

Family as a framing resource for political identity construction: Introduction sequences in presidential primary debates

JENNIFER SCLAFANI

*Georgetown University, Department of Linguistics 1421 37th Street NW,
Washington DC 20057, USA*

*Hellenic American University, Department of Applied Linguistics Massalias 22,
Athens 10680, Greece*
Jennifer.Sclafani@georgetown.edu

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the construction of political identity in the 2011–2012 US Republican presidential primary debates. Focusing on candidates' self-introductions, I analyze how candidates use references to family members and roles to frame their political identities or 'presidential selves'. Family references are shown to (i) frame candidates' personal identities as family men/women; (ii) interweave the spheres of home and politics and consequently, their private and public selves; (iii) serve as a tool of discursive one-upmanship in self-introduction sequences; and (iv) demonstrate intimate familiarity and expertise on the topic of national security. This study extends research on family discourse and identity by examining the rhetorical function of mentioning family-related identities in explicitly persuasive public discourse, and contributes to sociolinguistic research on political discourse by examining how family identities serve as a resource for framing political identities. (Discourse analysis, framing, family, identity, political discourse, presidential debates, sequentiality)

INTRODUCTION

You never get a second chance to make a first impression, or so the aphorism goes. It might be said that political candidates, and especially those running for the office of US President, have numerous chances to make a 'first' impression of sorts. In each public appearance they make, culminating in hundreds over the course of a campaign, presidential candidates have the opportunity to put forward a unique self that is tailored to the specific audience, the spatiotemporal context, and the political context of the event at hand.

Political communication research has demonstrated not only that voters place high value on qualities of 'likeability' and 'relatability' in a presidential candidate

(e.g. Aylor 1999; Hacker 2004), but that voters value these and other personality-related qualities more than candidates' stances on policy issues when making voting decisions (Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuk 1986). While scholars in this field have acknowledged the co-constructed nature of a candidate's image by candidates, voters, and the media (e.g. Jamieson & Waldman 2003; Loudon & McCauliff 2004), the exact discursive and interactional strategies from which these images emerge have remained underspecified. Lempert & Silverstein's (2012) treatment of presidential campaigns has begun to address such issues from a linguistic and multimodal perspective, focusing on the concepts of 'message' and 'brand', which both allude to some sort of presidential self that voters would want to 'buy' (i.e. vote for), ostensibly because the candidates project themselves as relatable and recognizably consistent, both over time and in various spheres of their lives. The present study develops this line of inquiry by delving into the projection of presidential identity construction, specifically in primary debate discourse.

From an interactional sociolinguistic perspective, a candidate's potential to come off to voters as 'relatable' relies at least in part on his or her ability to accommodate (linguistically and otherwise) to each audience and context in various ways. At the same time, candidates face the opposing but equally important constraint—the need to demonstrate consistency (in terms of selling their identity as a 'brand')—which places them in a double bind. Candidates who demonstrate consistency, both over time and between their public and private selves, are considered 'trustworthy'. A failure in this respect could jeopardize voters' impressions of a candidate's authenticity (Hacker 2004; Teven 2008), 'existential coherence' (Duranti 2006), or what Johnstone (1999, 2009) has referred to as the 'ethos of self'—that is, 'the discursive enactment of epistemic and moral authority linked to a unique "lingual biography"' (Johnstone 2009:30). Indeed, challenges to presidential candidates' personae in recent years have often involved accusations of inconsistency, as has been evidenced in the rise of accusatory term 'flip-flopper' in media discourse (Lempert 2009; Lempert & Silverstein 2012).

This study considers one way in which US presidential candidates discursively navigate the competing forces of relatability and consistency as they construct their political identities—what I am calling *presidential selves*—in the personal introduction sequences of nationally televised primary debates. Departing from previous studies on debate discourse, this analysis also highlights the importance of sequentiality in debates by considering how candidates use framing resources made available in earlier turns of talk in order to outdo past candidates' self-presentations, or stray from patterns set by previous candidates in order to reframe what viewers should consider important when it comes time to judge these multiple presidential selves at the ballot box.

Using a subset of the series of twenty US Republican primary debates that took place between May 2011 and February 2012 as a corpus, I focus specifically on how candidates make reference to family members and family roles in their

self-introductions, and how these references are integrated with other elements of their introductions through syntactic, prosodic, and other linguistic means. I demonstrate that family references serve four functions: (i) they frame candidates' personal identities as family men/women, thus projecting relatability; (ii) they interweave the private sphere of home with the public sphere of politics and consequently, candidates' private and public selves, which projects consistency between different spheres of their lives; (iii) they serve as a tool of discursive one-upmanship when considered sequentially in introduction sequences, through which candidates project themselves as better family men/women, and thus better presidential candidates than previous speakers; and (iv) in a topically focused debate, they serve in constructing candidates as intimately familiar with, naturally committed to, and expertly positioned to deal with issues relating to national security.

In seven of the debates in the 2011–2012 primary series, presidential candidates were given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the viewing audience rather than being introduced by the debate moderator. I argue that these self-introductions are an ideal site to delve into the discursive construction of political identity because they not only serve as an important framing device for the remainder of the debate, but they also provide candidates with an opportunity to do any necessary identity repair-work by *reframing* their political identities, especially at points in which their ideal presidential self has been compromised or maligned by their own gaffes or attacks by other parties (e.g. their opponents, the mainstream media, or other interested parties).

I proceed in my analysis by first providing some theoretical background on framing and identity construction and then reviewing past research that has considered framing in relation to the construction of family and political identities. Next, I introduce the primary debates and describe the conventional structure of self-introductions. Then, I analyze self-introduction sequences in two debates: an early debate in the 2011–2012 campaign season on general issues, and a later debate focused on the topic of national security. I conclude by highlighting both similarities and differences in how candidates use family references as framing strategies in these two debates, and highlight the importance of considering the sequential position of self-introductions in this data when considering how candidates choose from a variety of possible resources in constructing their presidential selves.

FRAMING AND IDENTITY

Framing is a theoretical framework that has been widely applied in discourse analytical work focusing on individual and group identity construction and on the negotiation of interpersonal meaning. The notion of a 'frame' was first put forth by Gregory Bateson (1972) in his work analyzing the communicative signals of animal play behavior, and was developed by Erving Goffman (1974) in an effort to explicate the nature of human engagement in social interaction. Bateson and Goffman have defined a frame as the definition that individuals attribute to a

situation—for example, ‘this is play’ or ‘this is work’. Frames play a central role in structuring interaction because they provide an interpretive scaffold on which speakers and hearers rely in order to produce and interpret communicative meaning from linguistic, paralinguistic (e.g. pitch, volume), and extralinguistic (e.g. facial expressions, gesture) cues (cf. Gumperz 1982 on contextualization cues and situated inference).

