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VIRTUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN

presented by

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MASTER OF ARTS	degree in	AMERICAN STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

VIRTUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN

By

Kamahra Ewing

Barack Obama personalized his campaign through the Internet and television via social capital. Obama was able to effectively respond to any type of attacks on his character, campaign, or beliefs through utilizing online technologies. One of the most effective ways Obama connected with American voters was through virtual social capital. Social capital will be divided into three categories: membership, trust, and networks. Social networking sites, including Obama's primary campaign website, were one of his strategies for maintaining contact with voters and enhancing social capital among his supporters. The first section will examine various definitions of social capital and demonstrate how it was generated by the Obama campaign. The second section will focus on how Obama's website as well as social networking sites were the conduit for maintaining or creating networks, membership, and trust both on and offline. The last section will discuss how Obama's life story enabled him to tap into various types of social capital that were already present within modern day culture in order to impeccably implement one of the best grass roots campaigns in American history.

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INTRODUCTION

Barack Obama as president elect had a few issues concerning technology, one of them being letting go of his blackberry. Former presidents had to let go of their personal email accounts. The blackberry is a combination between a telephone and email but less intrusive. The government wanted to protect Obama's online securityi. Obama was eventually was able to gain the right to use a new high tech blackberry. This marked Obama as the first high tech President in all respects. The use of the blackberry is to keep in touch with friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances. This example demonstrates how Obama capitalizes off of the benefits of virtual technology to keep in touch with his closest friends and family. During the campaign he maximized the use of virtual technology and networking with the American public. The following thesis will explore the various ways that Obama exploited virtual technology.

Barack Obama personalized his campaign through the Internet and television via social capital. Obama was able to effectively respond to any type of attacks on his character, campaign, or beliefs through utilizing online technologies. One of the most effective ways Obama connected with American voters was through virtual social capital. Social capital will be divided into three categories: membership, trust, and networks. Social networking sites, including Obama's primary campaign website, were one of his strategies for maintaining contact with voters and enhancing social capital among his supporters. The first section will examine various definitions of social capital and demonstrate how it was generated by the Obama campaign. The second section will

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focus on how Obama's website as well as social networking sites were the conduit for maintaining or creating networks, membership, and trust both on and offline. The last section will discuss how Obama's life story enabled him to tap into various types of social capital that were already present within modern day culture in order to impeccably implement one of the best grass roots campaigns in American history.

Although a relative newcomer to the political scene, Obama was successfully able to gain voter trust by the last months of the campaign. Membership, trust, and networks allowed people to find their place in history and become involved in volunteering time and money to help the Barack Obama campaign. This campaign especially social capital strongly flowed in two directions from online to offline and vice versa. Many citizens campaigned offline and online to recruit financial supporters for Obama. Text messaging, infomercials, and blogs helped reinforce new virtual versions of social capital.

DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL

> For we know that our patchwork heritage is a
> strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of
> Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-
> believers. We are shaped by every language and
> culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and
> because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war
> and segregation, and emerged from that dark

chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help

but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass;

that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the

world grows smaller, our common humanity shall

reveal itself; and that America must play its role in

ushering in a new era of peaceii.

The quote demonstrates Obama's connectedness with the American public on multiple

levels. This is networking or uniting with people, also known as social capital. Various

definitions of social capital will be examined in this section beginning with Pierre

Bourdieu.

French scholar Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist, defined social capital as resources

based on group membership and networks based on social supportiii. Assets of social

capital include cultural capital. Cultural capital is an invisible asset held by elites within

society who have money and power within the society.   Agents who historically

maintain control known as the embodied state; a form that has long-lasting impressions in

the minds and bodies of the inhabitants of such societies use honor, prestige, or

recognition. In order to categorize class differences there are invisible indicators

established within society. The objectified state is a result of cultural goods such as

media, books, dictionaries, instruments, and machines. It can also be referred to as

familial ties, elite connections, such as Ivy League school alumni elite, or aristocracy, and

other forms of connections that bond elites together.

According to Bourdieu, the institutionalized state is a form of objectification that sets society apart because, as seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers properties on the cultural capital that is presumed to guarantee a privileged position within society.

Bourdieu discusses capital as economic, cultural, or social in nature. Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money may be institutionalized in the form of property rightsiv. Cultural capital is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications. Social capital is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and can be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobilityv. The next section will more fully discuss various assets of social capital.

Bourdieu argues that elites speak for the masses and sometimes create their own version of reality since they have the power to speak for society. The rest of society follows what the upper class covered in a false sense of entitlement dictates. This social capital symbolic asset is also called habitus which "implies 'a sense of ones place' but also 'the sense of the place of others'"vi. Symbolic capital is an extra asset that the elite have to use, as they desire. Bourdieu suggests that symbolic capital is a combination of economic capital and educational capital. An example of symbolic capital is someone who has a legal, professional, or educational title(s) that guarantees them a certain status within society. Sometimes their status is based on familial ties, which benefit them

accordingly, and "rewards associated with the title tend to become autonomous with regard to the rewards associated with the work … the same work can receive different remunerations depending on the titles and qualifications of the person doing it."vii An example of symbolic capital and educational capital is the K-12 education system in Michigan, where there are many people who have bachelors or masters in multiple subjects that are needed in the school system. Historically, elites in government and administrators in charge of the educational school boards have created the educational system and later a necessity of certification. Thus, qualified university alumni who could teach science and math courses needed in inner city schools are denied the opportunity to teach because they do not have the right certification or professional degree. Even with a degree, potential teachers still have to pass another test to prove that they are qualified to teach. The certification test costs money and is scheduled only a few times a year, creating another obstacle. Later after teacher certification, they have to continue taking courses to improve their teaching skills. This system was created to help students learn from the best, but it is a false system according to Bourdieu that was created by the administrators in higher positions, and normalized in American society. Thus, various forms of symbolic capital would be a degree, certification, and passing a test.

Other ways elites create these divisions are among religious and ethnic groups so that power is maintained as they desire and people are split accordingly. Historically, societies have been set up in "dualist oppositions (masculine/feminine, high/low, strong/weak, etc). [The elite] organize the perception of the social world and, under

certain conditions, can really organize the world itself.viii" It is important to look at the

dualist classifications within American culture in order to understand how to reach

beyond them. Obama, for example, was a part of the elite class due to his educational

background at Harvard, even though he comes from a background that can be perceived

as middle class. He was able to reach audiences on both sides of this social structure of

lower and upper class. Bourdieu constructs social capital from a sociological perspective.

In the next section social capital will be examined through the lens of a political scientist.

Another often-quoted sociologist who works on social capital, Robert Putnam,

divides social capital in various ways: formal versus informal, weak ties versus strong

ties, and bridging versus bonding social capitalix. Putnam describes how society can

have both corrosive and healthy ways to build up social capital. For example, the Ku

Klux Klan treats social capital differently than a sewing club. In the 1950s, bonded and

strong social capital is demonstrated in the Ku Klux Klan based on its membership's

hatred of all ethnic groups outside of European descent. This group found ways to kill

and terrorize others within society in order to maintain social control. It exemplifies

bonded and strong social capital: whites had racial power within society, which was

connected, to powerful elites within educational and political institutions. Thus, they

were able to forge membership based on bonded social capital through a shared white

ethnic experience in American society. On the other hand, bonding and weak social

capital are exemplified in a sewing club, which is founded in the idea of gathering people

together based on a desire to sew. Sewing groups may have been segregated in the

fifties, but they were not founded to find ways to oppress other people who did not have similar interests. Bonded social capital unites people based on ethnic affiliations, which is the opposite of bridged social capital.

Bridging social capital occurs when a person or a group extends and reaches beyond its social comfort zone. For example, a person from a Muslim background may work with a person from a Christian background to create cultural diversity, unity, and understanding amongst the two groups or they could join together to fight poverty. These two groups could have stayed separate and used bonded social capital to fight for poverty. Instead they expanded themselves beyond their own social networks and broadened their network base in turn creating bridged social capital.

Putnam is one of the founders of term social capital, his arguments at times appear to be dated since the majority of his work is before the year 2000. Although his television, views appear to be narrow minded, other aspects of his definition can be useful for studying social capital. Television culture could be viewed as creating bonded or bridged social capital within global societies. Formally, Putnam views modernization as bad for social capital; although other scholars disagree, arguing that it brings new ways to create networks. Critics often single out television since it has made global societies aspire for similar consumer goods, encouraged cultural homogeneity, and often led to people not interacting with one another as in the past. As Putnam explains: "television

leads people to become disengaged from their communities directly and indirectly"x.

People become more socially disengaged through television and Internet entertainment.

Putnam puts the relationship between social capital and technology into a historical perspective. He recently explained how the United States went through a period from the 1950s until 9/11 of lower social capitalxi. After World War II Americans bonded and became more patriotic since together they endured a stressful period in American history. World Wars I and II fueled American patriotism, which increased a sense of community and volunteerism. After the war, volunteerism decreased and television watching increased. Instead of participating in local civic organizations, people stayed home and watched television. Thus, television is blamed for the decrease in political participation within society. Later, during harsh economic times, participation in civic organizations increased. Putnam states that after 9/11 social capital has especially increased and, younger people are more politically inclined than in previous generations.

Despite the potentially de-energizing power of media forms like television after 9/11 people felt more patriotic and people pulled together increasing volunteerism in America. Thus, after forty years of social capital decreasing in American society, after 9/11 social capital increased. Obama's campaign took advantage of this situation and amplified social capital through increased opportunities for volunteerism. Putnam refers to Obama as "the first President to receive the benefits of the renewed social capital,

though he is not its creator"xii. An example of this social capital through volunteerism is virtual campaigning as Nicole Ellison claims that eighty-six percent of college students have Facebook and half of the students used it as a method of campaigning for their candidate of choicexiii.

In his article, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America", Putnam explains the influence of media forms on social capital. Here, he defines social capital as "features of social life-networks, norms, and trust- that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives"xiv. He explains the role of social capital in civic engagement as peoples' interactions within their community that are not solely based on politics: "Social trust is generated through civic engagement: the more people connect with each other, the more they trust each other"xv.

While Putnam perceives people living in modern American society as closed off from communicating with others in a traditional sense of community, he says there are new ways to utilize social capital. These may be found in new forms of media, such as the Internet, which may or may not foster social capital. In the case of Obama's campaign, technology, including cell phones, websites, social network sites, and thirty-minute television commercials as a tool to enhance social capital. These technologies have allowed Obama to connect with the public, create familiarity, and motivate people to gather together under the purpose of hope and change. In order to understand more

about social capital it is best to explore the process of modernization abroad as a telling comparison.

