

GET OUT AND VOTE: FRAMING THEORY APPLIED TO NONPARTISAN VOTING
WEBSITES

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to analyze the three nonpartisan websites and Facebook pages of Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote to reveal how Latinos, women, and young voters are framed. The examination of frames was conducted using a textual analysis of the three websites and 239 Facebook posts. Bateson's (1972) framing theory was used to analyze how women, Latinos, and young people are framed throughout the website and Facebook page. Next, Braun and Clarke's (2006), procedure for conducting a thematic analysis was utilized to generate themes. Lastly, I generated themes that evolved from recurring information from the organizations. Each of the organizations had several themes throughout their websites and Facebook content and themes that connected the three organizations together. A total of 12 themes were found by analyzing the three organizations websites and Facebook pages. The themes found in Voto Latino are *adversity in voting*, *Latino vote*, and *agents of change*. The themes *ending voter suppression*, *healthcare reform*, and *increasing voter participation* were found from the League of Women Voters website and Facebook page. Rock the Vote themes were *change*, *understanding voting laws*, and *empowering young voters*. Lastly, the themes discovered amongst all three organizations and their corresponding Facebook pages were *suppression*, *the power of women*, and *get out and vote*. These themes are important because they represent the modern-day issues voters face within the world of politics.

Keywords: *Voto Latino*, *League of Women Voters*, *Frames*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When voters arrive at the polls, they are ready to cast their votes based on decisions that mostly align with their values (Gadd, B, 2019). However, in order to make informed decisions voters need to find information about the voting process and the different candidates found on the ballot. There are a variety of resources voters can use to help them make informed decisions on the ballot, such as voter information guides, attending or watching political debates, and visiting voter websites. Hooghe and Teepe (2007) found that during election campaigns nonpartisan websites have become increasingly popular attracting 25% of all voters. In recent years, Americans have expressed a clear preference for getting information on a screen than any other method (Mitchell, Gotfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016). Although television is still the primary medium people use to find out information, accessing information online is a close second (Mitchell et al., 2016). Since voters are using the internet to find out important information about voting it is important to analyze the content published online (Mitchell et al., 2016). The purpose of the research was to analyze Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote's website and Facebook posts to reveal how Latinos, women, and young voters are framed.

Chapter One, provides an overview of the topic of study by defining nonpartisan voting websites. The chapter discusses social media's role in politics and covers

information about marginalized voters. Lastly, it reveals the purpose of nonpartisan voting websites and provides a justification for the study.

There are a variety of nonpartisan websites voters can visit to find information about what will be on the ballot. Nonpartisan websites contain unbiased information that pertains to voting. Users can access information about how to register to vote, the importance of voting, and how to get ready to cast a vote (Rock the Vote, 2018). Previous research has also shown that social media is a critical resource for informing citizens of news and information about different campaigns (Lee, Lindsey, & Kim, 2017). The current study analyzed three nonpartisan voting websites (Voto Latino, League of Women Voters (LWV), and Rock the Vote) along with their Facebook pages to determine the different framing perspectives found for each organization because each of the organizations focus on different demographics. Rock the Vote aims to promote voting to young voters, motivating them to make a difference at the polls (Rock the Vote, 2018). Voto Latino strives to target primarily Latino voters empowering them to increase the Latino presence during elections (Voto, 2018). Lastly, League of Women Voters is tailored to women encouraging them to empower other women to cast their ballots at the polls (League, 2018).

Defining Nonpartisan Voting Websites

Just as the internet has changed the way users find information and the way people communicate, the internet has also become an important tool in the political arena (Gao, Marks, Peterson, & Shiu, 2018). The internet, including the different media platforms, channels, and digital tools that make up the internet, can be used by individuals and organizations interested in the political system to enhance democratic

values (Nicolas, Bragatto, and Sampaio, 2013). Users are now able to search the internet to find information relating to candidates, voter registration, and the voting process (Gao et al., 2018). In this research, a nonpartisan voting website is defined as any politically motivated website designed to inform or engage voters, free from bias (Hooghe & Teepee, 2007). According to the Richard G. Treyfry Library (2019), a non-bias website is intended to discuss only facts. Websites intended to persuade, endorse, promote, market, sell, or entertain are considered biased (Richard G. Treyfry Library, 2019).

Since 2000, voting websites have become an ever-popular method of reaching voters and has given a voice to nonpartisan groups that otherwise would have a difficult time disseminating their ideas (Gao, et al., 2018). For example, Voto Latino uses their website and social media to inform Latino voters about voting processes (Voto Latino, 2018). Campaign websites were among the first to introduce information regarding campaigns and the voting process. Gao et al. (2018) found that among major party candidates for Congress and governorships, 46% had campaign websites in 1998, which continued to rise to 76% of major party candidates using campaign websites by the year 2002 (p. 4). Campaign websites harbor information relevant to potential voters that help endorse their candidates and push their specific causes (Gao et al., 2018). With the rise of campaign websites came the evolution of nonpartisan voting websites that strive to provide information to voters without political bias. The word nonpartisan means not biased, particularly toward a political party (Reference, 2018). Nonpartisan websites have created a nation of informed voters, by providing information specific to the voting process and news in politics (Gao, et al., 2018). Each nonpartisan site has different

motivating factors for its existence that creates different methods of transportation for its messages (Gao et al., 2018).

Social Media's Role in Politics

In the current study, social media is defined by “internet tools that allow for conception and dissemination of information on virtual networks and communities,” such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube (Balcells, Batlle, & Padro-Solanet, 2015, p. 3). Such social networking sites “have revolutionized patterns in the access and spread of information” (Balcells et al., 2015, p. 3). Social media started as a tool for users to share personal content with friends, however; today, any internet user is a recipient of information and is capable of generating and sharing net content (Balcells et al., 2015). Roughly two-thirds of U.S. adults (68%) now report that they are Facebook users (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Because of this statistic, Facebook is the site targeted in this current research study.

Social media has provided a public space in which public opinion takes shape and spreads to users (Balcells et al., 2015). Social media has changed the way Americans consume information about politics. It has allowed politicians to circumvent the traditional method of reaching voters through paid advertising or earned media, which is when customers, the press, or the public share content via word of mouth (Murse, 2018; Campbell, 2017). Facebook has become instrumental in organizing political campaigns by allowing like-minded voters and activists to easily share news and information such as campaign events or voting information with each other (Murse, 2018). Murse (2018) states that President Barack Obama was the first politician to tap into the power of social media during his two successful campaigns. He used social media as a platform to

energize younger voters, which has a profound impact on elections (Murse, 2018). For example, President Obama was the first president to tweet from @POTUS, (President of the United States), catching the eyes of young voters who use Twitter (Bogost, 2017). He also used Snapchat filters and Facebook Live during his campaign being the first President to utilize social media as a strategy to win a Presidential Election (Bogost, 2017).

Justification for Study

According to Bond et al. (2012), the internet and social networks influence voting behaviors. Previous research has also shown that the internet and social media can be used to help specific candidates win elections. It's important to study nonpartisan voting websites to determine what type of content is being published. Between 2013 and 2017, Virginia saw an increase of 114% in early and absentee voting among Latinos, after nonpartisan organizations devoted time and resources towards in language advertisements, polling, and canvassing in Latino communities (Root & Kennedy, 2018). Thus, it's important to study nonpartisan organization to determine what type of content they are publishing to help voting become more accessible to voters. Nonpartisan websites keep people informed on voting policies and processes, another reason why it's important to study nonpartisan voting websites. The current study is unique as it analyzes the framing perspectives presented in three nonpartisan websites Rock the Vote, Voto Latino, and LWV and their respective Facebook pages.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided information about nonpartisan websites and what type of content is housed on these sites. The terms nonpartisan and nonbiased are defined and

will be used frequently throughout the current study. The chapter also discussed how the internet and social media disperse information about voting processes and why using these avenues are important. Lastly, the chapter concluded with a justification for why it's necessary to study nonpartisan voting organizations.

The following chapters elaborate on information pertaining to voting behaviors and backgrounds. Since young voters, Latino, and women are a primary focus in this study, a background of voting history is provided in the chapters to follow as well as information relating to previous studies on the internet and social media in politics. A synopsis of framing theory and its application to other studies are presented throughout the chapters as well. Framing focuses on how the media draws the public's eye to specific topics, and then it takes a step further to create a frame, through which the audience will comprehend such information (Arowolo, 2017).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two provides insight into the history of voting in the United States by discussing laws passed to make voting accessible to all. The chapter also discusses the stereotypes placed on voters whilst at the polls, specifically, women, Latino, and young voters. The internet and wave of social media and its impact on the voting process is also thoroughly explained in the chapter. Persuasive messages and their influence on the voting population is also an important part of the chapter. George Bateson's (1972) framing theory is the lens used for the study and is discussed in the chapter. Lastly, the three research questions are revealed.

History of Voting

Over time, as America promoted greater civil liberties for all of its citizens, voting rights have also undergone change (Reed, 2013). For much of the history of America, Caucasian males were the only group with voting rights (Reed, 2013). African Americans who were freed from slavery were also allowed to vote but the rest of America didn't have the opportunity (Reed, 2013). People who couldn't afford to pay their taxes and women under the age of 21 did not have the right to vote, which contributes to the difficult history of voting in the U.S. (Reed, 2013).

For much of American history, voting qualifications were so strict that very few people had the power to vote (Reed, 2013). However, these qualifications have changed

drastically since then to grant nearly all Americans the right to vote (Reed, 2013). In 1869, the 15th Amendment passed allowing Americans the right to vote regardless of race (Gosselin, 2016). However, discrimination laws and violent intimidation suppressed African American participation until around 1960 (Gosselin, 2016). In 1920, the 19th Amendment and Women's Suffrage began alongside that of poor whites and African Americans (Gosselin, 2016). The 19th Amendment mirrors the 15th except that it includes women (Gosselin, 2016). While African Americans technically gained the right to vote in 1869, only a small percentage of African Americans voted. It wasn't until The Civil Rights Act, which prohibits state and local governments from creating any kind of discriminatory voting laws that impede minority voters, they gained their freedom to vote (Gosselin, 2016). Lastly, the "old enough to fight, old enough to vote" movement began by calling out the American government for forcing 18 to 21-year-old boys to enter the draft but denying their right to vote (Gosselin, 2016, para. 19). In 1971, the 26th amendment was signed lowering the minimum voting age to 18 (Gosselin, 2016).

Both the Republican and Democratic parties have taken numerous steps towards increasing voter turnout so that people will participate in their right to vote as citizens (Reed, 2013). For example, easily accessible polling locations, ballots by mail, and voting information websites have all contributed to encouraging all Americans to exercise their right to vote. The United States Elections Project (2016) shows that voter participation of young Americans ages 18-29 has increased from 15% in 2014 to 45% in 2016 and Hispanic voter turnout has risen from 20% in 2012 to 48% in 2016. These statistics reveal that voter turnout has increased substantially in the last few years (Voter Turnout, 2016).

Marginalized Voters

Although much research has been conducted about how gender and racial stereotypes of candidates are prevalent at the polls, little research focuses on how voters face stereotypes while determining vote choice. For example, the idea that “voters have a preference to vote for male over female candidates, or female over male candidates” depending on the voter’s gender is a common stereotype placed upon voters (Sanbonmatsu, 2002, p. 20). Another stereotype is that Latino voters are commonly labeled as Democratic supporters, meaning that when faced with a decision at the polls, they will often select democratic candidates (Khalid, 2016). Young voters are often reported showing lower levels of political knowledge and information than older voters thus, the decision-making process becomes difficult for young voters (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2007). Since this research primarily focuses on the framing perspective of women, Latino, and young voters. These groups will be further examined to reveal if the common stereotypes are backed by sufficient research findings.

Women Voters

Gender stereotyping plays a prominent role in American politics; primarily, voters transfer their stereotypes of women and men to candidates seeking office (Anderson, Lewis, & Baird, 2011). Historically, women faced obstacles that prevented them from voting and running as serious political contenders (Anderson et al., 2011). Research from Corrington, Hebl, & Malcolm-Lovett found that despite being described by former U.S. President Barack Obama as the most-qualified presidential nominee in U.S. history, former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton lost the 2016 campaign for president due to gender stereotypes. Corrington et al. (2018) found that there are negative views toward

nontraditional women, such as career women and feminists. Clinton is a nontraditional career woman, which made her the subject to ambivalent sexism, rendering her election to the presidency unlikely.

Anderson et al. (2011) discovered that women voters were proven to be more likely to select candidates based on informed decisions regardless of gender than their male counterparts. Prior research shows that voters use shortcuts to help them make their vote choices and people often make choices based on limited information (Anderson et al., 2011). Thus, when citizens are faced with political decisions, they often take advantage of shortcuts or cues to compensate for their lack of information (Popkin 1994; Lupia 1994). Anderson et al. (2011) looks at vote choice as it is related to sex differences and gender-related issues in several different contexts (Anderson et al., 2011). The research indicated that strongly informed voters are less likely to pick candidates based off their gender. For example, the research associated sexual harassment prevention with a male candidate for the study, however; this did not increase that candidate's appeal to female respondents at all, but instead decreased that candidates appeal to male responders (Anderson et al., 2011). This research is important because it shows that women are more likely to select candidates based on informed decisions. It is useful to the current research that looks at how women are framed in nonpartisan voting websites.

Latino Voters

Most Latinos are labeled as primarily Democratic supporters (Khalid, 2016). However, during the 2016 presidential election this stereotype was proven false. There were two assumptions about Latino voters throughout the presidential campaign (Khalid, 2016). The first was that a record number of Latinos would show up on Election Day to

oppose Donald Trump's candidacy (Khalid, 2016). The second was that the anti-immigration rhetoric that launched Trump's campaign would push conservative-leaning Latinos away from the Republican Party (Khalid, 2016). According to Khalid (2016), 30% of Latino voters selected a Republican candidate during the last three election cycles, and 28% of Latino voters cast their vote for President Donald Trump.

Ramirez (2005) conducted a field experiment to "determine whether segments of the electorate that are often neglected by political parties, youth, African American, Asian Americans, and Latinos, would vote if exposed to get-out-the-vote drives" (Ramirez, 2005, p. 80). Through live phone calls, robo calls, and direct mail, Latinos were contacted and exposed to get out and vote messages (Ramirez, 2005). Resource constraints limited the scope of the live calling program, however; the calls that did occur increased voter turnout to a substantial and statistically significant extent (Ramirez, 2005).

Young Voters

The principal reason young voters give for not voting is perceived lack of knowledge about the candidates and the issues (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2007). Kaid et al. (2007) found that there is a signification relationship between young voters' confidence in their political knowledge and the likelihood that they will vote.

