Research Article

The International Journal of Press/Politics
2014, Vol 19(1) 3–23
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1940161213508206
ijpp.sagepub.com

Exposure to Ideological News and Perceived Opinion Climate: Testing the Media Effects Component of Spiral-of-Silence in a Fragmented Media Landscape

Yariv Tsfati[1], Natalie Jomini Stroud[2], and Adi Chotiner[1]

Abstract
Spiral-of-silence theory assumes that a monolithic stream of messages from mainstream media, leaving little ability for audiences to seek ideologically congruent news, affects people's perceptions of the distribution of opinion in society. While these assumptions may have been valid when Noelle-Neumann developed her theory forty years ago, the new media landscape, characterized by the proliferation of ideological media outlets, makes them seem outdated. Do audiences of conservative-leaning media perceive a conservative opinion climate while audiences of liberal-leaning media perceive a more liberal distribution of opinion? And if so, what are the consequences? We examine these questions using two data sets collected in extremely different contexts (Study 1 in the context of the 2005 Israeli disengagement from Gaza, n = 519; Study 2, in the context of the 2004 U.S. presidential elections using the National Annenberg Election Survey, n = 9,058). In both studies, selective exposure to ideological media outlets was associated with opinion climate perceptions that were biased in the direction of the media outlets' ideologies. In Study 2, we also demonstrated that partisan selective exposure indirectly contributes to political polarization, and that this effect is mediated by opinion climate perceptions.

Keywords
public opinion, media effects, partisan journalism

[1]University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel
[2]University of Texas-Austin, Austin, TX, USA

Corresponding Author:
Yariv Tsfati, Department of Communication, University of Haifa, Mt. Carmel, Haifa, 31905, Israel.
Email: ytsfati@com.haifa.ac.il

In a landmark article, Bennett and Iyengar (2008) call on public opinion scholars to look back at classic theories of media effects and to examine whether each theory "needs to be adapted, and in some cases overthrown" (p. 713) to keep pace with the changes in the post-broadcast media landscape. In this paper, we examine whether and how the development of partisan media outlets that present the news from the standpoint of either a politically liberal or conservative ideology has changed the media effects component of spiral-of-silence theory. When formulating this theory, Noelle-Neumann (1974) assumed that a consonant and monolithic stream of messages from the mainstream media would affect people's perceptions of the distribution of opinion in society. The era of an almost-monopolistic media market has ended, claim Bennett and Iyengar, and one implication of this change is the fact that the mediated presentation of the opinion climate is no longer unequivocal. How does exposure to partisan media shape opinion climate perceptions? Do Fox News audiences perceive a conservative opinion climate while MSNBC audiences perceive a more liberal distribution of opinion? And if so, what are the consequences? This paper attempts to answer these questions.

The Spiral-of-Silence and the Fragmented Media Landscape

The emergence of spiral-of-silence research in the early 1970s (Noelle-Neumann 1974), alongside agenda setting and cultivation theories, has signified for many scholars a paradigmatic shift from theories of a powerful audience back to theories of a powerful media (McQuail 1985). Interestingly, when reviewing this paradigmatic shift, McQuail (1985) mentioned the homogenization of media as a possible reason for the fact that conceptions of a dominant media regained ground (p. 104). The fact that the spiral-of-silence was part of this shift, combined with the uniqueness of linking interpersonal and mass communication at micro and macro levels, are perhaps the reasons why "the spiral of silence has assumed an important place in the literature on communication processes and effects" (Salmon and Glynn 1996: 177).

The media effects component of spiral-of-silence argues that, notwithstanding the influence of our interpersonal environment, media regularly and strongly impact our perceptions regarding what other people are thinking. Noelle-Neumann (1974) argued that

> mass media are part of the system which the individual uses to gain information about the environment. For all questions outside his immediate personal sphere he is almost totally dependent on the mass media for the facts and for his evaluation of the climate of opinion. (pp. 50–51)[1]

As Katz (1983) puts it, according to the spiral-of-silence, "mass media constitute the major source of reference for information about the distribution of opinion" (p. 89). The media's ability to shape opinion climate perceptions is at the core of the theory's spiraling process by which majorities may become minorities due to their

distorted perception of the opinion climate and its effect on people's willingness to engage in conversations.

Part of the reason for the media's strong ability to shape opinion climate perceptions relates to Noelle-Neumann's (1973) concept of consonance. According to Scheufele (2008), "consonance refers to the tendency of different media outlets to portray controversial issues in a homogeneous manner" (p. 177). Katz (1983) has argued that spiral-of-silence research assumes that "the media tend to speak in one voice. Almost monopolistically" (p. 89). Being captive by a monopolistic and ubiquitous media environment makes audiences rely heavily on the media as a source of information on social opinion (Salmon and Glynn 1996: 167). The consonant presentation of the opinion climate in mainstream media strengthens media effects, according to spiral-of-silence theory "since it undermines the ability of audience members to selectively expose themselves only to media messages that are consistent with their own views" (Scheufele 2008: 177).

The assumption of consonance was perhaps valid when Noelle-Neumann and her students studied the spiral-of-silence in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, at that time, the two German broadcast television stations ARD and ZDF did not differ even in technical features of news coverage such as camera angles (Noelle-Neumann 1984: 165–66). However, the new media landscape, characterized by the advent of current affairs websites that are targeted at political niches as well as the rise of ideologically oriented television cable news networks (such as Fox News) and ideological political talk radio (Bennett and Iyengar 2008), makes the assumption of consonance seem outdated. The more diverse ideological menu offered by media is being used by audiences, leading to what Bennett and Iyengar (2008) described as "partisan biases in consumption" (p. 724). In contrast to Noelle-Neumann's conceptualization of the audience as having little ability to engage in selective exposure, current audiences regularly expose themselves to likeminded media outlets. Stroud (2011, Chap. 3) presents cross-sectional and longitudinal survey-based evidence, as well as experimental evidence, documenting not only a link between partisanship and exposure patterns (such that liberals tend to consume liberal media and conservatives conservative media) but also that at least part of the causal mechanism goes from partisanship to consumption, and further that selective exposure is increasing over time (see also Iyengar and Hahn 2009 for additional evidence supporting ideological selectivity). But does this mean that the media lost their ability to shape opinion climate perceptions with the transformation to the new media landscape? Could it not be that explicitly ideological outlets such as Fox News and MSNBC also shape opinion climate perceptions?

Exposure to Ideological News Media and Climate of Opinion Perceptions

Noelle-Neumann (e.g., 1984) argued that our quasi-statistical sense, or our tendency to monitor the distribution of opinions, has two main sources: the interpersonal

environment and the mass media. The assertion that the media influence audience perceptions of public opinion was explained by Noelle-Neumann in media dependency terms (see Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Mutz, 1998). In a mass society in which direct interpersonal relationships no longer organize political life, individuals rely heavily on media sources when aggregating collective opinion. The psychological mechanism by which news affects opinion perceptions was not specified by Noelle-Neumann in detail, but she did argue that it is not necessarily opinion polls that shape climate-of-opinion perceptions but also cues such as "camera angles" or "crowd reactions" (Noelle-Neumann 1984: 165–67), which imply the distribution of opinion in society to audiences.

Later psychological research shed light on the process by which exposure to news shapes audience assessments of public opinion, largely confirming Noelle-Neumann's intuitions. This research demonstrated that people heavily rely on exemplars—unique perspectives of illustrative individuals—when they assess distributions in a society (Bar-Hillel 1980). This research has shown that, interestingly, exemplars are much more important than "base rate" information (such as opinion polls) in shaping assessments of how common opinions or behaviors are. Research in communication has confirmed that this bias applies to the estimation of the opinion climate even when it comes to exposure to mediated reports containing base-rate information and exemplars (Brosius and Bathlet 1994; Daschmann 2000). Namely, interviews with "the man on the street" and crowd reactions in news coverage, are examples of important sources of information for audience perceptions of public opinion.

Overtly ideological media outlets offer numerous such expressions of public opinion through the exposure they offer to the opinions of call-in listeners, commentators and experts, interviewees, opinionated hosts and the like (all of which could be perceived as exemplars, see Herbst 1996). Ample experimental (Perry and Gonzenbach 1997) and quasi-experimental (Mutz and Soss 1997) research has demonstrated that exposure to distorted news exemplars shapes audience perceptions of the opinion climate. Interestingly, the different conditions in some of this experimental research could be interpreted as conceptually representing different distributions of opinion in opposing ideological media outlets. For example, in Perry and Gonzenbach's (1997) study, which focused on the issue of school prayer, respondents were either exposed to exemplars supporting school prayer (somewhat similar to what one may find on a conservative network such as Fox News) or to exemplars opposing school prayer (somewhat similar to what one may find on a liberal network such as MSNBC). The results confirmed that different exemplar distributions affected perceived opinions. So, in a sense, experimental research has demonstrated that exposure to an ideologically slanted mediated presentation of the opinion climate would be associated with a biased perception of the opinion climate.

In line with this research, we hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Selective exposure to overtly ideological media is associated with opinion climate perceptions such that (a) selective exposure to conservative media is associated with the perception of a more ideologically conservative opinion cli-

mate, whereas (b) selective exposure to liberal media is associated with the perception of a more ideologically liberal opinion climate.

The current research not only extends the generalizability of past experimental studies by examining a theoretically similar hypothesis on data obtained using large-sample surveys, but also adds to the literature in five important ways. First, we focus on the effects of *selective* exposure to *ideologically congruent* media, which may differ compared with the effects of regular exposure to exemplars in the news. Second, rather than the straightforward stimuli used in experimental research (e.g., offering 5:1 or 1:5 pro- or con- school-prayers distributions of exemplars in Perry and Gonzenbach's 1997 study), ideological media such as Fox News or MSNBC may be more complicated, may offer more subtle cues about societal opinion, and may even offer a more balanced opinion distribution. Third, our research potentially tests for cumulative and longer-term effects in comparison with the effect of a single-shot exposure to news exemplars in the lab. Fourth, by applying the logic of previous exemplification research to the current media landscape, the present investigation contributes to contemporary debates on the effects of media on society in light of the development and popularity of partisan media in the post-broadcast era (Bennett and Iyengar 2008). Fifth, unlike previous experimental research, we examine the consequences of the process for political polarization.

Perceived Opinion and Political Polarization

What happens if exposure to right-wing media makes audiences perceive that the social opinion climate is tilted toward the right and exposure to left-wing media makes audiences perceive that the social opinion climate is tilted toward the left? Following Noelle-Neumann's (e.g., 1977) assertion that perceptions of public opinion bear the potential to change individual attitudes, it seems logical to expect that such tilted perceptions of the opinion climate would lead to political polarization. In other words, it is possible to expect that conservatives attending to conservative media (and perceiving a more conservative opinion climate) would be more polarized to the right and liberals attending to liberal media (and perceiving a more liberal opinion climate) would be more polarized to the left. This prediction is consistent with research in social psychology on conformity effects, in particular with small group research documenting that normative influences account for polarizing conformity effects in small group discussions (Isenberg 1986; Sanders and Barron 1977) especially within cohesive ideological groups (Janis 1982). As Stroud (2010) argues, a possible explanation is that "people want to be perceived well by their fellow group members and hence adjust their opinions toward the perceived group mean" (p. 558). Polarization effects stemming from exposure to ideological media through perceived opinions are also consistent with Price's (1989) social identification model of public opinion, which argues that exposure to media reports on group conflict (prevalent in ideological media) cues the audience to perceive the issue through group perspectives, leads to

polarized or exaggerated perceptions of group opinions, and finally polarizes attitudes. Thus, it is possible to hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 2:** Audience opinion climate perceptions will be associated with political polarization.

While the concept of selective exposure to likeminded media is arguably as old as modern communication research (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), recent explorations have broadened our understanding of the *consequences* of selective exposure for democratic life. Theoretically, it has been argued that the advent of more ideological outlets fragment societies by promoting political polarization (Jamieson and Cappella 2008; Katz 1996; Mutz 2006; Sunstein 2001). Indeed, recent research has demonstrated empirically that exposure to ideologically congruent channels is associated with more polarized attitudes (Jones 2002; Stroud 2010, but see Prior 2013 for a critique). Importantly, evidence has established that the causal mechanism behind the association works from selective exposure to polarization (Taber and Lodge 2006 used an experimental design; Stroud 2010 used cross-lagged analysis of longitudinal data). But how does selective exposure promote polarization? Despite the fact that the effect of selective exposure on polarization is a central avenue of news influence on politics in the current media environment, not much is known about the mechanisms explaining the association between the two constructs (Knobloch-Westerwick 2012: 629). In this paper, we examine whether the effect of partisan selective exposure on opinion climate perceptions is part of the explanation for the effect of such exposure on polarization. Thus, we ask,

> **Research Question 1:** Do climate-of-opinion perceptions mediate the effect of exposure to likeminded media on polarization?

In what follows, the hypotheses will be tested on data collected in two different contexts. In Study 1, we used data collected in Israel just before the pullout from the Gaza Strip in 2005. In Study 2, we used the 2004 National Annenberg Election Study data. While in Study 1 we only focus on Hypothesis 1a, in Study 2 we test hypotheses and examine our research question.

Study 1

Study 1 used secondary analysis of data collected by Tel Aviv University's Chaim Hertzog Institute for Society and Politics that assessed Israeli public opinion regarding the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip (also called "the disengagement"). The plan was proposed by the Sharon government in December 2003 as a response to increasing international pressure to advance the peace process; it also was prompted by the government's conviction that no deal was possible with Palestinian president Yasser Arafat. The plan included unilaterally withdrawing the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) from the Gaza Strip after relocating all 1,600 Jewish families from the Israeli

settlements within this area. Proponents (mainly from the Israeli center-left bloc) argued that the disengagement was meant to decrease friction among the Palestinian population, the settlers, and the IDF who were stationed in the area to protect the settlers. The plan also was meant to decrease international pressure on Israel and to provide a testing ground for the feasibility of Palestinian sovereignty. The plan met fierce opposition from the Israeli right wing. Opponents of the plan argued that after the evacuation of the IDF, the area would turn into a base for terrorist activities against Israel. They also argued that unilaterally giving up territory while receiving nothing in return would create the impression among Palestinians that violence pays off (thus encouraging future violence). Finally, the opposition argued that the relocation of the settlers would violate their civil rights. After a heated debate in Israel and faced with large-scale protests and the threat of the use of violence, the plan was implemented in August 2005.

Content analysis data demonstrates that, in accordance with the assumptions regarding exemplification in ideological versus mainstream media, right-wing newspapers' coverage included relatively more opponents of the disengagement, compared with mainstream newspapers.[2]

Data were collected using a telephone survey (n = 519) conducted on a probability sample of the adult Israeli population in July 2005. Interviews were conducted in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian. AAPOR's Response Rate 1 was 17 percent. Of respondents, 48.9 percent were male, 24.1 percent were religious, 89.6 percent were Jewish Israelis, and 22.9 percent were Mizrahi Jews (of predominantly Middle Eastern ethnic origin). On average, respondents had 13.17 years of schooling (SD = 2.66) and the mean age was 43.46 (SD = 17.58). Importantly, as other public opinion surveys published at the time indicated, support for the disengagement was more prevalent than opposition: 47.6 percent of respondents supported, while only 38.9 percent opposed, the disengagement plan.

Measures

The *dependent variable*—perceived opinion climate—was measured using an item worded "to the best of your knowledge, what percentage of Israeli citizens support the disengagement plan today?" (M = 51.08, SD = 18.02). The *independent variable*—likeminded exposure to right-wing ideological media—was measured using two indicators, the first focused on right-wing newspapers and the second on online outlets. The first indicator was worded "what newspaper do you usually read?" and was coded "1" for the right-wing newspapers *Makor Rishon, Hatzofe, Besheva* and other right-wing outlets and "0" for all other outlets. The second indicator, focused on the consumption of online political information, was worded "when you surf the web for information regarding disengagement, what is the main website you use?" Right wing "Arutz 7, Gush Katif websites or other websites opposing evacuation" were coded "1" while all other outlets were coded "0." As our study was aimed at exploring the effects of exposure to ideologically congruent media, we calculated dummy variables for exposure to right-wing newspapers and online outlets by respondents who reported

Table 1. OLS Model Predicting Perceived Public Opinion Toward the Disengagement (Study 1, Chaim Hertzog Institute data; Unstandardized regression coefficients).

	B (*SE*)
Congruent exposure to right-wing online outlets	−9.57 (3.33)**
Congruent exposure to right-wing print outlets	−9.70 (3.61)**
Political ideology	1.00 (0.59)†
Attitude toward the disengagement plan	4.24 (0.69)***
Attitude toward the settlements in Gaza	0.96 (0.83)
Close following of print news	−0.32 (0.62)
Close following of television news	0.78 (0.60)
Perceptions of biased coverage	1.93 (0.76)*
Third-person perceptions	1.09 (0.46)*
Sex (1 = female)	−0.59 (1.60)
Age	0.06 (0.05)
Years of schooling	0.19 (0.30)
Religiosity (= 1)	1.88 (2.25)
Mizrahi ethnic origin (= 1)	−2.54 (1.92)
Intercept	28.00
R^2	.41
n	322

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

opposing the disengagement. These variables were coded "1" for respondents who reported opposing the disengagement plan who also reported frequent exposure to right-wing media (8.3 percent for congruent exposure to right-wing press; 6.0 percent for congruent exposure to right-wing websites), and "0" for all other respondents.[3]

Control variables. To rule out the possibility of spuriousness, the models reported below controlled for political ideology, attitude toward the disengagement, attitude toward the settlements in Gaza, close following of news coverage of the disengagement, and demographic factors (age, sex, being religious, Mizrahi ethnic origin, and years of schooling). Since previous research has demonstrated that perceived public opinion is affected by perceived media bias and third-person perceptions (Tsfati and Cohen 2003), these variables also were included as covariates in the model. Measures of these control variables are detailed in Online Appendix 1 (available at http://hij.sagepub.com/supplemental).

Results

To test for Hypothesis 1a, we regressed perceived opinion on our indicators of ideologically congruent right-wing media exposure (Table 1). The model explained 40.60 percent of the variance. Results demonstrated that the best predictor (standardized coefficient β = .42) of perceived public opinion regarding the disengagement was

one's personal attitude toward the disengagement. The more respondents supported the plan, the more they tended to perceive that the public at large supports the plan ($b = 4.24$, $SE = 0.69$). Political ideology was similarly associated with perceived opinion such that the more respondents ranked themselves on the left, the more they perceived public opinion to be supportive of the disengagement ($b = 1.00$, $SE = 0.59$; however, this association was only of borderline significance, $p = .059$). Consistent with previous findings, the more respondents perceived news coverage of the disengagement as biased in favor of Sharon's disengagement plan ($b = 1.93$, $SE = 0.76$), and as influential on others compared with self ($b = 1.09$, $SE = 0.46$), the more they perceived that public opinion would be likewise favorable toward the plan. None of the demographic variables significantly predicted climate of opinion perceptions.

Hypothesis 1a predicted that congruent exposure to right-wing media would be associated with perceiving that the opinion climate is tilted against the disengagement. As demonstrated in the model, ideologically congruent exposure to right-wing print and online outlets was negatively and significantly associated with perceived public opinion as predicted. Ceteris paribus, perceived support for the disengagement among respondents opposing the disengagement and exposed to right wing media was 9.57 ($SE = 3.33$; standardized $\beta = -.15$) percentage points lower in the case of online media and 9.70 ($SE = 3.61$; standardized $\beta = -.13$) percentage points lower in the case of print outlets, compared with other respondents.

Discussion

Study 1 demonstrated that exposure to right-wing media was associated with perceiving that the opinion climate was tilted toward the right wing, over and above controls for demographic and political factors. Given content analysis findings demonstrating that the distribution of opinion presented in right-wing media outlets presented more exemplars opposing the disengagement than supporting it, this finding is similar to the one obtained in exemplification research (e.g., Perry and Gonzenbach 1997). Beyond extending the external validity of previous results by examining a similar hypothesis using survey data, the current investigation also demonstrated that this association holds when it comes to likeminded exposure to ideological media.

Although providing preliminary support for the core hypothesis of the present investigation, Study 1 was limited in several respects. First, respondents were not asked about their exposure to left-wing media, and this fact does not allow us to test for Hypothesis 1b. Second, standard measures of polarization (e.g., Stroud 2010) were not included and this fact does not allow us to test for Hypothesis 2. Third, the spiral-of-silence model requires "situations where ideology, agitation and emotions come into play" (Noelle-Neumann and Petersen 2004: 349). Although this description fits the context of the debates regarding the Gaza pullout well, the findings are limited to the Israeli culture, and were obtained in a very extreme context. In Study 2, we test hypotheses and examine our research question in the more standard context of a U.S. presidential election campaign.

Study 2

Our second study examines the hypotheses and research questions in the context of the 2004 Bush-Kerry U.S. presidential campaign. Throughout this campaign, the gap between the candidates in preelection polls was almost always lower than four percentage points (Traugott 2005). Given the relatively close contest, and hence, the vague opinion climate, this campaign is a very suitable context for the study of perceived public opinion. This study reports on a secondary analysis of data from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES; Romer et al., 2006). In addition to containing indicators of perceived opinion climate and validated measures of polarization, the biggest advantage of the 2004 NAES data for our purpose is our ability to use it in combination with data on partisan media use (Stroud 2008, 2010). While Stroud (2010) used the 2004 NAES to demonstrate that partisan media exposure is associated with polarization, we use the same data to demonstrate that partisan media exposure shapes opinion climate perceptions (Hypothesis 1), and that opinion climate perceptions mediate the association between partisan exposure and polarization documented by Stroud (2010).

The NAES project used a rolling-cross-sectional design that yields a random cross-section of the U.S. adult population for each day of interviewing. In this study, we utilized data gathered between June 9 (the day after the final primary election) and November 1, 2004. Using AAPOR's RR1 formula, the response rate was 22 percent. Although the overall *n* for this period was 39,338, because several of the questions utilized here were asked only of a random subset of the sample, only 9,058 respondents were included in the current analysis.

Measures

To measure *perceived opinion climate*, we used questions relating to the candidates' electoral chances. At random, half of NAES respondents were asked a question worded "Using a 100-point scale, please tell me the chances that George W. Bush will beat John Kerry in the general election. A zero means no chance, 50 a 50–50 chance and 100 a certain win." The other half was asked an identically worded question about the chances of Kerry beating Bush. Both items were combined after subtracting the answer to the second question from 100, creating a measure for the chances that Bush would win the general elections ($M = 49.54$, $SD = 26.33$). While obviously an inferior measure of opinion distribution, it follows the strategy used by Noelle-Neumann (1984) in spiral-of-silence research, focusing on expectations of election winners as the indicator for opinion climate. As Noelle-Neumann (1974: 50) explains, future expectations regarding opinion distributions are not less important than perceptions of current distributions in shaping individual behaviors and attitudes.

To measure *ideological selective exposure* we used measures developed and applied to the NAES data by Stroud (2010: 563–66). Stroud first identified the different conservative or liberal leanings of the different news outlets reported by NAES respondents: For newspapers, her classification was based on endorsements. For radio programs, the classifications were "based on self-identification of radio hosts/shows,

the ideological affiliations ascribed to the programs by trade magazines or how prior research classified the programs" (p. 564). Based on previous content analytic research, Fox News was classified as a conservative-leaning outlet and CNN and MSNBC as liberal-leaning outlets. For political websites, Stroud used content analysis to classify open-ended responses to a question asking respondents to identify the websites they used to obtain information about the campaign for president in the past week. In the next stage, Stroud created an index of conservative exposure by summing respondents' reports of reading newspapers endorsing Bush, listening to conservative talk radio, watching Fox, and accessing conservative websites (range = 0–4; M = 0.57, SD = 0.76), and an index of exposure to liberal media by summing reading newspapers endorsing Kerry, listening to liberal talk radio, watching CNN or MSNBC, and accessing liberal websites (range = 0–4; M = 0.78, SD = 0.80).[4] In the final stage, to measure selective exposure to ideologically congruent media, all respondents who were not self-identified as conservatives or Republicans received a score of zero on the selective exposure to conservative media measure and all respondents who were not self-identified as liberals or Democrats received a score of zero on the selective exposure to liberal media measure.

To measure *polarization*, we followed Stroud's (2010) measure that, based on Fiorina et al. (2005) and Mutz (2002), utilized the difference between candidates' thermometer ratings. NAES respondents were asked,

> For each of the following people in politics, please tell me if your opinion is favorable or unfavorable using a scale from 0 to 10. Zero means very unfavorable, and 10 means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable toward that person. Of course you can use any number between 0 and 10.

They were asked this question for Bush (M = 5.25, SD = 3.71) and for Kerry (M = 5.07, SD = 3.29). We operationalized polarization as the difference between the thermometer ratings for Bush and Kerry. Unlike Stroud, and given that perceived opinion climate is a directional measure, we did not take the absolute value of the difference score, but rather, we used a measure (M = 0.18, SD = 6.41) that varies between −10 (very favorable toward Kerry-very unfavorable toward Bush) to +10 (very favorable toward Bush-very unfavorable toward Kerry).

Control variables. Following Stroud (2010), all models reported below control for demographics, media use, media attention, and political orientations (ideology, partisanship, political interest, discussion with friends and family, general political knowledge, and strength of political leanings). These variables, constructed in an identical manner to Stroud's control variables, are described in Online Appendix 2 (available at http://hij.sagepub.com/supplemental).

Results

We tested the hypotheses using OLS regression models. To test for the significance of the indirect effects we used PROCESS, an SPSS macro that uses bootstrapping to test

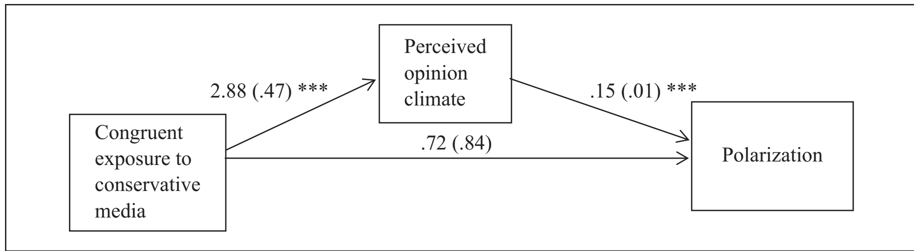

Figure 1. Effects of congruent exposure to conservative media on polarization (unstandardized OLS estimates, NAES 2004 data, *n* = 9,032).
Note. NAES = National Annenberg Election Survey.

for mediation (Hayes 2013). The main results are depicted in Figures 1 and 2. We first ran regression models predicting the perceived opinion climate with the measures of conservative and liberal ideologically congruent news exposure as the independent variables, controlling for all covariates. Hypothesis 1a predicted that ideologically congruent exposure to conservative media would be associated with perception of a more conservative opinion climate. This hypothesis was supported. All else being equal, each one-unit increase on the total conservative selective exposure scale was associated with an increase of 2.88 ($SE = 0.47$, $p < .001$) points in perceived opinion in favor of Bush. Hypothesis 1b predicted that ideologically congruent exposure to liberal media would be associated with perception of a more liberal opinion climate. This association was also statistically significant. All else being equal, each one-unit increase on the liberal media exposure scale was associated with a *decrease* of 3.96 ($SE = 0.39$, $p < .001$) points in Bush's perceived electoral chances. In sum, Hypothesis 1b also was supported.

In the next stage, we ran OLS models predicting political polarization, with the selective exposure indicators and opinion climate perceptions as the main independent variables while controlling for all covariates. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, and over and above the contribution of all of the covariates, perceived opinion climate was consistently associated with polarization. The more respondents perceived that Bush was the likely winner, the more their polarization scores reflected favorability toward Bush combined with unfavorability toward Kerry, and the more respondents perceived an opinion climate that favors Kerry, the more their polarization scores reflected favorability toward Kerry combined with unfavorability toward Bush (in Figure 1, $b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < .001$; in Figure 2, $b = 0.16$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .001$).

Our first Research Question (*RQ1*) asked whether perceived opinion climate mediates the association between selective exposure to ideologically congruent media and polarization. The bootstrap results for this mediated effect were statistically significant in both models (for conservative media the indirect $b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.13$, 95 percent CI [.23, .75], $p < .05$; for liberal media the indirect $b = -0.62$, $SE = 0.17$, 95 percent CI [–1.00, –.32], $p < .05$). In other words, the mediated effect of ideologically congruent exposure on polarization through perceived opinion climate was statistically significant.

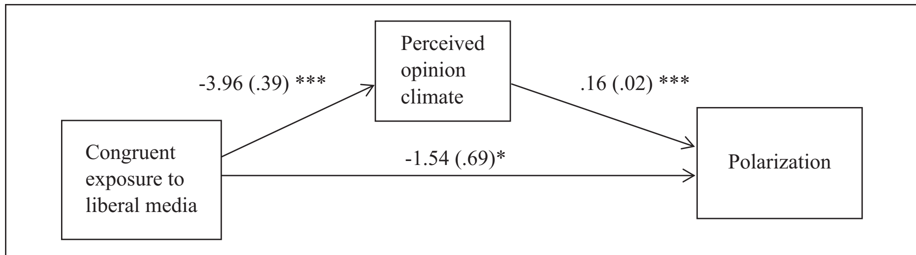

Figure 2. Effects of congruent exposure to liberal media on polarization (unstandardized OLS estimates, NAES 2004 data, *n* = 9,058).
Note. NAES = National Annenberg Election Survey.

Discussion

Using the 2004 NAES data, we were able to demonstrate that exposure to conservative media makes people perceive a more conservative opinion climate and vice versa for liberal media. We also were able to demonstrate that this effect has important political implications: Our findings revealed that opinion climate perceptions are part of the mechanism underlying the association between partisan selective exposure and political polarization, reported by Stroud (2010). In addition to the fact that the indirect effect was significant, for liberal and conservative news exposure, the direct and significant association between exposure and polarization became weaker (and insignificant in the case of conservative media) when controlling for opinion climate perceptions. We are hesitant to make any bold claims about the difference between the direct effects of conservative and liberal media given findings that these relationships may be contextual depending on electoral dynamics (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman 2012). Furthermore, although there are some differences in the magnitudes and significance of the coefficients, we note the general consistency of the findings across both models.

General Discussion

When formulating her spiral-of-silence theory in the 1970s, Noelle-Neumann assumed a homogeneous, almost monopolistic, media landscape that projects a consistent opinion climate. Noelle-Neumann also assumed that audience members have little ability to engage in selective exposure (Metzger 2009: 570). Both of these assumptions lie at the core of Noelle-Neumann's (1973) conception of media as exerting enormously strong influences on society (Scheufele 2008). However, as recent findings demonstrate, the post-broadcast media landscape and the way many members of the audience have adjusted their exposure habits to this changing landscape by using ideologically congruent media (Stroud 2011; although see Garrett 2009, who demonstrates that this does not mean people are equally motivated to avoid attitude-inconsistent information), largely have invalidated Noelle-Neumann's core assumptions. Does this mean

that, at least when it comes to media effects on opinion climate assessments, we are entering the new era of minimal media effects envisioned by Bennett and Iyengar (2008)?

Two studies, conducted in very different political contexts, demonstrate that exposure to ideologically slanted media outlets was associated with a perception of an opinion climate that is biased in the direction of the media outlets' ideology. In other words, over and above tight controls, audiences of right-wing media perceive a more right-wing opinion climate and vice versa for audiences of left-wing media. These associations are consistent with the argument that exposure to ideological media shapes opinion climate perceptions.

The mechanism underlying these associations may be (although not necessarily) related to cognitive processes such as the base-rate fallacy (Bar-Hillel 1980), which is the human tendency to rely heavily on vivid individual cases when assessing distributions. Exemplification research has documented that exposure to a slanted (liberal or conservative) set of exemplars in news coverage makes audiences perceive a correspondingly slanted (liberal or conservative) public opinion, even when base rate information (or the actual distribution of opinion, such as polling information) is presented (Brosius and Bathelt 1994). The transformation of the media landscape in recent decades left little impact on the cognitive psychology of human reasoning and information processing. People still are affected by exemplars when they assess distributions. However, the advent of ideological media did change the content to which audiences were exposed. Instead of a situation in which a homogenized presentation of societal opinion almost universally affects audience opinion perceptions to the left or right, as was the case four decades ago, in the current media landscape, those attending to liberal media tend to think that society at large is more liberal and those attending to conservative media tend to perceive that society is more conservative.

While the psychological individual-level effect of media on perceived public opinion seems to remain despite the transformation of the media landscape, the results of the process may be different than the one envisioned by Noelle-Neumann at the macro-level. In an era dominated by truly mass media, Noelle-Neumann argued that the effect of the media on opinion perceptions was the instigator for a societal silencing and conformity effect. Study 2's findings demonstrate that rather than social conformity at the macro level, the end result of the process described in this paper is more polarized attitudes on both sides. Instead of a perceived minority yielding to the perceived majority by withdrawing from public debate, abandoning the fight (in the words of Katz 1983: 89), and refraining from political recruitment, audiences of partisan media on both sides of the political spectrum in the current environment are becoming more confident in their camp's popularity and probable triumph and as a result are more polarized in their attitudes. This is not to say that silencing will not occur in the modern media environment. On the contrary, one can envision examples where outlets, irrespective of their partisan bent, may emphasize a particular societal opinion distribution that could prompt silencing. Yet the possible outcomes associated with selective exposure may portend new effects associated with one's perception of the opinion climate, as demonstrated here. Overall, this study's empirical findings may be interpreted as

lending support to Metzger's (2009: 570) suggestion that, the spiral-of-silence in its original form could be replaced by a reinforcing spiral process (Slater 2007) in which partisans become more polarized as a result of selective exposure.

Other findings in the present investigation, unrelated to the effects of exposure to ideologically congruent media, were in line with theoretical expectations and previous research. One of the strongest forces predicting opinion climate perceptions was one's political predispositions. In both studies, liberals tended to perceive a liberal opinion climate and conservatives tended to perceive a conservative opinion climate. These associations are consistent with research on the projection hypothesis, which indicates that people tend to project their own opinions on society and perceive that others hold similar opinions (Fields and Schuman 1976; Kennamer 1990). Also in line with previous research (Tsfati and Cohen 2005), third-person perceptions regarding the perceived effects of mainstream media significantly predicted perceived public opinion, and so did perceptions of bias in mainstream media coverage (in Study 1). In addition, in Study 2, Blacks and Hispanic tended to perceive that Bush had lower chances of winning the election, and these results are consistent with findings about minority perceptions of the opinion climate in previous investigations (Tsfati 2001), and with the argument that reference group membership should be taken into account in models predicting perceived public opinion, given the likely effect of reference groups on such estimations via interpersonal discussion (Krassa 1988).

Although the main finding was obtained in two different contexts using different measures and despite controlling for numerous potential causes of spuriousness, the present investigation suffers from several limitations. First and foremost, given the use of secondary data that did not contain appropriate questions about opinion expression in interpersonal contact with anonymous others[5] (e.g., Noelle Neumann's train test), we were not able to test the spiral-of-silence process in full and examine whether the effects of exposure to ideologically congruent media on opinion climate perceptions translate into more vocal opinion expression (as Noelle Neumann predicted, albeit with a different macro-level result). This important question remains open for future research.

A second limitation has to do with the question of causality. Our interpretation of these results (that likeminded exposure to ideological media shapes polarization through opinion climate perceptions) is consistent with research on exemplification (e.g., Brosius and Bathelt 1994; Daschmann 2000), with the logic of psychological research on distribution assessments and with the causal direction implied by spiral-of-silence research (Noelle-Neumann 1974, 1977, 1984). It is important to stress that the causal direction of the association between likeminded exposure and opinion climate perceptions is not only supported theoretically, but it also can be inferred from previous experimental (Perry and Gonzenbach 1997) and quasi-experimental (Mutz and Soss 1997) research.

However, the present evidence does not allow us to fully negate the different causal orderings, namely that people expose themselves to ideological media *because of* their perception of the opinion climate (perhaps because they want to get their news from the perspective of the majority), or that our polarization construct independently

affects perceived opinion and likeminded exposure. While future research should substantiate the causal mechanism behind the associations demonstrated in this study using longitudinal or experimental designs, and while we suspect some reciprocal relationships are theoretically very plausible (given Slater 2007), the complete reverse causation argument seems unlikely on conceptual and theoretical grounds, and (given previous experimental research) also on empirical grounds.

A third limitation is related to the interpersonal environment. Interpersonal discussions tend to occur with likeminded partners, fostering political polarization (see Lang and Lang 2012). Even Noelle-Neumann acknowledged that these interpersonal conversations, not only media exposure, shape opinion climate perceptions. While our models control for the general frequency of political discussion, they do not control for whether these political conversations crossed lines of disagreement. It may be the case that the process we described is exacerbated when it is coupled with exposure to likeminded discussions. If likeminded conversation is highly correlated with selective exposure, spurious correlation is also a possibility. These possibilities should also be tested by future research.

A fourth limitation of the current exploration has to do with underlying mechanisms. Our explanation attributed the findings to exemplification and the base-rate fallacy. While this is a plausible explanation, other explanations are admittedly possible. For example, third-person effect researchers might argue that perceptions of the influence of ideological media might be shaping opinion perceptions, while social identity theorists might argue that these effects are due to ingroup versus outgroup processes. At least when it comes to congruent exposure to liberal media, the significant direct effect of exposure on polarization (over and above controlling for the mediators) leaves room for uncovering additional mediators. Underlying mechanisms should be explored in depth in future research, but in the meantime, our understanding of changes in the way that spiral-of-silence works in the contemporary media landscape is enhanced, regardless of the exact mechanisms operating in the background.

This study has answered Bennett and Iyengar's (2008) call and examined how the transformation of the media landscape affects the media effects component of spiral-of-silence theory. As is evident from the present investigation, it may very well be that the psychology of individual-level effects will be unchanged by shifts in the media environment when putting other theories from the "return to the powerful media" tradition (such as agenda setting, cultivation, and media priming and framing) to similar tests (see Metzger 2009: 572). After all, the cognitive mechanisms that lie at the core of these media processes (such as heuristic processing) are unlikely to be affected by the shifts in the media market. However, the macro-level social consequences (not examined in the present investigation) could possibly be different. The current findings may be interpreted as suggesting that opinion climate perceptions fostered by exposure to liberal or conservative media may promote political polarization, but polarization has been examined at the individual level in the present research, and hence macro-level consequences should be examined by future research.

Similar to spiral-of-silence theory, other theories of relatively strong effects facilitate social cohesiveness and the "mainstreaming" of society (e.g., in agenda setting, a

shared social agenda is adopted by a diverse audience; in media framing, diverse audiences learn to accept certain interpretations of social realities as valid). The ideological fragmentation of the media market may impact media effects (see Shehata and Stromback 2013 for a discussion of how changes in the media landscape affect agenda setting effects), shape audience perceptions (Feldman et al. 2012), and contribute to social and political polarization via other mechanisms, not just opinion climate perceptions; these should be spelled out and investigated in future research. As Holbert et al. (2010) argue, polarization and attitude reinforcement are important media effects, arguably the strongest media effects on society in an era of media choice. Our long journey to understanding the media's effects on society in constantly changing communication and political surroundings still has a long way to go.