Peter Hall explores social capital in Britain which is different than in America for three reasons: 1) Change in the educational system after the 1950s; 2) Change in the class system economically and politically in society; and 3) government-encouraged volunteerism and provision of funding to create associationsxvi. As a result of the changes to Britain's educational system, education automatically increased social capital. Hall asserts that educated people are known to volunteer more. This creates social capital: thus, with an increase in education comes an increase in social capital. During the period of modernization, the British government properly promoted societal values that they wished to maintain through education and opportunities for volunteerism. This explains how positive social capital has continued strongly for the last fifty years in Britain as people continue to stay involved in their community. The British government continues to make concerted efforts to improve their society through volunteerism and the provision of grants to help people continue this tradition. The opposite occurs when an individualist government (one that is only concerned with its own interests or the interests of a few people) pushes society to become similarly individualistic. That ultimately sets the standard for the elites to favor themselves through policies that provide no assistance for citizens to volunteer.

According to Hall, the education revolution was important in British society in order to upgrade the level of education for all citizens, but with change came negative

consequences such as a breakdown of traditional family structures: higher divorce rates, women working more, and an increase in the welfare statexvii. Television viewing increased as well, but it did not have as much of an impact on associations and membership in British society as it had in the United States. Due to British government intervention in society, social capital has flourished more than in the United States. Overall, most English benefit from positive social capital, but the elite receive more benefits from bonded social capital since they have better connections and more powerful resources. This power affords the elite to create an in and out group effect.

Over the later half of the twentieth century, members of Britain's society lowered their trust due to a shift from a collectivist society to a more individualistic society. Hall claims younger people tend to be more individualistic and hold idealistic moral norms, and have lower social political trust. Individualistic tendencies within societies may encourage a people to hold idealistic views since they are not interacting with others in society as much. Although Britain continues to move towards the individualistic side, it still has a backbone of volunteerism that is missing in other capitalist societies. Some scholars, such as Hall, feel that membership in a volunteer organization alone cannot help political and social trust. Putnam would argue that membership is the key to social capital. Britain proves Putnam's point since the government was successful in implementing social capital in the later half of the 21st century, unlike the United States.

Peter Wuthnow discusses how American society before the 1960s had good social group membership, even though these groups often excluded minoritiesxviii. During pre-

Internet era people were more interactive and found different ways to bond within communities or enjoy themselves with membership in clubs or associations. Now, women and minorities are included but the process of social capital still has yet to flourish in the American democratic society, as it should. In a democratic society social and political memberships should normally result in high civic engagement. Wuthnow wonders what would happen if general group memberships continued to die, and how American society would have reinvigorated itself. From World War II to 9/11, people were less involved in civic organizations. Because a shift in technology has changed the way people meet, social capital is built on different activities outside of traditional organizations.

Prior to the Obama campaign, volunteerism remained low in America until 9/11. However, with the increase in social capital along with enthusiasm for change and mistrust in the American political system, people voted in large numbers during the 2008 election because they felt that with the right leadership change was possible. Due to harsh economic times and war, people had to pay four dollars for a gallon of gas. They needed an outlet to express their anger and discontent with how society was crumbling in front of their eyes with inflation, joblessness, and a war on terror. In a democratic society, people are allowed to exercise their collective power to vote and overturn an improperly functioning government. Many Americans channeled their urge for change by using their power to vote and make history.

The first African-American President in United States history answered the call of the people for direct change due to the power of social capital on and offline. The media's focus on race may overshadow the ingenious strategy of how he was able to dominate American electoral maps. The American electoral map is normally divided in red for Republicans and blue for Democrats. In the west normally the electoral map is red and in major cities throughout the United States the map is blue. In the 2008 presidency, the United States map was observed from each voting precinct, both colors were combined to create purple, even in rural America, which is traditionally known for its red Republican voting tendencies. The well-organized Internet campaign allowed people in rural areas to familiarize themselves with Obama's plans. Obama was able to gain people's trust, and online networks supporting Obama gained membership. His campaigning was done impeccably and Obama changed the face of campaigning. Voter engagement and participation is a major factor in the Obama campaign. In the future candidates will have to have technological skills, and know how to access YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and whatever future social network sites that will be created next.

INTERNET AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

> "Together, we could open up government and invite citizens in, while connecting all of America to 21st century broadband. We could use technology to help achieve universal health care, to reach for a clean energy future, and to ensure that young

Americans can compete – and win – in the global economy,"

Obama said at the Google meetingxix.

Internet is a form of technology that Obama concretely combined with social networking during his campaign. This section will explore how the Internet was vital for the flow of social capital from online to offline activities. The following articles were published in the early 2000s and technology Internet theory has quickly changed. The following studies will indicate how scholars view social capital online. The first article, demonstrates how some social scientists feel about modern technology. In, "The Internet and Social Capital", Eric M. Uslaner discusses the exaggerated view in social capital studies that the Internet is unsafe and causes depression, social isolation, and stress. Social scientists who feel the Internet is used in a negative way tend to agree that users should leave the net and associate with people face to face, "' [Online] friends' are fictional characters whom you will never be asked to help out"xx. The proponents of this idea blame the Internet for many societal problems and the destruction of social capital. This perception lacks awareness of what is done positively to increase social capital via the Internet.

At the other end of the spectrum, some scholars have viewed the Internet as a romanticized virtual utopia where everything is possible and the world's people are getting to know each other better daily. Uslaner states, "The Internet is a great leveler of class and race barriers – which have to be strong barriers to effective participation in American society"xxi. Computer users are able to access a virtual society through email,

support groups, list serves, chat rooms, and many other sites and services that are being created daily.

The Internet is a tool that can be used for both positive and negative purposes. Uslaner holds a more balanced view of the relationship between social capital and the Internet: "The Internet neither destroys nor creates social capital"xxii. Uslaner feels that everything one can find online already exists in the modern world. What people do online they also do offline: shopping, bargaining, look at news and sports, gamble, get vacation packages, cars, electronics, and maintain contact with people they know through email or SNS. "The net is not a threat. But it is not Nirvana either"xxiii. This third perspective on the Internet is a balanced way to view it realizing that it is not a plague, nor will it solve all of our problems. This article is correct in viewing the Internet as a neutral modern tool, and a person with the proper skills can enhance normal offline activities as Obama did during the campaign.

In 2002, Wellman, Quan-Haase, Berry Wellman, James Witte, and Keith Hampton examined the role of social capital online, conducting research on how often people were in contact with friends and kin living locally and afar. They analyzed how often people used the phone, talked face to face, used email and wrote letters. They believe that due to advancements in technology, traditional personal communication as well as social capital has decreased. Nevertheless, data shows that social capital via the Internet has increased and that it is transforming the ways in which we communicate.

This study shows that social capital decreases when people have low self-esteem and fewer face-to-face meetings. On the other hand, people with higher self-esteem have more face to face gatherings and email usage. This aids us in understanding how we can redefine social capital via the Internet. The researchers found that previously known local and distant relationships are maintained online, although meeting new people online has decreased. The 2002, findings explain that global networks decreased and people are now networking more locally. Prior to the year 2000, many people joined various chat rooms to meet new people online. This study shows that by 2002 people no longer went online as much to meet new people, rather they were connecting with previously familiar friends and family online. Since the beginning of online communication there has been another shift in how people interact. More people associate with friends and family online the less people associate with family and friends in their immediate surroundings face to face. Wellman, Quan-Haase, et al, agree with Putnam, that television is a passive engagement, more than the Internet: "Both technologies draw people away from their immediate environments, potentially alienating them from social interactions and civic engagement"xxiv. When the use of email, telephone, and other communication between people is high, people become more connected. A lower usage of email and telephone also causes a downtrend in personal interactions. Trends in online users interactions with media suggest, "the stronger the relationship the more media is used and the more types of information is exchanged"xxv. Therefore, because these technologies enhance communication between people, once people meet face to face they are able to have a

more enriched experience.

The Obama campaign was able to connect with people on and offline creating a network base of volunteerism. Internet use is up and so is participation in volunteerism in organizational and political organizations. The study of the Internet and social capital may be broken down into three types of social capital: network capital, participation capital and community commitment. Network capital is defined as "Relations with friends, neighbors, relatives, and workmates that significantly provide companionship, emotional aid, goods and services, information, and a sense of belonging"xxvi. Participatory capital is defined as, "Involvement in politics and voluntary organizations that afford opportunities for people to bond, create joint accomplishments, and aggregate and articulate demands and desires, a concept enshrined in the American heritage by de Tocqueville (1835). Lastly,

> *Community Commitment:* Social capital consists of more than
> going through the motions of interpersonal interaction and
> organizational involvement. When people have a strong attitude
> toward community – have a motivated, responsible sense of
> belonging – they will mobilize their social capital more willingly
> and effectively (McAdam, 1982)xxvii.

For example, Wellman, Quan-Haase, et al, found that interpersonal network contact was affected by Internet use. Organizational participation on the Internet provided a vehicle for which involvement increased, making the relationship between interpersonal

networks and Internet positive. This explains how Obama's campaign was able to take advantage of the previously unutilized tool. Wellman, Quan-Haase, et al found that Internet users are younger and people 40-65 years used the Internet to get politically involved. While before 2002, older people were less likely to use the Internet, during the Obama campaign; people of all ages took part in online discussions. Most discussions started offline and continued online, "The more online participation in organizations and politics, the more offline participation in organizations and politics"xxviii. This was confirmed in the Obama campaign through the outstanding volunteerism, which is fostered by the set up of his website. The Internet clearly provides and extends offline activities, which then continue again online. The more people engage in offline activities the more their Internet involvement increases. People no longer need to meet face to face or talk on the telephone, since they can chat online, email, or send a text message.

SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

On Jan. 21, his first full day in office, Obama signed an Executive Order calling for all departments and agencies to "establish a system of transparency, public participation and collaboration." At the same time, White House lawyers, working with other federal agencies, sought to create new "terms of use" agreements with private companies that would allow

government to sign up for social networks like

MySpace, YouTube and Facebook as if they were

just another person. What was once the sole domain

of adventuresome government agencies and

officials soon became standard policyxxix.

