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Framing in the New Media Environment

The media landscape has undergone significant transformations with the rise of social media, access to infinite online news sources, and the perpetuation of an accelerated news cycle through 24-hour cable news channels. These dynamics have reshaped how information is disseminated, consumed, and interpreted by the public. How has framing evolved or remained the same in the current media environment?

Framing refers to the strategic presentation of information by the media to shape the interpretation of an issue or event among the audience. It involves selecting certain aspects, perspectives, and frames of reference while excluding others, ultimately influencing how individuals perceive and understand a given topic. The power of framing lies in its ability to shape public opinion, set agendas, and influence political behavior. The contemporary media environment is characterized by the proliferation of social media platforms, unlimited access to online news sources, and the constant flow of information facilitated by 24-hour cable news channels. These factors have intensified the competition for attention, created echo chambers, and accelerated the news cycle.

The media's role in shaping Americans' political information, beliefs, and behavior has become more complex in the new media landscape. The availability of diverse news sources and

social media platforms has expanded the range of perspectives accessible to the public, potentially challenging dominant frames and providing alternative viewpoints. However, the fragmented nature of the media environment has also led to the emergence of echo chambers, where individuals are exposed primarily to information that aligns with their existing beliefs, reinforced by social media algorithms and personalized news feeds. Furthermore, the accelerated news cycle driven by 24-hour cable news channels prioritizes speed over depth, resulting in simplified and sensationalized coverage focusing on conflict, scandal, and spectacle rather than nuanced analysis and context.

Framing remains significant in this evolving media landscape, although its manifestations have changed. Traditional news outlets still play a role in setting the agenda and framing political issues. However, social media platforms and online news sources allow individuals to actively engage in framing through sharing, commenting, and reshaping news content. Online discussions, viral hashtags, and user-generated content can amplify or challenge dominant frames, reshaping public discourse. This dynamic interaction between media organizations, influencers, and the public adds new layers to the framing process.

Social media platforms also play a crucial role in disseminating and amplifying framed messages. Users can easily share and comment on news stories, contributing to the spread of specific frames and narratives. The dynamic interaction between traditional media outlets and social media platforms influences public perception and political behavior.

While the new media environment presents challenges, such as the potential for misinformation and the reinforcement of existing beliefs, it also offers opportunities for diverse perspectives to be heard. The accessibility of online news sources and the ability to engage

directly with content creators allow individuals to challenge dominant frames and introduce alternative narratives. The power of social media movements and grassroots activism demonstrates the potential for individuals to counteract mainstream framing and push for alternative viewpoints in shaping public discourse.

The concept of framing has adapted to the current media environment, where social media, online news sources, and 24-hour cable news channels have reshaped information dissemination and consumption patterns. The media's role in framing political issues has both increased and transformed. While individuals now have access to a broader range of information sources, the fragmentation and polarization of the media landscape have also intensified. Acknowledging the hybridization of established theories and the complex interplay between traditional media and social media is crucial for understanding the evolving influence of framing in shaping public perception and political behavior.

Works Cited

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