Frames not only play a central role in governing pragmatic interpretations of language use in the immediate interaction, but they also guide our expectations of what is to occur in the future of a given interaction, and they retrospectively shape our understanding of what has occurred in the past. Just as a physical frame that surrounds a piece of artwork delineates where the artwork begins and ends in space, an ‘interactive frame’, using Tannen & Wallat’s (1993) terminology, can define a stretch of speech, delineating the beginning and end of a distinct communicative event in time—what Goffman (1974:255) and Schiffrin (1987:36) call ‘brackets’. Personal introductions are one type of framing device that indicate the first bracket surrounding a communicative event (Schegloff 1968; Schiffrin 1977). For example, the parallel use of first names as opposed to formal titles and last names in personal introductions may frame a future interaction as a friendly, informal, or non-institutional encounter. Similarly, presidential candidates’ self-introductions at the beginning of a debate are a framing device that sets the stage for the identities they will construct throughout the remainder of the debate.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is useful to first distinguish how the terms *frame* and *identity* are used, and how they interact with each other. I use Tannen & Wallat’s (1993:59) notion of an interactive *frame*, which they define as a ‘definition of what is going on in interaction’. So when considering self-introductions as part of the larger speech event of the debate, we can say that they frame the debate by demarcating the beginning of the speech event, but they also help define viewers’ understandings and expectations of the *identities* of the people engaging in the event. I define *identity*, following the work of Schiffrin (2002:316) as a social role or institutionally defined category that can be filled by different people at different times. In my analysis, I also use the term *sphere* to describe the socially meaningful places in which particular social identities are conventionally enacted. My use of sphere draws specifically on Habermas’ (1989) distinction between the *public* sphere, associated with the political apparatus of the state, and the *private* sphere, which has been historically associated with the home.¹

FAMILY AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES

Framing and family-related identities have been discussed by numerous scholars, though most work has focused on the context of talk within the family (e.g. Schiffrin 1996; Tannen, Kendall, & Gordon 2007; Gordon 2009). Much of this work has focused on household-centered activities, though some work has also begun to consider the construction of family identities in other institutional contexts. For

example, Schiffrin (2002) has analyzed the construction of family identities as they unfold in a Holocaust survivor's life history narrative, focusing on how linguistic features like referring terms and reported speech work to construct the narrator as lacking agency in disparate contexts of her life—as an abandoned daughter and as a victim of the Holocaust. Schiffrin's detailed analysis of specific discourse strategies, like referring terms and reports of speech acts, demonstrate how specific types of referrals to family can play an important role in the construction of a 'survivor' identity.

Gordon, Tannen, & Sacknovitz (2007) provide a rare examination of a man's family-related identity construction outside the home, analyzing one father's references to his family members in the workplace as a resource for sociability and parental identity construction. Taking up themes explored in Kendall's (1999, 2006) earlier examination of a mother's parental identity construction, this study addresses the 'interpenetration' of the spheres of home and work that occurs when family talk occurs in the workplace. Gordon and her colleagues find that through the blending of these disparate spheres, a father uses his family-based identity as a discursive strategy for constructing not only solidarity with his coworkers, but also to display power and expertise as a parent (Gordon et al. 2007:221–25).

Gordon (2009) takes up the concept of intertextuality (Kristeva 1967/1980, an elaboration of Bakhtin's 1986 concept of double-voicing)—or the idea that all texts contain remnants of or are otherwise linked to other texts—and describes how intertextuality contributes to framing in family discourse. Dissecting Goffman's (1974) discussion of frame 'lamination', Gordon illustrates distinct types of frame interaction, including 'overlapping frames' (2009:116), where an utterance simultaneously indexes two or more distinct frames and associated meanings, and 'embedded frames', in which an utterance indexes both a more specific frame and a broader frame (2009:141; see also Gordon 2002). She illustrates how such frame interaction contributes to creating multiple-layered meanings in interaction and how intertextuality and framing contribute to 'family-making' (2009:189), or family identity construction. In the following analysis of introductions in presidential debates, I illustrate that candidates' family and political identities intersect in similar ways, and that candidates' self-projections as family members—especially as parents and grandparents—can serve to frame their political identities and bolster their claims of competence as national leaders.

Scholarly interest in the linguistic mechanisms of identity construction in political discourse has also grown in recent years. As part of a larger ethnographic study of language and politics, Duranti (2006) conducted a discourse analysis of candidates' constructions of their 'political selves' in congressional campaign debates, focusing on the use of narrative strategies for constructing 'existential coherence' and combatting charges of inconsistency. One central strategy Duranti identifies in constructing existential coherence is the act of linguistically casting one's current self as a 'natural extension' of one's past self—thus demonstrating consistency of character over time. This temporal consistency complements the

consistency across public and private spheres discussed earlier in research on family identity construction. Duranti also analyzes how political candidates frame their status as ‘independent’ candidates, demonstrating that competing definitions for the term emerge through debate attacks and rebuttals. A similar semantic debate emerges in the corpus of data examined here over candidates’ use of the word ‘conservative’, which has long been considered a central value of the US Republican party, but whose meaning has come into question in recent years as the party has struggled to redefine itself in response to changing demographics of the United States electorate.

Lempert (2009) also takes up the contestation of political consistency in his analysis of stance-taking and identity ‘branding’ in electoral politics. His analysis demonstrates how 2008 Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry contested accusations of ‘flip-flopping’ by counter-branding himself as a candidate of ‘conviction’ through discourse strategies such as repetition, parallelism, and the use of epistemic markers. In addition to demonstrating how such features function in the critical initial and final moments of debates, Lempert notes that presidential debates in general are widely understood by viewers as ‘contests of “character”, which prime viewers to read speech behavior in terms of what it reveals about the speaker’ (2009:238). This insight emphasizes the need to further investigate the discursive mechanisms of political identity construction in this particular speech genre, especially in introduction sequences, which play an important role in framing candidate’s identities for the remainder of the debate.

Lempert & Silverstein (2012) have built on the idea of candidate branding and messaging in American presidential political discourse, examining the magnified effects of temporarily going ‘off-message’ via gaffes and slips of the tongue in the age of mass mediatized politics. They also consider nonverbal cues that contribute to candidates’ message and identity construction, such as President Obama’s ‘precision-grip’ gesture (see also Lempert 2011), which they argue invites the viewer to not only perceive the politician’s verbal message as ‘sharp’, but to view Obama himself as a rhetorically ‘sharp’ character. This work emphasizes the need for further consideration of how candidates actively manage their presentation of self in mass-mediated events like primary debates, and how they use serial appearances in order to do remedial identity work via reframing practices.

Other sociolinguistic studies of political interaction, such as Beck (1996) and Clayman (2001), have employed tools of conversation analysis, demonstrating that sequential aspects of talk and floor management in particular genres of political discourse have an important bearing on how political figures manage their identity construction in particular interactional contexts. Clayman (2001) examines question and answer pairs in political interviews, analyzing interviewees’ overt and covert tactics of question evasion and the accompanying ‘damage control’ that accompanies interviewees’ resistance to answering potentially identity-compromising questions. Clayman demonstrates that despite this remedial work interviewees must undertake to minimize the perception of evasion, politicians ‘gain

substantial “wobble room” for pursuing their own agendas even under the most persistent interrogation’ (2001:439) by using such strategies.

Beck (1996) examines a similar phenomenon in a vice presidential debate, in which candidates have the rare ability to interact directly with each other rather than being moderated by a third party. She finds that the candidates’ different styles of turn and floor management in the open-discussion format, and specifically, their interactional ability to present their own desired social face while trying to expose their opponent’s weaknesses, has a significant impact on who is viewed in post-debate analysis as more ‘vice-presidential’. This study points to the importance of examining how candidates orient toward their opponents’ talk in debate contexts and the implications this has for how debate viewers consider them in terms of presidential qualities like ‘reliability’ and ‘likeability’.

The present study builds on the body of literature examining both family and political identity construction, as well as conversation analytic approaches to political discourse, by examining how family resources are used in the construction of political identity in the tightly structured context of presidential primary debates. Specifically, I focus on specific linguistic resources including referring terms, syntactic constructions, cohesive ties, and speech acts that blend family and political identities, along with the private and public spheres in which they are normally enacted, in order to construct a presidential self that is relatable and consistent both over time and across various aspects of social life. When analyzed sequentially, family identity claims in self-introductions are also shown to serve as a rhetorical tool of one-upmanship demonstrating that each candidate is a ‘better’ family man/woman than previous candidates. In a topic-focused debate, family identity claims in self-introductions also serve as a tool for showing more intimate degrees of familiarity and expertise on matters of national security than previous candidates.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY DEBATES

Debates are an interesting context for analyzing the construction of political identity because they differ on several levels from other widely studied genres of political discourse. In addition to being one of the few moments in which voters have a direct view of the candidates speaking extemporaneously at length in public, some features unique to the debate genre include: (i) the tightly controlled allotment of turns by debate moderators; (ii) the antagonistic genre of the debate, in which confrontational stances are considered the norm rather than the exception; and (iii) the complex participation framework (Goffman 1981) of the audience: candidates must address their utterances simultaneously to the moderator, competing candidates, the local co-present audience, and the remote television audience, as well as the media, who can be expected to select, extract, and reproduce sound bites for an even wider audience.