The same way Obama connected with voters during the campaign he is striving to

do in his presidency. Social network sites have transformed the way that people interact

along with the way it is used politically. Virtual politics is changing as well to meet the

demands necessary for a high paced technologically advanced society. Obama's

campaign adapted to the virtual community accordingly to meet the demands of a high-

tech society. This is an area where Obama excelled while other candidates lagged ten

years behind. The following section explores social capital on social network sites and

the habits of networking. The first section will explore how these sites connect people

from net acquaintances or friendships to a political tool that revolutionized the way to

campaign on and offline.

In the late nineties the SNS revolution was created. In the beginning of this

period, many people encountered new friends online, while they maintain previous

contacts. Later the state of online use changed from meeting as many new people as

possible to minimizing new friends and connecting with friends and family. SNS users

wanted to meet new online users less. SNS provided subscribers who were not able to

meet face to face with different ways to interact with each other online. In, "Social

Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship," Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison, focus on the historical changes in Social Network Sites on the web. The authors explore the Social Network Sites (SNS), which they describe as a "fantasy friend". In 1997, the first SNS was created, called SixDegrees.com soon after, Classmates.com followed. SixDegrees.com allowed subscribers to invent their profile and list their friends. Later in 1998, the site allowed people to view their friend's list of friends. Following the first SNS were AIM and ICQ, which hid net users buddy, lists from other friends. SNS are an extended version of social capital or a tool to allow social capital to flow. Boyd and Ellison listed three services that SNS provide for users to, "construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system"xxx. These are the basic functions of these sites. Face to face communication involving body expressions have been replaced by a new type of virtual communication that may include reference to physical activities like online nudging and throwing imaginary items at friends. They argued that people continue to behave as before, as they have adapted their activities to the web. However, they do not have as much time for personal connections. Ellison and Boyd also mention issues with privacy; most people feel more comfortable with Facebook than MySpace because they reveal personal information only to a select audience.

SNS have evolved as people's interests and software developments have shifted and changed, for example from Friendster to MySpace, from MySpace to Facebook.

Obama's website linked to around ten different ethnic SNS such as blackplanet and batanga. Obama connected with millions of people online which is the power of online social capital. On McCain's website he only had Facebook listed as his social network site, therefore he did not reach across the board in other ethnic group sites.

Most young college students are connected online and were a huge factor for recruiting and gaining votes during the election campaign. Ellison continues the SNS discussion by examining Michigan State University undergraduate students in, "The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends': Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites". She found that around 90% of people surveyed used SNS to maintain contact with high school friends. In 2007, Facebook had over 21 million registered members and 1.6 billion hits on the site daily. This demonstrates the power that SNS's have and how it impacts and connects student's lives everyday. Ellison states, "Social capital has been linked to a variety of positive social outcomes, such as better public health, lower crime rates, and more efficient financial markets"xxxi. This demonstrates potential networking how effective and influential these sites are to the American public, more specifically young adults.

SNS has provided new avenues for social capital in a way that former uses of the Internet have not. The Internet can be both positive and negative for building social capital. Ellison explains that from one perspective, "Internet use detracts from face-to-face time with others, which might diminish an individual's social capital"xxxii.

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However, some researchers claim that, "online interactions may supplement or replace in-person interactions, mitigating any loss from time spent online"xxxiii. Social capital has changed along with current technology. Due to geographical changes people may lose face to face contact, an SNS can intervene. Her research concludes that there was no connection between general Internet use and the building of social capital, but intensive use of Facebook did increase social capital. Students used Facebook to strengthen weak connections at Michigan State University and maintain a strong bond between friends. These networks could lead to future connections. Thus, if the Internet website is constructed in a user-friendly way, such as, Facebook, more social capital could be created.

There are many positive benefits from using SNS sites such as strengthening weak connections. In, "Social Network Sites and Society: Current Trends and future possibilities", Ellison examines research performed with Michigan State University students. They found that students on Facebook have the highest form of social networking. People with low self-esteem could communicate in a relaxed, not engaged face-to-face setting, received high levels of social capital. Many people that were online for meeting people later made offline friends. The SNS are effective in bridging social capital between weak ties. Most Americans were not familiar with Obama, yet through SNS and his website he was able to strengthen weak ties.

Facebook and SNS are always finding different ways to stay cutting edge. In the article, "Changes in Use and Perception of Facebook", Ellison and other authors discuss Facebook as being the number one popular SNS site, which started based on a need to connect with university students and their desire to reconnect with persons previously known. The site is primarily used for group organizations, photo sharing and keeping in touch with friends. Obama's website does this effectively as well by including videos and photos which are various ways to engage in volunteerism locally. This process produces stronger ties amongst neighborhood supporters.

There were some examples of how Facebook may have negative impacts: users were spending too much time, losing job opportunities due to content on their page and fighting with ex-partnersxxxiv. Overall, the changes in the perception of Facebook have positively improved in comparison to other websites such as MySpace, where often privacy is a major issue. Research analysis of student data in 2006-2008 showed no drastic changes in use of the site. More problems arose based on getting jobs or embarrassing moments. News feeds features changed the way people maintained contact with the public. Due to prior privacy issues, learned they had to watch what they say and worry whether or not a future employer would notice their website.

People use the Internet most because it is fast, cheap, and convenient. In their study Ellison et al found that, the "Internet also does not appear to have radically transformed civic involvement in voluntary organizations and politics, although more

active groups use it extensively"xxxv. The Obama election demonstrated voluntary political mobilization, which argues against this statement. The authors' research is outdated and demonstrates how quickly things can change on the Internet "The hope that the Internet would be especially useful in encouraging many people to join political discussions has not been realized"xxxvi. The Obama campaign contradicted this statement just by his collecting of dollars via his website. The authors realize that their challenge is that the Internet moves rapidly and it is nearly impossible to predict changes online. They conclude by stating that Internet adds to social capital, which is not decreasing, contrary to what Putman claims,

> The fact that people are not interacting in the visible
> public spaces does not mean that they are in
> isolation.... Internet makes it necessary to redefine
> what social capital is ... interpersonal
> transformation from "door-to-door" to "place-to-
> place" and individualized "person-to-person"
> networksxxxvii (11).

This statement confirms how the Internet has changed people's communication; naturally, the definition of social capital should change as well to fit the modern way of virtual social networking.

In the article, "Spatially Bounded Online Social Networks and Social Capital: The Role of Facebook," Nicole Ellison, Charles Stein field, and Cliff Lampe discuss how social network systems provide necessary support to increase online and offline social capital. This article explains that press coverage for Facebook has been negative. For ninety percent of undergraduate students at Michigan State University use an SNS. Out of people who meet strangers, the majority of people who talk online and later meet in person most of the time tell the truth about themselves. In Ellison, et al.'s findings, white students were more likely than other ethnic groups to have bridging social capital. Facebook is a new way of virtual socializing with weak ties that can turn into maintained contacts or deepened friendships, "This kind of social capital speaks most clearly to the "strength of weak ties"xxxviii. This is why Facebook and MySpace, outside of Obama's website, did the most for virtual political campaigning online. The majority of the American public has weak ties connected to Obama; due to these SNS these weak ties became stronger.

Ellison's study also shows that Facebook aides people with low self-esteem; although they were less likely to take advantage of bridging networks, "low self-esteem students who do use Facebook more intensely are just as likely to have bridging social capital as their peers. However, low self-esteem students who don't use Facebook intensely do not score as highly on bridging the social capital measure…"xxxix. Thus, we find the "poor get richer" instead of the "rich get richer" scenario via social capital on

Facebookxl. Similarly Obama was able to meet across the board with the haves and have-nots socially.

Online communities have been seen as positive for social capital, the reason being that it bonds people and communities together. Most literature has focused on the negative effects of Internet use instead of the positive side. Obama demonstrates an overall more positive side of this powerful grass roots effort, which mobilized, people both on and offline. Putnam's theory on social capital explains how people are "1) outward looking; 2) contact with a broader range of people; 3) a view of oneself as part of a broader group; and 4) diffuse reciprocity with a broader community"xli. This theory could be applied to Obama's campaign and his virtual online supporters.

The use of Facebook is different from the passive nature of watching television due to being able to increase personal connections on and offline, which enriches social capital. Ellison hypothesized that Facebook maximizes college students' experience since, "bridging social capital provides benefits such as increased information and opportunities, we suspect that participants who use Facebook in this way are able to get more out of their college experience"xlii. Facebook and Obama's website allowed people to get the maximum experience out of campaigning. People gathered information online and later connected with other unknown Obama supporters' offline in the spirit of volunteerism. This demonstrates the powerful use of SNS.

The previous authors demonstrate that contrary to media negativity towards

Facebook, in universities it is very popular and students are able to benefit from its

usage. In previous literature Putnam claims that social capital is decreasing based on

civic involvement, this study also shows that social capital has shifted to online

involvement. People are more focused on maintaining and establishing old contacts than

meeting new ones. This point is key to Obama's campaigning since, many people would

convince friends and neighbors to vote and become a volunteer for Obama.

This section has demonstrated various definitions of virtual social capital and how

it has worked online. Ellison's et al studies demonstrate the numerous ways that

Facebook has had a positive effect on students despite negative media coverage. Obama

and McCain realized the possible opportunities to network with millions of Americans

via Facebook. This explains why Facebook and MySpace are the number one sites

outside of *Mybarackobama.com* website for political support of Obama. This was

ingenious to combine traditional conservative methods of campaigning with virtual

technology. Thus, many people were able to dive into promoting their campaign pick

and volunteer time, money, or support on and offline for Obama.

MEMBERSHIP ON OBAMA'S PERSONAL WEBSITE

> When MyBarackObama.com launched, at the start of the campaign,
>
> its lineage was clear. The site is a social-networking hub centered
>
> on the candidate and designed to give users a practically unlimited

array of ways to participate in the campaign. You can register to

vote or start your own affinity group, with a listserv for your

friends. You can download an Obama news widget to stay current,

or another one (which Spinner found) that scrolls Obama's

biography, with pictures, in an endless loop. You can click a "Make

Calls" button, receive a list of phone numbers, and spread the good

news to voters across the country, right there in your home. You

can get text-message updates on your mobile phone and choose

from among 12 Obama-themed ring tones, so that each time Mom

calls you will hear Barack Obama cry "Yes we can!" and be

reminded that Mom should register to vote, tooxliii.

