

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory:
A Systematic Examination of a Decade's
Literature**

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Although many scholars have pointed out problems in framing research, there has been very few systematic examinations of the published literature. To examine the common conceptual debates, the present study content analyzes framing literature from 93 peer-reviewed journals for a decade. Two methods were employed for the sample: First, every journal identified as a "communication journal" in the Journal Citation Report was included; second, keyword searches in electronic databases were used. The main findings showed that framing studies have concentrated more on message design and "unique" frames. Consistent with existing debates, results highlight the lack of research about production of frames and mixed frames. This examination of a decade's published literature reveals better direction for future research.

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Introduction

A large and growing body of literature in framing studies has emerged in recent years from a range of disciplines and academic domains (D'Angelo, 2002; Shah, Domke, & Wackman, 1996). Framing research draws on literature from "cognitive, constructionist, and critical" studies (D'Angelo, 2002, p. 870); "sociology, economics, psychology, cognitive linguistics, and communication" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 9); and "political science, sociology, and media studies" (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, p. 139). This range of multiple approaches is "both a blessing and a curse" (p. 139).

The numerous viewpoints allow for creativity (Hertog & McLeod, 2001) and the paradigmatic diversity also leads to a comprehensive view of the framing process (D'Angelo, 2002). However, the lack of clear conceptualizations and operationalizations (Scheufele, 1999) has led framing research to be used synonymously with research approaches that are distinctly different (Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele &

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Tewksbury, 2007). In addition, different approaches and theoretical positions often disagree on key points (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). D'Angelo (2002), for instance, argues that Entman's (1993) call for a single paradigm for framing research is not possible or even desirable: "nor should there be a single paradigm of framing" (p. 871). He asserts that a diverse theoretical and methodological approach has led to a comprehensive understanding of framing. It is indeed neither possible to incorporate the different methodologies or theoretical approaches together, nor will it do any good for the field. Nevertheless, it is equally important to clarify the conceptualizations and operationalizations of the framing studies conducted, so that the research is not grouped with distinctly different approaches (Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

To examine the trends in this growing body of research, a content analysis of the published framing literature from 93 peer-reviewed journals was conducted for a period of 10 years. Of this larger research, the present study examines the conceptual variables in the 10-year period. In doing so, the study addresses some of the key debates in the field and discusses future directions. There are several studies integrating framing theory that explain and clarify the manifold concepts (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Chong & Druckman, 2007a, 2007b; D'Angelo, 2002; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). There are also few meta-analysis studies that have examined particular aspects of framing—"gain-loss" or "task-responsive" (Kühberger, 1998; O'Keefe & Jensen, 2006, 2007).

Scholars have pointed out various problems in framing research, but there has been no systematic examination of the published literature. Although these debates are prevalent because scholars have identified certain studies with problems (e.g., unclear conceptualizations) or have noticed the lack of research in certain areas (e.g., frame production), without a systematic examination of the literature, it is not possible to fully grasp the extent of the problem. This examination of a decade's literature facilitates a deeper understanding of the conceptual debates in framing. Examining past literature is useful not only to track the trends and patterns in the field, but also to help make "better decisions about what research needs to be designed next" (Potter & Riddle, 2007). Thus, the systematic examination of the main conceptual debates in the present study reveals better direction for future research. The analysis attempts to explicate where framing research has been mostly concentrated and identify the areas that need future attention.

Sociological versus psychological aspects

Conceptually, framing can be said to have two broad foundations—sociological (Entman, 1991; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Gitlin, 1980; Goffman, 1974) and psychological (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998; Iyengar, 1991; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). Framing research that grew from sociological foundations refers to the "frames in communication" (Chong & Druckman, 2007b, p. 106). In general, this research tends to focus on the "words, images, phrases, and presentation styles" (Druckman, 2001, p. 227) that are used to construct news stories and the processes that shape this construction.

Goffman (1974) was one of the first scholars to have developed the general concept of framing. As such, frames help people organize what they see in everyday life. Goffman calls frames the “schemata of interpretation,” a framework that helps in making an otherwise meaningless succession of events into something meaningful (p. 21). Gitlin (1980) defines frames as devices that facilitate how journalists organize enormous amounts of information and package them effectively for their audiences. He sees frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion,” organizing the information for both the journalists and their audiences (p. 7). According to Entman (1993), framing involves selection and salience—“to frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Framing could have significant connotations as frames highlight some aspects of reality while excluding other elements, which might lead individuals to interpret issues differently.

