Parasocial Interactions Online: Candidate Intimacy in Webpages and Facebook

Stephanie G. Schartel Dunn
and Gwendelyn S. Nisbett

Abstract
Research presented in this article assesses cognitive processing and behavioral outcome differences that occur when the public interacts with political candidates' webpages as opposed to viewing their Facebook pages. Further, an exploration into perceptions individuals have of these candidates and the potential for developing parasocial relationships is pursued. Findings suggest that perceptions of intimacy are directly related to perceptions of candidates' credibility and potential political action; these findings have clear implications on future political marketing strategies.

It is without question that our society interacts with technology and mediated messages more now than ever before. We form and maintain relationships via online channels; as we do so it becomes increasingly important to examine the various types of relationships formed. Parasocial interactions, a building block for relationship cultivated by technology-based channels forms when an audience member develops a pseudo interpersonal relationship with a character or media personality (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Parasocial relationships are more likely to form when an individual has repeated or prolonged exposure to media that showcases a particular media

Stephanie Schartel Dunn is an Assistant Professor at Missouri Western State University, and Gwendelyn Nisbett is an Assistant Professor at the University of North Texas. Correspondence can be directed to sscharteldunn@missouriwestern.edu

figure (Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010). Though the viewer never actually meets nor formally interacts with media personalities, viewers form an interpersonal relationship and develop feelings for the character or media personality. After extended exposure to media channels, and repeated parasocial interactions, some individuals begin to think of media or political figures as friends (Semmler, 2007).

Though parasocial relationships are generally thought as developing through television viewing, Schramm and Wirth (2010) indicate that television is not the only medium through which parasocial relationships develop. Parasocial relationships may also develop as the product of repeated parasocial interaction that occurs through any medium of interaction with a media figure, including online interactions. Online interactions allow individuals to form primary impressions of others (Walther et al., 2008). Despite previous research involving Facebook and perceptions of others, there is still a lack of understanding how (a) the online medium affects impressions, and (b) if parasocial evaluations impact impressions.

The potential for parasocial interactions to occur with political candidates is particularly important to examine as new technologies develop and relationships are formed and maintained online. As was illustrated in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, candidates are increasingly using social networking websites to disseminate campaign information and to connect with their constituents. Further, voters use Facebook and other social media as a way to "feel involved with what's going on with other people," (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010, p. 357).

The research presented in this paper examined parasocial interactions individuals had with political candidates online, both via Facebook and traditional candidate webpages. The study first examined levels of perceived intimacy of the online interaction (as intimacy is a predictor of parasocial relationship development) and how intimacy differs between online channels. Second, elaborating on Walther's assertation that impressions form via online channels (1993), the differences on how candidates are evaluated via the two online channels were determined. Parasocial interactions and relationships are not based on one particular theory, therefore, in this study, elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b) was employed to provide a theoretical foundation allowing us to ana-

lyze message processing.

Background

Voters want their political candidates to possess the ability to champion political goals they support as well as a candidate's ideals to match up with their own (Erikson, Mackuen, & Stimson, 2002). Though it may seem a candidate should have similar values and priorities as their constituents so as to be perceived as having the ability to champion causes the voter supports, which is not always the case. As evidenced by the number of independent and undecided registered voters, American's are moving away from the traditional party-line evaluations (Bartels, 2000), opting to evaluate individual candidates rather than relying solely on party identifiers. Therefore, persuasion and candidate-voter interactions have an increasingly important role in campaign outcomes.

Parasocial interactions allow for increased perception of value similarity. Just as individuals perceive their traditional interpersonal relationship partners as holding similar values and beliefs (Mutz & Martin, 2001), it is likely that individuals in parasocial relationships perceive that their relationship partner holds values and beliefs similar to their own. Though these perceptions are not a requisite for parasocial interactions, understanding how online interactions are interpreted and processed may prove helpful in campaign planning.