This section continues to discuss online social capital but, turns more specifically

to membership on Obama's website. Putnam describes the importance of membership in

civic society. Membership means a person or organization belongs to some other

institution formal or informally; albeit a church, country, associations and clubs. In

America during the campaign election there was an underlined debate about whether

Obama was American and how can we trust him since he is not like former presidents. In

the 2008 campaign, Hillary Clinton and the Republican Party numerous times stated that

the American people did not know Barack Obama well enough to vote for him. These

remarks tie in with Obama's background and not being from traditional presidential

background, education, class, and religion. Although membership was also found offline,

membership online was just as important and possibly most important. In order to create

an attractive space for the American public to familiarize themselves with Obama, he had

to create an inviting all-inclusive American website. Obama's personal website differs

from the ten other social network spaces being that this was Obama's personal

membership community. The use of a personal website creates a warm image with

which voters can relate. When one enters the Obama campaign website, visitors see the

American patriotic colors of red, white, and blue, reminding the viewer of Obama's

democratic spirit. The colors imply that electing Obama would be a confirmation that the

democratic process truly works. Obama's emblem in comparison to other candidate's

logo was quite patriotic and some say genius:

- The O represents Obama and he can use the logo without his name

  next to it. He's claiming the O as George W. Bush claimed the W

- The blue O and the red stripes represent the flag

- The red stripes represent the plains, the American farmland

- The O's whitespace represents the sun, shining over the plains.

  Because it's white, it evokes sunrise, not sunsetxliv.

His webpage was clearly built to welcome people; the light blue provides a

calmness that allows people to feel comfortable. Obama provided a quote at the top of

the page reminding everyone what civil service is, not just the duty of a president but, the

duty of all citizens to support and participate in making change possible. The evocation to

service is a reminder of President Kennedy's famous admonition, "Ask not what your

country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.xlv" Obama states, "I'm

asking you to believe, not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington....

I'm asking you to believe in yours.xlvi" Barack Obama suggests that changing presidents

alone will not be able to solve all the nation's political, social, or economic problems. Much more can be accomplished when the American citizens do their civic duty and participating in volunteerism that creates stronger social capital.

In the right upper hand corner of Obama's personal website, he invites people to join *http://my.barackobama.com*xlvii. This alternative site encourages people to become involved in community service; it provides people the proper tools to become volunteers in participatory civic projects. When one enters Obama's more personalized website, he demonstrates his past activities as a community organizer. Obama's website provides visitors interested in helping his campaign the necessary information on how to become community organizers in their neighborhood. A true leader empowers people to become leaders. Obama as a leader understood the importance of delegating responsibility to community organizers. Participation in civic activity occurs more when there is a well-organized structure and leader to follow. The center of this page changes to represent a multiethnic America an older aged white woman, a younger white man, a Hispanic male, an African-American male, and an Asian woman. This shows how people from all backgrounds, and ages are invited to participate in community spirit and volunteer time to help change America. The slogan on the page is "Because it's about youxlviii"

Sarah Lai Stirland, an online journalist for wired.com, discusses the sheer intelligence of Obama's online campaign strategyxlix. The Internet is a tool and thus far Obama is the first presidential candidate who has successfully used it in a campaign. His background as a community organizer and a frequent Internet user provided him proper

vision to utilize multiple online connections. Obama's campaign strategists found the best way to organize people's enthusiasm, capitalize on Obama's eloquent speeches, and market his vision through his personal website. This website encouraged voters to volunteer in many towns and cities throughout America. The site supplied proper tools for voters to become leaders and effective community organizers in multiple communities. These "grass roots" efforts afforded Obama the opportunity to both save money on campaigning and to raise the most funds in presidential campaign history. Joshua Green a writer for *The Atlantic* online confirms that Obama saved money on and offline:

> The most striking thing about all this was that the
>
> headquarters is entirely self-sufficient – not a dime
>
> has come from the Obama campaign. Instead,
>
> everything from the computers to the telephones to
>
> the doughnuts and coffee – even the building's rent
>
> and utilities – is user-generated, arranged and paid
>
> for by local volunteers. It is one of several such
>
> examples across the country, and no other campaign
>
> has put together anything that can match this level
>
> of self-sufficiencyl.

The grass roots effort often was based on volunteers who gave time, money, and energy. Many Americans signed joined Obama's website and found various ways to volunteer.

Americans' enthusiasm and eagerness for change allowed *Mybarackobama.org* to channel the public's energy into an effective organizational base online. His website provided the best tools to raise funds not solely based on a few rich special interest donors, as was the case in Hillary Clinton's campaign. The majority of individual funds collected for Obama were individual donors that gave 200 dollars or less; this was "grass roots" campaigning at its finest, allowing the fundraising process to become truly democratic. Some people feel that he is the first elected independent president. The Washington post confirms, "Of those 6.5 million donations, 6 million were in increments of $100 or less. The average online donation was $80, and the average Obama donor gave more than once.[li]" Obama made people feel comfortable donating money and signing up to volunteer online means that people felt that they could trust the site and provide valuable personal information. On personalized pages on Obama's website – called *mybo.com* – 70,000 supporters raised 30 million dollars. Obama's Internet campaign collected more money than any other presidential candidates in history[lii]. In February of 2008, Obama raised more money than Clinton and McCain[liii]. These fundraising facts illustrate the power of membership on Obama's website. This demonstrates the power of modern online social capital membership according to Putnam's definition. Obama was able to develop a base online that encouraged supporters to mobilize to serve both their country and their own interests.

The best way to gain votes continues to be through face-to-face communication. Nowadays, technology is enhancing the way people meet face to face. Through Barack Obama's website, people were able to mobilize offline, go door to door, and make phone calls. Thus, virtual mobilizing supported old fashion methods of campaigning. Due to

the modernization of television many candidates stopped going door to door and relied primarily upon television for campaigning. The old fashioned method of visiting residences is still the best for personalizing the voting process and gaining voter commitment. The Mybarackobama.org website organized people who wanted to volunteer to go door-to-door and collect phone numbersliv. Obama's website publicized the data that these volunteers collected from different cities on the website. Obama supporters checked their local areas, went door to door to see how people felt in terms of voting and submitted that information to be later published on the site. In the past the Republican Party was known to have better-established information network records of their supporters than the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party did not have the same wealth of information about their supporters. Obama had to start from scratch, and chose to create a viable online data research center that was accessible only to those who were members of the Obama website, and were interested in volunteering in some way for Obama. Due to the user-friendly nature of the sites, it most people felt that this website was better than other campaign sites. It was free to register for the site and participate in the groundbreaking historical campaign. Internet researchers voted Obama's website as number one in comparison with other presidential candidateslv.

Volunteer members in the Obama campaign experienced historical groundbreaking social capital on and offline. When entering the website some participants stated that they felt a gratifying Internet experience that made them feel connected. This connectedness represents bridged social capital. Obama's website branched out to communicate across cyber lines to reach the American public. Obama personally welcomed people to the site through a video, and after introducing himself,

shared his future goals. Then, he invited people to participate and make his goal a reality.

In order to donate there was a red button that was not intimidating, since the dark blue

background was strong enough to mitigate the boldness of the red button that one hit to

contribute. There was a video campaign ad on the website discussing Obama's agenda

and how to use the website which also made the site welcominglvi.

Visitors on mybarackobama.com could sign up for emails and receive them a few

times a weeklvii. Email has become just as important as the phone to social connection:

thus, when people received email from the campaign, it helped build social capital

between the candidate and the future voter. The Obama website has a mailing list of 13

million subscriberslviii. This is triple the amount of subscribers that Senator John Kerry

had on his mailing list in 2004. During the campaign Obama and aides sent over 7,000

emailslix. When there is constant activity on a website it allows people to feel that the

organization in which they are involved is vibrant and full of life. The website

administrators knew not to send too many emails, but just enough to stay in the minds of

voters and remind them of their voting choice.

Another positive aspect of membership on Obama's webpage was the fact that

people felt safe sending money to his website. Secure donations enabled more people to

feel comfortable to serve the campaign. If the website did not provide a security system

to accept donations, then the site would not have received as many donations. Buttons,

hats, t-shirts, and coffee cups were also sold by the Obama campaign, on and off of his

website. These items helped build the Obama community that ultimately elected him.

Obama's product vender's created a visual community of consumerism. The

merchandise products were pieces of the Obama campaign and the consumers were

.

Obama supporters. This exchange between unknown venders and Obama supporters is a form of bridged social capital. Obama product consumers forged a sense of community that may not have occurred otherwise if they did not share the same merchandise for example an Obama bumper sticker. This type of marketing also made people feel included in the political process, and this publicity, such as buttons, hats and t-shirts, were the perfect form of walking advertisements. The selling of these items fostered membership communities and venders to come together, raise money, and volunteer. This had the effect of making supporters feel included in Obama's network.

Obama's website's user-friendly nature allowed visitors to easily foster more online membership participation. On *mybarackobama.com* a video gives instructions on how to use the websitelx. There was a tutorial narrated by a woman that explains step by step how to fill out the form. The video guide informed people of the purpose of the website, which is to elect Obama as the President of the United States. The tutorial also explained how to navigate the website. The website encouraged people to share more information about themselves, in order to be connected with other voters in their community. The navigation leads visitors to choose bridge or bonded social capital. The website guide told website visitors to find local groups and circles that are similar to their work, hobby, or interests. The website guide states that there are over 20,000 different groups on the site. Examples of the different types of groups that were available are: single moms, single Latin dancers, and air traffic controllers. Some local groups were more active than others. The instructor suggested that visitors generate positive social capital by stating that it was best to pick a group of a person's interest and a group that is most active. The website has input for the viewer's zip code that will lead the viewer to

groups in their area. As a member of a group they will receive regular emails and the last

step is volunteerism by walking through their own neighborhoods or making phone calls

to contact voters. In order to bond voters together they ask voters to exchange contact

information. Through local membership groups an administrator in charge of a

designated area and is able to meet face to face with local members. This is an example

of how online social capital pushes offline action. After having scripted discussions with

neighbors, the volunteers have to report their findings. The local membership connections

fostered both bridged and bonded social capital.

The site discusses the importance of fundraising and setting goalslxi. The

membership site also encourages people to set up a personalized webpage, and then invite

friends and family to participate. This strategy shows the importance of bringing in, as

well as building, social capital, and encourages the natural inclination to give, amongst

friends and family, which creates perfect synergy. If these volunteers had approached

unfamiliar people, they would most likely not have received as many donations. These

intimate connections between people are what allow social capital to grow. The

personalized fundraising utilizes email to recruit people to vote for Obama, and weblogs

allow people to voice their opinions on the campaign. Visitors were also able to read and

see how others felt about the campaign providing a constant renewed experience for

participants. The fundraising goals were set and it allowed people to monitor their

progress through a "fund-o-meter" on the website. These efforts to create motivations for

members of Obama's specialized community encouraged people to continue constant

activity in civic engagement.

