

The Limits of the Debate: How the Oslo Terror Shook the Norwegian Immigration Debate

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Abstract

How do disruptive events such as terrorism, disasters, and crises change public discourses? Do they alter journalistic distinctions between legitimate utterances and unacceptable viewpoints? This article provides answers to these questions through a unique data set concerning the coverage of immigration in Norway before and after the Oslo terror of 2011. The data serve as a natural experiment where we can analyze how immigration discourse was changed with regard to its magnitude, topical emphasis, and the sources interviewed. The analysis demonstrate that Hallin's classic three-sphere model illuminates the dynamics of current meta-debates on polarized topics, where multiple online media continually criticize mainstream media and multiple voices question legitimate discourse. The main finding is that mainstream media definitions of appropriateness and deviance were challenged after the terror, as journalists adapted to a new political context. First, the issue of immigration was covered less in the months after the attacks. Second, the most vocal critics of the current immigration policies were put on the defensive, and debates with a critical potential were largely muted. At the same time, however, the attacks to some extent also opened mainstream media debate to online, deviant anti-Islamic actors who were previously largely silenced and ignored.

Keywords

journalistic norms, blog, ethnicity, nationalism, terrorism, ideology

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Terror attacks force democratic societies to mobilize, negotiate, and rethink a number of core values, including media freedom and freedom of speech. A number of studies have documented that disruptive events challenge mediated political debates (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Gitlin 1980; Molotch and Lester 1974) and alter journalistic practices and routines during crisis (Nossek 2008; Schudson 2002; Waisbord 2002). In the first phase after crisis, the mainstream media often engage in a ritualized coverage, largely moving away from their everyday professional roles as critical reporters into a “sphere of consensus” (Andenæs 2012; Nossek 2008; Schudson 2002). According to Moloch and Lester (1974) and Nossek (2008), accidents, disasters, or events initiated by disruptive outsiders potentially create more substantial changes, in contrast to elite-controlled events, which mostly offer very limited openings for changes in public discourse. The present article argues that the current media landscape with a proliferation of various online media outlets has intensified the meta-debate on how the mainstream media frame and cover issues. The meta-debate has become more vocal, more contested, and continuously present for mainstream media to a larger extent than before. Combining the insights from the studies of disruptive news events with Hallin’s (1986) classic three-sphere model, this study examines how a massive terrorist attack impacts on *legitimate discourse* and *deviant viewpoints* in an ongoing debate.

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik, a white, middle-class Norwegian male carried out twin terror attacks—bombing the executive government headquarters (killing eight), and assassinating sixty-nine people, most of them teenagers and children, in the Labor Party’s youth camp at Utøya. Breivik planned and carried out the violent attacks alone, inspired by a transnational, online community of anti-Islamic, ultraconservative writers.¹ Based on the classic studies of how dramatic events and crises potentially change the media coverage of ongoing political issues, the present article examines to what extent the terrorist attacks altered the balance in the Norwegian mainstream media debate on immigration. In his so-called manifesto, Anders Behring Breivik positions himself as a key contributor to the anti-Islamic community, and states that he had to use violent means to wake up the public and warn them about a Muslim takeover. His message may have wide-ranging implications for the various positions in the immigration debates and meta-debates on immigration. His horrendous actions and ideology illustrate the extreme, negative consequences of a radical anti-Islamic “echo chamber culture,” which spurred political and media calls for a broadening of the public debates on immigration what Eide et al. (2013) label *the pressure cooker discourse*. In line with this discourse, the mediated debate should be expanded further to include even previously unaccepted views on immigration, to expose them and “debate them to death” (Eide et al. 2013: 190). However, the attacks may also strengthen those calling for muting the anti-Islamic community (which Breivik was heavily influenced by and identified with), and immigration critics (such as the Progress Party where Breivik was a member of the party’s youth organization in 2002–2003²), with what Eide et al. label *the responsibility discourse*. In this analysis, Breivik’s violent ideology and acts represent a disruptive event with the potential to influence day-to-day media coverage of immigration. Based on a comprehensive,

quantitative data set of mainstream media coverage of immigration throughout 2011, we examine how immigration was covered before and after the attacks.

The article contributes to the study of disruptive news events both empirically and theoretically: First, our data, comprising a full year's coverage of immigration news in Norway, offer the unique opportunity of a natural experiment as the attacks occurred in July, making it possible to detect changes in the coverage after the attacks took place. This design contributes empirical clarity both to how important an issue is in the media and to what aspects of this coverage increase and decrease after a disruptive event. Second, it demonstrates how Hallin's (1986) classic three-sphere model offers insight into the dynamics of current meta-debates on topics such as immigration, where multiple online media continually criticize mainstream media, and multiple voices question and increase the awareness of what is accepted as legitimate discourse. While maintaining an analytical focus on the mainstream media, this perspective adds to the original model as it includes online niche media, often largely unedited and neither adhering to the so-called objective criteria nor recognizing the importance of mainstream media, to the theoretical model. Third, the radical anti-Islamic critique of mainstream media, discussed in this article, is transnational and particularly intense in Europe and the United States. By combining Hallin's model with the literature on disruptive news events, we show how contemporary news organizations are forced to deal with extreme actors, radical social movements, and alternative media—and whether to expose these viewpoints or curb them. Rather than examining the crisis coverage of the terror itself, it analyzes how disruptive news events challenge journalistic understandings of the appropriateness of different arguments and positions in political debates. Thus, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the deeper, more profound impact the terror attacks had on journalistic practice.