Besides examining media frames, researchers have most enthusiastically studied the processes involved in the formation of the audience frame. There is much research that demonstrates how news framing influences information processing and the subsequent decision-making processes. Kahneman and Tversky (1979, 1984) were the first to demonstrate how different presentations of essentially the same information can have an impact on people’s choices. They found that individuals were inclined to take risks when “losses” are highlighted. But when the same information is presented in terms of “gains,” individuals shy away from risks. This approach, called “equivalency” (Druckman, 2001, p. 228), examines the influence of different but logically equivalent messages. In this approach, all factual and stylistic elements are comparable so that the pure influence of the frame can be observed. The “equivalency” perspective draws extensively on the experiments of risk-gain research (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1984).

The “emphasis” (Druckman, 2001, p. 230) approach to framing demonstrates that accentuating certain considerations in a message can influence individuals to focus on those particular considerations. Scholars (Domke et al., 1998; Iyengar, 1991; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999) aligned to this interpretation of framing maintain that it is not always possible to manipulate a frame without changing some of the facts. Druckman (2004) aptly points out that in many cases, especially with political issues, there is not always a way to present a situation in different but equivalent ways. Instead, emphasis framing effects refer to situations when, by “emphasizing a subset of potentially relevant considerations,” individuals are led to focus on these considerations in the decision-making process (Druckman, 2004, p. 672). Thus, for political issues the concept of framing usually refers to “characterizations” of a course of action where a central idea provides meaning to the event (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004, p. 136). It is within “emphasis” framing that scholars have again differentiated frames—episodic versus thematic (Iyengar, 1991); strategy versus issue (Cappella &

Jamieson, 1997); in terms of values (Brewer & Gross, 2005; Shah et al., 1996) to name a few.

The dual nature of framing research—frames in the news versus frames in the individuals' minds—is evident. Scholars have examined both areas of literature in the past decades. The first research question of this study attempted to examine the dual nature in the published literature:

RQ1: In the published framing literature of the last decade, what was more commonly studied—the sociological or psychological aspect of framing?

Unique versus consistent frames

Debates continue about how we conceptualize frames—“multiple problems have surfaced in how researchers define frames” (Carragee & Roefs, 2004, p. 217). There are content analysis studies that do not differentiate between story topics, themes, or frames, and “the reduction of frames to story topics, attributes, or issue positions” (p. 218) ignores how frames construct particular meanings (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). Scholars such as Gamson and Modigliani (1989) use “interpretive packages” to examine media discourse. The central organizing idea of the package is the frame, “for making sense of relevant issues” (p. 3). The five framing devices that the authors suggest are metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images. Clearly, frames are much more than just story topics. Reducing frames to story topics or issues could be problematic. Often “frame” is substituted for “topic”; however, a frame does much more “organizing” and “structuring” work (Reese, 2007).

Moreover, scholars have often indicated the importance of studying a consistent set of frames. Yet, there is a general tendency to generate a unique set of frames for every study. This “lack of disciplined approach” could lead researchers to “easily find the evidence they are looking for” (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, p. 151). Examining specific frames have value in understanding that particular issue or event; however, it is important that these idiosyncratic frames are connected to the larger implications of framing theory. It was necessary for the present study to examine the frequency of unique and consistent frames in the published literature. Hence, the second research question asks:

RQ2: In the published framing literature of the last decade, what were more commonly studied—unique or consistent frames?

Frame production

Carragee and Roefs (2004) criticize the indifference to “framing,” the process through which media frames are actually created. They argue that although a large body of research has looked into media frames, there is a significant lack of examination of the “multiple social actors, including politicians, organizations, and social movements” (p. 216) who create the frames. Several scholars (Gans, 2004; Gitlin, 1980; Ryan, 1991; Schudson, 1983; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) have examined the multitude of influences of news content. Although these studies do not directly explore the frame

production process, these factors can be useful in understanding the antecedents of frames as well.