The site mentions *www.mybo.com* which is a website similar to Facebook, but this page is specifically for "grassroots" campaigning. This personalized website was recommended by Obama's main website. The mybarackobama.com website reiterates the purpose of the page: to join a local group, contact nearby voters, and to fundraise. On Mybo.com, "2 million profiles were created. In addition, 200,000 offline events were planned, about 400,000 blog posts were written and more than 35,000 volunteer groups were created – at least 1,000 of them on Feb. 10, 2007, the day Obama announced his candidacy"[lxii]. Thus through membership on mybo.com one would be fulfilling the spirit of volunteerism.

The Obama website created new applications for some technologies, for example, the Apple iPhone, which used GPS to allow voters to find the nearest voting precinct. Another example of utilizing mobile phones were the Obama ringtones that were reminders of former speeches, provided campaign exclusive information, and allowed people to make donations through the phone.

In order to discuss various online rumors, Obama created a website that gave people the proper information about his true beliefs. Internet gossip, negative blogging, and tabloid information quickly spreads online which are examples of destructive social capital. Destructive social capital is the opposite of positive social capital and it occurs when people connect and or associate negatively. In order to set the record straight, Obama built a webpage to answer many misunderstandings that mostly came from the media, for example *IsBarackObamaMuslim.com*. Thus, negative social capital converted to positive social capital solely by addressing issues that many other candidates would

often ignore. Obama also sent out mass emails to many supporters so that they could forward correct information about his background to supporters close friends.

An example of negative publicity was the Sarah Palin interview with Katie Couric on a morning news show. Palin insufficiently answered Couric's questions. YouTube and various sites picked up the interview and it was one of the most watched interviews of 2008. After the interview *Saturday Night Live* performed a skit on Palin that was almost verbatim. These Palin online incidents were examples of negative publicity being that they depicted her as an ignorant beauty queen that did not know anything outside of Alaska. This transparency, through YouTube, his website and other media outlets provided knowledge that people could use against false information. Most candidates do not address false accusations hoping that eventually they will disappear.

Creating unified memberships was a powerful tool for Obama. He represented himself during the campaign as transparent by being an honest leader. Obama networked, maintained memberships online, created a clear message of hope, and found thousands of people to support himlxiii. Using online techniques Obama tuned out other candidates by making his message available in as many places as possible online. Another aspect that personalized his campaign was that he empowered the public and effectively engaged them to participate on his campaign. Lastly, there were numerous ways for voters to campaign for Obama and join different sites in order to ensure that Obama's message was being heard throughout the net. The World Wide Web is large and it is easy for people to be ignored online. Obama utilized diverse online methods to

make sure that his website and information about him would appear at the top of their search. This is different from other candidates who when one web searched their names their website was not at the top.

Understanding the campaigns bonded and bridged social capital allowed it to take advantage of the solidarity that occurs within the group. Grassroots efforts help reinforce an ideal bonded and bridged community as people came together under a common goal. Obama's goals for his Presidency were to provide hope for Americans that were losing their jobs, houses, and healthcare. In order to conceive of solving a problem one first has to realize that hope is needed. Obama's rhetoric of hope aided many people to volunteer in the spirit to change America.

Obama's website reiterated his primary focus on reforming America by improving education and healthcare. These concepts were simple, easy, and straight forward something that most people would not be able to disagree that change was needed. Later in a debate, when questioned about how Obama would fix the healthcare system, he honestly answered that he was not prepared to answer that question yet, but promised an answer within a week. After a week he provided some of his healthcare goals on his website. Many candidates in that position may not have been as honest or willing to admit hesitance. His response was later provided online so that people could examine his template at their leisure. Obama's response exemplifies the benefits of being transparent in ideas and making them available online. The placement of information

online allows the country to become involved and decide whether or not they agree with him on healthcare.

During the campaign Obama shared with the American public many personal stories. One example of his stories pertained to his mother who died from cancer, and she was fearful that would not be able to pay for her doctor's bill. Thus, healthcare hit home for Obama and he relayed a message that he would be invested in it so that other Americans would not have to suffer in their last days in the same way. His mother, during, her last days, was concerned about being able to pay for the hospital bills. These family experiences aided Obama's understanding of why it is important to have universal health care, and were effective in convincing other of Obama's commitment to solving the problem.

Reforming the education system in the United States is a concept that Obama discussed in his campaign. When people are more educated often they volunteer more and social capital will flow within a society. This was exemplified earlier in the paper when discussing the difference between the American system post television era versus the British system. When people are unskilled and uneducated a negative effect on social capital may occur. England's government focuses on education thus, they have more people volunteering.

America's infrastructure was another issue that Obama focused on. This is important for any society in order to increase productivity and job opportunity, as well as more tourism. He discussed how China has better train system better ports they are living

in the twenty first century economy unlike the United States. Obama felt that it is important to rebuild the roads, sew lines, water system and bridges. Incorporate new electricity grids and renewable energy. When there is good transportation from cities to suburbs, and city-to-city more social capital can flourish.

With the reiteration of clear ideas and presidential objectives people did not get lost in what Obama wanted to accomplish during his presidency. In the past people have fundraised large sums of money but their message did not connect with the American people nor give them enthusiasm to volunteer. McCain was criticized as well for being scattered, not providing consistent presidential goals. This was an advantage for Obama, who along with eloquent speeches was able to "be sensible"lxiv, as his grandmother told him. When objectives are kept simple people are able to unify accordingly and continue "the technology of participation"lxv. Having enough money and a clear presidential mission statement aided in relaying his message country-wide.

In 2007, presidential campaigning began earlier making it automatic that candidates would fundraise more than previously. There was a secret ballot taken in Washington amongst 19 of the most knowledgeable foreign policy experts, they voted Obama to be the most probable to change the image of America abroad, "Nine seasoned veterans voted for Barack Obama, the 45-year-old freshman senator from Illinois. Hillary Clinton, the most experienced candidate, received zero votes. Rudy Giuliani ... polled highest amongst republicans with just two"lxvi. The tone of this quote reflects how most mainstream media described the phenomena of an African-American running

for president. Many people wondered how it was possible that a newcomer could develop trust amongst senior politicians, and Americans. People were shocked at how Obama was able to fundraise more than any other candidate. Early in the campaign it would seem illogical for Obama to beat Hillary. However, Obama's fresh approach utilizing virtual social network sites, building grassroots amongst Americans to get out and vote he connected with more Americans. The rhetoric of hope and change is something that many Americans could identify with. The concepts of hope and change within itself connected people who normally would stay separated within their neighborhoods in society. Obama's campaign allowed that possibility and to go beyond bonded social capital and created bridged social capital as well. People understood that Clinton would have been more of the same politics maybe a little better, but people wanted and outsider a fresh perspective. Obama highlighted that he was not from Washington; meaning that he would not run the office as former people in Washington have.

MySpace and Facebook often linked people to Obama's personal website during the campaign. Obama's personal website was necessary to build social capital nationally and locally. Through his website Obama was able to mobilize interested voters to campaign for him personally. It also linked like-minded people together to campaign virtually, evidenced by the 20,000 different groups on www.mybo.com oftenlxvii. SNS users on his personal website, Facebook, and MySpace sent petitions to mutual friends to join their online virtual campaign.

In order to market himself, Obama also created many commercials on YouTube instead of paying for spots on television. Often, the news picked up the online commercials and discussed them, providing more free publicity. This section has thoroughly discussed the various methods in which Obama extended himself on his personal website, through television, YouTube, and other websites to create bonded and bridged social capital.

GENERATIONAL

> A USA TODAY/MTV/Gallup Poll of registered voters 18 to 29 years old shows Democrat Barack Obama leading Republican John McCain by 61%-32%, the most lopsided contest within an age group in any presidential election in modern times. Obama's margin is overwhelming across four groups of younger voters, divided by their engagement in the election, their optimism about the future and other factors.lxviii

Statistically younger voters are more prone to vote Democratic. In fact Democrats under thirty lead online political action. The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, a political research foundation found that 46% of Americans used Internet, email, or cellular texting to get information about the campaign in 2008lxix. A third of Americans watched campaign videos online, and a tenth used social network sites

to participate in political activity. One fourth said that they received emails about the campaign one or more times a week. In every area Obama tripled political activity, in part because of his utilization of technology.

The Pew statistics noted that 75% of Obama supporters were connected online, whereas only 57% of Clinton supporters were connected onlinelxx. Obama's supporters received more political news information online than McCain supporters. Thus, Obama dominated the social networking sites and online videos databases. This is an example of a political candidate making himself available to the masses in multiple ways, and thus connecting and building trust to increase social capital amongst voters.

Obama out campaigned all other candidates virtually by realizing that almost three out of four Americans are online. He targeted these online voters, Obama was able to connect with Americans in ways not considered in previous campaigns. Statistics show that in the United States, 72.5% use the Internet. On MySpace and Facebook Obama had 380% more supporters than McCain, on YouTube, Obama had 403% more subscribers, and 905% more viewers than McCainlxxi. Obama realized early on that virtual technology was a tool to be utilized in a political campaign. In addition to slaughtering McCain in that regard, he also beat Hillary Clinton, even as a younger Democratic candidate. The utilization of such campaigning methods allowed an underdog to win over a well-connected former president's wife. No one thought that would have been possible, in part due to Obama's maximizing of virtual social capital, he was able to win the most powerful position in America, if not the world.

Obama's campaign was intergenerational it provided older mentors with younger people that were interested in the same areas. Volunteers focused on having similar voting preferences which proved to be much more beneficial for his campaign, "He has mobilized senior-caliber talents and youthful energies to raise money, go door to door, and man telephone brigades to get out the vote, and vote early"lxxii. This is an example of bridged social capital that Putnam would describe as one of the key components for social capital.

