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Abstract

Presidential campaign logos are unique icons in our democratic society. Their saliency and how they are perceived by the general public is tantamount to the success of the campaigns themselves. Due to the rise of social media, the online world has significantly changed the playing field for political branding, design, and candidate appeal. This study explores how the rise of social media has reshaped political branding in American presidential election campaigns. Presidential candidate logos from 1968 to the 2016 election cycle were analyzed for this study. Year of election, political party, shapes, colors, typography, slogans, and URL presence were all studied in this analysis of the 171 logos of major candidates during these election cycles. This study found that political branding has experienced some notable changes while other elements have remained the same. Not surprisingly, the appearance of the colors red, white, and blue, as well as stars and stripes are common occurrences in American presidential campaign logos across both time and political party. The content of the logos has remained consistent—what has changed is the improvements of the designs themselves.
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**Introduction**

Anyone familiar with the 2008 U.S. presidential election will be able to describe the distinctive design associated with the Obama campaign logo. Remembered as the “O” logo, Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign brand reinvented what it means for candidates to achieve successful visual representation. This was due to the logo’s simplicity and ability to transfer to various platforms. With the 2016 election cycle, even those peripherally following the campaign can recognize Hillary Clinton’s distinctive H logo or identify the exclamation mark that followed Jeb Bush’s first name (*POLITICO Magazine* 2015).

The quick iconic status and phenomena of these logos have prompted the following questions:

1) Has the introduction of social media changed the appearance of logos and slogans?
2) How have presidential logos adapted to the constraints and affordances of social media, and can this be measured?
3) Do candidates repeat artistic motifs or elements in their logo designs or slogans, and if so, is there reasoning behind this?
4) Are design elements shared by both major parties, Democrat and Republican, or different among the two?

This analysis examines how the appearance of presidential candidate logos is indicative to campaign goals and branding strategy. Whether these logos express newness, harken back to traditional elements, or remain unchanged, each strategy strives to make voters view candidates as memorable and identifiable.

**Literature Review**

**Political Branding**

Mumby (1987) provides an early explanation of how symbolic representation can simplify complex ideas and stances while also being persuasive. Scholars state that although brands are visual, their representation is intangible but equally important (Aaker 1991; Copeland 2003; Lakoff, 2008). A candidate’s political brand aims to educate the voter about their platform and campaign, differentiating themselves from other candidates, advocating the voter’s decision-making process in their favor.

Political branding in campaigns is a method of promoting candidates against their competitors and ensuring their messages resonate with the voter, similar to commercial branding (Lees-Marshment 2009; Smith and French, 2009). Following and expanding upon the literature on brand personality, Guzmán and Sierra propose that presidential brands are judged on five perceived traits: capability, openness, empathy, agreeableness, and handsomeness (2009). In recent years presidential campaigns have shifted from purely political icons to high-end consumer branding, superseding companies such as Apple and Nike for advertising awards (Seidman 2010).

**Party**

As political parties have begun to act similarly to consumer brands, there is reason to suggest that Republicans and Democrats would strive to mimic each other’s successful methods of branding strategy as well as seek differentiation. No scholarly research on how party differentiation manifests itself in campaign logos and slogans was found, therefore testing the variable of “political party” became a main motivator for this
project. Do Republicans and Democrats brand themselves in similar or different ways via logos and slogans? Can this study show these patterns of behavior over time?

**COLOR**

In American politics, it is widely known that Republican-leaning states are “red states” and Democratic-leaning ones are “blue states,” but do these colors matter when it comes to the campaigns themselves and their branding? Although these color-based terminologies are broadly used today, the concept of a state being classified as “red” or “blue” did not begin until 1976. As a result of the close election, this represented the first time that casual observers poured over maps extensively, well beyond the day of voting, and the blue-and-red state terminology entered the lexicon (Elving 2014). The formation of this mindset creates a specific need to look at the color distinctions between the logos used prior to and after its adoption.