Entman's (2004) cascade model demonstrates the complexity of the frame production process. He argues that at least in the case of foreign policy issues, frames originating from the administration could shape the frames used by the media outlets, members of Congress, or the public. Furthermore, the public's reaction to the initial frame can affect the administrations' revised frames. Entman's model helps understand the multiple actors that can influence the frame production process.

In another comprehensive study on frame production, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) examine the issue of nuclear power over 40 years of media content. They name three broad classes of determinants that combine to produce a particular package: cultural resonances, sponsor activities, and media practices. The cultural resonances make the content appear natural and familiar. In general, the packaging of an issue is made possible when the cultural resonances and the sponsor activities fit with the media routines.

Other scholars (e.g., Pan & Kosicki, 2001) have argued that frame production is not always an elite-driven process. Citizens take part in framing by participating in public deliberation. Citizens develop their own interpretations of media messages and talk about public issues by making use of the resources available to them from the media, personal experiences, or common sense. Thus, frame production is a "multifaceted process in which influences travel in different directions" (Pan & Kosicki, 2001, p. 47). An understanding of the framing theory is incomplete unless these factors are analyzed. However, in general, framing analysis studies examine frames used in the media text, but there are very few studies that have actually paid attention to the frame production process. As a result, it was pertinent for the present study to analyze the number of studies that looked at frame production.

RQ3: How much of the published framing literature of the last decade concentrated on frame production?

Framing and second-level agenda setting

Framing research has often been grouped with agenda setting and priming. All three approaches have been examined under the broad category of cognitive media effects (Scheufele, 2000, Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Challenging the limited effects model, McCombs and colleagues tested the proposition that by the day-to-day selection of news, the mass media influences the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In later studies, McCombs argued that framing can be brought under the umbrella of agenda setting studies and can be considered a second dimension to agenda setting research (Maher, 2001). However, McCombs' proposition became a highly contested notion and scholars over the years have disputed his claim and explained the differences between the two processes. Agenda setting occurs due to the frequency with which an issue is discussed in the mass media. It does not involve how the issue is treated in the media and is not relevant to framing (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997).

An examination of the psychological processes involved in framing effects helps to understand framing as a process distinct from agenda setting and priming. Scholars have used the accessibility model to explain agenda setting and priming effects. However, the inability of the accessibility bias to specify the particular cognitive units that get activated makes it a poor explanation for the processes involved in framing effects. Framing effects involve activation of specific cognitive units in a process where “ambivalence” is a “necessary” condition (Pan & Kosicki, 2005, p. 177). The authors quote many studies that demonstrate a suitability judgment process or a deliberate selection and integration that starts after the activation by a framing message. Pan and Kosicki (2005) describe the sequence of framing effects as “exposure to framing devices” ⇒ “activation” ⇒ “suitability judgments” resulting in the use of the suitable cognitions in understanding an issue (p. 186). Thus, the extant literature on the psychological processes involved in framing demonstrates the inadequacy of the accessibility model to explain framing effects. However, there has been a tendency to consider agenda setting, priming, and framing under the same expansive concept of media effects processes. The next research question examines how often framing has been categorized under the larger configuration of agenda setting research:

RQ4: How much of the published framing literature of the last decade used framing interchangeably with second-level agenda setting?

Frame competition

Moreover, in previous experimental research, scholars have focused largely on how different frames can affect the audiences’ attitudes, their learning, or political behavior. These studies have mainly focused on the difference of framing effects in single frame conditions, for instance, strategic versus value framing, loss versus gain, or episodic versus thematic (Iyengar, 1987, 1991; Nelson, Clawson, et al., 1997; Shah et al., 1996). However, there has been little research on the effects of multiple frame conditions, where the same subjects get alternative frames of an issue (Shah, Kwak, Schmierbach, & Zubric, 2004; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). In general “the role of multiple competing frames has gone largely unexplored” (Chong & Druckman, 2007a, p. 101).

To be able to capture what actually happens in politics, “it is necessary to have an additional condition in framing experiments, in which opposing frames are presented together” (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004, p. 146). The authors consider “ambivalence” as key for framing effects (p. 137). They argue that the very nature of politics requires choices to be made between competing values. So value conflict is critical to the link between issue framing and political judgment. As such, the present study examined the published literature for the presence of studies exploring mixed frames.