SOCIAL MESSAGING SITES/TEXT MESSAGING

The brief text message from the Obama campaign came about 3 a.m., less than three hours after word of the decision had begun leaking out. "Barack has chosen Senator Joe Biden to be our VP nominee. Watch the first Obama-Biden rally live at 3pm ET on www.BarackObama.com. Spread the word!" His e-mail announcement began: "Friend — I have some important news that I want to make official. I've chosen Joe Biden to be my running mate.lxxiii"

This is the example most people will remember about the text messaging and the Obama campaign. Obama was the first in the United States to utilize this technology in a presidential campaign, but he was not the first in the world to use text messaging. The following section will give international examples of how virtual campaigning has

influenced or even radically changed the political climate in various countries. Obama used the benefits of text messaging and social websites in his campaign to urge people to vote for him. Text messaging allowed people to participate in a way that was unknown, prior to the 2008 election. When Obama chose Biden as his running mate, three million text messages were sent. Later, messages discussed current events, as well as upcoming debates or speeches, and lastly, to vote. Text messaging was useful prior to the 2008 elections in the Philippines' and Korea these technologies had already been tested.

In "Sociable Technology and Democracy Technology," Danah Boyd discusses how digital technology is becoming the glue to mobilize people who already have connections or similar goals. Boyd uses the term *homophily,* meaning that which allows people to express themselves and associate with those who have similar beliefslxxiv. In her research she found most people are active online when their friends are active. Thus, through friendship association people often follow what their friends do. This is important in understanding, why Obama wanted supporters to ask their friends and family to support his campaign. Technology such as instant messaging and cellular phones makes it easier to keep in touch with friends and family. Obama realized this fact about cell phones and incorporated it within his campaign.

Cellular phones have been updated to include an email system called text messaging. This system allows people to interact more frequently without having to make a phone call. The purpose of text messaging was to connect people; it was not

made for political changes, but it can also be used in this way. In the Philippines she

describes the power of social messaging systems that overthrew the government. In

2001, Joseph Estrada was newly elected as the President of the Philippines. Text

messaging assembled 700,000 protesters to meet at Manila's People Power shrine to

denounce President Estrada's electionlxxv. This manifestation was successful forcing

President Estrada to resign allowing his Vice President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to take

over. This example shows how to mobilize through technology for political action, and is

similar to Obama's use of text messaging to get people out to vote.

Technology connects people far beyond physical limits. The key for democracy

is that one has to extend outside of one's close social networks or boundaries. President

Obama during the campaign was an expert at reaching beyond his social boundaries and

physical space through the Internet. Political failures have occurred when people

proposed change amongst friends but did not extend the messages of their campaign,

struggle, or fight to outsiders. Boyd gives an example of proposition 54 in California.

Proposition 54, prohibited affirmative action, "…which called for prohibitions in

education and hiring based on classification by race, ethnicity, color, or national

origin"lxxvi. There was a group of Anti-54 Berkley students. They only targeted

students, staff and faculty on Berkley's campus, later they decided to take their debate

online. The group insufficiently targeted multiple populations, meaning that they

campaigned only within their own communities on Friendster. Many members changed

their Friendster SNS profile photos to "no on 54"lxxvii. The majority of these students

were friends with each other or people with a similar mindset. A broader audience was

not reached in California on or offline due to marketing within small clusters. Sharing

ones political message only with people of the same mindset and beliefs stifles the

possibility of sharing information with a wider audience. The Anti-54 group was

ignored by the majority of the online public because they were only visible to their Anti-

54 friends.lxxviii

Boyd also points out another problem with the Internet is when people divide and

conquer online. That occurs when members from one group join a message board or

group contrary to their interests, and their behavior and etiquette do not fall in line with

they group they purposefully entered. This blundering can be detrimental to groups

trying to promote a cause through bridging social capital. In contrast, when a positive

connection occurs it can lead to tremendous and powerful social movements.

Boyd describes an event that she helped organize for five years, called V-daylxxix.

She began working with V-day in 1999, to help a global campaign against the abuse of

women. The V-day event is a non-profit organization with 1,200 supporters that collect

funds annually by performing the Vagina Monologues. The V-day event is a perfect

example of bridged social capital because it brings people from various backgrounds

together to fight for a common cause. Often the supporter's belief systems would

normally have separated them, for example, pro-life and pro-choice supporters. The goal

of the group is to find similarities not differences. Boyd explains, "Muslims speak with

sex workers; older women speak with teens. National and political boundaries are forgotten.lxxx" Finding a goal and using bridge social capital type of unity is possible when proper leadership takes place.

One problem is that people often stay in clustered net boxes where a group of like-minded people never leave their online community, and thus fail in provoking broad political action. On the other hand, Obama's campaign extended across multiple borders via the Internet, television, and campaign stumping in many communities. Three things Boyd discussed as being important for social certainties or ways to deal with socializing online are: that not everyone will want to meet online, that people often seek similar minded individuals to build communities, and that while, "community is valuable for support; outreach is limited by the diversity of a community's breadth" lxxxi. She continues, "Within democracy, effectiveness is measured in quantifiable terms; bigger is better-more money, more votes etc"lxxxii. She then explains how it is not always true in the Internet world since, for example, communities like listservs die due to too many subscribers. This could explain why Obama asked people to join groups of their interest that way they can communicate about issues pertinent to themselves. Whereas if he lumped over a million people together on a listserv for community discussion that would have been detrimental to his goal. Instead of allowing people to speak freely on a listserv, www.mybo.com was set up to allow subscribers to express their opinions. The function of www.mybo.com was to find local groups within ones area and to voice your opinions on your own page. These two ideas allowed people to voice opinions with like-

minded people even if they did not know them. Also, it allowed everyone to voice their opinion and recruit other friends and family to join Obama's cause. Thus, the mass emails only came from Obama campaign team and avoided the problem of dead listservs.

Networking was Obama's specialty especially through various ethnic sites. Obama had over ten different social networking sites linked to his website. This showed that he wanted to connect with as many people as possible, thus from now on politicians will take inspiration and campaign via social network sites and other communication forms.

As Jongwoo Han explains, the use of social network sites and text messaging in Korean politics can tell us much about the impact of digital communication on political behavior. In "Internet, Social Capital, and Democracy in the Information Age; Korea's Defeat Movement, the Red Devils, Candle Light Anti-U.S. Demonstration, and Presidential Election during 2000-2002", Han describes a mobilization similar to Obama campaign and the electorate's reaction to eight years under the Bush administration. Han explains that in the Korean election a political citizens group called Generation 386, formed against the authoritarian government and its control of the medialxxxiii. This group of citizens were primarily in their thirties and forties. The collective groups formed using technological apparatuses. Another group, General 2030, also formed spontaneously using social network sites and text messaging.

In 2002, General 2030, an apolitical Internet fan group, primarily consisting of those in their twenties and thirties, supported the Red Devil soccer team in Korea/Japan

World Cuplxxxiv. General 2030, was recognized first recognized by mobilizing people to gather in the streets to celebrate Korea's win over Japan. December 2002, a few months after the soccer game these individualistic wired youths mobilized after the killing of a Korean girl by a US soldier. The youths used their connection to soccer to mobilize and protest what they felt was injustice in their country. The news spread quickly along with the desire to take a stand. This incident exemplified how communication devices that are normally used to connect with friends could be used to mobilize masses of people to politically protest. The group held a candlelight demonstration to protest America. The result of this protest was that globally people understand that South Koreans would fight injustice if needed and not remain in silence as they have in the past. After, the manifestation the 2002 elections were influenced, allowing the opposition party Rho Moo Hyun to defeat Lee who was expected to win. In both cases online social capital functioned to quickly push offline unions based on previous established resource networkslxxxv.

Leading up to these events in the eighties, Korean civic organizations were the catalyst of political mobilization via 2002 young voters that changed the outcome of the elections. Thus, the Internet was combined with previously established public co-ops. Previously established organizations along with technology changed how to politically mobilize citizens. These events exemplify a perfect combination of virtual social capital. Korea began its Internet revolution in 1985, gradually around continued to increase. The height of Korean Internet use was between 1999-2002. Han shows the increase in Internet use also increased the power of the people, which afforded them the opportunity

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to overturn a corrupt government. Social capital stemmed from social movements collectively gathered to stop the strong government from trampling over a weak society. Han defines social capital as, "multiple human resources networks, either actual or potential, with certain characteristics of shared norms, attitude, and trust that can be mobilized for social and political actions"lxxxvi (9). This exemplifies what occurred in the Obama campaign.

The Korean political underdogs used tactics similar to Obama's by posting information online and messaging cellular phoneslxxxvii. On the morning of election cyber space records were broken. Rho was the underdog in the campaign his supporters used cellular phones and MSN Messenger to encourage people to vote for him. In three hours from midnight to 3 a.m. Koreans visited *naver.com*, a political news website. Half of the voters were youths who used mass media technologies, which directly affected the outcome of the election. Han expressed that these new social movements were movements that sprang from older movements from the 1960s through the 1980s. Thus, without the combination of technology and civic organizations, masses of people would not have been able to gather so quickly in 2002. This scenario is similar to the election of Obama. In the United States there were many civic organizations fighting for equal justice, civil rights, and against the Vietnam War. Thus, through modern means he was able to use grass roots efforts, and combine the Internet with previous methods in order to triumph. The difference in the Obama campaign was that many volunteers did not have grass roots experience in community organizing.

Through his website, subscribers were able to access everything needed, in order to become leaders in their community. Some say that one can judge a leader by how he is able to effectively train others to lead. Obama's exemplified leadership skills by constructing a website that trained volunteers to become leader's which created a nexus for social capital to flourish.

NEWS MEDIA

> As the long presidential campaign wound down last week, the public remained highly engaged. Fully 60% of registered voters said they were following campaign news very closely, while 28% said they were following fairly closely. That is the highest level of voter interest just before a presidential election since the Pew Research Center began tracking campaign news interest in 1988lxxxviii.

The Obama campaign was the first time in history that a presidential candidate bought half an hour time on three major networks before the election. Obama felt it was necessary to create an infomercial to make sure people feel comfortable with him being in the White House. This demonstrates the power of media and why Obama was invested in utilizing it to capture the American public's attention and get them accustomed to the idea of him being their president.

In October of 2008, many voters felt that the media wanted Obama to win. Researchers found that the majority of news stories on Obama were positive, while on McCain's stories negative. Most of the time news sources ignored how the economy was in recession and instead discussed the debates. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, found that 51% of the national news was interested to the presidential campaign, while 23% of the news focused on the economy lxxxix. Thus many journalists felt that Americans were more interested in watching the debates than any other news. The top story of the campaign was Obama securing the Democratic nomination. Someone deciding who to vote for in the election would have interest in watching the debate on television or online. Whoever was most articulate and won the debates would give people a chance to decide who to vote for. If judged by how one would respond to questions in an articulate way, Obama would probably beat most, since his speech is very captivating to many Americans. Some of the undecided public connected with both candidates based on their responses and body language. Television aids the viewers in deciding whether or not they can trust candidates based on not only their answers but also body language. They are networking and familiarizing themselves to the future president as television or YouTube are most people's primary opportunities to connect with both candidates via the media.