Color has been shown to have a high effect on most decision-making, with the exception of low involvement decision-making. This has made consumer color preference less important than learned associations about colors (Grossman and Wisenblit 1999). Numerous studies have shown that audiences perceive color to portray different traits about brands, varying by culture. In the United States, the use of red is viewed as exciting, blue as competent, white as sincere, black as sophisticated, and brown as rugged (Labrecque and Milne 2011). Jacobs et al. (1991) found that U.S. students associated black with expensive and powerful; blue with dependable, trustworthy and high quality; red with love; gray with dependable and high quality; and yellow with happy. Other scholars in the political field have found that different uses of colors in background and font can lead to different poll results (Ditsch 2012).

**Logos**

Logos are intended to represent and prompt recognition of brands across different languages and cultures (Kohli, Leuthesser, and Suri 2007). A logo is a brand-identity sign that is either word or graphic-driven in order to identify itself (Henderson and Cote 1998). Brands rarely recreate or change their logo to maintain recognition, but do make amendments to keep current (Kohli, Leuthesser, and Suri 2007).

According to Green and Loveluck (1992), understanding a logo requires three considerations: purpose of communication, its graphical and referential properties (what is the logo alluding to?), and the context in which the logo is presented. While these sources may be dated, the arguments made remain applicable to public perception of branding and design. The digital impact logos seek today have taken on new forms that insinuate patterns of party differentiation. A recent Pew Research study claims that social media has polarized politics and people’s party identification more than ever before to serve as echo chambers of ideology (Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, and Matsa 2014). This study further examines how the phenomenon of echo chambers has affected elements of logo design.

**Slogans**

In defining slogans, Kochan (2002) says, “short messages, which constitute a closed entirety, either stand out from an advertising or a propaganda text or exist by themselves, [and] are characterized by a brief, often poetic form.” Slogans are used to position an entity, in this case a political candidate in an election, and set the tone of a campaign (Seidman 2013). Their
purpose is to communicate the brand’s position (Kohli, Leuthesser, and Suri 2007). In every American election, party slogans change to remain updated on relevant issues (Gouliamos et al. 2013). An effective slogan is simple and appeals to large audience needs, desires, or demands. Features of a slogan make its recurrence easy through the use of rhymes, puns, and alliterations (Gouliamos et al. 2013). Although this study does not evaluate or assess successful slogans, it could be helpful to consider slogan features during the coding process.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media are “platforms whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion” (Kietzmann 2011). According to Pew Research’s survey on social media in 2014, 52% of American adults are present on multiple platforms, which is an increase from 42% in 2013 (Duggan et al. 2015). Presidential campaigns utilize social media platforms to initiate online presence and engagement. When political entities, such as candidates, establish an online presence, they simultaneously incorporate an online political brand.

With the proliferation of communication channels, political campaigners are challenged to create effective branding to appeal to voters. The 2008 American presidential elections exemplify this. There is an abundance of existing literature on President Obama’s use of social media in his campaign that demonstrate the successful use of branding and social media in American political campaigns (Hafrouch 2009; Seidman 2010; Johnson and Perlmutter 2011; Katz 2013).

Although coverage of candidate branding has been minimal, research does exist on branding, logos, and slogans. However, existing literature lacks a comparative analysis of political branding across several presidential campaigns especially with regard to the rise of social media. Finally, this study will incorporate the political branding of the upcoming 2016 presidential elections, making the analysis more recent.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This content analysis examines potential trends in brands and slogans with the introduction of social media. Furthermore, it examines whether candidates’ brands have any similar characteristics in terms of typography, color, shape, or slogan. The primary research questions for this analysis are:

1) Has the introduction of social media significantly changed the appearance of presidential logos?
2) Has the introduction of social media changed slogan wordage and etymology?
3) Do candidates’ logos from the same political party share similar characteristics?
4) Do candidates’ slogans from the same political party share similar characteristics?

Based upon the existing and previously cited literature, the primary hypotheses for this analysis were:

1) The introduction of social media has changed the way logos are represented.
2) Social media’s effect on slogans is minimal and not substantial.
3) Candidates’ logos from the same political party share similar characteristics.
4) Candidates’ slogan characteristics are not significantly different based upon party.