As in traditional interpersonal relationships, parasocial interactions are instances that, when grouped, may lead to relationship development. Similarly, a series of parasocial interactions can result in the development of parasocial relationships (Giles, 2002; Hartmann & Schramm, 2006; Schiappa, Allen, & Gregg, 2006; Vorderer, 1998). When an individual has prolonged exposure or mediated interactions with a particular media figure, the relationship they have with that media figure grows. Parasocial interactions may occur anytime a viewer feels a degree of intimacy with the media personality they observe (Newcomb, 1982; Pfau & Parrott, 1993). Therefore, in this study it is important that we determine perceptions of intimacy that voters have with candidates online.

Social networking websites allow individuals to become "friends" with politicians and "like" causes which allow users to have access to continuously updated campaign information. Since Facebook is

a social media networking site that many individuals use to keep in contact with current relationship partners it is logical to believe that users will perceive higher levels of intimacy when they interact with a candidate on Facebook than they will have when they view candidate web pages.

H1: Users of candidate Facebook pages will be more likely to feel as though they have had a more intimate interaction with the candidate than individuals who interacted with more formal candidate web pages.

Beyond initial parasocial interactions, Facebook users are also able to ask questions or leave comments for the campaigns, thus allowing for an interactive and somewhat interpersonal relationship to develop with those politicians. This interactivity, especially when coupled with a more intimate setting that social networking sites provide, allows for an increase of parasocial relationships to form.

In recent years, parasocial interactions and infotainment have been used more often as a means for disseminating campaign information to potential voters (Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010). Political public relations managers view social networking websites as a medium for the dissemination of specific political viewpoints (Trammell, 2006). When people use the Internet to elaborate, or gain information on a topic, they generally find more in-depth information (Cho et al., 2009). Therefore, when elaboration incorporates information from interpersonal-type websites (e.g. Facebook) it is possible that it will be given more credence than information from traditional websites.

Online Opinion Formation

Though many early studies show the American voter as an ill-informed, apathetic individual that cannot handle the responsibility of voting (Althaus, 1998), more recent studies show that the American populace is capable of forming opinions and voting accordingly (Erikson, Mackuen, & Stimson, 2002). To discover how individuals form their opinions, it is important to look at the information presented to those individuals (Druckman, 2001). Voters look to television, the Internet, and other forms of mass media for political information (Hansen & Benoit, 2005; Ancu & Cozma, 2009; Cho et al., 2009). As technology advances, the way people gain political information does as well.

Cho et al. (2009) found a significant difference in interaction

with online news outlets between 2000 and 2004 in relation with those users' overall political knowledge. Their study indicated that as exposure to online advertisements increased, so too did information seeking. These findings inform us that when individuals are exposed to online messages, they have an increased likelihood to elaborate, or seek out more information. As the social networking site Myspace came about in 2003 and Facebook quickly followed, both sites quickly became a favorite channel of communication for politicians (Ancu & Cozma, 2009). Perhaps social networking websites account for the differences in where individuals acquire political information that Cho et al. (2009) found between 2000 and 2004.

R1: Do Individuals perceive higher levels of argument quality after viewing information on social networking sites than they do after viewing traditional candidate websites?

Site users need to have a relatively advanced level of information processing comprehension in order to decode meaning and make accurate inferences from information found online (Kintsch, 1998; Rapp & van den Broek, 2005; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Because this degree of comprehension is necessary (Sparks & Rapp, 2011), it is essential to explore how the ability to process political information impacts the users' interpretation of website messages found in online political mediums.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

Regardless of where political messages come from, the issue must become salient for the persuasive messages to be effective (Zaller, 1997). Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) focuses on the process by which the messages that individuals are exposed to change their attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). When stimuli are presented to a receiver, the receiver reacts by making the decision whether or not to elaborate upon the stimuli and cognitively process the messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b; Stephenson, Benoit, & Tschida, 2001). You need both motivation and ability to cognitively process information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Motivation, persuasiveness of an argument (i.e., argument quality), peripheral cues, and the amount of elaboration that occurs can all affect the amount of attitude change after an individual is exposed to a persuasive message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

