial boards explicitly state a philosophical stance that provides the context in which the newspaper seeks to function. *The Dallas Morning News*, for instance, states, "We believe in a progressive conservatism that advocates civil rights, fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship, effective local governments, public accountability and an internationalist foreign policy" (Willey, 2009).

The history of the editorial column in the United States dates back to the colonial-era press. Opinion pieces were often written by the owner of the press or by party leaders

bankrolling the press (Pasley, 2001). Early American newspapers focused primarily on local gossip and trade advertising, but as the revolutionary movement heated up, newspapers employed a more partisan tone in either support of or opposition to the patriot movement. This continued well into the height of the partisan press in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Often, the newspaper was run by a party leader in service to a particular party, and editorials were used to display the position of the paper. As the newspaper became a more profitable business, objective writing of news became the norm, but most newspapers included an editorial section to communicate the newspaper's opinions and philosophy.

Columns, which include Op-Ed columns, are included on the editorial pages and are designed to provide perspectives that stand in contrast to or provide a differing voice than that of the editorial column. The columns section includes opinion columns from syndicated columnists and others contributing from outside the newspaper. Like the editorials, columns deal with news events and current topics. According to the *New York Times*, the columns sections "feature opinion pieces written by outside contributors and *The Times's* own team of columnists..." (*The New York Times* Customer Service, 2008). However, some newspapers may include columns written by newspaper staffers. Articles from local citizens, typically business, political, and education leaders in the community, may also be included.

Letters to the editors are intended to give a voice to local citizens and readers. Letters may be written by citizens in response to content featured in previous opinion pieces, or may provide pithy commentary on hot button issues. Letters are brief, typically 200 words or less. The *Dallas Morning News* states letters are "chosen to represent a diverse set of views on as many issues as possible" (*The Dallas Morning News* letters to the editor, 2008).

Letters to the editor have been a fixture in American politics from colonial times. Essays were submitted to newspapers and printed throughout various regions during the revolutionary

era. Many early letters were submitted anonymously, often from politicians who preferred to write in anonymity. Today, most newspapers refuse to print anonymous letters. For example, *The Dallas Morning News* requires the “writer's name and city to be published with each letter. We do not withhold names or allow the use of initials or pseudonyms. We also require telephone numbers so we can contact writers for clarification or confirmation” (*The Dallas Morning News* letters to the editor, 2008). *The Philadelphia Inquirer* states, “The writer's name, home address, and day and evening phone numbers must be included for verification purposes” (*The Philadelphia Inquirer* Opinion, 2007).

The importance and impact of editorial pages on the public and for democracy have been noted in several cases. Editorial pages are among the most widely read portions of the newspaper, according to the Newspaper Association of America (NAA), which found that 42% of those reading daily newspaper editions read the editorial pages (2008). Thirty-seven percent of Sunday newspaper readers read the editorial pages. Although these numbers are not as high as the front page, local news, and business sections, it is a substantial proportion of the newspaper readers.

Albright (1995) argued that, contrary to conventional wisdom or newsroom myth, readership of editorial pages is much stronger than believed. Seventy-nine percent of daily (not including Sunday) adult readers in an NAA study reported reading editorial pages. Editorial pages also benefit from placement in the newspaper pages. They are frequently located in the A section, which is among the most-read and advertised sections of the newspaper.

There is some evidence to suggest that editorials impact public policy decisions. Not only does the editorial board make pivotal endorsements, but at times it invites policy-makers to meet with them. Hallock (2008) sent questionnaires to Illinois state legislators asking the level to which they read their local editorial pages and whether they seriously considered the

editorial recommendations. Sixty-one percent of the respondents reported always or frequently taking the advice seriously from their local editorial pages. Although no legislator stated they always followed the recommendations, 22% responded that they frequently followed advice, while 62% reported sometimes following advice. Hallock (2008) also found that 92% of the legislators believed that the editorials of their hometown newspapers reflected the feelings of their constituents. This suggests that legislators are not only reading editorials, but also taking into account their recommendations while making legislative decisions.

The tone of the editorial positions may correlate to the tone of coverage in the newspaper's hard-news pages. Kahn and Kenney (2002) looked at the interplay between opinions expressed on editorial pages and coverage in the news pages during senatorial campaigns over three election years. They found that news coverage of editorially endorsed incumbent senators was more favorable than challengers who were not endorsed; non-endorsed incumbents received more negative coverage. Brewer and McCombs (1996) looked at a Texas daily newspaper's attempt to influence the community agenda. The newspaper ran a full-page editorial that proposed the community focus on eight issues affecting children, followed by further news coverage of each issue. Comparing community spending before and after this campaign revealed that programs dealing with these issues increased, some substantially, after the campaign.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The marketplace of ideas metaphor works under the assumption that truth will emerge from the debate and exchange of competing ideas. As noted by Hallock (2007), the editorial pages are where vigorous political, cultural, and social debate is most likely to take place in the press. And, as noted by Kim et al. (2005), given the importance of an informed electorate in a

democracy, the question of how well the editorial pages provide a marketplace of ideas in an election season seems especially relevant. In a functioning marketplace of ideas, the editorial page should not only present content as a competition of diverse opinions and ideas, but should also provide a forum for comment and criticism as well as providing a comprehensive account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning. If the purpose of the marketplace is to provide diverse opinions aimed at finding truth and clarifying ideas, editorial page coverage focusing on ideas (issues) is important in the process. Lippmann was concerned that the marketplace of ideas is limited due to the individual's difficulty in reaching their potential to be informed. He viewed the press's performance in exposing the individual to the necessary information as unsatisfactory. Likewise, the Commission on Freedom of the Press was concerned that those who had access to express their opinions were not providing the requisite service needed by society. Content focusing on the campaign in and of itself does not provide the readers with a discussion of ideas.

For the present study, the amount of content devoted to the election and the diversity of issues and authors are of interest. If readers are to become informed voters, covering the events of the day within the context of the election will be important. The focus of the election related material, whether focused on the campaign or on substantive issues, will provide substantive information to the electorate. Specific issues appearing on editorial pages of newspapers will give a picture of what ideas are competing for attention in the modern marketplace of ideas. This may also be considered an indication of what editors and community deem to be the most pressing issues of the day. The potential for a diversity of viewpoints may manifest itself through the number of voices given an opportunity to be heard. The greater number and more varied the backgrounds of authors may coincide with a greater diversity of viewpoints. With these considerations in mind, four questions will guide my analysis in the

editorial pages of the representative daily metropolitan newspapers during the 2008 presidential election campaign:

1. What percentage of the content of the editorial pages analyzed was specific to the 2008 election? How do the selected newspapers compare to each other?
2. Of the content that is election-centered, was the focus on the campaign or a specific issue? How do the selected newspapers compare to each other?
3. Of the content that is focused on a specific issue, what issues are covered and what issues were the most frequently covered? How do the selected newspapers compare to each other?
4. Who wrote the piece and in what role are they writing? How do the selected newspapers compare to each other?

## METHOD

To answer the proposed research questions, a quantitative content analysis was conducted on the editorial pages of three newspapers during the height of the 2008 presidential campaign. According to Berelson (1952), "Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). To ensure that my research was objective, systematic, and quantitative, the following method was employed.

### Newspapers

Because I am looking at the ways in which editorial pages cover an election, only the editorial pages of the selected newspapers were used. This study did not seek to generalize to all large metro newspapers in the country; it sought to describe the content in three selected newspapers. The aim is to give insight into how the marketplace of ideas may exist in today's media market in three diverse metropolitan areas. Three major metropolitan newspapers were chosen: *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. All three newspapers are recognized among the top newspapers in the country based on circulation, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (2009). *The Dallas Morning News* has a daily circulation of 338,933, and a Sunday circulation of 483,841. It is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest newspaper in the country. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* has a daily circulation of 300,674, and a Sunday circulation of 556,426. It is the 19<sup>th</sup> largest newspaper in the country. The *San Francisco Chronicle* has a daily circulation of 339,430, and a Sunday circulation of 398,116. It is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest newspaper in the country.

Each of these newspapers has a prominent national reputation, but their focus is primarily on the communities they serve. Although newspapers such as *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are in major metropolitan areas of the country, each newspaper's reach extends well beyond the cities in which they operate. *The New York Times* is generally accepted as the newspaper of record in the United States; *The Washington Post* covers Washington, D.C., and is a leader in national political coverage. In contrast, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* do not have the national reach of either the *Times* or the *Post*. The content of these papers targets particular geographic regions. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* covers and serves five counties in Pennsylvania and three counties in southern New Jersey, which includes the Philadelphia metropolitan area. *The Dallas Morning News* covers and serves the North Texas area, focusing on the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex plus the Rockwall, Collin, Tarrant, Denton, Ellis, and Kaufman areas. *The San Francisco Chronicle* covers and serves the San Francisco Bay Area, but is distributed throughout northern and central California. These newspapers were selected because of their circulation size and their geographic locations as generally representative of general-interest daily newspapers whose function is to provide the kind of local coverage described by the Commission on Freedom of the Press.

### Sampling

The editorial pages include: the editorials (written by the editorial board of the specific paper), columns (written by staff members of the paper, syndicated columnists and guest columnists), letters to the editor, and supplemental data (Q&As, quizzes, quick facts, etc.). The editorial pages consist of two pages from Monday through Friday in all newspapers. The Saturday edition is a single page in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The



Saturday edition for *The Dallas Morning News* is two pages. Also included is the expanded section in the Sunday edition. This section includes six pages of expanded commentary and opinion pieces in *The Dallas Morning News* and *Philadelphia Enquirer*. The *San Francisco Chronicle* includes 12 pages. *The Dallas Morning News*' Sunday section is titled "Points," The *Philadelphia Inquirer*'s Sunday Section is titled "Currents," and the *Chronicle*'s Sunday section is titled "Insights."

#### Dates

The dates examined were from August 1, 2008, to the general election on November 4, 2008. These dates were chosen to coincide with the run-up to the major party conventions, and the final months of the campaign. The Democratic National Convention was held in Denver, CO, August 25 through 28, 2008; the Republican National Convention was held in St. Paul, MN, September 1 through 4, 2008. Editorial-page content during August through November was more focused as the official presidential nominee was chosen, party platforms were adopted, and rising stars within the parties tried to garner support. The final months of the election campaign also included an increase in political activity in the form of debates and campaign rallies.

#### Unit of Analysis

The article will be the unit of analysis. The objective of this study is to tease out what issues are being discussed in the marketplace of ideas represented by those newspapers, and the focus of the coverage of these issues. This can be achieved by looking at each article within the section.

## Codebook Categories

To answer the research questions, a systematic analysis of the collected data was conducted (see codebook in Appendix B). Content categories includes article number, newspaper, article type, election related, campaign or issue specific, issues, and authors. Each editorial, column, letter, and supplemental data was given a specific number, each coinciding with the range of numbers assigned to each newspaper. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* ranged from 1,000 to 4,999, *The Dallas Morning News* from 5,000, to 8,999, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 9,000 to 12,999. Articles that were missed or mis-numbered were given article numbers at the end of the newspaper's number range. Some pieces were not coded for election-related material; these pieces did not possess information that could be consistently coded like other pieces. Supplemental data that consisted of quotes, quick facts, quizzes, or directing the readers to the newspaper's online edition were not coded after article type. Of the 288 pieces coded as supplemental data, 179 were not coded past article type.

Article type was coded into one of five categories: editorial, column, letter to the editor, supplemental data, or "can't tell." Each piece was identified as election-related or non-election related. Articles coded as election-related were coded further into one of two categories: campaign/election-specific or issue-specific. Articles that were campaign/election-specific focused on the horserace, strategy, rhetoric, personality, or personal relationships of the political actors. Articles that were issue-specific focused on specific campaign or policy issues.

If the article was coded as issue-specific, the central issue was identified. Issues were coded as falling into one of the following 10 categories: Defense/Foreign Policy; Education; Environment/Energy; LGBT Issues; Health; Medicine and Healthcare; Immigration; Money (Tax Policy, Budget Policy, Regulation, Economic Activities and Infrastructure); Social Issues; or

“Other Issues.” Once the issue-specific article was coded, or the article was coded as campaign/election-specific, the authorship of the article was coded. Authorship was identified by the role in which they are writing the article (i.e., syndicated columnist, citizen, educator, etc.). In articles where more than one author was identified, each author was coded in the “please specify” space provided. In articles where the author was identified by more than one role, each role was coded in the “please specify” space provided.

### Coders

Two coders in addition to the researcher were used in coding. One coder was a Journalism undergraduate student who had contributed articles to the University’s newspaper. The second coder was a Public Relations undergraduate student. Both were familiar with the function and layout of newspapers. The coders began training and stayed throughout the entire coding process. Coders were trained by coding a sample, followed by comparing the results and discussing the answers. Changes were made to the codebook to clear inconsistencies. When changes were made, the coders were retrained. This process was continued until I felt comfortable performing an inter-coder reliability test. The coders and the researcher met together once a week until reliability was met. When the coding of the sample began, the coders and the researcher met together once every two weeks to discuss the progress of the coding and to ensure continued reliability.

### Intercoder Reliability

Once the changes to the codebook were instituted and the coders were trained, a sample of 100 articles from the data was tested for reliability. Tests of reliability were performed on each variable. Scott’s pi was chosen for reliability. Intercoder reliability checks

were made after each revision until intercoder reliability was more than 85% for each category but election/campaign specific. Intercoder reliability was over 80% for election/campaign-specific. A reliability check was performed halfway through the coding process. Reliability was above 90% for article type, election-related, and author. Reliability was above 85% for election/campaign specific. Once the coding was complete, data was entered into SPSS. A random sample of 15% of the coding sheets was examined and rechecked for data entry errors. Of the 699 articles and 11,184 data entries, 21 were entered wrong for an accuracy rate of 99.81%.