Data

Presidential campaign logos from 1968 through 2016 are included. This was done in order to examine similarities amongst party members and if there were changes to logos before and after the introduction of social media. All logos were taken from 4president.org by following a detailed procedure. The website 4president.org was chosen as the source because it housed a comprehensive list of all presidential campaign years, candidates, and logos starting in the latter half of the 20th century.

Methodology

Population

This study explores “if the rise of social media has reshaped political branding in American presidential election campaigns.” To measure this, close attention was paid to the Web 2.0 era—beginning in the early 2000’s—as a vantage point for how social media first began to reshape political branding. Web 2.0 can be defined as the age where users were able to contribute content and collaborate with one another online, as opposed to merely being spectators (Fox 2006). All candidates for President, per 4president.org’s listing, were included in the study due to the limited size of the population.

Measurement

The codebook, located in Appendix A, seeks to create measurements of the following variables, informed by the preceding literature, found within presidential campaign logos: (1) year of election, (2) political party, (3) shapes within the logo, (4) number of colors used, (5) colors included, (6) use of text in the logo, (7) how much of the candidate’s name appears in the logo, (8) punctuation, (9) if the campaign year is included, (10) font type, (11) case type of font, (12) if a slogan was included, (13) usage of common words in the slogan, and (14) if a URL is included within the logo.

These variables were chosen after researching previous content analyses on political branding (Heising 2015; Nee 2011). One study in particular—written by a master’s candidate at American University—juxtaposed Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and John McCain’s campaign logos using semiotic analysis (Nee 2011). Items from Nee’s study borrowed for this research include: text analysis, color theory, font analysis, logo image variation, and the presence of a URL or other media.

Slogan Measurement

Two questions arose in coding the slogans: (1) Is there a slogan as part of the logo? If so, how many words are in the slogan? (2) Does the slogan contain the following words:

America/country, American/people, believe, better, change/reform, courage/bravery, Democrat/democratic, dream, experience, faith, fight, freedom, future/forward/tomorrow, hope, leader/leadership, new, peace, President, prosperity, Republican, responsible, restore, secure/security, strength, trust, win, the name of the candidate in the slogan. During the coding process, the stand-alone phrase “for president” was not coded as a slogan because it did not fit Kochan’s definition. A notable exception is when a candidate listed their name followed by “for President” in addition to their name being elsewhere in the logo, as this did fit Kochan’s definition.
**COLOR MEASUREMENT**

Color is produced when light, striking an object, is reflected back to the eye (Parekh 2006). While the study of color includes three aspects—hue (general color), saturation (intensity) and brightness (value)—this study focused on color hue, as it was deemed unnecessary to differentiate between shades of colors for the purpose of this study. There are two questions concerning measuring color in the coding: (1) How many colors are used in the logo? (2) What are the colors included in the logo?

**TYPOGRAPHY MEASUREMENT**

“Typography is the use of type to advocate, communicate, celebrate, educate, elaborate, illuminate, and disseminate… [it is] both a science and an art” (Felici 2015, iv). Felici’s research revolves around font making as a technology for communication, and the differences between “good fonts” and “bad fonts.” The coding for the analysis included two questions in relation to font: (1) What is the text case (uppercase, lowercase, combination of cases)? (2) What is the font type (serif, sans serif, or a combination of both)? Serif font includes small lines at the ends of the letters (a popular serif font is Times New Romans), while sans serif excludes the lines (a popular sans serif font is Arial).

**SHAPE MEASUREMENT**

A shape is defined as “an area that stands out from the space next to or around it due to a defined or implied boundary, or because of differences of value, color or texture” (Kovalik 2013). This definition describes shape as one element of design in visual literacy. Query regarding shape in the coding included: Are there any shapes within the logo? If so, what type? Shapes considered for the coding were square, circle, oval, star, animal, stripe/line, American flag, and other shapes. If the logo was coded as having an American flag, star and stripe/line were not coded for that logo. After several rounds of pilot coding, a consensus on what did and did not constitute a rectangle in a logo could not be reached among the coders. For example, there were shapes almost identical to a rectangle but had discrepancies such as a small gap in one corner, disconnected corners, or a different shape in one or more corners. The ‘other’ option allowed for the disputed shapes to still be coded in the analysis.