The fact that young voters appear to have low levels of political knowledge and information and attribute their lack of voting participation to these inadequacies suggests the importance of focusing on the role campaign messages may fill in enhancing the political efficacy of young adults (p. 1097).

During political campaigns, political information comes to voters of all ages in many ways (Kaid et al., 2007). For example, political debates and advertising can increase young voters' feeling of political efficacy (Kaid et al., 2007). In a study of four presidential election cycles, older voters were more likely to watch both local and national television political news and political debates than younger adults, but younger citizens were more likely to use internet for political information (Kaid et al., 2007). The research shows that informed voters are more likely to vote than voters who are less informed (Kaid et al., 2007). This research also shows that younger voters are more likely than older voters to think "that political officials don't care what they think" and believe they themselves "have no say in government" (Kaid et al., 2007). This contributes to the belief that young voters are significantly less informed than older voters. The results from Kaid et al. (2007) supports the idea that young voters are much less confident in their levels of political knowledge than their older cohorts (Kaid et al., 2007). The information from Kaid et al. (2007) also explicates why younger voters tend to be ill informed and therefore less likely to vote.

The information in the research studies discuss the different types of voter and how they make their voting decisions. Voters are now able to access information about different candidates and the voting process online which makes educational voting activities easily accessible. Previous research has shown stereotypes on marginal voting groups such as women, Latinos, and young voters that make the voting process unfit for all voters. Nonpartisan voting websites are created to target marginalized groups to help them access information needed to get out and vote. This research analyzes the messages on the websites and Facebook accounts of Voto Latino, LWV, and Rock the Vote the

nonprofit organizations, to see how women voters, Hispanic voters, and young voters are framed. It is important to understand how websites frame marginalized voters in their materials. With this information, new understandings will be generated for nonpartisan organizations to help properly advertise the importance of everyone having the ability to utilize their voices at the polls.

Internet and Politics

Nonpartisan websites are used to help voters access information about voting and its processes. The current research study uses the term nonpartisan voting websites as any website that does not affiliate with any political ideology (Hooghe & Teepe, 2007). Nonpartisan party websites can be seen as one of the innovations in election campaigning that fully exploit the internet's interactive opportunities (Hooghe & Teepe, 2007). Most often these websites present themselves as offering voting advice to new or inexperienced voters and provide information about political candidates (Hooghe & Teepe, 2007). The proliferation of interactive nonpartisan voting websites has made it very easy for citizens and voters, even in complex multiparty systems, to determine the distance between their own political preferences and the agendas of all political parties (Hooghe & Teepe, 2007). The study found that over 100,000 users utilize nonpartisan voting websites, which is two percent of the entire voting population (Hooghe & Teepe, 2007). Out of these users educated males tend to utilize nonpartisan party websites more frequently (Hooghe & Teepe, 2007).

The internet has changed the ways politicians run their elections campaigns by influencing voters online.

It is not surprising that the internet is playing an ever-growing role in

political marketing when it comes to both promoting individual candidates and political parties, given its ability both to reach individuals directly and also to mobilise [sic] groups via its Web2.0 capabilities. (p. 300)

This influence is pivotal during elections, when political websites are frequently visited by voters who seek information about a candidate or political party (Papagiannidis, Coursaris, & Bourlakis, 2011). Research by Papagiannidis et al. (2011) found that political websites can be used as tools for promoting political parties and establishing stronger relationships with citizens, in order to gain their trust and eventually influence their voting intentions (Papagiannidis et al., 2011). By examining the websites and deconstructing a site into various elements and then measuring them, it was determined that websites present a significant opportunity for candidates to reach out to voters and positively influence them during the election (Papagiannidis et al., 2011). Papagiannidis et al. (2011) research breaks down political party websites to determine if their content is relevant to voters during the voting process.

Social Media

The following research information is valid to my study because it indicates that voting, when framed in a positive light, can influence participation at the polls. Bond et al. (2012) created a study to understand whether online networks, that harness social information, can be used to increase the likelihood of behavior change and social contagion. Since voting behavior has been proposed to spread through networks and influence outcomes, the study aimed to understand if online networks influenced voting behaviors (Bond et al, 2012). To test the hypothesis, a randomized controlled trial of all users who utilized Facebook the day of the US congressional election on November 2nd,

2010, was accessed (Bond et al, 2012). Users were assigned to a “social message” group, an “informational message” group, or a control group (Bond et al. 2012). The social message group was shown a statement on their Facebook news feed that encouraged users to vote and provided a link to local polling locations, showed a clickable button reading “I Voted”, showed a counter indicating how many other Facebook users had previously reported voting, and displayed up to six small randomly selected “profile pictures” of the user’s Facebook friends who had previously clicked the “I Voted” button (Bond et al., 2012, para. 3). The informational message group was shown the message, polling place information, counter, and button, but they were not shown any faces of friends (Bond et al., 2012). The control group did not receive any messages at the top of their news feed (Bond et al., 2012). The results showed that online political mobilization can have a direct effect of political self-expression, information seeking, and real-world voting behavior, and that messages including cues from an individual’s social network are more effective than information only appeals (Bond et al., 2012). This study indicates voting behaviors are influenced by social networking sites that post information about voting.

Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) released a study that examined college students’ use of online media for political purposes in the 2008 presidential election. The study found that as “as political campaigns increasingly make use of these new media, it is important to understand the impact on political communication in the contemporary political environment” (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2012, p. 609). In this study, political internet activity was broken into two different forms. The first political activity focused on information seeking behaviors in which the individual gathers information by

attending to internet sources (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2012). The second political activity focuses on the active process in which the individual interacts with others or participates in online communities (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2012). Two weeks prior to the election, researchers conducted an online survey of college students at a large public university in the Northwest. As social media was expected to be positively related, the results were not significantly associated with political self-efficacy and situational political involvement (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2012). However, young adults did use the social media sites YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs to get political content and commentary from other members of the social media community as well as to get information from news sources and campaigns therefore, although it did not influence young voters how to vote, it influenced them to vote (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2012). This research helped determine the voting behaviors are influenced by social media.

Framing Theory

Framing theory (1972) created by George Bateson is the lens used in the current study. Bateson defines *psychological frames* as a “spatial and temporary bounding of a set of interactive messages (Bateson, 1972, p. 197). Framing theory suggests that how a message is presented to the audience (the frame) influences the choices people make about how to process that information (Bateson, 1972). Framing focuses on how the media draws the public’s eye to specific topics, and then it takes it a step further to create a frame, through which the audience will comprehend such information (Arowolo, 2017). For example, creating frames for stories is commonly done by reporters, journalists, and editors on purpose so the media can select the topics they will cover. There are two distinctions within primary frameworks, natural and social (Bateson, 1972). Natural

frameworks “identify events as physical occurrences taking natural quotes literally and not attributing any social forces to the causation of events” (Arowolo, 2017, p. 2). Social frameworks “view events as socially driven occurrences, due to the whims, goals, and manipulations on the part of other social players (people). Social frameworks are built on the natural framework” (Arowolo, 2017, p. 2). For example, natural frame works would be the weather and the social frame work would be the meteorologist who reports the weather forecast (Frame Analysis, n.d.). These frameworks along with the frames that they create in our communication, influences how data is interpreted, processed, and communicated (Arowolo, 2017). In this research, I analyze messages in Voto Latino, LWV, and Rock the Vote’s website and Facebook pages to uncover thematic categories of frames.

Richardson (2013) utilized framing theory to examine coverage of Hugo Chavez, the president of Venezuela from 1998 to 2013, to present the depth of turbulent politics between the U.S. and Venezuela during the Bush administration, and the neutral politics between the U.S. and Venezuela during the Obama administration, to show that the U.S. media may reflect the perspective of the U.S. administration. This research examined articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* because both newspapers contain national and international coverage with two different aspects; the coverage of *The New York Times* portrays a more liberal aspect versus the more conservative coverage of *The Washington Times* (Richardson, 2013). Richardson (2013) utilizes Robert Entman’s definition of political framing to explore how article themes, tones, and sources may differ among newspapers and during different U.S. presidential administration. (Richardson, 2013). The study found that media does reflect the views of

the presidential administration and a change in presidential administration did affect how Chavez is portrayed in the media, and that different media outlooks framed the Venezuelan president differently (Richardson, 2013). After analyzing 148 articles, the researchers found that *The New York Times* framed Chavez slightly more positively or neutrally than *The Washington Times* (Richardson, 2013). According to Entman (1993), when analyzing the text frames are created, “which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The frames are then generated into themes to determine prevalence in the text.

Research Questions

As stated previously, Latinos, women, and younger voters are considered marginalized groups, because they have experienced hardships throughout history that prevent them from voting (Gosselin, 2016). The nonpartisan voting websites Voto Latino, LWV, and Rock the Vote were created to help promote the voting processes to these groups. The research questions for this study result from various research that explores stereotypes, marginalized voters, and nonpartisan websites. Further, Bateson’s (1972) research on Framing Theory was used as a guide to ask the following questions:

RQ1: How does Voto Latino frame voting and Hispanic voters in their website and Facebook?

RQ2: How does LWV frame voting and women in their website and Facebook?

RQ3: How does Rock the Vote frame voting and young voters throughout their website and Facebook?

RQ4: What are the underlying frames used in Rock the Vote, Voto Latino, and LWV?

Chapter Summary

From the literature, it is evident that there is various research containing information about voting and its process as well as how the internet is used to promote voting to the public. Some of the resources found in the literature review consist of the gender and racial stereotypes that exist amongst voters and the way the internet has been used to persuade others to vote. Other research regarding framing theory was also explained in the chapter and was used to formulate the research questions asked in this study.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Chapter Three discusses how the research questions in this study are answered using Bateson's (1972) framing theory. It explains the ways in which data is collected and how the three nonpartisan websites are broken down to find the frames and themes that are uncovered through the research.

In order to answer the research questions, Bateson's (1972) Framing Theory is used as a lens for the study. RQ1's purpose is to determine how Rock the Vote frames voting throughout the website and on Facebook. Further, RQ2 and RQ3 are similar to RQ1 but differ because they ask about Latino voters and women. RQ4 elaborates on the underlying frames used in Rock the Vote, Voto Latino, and LWV. To answer the research questions posed, a textual analysis was conducted. Per Brennan (2013) qualitative research is a messy endeavor that is challenging, time-consuming and difficult to get right. Opposed to quantitative research that focuses on numbers to quantify data, qualitative data does not provide us with easy answers, simple truths, or precise measurements (Brennen, 2013). The research questions for this thesis were addressed through textually analyzing the denotative and connotative meanings of nonpartisan voting websites and their corresponding Facebook pages. "Denotation" refers to the dictionary meaning of a word or phrase whereas, "connotation" refers to the emotional implication or socially constructed meaning of a word or phrase. A textual analysis is used to evaluate the many meanings found in texts to understand how written, visual and

spoken language helps create social realities (Brennen, 2013). Brennen (2013) states that texts are anything used to generate meaning from, for example, books, films, newspapers, magazines, websites, games, television programs, radio broadcasts, advertisements, fashions and popular music. Per Atkinson and Coffey (2011) texts are thought to provide traces of socially constructed reality, which may be understood by considering the words, concepts, ideas, themes and issues that reside in texts as they are considered within particular cultural context. Further, analyzing the written and visual frames that compose the nonpartisan voting websites and their Facebook pages provided a thorough analysis of the underlying frames. Textual analysis has minimal experience being applied to research analyzing nonpartisan voting websites, which is why it is the method used for the study. By using this method, new frames occurred that determine how nonpartisan websites frame the marginalized group they are targeting

Data Collection

The three nonpartisan websites were broken down and analyzed in order to generate themes from the text. The websites are analyzed according to tabs on the main page of the site. Each tab along with its subcategories is organized in a chart. For example, on the LWV websites, there are four categories that can be accessed from the menu on the main page. On the LWV website, under the “Voting Rights” tab there are four sub categories underneath. These sub categories were analyzed as the main categories. All of the websites content was thoroughly examined in order to find reoccurring themes. Firstly, I broke down each of the websites by taking screen shots of each page and then using a data collection chart to record the data. The categories on the chart are summary, denotation, and connotation. The first step in collecting data was

summarizing everything on each of the website sections. For example, the about section of the website was analyzed separately. Next, I discovered the literally meaning of what messages appeared on the page. Then, I moved on to the connotative messages and revealed the emotional implications or, nonliterally meanings behind each of the messages.

The Facebook posts from each of the three organizations Facebook posts were randomly pulled from the last six months, June - December of 2018 for a total of 239 Facebook posts. The purpose of this is to be able to look at Facebook posts from pre and post-election to understand how persuasion messages differ before, during, and after an election. Out of the sample, only 12 weeks of data were used for the study due to the inability to retrieve posts past the month of June 2018. This occurred because of computer data complications. The 4 computers used during this research were unable to reach back past May 2018 to retrieve Facebook post and would freeze due to lack of memory. Once the posts used in the study were accessed, by taking screenshots, using a randomizer generator online, the data was randomly selected. For the analysis phase, Facebook posts were broken down to find emerging themes through denotation and connotation of posts. For example, the denotation was the literal meanings derived from each message and the conative meanings take on emotional meanings and must be uncovered through breaking down text. A chart (See Appendix A) was generated that describes each of the Facebook posts as well as emerging themes that occur. The 239 Facebook posts and 3 websites were thoroughly analyzed through a constant comparison process (Duke Kunshan University, n.d.). A constant comparison consists of reading and

rereading text in order to identify emerging themes in search for meaning (Duke Kunshan University, n.d.).

This data analysis section of this research project begins by applying a textual analysis to nonpartisan websites that target women voters, Latinos, and young voters. This approach allows for common themes to emerge while examining the words used within the websites and Facebook. Random sampling, a type of sampling where each piece of content has an equal probability of being chosen, was used to select the Facebook posts.

The data collection charts (see appendix A) have a portion to describe the website and the Facebook posts. The words used on each of the websites were used to find themes. The data chart (see appendix A) has a section for the denotation and connotation of words. The denotation is meaning that is directly implied from the text. However, connotation takes on a deeper meaning and will reveal the emotional implications of the words or phrases. A thematic analysis, per Braun and Clark (2006) six-step frames work was used to generate themes for the study. This thematic analysis process is further explained in Chapter 4. After the themes emerge from the texts, greater analysis takes place based on how these messages frame women voters, Latino voters, and young voters in the text, as well as the underlying frames used in all three of the nonpartisan organization's websites and Facebook pages.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on how the research questions were answered in the study and explains the textual analysis process. The chapter provides insight into framing theory, the theory used to answer the four research questions in the study. Lastly, the

chapter discussed how the websites and Facebook post are broken down to generate themes and explains the data collection process for this research.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on the credentials that make me worthy of completing this study. I worked for the Randall County Elections Administration for approximately 3 years. Through this career path I became familiar with the League of Women Voters organization and would constantly guide voters to the website. Here I became interested in finding out information about what type of content nonpartisan websites offer to voters. The other nonpartisan websites, Voto Latino and Rock the Vote I found while conducted an internet search. The remainder of this chapter focuses data analysis. First, it provides information about Braun & Clark's six-step framework for conducting a thematic analysis. Then, the chapter focuses on data analysis and provides answers to the four research questions. The twelve themes along with evidence to what created these themes are also revealed in this chapter.