Author's Note

A draft of this paper was presented at the annual conference of the World Association for Public Opinion Research.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Data collection for Study 1 was funded by the Chaim Hertzog Institute, Tel Aviv University. Data collection for the NAES was funded by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Notes

1. A similar media effect on climate of opinion perceptions was described by neighboring theories such as impersonal influence (Mutz 1998), bandwagon effect research (Bartels 1988), and pluralistic ignorance (O'Gorman & Garry 1976).
2. To test whether there were more people expressing opposition to the disengagement on right wing ideological media, we used the content analysis reported by Sheafer (2005) focusing on three mainstream news outlets at the time of the disengagement debate in Israel. To this data we added, using the same codebook and coder instructions, an analysis of two right-wing newspapers. All items referring to the disengagement plan in five Israeli newspapers (n = 817; mainstream newspapers were the most widely circulated *Yedioth Aharonoth, Maariv and Haaretz*, and right-wing newspapers were *Hazofeh* and *Makor Rishon*) between March 30th and May 5th 2004 were included. Coders were asked to count the number of interviewees or other people mentioned in each story expressing explicit support or opposition to the disengagement. They then marked whether the story reported on more supporters, more opponents, or an identical numbers of supporters and opponents. Krippendorff's alpha for this variable was .62. Only 35.2 percent of the items that appeared in mainstream newspapers included more opponents than supporters, compared with 45.7 percent of the items in right-wing newspapers. On the other hand, only 35.3 percent

of the items in right-wing media included more supporters than opponents, compared with 43.1 percent in mainstream media ($\chi^2 = 8.03$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$).

3. We also ran models using the original exposure variables (that include likeminded and nonlikeminded exposure). These models—that we do not report below due to space limitations—resulted with identical patterns of results.
4. The results obtained using the general measures of ideological exposure, as well as the separate results for different media are not reported below due to space limitations. However, when running models using the regular (i.e., nonlikeminded) indicators of exposure to ideological media as the independent variables, very similar patterns of results were obtained.
5. The NAES data did contain an item, worded "During this presidential campaign, have you talked to any people and tried to show them why they should vote for or against one of the presidential candidates?" with "yes" or "no" response categories. This dichotomous measure is problematic as an indicator for spiral-of-silence research as it is not sensitive to timing (measuring opinion expression that could have occurred anytime during the campaign, and ignoring possible dynamics in the climate of opinion). While recent conversations are arguably more cognitively available when answering such questions, the wording of this item is very different than standard spiral-of-silence outcome measures (such as the "train test"), and the fact that it is dichotomous (in addition to its insensitivity to the timing of expression) make it inappropriate as an outcome measure in the current context.
6. Interestingly, when running logistic regression models predicting opinion expression (to tap opinion expression in favor of Bush, likely Bush voters who responded positively to this item were coded "1" while the rest of the respondents were coded "0," and vice versa for opinion expression in favor of Kerry) we found an association between opinion climate perceptions and opinion expression. Polarization also was associated with opinion expression, such that higher polarization scores (indicting favorability toward Bush combined with unfavorability toward Kerry) were positively associated with an increase in the odds of opinion expression in favor of Bush and negatively associated with the odds of opinion expression in favor of Kerry. The effect of congruent news exposure on opinion expression was mediated through opinion climate perceptions and polarization ($p < .05$).

References

Bar-Hillel, Maya. 1980. "The Base-Rate Fallacy in Probability Judgments." *Acta Psychologica* 44 (3): 211–33.

Bartels, Larry M. 1988. *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bennett, W. Lance, and Shanto Iyengar. 2008. "A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication." *Journal of Communication* 58 (4): 707–31.

Brosius, Hans-Bernd, and Anke Bathelt. 1994. "The Utility of Exemplars in Persuasive Communications." *Communication Research* 21 (1): 48–78.

Daschmann, Gregor. 2000. "Vox Pop & Polls: The Impact of Poll Results and Voter Statements in the Media on the Perception of a Climate of Opinion." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 12 (2): 160–81.

Feldman, Lauren, Edward W. Maibach, Connie Roser-Renuof, and Anthony Leiserowitz. 2012. "Climate on Cable: The Nature and Impact of Global Warming Coverage on Fox News, CNN and MSNBC." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 17 (1): 3–31.

Fields, James M., and H. Schuman. 1976. "Public Beliefs about the Beliefs of the Public." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40 (4): 427–48.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy Pope. 2005. *Culture War?* New York: Pearson Longman.

Garrett, R. Kelly. 2009. "Politically Motivated Reinforcement Seeking: Reframing the Selective Exposure Debate." *Journal of Communication* 59 (4): 676–99.

Hayes, Andrew F. 2013. *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach*. New York: Guilford.

Herbst, Susan. 1996. "Public expression outside the mainstream." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546: 120-131.

Holbert, R. Lance, R. Kelly Garrett, and Laurel S. Gleason. 2010. "A New Era of Minimal Effects? A Response to Bennett and Iyengar." *Journal of Communication* 60 (1): 15–34.

Isenberg, Daniel J. 1986. "Group polarization: A critical review and meta-analysis." *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 50: 1141-1151.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Kyu S. Hahn. 2009. "Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use." *Journal of Communication* 59 (1): 19–39.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, and Joseph N. Cappella. 2008. *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Janis, Irving Lester. 1982. *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Jones, David A. 2002. "The Polarizing Effect of New Media Messages." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 14 (2): 158–74.

Katz, Elihu. 1983. "Publicity and Pluralistic Ignorance: Notes on the 'Spiral of Silence." In *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, 4th ed., ed. Charles D. Whitney, Ellen Wartella, and Sven Windahl, 89-100. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Katz, Elihu. 1996. "And deliver us from segmentation." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 546: 22-33.

Kennamer, J. David. 1990. "Self-Serving Biases in Perceiving the Opinions of Others: Implications for the Spiral of Silence (Review Essay)." *Communication Research* 17 (3): 393–404.

Knobloch-Westerwick, Silvia. 2012. "Selective Exposure and Reinforcement of Attitudes and Partisanship before a Presidential Election." *Journal of Communication* 62 (4): 628–42.

Knobloch-Westerwick, Silvia, and Steven B. Kleinman. 2012. "Preelection Selective Exposure Confirmation Bias versus Informational Utility." *Communication Research* 39 (2): 170–93.

Krassa, Michael A. 1988. "Social Groups, Selective Perception, and Behavioral Contagion in Public Opinion." *Social Networks* 10 (2): 109–36.

Lang, Kurt, and Gladys Engel Lang. 2012. "What Is This Thing We Call Public Opinion? Reflections on the Spiral of Silence." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 24 (3): 368–86.

Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1948. *The People's Choice; How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

McQuail, Denis. 1985. "Sociology of Mass Communication." *Annual Review of Sociology* 11:93–111.

Metzger, Miriam J. 2009. "The Study of Media Effects in the Era of Internet Communication." *The Sage Handbook of Media Processes and Effects*, ed. Robin L Nabi and Mary Beth Oliver, 561–76. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Mutz, Diana C. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mutz, Diana C. 2002. "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 46:838–55.

Mutz, Diana C. 2006. "How the Mass Media Divide Us." In *Red and Blue Nation?: Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics*, ed. Pietro S. Nivola and David W. Brady, 223-248. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Mutz, Diana C., and Joe Soss. 1997. "Reading Public Opinion: The Influence of News Coverage on Perceptions of Public Sentiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61:431–51.

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1973. "Return to the Concept of the Powerful Mass Media." *Studies in Broadcasting* 9:67–112.

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1974. "The Spiral of Silence a Theory of Public Opinion." *Journal of Communication* 24 (2): 43–51.

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1977. "Turbulences in the Climate of Opinion: Methodological Applications of the Spiral of Silence Theory." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 41 (2): 143–58.

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1984. *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion–Our Social Skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth, and Thomas Petersen. 2004. "The Spiral of Silence and the Social Nature of Man." In *Handbook of Political Communication Research*, ed. Linda L. Kaid, 339–56. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence & Erlbaum.

O'Gorman, Hubert J., and Stephen L. Garry. 1976. "Pluralistic Ignorance—A Replication and Extension." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40 (4): 449–58.

Perry, Stephen D., and William J. Gonzenbach. 1997. "Effects of News Exemplification Extended: Considerations of Controversiality and Perceived Future Opinion." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 41 (2): 229–44.

Price, Vincent. 1989. "Social Identification and Public Opinion Effects of Communicating Group Conflict." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53 (2): 197–224.

Prior, Markus. 2013. "Media and Political Polarization." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16:101–27.

Romer, Daniel, Kate Kenski, Kenneth Winneg, Christopher Adasiewicz, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2006. *Capturing Campaign Dynamics, 2000 and 2004: The National Annenberg Election Survey*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Salmon, Charles T., and Carroll J. Glynn. 1996. "Spiral of Silence: Communication and Public Opinion as Social Control." In *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don W. Stacks and Michael B. Salwen, 165–80. New York: Routledge.

Sanders, Glenn S., and Robert S. Baron. 1977. "Is Social Comparison Irrelevant for Producing Choice Shifts?" *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 13 (4): 303–14.

Scheufele, Dietram A. 2008. "Spiral of Silence Theory." In *The SAGE Handbook of Public Opinion Research*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach, and Michael W. Traugott. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Sheafer, Tamir. 2005. "Detecting Campaign Effects in Imbalanced Campaigns The Likud's Intraparty Referendum over Sharon's Disengagement Plan." *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10 (2): 85–93.

Shehata, Adam, and Jesper Stromback. 2013. "Not (Yet) a New Era of Minimal Effects: A Study of Agenda Setting at the Aggregate and Individual Levels." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18 (2): 234–55.

Slater, Michael D. 2007. "Reinforcing Spirals: The Mutual Influence of Media Selectivity and Media Effects and their Impact on Individual Behavior and Social Identity." *Communication Theory* 17 (3): 281–303.

Stroud, Natalie Jomini. 2008. "Media Use and Political Predispositions: Revisiting the Concept of Selective Exposure." *Political Behavior* 30 (3): 341–66.
Stroud, Natalie Jomini. 2010. "Polarization and Partisan Selective Exposure." *Journal of Communication* 60 (3): 556–76.
Stroud, Natalie Jomini. 2011. *Niche News: The Politics of News Choice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Sunstein, Cass R. 2001. *Republic. com 2.0*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 755–69.
Traugott, Michael W. 2005. "The Accuracy of the National Preelection Polls in the 2004 Presidential Election." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (5): 642–54.
Tsfati, Yariv. 2001. "Why do People Trust Media Pre-Election Polls? Evidence from the Israeli 1996 Elections." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 13 (4): 433–41.
Tsfati, Yariv, and Jonathan Cohen. 2003. "On the Effect of the "Third-Person Effect": Perceived Influence of Media Coverage and Residential Mobility Intentions." *Journal of Communication* 53 (4): 711–27.
Tsfati, Yariv, and Jonathan Cohen. 2005. "The Influence of Presumed Media Influence on Democratic Legitimacy The Case of Gaza Settlers." *Communication Research* 32 (6): 794–821.

Author Biographies

Yariv Tsfati (PhD, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 2006) is an Associate Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Haifa. His research deals with various aspects of public opinion, audience perceptions of media, and media effects.

Natalie Jomini Stroud (PhD, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 2006) is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Assistant Director of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. She is broadly interested in how the media affect our political behaviors and attitudes and how our political behaviors and attitudes affect our media use. Her recent book, *Niche News: The Politics of News Choice* (Oxford University Press, 2011) explores the causes, consequences, and prevalence of partisan selective exposure.

Adi Chotiner (MA) compteled his Master's degree at the Department of Communication, University of Haifa. His thesis research dealt with possible mediators in the association between selective exposure and polarization.

Research Article

The International Journal of Press/Politics
2014, Vol 19(1) 24–41
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1940161213508813
ijpp.sagepub.com

Kevin's Predicaments: Power and Celebrity across the Political and Media Fields

Geoffrey Craig[1]

Abstract
This article grounds the concept of political celebrity in the contexts of the differentiated media or journalistic field, and it also investigates the functions of political celebrity in the exercise of political leadership where individuals must negotiate the relationship between the political and media fields. Through a discussion of the changing political fortunes of former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the power of political celebrity is attributed to particular structural negotiations between the political and media fields, and also to exploitations of the temporality of political cycles, and the ephemerality of the currency of political celebrity. It is also argued that political celebrity is an unstable phenomenon, partly because it encapsulates a tension between different conceptualizations of subjectivity, where the positing of an autonomous, authentic self competes with a more situational and performative understanding of the self and that this latter understanding of political celebrity is exacerbated in the contexts of post-broadcast democracy.

Keywords
celebrity, politics, media, fields, Kevin Rudd

Introduction

On June 26, 2013, Kevin Rudd staged a remarkable political comeback when he was voted leader of the governing Australian Labor Party (ALP) and reassumed the position of prime minister, a post he lost three years earlier after a leadership challenge by Julia Gillard. The change of political leadership only months before a scheduled

[1]University of Kent, Chatham, UK

Corresponding Author:
Geoffrey Craig, Centre for Journalism, University of Kent, Gillingham Building, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4AG, UK.
E-mail: g.a.craig@kent.ac.uk

national election was prompted by sustained poor public opinion polling by the ALP and Gillard. Rudd was reinstalled because his perceived popularity with the electorate was thought to be the best chance to at least minimize the scale of an election loss to the Liberal/National Party conservative coalition. Rudd's political celebrity status, generated initially from his defeat of long-serving conservative leader John Howard at the 2007 Australian election, and sustained by the ongoing, energetic public and media promotion of his quirky and idiosyncratic political persona, was a vital factor in his political revival. Rudd's return also highlighted the deep divisions within the party, with a number of prominent frontbenchers opposed to Rudd declaring after the leadership change they would not re-contest their seats at the upcoming election, and even a prominent few who switched their allegiance to Rudd did so predominantly with a somber acknowledgment of the party's perilous political fortunes. Rudd's return as prime minister capped a turbulent three years of political struggle against the woman who ousted him. After the 2010 election, Rudd had initially served as foreign minister in the Gillard government before moving to the backbench after an unsuccessful leadership bid in 2012 and further unsuccessful leadership maneuverings in 2013. At the time of writing, the ALP had just lost the national election and Rudd had announced he would not be re-contesting the leadership of the party.

The narrative of Rudd's changing political fortunes is instructive in contemplations about the nature of political celebrity. Political celebrity is popularly presented as a relatively autonomous phenomenon, derived from the charisma of particular individuals, and Rudd's return to the prime minister's position does attest to the power of political celebrity in contemporary political leadership, but I argue here that we need to ground political celebrity in the internal exigencies of a political system and also in the contexts of an increasingly heterogeneous and fragmented post-broadcast journalistic or media field. The case study of Rudd that is offered here demonstrates that the power of political celebrity is dependent upon particular structural negotiations between the political and media fields, exploitations of the temporality of political cycles, and management of the ephemerality of the currency of political celebrity. It is argued that contemporary political celebrity is an unstable phenomenon, partly because it encapsulates a tension between different conceptualizations of subjectivity, where the positing of an autonomous, "authentic" self competes with a more "situational" and performative understanding of the self and that this latter understanding of political subjectivity is exacerbated in the contexts of post-broadcast democracy. Following John Street (2004), political celebrity is seen here not as a superficial or exceptional form of political representation but rather as intrinsic to the processes of political representation. Equally, the power of political celebrity depends on how effectively politicians can manage relations of identification and distinction with the public, and express an authenticity that is both recognized and validated by the public, and able to be effectively mobilized in the power dynamics of both the media and political fields.

The Contexts of Political Celebrity

While the articulation of "celebrity" and "politics" still carries with it a sense of novelty, political celebrity is a well-established historical phenomenon. As Robert van

Krieken (2012: 109) notes, "Celebrity and politics are Siamese twins for the simple reason that both are about visibility, recognition, and esteem: where popular politics and any approximation of democracy was, there shall celebrity be." Political celebrity predates the contemporary obsession with film stars, models, sports stars, singers, and other types of celebrities (van Krieken 2012: 99). Political power has always been expressed through the embodiment of a political self and its presentation through acts of spectacle, as we see with Habermas's concerns about representative publicity (Craig 2002; Habermas 1989; Peters 1993). Modern political celebrity can be traced back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries where burgeoning democratic momentum coalesced with new forms of mass media, particularly photographic media. These political and media developments enabled (and indeed required) politicians and other prominent public figures, such as royalty, to present a mode of subjectivity, and establish relationships with the public, that privileged notions of individuality, authenticity, and familiarity. The political, cultural, and media milieu of the latter part of the nineteenth century in the United States facilitated profound development in both the character of public identity and the relationship between the public and private spheres. As Charles Ponce de Leon (2002) notes, this period saw public figures use media innovations, such as the interview, to cope with an increasingly assertive press and to exercise strategies of self-promotion that emphasized a natural and authentic identity that was grounded in a successful and harmonious private life.

The modernization of the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave rise to a paradoxical orientation toward public identity that continues to animate and problematize contemporary celebrity status. On the one hand, the idea of an authentic, coherent public identity that captured the essence of an individual invoked a notion of the self expressed in secular Romanticism. This self was able to rise above social constraints and was characterized by the transparent expression of a constancy of behavior across the boundaries of public and private life (King 2008: 118). On the other hand, economic and social opportunities provided people with greater freedom to fashion their own identity and this "aroused a profound suspicion of appearances—including a suspicion of the personas that public figures projected in the public sphere" (Ponce de Leon 2002: 41). As Ponce de Leon notes (2002: 41), the artifice of the public sphere meant that the real self of an individual could only be viewed in private and this "sparked a heightened interest in the private lives of public figures, and encouraged writers, reporters, and biographers to employ new techniques that made their subjects appear more realistic." This paradoxical orientation toward public identity was also manifested in the figure of the new modern politician. Increased dissatisfaction with partisan politics gave rise to a desire for "real" individuals who could rise above party machinations and corruption while also possessing appropriate character, knowledge, and skills:

> In the first quarter of the twentieth century, then, one can see in American politics the pursuit of a delicate balance between pragmatism and idealism, achieved only by a certain kind of individual character, with particular life experience, values and beliefs that needed to be demonstrated as being firm enough to withstand the corrosive effects of organized political life. (van Krieken 2012: 107)

Political celebrity not only derives from a particular historical context but it is also an expression of intrinsic features of political subjectivity and political representation. Such an argument runs directly counter to common charges that political celebrity hinders a proper relationship of democratic representativeness (Crick 2002; Meyrowitz 1985; Postman 1987; Zolo 1992). These critiques of the prevalence of political celebrity argue that an undue emphasis on personal image and superficial matters marginalize more substantive political issues that are more directly relevant to the concerns and welfare of the people. Equally, it is claimed that while the individual distinctiveness of political celebrities may attract attention, it also invalidates their ability to be able to be true representatives of the people. As Street (2004) has noted, acknowledging the historical precedents of political celebrity tempers, but does not necessarily undermine, such criticisms, and an argument must be marshaled that demonstrates that "the celebrity politician is not in fact an exaggerated form or exceptional form of all political representation, but rather characteristic of the nature of political representation generally" (2004: 449).

Such an argument is based upon an understanding of the necessarily symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of political representation that are always constituted through negotiations of both identification and distinction (see Ankersmit 2002, 2003; Pels 2003; Street 2004). There is always a substitutional basis to representation generally, and political representation specifically, that must incorporate judgments about the appearance or fit between the representative and the represented, even in accounts of political representation that foreground an understanding of representativeness based on the idea of "acting for" instead of a more mimetic-based "standing for" (see Pitkin 1967; Street 2004: 442–43). As such, aesthetic judgments about political image and performance are legitimate features of any assessment of political representation, from the point of view of both those who are represented and also their representatives. Street (2004: 445) can then argue that "Celebrity politics is a code for the performance of representations through the gestures and media available to those who wish to claim 'representativeness.'" The substitutional basis of representation means that there will always be a representational gap, a negotiation of identification and distinction, which equates to the appeal and power of celebrities who are able to forge connections with their fans while also distinguishing themselves through their talent and/or appearance. Pels (2003: 49) argues with regard to celebrity politicians that "Political style is the concept that simultaneously marks this representative gap and bridges it in a novel fashion." He further argues celebrity politicians negotiate the representative gap in a personalized democracy, not by demonstrating that they are exactly the same as their constituents, but by exhibiting an *authenticity* that is consistently expressive of both the individuality of the politician and the will of the people they come to represent.

The negotiation of this representative gap is variously played out across the terrains of politics and popular media culture and manifested in a range of subject positions. We are familiar with those celebrities from the entertainment industry, such as Bono and George Clooney, who use their celebrity status in political campaigning. The focus here is on those who have assumed political office, but there still remains a diversity of subject positions open to celebrity politicians, stemming from the nature of their

celebrity status and also from their position within the political field. Liesbet van Zoonen's (2005: 82–85) typology of the personae of celebrity politicians maps the range of such subject positions across axes of political insider/outsider and also ordinary/special celebrity. Some conventional political leaders are obviously political insiders who assume celebrity status merely because of their leadership position. Other high-profile political leaders, such as Barack Obama and Kevin Rudd, are conventional politicians but they are attributed with a relative degree of autonomy from the strictures of the party political system and attract higher-than-normal levels of media and public attention because of their personality or charisma. It is difficult to derive status as a celebrity politician as a political outsider and one who has an ordinary celebrity status, but van Zoonen identifies former U.S. presidential candidate Ros Perot as one such figure. Finally, Arnold Schwarzenegger is identified as the exemplary example of a political outsider with special celebrity status.

The celebrity politician must also manage their identity across the spectrum of the public and private spheres. While critics of the phenomenon of the celebrity politician may bemoan journalistic intrusions into the private lives of political leaders, the noted demand for the consistent expression of an authentic self is satisfied with the display of the politician across different "spheres of action" (Corner 2003). John Corner (2003: 73) has captured such a terrain, referring to the "sphere of political institutions and processes," which refers to the internal processes of the political field, such as political party organization and administrative processes; the "sphere of public and popular," which refers to the collection of mediated settings where politicians are publicly visible; and the "private sphere," which refers to the politicians' homelife, friends, leisure activities, and their biographical history. Stanyer (2013: 15) has suggested that Corner's "private sphere" would be better comprehended as the politician's "personal sphere," and he has delineated the personal sphere into three overlapping domains: an individual politician's "inner life," which includes their lifestyle choices, personal tastes and modes of behavior, health and finances; their "domain of relationships," including those with family, friends, and lovers; and their "spatial domain," which includes not only their family home but also other spaces they inhabit in a private capacity, such as holiday destinations. The performance of the celebrity politician, then, extends well beyond a stereotypical parade of talk shows, tabloid photo spreads, and "meet and greets" with an adoring public, and instead traverses a complex terrain and web of relationships involving the sphere of institutional politics, a diversity of media settings, and the features and spaces that make up an individual's life-story and everyday personal life. We need to understand political celebrity in the ways that it is implicated in the exigencies of the political system, how it is variously exercised in an extraordinarily differentiated news, entertainment, and social media landscape, and also how individual resources of personality, knowledge, and rhetoric are mobilized across such a diversity of institutional and communicative encounters.

The conventional emphasis on the individual *charisma* of celebrity politicians needs, then, to be substantially tempered by an appreciation of how such subjectivity is inserted into the infrastructure of the political field. For Pierre Bourdieu (1991, 1998, 2002, 2005), fields are institutional sites that are governed by their own internal

dynamics and they attribute individuals with power and status, or various forms of capital (financial, cultural, symbolic, and social), once people become cognizant of how such fields work and they are able to discipline themselves accordingly. Fields are constituted by: particular conditions of entry, competitive dynamics, productive requirements, modes of deportment, and a range of skills, a knowledge base, and a discursive register. As Bourdieu notes, politicians undergo a specialized training—a "sort of *initiation*, with its ordeals and rites of passage" (1991: 176, author's emphasis)—that includes acquiring relevant bodies of knowledge and ways of speaking to a variety of different groups. Fields discipline individuals, but Bourdieu does not posit a mechanistic account of subjectivity. Through his theory of habitus, Bourdieu attempts to offer an account of subjectivity that balances a sense of agency through the way individuals present themselves in their appearance, accent, posture, and ways of engaging with everyday practices, with an understanding that such "individuality" is always profoundly structurally constituted, the product of particular class and social conditions. As such, there is always a "*dialectical confrontation*" (Bourdieu 2002: 31, author's emphasis) between the marshaling of the resources of a particular habitus and the strictures of operation in a particular field.

Celebrity politicians are nonetheless partly defined by their aptitude in managing the requirements of the journalistic or media field; they are able to effectively communicate the appeal of their personality through proficient media performance. They are able to demonstrate a "common touch" that is manifested in appropriate and seemingly natural use of colloquial language and everyday mannerisms. They convey a sense of ease with themselves and with ordinary members of the public, but they also appear comfortable in the media spotlight and are able to interact easily with journalists and master the generic strictures and conventions that govern media performance and language. This mobilization of personality and mastery of the media field is, however, an increasingly complex process because of the field's growing differentiation. It is not simply that politicians must be able to move, for example, between the more formal political discourse of a serious current affairs interview and the more friendly banter of a breakfast television appearance. The post-broadcast media landscape (Prior 2006; Wilson 2011) that incorporates online and social media has resulted in a proliferation of channels and platforms and more niche audiences, requiring greater flexibility in the presentation of a political persona that can potentially undermine the coherence of an authentic subjectivity. In such a media environment, politics is both more visible and less prominent, as twenty-four-hour news channels coexist with mainstream media that increasingly present a public world that is drained of politics and filled with entertainment. Politicians must also engage with the "interpersonalisation of the public world" (Marshall 2010: 42), which stems from forms of social media, and negotiate the "new mix of representational and presentational culture" (Marshall 2010: 42), which is encapsulated by the interweaving of mass and social media.

Celebrity politicians are able to garner public support, *as celebrities*, but they can also be understood as embodiments of the encroachment of a media logic into the political field. That is, the power of celebrity politicians also stems from perceptions about the shifting balance of power between the political field and the journalistic or

media field, or in terms of Corner's schema, the elevation of the "sphere of the public and popular" over the "sphere of political institutions and processes." As Strömbäck has argued, the process of mediatization has developed to the point where "the media and their logic can be said to *colonize* politics" (2008: 240, author's emphasis). That said, the media proficiency of celebrity politicians does not translate monolithically into political success. The "media capital" (Davis and Seymour 2010) of celebrity politicians, and politicians in general, is variously exercised within and outside the political field, and attenuated or enhanced by engagement with institutional authority. Davis and Seymour (2010) emphasize that "media capital" refers not just to credit gained from quality media performance skills, but rather it is a broader regime that also includes knowledge about the media industry and its practices and values, as well as contacts within the industry. Such media capital can be generated and exercised *within* the political field (what Davis and Seymour term, *internal media capital*) through informal discussions and relationships with political colleagues, journalists, and other political actors about media strategy and performance, or it can be generated *outside* the political field ("media meta-capital") through interactions with journalists and media performances directed to the populace. Media capital can further be delineated by the extent to which it is generated through sheer force of individual personality ("individualized media capital") and the extent to which it derives from their leadership position within the political field ("institutionalized media capital").

Political celebrity is thus a complex and multifaceted concept that extends well beyond simple portrayals of a charismatic personality and comprehensive media attention. Celebrity is, of course, still linked to the individual, irrational, and unstable form of authority that is encapsulated in the notion of charisma that was identified by Weber (Weber 1968, see also Marshall 1997). Modern charismatic politicians are able to inspire publics and do capture something of an independent affective power, expressed through an exemplary character and the articulation of a normative order. van Krieken (following Grande) (2012: 116–17) notes that the traditional mechanisms for justifying decision making within the political field have ceased to retain their potency and, as such, "new life has been given to the old political function of charisma" (van Krieken 2012: 117). He argues that the erosion of traditional mechanisms for reducing complexity of decision making—the "use of procedure for political legitimation," the "mobilization of religious and political images of the world," and "reliance on the persuasion of expertise" (van Krieken 2012: 117)—has meant that personal profile and personality is increasingly mobilized in the journalistic field to enable and justify political change. Equally, as Weber outlined in his account of the routinization of charisma, and as others (Bourdieu 1987) have also noted, charismatic authority is, in fact, a social phenomenon. The contexts of contemporary mediated politics also mean that political celebrity can never be the spontaneous and organic outcome of the emergence of an exceptional individual. Political celebrity is rather the product of a particular communication strategy that carefully negotiates the respective requirements of the political and media fields, and which harmonizes an existence across the span of the private and public spheres. The contexts of contemporary popular culture also introduce a new kind of instability to modern political celebrity, in addition to the inherent

precarious nature of charisma, because there is now greater potential for the more independent production of celebrity that is less reliant on a preexisting charismatic authority and accompanying public support. Telegenic and media-savvy politicians can discover at their peril that celebrity and media visibility do not automatically translate into public mobilization and electoral support.

Kevin's Predicaments

Kevin Rudd had a celebrity status that existed over and above his standing as Australian prime minister. In October 2012, when he was a backbench MP, he effectively gave a stand-up comedy performance in Mandarin to a largely Chinese audience in western Sydney that had the crowd roaring with laughter (Snow 2012), leaving the watching Opposition leader Tony Abbott to mutter afterward: "Those of us who don't speak Mandarin felt a little bit inadequate." Prior to Rudd's leadership challenge in February 2012, the *Australian* newspaper ran an article headlined: "Gillard always left in the shade by celebrity Rudd" (Kerr 2012). The article details the extensive range of Rudd's celebrity activities from his extensive YouTube channel presence to his winning of a national tea blend competition. In August 2012, Rudd featured prominently in an *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine spread with his daughter Jessica, who had just given birth to a baby daughter. In the article, Rudd expressed an ongoing willingness to shape the country's future, saying such a desire is "part of who I am, and you gotta be who you are" (Overington 2012). Rudd's new status as a grandfather not only had the effect of further humanizing the politician, but it enabled Rudd to offer a long-term vision for the country, projecting a statesman-like persona as an authentic part of his identity, while also undercutting any sense of hubris attached with the adoption of such a role: "Without wanting to sound too pious about it all, you just have a keen eye to where will the country be in half a century's time when this little one's contemplating grandchildren" (Overington 2012).

Rudd was notoriously famous for his active courting of the mass media and his incessant use of social media. As leading Labor strategist, Bruce Hawker previously noted, "Anyone who gets between Kevin Rudd and an interview is probably in danger of being run over" (Hannan 2007). Rudd came to public prominence through his regular appearances as an MP on the *Sunrise* breakfast television program with political opponent Joe Hockey. Their good-natured banter and ribbing of each other helped to humanize both of the politicians and elevate their public popularity. Rudd was also well known for his appearances on FM radio programs and popular variety television programs, including *Rove* and, more recently, *The Project*. Rudd's predilection for such popular media appearances, particularly when Opposition leader, provoked the ire of some of the country's leading political journalists, including Barrie Cassidy from the *Insider's* Sunday morning political talk show. In response, Rudd was explicit about the political strategy of targeting a unconventional section of the media field: "Guess what? There's a whole bunch of people out there who you may be surprised to know don't watch *Insiders* but do listen to FM radio. And my job as the alternative prime minister is to communicate with the entire country" (Hawthorne 2007). Rudd's

use of mass media to cultivate his political celebrity was not, however, limited to popular or tabloid media. He has been a prolific writer of op-ed articles and also penned a number of lengthy essays in newsmagazines, enhancing his intellectual credentials (Knott 2011). Rudd has also always been an active user of social media: he used it prolifically in his earlier leadership challenge (Parkinson and Ramli 2012), and even when he was a backbench MP, he had 1.17 million Twitter followers, nearly as many followers as the total of all other federal politicians combined (Butt 2012).

Rudd cultivated a "folksy," informal persona, encapsulated in the foregrounding of his first name. Rudd ran in his 2007 election campaign under a slogan that has now entered Australian political folklore: "Kevin07." When Rudd addressed his first Labor national conference as opposition leader, he quipped, "My name is Kevin. I'm from Queensland, and I'm here to help." Rudd strongly promoted the story of his humble upbringing in rural Queensland and the way it instilled values of hard work, commitment, honesty, and a sense of a "fair go" for all. His folksy political character was expressed in colloquial and sometimes quirky language use: A year before his ousting as prime minister, he used the phrase "fair shake of the sauce bottle" three times during a political interview, and he is well known for the phrase, "I've got to zip (depart)," which he used at the end of his departing press conference as prime minister in 2010. Equally, Rudd, as a former political bureaucrat and diplomat, Mandarin speaker, foreign affairs specialist, and self-confessed "first-class policy wonk," was known for his convoluted and sometimes torturous use of language, his implementation of brutal work regimes for himself and his staff, and his love for globe-trotting and mixing with the world's political elite. As one journalist previously noted,

> It's like there are two Kevin Rudds. One is the policy pendant, demanding and rigorous. The other is the relaxed and joking Kevin07 from *Sunrise* and FM radio, at ease and able to interact with the common man. If it's an act, it's an awfully good one. (Hammer 2007: 22)

The unfolding narrative of Kevin Rudd's political career is symptomatic of the complex character of political celebrity. Even with his reclamation of the prime minister's position in 2013, Rudd's predicament resided in the difficulty of managing the balance between popular and political authority, and translating and consolidating the power of celebrity in the contexts of the political field. Rudd came to power in 2007 after a successful and highly presidential election campaign. Rudd's remarkable defeat of the long-standing Prime Minister John Howard was in no small way due to the overwhelming public response to his character and personality. Rudd's political ascension was primarily based upon his popular appeal; he cultivated an independent image and was not publicly strongly aligned with a faction within the ALP. The efficacy of Rudd's leadership style derived from both the contrast from, and similarity to, John Howard. Rudd was able to distinguish himself as a younger, more energetic leader than the elderly Howard, but Rudd also promoted a balanced image that was both progressive and socially conservative in a way that reassured the public and ensured broad electoral support. The electoral victory of the ALP was, however, also due to much more than Rudd's political celebrity and leadership style. The rise of Rudd

occurred after a long period of rule by the Liberal and National Party coalition that had led to an acrimonious leadership struggle between Treasurer Peter Costello and Howard, who refused to give way to his younger colleague. This party disunity was exacerbated by a number of factors, not least of which was the introduction of controversial and deeply unpopular industrial relations legislation that dispensed with the unfair dismissal laws for smaller companies and severely undermined the rights of employees. As Prime Minister, Rudd cultivated an autocratic leadership style that marginalized the Cabinet process and his political colleagues, and his downfall as prime minister was principally based upon his leadership style and the loss of his high popular public support after poor political management of a number of issues, most notably the introduction of an Emissions Trading Scheme. As such, Rudd's celebrity appeal and his individualized media capital, even when it was supported by the institutionalized media capital associated with the prime minister's position, was not sufficient to counterbalance his unsuccessful management of the political field.

The limitations of Rudd's celebrity appeal within the contexts of the political field is readily apparent from this narrative, but we also need to highlight that the translation of the power of political celebrity into power within the political field is not only a structural issue but also crucially linked to the *temporality* of the political cycle. The power of political celebrity is tied to its implementation at a certain political moment and in the contexts of a particular news cycle. For an extended period of time between 2010 and 2013, when he was a foreign minister and then a backbench MP, Rudd was regularly judged in public opinion polls to be the preferred leader of the ALP and the preferred prime minister but political commentary commonly observed the chances of a second Rudd leadership challenge had ebbed over time, particularly after a disastrous occasion in March 2013 when a senior government minister indicated that a renewed challenge was forthcoming only to have Rudd subsequently deny he was recontesting the leadership. Rudd's eventual successful leadership challenge only occurred as the ALP's poll rankings sunk to a level where the party could expect an electoral annihilation and the election date became more imminent.

The ability of a politician to transform celebrity appeal into electoral and governmental success is also based upon the *ephemerality of the currency* of political celebrity. Given its grounding in notions of authenticity, political celebrity can be effectively exchanged for electoral success in an initial instance, but it is hard to sustain the currency of that political celebrity once it encounters the strictures of the political field (witness the dissolution of Barack Obama's celebrity appeal in his first presidential term), and, as Rudd discovered, it is hard to reenergize the power of political celebrity once it is disconnected from the institutional authority of political leadership. His recent return as prime minister, of course, also showed that political celebrity can have an enduring appeal, but it also requires a reworking in such circumstances. Particularly, since Rudd's loss of the leadership in 2010, he increasingly adopted a degree of self-reflexivity about his political persona. Rudd's character, political history, and leadership ambitions were too well known to avoid or dismiss, so they were often acknowledged and defused through a playful self-deprecation. When it was pointed

out to Rudd in an interview that the biggest news story of 2012 was not the Olympics or the U.S. elections, but his unsuccessful leadership challenge he responded with a laugh, saying, "That didn't turn out too well, did it?" (Ireland 2012). In another incident, immediately after his return as prime minister, Rudd was able to both engage in gentle self-mockery and align himself with ordinary Australian fathers. After using the old colloquial phrase "cooking with gas" (meaning to get something going or moving) in a specific address to younger Australians, Rudd later reported that his daughter had criticized his use of language:

> His daughter Jessica had counselled him about his use of "cooking with gas" on Wednesday night, he said.
> It's "one of the daggiest [dumbest, unstylish] things she had ever heard me say," Rudd explained with a shrug.
> "None of you are daggy Dads?" he wondered, as a confused Australia heaved a small sigh of relief. (Ireland 2013)

Another predicament that Rudd experienced stems from the difficulty of generating political celebrity within the contexts of an increasingly fragmented journalistic and media field, together with conflicting evaluative frameworks of political celebrity that circulate in journalistic and public culture. As noted above, Rudd was quite innovative as an Australian political leader in his active courting of the full range of the media field beyond the conventional confines of political media, and the mass media more generally. The ability to move freely between a serious, late-night current affairs interview and the jovial banter on a morning FM radio show, or a 4,000-word treatise on foreign affairs and a Twitter message about his love for his wife, can obviously be attributed as a considerable asset for any politician that seeks the assent of the populace. The extraordinary discursive and performative range associated with such a diversity of media appearances does, however, also undermine a sense of a coherent and apparently authentic subjectivity, and it promotes a more "situational" sense of self that is variously oriented to different communicative encounters. Such a sense of self is aligned with Erving Goffman's (1959) theorization of the self that acknowledges the differentiated production of the self across a range of social and private settings, and the management of divisions between the "front" and "back" stages of communicative encounters. This understanding of the self is exacerbated in the "presentational culture" (Marshall 2010) of online and social media, and Rudd more so than other politicians extended the public presentation of his private self in "recognition of the new notion of a public that implies some further exposure of [an] individual's life" (Marshall 2010: 44). While we obviously exist in a promotional culture where such a situational understanding of subjectivity is increasingly naturalized, politicians such as Rudd are also still subject to criticism because such mediated acts of self-promotion undermine perceptions of a "coherent" subjectivity, they are seen to be "inauthentic," and too obviously linked to a political strategy. As such, Rudd's quirky language use was judged to be a carefully constructed affectation. Equally, Rudd was

subject to strong criticism from journalists for too actively courting media attention (Duffy 2012; Farr 2010) and for obviously timing media appearances when Gillard was overseas in a bid to upstage the then prime minister (Kerr 2012).