**PILOT CODING**

Using an online random number generator, 30 logos (17.5%) were selected from the entire population of 171 logos. All five trained coders coded each of the 30 logos following the initial draft of the codebook. A reliability test was run for each variable to determine the reliability among the five coders. If the variable’s ‘Krippendorff’s Alpha’ fell below 0.5 the coders discussed the coding issues and came to mutually agreeable coding decisions. After two more rounds of pilot coding, a very limited number of variables still had not reached consensus. It was determined that these would not reach an acceptable reliability score and were therefore dropped from coding; an explanation of these decisions is noted previously in the methodology section. The Krippendorff’s Alpha for all variables is included in Appendix B.

**Findings**

The findings have been divided into an overall analysis of political brands during U.S. presidential campaigns and among candidate families, and branding by party and pre/post the introduction of social media. Cross-tabulations summarize the relationship between two categorical variables (“SPSS Crosstab Tutorials”). A crosstab is a table that shows the number
of times each of the possible category combinations occurred in the sample data. The resulting Pearson's Chi Square scores were deemed significant if p values were lower than 0.05. If Pearson’s Chi Square test deemed a relationship as significant, it was assumed that the statistics represented in the cross-tabulation did not occur by chance and that there is a relationship between the variables compared. The majority of the following tests were cross tabs.

**FINDINGS PART I: ANALYSIS OF BRANDING DURING U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS (1968–2016)**

For each election cycle, the number of candidates campaigning to be President differed and in some cycles there were more parties running than in others. Shown in Figure 1, years that have one candidate running for President were due to reelectons. For example, in 2004, former Republican President George W. Bush ran for reelection in 2004, and in 2012, President Barack Obama was the only Democratic candidate running for reelection.

**SPECIFIC WORDS USED IN SLOGANS**

The words “America” or “country” appeared thirteen times in the analysis and increased during the 2012 and 2016 campaigns. It was the only variable in the slogan section that had statistical significance. This could potentially be due to the rise of the Tea Party, whose goal is to change the direction of the country. In the 1972, 1984 and 2004 campaigns, slogans did not include any of the top eight words, and primarily did not contain any slogans.

**COLOR**

Many colors appeared in the population, but the top three colors were red, white, and blue. Red is the only color that reached statistical significance based on campaign year. It was high in 1972, but drops and remains at a consistent rate for three presidential campaigns before increasing again in 1988. The use of the color red may have been used sparingly during the Cold War era due to its association with communism. The color white consistently was used at a higher rate than red and blue throughout all campaign years, but was not statistically significant based on year.

**CASE TYPE**

When analyzing font type, sans serif was used most at 49.12%, followed by serif at 36.26%, and a combination of both at 14.62%, respectively. The majority of logos used sans serif in the 1968, 1972, 1976 and 1980 election campaigns before increasing again in 1988. This could be due to the availability of technology at the time and font capability. There was a significant increase in logos using serif in the 1996 election, which remained through the 2012 campaign cycle. This period was during the rise of the Internet, computers becoming widely accessible, and the creation of more fonts. In the 2016 campaign, there is a significant increase in the use of sans serif font. The sudden increase in the sans serif font may be due to the increased use by major brands having rebranded their logos to use sans serif font, such as Domino's Pizza in 2012, Yahoo! in 2013, the Marriott Hotel and Oxford Dictionaries in 2014, and Google in 2015. Additionally, according to Grohmann, Giese & Parkman (2012), serif font types are viewed as elegant, emotional, and beautiful whereas, sans serif font types are viewed as manly, powerful, smart, and upper class.

**SHAPES**

The most common shapes used in U.S. presidential campaign logos were stripes,
followed by stars, the American Flag, circles, and other shapes. Other shapes included non-coded shapes such as speech bubbles, hearts, and rectangles. Logos did not contain any squares until 2004, with only three candidates using them since: Republican Ben Carson in 2016, Democrat Joe Biden in 2008, and Democrat John Edwards in 2004. Democratic candidate Lincoln Chafee in 2016 was the first to use an oval. The limited design software technology could be cause for low numbers of shapes in logos.