Primary debates present a unique challenge to presidential candidates because unlike the general debates, in which political ideology plays a central role in differentiating candidates' identities, primary candidates must position themselves against several opponents from the same political party, who often hold similar views on various issues. Meanwhile, they must also position themselves against the candidate from the opposing party, against whom they hope to compete in the general election (in this case, the incumbent, President Barack Obama).

While scholars of political communication have examined certain aspects of debate discourse—for example, attack and defense (Benoit & Wells 1996), humor (Stewart 2012), and politeness (Dailey, Hinck, & Hinck 2008)—these strategies have not been considered within a broader framework of identity construction. Furthermore, while agonistic discourse has been studied as a feature of sociability in everyday conversation (Schiffrin 1984) and in the institutional contexts of journalism, education, and politics (Tannen 1998), the question of how individuals manage a positive and affiliative presentation of self in ritually argumentative discourse, especially in public mass-mediated events, has still received little consideration. Furthermore, while it can be argued that family references as framing resources occupy a relatively minor role in the larger context of the primary debates, it should be recalled that the first family (and especially the first lady) plays a central role in constructing the larger image of the American presidency (Mayo 2000; Watson 2004). Finally, considering the important sequential position of introductions and their role in bracketing the entire debate event, the fact that over one third (36%) of all the self-introductions in the debates examined here make some reference to family underscores the significance of family in the construction of presidential selves.

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS IN THE PRIMARY DEBATES

Although the importance of first impressions has been emphasized, it should be recalled that a candidate's self-introduction in a presidential debate is not *truly* a first impression in many ways. Even in the first debate of a campaign season, many candidates are not newcomers to the national political scene, and the electorate's awareness of each candidate's past record varies. At the beginning of the Republican primary debate season in June 2011, several candidates had already officially declared their candidacy and had been actively campaigning; others had at least established exploratory committees. Two candidates (Ron Paul and Mitt Romney) had been prominent candidates for the same office in prior election cycles (which factor into their present identity constructions, and especially the presentation of consistency). Other participants had held other political offices in the past, which are also alluded to in the introductions.

The debates in which candidates made self-introductions span the length of the 2011–2012 primary season, and all debates in this subset were hosted and sponsored by the cable news network CNN. The network had different co-sponsors in each

debate, ranging from conservative research institutes (Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, Hispanic Leadership Network) to various state Republican parties (Arizona, Florida). While these co-sponsors constitute an audience factor that may influence speakers' constructions of self, the major sponsor remains constant.

Before considering the various discourse strategies that candidates use to frame their identities in debate self-introductions, it will be useful to first consider the structure of a standard or conventional self-introduction. First, let us start with what one might call a bare skeleton of a personal introduction. Early work in conversational analysis and interactional sociolinguistics has sketched out the important social and cognitive processes involved in personal introductions or opening encounters (e.g. Schegloff 1968; Schiffrin 1977). Schiffrin (1977:688) emphasizes two facets of cognitive recognition that take place before individuals come together in social interaction: (i) *categorical* identification, in which the individual is recognized as a member of a particular social (ethnic, gender, or other institutionally-based group), and (ii) *biographical* recognition, which constitutes personal identification. While these cognitive processes do not require overt signaling (linguistic or otherwise) for interaction to take place, individuals normally engage in some ritual 'identification display'. However, Schiffrin (1977:680) maintains that identification displays play more than a ritual role in opening encounters: 'They externalize a correspondence between the appearance of a specific individual and an identificatory framework based on such an appearance which allows for personal identification', or in other words, they are an 'open assertion that an individual has "been seen"'.

Applying this integration of cognitive and social factors that underlie the structure of opening encounters to the current data, we can assume that since candidates have clearly been 'categorically' recognized by the audience by virtue of their position on stage as a participant in the debate, the self-introductions ritually confirm 'biographical' recognition, which would consist of, at a minimum, the candidates' name (Schegloff 1968). Indeed, nearly all the self-introductions begin with candidates stating their names, as illustrated below in (1)–(7).

- (1) Good evening I'm Tim Pawlenty (Deb2-0613-NH)²
- (2) My name is Michele Bachmann (Deb5-0912-FL)
- (3) I'm Mitt Romney (Deb8-1018-NV)
- (4) I'm Ron Paul (Deb11-1122-DC)
- (5) I'm Rick Santorum (Deb17-0119-SC)
- (6) I am Ron Paul (Deb19-0126-FL)
- (7) I'm Newt Gingrich (Deb20-0222-AZ)

While this pattern may seem self-evident, it is important to point out any categorical or near-categorical patterns in order to highlight where and how variation in self-introductory sequences does occur. It should also be noted that there are other

expressions that nearly all self-introductions include (discussed below), and there is no introduction that consists solely of a candidate stating his or her name.

Another factor to consider when defining a conventional self-introduction is how it is elicited by the debate moderator. In each of the seven debates under consideration, not only does the moderator request specific information from participants and impose time constraints on the introductions, but he provides a model introduction as well. Examine how each moderator introduces, elicits, and models the candidate self-introductions.³

(8) John King (Deb2-0613-NH)

- a. Now, we've asked for no opening statements.
- b. However, we will continue a tradition from our past New Hampshire debates,
- c. To ask each candidate in one short sentence,
- d. Hopefully five, maybe six or seven seconds,
- e. To introduce themselves to the voters of New Hampshire and the United States of America.
- f. Let me begin with an example.
- g. I'm John King with CNN.
- h. I am honored to be your moderator tonight,
- i. And I am thrilled to be back in Red Sox nation.

(9) Wolf Blitzer (Deb5-0912-FL)

- a. Now that the candidates are all in place,
- b. It's time for the candidates to introduce themselves to our audience.
- c. I'm asking them all to keep it very, very short.
- d. Here's an example of what I have in mind.
- e. I'm Wolf Blitzer,
- f. And I'm usually in 'The Situation Room',
- g. But tonight I'm thrilled to be at the Tea Party Republican presidential debate.

(10) Anderson Cooper (Deb8-1018-NV)

- a. Now that everyone is in place,
- b. It's time for the candidates to introduce themselves to our audience.
- c. All the candidates are going to keep it short.
- d. Here's an example.
- e. I'm Anderson Cooper.
- f. I'm usually anchoring 'AC 360' on CNN,
- g. But I'm honored to be here in Las Vegas at the Western Republican Presidential Debate.

The three moderators' elicitation and modeling strategies have a number of features in common. First, the moderators begin by announcing that it is time for candidate introductions (8a-e, 9a-b, 10a-b) and emphasizing that they should be brief (8c-d,

9c, 10c). Then, each moderator provides an example by introducing himself (8g-i, 9e-g, 10e-g). Within the modeled introductory sequence, the moderators provide: (i) their names (8g, 9e, 10e); (ii) an account of their usual professional role and/or affiliation with the network (8g, 9f, 10f); and (iii) an expression of positive evaluation toward their presence at the event.

These models set the stage for candidates' self-introductions by suggesting what information they might include (i.e. their name and professional role and affiliation) and an affective stance they might take up in their own introductions. Examining all self-introductions across the seven debates (forty-one in total), we find that nearly every introduction contains a reference to the candidate's name (39/41, or 95%), and approximately half (21/41, or 51%) make reference to the candidate's present or former professional role or affiliation. Candidates also frequently express a positive affective stance toward their participation in the debate (16/41, or 39%).