#### Personal Communication with Editors

Editors from each newspaper were contacted with questions through email. Letters editor Michael Landauer of the *Dallas Morning News* was contacted March 19, 2010. Commentary page editor Josh Gohlke of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* was contacted March 19, 2010. Editorial and opinion page assistant editor Jay Johnson of the *San Francisco Chronicle* was contacted April 1, 2010. Each editor responded via email with the exception of Jay Johnson of the *Chronicle*, who responded by telephone. Each editor was asked the same questions regarding the selection of letters to the editor and opinion pieces.

## RESULTS

There were 4,591 articles included in the sample over the final three months and four days of the election season. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* included 1,297 articles, the *Dallas Morning News* included 1,781 articles, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* included 1,513. When supplemental data could not be coded further than article type, there were a total of 4,412 articles. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* included 1,268 articles, the *Dallas Morning News* included 1,699 articles, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* included 1,445 articles.

### Frequency of Article Type

Of the 4,591 articles in the sample, 55.8% were letters to the editor (see Table A1). Columns were the next most frequent with 24.8%, followed by editorials (13.1%) and supplemental data (6.3%). Letters constituted well over half of the articles for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (53.2%), the *Dallas Morning News* (56.8%) and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (56.8%). In terms of raw numbers, the *Dallas Morning News* had more letters to the editor (1,012) than did the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (690) and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (859). The *Dallas Morning News* ran anywhere from six to 10 letters Monday through Saturday. It devoted more than a page in the expanded Sunday edition which included from 20 to 25 letters. *Philadelphia Inquirer* had the fewest letters to the editor. It included only four to eight letters each day including the expanded Sunday edition. The *San Francisco Chronicle* ran 6 to 12 letters Monday through Saturday, but only included four to five in their expanded Sunday edition.

Columns made up more than 20% of the article type for each newspaper (see Table A1). The *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had the highest frequency of columns relative to other article type while the *Dallas Morning News* had the least. In terms of raw

numbers, the *San Francisco Chronicle* (412) had the most columns, followed by the *Dallas Morning News* (378) and *Philadelphia Inquirer* (349). The *Philadelphia Inquirer* ran three to four columns from Monday through Friday, occasionally ran a column on Saturday, and ran nine to 11 in the Sunday edition. The *Dallas Morning News* ran three to four columns Monday through Saturday and five to seven in the Sunday edition. The *San Francisco Chronicle* ran three to five columns from Monday through Friday, occasionally one on Saturday, and seven to 12 in the Sunday edition.

The *Dallas Morning News* had the most editorials (220), followed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (210) and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (173). However, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had a higher frequency of editorials (16.2%) than did the *Dallas Morning News* (12.4%) and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (11.4%). Each newspaper ran from one to three editorials every day except Saturdays in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which only occasionally ran an editorial. In terms of raw numbers and frequency, The *Dallas Morning News* had the most supplemental data. This was due to the newspaper's supplemental "hits and misses" pieces in the Saturday edition. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* had the least supplemental data in terms of numbers and frequency.

#### Content of the Editorial Pages Specific to the 2008 Election

From August to Election Day, 47.8% of the articles in all three newspapers were election related (see Table A2). The *San Francisco Chronicle* had a statistically significant amount more coverage of the election than did the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* (see Table A2). The *Chronicle* devoted 57.6% percent of its articles to the election, well above the mean. In contrast, the *Inquirer* devoted 44.6% of its articles to the election, only slightly more than the *Morning News*, which devoted only 41.8% to the election.

As Election Day approached, each newspaper had a statistically significant increase in the amount they devoted to the election except for the *Dallas Morning News* between September and October/November (see Table A2). Election coverage was the lowest in August. Only 34.3% of the content for this month was focused on the election. Despite this overall frequency of coverage, the *San Francisco Chronicle* devoted 42.4% of its content to the election. This was much higher than the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (30.7%) and the *Dallas Morning News* (29.8%). Election coverage increased dramatically in September. Close to 50% of the editorial pages for all newspapers focused on the election. Once again the *Chronicle* had the greatest amount of coverage with 57.5%. The *Inquirer* and *Morning News* had an equally dramatic increase as coverage rose to 44.9% and 45.6%, respectively.

October/November had the highest frequency of election-related content. Fifty-eight percent of the content during this time focused on the election. Again, the *San Francisco Chronicle* had the greatest amount of coverage with 71.4%. The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* election coverage rose to 55.6%. The *Dallas Morning News* increased its coverage to only 49%, the lowest of each newspaper.

In each month, the *San Francisco Chronicle* carried a statistically significant amount more election content than did the other papers. For August and September the difference in frequency between the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* was small, with generally only around a percentage point difference. During October/November this difference increased to more than 6 percentage points for the *Inquirer*, this was statistically significant. The *Morning News* was the only paper of the three to not devote more than 50% of its coverage to the election in each of the three months. The closest it came was in October/November with 49%.

Letters to the editor were the most frequent article type present in the election-focused articles (see Table A3). Of the election-related articles, 54.1% were letters to the editor. Each newspaper's election-related content was dominated by letters to the editor; 49.1% in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 52.7% in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 58.8% in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Columns made up 32.6% of the election related material. The *Inquirer* had the highest frequency with 36.6% while the *Chronicle* had the lowest with 30.6%. Editorials accounted for 12.1% of the material. Between 10% and 13% of each newspaper's election related material were editorials. Supplemental data accounted for only a small percentage of the election-related material for the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News*. The *San Francisco Chronicle* had no supplemental data devoted to the election.

In terms of election-related material within the article type alone, columns had the highest frequency of election-related content than any other article type (see Table A4). Overall, 60.3% of the columns were election-related. This was consistent for each newspaper. Fifty-nine percent of the columns in each of the newspapers were focused on the election. Overall, 44.6% of the letters to the editor were devoted to the election. The *Dallas Morning News* has the lowest frequency with only 37.1% of its letters to the editor focused on the election. In contrast, the *San Francisco Chronicle* devoted a statistically significant amount more election-centered letters to the editor than the other two newspapers, with 56.9% . Overall, 42.3% of the editorials were related to the election. The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* editorials focused the least on the election with only 34.3%, the *Chronicle* devoted the most with just over half (50.9%) of its editorials to the election, statistically significant more than the *Inquirer*. Each newspaper only devoted a fraction of its supplemental editorial data to the election; 18.8% in the *Inquirer*, 9.4% in the *Morning News* devoted, and 0% in the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* was the only newspaper to devote more than 50% to the election in each editorial page type except supplemental data.



### Election Related Content Devoted to the Campaign and Issues

Each newspaper devoted more than half of its election-related content to the campaign (see Table A5). Sixty-one percent of the election-related content was focused on the campaign. The *Dallas Morning News* (69.4%) had a statistically significant amount more coverage of the campaign than the other newspapers. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* devoted 62.2% of their election coverage to the campaign. In contrast, the *San Francisco Chronicle* had a significant amount less than the other two newspapers, devoting 52.9% to the campaign. In September, the *Morning News* had a significant amount more campaign-focused content than the *Chronicle*. In October/November, the *Chronicle* had significantly more issue focused content than both of the other newspapers.

This frequency overall changed little over the course of the three months leading to the election (see Table A5). The *Dallas Morning News* and *San Francisco Chronicle* trended in opposite directions during these months. The *Morning News* increased its focus on the campaign during each month leading up to the election. In August, it focused 66.3% of its election coverage on the campaign. This number increased slightly during September with 67.9%. In October/November it jumped to 72.2%. Conversely, the focus on the campaign decreased for the *Chronicle*. In August the *Chronicle* had a high of 60.4% of its election related content focused on the campaign. This decreased to 53.9% in September. In October/November campaign focused content fell below 50%, the lowest of the three newspapers. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* had 60.3% of its election related content focus on the campaign in August. This number decreased slightly to 58.7% during September. In October/November this number jumped up to 65.3%.

The distribution of article type in campaign focused content was similar to article type frequency overall (see Table A6). Letters to the editor were the most frequent article type accounting for 57.3% of the campaign-focused articles. Columns followed making up 29.4% of the total campaign focused content. Editorials accounted for 11.9% while supplemental data was merely a blip with 1.4%. This trend was mostly consistent in each of the newspapers. However, columns in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* made up 45.5% while letters to the editor made up 39.4%. This was the only newspaper for which letters to the editor were not the most frequent articles in any category.

Each article type devoted the majority of its election related content to the campaign (see Table A7). Overall, campaign-focused content accounted for 64.3% of the letters to the editor. Columns were the least campaign focused article type with 54.9% focusing on the campaign. Sixty percent of editorials and 72% of the supplemental data were focused on the campaign. The *San Francisco Chronicle* had the least campaign focused content of the three newspapers in every article type except supplemental data (there was no supplemental data coded as election related). The *Chronicle's* letters to the editor focused the most on the campaign with 56.4%. Columns focused only 47.1% of its coverage of the campaign while editorials focused on the campaign 50% of the time. Campaign focused content made up the vast majority of the letters to the editor for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, but columns and editorials were more balanced with 52.7% and 56.9%, respectively. The campaign was the focus of 77.7% of the supplemental data for the *Inquirer*. The *Inquirer* and the *Morning News* had a statistically significant amount more letters to the editor focused on the campaign than did the *Chronicle*. The *Morning News* had significantly more columns than the *Inquirer* and significantly more columns and editorials that focused on the campaign than the *Chronicle*.

## Issue Frequency

Money was the most covered issue, receiving more coverage than did any other issue (see Table A8). Overall, money accounted for 31.1% of all issue-specific content. “Social issues” was the second most covered issue with 21.4%, almost 10% points behind money. Defense/foreign policy was the third most covered issue with 17.6% of the issue-specific material. These three issues accounted for more than 70% of the issue-specific pieces.

Money was also the most covered issue for each of the three newspapers. Defense/foreign policy and social issues were also among the top three issues for each newspaper. Combined, these issues accounted for the bulk of the coverage in each newspaper. These issues accounted for the highest percentage in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, making up 77% of the issue specific content. Although still constituting the majority of the coverage, the *Dallas Morning News* had only 66.6% of its issue specific content focus on these three issues. They made up 72.6% of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

There was a substantial difference in the frequency of coverage between money, the most covered issue, and social issues, the second most covered issue. This gap was less pronounced between social issues and defense/foreign policy, the third most frequent issue. There was an almost 8% point difference between the third and fourth most covered issue, energy. The frequency difference between money and the second most covered issue was the most prominent with the *Dallas Morning News*. Money accounted for 34.9% of the issue coverage while social issues accounted for only 16.1%. The difference in frequency was the smallest in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Money accounted for 31.1% while social issues accounted for 25.1%. The frequency difference between money (34.7%) and defense/foreign policy (22.1%) was also large in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

As we will see below, some issues received more coverage than some of these top three issues in specific months. Overall, energy and healthcare were not among the most covered issues for each newspaper, but received some coverage in all. LGBT issues was the fifth most covered issue overall. This number is a bit deceiving as the majority of this coverage was found only in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. LGBT issues were the least covered issue for both the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News*. However, it was the fourth most covered issue in the *Chronicle*. Only slightly more than a single percentage point separated LGBT issues and defense/foreign policy, the third most covered issue. Immigration and education were among the least covered issues in each newspaper. Immigration received only 1.7% of the coverage while education received only 2.2% of the coverage.

Although money was the most prominent issue overall, it was only the fourth most frequently covered issue in August (see Table A9). Defense/foreign policy was the most frequently covered issue in August with 28.1% of the coverage, energy was the second most covered issue with 22.5%, and social issues followed closely behind with 19.1% of the coverage. These three issues accounted for 69.7% of the total coverage. If money (15.2%) is included, this total jumped to 84.9%. The remaining five issues accounted for a meager 15% of the coverage. Energy was the most frequently covered issue in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* with 30.4% of the coverage followed by social issues with 23.9%. Money and Defense/foreign policy were the next most frequently covered, both with 15.2% of the coverage. Defense/foreign policy was the most frequently covered issue in both the *Dallas Morning News* and The *San Francisco Chronicle*. Energy and social issues were among the top three issues for both newspapers as well. Money was the fourth most covered issue for each newspaper but still received close to 15% of the coverage in each. The top four issues accounted for more than 80% of the coverage in each of the newspapers. There was a substantial difference in frequency between the first and second

issues in each of the newspapers. This difference was the largest in the *Morning News* and the *Chronicle* with around 13% point difference between the two issues. This difference was the smallest in the *Inquirer*, with only about 7% point difference.

LGBT accounted for 10.3% of the issue specific content in the *San Francisco Chronicle* but received no coverage in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News*. Immigration and education were among the least covered issues again in each of the three newspapers. Healthcare received some coverage in the *Inquirer* and *Morning News* but received no coverage in the *Chronicle*.

In September, money became the most frequent issue overall, accounting for 34.9% of the coverage (see Table A10). Money received a considerable increase in coverage in comparison to the previous month in each of the newspapers. Social issues and Defense/foreign policy followed with 29.5% and 15.6% of the coverage, respectively. Money was the most frequent issue for both the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News*. It accounted for 39.2% of the issue specific coverage in the *Inquirer*. Social issues and defense/foreign policy were the second and third most covered issues. The difference in frequency between defense/foreign policy and the fourth most frequently covered issue was large. Energy accounted for only 6.8% of the issue coverage. Money received 39.7% of the coverage in the *Morning News*. In distant second was social issues with only 14.1% of the coverage. Defense/foreign policy was the third most covered issue with 12.8%. The difference in frequency between money and the second most covered issue was the largest in the *Morning News*.

In contrast to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* devoted most of its coverage to social issues, which accounted for 41.5%. Money accounted for 29.3% while defense/foreign policy accounted for 14.6%. The top three issues

accounted for 80% of the content overall. The top three issues accounted for more than 85% for the *Inquirer* and the *Chronicle*. The same three issues accounted for only 66.6% of the *Morning News*, while energy, “other” issues, and healthcare received a moderate amount of coverage (24.4%).