**Families in U.S. Presidential Campaigns**

Throughout presidential campaigns there have been instances where several members from the same family ran for President, such as the Clinton, Romney, and Bush families. Former Democratic President Bill Clinton's branding in the 1992 campaign and Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton's brand in 2008 were similar. Although four elections apart, both husband and wife used an American flag and the same color hues.

Father and son, George and Mitt Romney, ran ten election campaigns apart and their brands had similar characteristics with their name above a slogan, the same color hues, capitalized names, and slogans using the word America. In the 1968 election campaign, George Romney, included the election year in his text-based logo. The younger Romney’s logo in 2012 employed more graphic design elements by stylizing the R.

Three generations of the Bush family members have run for President as Republicans, with two becoming President. George H.W. Bush ran for President in 1980, five cycles later George W. Bush ran for President, and Jeb Bush ran in the current election cycle. George H.W. Bush had a simple brand similar to Jeb Bush, but the difference across the logos could be due to the negative associations with their family name.
**Findings Part II: Crosstabs Pre/Post Social Media and by Party**

In these crosstabs, social media was coded with the binary “pre” and “post,” with pre social media occurring from 1968–2000, and post occurring with the introduction of social media in 2004 to the present. 2004 serves as a historical benchmark for social media’s introduction because that is the year Facebook launched (Facebook.com). Logo elements listed are either statistically significant ($p < .05$) or approaching statistical significance ($p < .10$). All other elements tested did not meet these criteria.

**Logo Element Usage by Party**

**Specific Words Used in Slogans**

“America/Country” was nearly statistically significant at $p < .053$ based on party. Republicans used the words “America/Country” 10 times, or 11.8% overall, and Democrats used them 3 times, or 3.7% overall. Republicans’ frequent usage of the word “America/Country” supports an ongoing trend in the party ideology that aims to restore America to a former golden age. A 2014 article in *The Atlantic* stated that Republicans love the word “restore” and associate restoration to Republican President Ronald Reagan and his success (Beinart, 2014). Although “restore” was examined, in analysis it was not found statistically significant; but the words “America/Country” are often seen used within the same slogan. In recent years, Republican presidential candidates have authored books titled: *American Dreams: Restoring Economic Opportunity for Everyone*, written by 2016 presidential candidate Marco Rubio, and *12 Steps to Restoring America’s Greatness*, written by 2008 presidential candidate Mike Huckabee. In 2012, the Republican platform promised to “Restore the American Dream.” When Republicans allude to “America/Country,” they harken back to the golden age of America that is promised to voters if elected. In the 2016 election, Donald Trump’s shares this ideology with his slogan, “Make America Great Again!” (DonaldJTrump.com).

**Color**

None of the colors were found to be statistically significant by either Republicans or Democrats. However, red was approaching statistical significance at $p < .075$. Republican red usage occurred 68 times or in 80% of the Republican logos examined. The frequency at which Democrats used red in logos over the years was 55 times or 67.9% of the time. White and blue did not come close to either statistical significance or approaching, and therefore cannot be compared. Raw frequency analysis states blue and white were used almost equally by both parties. Given that red approached statistical significance, its $p$-value suggests that Republicans have used red at a higher percent from 1964–2016. This may be due to the red color association with the Republican Party. The fact that Republicans are red and Democrats are blue “wasn’t cemented into the national psyche until 2000,” according to Smithsonian.org contributor Joni Enda, who describes how NBC’s coverage of the 2000 election began this bi-partisan division of color. On the night of the George W. Bush vs. Al Gore election, NBC color-mapped the results per state as numbers came in from the Electoral College (Edna, 2012). This may explain Republicans’ overall higher frequency of red use to the Bush vs. Gore election. In 2000, mainstream media unintentionally changed the current U.S. political narrative and its color scheme.