RQ5: How much of the published framing literature of the last decade concentrated on frames in competitive environments?

Moderators and mediators of framing

Several psychological processes involved in framing have been widely studied (Iyengar, 1991; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Nelson, Clawson, et al., 1997; Pan & Kosicki, 2005; Price & Tewksbury, 1997). Recent work demonstrates an increasing interest in the moderating and mediating processes involved in framing. In general, a moderator is a variable that “affects the direction and/or strength of the relation” between a predictor and a criterion variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p. 1174). In terms of framing, the variables that “condition framing effects” are called moderators (Chong & Druckman, 2007b, p. 111). Several framing studies have started delving into conditions that might abate framing effects (e.g., Druckman, 2001; Druckman & Nelson, 2003).

In one of the first studies to examine the moderators of framing effects, Miller and Fagley (1991) found that framing effects were moderated by variables, such as requesting a rationale and the probability of success in the risky option. Studies like this suggest that framing effects are far from being the magic bullet-like effects where citizens play a passive role. Unlike emphasis framing, equivalency framing effects are supposed to be a violation of “preference invariance” (Kahneman, 2003). However, these framing effects are also “less pervasive than previously believed” (Miller & Fagley, 1991, p. 517). The extant literature on framing (Brewer, 2003; Druckman, 2001, 2004; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; and many others) has demonstrated that framing effects are not universal; individual characteristics can shape the influence of frames. Understanding these various individual characteristics is then fundamental to the growth of framing theory.

On the other hand, a mediator is described as “a variable that is causally between two variables and that accounts for the relationship between those two variables” (Hayes, 2005, p. 425). In other words, a mediator variable accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). As mentioned earlier, several psychological processes have been employed to explain the cause of framing effects. Framing has been explained by processes such as accessibility explanation (Iyengar, 1991), priority explanation (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997), applicability explanation (Price & Tewksbury, 1997), readjusting explanation (Simon, 2001), metaphorical reasoning (Lau & Schlesinger, 2005), or usability explanation (Pan & Kosicki, 2005).

In general, framing involves a process where individuals choose from a number of considerations available to them (Nelson, Oxley et al., 1997). Individuals use a set of available beliefs stored in memory. These beliefs are applicable and are considered relevant or judged suitable (Pan & Kosicki, 2005) among many other considerations that may be available. Ambivalence is key in this process and this conflict is similar to “a kind of hydraulic system” that governs values “wherein strengthening one weakens the other” (Nelson & Willey, 2001, p. 252). Thus, along with examining moderators, the mediational processes involved in framing are important in understanding framing effects. The last research question in the present study examines these processes.

RQ6: How much of the published framing literature of the last decade tested moderating and mediating processes?

Method

Sample

The unit of analysis for this study was peer-reviewed journal articles on framing from 1997 to 2007. Two methods were used to obtain the articles included in the sample. First, every journal identified as a “communication journal” in the Journal Citation Report, the Institute for Scientific Information’s (ISI) Social Sciences Citation Index (web of Knowledge) was included. The sample was gathered in February 2008 and the list contained 44 journals. Using the ISI list helped in gathering a thorough, objective sample.

To encompass major journals from outside the area of communication studies and to include any communication journals that might have been left out, a second sampling method was used to supplement the ISI list. Keyword searches in electronic databases were used to capture these additional journals. The electronic databases used for keyword searches were the following: the ISI Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science), PsychINFO, Communication Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and ProQuest Research Library. The keyword searches resulted in an additional 68 journals. Of course, journals that were already included in the sample through the first method were not included via the second method of data collection. The search terms used were “framing,” “frames,” “media framing,” and “framing effects.” All articles that contained these words or phrases were included in the sample.

Coding

Articles were coded as sociological or psychological depending on the methodology of the study. The sociological studies examined the frames in communication, whereas the psychological studies examined the effects of framing on the audience. Studies employing methodologies such as content analysis and textual analysis were coded as sociological, whereas research using experimental and survey designs were coded as psychological.

Articles were coded for “consistent” and “unique” frames or both. Framing studies that employed frames broad enough to be applied to various issues across studies such as “strategy frame” or “value frame” were coded as “consistent.” The list of consistent frames was acquired from prior studies on framing that have consistently examined these frames and the frames have been applied to various issues. Studies that examined frames specific to one particular issue were coded as “unique.”