Elaboration is measured by the amount of thoughts generated by an individual that are relevant to the message or issue in question during the decision making process (Petty & Wegener, 1999). There are two major routes of message processing – central and peripheral; the effectiveness of these routes relies entirely upon the receiver (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). High levels of motivation and ability to analyze the message presented is essential for central processing to occur (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Parasocial relationships nurture involvement, and, subsequently, increase motivation for message processing. As individuals gather more information and become more involved in processing they become better informed, which, in turn, increases their motivation level inspiring continued message involvement (Johnson & Eagly, 1990).

To contrast, peripheral processing is more likely to occur when individuals are less motivated (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b; Petty & Wegener, 1999). Rather than centrally processing information presented to them, individuals processing peripherally are more likely to draw on their prior knowledge and outside factors in order to evaluate messages. This type of processing is also more likely to occur when individuals are uncertain about their processing abilities (Stephenson, Benoit, & Tschida, 2001).

H2: There will be a positive correlation between perceived ability to understand politics and central processing of information on the site.

Moderate amounts of message repetition increases likelihood of elaboration (Pfau & Parrott, 1993). When an individual befriends a candidate on a social networking site they receive increased exposure to campaign messages. Further exposure to campaign messages is positively associated with seeking out further elaboration/information (Shah et al., 2007) and this is almost certainly a goal of many political campaigns. News consumption is linked to political participation. Since people have increased access to news and campaign messages online, it is expected that overall political participation should increase as use of the internet increases (Shah et al., 2007).

H3: The more intimate the interaction is perceived the more likely an individual will be to use a peripheral route of processing messages.

H4: As the level of perceived intimacy of interactions with the candidate increases, so too will the level of anticipated political participation.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants (n=304) were drawn from a large southwestern university's undergraduate human communication classes. Respondents were recruited by flyers and offered class credit for their participation. Participants' ages ranged from 18-35, with the median age being 19. This population was selected because, though other demographics are certainly using social networking sites, there over 50 million Facebook users between the ages of 18-25, more users than any other age range (Burbary, 2011).

Participants were first asked to answer questions evaluating perceived character traits of politicians and respondents' overall feelings towards political candidates in general, as well as their political efficacy, and likelihood of political participation. They were then randomly assigned to one of four conditions: Republican candidate's campaign Facebook page (n = 67), Republican candidate's campaign web page (n = 79), Democratic candidate's campaign Facebook page (n = 71), and Democratic candidate's campaign web page (n = 87). Screen shots of all pages were used to control for the accessibility of each individual page. The candidates featured in the screen shots presented were Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Richard Shelby (R-AL). These candidates were selected because they have similar physical characteristics (race, relative age, hair color, etc.), were both incumbent senators from states other than the state data collection took place, and, as was determined after a concise content analysis, had similarly worded and laid-out content on their campaigns' Facebook and web pages. Candidates from areas outside of where data collection occurred were chosen in an effort to reduce pre-existing attitudes from interfering with the study results.

After viewing the assigned candidate's online campaign page, respondents were asked questions pertaining to content evaluation, perceived character traits of the featured candidate and candidate affect toward the featured political candidate, as well as political efficacy, likelihood of political participation, argument quality, message elaboration, level of parasocial interaction, source bias, source credibility, and basic demographic questions.

Variables & Measures

Source credibility was measured using a modified McCroskey

(1966) source credibility scale. For this measurement, a 7-point Likert type scale was used. The fourteen items measured included: intelligent, honest, trustworthy, expert, honorable, informed, moral, competent, ethical, sensitive, right, positive, wise, and bad. Overall, this variable had a reliability of $\alpha = .953$ ($M = 4.84$, $SD = .935$).

Likelihood of political participation was measured by asking respondents to estimate their likelihood to: try to influence others to vote, attend a political meeting, work for a party or candidate, wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on their car, and give money to help a campaign. This index, measured with a 7-point Likert type scale, had a reliability of $\alpha = .899$ ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.26$).