There is much more, though, that candidates include in these short introductions: they talk about their accomplishments, their beliefs, their plans for the country, and perhaps surprisingly, but quite frequently, their families. In fact, the most frequent additional information provided by candidates in self-introductions involves references made to family members, including parents, spouses, siblings, children, in-laws, and grandchildren. Fifteen of the forty-one (36%) self-introductions make some reference to the candidate's family members or family roles (i.e. as a father, mother, grandparent, etc.). Despite some surface-level similarities in these references to family members and roles, they differ in the way that they are syntactically incorporated into the remainder of the introduction, in the way that they serve to draw distinctions between the candidates and their opponents, and in how the candidates discursively connect their family members and roles to various qualities associated with a presidential self.

I illustrate below how these family references serve in framing political identity in candidates' self-introductions, focusing on discursive strategies such as referring terms, syntactic coordination, prosodic cues, and negation through which candidates integrate referrals to their family to other aspects of their presidential selves in two of the primary debates containing self-introductions. The first (Deb2-0613-NH) took place in New Hampshire early in the primary season and covered a variety of issues; the second debate (Deb11-1122-DC) occurred in Washington, DC nearly five months later, just over a month before the nation's first caucuses and primaries would occur, and focused on the topic of national security.

FAMILY REFERENCES AND FRAMING IDENTITY IN AN EARLY INTRODUCTORY DEBATE

Not surprisingly, more references are made to family in self-introductions in the earlier primary debates, at which point the candidates are relatively unknown to their audiences. Providing information about family in earlier debates can be considered a display of categorical identification through the basic societal institution

of the family. In terms of framing, the use of family-based membership categorization devices (Sacks 1992) serves to frame the candidates' identities not in their roles as political figures in the public sphere, but in their familial roles in the private sphere of the home.

In the first debate that allowed self-introductions (Deb2-0613-NH), five of the seven candidates made reference to their families. Rick Santorum is the first candidate to introduce himself.

- (11) Rick Santorum
- a. Hello, New Hampshire.
 - b. I'm Rick Santorum.
 - c. I served twelve years representing Pennsylvania in the United States Senate,
 - d. But I also have substantial executive experience,
 - e. Making tough decisions and balancing budgets and cutting spending.
 - f. Karen and I are the parents of seven children.

Santorum begins by introducing himself in a way that closely resembles the moderator, John King's model in (8) by providing his name and some relevant professional experience. He concludes his introduction in (11f) with a family reference: "Karen and I are the parents of seven children." By first mentioning his wife by name in the coordinate noun phrase *Karen and I*—thereby constructing a 'with' (Goffman 1971)—Santorum provides less information than would normally be required for a first-mention of a new referent (Prince 1981; Ariel 1990). The predicate of the sentence, however, identifies Karen as the mother of his children, with the implicature that Karen is his wife. Through these referential strategies, Santorum not only constructs himself as a family man,⁴ but on an intimate level with the audience via what Brown & Levinson (1987) call 'positive politeness strategies'—revealing private information and using first names. Santorum thus frames his identity not simply as an individual in a political office with demonstrated expertise in the executive role that he is vying for, but as an integral member of society's most basic unit—the family.

Although the moderator has officially modeled an introduction for the candidates, Santorum's self-introduction arguably plays a more important role in setting up a pattern for the following candidates' introductions, which Myers (2006) has demonstrated in his analysis of sequential factors and identity construction in personal introductions in the context of focus group settings. In this debate, Santorum's establishment of the family as relevant in the framing of political identity is immediately taken up in the following introduction by Michele Bachmann.

- (12) Michele Bachmann
- a. Hi, my name is Michele Bachmann.
 - b. I'm a former federal tax litigation attorney,
 - c. I'm a businesswoman,

- d. We started our own successful company?
- e. I'm a member of the United States Congress,
- f. I'm a wife of thirty-three years,
- g. I've had five children,
- h. And we are the proud foster parents of twenty-three great children,
- i. And it's a thrill to be here tonight in the 'Live Free or Die' state.
- j. Thank you.

Bachmann's introduction follows the sequential structure set up by Santorum. She begins by stating her name (12a), follows with a description of her past and current professional roles (12b-e), and continues by providing information about her family. However, Bachmann's references to her family-related identities (12f-h) are syntactically and prosodically incorporated into the rest of her introduction, unlike Santorum's, and appear as units in a list of accomplishments. The syntactic construction she uses to provide information—*I'm a...*—is repeated four times: to refer to (i) her former profession (12b); (ii) her current profession; (iii) her current political role (12c,e); and (iv) her familial role (12f-h). The syntactic parallelism and coordination across these different time periods and spheres of her life blends multiple facets of her identity—familial, professional, and political—and their corresponding public and private spheres.

In addition to the syntactic parallelism in this excerpt, there is further discursive fusing of identities in Bachmann's self-introduction: She uses the inclusive pronoun *we* (12d) as she refers to the company she started. Again, this first-mention of other individual(s) in her introduction contains less information than the discourse requires for the audience to identify part of the referent *we* without specific prior knowledge about Bachmann. While *we* could refer to any potential business partner(s), the next reference to *we* (12h) narrows its possible referents as she identifies herself and her husband as the foster parents of twenty-three children. While her husband is neither mentioned by name or by another membership category explicitly (e.g. as *husband* or *father*), he is indirectly referenced via its relational opposite—*wife* (12f).

Bachmann's integration of her family-related identities in her introduction constructs continuity within this self-introduction frame established by Santorum, but she also uses family references to one-up his identity claim as a family man: Bachmann not only has five children of her own (again, more than the average American family), but has cared for an unusually large number of foster children. The reference to foster children also contributes to a subtle but more complex integration of identities in Bachmann's self-introduction when one considers that foster children are both family members and wards of the state: her identity claim as a foster mother emphasizes that she is not just a mother and a legislator, but that her role *as* a foster mother has also been ratified *by* the state. Bachmann's introduction contrasts that of Santorum not only by blending identities related to the private and public spheres through syntax, prosody, and referring terms, but

through reference to an additional identity category that fuses the public and private spheres.

Newt Gingrich introduces himself next, making no reference to family.

(13) Newt Gingrich

- a. I'm Newt Gingrich,
- b. Former Speaker of the House.
- c. And when fourteen million Americans are out of work,
- d. We need a new president to end the Obama depression.

Gingrich's lack of reference to family members or family-related roles can be viewed as a reframing strategy in this introduction sequence that orients the audience *away* from viewing the presidential candidates in their identities as family men/women in the private sphere, and toward a frame that relates to their political identities in the public sphere. In other words, Gingrich could be interpreted here as saying, 'Let's get down to business'. Interestingly, Gingrich *does* have a wife and children that he could refer to in his introduction. However, considering Gingrich's widely publicized personal history—he has married three times and has had extramarital affairs—any claim to a family identity in this context would highlight *inconsistency* in his private life (not to mention moral shortcomings). Such a mention may also cast doubt on his claims to consistency in his public life, which could be detrimental to presenting a viable presidential self in this context.

Mitt Romney follows Gingrich in the introductory sequence, and reinstates the earlier framing of presidential identities by making several references to his family members. Like Bachmann, he blends the private and public spheres of the home and political office, and with it, family and political identities.

(14) Mitt Romney

- a. I'm Mitt Romney,
- b. And it's an honor to be back at Saint Anselm.
- c. Hopefully I'll get it right this year?
- d. And uh appreciate the chance to be with you
- e. And to welcome my wife and uh,
- f. I have five sons as you know,
- g. Five daughters-in-law,
- h. Sixteen grandkids.
- i. The most important thing in my life,
- j. Is to make sure their future is bright,
- k. And that America is always known as the hope of the Earth.
- l. Thank you.