The fact that Rudd both gained public support and political capital from the presentation of such a persona, and also that he was subject to strong criticism for inauthenticity, is indicative of different evaluative frameworks of subjectivity that inform journalistic and public culture. Part of Rudd's public appeal could be attributed not only to his particular individuality but also to the pleasure and enthusiasm he exhibited in the range of his public performances and the movement across a variety of discursive registers. Rudd was an overdetermined site of meaning, and he exemplified how "identity is constituted in contemporary society through images and . . . that such a mode of identity is highly fluid, multiple, mobile and transitory . . . [while still] connected to content and values" (Kellner 1992: 157). Alternatively, the comment quoted above about the existence of "two Kevin Rudds" underlines assumptions about the *singularity* of subjectivity. This kind of journalistic critique of Rudd's public profile is informed by a more traditional, conservative view of subjectivity that posits a more unitary, homogeneous sense of self that is both the consistent expression of a process of socialization and also disciplined through the enactment of fixed and delimited institutional roles. This view of political subjectivity is thus mobilized to judge a political "performance" as necessarily "manufactured" and inauthentic.

The limits of the power of political celebrity can also arise from the fact that the logic of the political field imposes strictures on appearances and performances within the media field in a way that is in tension with the ubiquity of Rudd's media presence. While it may have been politically beneficial for Rudd to seek out noncommitted voters on popular, entertainment-based media, he also needed to balance this strategy with appearances on more political programs where he provided "appropriate" performances as prime minister, displaying the kind of gravitas and competency associated with the position. Journalist Malcolm Farr previously noted in a criticism of Rudd:

> Prime Ministers can't jive with funky FM radio comedians or relax with comfy breakfast TV hosts. They are indulgences for a national leader and look to be attempts to dodge important questions. (Farr 2010)

It may well be that this suggested strict binary between different sectors of the media field does not, in fact, discipline the performances of contemporary Australian prime ministers, but such a comment does allude to the difficulty of engaging with an increasingly diverse media field while also not undermining the capital that the political field designates to the office of prime minister. Indeed, this balance between the authority of the political field and the power of political celebrity takes place not only across the range of the media field but also within individual media performances. There is generally a more flexible and pluralistic mode of language use in everyday political discourse, and this materializes in a tension between populist modes of address and a discourse that is deemed appropriate for the holders of a particular political office. As such, in addition to the now well-established observations about the

"conversationalization" (Fairclough 1995) of political discourse, we can note the "patchwork" character of contemporary mediated political language where different discursive registers and modes of interaction can coexist within the one interview. For example, in his first in-depth interview after reclaiming the office of prime minister, Rudd engaged in both artful self-deprecation in a debate challenge to Opposition leader Tony Abbott and more formal explication of his party's immigration policy, as the two following excerpts indicate:

> So, Mr Abbott, I think it's time you demonstrated to the country you had a bit of ticker [courage, "guts"] on this. I mean, he's the boxing blue; I'm the glasses-wearing kid in the library—come on, let's have the Australian people form a view about whether his policies actually have substance, whether they actually work or whether they're just slogans.

> Well can I say with due respect, Leigh, we are dealing actively with all the source countries, we are working cooperatively with the International Office of Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We have programs within Indonesia to sustain people who are there currently under the protection of the International Office of Migration. We have huge investments in our police resources in Indonesia and other source countries across the country. We have massive assets deployed on the high seas and aerial surveillance. And, of course, we must continue to adjust those policies. (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2013)

The observations noted here in this analysis cumulatively both *centralize* political celebrity in the political process and *attenuate* its efficacy. The idiosyncrasy of Kevin Rudd should not distract us from recognition of the more generalized status of political celebrity that derives from a particular historical context that has only been exacerbated by developments in the contemporary media environment. It is acknowledged that there is a limit to the designation of political celebrity—as Turner, Bonner, and Marshall (2000: 9) have previously noted there is a "syllogistic logic lurking behind discussions of celebrity" —and that political celebrity is an identity that is variously realized, but alternatively, this study has demonstrated that we also need to be cognizant of how the structural constitution of political celebrity encapsulates a fundamental relation between individual identity and represented others. In this way, theorization of the subjectivity of political celebrity provides us with a means to elucidate the legitimate significance of political identity where there has been consternation over the increasing "presidentialization" of politics. Equally, the dissection of political celebrity that has occurred here highlights the complex, fluid nature of public life, where the interactions between the public and private spheres, the political arena and the cultural domain commingle. As I have previously noted (Craig 2004: 52–55), this does not render the specificity of the political public sphere redundant, but it is to argue that politics must always be informed by, and interact with, the broader contexts of public life. This analysis has also tempered perceptions of the power of political celebrity, retrieving it from the glare of the studio lights and grounding it in the machinations of the political field. Interest in political celebrity has generally tended to focus on the forays of politicians into the media field and their engagements with everyday

culture. This study has provided a corresponding scrutiny of how political celebrity functions within the contexts of the political sphere, how political celebrity works in the broader constitution and performances of the subjectivity of a politician, and how the value of political celebrity changes over time through engagement with a range of political struggles.

Conclusion

While Kevin Rudd professed that "you gotta be who you are," the exercise of a particular political habitus, and the management of political celebrity across the dynamics of the political and media fields, suggests that such a task is not as simple or straightforward as it might seem. The power of celebrity is an increasingly important component of successful political leadership, but political celebrity is a complex phenomenon, existing beyond the simple manifestation of an appealing personality, good looks, and a winning smile. Political celebrity involves the embodiment and expression of a perceived authenticity that is difficult to generate in a highly mediated political culture and an increasingly diverse media or journalistic field. Celebrity politicians must continually negotiate different public evaluative frameworks where performative proficiency across a plethora of political, public, mass, and social media sites coexists with desires for "real" individuals who can rise above institutional exigencies. The power of political celebrity does not translate directly into success in the political field but rather it must be variously and carefully exercised across different institutional sites and a plurality of relationships. The story of Kevin Rudd's ascension to political power, his loss of that power, and his struggle to harness the power of his political celebrity on his return as prime minister attests to the fact that the power of political celebrity is not only realized across such institutional and public *spaces* but also determined by the *temporality* of political, media, and public narratives. Political celebrity has a limited currency: its power can be enhanced by the institutionalized media capital of political office, but it is also often tempered by the rigors of the political field; it also requires constant management and renegotiation to have any chance of a sustained efficacy.

Finally, this study highlights the need for further research on the phenomenon of political celebrity. Such investigations could continue to rescue political celebrity from its status as an atypical form of political identity and further delineate how political celebrity facilitates the necessary requirements of identification and distinction in contemporary political representation. Further research could also work against the portrayal of political celebrity as a relatively autonomous form of identity and highlight in greater depth how the successful implementation of political celebrity stems from complex negotiations of the requirements of both the media and political fields. That is, such work would further "politicize" our understandings of political celebrity. Equally, such research needs to reveal how the growing breadth and complexity of the media field, incorporating the dynamics of online and social media, are transforming the performance of political celebrity and requiring more diverse forms of public engagement. While research needs to derive the generalized nature and power of

political celebrity, individual case studies of political celebrity are valuable because they highlight the particular resources that individuals bring to the professional role of politician. The habitus of each individual politician reveals the complex embedding of formative contexts, such as class, ethnicity, gender, and geography, in the socialization of individuals and demonstrates how such subjectivities, life narratives, discursive, and performative skills are then mobilized in the particular exigencies of professional political experiences. As such, the centrality of media contexts in the production of political celebrity needs to be supplemented with a greater appreciation of the broader cultural and sociological significance of political celebrity as a form of subjectivity. It is suggested that such a reworking of our understanding of political celebrity would only strengthen the specialist study of media and politics.

Author's Note

A version of this article was presented at the Celebrity Studies Conference at Deakin University in Melbourne in December 2012.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank Jason Wilson and Stephen Harrington for their support, assistance, and feedback. He also thanks the journal's anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on the initial draft of this article. As always, any omissions or errors are the responsibility of the author.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

Ankersmit, Frank. 2002. *Political Representation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

Ankersmit, Frank. 2003. "Democracy's Inner Voice: Political Style as Unintended Consequence of Political Action." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, ed. J. Corner and D. Pels, 19–40. London: Sage.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation. 2013. "7.30: PM Answers Asylum Policy Questions and Challenges Tony Abbott" July 3, http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3795447.htm (accessed July 4, 2013).

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1987. "Legitimation and Structure Interest in Weber's Sociology of Religion." In *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*, ed. S. Whimster and S. Lash, 119-36. London: Allen & Unwin.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *On Television*. New York: New Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2002. "Habitus." In *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, ed. J. Hillier and E. Rooksby, 27-36. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. "The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field." In *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, ed. R. Benson and E. Neveu, 29–47. Malden, MA: Polity.

Butt, Craig. 2012. "Powering Up: The Top MP Tweeters." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 2. http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/powering-up-the-top-mp-tweeters-20121201-2ankz.html (accessed December 3, 2012).

Corner, John. 2003. "Mediated Persona and Political Culture." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, ed. J. Corner and D. Pels, 67–84. London: Sage.

Craig, Geoffrey. 2002. "The Spectacle of the Street: An analysis of Media Coverage of Protests at the 2000 Melbourne World Economic Forum (WEF)." *Australian Journal of Communication* 29 (1): 39–52.

Craig, Geoffrey. 2004. *The Media, Politics and Public Life*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Crick, Bernard. 2002. *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davis, Aeron, and Emily Seymour. 2010. "Generating Forms of Media Capital Inside and Outside a Field: The Strange Case of David Cameron in the UK Political Field." *Media, Culture & Society* 32 (5): 739–59.

Duffy, Michael. 2012. "He's Kevin from TV, Here to Help Himself." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 27. http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/hes-kevin-from-tv-here-to-help-himself-20120226-1twau.html (accessed November 29, 2012).

Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.

Farr, Malcolm. 2010. "The Sun is Setting on Rudd's Sunrise Strategy." *The Punch*, February 15. http://www.thepunch.com.au/articles/the-sun-is-setting-on-rudds-sunrise-strategy/ (accessed May 18, 2012).

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by T. Burger with F. Lawrence. Cambridge: Polity.

Hammer, Chris. 2007. "Inside Fortress Rudd." *The Bulletin*, November 27. pp. 18–22.

Hannan, Ewin. 2007. "Press Gallery in Spin Over Leader." *The Australian*, April 3. http://www.hawkerbritton.com/hawker-britton-media/media-2007/press-gallery-in-spin.htm (accessed April 3, 2007).

Hawthorne, Maria. 2007. "Rudd Gatecrashes Toddler's Party." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 17. http://news.smh.com.au/national/rudd-gatecrashes-toddlers-party-20071117-1axi.html (accessed November 29, 2012).

Ireland, Judith. 2012. "High-Profile Rudd at Pains to Deny Comeback Talk." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 8. http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/highprofile-rudd-at-pains-to-deny-comeback-talk-20121108-28zqb.html (accessed November 29, 2012).

Ireland, Judith. 2013. "New-look Kevin Not Easily Fazed." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 28. http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-opinion/newlook-kevin-not-easily-fazed-20130628-2p2ac.html (accessed 29 June, 2013).

Kellner, Douglas. 1992. "Popular Culture and the Construction of Postmodern Identities." In *Modernity and Identity*, ed. S. Lash and J. Friedman, 141–177. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kerr, Christian. 2012. "Gillard Always Left in the Shade by Celebrity Rudd." *The Australian*, February 23. http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/features/gillard-always-left-in-the-shade-by-celebrity-rudd/story-e6frg6z6-1226278766444 (accessed February 23, 2012).

King, Barry. 2008. "Stardom, Celebrity and the Para-Confession." *Social Semiotics* 18 (2): 115–32.

Knott, Matthew. 2011. "Kevin Rudd and the Power of the Opinion Page." *The Power Index*, October 11. http://www.thepowerindex.com.au/power-move/kevin-rudd-and-the-power-of-the-opinion-page/20111010537 (accessed 18 May, 2012).

Marshall, P. David. 1997. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Marshall, P. David. 2010. "The Promotion and Presentation of the Self: Celebrity as Marker of Presentational Media." *Celebrity Studies* 1 (1): 35–48.

Meyrowitz, Joshua. 1985. *No Sense of Place*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Overington, Caroline. 2012. "Shaping Nation Part of Who I am, says Kevin Rudd." *The Australian*, July 21. http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/shaping-nation-part-of-who-i-am-says-kevin-rudd/story-fn59niix-1226431309527 (accessed September 24, 2012).

Parkinson, Emily, and David Ramli. 2012. "Under the Thumb: Kevin's Secret Weapon in Twitter War." *The Australian Financial Review*, February 23. http://afr.com/p/technology/under_the_thumb_kevin_secret_weapon_o5ew4fysu6D5a3W3oWtSSI (accessed December 3, 2012).

Pels, Dick. 2003. "Aesthetic Representation and Political Style: Re-balancing Identity and Difference in Media Democracy." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, ed. J. Corner and D. Pels, 41–66. London: Sage.

Peters, John D. 1993. "Distrust of Representation: Habermas on the Public Sphere." *Media, Culture & Society* 15:541–71.

Pitkin, Hannah. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ponce de Leon, Charles. 2002. *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Postman, Neil. 1987. *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. London: Methuen.

Prior, Markus. 2006. *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.).

Snow, Deborah. 2012. "Star of the Show: Rudd Wows Chinese Audience." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 22. http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/star-of-the-show-rudd-wows-chinese-audience-20121021-27zcw.html (accessed November 29, 2012).

Stanyer, James. 2013. *Intimate Politics: Publicity, Privacy and the Personal Lives of Politicians in Media-Saturated Democracies*. Cambridge: Polity.

Street, John. 2004. "Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 6 (4): 435–52.

Strömbäck, Jesper. 2008. "Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13 (3): 228–46.

Turner, Graeme, Frances Bonner, and P. David Marshall. 2000. *Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

van Krieken, Robert. 2012. *Celebrity Society*. London: Routledge.

van Zoonen, Liesbet. 2005. *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Weber, Max. 1968. *Economy and Society*. Vol. 3. New York: Bedminster.

Wilson, Jason. 2011. "Sunrise to Sunset: Kevin Rudd as Celebrity in Australia's Post-Broadcast Democracy." *Celebrity Studies* 2 (1): 97–99.

Zolo, Danilo. 1992. *Democracy and Complexity*. Cambridge: Polity.

Author Biography

Geoffrey Craig is a professor of journalism and director of research in the Centre for Journalism at the University of Kent, UK. He is the author of *The Media, Politics and Public Life* (Allen & Unwin 2004), the coauthor of *Slow Living* (Berg 2006), and the coeditor of *Informing Voters? Politics, Media and the New Zealand Election 2008* (Pearson 2009). He has also published broadly in the areas of political and environmental communication.

The International Journal of Press/Politics
2014, Vol 19(1) 42–65
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1940161213508207
ijpp.sagepub.com

Making Hay While the Sun Shines: Do Parties Only Respond to Media Attention When the Framing Is Right?

Daphne van der Pas[1]

Abstract

When do parties take over the media's issue attention in parliament? Scholarly work has shown that the mass media's influence over the political agenda is conditional, yet only recently scholars started to consider the active role of parties and their strategic incentives in responding to the media. This article argues that parties only respond to media attention if the issue is framed in the party's terms, as the right framing helps the party attain its policy goals. This argument is supported by pooled time-series analyses of the issue of European integration and the issue of immigration in Sweden and the Netherlands over the period 1995 to 2010. Altogether, the study contributes to our understanding of the strategic incentives and options parties have in responding to the media, as well as to our knowledge of the role of framing in political competition.

Keywords

media framing, political parties, agenda setting, comparative research.

Do the mass media dictate the political agenda? The scholarly work on *mediatization, mediamalaise*, and *media-logic* seems to suggest that media have a large and growing influence on the workings and the content of competition between parties (Altheide and Snow 1979; Mazzoleni et al. 2003). Yet on the other hand, studies on the effect of the media agenda on political agendas have produced conflicting findings and scholars

[1]University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Corresponding Author:
Daphne van der Pas, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, OZ Achterburgwal 237, Amsterdam, 1012 DL, Netherlands.
Email: d.j.vanderpas@uva.com

have now come to the conclusion that the magnitude of mass-media's agenda-setting power varies (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). The differences in media influence on political agendas can partly be explained by the nature of the issues on the table (e.g., sensational or nonobtrusive), the type of media outlet (e.g., TV or newspaper, quality or tabloid), and the time (campaign or routine times), but also an important part of the explanation lies in the strategic behavior of political actors. The strategic interests of political parties form "a crucial gate-keeping mechanism in terms of mass media influence on macro-politics," as Green-Pedersen and Stubager (2010: 664) note.

This article expands the research on how political parties strategically filter or amplify media attention. Specifically, it examines whether parties selectively discuss issues when the media framing is to their advantage, and remain silent about the issues when it is not. I argue that in this way they take advantage of the opportunities the media environment offers. Parties prefer issues to be framed in a particular way because a frame entails a problem definition and suggests appropriate solutions. As a consequence, parties themselves use the frame that most closely suits their policy program, but it is also rational for parties to talk about an issue when the framing in the media is how the party likes to frame the issue. In other words, the frame preferences of political parties should moderate the agenda-setting power of the media. This hypothesis is tested using the issues of European integration and immigration in newspapers and the parliaments of the Netherlands and Sweden in the period from 1995 to 2010.

The study contributes to existing research in three ways. First, it underlines the importance of framing in party competition and connects it to agenda setting. Agenda-setting studies are mainly concerned with the salience of issues, while political competition is for a substantial part fought over the definition of an issue, with parties striving to make their interpretation dominant (e.g., Callaghan and Schnell 2001; Daviter 2007). The present findings confirm that not only the sheer quantity of political or journalistic attention devoted to an issue needs to be considered, but that also qualitative aspects in terms of frames are important. In other words, not only *what* is on the agenda, but also the *way* issues are discussed matters. Only recently scholars have started to expand the scope of political agenda-setting studies to the qualitative characteristics of news reporting and political discourse (most notably Thesen 2013), and this study adds framing to this broader picture. This way, it bridges the two distinct literatures on framing and on political agenda setting by the media.

Second, the study contributes to the recent strand of agenda-setting literature that stresses that parties strategically use media attention to advance their own goals (see Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Thesen 2013). Parties, by responding selectively when framing in the media is advantageous, and remaining silent when it is not, actively take advantage of situations arising the media, rather than passively undergoing the influence of the media. Thus, this study underlines that the media indeed exert an unmistakable influence on politics, but that this influence is filtered by the strategic considerations of political actors.

Third, it also contributes to the literature on framing. Much of this research is on the effects of framing on *individuals*, typically studied in lab settings (Chong and

Druckman 2007). This study shows that frames indeed also have important effects in real-world settings on the actions of collective actors such as political parties.

The article proceeds as follows. First, I shortly discuss previous findings on the media's political agenda-setting power and more broadly on framing, from which this study's expectations are formulated. After this, the issues of immigration and of European Union (EU) integration in Sweden and in the Netherlands are presented, which are used as cases to test the theory. Then, I explain how from newspaper databases and parliamentary records the media and party agendas are measured, and what the manual coding procedure was used to measure framing. This is followed by a description of the statistical model, after which the results are presented. Finally, the implications and limitations of the finding that parties' response to media attention is moderated by favorable framing are discussed.

Contingency of the Mass Media's Agenda-Setting Power

The question whether the mass media steer the political agenda has been picked up in many studies. However, what stands out from this body of research is disagreement: While some find a very strong impact of the media, others hardly find any influence at all. For example, Vliegenthart and Roggeband (2007) find a very small and negative effect of media attention for immigration on the parliamentary agenda in the Netherlands, while in a study of the neighboring country Belgium, Vliegenthart and Walgrave (2011) find that increasingly and in general considerably the media determine what is discussed in parliament. In a review of the literature, Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) point out that these contradictions imply that the political agenda-setting power of the media is *contingent*. There is no simple answer to the question to what extent the media determine the political agenda, but the media's influence depends on a number of factors (see also Walgrave et al. 2008).

Which factors, then, moderate if the media influence the political agenda? The authors have suggested that the type of issue (Bartels 1996; Soroka 2002), the type of media outlet (TV or newspaper, public or private) and the way topics are covered matters. Eilders (2000, 2002), for example, argues that the media are more likely to exert an influence when they collectively focus on the same issues (focus) and when they do so with overwhelmingly similar opinions (consonance). Moreover, besides characteristics pertaining to the media agenda input that political actors are confronted with, parties and other political actors themselves play an active role in choosing when to copy issues from the media agenda. The transfer of salience is by no means automatic or mechanic, as political actors have a *choice* whether to react or not to what the media are covering, and often consider this carefully.

The question then becomes, as Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006: 99) put it: "Why do political actors embrace issues put forward by the media?" Green-Pedersen and Stubager (2010) have recently examined the strategic incentives parties face when deciding to adopt issues from the media agenda, and found that parties tend to respond to media attention on issues they "own" (see also Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011). This paper extends the argument that the media's influence on the political agenda

depends on parties' strategic interests in political competition, but it also takes the *way* topics are discussed into account. In a recent study on Denmark, Thesen (2013) found news content characteristics in interaction with the political context condition parties' incentives to adopt owned issues from the media agenda. For example, opposition parties have more reason to respond to bad news than government parties, because government could be held responsible for the situation. In this paper, the idea that the content of the coverage—not just the topic—matters in parties' decisions to bring news into politics is further explored, by considering more broadly how an issue is framed. However, before moving further, we turn to the concept of *framing*, to develop how this is a crucial concept in understanding the strategic incentives parties have to adopt issues from the media agenda.

Framing and Party Competition

Framing, in Entman's (1993: 52) much cited definition, is "to select some aspects of a 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." So, by framing the meaning of an issue or problem is construed, and as a consequence certain solutions become more salient, while others are pushed to the background. Parties, in pursuit of the implementation of their specific policies, want issues to be defined in terms facilitating their solutions. In other words, parties have a great interest in promoting the framing that most closely fits their program (e.g., Helbling et al. 2010). This makes it more likely they will attain their policy objectives, as well as their vote-seeking objectives if they successfully get their frames across to the electorate (Müller and Strøm 1999).

Much like they "own" particular issues (Petrocik 1996), then, parties may be linked to certain frames. This notion has recently been recognized in the literature on policy framing. Slothuus and De Vreese (2010), for example, use the term *party frames* to denote issue frames that are explicitly sponsored by a political party. Similarly, Petersen et al. (2010) argue that parties use frames to signal their value reputations or ideology to citizens. Accordingly, voters associate political parties with particular frames in the political debate, that is, they recognize the party frames. To sum up, parties promote the issue frame that leads naturally to their preferred policy solutions. In parallel fashion, their competitors strive for their framing of an issue to become the dominant interpretation. An important part of party competition is, therefore, a struggle over the meaning of an issue, that is, a fight over frames (Van der Pas et al. 2012). In this way, frames are an integral part of party competition (see also Chong and Druckman 2007; Hänggli and Kriesi 2010; Sniderman and Theriault 2004).

As argued above, political parties work hard to get the frames that are supportive to their argument into the dominant discourse. Conversely, their competitors also promote their framing, while other actors in the public sphere (journalists, opinion makers, interest groups, etc.) also add to the total framing of an issue. Parties therefore rarely have a monopoly over the way issues are defined. This straightforwardly leads to the reason why parties should pay attention to the same issues as the media do when

the media are using their frame. When media reporting provides a context in which their frame prevails, their policy solutions appear more plausible, so it makes sense to strike iron when it's hot and discuss the issue in parliament at that moment. In contrast, if parties broach a topic while the framing of it in the media is in discord with their platform and framing, they will have a hard time finding support for their policies. Previous studies have shown that framing is more persuasive if it resonates with prior beliefs or opinions an individual holds (e.g., Entman 2004; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Schemer et al. 2012). As Hänggli and Kriesi (2010: 143) summarize "frames that employ more culturally resonant terms have a greater potential for influence." When a party discusses an issue in a frame that was just used for the same issue in the news, the audience is already familiar with the frame. As a consequence, it not only saves a party the effort of framing the issue in the preferred frame, it also makes the framing of the party more powerful because it resonates.

Hypotheses

The expectation of this study is that parties stress issues when the media framing is congruent with their own framing. So parties keep an eye on the framing of an issue in the media, and respond in parliament when the media framing resembles their own. This directly leads to the first hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1 (main effect hypothesis):** The closer the framing of an issue in the media is to the framing of the party, the more likely the party is to address the issue in parliament.

Accordingly, when the media framing is not to their advantage, parties will call less attention to an issue than usual. This does not mean that they will be completely silent on the topic, but simply that—everything else being equal—they emphasize it less than they would have had the media framing been closer to their own. In short then, Hypothesis 1 postulates an effect of framing closeness between a party and the media on a party's issue salience. However, the way an issue is framed in the media should matter only when there is sufficient coverage. If the media hardly report on an issue, the mix of frames used in those few articles will not be very important, whereas when newspaper pages overflow with articles on a certain topic, the framing of this huge amount of coverage matters a lot for parties. In other words, it could be that media attention needs to pass a certain threshold before framing starts to have an effect, that is, there is an interaction between the closeness in framing and media salience:

> **H2 (interaction hypothesis):** The closeness in framing between a party and the media has a stronger effect on a political party's agenda when media attention for the issue is high.

While this interaction means that more media attention bolsters the effect of framing closeness, it conversely would also indicate that media attention has a stronger

effect on parliamentarians when the framing is congruent. These two readings of the interaction effect are merely two sides of the same coin; however, it is worth noting the substantive implication. Interpreted that way, closeness in framing is one of the factors that moderate the impact the media agenda has on the political agenda (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). The interaction hypothesis therefore speaks directly to the literature on the conditionality of the media's political agenda-setting power.

As noted before, parties also actively try to influence the way issues are framed in the public debate, and journalist often use politicians as direct sources in their coverage. It could be, therefore, that parties do not actually respond to the right framing in media, but simply first spread their framing of a topic in the media, and then address the issue in parliament. If this were the case, a closeness in framing between media and a party preceding a parliamentary question would merely be an epiphenomenon of the fact that the party is the "framer" in both domains. To test this alternative explanation, whether a party is a big contributor to the coverage of an issue in the media is included as a control variable.

The hypotheses are tested on the issues of European integration and immigration in Sweden and the Netherlands. In Sweden, the EU is a politically contested issue, but immigration is remarkably little politicized, whereas in the Netherlands immigration has been fiercely disputed in politics, and the EU until very recently retained its "sleeping giant" status (Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004). Thus, these four cases present a nice spread in predicted outcomes, because—following the interaction hypothesis—framing closeness should only have an effect in the cases when media salience is sufficiently high. According to the hypotheses, an effect should be visible for immigration in the Netherlands and the EU in Sweden, but not for immigration in Sweden and the EU in the Netherlands. In the next section, the context of the two countries and issues is discussed a little further.

The Issues of European Integration and Immigration in Sweden and the Netherlands

Like many of its Nordic neighbors, Sweden is somewhat reluctant toward the European Union. Entry to the Union was decided by a very narrow majority in a referendum in 1993, shortly after which support declined to a minority again. The Miljöpartiet and Vänsterpartiet (Green party and Left party) even called for a withdrawal from the Union, and since continued to oppose European integration. The Eurosceptic parties led a successful campaign against adoption of the Euro currency at the 2003 referendum, and also consistently perform well at European parliamentary elections, with most notably the single issue Eurosceptic party Junilisten receiving 15 percent of the votes in 2004 (Raunio 2007). In addition, the issue has laid bare deep tensions within the Social Democratic party, and is on average very salient among Swedish parties (Netjes and Binnema 2007). Immigration, on the contrary, is exceptionally little politicized in Sweden (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2013). There was an anti-immigration party in the early nineties, Ny Demokrati, but it disappeared from parliament quite

Table 1. Summary of Expectations for the Four Cases.

Country	Issue	Level of Politicization	Expectation Regarding Main Effect Framing Proximity (H1)	Expectation Regarding Interaction Between Framing Proximity and Media Salience (H2)
Sweden	EU	High	Positive	Positive
Sweden	Immigration	Low	Zero	Zero
Netherlands	EU	Low	Zero	Zero
Netherlands	Immigration	High	Positive	Positive

Note. H1 = main effect hypothesis; H2 = interaction hypothesis.

quickly. The mainstream right had strategic incentives to keep the issue nonsalient, to be able to govern together with proimmigrant parties as well as to keep internal divisions below the surface (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). As a consequence, even though there existed anti-immigrant sentiment among the public, the issue was not prevalent in Swedish politics up till 2010.

In the Netherlands, immigration received some political and media attention in the 90s, but the main anti-immigrant party, the Centrum Partij, and later Centrum Democraten, was effectively boycotted in parliament as well as in the media (Van Spanje and Van der Brug 2007).[1] Full politicization of the issue did not take place until the early 2000s, after the debate was sparked by international events such as the 9/11 attacks and Madrid bombings as well as the adoption of the issue locally by more mainstream actors (e.g., Paul Scheffer). Most crucial though was the spectacular rise of anti-immigrant party Lijst Pim Fortuyn in 2001 to 2002 (Koopmans and Muis 2009). Mainstream parties were left in an awkward position, as the Labor party PvdA was blamed for past failures of immigration policies and the liberal party VVD was confronted with pressure from competitors to the right (Van Reekum and Duyvendak 2012). From 2006 the anti-immigrant niche was filled by Wilders' Party for Freedom (Van der Brug et al. 2009). By contrast, the issue of European integration remained on the background of Dutch national politics for a longer period, and while it was shortly contested around the 2005 referendum (De Vries 2009), the issue only as recently as the 2012 elections really broke into the domestic political debate.

Table 1 below summarizes the expectations for the four cases. Two of the cases, immigration in Sweden and the European integration issue in the Netherlands, only provide weak tests of the theory, as merely the *absence* of an effect is predicted. The expectation here is that the closeness in framing has no significant main effect, due to the relatively low media salience of the issues. Though it is less evident whether to anticipate an interaction, my expectation is that media attention in these cases is never enough for the main effect and interaction to combine into a significant effect of the closeness in framing. The two other cases, the EU in Sweden and immigration in the Netherlands, offer the more thorough tests because here significant effects are expected. In both these cases, parties are expected to emphasize the issue more in

parliament when the media use their frames, and put less emphasis on it if the media framing is very much unlike their own (H1). In addition, they are expected to respond more strongly to media framing when attention for the issue in the media is high (H2). In combination, the four cases—with their crossed expectations—give the opportunity to exclude country as well as issue specific explanations, and thus really put the spotlight on the framing and attention as causes.

Data: Salience

This article inspects if parties pay more attention to an issue if the media framing coincides with their own, so the response variable is the salience of an issue for a specific party. Parliamentary questions are used to measure this, as they are the prime avenue for parties to put new issues on the legislative agenda and thus further their policy goals (as opposed to manifestos for example, which are further removed from implementation). Furthermore, parliament is also the political arena that is most likely to respond to the media agenda (Walgrave et al. 2008). The measure for salience was obtained via automated content analysis on the oral questions in the parliamentary proceedings from 1995 to 2010. First, the text of the oral questions was selected from the proceedings based on the titles.[2] Second, the number of words related to the issue, either immigration or European integration, was counted for every question using previously developed search strings (see Vliegenthart 2007; Vliegenthart et al. 2008; search strings may be found in Appendix A). This count was summed over all questions of a party in the same quarter of a year. Because oral and written questions are primarily an instrument of the opposition, government parties ask fewer questions and consequently score lower on the issue words. As a third step therefore, the search string count was divided by the total number of words in the questions posed by members of the party in that quarter.[3] Thus, the resulting salience score taps the amount of time and resources a party is willing to invest in an issue, given the limited number of issues they can address in parliamentary questions (see Appendix B for a descriptive overview of the collected data).

Salience of the issues EU and immigration in the media, one of the independent variables, was measured in a very similar way with an automated content analysis of two daily newspapers. Previous work has shown that political parties respond more strongly to newspapers than to television or radio news, so newspapers were chosen over other media for their most likely effect (Bartels 1996; Roberts and McCombs 1994). To get a representative overview of newspaper reporting, for the Netherlands the most widely read quality paper, *de Volkskrant*, and the most widely read tabloid paper, *De Telegraaf*, were selected, while for Sweden the most read morning paper *Dagens Nyheter* and most read evening paper *Aftonbladet* were included. First, like for the parliamentary questions, the number of EU and immigration related words were counted with the help of search strings in LexisNexis' newspaper database for the Dutch papers and the newspaper archive Retriever for the Swedish papers. Second, a visibility score was calculated using this formula:

$$v(\text{issue at } t) = \sum_{a \in \text{articles at } t} {}^{2}log\left(8hf_{\text{head}} + 2hf_{\text{body}}\right), \tag{1}$$

where v(issue) is the visibility of an issue in a given quarter (t) of a year, a denotes an article from all articles in this period, hf_{body} is the number of mentions in the body of the article, while hf_{head} is the number of mentions in the headline. The log transformation and the multiplication by 8 and 2, respectively, gives mentions in the headline three times the weight of mentions in the rest of the article (see Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007: 80).[4] Third, the visibility scores of the two papers in each country were combined with equal weights, except for the period prior to 1998 when De Telegraaf was not digitally available, and for which a weighted version of the Volkskrant score was used.[5] Finally, because an interaction term is used in the models, the visibility score was standardized within each issue and country combination, so that the main effects can be interpreted more easily.

As discussed, an alternative explanation for a congruence in framing could be that parties first plug an issue (using their framing) in the media, and subsequently discuss it in parliament. This explanation is tested by including as a control the percentage of coverage of an issue in which the party name occurs. The idea here is that if a party is directly responsible for the framing in an article, for example, a party member is explicitly quoted or paraphrased, the name of the party will be mentioned. This control was constructed by selecting the articles from the two newspapers that contain at least one immigration or EU search string word in the header, and by counting within these articles the percentage containing the party name or acronym.[6]

Data: Framing

To gauge the framing of the issues among political parties and in the media, trained coders manually coded newspaper articles and parliamentary questions and speeches. For the newspapers, three (EU) or four (immigration) articles per month were randomly selected from all articles in the database containing at least one mention of EU or immigration related words in the header. We selected from articles mentioning these terms in the header to ensure the coders received material that was on-topic, and articles that were nonetheless not on-topic were manually filtered out afterward. Similarly, for political framing, four parliamentary questions were randomly sampled from the question hours in which the EU and immigration search strings yielded at least three hits, and off-topic questions were discarded manually. In addition, for the Dutch parliament in each year the two debates containing most EU or immigration related words were selected, and from these debates the first entry of each party was coded. This is the speech MPs prepare completely beforehand, so it reflects the carefully chosen framing of the party best.

For each issue, the coders could choose six non–mutually-exclusive frames: the economic frame, the social frame, the cultural frame, the judicial/legal frame, the international security frame and the political frame.[7] The economic frame signals that

the issue of immigration or European integration are described in economic or financial terms and/or referring to economic or financial consequences for individuals, groups, organizations, or countries. The social frame means the issue is presented in light of concerns dealing with the welfare state, social housing, health care, elderly care, education, or other social concerns. The cultural frame is used for example for mentions of uni/multiculturalism, cultural integration or assimilation, creating, maintaining or defending of own or others identity or nationality, the use of religious symbols, signs, or holidays. The judicial or legal frame denotes framing in terms of laws and regulations, for example mentions of jurisdiction, (criminal) law, justice, discrimination, or human rights. The international security frame means the issue is presented in light of the international balance of power between states, peace and war, security, defense, or geopolitics. The political frame, finally, is when the issue is discussed from an institutional or political-strategic viewpoint, for example dealing with the notion of democracy, constitutional affairs, the institutional framework, the bureaucracy, political institutions, elites, or parties.

Via these frames, parties or journalists can provide a meaning in six different ways to the issues of immigration and European integration. The hypothesis of this paper is that a closeness in framing between a party and media matters, so how is this measured? To tap the closeness in framing, a simple measure of Euclidean proximity was calculated in four steps. First, for each party the preference for a frame was assessed by calculating the fraction of questions and speeches in which the frame was used over all coded parliamentary questions and speeches. Second, the scores for each party were standardized within a frame, so only the differences among parties, and not so much among frames remained.[8] Third, for every quarter of a year in the research period, the fraction a frame was used by the media was calculated from the coded newspaper articles, and these fractions were also standardized within each frame. Because three to four articles were sampled per month for each of the two newspapers, the quarterly framing scores for the media are based on 18 to 24 coded articles, minus the articles that coders deemed off-topic. Fourth, an overall framing proximity measure was computed for each issue separately via a Euclidean distance formula multiplied by −1:

$$\text{proximity}\left(\text{party,media at } t\right) = -1 * \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{6} (\text{party}_i - \text{media at } t_i)^2}, \qquad (2)$$

where i is the index of frames, party_i is the standardized fraction of questions in which the party uses frame i, and media at t_i is the standardized fraction of coded articles at time t using frame i. Thus, the proximity in framing between a party and the media at a given time point is the reverse of a framing distance score. Last, like the media salience measure, the framing proximity score was standardized within a country-issue combination for ease of interpretation.

Statistical Model

For each of the four cases (the issues of immigration and European integration in Sweden and the Netherlands) a separate model was built with the issue attention of parliamentary parties in the question hour as the dependent variable. This gives the data a time-series cross-sectional structure, with panels being parties which are followed over time, measured in quarters from 1995 till 2010. First, the temporal structure was dealt with by checking that the series were stationary, and including in the right-hand side of the equation the dependent variable with lag 1 (the previous quarter) and lag 4 (a year earlier). The residuals were afterward inspected and found to be white noise, so serial correlation was sufficiently modeled. Second, OLS estimates with panel-corrected standard errors were used with a correction for contemporaneous correlation and heteroskedasticity (Beck and Katz 1995). Furthermore, to make sure the causal factors took place before the response, a lag of 1 quarter was used on every independent variable. Finally, in avoid giving small parties a disproportionate importance in the analysis, observations were weighted by party size (as the share of parliamentary seats).

Testing the Framing Proximity Hypotheses

We now turn to the empirical tests of the theory. According to the first hypothesis of this paper, framing proximity between newspapers and a party has a positive effect on the party's issue salience: The more the framing in the media is supportive to a party's argument, the likelier the party is to bring the issue up in parliament. Furthermore, following the second hypothesis, this effect is stronger the more media attention there is, implying that there is a positive interaction between framing proximity and media attention. In Table 2, the separate models for each four cases are displayed. To start with the *weakest* tests of the theory, that is, the cases in which only the absence of an effect was predicted, we can see that as expected neither for immigration in Sweden nor for the EU in the Netherlands any of the explanatory variable has a significant effect. The main effect of framing proximity is in both cases almost zero, and the interaction between the framing proximity and media salience is also not nearly significant. For the EU issue in the Netherlands, the model explains none of the variance, while for immigration in Sweden there is some variance explained, but this can be attributed to the lagged dependent variables.