Political efficacy was measured using a modified political efficacy scale (ANES Mnemonics) (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954) and participation likelihood questions (try to influence how others vote, attend a political meeting, work for a candidate, wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, and give money to a campaign. This measure, which included eleven questions had a reliability of $\alpha = .752$.

Argument quality was measured by asking respondents to rate the quality of the messages presented on the page they viewed based on the following criteria: logical, clear, ease of understanding, presentation of factual information, and overall message quality. Overall, this variable had a reliability of $\alpha = .822$ ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .593$).

Level of perceived intimacy and parasocial interaction was measured using the parasocial interactions scale (Rubin & Perse, 1987). All twelve questions were used to evaluate the level of parasocial interaction $\alpha = .890$ ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .934$). Perceived intimacy was measured by modifying the parasocial interactions scale and focusing on five items (e.g., the webpage shows me what this candidate is really like, when I viewed the candidate webpage I felt like part of a group, I see this candidate as a natural, down to earth person, this candidate understands what I need, and this candidate understands what I want). These items were selected because, of the items included in the parasocial scale, these items described perceptions of a reciprocal relationship, in which the candidate would seek an intimate understanding of the respondent. This perceived intimacy measure had a reliability of $\alpha = .809$ ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.03$).

Elaboration likelihood was measured based on respondents' answers to three open response questions: What aspect of this page

did you spend the most time looking at or considering, what is most memorable about this candidate, and what information helped shape your impression of this candidate the most. A pair of coders evaluated responses to these questions and identified them as being centrally processed cognition, or a peripherally processed cognition, or an irrelevant cognition. Responses identifying specific statements made by the candidate or stories published on the website were coded as central processed cognitions. References to the candidate's picture or number of friends were coded as peripherally processed cognitions. Irrelevant cognitions, though few, were comments made that did not indicate in any way that the respondent had viewed the webpage presented to them.

Results

The first hypothesis presented above suggested that individuals who viewed candidate Facebook pages would be more likely to feel as though they have had an intimate interaction with the candidate than individuals who interacted with more formal candidate webpages. An ANOVA indicated that there is a significant difference between those who viewed the candidate's campaign Facebook page and those who viewed the candidate's traditional campaign webpage on reported levels of perceived intimacy $F(1, 302) = 4.77$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .015$.

R1 asked if individuals perceive higher levels of argument quality after viewing information on social networking sites than they would from traditional candidate websites. A regression indicated that this relationship between perceptions of argument quality and type of candidate page viewed were significant $b = -.093$, $t(16.443) = -1.924$, $p = .05$. Our results suggest that higher argument quality was found on social networking sites as opposed to traditional candidate websites, $R2 = .012$, $F(1, 302) = 3.703$, $p = .055$.

H2 predicted a positive correlation between political efficacy and central processing of information on the site. A regression indicated that this proposed correlation was significant $b = -.412$, $t(15.538) = -2.552$, $p = .013$. Political efficacy was shown to predict central processing $R2 = .012$, $F(3, 300) = 3.67$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .036$.

H3 suggested that the more intimate the candidate interaction is perceived, the more likely an individual will use a peripheral route of processing messages. A linear regression supported this hypothesis, $b = -.177$, $t(19.441) = -1.832$, $p = .041$, and indicated a significant cor-

relation between perceived intimacy and peripheral processing $R2 = .027$, $F(3, 300) = 2.78$, $p = .041$, $\eta^2 = .027$.

The final hypothesis, H4, posited that the level of anticipated political participation will increase as perceived intimacy of interaction with the candidate increases. A regression indicated that the correlation between anticipated political participation and perceived intimacy was significant, $b = .396$, $t(23.644) = 9.572$, $p < .001$. This correlation suggests that as perceptions of intimacy increases so too does the likelihood of political participation $R2 = .233$, $F(1, 302) = 91.632$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .23$.