LGBT was again among the least covered for both the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News*. It accounted for 5.7% of the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s coverage, making it the fourth most covered issue. Immigration and education were again among the least covered issues for each newspaper.

Money was the most covered issue in each newspaper in October/November (see Table A11). It received a considerable amount more coverage than the second most frequently covered issue. Social issues and defense/foreign policy were again among the top three issues overall. Money received the most coverage in the *Dallas Morning News*, receiving 43% of the issue specific coverage. This was 26% points more than the second most covered issue. Healthcare received the second most coverage in the *Morning News*. This marked the most coverage healthcare received in any of the newspapers. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* focused 40.9% of its coverage on money, the same amount as the second (defense/foreign policy) and third (social) most covered issues combined. LGBT received the most coverage of any month in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, where it received 23.2%, second only to Money.

Money was the most frequently covered issue in editorials of each newspaper with defense/foreign policy and energy among the top three (see Table A12). Half of the editorials in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* focused on Money. Energy and social issues accounted for 13.3% of the coverage apiece. The *Dallas Morning News* focused on Money and Defense/foreign policy equally, with 29.6% of the coverage apiece. Healthcare was the third most frequently covered

issue. The editorials in the *San Francisco Chronicle* focused on Money, Energy, and Defense/foreign policy the most.

Money, Defense/foreign policy, and Social issues were among the most covered issues in columns (see Table A13). In contrast to the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, columns in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* focused most of their coverage to defense/foreign policy. Money (27.8%) and social issues (17.5%) followed. Money was the most frequently present issue in the *Morning News*, followed by defense/foreign policy and energy. Money was the most frequent issue in the *Chronicle*, with social issues and defense/foreign policy rounding out the top three issues.

Money, social issues, and LGBT issues were the most frequently covered issues in letters to the editor (see Table A14). Again, the frequency of LGBT issues overall are misleading in that all of the coverage took place in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Money was the most frequent issue in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* with Social issues and energy following with 26.2% and 15.5% of the coverage, respectively. Money was also the most frequently covered issue in the *Dallas Morning News* followed by social issues and healthcare. Social issues was the most frequently covered issue in the *Chronicle*. Money and LGBT issues followed as the top three most frequent issues.

Supplemental data did not include enough pieces to make an analysis. There were only 7 supplemental articles that were issue specific.

Defense/foreign policy was covered most heavily in the editorials for the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, but was covered only 10% of the coverage in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. However, defense/foreign policy was represented the most in the columns in the *Inquirer* with 34%. In each article type, education and immigration were among the least covered issues for each newspaper. Healthcare was among the least covered issues in the

*Inquirer* and *Chronicle* but received some coverage in the *Morning News* editorials and letters to the editor.

#### Who Wrote the Piece and in What Role Are They Writing

There were a total of 2,154 authors coded in the sample. An author was only coded if the article was previously coded as election-related. Thirty-eight articles had two or more authors. This explains the anomaly between the number of election-related articles (2,109) and the total number of authors (2,154). Of the total number of authors, 80 (3.7%) were identified with two or more roles. These articles were coded once for each role identified. Some articles were coded as many as four separate times, with each role counted once. After each role was identified, the total number of roles included in the following analysis was 2,203.

The majority of the article types were dominated by a particular author role. All 255 election-related editorials were written by the editorial board. Citizens accounted for 96.9% of the 1,111 election-related letters to the editor, 96.5% for both The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* and 97.6% for the *Dallas Morning News*. The editorial board was responsible for authoring 87.5% of the supplemental data for the *Morning News*. The authorship of supplemental data for the *Inquirer* was spread between five authors. There was no supplemental data coded as election related for the *Chronicle*.

Due to the overwhelming presence of letters to the editor in election related articles, citizens constituted the majority of the authors overall. Because over 95% of the letters to the editor were authored by citizens, it makes sense they would have such a strong presence. Of the 2,203 identified authors, citizens made up 51% (1,123) (see Table A15). Among the other most frequent authors were editorial board, syndicated columnists, in-house columnists, no-profit, and writers. The least covered authors for each newspaper included for profit, government



employee, local politician, campaign worker, national politician, religious leader, and unidentified. The top eight of the sixteen authors were responsible for 97.4% of the articles.

Citizens made up the majority in each newspaper with 45.1% in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 50.4% in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 55.5% in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Editorial board, syndicated columnists, and in-house columnists were the most frequent authors following citizens in the *Inquirer* and *Morning News*. Writers were the fourth most frequent author in the *Morning News*, ahead of in-house columnists. Non-profits were the third most frequent in the *Chronicle*. In-house columnists were more frequent than syndicated columnists. Writers accounted for 5.6% of the authors.

Columns were the least dominated by a single author of all the article types (see Table A16). Syndicated columnists (34.2%), in-house columnists (24%), non-profit (15.6%), writers (14.9%), and educators (10%) were the most frequently responsible for authoring columns. In-house columnists made up the majority of authors in the *Inquirer*, with syndicated columnists, educators, and non-profit rounding out the top four. Syndicated columnists were the most frequently cited column authors in the *Morning News* making up 41.7%. Writers and In-house columnists followed with 17.9% each. Non-profit made up the majority of the *Chronicle's* authors for columns. In-house columnists made up 21.4% while writers made up 16.7%.

Only six out of 16 authors focused more on specific issues than on the campaign (see Table A17). Of the eight most frequent authors overall (citizen, editorial board, educator, in-house columnist, non-profit, radio/tv/etc., syndicated columnist, and writer), all authors but educators and non-profit focused more on the campaign than specific issues (except in the *Dallas Morning News*). However, there were many variations of frequency with each newspaper. Citizens, In-house columnists, and syndicated columnists focused more on the campaign in each newspaper. Editorials in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Morning News*

focused more on the campaign, but editorials in the *San Francisco Chronicle* were split 50/50 between campaign focused and issue focused. Writers were campaign focused in the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News*. However, they were focused on the campaign in the *Chronicle* only 30.6% of the time. Similarly, Radio/TV focused mostly on the campaign in the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News*, but was only focused on the campaign 42.9% of the time in the *Chronicle*. Educators focused more on the issues in both the *Inquirer* and the *Chronicle*, but 64.3% in the *Morning News* focused on the campaign. Non-profit was issue specific in the *Inquirer* and the *Chronicle*, but was split 50/50 in the *Morning News*. The *Morning News* was the only newspaper where each of the top eight most frequently cited author type focused equally or more on the campaign than it did on specific issues.

#### Authors and Issues

There were 387 articles coded as written by citizens: 81 appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 105 appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 201 appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Of all the articles with authors identified as citizens, money was the most frequent issue focused on (see Table A18). Thirty-one percent of citizens focused on money, 26.6% focused on social issues, and 12.1% focused on defense/foreign policy. Money and social issues were the two most frequent issues for citizens in the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News*. The two issues accounted for more than 60% of citizens' focus. Money was the most highly covered in the *Morning News* (41%) and the *Inquirer* (37%). Energy (16%) and defense/foreign policy (13.6%) were the next most frequently written about in the *Inquirer*. Healthcare and defense/foreign policy each received 10.5% in the *Morning News*. Social issues were the most frequent issue citizens wrote about in the *Chronicle*. LGBT issues were followed closely by

money as the second and third most covered issues. Defense/foreign policy, the next most frequent issue received 12.4% of the coverage.

There were 104 editorials coded. Thirty appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 appeared in the *Dallas Morning news*, and 44 appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Overall, editorial boards focused on money and defense/foreign policy as the top issues (see Table A19). Money and defense/foreign policy accounted for more than half of all issue specific editorials. Money accounted for the most issue specific material in both the *Inquirer* (50%) and the *Chronicle* (34.1%), while defense/foreign policy was the second most covered for each newspaper. The *Morning News* had more editorial coverage of defense/foreign policy (30%) than money (26.7%). The *Morning News's* editorial board gave coverage to healthcare, which was the third most covered issue. Social issues only accounted for 3.3% for the *Morning News* as opposed to 13.3% for the *Inquirer* and 11.4% for the *Chronicle*.

Overall there were 64 in-house columnists who wrote about issue specific articles. Thirty-two in-house columnists appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 21 appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The majority of in-house columnists focused on money and defense/foreign policy (see Table A20). Money was the most discussed issue in the *Chronicle* and the *Morning News*. Money accounted for more than half of the articles in the *Morning News* and 66.7% in the *Chronicle*. However, defense/foreign policy was the most covered issue among in-house columnists in the *Inquirer*. Defense/foreign policy was the second most covered issue in the *Morning News*. Defense/foreign policy did not appear in any articles written by in-house columnists in the *Chronicle*. Social issues were the second most covered issue in the *Chronicle*.

There were 76 syndicated columnists with each newspaper combined: 17 appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 39 appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 20 appeared in the *San*

*San Francisco Chronicle*. Money was the most discussed issue among syndicated columnists in each newspaper (see Table A21). More than 40% of the syndicated columnists in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Chronicle* focused on money while only 30% in the *Morning News*.

Defense/foreign policy was the second most covered issue among syndicated columnists for each newspaper as well, with energy tying defense/foreign policy as the second in the *Morning News*. Social issues were among the three most covered issues for both the *Inquirer* and the *Chronicle*.

Overall there were 88 articles written by those identified with a nonprofit organization: 25 appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 51 appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Social issues were the most frequently written about in the *Chronicle*, followed by energy. Money and defense/foreign policy both received 13.7% (see Table A22). The *Morning News* only had 12 issue specific articles authored by non-profits. Of these 12 issue specific articles, 4 focused on the money, 2 focused on social issues, and defense/foreign policy and energy each had one article apiece. The *Inquirer's* non-profit authors focused on defense/foreign policy 40% of the time. They focused on social issues 16% and on money 12% of the time.

Overall there were 52 articles identifying themselves as writer: 9 appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, and 34 appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Four articles focused on money in the *Inquirer*, 3 on social issues, and one on defense/foreign policy and LGBT (see Table A23). Four articles were devoted to defense/foreign policy in the *Morning News*, 2 on energy and "other" issues, and one for money. Of the 34 articles in the *Chronicle*, 35.3% focused on defense/foreign policy, 29.5% focused on money, and 23.5% were focused on social issues.

Overall there were 59 articles identified as educators. Twenty-four appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, five appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, 30 appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Only five articles appeared in the *Morning News* (see Table A24). Two articles focused on social issues, one article on defense/foreign policy, one article on education, and one in “other” issues. Of the 24 articles that appeared in the *Inquirer*, 37.5% focused on money. Social issues accounted for 20.8%. Other issues accounted for 12.5%. Healthcare accounted for 16.7%. Energy, defense/foreign policy, and education accounted for 4.2% apiece. Of the 30 that appeared in the *Chronicle*, the majority of the issues were focused on defense/foreign policy (30%), social issues (23.5%), money (20%), and energy (10%).

The majority of the articles focusing on defense/foreign policy were written by citizens, which accounted for 29.6% (see Table A25). The editorial board, in-house columnists, syndicated columnists, non-profit, and writers also contributed to articles on defense/foreign policy. In-house columnists accounted for most of the authors in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* with 36.7% followed by citizens (22.4%) and non-profit (20.4%). The top three authors accounted for nearly 80% of the authors for this issue in the *Inquirer*. Citizens accounted for 30.6% of the defense/foreign policy coverage for the *Dallas Morning News* while the editorial board and Syndicated columnists accounted for 25% and 22.2%, respectively. Citizens made up most of the articles focusing on defense/foreign policy in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Writers and the editorial board followed. Educators in the *Chronicle* made up 12.2% of the coverage for defense/foreign policy, the fourth most frequent author for this issue. In contrast, educators in the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News* made up less than three percent of the defense/foreign policy focused articles. In-house columnists only made up 5.6% of the authors in the *Morning News* and did not write on the issue at all in the *Chronicle*.

Citizens authored the majority of the coverage of energy, making up 37.2% (see Table A26). Nonprofit (18.6%), editorial board (15.1%), and syndicated columnists (10.5%) made up the bulk of the rest of the coverage. Citizens authored half of the articles focusing on energy in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* followed by the editorial board. The majority of energy coverage in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* were written by two authors. Syndicated columnists accounted for 35.4% while citizens accounted for 31.8% in the *Morning News*. Non-profit authored the most articles in the *Chronicle* with 34.2%. Citizens were close behind with 31.6%. The editorial board had 15.8% of the coverage.

Citizens accounted for 40.7% of the authors in articles focusing on healthcare (see Table A27). The editorial board and non-profit were the next most frequent. In terms of raw numbers, the *Dallas Morning News* had the most coverage of healthcare. Citizens accounted for 42.3% of the coverage followed by the editorial board (26.9%). Citizens (33.3%), educators (26.7%), and non-profit (26.7%) covered the issue most frequently in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Citizens made up almost half of the authorship in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, with the editorial board and non-profit accounting for 15.4% apiece.

Citizens were responsible for the majority of the articles focusing on money as well (see Table A28). Citizens accounted for 44.3%, editorials accounted for 14%, while syndicated and in-house columnists accounted for 10% apiece. Citizens accounted for the most in each of the three newspapers. The *Dallas Morning News* had the highest concentration with 55.8% while the *Philadelphia inquirer* had the least with 37%. The editorial board accounted for the second most frequent in the *Inquirer* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The editorial board was the third most frequent in the *Morning News*. Educators, syndicated columnists and in-house columnists were among the top five in the *Inquirer*. In-house columnists dealt the third most frequent in the *Chronicle*.