The article first theorizes and categorizes the Norwegian-mediated public debate on immigration and the meta-debate on how to debate immigration. In the second section, we present our data and research design. The third section presents the results from the content analysis. It examines how immigration was debated before and after the attacks, with emphasis on the prioritization between topics and the news sources participating in the immigration debate. Overall, it finds that the perception of a legitimate immigration debate changed after the attacks, as immigration received less media attention, critical debates were muted and the most vocal critics were pushed onto the defensive. At the same time, however, the attacks to some extent also opened the mainstream media debate to deviant actors who were previously largely ignored. The empirical findings and theoretical contributions are discussed and explained in the concluding section.

Theorizing the Limits of the Norwegian Immigration Debates

Mediated debates on immigration are often characterized as polarized, heated, and emotional (see Benson 2013; Cottle 2000; Horsti 2008 for literature reviews). Overall,

Norwegian mainstream media debates on immigration and meta-debates—about *how* immigration is debated—are no exception (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011; Lindstad and Fjeldstad 2005). Norway became a net receiver of immigrants from the 1960s. Since then, immigration has multiplied, and in the last five years, the country has had a record high net immigration, with an immigrant population³ now consisting of 12 percent of the total population of about 5 million (Statistics Norway 2013). From the late 1980s onward, both politicians and the public started to become increasingly concerned about the pressure of low-skilled immigrants from the global South on the Norwegian welfare model, and, in the 2000s, potential cultural conflicts have been accentuated in the public immigration discourse (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). Parallel to this development, the meta-debate concerning how the media cover immigration, what is debated and who is invited to participate in the public debates on immigration, has intensified (Hagelund 2004). In the meta-debate various stakeholders and positions have conflicting views on where the limits of an appropriate debate *are* and *should be* drawn—how the mainstream media *cover* immigration and how they *should* debate immigration. These limits to the debate are contested, vague, and dynamic, and the media's understanding of an appropriate and open debate is constantly renegotiated. In today's media landscape, the meta-debate takes place on multiple platforms, both in and outside of the mainstream media. Participants in the immigration debate, both online and in the mainstream media, experience daily these "invisible" borders between "inappropriate" and "appropriate" topics, opinions, and viewpoints.

To conceptualize the dynamics of, and main positions in, the contemporary Norwegian immigration discourse, we use Hallin's (1986) classic three-sphere model. Hallin's framework, distinguishing between a sphere of consensus, a sphere of legitimate controversy, and a sphere of deviance, enables us to analyze what topics and viewpoints are legitimate to debate in the media. The mainstream media debate on immigration (the sphere of legitimate controversy) is continuously challenged from both sides of the meta-debate on a number of platforms and forums. Hallin argues that the media's coverage of any topic is contingent upon the editorial strategies and values of journalists, editors, and news organizations. These editorial priorities are based on the mainstream media's interpretation of political and societal values, and this defines what the media perceive as appropriate and decent. We use the model to conceptualize key characteristics and developments of the debate and key positions in the meta-debate on immigration (see Figure 1), and not as an all-encompassing model to characterize the complex, contemporary Norwegian media landscape.

A Limited Consensus

In Hallin's three-sphere model, the *sphere of consensus* encompasses those social objects not regarded as controversial by the media or most of the society (Hallin 1986: 116–17), and journalists do not feel compelled to balance issues with opposing views within this sphere. Within the sphere of consensus, journalists step out of their role as disinterested observers to serve as advocates or celebrants of consensual values.

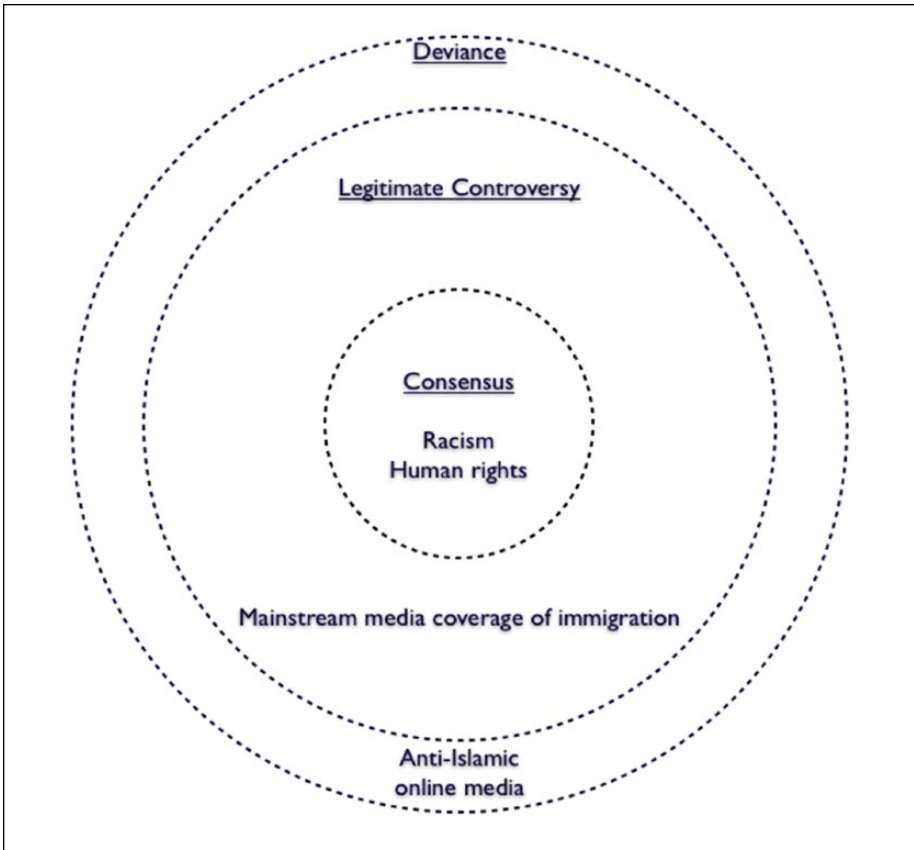


Figure 1. The three spheres of Norwegian immigration discourse.