ADVERTISING

Barack Obama spent a total of $235,974,838 to broadcast 118 television ads, according to statistics compiled by Campaign

Media Analysis Group, which tracks political advertising

expendituresxc.

This demonstrates the power of advertising during the Obama campaign. The top

three campaign stories were Obama securing Democratic nomination, Palin's pregnant

teenage daughter, and McCain's campaign suspension xci. During the campaign, McCain

often portrayed Obama as if he were a rock star, in last attempts to destroy Obama's

credibility. These attacks were an attempt by McCain to mix Obama's popularity with

pop culture versus real political culture. McCain launched an advertisement comparing

Obama with Paris Hilton. Throughout the campaign the Republicans often slighted

Obama for having many celebrity supporters. Obama for the most part did not play dirty

politics and remained genuinely poised, eloquent, and sophisticated, which became

apparent through various media outlets.

Obama's advertising style is a model not only for other politicians, even for

businesses. Various industries have tried to figure out how to use the Internet in

productive, beneficial ways, as Obama did. After all, *Advertising Age* gave Obama the

award of being Marketer of the Year in October 2008. Normally companies such as Nike

or Apple would receive this award"xcii. Bruno feels that this title is suitable being that

Obama had to sell himself to the American voting public. Bridge and bonded social

capital through advertising afforded Obama to connect with voters increasing the

possibilities to gain voters. He was ahead of other candidates in the Internet race,

dispersing information in multifaceted ways, thus broadening the possibilities of bumping

into him online. Prior to Obama's election Americans were not able to access candidates information as easily online in communities like Facebook and YouTube.

Traditionally, campaigning through mass media has included television and radio advertisements, direct mailing, and volunteer phone calls. One lesson that Antony Bruno from Billboard magazine suggests is that "there needs to be a steady stream of content from every resource available, as well as a call to action to get them [the public] involved in marketing your work. Obama supporters have encouraged their friends to vote for him"xciii. The Obama website is set up as an advertising tool that fuel fired up Americans with the necessary community organizer tools needed to multi task. The website facilitated people's eagerness to participate in the campaign and engaged them in direct engagement. The overall point is that if we call media social then should be socially interactive, not one sided. The Democratic campaign advertised online, through email, SMS, SNS, YouTube and another virtual apparatuses available online.

YouTube was another aspect of direct advertising in the Obama campaign. In addition to the constant campaign updates that Obama fed this site, another aspect was the American public creating political videos. People were allowed to create their own political spoof video, which enriched support or deterred support of a candidate. This type of virtual social capital was not beneficial to Palin when *Saturday Night Live* portrayed her as an idiot in her Katie Couric interview. Online viewers saw the SNL skit first and then searched for the actual interview online. Obama, luckily, did not have as many videos that stood out and made him look less credible.

Text messaging allowed people to participate in a way unknown prior to the 2008

election. When Obama chose Biden as his running mate, three million text messages

were sent out. Later, messages discussed current events as well as upcoming debates or

speeches, and lastly to vote.

The utilization of television is one of the oldest technologies, thus Obama seized

the opportunity to go beyond thirty-second commercials and make history with the first

political thirty minute commercial. Obama was able to spend more money on

commercial ads, since he collected more money online. Television is known as a vehicle

to promote capitalism through buying products or ideas. Brian Lowry explains, "TV has

long boasted that its ads are perceived to be the most 'influential,' 'authoritative,'

'exciting' and 'persuasive'"xciv. The effects of virtual Obama was everywhere to the

point that McCain complained about Obama having more opportunity since he had more

money. This is a result of using traditional ways of campaigning versus Obama's grass

roots version of campaigning. The effects of more media attention were detrimental for

McCain, TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG told the *Wall Street Journal*, "(John) McCain is

in a shouting match with a megaphone"xcv. This comparison embodies the reality of not

properly using technological tools. It makes perfect sense that Obama won under such

conditions.

In the commercial, Obama discussed repeatedly the tough economic times that

people are enduring. His endorsers were the CEO of Google, Eric Schmidt, along with

other Senators and Governors. The most powerful message of the commercial engages in volunteerism and voter participation.

TRUST

Obama "launched his political career in the living room of a domestic terrorist." He is "palling around with terrorists" (note the plural noun). Obama is "not a man who sees America the way you and I see America." Wielding a wildly out-of-context Obama quote, Palin slurs him as an enemy of American troops.

By the time McCain asks the crowd "Who is the real Barack Obama?" it's no surprise that someone cries out "Terrorist!" The rhetorical conflation of Obama with terrorism is complete. It is stoked further by the repeated invocation of Obama's middle name by surrogates introducing McCain and Palin at these rallies. This sleight of hand at once synchronizes with the poisonous Obama-is-a-Muslim e-mail blasts and shifts the brand of terrorism from Ayers's Vietnam-era variety to the radical Islamic threats of todayxcvi.

These statements illustrate the mood towards the end of the campaign. These allegations along with many others against Obama were framed to persuade voters towards another candidate. Trust, Putnam defines as an intricate component of social capital. During the Obama campaign Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, or John McCain often tried to give reasons that Americans should not trust Obama. Some mistrust examples

pertained to his age, lack of experience, possible Muslim, affiliation with Reverend Wright or William Ayers. If opponents succeeded in creating mistrust this could lead to a lower possibility of fostering bridge and bonded social capital.

The following section will explore trust across multiple disciplines. It will focus on how others measure trust in different fields such as business, psychology, and other social science fields. After reviewing literature on trust one will be able to examine which definitions are best applicable to how Obama cultivated trust on and offline. Both social capital and trust are often oversimplified or not properly defined across fields. The following section will explore various ways to define trust in relation to social capital.

Various definitions reveal how social capital is pliable and interchangeable according to the research. Melanie C. Green and Timothy C. Brock explore how social capital psychologically explains situations, moods, and how trust can be affected by circumstance. They explained that, "situational forces and individual attitudes can combine to create behavior that either enhances or detracts from aggregate social capital"xcvii. Social capital is based on individual choices. When people meet face-to-face, social capital may be greater. Putnam argued that nowadays people are face to face with machines more than humans and these he called "parasocial relationships", which do little to foster bonds between individualsxcviii. Over the long term, and in the aggregate, these "parasocial" or "ersatz" individual choices fostered online may lead to detrimental societal-level effectsxcix. Other social scientists argue that social network

sites provide higher possibilities for social capital to flourish that will be explained later on in the paper.

This alternative reality may be more alluring to some people more than others. Often the ersatz world cuts off real social activities. Other social scientists studied the relationship between which relationship would be stronger in college students based on trust, situations, and mood. Positive people are happy and may be more sociable whereas negative people may want to be alone more. The study found that the more online trust students had the more motivation they had to create real social capital. Low trust was the opposite, "high trust individuals may have intrinsic motivation to engage in real social activities whereas; low-trust individuals are susceptible to situational sources of heightened or reduced motivation to engage in real social activities"c. Often people will plan an activity online and later meet face to face or vice versa. This is a key correlation to Obama's campaign; many people felt inspired and positive during difficult economic times after listening to him speak. Therefore, they utilized their motivation in an action and participated in real social capital whether by voting for him or registering others to vote.

In *Trust, Dependency, and Control in the Contemporary, Organization,* Carole V. Wells found a correlation between character and trustci. Nowadays there is a higher rate of job changing and trust has changed with that. Her study finds that the more employers had to depend on employees the more trust was developed. Trust decreased when the

manager did not interact with their employees. Reasons for distrust often stemmed from personal reasons. People hang around people they like and trust. They found that trust is the key for the organizational process. Trust and alliances are connected.

Another work on trust discusses the ethical reasons for trust. In, *Sharing our Alliances: Trust and Ethics,* Antonio Argandoña focused on the nature of relationships. Time is necessary for alliances in order to assess whether trust will increase or decrease. Often trust begins in the form of an idea of trust[cii]. Due to globalization and technology alliances have increased. Alliances occur due to necessity and thrive on reciprocity without hidden agendas. Learning is the key factor in alliances. The quality of bonds and reputation are important for alliances along with trust. Argandoña describes thirteen trust factors that are important for alliances. The following section will break down trust.

First, trust is: "interpersonal: between concrete individuals", if we think about Obama and how he was able to connect with people on television, on his website, at rallies, through email and text messaging he was able to create closeness with many Americans[ciii].

The second factor is "situational, rather than global: trust is placed in one particular person". The economy was horrible, oil prices were high, people were losing jobs left and right and many people wanted an answer to the last eight years of war and decreasing value of the dollar. People decided to invest their trust in a one person to fight for their cause and frustrations[civ].

The third key is "voluntary: properly, trust must spring from choice and cannot be compulsory". People were eager and enthusiastic to see many things change thus they volunteered their free timecv.

The fourth, "free, since no party can (sufficiently control the other party's behavior)", this is obvious since in the United States people are not obligated to vote or participate in campaigning activitiescvi.

Fifth, "committed, since each party depends on the other (without being able to control her)", this can be seen from out of a desperation for the government to change the economy and the system of governmentcvii.

Sixth, "conscious: each party is aware of the other party's trust", being that many people felt anything could be better than the past Republican years there was a trust that America and global relationships would change in multiple wayscviii.

Seventh, "vulnerable, because betrayal or breach of trust are possible", this can be understood in the 2008 campaign since voters had no other choice- there were only two candidates and most voters would align themselves with either a Republican or a Democratcix.

Eighth, "relevant, in the sense that the consequences of breach of trust by one of the parties cannot be considered insignificant by the other", this can be interpreted as half

of the American public is ready for change and if they do not receive change they will

feel betrayed and the consequences would be, not re-elect Obamacx.

Ninth alliances are, "dynamic or temporal, because it evolves over time: trust is

established, grows, diminishes and ties". Initial trust is established and tested with time,

thus the Obama's loyalty and trust with American public will be testedcxi.

Tenth, "action oriented, implicit in the goal of the alliance", implies that the

citizens have created an alliance with Obama in order to see change and that is their

expectation or else they would have voted for someone elsecxii. Also, Obama laid out his

goals simply and repeated them accordingly, allowing people to clearly understand what

he hopes to accomplish.