Growing up, I had a strong connection to politics and the voting processes. My mother worked as a county clerk and was in charge of programming all elections for Moore County. She managed recruiting election judges and poll workers, sending out mail ballots, and setting up election equipment for every election. From a very early age, I had the opportunity to help my mother assemble voting kits and create mail ballot envelopes. Before I was old enough cast a ballot, I worked my very first election. I checked voters in, acquired signatures on an I-Pad, and answered voting process

questions to all voters in my precinct. This created my love for politics and desire to conduct research in this field.

After graduating high school, I received a job working at the Randall County Elections Administration. I put all the skills I learned from helping my mother to the test. At my job, I was responsible for programming every election that Randall County conducted. Preparing for an election is a strategic and time-consuming process. It consists of creating a ballot and conducting a thorough “logic and accuracy” test to ensure the equipment and the ballot are functioning properly, preparing an election kit full of state mandated paperwork, assembling machines and setting up 13 different polling locations (polling locations are dependent upon the size of the county), ensuring voter questions are answered in a professional nonpartisan manner, and conducting a voter registration training course to prepare poll workers and election judges. This doesn’t include maintaining confidentiality and overseeing an early voting ballot board and election night count in order to get the votes counted quickly and accurately. Primarily, my duties consisted of answering questions about candidates on the ballot. Because I was required to be nonpartisan, I had to guide voters to nonpartisan organizations or information based on what political party they mostly aligned with. This is where I was introduced to a variety of nonpartisan websites including League of Women Voters. The League of Women Voters has a Voter Guide that provides a brief biography about each candidate as well as what they are promising to uphold, if elected. Working at the Elections Administration helped shaped my passion for politics and is a primary reason I chose to analyze nonpartisan organizations for this research.

Throughout my undergraduate career, I used politics as a main component in a variety of research papers and assignment. In my Rhetorical Criticism course, I wrote an Ideological Criticism over Donald Trump's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. I analyzed the text by breaking down the speech in order to reveal the ideology embedded in the words of Donald Trump. By analyzing this speech, I was able to uncover the hegemonic rhetoric used towards minorities and women. This was the first time I was able to analyze a political text and use my own lens to uncover the meaning behind words. I enjoy conducting research about voting because it's something that is very familiar to me. Throughout this current study, I have used my experience in academia to complete a thorough analysis of my research findings.

Thematic Analysis

I conducted a thematic analysis which consists of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006). The goal of a thematic analysis "is to identify themes patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3353). For this research, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step framework for a thematic analysis. The first step is becoming familiar with the data. Using a chart, I broke down the data using a description, denotation, and connotation table (See appendix A). From here, I completed step two and three which are to generate codes from the data and review them. I used open coding, meaning that there were no pre-existing codes but codes were developed and modified by working through the coding process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Lastly, I completed steps five and six by defining the themes and constructing the data analysis section. A theme is a "pattern that captures something significant or

interesting about the data and/or the research question” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3356). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is characterized by its significance and there are no hard or fast rules about what makes a theme.

As previously mentioned, I used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide for completing a thematic analysis by analyzing three nonprofit organizations: Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote to uncover the existing frames and themes in their websites and Facebook posts.

Chapter Four is organized according to each of the research questions. The analysis consisted of describing each website by analyzing each main category and subcategory and establishing the denotation and connotation for messages on the pages. For example, on Voto Latino there is an “About Us” tab and underneath there are several subcategories such as, “Team” and “Mission and History” (Voto Latino, 2018). These were analyzed separately according to category. The Facebook posts were randomly chosen from the months of June through December and described and analyzed using connotation and denotation to generate themes. The analysis phase consisted of summarizing and describing each section of the website page and each Facebook post, individually and after each of the sections were described, the denotative and connotative meanings were revealed. From here, themes were generated using Braun and Clarke’s six-step framework to find themes in Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote’s websites and Facebook posts.

RQ1: How does Voto Latino frame voting and Hispanic voters in their website and Facebook?

Voto Latino is an organization that appeals to young Latino Voters. Its main purpose is to advocate for the Latino community in order to raise voting numbers through spreading awareness about pertinent voting information. This section provides answers to RQ1.

The themes that evolved from analyzing Voto Latino are *adversity in voting*, *Latino vote*, and *agents of change*. From these themes, I was able to find how Voto Latino frames voting and Hispanic voters through their website and Facebook pages. *Adversity in Voting*

Voto Latino is an organization that appeals to young Latino Voters. Its main purpose is to advocate for the Latino community in order to raise voting numbers through spreading awareness and reveal pertinent voting information. There are a variety of different themes that emerge from analyzing the website. From these themes, I was able to find how Voto Latino frames voting and Hispanic voters through their website and Facebook pages.

The first theme is *adversity in voting*. Adversity in voting refers to the hardships marginalized groups experienced in order to have the right to vote. Throughout the website pages, there are various images that show a variety of different cultures coming together to share information about voting and multiple protests. These images help frame voting as a difficult yet rewarding process. Showing voting in this light contributes to the idea that historically Latinos have had to fight for proper voting rights in order to cast a ballot. During a segment on the website, there is a headline that reads “We made

our voices heard and showed the power of our families and communities at the ballot box” (Voto, 2018). Underneath this headline are pictures of women and men from different ethnic backgrounds: two Latino women, two Latino men, and two African American women. In the background, there are the faded colors of red, white, and blue along with images of curled up fists, a megaphone, and several voting signs. The faded colors, the different people, and the protest images relate to the cultural milestones and hardships taken in order for African Americans, Latinos, and women to be able to cast a ballot at the polls. The denotative message in this photo explains people attending a protest. However, the connotative takes on a whole new meaning people as African Americans, Latinos, and women had to fight hard for their right to vote.

Voto Latino’s Facebook posts are an important avenue for sending messages across to a variety of voters. A post about Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress (1968) was posted on Voto Latino’s Facebook page (Voto, 2018). This post is shown below in Figure 1. This post frames voting as a vital aspect of history and culture due to the hardships individuals throughout history experienced in order for marginalized groups to cast a ballot for the candidate of their choosing.

Historically, African Americans experienced adversity in order to gain their right to vote. In 1965, The Voting Rights Act initiated by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 was put into effect in order to “overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote” (Voting Rights Act, 2019, para. 1). Three years later Shirley Chisholm was elected to Congress and in 1972 would become the first woman to seek nomination for president (Michals, 2015, para 1). She is famous for quoting the well-known line after winning the seat, “if they don’t give you a

seat at the table, bring a folding chair” (Voto, 2018, para. 1). By posting this information and photo of Shirley Chisholm, Voto Latino is raising awareness of the hardships marginalized groups experienced in order to gain voting rights and having the ability to choose candidates from different backgrounds.

Figure 1 Shirley Chisholm Facebook Post (Voto Latino, December 3rd, 2018)



In the weeks leading up to the November 2018 election, a variety of voter registration messages were posted on social media in order to stimulate more people to register to vote. The November election was a milestone election because there were 277 female candidates running for either Congress or governor (Mak, 2018). Many of the 277 were Latino, African American, and Muslim women who were candidates for a variety of different political races. Voto Latino emphasized the importance of voting by creating a post that reads, “together we will make ourselves heard in this historic election” (Voto, 2018, para. 3). The verbal and visual elements that help frame this post include a black and white background of people holding up signs about citizenship as well as American flags (Voto, 2018). This image is half black and white and in color. At the front of the image are two Latinas and one Latino holding up signs with Oklahoma, Idaho, and New York on

them in full color (See Figure 2). The people in the photos are protesting by holding up signs in favor of “citizenship” and “Voting Rights” in the background of the image (Voto, 2018). This post continues to frame voting as a privilege that Latino ancestors fought to receive. Because the photo is half black and white, this signifies that the image is a historical image taken at a protest. The three people in color holding up state signs are an image taken in the future. The purpose of the post is to show the difficult endeavors Latinos in history had to experience in order to be able to freely cast a ballot at the polls. The image is powerful because it has a brief glance of the history that allows Latinos to vote as they do today. This contributes to the theme *adversity in voting* because it shows how hard people worked to gain voting rights and now how hard people must work to get others to cast a ballot in order to see desired change.

Figure 2 Voto Latino: Making History Post (Voto Latino, October 12th, 2018)

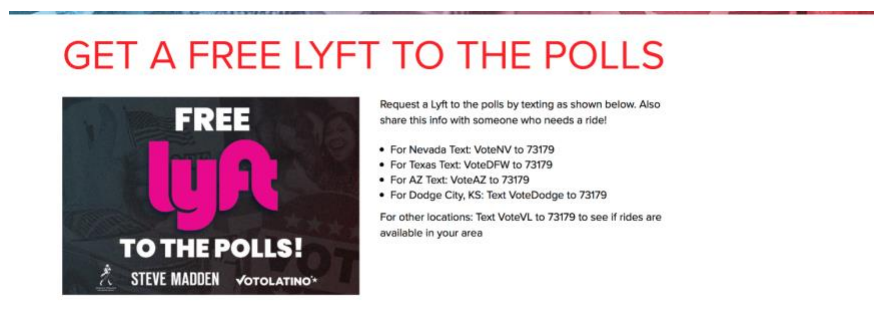


Latino Vote

The next theme, *Latino Vote* comes from website content and Facebook posts about Latino's experiences with voting. The importance of voting is presented within the website and Facebook pages. According to Brookshire (2016) millions of people who are registered will not vote. There are several reasons Americans don't exercise their rights as citizens, and one is simply because registering to vote takes work. Unlike other countries, whose voter registration is automatic, in America it is up to each person to register themselves (Brookshire, 2016). Per the Pew Research Center (2012), out of 51 million citizens, 1 out of 4 are not registered to vote. Another reason is lack of education. Many people do not take the time to research information about the candidates on the ballot and therefore, are ill prepared to cast a ballot. Voto Latino seeks to eliminate this problem by posting information about the voting process, which frames voting as extremely important. The theme, *Latino Vote*, comes from the continuous voting messages presented by Voto Latino. On their website, Voto Latino has a variety of messages in place to persuade Latinos to register to vote. They provide a number for people to call if they experience issues at the polls and have the website that also includes a page with frequently asked questions and answers that provide additional information before heading to the polls: Where is my polling location? What do I need to bring to the polls? How do I vote early or receive an absentee ballot? These questions are designed to help Latinos find the information they need to make the voting process significantly easier. Underneath the frequently asked question sign is a blurred image of someone casting a ballot with Voto Latino's logo on it. There are several Vote Here signs and a giant question mark, a curled-up fist, and a Latino and Latina preparing to cast their ballot at the polls. The image symbolizes that Latinos

have had to fight for their right to be heard at the polls. Voto Latino seeks to provide information about the voting process and even includes a link to receive a free “Lyft to the polls” which signifies a partnership with the company Lyft (see Figure 3) (Voto, 2018). These types of messages show that Voto Latino will stop at nothing to get people to vote. The next theme of Voto Latino signifies that Latinos are powerful agents of change that will stop at nothing to be able to vote.

Figure 3 Voto Latino: Lyft to the Polls (Voto Latino, 2018, p. 4)



Agents of Change

The third theme, *agents of change* refers to the ability for Latinos to register to vote and make desired changes possible. Throughout history protests have been used to get messages across to powerful people. Another image on the website shows a similar scenario. Under a section labeled “Defending Dreamers,” a young Latino man and woman stand at a protest. There are two signs visible in the image, one reads “We are Power” and the other says “Can’t Stop Won’t Stop” (Voto, 2018). The image shows the couple locking arms in unity (see Figure 4). When clicking on the image the viewer is redirected to a short article about the photo. The article reads, “on September 5th, the Trump administration decided to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, leaving 800,000 immigrant youth and their families in limbo” (Voto, 2018, para. 2). The different images

and words used in this post frames Latinos as voting advocates that are essential to receiving political change. According to the article, “there has never been a more critical moment to fight for dreamers and a permanent legislative solution for immigrant youth” (Voto, 2018, para. 2). This image and article indicate that there are continuing issues Latinos are fighting for outside of voting but coming together is an important way to achieve desired change.

Figure 4 Voto Latino: Defending Dreamers (Voto Latino, 2018, p. 3)



Defending Dreamers

On September 5th, the Trump administration decided to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, leaving 800,000 immigrant youth and their families in limbo. The individuals who came to the U.S. as children were looking for opportunity when they surrendered their personal information to the Department of Homeland Security and signed up for DACA.

There has never been a more critical moment to fight for Dreamers and a permanent legislative solution for immigrant youth. Hear why and how you can support the social movement post-protection deadline with strategies from the front lines.

Under the Mission and History tab, a paragraph discusses the mission of Voto Latino as a “pioneering civic media organization that seeks to transform America by recognizing Latinos’ innate leadership” (Voto, 2018, para. 3). There are six images of

young Latinos smiling in pictures wearing long lanyards around their necks indicating that they are at some sort of professional development conference. These types of messages seek to recognize Latinos and their leadership skills to empower others. The elements in the message frame Latinos as leaders and agents of change by showing pictures of them at leadership conferences and recognizing their leadership abilities.

Voto Latino also used a pledge to help people commit to vote in upcoming elections. A study conducted by Costa, Schaffner, and Prevost (2018), found “people who pledge to vote are more likely to turnout than those who are contacted using standard get-out-to-vote materials” (para. 3). Costa et al. (2018) found that the simple mobilization tactic could stimulate increases in voter turnout amongst inactive segments of the eligible electorate. A Facebook post frames voting as an essential process by creating a pledge to hold people accountable to vote. The post is framed by picturing a young Latino woman holding up a sign that says “I just pledged to vote” (Voto, 2018). The caption of the post reads, “We’re pledging to show up on November 6th, because we are more. More than Stereotypes. More than the hate spewed against us. More than pawns for political parties. More than those who stand against us. Pledge to vote.” This message fits the theme of Latino Vote because it discusses many of the reasons why Latinos should vote. By getting people to sign the pledge, more Latinos are willing to take initiative and find the time and resources necessary to vote.