Citizens were the most frequent author of articles focusing on social issues (see Table A29). Overall, more than half of articles were written by citizens. Non profit and educators were among the top three most frequent authors. Citizens were by far the most frequently cited author in each of the three newspapers. The *Dallas Morning News* had the highest percentage with 68.6% while the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had the fewest, with 47.7%. Educators were among the most frequent cited authors in each newspaper. Non-profit was the second most frequently authored in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

LGBT was a non-issue in both the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* (see Table A30). Only three articles appeared in the two newspapers combined. In the *San Francisco Chronicle*, this debate was mostly played out in the letters to the editor. Citizens accounted for 84.7% of the LGBT specific articles. The editorial board and non-profit devoted only three articles apiece to the issue. Immigration, Education and “other” issues did not receive enough election coverage for analysis.

## DISCUSSION

### Implications from Research Question 1

Working on the assumption that the framers of the United States Constitution envisioned a nation of well-informed voters, the amount of coverage devoted to an election is important. A newspaper's editorial pages cover a variety of issues and events both locally and nationally every day of the year; political discussion is not reserved for election season, and even in a non-election year the editorial pages are never left without issues of public policy to discuss and debate. Despite this, all three of the newspapers in this study, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, dedicated more than 40% of its editorial page items to the 2008 election (see Table A2).

Of the three, the *San Francisco Chronicle* included a statistically significant amount more election coverage than either the *Philadelphia Inquirer* or the *Dallas Morning News*. The *Morning News* devoted the least with 41.8% and the *Inquirer* devoted slightly more with 44.6%. Thus, the *Chronicle* appears to have placed a higher priority on the election than the other two newspapers. There may be a number of explanations for this. The San Francisco Bay area has a reputation for being an outspoken and politically active community. The political environment in 2008 in the state of California may have also played a role that the Dallas and Philadelphia communities didn't experience. California had been in the midst of a huge budget shortfall, and neither political party seemed willing to compromise on passing a new state budget. A substantial portion of the workforce in the state had been or was in threat of seeing layoffs, furloughs, or pay cuts. Grumblings for a change in Sacramento were growing. California also had a highly publicized and controversial collection of propositions (most notably Proposition 8, the California Marriage Protection Act) on the 2008 ballot.



As would be expected, the content focused on the election increased each month as Election Day approached in each of the three newspapers. August had the least election coverage, while there was a relative lull in election activity on the national stage. Although neither Obama nor McCain had yet been officially nominated, by June primary results had determined who would be the presidential candidate for both parties. The party conventions didn't occur until the end of the month: the 2008 Democratic National Convention was held in Denver, Colorado, from August 25 to August 28, 2008, while the 2008 Republican National Convention was held in Saint Paul, Minnesota, from September 1 to September 4, 2008, and the nominees did not begin to campaign formally until their nominations were official. Election coverage in August increased from week to week as the conventions approached. As the conventions passed and candidates were officially chosen, election coverage had a considerable spike.

It is apparent from the data that the *San Francisco Chronicle* was outperforming the other two newspapers in the amount of election-related editorial page content. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* devoted roughly the same amount of editorial page content to the election in August (30.7% and 29.8%, respectively) and September (44.9% and 45.6%, respectively). In October, the *Inquirer* devoted more space to the election, but was still within 6% points of the *Morning News*. Both newspapers were closer to the mean of the three newspapers combined in each of the three months (see Table A2). It is possible that these two newspapers are representative of the average amount of election content found in major metropolitan newspapers around the country. In contrast, the *Chronicle* saw a greater increase in editorial page election content each month in addition to devoting a significant amount more election coverage overall in comparison to the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News*. In August, despite the lull in election related activity, the *Chronicle* still had almost 12% points

more coverage than the other two newspapers. This high level of attention to the election continued and increased as the election approached. Each newspaper saw a dramatic increase in election related content in September. The *Chronicle* and the *Inquirer* saw an increase of 11% points or more from September to October/November. The *Morning News* had the smallest increase in election coverage of the three in October/November, with less than a 4% point increase. There was more than a 22% point difference in coverage between the *Chronicle* and the *Morning News* during this month, and nearly a 16% point difference between the *Chronicle* and the *Inquirer*. The *Chronicle* clearly placed more importance on the election than did the other newspapers. To understand why, a further examination of the election-related content is warranted.

#### Implications from Research Question 2

Despite the high amount of content each newspaper devoted to the election, a truly informed voter is not necessarily fashioned by election coverage alone. Voters benefit from information that allows them to make careful assessments of the candidate positions and the character of a candidate to make an educated vote. Voting choices should be grounded in careful considerations in the context of their own issue preferences and perceptions of candidate issue positions. Voters benefit from coverage of both the campaign and specific policy issues. Some campaign-focused editorial page content sought to inform the voter of the personal characteristics of a candidate and to educate voters on the election process. This can be seen, for example, in articles devoted to the legality of campaign signs (“Campaign Signs,” 2008, p. A14.), the flirtatious behavior of Sarah Palin (Rutledge, 2008, p. C2.), and the problem with voting straight-ticket (“Don’t Vote,” 2008, p. 2P.). Some campaign-focused articles attempted to show that the way in which a candidate performs in campaign speeches and

political debates can indicate a candidate's temperament. Some articles encouraged readers to register and take part in the election process; the *Dallas Morning News* even included a voter registration form that could be cut out and sent in ("Are You `," 2008, p. 22A.). Some campaign-focused articles sought to educate readers about electoral processes such as straight party voting, the use of voting machines, and early voting times.

While campaign-focused articles may provide the reader with some important political information, content that focuses on specific issues allows the reader to make the kind of assessments of the important policy issues the candidates stand for, and to evaluate the policy issues that will have a direct effect on them (Graber, 1993; Kim et al., 2005). The majority of campaign-focused articles focus on the drama of poll results, strategies, fundraising, and predictions on voter turnout. When Jefferson wrote of the informed voter, he was not talking about a voter informed of the horserace; he was writing about how informed citizens were about the issues of the day. Issue-focused content gives the voter more substantive information and provides a deeper understanding and context of issues to be able to choose those policies that reflect their own values.

Overall, each newspaper devoted more than half of its editorial page content over the 13 ½ week study period to the campaign (see Table A5). Again, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Dallas Morning News* were on opposite ends in their focus of content, with the *Chronicle* focused more on substantive issues, and the *Dallas Morning News* more on the contest of the campaign. The *Chronicle* was the most balanced. Slightly more than half of its election content was focused on the campaign while slightly less than half was focused on specific issues. In contrast, the *Morning News* focused nearly 70% of its election-related content on the campaign while only around 30% focused on specific issues. Although the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* focus on

the campaign was not as high as the *Morning News*, it still focused on the campaign 62.2% of the time.

Overall, the relative proportions of each newspaper's campaign focused content changed little over the course of the three months leading up to the election. The *Dallas Morning News* focused on the campaign the most in each the three months. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Morning News*' campaign-focused content stayed basically the same in August and September. The presence of the conventions in late August and early September appeared to have no effect on issue-specific content. The newspapers' focus on the campaign increased in October/November for both the *Morning News* and the *Inquirer*, not surprising in the home stretch of the election, when close races make for great stories. Interestingly, the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s coverage became more issue-specific as the election approached. In August, the *Chronicle* focused about as much on the campaign as the other newspapers, about 60%. But this dropped to 53% in September and to 48% in October/November.

There may be a number of reasons why there was so much focus on the campaign as opposed to issues. This election marked the end of the administration of an extremely controversial and unpopular president. Polls around this time indicated that the majority of voters felt that the country was on the wrong track and headed in the wrong direction (Harris, 2008; Associated Press, Ipsos, 2008; Los Angeles Times, Bloomberg, 2008). The election for both presidential candidates was framed in terms of change. This also marked the first election since 1952 where there was not an incumbent presidential or vice presidential candidate in either party. There was also several other "firsts" in this presidential election; notably Barack Obama's historic nomination as the first African American presidential candidate, and Sarah Palin as the first female Republican vice presidential candidate. John McCain also had the distinction of being the oldest presidential candidate from a major party.

The difference in focus between the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Dallas Morning News* and to a lesser extent the *Philadelphia Inquirer* was substantial. One obvious reason that the *Chronicle's* content focused so much more on issues than on campaign matters was due to the numerous state and city propositions that appeared on the 2008 ballot in the San Francisco Bay area. There were a total of 12 high-profile statewide propositions on the California ballot. Eleven of these 12 were specific to particular issues, while only one dealt with election process. Among these 11 issue focused propositions were: funding for high speed rail (money), conditions for farm animals (social), funding for a children's hospital (healthcare), parental notification for abortion (social), funding for treatment of nonviolent drug offenders (social), funding for law enforcement (social), renewable energy generation (energy/environment), eliminating right of same-sex marriage (LGBT), victim's rights in criminal parole (social), subsidizing alternative fuel vehicles for consumers (energy/environment), and funding for farm and home aid for military veterans (defense/foreign policy). Only one of the 12 propositions, reforming the rules for redistricting, focused on campaign matters. Furthermore, there were another five propositions for the city of San Francisco, which included: increased funding for affordable housing (money), fund study to achieve 51% renewable energy by 2017 (energy/environment), make enforcement of prostitution a low priority for the SFPD (social), rename the water pollution control plant to the George W. Bush Sewage Plant (energy/environment), and bringing JROTC back to the public schools (education).

Many of these issues were controversial and dealt with hot-button issues (gay marriage, abortion, energy/environment). Not only were these issues high-profile, but many advocacy groups and citizens were campaigning furiously for or against certain propositions. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* did not have such controversial issues on the ballot in their area.

Why such a difference in how much the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* focused on the campaign? As we have already discussed, the San Francisco Bay area has a history of political advocacy and highly-issue specific measures on the ballot. But why would the *Dallas Morning News* give so little coverage to specific issues, even when compared to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* which also did not have the contentious propositions or the culture of advocacy found in San Francisco? One way to examine this difference is in how the official voice of the newspaper, the editorials, and how citizens, the letters to the editor, chose to focus on the election-related content.

Editorials represent the institutional opinion of the newspaper, providing opinions and recommendations and endorsements on what they perceive to be in the best interests of their community. Examination of the editorials may give us an insight into what aspects of an election the newspaper deems important. Letters to the editor, on the other hand, are intended to give a voice to local citizens and readers. Most letters are written by local citizens and give opinion on local and national events or in response to content featured in previous opinion pieces.

As such, it is interesting to note the similarity of the focus on the campaign between all election-related pieces and the letters to the editor, the voice of the readers. Overall, close to 70% of the election-related material in the *Morning News* was campaign-focused; in fact, slightly more than 70% of letters to the editor focused on the campaign (see Tables A5 and A7, respectively). In contrast, campaign-focused content in the *San Francisco Chronicle* was roughly 53%, including 56.4% of letters to the editor. This could point to the notion that election-related editorial page content is in some way influenced by the readers. Conversely, this could be a by-product of gatekeeping by the newspaper having an influence on the focus on the election-related material of its readers. However, the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* letters to the editor focused on the election nearly as much as the *Morning News*, yet its overall campaign-focused content

was only 62.2%. The selection of the letters to the editor may be more telling as an explanation of this ratio. When contacted, each of the newspaper letters editors gave a slightly different approach to how letters are chosen. According to letters editor M. Landauer (personal communication, March 19, 2010), the *Morning News* chooses its letters as a proportional representative of what it receives (with certain limits). They don't tend to run more than two letters without one opposing opinion on any given day. Given this method of selection, it is plausible that the ratio of letters to the editor that appeared in the *Morning News* is consistent with the readers' own campaign focus preference.

The *San Francisco Chronicle's* letters are chosen in a different way, but in the end mirror the overall frequency of campaign-focused content, similar to the *Dallas Morning News*. The letters to the editor are chosen to achieve balance, said editorial and opinion page assistant editor J. Johnson (personal communication, April 1, 2010). Letters that are interesting, thought-provoking, or that may elicit a response are chosen, but the overall goal is to print letters that balance of opinion. But the political makeup of the area makes this difficult. The San Francisco Bay area leans heavily toward a liberal/democratic philosophy. Because of this, there is often a dearth of letters supporting conservative viewpoints (or as J. Johnson put it, "conservatives don't like to write letters"). But, this goal of balance in the letters is reflected and achieved when looking at campaign-focused versus specific issue-focused material.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the other hand, has a much more subjective process of letter selection. According to commentary page editor J. Gohlke (personal communication, March 19, 2010), its main goal is to make sure that as many views as possible are represented, particularly on issues of current interest and those that have appeared in their pages already. There is no actual math used to ensure proportionality or parity; rather The *Philadelphia* seeks to make sure that all views are represented at some point, and that the same view is not

presented over and over for no particular reason. By Gohlke's own admission, it is a very subjective process. This might explain why the proportion of letters focused on the campaign does not reflect the overall amount of campaign-related content of the newspaper.

Another way to examine the focus of election-related articles is through each newspaper's editorials. Both the *Dallas Morning News*' and the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s campaign-focused editorials were similar in frequency to the percent of campaign-focused articles overall. The percentage of campaign-focused content in the *Morning News*' editorials was 71.6%. The overall percentage of campaign-focused content was 69.4% (see Tables A7 and A5, respectively). Likewise, the percentage of campaign-focused content in the *Chronicle*'s editorials was 50%. The overall percentage of campaign-focused content was 52.9%. However, the percentage of campaign-focused editorials was actually lower than the overall percentage of campaign-focused content in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The amount of campaign-focused editorials in the *Morning News* and the *Inquirer* was consistent with the amount of campaign focused-content among all article types in each newspaper. It is possible that the overall amount of content devoted to the campaign was influenced by the amount of coverage each newspaper's editorial board devoted to the campaign. The editorials for the *Inquirer* and the *Chronicle* provided more balance between campaign-focused and issue-focused content than the editorials in the *Morning News*. It is interesting to note that both the voice of the newspaper (editorials) and the voice of the reader (letters to the editor) shared roughly the same focus on the campaign for the *Morning News* and the *Chronicle*. It is possible this is an indication that the editorial board's focus is consistent with that of the readers. This could also be an indication of the readers responding to content presented in the content (editorials and columns) chosen by the editorial board. Another possibility may be gatekeeping used by the editors of the letters to reflect the views of the newspaper.