Overall, the Norwegian mainstream media's sphere of consensus has been relatively limited (Figenschou and Beyer 2014; Lindstad and Fjeldstad 2005), beyond fundamental principles such as the fact that skin color (or race) should not decide how people are treated and that basic human rights should be respected.⁴ The consensus concerning immigration is notably limited in Norwegian discourse, a fact that will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

A Gradual Extension of the Sphere of Legitimate Controversy

What is covered in the mainstream media is what Hallin (1986: 116) labeled the *sphere of legitimate controversy*—put simply, what we debate in public and what we agree to disagree on. Within this sphere, objectivity and balance are supreme journalistic norms, and the weaker the consensus, the stronger the emphasis on the journalistic principle of balance. Even though the mainstream media frequently criticize the

political establishment, they very rarely make the system—or its core beliefs—an issue (Hallin 1986). The Norwegian-mediated immigration debate can be characterized as broad and intense, with an emphasis on immigration policy and national identity, but also debating topics from sports to crime and terrorism. Although studies have found that the mediated debate is elite-dominated, a diversity of voices participated in the mainstream media coverage of immigration (Figenschou and Beyer 2014).

In the Norwegian immigration context, the sphere of legitimate controversy has gradually expanded from the late 1980s. As emphasized by Hallin (1986), the borders between the three spheres are dynamic, depending on the political climate and on the editorial line of the various media outlets. Concerns for the Norwegian welfare model and for Norwegian culture increased among politicians and the public throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). The growth of the populist right-wing Progress Party,⁵ as a major opposition party in national Norwegian politics, coincided with this change in the political climate on immigration. The Progress Party has held a strong issue-ownership role on immigration (Karlsen and Aardal 2011), and the rise of asylum seekers in Norway in the 1980s paved the way for the party's electoral breakthrough in 1987 (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). The party's charismatic, media savvy, and controversial political leadership has strategically foregrounded immigration, continually criticized immigration policy, and framed itself in opposition to all other political views on immigration as *the* anti-immigration voice in Norway (Hagelund 2005).

The political mainstream has moved in the direction of the Progress Party over the last decades (Aalberg et al. 2012). This reflects a broader Western European development since the 1980s in which populist far-right parties have broadened the immigration debate and pushed the mainstream political scene toward stricter immigration positions and policies (see, among others, Benson 2013; Schafraad et al. 2012). Over time, the repetitive, controversial statements by Progress Party politicians have challenged and expanded legitimate discourse on immigration so that perspectives that earlier bordered the deviant sphere (see below) gradually became accepted. The topic of immigration has been strategically avoided by the other political parties in election campaigns and debates, due to the Progress Party's agenda-setting function and issue-ownership on immigration (Jupskås 2013).

The Progress Party has had a conflicting relationship with the mainstream Norwegian media, and party representatives have been vocal critical voices in the meta-debate on immigration, claiming that a broad, comprehensive media sphere of consensus has obstructed critical public debate (Hagelund 2004). The party receives only marginal support among Norwegian journalists, concurring with “the cultural (habitus) gap” between journalists in the mainstream media and immigration restrictionists in Western democracies (Benson 2013). Still, the party's immigration politics, and not least its controversial politicians, have been regarded highly newsworthy by the mainstream media. Over time, the Progress Party became what Schafraad and colleagues (2012: 374) label “an established (controversial) outsider” in mainstream mediated debates.

The mainstream media are also criticized for being problem-oriented, essentialist, and discriminating in their coverage of immigrants and immigration from the global South (see Eide 2010; Lindstad and Fjeldstad 2005). More recently, the range of legitimate viewpoints has been further widened as more outspoken, conservative writers of immigrant backgrounds have entered the mediated debate on immigration and integration, voicing controversial arguments. These critics have also participated in the meta-debate about immigration, criticizing the media coverage of immigration and Islam as stereotypical, ignorant, and conflict-oriented (Bangstad 2013b).

An Emerging Deviant Online Sphere

Outside the mainstream media, online activities, such as blogs, online news sites, and social media, have increased both anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic criticism. The views and perspectives voiced in these forums have been generally ignored by mainstream media coverage of immigration and, thus, belongs to what Hallin (1986: 117) would label the *sphere of deviance*. Journalists and the political mainstream regard this realm of political actors and views as too inappropriate and extreme, “unworthy of being heard” (Hallin 1986: 117). These critics have had a varied “level of deviance” (Boyle et al. 2012), although they often share a radical goal (overturning the government to change immigration policy). These anti-Islamic voices experience, and actively portray, themselves as victims of political censorship and consensus culture to such an extent that they have withdrawn to a closed, online public sphere. Contrary to Hallin’s (1986) model, the most radical and influential individuals in the deviant sphere today do not strive to enter the sphere of legitimate controversy. They do not consider the mainstream media an important platform for their message but choose to communicate directly to large numbers of devoted followers online. In contrast to the Progress Party, the anti-Islamists and their readers consider the mainstream media as a lost cause and deemed largely irrelevant. This online sphere, where people gravitate toward news and sources that agree with their own views, and systematically ignore or discredit information that challenges or contradicts this view, has been characterized as “echo chambers,” “information cocoons,” or “cybercascades” (Sunstein 2007). Over time, these echo chambers will most likely magnify and amplify the message, so that discourses become more extreme and polarized (Sunstein 2007).⁶ The online anti-Islamic sphere is transnational, with many and tight connections between the Norwegian blogs and its international associates (Bangstad 2013a). The growth of the Eurabia ideology and the emergence of this parallel anti-Islamic online sphere were rarely included in the ongoing mainstream debates before the attacks. The only platform where the two spheres regularly collided was in the online discussion forums provided by the mainstream media. From these online forums, where participants could be anonymous, the contributors participated in repeated heated and harsh debates about immigration in general and Islam in particular (see Ihlebæk et al. 2013), the mainstream media were constantly reminded of their critics.