The idea of making a change occurs often in Voto Latinos posts. In order to make desired change, Latinos must exercise their right to vote. The organization seeks to empower Latinos through motivational events. For example, Voto Latino hosts a variety of leadership conferences and posts about them frequently on their Facebook page. The

Voto Latino Power Summit 2018 posted images about the 2-day conference and the various speakers and attendees. After thanking the speakers, volunteers, staff, attendees, and sponsors of the event, the organization says, “We come home [from the Summit] recommitted to empowering and registering communities” (Voto, 2018). By hosting this type of leadership conference to speak to communities in Austin, Texas, Voto Latino frames Latinos as a powerful group that is able to recommit others to making lasting changes through voting. The organization posts images of the several speakers at the event which were primarily Latino men and women seeking to empower voters to make a change. The Voto Latino section provides answers to the research questions by providing information about how Voto Latino frames voting and Hispanic voters throughout their website and Facebook page.

RQ2: How does LWV frame voting and women in their website and Facebook?

League of Women Voters desires to help create a democracy where everyone is able to vote (Vote, 2018). It’s a nonprofit organization that seeks to provide information and solutions to vital issues and concerns to voters, such as immigration, healthcare, and the environment (Vote, 2018). This section seeks to find the main themes presented throughout the organizations website and Facebook page while answering RQ2. The themes discovered throughout were *ending voter suppression*, *healthcare reform*, and *increasing voter participation*.

Ending Voter Suppression

According to the American Civil Liberties Union (2019), voter suppression has been on the rise since the 2008 Presidential election with new laws coming into effect that could potential keep marginalized groups from voting (para. 9). Voter suppression, “is any

effort, either legal or illegal, by way of laws, administrative rules, and/or tactics that prevents eligible voters from registering to vote or voting” (Demand the Vote, 2019, para. 1). These new barriers such as eliminating same day voter registration, reducing voter registration drives, and requiring photo ID, make it harder for people to participate in the democratic system (ACLU, 2019).

The ACLU (2019) shows that Hispanic and African American voters are twice as likely to register through voter drives as white voters thus, limiting the number of drives could serve as a form of voter suppression. The League of Women Voters also believes the voting system is under attack by politicians who have created intentional barriers including “forcing discriminatory voter ID and proof-of-citizenship restrictions on eligible voters, reducing polling place hours in communities of color, cutting early voting opportunities and illegally purging voters from the rolls” (LWV, 2019, para. 1). Through its images and text, the League of Women Voters seeks to frame voter suppression as a hardship that marginalized groups experience when trying to exercise their right to vote. An image of several people of different ethnicities and genders line the streets in a protest. Several of which are holding signs that say, “Defend Yourself Vote, #NAACP” (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), “Protect my Vote”, and “End Voter Suppression” (LWV, 2019). This image shown in Figure 5 paved the way for the theme, *ending voter suppression*. By utilizing rhetoric that emphasizes the importance of eliminating voter suppression, the League of Women Voters is advocating against unnecessary voting laws and working to make sure elections are always free, fair, and accessible (LWV, 2019)

Figure 5L WV: Voter Suppression (LWV, 2019, p. 1)



The League of Women Voters also has a section labeled “End Voter Suppression” (LWV, 2019). The page starts with two paragraphs discussing the concerted effort of many states that are focusing on making voting much harder for people to participate (LWV, 2019). This page frames suppression as an act that must be recognized in order to be eradicated. There is also an image of a box with a red check mark beside it, as if someone is casting a ballot. The text to the sides of the check marked box says, “I stand with the League against partisan, discriminatory and even illegal tactics that deny eligible Americans the right to vote” (LWV, 2019, para. 1). This is a pledge that individuals can take in order to end voter suppression. By signing up the pledger agrees to work with the League of Women Voters to stop voter suppression tactics that threaten voting abilities.

The League of Women Voters also takes to Facebook to discuss the prevalence of voter suppression by posting an article about voter ID restrictions. The National Conference of State Legislators (2019) identifies the different voter ID laws according to each state. States such as Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin require voters to bring a valid photo ID with them to the polls to be eligible to

cast a ballot (NCSL, 2019). According to the League of Women Voters (2019), this is a form of suppression because many voters don't have access or the means necessary to receive a photo ID. The League of Women Voters posted an article on their Facebook page that frames some voter ID laws as a form of suppression. The post is captioned, "hear straight from North Carolina voters about why the Voter Photo ID Restriction Amendment is a bad idea" (LWV, 2019). The article comes from the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (2019), a nonprofit organization founded by, "a multidisciplinary group, predominantly people of color, who believe that families and communities engaged in social justice struggles need a team of lawyers, social scientists, community organizers and media specialists to support them in their efforts to dismantle structural racism and oppression" (para. 1). One of the major goals of the organization is to protect minority voting rights and elicit opportunities for civic participation for all (SCSJ, 2019). The organization posted an article about a man named Paul Kearney, a resident of North Carolina and was shared by the League of Women Voters on Facebook. The article expresses Kearney's experience while voting in Warrenton, North Carolina. In 2016, North Carolina required voters to bring a photo ID to vote. Because Kearney didn't bring an ID he had to vote a provisional ballot, a ballot that is counted based on individual conditions, because he left his photo ID at home (SCJC, 2019). Because Kearney did not bring a photo ID up to the County Board of Elections within seven days after the election to ensure his ballot was counted, his ballot was not counted (SCSJ, 2019). Due to the fact that he was unaware of the ID laws enacted in his state, his ballot was rejected. This personal testimony of Paul Kearney and his issue at the polls is what League of Women Voters believe is a form of voter suppression that keeps citizens from knowing the laws

that affect them in their state (LWV, 2019). This article contributes to the theme of ending voter suppression by retelling a personal testimony of a voter being suppressed at the polls.

Healthcare Reform

The next theme, healthcare reform comes from several mentions of the Affordable Care Act on the League of Women Voters page. In 2010, President Barack Obama create a comprehensive healthcare reform law called the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare (Healthcare, 2019). The purpose of the ACA is to make affordable health insurance available to more people (Healthcare, 2019). The new law provided consumers with subsidies that lower costs for households with low incomes (Healthcare, 2019). An image on the League of Women Voters site shows a young woman holding a sign that states, “girls just wanna [sic] have fundamental human rights” referring to how women should have access to affordable and quality healthcare (LWV, 2019). This image (shown in Figure 6) and its verbal messages used on the page frames women as supporters of the Affordable Care Act and nationwide affordable healthcare. The League of Women Voters expresses that women should have access to affordable healthcare and be able to make choices regarding birth control and private reproductive decisions (LWV, 2019). The League believes that people should have rights to basic healthcare including, disease prevention, primary care, acute long-term care, mental healthcare, and promotion and education about medical care (LWV, 2019). The League of Women voters, “lobbied for health care policy solutions, including the ACA, to control costs and to ensure a basic level of care for all” (LWV, 2019, para. 2). The theme of *healthcare reform* stems from the extensive rhetoric surrounding healthcare reform on their website. Throughout the

various healthcare debates of the last few decades, the League has worked to provide Americans with objective information about the healthcare system and its significant reforms (LWV, 2019). The organization also values keeping the public informed about significant healthcare information and strives to keep Americans educated about healthcare. The health care reform theme stems from various messages from League of Women Voters that advocates for the Affordable Care Act.

Figure 6 LWV: Fundamental Rights (LWV, 2019, p.1)



President Trump was elected in 2016 on the promise that he would repeal the ACA (Jost, 2018). On his first day in office, Trump, “issued an executive order intended to turn back the ACA implementation” (Jost, 2018, para. 1). The current plan for the Trump Administration is to create an alternative individual coverage market from the Affordable Care Act (Jost, 2018). In support of the ACA, the League of Women Voters came together to “rally to save the ACA” (LWV, 2019, para. 1). Through its rhetoric on the page, the LWV frames the Affordable Care Act as an important breakthrough in healthcare for women. According to the page, League of Women Voter representatives Ana Little-Sana and Maya Stone joined the organizations Healthcare Voter and Protect Our Care to stop the legislative efforts to repeal and replace the ACA (LWV, 2019). The League of Women voters stands with a group of five bipartisan governors, including John

Kasich (Ohio), John W. Hickenlooper (Colorado), Bill Walker (Alaska), Tom Wolf (Pennsylvania), Brian Sandoval (Nebraska), Roy Cooper (North Carolina), Steve Bullock (Montana), Jay Inslee (Washington), and Larry Hogan (Maryland), who revealed that “thousands of Americans with pre-existing conditions, as well as unemployed or self-employed individuals, depend on the ACA to access care”, therefore repealing it would leave individuals without healthcare (LWV, 2019, para. 5). The League of Women voters discusses health care frequently throughout its website and Facebook page, thus contributing to the theme of healthcare reform.

A press release posted on the League’s website discusses the Trump Administration’s announcement to allow employers to opt out of birth control coverage for women initially required by the ACA (LWV, 2019). The League of Women Voters issued a statement that stated, “eliminating employer-covered birth control coverage, a requirement under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), is a direct assault on a woman’s right to make her own health care choices” (LWV, 2019, para. 2). The messages in this article on the website frames women as strong supporters of the ACA and deserving of proper and just healthcare. The League believes that the ACA has saved women from over \$1.4 billion in out-of-pocket costs for contraception coverage because 1 in 10 women utilize birth control for family planning or health reasons (LWV, 2019). Per the League of Women Voters (2019), “birth control is critical for effective planning and preventing unwanted pregnancies, which opens up more opportunities for women and increases lifetime earnings” (para. 3). The League of Women Voters openly opposed the Trump Administration by calling it an “insulting decision” (LWV, 2019, para. 6). The extensive

messages in support for the healthcare reform indicate that this organization is adamant about allowing everyone access to healthcare.

Increasing Voter Participation

Voter registration lies at the forefront of the League of Women Voters messages. At the top of the Increasing Voter Registration page there is an image of young adults, eight men and six women, holding up red, white, and blue signs that say, “Register Here” (LWV, 2019). Figure 7 shows the men and women in picture smiling profusely, excited to be leaders for the organization. There is an American flag covering the voter registration table and a League of Women Voters sign posed in the back of the photo. The photo and other textual messages frame voting as a civic and rewarding duty people have the ability to participate in as Americans. The organization believes that, “every eligible voter should have a fair and equal opportunity to register to vote and to cast their ballot” (LWV, 2019, para. 1). Thus, each American should understand important registration deadlines in order to be eligible to vote. The theme of *increasing voter participation* stems from the League of Women Voters long-standing goal to host voter registration drives at locations that reach large numbers of unregistered voters (LWV, 2019). This goal will consist of reaching thousands of voters across the country each year in hopes of adding more voters to the registration rolls (LWV, 2019). Root and Kennedy (2018) found that 81% of the entire U.S. population is registered to vote and only 61% of citizens reported voting. The League works with unregistered voters, especially non-college youth, new citizens, communities of color, and low-income Americans to make sure they all have the opportunity to register to vote (LWV, 2019).

Figure 7 LWV: Voter Participation (LWV, 2019, p. 1)



The League of Women Voters works hard to ensure all voters have the opportunity to cast their ballot. A 2016 Survey of Performance of American Elections found that 30% of youth did not vote because they didn't have a way of getting to the polls (Gurley, 2018). The League of Women Voters partnered with Lyft to offer a 50% discount when getting a ride to the polls (LWV, 2019). A Facebook post was created that discussed the partnership and released the hashtag (#PollUp2018). The post reads, "Make Your Voice Heard in This Year's Election!" and explains how the coupon can be downloaded on the website (LWV, 2019). This post contributes to the theme of increasing voter participation by showing the steps the organization is willing to take to get people to vote. The League of Women voters frames voting as an essential duty as an American. They have revealed a major partnership that reveals how important it is to vote.

Each year the U.S. welcomes approximately 700,000 to 750,000 new citizens through naturalization ceremonies in communities across the country (LWV, 2019). Naturalization ceremonies are federal court conducted citizenship ceremonies

(Naturalization, 2019). At these civic events the League of Women Voters registers new citizens to vote (LWV, 2019). An article on the League of Women Voters page discusses the significance of registering new citizens to vote. The images and the article on this page frames voting as an important civic duty for all citizens to partake in. The page features a woman holding up a pin that says, “New Citizen & 1st time voter” (LWV, 2019). This indicates that voting is something to be proud of as a U.S. citizen. The League of Women Voters has been registering new citizens to vote for decades and they are “proud and honored to be one of the few organizations that register new citizens on site at naturalization ceremonies throughout the United States” (LWV, 2019, para. 1). The League of Women Voters supports new voters through the voting process. For example, “when a new citizen approaches the registration table, they are kindly met by a League member or volunteer ready to provide crucial, nonpartisan election information and walk any eligible new voter through a registration application” (LWV, 2019, para. 4). After new citizens are registered to vote, “many citizens continue to receive *Get Out the Vote* reminders, additional voting resources, and follow-up registration assistance from the League” (LWV, 2019, para. 4). The League of Women Voters desire to help new citizens register to vote and keep voters informed about up to date voting information, which validates the theme of increasing voter participation. Through various messages the League of Women Voters frames women as an important group that could spread information about the voting process.

RQ3: How does Rock the Vote frame voting and young voters throughout their website and Facebook?

Rock the Vote is an organization tailored specifically for young voters. The organization believes that, “our generation is getting screwed by a system and leadership that [doesn’t] reflect our vision for the future” (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 1). The purpose of Rock the Vote is to bring people together regardless of race, gender, background, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability to create a better future (Rock the Vote, 2019). The themes found throughout the website and Facebook posts of Rock the Vote are *change*, *understanding voting laws*, and *empowering young voters*.

Change

Beck and Kitchener (2018) found that in the 2018 November election young people ages 18- 24, made up 13% of the electorate which increased from 11% in 2014. This increase is because young people are understanding their voice is important in political races (Beck & Kitchener, 2018). According to Rock the Vote (2019),

[T]he average monthly student loan payment for young Americans is 50% higher than it was in 2005, while the federal minimum wage is worth less than it was over 50 years ago. As young black Americans are arrested at twice the rate of their white peers, over 800,000 DREAMers who came to our country as children are now facing the threat of deportation. (para. 2)

With these issues facing the young population their vote is more critical than ever (Rock the Vote, 2019). Rock the Vote believes the government is putting young people in harm’s way by refusing to pass comprehensive background checks to protect against gun violence, taking away health care, defunding Planned

Parenthood, and avoiding the topic of climate change (Rock the Vote, 2019).

From the messages on the Rock the Vote website, young people are framed as victims of an unsupportive government. Voting is the power they will use to fight back and “build a world that works for [them] and [their] communities” (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 4). The next theme, *change*, comes from the constant use of the word when referring to society. As the largest, most diverse group in history, Rock the Vote believes young people have the ability to make the desired changes needed and will use them to make a difference.