Finally, columns were the most focused on issues of all the article types. Columns are designed to supplement or give opinion that stands in contrast to the editorials. Editors from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* stated that columns were usually the most subjectively chosen part of the editorial pages, selected to give a contrasting editorial position or to provide a voice consistent with the editorial position. Columns were the most issue-focused articles in each of the newspapers. Despite this, the *Dallas Morning News* only had 34.2% their columns focused on issues (see Table A7). In contrast the columns in both *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* were balanced, with each close to having a 50/50 split. Since columns are chosen to either contrast or supplement the viewpoints expressed in the editorial pages, this may be an indication of the editors purposefully choosing columns to create balance.

Not only was the *Dallas Morning News* the most focused on the campaign overall, each article type was considerably focused on the campaign as well. There was not an article type in the newspaper that provided a contrast to the campaign centered content. The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* letters were similar to the *Dallas Morning News* in their overwhelming focus on the campaign. But the columns and editorials, which devoted more than 43% of its content to specific issues, provided some balance to its otherwise campaign-centered content. The *Morning News*, however, had no such contrast in the campaign focused content in any of their article types.

What does this say about the health of the marketplace of ideas in the modern newspaper editorial page? Tocqueville et al. (2007) marveled at the number of newspapers available to the people in the early United States. He was astonished by the notion that nearly every hamlet in America had a newspaper, and at how America's information system was decentralized. In terms of newspapers, there is still hardly a hamlet in the country that is not

served by at least one newspaper, but these hamlets are not the quaint villages of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but complex communities of millions of people. In such large communities with such diverse populations, does a single newspaper provide the necessary market for ideas? It would be difficult to argue that it does. However, according to the information obtained in this study, the *San Francisco Chronicle* seems to provide a vibrant marketplace. A sizable amount of coverage and balance in its election-related content was consistent throughout the editorial pages. This is commendable in comparison to the coverage and balance observed in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. At least in terms of exposure, it is safe to say that the readers of the *Chronicle* not only had access to more election information than the readers of the other newspaper, but were also provided with more content focused on substantive issues.

But does the high level of electoral content coupled with balance given between campaign-focused and issue-focused content observed in the *Chronicle* indicate that the other newspapers are coming up short? Looking at the marketplace in terms of the libertarian ideal, such as John Stuart Mill's (1909), the editorial pages of each newspaper does provide for a forum for the free exchange of ideas. As Mott (1940) stated, each section of the editorial pages serves a purpose. All three of these newspapers provided editorials, giving recommendations they believed were in the best interests of their community. Columns are purportedly chosen to provide a different take than that of the editorials, even if they agreed on the same issue, giving a voice contrary to the editorial line. Citizens were given a forum of their own to comment on and present their own ideas. From this standpoint, the necessary ingredients for a healthy marketplace do exist in the modern U.S. newspapers in these three cities. Mill believed that through discussion, ideas are exchanged and compete with one another. Consumers then compare their ideas with those of others and the best are chosen among them. Good ideas

thrive in the marketplace, while poor ideas die out. In the case of the libertarian ideal, the opportunities for a healthy exchange still exist.

In this case, the marketplace of ideas is alive and well in each of these communities in many ways. Each of the key elements of the editorial page existed in the three newspapers. The *Dallas Morning News* provided consumers with the greatest opportunity for readers to express their opinions. During the three-month period leading up to the election, it ran the most items overall, and it ran the most letters to the editor, which were the most frequent items in each newspaper. Columns were the second most common, followed by editorials, the voice of the newspaper itself.

In terms of election related-coverage, Kahn and Kenney (2002) and Graber (1993) have indicated the importance of the press in disseminating information between the candidates and the citizenry, and for the basis of forming public opinion and engendering action among those in society. The *San Francisco Chronicle* provided the greatest opportunity for a healthy marketplace of ideas. Nearly 60% of its articles focused on the election. But each newspaper devoted a sizeable portion of its content to the election. The lowest showing for each of the newspapers occurred in the letters of the *Dallas Morning News*, which focused on the election only 37.1% of the time. But as indicated earlier, this percentage wasn't necessarily due to lack of an opportunity for readers to voice their opinion.

According to the Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947) the editorial pages providing a presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society is of great importance. Although there was a substantial portion in each newspaper devoted to the election, the majority of the focus for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News* was on the campaign as opposed to substantive issues. This is concerning given the finding of the Chaffee and Kanihan (1997) study a decade earlier that indicated newspapers devote less

coverage to stories about the campaign trail and more focused on issue-centered coverage. A fair amount of useful information that can be given in campaign-focused content, but the clarification of the goals and values happens only when the proper context of the issues is provided. The *San Francisco Chronicle* was the most balanced of the newspapers in this aspect. Nearly 50% of the content was focused on substantial issues.

### Implications from Research Question 3

The most striking finding in issue coverage was how much content was devoted to only a few specific issues. The most frequently covered issues in each newspaper were money, social issues, and defense/foreign policy. Outside of these big three issues, each newspaper only had a single issue of prominence. Energy/environment was the fourth most frequently covered issue for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Healthcare was the fourth in the *Dallas Morning News*, while LGBT issues' were the fourth in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The top four issues (or five in the *Morning News*) accounted for 87% or more of all the content devoted to issues in each newspaper.

In most instances, the frequency of the issues mirrored important events as they came up in the final months of the campaign. In August, contrasting September and October/November, financial and economic issues was the third most covered issue in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, as armed conflict between Russia and Georgia made headlines, raising interest in defense/foreign policy. However, this story dominated the issue specific coverage for both the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It is interesting to note that this issue was covered the least in the *Inquirer* during not only such a high profile foreign policy event, but also during a lull in election coverage in general. If coverage of the conflict occurred during this month, it wasn't covered in the context of the election. But, as the campaign heated up in the months that followed, defense/foreign policy coverage increased for the *Inquirer* in

September and October. In contrast, the *Morning News* and the *Chronicle's* defense/foreign policy coverage peaked in August but fell in the following months. So while the issue became a less defining factor in the *Morning News* and *Chronicle*, it became more of an important factor in the *Inquirer*. The *Inquirer* placed a greater importance on this issue than did the two other newspapers.

The peak in energy/environment coverage also occurred in August. Energy/environment was the most-covered issue in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the second most-covered issue in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* during this month. This coincides with the energy/environment debate that arose in July as President George W. Bush lifted an executive order put in place by his father in 1990 that banned offshore drilling. He also called for exploration of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Members of Congress and environmental groups voiced their opposition and each newspaper carried coverage of the debate. However, as the campaign heated up in the subsequent month, as with defense/foreign policy, energy/environment-focused items fell in the following months in each newspaper.

Items focusing on money also were influenced by current events. Although the financial troubles in the United States began as early as 2006, there was a dramatic escalation of the financial crisis in September, and each day seemed to bring more bad news. The jobless rate skyrocketed. Major mortgage and lending institutions were on the brink of collapse, and debate raged over proposed government takeover. In October, a bailout of the U.S. financial system passed Congress and was signed by President Bush. After this, the campaigns on both sides focused on what had gone wrong, and how they were the ones to fix it. It is not surprising, then, that money became the top issue in September in each newspaper but the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The *Dallas Morning News* placed the most emphasis on money-related issues, more than the next three issues combined. This focus on money wasn't quite as dramatic in the

*Philadelphia Inquirer*, but there was still a 12.6% gap between money and defense/foreign policy. Money continued to be the most prominent issue for both newspapers in October/November. Interestingly, the *Chronicle* focused more on social issues than money, despite the fact that California had not only been dealing with a failing economy, but massive state budget crisis as well. The state budget had been overdue for three months when Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger finally signed a compromise in September. Money only became the top issue in the *Chronicle* in the final month before the election.

Social issues were among the top three issues for all newspapers newspaper in each month leading up to the election, but it was the top issue for only one month, September, and only in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Unlike the other top issues, there was not a specific event that brought extra focus to social issues. But it was still among the most covered issues in each newspaper. Social issues are important in identifying the values of a candidate or political party. Abortion is perhaps the most high-profile social issue, and is often one of the major issues that define party affiliation. But this election season was characterized by coverage of social issues that reflected the historic nature of the election, namely discrimination, race, and women's issues. Social issue coverage was fairly consistent month to month in the *Dallas Morning News*, and in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* during August and September before dropping off in October/November. The *San Francisco Chronicle* had a dramatic increase in its social issue coverage in September before dropping off some in October/November.

LGBT issues were non-issues in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Dallas Morning News*, each of which ran only a single item to this topic. However, LGBT-focused articles were a major part of the election coverage in San Francisco. This was due in large part to California's highly controversial and highly publicized Proposition 8, which sought to reverse a state law, passed the previous year, legalizing same-sex marriage. This issue was only lightly covered in August

and September, but received more than five times as much coverage in October/November.

This indicates an intense debate in the final month.

The San Francisco Bay area is known for being one of the most liberal cities in America. According to the Bay Area Center for Voting Research, three major cities that are covered by the *San Francisco Chronicle* are among the top 10 most liberal cities in the country: Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. San Francisco also has the highest percentage of openly gay and lesbian individuals of any major U.S. city. The city has a long history of supporting LGBT rights and is considered the cultural center for the LGBT community in the United States. Every year the city hosts several LGBT festivals, parades, and is home to several advocacy groups. Add to this the fact that several prominent state and local ballot propositions focused on social issues, it makes sense that they received so much attention and debate in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

In contrast, Immigration and education were among the least covered issues for each newspaper. In the Spring of 2006, there were massive protests throughout the United States over illegal immigration, especially in states with sizable Hispanic populations such as California and Texas, two states that border Mexico and have sizable illegal immigration populations. Two years later, however, it was a non-issue, although the *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran more immigration related items than did the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Education was also consistently a non-issue. Interestingly enough, non-election education related issues did receive a considerable amount of attention in the *Morning News* editorial pages as the Dallas Independent School District experienced a major budget crisis, leading to teacher layoffs. This crisis did not carry over into education policy in the context of the election. Healthcare was not a significant issue for either the *Inquirer* or the *Chronicle*, but it was a prominent issue in the *Morning News* in October. Interestingly, there were prominent votes to allow funding for hospital renovations in both Dallas and San Francisco. The \$887 million bond

to rebuild San Francisco General Hospital passed easily with 84% of the vote. The \$747 million bond for the New Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas also passed with overwhelming support. Despite this similarity, the issue was barely a blip on the *Chronicle's* radar. It may have not received as much attention in the *Chronicle* as it did in the *Morning News* due to the more prominent issues present in the election in San Francisco.

In terms of the Commission on Freedom of the Press' (1947) recommendation that the press should provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning, each newspaper could benefit from a greater diversity of issues in discussion. Only four or five issues dominated the content of issue-specific election-related content. As Mill (1909) believed, however, consumers compare their ideas with those of others and the best are chosen from among them. Given the number of opportunities that citizens, columnists, and the editorial board had to present their ideas, this handful of issues may have been the "best ideas" for the times. These ideas followed closely the events of the day. Each newspaper approached the selection of letters and columns a different way, but each newspaper's stated goal was similar: to make sure as many viewpoints as possible were given. Given that there is a concerted effort to achieve a diversity of opinion, the prominence of only a handful of issues may very well be a result of the best ideas winning out.

#### Implications from Research Question 4

Before discussing the authorship of editorial page content, it will be important to discuss article type. Article type and author are nearly synonymous where editorials and letters to the editor are concerned. All editorials are written by the editorial board. Likewise, letters to the editor are overwhelmingly written by citizens, who accounted for more than 96% of the letters to the editor in this study (see Table A15). Columns, on the other hand, are a little more



complex, although 93% of all columns were written by the same six author type: syndicated columnists, in-house columnists, writers, non-profit, radio/tv/etc., and educators. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* devoted the most space to in-house columnists. The *Dallas Morning News* focused on syndicated columnists. The *San Francisco Chronicle* devoted the most space to non-profit authors, followed closely by in-house columnists. Syndicated and in-house columnists accounted for more than 50% of all the columns in the *Inquirer* and the *Morning News*.

Measuring diversity of authors in the editorial pages can be difficult. The specific purpose and the layout of each section may limit the diversity authors. Editorials are always written by the editorial board. Letters to the editor are designed to give a voice to the readers, and as such, readers write most of the letters; in some cases letters are written by people identifying themselves with an organization. But most authors of letters list their first and last names, their city, and at times an email address. As such, they are writing as citizens.

If there is to be a discussion about diversity of authors in the editorial pages, it would most likely take place in the columns section. Overall the majority of in-house columnists, syndicated columnists, radio/tv/etc., and writers were more focused on the campaign, while those writing as non-profit writers and educators were more focused on issues. This may be a result of the role in which these authors are writing. In-house columnists, syndicated columnists, writers generally already work within the media and write on a variety of topics. As such, they will be less likely to focus on a single issue. However, educators and non-profit writers generally write only support of a particular issue, and thus their voice is given in the context of that particular issue. It is not surprising then that non-profit writers and educators were highly issue-focused, each focusing on the campaign only 33.8% and 30.6% of the times respectively. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* followed this same trend among the six author types. Syndicated and in-house columnists as well as writers, and radio/TV/etc. were 60% or more focused on the

campaign, while non-profit and educators were focused on the campaign 26.5% and 31.4% respectively.

Five of these six columnist types in *Dallas Morning News* were 60% or more focused on the campaign than on specific issues, non-profit writers being the exception with 50% of its content focused on the campaign. It is interesting to note that in-house columnists focused on the campaign nearly as much as the editorial board and citizens in the *Morning News*. In almost every opportunity that the newspaper had to present election related material, it was overwhelmingly focused on the campaign. In contrast to the *Morning News*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* writers focused the least on the campaign. Radio/TV/ etc, educators, and non-profit all focused more on specific issues. Only In-house and syndicated columnists were more focused on the campaign.