The production of frames was operationalized as the processes that create frames or the antecedents of frames. Each article was read to identify whether the author examined the frame production processes. Some of the examples of these processes are interviews with journalists, news producers, and political strategists.

Each article was also assessed on whether the concepts of second-level agenda setting and framing were employed interchangeably. Entire articles were read to make this distinction because some of the articles just mentioned the two terms in passing. The presence of competitive frames was operationalized as those studies that employed a mix of the two main frames. For example, in a framing effects study on episodic versus thematic frames, an extra experimental condition would be added to study the effects of a mix of the two frames.

Additionally, the articles on framing effects were coded for the presence of processes such as moderators and mediators in the analysis. Only those articles that employed these processes in the study design were included. Those articles identified as examining moderating effects were coded for the kind of moderators.

Each variable used in this analysis was coded by reading the articles in entirety except the discussion sections. The discussion sections of the articles were not required for coding any of the variables. However, reading the rest of the article was necessary to differentiate the articles that might mention some of the processes, but not actually employ the variable in the study design. In other words, just mentioning processes such as moderators, mediators, competitive frames, or antecedents of frames was not enough to be included in that particular category. Coders made sure that each process was employed in the study design and that results were reported on those particular variables.

Intercoder reliability

A random sample of 10% of the total articles was used to assess intercoder reliability. Three independent coders were trained to use the coding instrument. Intercoder reliability of the three coders was calculated using Cohen's Kappa, resulting in a score of 0.77 or higher on all measures. See Table A1 for the individual scores of all measures.

Results

As mentioned in the "Method" section, this study used two methods of data collection. The ISI Citation Index generated 44 journals identified as a "communication journal." However, when the individual journals were searched, only 25 of those journals had published any research on framing. Therefore, 19 journals from the ISI Citation Index were excluded. The second method of sampling, the keyword searches generated 68 journals with research on framing. Journals added through the first method were not included in the keyword searches. A total of 414 articles on framing were retrieved from a total of 93 journals gathered from the ISI Citation Index and keyword searches. Upon reading the articles, it was found that 35 articles did not examine framing research but mentioned the term in passing. These 35 articles were excluded from the final sample, which consisted of 379 articles.

The most common type of method ($N = 379$) that emerged from the study was content analysis (61.5%), followed by experiments (19.8%) and theoretical articles (7.4%). Articles using content analysis, experiment, survey, and multiple methods

($N = 340$) were coded for the presence of the kind of frames: consistent, unique, and both. A number of articles (49.1%) used “unique frames,” whereas 32.9% of the articles used “consistent” frames. A few articles (6.4%) used both these frames. There were some framing studies (11.6%) that could not be included in these three categories. These studies examined “framing packages” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) to decipher the frame employed.

The total number of articles without the theory pieces on framing ($N = 347$) was coded for whether they examined the production aspect of frames. Only 2.3% of the framing articles studied the production process, whether it was the journalists’ frames or other social actors. A small number of the framing studies (3.7%) considered framing theory as interchangeable with second-level agenda setting. Another variable coded was the presence of mixed frames. A small number (3.2%) of the framing studies examined mixed frames.

Examination of the processes used in framing effects studies ($N = 90$) shows that moderators were most commonly used (23.8%). A few framing studies used mediators (8.8%), whereas 2.2% of the studies employed a combination of moderators and mediators. A large part (65.5%) of these experimental and survey research did not employ any moderators or mediators for examining framing effects.

Discussion

Before the discussion of the findings, it is important to point out some of the caveats of the study. Even though the present study has included framing literature from all of the scholarly fields made possible by the method of data collection, there might have been some omissions in other areas. For instance, the variables included in the study might have missed some of the debates in areas such as critical-cultural or social movement literature. It was beyond the scope of the study to add areas such as semiotics, if those areas were not covered by the present data collection method. A qualitative analysis of the articles under study would have shed more light on the analysis; however, that was beyond the scope of the present study. Despite some of these limitations, this study for the first time provides a systematic analysis of framing literature from the last decade.