Eleventh, "uncertain, since before the alliance is established it is possible to

question the reliability of the other party and, once it is under way the question is whether

the other party will have change of heart and betray the terms of the relationship",

explains that we do not know if change will occur or more of the same politics wrapped

up in a mulatto packagecxiii. It will be hard to determine betrayal since Obama made

over four hundred-campaign promises.

Twelfth, "based on communication", if Obama continues to use media and

Internet well he will be able to communicate and explain to his partners the American

public why he chooses to propose certain actionscxiv. In the pre-election he was able to debunk false rumors that were floating around on the Internet.

The last key to alliance is "experimental" cxv. The majority of Americans did not know anything about Obama two years ago thus, most of the public is experimenting with his rhetoric and visions of change and living in constant hope that it will be change they can agree with.

Exploring alliances within businesses allows one to see the important foundation of trust and key aspects of how to build camaraderie. These principles of trust can be explored in the Obama campaign since Obama had to make alliances with the American people. Presidential campaigning is similar to a business relationship with voters since by voting for a candidate they are in alliance with the administration. Since Obama did not have many special interest donors and ninety percent of his funds were 200 dollars or less, the argument could certainly be made that he made an alliance with the American public.

In any relationship at the beginning trust is not a gift of exchanges because the two parties are not familiar with one another. The higher the trust the more alliances are formed, thus employers have to treat staff in an appropriate way. Partnerships must serve own interests as well as partner interests in order to gain trust. Thus, trust is often a lucid idea that later becomes stronger with time and through proper connections.

Bing-Sheng Teng, in "The Risk-Based View of Trust: A Conceptual Framework",

discusses three types of trust: behavioral trust-which is perceptual, trust antecedents, and

subjective trustcxvi. Teng explored the different way to research trust in social science.

He claimed there are high demands for trust within organizations although trust in

America is decreasing. Overall, there is a high expectation of the risk of trust; many

scholars believe that risk is needed to produce trust. In the USA trust is down yet there is

a high demand within organizations. He described the trust propensity as subjective trust

as goodwill trust and competence trust which is ultimately behavioral trust. Risk

propensity broken down as relational risk and performance meaning that risk is ultimately

risk taking. Risk taking and behavioral trust are connected. Faith -based trust supersedes

risk based trust. Three dimensions of trust are predictability dependability and faith. The

key risk concepts are uncertainty and adverse outcomes. Normally when risk is lower,

the more people are willing to trust the other party. Coleman another sociologist that

studies social capital, described trust as dependent on expected utility. Behavioral trust is

explained as a combination of certain levels of risk and performance risk. Most people

lend trust due to feelings that they will have a positive gain in the future. In the

campaign, many people were uncertain about Obama's religious beliefs and if they felt he

was Muslim, many Americans would not have trusted him.

There is negative relationship between risk perception and risk propensitycxvii.

The lower the risk the more likely one is to do a certain task. The risk propensity mirrors

the image of subjective trust. Behavioral trust is risk taking. They define trust propensity

as ones personal tendency to believe in others trustworthiness. They concluded that trust is the mirror image of risk. For example, if trust for the government and goodwill are down then goodwill is often ignored. Beng claimed that often trust researchers leave out the probability aspect. This study focused on the trustor point of view not the trustee.

There is a basic standard procedure for measuring trust; Stacey Ulbig a political scientist tries to provide an alternative to the four point NES that is used to measure political trustcxviii. The four-point scale is based on the certainty that all people trust the government when there is not conclusive evidence that this is true. Often with the 4-point scale model people tend to choose towards the middle. Ulbig tries to prove that government trust has increased due to unconventional political activity. She felt that the four-point scale limited people's ability to mistrust the government. Thus, she created a trust scale from -5 to 5 and found out that the four-point scale was better in evaluating people's trust for the government. Now we will examine how to measure trust online via a business model.

The article, "Trust transfer on the World Wide Web", by business professor Katherine Stewart, focuses on how to measure consumer trust online and trusting intention "defined as the extent to which an individual is willing to make himself vulnerable to a targets actions"cxix. Trust is discussed as a cognitive process that can come from any background connection from sports to online. Stewart described trust transfer as a cognitive process, transfer occurs when a person (the trustor) bases initial

trust in an entitycxx". Another term used was *entitativity*, which means "expectations of unity and consistency, which can vary for both groups and individuals" cxxi. Impressions are based on memory. People often lump groups of people together; if one is good then the rest of the group must also be good and trustworthy. Trust signals are important. They are measured by age, income, gender attitudes towards shopping, length of net use, and the propensity to trust companies and stores. They set up three fake websites, and found that most people didn't trust buying online. Trusting beliefs related to impact on perceived trustworthiness of the unknown website. They found that institutional factors were also important. In the field of social science Stewart felt that there is not enough emphasis on social networks and alliances that focus on cognitive effects. From a social science point of view the number of ties may effect perception. Alliance studies aid in expanding understanding of alliances as well as cognitive explanations for network effects. This study focused on online computer shopping, but politicians have to sell themselves and their politics, which is parallel to a company. Thus, alliances and networks are just as important.

A management science study on trust by Lenard Huff and Lane Kelley, two professors in the Department of Business, showed how although most people thought that collectivist societies were the best model for international business, it was an incorrect assumption. They investigated seven countries in local native mid level bankers. This study focused on organizational trust, which is "based on the collective trust of individual organizational members"cxxii. The higher the organizational trust the higher the external

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trust. They discussed internal trust within organizations, which is the atmosphere within businesses. Their results were that Asian families had higher family bias than the USA. Within organizations in Asia, often they have lower trust of others thus making it difficult to create social capital or alliances with others. Thus, in collectivist cultures it may be harder to foster relationships within a business setting. The USA and Europe are easier places to conduct business and it is generally easier to forge alliances within these cultures.

This study is important since it demonstrates that individualist countries are more prone to trust initiallycxxiii. The United States is a very individualist country in comparison to Asian countries. Obama had a clean slate, practically no background was know about him two years prior to him running for president. In the study they stated that those in individualist countries are more likely to foster trust whereas those in collectivist countries will take longer time to foster trust. But, individualist countries are quick to drop the partnership if someone ruins that trust, unlike Asian countries where once you have that bond it is harder to break their trust since it took time to establish. This could be the reason why people were able to foster enough trust to vote for Obama.

Social capital is based on trust within networks and memberships. Trust has been defined from sociological, psychological, political, advertising, business and lastly, a mathematical standpoint. There were calculated reasons that Clinton, Palin, and McCain tried to break down the character and image of Obama by reiterating that he is not

trustworthy. If Obama's opponents succeeded in persuading the public to not trust him, this would have broken down the foundation of virtual social capital.

OBAMA'S LIFE STORY

This last section will demonstrate how Obama's autobiography naturally fostered social capital or bonds with many Americans. Obama connected with voters in various areas such as: single parents, working class, middle class, upper class, immigrants, conservatives, liberals, higher education elites, and community activists. Hillary and McCain often discussed how Obama was an outsider and not traditional and would not fit into Washington politics. Obama always turned that argument around, and proclaimed, that Americans were tired of politics as usual in Washington and change was needed. Republicans and democrats alike could agree that change was needed although they differed in the way to change America.

The rate of the divorce is a little under fifty percent, meaning that many Americans can identify with the struggles of a single parent. Obama's father left his mother to pursue a Ph.D. at Harvard, shortly after they divorced. Later, his mother met and fell in love with another man and moved to Indonesia when Obama was six years old. Later, when Obama was nine years old his mother sent him back to Hawaii with his grandparents. Many single parent household send their children to live with their parents. Luckily, Obama's mother divorced and moved back to Hawaii.

Education is the key to success for many Americans, and Obama excelled academically for the majority of his life. His mother did not have a lot of money, and his grandparents were working-class. Later on, Obama was able to enter upper echelons of society through hard work in education. Obama went to the best schools in Hawaii. His grades were not the best so we went to a mediocre college and later his sophomore year he transferred to Columbia University, in New York. He moved to Chicago and realized as a community organizer, that he was not able to make sufficient change because many law and policy affected the way people lived. He realized he had to become a lawyer, thus he later attended Harvard law school. If voters were looking at someone they could relate to, most could relate to some aspect of Obama's background.

Obama's international biracial background afforded him the opportunity to naturally be able to socially network with groups in multifaceted ways. His white grandparents were from Kansas and his African grandparents were from Kenya. Many Americans have parents or grandparents that are immigrants, and originally the majority of Americans come from immigrant backgrounds.

Many Internet and television ads targeted the Latino community. Some ways that Obama fostered social capital intentionally was by speaking Spanish in television ads. In Michigan, Spanish-speaking newspapers and on Univision, journalists focused on how Obama had an illegal immigrant cousin from Kenya living in Boston. This story in English speaking media was negative, but in Latino journalism the social capital was positive. Many Latinos, have or know of illegal immigrants that are friends of friends or

family living in America or other parts of the world. The positive connotation in this story was similar to, compare Barack Obama to being similar to Latinos. The immigrant American dream is spread across many first, second and third generation immigrants including: Latinos, Africans, Indians, Arabs, Jews, and Eastern Europeans. Many immigrants have a romanticized vision that in America anything and everything is possible. Maybe this vision combined with hope is the reason that in the final election, 67% of the Latino vote went to Obama. The Latino turnout was 20% higher for Democrats than previous elections. Another Latino factor is the fact that Obama is multiracial, he looks like many Latinos who also come from multiracial ancestry. This could further propagate bonded or bridged social capital.

CONCLUSION

This thesis explored the various ways Obama campaigned using virtual social capital. Primarily throughout this thesis social capital was defined by Bourdieu and Putnam. This thesis argues against Putnam's claims that media breaks down social capital. The Internet expands media possibilities and Obama effectively used these virtual technological tools to connect with various sectors of society that may have been ignored in previous campaigns. Through social network sites such as Facebook and Myspace and above all his personal website were a virtual grass roots in action. People campaigned both on and offline based on these systems. In order to become a member you could choose the extent of involvement which one wanted to participate. Trust in membership and networks were key to allow people to feel safe in donating money or

setting up local campaign sites within their communities. Many records were broken within the Obama campaign and race often overshadow the intelligent strategic methods of campaigning. Future businesses, non-profit organizations, advertisers, marketers, as well as presidential nominees can learn how to effectively build virtual social capital. Any organization that wants to advertise to achieve their goals can follow the Obama campaign mode

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