In each of the most covered issues, money, social issues, defense/foreign policy, energy/environment, and healthcare, the majority of the articles were authored by citizens, with the exception of in-house columnists making up the majority of defense/foreign policy focused articles the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, syndicated columnists in the *Dallas Morning News* and non-profit writers in the *San Francisco Chronicle* with energy/environment focused articles. This again is an indication of the layout of the newspapers. It is interesting to note that the coverage of the LGBT issues in the *San Francisco Chronicle* occurred almost exclusively in the letters to the editor (citizens). The editorial board and non-profit writers devoted only three articles to the topic, and In-house columnists only one (see Table A30). In contrast citizens devoted 50 (84.7%) to the issue. This is surprising in that this issue ranked among the most covered issues overall in the *Chronicle*, but wasn't discussed at length in the editorials or columns. The large amount of coverage of LGBT issues in the newspaper does not appear to be initiated by the editors within the *Chronicle*, it appears to be mostly initiated by the readers. It is possible the editors believed

that the debate present in the letters to the editor was sufficient in their treatment of the issue. The *Chronicle* did devote an editorial making an official recommendation against Proposition 8, and provided further recommendations against the measure in editorials making recommendations on all propositions.

Looking at the marketplace of ideas in terms two recommendations set forth by the Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947), a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society, the health of the marketplace is in some ways difficult to assess. Did the editorial pages provide a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism? To a certain extent, each newspaper did. The letters to the editor sections of each newspaper allowed for several readers to respond almost every day. The *Dallas Morning News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* provided the greatest opportunity for readers to be heard. Likewise, editors of the editorial pages seemed to have made a concerted effort to provide a variety of voices in op-ed columns and letters to the editor. It appears that each newspaper provided an opportunity for the exchange of comment and criticism.

Did the editorial pages project a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society? In this study, one way that a representative picture of the constituent groups in society could be examined is through the diversity of authors. In theory, the constituent groups in society will be able to present their voice in either the letters to the editor or in the columns. There were many letters to the editors in each newspaper, on any given day, more letters than columns and editorials. In theory this could provide twice as many opinions as would otherwise be presented. But, as previously stated, there is no guarantee that each constituent group from the community is submitting letters, and letters to the editor consisted of mainly one author. In many ways, the heavily liberal democratic San Francisco area is not as politically diverse as other

metropolitan areas may be. As the editor of the San Francisco Chronicle noted, “conservatives don’t like to write letters here” (J. Johnson, personal communication, April 1, 2010). Although the newspaper works its hardest to provide as balanced coverage as it can, there are certain voices that are not being heard or are much louder than others.

However, columns present an opportunity for diversity. Op-ed columns are by their very nature designed to contrast the editorial position. Guest columnists from individuals or organizations from the community can contribute pieces. But, only a handful of author types were given the majority of the space. Syndicated and in-house columnists, writers, and radio/TV/etc authored most of the columns, and all employed within the media. The *San Francisco Chronicle’s* columns did allow a substantial opportunity for those associated with non-profit organizations to voice opinions, the only newspaper to do so. There were a couple of cases of citizens writing a column, but they were barely a blip on the radar. It appears that unless an author is well connected within the industry or is a part of a large non-profit organization, opinions given were relegated to the shorter and less in-depth letters to the editor. Each newspaper should do more to provide a greater diversity of authors in their columns.

#### Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study sought to use content analysis to evaluate and compare the marketplace of ideas among three major metropolitan newspapers. This examination included the comparison of election-related content, campaign/issue-focused content, and author type in each of these newspapers. Although this is a good beginning in the examination of the marketplace, an expanded study that incorporates the tone (i.e. in favor of or in opposition to a viewpoint) of the articles would be useful. As this study stands now, it is useful in understanding the potential for

a diversity of opinions but is unable to provide insight into the nature of those opinions. This current examination can only provide the frequency of election-related content, campaign/issue-focused content, and which issues appear. The inclusion of tone would provide the ability to examine which arguments or viewpoints are being presented in each of the categories. This study would also benefit from an examination of the depth in which the issues are presented. The data shows that the majority of the articles that focused on a particular issue were letters to the editor. But letters to the editor are shorter than an editorial or column, typically comprising of less than 200 words. With so many of the issue-specific articles residing in the letters to the editor, it would be interesting to examine the depth provided. Although being able to characterize an article as focused on the campaign or focused on specific issues can be useful, a deeper examination of what viewpoints were expressed and the depth in which an issue is presented would provide a greater insight into diversity.

This study looked only at articles that were focused on the election, so no assumption can be made regarding the content of all articles in the editorial pages. Each newspaper's election-related material tended to focus more on the campaign than on issues. Conclusions can only be drawn about the number of issue-based coverage in the editorial page's election coverage. However, it may be useful to examine the amount of issue-centered content each newspaper provides in their non-election related items. This could provide baseline data of the amount of issue-based coverage the newspaper provides to compare with election-related issue-based coverage.

This study looked at only three major metropolitan newspapers, a fraction of what exists in the country as a whole. Expanding this study to include other major metropolitan newspapers could provide a better picture of each newspaper's performance in comparison to the content of other metropolitan newspapers across the country. This study reveals that the

*San Francisco Chronicle* stood apart from the other two newspapers in its election related content. A comparison to a representative sample of major metropolitan newspapers from the country as a whole would give a fuller picture of the uniqueness of the *Chronicle's* performance. It would also be useful to look at those few remaining major metropolitan areas that are still served by two newspapers. In the current study, only one major newspaper from each metropolitan area was examined. In a functioning marketplace of ideas, more than one voice and point of view is presented to the constituency. In communities that are served by more than one major newspaper, it would be interesting to compare how each newspaper presents election-related content to their constituents and if more diversity in content and points of view exist taken together compared to a single newspaper based community.

Finally, this study examines only the 2008 presidential election. The amount of coverage focused on the campaign may have been a result of the uniqueness of this particular campaign. This election included the end of the term for an extremely unpopular president, the first African-American candidate from a major party, and the first female Republican vice-presidential candidate. It might be useful to compare this study with the content of the final three months of the 2004 and 2000 U.S. presidential elections.

My study has contributed to the body of knowledge about the content of editorial pages, particularly in the context of the marketplace of ideas. The results provided insight into the potential for a healthy marketplace to exist in the editorial pages. The information obtained through this study has practical applications for the editorial pages of newspapers. The focus of the election-related material in particular may benefit from a more balanced presentation between campaign-centered and issue-centered coverage. It is understandable that newspapers and readers alike may gravitate toward coverage of the campaign. The excitement of the horserace brings entertainment to many readers and provides almost ready-made stories

for journalists and editors. But devoting more pieces to issues of substance could help transform a reader into a more informed voter. Finally, the format of the editorial pages in terms of editorials and letters to the editor, written primarily by the editorial board and citizens, respectively, does not lend itself to a diversity of authors. But the columns of newspapers may provide space to authors outside of the handful of regulars usually appearing. The newspapers should actively seek to recruit and include more authors beyond syndicated and in-house columnists (i.e. non-profit, educators, local politicians, religious leaders, etc.). This study will be useful to both media researchers and practitioners of the editorial pages alike. Editors may use this research to examine their own focus on campaign-centered vs. issue-centered coverage, as well as diversity in issue coverage and diversity of authors writing pieces for their pages. This work sets the stage for further research into the diversity of viewpoints that may or may not exist in the election coverage of editorial pages.

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APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Tables

Table A1  
*Frequency of Article Type in Each Newspaper*

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Article Type</u>							
	<u>Letters</u>		<u>Columns</u>		<u>Editorials</u>		<u>Supplemental</u>	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>Overall</u>	55.8%	2561	24.8%	1139	13.1%	603	6.3%	288
<u>PI</u>	53.2%	690	26.9%	349	16.2%	210	3.7%	48
<u>DMN</u>	56.8%	1012	21.2%	378	12.4%	220	9.6%	171
<u>SFC</u>	56.8%	859	27.2%	412	11.4%	173	4.6%	69

Table A2  
 Frequency of Election Related Content by Month and Newspaper

Percentage of Election Related Content by Month in Each Newspaper								
Newspapers	Month							
	Overall		August		September		October/November	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>All</u>	47.8%	2109	34.3%	477	49.4%	688	58%	944
<u>PI</u>	44.6%	566	30.7%	119	44.9%	179	55.6%	268
<u>DMN</u>	41.8%	711	29.8%	161	45.6%	241	49%	309
<u>SFC</u>	57.6%	832	42.4%	197	57.5%	268	71.4%	367

  

Chi Square Score for the Comparison of Each Newspaper's Frequency of Election-Related Content by Month				
Newspapers	Month			
	Overall	August	September	October/November
	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$
PI and DMN	2.30	.093	.056	4.81 <sup>b</sup>
PI and SFC	45.28 <sup>a</sup>	12.22 <sup>a</sup>	13.78 <sup>a</sup>	26.87 <sup>a</sup>
DMN and SFC	77.31 <sup>a</sup>	17.16 <sup>a</sup>	13.95 <sup>a</sup>	58.94 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $p < .001$   
<sup>b</sup>  $p < .01$

Note:  $df = 1$  for all  $\chi^2$

  

Chi Square Score for the increase of Election-Related Content by Month in Each Newspaper		
Chi Square – increase in election related content month to month		
Newspaper	Months	
	August to September	September to October/November
	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$
<u>PI</u>	16.62 <sup>a</sup>	10.07 <sup>b</sup>
<u>DMN</u>	28.50 <sup>a</sup>	1.28
<u>SFC</u>	21.36 <sup>a</sup>	20.67 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $p < .001$   
<sup>b</sup>  $p < .01$

Note:  $df = 1$  for all  $\chi^2$



Table A3  
*Frequency of Article Type in Each Newspaper's Election-Related Content*

Newspaper	Article Type							
	<u>Letters</u>		<u>Columns</u>		<u>Editorials</u>		<u>Supplemental</u>	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>Overall</u>	54.1%	1142	32.6%	687	12.1%	255	1.2%	25
<u>PI</u>	49.1%	278	36.6%	207	12.7%	72	1.6%	9
<u>DMN</u>	52.7%	375	31.6%	225	13.4%	95	2.3%	16
<u>SFC</u>	58.8%	489	30.6%	255	10.6%	88	0%	0

Table A4  
*Frequency of Election-Related Content in Each Newspaper's Article Type*

Newspaper	Article Type							
	<u>Letters</u>		<u>Columns</u>		<u>Editorials</u>		<u>Supplemental</u>	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>Overall</u>	44.6%	1142	60.3%	687	42.3%	255	8.7%	25
<u>PI</u>	40.3%	278	59.3%	207	34.3%	72	18.8%	9
<u>DMN</u>	37.1%	375	59.5%	225	43.2%	95	9.4%	16
<u>SFC</u>	56.9%	489	59.5%	255	50.9%	88	0%	0

Chi Square Score for the Comparison of Each Newspaper's Frequency of Election-Related Content by article type

Newspapers	Article Type		
	<u>Letters</u>	<u>Columns</u>	<u>Editorials</u>
	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$
PI and DMN	1.81	.003	3.60
PI and SFC	42.37 <sup>a</sup>	.528	10.72 <sup>b</sup>
DMN and SFC	73.82 <sup>a</sup>	.464	2.23

<sup>a</sup>  $p < .001$

<sup>b</sup>  $p < .01$

Note:  $df = 1$  for all  $\chi^2$

Table A5  
*Frequency of Campaign-Specific content by Month in Each Newspaper*

Frequency of Campaign-Specific Content by Month in each Newspaper								
Newspapers	Month							
	<u>Overall</u>		<u>August</u>		<u>September</u>		<u>October/November</u>	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>All</u>	61%	1282	62.4%	295	60.1%	412	60.9%	575
<u>PI</u>	62.2%	350	60.3%	70	58.7%	105	65.3%	175
<u>DMN</u>	69.4%	492	66.3%	106	67.9%	163	72.2%	223
<u>SFC</u>	52.9 %	440	60.4%	119	53.9%	144	48.2 %	177

  

Chi Square Score for the Comparison of Each Newspaper's Campaign-Specific Content				
Newspapers	Month			
	<u>Overall</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>October/Nov.</u>
	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$
PI and DMN	7.32 <sup>b</sup>	1.02	3.81	3.17
PI and SFC	11.62 <sup>b</sup>	.000	.971	18.27 <sup>a</sup>
DMN and SFC	43.30 <sup>a</sup>	1.29	10.35 <sup>b</sup>	39.76 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $p < .001$   
<sup>b</sup>  $p < .01$

Note: df = 1 for all  $\chi^2$

Table A6  
*Frequency of Campaign Specific Content by Article Type*

<u>Frequency of Article Type in Each Newspaper's Campaign-Specific Content</u>								
Newspaper	<u>Letters</u>		<u>Columns</u>		<u>Editorials</u>		<u>Supplemental</u>	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>Overall</u>	57.3%	734	29.4%	377	11.9%	153	1.4%	18
<u>PI</u>	62.7%	193	27.3%	109	11.7%	41	2%	7
<u>DMN</u>	53.9%	265	30.1%	148	13.8%	68	2.2%	11
<u>SFC</u>	55.1%	276	31.1%	120	10%	44	0%	0

Table A7  
*Frequency of Campaign-Specific Content in Each Newspaper's Article Type*

Newspaper	<u>Letters</u>		<u>Columns</u>		<u>Editorials</u>		<u>Supplemental</u>	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<u>Overall</u>	64.3%	734	54.9%	377	60%	153	72%	18
<u>PI</u>	69.4%	193	52.7%	109	56.9%	41	77.7%	7
<u>DMN</u>	70.7%	265	65.8%	148	71.6%	68	68.7%	11
<u>SFC</u>	56.4%	276	47.1%	120	50%	44	0%	0