So the two cases where no effect was expected indeed display none, but what about the cases where the framing closeness between parties and the media *should* matter? Looking at the first model, for the issue of immigration in the Netherlands, we see a significant positive main effect of framing proximity, but no significant interaction between framing proximity and the attention for the issue in newspapers. So Dutch parties tend to pay attention to the framing of immigration and discuss the topic more when the framing the media matches their own, but do not do this more intensely when media report a lot about immigration. In other words, the framing matters, regardless of the amount of media attention. This is effect is found while controlling for the party's own occurrence in the coverage of the issue, which indicates that parties do not merely

Table 2. Determinants of Issue Attention in Parliamentary Questions, 1995–2010.

	Netherlands		Sweden	
	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU
Framing proximity $t - 1$	0.023* (0.011)	0.001 (0.005)	−0.001 (0.007)	0.005 (0.006)
Media salience $t - 1$	0.001 (0.011)	−0.006 (0.004)	0.002 (0.009)	0.003 (0.005)
Framing proximity $t - 1$ × media salience $t - 1$	−0.002 (0.010)	−0.004 (0.004)	−0.009 (0.009)	0.020** (0.006)
Party-issue co-occurrence in media $t - 1$	−0.002 (0.002)	−0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	−0.002 (0.001)
Parliamentary questions $t - 1$	0.109 (0.086)	−0.006 (0.068)	0.156 (0.080)	0.123 (0.067)
Parliamentary questions $t - 4$	0.214* (0.087)	0.009 (0.049)	0.192** (0.066)	0.193** (0.069)
Constant	0.104*** (0.020)	0.036*** (0.006)	0.048*** (0.011)	0.076*** (0.011)
N (parties × time points)	413	402	301	287
N (parties)	11	10	7	7
Adjusted R^2	0.05	0.00	0.10	0.08
Chi square	14.82	3.32	21.12	21.72

Note. OLS estimates weighted by party size with correlated panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses; framing proximity and media salience are standardized per country and issue combination.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

respond to the media attention they generated themselves. In addition, it is striking that media salience does not have a significant impact on the questions parties ask on immigration topics in parliament. Possibly sheer attention in the media only has a short term effect that is not captured in the quarterly time span used here, while apparently the influence of the framing context provided by the media is more persistent.

Finally, in the last column the model for the EU issue in Sweden has no significant main effects, but does have a significant positive interaction between framing proximity and media salience. To get a clearer picture of the net effects in realistic situations for the issue of the EU in Sweden, Figure 1 shows the marginal effect of framing proximity on party issue attention in parliament depending on the salience in the media, and conversely (in the lower panel) the effect of media salience depending on the proximity in framing (see Brambor et al. 2006). The histograms display which values of the variable along the *x*-axis are in the data set. In the upper panel we see that when media salience is relatively low (below 0.46), the effect of framing proximity is not different from zero, or even negative (for media salience values below −1). Yet as the salience of EU matters in the Swedish papers goes up (above 0.46), the effect of framing proximity becomes positive and increasingly strong. In other words, when newspapers write very little about the issue, it does not matter for parties whether the media framing coincides with their own, but when the issue is all over the papers, the framing becomes more and more important. This amounts to more than a threshold:

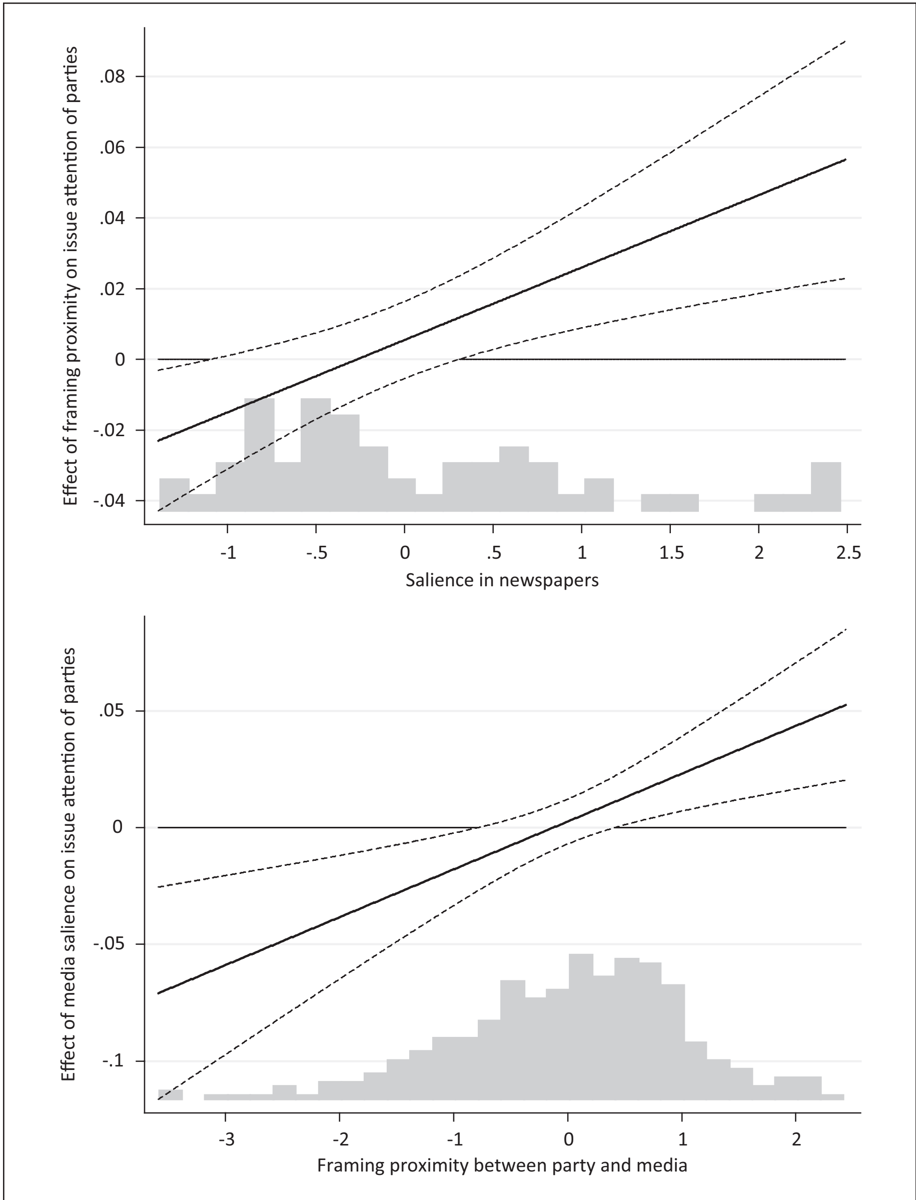

Figure 1. Marginal effects for the EU issue in Sweden with 95% confidence intervals.

The effect of framing proximity actually keeps growing as media salience rises. Again, this holds while controlling for coverage in which the framing might directed by the party. The lower panel is based on the same interaction, but here the emphasis is on the transfer of salience, with framing proximity on the *x*-axis moderating the effect of

the media agenda on the party agenda in parliament. The effect of media attention on party agendas indeed ranges from significantly negative to significantly positive depending on framing proximity: When the media framing is similar to that of the party, parliamentarians adopt the issue the media put on their agenda, however when the media framing is not at all like their preferred framing of the issue, they actually discuss the issue *less* if the media bring it up.

In summary, as expected in the two cases of politicized issues a closeness in framing with the media leads parties to emphasize an issue more. Nevertheless, there is a subtle difference in the way in which frame closeness works: in one case through a main effect (H1), and in the other via an interaction (H2). On the one hand, for the issue of the EU in Sweden a significant interaction between media salience and framing proximity was found, which means that parties react to the frames in the media more when the issue is more visible in the media. On the other hand, for immigration in the Netherlands only a main effect of framing proximity was found, so for this issue the amount of media attention was of no importance. It therefore appears that, at least in the period from 1995 till 2010, Dutch parties were *always* sensitive to the framing in the media, whereas for Swedish parties media framing only mattered if the visibility was high enough. A possible explanation for this difference is that the attention for immigration in Dutch newspapers was always high while it varied for the EU in Sweden, or alternatively, that the immigration issue was such a game changer for Dutch politics that parties were constantly watching the framing, even if it was not on the front pages. As said though, this is a small difference, as for both cases in most instances a closer resemblance to the media framing led to a greater issue emphasis in parliament.

Discussion and Conclusion

An important part of politics is the struggle over the way problems are defined. Parties not only compete by taking different positions or selectively emphasizing different issues, but also by promoting their way of understanding the issues, that is, *frames* (see Chong and Druckman 2007; Hänggli and Kriesi 2010; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). This study adds to our understanding of this struggle over meaning by showing that parties strategically bring issues into parliament when their framing is prevalent in the media, and avoid an issue when it is not. It is rational for parties to put issues on the political agenda when the framing in the media is similar to the party's own framing, as the party frame will resonate and the party's proposed policy solutions will seem more appropriate. Contrariwise, when the media use a framing that is very different from the party's own, it will be very hard for the party to find support for its policies in parliament, and it would be wiser to keep the issue of the legislative agenda. Four cases with each a pooled time-series model bring support to the theory. As expected, in the cases of the unpoliticized issues of immigration in Sweden and European integration in the Netherlands, parties were unresponsive to the framing used in the media, while for the politicized issues of European integration in Sweden and immigration in the Netherlands parties put the issues on the agenda when the framing in the media was right.

At least two conclusions follow from these findings. First, the results underline the importance of framing in political competition. Much of the work on party competition

focuses on either positions or on salience (Budge and Farlie 1983; Downs 1957), while the struggle over frames is an essential part of politics. Yet framing studies have only recently begun to consider situations outside the experimental setting and with competing frames (Chong and Druckman 2007; Schaffner and Sellers 2009). This study provides evidence of the significance of frames in the real-world setting of media-politics interactions in parliamentary democracies. Moreover, the impact of framing was even more pronounced than that of media salience, which had a significant effect in only in one of the cases. The limited effect of media salience is probably due to the focus on long term dynamics, and it is likely that a stronger effect would have been visible with a monthly or weekly time span. Yet in this light the consistent effect of framing closeness is even more interesting, as apparently the consequences of media frames *do* persist over a longer period.

Second, the findings emphasize that parties opportunistically choose when to respond to the media and when not to. Thus, they contribute to the recent set of studies that stress that the transfer of salience to politics is not automatic, but that parties strategically filter media attention according to their interests (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Thesen 2013). This way, the study also adds to our wider understanding of the conditionality of the media's political agenda-setting power (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006).

In the present article, only two policy issues in two countries are studied, and this of course begs the question whether the results hold equally for other issues. A full answer requires research on more issues, but immigration and European integration do seem to be typical of the wider set of politically contested issues. However, not all issues are contested: Just like there are valance issues for which parties do not hold different positions, there might be issues for which parties agree over the framing, or have not developed their frame preferences yet. Further research could establish which issues are characterized by a framing consensus and, relatedly, when and how parties form preferences for specific frames.

In brief, this paper found evidence for a very general pattern of political responses to media communication. It argued that this strategy would help a party attain its goals, and as a follow-up it would be very interesting to see if this behavior indeed brings the intended benefits. Do parties that keep more firmly to this media strategy get more policies implemented? Do they get a more favorable evaluation from voters as a result of frame resonance? Does this strategy help parties become associated with an issue and possibly attain ownership in the eyes of the electorate? Furthermore, the proposed media strategy should serve the policy-seeking goals of the party, but not all parties are equally policy-seeking. It is therefore to be expected that, even though the pattern found here holds in general, some parties use a very different strategy when it comes to dealing with media frames and attention (see also Hänggli and Kriesi 2012). Are there for instance parties that do not avoid a topic when the framing is contrary to their own, but rather try to engage in the conversation and turn the framing around by stressing the issue more? Surprisingly little research is done on different strategies for media frames, let alone what the consequences of different strategies might be. These are interesting questions for further research, as answers bring us closer to understanding what is on the political agenda, and moreover, who determines what is.

Appendix A: Search Strings

This appendix documents the search strings that were used to measure salience of the issues in parliamentary questions and in newspaper articles. For the parliamentary and the newspaper data, the number of hits on the search string below was counted. Composites were counted as one hit, so that for example "Europeiska unionen" and "EU" both count as one. For the parliamentary data, the search string was applied without the "w/" operator, while in the media data the operator "w/10" means that the word should occur within ten words of the previous word. An asterisk (used for parliamentary and media data) functions as a wildcard, so at the end of a word this indicates that any ending is allowed.

Table A1.

Country	Issue	Search String
Sweden	European integration	(Europeiska unionen) or (EU) or (Europeiska gemenskap*) or (EG) or (Europaparlamentet) or (Europeiska kommissionen)
Sweden	Immigration	diskrim* or (skola* or kurs* or lektion* or utbildning*) w/10 (utlän* or flykting* or gästarbetar* or asylsök*)) or (svenska för invandrare) or språkkurs* or språkundervisn* or anhöriginvandring* or skenäktenskap* or utlänn* or flykting* or gästarbetare* or asylsök* or invandr* or (illegala flyktingar) or utvis* or Uppehållstillstånd* or Mångkult* or tvångsgiftermål* or tvångsäktenskap* or (brud* w/5 utland) or (försörjningskrav w/20 äktenskap*) or asyl* or Flyktingamnesti* or Huvudduk* or slöja* or burka*
Netherlands	European integration	(Europese Unie) or ALLCAPS(EU) or (Europese Gemeenschap) or ALLCAPS(EG) or (Europees Parlement) or (Europese Commissie) or ((Europees Hof) w/5 Justitie)
Netherlands	Immigration	discrim* or (haat w/5 aanzet) or (scholing* or (cursus* or les* or onderwijs or oprot*) w/10 (migrant* or immi* or alloch* or asiel* or buitenl*)) or (cursus w/1 Nederlands) or taalcur* or taalles* or taalonderw* or gezinsherenig* or schijnhuw* or nephuw* or uithuw* or immig* or alloch* or vreemdeling* or migran* or moslim* or islam* or asiel* or illegalen or uitgezet* or verblijfs* or multicult* or (massa w/1 regularis*) or regularis* or importbruid or (bruid* w/5 buitenland) or (inkomenseis w/20 trouw*) or pluriform* or asielzoeker* or vluchteling* or (generaal pardon) or hoofddoek* or kopvod*

Appendix B: Descriptive Results

This appendix gives a descriptive overview of the data that were collected for this paper, to give some insight into the face-validity of this novel data set. For brevity only the two politicized issues are shown here (European integration in Sweden and immigration in the Netherlands), as these well-known issues are easier to inspect.

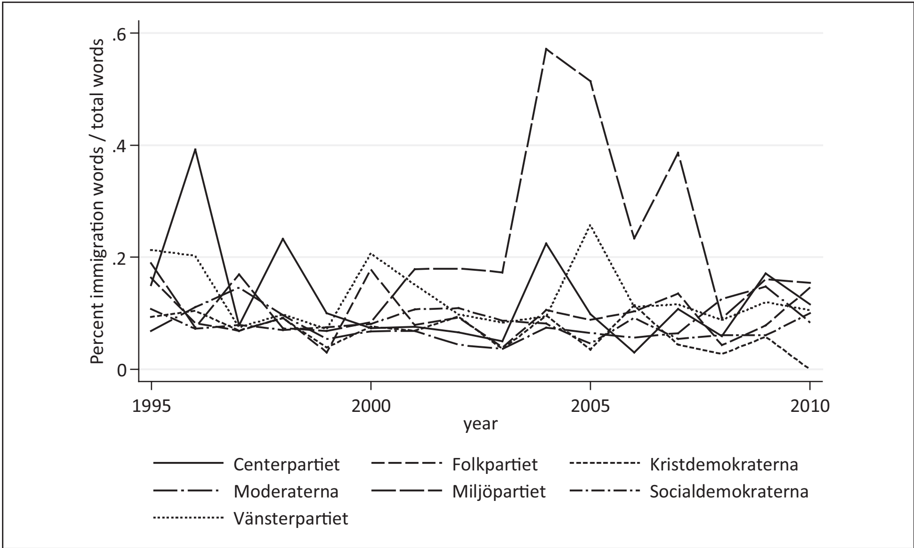

Figure A1. Attention for the EU in parliamentary questions, Sweden.

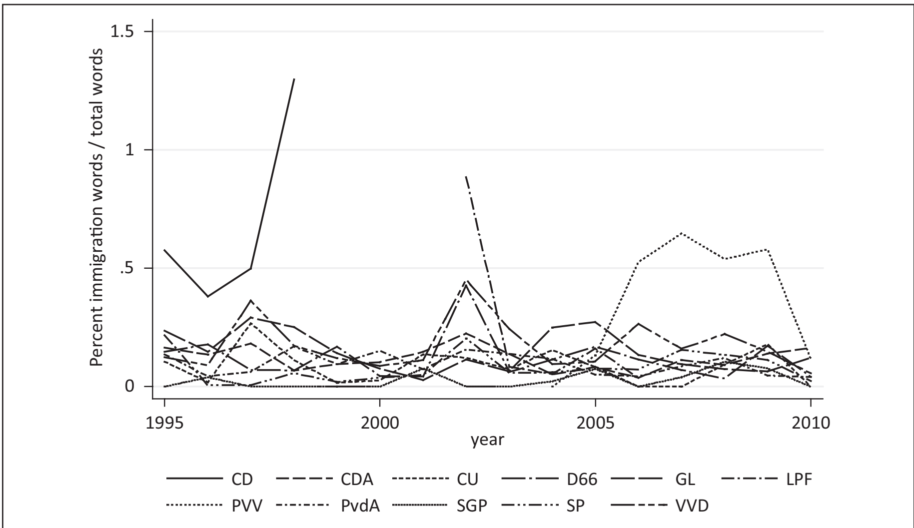

Figure A2. Attention for immigration in parliamentary questions, the Netherlands.

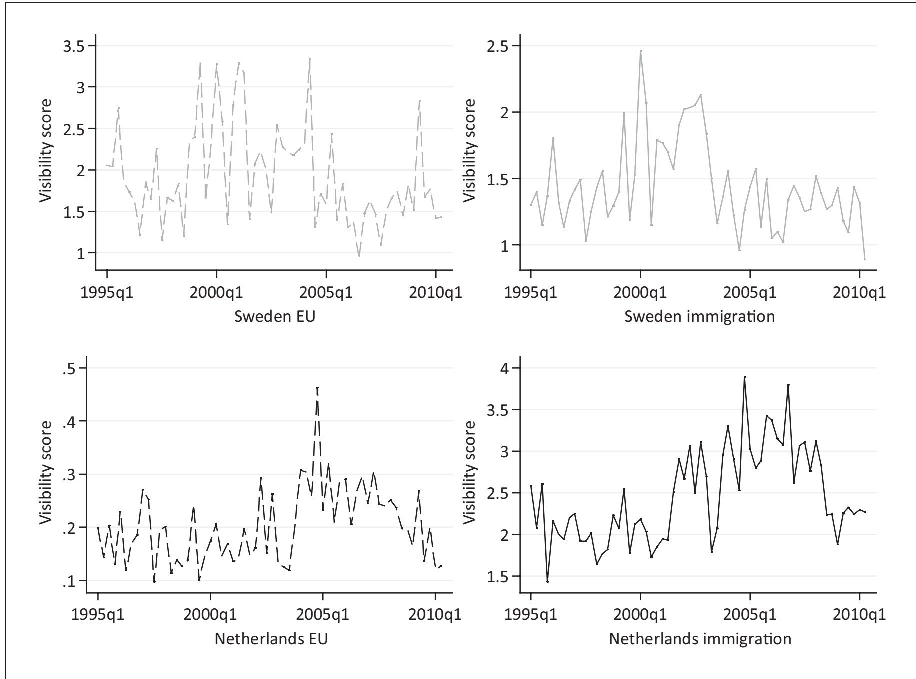

Figure A3. Visibility of immigration and EU in Dutch and Swedish newspapers.
Note. The y-axis differs per graph. The visibility can be compared over time within one issue and country, but not strictly between issues, as the different search strings might not work equally well and the size of newspapers differs over countries.

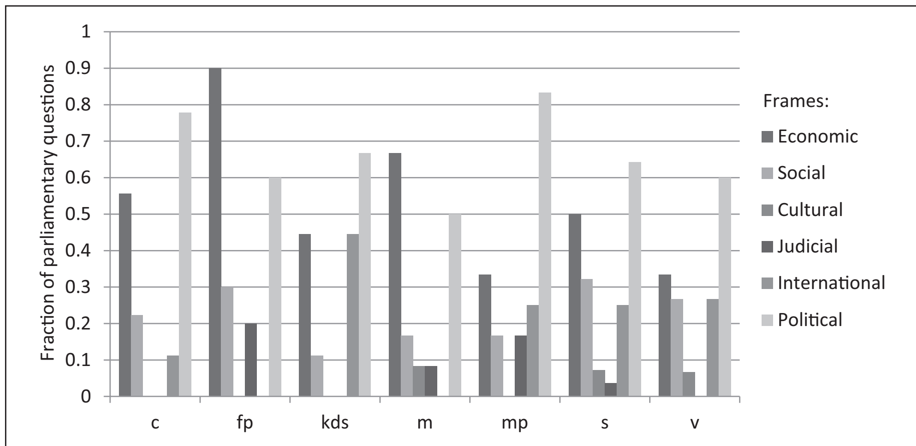

Figure A4. Use of the six frames by different parties for the EU in Sweden.

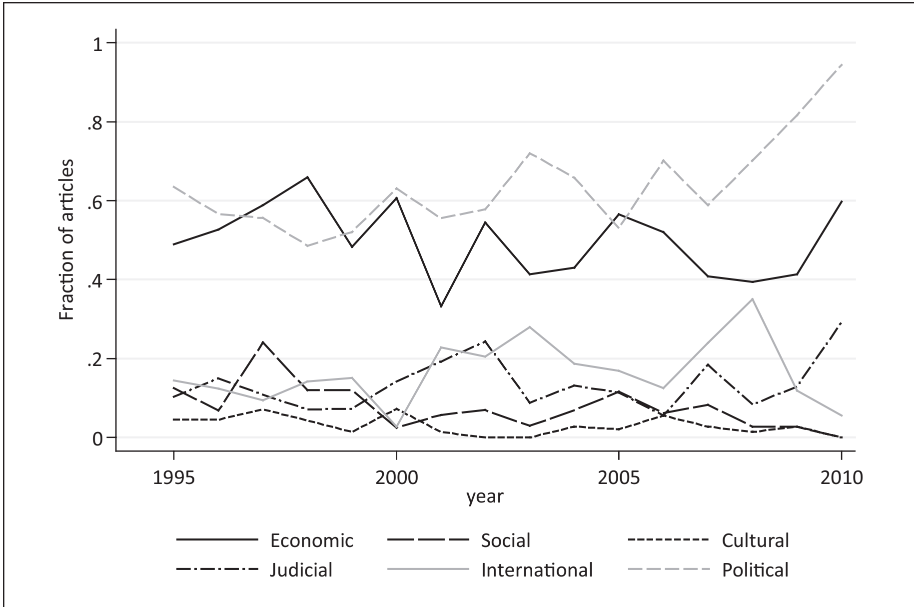

Figure A5. Use of the six frames for European integration in Swedish newspapers.

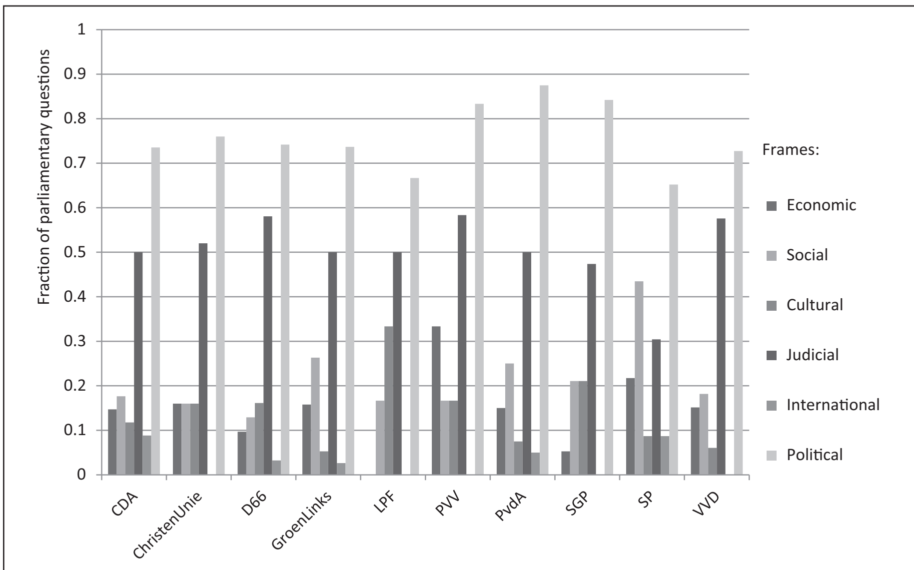

Figure A6. Use of the six frames by different parties for immigration in the Netherlands.

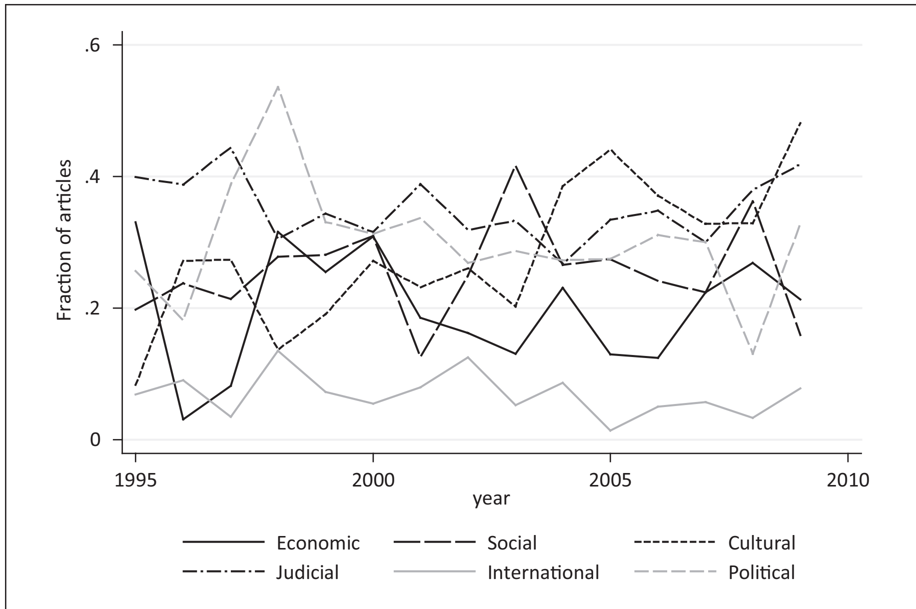

Figure A7. Use of the six frames for immigration in Dutch newspapers.

Acknowledgments

I thank the participants of the agenda-setting workshop at the University of Antwerp and those of the CPPC discussion group at the University of Amsterdam for their tips, and Ruud Koopmans, two anonymous reviewers and the editor for their useful suggestions.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research, as part of its program Conflict and Security (NWO432-08-130).

Notes

1. In this article, "immigration" denotes immigration and integration into society of people with an immigrant background.
2. The data were provided by Maarten Marx, who selected it from the data set created in the PolticalMashup project. The parliamentary questions were found by selecting from the Dutch data the speeches with "vragenuur" in the title, and from the Swedish data the

speeches with “frågestund,” “frågor till,” or “Svar på interpellation” in the title. Speeches that were not by members of parliament were filtered out (such as ministers responding to questions).

3. Members of the European Parliament were counted as speakers of their respective party’s parliamentary fraction; speakers from the Dutch Antilles and Aruba were excluded, as well as all Dutch parties that spoke less than 600 paragraphs (out of 469,733 paragraphs of parliamentary speech, so less than 0.13 percent) over the whole research period in the Dutch parliament. No such procedure was necessary for the Swedish data.
4. Newspapers change their formats and the newspaper databases may contain gaps, so to check whether this influenced the results, the total number of words in the entire paper of every second week of the month was counted for the Dutch newspapers. This measure for the size of the paper was also summed over quarters, and used to divide the EU and immigration word counts by, yielding a measure of the relative salience of an issue at a given time. This measure correlated very strongly with the visibility score used in the main analyses, and led to similar results.
5. This was done by calculating how much higher the mean visibility in the two papers was than then the visibility in only the Volkskrant, and multiplying the Volkskrant score by this factor in the period when only this paper was available.
6. The search strings of party names and acronyms is available on request.
7. The intercoder reliability for the frames in Dutch material was 0.65, 0.46, 0.61, 0.46, 0.63, and 0.41 (Krippendorff’s α on a random sample of 254 units with five coders), respectively, for the economic, social, cultural, judicial, international, and political frame, and in the Swedish papers 0.52, 0.38, 0.61, 0.52, 0.48, and 0.24 (Krippendorff’s α on a random sample of 72 articles with two coders). Overall, these reliability scores range from acceptable to rather low. However, there are two reasons why these data can still bring valuable insights. Firstly, the codes for individual frames are not used directly in the analyses, but grouped per time period into a frame usage fraction and then combined over frames into the framing proximity score. Each observation of the framing proximity measure is built up of on average 210 codes (6 frames × on average 15 articles = about 90 newspaper codes, plus about 6 frames × on average 20 parliamentary speeches or questions = 120 codes of parliamentary material, giving a total of 210 codes), and can therefore be expected to be much more reliable than its constituent parts. Second, the lower reliability scores bias the estimates such that effects are *less likely* to reach significance. In other words, the lower reliability scores make the tests of the hypotheses more conservative in the cases where positive effects are expected.
8. In addition, some frames are used far more often in the political arena than in the media, yet it is undesirable that these differences due to the arena start driving the results. This is also avoided by this standardization. In particular, for the Dutch immigration issue the political frame was used much more frequently in parliament than in newspapers (about 70 percent versus about 30 percent of coded units), so as an extra check the analysis was repeated for this issue but excluding the frame altogether, yielding identical results.

References

Altheide, David L., and Robert P. Snow. 1979. *Media Logic*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Bartels, Larry M. 1996. “Politicians and the Press: Who Leads, Who Follows?” Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, September.

Beck, Nathaniel, and Jonathan N. Katz. 1995. "What to Do (and Not to Do) with Time-Series Cross-Section Data." *American Political Science Review* 89 (3): 634–47.

Boomgaarden, Hajo G., and Rens Vliegenthart. 2007. "Explaining the Rise of Anti-immigrant Parties: The Role of News Media Content." *Electoral Studies* 26 (2): 404–17.

Brambor, Thomas, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14 (1): 63–82.

Budge, Ian, and Dennis J. Farlie. 1983. *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Callaghan, Karen, and Frauke Schnell. 2001. "Assessing the Democratic Debate: How the News Media Frame Elite Policy Discourse." *Political Communication* 18 (2): 183–213.

Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "A Theory of Framing and Opinion Formation in Competitive Elite Environments." *Journal of Communication* 57 (1): 99–118.

Dahlström, Carl, and Peter Esaiasson. 2013. "The Immigration Issue and Anti-immigrant Party Success in Sweden 1970–2006: A Deviant Case Analysis." *Party Politics* 19 (2): 343–64.

Daviter, Falk. 2007. "Policy Framing in the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy* 14 (4): 654–66.

De Vries, Catherine E. 2009. "The Impact of EU Referenda on National Electoral Politics: The Dutch Case." *West European Politics* 32 (1): 142–71.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.

Eilders, Christiane. 2000. "Media as Political Actors? Issue Focusing and Selective Emphasis in the German Quality Press." *German Politics* 9 (3): 181–206.

Eilders, Christiane. 2002. "Conflict and Consonance in Media Opinion: Political Positions of Five German Quality Newspapers." *European Journal of Communication* 17 (1): 25–63.

Entman, Robert M. 1993. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43 (4): 51–58.

Entman, Robert M. 2004. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gamson, William A., and Andre Modigliani. 1989. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1): 1–37.

Green-Pedersen, Christoffer, and Jesper Krogstrup. 2008. "Immigration as a Political Issue in Denmark and Sweden." *European Journal of Political Research* 47 (5): 610–34.

Green-Pedersen, Christoffer, and Rune Stubager. 2010. "The Political Conditionality of Mass Media Influence: When Do Parties Follow Mass Media Attention?" *British Journal of Political Science* 40 (3): 1–15.

Hänggli, Regula, and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2010. "Political Framing Strategies and Their Impact on Media Framing in a Swiss Direct-Democratic Campaign." *Political Communication* 27 (2): 141–57.

Hänggli, Regula, and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2012. "Frame Construction and Frame Promotion (Strategic Framing Choices)." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56 (3): 260–78.

Helbling, Marc, Dominic Hoeglinger, and Bruno Wüest. 2010. "How Political Parties Frame European Integration." *European Journal of Political Research* 49 (4): 495–521.

Koopmans, Ruud, and Jasper Muis. 2009. "The Rise of Right-Wing Populist Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands: A Discursive Opportunity Approach." *European Journal of Political Research* 48 (5): 642–64.

Mazzoleni, Gianpietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. 2003. *The Media and Neo-populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis*. Westport: Praeger.

Müller, Wolfgang C., and Kaare Strøm. 1999. *Policy, Office, or Votes?: How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Netjes, Catherine E., and Harmen Binnema. 2007. "The Salience of the European Integration Issue: Three Data Sources Compared." *Electoral Studies* 26 (1): 39–49.

Petersen, Michael Bang, Rune Slothuus, and Lise Togeby. 2010. "Political Parties and Value Consistency in Public Opinion Formation." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74 (3): 530–50.

Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (3): 825–50.

Raunio, Tapio. 2007. "Softening but Persistent: Euroscepticism in the Nordic EU Countries." *Acta Politica* 42:191–210.

Roberts, Marilyn, and Maxwell McCombs. 1994. "Agenda Setting and Political Advertising: Origins of the News Agenda." *Political Communication* 11 (3): 249–62.

Schaffner, Brian F., and Patrick J. Sellers, eds. 2009. *Winning with Words: The Origins and Impact of Framing*. New York: Routledge.

Schemer, Christian, Werner Wirth, and Jörg Matthes. 2012. "Value Resonance and Value Framing Effects on Voting Intentions in Direct-Democratic Campaigns." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56 (3): 334–52.

Slothuus, Rune, and Claes H. De Vreese. 2010. "Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Issue Framing Effects." *The Journal of Politics* 72 (3): 630–45.

Sniderman, Paul M., and Sean M. Theriault. 2004. "The Structure of Political Argument and the Logic of Issue Framing." In *Studies in Public Opinion*, ed. Willem E. Saris and Paul M. Sniderman, 133–65. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Soroka, Stuart N. 2002. "Issue Attributes and Agenda-Setting by Media, the Public, and Policymakers in Canada." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 14 (3): 264–85.

Thesen, Gunnar. 2013. "When Good News Is Scarce and Bad News Is Good: Government Responsibilities and Opposition Possibilities in Political Agenda-Setting." *European Journal of Political Research* 52 (3): 364–89.

Van der Brug, Wouter, Meindert Fennema, Sjoerdje Van Heerden, and Sarah L. De Lange. 2009. "Hoe Heeft het Integratiedebat Zich in Nederland Ontwikkeld?" [How Has the Dutch Immigrant Integration Debate Evolved?] *Migrantenstudies* 25 (3): 198–220.

Van der Eijk, Cees, and Mark N. Franklin. 2004. "Potential for Contestation on European Matters at National Elections in Europe." In *European Integration and Political Conflict*, ed. Gary Marks and Marco Steenbergen, 33–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Van der Pas, Daphne J., Catherine E. De Vries, and Rens Vliegenthart. 2012. "Do Media Respond to Party Conflict? Debates on European Integration in British, Dutch & German Election Campaigns, 1987-2006." Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 12–15.

Van Reekum, Rogier, and Jan Willem Duyvendak. 2012. "Running from Our Shadows: The Performative Impact of Policy Diagnoses in Dutch Debates on Immigrant Integration." *Patterns of Prejudice* 46 (5): 445–66.

Van Spanje, Joost, and Wouter Van Der Brug. 2007. "The Party as Pariah: The Exclusion of Anti-immigration Parties and Its Effect on Their Ideological Positions." *West European Politics* 30 (5): 1022–40.

Vliegenthart, Rens. 2007. *Framing Immigration and Integration: Facts, Parliament, Media and Anti-immigrant Party Support in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Free University Press.

Vliegenthart, Rens, and Conny Roggeband. 2007. “Framing Immigration and Integration: Relationships between Press and Parliament in the Netherlands.” *International Communication Gazette* 69 (3): 295–319.

Vliegenthart, Rens, Andreas R. T. Schuck, Hajo G. Boomgaarden, and Claes H. De Vreese. 2008. “News Coverage and Support for European Integration, 1990-2006.” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (4): 415–39.

Vliegenthart, Rens, and Stefaan Walgrave. 2011. “When the Media Matter for Politics: Partisan Moderators of the Mass Media’s Agenda-Setting Influence on Parliament in Belgium.” *Party Politics* 17 (3): 321–42.

Walgrave, Stefaan, Stuart Soroka, and Michiel Nuytemans. 2008. “The Mass Media’s Political Agenda-Setting Power: A Longitudinal Analysis of Media, Parliament, and Government in Belgium (1993 to 2000).” *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (6): 814–36.

Walgrave, Stefaan, and Peter Van Aelst. 2006. “The Contingency of the Mass Media’s Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory.” *Journal of Communication* 56 (1): 88–109.

Author Biography

Daphne van der Pas is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Amsterdam. She has published on the expression of leadership in the media, while her current research focuses on interplay between media and parties in the politicization of European integration and immigration in five West European countries through time.

Research Article

The International Journal of Press/Politics
2014, Vol 19(1) 66–84
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1940161213507608
ijpp.sagepub.com

The Bully Pulpit and Media Coverage: Power without Persuasion

Matthew R. Miles[1]

Abstract

Though modern presidents seem to be less persuasive in their public campaigns for policy, they are more likely to go public. In addition, they publicly campaign for policies that they could enact without the support of Congress or the public. The dominant view emphasizes the persuasive capacity of the president or his ability to set the agenda of various government institutions; however, this neglects one of the more powerful components of the bully pulpit. I demonstrate that presidents can use the bully pulpit to remove issues from the national news agenda with relative ease. By modeling the daily change in national media content, I show that presidents can divert the attention of the national media away from issues that are less desirable toward more favorable issues with a single televised address. This suggests that the bully pulpit is more powerful than the current literature expects.