Again, Romney's extensive references to family members (14e-h) serve as a power maneuver that one-ups previous candidates in terms of his

identity claims as a family person. Not only does he mention his immediate nuclear family in his introduction, but also his in-laws and grandchildren. The family references are also syntactically incorporated into the remainder of his introduction: His first-mention of his wife (14e) is prefaced by the discourse connective *and*, marking continuity between different spheres of his life and aspects of his identity. Furthermore, Romney does not simply declare his marital status as previous candidates did, but *welcomes* his wife to this particular event. This speech act blends both private and public spheres and family and political identities, as his wife is metaphorically greeted into this nationally televised political event. As he mentions his five children (14f), he adds “as you know”, indicating that this information is previously established common ground with the audience, contributing toward constructing an identity as a seasoned and well-known candidate in contrast to other relative newcomers to the race. This is supported by other linguistic markers in Romney’s introduction, including his statement that it is an honor to “be back” at St. Anselm College (14b), and his humorous self-deprecatory statement “Hopefully I’ll get it right this time?” (14c), which references his unsuccessful prior run for the same office.

Romney can also be considered to one-up previous candidates in terms of family-based identity claims by introducing his role as a grandfather—the first thus far in this introduction sequence. When Romney declares that “the most important thing” in his life is to “make sure their future is bright, and that America is always known as the hope of the Earth” (14j-k), his political and family identity claims are blended in a more complex relationship than the introductions examined previously. The two propositions that he refers to here—(i) *their future is bright*; and (ii) *America is always known as the hope of the Earth*—are connected syntactically via *and* in a two-part predicate modifying the singular subject (14i). Through this syntactic construction, Romney portrays the future of his own grandchildren as being intricately tied to the future of the nation at large. As a grandfather, he is responsible for ensuring a promising future for his offspring, and as a president, he is responsible for ensuring a promising future for his metaphorical offspring—the youth of the nation. Through this interpenetration of the private and public spheres, Romney is able to connect with the audience on multiple fronts simultaneously—as a father, grandfather, and as a concerned citizen. In sum, the linguistic strategies that emphasize Romney’s seasoned status can be seen as contributing to his display of consistency in the sense that he is running again for the same office, four years later, while the multiple family roles he highlights construct an identity as relatable to a wide swath of the audience.

Ron Paul introduces himself next, making no reference to family, but he does provide extensive information related to his former profession outside the political sphere.

(15) Ron Paul

- a. I am Congressman Ron Paul
- b. I've been elected to the Congress twenty-three times from Texas
- c. Before I went into the Congress,
- d. I delivered babies for a living,
- e. Delivered four thousand babies.
- f. Now I would like to be known and defend the title
- g. That I am the champion of liberty
- h. And I defend the Constitution.
- i. Thank you.

Paul introduces himself in terms of his past professional identity as an obstetrician, not through a direct act of membership categorization (e.g. "I was a doctor"), but through the actions he performed in this role: "I delivered babies for a living, delivered four thousand babies." It is notable that Paul maintains a temporal distinction between his nonpolitical and political profession through deictic adverbs in this sequence: "*Before* I went into Congress" (15c); "*Now* I would like to be known" (15f). Through these indexes of temporal distinction, Paul maintains a distinction between his former professional and current political identities.⁵ This move can also be viewed, since it directly follows Romney's introduction, as a *resistance* to integrating these identities or a reframing of his presidential self as one that relates solely to his political stances and not to his private life. (Paul does have a wife and five children—one of whom is a prominent politician in his own right—that he could reference if he wished to frame his presidential self in this way.) This move also reinforces Paul's consistency in his particular political ideology, which among the Republican primary candidates, leans strongly toward libertarian values of limited government and individual liberties and privacy.

While Paul makes no mention of family, it could be argued that his mention of having "delivered four thousand babies" nonetheless indirectly indexes the family framing devices used by others. As an obstetrician, Paul has played a large role in *creating* families, so this could be seen as an act of one-upmanship as it outdoes the number of family relations mentioned by previous candidates to the extreme.

Following this introduction, Tim Pawlenty introduces himself, reframing the introduction sequence by taking up the previously established pattern of making nuclear family references.

(16) Tim Pawlenty

- a. Good evening I'm Tim Pawlenty,
- b. I'm a husband,
- c. My wife Mary and I have been married for twenty-three years,
- d. I'm the father of two beautiful daughters, Anna and Mara,
- e. I'm a neighbor,
- f. And I'm running for president of the United States because I love America,

- g. But like you, I'm concerned about its future.
- h. I've got the experience and the leadership and the results
- i. To lead it to a better place.

Pawlenty uses similar syntactic constructions to previous candidates as he introduces himself and frames his introduction within the private sphere of the home and in the family role of husband and father. Like Bachmann, he refers to himself first in his role as a spouse using the copular syntactic construction "I'm a husband" (16b), after which he makes reference to his wife—"My wife Mary". Unlike other candidates who use less informative referring terms that blend private and public spheres, personal and professional identities, and family and nation frames, Pawlenty syntactically integrates his references to his family within his larger self-introduction, but transitions from the private sphere of the home to the public sphere by referring to himself as a "neighbor", which is grounded in the sphere of the 'neighborhood'—a public place that is proximal to the home.⁶ This particular identity claim serves to connect the private and public spheres and constructs continuity between Pawlenty's identity as a family man and a politician. It could be argued that his self-presentation as a neighbor functions not only in the presentation of consistency between his private and public life but also relatability, since everyone, regardless of their familial status, has a neighbor.

Herman Cain is the last candidate to introduce himself, which puts him in both a privileged and disadvantaged position in terms of sequentiality at the same time. On the one hand, he has the power of having the last word and providing the closing bracket to the introduction sequence, but on the other hand, he has fewer opportunities to employ new framing devices and construct a unique identity to this audience. Interestingly, Cain chooses to frame his introduction by doing oppositional identity work—that is, declaring what he is *not*.

(17) Herman Cain

- a. Hello, I'm Herman Cain.
- b. I am not a politician.
- c. I am a problem solver with over forty years of business and executive experience,
- d. Father of two,
- e. Grandfather of three,
- f. And I'm here tonight because it's not about us,
- g. It's about those grandkids.
- h. Happy to be here in New Hampshire.

On the surface, Cain's introduction rejects the expected identities evoked in a candidate's self-introduction, since one running for political office is by definition a politician. By beginning his introduction with "I am not a politician" (17b)—Cain performs several distinct acts. First, and perhaps most importantly when

considering Cain's sequential position in this event, he grabs the audience's attention by opposing expectations of what will be said. Secondly, the structure of this introductory statement provides a syntagmatic contrast with the repeated *I am/m a...* statements made by previous candidates. Thirdly, the marked use of negation suggests through implicature that (i) the other candidates on stage *are* politicians, and that (ii) being recognized as a politician in this particular context is not a desirable identity.

Following this opening, Cain returns to the expected framing strategies within the introduction sequence, expressing through the copular construction and nominal predicates what he *is*. Like other candidates, he presents an identity as an experienced leader, father, and grandfather, in the format of a list (17c-e). Cain's introduction is most similarly structured ideationally and syntactically to Romney's introduction, and it also refers back to the content of Romney's introduction and to family identities via the reference to 'those grandchildren' (17g). In one sense, Cain constructs an individual identity similar to Romney on several levels – as a businessman, a family man, and a citizen concerned about the future of the country. However, it is noteworthy that when he expresses concern for the future, Cain juxtaposes family framing devices—"it's about those grandkids" (17g)—with 'what it is not about'—"us" (17f), he reinforces the reframing of identity that he has already developed by stating that he is "not" a politician at the outset of his introduction.

To summarize thus far, we have seen that the concept of family enters into the majority of candidates' self-introductions in this early general debate. By examining family-related referring terms in conjunction with syntactic patterns, cohesive devices, and negation, we have seen that candidates incorporate the family identities into their personal introductions in a variety of ways, and that these identities serve to frame candidates' presidential selves in distinct ways. Through reference to family identities, candidates manage to present themselves as both consistent and relatable. Candidates also use family references to one-up each other as they progress sequentially through the introduction sequence, claiming more familial dependents, different types of dependents (e.g. Bachmann's foster children), and in the case of Paul, claiming the role of a 'family-maker'. By contrast, some candidates resist the family frame by not referring to their family and reframing the self-introductions as about professional/political identity only. In the case of Gingrich, this could be attributed to the potential conflict with his desire to present consistency across facets of his personal identity (which a history of marital infidelity and remarriage could jeopardize), while Paul's reframing of his presidential self as distinct from his familial ties works *toward* his presentation of consistency—as a candidate that supports individual liberties and rejects any government intervention in the private sphere of the home.