Chi Square Score for the Comparison of Each Newspaper's Frequency of Campaign-Specific Content by article type

Newspapers	Month		
	<u>Letters</u>	<u>Columns</u>	<u>Editorials</u>
	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$
PI and DMN	.075	8.07 <sup>b</sup>	3.10
PI and SFC	12.82 <sup>a</sup>	1.56	.948
DMN and SFC	18.05 <sup>a</sup>	18.01 <sup>a</sup>	8.34 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $p < .001$

<sup>b</sup>  $p < .01$

Note: df = 1 for all  $\chi^2$

Table A8  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 821			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 213		Dallas Morning News n = 217		San Francisco Chronicle n= 391	
Issue	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>
Money	31.1%	1	34.7%	1	34.9%	1	31.1%	1
Social	21.4%	2	20.2%	3	16.1%	2	25.1%	2
Defense	17.6%	3	22.1%	2	15.6%	3	16.4%	3
Energy	9.9%	4	11.7%	4	9.6%	5	9%	5
LGBT	7.4%	5	.5%	9	.5%	9	15.1%	4
Healthcare	6.1%	6	5.6%	5	11.5%	4	6.1%	6
Other	2.4%	7	2.8%	6	5%	6	.8%	9
Education	2.2%	8	1.9%	7	3.2%	7	1.8%	7
Immigration	1.7%	9	.5%	8	3.2%	7	1.5%	8

Table A9  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues in August for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 178			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 46		Dallas Morning News n = 54		San Francisco Chronicle n= 78	
Issue	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>
Defense	28.1%	1	15.2%	4	31.5%	1	33.3%	1
Energy	22.5%	2	30.4%	1	18.5%	2	20.5%	2
Social	19.1%	3	23.9%	2	16.7%	3	17.9%	3
Money	15.2%	4	15.2%	3	14.8%	4	15.4%	4
Healthcare	5.1%	5	8.7%	5	9.3%	5	0%	-
LGBT	4.5%	6	0%	9	0%	9	10.3%	5
Immigration	2.2%	7	2.2%	6	1.9%	7	2.6%	6
Education	1.7%	8	2.2%	6	3.7%	6	0%	-
Other	1.1%	9	1.1%	8	1.9%	7	0%	-

Table A10  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues in September for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 274			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 74		Dallas Morning News n = 77		San Francisco Chronicle n = 123	
Issue	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Money	34.9%	1	39.2%	1	39.7%	1	29.3%	2
Social	29.5%	2	25.7%	2	14.1%	2	41.5%	1
Defense	15.6%	3	20.3%	3	12.8%	3	14.6%	3
Energy	6.2%	4	6.8%	4	10.3%	4	3.3%	5
LGBT	3.3%	5	1.4%	7	1.3%	9	5.7%	4
Other	3.3%	6	1.4%	7	7.7%	5	1.6%	8
Healthcare	2.9%	7	2.7%	5	6.4%	6	0.8%	9
Education	2.5%	8	2.7%	5	3.8%	7	1.6%	6
Immigration	1.8%	9	0%	-	3.8%	7	1.6%	6

Table A11  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues in October/November for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 369			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 93		Dallas Morning News n = 86		San Francisco Chronicle n = 190	
Issue	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Money	36%	1	40.9%	1	43%	1	30.5%	1
Social	16.5%	2	14%	3	17.4%	2	17.4%	3
Defense	14.1%	3	26.9%	2	8.1%	4	10.5%	4
LGBT	11.9%	4	0%	-	0%	-	23.2%	2
Healthcare	8.9%	5	6.5%	4	17.4%	2	6.3%	6
Energy	6.5%	6	6.5%	4	3.5%	6	7.9%	5
Other	2.4%	7	4.3%	6	4.7%	5	0.5%	9
Education	2.2%	8	1.1%	7	2.3%	8	2.6%	7
Immigration	1.4%	9	0%	-	3.5%	6	1.1%	8

Table A12  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues in Editorials for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 101			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 30		Dallas Morning News n = 27		San Francisco Chronicle n = 44	
Issue	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Money	37.6%	1	50%	1	29.6%	1	34.1%	1
Defense	20.8%	2	10%	4	29.6%	1	22.7%	2
Energy	12.9%	3	13.3%	2	11.1%	4	13.6%	3
Social	9.9%	4	13.3%	2	3.7%	6	11.4%	4
Healthcare	7.9%	5	3.3%	6	18.5%	3	4.5%	6
LGBT	3%	6	0%	-	0%	-	6.8%	5
Other	3%	6	3.3%	6	0%	-	4.5%	6
Education	3%	6	6.7%	5	0%	-	2.3%	8
Immigration	2%	9	0%	-	7.4%	5	0%	-

Table A13  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues in Columns for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 307			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 97		Dallas Morning News n = 75		San Francisco Chronicle n = 135	
Issue	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Money	30.2%	1	27.8%	2	32.9%	1	30.4%	1
Defense	24.7%	2	34%	1	18.4%	2	21.5%	3
Social	17.9%	3	17.5%	3	10.5%	4	22.2%	2
Energy	10.7%	4	8.2%	4	13.2%	3	11.1%	4
Healthcare	4.5%	5	5.2%	5	6.6%	6	3%	7
Other	3.6%	6	4.1%	6	7.9%	5	0.7%	9
Education	3.2%	6	1%	7	5.3%	7	3%	7
Immigration	2.9%	6	1%	7	5.3%	7	3.7%	6
LGBT	2.3%	9	1%	7	0%	-	4.4%	5

Table A14  
*Frequency and Ranking of Issues in Letters to the Editor for Each Newspaper*

Overall n = 406			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 84		Dallas Morning News n = 110		San Francisco Chronicle n= 212	
Issue	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>
Money	30.3%	1	35.7%	1	39.1%	1	23.6%	2
Social	27.3%	2	26,2%	2	23.6%	2	29.7%	1
LGBT	12.3%	3	0%	-	0%	-	23.6%	3
Defense	11.6%	4	13.1%	4	10%	4	11.8%	4
Energy	8.6%	5	15.5%	3	7.3%	5	6.6%	5
Healthcare	6.4%	6	7.1%	5	11.8%	3	3.3%	6
Education	1.5%	6	1.2%	6	2.7%	7	0.9%	7
Other	1.2%	6	1.2%	6	3.6%	6	0%	-
Immigration	0.5%	9	0%	-	0.9%	8	0.5%	8

Table A15  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors for Each Newspaper*

Total n = 2203			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 605		Dallas Morning News n = 726		San Francisco Chronicle n = 872	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Citizen	51%	1	45.1%	1	50.4%	1	55.5%	1
Editorial Board	12.2%	2	11.9%	3	15%	2	10.1%	2
Synd. Column.	8.6%	3	7.1%	4	13.8%	3	5.3%	6
In-house column.	8.4%	4	13.6%	2	5.6%	5	7.2%	4
Non-profit	6%	5	5.6%	6	3.3%	6	8.6%	3
Writer	5.4%	6	4.1%	7	6.1%	4	5.6%	5
Educator	3.9%	7	5.8%	5	1.9%	8	4.1%	7
Radio, TV, etc	1.9%	8	3%	8	2.2%	7	0.8%	8
Other	0.8%	9	1.2%	9	0.6%	9	0.7%	9
For profit	0.5%	9	0.5%	10	0.1%	12	0.7%	9
Gov Empl	0.4%	11	0.3%	13	0.3%	11	0.5%	11
Local pol.	0.3%	12	0.3%	13	0.4%	10	0.2%	13
Campaign worker	0.2%	12	0.2%	15	0%	-	0.5%	11
National pol.	0.2%	14	0.5%	10	0.1%	12	0.1%	14
Religious leader	0.1%	14	0.2%	15	0.1%	12	0.1%	14
Unidentified	0.1%	14	0.5%	10	0%	-	0%	-



Table A16  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Columns for Each Newspaper*

Total n = 771			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 237		Dallas Morning News n = 240		San Francisco Chronicle n = 294	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Synd. Column.	24.1%	1	17.3%	2	41.7%	1	15.3%	4
In-house column.	24%	2	34.2%	1	17.1%	3	21.4%	2
Non-profit	15.6%	3	12.7%	4	8.8%	4	23.5%	1
Writer	14.9%	4	9.7%	5	17.9%	2	16.7%	3
Educator	10%	5	13.9%	3	4.2%	6	11.6%	5
Radio, TV, etc.	4.9%	6	6.3%	6	6.7%	5	2.4%	7
Other	1.9%	7	3%	7	1.7%	7	1.4%	8
Citizen	1.6%	8	0.4%	10	0%	-	3.7%	6
For profit	0.8%	9	0.8%	8	0%	-	1.4%	8
Gov Empl.	0.8%	9	0.8%	8	0.8%	8	0.7%	11
Local pol.	0.6%	11	0.4%	10	0.8%	8	0.7%	11
National pol.	0.4%	12	0.4%	10	0.4%	10	0.3%	13
Campaign worker	0.4%	12	0%	-	0%	-	1%	10
Editorial Board	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Religious leader	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-

Table A17  
*Frequency of Authors in Campaign-Specific Content for Each Newspaper*

Total			Philadelphia Inquirer		Dallas Morning News		San Francisco Chronicle	
Author	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Campaign worker	40%	2	100%	1	0%	0	25%	1
Citizen	65.5%	734	70.2%	191	71.3%	261	58.4%	282
Editorial Board	61.2%	164	57.7%	41	72.5%	79	50%	44
Educator	30.6%	26	31.4%	11	64.3%	9	16.7%	6
For profit	30%	3	33.3%	1	0%	0	30.6%	2
Gov Empl.	50%	2	0%	0	0%	0	50%	2
In-house column.	65.6%	122	61%	50	79.5%	30	66.7%	42
Local pol.	42.9%	3	64%	2	33.3%	1	0%	0
National pol.	83.3%	5	75%	3	100%	1	100%	1
Non-profit	33.8%	45	26.5%	9	50%	12	32%	24
Other	41.2%	7	71.4%	5	25%	1	16.7%	1
Radio, TV, etc.	73.2%	30	83.3%	15	75%	12	42.9%	3
Religious leader	66.7%	2	100%	1	100%	1	0%	0
Synd. Column.	59.1%	110	59.5%	25	60.2%	59	56.5%	26
Unidentified	100%	3	100%	3	0%	0	0%	0
Writer	55.9%	66	64%	16	73.2%	35	33.3%	15

Table A18  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by Citizens*

Overall n = 387		Philadelphia Inquirer n = 81	Dallas Morning News n = 105	San Francisco Chronicle n = 201
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	12.1%	13.6%	10.5%	12.4%
Education	1.6%	1.2%	2.9%	1%
Energy	8.3%	16%	6.7%	6%
Healthcare	5.7%	6.2%	10.5%	3%
Immigration	0.5%	0%	1%	0.5%
LGBT	12.9%	0%	0%	24.9%
Money	31%	37%	41%	23.4%
Social	26.6%	25.9%	22.9%	28.9%
Other	1%	0%	3.8%	0%

Table A19  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by Editorial Board*

Overall n = 104		Philadelphia Inquirer n = 30	Dallas Morning News n = 30	San Francisco Chronicle n = 44
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	21.2%	10%	30%	22.7%
Education	2.9%	6.7%	0%	2.3%
Energy	12.5%	13.3%	10%	13.6%
Healthcare	9.5%	3.3%	23.3%	4.5%
Immigration	1.9%	0%	6.7%	0%
LGBT	2.9%	0%	0%	6.8%
Money	36.5%	50%	26.7%	34.1%
Social	9.6%	13.3%	3.3%	11.4%
Other	2.9%	3.3%	0%	4.5%

Table A20  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by In-House Columnists*

Overall <i>n</i> = 64		Philadelphia Inquirer <i>n</i> = 32	Dallas Morning News <i>n</i> = 11	San Francisco Chronicle <i>n</i> = 21
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	31.3%	56.3%	18.9%	0%
Education	0%	0%	0%	0%
Energy	4.7%	6.3%	0%	4.8%
Healthcare	3.1%	0%	13.2%	0%
Immigration	1.6%	0%	0%	4.8%
LGBT	1.6%	0%	0%	4.8%
Money	42.2%	21.9%	54.5%	66.7%
Social	12.5%	12.5%	9.1%	14.3%
Other	3.1%	3.1%	0%	4.8%

Table A21  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by Syndicated Columnists*

Overall <i>n</i> = 76		Philadelphia Inquirer <i>n</i> = 17	Dallas Morning News <i>n</i> = 39	San Francisco Chronicle <i>n</i> = 20
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	26%	29.4%	20%	35%
Education	1.3%	0%	2.5%	0%
Energy	11.7%	5.9%	20%	0%
Healthcare	2.6%	0%	2.5%	5%
Immigration	5.2%	5.9%	5%	5%
LGBT	0%	0%	0%	0%
Money	35.1%	41.2%	30%	40%
Social	13%	17.6%	10%	15%
Other	5.2%	0%	10%	0%

Table A22  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by Members of a Non-Profit Organization*

Overall <i>n</i> = 88		Philadelphia Inquirer <i>n</i> = 25	Dallas Morning News <i>n</i> = 12	San Francisco Chronicle <i>n</i> = 51
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	20.5%	40%	8.3%	13.7%
Education	2.3%	0%	8.3%	2%
Energy	18.2%	8%	8.3%	25.5%
Healthcare	8%	16%	8.3%	3.9%
Immigration	3.4%	0%	8.3%	3.9%
LGBT	5.7%	4%	8.3%	5.9%
Money	15.9%	12%	33.3%	13.7%
Social	25%	16%	16.7%	31.4%
Other	1.1%	4%	0%	0%