Inspired by the online anti-Islamic discourse, the Oslo terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik, *sought* to influence the online and mediated debates on immigration by his

violent manifesto. In this article, the implications of the shocking, disruptive July 22 terror on Norwegian immigration debates are studied through an analysis of mainstream media discourse (the sphere of legitimate controversy) on immigration before and after the attacks. We investigate the possible changes in the discourse along several dimensions: (1) a change in the magnitude of the overall coverage of immigration, (2) a change in the topics being debated, and (3) a change in the use of sources used by the news media. The last point is further explored by taking a closer look at sources that can be characterized as deviant with regard to the immigration debate, and we ask if these sources were given more room in the debate after the attacks or if they were silenced. Taken together, these possible changes in the discourse will give evidence of whether and how Norwegian journalists' worldview about immigration changed after the terror attacks.

Method

The present article relies on a quantitative data set, and the sample was designed to represent a broadly defined mainstream immigration debate reaching a mass audience in Norway,⁷ before and after the attacks. The data include news and opinion articles on immigration, integration, and international refugees published in the main national, daily newspapers (*Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, and *VG*), and prime-time television news on the national broadcasters (NRK, the public broadcaster, and TV2, the commercial broadcaster) throughout 2011. In total, 3,173 news items (2,587 newspaper articles and 586 television reports) with immigration or integration as the main topic were analyzed.⁸ The sample comprises immigration stories from all sections of the selected media (including culture/entertainment, foreign news, sports, crime, and the weekend/magazine sections) and was selected manually by a team of coders.

To examine changes in media attention and topical emphasis, we use a quantitative content analysis, mapping news medium, format, size/length, priority (whether it made headlines), if it was directly related to the July 22 attacks, and the topical focus of the items. News sources are defined as those individuals who are quoted directly in the news items, or those who have written op-ed pieces. The first ten news sources were registered for each news item and each source was categorized by institutional affiliation,⁹ gender, and ethnic background.¹⁰ Deviant sources are defined as either members of the Progress Party (critical voices within the sphere of legitimate controversy, bordering the sphere of deviance) or the anti-Islamic contra-Jihadist online community¹¹ (primarily active in the deviant sphere, with some appearances in the mainstream media). To perform a more comprehensive analysis of the role of these critical voices in the immigration debate, the analyses provide measures concerning whether they are on the offensive (criticizing the authorities and immigration policy, demanding stricter policy) or on the defensive (under criticism for their far-right ideology) when they are quoted as news sources or op-ed writers. A team of two senior researchers and four research assistants collected and analyzed the empirical data. For the variables used in this paper, scores for Krippendorff's alpha were between .73 and .93, a satisfactory level of intercoder reliability.

Results: Post July 22 Changes in Mainstream Media Debate on Immigration

In the following, we report results concerning how the immigration coverage was changed or unchanged after the terror attacks hit Norway on July 22. We first give a broad overview of the *magnitude and genres of coverage* and then proceed to analyze the changes in *topical emphasis* and *news sources*.

Magnitude and Genres of Coverage Before and After July 22

Overall, the media covered immigration- and integration-related issues to a lesser extent after the Oslo terror attacks than before. Before July 22, the media in our sample had an average of almost ten articles concerning immigration per day ($M = 9.93$, $SE = .46$), while after the terror the media published a little over seven articles per day ($M = 7.15$, $SE = .39$). This difference was clearly significant: $t(361.822) = 4.585$, $p > .01$ (equal variances not assumed). Furthermore, the immigration coverage moved from the news section to the opinion formats after the Oslo terror, and almost half the articles and reports (47 percent) published after the attacks were published in opinion formats, compared with 37 percent in the period before the attacks took place.¹² This turn away from regular news stories toward opinion pieces primarily took place in the print media (op-ed pages, editorial and journalist-authored commentaries and analyses), while the two television channels continued to cover immigration-related issues in the news formats in nine out of ten stories more or less as before. Overall, these changes signal that the immigration coverage changed character from broader routine coverage to fewer, albeit more analytical and newsworthy, debates after the attacks. This move toward more opinion journalism can be seen as a sign of movement between what is considered within and outside the sphere of legitimate controversy. It is probably fair to say that such a movement would entail more newsworthy journalism and that many of the aspects are laden with a controversy that makes the opinion format more suitable. The overall salience of the theme of immigration decreased after the attacks but, when covered, it was covered in more analytical formats. The topical emphasis in the media coverage will be analyzed in the next section.