FAMILY REFERENCES AND FRAMING IDENTITY
IN A DEBATE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

Having considered the function of family references in the construction of presidential selves in an early general debate, it is useful to see whether and how these framing strategies factor into self-introductions in a different debate context. Surprisingly, the primary debate with the second highest frequency of references to family (4/7 candidates, or 57%) is the debate that took place in Washington, DC, on November 22, 2011. The predetermined topic of the debate was national security. These observations raise a number of questions: How do candidates weave references to family, which on the surface may be considered irrelevant to matters of national security, into their introductions in this debate? Do they blend their family identities with their political identities in order to construct consistency and relatability as they did in the earlier debate? Or are family references used as an interactional resource for candidates to present a presidential self that is uniquely competent and experienced in matters of national security?

The first two candidates to introduce themselves⁷ in this debate are Rick Santorum and Ron Paul, neither of whom makes any reference to family. Aside from the standard introductory information, both these candidates introduce issues related to national security. Below, Santorum begins by thanking the sponsors of the debate (the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation), and launches into stating his beliefs about US national security.

(18) Rick Santorum

- a. Well, I am Rick Santorum.
- b. And it's great to be here
- c. And I want to thank AEI and Heritage- [broadcast interrupted].
- d. One constitutional responsibility of the federal government
- e. And that is national security and,
- f. I think we can all agree,
- g. That if you like what Barack Obama has done to our economy,
- h. You'll love what he's done to our national security.

(19) Ron Paul

- a. I'm Ron Paul,
- b. A Congressman from Texas.
- c. I am pleased to be here at the debate
- d. Because this is a very important debate.
- e. I am convinced that needless and unnecessary wars are a great detriment.
- f. They undermine our prosperity and our liberties.
- g. They add to or deficits
- h. And they consume our welfare.
- i. We should take a careful look at our foreign policy.

Due to the brief broadcast interruption during Santorum's speech, we cannot fully analyze how facets of his identity emerge and interact in his self-introduction, but it is clear that rather than sharing personal details of his family life, he maintains the predetermined frame of this debate in his introduction through talk about national security. Ron Paul continues the introduction sequence, reinforcing the predetermined frame in this introduction sequence by focusing on a singular aspect of national security—foreign policy, and specifically, military warfare.⁸ While the tone of Paul's introduction contrasts Santorum's ironic statement about the incumbent's record (18g-h), both candidates use their self-introductions to put forth their positions on national security policy. These two introductions can be seen as presenting a political stance that is consistent with the larger established frame of the debate.

Rick Perry introduces himself next, but makes no reference to national security. Instead, he introduces himself and his wife.

(20) Rick Perry

- a. I'm Rick Perry, the governor of Texas.
- b. And I want to take a moment and introduce you,
- c. Uh the beautiful first lady of the state of Texas, Anita.
- d. Thank you for being here with me,
- e. Twenty-nine years of wedded bliss,
- f. And forty-five years ago we had our first date.
- g. So, I'm a blessed man in many ways to represent a great state,
- h. And we're here to ask you for your support, your blessings, and your vote.

Perry's introduction, like many discussed in the previous debate, interweaves his family and professional/political identity on a number of levels: by referring to his wife in her political role as first lady (20c); manipulating the participation format by addressing her in the second person as he thanks her (20d); and by constructing a 'with' via plural pronominal reference as he asks the audience for their vote (20h). Perry's introduction can be considered to shift the overall tone and reframe the introductory sequence from a focused discussion of issues to a more personal discussion of character, which constructs a presidential self that is relatable to a wide audience, including voters who may not be familiar with or do not place high value on issues of national security when voting.

Mitt Romney follows Perry, referring to family in a way that actively frames his position on national security.

(21) Mitt Romney

- a. I'm Mitt Romney
- b. And uh yes, Wolf, that's also my first name.⁹
- c. And uh, I'm a husband, a father, a grandfather of sixteen.
- d. I love this country very much.
- e. I spent my life in the private sector.

- f. And as I've watched the direction this president has taken our country,
- g. Both domestically and internationally,
- h. I'm afraid that he's taking us on a perilous course.
- i. I want to keep America strong. And free.
- j. And if I'm president,
- k. I'll use every ounce of my energy to do just that.

The play frame evoked in (21b) immediately marks Romney's introduction as distinct from the previous self-introductions, and also parallels Romney's humorous start to his introduction in the previous debate (14). Instead of seriously reaffirming the frame of national security, Romney evokes a nonserious frame, which contributes to the construction of a self-aware and light-hearted personal identity. While one might argue that this presentation of self is at odds with an ideal presidential self, which should display a sense of gravitas, especially given the debate's topical focus, Romney's choice could also be seen as a remediating strategy to combat wide-spread criticism in the media throughout his campaign describing the candidate as stiff and aloof. Thus, the humorous frame functions as a strategic attempt to reframe dominant discourses surrounding his campaign and to construct a presidential self that is 'easy-going' and 'in touch' with the people.¹⁰ This move highlights the point that self-introductions can be seen as a tool for *reframing* political identity.

Next, Romney's self-introduction makes reference to his role as a family member—as a husband, father and grandfather (21c)—in a similar way that candidates did in the earlier debate. Following the family references, Romney shares his impressions regarding the “perilous course” (21h) along which the incumbent has taken the country. In this sequence, Romney presents an identity as a political outsider, though in a more subtle way than Cain's positioning strategy in the previous debate (17). Rather than directly negating a categorical identification as a politician through syntactic negation, Romney distances himself from the political sphere—and specifically, the current president—through a nation-as-vehicle metaphor, in which the president is the agentive ‘driver’, while citizens are passive ‘passengers’ being taken on a ‘perilous course’. In this introduction, Romney both distances himself from his political identity by highlighting his identity as a family member and businessperson, but also constructs a presidential self that has the capacity to empower Americans by keeping the country “strong” and “free” in (21i) if given the chance to drive this metaphorical vehicle himself.

Herman Cain follows Romney in this sequence, making no reference to family but constructing consistency in terms of his self-presentation by identifying himself as *businessman Herman Cain*, and reinforcing the current overarching debate frame of national security.

(22) Herman Cain

- a. I am businessman Herman Cain.
- b. I'm delighted to be here, to discuss one of the most critical issues we face.

- c. Because as a result of this administration,
- d. Our national security has indeed been downgraded.

Cain's decision to make no reference to family members can be seen as rejecting the framing of presidential selves set up by the two previous candidates; it should be noted that this strategy is also inconsistent with Cain's references to his family identities in the earlier debate in (17). This decision could again be seen as a strategic reframing move that distances his present identity from media discourses that had maligned Cain's character in the month leading up to this debate, in which reports of multiple allegations of sexual harassment against the candidate surfaced.¹¹ With this broader social context in mind, any self-identification as a 'family man' at this point in the campaign could reinforce the negative framing of the candidate's presidential self in the media and jeopardize his presentation as consistent and relatable. Instead, Cain reframes his political identity by zeroing in on the established frame of the debate, and more specifically the economic power and status of the United States as an element of national security, when he refers to national security as having been "downgraded" (22d), a term that evokes discourses surrounding the downgrading of the United States credit rating by Standard & Poor's in August 2011. In this respect, Cain uses his professional identity as a businessman, knowledgeable about the economy, and blends it with his political identity via the interdiscursive borrowing of the term *downgraded*.

In the following introduction, Gingrich does make reference to a family-related identity, unlike the earlier debate, by making reference to his father in a personal narrative.