According to an article on Rock the Vote’s Facebook page, young voters are pushing back against the Trump Administration at the ballot box (Rock the Vote, 2019). The Politics Associated Press (2018) found that 33% of Americans between the ages 18 and 34 approve of his job performance which indicates that the remaining 67% believe President Donald Trump is “mentally unfit” for office (para. 1). President of Rock the Vote, Carolyn DeWitt, issued a statement saying she believed young people were reacting to “the aggressive maneuvers of the administration on progressive values” (Manchester, 2018, para. 2). This article was then shared by Rock the Vote on their Facebook page. DeWitt also stated that young people are taking a stand against immigration policy and on the “fear-mongering happening that young people just don’t want a part of their country” (Manchester, 2018, para. 2). This article contributes to the theme of change that is continuously discussed throughout the organization’s website and Facebook page. Millennials do not like the direction the country is headed and decided to make changes by heading to the polls (Manchester, 2018). Since Trump was elected,

nearly half of the voting population say they're paying closer attention to politics and are more engaged in political activism than ever before (Politics, 2018).

The Rock the Vote "Why I Vote" campaign gives celebrities the chance to share personal opinions about elections (Rock the Vote, 2019). A video starring American rapper, Common, discusses the reasons why he votes in elections. He believes that it is the people's job to "vote for politicians that you know are standing up for what you want to change" (Rock the Vote, 2019). One of the political topics Common is most passionate about is prisoners' rights (Rock the Vote, 2019). Common believes that contrary to other people's beliefs, slavery is still alive today in different forms and fashions (Rock the Vote, 2019). According to the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, there should be "neither slave nor involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime". Common may have been chosen for a partnership with Rock the Vote because he is a young African American advocate who views voting as essential to democracy. Common believes prisoners' rights is an issue that needs to be addressed and that when people make mistakes there should be an amount of forgiveness acceptable (Rock the Vote, 2019). He tells a story about a young man named Kalief Browder who was wrongly convicted of a crime and was incarcerated for three years. Upon leaving prison, Browder ended up committing suicide because of his experience being wrongly accused of a crime (Rock the Vote, 2019). According to Common, voting is a way that these conditions and policies can be changed in society (Rock the Vote, 2019). This video reinforces the theme of change by indicating that by voting for the politicians and candidates who stand for change the current policies

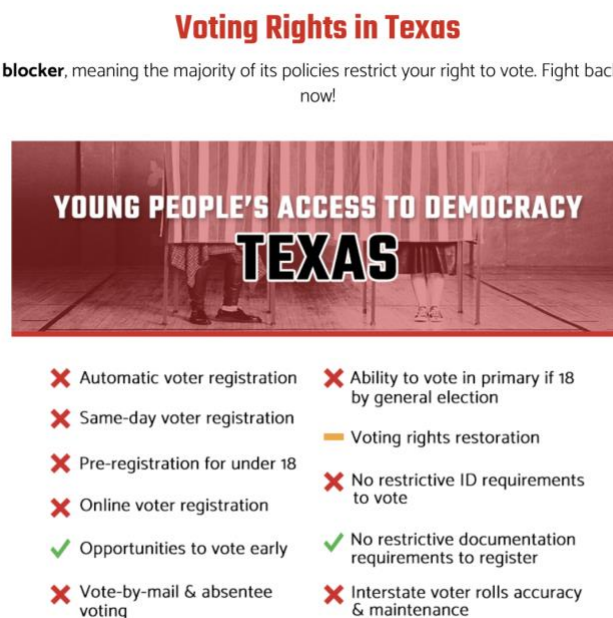
can be altered to fit the needs of the American people. This type of rhetoric also persuades people using the appeals to pathos and ethos by telling the heartfelt story of Browder and using Common as an avenue persuade young people to vote.

Understand Voting Laws

In the U.S. voting laws differ from state to state and in order to be prepared to cast a ballot people need to be aware of the different voting laws. Jacobson (2016) took note of the changes to voter registration leading up to the 2016 Presidential election and found that some of the voting laws were “geared toward expanding access to the polls [and others] intended to prevent fraud, thus making it harder to vote” (para. 1). On Rock the Vote’s website they created a chart that is a map of the U.S. (Rock the Vote, 2019). The map has a key labeled “leader” as the color green, “slacker”, orange, and “blocker” labeled red (Rock the Vote, 2019). Each state is labeled a different color in accordance to the key. Leader states are defined as states that have created policies to protect the right to vote (Rock the Vote, 2019). For example, these states have automatic and same day voter registration, pre-registration for those under 18, online voter registration, absentee ballots and early voting, and no restrictive documentation requirements to register to vote (Rock the Vote, 2019). States such as California, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah are considered leader states due to their advancement in voter registration laws (Rock the Vote, 2019). A slacker state means that “there’s still a lot of work to do to protect everyone’s right to vote” (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 1). Wyoming, Nevada, Louisiana, and Kentucky are considered slacker states because they do not allow for automatic or online voter registration (Rock the Vote, 2019). Blocker states like Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas have adopted major policies that restrict peoples’ right to vote

(Rock the Vote, 2019). Figure 8 shows the State of Texas and its voting policies summarized. They do not offer any of the registration policies of other states besides the opportunity to vote early and no restrictive documentation to register to vote (Rock the Vote, 2019). This map frames voting as a process that can be restrictive according to state laws. If voters do not understand proper voting laws, it could prevent them from voting in elections. Also, since the younger generation will make up majority of the electorate in the next decade it's important to help them understand the laws that pertain to voting. The theme *Understanding Voting Laws* comes from the variety of images and text that discusses how voting is different from state to state. Voters must understand these processes in order to be eligible to cast a ballot.

Figure 8 Rock the Vote: Voting Rights in Texas (Rock the Vote, 2019, p. 6)



Rock the Vote houses a variety of information about the voting process in each state. In a chart the organization has created a segment of different information pertinent

to voting according to state. This chart houses information regarding registering to vote, preparing to vote, important dates and deadlines, election official information, overseas and military voting, voting by mail and absentee voting, voting for people with convictions, voting as a student, voting with a disability, and access to the state election website. This chart seeks to keep voters informed about the different voting policies adapted by each state. The chart and information associated with the chart are used to help keep voters up to date with state election laws, which supports the theme of understanding voting laws.

Rock the Vote takes to Facebook to post about the different voting stipulations according to state. One post lists the names of the states that offer same day voter registration. These states include California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (Rock the Vote, 2019). The post also includes a list of possible polling locations for each state. Another post shows an image of the U.S. with polling location times written in each state. For example, the polls in Texas are required to be opened from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., however, Arizona's polls require workers to stay open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Rock the Vote, 2019). These polling hours are set in place to accommodate working people with busy schedules. Rock the Vote also takes to Facebook to post about voter registration deadlines in each state. This helps keep voters aware of the deadlines and restrictions they must pay attention to in order to be eligible to vote. These posts validate the theme of understanding voting laws because they are intended to keep voters up to date about what's going on in each state.

Empowering Young Voters

Rock the Vote believes that young people are essential to seeking the desired changes needed in America (Rock the Vote, 2019). In order for those changes to be met, the organization must get young people to the polls (Rock the Vote, 2019). An image of a young Latina woman voting and an article about youth voter turnout, shared as a Facebook post, frames young people as a group of individuals that are able to make a difference. Research from Kaid et al. (2007) explains that young people lack knowledge when it comes to voting. This post is designed to make young people feel as if their voting right is important.

The next theme is *empowering young voters*. The theme evolved from the various messages empowering youth. President of Rock the Vote, Carolyn Dewitt declares that "the youth generation is proving itself to be a very powerful force that demands to be heard and demands leaders to be responsive to their vision for a progressive and inclusive America" (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 16). The article discusses that it's important to motivate and inform the youth because in the year 2020 they will make up 40% of the electorate (Rock the Vote, 2019). There is also an image of a young woman named Delilah Freytes, an 18-year-old from Salida California voting for the first time (Rock the Vote, 2019). She is inside a cubicle filling out a paper ballot. (Rock the Vote, 2019). This image is important because it shows a woman participating at the polls for the first time and it's showing how simple the process is. This also shows that Rock the Vote is willing to celebrate young voters when they make the decision to vote for the first time. Rock the Vote believes that it's important to empower young people to make desired changes

because during the 2020 Presidential Election there will be 90 million eligible millennials who will be able to cast a vote (Rock the Vote, 2019).

Another article titled “Young Voters are the Heroes” is shared by Rock the Vote with the caption “In 1971, 18-year-olds were finally granted access to vote in America. In 2018, our numbers look strong enough to be the highest turnout for 18-29-year-olds since then” (Rock the Vote, 2019). By celebrating young people over Facebook, Rock the Vote is seeking to empower young voters. The article discusses the reasons young people should show up to the polls and what’s at stake (Rock the Vote, 2019). The article reads, “we see what’s happening to our DREAMer friends and immigrant neighbors” and “putting their careers above our safety”. (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 2). Family members with “pre-existing conditions worried they won’t be able to get treatment” and “we experience bigotry, xenophobia and misogyny as young women, members of the LGTBQ community, and as the most diverse generation in our country’s history” (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 2). Because young people desire a future that is inclusive and forward thinking about these challenges they show up and will continue to show up at the polls (Rock the Vote, 2019). By motivating young people to show up to vote about issues of importance they are empowering the younger generation to cast a vote to generate desired changes.

RQ4: What are the underlying frames used in Rock the Vote, Voto Latino, and LWV?

In this section of the analysis, I analyzed the websites and Facebook posts of Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote to discover the underlying frames presented in their messages. This section discovers the frames that connect the three

organizations together and provides the answer to RQ4. The themes that emerged were *suppression*, the *power of women*, and *get out and vote*.

Suppression

Many of the underlying frames used to in the three nonpartisan websites and Facebook pages to represent voters include numerous references to suppression. In the League of Women Voters, the idea of suppression emerged frequently throughout its messages. As previously stated, the article about voter ID laws was put into effect to prevent people from voting was one of the artifacts that discusses suppression on the League of Women Voters page. The topic of suppression was also present in Voto Latino and Rock the Vote. For example, Voto Latino mentions on their website the partnership created with the NAACP and the National Action Network to relaunch its United We Win campaign to build cross-community voting engagement to help others vote without free of suppression tactics. (Voto Latino, 2019). Lastly, Rock the Vote seeks to end suppression by posting information about a protest about voting rights amongst felons. Rock the Vote portrays that not allowing felons to vote is a form of suppression (Rock the Vote, 2019).

In Voto Latino, an article was posted on Facebook discussing how the previously ignored Latino vote would influence the results of the next election (Voto Latino, 2019). A study conducted by Latino Decision for NALEO, found that despite their effort to find the right mix of voters for their survey they overlooked 60% of Latino voters and did not register them to vote (Voto Latino, 2019). Campaigns and candidates see Latinos as “low propensity voters” and don’t reach out to them thus, Latinos’ do not vote (Voto Latino, 2019). This is considered a form of suppression because organizations are purposely

leaving out Latino voters because they believe they are unlikely to vote in elections (Voto Latino, 2019).

An image posted on Facebook by Rock the Vote is captioned, “voter suppression is un-American” (Rock the Vote, 2019). The image associated with the post has seven people with different ethnicities and genders holding up signs that say, “My Vote”, “Our Rights”, and “Our Fight” (Rock the Vote, 2019). There are also various posters inside of the picture such as a house, a megaphone, and a picture of checks and balances. These images indicate that many Americans are willing to take on the fight against voter suppression in order for every citizen to cast a vote. From the images, it’s evident that Rock the Vote sees an issue with these suppression tactics and are publicly recognizing them as issues that prevent people from voting.

Also, in the video “Why I Vote” on the Rock the Vote page featuring rapper, Common, discusses the issue with prisoners not receiving the rights to vote. He believed that incarcerated individuals should not be denied the right to vote because they are experiencing isolation and unjust treatment already, and their basic rights as Americans shouldn’t be taken away (Rock the Vote, 2019). Common believed that not allowing prisoners to vote is a form of suppression that should be eliminated in society.

The Power of Women

Women are considered underrepresented in terms of politics. In 2017, only 19% of all Congress members were women and in all 50 states only four, or 8%, were women (History, 2017). However, in 2018, a record number of women won their races with 110 women elected into Congress, 87 women elected into the House of Representatives, and 23 women elected into the Senate (Rock the Vote, 2019). Voto Latino, The League of

Women Voters, and Rock the Vote frames women as marginalized groups trying to make their way into politics. The theme *the power of women* comes from the images and articles about women making their way into the political realm.

Voto Latino posted an image on their Facebook pages with the caption “Knock Knock. Diversity is at the [door]” (Voto, 2019). The image is a replica of the magazine, *The New Yorker*. The cover is a sketch of about 18 white men with suits and ties. These men are meant to portray the stereotypical politicians (Voto, 2019). The stereotypical politician is “a [white], paunchy, old, silver-haired man with no facial hair wearing an ill-fitted dark suit” (Congress, 2008). The men are gathered around in intense conversations while a group of women in full color including, one Latina, one African American, and one Muslim stand behind an opened door (Voto, 2019). The men in the picture do not notice the women standing at the door but the woman in the front holds her arm out to prevent the door from being shut (Voto, 2019). This image frames women as the new and diverse faces of politics and reinforces the theme that indicates that women are powerful.

The League of Women Voters has many images that emphasize the theme of the power of women. Under the history tab on the website, there are several images of women advocating and protesting for women’s right to vote. An image of a young white woman and an African American woman stand out front of a large building holding signs that say “Vote, Baby, Vote” and “Voting is people power” (LWV, 2019). Another image shows several women helping other women register to vote (LWV, 2019)

Rock the Vote posts an article titled “A Woman’s Place is in the House” a spin-off of the original sexist joke that says, “A Woman’s Place is in the Kitchen” (Rock the Vote, 2019). The article explains that “35 new women were elected into the U.S. House

of Representatives, making this incoming class the most diverse by race in gender in the body's 230-year history" (Rock the Vote, 2019). The image shows women locking arms in unity with their hands upon their hips, indicating a stance of power and knowledge. This supports the theme that women are powerful and deserve a place in the white house.