Topical Emphasis Before and After July 22

While some topics rose on the national agenda, others largely disappeared from mainstream discourse on immigration and integration (see Figure 2). First, the coverage of immigration policy and administration diminished significantly after the attacks from about one-third of the total coverage to one-tenth after the attacks. The regulation and administration of the immigration system (including immigrant statistics, principles and implementation of the immigration laws, and the consequences of regulation for the applicants), which is a key issue in the immigration debate, largely disappeared after the attacks. Second, the items that investigate the negative effects of immigration, such as immigration-related crime, critical investigations of religious and cultural

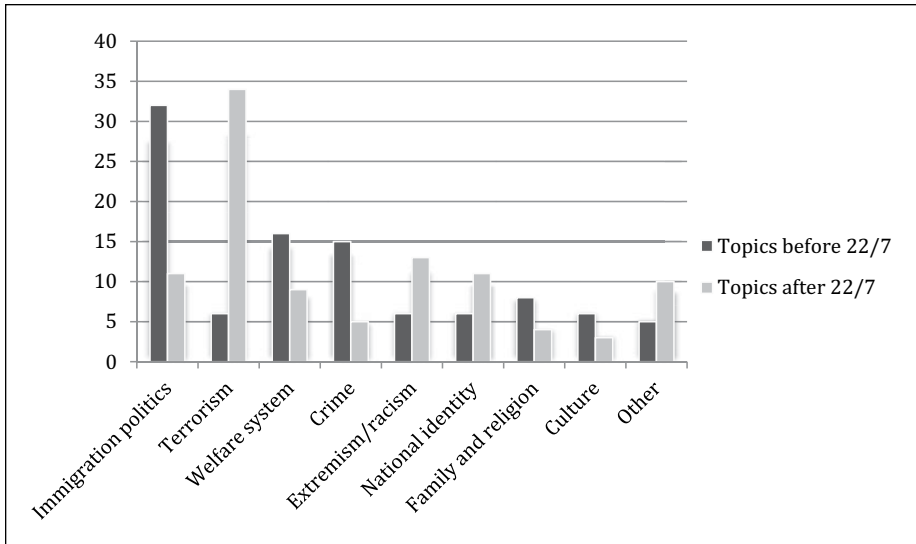


Figure 2. Topical emphasis before and after July 22 (N = 3,173).

practices, and debates on how immigration burdens the Norwegian welfare model, decreased markedly after the attacks. These two developments indicate that the controversial, critical debates on immigration policy disappear from the sphere of legitimate controversy after the attacks.

However, the media interest in violent extremism and terrorism increased from 6 percent of the total immigration coverage before the attacks to 34 percent after the attacks (see Figure 2). Related to this, the ideas of the right-wing extremism became a salient issue in the mediated immigration debate. After the attacks, the media output on a closely related topic—that of political extremism (contra-Jihadism, neo-Nazism, and racism), which had been largely ignored in the media before the attacks (Bangstad 2013a)—doubled from 6 to 13 percent of the total coverage. Furthermore, the attacks also sparked a more fundamental debate concerning Norwegian identity, national culture, and core societal values. These debates became more important in the media after the attacks, rising from 6 percent before the attacks to 11 percent after. Throughout the fall of 2011, a meta-debate concerning how Norwegian society discusses immigration became a key issue in these identity debates, which primarily took place in the op-ed sections of the newspapers analyzed (compare with the above-mentioned change in format toward more opinion coverage). It is perhaps only natural that the issues of terrorism, political extremism, and national identity are more salient on the national agenda after such a shocking and deeply tragic event as the Oslo terror.

Overall, the immigration debate remains broad and diverse as no topics disappear completely, although the relative strength between them changes. These changes in topical emphasis signal a renewed discussion of what types of arguments and topics

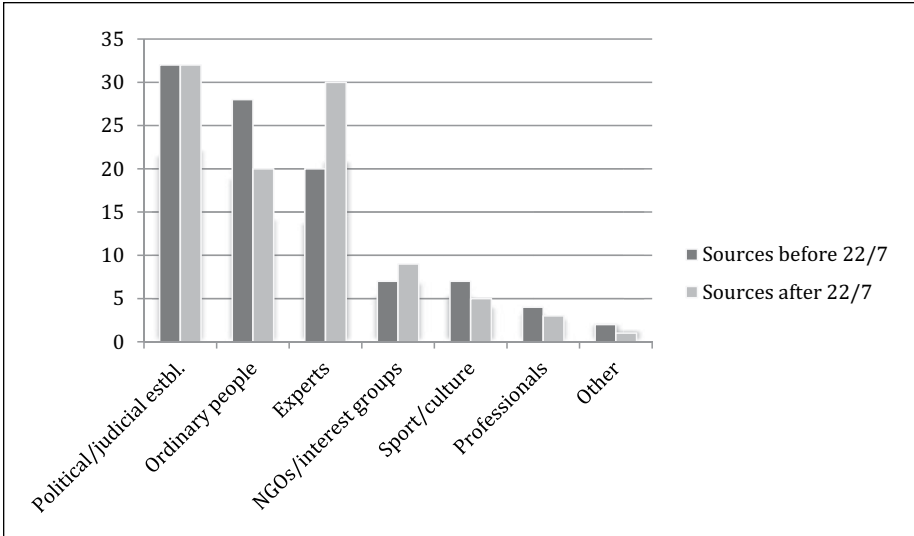


Figure 3. Main sources before and after July 22 ($N = 2,857$).

Note. NGOs = nongovernmental organizations.

that belong to the sphere of legitimate controversy. Explanations for why the critical, routine coverage of immigration became largely subdued post-July 22 will be analyzed in detail in the discussion section below.

News Sources Before and After July 22

Political crisis events potentially open up the public sphere to new actors and interests (Molotch and Lester 1974), at the same time as the political authorities will strive to communicate that they are in control of the situation (Christensen et al. 2013; Nossek 2008). Based on the analyses above, where we could observe relatively large changes in the prioritization of immigration-related topics, we might also expect changes in the selection of sources. To examine whether the source patterns become more elitist or diverse, we analyze both the share of news sources with ethnic minority/immigrant backgrounds and changes in the institutional affiliations of the news sources that are participating in the mediated immigration debate before and after July 22.