(23) Newt Gingrich

- a. I'm Newt Gingrich,
- b. My father spent twenty-seven years in the infantry,
- c. And as a result of that, in the fall of 1958, I decided that national survival was worth the study of a lifetime.
- d. I've worked with both Heritage and the American Enterprise Institute for over thirty years
- e. I can't imagine any two institutions better to partner with CNN, on the most important single topic,
- f. The survival of the United States.

Unlike prior references to family, Gingrich's reference to his father (23b) serves not to construct a family frame that situates his self-identification, but to construct a *narrative rationale* for his decision to dedicate his life career to "national survival". In this sense, Gingrich embeds his self-introduction within the frame of national security in a way that linguistically situates his individual actions within a historical familial lineage that is closely aligned with the US Armed Forces. This strategy articulates with Duranti's (2006:486) analysis of narrative strategies in political

debates, through which candidates construct ‘personal coherence’ by presenting the present as a ‘natural extension’ of the past. Through this family reference, Gingrich extends beyond his own personal coherence and extends it to the service mission of his entire family, demonstrating consistency over time, generations, and across members of his family unit. Michele Bachmann follows this with similar framing strategies in her self-introduction.

(24) Michele Bachmann

- a. My name is Michele Bachmann
- b. I’m a proud member of the United States Congress
- c. I’m privileged to serve on the House Select Committee on Intelligence.
- d. My father honorably served in the United States Air Force,
- e. My stepfather in the United States Army
- f. And my brother in the United States Navy.
- g. I think, for every one of us who are here on this stage tonight,
- h. I think we all want to send our very best Happy Thanksgiving greetings to all of our men and women in uniform who are serving us overseas,
- i. Here in the United States and also to their families.
- j. Happy Thanksgiving.
- k. We appreciate, we love you and we want to get you home as soon as we can.

In this introduction, Bachmann refers to her family members who have served in the US Armed Forces (24d-f) but rather than using family references as an orientation that constructs coherence in her own political actions, she uses her familial relations with the Armed Forces as a basis for assuming the role of spokesperson for all the candidates and audience members (24g-h) in order express greetings, appreciation, and support for the work of the US Armed Forces (24h-k). In this sequence, Bachmann makes use of the temporal context of the debate (two days before the Thanksgiving holiday) to reinforce not only her familial affiliations with the Armed Forces and relate to audience members who have such relations,¹² but to construct an additional alignment with audience members by offering to speak directly *to* service members on their behalf (and possibly on behalf of her opponents on stage), evidenced through her use of the pronoun *we* (24h, k). In this sequence, the interactional strategy of ‘speaking for another’ (Schiffrin 1993) reorganizes the participation framework of the interaction, and can be interpreted, following Tannen’s (1994) elucidation of the relativity of linguistic strategies, as a polysemous move that constructs both power and connection at once. On the one hand, her statement instantiates a discourse of inclusion that constructs solidarity with her debate opponents and the audience. On the other hand, it can also be seen as a power maneuver that discursively constructs a propositional alignment with these groups where it may not exist (e.g. with some anti-war activists who view any expression of support for troops as condoning or supporting military action).

The final candidate to introduce himself in the national security debate is Jon Huntsman. Following patterns set up in previous introductions in this debate, he makes reference to his family members, the temporal context of the debate, and highlights his professional experience in national security.

(25) Jon Huntsman

- a. My name is Jon Huntsman
- b. I believe this week in particular, that there is still much to be grateful for in this, the greatest nation that ever was.
- c. I'm here with my wife of twenty-eight years, Mary Kaye,
- d. Who is fortuitously sitting in the New Hampshire box up here.
- e. We are the wife-- or we are the parents of seven kids,
- f. Two in the United States Navy.
- g. Twice elected governor of the great state of Utah,
- h. I've lived overseas four times.
- i. Three times as a United States ambassador
- j. And I am honored and privileged to be here.
- k. Wolf, CNN, Heritage, AEI, thank you one and all for making tonight possible.

In this self-introduction, Huntsman upholds the Thanksgiving theme evoked in Bachmann's introduction, but reinstates the standard participation framework by 'speaking for' himself (rather than speaking for the other candidates and the audience, as Bachmann did), and speaking to the co-present and televised audience (rather than to currently deployed troops presumably watching via television). Huntsman makes reference to his family members (25c-f), displaying his familial ties to the US Armed Forces like earlier candidates, but unlike previous introductions, these familial alliances serve to build up to his own public service related to national security as a US Ambassador (25h-i). Again, this can be seen as a form of one-upmanship over the previous candidates in this debate: not only is he a family member and a service member himself, but the construction of consistency across generations in this introduction, in contrast with Gingrich's, starts with the candidate himself and extends to his children's decisions to serve in the Navy. As such, his family identity as a role model for his children overlaps with his political identity as a role model for the nation, constructing a powerful presidential self in this last self-introduction that both closes the introductory sequence and frames the remainder of the debate.

In summary, in the self-introduction sequence of the debate on national security, we find that candidates make reference to family identities and roles that are either directly or indirectly related to the established debate frame of national security. Perry's framing strategies mirror those seen in the earlier debate: he integrates family and political identities by introducing his wife in her political role and syntactically incorporates her via pronominal reference as he asks for voters' support.

Romney refers to his family identity as part of a positioning strategy that distances himself from his political identity as he expresses his doubts about the current administration's actions related to national security. Gingrich, Bachmann, and Huntsman all evoke family identities by making reference to family members who have served in the Armed Forces, but these references serve distinct purposes in each introduction: (i) to provide a narrative rationale for Gingrich's own interest in politics; (ii) to demonstrate Bachmann's familiarity with the Armed Forces, and to make an identity claim that warrants her manipulation of the participation framework of the speech event; and (iii) in Huntsman's case, to one-up previous candidates' identity claims by foregrounding his own extensive political experience related to matters of national security, which fosters a sense of his current self as a natural extension of the past.

DISCUSSION

In this analysis of two primary debate introduction sequences, it was found that in addition to providing standard self-introductory information, the Republican candidates used these sequences as an opportunity to frame their presidential selves in distinct ways, and in particular through reference to their family identities. References to family members and roles serve in framing political identity in a majority of the introductions, though these references interact with professional and political identities in various ways. Overall, family references were demonstrated to function in (i) creating personal identities as family men/women; (ii) interweaving aspects of personal identity traditionally associated with the private sphere of the home with identities related to the public sphere of politics; (iii) outdoing previous candidates' family identity claims; and (iv) demonstrating intimate experience with and expertise on issues of national security.

Family and political identities were blended in self-introductions through referring terms (e.g. by referring to oneself as a foster parent or one's wife as a first lady), syntactic constructions (e.g. coordinate noun phrases and cohesive devices), and through specific speech acts (e.g. welcoming, thanking). Through these linguistic devices, candidates blend identities and their conventional spheres in ways that are analogous to the types of frame laminations described by Gordon (2009)—namely, via overlapping and embedding. Instances in which candidates present themselves as *both* parent and political candidate, or as spouse and business partner, or as grandfather and concerned citizen, constitute presentations of *overlapping identities* in self-introductions. Discursively locating oneself in multiple roles and spheres serves an important rhetorical function in the debates. It presents candidates not only as well-rounded individuals (and not simply as power-hungry, slimy politicians), but as relatable to the audience on various levels. Identity blending also serves to construct involvement (Tannen 2007) with viewers in a context that is otherwise formal and impersonal. Some family references, such as 'first lady' and 'foster mother' can be considered a distinct type of blend—*hybrid*

identities—because they constitute unique roles that simultaneously index two distinct social units—the family and the state. This type of blending can be distinguished from overlapping because a first lady is not just a political role and a family role—it is a family member with specific obligations to the state.