Get Out and Vote

Throughout the three organizations' pages, voting is framed as a civic duty that must be done to receive desired change. Voto Latino emphasizes the importance of voting by showing that Latino voters are an important piece of the puzzle to a valuable democracy (Voto Latino, 2019). The League of Women Voters indicates that by casting a vote at the polls, history can be made, and diversity and politics can go hand in hand (LWV, 2019). Lastly, Rock the Vote indicates that by voting "we can take back our future by standing together and fighting for justice" (Rock the Vote, 2019, para. 1). These three websites all discuss why voting is important to society and motivate people to get out and vote in order to see necessary changes.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four discusses my background and why I chose to take a political route while completing my thesis. The chapter also explains Braun and Clark's (2006) six-step frame work for completing a textual analysis which was used to generate themes in the research. Lastly, the frames are revealed by answering the four research questions. In total, 12 themes were uncovered through Voto Latino, LWV, and Rock the Vote's website and Facebook pages. The themes are discussed further in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Chapter Five discusses the framing mechanism found throughout Voto Latino, LWV, and Rock the Vote's websites and Facebook pages. The chapter also examines the 12 different themes that were generated through Voto Latino, LWV, and Rock the Vote's websites and Facebook pages and explains how those themes occurred. Lastly, the chapter also discusses the various limitations that occurred throughout the research and suggests other research opportunities for nonpartisan voting websites in the future.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how framing mechanisms are used to represent voting and its processes and to find the reoccurring themes throughout the organization's website and Facebook posts. Another focus of the study was to reveal how Latinos, women, and young voters are framed throughout Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote's websites and Facebook pages. The last goal was to find the underlying frames presented across the three organizations' website content and Facebook pages. This was accomplished by thoroughly examining the three website pages of each organization and 239 Facebook posts to discover reoccurring themes.

Overview of Themes

In this study, a total of 4 research questions were addressed. As previously mentioned, the focus of these research questions was to interpret the overall frames throughout the website of Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote along with their corresponding Facebook pages. In total, 12 themes emerged during the analysis of both the websites and Facebook pages.

Voto Latino Themes

After thoroughly analyzing Voto Latino's content, 3 different themes emerged from the text. These themes are *adversity in voting*, *Latino vote*, and *agents of change*. The themes were created from repetitive text and images that strengthened each theme.

The first theme that emerged from Voto Latino's website and Facebook content was adversity in voting. Images from Voto Latino revealed people holding up voting signs and marching around with their fists held high in the air. The images insinuated that protests are held due to adversity that the Latino community experiences or experienced regarding casting a ballot. Voto Latino doesn't just tailor their content to Latinos, but to all marginalized groups. For example, Voto Latino celebrates the milestone of women who play a vital role in politics. The first woman to be elected to Congress in 1917 was a white woman named Jeannette Rankin (Shafer, 2018). Congresswoman Rankin was a well-known leader in the suffrage movement and earned respect by pushing her women's rights agenda and helping win the passage of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote (Shafer, 2018). Almost forty-six years later, Shirley Chisholm the first African American woman was elected into congress in 1963 (Michals, 2005). Voto

Latino, celebrates Chisholm by posting a photo of her citing her accomplishment of being the first African American woman elected into congress.

A more recent milestone for women is celebrated by Voto Latino as 277 women from all different cultural backgrounds were candidates on the ballot. The rhetoric leading up to the election from Voto Latino emphasized the importance of “making ourselves heard” (Voto, 2018). These visual and textual elements that Voto Latino uses indicates that the organization understands the adversity marginalized groups experienced in order to earn a place on the ballot. Voto Latino regards to these victories as major milestones that help create a more diverse political system.

Per Reichard (2018) Latinos are the largest minority ethnic group in the United States were unable to cast a vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed by President Lyndon B. Johnson prohibiting states from disenfranchising voters “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (Voting Rights Act, 1965). The theme adversity in voting portrays the hardship Latinos endured to be eligible to vote in elections.

Another image shows two Latinas and one Latino carrying signs that says “citizenship” and “voting rights” (Voto, 2018). The photo is in black and white and there are people in the background holding American flags. This protest indicates that Latinos have experienced adversity when trying to receive basic voting rights. Although the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ensures marginalized voters the right to vote, that didn’t stop voter suppression tactics (Reichard, 2018). More recently, “communities of color have seen voting restrictions increase, particularly in the form of strict photo ID requirements” (Reichard, 2018, para. 7). This image symbolizes the adversity in voting that is still

present today, by showing a powerful image indicating that Latinos will not stop fighting for their right to vote.

The themes from Voto Latino, *adversity in voting*, *Latino vote*, and *agents of change* are important because they show the types of messaging the organization seeks to post on the website and Facebook page. Adversity in voting is important because historically Latinos have experienced adversity while gaining their right to vote (What Resilient, 2015). According to Flores & Lanham (2015), racial exclusion is a limitation of the U.S. democracy and has led to systematic disempowerment of minority voters. The history of racial bias in the United States, has caused adversity amongst Latinos as they feel discouraged to vote because of fear of discrimination (Flores & Lanham, 2015). The theme adversity and voting reiterated by Voto Latino as they acknowledge the hardships Latinos experience at the polls. Voto Latino uses this type of messaging to make Americans aware of what minorities voters may experience during the voting process.

The theme Latino vote describes the many messages Voto Latino publishes in order to encourage Latinos to cast their vote. Per Habib (2019) Latinos are the country's largest, and most important demographic group. During the 2018 mid-term election, 27.3 million Latinos voted and changed the trajectory of the election (Habib, 2019). Voto Latino recognizes the importance of this statistic and seeks to publish messaging that encourages Latinos to vote. Voto Latino understands that if all Latinos voted they could determine the fate of elections (Habib, 2019).

The theme agents of change tailors to young Latinos who are making a difference in their communities (Voto, 2019). Latino youth under the age of 18 make up 25% of the nation's child population (What Resilient, 2015). This demographic has resulted in large

amounts of research being devoted to examining the disparities and inequalities that plague youth in communities of color. However, studying inequalities led to noticing the majority of young Latinos that overcame adversity by becoming advocates of change (What Resilient, 2015). The theme agents of change is important because it recognizes the resilience that many young Latinos possess that led to them becoming agents of change in society. The change needing to occur is the inequalities that minorities experience in the United States. By publishing information about young Latino advocates, Voto Latino is trying to recruit young Latinos to help the organization demolish the inequalities and adversity experienced by the Latino population. Young Latinos also make up a large portion of the youth population and by demonstrating the importance of voting and making changes, Voto Latino can encourage this young population to cast their ballots.

League of Women Voter Themes

After analyzing the content of the League of Women Voters, three themes emerged from the content. The themes were *ending voter suppression, health care reform, and increasing voter participation*. These themes were developed from repetitive information about suppression, the health care reform, and increasing voter turnout.

The theme of ending voter suppression stems from images and text that insinuate voter suppression. For example, an image of several people with different ethnicities hold up signs reading “Defend Yourself Vote”, “Protect My Vote”, and “End Voter Suppression” (LWV, 2019). Again, voter suppression is an effort that prevents eligible voters from registering to vote or voting (Demand the Vote, 2019). The messages on the poster indicate the organization is fighting to prevent voter suppression tactic happening

at the polls. In order to prevent suppression tactics, The League of Women Voters created a pledge that aims to protect American's right to vote (LWV, 2019). By signing this pledge, a person is indicating that they are willing to combat voter suppression and stand against those who try to prevent others from casting a ballot.

According to The League of Women Voters, some states have created strict voter ID laws that are considered to be forms of suppression. According to various articles shared on The League of Women Voters website there are many instances where people have been turned away at the polls, despite being registered, because they didn't have a photo ID in their possession. The article shares the personal testimony of a man named Paul Kearney who was asked to vote a provisional ballot because he left his driver's license at home. Because Kearney didn't show, now he had to come back with his photo ID his vote did not count (SCSJ, 2019). According to the article, the stricter states become with their voter ID policies, the more voter suppression tactics are being formed.

Providing citizens affordable access to healthcare is something the League of Women Voters discusses frequently. The Healthcare Reform is another theme uncovered in the organization's messages. In an image on the League's website a young woman holds up a sign that says, "girls just wanna [sic] have fundamental human rights" (LWV, 2019). This meaning that women should have access to affordable and quality healthcare. The League of Women Voters indicates that they have tried to fight for the Affordable Care Act despite President Trump's promise to eradicate it after becoming elected in 2016. The League of Women Voters have various press releases, that discuss their support for the Affordable Care Act. A major concern for the League is the defunding of

birth control for women claiming it as “a direct assault on a woman’s rights” (LWV, 2019, para. 2).

The final theme from The League of Women Voter’s is increasing voter participation. The organization believes that every person should have a fair an equal opportunity to register to vote and cast a ballot (LWV, 2019). With an image that consists of eight men and six women holding up red, white, and blue signs that say “resister here” the message being sent is that everyone should be involved in voting. This type of image frames voting as a civic duty as an American citizen. This image was taken at a voter registration drive. The purpose of a voter registration drive is set up in a heavily populated area to help citizens become registered to vote. The League partners with people to make them understand their voting rights and help them get ready to cast a ballot for the first time (LWV, 2019).

A partnership between the League of Women Voters and the ride service Lyft helps people without access to transportation get an affordable ride to the polls. The hashtag (#PollUp2018), see Figure 8, was created and used on Facebook to help get the word out about the cheap Lyft rides. The Facebook posts reads “Make Your Voice Heard in This Year’s Election!” (LWV, 2019). This post indicates that The League of Women Voters is willing to go through great lengths in order to increase voter turnout at the polls.

Another way The League of Women Voters seeks to increasing participation at the polls is voter registration drives at Naturalization ceremonies. According to the League (2019), Naturalization ceremonies welcome about 700,000 people into the U.S. each year. These ceremonies, as discussed on an article on The League of Women Voters website, are a great way for the organization to help new citizens register to vote and

reveal information pertinent to voting to new citizens. The article discusses the process of how new citizens are walked through the voter registration process after become U.S. citizens. The voters then become added to the Leagues voter information lists so they can receive the help they need during the voting process.

The League of Women Voters themes ending voter suppression, health care reform, and increasing voter participation are the main topics the organization discusses. The theme ending voter suppression was revealed through constant rhetoric about how minority voters are suppressed at the polls (LWV, 2019). According to Hajnal, Lajveardi, & Nielson (2017) a study conducted using data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study found that “strict identification laws have a differentially negative impact on the turnout of racial and ethnic minorities in primaries and general elections” (Hajnal et al., 2017). Thus, discussing voter suppression tactics can help minority voters better prepare for their trip to the polls.

Health care reform, the next theme from The League of Women Voters, stems from several mentions of its benefits on the organization’s website and Facebook page. During the 2008 election both major party platforms promised change to health care in different ways. Democrats believed “affordable health care...is not just a moral imperative but is a necessary to making our health system workable” (Heinrich & Johnson, 2008). Democrats proposed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which required Americans to have health insurance for 9 out of 12 months (Heinrich & Johnson, 2008). The ACA planned to change the way health care is delivered by mandating that hospital doctors and pharmacists work together electronically by recording health records to better treat their patients (Heinrich & Johnson, 2008). Its main goal was to provide affordable

access to all a concept that Democrats heavily supported. The League of Women Voters supported the ACA by discussing its benefits to women in the United States (LWV, 2019). They even went as far as degrading the Republican party and Donald Trump for trying to demolish the ACA. It's evident that The League of Women Voters has content that is not nonpartisan. For example, the LWV attacked the Trump Administration for trying to take away the ACA by saying that eliminating the ACA "is a direct assault on a woman's rights" (LWV, 2019, para. 2). It was also stated that, "The League of Women Voters strongly opposes this insulting decision by the Trump Administration." (LWV, 2019, para. 6). This type of content raises question as to whether not the League is fully nonpartisan.

The final theme, increasing voter participation evolved from messages promoting the voting processes. Stated in their "About Us" section the League states that they work to register voters, provide voters with election information, and offer voter guides to help decision making (LWV, 2019). The League believes everyone is equal at the ballot box, but only if everyone votes (LWV, 2019). Nonpartisan websites were created to help register voters, take the guesswork out of voting, help people make informed decisions while voting (Fair Vote, 2019). By offering information to voters the League is helping increase participation at the polls by offering helped to first time and uninformed voters.

Rock the Vote Themes

By analyzing messages on Rock the Vote's website and Facebook posts, three themes emerged: *change*, *understand voting laws*, and *empowering young voters*. These themes were established through repetitive messages on the organization's website and Facebook page.

There are several issues in society that effect young people. According to an article by the Rock the Vote, young people are put in harm's way due to the government's decision not to regulate background checks to protect against gun violence and to defund Planned Parenthood. Also, climate change is also a fact that threatens young people today. Per Rock the Vote (2019) these issues have not been addressed by the current administration (Rock the Vote, 2019). The themes change comes from the continuous use of the word when referring to the current state of politics. By voting in elections, the proper change needed to fix the current problems could be initiated by new politicians.

Another article on Rock the Votes page discusses how young people are fighting back against the Trump Administration at the ballot box (Rock the Vote, 2019). President of Rock the Vote, Carolyn DeWitt believes that young people were reacting to the aggressive tactics of the Trump Administration on progressive values (Manchester, 2018). This type of messaging indicates that Rock the Vote supports change in administration and seeks to get young people to vote that that desired changes can be made to administration.

Rock the Vote released the "Why I Vote" campaign which give celebrities the opportunity to share their personal opinions about voting and the election process (Rock the Vote, 2019). Common, an American rapper stars in one of the videos and tells his story about the unjust treatment of inmates in prisons (Rock the Vote, 2019). This topic is something Common is passionate about after hearing of Kalief Browder, who was wrongly incarcerated for 3 years (Rock the Vote, 2019). After being released, Browder committed suicide because of his experience being wrongly accused of a crime (Rock the

Vote, 2019). Common believes that one way to take a stand is to vote for politicians that desire change (Rock the Vote, 2019). The video supports the theme of change by discussing how voting can change the direction of the current governmental policies to better fit the need of Americans (Rock the Vote, 2019).

The next theme understand voting laws comes from messages about the many different voting laws in accordance to each state on Rock the Vote's website. The organization created a chart in the shape of the U.S. to help people easily find voting information in each state. The states are labeled on the map as either leader, slacker, or blocker states, indicating that states with minimum voter restrictions laws are the leaders of the county. The slacker states are the states that are slacking, or behind on initiating policies to help people vote. The blocker states indicate that the state is using tactics to block or prevent people from voting. By helping people understand voting laws Rock the Vote is informing people on important voter registration deadlines.

Rock the Vote also has information about the different state laws on their Facebook page. On one of the posts, Rock the Vote has a list of the names of states with same day voter registration. For example, in Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Minnesota and Wisconsin are some of the states that allow for same day voter registration. This means that voters are eligible to vote the same day that they register to vote. Rock the Vote also posts about polling location times and locations for each state. This helps keep voters aware of the different times and places where they are able to vote. These types of messages reinforce the theme of understanding voter laws because it is providing information to the public about voting and its process so that people can be informed and potentially vote.