As outlined above, the Norwegian immigration debate has been criticized for being dominated by a “politically correct consensus elite.” To measure who are invited in as the “authorized knowers” (Ericson et al. 1989: 3) or “primary definers” (Hall et al. 1978; Manning 2001) on immigration-related issues before and after the terror attacks, we have measured news sources’ institutional affiliations. The three largest source groups were the same before and after the attacks,¹³ but we see substantial changes in the prioritization between them (see Figure 3). These three categories comprise the *political establishment* (politicians, lawyers, judges), *experts* (internal and external

media experts and researchers or analysts), and, finally, *ordinary people/unaffiliated individuals*, people who speak on behalf of themselves and their personal subjective experiences.

As can be seen from Figure 3, the main change that occurred was the decrease in ordinary people as sources and the increase in the use of experts. Other differences were of a minor character. This signals a turn toward a more elite-oriented, opinion journalism after the attacks. If we break down these broader source categories into more narrowly defined groups, we find some changes within the “political establishment sources,” as the judicial side decreases, while there is a substantial increase in sources representing the political opposition after the attacks. Furthermore, we find that within the “experts” group, particularly the number of researchers and scholars increases substantially compared with the situation before the attacks.

In the total 2011 sample studied here, an average of 22 percent of all news sources are from an ethnic minority background (as operationalized above). The overall number of ethnic minority sources declined slightly in the broader media debate on immigration and integration after the terror attack, from 23 to 17 percent of the news sources. Moreover, ethnic minorities in Norway were not included/participating in the fundamental debates in the aftermath of the terror. Although both political and cultural elites argued for a broader and more multiethnic Norwegian identity in their texts and quotes, those who participated in the mediated debate on immigration after the attacks represented a homogeneous group of non-immigrant background, elite sources. Prominent among these were experts and academics representing a liberal-leftist view on immigration policy. These findings correspond with Eide’s (2012) study of Norwegian media debates on multiculturalism after July 22, where she identifies an elite-dominated debate with only 14 percent of the participants identified as people with an immigrant background.

To further explore whether the changes in news sources and opinions represent a broadening of the immigration debate, we continue with a more fine-grained analysis in the next section that measures the source activities of the right-wing populist Progress Party (challenging the border from within the sphere of legitimate controversy), and sources from a more extremist anti-Islamic sphere, mostly present in the contra-Jihadist online sphere (challenging the debate from the outside).

Anti-Islamic and Anti-immigration Sources Before and After July 22

In this section, we examine whether the immigration debate was opened up to more critical views or muted them as a reaction to the terrorist’s radical contra-Jihadism. Mapping the distribution of articles where sources representing Progress Party and radical far-right bloggers and activists are quoted, one finding is that these sources become more visible after the attack than they had been before. This is especially true for bloggers from radical anti-Islamic online forums (see Figure 4).

Because we are talking about relatively low numbers of articles where these sources are present (a total of 141 and 99 articles for the Progress Party and right-wing bloggers, respectively), it is hard to break down the numbers without running the risk of

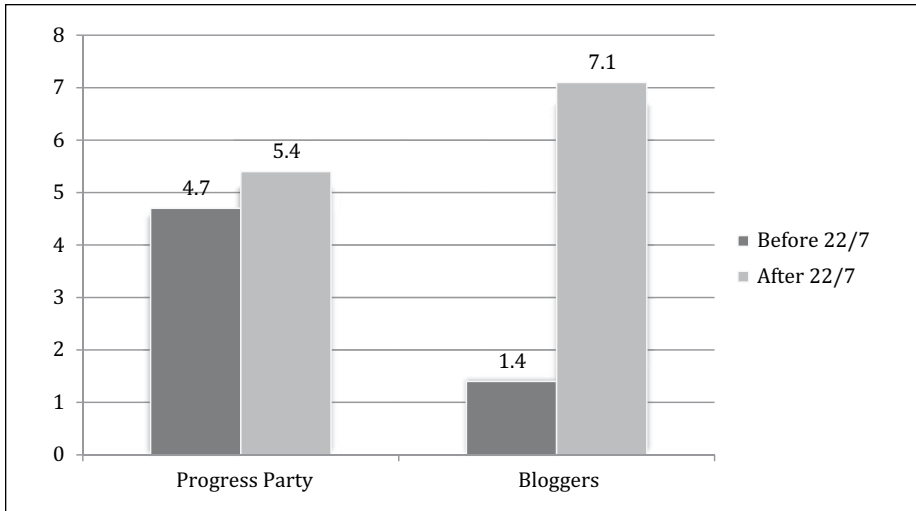


Figure 4. Articles with deviant sources before and after July 22 (%; $N = 2,857$).

drawing conclusions on the basis of numbers that are too low. What we can see, however, when analyzing these source groups' presence in relation to various topics is that they are both more present on the topic of terror, as they are connected to the terrorist. Furthermore, they are both particularly important in articles where national identity is discussed, primarily in meta-debate articles on what kinds of utterances should be tolerated in the immigration debate.

Second, we analyze whether these immigration critics are primarily quoted as sources in news formats or if they are participating in the public debate through the writing of opinion pieces. As outlined above, opinion formats became more important after the attacks in the total immigration coverage. However, articles where sources from the anti-Islamic online sphere or the anti-immigrant Progress Party are quoted show the opposite trend; they now become much more important sources in news formats. The fact that anti-Islamic sources are more present in the news than in opinion formats may reflect that these sources themselves became newsworthy after the attacks because Anders Behring Breivik has been strongly inspired by their texts, quoting them extensively in his manifesto (see Bangstad 2013a; Berntzen and Sandberg 2014; Fekete 2012; Gardell 2014; Hervik and Meret 2013; van Buuren 2013). This is an argument that is supported by the finding that the news items where these sources are quoted are more likely to make headlines than the articles where immigration critics are not quoted as sources—a tendency that increased post-July 22 (see Figure 5).