Table A23  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by Writers*

Overall <i>n</i> = 52		Philadelphia Inquirer <i>n</i> = 9	Dallas Morning News <i>n</i> = 9	San Francisco Chronicle <i>n</i> = 34
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	32.7%	11.1%	44.4%	35.3%
Education	1.9%	0%	0%	2.9%
Energy	7.7%	0%	22.2%	5.9%
Healthcare	0%	0%	0%	0%
Immigration	1.9%	0%	0%	2.9%
LGBT	1.9%	11.1%	0%	0%
Money	28.8%	44.4%	11.1%	29.4%
Social	21.2%	33.3%	0%	23.5%
Other	3.8%	0%	22.2%	0%

Table A24  
*Frequency of Issue-Specific Articles Authored by Educators*

Overall <i>n</i> = 59		Philadelphia Inquirer <i>n</i> = 24	Dallas Morning News <i>n</i> = 5	San Francisco Chronicle <i>n</i> = 30
Issue	%	%	%	%
Defense	18.6%	4.2%	20%	30%
Education	6.8%	4.2%	20%	6.7%
Energy	6.8%	4.2%	0%	10%
Healthcare	8.5%	16.7%	0%	3.3%
Immigration	0%	0%	0%	0%
LGBT	0%	0%	0%	0%
Money	25.4%	37.5%	0%	20%
Social	25.4%	20.8%	40%	26.7%
Other	25.4%	20.8%	40%	26.7%

Table A25  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Articles Focused on Defense/Foreign Policy*

Total n = 159			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 49		Dallas Morning News n = 36		San Francisco Chronicle n = 74	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Citizen	29.6%	1	22.4%	2	30.6%	1	33.8%	1
Editorial Board	13.8%	2	6.1%	5	25%	2	13.5%	3
In-house column.	12.6%	3	36.7%	1	5.6%	5	0%	-
Synd. Column.	12.6%	3	10.2%	4	22.2%	3	9.5%	5
Non-profit	11.3%	5	20.4%	3	2.8%	6	9.5%	5
Writer	10.7%	6	2%	6	11.1%	4	16.2%	2
Educator	6.9%	7	2%	6	2.8%	6	12.2%	4
Radio, TV, etc	1.3%	8	0%	-	0%	-	2.7%	7
Campaign worker	.6%	9	0%	-	0%	-	1.4%	8
Other	.6%	9	0%	-	0%	-	1.4%	8
For profit	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Local pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
National pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Gov Empl.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Religious leader	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-

Table A26  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Articles Focused on Energy*

Total <i>n</i> = 86			Philadelphia Inquirer <i>n</i> = 26		Dallas Morning News <i>n</i> = 22		San Francisco Chronicle <i>n</i> = 38	
Author	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>	%	<i>rank</i>
Citizen	37.2%	1	50%	1	31.8%	2	31.6%	2
Non-profit	18.6%	2	7.7%	3	4.5%	5	34.2%	1
Editorial Board	15.1%	3	15.4%	2	13.6%	3	15.8%	3
Synd. Column.	10.5%	4	3.8%	5	35.4%	1	0%	-
Writer	4.7%	5	0%	-	9.1%	4	5.3%	5
Educator	4.7%	5	3.8%	5	0%	-	7.9%	4
In-house column.	3.5%	7	7.7%	3	0%	-	2.6%	6
For profit	2.3%	8	3.8%	5	4.5%	5	0%	-
Gov Empl	1.2%	9	3.8%	5	0%	-	0%	-
Local pol.	1.2%	9	0%	-	0%	-	2.6%	7
Radio, TV, etc.	1.2%	9	3.8%	5	0%	-	0%	-
Campaign worker	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
National pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Other	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Religious leader	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-



Table A27  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Articles Focused on Healthcare*

Total n = 54			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 15		Dallas Morning News n = 26		San Francisco Chronicle n= 13	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Citizen	40.7%	1	33.3%	1	42.3%	1	46.2%	1
Editorial Board	18.5%	2	6.7%	4	26.9%	2	15.4%	2
Non-profit	13%	3	26.7%	2	3.8%	6	15.4%	2
Educator	9.3%	4	26.7%	2	0%	-	7.7%	4
For profit	3.7%	5	6.7%	4	0%	-	7.7%	4
In-house column.	3.7%	5	0%	-	7.7%	3	0%	-
Local pol.	3.7%	5	0%	-	7.7%	3	0%	-
Other	3.7%	5	0%	-	7.7%	3	0%	-
Synd. Column.	3.7%	5	0%	-	3.8%	6	7.7%	4
Writer	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Campaign worker	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Gov Empl	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
National pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Radio, TV, etc.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Religious leader	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-

Table A28  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Articles Focused on Money*

Total n = 271			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 81		Dallas Morning News n = 77		San Francisco Chronicle n = 113	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Citizen	44.3%	1	37%	1	55.8%	1	41.6%	1
Editorial Board	14%	2	18.5%	2	10.4%	3	13.3%	2
Synd. Column.	10%	3	8.6%	4	15.6%	2	7.1%	5
In-house column.	10%	3	8.6%	4	7.8%	4	12.4%	3
Writer	5.5%	5	4.9%	6	1.3%	7	8.8%	4
Educator	5.5%	5	11.1%	3	0%	-	5.3%	7
Non-profit	5.2%	5	3.7%	7	5.2%	5	6.2%	6
Radio, TV, etc.	2.2%	8	2.5%	8	3.9%	6	0.9%	10
Gov Empl	1.1%	9	1.2%	10	0%	-	1.8%	8
For profit	0.7%	10	0%	-	0%	-	1.8%	8
Other	0.7%	11	2.5%	8	0%	-	0%	-
Campaign worker	0.4%	12	0%	-	0%	-	0.9%	10
National pol.	0.4%	13	1.2%	10	0%	-	0%	-
Local pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Religious leader	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-

Table A29  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Articles Focused on Social Issues*

Total n = 187			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 44		Dallas Morning News n = 35		San Francisco Chronicle n= 108	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Citizen	55.1%	1	47.7%	1	68.6%	1	53.7%	1
Non-profit	11.8%	2	9.1%	3	5.7%	3	14.8%	2
Educator	8%	3	11.4%	2	5.7%	3	7.4%	3
Writer	5.9%	4	6.8%	6	0%	-	7.4%	3
Editorial Board	5.3%	5	9.1%	3	2.9%	5	4.6%	5
Synd. Column.	5.3%	5	6.8%	7	11.4%	2	2.8%	6
In-house column.	4.3%	7	9.1%	3	2.9%	5	2.8%	6
Other	1.6%	8	0%	-	0%	-	2.8%	6
Radio, TV, etc.	1.1%	9	0%	-	2.9%	5	0%	-
Campaign worker	0.5%	10	0%	-	0%	-	0.9%	9
For profit	0.5%	10	0%	-	0%	-	0.9%	9
Local pol.	0.5%	10	0%	-	0%	-	0.9%	9
Gov Empl	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
National pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Religious leader	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-

Table A30  
*Frequency and Ranking of Authors in Articles Focused on LGBT*

Total n = 62			Philadelphia Inquirer n = 2		Dallas Morning News n = 1		San Francisco Chronicle n= 59	
Author	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Citizen	80.6% (50)	1	0%	-	0%	-	84.7%	1
Non-profit	8.1% (5)	2	50%	1	100%	1	5.1%	2
Editorial Board	4.8% (3)	3	0%	-	0%	-	5.1%	2
Writer	1.6% (1)	4	50%	1	0%	-	0%	-
In-house column.	1.6% (1)	4	0%	-	0%	-	1.7%	4
Other	1.6% (1)	4	0%	-	0%	-	1.7%	4
Religious leader	1.6% (1)	4	0%	-	0%	-	1.7%	4
Campaign worker	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Educator	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
For profit	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Gov Empl.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Local pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
National pol.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Radio, TV, etc.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Synd. Column.	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Unidentified	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-

Appendix B. Codebook

### Code Book

Item 1: Article number. Look for the article number handwritten in pen at the top of the article.

<b>1,000 - 4,999</b>	Philadelphia Inquirer
<b>5,000 - 8,999</b>	The Dallas Morning News
<b>9,000 – 12,999</b>	The San Francisco Chronicle

Item 2: What newspaper is the article from?

- 1** Philadelphia Inquirer (PI). The name of the newspaper is located at the center of the header on the top of each page.
- 2** The Dallas Morning News (DMN). The name of the newspaper is located at the top of the left hand column on the title page and on the left side of the header on top of the page on subsequent pages.
- 3** The San Francisco Chronicle (SFC). The name of the newspaper is located at the bottom of the page on the far outside margin.
- 99** Can't tell.

Item 3: Date of the article. - mm/dd/yy

Item 4: Article type

- 1** The piece is an editorial. The editorial piece is written by the editorial board of the newspaper. They are found on the first page of the section, usually the first two to three articles. Each newspaper will often identify editorial pieces with the heading "Editorials"
- 2** The piece is a column. A column includes syndicated columns, columns written by the staff of the newspaper, or columns written by a guest columnist. Columns will be found Monday through Friday on the second page of the section (PI – "Commentary." DMN – "Viewpoints."), might be included on the single page Saturday edition of the PI and the SFC, will be included on the second page of the DMN Saturday edition, and will be found throughout each newspaper's extended Sunday edition.
- 3** The piece is a letter to the editor. Letters to the editor will be found under the heading "Letters" in the PI and DMN and under "Letters to the editor," and "Sound Off" in the SFC. Letters will be fewer than 200 words.
- 4** The piece is supplemental editorial data. This includes items such as polls, lists, Q and A's, suggested topics, quotes, quizzes, and summaries. Will be found primarily in Saturday and Sunday editions but will appear periodically in the Monday through Friday editions. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 99** Can't tell. The article or item cannot be identified with any of the previous categories. Briefly describe the article format. \_\_\_\_\_

Item 5: Is the piece related to the election? If several quotes or summaries appear within a piece, apply only the parts that concern the election.

- 0** The election is not dealt with in the piece. There is no mention of the 2008 election in the piece. Give a one or two word description of the topic and move on to the next article.
- 1** The election is mentioned in the piece. The piece discusses an issue or issues, candidates, or election related commentary in relation to the 2008 election. This includes pieces that focus on an election as well as pieces that only mention the election in passing or only focuses on the election in only a sentence or paragraph.

Item 6: Is the main focus of the article on the campaign or contest? This includes strategy, rhetoric, personality, or personal relationships between political actors.

- 0** No. Continue to item 7.
- 1** Yes. Continue to item 8.

Item 7: Is the main focus of the article on a substantive issue? More than one of these categories may show up in one piece. Please decide which **single** issue is the main focus of the article:

- A. Defense/ Foreign Policy and Relations?** - issues that deal with military, defense, war, or homeland security such as the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, military action against Iran or North Korea, terrorism, intelligence, defense spending, or U.S. interaction/trade and policies with the rest of the world.

- 0** No.
- 1** Yes.

- B. Education?** – issues that deal with the preschool, primary, secondary, and college education policy.

- 0** No.
- 1** Yes.

- C. Environment/Energy?** – issues that deal the environment and environmental policy such as global warming, pollution, natural resources, land management, production and consumption of energy and resources such as energy policy, oil/fuel prices, renewable sources of energy, or nuclear energy.

- 0** No.
- 1** Yes.

- D. Gay Marriage, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues?** – issues that deal with the legalization of same-sex unions or marriage or LGBT rights.

- 0** No.
- 1** Yes.

- E. Health, Medicine and Healthcare?** – issues that deal with medicine, healthcare, health insurance, health policy, or drug policy in regards to health..

- 0** No.
- 1** Yes.

- F. Immigration?** – issues that deal with immigration policy or legal and illegal immigrants.  
**0** No.  
**1** Yes.
- G. Money, Tax Policy, Budget Policy, Regulation, Economic activities or Infrastructure?** – issues that deal with infrastructure, national debt, government budgets and project funding, tax policy, government projects regulation, economic conditions, recovery bills or financial bailouts.  
**0** No.  
**1** Yes.
- H. Social Issues?** – issues that deal with social issues such as abortion, stem cell research, poverty, crime, morality, religion or discrimination such as racism or misogyny.  
**0** No.  
**1** Yes.
- I. Other issues?** – Issues that are not identified in the previous categories. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Item 8: Who authored the article? Use the author's information provided at the beginning or end of the article.

- 1 Editorial board** – written by the editorial board of the newspaper. Editorial pieces represent the collective voice of the editorial board.
- 2 Syndicated columnist.** A syndicated columnist is a columnist identified with another newspaper, syndicated company, or publication. Often identified specifically as a syndicated columnist or columnist associated with a different newspaper. Specify author \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Columnist from the newspaper's editorial board or staff** – identified as a member of the newspaper staff. Often identified from an email address from the newspaper.
- 4 Citizen** – identified only by their first and last name and the community in which they live.
- 5 Member of an advocacy/lobbying group or non-profit organization** – the author is writing on behalf of an advocacy or lobbying group or non-profit organization. Affiliation may be determined by the organization listed with their name in the byline or at the end of the article or if it is given in the body of the article.
- 6 Member of a for-profit organization** – the author is writing on behalf of or is identified as representing a for-profit organization.
- 7 Local politician** – the author is identified as a local politician



- 8 National politician** – the author is identified as a national politician.
- 9 Campaign worker** – the author is identified as a campaign worker.
- 10 Spokesman for the current administration** – an author writing on behalf of a current administration of a politician.
- 11 Government employee** – the author is writing as an employee of the government or government agency. Not on the staff of a current politician.
- 12 Educator/Student** – the author is identified as a teacher or professor or as a student.
- 13 Radio host, television anchor, or internet journalist** – the author is identified with a medium other than print.
- 14 Religious leader** – the author is identified as a religious leader or from a religious organization.
- 15 Writer/author/free lance** – the author is identified as a writer.
- 16 Unidentified.** There is no name given or work was written anonymously. Do not confuse with editorials written by the editorial board.
- 17 Other.** Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 More than one author.** Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 Author is identified by more than one title** – please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 99 Can't tell**