**Shapes**

The shape of the American flag in candidate logos for Republicans and Democrats achieved strong statistical significance at $p$
< .011, indicating that the relationship was not happenstance. Republicans used the shape of the American flag 10.6% of the time in their logos but Democrats used the American Flag only 1.2% of the time. This means that Republican candidates appear to have a greater affinity for the American flag than Democrats by 9.4 percentage points. No other shape—stars, stripes, or squares—showed statistical significance for either Republicans or Democrats. Neither party favored these shapes more than the other. Republicans’ frequent usage of the American flag is not surprising given that American patriotism is known to be more associated with Republican ideology (Carter, Ferguson and Hassin, 2011). In a 2011 psychology study, researchers found that a “single exposure” to an American flag has the potential to shift support towards Republicanism even 8 months later. Visual representations of the American flag in presidential candidate logos may also provoke similar sentiments in voters. Republican usage of the American flag may be a branding strategy used not only to grab the Republican voters’ attention, but other undecided voters as well.

**URL**

URL usage by Republicans and Democrats achieved statistical significance at $p < .028$. Republicans used URLs 13 times at 15.3% overall and Democrats used URLs only 4 times at 4.9% overall. Frequency of URL usage suggests that Republican campaigns, at one time, were more heavily influenced by technology than Democrats. Jason Gainous and Kevin M. Wagner’s book, *Tweeting to Power: The Social Media Revolution in American Politics*, discovered that Republicans used Twitter more often in 2008 as the underdog party in an attempt to rise to power. “Republicans were beaten decisively in 2008 with the Democrats, and the Democratic candidate Barack Obama in particular, using online technologies to motivate supporters and gather resources. Parties must innovate to survive, so it would be expected that the Republicans would adapt to the online campaigning” (Gainous and Wagner, 2014). Further research shows that URLs reached a usage peak in 2012, declining afterwards. This implies that for the 2012 election, logo creators no longer found the insertion of URLs in logos to be useful, especially after Google’s rise to prominence and accessibility, and the increase of mobile devices.

**Logo Element Usage Pre/Post Social Media**

**Specific Words Used in Slogan**

“America/Country” achieved statistical significance in relation to social media at $p < .003$. Before social media, “America/Country” was used 2.8% of the time and after its introduction, “America/Country” appeared 15.4% of the time. As previously stated, “America/Country” words are associated with the restoration of a golden age. This demonstrates that both Republicans and Democrats would call upon this ideology after the start of social media, asking voters to remember what America used to be and what it could be. Largely, use of these words can be associated with Republicans and their attempt to call for restoration of the country. However, Democratic candidates may also be inclined to use “America/Country” for similar or other reasons. The word “New” evolved from no usage before social media to 4.6% usage after its introduction ($p < .026$). “New” used only after social media is no surprise. The digital age certainly brought newness to the political sphere and the usage of the word is arguably evident of candidates’ attempts to address this notion of moving forward with technological advancement and continuous change, as Obama did in 2008.
**Color**

In this test, red was statistically significant at .002. Before social media red was used 66% of the time. After social media was introduced, red was used 87.7% of the time. The total usage increased by 21.7 percentage points, post social media. Social media may not be the major influencer. This increase can be attributed to NBC’s color-mapping of the 2000 election, and the identification of Republicans as red and Democrats as blue. The color white did not achieve statistical significance but was approaching significance based on social media presence at .076. White was used in almost all of the presidential logos. Only 5 logos coded did not use white. Prior to social media, 95.3% of logos used white. After social media, 100% of logos used white. This slight shift in the need for “white space” on social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, may be caused by a preference for the logos to take on a floating or stand-alone effect. Blue usage based on social media presence was statistically significant at .012. Before social media blue was used 82.1% of the time; after social media, blue was used 95.4% of the time with an increase of 13.3%. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram all use blue as neutral background colors for their websites in addition to font. The increase of blue usage in candidate logos after social media’s introduction coincides with the idea that blue is simply easy to look at online. The blue usage may be a byproduct of the rise of social media and a more prominent design choice for the digital age.