Third, we analyze the role anti-Islamic deviant actors and anti-immigration politicians from the Progress Party play when they are quoted in the immigration news or authors of opinion pieces, asking whether their criticism and initiative changed after the terror? As illustrated in Figure 6, the Progress Party served as active immigration

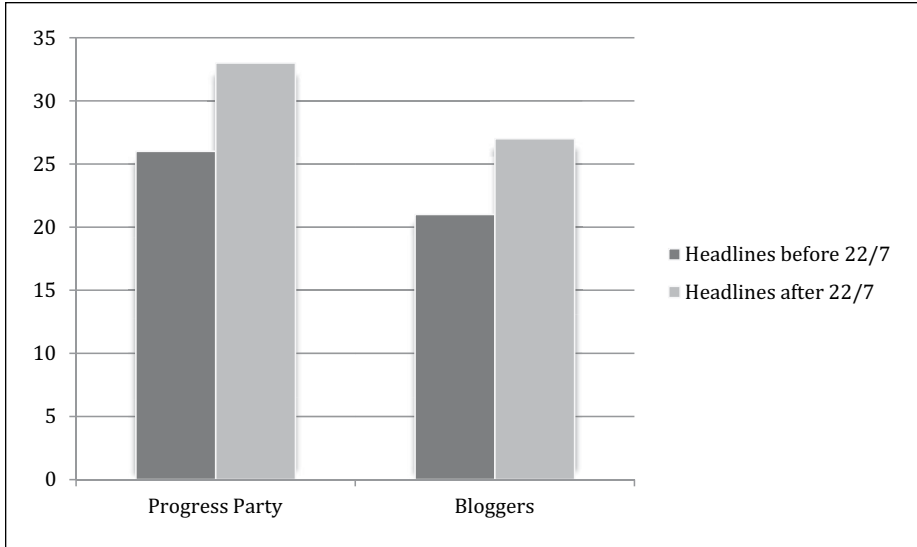


Figure 5. Presence in articles/stories on front pages or headlines (% , N = 2,857).

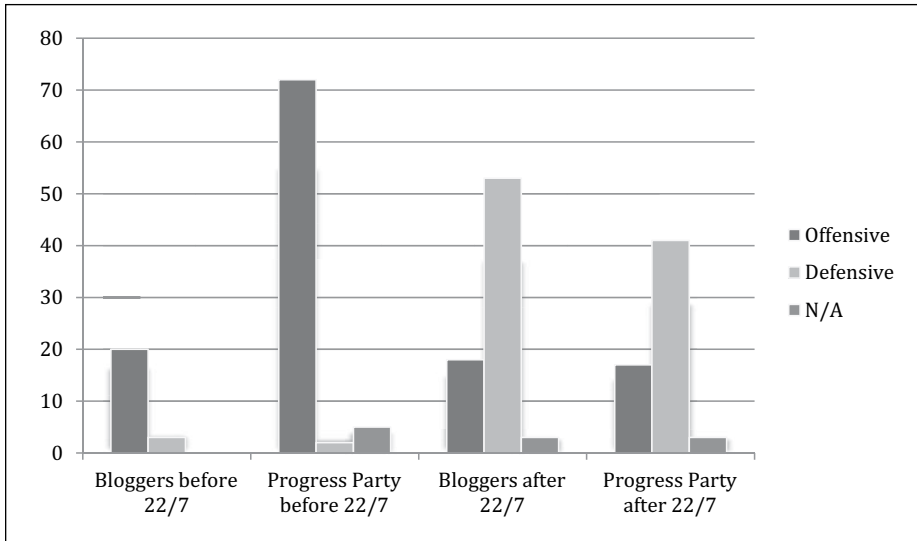


Figure 6. Offensive and defensive utterances before and after the attacks (absolute numbers).

critics before the attacks, scolding the current immigration regime for being naïve and politically correct; blaming immigrants in general, and Muslims in particular, for

exploiting the generous Norwegian welfare system, for posing a security threat, and for undermining Norwegian values and culture. This changed dramatically after the terror, when it became clear that the terrorist had been active in the Progress Party's youth organization in 2002 and 2003. The party was therefore forced to publicly reevaluate their populist rhetoric and anti-Islamic discourse, and the media covered a row of unfortunate comments and interviews given by various party members. Progress Party politicians remained critical toward immigration and Islam but, after the attacks, they had a defensive role in more than two-thirds of the news items and opinion articles. How the Progress Party adapted to the public debate after July 22 thus became a story in its own right after the attacks. This new, passive role of the most vocal immigration critics within the sphere of legitimate controversy is a strong signal of a changed immigration debate.

The anti-Islamic online sphere, activist groups, and organizations that were largely ignored in the mainstream media before the attacks were pushed into the media spotlight after Breivik extensively quoted their texts, discussed their projects, and wrote about his relations to key individuals in his manifesto. Before the attacks, the terrorist had also made contact with several of the most prominent online anti-Islamic writers.¹⁴ Although some of the contra-Jihadist bloggers and editors appear critical of the most extremist views expressed in the manifesto and distance themselves from the violent means of the terrorist, they often maintain a radical anti-Islamic aim. The fact that key individuals and "ideologists" from the contra-Jihadist deviant sphere increasingly participated in the mainstream media is another notable change in the debate after the terrorist attacks.

Discussion and Conclusion

The changes in the mainstream media immigration debate outlined above are a result of intricate changes in the political climate (such as trauma and new sensitivities, the position of primary anti-immigration and anti-Islamic sources, and in changes in public opinion) in combination with changes in editorial production processes (newsworthiness and internal priorities). Aiming to contribute empirical clarity to the literature on media coverage after a disruptive event, we first elaborate on how and why these changes took place after the Oslo attacks and second highlight the main theoretical contributions.