The present content analysis of the published literature found that framing research in the past decade has concentrated more on the sociological aspects by examining message design. A number (61.5%) of published literature on framing consisted of content analysis followed by only 19.8% of experiments. Examining media content is fundamental for understanding framing, but for a comprehensive growth of the theory, framing research should pay attention to the various aspects. The sociological aspect of examining media content is important, but the results from the second research question show that most of these content analysis studies had a tendency to develop unique frames.

The inclination of researchers to develop a unique set of frames has often been criticized (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). The present study found that more than half of

the framing research used unique frames—frames that are specific to the particular issue under study. There are several such unique frames that cannot be explained within the generic frames and these may have their own significance. However, the propensity to develop only unique frames could result in the development of very specific frames unable to make any connection to the broader theoretical or conceptual issues of framing. Some of these studies may not be able to contribute much to the advancement of framing theory. Developing generic frames identified in prior studies helps to elucidate the conceptual issues.

Issue-specific frames would be beneficial if they are tied to broader concepts in the framing theory answering some of the more general questions: Does the examination of the issue-specific frames help in methodological development of frame analysis? How does the unique set of frames associate with already developed generic frames in the literature? It is true that “framing has put together strange bedfellows that differ in important philosophical assumptions” (Reese, 2007, p. 149). The convergence of these different perspectives is no doubt an attractive aspect of framing research, but this combination of approaches at the same time can also cause the ambiguity in conceptualizations. The conceptual fuzziness in framing research can be avoided by following strict operationalizations. Of the manifold perspectives in framing research, it is pertinent for each individual study to clearly define the conceptualizations and operationalizations of that particular study.

Examination of the antecedents of frames demonstrates that a very small part of the literature in the present sample examined these production processes. A fundamental question related to frames in communication is that of the origin of these frames. The ability of a frame to dominate the news discourse depends on a multitude of complex factors—economic and cultural resources and the journalistic routines and practices or the frame’s resonance with political and cultural values. The qualitative analysis of the articles in this sample examining frame production is beyond the scope of this article. However, a preliminary look shows various factors such as an interaction of organizational and ideological factors (Silcock, 2002), gender of the reporters (Devitt, 2002), or cultural repertoires (Benson & Saguy, 2005) that have caused different media frames.

Needless to say, the study of frame production is pertinent for a comprehensive understanding of framing theory. Although frames in communication and their influence on the audience are equally important, understanding the origin of the frames is essential for a more complete picture of framing. In general, the studies examining the frames in communication identify the various frames present in the text. One of the ways to research more into the origins of these frames would be to conduct interviews with journalists and editors. Interviews and surveys of activist group members, political campaign managers, and other potential sources of frame sponsorship could also be useful in understanding the production process.

The results from the present study also showed that there was a small sample of studies, which considered framing and second-level agenda setting as similar processes. As already mentioned, clear conceptualizations of these processes are

essential for future studies on framing. Moreover, past research (Brewer & Gross, 2005; Chong & Druckman, 2007a, 2007c; Shah et al., 2004; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004) has demonstrated the importance of examining frames in competitive environments. However, there is very little research examining the influence of multiple frames and results from the present study show that 3.2% of the studies examined mixed frames. Future research on framing has a lot to achieve in terms of understanding the process of frames production as well as examining mixed frames.

As Chong and Druckman (2007b) point out, "little is known about the dynamics of framing in competitive contexts" (p. 113). Questions such as whether competing frames cancel each other and reinforce existing values, push individuals in conflicting directions, or increase motivation for more careful evaluations of the alternatives (Chong & Druckman, 2007b) are germane for future research. The very small number of studies dealing with mixed frames from the present sample demonstrates this need for future research.

The emerging research in framing is paying considerable attention to moderators and mediators of framing effects. In the present sample, 23.8% of the framing effects studies used moderators, whereas fewer studies (8.8%) employed mediators to explain framing effects. The present study demonstrates that the most common moderator used in framing studies is "political knowledge." This individual-level moderator has produced mixed results in the past. Chong and Druckman (2007b) discuss some of these conflicting results. Framing studies (for, e.g., Kinder & Sanders, 1990) conclude that frames influence the less knowledgeable individuals, whereas other studies (for e.g., de Vreese, 2004; Druckman & Nelson, 2003) demonstrate just the opposite. The analysis from the present study reveals this conflict. Of the studies included in this sample, a few concluded the stronger influence of frames on individuals high on knowledge. However, others (Schuck & de Vreese, 2006) found the opposite result. Schuck and de Vreese (2006) concluded, "individuals with low political knowledge were more strongly affected by the news frames" (p. 20). Some of the other moderators (complete list in Table A2) employed in framing studies were the need for cognition, values, need to evaluate, ideology, or political schema.