The final theme from Rock the Vote is empowering young voters. According to Rock the Vote (2019), young voters are the key to seeking the desired changes Americans want to see. In an article on the Rock the Vote page, president of the organization Carolyn Dewitt explains how the youth in America has proven to be a powerful force that is demanding to be heard (Rock the Vote, 2019). The article discusses how by the year 2020, the current youth will make up 40% of the overall voting population (Rock the Vote, 2019). In the article, there is an image of a young woman who is voting a paper ballot in the state of California for the very first time (Rock the Vote, 2019). This messaging indicates that Rock the Vote is looking to celebrate the power of young people and motivate them to make their voices heard in the upcoming elections.

Another article shared on the page is called “Young Voters are the Heroes” and discusses how in 1971, 18-year-olds were given access to vote in the U.S. Most recently in the 2018 November election, the highest number of 18-29-year-olds in history turned out to vote (Rock the Vote, 2019). The article discusses how some of the major controversies that are affecting the country such as immigration, health care, and lack of diversity are what is motivating the young people to make their voices heard at the polls. By releasing articles about young voters Rock the Vote is empowering young people to express their opinions at the polls.

The 3 themes that evolved from Rock the Vote are change, understand voting laws, and empowering young voters. Various messages of Rock the Vote’s Facebook page refer to change. For example, a Facebook dated November 1st, 2018 discusses the importance of voting in order to “start the change we want to see” (Rock the Vote, 2019,

p. 5). Another post on November 6th, 2018 the day before the November 7th, 2018 election, says “Today is our only day to create the change we want to see” (Rock the Vote, 2018, para. 8). The change being referred to is the fact that prior to the November 2018 election Republicans had control of the House of Representatives. However, after the election results arrived in 2018, the Democrats took control of the house adding several women to their ranks (Martin & Burns, 2018). This indicates that Rock the Vote is leaning more towards the Democratic party and was looking for the change needed. This is shown through shared article posted on November 13th, (shown in figure 9) indicating that “young voters are pushing back on [the] Trump Administration” (Rock the Vote, 2019, p. 6). This indicates the the content Rock the Vote is posting is not solely nonpartisan

Figure 9 Rock the Vote: Trump Administration (Rock the Vote, November 13th, 2018)



The next theme understanding voting laws comes from many messages about the different laws according to each state (Rock the Vote, 2019). This theme is important because Rock the Vote wants each voter to be prepared when hitting the polls. Each

State's election laws are different making it hard for voters to understand what they need to do before being eligible to vote. Rock the Vote even goes as far as labeling states with strict voting laws "slacker" and "blocker" states and states with less restrictive voting laws "leader" states (Rock the Vote, 2019, p. 3). Per Wines (2019) during the years Republicans swept state and congressional elections they enacted laws that made it harder to register to vote by imposing strict ID requirements and curbing voter registration drives. Democrats seeks to expand access to the voting box to make voting more accessible (Wines, 2019). Rock the Vote aggress more with the Democratic party when it comes to state voter registration laws making their ideologies less nonpartisan and more partisan with the Democratic party.

The last theme empowering young voters stems from Rock the Votes main target audience, young people. The main purpose of Rock the Vote is "to build political power for young people" buy empowering them to get involved (Rock the Vote, 2019, p. 4). Research shows that young people ages 18-29 make up 13% of the voting population (Beck & Kitchener, 2018). Rock the Vote seeks to let young people know that their participation is important (Rock the Vote, 2019). This type of content aligns with the nonpartisan information that is supposed to be presented on Rock the Votes website and Facebook pages.

Underlying Themes

After analyzing the websites and Facebook page of Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote there were three themes that connected the three nonprofit organizations. These themes were: *suppression*, *the power of women*, and *get out and vote*. These themes emerged from repetitive messages that are emphasized by the

three organizations together. Table 1 shows the various themes generated across the three organizations websites and Facebook pages and Table 2 shows themes found in each of the nonpartisan voting organizations website and Facebook pages as well as the overview of themes found in all three.

Table 1 Overview of Themes found in Three Nonpartisan Voter

Voto Latino	LWV	Rock the Vote
Adversity	Ending Voter Suppression	Change
Latino Vote	Health Care Reform	Understanding Voting Laws
Agents of Change	Increasing Vote Participation	Empowering Young Voters

Table 2 Common Themes found in Three Nonpartisan Voter Information Websites

Website	Individual Themes	Common Themes
Voto Latino	Adversity Latino Vote Agents of Change	Voter suppression Power of women Get out and vote
LWV	Ending Voter Suppression Health Care Reform Increasing voter participation	Voter suppression Power of women Get out and vote
Rock the Vote	Change Understanding voting laws Empowering young voters	Voter suppression Power of women Get out and vote

Suppression was referenced throughout all three of the websites and Facebook pages. On Voto Latino, suppression was mentioned when discussing how previously the Hispanic vote has been ignored in several elections. This frames voting as a privilege that

should be opened to all American citizens. The League of Women Voters provide several messages about suppression of women voters. For example, the website article about the strict Voter ID laws that kept many people from casting a ballot in various elections. Rock the Vote also posts information on Facebook with an image that shows people protesting in order to protect their right to vote and end voter suppression. Suppression is a recurring theme because it is discussed throughout all three of the organizations' website and Facebook posts.

The Power of Women

The theme the power of women occurs throughout all three of the nonpartisan organizations. Voto Latino focuses on the theme by providing an image on its page with the caption “Knock. Knock. Diversity is at the [door]” (Voto, 2019). The post shows various women making their way into a meeting space where white men gather to discuss politics (Voto Latino, 2019). This image is shown below in Figure 10. The League of Women Voters is a website overseen strictly by women to empower other women (LWV, 2019). The image of the young white woman and African American women protesting out in front of the court house with signs indicates the strong power of women (LWV, 2019). Lastly, Rock the Vote celebrates the victory of the 35 women elected into the U.S. House of Representatives by posting an image shown in Figure 11, of women locking arms in unity showing their true power and strength in the political arena (Rock the Vote, 2019).

Figure 10 Voto Latino: The New Yorker (Blitts, November 18th, 2018)



Figure 11 Rock the Vote: Women in Power (Rock the Vote, December 19th, 2018)



Get out and Vote

The final theme that connects Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote together is the theme get out and vote. All of the organizations frame voting as a civic duty necessary to complete for desired changes. For example, Voto Latino uses its messages to show that Latinos are a vital part of their communities and the Latino vote is needed to change the face of elections (Voto Latino, 2019). The League of Women

Voters indicates that women have worked hard to gain their right to vote and exercising that right is essential to democracy (LWV, 2019). Lastly, Rock the Vote says it is important to get out and vote in order to see changes in different policies (Rock the Vote, 2019). All organization mention the importance of voting several times throughout the websites and Facebook pages thus contributing to the final underlying theme.

The underlying themes presented are voter suppression, the power of women and get out and vote. Voter suppression refers to the several restrictive voter ID laws that were passed by Republicans. The three nonpartisan organization mention voter suppression referring to the tough voter registration laws including ID restrictions in various states (Voto Latino, 2019; LWV, 2019; Rock the Vote, 2019). According to Democratic law makers strict voter ID laws are a form of suppression (Blumenthal & Levine, 2019). This indicates that all three organizations side with Democrats when it comes to strict voter ID laws in the United States.

The theme power of women comes from information that discusses the 2018 November election and how women took control of the House (Voto Latino, 2019; LWV, 2019; Rock the Vote, 2019). According to Pew Research (2019), women now make up 24% of the House of Representatives and 25% of the Senate. However, all organizations mention that there is more work to do for women to gain equality in politics (Voto Latino, 2019; LWV, 2019; Rock the Vote, 2019). All three organizations push for equality of women and minorities in government and recognize that everyone's voices should be heard (Voto Latino, 2019; LWV, 2019; Rock the Vote, 2019).

Lastly, get out and vote is the final theme that is common in the three organizations together. Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote

believe that voting is one of the most important rights and responsibilities U.S. citizens have (Voto Latino, 2019; LWV, 2019; Rock the Vote, 2019). It's important to vote because an election could be decided by a single vote and history could be changed because of one single vote (Knox County, 2019). That's why all organizations make it a point to have information about voting and its process. When voters are informed of the importance of voting they are more likely to get out and vote.

Limitations

Due to technical limitations during research, the Facebook posts could only be accessed until the month of June because of the large amount of posts on each of the organization's Facebook pages. Therefore, only six months of Facebook posts were accessed for the study. Another limitation was the lack of Facebook posts on the League of Women Voters Facebook page. Voto Latino and Rock the Vote had several more Facebook posts than the League allowing for more data to generate themes for the research. A final limitation was the inability to control change to the websites that occurred over the course of data collection. Rock the Vote's website had been edited so that some information on the page was different from when the research process originally started. While the 3 sites are representative of nonpartisan voter information, there are other sites I could have selected (e.g. Greenhouse, Change Politics, Vote 411).

Implications for Future Research

While analyzing the three voting websites I found several images and messages that were opposing President Donald Trump. This type of messaging could be analyzed to determine if websites are posting nonpartisan content. Other research studies could analyze the other social media outlets to complete the study, such as Instagram and

Facebook for more variety of content. The current research study adds to the literature over framing theory. It also benefits voters by breaking down the content on Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote to show what information each website houses. This research is valuable to the world of academia because it gives pertinent information about nonprofit organization content and could serve as a foundation for similar textual analysis studies.

Chapter Summary

The final chapter includes an overview of the 12 themes found throughout Voto Latino, League of Women Voters, and Rock the Vote's websites and Facebook pages. The themes emerged from visual images and rhetoric surrounding the topics for each of the organizations. The themes are discussed in-depth in the chapter. The themes found in Voto Latino included adversity, Latino vote, and agents of change. The themes found in League of Women Voters were ending voter suppression, health care reform, and increasing voter participation. The themes found in Rock the Vote were change, understanding voter laws, and empowering young voters. Three common themes that occurred on all three websites were voter suppression, power of women, and get out and vote. Lastly, the limitations of the study are discussed in detail as well as the implications for future research.

"Someone struggled for your right to vote, use it"

-- Susan B. Anthony

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Textual Analysis Guide - Voto Latino

	Description	Denotation	Connotation
Main Page	<p>The web page consists of various shades of red white and blue to present its messages. At the top of the main page there are several social media icons: Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, Snap Chat, Tumblr, and Medium. There are also two additional links to the side of the social media icons that read “register to vote” and “donate”. The sub headline icons are “about us”, “what we do”, “events”, “get involved”, and “voter information”. The main page is divided into four more sections. On the first section, in giant bold font there is a message that says, “Donate today to support dreamers”. Immediately under that message is a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The web page desire to have its viewers reach out to them via social media. - The register to vote and donate section indicates that this is very important to the VL. - Neatly organized to find information relevant to VL and the voting process. - In 2018, more Latino voters voted than ever before. - The background consists of men and women who are African 	<p>It’s important for this organization to receive followers on social media and donations to keep this non-profit alive. The more Latinos who register to vote the better off the organization as a whole. The Latino community has continued to break records as 2018 was one of the highest turnouts for Latino voters. Different cultures are very important to VL. In their images on the website African Americans and Latinos are shown often. Which shows how culturally diverse this organization is. It also shows these culturally diverse women and men with protest signs and fists in the air. Which indicate they are</p>

	<p>large donate button. The webpage in long and consists of multiple parts. After scrolling slightly downward entering the second section, there is another message that says “VOTO LATINO VOTERS BREAK RECORDS IN 2018” and “We made our voices heard and showed the power of our families and communities at the ballot box”. Behind this message is a distinct background. Faded in the colors red, white, and blue are 2 Latino women, 2 Latino men, and 2 African American women. Also pictured is the Statue of Liberty and the Texas State Capitol. There are other images imbedded in this background as well: a large curled up fist, a megaphone, and several voting signs. The third section is titled “Issue Spotlight”, it is captioned “Here’s where and how Latino voters can</p>	<p>American and Hispanic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Texas is shown in an image along with other images that show protest and fighting. - Statistics show that Latino presents at the polls is growing significantly - Defending Dreamers is an important aspect of this organization which shows through various messages. - Latinos are powerful because of their numbers. - DACA is an issue of importance due to how it affects the Latino community and their immigrant families. 	<p>fighting for something important related to voting rights. DACA is another issue that is prevalent throughout the website. The term critical time to fight ensures that this is a major issue VL advocates for. The video seeks to mock Donald Trump and his lack of information surrounding Mexico and the crisis at the border. Donald Trump said something along the lines of Mexico building bigger...faster...and stronger...vehicles to take over the border patrol and come to the United States illegally. This is Donald Trump believing that a wall should be built at the border to prevent illegal immigrants from coming to the U.S. illegally. The video is an intense scene from the movie <i>Mad Max: Fury Road</i>. This video was posted to make fun of</p>
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	<p>shape 2018".</p> <p>Underneath there are three pictures with numbers beneath them: 1. Our Numbers We're getting bigger. And bigger.</p> <p>2. In Every Race Local, state, and national</p> <p>3. At the Polls In the general election</p> <p>After clicking on the link associated with number, it explains in detail what they mean e.g. 1. Latinos are the second fastest growing group of Americans. The fourth section is labeled "The Latino Voter BY THE NUMBERS". The website has statistics written larger and a Tweet (Twitter) or Share (Facebook) icon under each statistic. 803K, the "Number of Latinos who turn 18 each year". 27.3M, is the "Number of eligible Latino voters", and 11.9%, is the "projected percentage of all eligible voters who are Latino. The</p>	<p>- A video message that show president Donald Trump being mocked when he discusses the issues at the Mexican border.</p>	<p>President Trump and his behavior regarding the border.</p>
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	<p>next section is titled “Be Our Eyes and Ears”, the caption says that if you see a story or even, we should know about to share it here. The “SUBMIT NOW” icon is located just beneath the caption. The background on this section is students learning in the classroom, while a young, Latino women is staring off into the distance. The entire background is blurred to, so the viewer is only able to make out her face. The final section is labeled “VL highlights”. There are three different stories under the highlight’s sections.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defending Dreamers 2. VL Power Summit: Austin 3. Invest in VL <p>For section 1, Defending Dreamers, the title is placed in a distinct background. The background is different shades of Blue, with a young Latino woman and</p>		
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	<p>man visible in the image. The setting of the background takes place at a protest, and there are various signs being held up by people (unable to make out features). There are only two signs visible to the eye on this background. The first reads “We are Power” and has the image of a woman and a man locking arms in the air. The other sign says can’t stop wont stop. When clicking on the image, an explanation appears directing users to a new page, it begins with a paragraph about how “On September 5th, the Trump administration decided to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, leaving 800,00 immigrant youth and their families in limbo”. The paragraph leaded on to discuss how “individuals who came to the U.S. as children were looking for opportunity when</p>		
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	<p>they surrendered their personal information to the Department of Homeland Security and signed up for DACA”. The paragraph ends with a sentence that says there has “never been a more critical moment to fight for dreamers and a permanent legislative solution for immigrant youth”.</p> <p>The second image is an actual picture of a women standing on stage in a conference type setting. There are several Latino men and women sitting at tables listening to the woman speak. By clicking on the image, the viewer is directed to a page with the City of Austin, TX in the background. The entire image is a golden yellow color. Here the viewer is encouraging to register for the “conference for emerging leaders”.</p> <p>Lastly, the Invest in VL section has a picture of five Latino</p>		
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	<p>women hunched over together to take a picture. The picture taker has several cellphones in her hand. This section discusses how Voto Latino is growing, having chapters on 25 college campuses, 200+ local events, and over 700 volunteers.</p> <p>Ending the webpage there is a revolving feed of Instagram posts from Voto Latino. The first post is a video of President Trump. It is a video of president trump discussing how immigrants enter the United States in “unbelievable vehicles” that are said to break down current border barriers. He describes the vehicles and “Stronger, Bigger, and faster vehicles”. After trumps portion of the video the video is interrupted by screen that says, “meanwhile in Mexico”. The video shows large vehicles with spikes on the tops and with fire coming out the</p>		
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	<p>top. The setting is dirty and appears to be desert. The next post is a young female and male from around the 1960s. They are holding a sign that reads “Note to President Trump: The People United Will Never Be Defeated”. The next post is a picture of a young Latino women smiling at the camera. It appears she is sitting in a room in the white house. The webpage is ended by links that read: Register to Vote, Recruit Friends, and Donate.</p>		
Sub Headline	Description	Denotation	Connotation
About Us (Team)	<p>This page starts with a headline that reads “Donate Today to Support Dreamers” along with an icon that leads to a section where the viewer can donate. The title of the About US section is placed in front of a picture of several young Latino men and women. One man and one woman placed towards the front of the group are</p>	<p>The men and women are at a conference that empowers young Latino and Latinos to be leaders and advocates. There lanyards indicate they are at some exclusive event.</p>	<p>The young Latino men and women are advocates that are trying to learn to empower others to Vote and becoming leaders of their communities.</p>