We also observed some notable differences between the function of family references in the two debates: in the earlier debate, family identities were incorporated syntactically and prosodically within a list of other relevant identity claims, whereas in the second debate, they were embedded in personal and family narratives that positioned candidates as having intimate experience with the military (even if they had not served themselves), and being distinctly familiar with and knowledgeable about matters of national security. In this debate, a more complex brand of identity blending occurs, which is in some respects analogous to Gordon's concept of embedding, but that is only apparent when one considers the intersection of identities of *president* and *parent* and how they are associated with their corresponding public and private spheres. Matters of national security (the official debate frame), whether they are related to the armed forces, the national economy, or the environment, are embedded in a larger, more general frame of 'safety.' The *president's* job is to ensure the nation's safety, and this is what candidates are expected to argue (on-record) they are capable of in a debate on national security. At the same time, it is a *parent's* job to ensure the safety of their family.¹³ So when candidates refer to their roles as parents and grandparents, their role in ensuring the safety of their families enhances the credibility of their claims of ensuring national security as president in an off-record manner. And when they mention their relatives' service in the armed forces, they show that security is not just their personal concern as a family member and a presidential candidate, but it is also a family value. Thus, we can say that family and political identities overlap here, but that they intersect specifically via an overarching frame of safety. This study thus elucidates the utility of applying framing to the study of political identity construction, and adds to Gordon's (2009) illustration of various frame interactions by showing that identities may overlap in similar ways, or constitute hybrids that bring together distinct roles, social units, and spheres.

Lack of family reference was shown to be a reframing device. In the case of Gingrich, this could be considered an evasion of sorts, given his family history, but in the case of Paul, this reframing worked to construct personal consistency in his distinct libertarian political ideology. Thus, reframing strategies that look similar on the surface can figure into quite different types of identity construction across individuals. Reframing can thus be seen as both a defensive strategy—as 'damage control', in Clayman's (2001) terms—or it can function as an offensive move, serving to differentiate oneself as a unique candidate within a group of similar-minded individuals. Such findings problematize broad-stroke content analyses of debate strategies (e.g. Benoit & Wells' 1996 analysis of 'attack' and 'defense'), by showing that the same linguistic strategy can instantiate one move or the other, or two moves simultaneously.

The analysis also attended to a variety of contextual features that influenced the candidates' constructions of a presidential self in their introductions. By taking into account sequentiality, we could better understand how candidates one-upped each other through family identity claims. We also found that family references or lack thereof served in drawing on or resisting frames that were made available in previous introductions. These findings point to the need to consider how frames are made available sequentially in discourse as resources for strategic identity work. In addition to manipulating locally emergent discursive resources, candidates also drew on broader circulating discourses in the media relating to the state of the nation as a way to reframe their identities or transition a frame to a more specific embedded frame, which could be seen in the multiple ways that candidates construed the topic of national security in the second debate.

On a more general level, this study expands our understanding of how multiple facets of identity intersect in a genre of political discourse whose purpose is to showcase identities for voters, who are expected to choose one to 'buy' at the ballot box. The past decade of research on discourse and identity has emphasized the constructed and performed nature of identity (see Bucholtz & Hall 2005), but thus far little work has examined 'high' performances in speech genres that are constructed explicitly for identity consumption. In fact, we have evidence of candidates' heightened awareness of the market in which they participate by manufacturing these presidential selves in Santorum's self-introduction in the second debate, which contains an ironic interdiscursive allusion to the world of advertising: "If you like what Barack Obama has done to our economy, you'll love what he's done to our national security" (18g-h).

Finally, this study extends the body of research on family frames to the sphere of political discourse by examining how references to family members and roles can be used as a rhetorical strategy in explicitly persuasive discourse, and adds to our understanding of how candidates construct 'existential coherence' (Duranti 2006) in debate discourse. Coherence should not only be considered along a temporal axis—as personal consistency over time—but also in terms of consistency across spheres of one's own life and across generations within candidates' family histories, which may serve in promoting oneself as a presidential 'logical next step' in the history of the nation.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

- . falling intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of a declarative sentence)
- ? rising intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of an interrogative sentence)
- , continuing (slightly rising or falling) intonation followed by short pause (as in mid-sentence)
- underline emphatic stress

APPENDIX B: 2011–2012 US PRESIDENTIAL
PRIMARY DEBATES THAT INCLUDED
CANDIDATE SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

DEBATE CODE	DATE	LOCATION	SPONSORS	MODERATOR	PARTICIPANTS
Deb2- 0613-NH	June 13, 2011	Manchester, NH	CNN, WMUR-TV, New Hampshire Union Leader	John King	Bachman, Cain, Gingrich, Paul, Pawlenty, Romney, Santorum
Deb5- 0912-FL	September 12, 2011	Tampa, FL	CNN, Tea Party Express	Wolf Blitzer	Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Huntsman, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum
Deb8- 1018-NV	October 18, 2011	Las Vegas, NV	CNN, Western Republican Leadership Conference	Anderson Cooper	Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum
Deb11- 1122-DC	November 22, 2011	Washington, DC	CNN, Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute	Wolf Blitzer	Bachmann, Cain, Gingrich, Huntsman, Paul, Perry, Romney, Santorum
Deb17- 0119-SC	January 19, 2012	Charleston, SC	CNN, South Republican Leadership Conference	John King	Gingrich, Paul, Romney, Santorum
Deb19- 0126-FL	January 26, 2012	Jacksonville, FL	CNN, CNN en Español, The Hispanic Leadership Network, Republican Party of Florida	Wolf Blitzer	Gingrich, Paul, Romney, Santorum

Continued

INTRODUCTION SEQUENCES IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY DEBATES

Continued

DEBATE CODE	DATE	LOCATION	SPONSORS	MODERATOR	PARTICIPANTS
Deb20-0222-AZ	February 22, 2012	Mesa, AZ	CNN, Republican Party of Arizona	John King	Gingrich, Paul, Romney, Santorum

NOTES

¹Kendall (1999, 2006) has also used the term *sphere* in her discussion of family-related identity construction at work and home; however, the public-private distinction that Habermas makes is particularly relevant to the construction of political identities in the sphere of national politics.

²Codes for debate references are located in the appendix.

³One example is provided for each of the three moderators of the seven debates examined in this study. King and Blitzer’s subsequent models in later debates do not differ substantially from the ones provided here.

⁴With an unusually large family by American standards, we might add, which could have further implicatures related to Santorum’s political views regarding the family, which were central to his campaign platform (see Santorum 2006).

⁵It is worth noting that Paul could potentially blend his professional and political identities, having served in the US Air Force as a flight surgeon.

⁶This reference to being a ‘neighbor’ could also be interpreted as indexing a religious frame and Christian identity.

⁷It should be noted that the moderator introduces the candidates before they introduce themselves in this debate; however, the focus of this analysis is on self-introductions.

⁸As Romm (1993) has emphasized, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of what issues constitute American ‘national security’: while some narrow definitions focus primarily on issues directly related to military protection from foreign threats, broader definitions include issues related to education and economic and energy independence.

⁹This comment is a playful response to the moderator’s earlier self-introduction: “I’m Wolf Blitzer and yes, that’s my real name.”

¹⁰Further evidence for this argument can be found in other debates, in which Romney stands out among the candidates as the only participant to make humorous remarks in the introductory sequence.

¹¹Cain was also publicly accused of a long-time extra-marital affair with a friend, Ginger White, one week after this debate aired.

¹²It would seem logical to do this in a debate about national security, since voters with an interest in the designated topic are more likely to have personal experience with the effects of warfare and national security policy.

¹³One might argue that it is considered more specifically a father’s job. Given that my purpose in this article is not to address the gendered dimensions of political identity, I use gender-neutral terms in my discussion, but one could certainly argue that a mother’s role in ensuring a family’s safety is viewed quite differently than a father’s role, and that gendered family roles divide ‘safety’ responsibilities along the lines of economic, health, and emotional well-being, similarly to the way that candidates have construed multiple embedded frames of national security in this debate.

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