Keywords

agenda-setting, broadcasting news, presidency, media effects

Introduction

Modern presidents seem to be less persuasive than their predecessors, yet they are going public more often (Cohen 2010; Edwards 2003; Kernell 1997). Despite significant effort to explain this paradox, the literature does not yet offer a complete explanation. In part, this is because both the "going public" paradigm (Kernell 1986) and recent challenges to the paradigm (Edwards 2003, 2009) emphasize the persuasive capacity of the president. Indeed, the dominant view of the public presidency is that

[1]Brigham Young University, Rexburg, ID, USA

Corresponding Author:
Matthew R. Miles, Department of History, Geography and Political Science, Brigham Young University, 252 S. Center Street, 262 Ricks Building, Rexburg, ID 83460-2160, USA.
E-mail: milema@byui.edu

presidents give speeches to influence public opinion, which in turn influences the policy agenda of Congress (Barrett 2004;Canes-Wrone 2006; Kernell 1986; ; Tulis 1987), the Supreme Court (Yates et al. 2005), or the bureaucracy (Whitford and Yates 2009). Yet, this view reduces the role of the national news media to an intermediary between the president and the public. In one extreme, the president is most persuasive when he bypasses the news media and delivers an undiluted message to the public (Rottinghaus 2010;;), in the other, the news media hinder persuasion because they determine the tone or content of the message the public ultimately receives (Cohen 2008, 2010; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2006).

However, any issue advocate will tell you that getting an issue on the national agenda is no small feat. Most advocates expend substantial time and energy trying to get their issue on the national agenda (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Grossman 2012;). In part, this is not only because media coverage of an issue influences the importance the public places on an issue (Cook et al. 1983; Erbring et al. 1980) but also because media coverage of an issue influences how people evaluate their political world (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Miller and Krosnick 1997). Moreover, the national news media are the gatekeeper to the national agenda (McCombs and Shaw 1972). Yet, presidents may be uniquely positioned to influence the national agenda without considerable effort (Kernell 1986; Kingdon 1995; Young and Perkins 2005). Thus, modern presidents may go public more often to influence the content of the national news agenda.

As the singular national representative, presidents are uniquely positioned to influence both the tone and content of national news coverage (Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2011; Kernell 1986; Peake 2007; Tulis 1987). However, recent work suggests that it is not easy for modern presidents to influence the tone of national news coverage (Cohen 2008, 2010; Young and Perkins 2005). Yet, the ability of the president to influence the national news agenda is not clear. Some find that presidents can influence the news agenda through domestic policy addresses but not through foreign policy (Edwards and Wood 1999). Others argue that presidential addresses on easy, new, and salient issues will influence the national news agenda but addresses on less salient, complex issues do not influence the national news agenda (Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2011). Either way, presidential command of the national news agenda seems to require substantial sustained effort (Cohen 2010; Eshbaugh-Soha 2006; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2011).

The problem is twofold. First, the emphasis the literature places on the persuasive capacity of the bully pulpit limits the scope of inquiry to issues that are clearly a part of the president's policy agenda. Yet, modern presidents address the public nearly every day and not every issue is clearly a part of the president's policy agenda. Second, the dominant methodology for measuring presidential influence of the national news agenda emphasizes large changes that occur between months and last at least a month (Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004, 2005, 2011). Since the unit of analysis in these studies is the number of news stories in a month, this method does not measure daily changes that may last for less than a month. Yet, we know that news content changes daily and most news stories tend not to dominate news coverage

for extended periods of time. As such, it may seem like substantial effort is required to influence the national news agenda when that may not be true.

This article overcomes both shortcomings in the literature by proposing a new approach to the public presidency literature and analyzing the data with a method that accounts for daily changes in the content of national news. Multilevel growth models are commonly used to measure how individuals respond to changes over time (Biesanz et al. 2004; ; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012; Skrondal and Rabe-Hesketh 2010; Snijders and Bosker 2011). This article extends the approach to analysis of the national news media. Using daily counts of news stories coded by the Pew Research Center (Rosenstiel et al. 2007–2012), I model the influence of presidential speeches on the daily count of news stories by topic. The precision of this approach shows that a president can substantially alter the content of the national news with one or two speeches.

In addition, this article demonstrates that presidents have significant power to divert the attention of the national news media away from some issues and toward others. In the following sections, I demonstrate that one or two speeches about either domestic or foreign policy can significantly alter the content of the national news. This negative control of the national news agenda may be one reason that modern presidents use the bully pulpit more often than their predecessors. Presidents may use the bully pulpit to influence the policy agenda, in the absence of persuasion.

The Public Presidency as a Persuasive Tool

The modern president wields power far beyond those articulated in the Constitution. Many presidents have taken advantage of the informal powers of the presidency to expand the formal powers of the office and promote their policy agenda (Neustadt 1960; Tulis 1987). The rise of television provided presidents with another medium to influence the public agenda (Kernell 1986). However, despite early contentions that the president could use the bully pulpit to set the agenda of Congress and the public (Cohen 1995; Hill 1998; Kingdon 1995), recent work suggests that the power of the president to influence the public may be much more limited (Edwards 2003; Young and Perkins 2005).

Despite this, modern presidents go public more frequently than their predecessors (Kernell 1997). This article is motivated, in part, by this paradox. If modern presidents are less persuasive, why do modern presidents go public more often than their predecessors? Some argue that presidential rhetorical power has not diminished, presidents simply lack the captive audience they once had (Baum and Kernell 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha 2006; Kernell and Rice 2011). The fragmented audience requires him to give more speeches to reach the same number of people that presidents of an earlier era reached in a single speech. Others argue that presidents go public more often because an increase in news outlets requires more speeches to ensure that the message is properly framed across news outlets (Cohen 2010).

Indeed, the dominant view of the public presidency tends to define the success or failure of a particular public campaign in terms of persuasion. Yet, presidents are

uniquely positioned to influence the national news agenda, even when their message is not persuasive (Kingdon 1995). The focus that the current literature places on persuasion neglects the potential to *displace* issues on the national agenda using the bully pulpit. Presidents may be going public more often because televised addresses allow them to influence the national news agenda.

The National News Agenda

The media play an integral role in deciding which issues are placed on the national agenda. The media are the major source of national political information (McCombs and Shaw 1972:185). Media attention to particular issues influences both the salience (the importance people place on an issue) and the weight people place on one issue relative to another when evaluating their political world (through priming) (Cook et al. 1983; Erbring et al. 1980; Iyengar and Simon 1993; Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Miller and Krosnick 1997, 2000). As such, significant scholarly attention focuses on the ability of the president to influence the national agenda (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004, 2011; Kingdon 1995; Light 1999). Getting an issue on the national agenda is no small task (Downs 1972; Nisbet and Huge 2006; Peters and Hogwood 1985). Yet, journalistic dependence on sources uniquely positions the Executive Branch to influence the national news agenda because they provide a constant source of predictable and credible news (Bennett et al. 2007; Zaller and Chiu 1996). Indeed, presidential speeches seem to positively influence the national news agenda (Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha 2006; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004, 2005, 2011).

However, presidential power in this realm is not clearly specified by the current literature. For instance, some argue that the president may influence the national agenda on domestic policy but not on foreign policy (Edwards and Wood 1999). Others argue that presidential leadership depends on the broader political context. For instance, presidents may be able to influence media coverage on new, salient, easy issues (Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004) but not on important issues like the economy (Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2005, 2011). Methodological conventions may be one reason that the literature does not provide clear consensus on presidential influence of the national agenda. Typically, the news agenda is measured by a monthly count of stories on a particular topic (Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004, 2005, 2011). Yet, the news agenda rarely changes in regularly occurring monthly intervals. The methods of inquiry used to date limit our ability to measure presidential influence that may occur more rapidly and for shorter durations. In short, presidential influence of the national agenda may seem to require significant effort on the part of the president, a sustained campaign of some kind, and careful selection of issue type (Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2011) because the methods of inquiry measure only changes that have effects longer than a month. This study corrects this perception by using an alternative method that measures daily changes in content of the national news.

In addition, most studies assume that presidential influence of the national media agenda is designed to *indirectly* influence other players in the policy negotiation

process (Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2011; Whitford and Yates 2009; Yates et al. 2005). This limits the scope to issues that are already on a part of the president's agenda. However, if the media have the power to influence the importance of political issues in the public mind (through setting the agenda) as well as the importance of particular issues in the public presidential approval calculation (through priming), presidents have just as strong an incentive to *displace* items from the national agenda as they have to *place* items on the agenda.

The Public Presidency as a Tool to Displace Items on the National News Agenda

We know much about the processes through which a president can influence the press to place items on the national agenda; however, we know relatively little about the process through which items are displaced. In general, news stories tend *not* to dominate the news cycle for extended periods of time (Downs 1972; Nisbet and Huge 2006; Peters and Hogwood 1985). Typically, issues receive attention when something newsworthy happens (Bennett 1996; Bennett and Entman 2001). By doing something that the media deem newsworthy, a president could direct the attention of the national media toward something other than topics that had previously dominated the news cycle. Once the attention of the media has been diverted to a new issue, there is no reason to expect them to return to the previous issue, unless something newsworthy occurs to redirect their attention.

A president might be able to displace undesirable content from the national news agenda with a public campaign for a salient foreign policy objective. The president's informational advantages in the realm of foreign policy make the new media highly dependent on him and more likely to report the story as he presents it (Bennett 1996). Particularly when the president can exercise unilateral authority, a public campaign for policy makes little sense under the current public presidency paradigm. Yet, a public campaign for a foreign policy objective that is both novel and salient is very likely to attract the attention of the press (Bennett 1996; Bennett and Entman 2001). Thus, while a president may not influence the news agenda for an extended period of time with a public campaign for foreign policy (Edwards and Wood 1999), he may be able to significantly alter the attention of the news media for a shorter period of time with a well-timed public address advocating a new foreign policy initiative.

In the domestic policy realm, the media are more likely to attend to issues on which Congress and the president conflict (Zaller 1992). A president might choose to go public on a domestic issue to divert the attention of the news media *away* from an undesirable issue and *toward* the conflict between the president and Congress. In this scenario, the president has less control over the tone of the news since the coverage will reflect the debate, but the president may be less concerned about the tone of the national coverage than the content. Again, the president is using the *new* issue as a diversion to displace another unwanted topic from the national agenda. Given the large audience presidential speeches still attract, especially when proposing a new initiative (Edwards 2003:88), and the journalistic norm to emphasize stories that involve

conflict (Bennett and Entman 2001), a presidential public campaign could influence the content of the national news. Indeed, a public campaign that emphasizes the difference in philosophy between members of Congress and the president could not only divert the attention of the media away from an unpleasant issue but also focus the news agenda on different proposed solutions to a particular problem.

As the national representative, the president is not only uniquely positioned to place items on the national agenda but also to *displace* items on the national agenda. Indeed, through a single speech or two on a newsworthy topic, modern presidents may be able to significantly alter the content of the national news media. This could be done through a public address about foreign policy or by addressing a domestic issue about which the president and the Congress disagree and might lead to interbranch conflict.

Hypothesis 1: A single televised presidential address on a salient foreign policy initiative will significantly *decrease* national news coverage about an undesirable topic and *increase* coverage on the topic addressed by the president.

Hypothesis 2: A single televised presidential address on a domestic policy initiative that involves conflict between the president and Congress will significantly *decrease* national news coverage about an undesirable topic and *increase* coverage on the topic addressed by the president.

These hypotheses are tested using two case studies from two different presidencies that fit the conceptual conditions. The first test case involves George W. Bush's 2007 campaign for additional troops in Iraq. Consistent with the first hypothesis, the troop surge campaign involved an issue that was both salient and new, and the president had incentive to displace unwanted coverage of the new democratic majority in Congress from the national news agenda. The second case study involves Barack Obama's campaign to reduce the federal budget deficit. Consistent with the second hypothesis, the timing and content of the speech suggest that the intent behind this campaign was something other than persuasion. Indeed, the campaign began as an announcement of a policy agreement between Congress and the president. In the weeks prior to this campaign, the national news was dominated by international conflict and natural disasters, yet the domestic coverage focused on how the poorly performing economy was influencing state budget battles.

The Troop Surge

George W. Bush had devised his troop surge strategy by September 2006—before the election—and by December, he had all the details worked out, yet he waited to present it to the public until after the newly elected democratic majority had been sworn in (Bush 2010). As commander-in-chief, President Bush neither needed support from Congress to change his Iraq strategy or to reallocate troops from one region to another nor did he need public support. I contend that President Bush chose a public campaign over this issue because he wanted to change the focus of the national media from his defeat in the 2006 election to his new strategy in Iraq. By publicly proposing a new

foreign policy initiative when he did, President Bush diverted the attention of the news media away from coverage about the Democrats in Congress and toward his vision for the future of Iraq.

Data and Method

The dependent variable for these analyses comes from content-analyzed stories provided by the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index (Rosenstiel et al. 2007–2012). The index provides a daily count of stories on a particular topic contained in more than four dozen news outlets from the five main sectors of mainstream media—print, network TV, cable, online, and radio. They include evening and morning network news, several hours of daytime and prime-time cable news each day, newspapers from around the country, the top online news sites, and radio, including headlines, long form programs and talk. For the forty-day period used to analyze the troop surge, the data set has more than 1,500 stories coded by topic.

Ultimately, we want to know something about what influences the change in content from one day to the next. For this reason, I estimate the model using a multilevel growth model. This approach allows the model to estimate the influence of independent variables that change with time (presidential speeches) on the change of trajectory of the dependent variable day by day (Biesanz et al. 2004; Curran and Bollen 2001; Snijders and Bosker 2011).

The analysis of the data involves several steps. First, I model the influence of the troop surge speech on news content using topic dummies for each story with fifteen or more mentions in the forty-day period. The dependent variable is the count of the number of stories on a topic and the dependent variable has significant over-dispersion, so the models are estimated using maximum likelihood estimation with a negative binomial link (Agresti 2007; Kosuke et al. 2007; Long 1997). In addition, my hypotheses are conditional in nature; a speech on the topic predicts a change in news coverage, but the absence of a speech on the topic predicts no change in news coverage on that topic. For this reason, each of the story topics is interacted with the dummy codes for the speeches (Aiken et al. 1991; Brambor et al. 2006). This models the effect of a presidential speech on the number of stories on a given topic after the speech. For instance, to model the influence of the troop surge speech on the number of stories about the change in congressional control to the Democrats takes the following form:

$$\log(\lambda_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Troop Surge}) + \beta_2(\text{State of the Union}) + \beta_3(\text{Story topic}) + \beta_4(\text{Troop Surge * Topic}) + \beta_5(\text{SOU * Topic}) + \log(N_i).$$

Statistical significance of predictors alone (indicated by stars in the table) is not conclusive evidence that hypothesized relationships exist. To improve confidence in the findings, I estimate the final model one step at a time showing how each model improves on the previous model. I begin with a simple negative binomial regression model that does not include any interactions.

Table 1 displays the results of the regression models. The statistical significance of different story topics in model 1 indicates that there were more stories on these particular topics over the forty-day period than other topics contained in the model. Model 2 displays the results of a negative binomial regression that includes all the hypothesized relationships, including interaction terms, but it does not account for change over time. Controlling for all other topics, the troop surge speech had a statistically significant positive effect on the number of stories in the national news media about the troop surge. Model 2 is a better fitting model, demonstrated by the decreased AIC and the reduction in the negative log likelihood.

Model 3 displays the results of a multilevel negative binomial regression model. Multilevel regression models account for the systematic error that occurs when the structure of the data is influenced by group characteristics. Each story topic is estimated at the first level and time is the second. Story topics are nested within days of the week. This technique models change in the trajectory of stories over time, estimating a separate intercept and slope for each story topic over time (Biesanz et al. 2004; Curran and Bollen 2001; Duncan et al. 2006; Snijders and Bosker 2011). Model 3 displays the results from the multilevel negative binomial regression model with a random intercept that varies for each of the twenty-four time points (Agresti 2007; Min and Agresti 2005). The results indicate that the troop surge speech significantly *increased* the amount of news coverage on the troop surge. However and perhaps more importantly, the State of the Union also significantly *decreased* the number of stories about the Democrat majority in Congress (H1).

The next step of the analysis calculates the predicted number of stories by topic given certain conditions. Though it is impossible to rewrite history and see what might have happened if President Bush did not deliver the troop surge speech, we can generate predicted probabilities. Figure 1 displays the predicted number of stories by topic for different conditions.

Statistical significance tells us little about the substantive change that a presidential address has on the content of national news coverage. Figure 1 displays the predicted number of stories calculated using postestimation techniques (Kosuke et al. 2007). If President Bush had never given a speech on the troop surge or the State of the Union address, the predicted number of stories on the change in congressional control is twenty times higher than the predicted number of stories on the troop surge. Following the troop surge speech, the model-predicted number of stories on the change in congressional control is four times *less* than the predicted number of stories on the troop surge. This demonstrates that a single speech on foreign policy significantly and substantively changed the content of the national news.

In addition, the model predicts eleven national news stories per day on the topic of the change in congressional control after the troop surge speech. This is a twofold *decrease* in the number of stories on the topic as the day before the speech. Moreover, coverage on this story nearly vanishes after the State of the Union address. Coverage about Iraq policy dramatically increases following the speech on the new strategy—the model predicts more than forty stories in national news outlets on the topic. The speeches did not have a statistically significant effect on the number of stories on Iraq

Table 1. The Influence of a Presidential Foreign Policy Speech on National News Content.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	−0.099 (−0.2)	−0.583** (−0.226)	−1.343** (−0.428)
SOU (State of the Union) speech	0.099 (−0.163)	0.189 (−0.175)	0.550* (−0.249)
Troop surge speech	0.742** (−0.232)	1.266*** (−0.262)	1.345** (−0.454)
Troop surge	1.963*** (−0.404)	0.178 (−1.083)	0.667 (−1.365)
Democrats Congress	1.874*** (−0.404)	3.829*** (−0.964)	4.639*** (−1.01)
Ford death	1.408*** (−0.406)	3.775*** (−0.965)	4.839*** (−1.03)
Democratic presidential candidates	1.370*** (−0.406)	0.178 (−1.083)	−0.118 (−1.338)
Iraq policy	2.013*** (−0.404)	3.211*** (−0.967)	4.714*** (−1.01)
Combat in Iraq	1.629*** (−0.405)	2.429* (−0.975)	3.529*** (−1.023)
SOU × Troop surge		−1.524 (−0.831)	−1.793* (−0.838)
SOU × Democrats Congress		−1.895* (−0.847)	−2.635** (−0.881)
SOU × Ford death		−1.187 (−1.477)	−1.204 (−2.455)
SOU × Democratic presidential candidates		−0.019 (−0.833)	0.5 (−0.858)
SOU × Iraq policy		−0.068 (−0.831)	−0.422 (−0.84)
SOU × Combat in Iraq		0.074 (−0.833)	−0.477 (−0.845)
Afghanistan		−16.719 (−1,415.75)	−13.36 (−682.93)
SOU × Afghanistan		−0.42 (−0.91)	−0.559 (−1.103)
Troop surge speech × Democrats Congress		−2.252 (−1.153)	−2.113 (−1.197)
Troop surge speech × Ford		−6.403*** (−1.35)	−7.116*** (−1.901)
Troop surge speech × Democratic presidential candidates		1.246 (−1.255)	1.356 (−1.492)
Troop surge speech × Iraq Policy		−1.457 (−1.155)	−1.53 (−1.196)
Troop surge speech × Combat in Iraq		−1.006 (−1.162)	−0.933 (−1.207)
Troop surge speech × Afghanistan		15.963 (−1,415.75)	11.796 (−682.931)
Dispersion parameter			−0.003*** (0)
−2(log-likelihood)	4,030.1	3,954.86	2,257.66
AIC (Akaike Information Criterion	4,050.095	4,004.85	2,311.651
BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion)	4,100.743	4,131.469	2,448.4
N	1,170	1,170	1,170

Source. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007 News Coverage Index, www.journalism.org
Note. Entries are coefficients from negative binomial regression models. Models using R version 2.14. Standard Errors in parentheses.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$, one-tailed test.

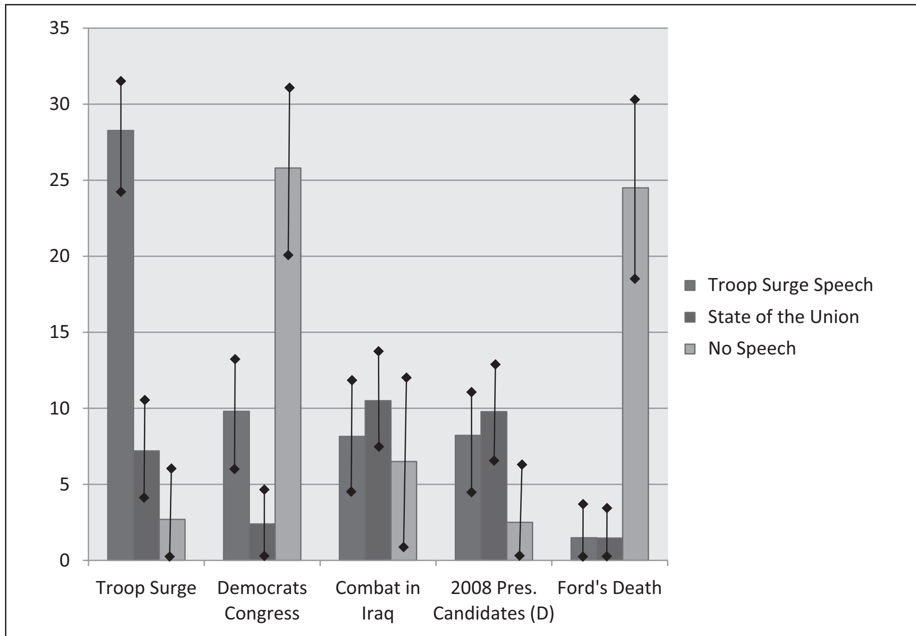

Figure 1. Model-predicted number of stories by topic.
Note. Entries are the model-predicted number of stories on a given topic. Predicted probabilities calculated using the Zelig package in R 2.15. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated prediction.

or the 2008 Democratic presidential candidates, but the *substantive* effect of the speeches is displayed for comparison. In all, these findings suggest that a single presidential address on foreign policy can significantly and speedily change the focus of the national news media (H1). Presidential power to displace items on the national agenda does not seem to require substantial effort.

Obama's 2011 Campaign for Reducing the Budget Deficit

There are three reasons to explore Obama's 2011 campaign for a budget policy as a second test. First, Obama had no clear motive in this public campaign other than changing the focus of the news coverage. He had just reached a compromise with the Republicans on a budget deal, and there was no imminent need for negotiating a new budget. Second, news coverage was dominated by topics outside of the president's control. International conflicts and natural disasters quickly caught the attention of the media. On the domestic front, stories about how the poorly performing economy was influencing state budget battles dominated the coverage. Finally, the issue involved domestic, rather than foreign policy. Thus, this case provides a "hard" test for the theory. If President Obama could change the focus of the news media given these

circumstances, it strongly suggests that presidential public campaigns effectively alter the attention of the national news media.

In the early spring of 2011, the national news focused primarily on international events, but the domestic coverage focused on the poor economic conditions. Even if it is not the dominant focus of the news, persistent negative economic news can have adverse effects on public attitudes toward the president and his job performance (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Patterson 1996). In early April, 2011, President Obama officially launched his reelection campaign with an e-mail to supporters and a video posted on his website. Two days later, on April 6, *the Washington Post* ran a story that outlined Congressman Ryan's plan for balancing the budget, which included significant cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. On April 8, President Obama made his first public address on fiscal policy and stated that he would only support spending cuts that were "necessary" and would not jeopardize "social issues like women's health and the protection of our air and water" (Obama 2011). Five days later, Obama gave a much more detailed address at George Washington University in which he more fully articulated the differences between his and the Republican's proposal.

Consistent with the second hypothesis, President Obama chose to go public on this issue at this time to accomplish a strategic purpose other than persuading the public. Indeed, national polls did not measure any significant change in public opinion as a result of this public campaign for fiscal policy (Gallup 2011). The compromise to avoid a government shutdown was reached one day *prior* to the beginning of this public campaign. Why then did President Obama choose to engage in a public campaign over the proper way to reduce the deficit, if he no longer needed congressional support for a particular policy? President Obama hoped to move the national news agenda's focus away from negative coverage about the economy toward the contrasting proposals about how to fix the economy (H2).

I use the same estimation strategy for the second hypothesis as I used to test the first. Story topics with more than fifteen mentions are dummy-coded as well as the presidential speeches. I gradually build from the simplest model to the most complex to increase confidence in the findings beyond that of Wald tests.

Table 2 displays the results from each of the models used to test the second hypothesis. Model 1 is the naive negative binomial regression model. It does not include any interaction variables but serves as the baseline model to which other models are compared. Model 2 displays the negative binomial regression model and includes the interaction terms but does not model time. Model 3 displays the results of a negative binomial multilevel regression model that properly accounts for the influence of time on the measurement model. Once again, and consistent with theoretical expectations, the reduction in AIC suggests that model 3 is the most robust of the models, since it measures the influence of presidential speeches on the change in the number of stories on a topic day by day. President Obama's April 8 speech on the budget deficit significantly increased the number of news stories about the budget deficit ($p = .017$). This speech also had the intended effect of decreasing the number of stories on the poor national economic situation ($p = .07$). The speech did not have a statistically significant effect on the number of stories on any other topic. This means that a

single domestic policy speech significantly *increase*d the number of news stories dedicated to the budget deficit topic, and the speech significantly *decreased* the number of stories about the negative economic situation (H2).

Once again, we would like to know something about the substantive impact of a single presidential address about a domestic policy proposal on the content of national news. Using Monte Carlo simulation and the Zelig package in R 2.15, I simulated the data one million times to generate the predicted number of stories on a given topic under particular conditions. If President Obama had not given his April 8 or April 13 speeches, the model predicts that the national media would have contained five stories on the poorly performing economy per day, but after the April 13 speech, the model predicts 2.1 stories on that topic, and just after the April 8 speech, the model predicts 1.7 stories on the poorly performing economy. With a simple speech, the president brought about a nearly *threefold* decrease in the number of stories about the poorly performing economy.

In addition, the model-predicted change in content about the budget deficit is stark. The model predicted number of speeches on the budget deficit is 4.6 stories per day–roughly the same number as the model predicts about a poorly performing economy–given the counterfactual condition of no presidential speeches. Had President Obama chosen not to give the April 8 and April 13 addresses, the poorly performing economy and the budget deficit would have received equal news coverage. However, following the April 8 speech, the model predicts a *sixfold* increase in the number of stories on the budget deficit, and following the April 13 speech, the model predicts a nearly *fivefold* increase in the number of stories on that topic per day. Thus, instead of a news cycle consisting of roughly the same number of stories about the bad economy and the budget deficit, the empirical model suggests both a nearly fourfold decrease in stories about a negative news item and a sixfold increase in stories about the president's public address. During the week prior to Obama's reelection campaign launch, the domestic news focused on the negative impact the national economy was having on housing, business investment, and state and local government. Yet, through a strategically timed series of public addresses, President Obama diverted the focus of the national news media away from the state of the economy and toward the differences between his and the Republican's approach to solving the economic crisis. This pattern of findings is consistent with the second hypothesis and suggests that a single public presidential address on domestic policy can significantly and substantively alter the national news agenda.

There are events beyond the control of the president that influence the national news agenda. Figure 2 illustrates other stories that dominated the national news during the month analyzed with these data. Obama's public campaign advocating particular budget priorities also diminished coverage on the Tsunami in Japan and Libya, while it increased the number of stories about the Republican presidential candidates. In fact, the model predicts sevenfold increase in the number of stories following the April 13 address about the 2012 Republican presidential candidates than would have been expected had the president chosen stay private. Thus, presidents do not exercise complete control over the national news agenda, and this strategy should be employed

Table 2. The Influence of a Presidential Domestic Policy Speech on National News Coverage.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	−0.061 (−0.133)	−0.634*** (−0.166)	−2.672*** (−0.311)
April 8 speech	−0.326 (−0.217)	0.108 (−0.274)	−0.136 (−0.492)
April 13 speech	0.652*** (−0.188)	0.916*** (−0.232)	0.788 (−0.424)
Bad economy	−0.248 (−0.143)	0.922** (−0.309)	1.027*** (−0.307)
Budget deficit	2.188*** (−0.303)	2.175** (−0.667)	2.322*** (−0.573)
Japan Tsunami	1.522*** (−0.306)	3.191*** (−0.656)	3.721*** (−0.529)
Republican campaign	1.544*** (−0.306)	0.229 (−0.767)	0.343 (−0.719)
Libya	2.453*** (−0.302)	4.047*** (−0.652)	4.164*** (−0.53)
Obama campaign	0.087 (−0.328)	1.433** (−0.686)	0.995 (−0.661)
4/8 Speech × Bad economy		−1.466** (−0.573)	−1.046* (−0.582)
4/8 Speech × Budget deficit		1.64 (−1.1)	2.168** (−0.912)
4/8 Speech × Japan Tsunami		−0.69 (−1.102)	−1.053 (−0.918)
4/8 Speech × Republican campaign		0.885 (−1.206)	0.834 (−1.132)
4/8 Speech × Libya		−1.28 (−1.097)	−1.177 (−0.898)
4/13 Speech × Obama campaign		−2.516* (−1.493)	−2.039 (−1.593)
4/13 Speech × Bad economy		−0.01 (−0.509)	0.048 (−0.52)
4/13 Speech × Budget deficit		−2.263** (−0.941)	−2.473*** (−0.768)
4/13 Speech × Japan Tsunami		−2.485*** (−0.96)	−2.373*** (−0.823)
4/13 Speech × Republican campaign		0.568 (−0.994)	1.183 (−0.92)
4/13 Speech × Libya		−1.185 (−0.948)	−1.26 (−0.786)
4/13 Speech × Obama campaign		0.811 (−1.379)	1.095 (−1.493)
Dispersion parameter			0.001*** (0)
Nagelkerke R^2	.235	.298	
Log-likelihood	−2,307.74	−2,277.5	−1,321.91
AIC	4,635.478	4,598.997	2,691.814
BIC	4,689.028	4,716.807	2,820.334
N	1,564	1,564	1,564

Source. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2011 News Coverage Index, www.journalism.org
Note. Entries are coefficients from negative binomial regression models. Models estimated in R version 2.14. Standard errors in parentheses.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001, one-tailed test.

judiciously. However, the analyses of both the troop surge campaign and Obama's campaign for resolving the budget deficit crisis suggest that presidential public campaigns can significantly alter the national news agenda.

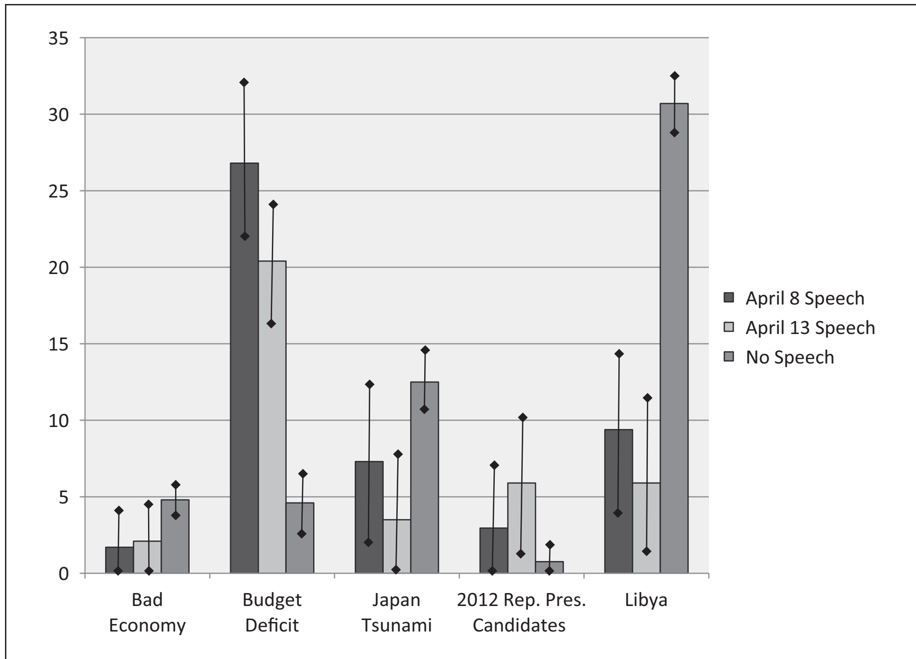

Figure 2. Model-predicted number of stories by topic.
Note. Entries are the model-predicted number of stories on a given topic under particular conditions. Predicted probabilities calculated using the Zelig package in R 2.15. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated prediction.

Conclusion

The dominant approach to the public presidency expects presidential campaigns to either persuade the public or set the policy agenda. However, the focus of the current literature on positive presidential powers may mask certain negative presidential powers. For instance, decades of research on policy change shows that the president is the most powerful player in the policy process because he is uniquely positioned to prevent changes to the status quo (Baumgartner et al. 2009:234). Likewise, this article demonstrates that presidents can use strategically timed public addresses to displace unwanted items from the national news agenda with relative ease.

The bully pulpit need not be used exclusively to persuade. As the national representative, a president is in a unique position to both place items on the national agenda and displace unwanted items on the national agenda. Given the power of the press to influence what the public thinks is important (agenda-setting) and the considerations people use to evaluate political figures (priming), the power to influence media coverage should not be neglected. To date, the literature has focused so much on the power to place items on the national agenda that it has neglected the power to displace unwanted items on the national agenda. Yet, the power to displace should not be ignored. Once

an issue is removed from the national agenda, it has very little chance of becoming enacted into policy (Baumgartner et al. 2009:193). Though some may struggle mightily to influence the national news agenda, modern presidents seem to be able to displace items on the agenda with ease.

This could be why modern presidents go public more often than their predecessors, despite their seemingly diminished capacity to persuade (Cohen 2010; Edwards 2003). The troop surge example shows that a single foreign policy address can change national news coverage overnight. In addition, presidents can alter the national news agenda with a speech on domestic policy. Even when international events dominate news coverage, presidents can alter the focus of the domestic news coverage. A single speech highlighting the different strategies to solving a national problem was sufficient to significantly alter the attention of the national news media. Overnight, the attention shifted from poor economic performance to the Obama/Ryan plans for fixing the budget deficit.

Often, the persuasive capacity of a presidential speech is measured by changes in public support immediately following a presidential address (Edwards 2003, 2009). However, this view neglects the influence that the national news agenda has on long-term political attitudes. One of the reasons that President Obama was reelected despite historically high levels of unemployment was his ability to persuade the public that his approach to fixing the economy was better than his opponents (Hetherington 2013). Thus, Obama's April 2011 campaign to reduce the budget deficit could be viewed as the beginning of a long-term strategy to persuade the public to support his approach for fixing the economy. By redirecting the national news agenda away from the effects of a poorly performing economy toward the different approaches of the two political parties, President Obama helped frame the election year debate (Hetherington 2013).

This pattern of findings suggests that modern presidents wield power beyond short-term persuasion. It might be true that presidents cannot shape the contours of the political landscape to pave the way for change by establishing an agenda and persuading the public Congress and others to support their policies (Edwards 2009:188). However, the power to displace unwanted items from the national news agenda provides modern presidents with unique power to influence the policy process and political dialogue, and potentially frame the terms of political debate. Future work should consider this important informal presidential power.

However, undesirable effects may also accompany displacement of issues from the national news agenda. For instance, both public campaigns examined in this article *increased* the amount of coverage devoted to opposition candidates. Publicizing one perspective seems to publicize the opposing perspective as well. Thus, presidents must be judicious about the conditions under which they engage in a public campaign and the issues they will advocate. Future research might explore instances when presidents sought to redirect the attention of the national news agenda toward more advantageous topics and inadvertently brought more attention to a much less desirable topic.

Author's Note

Supplementary files available by request. Please contact the author for more information.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

Agresti, Alan. 2007. *An Introduction to Categorical Data Analysis*. Vol. 423. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Aiken, Leona S., Stephen G. West, and Raymond R. Reno. 1991. *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Barrett, Andrew W. 2004. "Gone Public the Impact of Going Public on Presidential Legislative Success." *American Politics Research* 32:338–70.

Baum, Matthew A., and Samuel Kernell. 1999. "Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?" *American Political Science Review* 93:99–114.

Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth Leech. 2009. *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics, American Politics and Political Economy Series*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bennett, W. Lance. 1996. "An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representations of Politics." *Political Communication* 13:373–84.

Bennett, W. Lance, and Robert M. Entman. 2001. *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy, Communication, Society, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, W. Lance, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston. 2007. *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina, Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Biesanz, Jeremy C., Natalia Deeb-Sossa, Alison A. Papadakis, Kenneth A. Bollen, and Patrick J. Curran. 2004. "The Role of Coding Time in Estimating and Interpreting Growth Curve Models." *Psychological Methods* 9:30.

Brambor, Thomas, William R. Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14:63–82.

Bush, George W. 2010. *Decision Points*. 1st Edition. New York: Crown Publishers.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2006. *Who Leads Whom?: Presidents, Policy, and the Public, Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cohen, Jeff E. 1995. "Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda." *American Journal of Political Science* 39:87–107.

Cohen, Jeff E. 2008. *The Presidency in the Era of 24-Hour News*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cohen, Jeff E. 2010. *Going Local: Presidential Leadership in the Post-Broadcast Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, Fay Lomax, Tom R. Tyler, Edward G. Goetz, Margaret T. Gordon, David Protess, Donna R. Leff, and Harvey L. Molotch. 1983. “Media and Agenda Setting - Effects on the Public, Interest Group Leaders, Policy Makers, and Policy.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 47:16–35.

Downs, Anthony. 1972. “Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle.” *Public Interest* 28:38–50.

Duncan, Terry E., Susan C. Duncan, and Lisa A. Strycker. 2006. *An Introduction to Latent Variable Growth Curve Modeling: Concepts, Issues, and Applications*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Edwards, George C. 2003. *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Edwards, George C. 2009. *The Strategic President: Persuasion and Opportunity in Presidential Leadership*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Edwards, George C., and B. Dan Wood. 1999. “Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress, and the Media.” *American Political Science Review* 93:327–44.

Erbring, Lutz, Edie N. Goldenberg, and Arthur H. Miller. 1980. “Front-Page News and Real-World Cues: New Look at Agenda-Setting by the Media.” *American Journal of Political Science* 24:16–49.

Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew. 2006. *The President’s Speeches: Beyond “Going Public.”* Boulder: Rienner.

Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew, and Jeffrey S. Peake. 2004. “Presidential Influence over the Systemic Agenda.” *Congress & the Presidency* 31:181–201.

Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew, and Jeffrey S. Peake. 2005. “Presidents and the Economic Agenda.” *Political Research Quarterly* 58:127–38.

Eshbaugh-Soha, M., and Jeffrey S. Peake. (2006). “The contemporary presidency: “Going local” to reform Social Security.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36(4): 689-704.

Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew, and Jeffrey S. Peake. 2011. *Breaking through the Noise: Presidential Leadership, Public Opinion, and the News Media, Studies in the Modern Presidency*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gallup. 2011. “Gallup Monthly Poll.” Polling Report. Retrieved from http://www.pollingreport.com/budget6.htm

Hill, Kim Quaile. 1998. “The Policy Agendas of the President and the Mass Public: A Research Validation and Extension.” *American Journal of Political Science* 42:1328–34.