	holding flowers. Each other person has a lanyard placed around their neck.		
Mission & History	<p>Mission & History is the next subline. It starts with a paragraph about the mission of Voto Latino labeling is as a “pioneering civic media organization that seeks to transform America by recognizing Latinos’ innate leadership. The paragraph discussed how the mission is to “educate and empower Latinos to be agents of change”. Direct underneath the mission is the names and pictures of the founders: Maria Teresa Kumar (Presidents and CEO) and Rosario Dawson (Co-Founder). There is a brief not from each founder that discusses how they began the journey to creating Voto Latino.</p>	<p>This organization seeks to recognize Latinos’ and their leadership skills to help empower others.</p>	<p>The mission of this organization is to recruit other Latinos to be agents of change and help others realize their duties as Latinos...to be advocates for one another.</p>
Careers	<p>The next portion, careers, is a very small section. It begins by listing staff openings with a small note that says, “We</p>	<p>This is the career section where the organization seeks to find people.</p>	<p>This organization looks for agents of change to advocate for others who don’t know how to use their voices yet.</p>

	like amazing people who want to do life-changing work”. It then lists the current job opening available at Voto Latino. The back ground is white.		
Press	<p>The next section has several blue icons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Releases & Statements 2. VL in the News <p>This section asks viewers to “keep up with us right here on everything from what we have to say on issues in the news to stories about VL’s work.</p> <p>The first icon, when clicked, gives a list of press releases and statements made by VL. The second icon shows a list of news articles that discuss VL. Underneath the blue icons there are two questions with clickable icons to the side: Want to get in touch with our press office? (Contact Us) Want to Request a Speaker? (Click Here).</p>	Voto Latino has several options to look at and understand the work they are doing in communities.	<p>They offer up information on how to contact the press which indicates they like to have their stories shown in the media. This likely helps the organization receive more followers.</p> <p>There is also a button that allows a person to request a speaker. This shows that VL is willing to send people to go speak to communities about the importance of Latinos presence at the polls.</p>

Awards	<p>This section has a list of Awards: Cynopsis Social Good Award, Level Playing Field Institute's 2016 Award Tecla Best Social Good or Cause-Related Campaign, LATISM Best of Award Webby Award Honoree – 2009</p> <p>White House Project EPIC Award</p> <p>Webby Award Honoree – 2008</p> <p>Myspace Impact Award</p> <p>NAMIC Best In Ethnic Marketing & Diversity</p> <p>Newsweek Women in Leadership Award</p> <p>Hispanic Heritage Award for Vision</p> <p>ProMax Gold Award</p> <p>Webby Award Honoree – 2009</p> <p>White House Project EPIC Award</p> <p>Webby Award Honoree – 2008</p> <p>MySpace Impact Award</p> <p>NAMIC Best In Ethnic Marketing & Diversity</p> <p>Newsweek Women in Leadership Award</p> <p>Hispanic Heritage Award for Vision</p> <p>ProMax Gold Award</p>	Voto Latino has a list of various awards.	These awards show VL pride and success as an organization as a whole.
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Annual Reports	This section seeks to highlight the work done by VL members and volunteers. By thanking generous supporters for helping VL build and strengthen the financial base to do more for and with the community. The annual reports date back to 2013. Each report synthesizes the work the VL has done each year. The reports start at 2013 but end at 2016.	Annual reports easily show.	This is a requirement in order to receive non-profit organization funding. It also is a great way to show off all of the great work the organization is doing on a yearly basis.
Headline	Description	Denotation	Connotation
What We Do	This small section is titled: What We Do The background images is a young woman with a Michigan hoodie and a young man with a backpack on signing up for something on Macs. The Macs are sitting on a table opened to the public, and there are a line of students waiting for their turn to sign up.	A young Latino women and man are either registering to vote or signing up to receive more information about Voto Latino. It is likely that they are at a High School or College campus.	This shows VL willingness to reach out to young voters. Young Voters have the lowest voting percentage and it makes sense why VL would be advocating at different schools.
Sub Headlines	Description	Denotation	Connotation
Our Focus	This section titled “Our Work”, explains how VL work evolved from voter registration to taking	This shows a list of the issues VL finds important. Firstly, Voter Education and Registration. An	It appears the list of sections the order of importance of each category. Primarily, Voter Registration is

	<p>on other key issues that impact the Latino community. There are five icons that make up this section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voter Education and Registration 2. Immigration and Citizenship 3. Social Justice 4. Health 5. Professional Development <p>1. This background shows a white male helping a Latino male register to Vote on an I-Pad. This is an actual image that has been taken. When clicking on this image it redirects the viewer to a page about Voter Registration. It allows the viewer to check their own Voter Registration and Register to Vote.</p> <p>2. This tab shows a picture of immigrants holding up their hands to the American flag, the people in the picture backs are turned to towards the audience so it is difficult to make out their appearance of gender.</p>	<p>image shows a white male helping a Latino male register to vote. The next is Immigration and Citizenship. The image of the American flag is held high while other people from a distance our standing from within. Social Justice is important as well as health and professional development.</p>	<p>the most important and Immigration/ Citizenship and Social Justice go second and third. An image of protest occurs within the Social justice section.</p>
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	<p>The American flag is raised high and in vibrant colors while the rest of the image is darker.</p> <p>3. This image is of people crouching down on the ground, protesting something unknown. The people appear to be young Latinos, but the signs are too small to make out.</p> <p>4. A young Latino women softly smiles at the camera. She is wearing baby blue scrubs and has a stethoscope around her neck, this indicates that she works in the medical field.</p> <p>5. A group of professionally dress Latino men and women pose in front of a VL background.</p>		
Our Work	<p>This section discusses the work done by VL. “All the work that we focus on is part of a pipeline meant to serve and empower our community. That pipeline is made up of three parts: civic engagement, issue advocacy, and</p>	<p>This discusses the importance of the work done by young Latinos. The three parts suggest what issues that are most important to Latinos such as civic engagement, issue advocacy, and leadership</p>	<p>The image of the young family shows the importance of happy and healthy families. They are holding the baby’s hands which indicates a message of togetherness. The Affordable Care Act. is mentioned under</p>

	<p>leadership development. Each other the pipeline's three parts in separated with images. Issues Advocacy discusses how VL advocates on issues that are important to Latinos, such as race, relation, or health. The image associated with Issue Advocacy is a young Latino family with a small baby. They are admiring the baby and holding its hands. The father is carrying the baby in a strap on baby carrier. The next section is the affordable care act. It shows the same medical professional woman from an earlier section smiling widely at the camera. Lastly, the Leadership development section shows various conferences that young Latinos may "connect with though leaders, elected officials, and industry experts to network and provide the tools they need to make changes". The</p>	<p>development. Images are shown in each section.</p>	<p>the health section. Created by Obama, this mandated insurance program was created to offer health care to men and women who could not afford it otherwise.</p>
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	conferences are: VL Power Summit Pop-Up: Los Angeles, Sarcramento, and the VL Power Summit.		
Headline	Description	Connotation	Denotation
Get Involved	This section shows a young Latino male with a clip board smiling directly at the camera. Behind him are two Latino women appearing to be getting volunteers as well. Across the male's chest is a large banner that says "Get Involved"	Involvement is something that anyone can do.	Showing normal everyday people getting involved relays the message that anyone can become involved with the organization regardless of race and gender.
Sub Headline			
Give Now	This section has 3 large blue icons: Donate Online, Donate by Mail, and Corporate Partners. Each icon that says donate has an donate now icon that allows the viewer to click the icon and type in credit card information to donate quickly.	The "donate" and "sign-up" here are icons often on every page.	It's important for Non-Profit organizations to receive funding and volunteers.
Volunteer	This small section has a "Sign me up" icon. There is an image of a Latino Women smiling directly at the camera. On top of the	Volunteer icons are prevalent throughout the website.	It's vital for Non-Profits to receive volunteers for their organization. Without volunteers the organization

	<p>picture there is a banner that says “Like What We are Doing?” Join the VL family.</p>		<p>would not thrive. Non-Profits are only about to pay one or two employees that rest of the organization is kept together by volunteers.</p>
Shop	<p>The next section has an image of a white T-Shirt behind a light blue and red background with VotoLatino directly towards the bottom. The shirt has #NoBanNoWall on it right in the middle. Underneath the images is “Voto Latino Swag” and an icon that says “Buy Now”. This redirects the users to a cart where they are able to enter there credit card or PayPal information to purchase VL swag.</p>	<p>Voto Latino sales a variety of merchandise with different logos. Primarily, a shirt that says #NoBanNoWall.</p>	<p>Since immigration is an issue of importance it is not surprising that the organization does not want a ban on immigrants entering the US or a wall separating the US and Mexico. Immigration is an issue that is very close to VL.</p>
Share Online	<p>This section leads by saying “One of the best ways to show support is to actually show it”. There are three Twitter background that the user can download to their profile on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The first one has various sentences: I am VL. I</p>	<p>This section allows people to download information pictures and banners for people to use on their social media pages. They show several different icons with several different messages. Some with “Girl Power” type appeals and others that</p>	<p>Social Media is the best way to get a message to a lot of people. By using these sort of appeals VL is able to appeal to a large amount of people and spread their messages.</p>

	<p>am an activist. I am a daughter. I am a son. I am a leader. I am brave. The second one shows a white women, a Latino women, and a African American women holding signs that say “Girl Power” and “All of Us must be free, or none”. In the background there are two distinct signs one says “We will NOT be silent” and the other says “Do Not Enter”. The banner over the icon says “Civic engagement matters”. The last sign says “Our comunidad needs you more than ever. Breathe. Grieve. Reflect. <u>March on.</u> There is not a specific background on this image.</p>	<p>appeal to Latino Voters.</p>	
Headline	Description	Denotation	Connotation
Voter Information	<p>Just like on the home page of VL. The banner appears on this page that says “Donate Today to Support Dreamers” with a donate icon that leads to a page where viewers can enter their credit card</p>	<p>This last page is all about Voter Registration. Viewers are able to donate and contact Voto Latino to receive information pertinent to voting. It also has the November 6th</p>	<p>Voting is a difficult process and in each state, there are different rules and regulations set in place that require a lot of reseach before heading to the polls. In Texas, a voter must be registered 30</p>

	<p>numbers to donate a specific amount of money. Under the donate icon, another icon is visible that says “To Report Issues at the Polls, call 888-VE-VOTA. Under this banner a background image appears. This image has the I-Phone calender icon with November 6 on it, a megaphone, someone casting a ballot with VL’s logo on it, a Vote Here sign, a giant question mark, a curled fist, and a young male and female of Latino origins. The banner on the picture reads “Get Ready to Vote”. There are two additional clickable Icons that say “When & Where to Vote” and “Pledge to Vote” When clicking on the When & Where to Vote it takes the viewer to the cite call ballotready.com. When clicking on the “Pledge to Vote” it takes the viewer up to the top to the donate now icon.</p>	<p>election date as well as a list of polling locations so that people can get out and vote.</p>	<p>days prior to an election and bring a photo ID. Laws have since change and now individuals are able to sign an affidavit stating they do not have a photo ID and they may vote with something else. Because of all the different voting laws set in place by each state VL must stay up to date with each states policy to be able to answer question about the voting process in each state. If voters are unable to access information they are less likely to get out and vote.</p>
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	<p>Scrolling down there is an advertisement from Lyft. That says Free Lyft to the Polls. By texting VOTENV to 73179 users can receive a free ride to the nearest polling location to vote. After the Lyft Ad, there is a section for frequently asked questions:</p> <p>How do I know if I'm registered to vote?</p> <p>When is the next election?</p> <p>I'm registered, but I've moved or want to change my party affiliation. What do I do?</p> <p>Where is my polling location?</p> <p>What do I need to bring to the polls?</p> <p>How do I vote early or absentee?</p> <p>I live abroad. How do I register to vote and vote?</p> <p>I'm in the armed forces. How do I</p>		
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	<p>register to vote and vote?</p> <p>I printed my voter registration form and I realized some of my information is wrong. What should I do?</p> <p>I received my voter card in the mail and some information is wrong. What should I do?</p> <p>I ran into issues at the polls. How do I report this?</p> <p>My question wasn't answered. Where can I get more info?</p> <p>¿Necesitas esta información en Español?</p> <p>By clicking on these questions, the user is redirected to answered questions.</p> <p>Lastly, on this page there is a section where users can enter their phone number and be reminded of important voting deadlines and dates. There is a box that says "Text Me" and</p>		
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	users can type in there phone number to receive updates.		
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