Discussion

Though much research has been done looking at intimate interactions with media personalities via television (Giles, 2002; Hartmann & Schramm, 2006; Schiappa, Allen, & Gregg, 2006; Vorderer, 1998), the study presented in this paper focused on online interactions respondents had with political candidates. Findings presented above suggest a link between individuals who view candidate Facebook pages and increased perceptions of intimate interactions with candidates. The intimate tone of the electronic interaction fosters interpersonal feelings more so than less intimate electronic settings. As online social networking sites continue to gain popularity, this study provides a foundational understanding of how messages are processed via these sites as opposed to more traditional channels of political communication.

Understanding that social networking sites allow for more intimate interactions with constituents can be a helpful tool for candidates and campaigners. H3 furthered the notion that individuals respond differently to various online mediums and suggested that as perceptions of intimate interactions increased so too would likelihood for individuals to process the information presented peripherally. Peripheral processing relies less on the content of messages presented and more on external factors. For example, an individual processing the information on a candidates' Facebook page would notice their appearance, or how many "likes" the candidate had received if they were utilizing peripheral processing. If a candidate were less confident about their platform than they were on their ability to interact with constituents interpersonally would benefit from utilizing social networking sites rather than traditional candidate web

pages in order to focus their audience's attention to the candidate's strengths.

As candidates have a more diverse audience on social networking sites than they have on traditional candidate web pages and messages on social networking sites are more likely to be processed peripherally, research suggests that argument quality will be perceived more favorably on social networking sites. R1 questioned if perceptions of argument quality would increase when constituents viewed social networking sites rather than traditional candidate web pages. The findings of this research question, moderately well supported, informs us that respondents perceive messages on candidate social networking sites as having a slightly stronger argument quality than the messages presented on traditional candidate websites. Understanding that message quality will be rated higher on social networking sites can help candidates, similar to those mentioned above, who are less confident in their message content than they are in there interpersonal skills. When increased perceptions of argument quality are coupled with the higher likelihood of peripheral processing by constituents, candidates are much more likely to gain the support of individuals who receive their messages via social networking sites.

Despite individuals favorably processing potentially less sophisticated messages on social networking sites, there is a positive correlation between perceived ability to understand politics and central processing of information on the site. Therefore, social media does not change the way more informed members of a candidates' audience processes messages, rather it serves allows individuals who are not as confident in their political message processing a forum in which to casually expose themselves to political information. Candidates can expect more self-efficacious constituents to process messages centrally and less-efficacious constituents to process messages peripherally on social networking websites. If we expect political participation to increase as intimacy increases we are able to understand the consequences of message processing. Social networking sites enable political candidates to have more intimate interactions with their constituents and, therefore provide a more effective tool for motivating potential voters to action.

Limitations

Overall, these hypotheses demonstrate how social networking

has changed how individuals interact with their representatives online. Social networking sites allow constituents to have more informal interactions with candidates. Because such informal interactions are considered to be more intimate, it is clear that the likelihood of parasocial interaction occurrence is higher via social networking sites. Responses to these parasocial interactions by constituents leads to peripheral processing, more favorable perceptions of argument quality, and, ultimately, increased likelihood of political involvement by message receivers.

Though this study provides insight on online candidate/constituent interactions, there are certainly ways to improve and build upon this study. Initially, though individuals included in our sample represent a demographic that is likely to utilize social networking sites, it would be beneficial to examine how a more diverse audience reacts to similar stimuli. It is possible that, different populations will process messages differently. Specifically, looking at constituent responses to political candidates at different levels (i.e. presidential candidates, state senators) may be one avenue for a follow up study.

The main purpose of this study was to explore how online candidate websites and social networking sites allowed for parasocial interactions. Our findings demonstrate that varying levels of interactions can occur, and those interactions lead to a variety of responses. However, as an initial exploration into web-based parasocial interactions, further investigations will provide more specific insight into online candidate message sending, especially as it pertains to audience targeting. Similar studies could consider interactions from better known politicians and explore how demographics and exposure effect perceptions of candidates.