Iyengar, Shanto, and Adam Simon. 1993. “News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public-Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing.” *Communication Research* 20:365–83.

Kernell, Samuel. 1986. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Kernell, Samuel. 1997. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. 3rd Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Kernell, Samuel, and Laurie L. Rice. 2011. “Cable and the Partisan Polarization of the President’s Audience.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41:693–711.

Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd Edition. New York: Longman.

Kosuke, Imai, Gary King, and Oliva Lau. 2007. “Poisson: Poisson Regression for Event Count Dependent Variables.” Zelig: Everyone’s Statistical Software, Http://Gking.Harvard.Edu/Zelig (accessed September 25, 2013).

Krosnick, Jon A., and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President through Priming." *The American Political Science Review* 84:497–512.
Light, Paul Charles. 1999. *The President's Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton*. 3rd Edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Long, J. Scott. 1997. *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables*. Vol. 7. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36:176–187.
Miller, Joanne, and Jon A. Krosnick. 1997. "Anatomy of News Media Priming." In *Do the Media Govern*. Pages 258-283. Ed.s Iyengar, Shanto and Richard Reeves. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Miller, Joanne M., and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source." *American Journal of Political Science* 44:301–15.
Min, Yongyi, and Alan Agresti. 2005. "Random Effect Models for Repeated Measures of Zero-Inflated Count Data." *Statistical Modelling* 5:1–19.
Neustadt, Richard E. 1960. *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership from FDR to Carter*. New York: Wiley.
Nisbet, Matthew C., and Mike Huge. 2006. "Attention Cycles and Frames in the Plant Biotechnology Debate: Managing Power and Participation through the Press/Policy Connection." *Harvard International Journal of Press-Politics* 11:3–40.
Obama, Barack. 2011. "Remarks by the President on the Budget." Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/08/remarks-president-budget.
Patterson, Thomas E. 1996. "Bad News, Bad Governance." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 546:97–108.
Peake, Jeffrey S. 2007. "Presidents and Front-Page News: How America's Newspapers Cover the Bush Administration." *Harvard International Journal of Press-Politics* 12:52–70.
Peters, B. Guy, and Brain W. Hogwood. 1985. "In Search of the Issue-Attention Cycle." *Journal of Politics* 47:238–53.
Rabe-Hesketh, Sophia, and Anders Skrondal. 2012. *Multilevel and Longitudinal Modeling Using Stata*. 3rd Edition, 2 Vols. College Station: Stata Press.
Rosenstiel, Tom, Amy Mitchell, Paul Hitlin, and Hong Ji. 2007–2012. *News Coverage Index*. Edited by Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center.
Rottinghaus, B. 2010. *The Provisional Pulpit: Modern Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion*. Texas: A&M University Press.
Skrondal, Anders, and Sophia Rabe-Hesketh. 2010. *Multilevel Modelling. 4 Vols., SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
Snijders, Tom A. B., and Roel J. Bosker. 2011. *Multilevel Analysis: An Introduction to Basic and Advanced Multilevel Modeling*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
Tulis, Jeffrey. 1987. *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Whitford, Andrew B., and Jeff Yates. 2009. *Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda: Constructing the War on Drugs*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Yates, Jeff L., Andrew B. Whitford, and William Gillespie. 2005. "Agenda Setting, Issue Priorities, and Organizational Maintenance: The US Supreme Court, 1955 to 1994." *British Journal of Political Science* 35:357–68.
Young, Garry, and William B. Perkins. 2005. "Presidential Rhetoric, the Public Agenda, and the End of Presidential Television's 'Golden Age'" *The Journal of Politics* 67:1190–205.

Zaller, John, and Dennis Chiu. 1996. "Government's Little Helper: US Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1945–1991." *Political Communication* 13:385–405.

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Author Biography

Matthew R. Miles is professor of Political Science at Brigham Young University-Idaho where he teaches courses on the US Presidency, political behavior, and research methodology. His research explores how individuals make sense of the political world they encounter and the role elites, institutions, and national conditions play in the formation of individual political attitudes.

The International Journal of Press/Politics
2014, Vol 19(1) 85–107
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1940161213508814
ijpp.sagepub.com

Kill One to Warn One Hundred: The Politics of Press Censorship in Vietnam

Geoffrey Cain[1]

Abstract

Recent literature on "soft authoritarianism" has called into question the extent to which policy, rather than personality and patronage, sets the direction of elite politics in the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). This strand of thinking argues that the state's direction toward "reform" is not as coherent as commonly believed, a relevant model for examining the role of the state-owned print and online press as an arm of Vietnam's post-communist marketization project. It argues that Party leaders, facing a breakdown of consensus across the spectrum of political and business elites, are using the press in an attempt to manage a growing number of voices in the political system, but that reporting on many political and corruption scandals has simply become unmanageable for state leaders. Under this paradigm, policy debates between "reformers" and "conservatives" in Vietnam fall short of explaining press censorship. This semidemocratic concept of the media's role opens up room for a wider understanding of civil society under transitional regimes in Asia. This paper draws on twenty-nine interviews with Vietnamese journalists, editors, media executives, Vietnamese and foreign journalism trainers, and government officials from 2010 to 2011, as well as an analysis of press coverage and internal newsroom documents.

Keywords

Vietnam, journalism, Internet and media censorship, Communist Party, marketization

[1]School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK

Corresponding Author:

Geoffrey Cain, Gyeonggi-do Yangju-si Baekseok-eub Beokji-ri, Kaya 2cha Apt. 201dong 109ho, South Korea 482-831.

Email: Geoffrey_cain@soas.ac.uk

Introduction: Press Censorship under the Politics of Marketization

On January 5, 2012, members of fish farmer Doan Van Vuon's family opened fire on more than one hundred police officers and soldiers trying to evict him and others from their homes in the Tien Lang district in the northern port city of Haiphong. He was being pushed off his state-owned plot a year before his lease was set to end (McKinley 2012). Six officers were injured in the fighting, leading Vuon and three relatives to be charged with attempted murder (Marr 2012). In a nation where economic decentralization has lent more political power to local and provincial officials, and where those figures are able to profit through land evictions in the countryside, the story was just like any other and at first did not receive much coverage. Vietnam's state-run press published quick reports based on police sources, which peddled the narrative that Vuon was a criminal who had used illegal firearms. A month later, however, the situation went from a hushed skirmish to a national imbroglio that the Communist Party was unable, and unwilling, to control. Two newspapers, *Nông Thôn Ngày Nay* (*Countryside Today*) and *Pháp Luật Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh* (*Ho Chi Minh City Law*), unearthed their own findings that district officials broke an earlier agreement reached in court and lied about statements made by witnesses (McKinley 2012).

The Tien Lang affair, as the case was called, released a torrent of popular grievances over corruption in local police departments. Yet rather than attempt to end the controversial and potentially damaging coverage as would be expected in this one-party state, leaders permitted the reporting to continue because, they even admitted publicly, exposing the local government malaise was also in its interests, while on the other hand, officials simply could not command press coverage over an incident that became so enormous. In February, relentless media criticism against district officials prompted Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to issue a rare statement announcing that heads would roll. The prime minister's spokesman publicly praised the two newspapers for providing "timely reports [that had] helped the central government agencies see the matter clearly and proceed to deal with it in an appropriate way." Newspapers, he said, did a good work "serving the nation" and "orienting public opinion" (Brown 2012: 1).

His comments on the Tien Lang affair summed up the tumultuous and often conflicted role of the state-controlled media in Vietnam: that the Party wants the press to be "a tool for managing society" (Hayton 2010: 158), a state-sanctioned watchdog that can keep a check on the growing power of decentralized bureaucrats, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and rival party factions while appeasing popular discontent against the regime itself. Indeed, the Tien Lang case had much power to undermine the party's legitimacy at a time when Vietnamese farmers and laborers complained that widespread corruption and inflation—at the time, the highest in Asia—was cutting sharply into their income. That the party-state correspondingly kept an evenhanded grip on the reporting that suggests this was not an example of complete press "liberalization," but one of partial liberalization when the political elite simply could not keep a lid on an explosion of press reporting, and found it in its interests to go along with popular

grievances. This protected the party's proclaimed status as the benevolent parent of national development.

This episode, however, did not mean that journalists were completely free to pursue hard-hitting investigative stories. Internet journalists and media executives later told the media researcher Catherine McKinley that they continued to be pressured by the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) to remove critical reader comments from their websites. The government permitted wide publishing on this story because it involved a single farmer in a small district—hardly an example of heavyweight corruption in the Politburo of Hanoi (McKinley 2012). By allowing for a flowering of controversial coverage, the party fashioned itself as having a popular mandate to address the grievances of the people while reasserting its control on the periphery.

With the Tien Lang model as a starting point, this paper will examine relations between the party-state and the government-supervised media in the contemporary political arena of Vietnam. In this system, the state-sanctioned press was the pragmatic creation out of the necessity to curb corruption, a major block to economic development, during the *Doi Moi* (renovation) marketization project starting in 1986. Because the press holds this task of informal policing, a study of Vietnamese journalism can reveal much about "civil society" in a period of economic growth without corresponding political "liberalization." Relaxations and crackdowns against the press are purposefully unpredictable and arbitrary, although reporters run a higher risk of reprisals when they publish allegations against high-ranking officials. Because the media hold a political position directly under Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) elites, this pattern of persecution against them reveals much about how the media are used as a tool of enforcement from the political center, even if top leaders in Hanoi cannot keep complete control over the activities of increasingly profit- and justice-driven journalists. Indeed, the media do not always act in tandem with Party interests. They instead attempt to exploit the growing space between the regime's political censorship of the media and the need to use the media as tools of economic development and of curbing corruption. (I am grateful to an anonymous peer reviewer for this phrasing.)

This paper is divided into four parts. The "Method" section lays out the procedure of and problems inherent in carrying out fieldwork in Vietnam, as well as the reasons for picking the two case studies. The literature review then delves into an examination of "soft authoritarianism" in Vietnam, summarizing institutional, informal, and patronage-based theories of state and civil society. A brief comparison to China, which is experiencing a similar path toward marketization directed by party elites, isolates factors that may explain why Vietnamese bureaucratic mechanisms seek to exploit a state-supervised semiwatchdog press. The background section then analyzes how and why the Party, during and after the *Doi Moi* economic reforms, gives the press the awkward position of state-sponsored watchdog, a role that reinforces the state's ability to allow for controversial coverage and then halt it if reportage moves too high up the food chain. The paper finishes with two case studies that demonstrate how the press continues to be used in a similar manner today, and concludes on a note with relevance to the broader study of comparative journalism under transitional states.

Method

This paper makes use of a number of first-person and secondary sources. It draws on ten months of field research in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi carried out from August 2010 to June 2011 on a Fulbright grant. The author interviewed twenty-nine journalists, bloggers, editors, media businesspeople, public relations officers, and government officials, although not all interviews are used in this paper because not all are relevant to the case studies. Of the total, twenty-seven of them wished to remain anonymous due to the politically sensitive nature of this research. This approach is common in Vietnam where McKinley (2009) and Gainsborough (2010) have similarly used anonymous sources when looking into corruption cases, land evictions, and media issues. To corroborate spoken statements, the author made use of internal briefings obtained from one newspaper in Ho Chi Minh City, peer-reviewed journal articles, quantitative counts of the article headlines on newspaper front pages (to measure the public-image priorities of the party, state, and press), *Tap Chi Cong An* (*Communist Review*) articles that lay out official party strategy, and American government cables published in 2010 by Wikileaks. In the absence of much peer-reviewed material on this topic, the diplomatic cables are a valuable, thorough resource for a topic muddled by rumor. The American embassy in Hanoi and consulate in Ho Chi Minh City take a keen interest in the Vietnamese press and blogosphere, and it is one of the few institutions, to the author's knowledge, that has penned well-referenced analyses of media coverage.

After laying out the literature review and background, the author presents these findings through two case studies: first, the 2010–2011 near-bankruptcy of the state-run shipbuilder Vinashin during preparations for the eleventh National Party Congress; and second, a controversial bauxite mining project in the Central Highlands. The author merged two events—the Vinashin near-collapse and the Congress—into one case study because in the course of research both turned out to be politically inseparable. Both transpired within months of each other: the Vinashin story broke in July 2010, and the eleventh Party Congress convened in January 2011, and the Party's press censorship around the former melded into the coverage of the latter. This first case study shows how the Party uses the press to launch "thrusts" against corruption at subordinate levels, which can also be used to hurt the political prospects of high-ranking rivals who support them. The second case study reveals how the government responded to "elite resistance" against the bauxite mining proposal. This refers to the tendency in Vietnamese politics of the Communist Party to be attuned to pressure from elites rather than from the *body politic*, and when elites flare up against Party policy, it usually relaxes its restrictions on press coverage.

Literature Review: Vietnamese Civil Society under Soft Authoritarianism

Nonacademic literature, produced by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the international mass media, typically use the moniker "state-run press" to describe the

Vietnamese media, a label that gives an accurate but at times incomplete impression of a highly restricted environment. The three largest censorship watchdog groups place Vietnam near the bottom of their international rankings, often a few spots ahead of China, Iran, and North Korea in terms of media and Internet freedoms. In its 2013 Freedom of the Press rankings, for instance, Freedom House labeled the Vietnamese media “not free” (Freedom House 2013: 1). Reporters without Borders (2013) ranks Vietnam number 172 out of 179 countries, a decline that owes to the five arrests of reporters in 2011 and that has remained steady since then. Finally, in its 2012 Attacks on the Press report, the Committee to Protect Journalists (2013) placed Vietnam as the sixth worst nation for bloggers, behind Myanmar and Saudi Arabia but in front of China. In an earlier report, the organization noted a growing clampdown against the media: in 2007, two reporters were imprisoned, while in 2011, that number more than quadrupled to nine journalists and bloggers imprisoned in a single year (Committee to Protect Journalists 2012).

While the rankings correctly suggest a grim picture, it would be an understatement to conclude that the Vietnamese media bow down to state direction and do not pursue their own controversial coverage, which, in nearly all interviews, respondents said were driven by both profit and egalitarian motives. Such a top-heavy picture overlooks the fervor of Vietnamese investigative journalists, and seeing these reporters as state-employed watchdogs goes contrary to the common framework, popular among academic theorists during the early-1990s, of binary opposition between an independent, nonstate affiliated press and civil society that can uphold checks and balances against the state (Cohen and Arato 1992). The logic of this view, taken at face value without added nuance, can easily lead to a false dichotomy between authoritarian censorship and democratic press freedom; in Vietnam, the state maintains checks and balances within, rather than outside, the one-party system, and the press is one-party-supervised institution used to balance off the power of other groupings. The problematic posturing of the media is evidenced in the fact that authoritarianism has not stopped the country’s fiery newspapers, magazines, and news websites in major cities, many of which focus on uncovering corruption and political gossip partially as a way of turning out a profit from general readers. Given the aggressiveness of this sphere of Vietnam’s “civil society” in the face of a one-party regime, a more pertinent question to ask would be “To what extent can the Party, which views the news media both as a propaganda mouthpiece and a watchdog, be seen as both popular as well as authoritarian?”

The case studies in this paper lend support to the idea that press–state relations, far from being strictly authoritarian, are determined by the breakdown of elite consensus and pluralization of Vietnamese society, as well as the rise of money politics, patronage, and models of “bureaucratic socialism”—the last term defined by Porter as “legal-rational centralization with economic liberalization” (Porter 1993: 128). Under this system, the CPV tolerates some criticism, mostly internal, as an instrument of rule, while occasionally and arbitrarily striking down at detractors who venture outside a hazy red line: that is, the writing of these dissidents directly threatens the party-state’s claim to legitimacy, which it bases on combination of economic performance, revolutionary history and national unification (Abuza 2001: 21). Dixon (2004: 25–31) calls

this system "soft-authoritarian corporatism," a reference to a fragmented state that delegates some roles to society in a trend toward gradual pluralization, while maintaining overall control over national development. In a wider theoretical context, this academic lineage places Vietnam in the realm not far from Herbert Marcuse's (1969: 95-137) "repressive tolerance," the idea that some conditions of tolerance serve domination by the state.

"Repressive tolerance" can elucidate the role of the press in Vietnam's one-party but increasingly pluralistic system. In the early-1980s, before Vietnam embarked on its marketization project, the press consisted of a handful of sporadically published newspapers whose circulation suffered from a paper shortage and poverty. In a modification of what Romano (2005: 4–5) calls, "development journalism," or the tendency in some Asian press outlets to support the development goals of the state, the state media advocated for the party line of Marxism–Leninism, and particularly for the state orthodoxy of building national self-reliance through collective efforts following the Second Indochina War. Today, the Party remains in power. However, mainstream newspapers and websites, while diverging regularly on controversial debates over the environment and political corruption, peddle largely homogeneous views that support the legitimacy of the Communist Party and its rightful hold on society—reflecting the trend toward "repressive tolerance" despite a widening media discourse.

One parallel to "repressive tolerance" in the realm of media can be found in the works of Hallin (1989: 116-118), who, in discussing the unrelated topic of American media coverage of the Vietnam War, laid out three "spheres" of discourse: the sphere of consensus, the sphere of legitimate controversy, and the sphere of deviance. The sphere of consensus contains reporting on which there is a widespread agreement, or areas of moral clarity in the United States on topics such as slavery and the equality of all human beings. The sphere of legitimate controversy is a middle ground where reporters feel the need to be objective, balancing several views on which there remains disagreement, such as partisan politics, the use of drone strikes, and universal health coverage in the United States. The sphere of deviance covers outlying views deemed not worthy of consideration, such as tales of alien abductions and unsubstantiated conspiracy theories.

In the more totalitarian Vietnamese media coverage of the late-1970s, the spheres of consensus and deviance steamrolled over the nearly nonexistent sphere of legitimate controversy. This was due to the near-total agreement among conservative elites, led by Le Duan and Le Duc Tho, who commandeered the press and Party journal to promote the 1975 victory over South Vietnam, the collectivization of rice farming, national reconstruction, the 1979 invasion and occupation of Cambodia, and the reeducation of "hostile elements" such as landowners and former government and military officials working for the defunct South Vietnamese state. In other words, Vietnamese journalists, who held trusted party credentials, gave little thought at the time to publishing views lingering in the "sphere of deviance." Before internal Party debates published in the official Communist Party journal became more heated in the late-1970s, these topics would have included gradual marketization and a relaxation of collectivization.

Because of the pluralization of Vietnamese society in the 1990s and 2000s, the middle "sphere of legitimate controversy" has been enlarged, giving the media far greater publishing space. Today, passionate debates occur in the press over political corruption in the police force and the state, various environmental projects, the overall direction of the Party, and Vietnamese society, to name some examples. At the same time, the state-supervised press continues to have a strong sense of the boundaries of the sphere of deviance and sphere of consensus. Despite the increasingly rambunctious rhetorical battles over the implementation and trends in government policy, the Communist Party remains the sole legitimate hand guiding national development, and any voice diverging from this is an outlier in the sphere of deviance. This dynamic places the press in the ironic position of being a state-sanctioned watchdog under state authority, a form of "repressive tolerance" in which journalists are allowed to push the boundaries in an ever-widening "sphere of legitimate controversy."

Understanding the growing role of this "sphere of legitimated controversy" also requires examining Vietnam's semiauthoritarian politics and the expansion of grass-roots civil society networks. Andrew Wells-Dang emphasizes informal networks as a benchmark for measuring the changes in state–society relations over the past three decades. He contends that the one-party state does not have the resources to control—and quite often overlooks—the spread of "informal and virtual networks" that have crept into the state-run "civil society," giving it a more popular mandate outside of state institutions. He argues that the consensus of a civil society based on "corporatist associations or autonomous non-profit organizations" gives the wrongheaded impression that civil society actors report directly to the state apparatus, when they rather comprise an active citizenship contesting the political system over which the Party does not maintain complete domination (Wells-Dang 2012: 4–15). In his examinations of what he calls "rice-roots democracy," Wells-Dang backs this assertion by pointing to the increasing number of public demonstrations (what he calls the "literal" form of political space) and dissenting media and blogging activity (the "virtual" arm), which are both tolerated as long as they do not attack the rule of the Party itself (Wells-Dang 2010: 96).

Likewise, political elites no longer have control over the potpourri of voices in the state-supervised press, so they work in harmony with newspapers while at other times attempting to restrict them when the coverage moves too high on the political food chain. In other words, this thesis is careful neither to underestimate the agency of the media nor to privilege the omniscience of the Party: Politburo elites sometimes receive compliance from reporters and editors through self-censorship and the threat of arrest, but journalists also push the boundaries in a form of fierce resistance (a collision of "top-down" and "bottom-up" forces) motivated by a search for justice as well as profit. As the case studies will demonstrate, when elite consensus collapses and various party groupings openly fight over key issues such as the environment, corruption, and political direction of the Party, the press can skirt punishment, publishing its most aggressive allegations of corruption and environmental degradation. It is only when the media get too bold that they face government reprisals.

Wells-Dang put forward a compelling model looking at nonelites, but when examining the role of the press, it is also necessary to take into account the Party elites who journalists ultimately report to despite growing pluralization. This paper looks to the writings of Martin Gainsborough, who has advanced the idea that Vietnamese elite politics is based predominantly on personality, money, and patronage—to which questions of policy are secondary. In *Vietnam: Rethinking the State*, Gainsborough (2010: 6) summarizes problems with the orthodox view of "reform," preferring to use the more neutral word "marketization," namely, that it overlooks the reality that what people call "policy" is actually "a disparate collection of elite actions and counteractions . . . much less coherent than is thought." The reform paradigm promotes an illusory division between the CPV's "reformist" and "conservative" factions, which are constantly changing and not based on policy (Gainsborough 2010: 140). With this paradigm in mind, this paper also uses the word "marketization" except in cases where the author is quoting or summarizing the views expressed in other documents or interviews.

Gainsborough partially frames Vietnamese politics in terms of the logic of decentralization and "recentralization." He applies this model to explain the rise in corruption cases brought against large businesses since the late-1990s, arguing that these court charges constitute "thrusts toward recentralization" in which "the centre has sought to regain the initiative" after ceding power to decentralized business interests (Gainsborough 2010: 152). However, the "center" brings these and other allegations forward without much coherency or predictability. Gainsborough (2010: 71) thus suggests that the Party (and its loose factions) use "uncertainty" as an "instrument of rule." What does Gainsborough's framework mean for an understanding of Vietnamese civil society and more specifically for the state-run press? Kerkvliet, for one, has noted a parallel pattern of vagueness in the jailing of activists. Analyzing the arrests of dissidents since the 1990s, he points out that even a revolutionary family background and strong party credentials do not always protect a critic from imprisonment, and that while many dissidents lose their jobs and are jailed, the Party tolerates criticism with "unevenness" (Kerkvliet 2010: 14–15). Taking this hypothesis further, the system simply lacks the reach and resources to punish every transgressor, preferring to discipline a handful of exemplars to keep the rest in line. (I am thankful to David Brown, a former American diplomat in Vietnam, for raising this point.) In other words, as goes a Chinese proverb, "Kill one to warn a hundred." The phrase was chosen for the title for this paper because of its parallels with the situation in Vietnam. In China, the axiom gained popularity in March 2009, when the Chinese government shut down a dissident law firm, Yitong, for taking on several controversial cases (Human Rights in China 2009).

McKinley has used Gainsborough's work to document the rise of the more decentralized, but still state-supervised, mass media (alongside a growing business sector, underlying their profit motive) in correlation with the economic and political growth of Ho Chi Minh City in the 1990s, where the most widely read newspapers are now based (Gainsborough 2003; McKinley 2007). These southern newspapers, such as *Tuoi Tre* and *Thanh Nien*, which are circulated all over the country, are more distant

from the "center" in Hanoi. The expanse is reflected in the greater liberties they take in publishing controversial articles on corruption and environmental degradation, as well as in the relative financial independence of newspapers in Ho Chi Minh City run by youth organizations rather than the Communist Party proper. In her three quantitative studies, McKinley charts out the surfeit of news articles that expose corruption in the south, noting that fewer newspapers expose corruption when they are "close to the sun" (McKinley 2007: 24–26; McKinley 2008: 5–9; McKinley 2009: 18–22).

To finish, a brief comparison with China, which has experienced a similarly boisterous story of economic growth, may help flesh out the factors that lead Vietnam to employ the press in this way. Vietnamese leaders act in the presence of elite institutions that, compared to China, "require construction of broader coalitions of policymakers, place more constraints on executive decision making, and have more competitive selection processes," argue Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng (2011, 409). Nonetheless, the broader paradigm of "recentralization" and media as an internal "checks and balances" tool stands in both countries. The use of the Chinese media to discipline corrupt officials became prominent in the 1990s under Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, when China was relaxing its markets and decentralizing its system in a parallel manner to what Vietnam did over the same decade. Parallels are to be found in the work of Peter Lorentzen, who, describing muckraking journalism after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake in China, pinpoints a remarkably similar pattern in which the Party allowed press coverage that painted a negative picture of corrupt lower level officials, both out of its pragmatic interests of disciplining them, and because the Beijing party center simply could not control newspaper articles about such a catastrophic event. Similar to the situation reported by media research subjects during periods of open reporting in Vietnam, there was also evidence in China of strife at the top level. Both the state-supervised media and civil society groups were given free rein in the disaster zone, even though many admitted in survey by Beijing Normal University that they depended on government connections to get access to the area (Shieh and Deng 2011: 185–87). Lorentzen (2011: 2) writes,

> The implicit theory of reformers versus oppressors, while commonplace in discussions both of China and of other authoritarian regimes, does a poor job of explaining the evolution and current state of China's media environment . . . Instead, the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] is consciously making use of journalists as a check on corruption and poor performance in lower levels of government.

Other China-focused accounts support the model. Liebman contends that judiciary–media relations in China can be characterized by "competitive supervision," meaning the Party uses the media as an informal mechanism to keep the reins on lower level courts. Media coverage "encourages Communist Party officials to intervene in the courts, reaffirming Party oversight of the judiciary and producing rushed trials in which assuaging populist demands for harsh treatment of defendants is more important than legal standards," he writes (Liebman 2011: 834).

Background: *Doi Moi* and the Need for Vietnamese Muckraking

As the literature suggests, the Vietnamese party-state, like in China, sees the press as a tool for managing decentralization and factionalism, even if journalists are partially free in pursuing these stories. This pattern owes to the state's changing political and economic needs during *Doi Moi*, the market reform of the mid-1980s. In 1986, the CPV tasked the media (at the time consisting of five scantly circulated newspapers because of a paper shortage) with addressing popular grievances over low-level corruption, which had contributed to the economic crisis and food shortages under the post-1976 collectivization attempts (Heng 1998: 32–34). This media restructuring, however, put the press in the awkward position: all publications were (as they continue to be) wholly or owned partially by the state, but were suddenly being ordered to locate corruption within it. McKinley points to this development as the first reason why leaders have been able to take an ad hoc attitude toward the media since the early-1990s (McKinley 2009).

The CPV, cautious about the effects of a boisterous press, reinforced its arbitrary capabilities by passing a conflicting juxtaposition of laws, decrees, and constitutional amendments that permitted media criticism while essentially making it a crime. At the height of legislative changes in 1990, the government pushed through the Press Law, which gave reporters the legal right to gather their own information and made it a crime to obstruct their work. In a contrarian fashion, though, the law stipulated that the media must act as a "forum for the people" while being a "mouthpiece of the Party," opening them to subjective criminal charges (Hayton 2010: 142). In a more widely reaching move in 1992, the government passed a new Constitution that essentially guaranteed freedom of speech while, through various laws, making criticism of the CPV an offense. Under this legal framework, all newspapers were required to legally answer to the MIC and Ministry of Public Security. Today, the MIC continues to hold a weekly meeting with top editors every Tuesday morning to review the previous week's coverage and to discuss the permissibility of the next week's stories (Hayton 2010).

As literacy rose and readership widened, the state quickly ceded to demands for more newspapers that could clean up corruption and aid the nascent marketization project. Throughout the late-1980s and early-1990s, more publications opened, putting out different views representing various orbits outside the administrative center in Hanoi, while the existing ones expanded with new bureaus despite ultimately answering to the Politburo. Those at the periphery today still have more, albeit limited, room to pursue controversial stories (McKinley 2007). These proximities are reflected in the fact that Vietnam's two largest outspoken newspapers are based in Ho Chi Minh City and are run by communist youth unions that are central to the party proper but pursue reformist stories to fulfill their profit role for their respective organizations. To name the most well-known example, *Tuổi Trẻ* (Youth), which operates under the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Organization, is the country's most-read newspaper with a daily circulation of 400,000. Its rival, *Thanh Niên*, is the official paper of the Ho Chi

Minh Youth League and runs 280,000 copies daily. Smaller progressive papers in the city include *Tiền Phong* (Vanguard) and *Sài Gòn Giải Phóng* (Saigon Liberation). The three most progovernment outlets, however, are based in Hanoi. *Nhân Dân* (The People) is the official newspaper of the CPV Central Committee and one of the five newspapers already running at the time *Doi Moi* began in 1986. *Lao Động* (Labor) is the publication of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, the party's umbrella union organization, and does not publish its circulation numbers. The Vietnam News Agency is the official state wire service, which publishes a progovernment newspaper, *Vietnam News*.

Vietnam was a latecomer to legalize the Internet in 1997, soon allowing the media to reach a wider audience and to include a more diverse set of voices. The mid-2000s, in particular, marked the rapid expansion of Internet journalism that was loosely state-controlled. In 2000, 0.3 percent of the population, or two hundred thousand people, were Internet users; in 2011, that number was 34 percent or 31 million users (Vietnam Internet Network Information Center [VNNIC] 2012). In 2007, the liberal and partially state-owned news site VietNamNet joined the list of the country's most popular online publications, claiming to attract 4 million viewers who generated one hundred million page views per day (Nguyen 2007). The website pushed the limits in uncovering government and business malaise and contributed to the professionalization of Vietnamese journalism by sending its reporters to trainings around the world.

Despite intermittent crackdowns mostly in the late-1990s, the rise of Internet journalism was the last significant development in an overall trajectory toward a strong, party-credentialed press corps that could enforce checks and balances within, rather than from outside, the CPV. In 2003, the central party-state got precisely the victory it wanted out of its growing press, when investigative reporters helped implicate Ho Chi Minh City mafia boss Nam Cam, along with his city government cronies who resisted police investigations. In 2004, Nam Cam and four other gang members were executed (Vasavakul 2003). Quickly, however, the CPV "center" realized it had unleashed a potential threat and had to curb the growing autonomy of the press during Vietnam's largest corruption scandal in the last decade, the Project Management Unit 18 (PMU-18) Affair from 2006 to 2008. The imbroglio revealed that journalists were indeed willing to publish investigations that went as high as the prime minister's office and that increasingly scattered party factions would go to great lengths to leverage the press in their favor during these scandals. The problems began in January 2006, when *Nguoi Lao Dong* revealed that the arrest of a low-level traffic officer, who had bet $1.8 million in Japanese and World Bank aid money on soccer matches, for petty bribery had led detectives up to the head of a corporation. Digging deeper, reporters found that the chair of the state's best-funded development agency, PMU-18, a body charged with road-building projects for the Ministry of Transport, had overseen the gambling ring. *Thanh Nien* and *Tuoi Tre* ran stories incriminating PMU-18's then-boss, Nguyen Viet Tien, who was quickly arrested for diverting the donor funds (Hayton 2010).

In a rarity, newspapers all over the country published articles and op-eds pummeling the national ministerial leadership—a topic that was almost always off-limits under the *Doi Moi* media model. But in April 2006, the reversal of fortunes started

when *Thanh Nien* went too far, publishing bribery allegations against PMU-18's new director, *Đặng Hoàng Hải*. He was the son-in-law of one of the most powerful men in the country at the time, then-CPV General Secretary Nông Đức Mạnh. Despite being sentenced to thirteen years in prison in 2007, along with seven others, he never served the sentence; the party suspended the investigation against him and then, in August 2008, arrested and sentenced two respected journalists who unearthed the allegations, while *Tuoi Tre* fired two editors who oversaw the coverage (Hayton 2010). This period marked a significant decline in press and online freedoms, with several bloggers also arrested in the mid- and late-2000s. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has also stepped up censorship by signing the Decree on Cultural and Information Activities, stipulating that reporters could be fined for writing articles that relied on anonymous sources and required articles to be reviewed by the state before publication (Government of Vietnam 2006). Decree No. 2, signed in January 2011, also laid down fines of $50 to $2,000 when journalists fail to "provide honest domestic and international news in accordance with the interests of the country and the people" (Human Rights Watch 2011). However, the edicts, like most in Vietnam, are only enforced when political elites decide to punish someone.

Case Study I: Vinashin and the Eleventh Party Congress

The first case study will demonstrate how patronage, factionalism, and personality influenced press coverage of the near-bankruptcy of the state-run shipbuilder Vinashin in 2010 and 2011, and the subsequent eleventh Party Congress to which it is linked. The press became a two-pronged party tool: first, for circumventing the bureaucratic procedures in the Ministry of Public Security to "punish" provincial-level Vinashin executives, and to discredit Prime Minister Dung right before he was up for reelection at the eleventh Party Congress. Vinashin was the crown jewel of Dung's SOEs, and the dependency of these companies was part of a project to model state companies after the South Korean *chaebol* (Malesky, Schuler, et al. 2011), or sprawling conglomerates that drive national development. The government doled out billions of dollars to Vinashin, hoping to turn Vietnam into the world's fourth biggest shipbuilder by 2018. By 2007, the company was taking advantage of its state backing and funding from foreign investors to open one subsidiary every one and half days in noncore areas such as hotels, motorbike manufacturing, and fruit sales (Cheshier 2009), and by 2010, it had branched out inefficiently into 300 noncore units (Hayton 2010).

In August 2010, the company nearly collapsed under $4.4 billion worth of debt, equivalent to 5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), a cataclysm that ignited a press frenzy as reporters blamed the company's poor governance and management practices, and speculated about complacency among political leaders. Large state newspapers and analysts capitalized on a state audit that month that alleged gross negligence on the part of top executives, who signed relationship-based contracts that served little economic value, and who invested in fourteen provinces as a way of diversifying support from the Central Committee (Malesky, Schuler, et al. 2011). In August 2010, Vinashin chairman Pham Thanh Binh was arrested and, in December,

the conglomerate defaulted on the $400 million Credit Suisse loan. In March 2012, eight executives were sentenced including the CEO, who was handed twenty years in prison (Hookway 2012).

As to be expected in this press model of recentralization driven by elites, coverage at first focused on provincial-level corruption and did not go higher than this informal mandate. Furthermore, because it followed pattern of exposing corruption right before Congresses often to shore up votes (Malesky, Schuler and Tran 2011: 337-339), the conundrum was being treated as a political rather than a law enforcement issue. This is evidenced by the fact that the debt quandary was first brought up to the press through the Party Inspection Committee, the body charged with auditing and disciplining party members, according to three editors in Hanoi (Anonymous Editor 2010a, 2010b; Anonymous Journalist 2010c) and corroborated by Thayer's analysis (Thayer 2010a). This political body reported to Sang as then-head of the Party Secretariat at the time. Usually, such as during the PMU-18 Affair, allegations have been released to the press via the traditional route of the Ministry of Public Security but not this time. As the Vinashin project was advocated by Dung, who as head of government had the power to appoint police leaders, the debacle became the cause célèbre of political rivals seeking a Party, rather than government, solution outside of his immediate grip (Thayer 2010a).

Two editors and one journalist said this oddity was widely noticed and exploited, because the newspapers hoped to cover a corruption scandal that could rival PMU-18 (Anonymous Journalist 2010c, 2010d, 2010e). "When the factions fight, we can write about pretty much anything we want," said one reporter at *Tuoi Tre*, "but only if it will be accepted politically," referring to his rule of thumb of not publishing allegations of wrongdoing too high in the hierarchy.

> On the one hand, we felt the pressure to make a profit, because even though we are [sic] doing well on money, we cannot let go of the chance to investigate and expose corrupt officials so we can sell papers. But we also felt a sense of justice. This was a serious problem in Vietnam and most reporters enter this field and criticize the government for justice, not money.

Further supporting Gainsborough's model of media–party relations, another editor added that the government's notion of "politically acceptable" is left purposefully vague, opening newspapers up to harassment should they cross the hazy line. For instance, at one weekly editorial meeting with the MIC, another high-ranking editor said that journalists were repeatedly given orders to "act in the interests of the people" and to "find solutions for the Party" when covering corruption in Vinashin, but that MIC officials would not clarify the precise meaning of this statement.

Their statements appear to be corroborated by the Party's written stance toward news reporting on the scandal, summarized in *Tạp chí Cộng Sản* (Communist Review), the official party journal. The publication put forward a press strategy that emphasizes "finding effective solutions for re-structuring," and in an analysis by one professor,

urges the Party to punish those responsible as a way of sowing political legitimacy (Vuong 2010: 43). The author further writes,

> While public attention has been given in particular to the arrest of a number of Vinashin's senior managers and the appointment of new top managers for the Group, there has been insufficient critical review and analysis of the causes of Vinashin's difficult situation, the evidence of corporate revitalization or of the work done by the members of the group in the last few months to restore confidence in the "brand" of one of Vietnam's biggest companies. (Vuong 2010: 43)

One mid-level MIC official (Anonymous 2011) backed this position in an interview, although he would not comment on the precise contents of those press meetings. He suggested that the Party was balancing the need to criticize SOE managers against the necessity of protecting its own legitimacy (by, he specified, showing readers that the government was trying to clean up corruption rather than partaking in it).

Although four of the most-read state-run newspapers and websites—*Tuoi Tre, Thanh Nien*, VietNamNet, and Nhan Dhan—did not directly incriminate the prime minister, they were given a party-sponsored opportunity to connect him to the debacle during his self-criticism session before the National Assembly on November 24, 2010. On national television, Dung took personal responsibility for the "government's shortcomings and weaknesses" that led to the conglomerate's downfall (Ruwitch 2010). Around the same time, from November 24 to 26, the four main newspapers began shifting their coverage away from the arrested executives and toward the prime minister's role in promoting the SOE model. From November 10 to 23, four out of eleven *Tuoi Tre* front pages surveyed and five out of eleven *Thanh Nien* front pages carried articles on the Vinashin executives, as well as broader SOE inefficiencies pegged to the Vinashin scandal. From November 24 to 29, all four front pages in each newspaper carried stories analyzing Dung's presumed admission of guilt, even though they did not tie it into big-picture political maneuvering before the Congress. This suggests that some Party elites were cautiously gaming the press system to make an example of Dung, but taking care not to unleash a PMU-18-style scandal, an unintended consequence that could upset the leadership transition.