The attraction for framing perhaps originated in the multiplicity of definitions, methodologies, and sponsors of framing. It is easier said than done to have a common paradigm encompassing all framing research and the concept is perhaps "laughably naive" (Nelson & Willey, 2001, p. 246). This study attempted to systematically content analyze the framing literature in the past decade and thereby allude to the areas of framing research that need future attention. The results of the analysis demonstrate that framing is indeed still a "fractured paradigm" (Entman, 1993, p. 51). But the "double life" (Kinder & Sanders, 1996, p. 164) of frames and its roots in various disciplines makes it impossible to be otherwise. Future framing research calls for studies that are not only able to examine specific framing issues or effects, but are also able to connect with the broader understanding of framing. This would facilitate the development of the theory and allow the multitude of definitions and methodologies to grow.

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Appendix A

Table A1 Reliability Results for the Variables Used in This Study

Variable	Percent Agreement	Cohen's Kappa
Method of study	1.00	1.00
Consistent/unique frames	0.89	0.77
Production of frames	0.99	0.95
Framing/second-level agenda setting	0.95	0.83
Mixed frames	0.94	0.80
Moderators/mediators	1.00	1.00

Table A2 List of Moderators in Framing Effects Studies (in chronological order)

Moderators	Main Results	References ^a
Audience sophistication	More framing effects for the more sophisticated	Nelson, Oxley (1997)
Issue knowledge	More framing effects for more knowledgeable	Rhee (1997)
Gender	Men more affected by issue frame	Terkildsen and Schnell (1997)
Personal involvement	Purchase intention influenced by involvement	Donovan and Geoffrey (1999)
Need for cognition	More framing effects for low NFC	Zhang and Buda (1999)
Ned for cognition	No interaction effects for NFC	Tewksbury, Jones, Peske, Raymond, and Vig (2000)
Source credibility	More framing effects when attributed to credible sources	Druckman (2001)
Political involvement Sophistication	Nonpartisans and those with less than college degree are significantly affected by strategy frames	Valentino, Beckmann, and Buhr (2001)
Political knowledge	Impact of moral traditionalism increased with political knowledge	Brewer (2003)
Conversations Political knowledge	Cross cutting conversations limit framing effects	Druckman and Nelson (2003)
Need to evaluate	More framing effects for the more knowledgeable More framing effects for individuals high on need to evaluate	

(continued overleaf)

Table A2 (Continued)

Moderators	Main Results	References ^a
Political knowledge Issue elaboration	More framing effects for individuals with greater political knowledge and issue elaboration	de Vreese (2004)
Elite competition Deliberation Individual expertise Ideology	Less framing effects in counterframing and heterogeneous groups Ideology conditioned framing effects	Druckman (2004) Gross and D'Ambrosio (2004)
Individuals' schemas	More framing effects when frames were consistent with the individual schemas	Shen (2004a)
Issue schemas	More framing effects when frames resonated with issue schemas	Shen (2004b)
Predisposed to support/oppose radical groups	Predispositions interact with individual versus group frames	Keum et al. (2005)
Core values	Core values interact with frames	Shen and Edwards (2005)
Gender	Male participants associated with negativity bias	Grabe and Kamhawi (2006)
Political knowledge	Less framing effects for the more knowledgeable	Schuck and de Vreese (2006)
Gender Partisanship	Both gender and partisanship interact with frames	Bleich (2007)
Mood	More framing effects on people in a positive mood	Chang (2007a)
Product functions	Product functions interact with frames	Chang (2007b)
Strength of frames Repetition of frames Dual frames	Framing effects depend more on quality than frequency; competition alters but does not eliminate effects	Chong and Druckman (2007c)
Political knowledge Social distance	Social distance interact with frames	Nan 2007

^aComplete citations are given in the References section.