Beyond assessing responses to varied candidates, understanding how users interact with political figures via social media channels they have elected to use would provide more accurate insight on how people actually respond to such political figures. This paper has assessed how individuals respond when exposed, but not all individuals will electively expose themselves to political candidates. Similarly, not all individuals will elect to use all social networks or other mediated channels at all – future research could investigate the motivation needed to use such venues to gain political information.

Conclusion

As technology continues to evolve, so too do political campaigns. It is vital that campaigners and communication scholars understand how technology can be used to connect to constituents. In addition to understanding how these forums can be utilized, it is even more important to know potential outcomes that can be expected in response to online messages. Given the findings in this study (that social networking allows for more intimate interactions with candidates, that individuals are more likely to use peripheral processing when viewing social networking sites, that argument quality is generally perceived as higher on social networking sites, and that individuals report higher likelihood of political participation after viewing social networking sites) a greater understanding of online candidate/campaign message distribution has been gained. These findings set the stage for future exploration of online candidate-constituent interactions and campaign message evaluation.

References

Althaus, S. (1998). Information effects in collective preferences. American *Political Science Review, 92,* 545-558.

Ancu, M. & Cozma, R. (2009). MySpace politics: Uses and gratifications of befriending candidates. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 53*(4), 567–583.

Bartels, L. M. (2000). Partisanship and voting behavior, 1952-1996. *American Journal of Political Science, 44,* 1, 35-50.

Benoit, W. (2007). *Communication in Political Campaigns.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Benoit, W. L., & Wells, W. T. (1996). *Candidates in conflict: Persuasive attack and defense in the 1992 presidential debates.* Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.

Burbary, K. (2011). Facebook Demographics Revisited – 2011 Statistics. Web Business by Ken Burbary. Retrieved from http://www.kenburbary.com/2011/03/facebook-demographics-revisited-2011-statistics-2/

Campbell, A., Gurin, G., & Miller, W. E. (1954). *The voter decides.* Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

Cho, J., Shah, D.V., McLeod, J.M., McLeod, D.M., Scholl, R. M, and Gotlieb, M. (2009). Campaigns, reflection, and deliberation: Advancing an O-S-R-O-R model of communication effects. *Communication Theory, 19,* 66-88.

Druckman, J. (2001). On the limits of framing effects: Who can frame? The

Journal of Politics, 63, 1041-1066.
Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes.* Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Erikson, R.S., MacKuen, M.B., & Stimson, J.A. (2002). *The Macro Polity.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
Giles, D. C. (2002). Parasocial interaction: A review of the literature and a model for future research. *Media Psychology, 4,* 279–305.
Hansen, G. J. & Benoit, W. L. (2005). Presidential campaigning on the web: The influence of candidate world wide web sites in the 2000 general election. *Southern Communication Journal, 70*(3), 219-229.
Hartmann, T., & Schramm, H. (2006). Logik der Forschung zu parasozialen Interaktionen und Beziehungen [The logic of research on parasocial interactions and relationships]. In W. Wirth, A. Fahr, & E. Lauf (Eds.), *Forschungslogik und –design in der Kommunikationswissenschaft. Band 2: Anwendungsfelder in der Kommunikationswissenschaft* [Logic and design in communication research. Volume 2: Applications in communication research] (pp. 264–291). Cologne, Germany: Halem.
Horton, D. & Wohl, R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry, 19,* 215-229.
Johnson, B. T., & Eagly, A. H. (1990). Involvement and persuasion: Types, traditions, and the evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 107,* 375-384.
Kintsch, W. (1998). Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
McCroskey, J .C. (1966). Scales for the measurement of ethos. *Speech Monographs, 33*, 65-72.
Moyer –Guise, E. & Nabi, R.L. (2010). Explaining the effects of narrative in an entertainment television program: Overcoming resistance to persuasion. *Human Communication Research, 36,* 26-52.
Mutz, D. and Martin, P. (2001). Facilitating communication across lines of political difference: The role of mass media. *American Political Science Review, 95,* 97-114.
Newcomb, H. (1982). *Television: The critical view* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986a). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change.* New York: Springer-Verlag.
Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986b). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (vol. 19, pp. 123-205). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
Petty, R. & Wegener, D. (1999). The Elaboration likelihood model: Current status and controversies. In S. Chaiken & Y. Troupe (Eds.), *Dual process theories in social psychology* (Vol, 1, pp. 323-390). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Pfau, M. & Parrott, R. (1993). *Persuasive communication campaigns.* Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