Such a reality is further evidenced by the fact that the pioneering site VietNamNet faced a swift strike. The website took more liberties in writing about state corruption and unspecified leadership than other newspapers (O'Flaherty 2011). On January 4, 2011, one week before the congress was set to begin, the MIC removed Nguyen Anh Tuan, the website's quasi-celebrity founder, from his post, and the website came under a series of hacking attacks from a mysterious origin (O'Flaherty 2011). Press commentators used the label "murky" to describe the situation, because they could not figure out which coverage prompted the attacks and removal, and why other newspapers were not being targeted for similar reporting (O'Flaherty 2011: 2); rather, it seemed the Party was striking strategically before the Congress as a preemption and warning.

Two months after the prime minister's public self-criticism, the eleventh Party Congress commenced from January 11 to 19, 2011. There was a general reluctance, even among *Tuoi Tre* and *Thanh Nien*, to publish bold reporting as they have done on topics like the environment and local-level corruption. A weekly internal briefing from *Tuoi Tre* on January 16, 2011, summarizes the strategy of publishing interviews with top officials who have more freedom to talk openly about the party's problems, but there is no mention of pursuing on-the-ground investigative reporting. It writes,

> The stories of those who are the journalists writing about the Party, concerning issues of corruption and waste relevant to Party members and the people are still a serious issue. But . . . the voices of insiders . . . have made the content not as heavy. With current events we're making a focus on "Hope" and "Youth and Great Challenges," with Tuoi Tre's opinions being expressed, though in a composed and subtle manner . . . We've been able to distinguish ourselves from the other newspapers with our exclusives relating to problems within the Party. We've had two consecutive news issues that have pursued such problems, and we are going to organize an interview raising every point of view regarding essential issues that the Party must address. (*Tuoi Tre* 2011: 3)

The briefing goes on to explain some reluctance to take the investigative reporting too far during a sensitive time. It raises a quibble over a front-page story, on January 12, 2011, which made the error of displaying wrinkled voting ballots with Ho Chi Minh's portrait—a sort of blasphemy that could be used as a pretext for punishment.

> This is the first time ever that party members have been seen withdrawing voting cards so sloppily, and with a photo of Uncle Ho on the party cards at that! We could be cited for using a photo in this manner. (*Tuoi Tre* 2011: 3)

Such an example shows a cautious and self-censoring press during this period, and with this relative quaintness, the Central Committee delegates continued meeting until January 19 with no significant leadership or policy changes. The Vinashin issue hurt Dung, but leaders did not allow the press to reach as far as PMU-18 once did. Dung resisted attempts to be ousted and was reelected to a second five-year term, while his main rival Sang was elected the president of Vietnam as he retained power in the Politburo rather than government. (It is still unclear precisely how Dung survived this test despite facing low popularity.) More than one year later, the *Communist Review* released a summary praising the press for "continuing to implement the resolutions of the 11th Party Congress," and reinforcing a vague role in helping the party curb economic problems.

> Over the past one year, the press and publication services have fulfilled their socio-political functions, contributing to disseminating the Party's political tasks, important solutions of the Government on inflation control, prevention of economic downturn, stabilization of macro economy, and insurance of social security for sustainable development. (Doan 2012: 1)

Case Study 2: Bauxite Mining, "Elite Resistance," and Press Coverage

This case study demonstrates how, similar to the Vinashin episode, the press can report widely on a provincial-level environmental issue with national market implications. Like Vinashin reporting, this case also reveals more about the responsiveness of the party to other elites and to the press, opening up space for muckraking journalists when "elite resistance" from the top flares up against these local officials. Vietnam is estimated to hold 5.4 billion tons of bauxite ore, thought to be among the largest number of reserves in the world. About 4.4 billion of those reserves are in Dak Nong, one of the poorest provinces in the Central Highlands, while the rest is primarily located in the nearby Lam Dong and Dak Lak provinces (US Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City 2009). The highly valued mineral is strip mined as the raw material for alumina, which in turn can be refined into aluminum (although Vietnam does not have the technological prowess to accomplish this yet). Local officials backed the state-run mining company, Vinacomin, in a plan approved by the prime minister in 2009 that included China's state-run mining giant, Chalco (Thayer 2010b).

Supporters of the proposal, and especially provincial elites from the Dak Nong People's Committee, argued that the revenue from tapping into the reserves would greatly enrich living standards among the impoverished population (US Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City 2009). What is revealing from press coverage of the bauxite controversy, however, was how a flood of "elite resistance" suddenly swept across Vietnam, pitting mainly mainstream elites against provincial party elites and affecting media policy in a manner consistent with Gainsborough's hypothesis. This was an incident that touched on the party's performance legitimacy, because "for the first time the government to decide on large-scale development projects was called into question by a broad national coalition of mainstream elites" (Thayer 2010b: 52). He adds, "When Vietnam's one-party state is confronted by challenges from within the party or from the elite, it reacts in a partly responsive manner," going back to the model of repressive responsiveness that is widely agreed upon in the civil society literature, regardless of the disagreements as to how civil society is structured (Thayer 2010b: 63).

In January 2009, the bauxite issue was suddenly enflamed in the media when the war-era hero General Vo Nguyen Giap issued an open letter (the first of three) to the main state-owned newspapers, arguing that the project would displace minorities, destroy the Dong Nai/Saigon River system, and threaten national security with the arrival of Chinese workers who would give China economic influence (Thayer 2010b). Giap released two more letters up until May 2009, and by that month, it was clear that a loose coalition of antibauxite activists had emerged, consisting of scientists, environmentalists, bloggers, politicians, and intellectuals. Emotions ran high in part because of the revolutionary general's involvement. In April and May, the government, which officially supported the idea, was forced to make public displays of caution toward the plan. For instance, the prime minister permitted the National Assembly to carry out its own reviews of mining practices (Thayer 2010b).

The bauxite scenario sat at the juncture of three sensitive subjects: the path of economic reform, the resulting environmental degradation, and relations with China. The confluence of these factors, along with elite involvement, led the press to be permitted to report more widely as the Party attempted to manage all these interests. Not all the media commentary was negative; however, a fact that reflects on the media's conflicted role in the state along with the genuine beliefs of some that, with safeguards, the project should go forward. The author's interviews line up with the media account given by the American embassy, commenting on a May 2009 National Assembly debate over the matter:

> This "balanced" approach has prevailed in the media's coverage of the National Assembly's debate, particularly after the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) submitted its May 23 report to the NA, as required by the April 26 Politburo directive announced by Standing Secretary Sang. As usual, VietNamNet's widely circulated e-newspaper provided the most thorough coverage, but other outlets such as Tuoi Tre also sought to contrast statements in favor of bauxite development from Central Highland provinces Dac Nong and Lam Dong with opinions from other deputies who oppose the project on environmental, economic, or "national security" grounds . . . A critical report prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment detailing the potential environmental fallout from bauxite development, was for example, given fairly wide play (U.S. Embassy Hanoi 2009).

For Vietnamese reporters, a number of conflicting initiatives from the top of the Politburo led to a confused and vague situation. When the public debate broke out in 2009, editorial staffers at VietnamNet were told not to cover the more controversial side of the bauxite projects, an order that came from then-propaganda committee chairman To Huy Rua, according to leaked American cables. Less than two weeks later, however, President Truong Tan Sang, who Rua ultimately reported to, reversed the decision, telling editors to cover both sides of the issue (U.S. Embassy Hanoi 2009), and signifying that Rua, a revolutionary ideologue, was subject to his more pragmatic, nonideological overseers. From the author's interviews and one published report, it appears that this decision was classically "soft authoritarian": the press was being utilized to please elite "resistors" hoping for more dialogue (Thayer 2010b: 48), while reining in nonstate blogs that were taking advantage of the issue to advocate multiparty democracy (Nguyen 2012: 1).

Two editors in Ho Chi Minh City affirmed that moderation was intended to offset the growing popularity of antibauxite blogs, particularly boxit.vn, while retaining credibility as a factual paper balancing both sides (Anonymous Editor 2011a, 2011b). Two other Hanoi-based journalists (Anonymous Journalist 2011c, 2011d) said they came under pressure from the MIC to label these blogs "reactionary," a label that indeed appeared in the printed press describing blogs (Nguyen 2012). The government antipathy toward these bloggers was evidenced further when, in March 2010, Google published allegations that computers downloading Vietnamese keyboard software were being infected with malware, which was then hijacking host computers to launch denial of service attacks on antibauxite blogs (Mehta 2010).

Around the same time, environmental reporting became a centerpiece of Vietnamese political journalism in relatively liberal news sources such as *Tuoi Tre, Thanh Nien*, and VietnamNet. This revealed how newspapers were pushing the boundaries on what is acceptable in taking on their state-sanctioned "anticorruption" role, because environmental issues had attention from elites and the scandals started with local mismanagement more than Hanoi-based stakeholders. In a survey of sixty daily front pages of *Thanh Nien* and *Tuoi Tre* from October 20, 2010 to December 20, 2010, forty-one of their front pages, or 68 percent, carried at least one environmental story. This is compared with approximately 10 percent of front pages surveyed from the same newspapers from June 20 to August 20, 2010, when environmentalism had subsided. One journalist said the rising interest in the environment, and particularly bauxite mining, grew further when, in October 2010, one million cubic meters of "red mud" were accidentally released from an alumina plant in Hungary. The incident killed seven people in what was known as the Ajka alumina plant accident (Kenarov 2011), which became front-page news in most large Hanoi-based and Ho Chi Minh City-based newspapers the next day. Catering to elites who had good standing within the system, state-run papers had to cover the Hungary fiasco in detail to please their tastes, said one reporter (Anonymous Journalist 2011e).

In the end, widespread press coverage as a result of elite resistance did not stop the government from going forward with the economically lucrative plan. In November 2012, the first refinery in Tan Rai was commissioned (Mok 2012). This case study has demonstrated, rather, how a flare-up of press coverage comprised one tool in a debate that forced other elites to make concessions. For example, it prompted the National Assembly to gather powers that allowed it to more directly audit provincial business-minded bureaucrats. The controversy, in essence, was one based on personality, with the involvement of Giap, and that pitted voices from around the nation against mainly local officials who aggressively lobbied for their plan.

Conclusion

Starting with the Tien Lang affair and weaving through some of Vietnam's most heated political, economic, and environmental coverage, this paper has demonstrated how the country's state-sanctioned press operates under a mandate closely linked to patronage and decentralization. This essentially makes newspaper operations partially free, but this study has further clarified why it would make little sense to fall back on a dichotomous framework of a watchdog press versus an authoritarian state. Rather, a more apt approach is to examine the role of "uncertainty" in Party rule as it allows the press to pursue stories that are strategic to its interests. However, it would be unwise to downplay the media's own agency in pursuing stories outside of elite direction, whether out of the pursuit of profit or a commendable desire to see justice done.

Alongside a literature review, this has been accomplished through a fieldwork approach gathering the views of journalists, editors, mid-level MIC officials, and others. A field-based approach can help clarify and add to the existing literature,

especially on questions over how media pressure is exerted, where censorship comes from, and how journalists react, comply, or resist. In a broader significance, studying the press reveals much about how the Vietnamese political elite sees itself and the role of its civil society, specifically under Dixon's (2004: 31) "soft corporatist-authoritarianism." Such a framework suggests that Party elites see themselves as cautiously but chaotically navigating the new era of markets—but only as long as it has tools to ensure the market project does not threaten the rent-seeking interests of national business-party elites.

What wider implications does this study have for research on nominally communist states experiencing economic growth without corresponding political openings? In Vietnam, it suggests that a strict, top-down institutional model can give the false impression that many of these states hold direct command over their state-run civil societies, when the picture is more complex and includes a variegated number of actors (even if many of them are elites). More often, erratic censorship can be explained through the rise of decentralized economic groups, prompting the party to go on Gainsborough's "thrusts" of recentralization. This model can be applied in future research on the comparative journalism of transitional states, such as in Myanmar, China, and Cuba, where elites, for reasons not always clear, have let down old ways and guided their countries toward the goal of marketization, while attempting to keep a hold on press reporting. This view necessarily goes beyond the orthodox view of "reformers" and "conservatives," opening up greater possibilities for understanding that a sphere of writers, reporters, and intellectuals—one arm of civil society—can be both repressed and raucous.

Author's Note

The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. government.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank all the journalists, editors, scholars, media businesspeople, and government officials who agreed to interviews, but who wished to remain anonymous due to the sensitive nature of this work. For their insightful comments, gratitude also goes to Tat Yan Kong, Enze Han, Bill Hayton, and David Brown, and a number of Vietnam scholars who also asked not to be named.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This paper is based on a related research project carried out under a Fulbright grant from 2010 to 2011.

References

Abuza, Z. 2001. *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*. London: Lynne Rienner.

Brown, D. 2012. "Vietnam's Press Comes of Age." *Asia Times Online* [Hong Kong], February 18. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/NB18Ae02.html (accessed June 20, 2012).

Cheshier, S. 2009. "State Corporations, Financial Instability and Industrialisation in Viet Nam." UNDP Vietnam Policy Dialogue Paper, Hanoi.

Cohen, J., and A. Arato. 1992. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2012. "Attacks on the Press in 2011: Vietnam." http://cpj.org/2012/02/attacks-on-the-press-in-2011-vietnam.php (accessed July 5, 2012).

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2013. "Attacks on the Press in 2012: Vietnam." http://www.cpj.org/2013/02/attacks-on-the-press-in-2012-vietnam.php (accessed September 20, 2013).

Dixon, C. 2004. "State, Party and Political Change in Vietnam." In *Rethinking Vietnam*, ed. Duncan McCargo, 25–31. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Doan, D. Q. 2012. "A Review of the Media Communication and Key Tasks in the Future." *Tạp chí Cộng Sản (Communist Review)* 15 (6/818): 1.

Freedom House. 2013. "Freedom of the Press 2013. Global Press Freedom Rankings." http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Global%20and%20regional%20tables.pdf (accessed September 20, 2013).

Gainsborough, M. 2003. *Changing Political Economy of Vietnam: The Case of Ho Chi Minh City*. London: Routledge.

Gainsborough, M. 2010. *Vietnam: Rethinking the State*. London: Zed.

Government of Vietnam. 2006. Decree No. 56/2006/ND-CP of June 6, 2006 on Sanctioning Administrative Violations in Cultural and Information Activities, 5-12.

Hallin, D.C. 1989. *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hayton, B. 2010. *Vietnam: Rising Dragon*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Heng, R. 1998. "Media in Vietnam and the Structure of its Management." In *Mass Media of Vietnam*, ed. David Marr, 32–34. Canberra: Australian National University.

Hookway, J. 2012. "Vinashin Executive Gets Prison Sentence." *The Wall Street Journal*, April 2. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303816504577317682973934846.html (accessed September 30, 2013).

Human Rights in China. 2009. "Killing One to Warn 100 (杀一儆百): The Shutdown of Yitong Law Firm." http://www.hrichina.org/content/3696 (accessed May 24, 2013).

Human Rights Watch. 2011. "Vietnam: New Decree Punishes Press." http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/23/vietnam-new-decree-punishes-press (accessed September 20, 2013).

Kenarov, D. 2011. "Recalculating 'Normal' in Hungarian Disaster Zone." *Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting*, June 9. http://pulitzercenter.org/articles/hungary-toxic-sludge-recalculating-normal-ajka-alumina-disaster (accessed 9 August, 2012).

Kerkvliet, B. 2010. "State Authorities' Actions toward Regime Dissidents in Contemporary Vietnam." Paper presented at Southeast Asia Research Center, City University of Hong Kong, June 29.

Liebman, B.L. 2011. "The Media and the Courts: Towards Competitive Supervision?" *The China Quarterly*, 208: 833–850.

Lorentzen, P. 2011. "Strategic Censorship." *Social Science Research Network* Working Paper Series. http://ssrn.com/abstract=2101862 (accessed September 30, 2013).

Malesky, E., R. Abrami, and Y. Zheng. 2011. "Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China." *Comparative Politics* 43 (4): 409–27.

Malesky, E., P. Schuler, and A. Tran. 2011. "Vietnam: Familiar Patterns and New Developments Ahead of the 11th Party Congress." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2011:337–63.

Marcuse, H. 1969. "Repressive Tolerance." In *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, ed. Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore and Herbert Marcuse. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 95–137.

Marr, D. G. 2012. "Vietnam's High-Profile Land Dispute." *Inside Story* [Australia], March 23. http://inside.org.au/vietnam-high-profile-land-dispute/ (accessed September 30, 2013).

McKinley, C. 2007. "Can a State-Owned Media Effectively Monitor Corruption? A Study of Vietnam's Printed Press." *Asian Journal of Public Affairs* 2 (1): 12–38.

McKinley, C. 2008. "A Study of the Vietnamese Press' Coverage of Land Issues As They Relate to Poverty Reduction." Ford Foundation Paper, Hanoi, Vietnam.

McKinley, C. 2009. "Media and Corruption: How Has Vietnam's Print Media Covered Corruption and How Can Coverage Be Strengthened?" UNDP Vietnam Policy Paper, Hanoi.

McKinley, C. 2012. "Policy Brief for Donors on the Tien Lang and Hung Yen Ecopark Land Eviction Cases." Vietnam Media Development and Coordination Initiative, Coordinated by Embassy of Switzerland, June 26.

Mehta, N. 2010. "The Chilling Effects of Malware." *Google Online Security Blog*. http://googleonlinesecurity.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/chilling-effects-of-malware.html (accessed May 15, 2012).

Mok, Y.C. 2012. "Vietnam Vinacomin commissions country's first alumina refinery." *Platts*, November 28. http://www.platts.com/latest-news/metals/singapore/vietnam-vinacomin-commissions-countrys-first-7290499 (accessed October 29, 2013).

Nguyen, A. T. 2007. "From VietNet to VietNamNet: Ten Years of Electronic Media in Vietnam." Discussion Papers Series, No. D-43. Cambridge, MA: Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/d43_nguyen.pdf (accessed September 30, 2013).

Nguyen, H. 2012. "Internet Stirs Activism in Vietnam." *YaleGlobal*, May 11. http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/internet-stirs-activism-vietnam (accessed September 1, 2012).

O'Flaherty, B. 2011. "Vietnam's Murky Media Picture." *The Diplomat*, March 10. http://the-diplomat.com/2011/03/10/vietnam%E2%80%99s-murky-media-picture/ (accessed June 25, 2012).

Porter, G. 1993. *Vietnam: The Politics of Bureaucratic Socialism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Reporters without Borders. 2013. "Press Freedom Index 2013." http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2013,1054.html (accessed September 20, 2013).

Romano, A. 2005. "Asian Journalism: News, Development and the Tides of Liberalization and Technology." In *Journalism and Democracy in Asia*, ed. Angela Romano and Michael Bromley. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–14.

Ruwitch, J. 2010. "Vietnam PM Takes Some Responsibility for Shipbuilder." *Reuters*, November 24. http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/11/24/vietnam-politics-idUSSGE6AN02Y20101124 (accessed June 25, 2012).

Shieh, S., and G. Deng. 2011. "An Emerging Civil Society: The Impact of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake on Grassroots Associations in China." *China Journal* 65 (January): 181–94.

Thayer, C. A. 2010a. "Background Brief: Vinashin's Difficulties and the National Party Congress." Thayer Consultancy http://www.scribd.com/doc/34555545/Thayer-Vietnam-Vinashin-s-Difficulties-and-the-Party-Congress (accessed July 18, 2010).

Thayer, C. A. 2010b. "Political Legitimacy of Vietnam's One-Party State: Challenge and Response." *Politics & Policy* 38 (3): 423–44.

Tuoi Tre. 2011. "THÔNG TIN TÒA SOẠN, Từ 10 đến 16/01/2011." Internal Newsroom Weekly Review at *Tuoi Tre*, obtained in January 2011.

U.S. Embassy Hanoi. 2009. "Bauxite Controversy Produces Leadership Divisions, Vibrant National Assembly Debate, Cable Reference 09HANOI537." http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09HANOI537.html (accessed September 30, 2013).

U.S. Consulate General, Ho Chi Minh City. 2009. "Deeper Digging into Vietnam's Bauxite Debate Uncovers As Many New Questions As Answers." Cable Reference Ho Chi Minh City 575." http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09HOCHIMINHCITY575.html (accessed September 30, 2013).

Vasavakul, T. 2003. "Mapping Vietnam's Legal Culture: Reflections on Corruption, Organized Crime, and State Building in the Post-socialist Era." Conference Paper presented at Vietnam Legal Culture Symposium, Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives, University of Victoria, Canada, March 27–29.

Vietnam Internet Network Information Center. 2012. "Internet Statistics." http://en.vnnic.vn (accessed September 30, 2012).

Vuong, Q. H. 2010. "Restructuring Vinashin: Symmetric Information on the Enterprise's Business Is Needed." *Tạp chí Cộng Sản (Communist Review)* 81 (12/818): 40–44.

Wells-Dang, A. 2010. "Political Space in Vietnam: A View from the 'Rice-Roots.'" *Pacific Review* 23 (1): 93–112.

Wells-Dang, A. 2012. *Civil Society Networks in China and Vietnam: Informal Pathbreakers in Health and the Environment*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Interviews with Author

Anonymous Editor. 2010a. "Interview with the Author." Hanoi: 10 November [Editor works at Nhan Dan, which is closest to the official party line as its official paper].

Anonymous Editor. 2010b. "Interview with the Author." Hanoi: 18 November [Editor works at Lao Dong, closer to the party line].

Anonymous Journalist. 2010c. "Interview with the Author." Hanoi: 15 November [Journalist works at Hanoi office of *Tuoi Tre*, a more liberal newspaper].

Anonymous Mid-level Ministry of Information and Communications Official. 2011. "Interview with the Author." Ho Chi Minh City: 25 January [Official works in the Ministry Press Reaction Unit].

Anonymous Journalist. 2010d. "Interview with the Author." Ho Chi Minh City: 9 December [Journalist covers politics for *Thanh Nien*, which is more liberal].

Anonymous Journalist. 2010e. "Interview with the Author." Ho Chi Minh City: 14 December [Journalist works for *Thanh Nien*].

Anonymous Editor. 2011a. "Interview with the Author." Ho Chi Minh City: 18 May [Works for Nhan Dan].

Anonymous Editor. 2011b. "Interview with the Author." Ho Chi Minh City: 21 May [Works for VietnamNet].

Anonymous Journalist. 2011c. "Interview with the Author." Hanoi: 1 June [Works for VietnamNet].

Anonymous Journalist. 2011d. "Interview with the Author." Ho Chi Minh City: 8 June [Works for *Thanh Nien*].

Author Biography

Geoffrey Cain is a governance and media consultant for international organizations in Asia and an editor at the New Mandala, the Southeast Asia blog at the Australian National University. He has worked as a journalist in Vietnam, Cambodia, and South Korea, writing for *Time, The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, Far Eastern Economic Review, Foreign Policy*, and others. From 2010 to 2011, he was a Fulbright scholar in Vietnam researching press censorship. He has worked as a researcher for the Open Government Partnership, Global Integrity, and a European Union–funded media development project in Cambodia. He holds an MA (Distinction) in Southeast Asian studies from London's School of Oriental and African Studies and a BA in international affairs from the George Washington University.

The International Journal of Press/Politics
2014, Vol 19(1) 108–131
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1940161213509285
ijpp.sagepub.com
SAGE

Silencing Mexico: A Study of Influences on Journalists in the Northern States

Jeannine E. Relly[1] and Celeste González de Bustamante[1]

Abstract

During President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's administration, the military was called on to confront organized crime, and dozens of journalists were killed in Mexico. Attacks on journalists have continued under the new administration. This study focuses on the erosion of the democratic institution of the press in Mexico's northern states, for the majority of journalists murdered in the last decade worked in that region. Utilizing Shoemaker and Reese's hierarchy of influences model, this study examines pressures constraining the press working in a tide of violence. The thirty-nine semistructured, in-depth interviews with Mexican journalists, who report in five of the northern states, indicate the strongest influences came from outside newsrooms, where intimidation and unthinkable crimes were committed against the press along the entire border. Individual-level influences, such as lack of conflict-reporting training, safety concerns, and handling the trauma of covering violence, were among the strongest pressures often leading to self-censorship. Organizational-level influences, including newsroom policies and financial arrangements with government and business, also influenced journalistic practice. The study added an inter-media level for analyses of news organizations and individual journalists working together to increase safety. Additional findings show major disruptions in border reporting where news "blackouts" exist amid pockets of lawlessness.

Keywords

violence and the press, hierarchy of influences, conflict reporting, democratic institutions in Mexico, press–state relations

[1]The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA

Corresponding Author:
Jeannine E. Relly, School of Journalism, The University of Arizona, 845 North Park Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA.
Email: jrelly@email.arizona.edu

Introduction

Crime reporter Armando Rodríguez Carreón was gunned down in his driveway in the Mexican border city of Juárez as his eight-year-old daughter looked on (Committee to Protect Journalists 2010a). Eight reporters were kidnapped in one month in Reynosa, a northern Mexican border city across from McAllen, Texas (Estévez 2010). And during one week in the summer of 2012, two northern border news outlets were attacked with grenades and gunfire "to silence reporting on criminal groups" (Archibold 2012).

By all accounts, Mexico is one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists. Violence against journalists increased precipitously after former President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa launched a war against organized crime in 2006, and by the end of his administration in 2012, 630 attacks were reported against the press, with more than 67 journalists killed and 14 disappeared (Human Rights Watch 2013; *The Associated Press* 2012).

Reporting in Mexico still is an enormous risk, with attacks on journalists continuing under the new administration of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto (Chavez 2013). This study examines to what extent journalism practices have undergone radical change amid the violence. Furthermore, given that the majority of journalists murdered in the last ten years leading up to our study were working in the northern border states (Committee to Protect Journalists 2010b) and that some news organizations there were among the leaders in the democratic consolidation of the media system in previous decades (Hughes 2003, 2006), our research focuses solely on journalists working in that region.

In this study, we address an overarching research question that examines how the democratic institution of the press has been influenced in northern Mexico during a period of rising violence related to organized crime and corrupt government officials. In our analysis, we use the framework of Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchy of influences model to which we add an inter-media level to accommodate a strong association among journalists and news organizations with distinct interactions within the profession during the tide of violence. We also draw on theoretical conceptions of press–state relations (Hallin and Mancini 2004), the hybrid civic news media model[1] in Mexico (Hughes 2003, 2006), the literature focused on professional journalism roles (Weaver et al. 2007), and journalism culture (Hanitzsch 2006). The study also builds upon other scholarship that examines the perceived effects of reporting in conflict zones and post-crisis situations (Carter and Kodrich 2013; Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Kim 2010; Kim and Hama-Saeed 2008), media censorship in conflict environments (Ferreira 2006; Sharkey, 1991), and antipress violence in lawless regions (Waisbord 2002, 2007).

News Media as a Democratic Institution in Mexico

The old system of media control in Mexico "has antecedents that stretch back to the pre-revolutionary era" (Lawson 2002: 26). The country's Constitution of 1917 guarantees freedom of the press and expression, though it has been noted that the

conditions for these liberties were not necessarily supported (Ferreira 2006). The country's post-revolutionary government controlled the news media through subsidization (Benavides 2000).

From the 1940s to the 1980s, Hughes (2006: 7) noted, "Clientelism, corporatism, and a state-centered ideology of social justice had attached most Mexican social, economic, and political organizations to the government or its party." For decades, the news media largely were subordinate to the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), passing on information sanctioned by the state (Arrendondo Ramírez and Sánchez Ruíz 1986). The 1968 and 1971 student protest massacres served as critical junctures for a nascent social movement with only a few news outlets attempting "assertive journalism" in the 1970s and none surviving that decade (Hughes 2006: 18).

By the 1980s, the PRI found it was too expensive to hold together its heterogeneous coalition during the structural crisis, leading to various sectors being cut away from support to stem the financial bleeding and leading to divisions within the party related to economic and political reform (Lawson 2002). Increased civic engagement in that same decade and into the 1990s sparked the Mexican press' transformation toward democratic consolidation, with a few innovative news organizations, several of them in northern states, publishing news critical of the regime (Hughes 2003, 2006).

One of the major turning points in the country's political transition has been placed with the 1996 political reforms, the loss of seats in Congress the following year, and the opposition National Action Party (PAN) candidate Vicente Fox Quesada's presidential election defeat of the party that had ruled for more than seven decades (Lawson 2002: 24). By the 1990s, too, many national papers reflected journalism that was more "civic" than authoritarian, ultimately becoming a hybrid press system of a varying mix of "civic," "market-driven," and state-centered orientations[2] (Hughes 2003, 2006: 10–12).

In her exhaustive research of press models in Mexico, Hughes (2003, 2006: 110) found that three of the seven "first wave" civic papers in her study were in northern Mexico. Three of the nine news organizations identified in Hughes' (2006) conceptualization of the second phase of change for civic newspapers were in the north and considered an example of the diffusion of professional journalism norms. The recent shift to increased violence against journalists in that region makes our study all the more relevant.

Violence as a Constraint on the Democratic Institution of the Press

Although institutionalized violence against the news media has received little scholarly study or theoretical focus (Kim 2010; Kim and Hama-Saeed 2008; Waisbord 2002), research has investigated the practice of journalism during conflicts (Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Kim 2010; Kim and Hama-Saeed 2008; Tumber and Webster 2006). Scholarly work also suggests that the relative strength of the institutional environment is critical for the protection of journalists from violence (Waisbord 2002), and we submit, for support of watchdog or "civic" news media in a fragile democratic system.

For decades, Mexico has been among the most dangerous countries for journalists in Latin America (Estévez 2010; Waisbord 2002). Although great attention has been dedicated to the bloody period after President Calderón called on the military to fight organized crime along the border, the previous ruling party's ties to drug trafficking date back to the end of World War II (O'Neil 2009). As the PRI lost monopoly control of government, so slipped the patron–client tie in which organized crime groups used the political party to "create a system-wide network of corruption that ensured distribution rights, market access, and even official government protection for drug traffickers" (Shirk 2011: 9). The 2000 presidential election of opposition PAN candidate Vicente Fox, and the PRI's loss of power, further eroded the old model, leading organized crime groups to embrace autonomy and to establish new ways of ensuring illicit goods received safe passage crossing the northern border through buying off local officials along the route (O'Neil 2009).

With rising profits, organized crime groups in Mexico developed militarized enforcement strategies and began a brutal struggle to gain control of smuggling routes along the northern border (O'Neil 2009). There have been more than 60,000 deaths in the country that have been linked to drug-related violence, organized crime, and corrupt government after the Calderón administration's proclaimed drug trafficking war (Human Rights Watch 2013), which was coupled with more than $1.1 billion of U.S. financial support delivered through the Mérida Initiative toward militarizing the border on the Mexican side (Ribando Seelke and Finklea 2013). By the year of our study, the majority of killings of Mexican journalists had occurred in the northern border states (Committee to Protect Journalists 2010a), away from the capital where it "appears to be politically too costly for criminal organizations" because of the concentration of diplomatic embassies, three branches of government, and headquarters of political and social groups (Estévez 2010: 274).

One of the many risks of institutionalized violence is its potential for undermining the country's fragile democratic system (O'Neil 2009), which we argue includes investigative or "civic" journalism. In the year of our study (2011), for example, the number of organized crime-related deaths in the six northern border states reflected how drug trafficking turf wars gained momentum along the eastern side of the northern Mexico border. From the northwest border to the northeastern border that year, there were 351 organized crime-related deaths in Baja California Norte, 320 in Sonora, 2,925 in Chihuahua, 851 in Coahuila, 1,472 in Nuevo León, and 1,257 in Tamaulipas (Molzahn et al. 2012; Ribando Seelke and Finklea 2013). That year, the Committee to Protect Journalists' (2011: 1) impunity index ranked Mexico among "the world's most murderous countries for the press . . . where authorities appear powerless in bringing killers to justice." Thus, we study the extent that the democratic institution of civic journalism (Hughes 2003) is in peril in these northern states. For political theorist Robert Dahl's suggested minimal conditions for democracy, one of the most widely accepted (Schmitter and Karl 1996), include citizens' rights to freely express themselves and the right to seek and obtain information (Dahl 1982).

Hierarchy of Influences Framework

As scholars have noted, the hierarchy-of-influences model is a strong framework for examining reporting in conflict zones (Fahmy and Johnson 2012; Kim 2010). Our study used Shoemaker and Reese's hierarchy of influences model, informed by other scholars' work in a global context (Hanitzsch 2006; Hanitzsch et al. 2010; Kim 2010; Reese 2001). The structure was used to analyze recent influences on journalistic culture and practice in a year that the number of attacks on press freedom in Mexico rose by nearly 11 percent from the previous year to 172 (Forced Silence 2012).

In the model, the five levels of influences on journalists are nested with the higher levels subsuming lower levels of influence (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). The individual-level influences form the core followed by the news media routines level, organizational level, extra-media level, and the outermost ideological level (Reese 2001; Shoemaker and Reese 1996).

Individual-Level Influences

We investigate individual-level factors that could influence journalists' work- and ethical decision making, including demographics, such as age, gender, education, work experience, and personal factors, such as family beliefs and values, professional background, and occupation (Hughes 2006; Hanitzsch et al. 2010; Kim 2010; Reese 2001; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Weaver et al. 2007). We also draw from studies that have examined the individual-level toll of exposure to violence toward journalists (Feinstein 2012; Kim 2010; Kim and Hama-Saeed 2008).

News Media Routines Influences

We use Shoemaker and Reese's (1996: 105) description of the news media routines level, which will include "patterned, routinized, repeated practices" that journalists perform in the course of working. The literature has been mixed on the extent that professional routines influence news judgment (Hanitzsch et al. 2010; Shoemaker et al. 2001; Zhu et al. 1997).

Organizational-Level Influences

We use the organizational level to analyze influences on journalists in northern Mexico through news media organizations' policies and structure (Hanitzsch et al. 2010; Shoemaker and Reese 1996) in a time of violence. The influences of editorial managers' business decisions related to staffing and competition also fall under this dimension (Berkowitz and Limor 2003). Furthermore, in Mexico, we assert, decision- making at the organizational level could be critical as news outlets struggle in a challenging financial and violent environment (Lowrey and Chang 2010), where concentration of media outlets in a few private hands has had direct implications on the strength of the press and democracy (Organization of American States 2011).

Extra-Media Influences

The influences on journalists from outside of news organizations are theorized as extra-media level influences, or, as Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 175) note, "extrinsic" to news media outlets. In an environment of violence, we examine these extra-media influences, which include news sources, business advertisers, governmental authorities including the military, nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, and organized crime groups (Reese 2001; Shoemaker and Reese 1996). According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), and other scholars (Zhu et al. 1997), extra-media influences may have more impact on the profession than lower levels of influence.

Ideology as an Influence

Ideology includes values, attitudes, and perceptions about the role of journalistic work in the broader context of society (Reese 2001; Shoemaker and Reese 1996). We examine the extent that some influences may be stronger than others in the context of violence and build on scholars' work that focused on the democratic transition of the news media in Mexico (Hughes 2003, 2006; Hughes and Lawson 2004; Lawson 2002).

Based on this literature and the framework of the hierarchy of influences model, our study examines the following research questions.

> **Research Question 1:** What are the political, societal, and economic influences on the country's journalists in the context of violence along the northern border?
> **Research Question 2:** What types of violence and intimidation are visited upon Mexican journalists along the country's northern border states?
> **Research Question 3:** How has increased violence along the country's northern border changed journalism practice for Mexican journalists since the period when civic journalism was introduced?

Method

We focus on the country's journalists working on the northern border because these journalists frequently are more at risk than those based near power centers of a country (Estévez 2010; Waisbord 2002). Several factors contribute to this heightened level of vulnerability in northern Mexico: (1) distance from political and economic centers in the country, which often results in fewer resources and recourses when journalists/news outlets are subjected to aggression; (2) news organizations located in peripheral areas tend to be smaller with less economic and political power to protect their employees; and (3) Mexico's northern border is the location of drug and human smuggling routes.

We developed a list for a purposive sample of journalists from large, medium, and small news organizations from print, online, radio, magazine, and television news in the six states along the entire northern border of Mexico (Baja California Norte, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas). In developing the list,

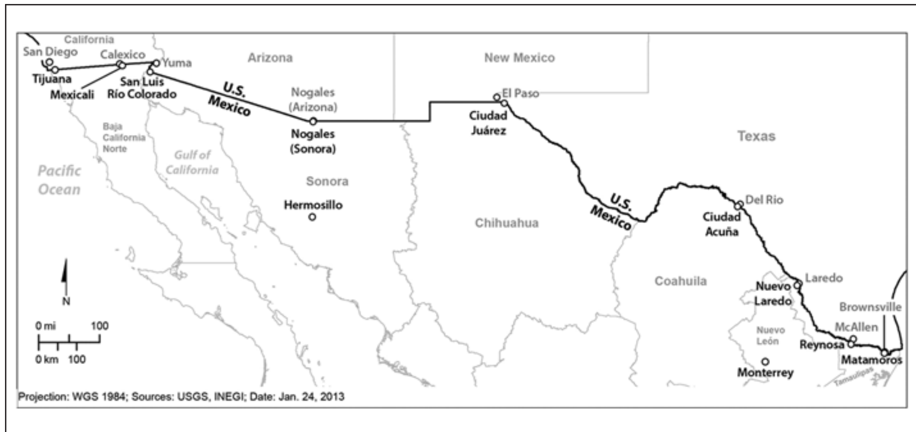

Figure 1. News media markets in the six northern border states of Mexico.

we consulted representatives from four major organizations that had contacts along the border: Investigative Reporters and Editors, the Inter American Press Association (2012), the Binational Association of Schools of Communication, and chapters of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. To recruit, we contacted journalists based in eleven representative media markets in six northern Mexican border states (Tijuana and Mexicali, Baja California Norte; San Luis Río Colorado, Nogales, and Hermosillo, Sonora; Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua; Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila; Monterrey, Nuevo León; and Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas; see Figure 1).[3]

The questionnaire was developed from a modified version of Kim and Hama-Saeed's (2008) framework utilized to study journalists performing in zones of conflict. Interview questions were designed to examine factors that impact the work of journalists in an unpredictable environment. We piloted our questionnaire with six journalists.

The reporters, photographers, videographers, editors, and producers whom we contacted had a range of experience, including coverage of public affairs, crime and corruption in northern Mexico. Of the forty-five Mexican journalists contacted, thirty-nine journalists agreed to be interviewed in person for an 86.67 percent response rate. We conducted in-depth interviews that were semistructured in nature from September 17, 2011, through December 16, 2011. Participants were offered anonymity, and every journalist opted for this. With participants' permission, all of the interviews were audio-recorded.

The audio files were translated into English and transcribed. We then analyzed and aggregated interview responses from the transcripts that corresponded to the study's research questions. We used Corbin and Strauss' (2008) coding schemata as an analytical strategy to identify concepts; and we further developed themes and categories using axial coding.

As we analyzed our data, we determined that an inter-media level should be added between the organizational and extra-media levels of the hierarchy framework to accommodate our data.

Findings

We recruited journalists from five states[4] in northern Mexico during the last full year of President Calderón's administration. Twelve of the thirty-nine Mexican journalists in the study were women (30.77%) and twenty-seven were men (69.23%). Participants' ages ranged from twenty-five to fifty-six years with a mean age of 39.6 years (*SD* = 7.89). Participants' journalism experience ranged from three years to thirty-five years with a mean of 16.49 years (*SD* = 7.37) working in the field. Education was from a high school diploma to holding a master's degree.