**Shapes**

Only squares achieved statistical significance based on social media presence with p < .010. Before social media squares were not used at all. After social media squares appeared 6.2% of the time, appearing in 4 presidential logos. No other shape—American flag, star, or stripes—occurred at different rates based on social media presence. There was no significant increase or decrease in their usage between the time periods. We conclude that increased square usage is directly related to the constraints of social media via profile photos and headers. Profile photos are typically in the shape of squares on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, while headers are rectangular. These constraints demand logos to share the same angles and precision to fit the format by which they are bound.

**URL**

Usage of URLs before and after social media is statistically significant at p < .000. URLs, like social media, are part of the digital era. URLs were used 26.2% of the time after the introduction of social media, but never before.

**Limitations**

Since no gallery of all previous and current U.S. presidential campaign logos exists, the
4president.org website was heavily relied upon for logo extraction. It is the only online source of candidate logos based on election year. Logo extraction from 4president.org cannot determine and guarantee logos as official. Current candidate websites could be visited to confirm and pull their official campaign logos, but logos from candidate websites prior to the 1996 election would not have this option. To remain consistent in logo extraction, 4president.org was used in order to have a cohesive online source with several presidential campaign logos, even if it may not have been deemed the “official” logo.

Future Research

It is important to continue research on U.S. presidential campaign logos and slogans because they represent how necessary branding, design, and word usage is to the success of a candidate’s logo. Further research to pursue includes consideration of the differences in logos in comparison to candidate success. Were candidates popular before their team had a great logo fashioned or was it the logo that raised the candidate to fame, or did the logo have no effect?

Conclusion

There have clearly been changes in the way presidential campaign logos are designed. Since the introduction of social media, the number of changes that have taken place are minimal. Arguably, even fewer statistically significant differences exist between political parties. While logos from more recent campaigns might seem more appealing and memorable than older logos, it appears that what has changed over time has been the quality of design rather than the content of the logos themselves. This demonstrates that political branding via logos is not something that is instantaneous, but rather follows trends of both campaign logos over time and dated design aesthetics. This analysis exemplifies the importance of logo design in fitting the design aesthetics of the time, rather than following patterns based on a candidate’s political party.

For presidential candidates, logo potency is a key factor that contributes not only to winning an election at home in the United States, but it also battles for global recognition. Similar to some of the most beloved product brands like Coca-Cola and Nike, candidate logos are used by politicians to provoke many thoughts for passersby such as nostalgia, forward-thinking, hope and positivity, and much more. Because of the digital age and advent of social media, U.S. presidential candidate logos have had to become more dynamic and able to produce the “stand alone” effect, more so than those of the past. Given what we know and have researched about the psychological affects of imagery, we see how voters at large can be manipulated by particular logo strategies over time. Voters should not simply fall victim to these campaign ploys, but instead develop skills of media literacy in order to think critically about how a simple image can have dramatic and widespread impact.
## Appendix A: Codebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Year of the election</td>
<td>Enter 4-digit year; if year is not known enter 9999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is the campaign year included in the logo?</td>
<td>[1] Yes, all four digits are listed, [2] Yes, only two digits are listed, [3] No, [99] Unable to determine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is the font type? (Check all that apply)</td>
<td>[1] Serif, [2] Sans Serif, [3] Combination of Serif and Sans Serif, [99] No text is included in the logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is there a slogan as part of the logo? If so, how many words are in the slogan?</td>
<td>Enter number of words; if no slogan, enter 0; if unable to determine number of words, enter 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Is the text in the logo:</td>
<td>[1] Sentence case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[2] All uppercase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[3] All lowercase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[4] Combination of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[99] No text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Does the slogan contain the following words?</td>
<td>A. America/country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. American/people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Change/reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Courage/bravery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Democrat/democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. Dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K. Fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Future/forward/tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N. Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O. Leader/leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q. Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T. Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U. Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. Restore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W. Secure/security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X. Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y. Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Z. Win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AA. Name of the Candidate in the slogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[99] No slogan is included in the logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Does the logo include a URL?</td>
<td>[1] Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[2] No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[99] Unclear or unable to determine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Logos Coded

2016

2012
References


Gouliamos, Kosta. Political Marketing.


Katz, James Everett. The Social Media President.


Political Branding in U.S. Elections