Quan-Haase, A. & Young, A. L. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science Technology and Society, 30,* 350.

Rapp, D. N., & van den Broek, P. (2005). Dynamic text comprehension: An integrative view of reading. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14,* 276–279.

Rubin, A., Perse, E.M., & Powell, R.A. (1985). Loneliness, parasocial, interaction, and local television news viewing. *Human Communication Research, 12*(2), 155-180.

Rubin, A. M. & Perse, E. M. (1987). Audience activity and soap opera involvement a uses and effects investigation. *Human Communication Research, 14*(2), 246-268.

Schiappa, E., Allen, M., & Gregg, P. B. (2006). Parasocial relationships and television: A meta-analysis of the effects. In R.W. Preiss, B.M. Gayle, N. Burrell, M. Allen, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Mass media effects research* (pp. 301–314). New York: Erlbaum.

Schramm, H. & Wirth, W. (2010). Testing a universal tool for measuring parasocial interactions across different situations and media: Findings from three studies. *Journal of Media Psychology, 22*(1), 26-36.

Semmler, S. (2007). *Cultivation as a process of parasocial symbolic interaction.* Paper Presented at the 2007 Meeting of the International Communication Association, San Fransisco, California.

Shah, D.V., Cho, J. Nah, S., Gotlieb, M.R., Hwang, H. Lee, N., Scholl, R.M. & McLeod, D.M. (2007). Campaign Ads, online messaging, and participation: Extending the communication mediation model. *Journal of Communication, 57,* 676–703.

Sparks, J.R. & Rapp, D.N. (2011). Readers' reliance on source credibility in the service of comprehension. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 37(*1), 230-247.

Stephenson, M.T., Benoit, W.L. and Tschida, D.A. (2001). Testing the mediating role of cognitive responses in the elaboration likelihood model. *Communication Studies, 52*(4), 324-337.

Teven, J.J. (2008). An examination of perceived credibility of the 2008 presidential candidates: Relationships with believability, likeability, and deceptiveness. *Human Communication, 11*(4), 391-408.

Trammell, K. D. (2006). Blog offensive: An exploratory analysis of attacks published on campaign blog posts form a political public relations perspective. *Public Relations Review, 32,* 402-406.

U.S. Census. (2014). Young-adult voting: An analysis of presidential elections, 1964-2012 (Economics and Statistics Administration). Washing-

ton, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.
van Dijk, T. A., & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of discourse comprehension.* New York, NY: Academic Press.
Vorderer, P., 1998. Unterhaltung durch Fernsehen: Welche Rolle spielen parasoziale Beziehungen zwischen Zuschauern und Fernsehakteuren?. In G. Roters, W. Klingler, & O. Zo¨llner (Eds.), *Fernsehforschung in Deutschland.* Themen, Akteure, Methoden. Nomos, Baden-Baden, pp. 689–707.
Walther, J. B. (1993). Impression development in computer-mediated interaction. *Western Journal of Communication, 57,* 381-398.
Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Kim, S. Y., Westerman, D., & Tom Tong, S. (2008). The role of friends' appearance and behavior on evaluations of individuals on Facebook: Are we known by the company we keep? *Human Communication Research, 34,* 28-49.
Zaller, J. (1997). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* New York: Cambridge University Press.