We found that journalists across the country's northern border had similar influences, though the intensity of those influences varied. In the following sections, we address the three research questions in this study, describing the political, societal, and economic influences on journalists in the context of violence along the country's northern border, the types of violence and intimidation visited upon these journalists, and how the violence in the region has drastically changed journalism practice since Hughes' (2003, 2006) civic journalism research.

Individual-Level Influences

The strongest influences on journalists at the individual level were lack of training to work in a conflict zone and extreme concerns about personal and family safety, risks that had become major influences on journalists' abilities to perform investigations about the government, and crime or other public interest issues. Most journalists in the study discussed the personal toll from working in an uncertain and violent environment with mass executions, which directly impacted their psyches, and thus their work, in what one editor [CH1] characterized as a "living nightmare" that has "all the ingredients to terrify anyone." One journalist anxiously recounted how the violent working environment led to a "nervous breakdown" and self-committing to a hospital [T7].

Journalists described altering their driving routes, changing automobiles, and concealing identities. One journalist [CH4] scrubbed links to his addresses and vacated his house. An editor [CH8] in Ciudad Juárez noted that many reporters fear for their lives. "I had colleagues who came to me and said, . . . 'If something happens to me, I trust my child with you.'" A Tamaulipas journalist [T4] received a bulletproof vest as a gift from his father. Another longtime reporter from that state [T8] noted, "I wake up at night seeing the dead, smelling the death, and shaking and crying . . . I try to forget . . . But honestly, it's something that you'll never forget. You can't."

In the states of Baja California Norte and Sonora, where turf battles had been settled, at least temporarily, and violence had dropped somewhat by 2011, reporters noted that they still were shell-shocked. "We still haven't shaken that fear we had at one point," said one reporter from Tijuana. "That's to say there are many things that could

be investigated but that aren't investigated" [BC8]. Still, in that same city, there were journalists at one news organization who would not be intimidated, even after a "hit" price was put on three of their lives and they had to use government bodyguards. One editor from that news organization, known for investigations, said, "If they call us to tell us what to do, or what not to publish, we're going to publish it twice over and we're also going to write that they called us to tell us not to publish" [BC11].

Media Routines Influences

A few journalists in the study noted technological innovations, which allow rapid news dissemination and increased use of social media, along with the faltering economy and local job layoffs, had led to increased workloads, longer workdays, and superficial reporting in an already challenging and often violent environment. Further, journalists spent more time backgrounding sources because of their potential connections to organized crime. Some reporters complained about working as many as fifteen hours at a time. Some wrote up to fourteen stories a day. "There are journalists who have to cover, and have covered, twenty deaths in one day. Different cases," said a Ciudad Juárez reporter [CH5].

Journalistic work has changed completely, just as personal lives have changed. One editor [CH1] noted, "We're more careful in our communications, especially because we know that criminals have teams and ways of finding out what we're talking about. Even when we talk on our cell phones, we know that they're listening to us."

Some reporters used radios instead of cell phones, and limited e-mail and phone calls, to avoid being detected. Some drove in unmarked cars, wore disguises at crime scenes, and used caution when handling equipment, such as cameras, to avoid the appearance of carrying a weapon.

Television and radio news reporters described facing larger challenges with not drawing attention to themselves compared with those in print work [T7, T8, T11]. "We want to report but have to ask, 'Do we do it? Do we not do it? Where can we go? Where can't we go?' Sometimes we say something (on air) and we're terrified," said one reporter, who wept [T11].

Organizational Influences

We found that most news organization owners, top editors, and producers interviewed for this study had developed policies that were, in large part, reacting to the violence and economic downturn rather than setting visionary goals. They also distanced themselves from organized crime to project a neutral position. Most communicated that they were conscious of the critical public interest role of journalists in society, as Hughes (2003, 2006) described in her research.

Although Hughes (2003, 2006) found a diffusion of civic journalism in the second wave of news media transformation process in Mexico, we found a diffusion of news practices among news outlets that largely retracted from investigative journalism, though there were exceptions. A journalist/co-owner [T10] from a news outlet along the

northeastern Mexico border said that after two staff journalists were killed within the news outlet, practices were adopted from another news organization with a similar history of civic journalism and violence against the staff: "We began self-censorship . . . We just stopped publishing anything to do with crime. Right now, they have left us alone" [T10]. Other news organizations quit publishing news reports with bloody images, ceased covering crime group street battles, eliminated bylines and replaced them with "staff," and changed datelines of news events to protect reporters. Other news organizations increased security by fortifying walls around their buildings, installing cameras, steel doors, bulletproof glass, fingerprint swipes for building entry, and vault-like security rooms. News organizations allowed journalists to sleep in the building when the streets were too unsafe to return home.

Although the owners of a number of news organizations used armored vehicles and bodyguards and set up consultations with security assessment experts for their staff, a number of news outlets lacked safety protocols and training for journalists. Nearly a half dozen news outlet owners and news managers arranged to send their reporters to the United States or other parts of Mexico after they received death threats. And in some of the more dangerous areas, news organizations had brought in war correspondents, U.S. Embassy representatives, and other experts to discuss security assessment. Still others chose not to purchase protective gear for employees.

After the death of a reporter and the disappearance of another reporter from one news organization known for investigative journalism, the owners and management became deeply worried about the remaining staff. In response, a news manager [BC3] there said,

> A policy was created—to not publish information related to drug trafficking or related to organized crime . . . with the exception of press releases, the information sent to us by an official source—the attorney general, the national attorney general . . . No more investigating for us.

One longtime and respected journalist from Chihuahua, who is spearheading an organization that assists journalists in distress, said some news organizations have abandoned reporters who have been hurt, often after discussions with Mexican law enforcement. "I mean I haven't heard of any case where the opposite has happened," the journalist said [CH7]. A veteran reporter in Ciudad Juárez [CH5] noted, "One of the challenges of journalists today is the lack of support from companies. I think that's one of the biggest problems. It's not just the risk from outside."

Insecurity related to the violence also impacted the marketplace, and thus news organizations as well. Businesses had pulled back on advertising to avoid being targets of extortion and kidnapping, leaving newsrooms' management to deal with tighter budgets and forcing some to close. One news organization that practiced civic journalism in the past had consolidated costs to the point that the advertising department was sharing space with the newsroom. A news manager [BC5] there said, "In a political sense, we don't have any firm positions. But when it comes to advertisers and everything else, yes, they do limit us" [BC5].

In 2011, in response to the decline in commercial advertising, some news organizations derived as much as 80 percent of their advertising from government with the balance made up by business, which is similar to the period before the transition to democracy. More than a dozen journalists spoke about the issue of business advertising decline and the increased use of, or consideration of, government advertising [BC1, BC3, BC8, BC12, CH1, CH2, CH7, CH9, SO2, SO3, SO4, T1, T3, T5, T6, T8, T10]. At one news organization that was sprayed with gunfire by a criminal organization, a top editor [CH1] noted that the company laid-off journalists to avoid taking a larger proportion of advertising from government sources:

> So the challenge of news organizations is to level out that imbalance . . . Try to get different numbers, at least 50-50, which is a place where if suddenly the government's 50 percent is taken away, you can still survive with the 50 percent from business, right?

A tough financial environment also resulted in some news outlets trimming journalists' fringe benefits, such as stipends for gasoline, training, and continuing education in an already strained work environment, where according to Estévez (2010), journalists earn between $300 and $500 a month on average outside of Mexico City.

We found only a few journalists and news organizations that still conduct watchdog journalism, though a number still file public records requests. And only two longtime news organizations continued investigative practices no matter what the level of violence, in spite of each losing journalists and receiving many threats. One top investigations journalist from one of those outlets [BC11] explained, "We enjoy a freedom that other news organizations don't have . . . Our decision is to not publish any advertising from the government . . . For us, it's more than economic resources . . . Freedom costs."

Inter-Media Influences

Although there are numerous exceptions, as a whole, Mexican borderland journalists have come to support one another, professionally and personally, mostly within cities, and occasionally, among cities and states and across the Mexico-U.S. border, whether working within the same news organization or a competing one. We introduce inter-media-level influences to the framework of this study, to examine interactions among news organizations and journalists from different news outlets to isolate factors that either discouraged or sustained journalists.

To ensure that news was reported, inter-media-level relationships included simultaneously reporting on news with other newsrooms to increase safety. Newsrooms also sent information that was too "hot" to other news outlets in other states, Mexico City, or to the United States. Journalists from different news organizations drove together or in caravans to report at crime scenes to ensure witnesses of potential abuses by security forces, local law enforcement officers, or members of organized crime groups. Other inter-media work included news outlets offering reporting courses and bringing in experts to speak about such issues as self-care and care of victims. Journalists also

have accompanied one another in filing complaints with state attorneys general over government or organized crime abuses against colleagues. Regional coalitions also have replicated national-level journalism support organizations along the border. One group developed a census of journalists in their city. Reporters also noted that they had visited other northern border states to learn strategies from other journalists.

One Sonoran journalist [SO1] acknowledged that these newfound relationships in an environment of uncertainty were a shift from earlier times:

> Before, there was more envy or competition or more rivalry as far as work. You'd go alone, and you wouldn't tell the rest, or tell the competition because, well, you want to get the scoop. And, so the lack of security, I think, was one of the things, among other things, that led us to be more united and more in touch.

The presence of growing inter-media relationships does not necessarily represent ubiquitous solidarity or community, however. In Baja California Norte, for example, some journalists complained about lack of solidarity. Others noted that Mexican journalists along the northern border are not only far from the power center of Mexico City [BC8], but they also are largely isolated from U.S. colleagues. One journalist in Mexicali noted,

> I think there is a serious problem because there is no communication among us. I feel it doesn't exist. And even less with the other side of the border. If there were constant communication—not just here on this side of the border, but also on the other side, it be a different thing. We'd be a block. And a very strong block. And it would be very important [BC1].

Extra-Media Influences

Criminal organizations, governments, academic institutions, business, civil society, and transnational organizations, all had an impact on journalists along the northern border. The Mexico City-based National Center for Social Communication (CENCOS) and the London-based Article 19, which researched 155 attacks against journalists and news organizations, found that nearly one in two of the reported assaults were committed by government authorities and one in four reported organized criminal groups as responsible (CENCOS 2011).

Criminal Organizations as an Extra-Media Influence

Journalists spoke about a generally unsafe environment, though those based in the states of Baja California Norte and Sonora suggested that there had been a reprieve in pressures on their work since the violence related to warring crime groups had died down by fall 2011. In some interviews, journalists spoke about corrupt politicians or government functionaries involved with criminal groups, which infiltrated newsrooms with moles or through buying off reporters, most commonly, with envelopes of cash, cars, and other gifts. One Ciudad Juárez investigative journalist [CH8] noted, "The

profession has been infiltrated and sometimes you don't know who you are working with."

Journalists in every state indicated that police beat reporters were the most at risk because of illegal activity taking place at crime scenes after killings and because of battling gangs, corrupt government officials, and organized crime groups' efforts to use journalists as propaganda tools for their own messages. At one point, said an editor from a newsroom that once practiced serious journalism in Tamaulipas [T10], more than three quarters of the newsroom was on the payroll of organized crime until management "cleaned house" and got it down to about one in five reporters. In some newsrooms in that state, reporters said that criminal organizations dictated to news executives or police reporters what to report and what to hold back. Study participants said these groups also had threatened news executives, producers, editors, reporters, and photographers in their news outlets. Along the entire northern border, journalists said criminal groups send lookouts to monitor crime scenes to observe when reporters arrive and what they report. A longtime investigative reporter noted: "It's like the city has eyes, and everyone knows what you were doing" [T8].

Government as an Extra-Media Influence

Journalists complained about government officials refusing to provide them with information for news reports and the overall insecurity in their practice related to weak government institutions. This was reflected in part by the high level of impunity that they witness regularly. Furthermore, the role of extensive government-backed advertising in the vacuum of business advertising has led to a largely unspoken threat of "government censorship" from officials who threaten to pull advertising when unfavorable stories are published. This was occurring in an environment of long-standing media consolidation and concentration (González de Bustamante 2012; Trejo Delarbre 2011).

Study participants also noted that because local law enforcement and other government agencies have been infiltrated by organized crime more than in the past, journalists have to be more careful when reporting, which takes more time. This confirms work by Freedom House (2012: 2), which noted, "Local political authorities and police forces appear to be involved in some cases, creating an environment where journalists do not know where threats are coming from or how to avoid the violence."

New law enforcement protocols at crime scenes also made reporters and photojournalists uneasy. Some reporters said law enforcement banned taking photos at crime scenes. In Baja California Norte, some reporters said politicians and government officials blacklisted those who do investigative journalism. Other journalists reported that their sources have been killed after leaking information to them about the government.

Grenade attacks, shootings in public places, and streets blocked by government or organized crime group convoys made it difficult for reporters to distinguish among corrupt government officials and battling crime groups on the street, further challenging the work within some cities in Tamaulipas. In Reynosa, Tamaulipas, at times, all

communication infrastructure had been shut down in sections of the city where street battles were in progress, making it difficult to communicate with colleagues, sources, the government, and others [T7].

Journalists in each state also spoke about the impunity of the crimes against journalists and the tepid responses from government agencies. According to one editor [CH8]:

> I mean the impunity is so great with these attacks that we've suffered, the investigations of the crimes [against] our colleagues so neglected, that it makes us more vulnerable . . . Because in the end we saw that the authorities don't do anything. They fold. And the drug traffickers decide who lives and who dies.

In some of the study's cases, journalists reported that government officials suggested their news outlets acquiesce to organized crime group demands. One of the most jarring examples in our study was of political pressure exerted on a newsroom with an investigative journalism tradition. A manager [BC5] from that newsroom noted just one year earlier most news outlets in the city agreed to forego crime coverage for more than a week as Tijuana sponsored an event with high-profile appearances to recast its image for economic development. But when several decapitated bodies were discovered hanging in the city, the news organization reported it, leaving off the organized crime group's message on a public banner (*narcomanta*), an internal newsroom policy adopted by many news organizations in the region and around the country to avoid becoming a propaganda tool. The next day, a decapitated head of a young man with the same message was thrown near the news outlet's security guard, which the management immediately reported to the state attorney general's office. According to the news manager [BC5]:

> I told them, "Hey, well, what do I do?" And what they told me there in the attorney general's office was, "You know what, that was because you didn't publish what they put on yesterday's blanket. And so what I recommend is that you publish this one." . . . So we decided to publish what the *manta* said [BC5].

Sources as an Extra-Media Influence

Journalists in all of the northern border states in the study talked about the level of uncertainty with all sectors of society. The extra-media influence of sources dodging interviews with journalists cannot be underestimated. Affluent citizens decline interviews to avoid extortion or to stay out of public view. Sources on the street from unknown backgrounds produce risk because of their potential connection to organized crime. Sources presumably without any drug-related ties on the street were less willing to be interviewed for fear of retribution. The gap in sourcing compounded by a general state of fear in some communities in the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas in the year of the study had led to a news vacuum and "news blackouts" in some cases.

Business and Market Forces as an Extra-Media Influence

Business advertising was down for news organizations, though neither the global economic downturn nor the state of the news industry was the key reason cited. Many businesses were pulling ads for fear of becoming targets of extortion or kidnapping. In Baja California Norte and Chihuahua, journalists noted business advertisers who have been crime victims asked that crimes not be reported. When mass killings occurred, for instance, hoteliers and restaurateurs were known to pressure news organizations to downplay the violence because negative coverage hurt business.

Banks pulled credit access for journalists because news media workers were a perceived security risk. A journalism organization leader and longtime reporter in Ciudad Juárez [CH7] noted that life insurance companies no longer were available to journalists in that city that had nearly 3,000 deaths (Wilkinson 2011) in the year of our study. The veteran reporter [CH7] noted that among a journalism organization group in Ciudad Juárez, sixty members lost life insurance:

> And so the government had to intervene in this, to be like our guarantor. If the government hadn't intervened right now, we would not be insured. It's a situation I mentioned to the people who came from the [United Nations], that right now we're almost completely vulnerable. So, I think that something has to be done because we are defenseless . . . The day the government says, "We're not going to insure them anymore," we're going to end up without it [CH7].

Civil Society as an Extra-Media Influence

The majority of journalists interviewed for the study indicated that by and large they were buoyed by a few academic institutions and national and transnational organizations, as well as journalists from outside of the country, who have taken interest in their plight and offered support. Journalists in nearly every state spoke about organizations that have offered counsel, workshops, and other support, as some journalists continue to attempt to report on government and organized crime, societal issues related to the violence, and political and bureaucratic corruption.

Our analysis of interviews with journalists in the northern region indicates that most of the efforts to effect change have been reactionary to the violence, or the potential for violence, which Hughes (2003, 2006) found to an extent in the new millennium as violence began to rise, though her earlier research along with Pinto's (2009) also found that civil society and press groups were moving forward with vision toward advancing access to public information and public interest journalism. Still, some organizations lobbied for legislation and an amendment to the Constitution, which now give power to federal authorities to prosecute crimes against journalists and human rights defenders. In the last months of the Calderón administration, nearly a year after our study, the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was enacted, yet implementing and utilizing the protections has proven to be a challenge (Freedom House 2013).

At the local level, the support of civil society has been enormous, noted one journalist [CH7] who is the leader of a professional group in Ciudad Juárez. And this support is largely because citizens can relate to the terror that many journalists face because violence is meted out throughout society, the veteran journalist indicated [CH7].

Ideology as an Influence

As expected, ideological-level influences on journalists in the study were not uniform across the profession in the northern states, and the study found nuance within the profession at this level. Although nearly all of the journalists interviewed believed that the role of a journalist is to inform society and to work in the public interest, we found in each state a loss of trust in government and dignity in the profession as an institution of democracy among some journalists, a diminished sense of news media independence, and a lack of hope about the future of the profession, contrary to scholarly literature from a decade or less ago (Hughes 2003, 2006).

In the context of journalism as a democratic institution, there also was a perception among some journalists that there is a disconnect between journalists and society with the decreased capacity to include citizens in news reporting. Exacerbating this is the decline in trust in politicians, political appointees, and local officials, including local law enforcement authorities, and fear that the constant presence of violence would become normalized through the constant presence of *la nota roja* (violent crime reports). Self-censorship and censorship became a new norm that is tolerated in some newsrooms. And reporting and news coverage were dictated, in part, by violence. One journalist in Tamaulipas [T11] noted, "If we analyze all of these situations, we could ask ourselves, 'What kind of journalism are we practicing here?'"

Discussion and Conclusion

In an era in which Mexico's news media are encountering an unprecedented level of aggression in a region with pockets of lawlessness and varying levels of violence, we found the hierarchy of influences model to be a strong and valuable framework for examining constraints on journalists. Our qualitative study of journalists who work in ten cities in five states along the 2,000-mile northern border with the United States examined the political, societal, and economic influences on journalists in a region that is far from the country's political power center (Estévez 2010). The study found that the democratic institution of the press, at all levels of influence, has been greatly disrupted in the country's northernmost states most directly by violence, weak governmental institutions, and market barriers. This finding is similar to earlier work of Hughes and Lawson (2005: 9) that identified factors in Latin American media systems that hampered "independent, pluralistic, and assertive media systems in the region." Our study affirms their argument that to foster the democratic institution of the press, journalists must be protected from violent retribution with a legal framework and enforcement of the law.

There was great nuance from newsroom to newsroom, city to city, and state to state in the levels of influences in our study. Generally, though, violence had increased at some point in the entire region within the previous five years (Ríos and Shirk 2011), and at the macro-level, political, societal, and legal structural change was brokered by representatives of domestic and transnational organizations, and the national Congress, with input from the states (O'Connor 2011, 2013; Ribando Seelke and Finklea 2013). However, these legal changes did not seem to diminish the increased risk that journalists faced on the periphery.

This discussion first assesses broadly the institutional relationships within our findings in the study and then reflects on the specifics of the model that we used. As we revisit Hughes' (2003, 2006) research, which demonstrated that six news organizations in northern Mexico had founded or transformed newsrooms into civic-style institutions, beginning in the 1980s and into the next decades, we note that our findings indicate the tide of violence has reshaped the hybrid model that Hughes introduced.

In some jurisdictions in the northern states, it appeared organized crime groups wielded more power than local politicians, political appointees, or government functionaries in their relationships with journalists. And across the border, journalistic autonomy often was traded for personal security, which included reporting only one version of events, that of government officials. Although these newsroom policies often were born out of a sense of terror in the practice along the northern border, this distinct trend can be likened to some semblance of Hughes' (2006:4,12) conceptualization of the "adaptive authoritarian" news model in its "passive approach to new gathering" with "traded autonomy," though in our study it did not appear to be for "partisan or personal advantage" and was complicated by the more prominent role of organized crime groups. Nonetheless, there appeared to be vestiges of the old guard ways, consisting of stenography from press releases, which Hughes' (2003) work a decade ago described as a model that was fading.

We found two other major issues with press–state relations in northern Mexico. News outlets had a growing dependency on government subsidies, and there were journalists in every state in our study who indicated that human rights abuse complaints were minimized or dismissed by law enforcement and attorneys general offices. This latter issue was validated in a report a year later. Although Mexican state and federal governments had set up special prosecutors' offices and committees during the Calderón administration, with the goal of tracking and investigating violence against journalists, the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (2012: 8) decried this as "institutionalized pretense," noting in the report that most investigations of violence fall under state and local jurisdiction where many government offices lack resources or have been infiltrated by criminal organizations.

It is important to note that in nearly every city in which news media in our study worked, journalists spoke about the level of uncertainty in the workplace and murky boundaries among organized crime groups, political appointees, government functionaries, and politicians. Although it apparently was not always clear who was involved with the violence against the news media, the context of nearly complete impunity exacerbated this issue. According to our study, organized crime groups filled

the governmental power vacuum in some jurisdictions with corrupt politicians and government functionaries colluding, in some cases, in pressing news organizations to compromise their ethics, news reporting, and investigations. And in other cases, news organizations adopted policies of other news outlets in the region in a diffusion of norms that are antithetical to Hughes' civic journalism model during less violent times, where for security reasons, news outlet owners and managers cited decisions to only use government authorities as the exclusive "official" account. In the most extreme case in the easternmost coastal state of Tamaulipas, bordering the eastern part of the U.S. state of Texas, the fragile institution of the press appeared to be in greatest jeopardy. We submit that the historical, political, and bureaucratic context in that state, coupled with one of the most violent drug cartels, the Zetas, fighting virulently for territory, created an idiosyncratic scenario for journalists not present in some other border states in the study.

The intersection of violence and the market-driven side of the hybrid news media model, which Hughes described, also has taken on unexpected consequences in the northern states, which has seriously undermined press autonomy. With organized crime groups extorting business owners who advertised with news outlets and the subsequent plummeting of private-sector support, the study's participants noted the tensions and risks with filling that void with government advertising and other subsidies, such as life insurance and government bodyguards. Furthermore, corporatist agreements between some news organizations and business advertisers to advance or avoid news coverage appeared to be another corruption of the democratic institution of the press.

In studying the press as a democratic institution, the hierarchy of influences approach offers a parsimonious model that allows researchers to examine patterns and relationships among influences in conflict zones or jurisdictions with sustained levels of violence. Our two main contributions in this area are the introduction of the inter-media level and the finding that the levels in the model are quite permeable and appear to be susceptible to bidirectional influences, particularly in an environment of intense violence. In crisis or conflict environments, this inter-media level creates a space in the model, between the organizational and extra-media levels, allowing nonhierarchical data among journalists and news organizations to be analyzed more closely. In this study, it allowed us to see there were areas in the border region where, at a very local and reactionary level, individual journalists and news outlets banded together to deeply examine ways to address the violence against the profession in order to do their work. This, in small part, is counter to Farah's (2012: 5) suggestion that heads of some news media outlets in Mexico have "remained virtually silent and have abandoned efforts to create a unified strategy, carry out common investigations, or highlight the plight of journalists."

Not surprisingly, we found influences on every level of the hierarchy. The violence coming from the extra-media level appeared to be the strongest influence, affecting every level above and below it in the hierarchy. We acknowledge that at the same time that violence may be exerted on journalists and news organizations from the extra-media level, there are other forces at the extra-media level, perhaps not as powerful,

such as domestic and transnational civil society, and intergovernmental and governmental organizations, which provide financial, educational, security, legal, and psychological support.

In some cases, similar to Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) conceptualization, the higher level influences subsumed lower levels of influence. Thus, an organized crime group (extra-media) killing and disappearance of journalists from one news organization influenced newsroom policies (organizational level). Similar to other scholars (Fahmy and Johnson 2005, 2012; Kim 2010), we found lower levels of the hierarchy, such as the organizational level, influenced higher levels in the hierarchy, such as ideology. We also observed bidirectional influences in the model. For example, sustained organized crime group violence (extra-media), such as killing journalists and mass numbers of people in a city, had a profound influence on the individual level for those in the profession, and consequently, influenced the ideological level about the role of the profession in society. In one city, a top editor [BC3] at a news organization that has cut investigations in response to the violence, noted, "The steps forward we made—with the freedom of expression that came with the transition to democracy in Mexico—we've gone backwards" [BC3].

Notably, the two levels that appeared most influenced by violence from the extra-media level were the individual and organizational levels. Many of the journalists interviewed for this study indicated that the violence deeply traumatized them (individual level) in some way, as Feinstein's (2012) survey found. The insidious level of intimidation, with assassinations, kidnappings, and beatings of journalists (extra-media) coupled with newsrooms infiltrated with "reporters" on cartel payrolls, and venders and others planted on streets to conduct surveillance in the service of organized crime, has created an understandable heightened level of fear and distrust among journalists at all of the other levels in the hierarchy. Furthermore, these findings support Waisbord's (2002) suggestion that violence (extra-media level) against journalists leads to self-censorship (individual level) stemming from fear, which tamps down watchdog reporting (news routines level) on drug trafficking, corruption, human rights, and environmental issues.

This study has a number of limitations. Security issues, to an extent, impacted our ability to recruit. We also acknowledge that the findings from a purposive sample of journalists in the country's five northern border states are limited to this group in a relatively limited time period.

There is a need for additional theorizing and research that focuses on violence, impunity and press–state relations, and the issues with the market model, as threats and prolonged aggression persist against the news media, and continue to place the democratic institution of the Mexican press at serious risk. We suggest that other researchers could utilize and test the pathways of influence from the northern Mexico case by applying the framework to studies conducted in other conflict zones, specifically in countries with consolidating democracies.

With the election of President Enrique Peña Nieto of the PRI, new border policies may shift the landscape once again along the border, which some suggest had been changed after the PRI lost its seven-decade grip on power to the PAN at the turn of the

millennium, disrupting the clientelistic organized crime-government system in a fragile political environment (O'Neil 2009). Although there has been a president elected from the former ruling party, a simple return to the old order is doubtful in the northern border region as some of the powerful organized crime groups have greatly fractionalized, and new relationships will be negotiated, all of which will influence the environment of violence and press–state relations.

Looking forward, journalists in the northern states are on the frontlines to witness and experience any outcomes from President Peña Nieto's pledge to prioritize protection for human rights and crime prevention in the country's shifting security strategy such as has been laid out in his Pact for Mexico. At some point, a transformation of newsrooms may again be required, as occurred in a seemingly different and less violent era for journalists in Mexico in the 1990s (Hughes 2003, 2006). This vision for transformation within current "newsrooms in conflict" may be apt given what is at stake.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The study received funding from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Emerging Scholars Program, The University of Arizona's Center for Latin American Studies, the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute, and the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy.

Notes

1. Hughes (2006: 4) defines the civic model as news media that provide "information that helps citizens communicate their needs to government, hold government accountable, and foster deliberation and debate."
2. Characteristics of the authoritarian news model include "the absence of newsroom autonomy, a representation of only points of view that support the positions of the current regime, and a passive approach to news gathering" (Hughes 2006: 4). The market-driven concept of journalism, according to Hughes (2006: 4–5), "involves the quid pro quo of news for material gain, but in a liberal political system and market-based economy."
3. By the end of the study, we were not able to recruit participants from the state of Nuevo León; and in the state of Coahuila, we only had one participant in the study.
4. Participants in the study are from five of the six northern Mexico states: Baja California Norte [BC], Sonora [SO], Chihuahua [CH], Coahuila [CO], and Tamaulipas [T].

References

Archibold, Randal C. 2012. "Attacks on Mexico Papers Underline Peril to Journalists." *The New York Times*, July 11. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/12/world/americas/attacks-on-mexico-papers-underline-peril-to-journalists.html (accessed October 17, 2013)

Arrendondo Ramírez, Pablo, and Enrique E. Sánchez Ruíz. 1986. *Comunicación* Social, P*oder y* D*emocracia*. [Social Communication, Power and Democracy]. Guadalajara, Mexico: Difusión Científica.

Benavides, José Luis. 2000. "Gacetilla: A Keyword for a Revisionist Approach to the Political Economy of Mexico's Print News Media." *Media, Culture & Society* 22 (1): 85–104.

Berkowitz, Dan, and Yehiel Limor. 2003. "Professional Confidence and Situational Ethics: Assessing the Social-Professional Dialectic in Journalistic Ethics Decisions." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 80 (4): 783–801.

Carter, Cathleeen, and Kris Kodrich. 2013. "Challenges and Dangers of Reporting in a Tumultuous Border Region: How Journalists at the El Paso Times Deal with Violence in Neighboring Ciudad Juarez." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 90 (2): 331–46.

CENCOS (National Center for Social Communication). 2011. "Violencia en México y el Derecho a la Información: Análisis de las cifras." [Violence in Mexico and the Right to Information: Analysis of Figures] Mexico City: Article 19. http://cencos.wordpress.com (accessed October 17, 2013)

Chavez, Ricardo. 2013. "Gunmen Kill Online Reporter in Mexico Border Town." *The Associated Press*, March 4.http://bigstory.ap.org/article/gunmen-kill-online-reporter-mexico-border-town (accessed October 17, 2013)

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2010a. *Silence or Death: Crime, Violence and Corruption Are Destroying the Country's Journalism*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2010b. *Journalists Murdered in Mexico Since 1992*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2011. *Getting Away with Murder: CPJ's 2011 Impunity Index Spotlights Countries* Where *Journalists Are Slain and Killers Go Free*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.

Corbin, Juliet, and Anselm Strauss. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research*. 3rd Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Dahl, Robert A. 1982. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Estévez, Dolia. 2010. "Protecting Press Freedom in an Environment of Violence and Impunity." In *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime*, ed. Eric L. Olson, David A. Shirk and Andrew Selee, 271-290. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and Trans-Border Institute at University of California San Diego.

Fahmy, Shahira, and Thomas J. Johnson. 2005. "'How We Performed': Embedded Journalists Attitudes and Perceptions towards Covering the Iraq War." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82 (2): 301–17.

Fahmy, Shahira, and Thomas J. Johnson. 2012. "Invasion vs. Occupation: A Hierarchy-of-Influences Analysis of How Embeds Assess Influences and Performance in Covering the War." *International Communication Gazette* 74 (1): 23–42.

Farah, Douglas. 2012. *Dangerous Work: Violence* Against *Mexico's Journalists and Lessons from Colombia: A Report to the Center for International Media Assistance*. Washington, D.C.: Center for International Media Assistance.

Feinstein, Anthony. 2012. "Mexican Journalists: An Investigation into Their Emotional Health." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 25 (4): 480–83.

Ferreira, Leonardo. 2006. *Centuries of Silence: The Story of Latin American Journalism*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.

Forced Silence: The State, an Accomplice in Violence Against Journalists in Mexico. 2012. Mexico City, Article 19. http://www.ifex.org/mexico/2012/03/20/article19informe2011.pdf (accessed October 4, 2013).

Freedom House. 2012. *"Mexico." Freedom of the Press*. New York: Freedom House.

Freedom House. 2013. *Freedom of Expression on the Agenda in Mexico*. New York: Freedom House, April 26.

González de Bustamante, Celeste. 2012. *"Muy Buenas Noches": Mexico, Television and the Cold War*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hanitzsch, Thomas. 2006. "Mapping Journalism Culture: A Theoretical Taxonomy and Case Studies from Indonesia." *Asian Journal of Communication* 16 (2): 169–86.

Hanitzsch, Thomas, Maria Anikina, Rosa Berganza, Incilay Cangoz, Mihai Coman, Basyouni Hamada, Folker Hanusch, Christopher D. Karadjov, Claudia Mellado, Sonia Virginia Moreira, Peter G. Mwesige, Patrick Lee Plaisance, Zvi Reich, Josef Seethaler, Elizabeth A. Skewes, Dani Vardiansyah Noor, and Kee Wang Yuen. 2010. "Modeling Perceived Influences on Journalism: Evidence from a Cross-National Survey of Journalists." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 87 (1): 5–22.

Hughes, Sallie. 2003. "From the Inside Out: How Institutional Entrepreneurs Transformed Mexican Journalism." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 8 (3): 87–117.

Hughes, Sallie. 2006. *Newsrooms in Conflict: Journalism and the Democratization of Mexico*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Hughes, Sallie, and Chappell Lawson. 2004. "Propaganda and Crony Capitalism: Partisan Bias in Mexican Television News." *Latin American Research Review* 39 (3): 81–105.

Hughes, Sallie, and Chappell Lawson. 2005. "The Barriers to Media Opening Up in Latin America." *Political Communication* 22 (1): 9–25.

Human Rights Watch. 2013. *World Report 2013: Mexico*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Inter American Press Association. (2012). *IAPA Welcomes Enactment of Law To Protect Journalists in Mexico*. Miami: Inter American Press Association.

Kim, Hun Shik. 2010. "Forces of Gatekeeping and Journalists' Perceptions of Physical Danger in Post-Saddam Hussein's Iraq." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 87 (3–4): 484–500.

Kim, Hun Shik, and Mariwan Hama-Saeed. 2008. "Emerging Media in Peril: Iraqi Journalism in the Post-Saddam Hussein Era." *Journalism Studies* 9 (4): 578–94.

Lawson, Chappell H. 2002. *Building the Fourth Estate: Democratization and the Rise of a Free Press in Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lowrey, Wilson, and Wan Woo Chang. 2010. "The News Organization in Uncertain Times: Business or Institution." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 87 (1): 41–61.

Molzahn, Cory, Viridiana Ríos, and David A. Shirk. 2012. *Drug Violence in Mexico—Data and Analysis through 2011*. San Diego: Trans-Border Institute, University of San Diego.

O'Connor, Mike. 2011. *In Breakthrough, Mexican Media Sign Crime Accord*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.

O'Connor, Mike. 2013. *In Mexico, A Movement and a Bill* Against *Impunity*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.

O'Neil, Shannon. 2009. "The Real War in Mexico: How Democracy Can Defeat the Drug Cartels." *Foreign Affairs* 83 (4): 63–77.

Organization of American States. 2011. *UN AND IACHR Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression Present Reports on Visit to Mexico*. Washington, D.C.: Organization of American States.

Pinto, Juliet G. 2009. "Transparency Policy Initiatives in Latin America: Understanding Policy Outcomes from an Institutional Perspective." *Communication Law and Policy*, 14 (1): 41–71.

Reese, Stephen D. 2001. "Understanding the Global Journalist: A Hierarchy-of-Influences Approach." *Journalism Studies* 2 (2): 173–87.

Ribando Seelke, Clare, and Kristin M. Finklea. 2013. *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service.

Ríos, Viridiana, and David A. Shirk. 2011. *Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis through 2010*. San Diego: Trans-Border Institute, University of San Diego.

Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl. 1996. "What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not." In *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, 49-62, ed. Larry Diamond and Mark F. Plattner. 2nd Edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press and National Endowment for Democracy.

Sharkey, Jacqueline E. 1991. Under Fire: U.S. Military Restrictions on the Media from Grenada to the Persian Gulf. Washington, D.C.: Center for Public Integrity.

Shirk, David A. 2011. *The Drug War in Mexico*. Washington, D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations.

Shoemaker, Pamela J., Martin Eichholz, Kim Eunyi, and Brenda Wrigley. 2001. "Individual and Routine Forces in Gatekeeping." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 78 (2): 233–46.

Shoemaker, Pamela J., and Stephen D. Reese. 1996. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Media Content*. 2nd Edition. Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

The Associated Press. 2012. "Mexico: Most Attacks on Journalists Unpunished." July 17. http://news.findlaw.com/apnews-lp/550624d4808548f1b2bf6b34eb67b649 (accessed October 17, 2013).

Trejo Delarbre, Raúl. 2011. "Televisoras, Privilegios y Poder Político." [Television Networks, Privileges and Political Power] In *Medios de Comunicación y Democracia: Perspectivas Desde México y Canadá* [Mass Communication and Democracy: Perspectives from Mexico and Canada], ed. Manuel Alejandro Guerrero, 35–66. México: Universidad Iberoamericana.

Tumber, Howard, and Frank Webster. 2006. *Journalists under Fire: Information War and Journalistic Practices*. London: Sage.

Waisbord, Silvio. 2002. "Antipress Violence and the Crisis of the State." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 7 (3): 90–109.

Waisbord, Silvio. 2007. "Democratic Journalism and 'Statelessness.'" *Political Communication* 24 (2): 115–29.

Weaver, David H., Randal A. Beam, Bonnie J. Brownlee, Paul S. Voakes, and G. Cleveland Wilhoit. 2007. *The American Journalist in the 21st Century*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wilkinson, Tracy. 2011. "Single Day's Toll in Ciudad Juarez is 18." *Los Angeles Times*, February 12. http://articles.latimes.com/2011/feb/12/world/la-fg-mexico-juarez-20110212 (accessed October 17, 2013)

World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers. 2012. *A Death Threat to Freedom: A Report on Violence against Mexico's Press*. Paris: WAN-IFRA Press Freedom.

Zhu, Jian-Hua, David Weaver, Ven-Hwei Lo, Chongshan Chen, and Wei Wu. 1997. "Individual, Organizational, and Societal Influences on Media Role Perceptions: A Comparative Study of Journalists in China, Taiwan, and the United States." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 74 (1): 84–96.

Author Biographies

Jeannine E. Relly is an Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Arizona with a courtesy appointment in the School of Government and Public Policy. She is an Affiliated Faculty Member at the Center for Latin American Studies. Her work has been published in publications, including *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Government Information Quarterly, Asian Journal of Communication*, and *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*. She reported from the U.S.–Mexico border region and the Caribbean before joining the academy. She is a founding member of the Border Journalism Network/*La red de periodistas de la frontera*.

Celeste González de Bustamante is an Associate Professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Arizona and an Affiliated Faculty Member at the Center for Latin American Studies. Her work has been published in *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism, Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, and *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*. She is the author of *"Muy buenas noches," Mexico, Television and the Cold War*. She is the President of the Border Journalism Network/*La red de periodistas de la frontera*. Before entering the academy, she covered politics and the U.S.–Mexico border region for commercial and public television.