First, we find that the overall media attention to immigration declined after the attacks. In his manifesto Breivik argued that the attacks were a marketing stunt to attract attention to political censorship of critical, anti-Islamic views (Gardell 2014). Contrary to his ambition, the decrease in media coverage of immigration may reflect that immigration had become an even more sensitive issue to debate publicly after the attacks. It was primarily the running, day-to-day routine coverage of immigration policy, as well as news reports highlighting immigration related to crime, welfare, religious, and cultural practices, that decreased after the attack. Before the attacks, these issues were prominent in the public debate (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011) and received considerable coverage (Figenschou and Beyer 2014). In particular, the

decrease in stories relating immigration to crime signals a notable change in the immigration debate, as the Norwegian mass media's presentation of immigrants as criminal threats has been consistent since the late 1990s (Lindstad and Fjeldstad 2005). This indicates that the mainstream media, consciously or not, adopted a responsibility discourse after the July 22 attacks. This sensitivity corresponded with opinion surveys that documented more positive attitudes toward immigration in the first phase after the attacks (Jakobsson and Blom 2014). Our analysis substantiates that the news media's subscription to a consensual "We" directly after the attacks (Andenæs 2012; Nossek 2008; Schudson 2002) had more profound lasting effects throughout 2011 on the coverage of the already sensitive immigration issue. This represents an extension to the disruptive news events' literature, which has primarily examined the short-term crisis coverage after terror and crises.

The responsibility discourse was strengthened as a consequence of the limited resources in contemporary Norwegian news media institutions. News productions are "zero-sum games" (Graber 2003: 147) and in the months after the terrorist attacks most Norwegian news journalists and editors were so occupied with the coverage of the attack that much of the more routinized news coverage of other related stories was postponed or omitted. This is particularly the case for the journalists working on the crime desk, who, after the attacks, worked non-stop on the terror investigation. This clearly goes beyond the Norwegian case, as demonstrated in numerous classic news values and news production studies (from Tuchman 1978 to today), and the shrinking budgets, reorganizations, and staff reductions have intensified in the last decade (Freedman 2010).

While the traditional emphasis on negative effects of immigration decreased after the attacks, a second main finding is that topics related to right-wing political extremism and the terrorist's ideological and political worldview became a major story in the immigration debate. The anti-Islamic online deviant sphere, which had been largely ignored in the mainstream public debate, became a major story overnight. Overall, 226 articles and reports covered the right-wing anti-Jihadist blogosphere and international networks after the attacks, compared with 53 before the terror, and the stories in which these radical critics are quoted were more likely to make headlines than those where they are not. The extreme version of the contra-Jihadist ideology expressed by Breivik in his manifesto left numerous questions, and the deviant anti-Islamic online community became highly newsworthy. Although they did receive increased attention from the mainstream media after the attacks, they did not become primary definers as the anti-Islamic movement was analyzed and explained by authorized "knowers" and established elite sources. This elite-dominance was identified by the turn toward more opinion formats and expert sources. The deviant online sphere was primarily defined and explained by others, a finding that underlines the need to distinguish between newsworthy actors and authorized sources, also in relation to the three-sphere model.

Third, the fact that the terrorist was a self-declared crusader against multiculturalism challenged the position of the regular critics of Norwegian immigration policy. As demonstrated above, the most prominent anti-immigration actors—the Progress

Party—lost their momentum and their initiative as primary definers in the immigration debate after July 22. In the second half of 2011, the media were primarily interested in the Progress Party to criticize them, not to use them as immigration critics. The party was struggling to balance their historically strong identity as *the* anti-immigration voice with the need to adjust to the new political climate and sensitivities, and to distance themselves from Breivik's extremist anti-Islamic views. Consequently, the most vocal critics within the sphere of legitimate controversy largely disappeared, which further contributed to the above-mentioned decrease in news investigation of the (perceived) negative effects of immigration.

The relations between the deviant anti-Islamic online sphere and the mainstream media were altered as a result of the attacks. Terrorism is highly newsworthy, but giving voice to terrorists remains highly controversial. The contra-Jihadist writers had both promoted themselves as victims of a politically censored consensus media and actively boycotted the mainstream media. After the attacks, the most influential bloggers from the deviant sphere were chased by both national and international media, and thus had unprecedented access to the mainstream public sphere. One journalistic approach identified in our analysis is to criticize and expose extreme views on Islam (the pressure cooker discourse). The challenge for the deviant actors was not primarily in accessing the mainstream media but, rather, to get their message through. Our analysis shows that, although invited into a temporarily expanded sphere of legitimate controversy, these deviant sources remained outsiders who were rarely given the chance to promote their extreme ideology.

After the attacks, the political authorities called for including the immigrant population in a larger Norwegian "We" (Christensen et al. 2013: 171). Even though the atmosphere and debate climate changed after the terror attacks, there were fewer news sources of immigrant background after the attack than before, particularly in those debates directly related to the terror. Both the political establishment and the mainstream media called for more diversity but, paradoxically, the opposite happened. There are several possible explanations for this: Newsrooms are still occupied by a people of ethnic-majority backgrounds, with lower awareness of diversity of perspectives; journalists under pressure often call the usual suspects, so that primary definers stay that way. In addition, ethnic minorities are still underrepresented among experts, political elites, and other groups of authorized "knowers"; and, finally, there may still exist a narrow understanding among journalists and editors of what Norwegian identity and society is and should be.

The present study demonstrates that, after a major crisis such as the Oslo attacks, ongoing media debates are affected on many levels and sometimes in unexpected ways. Moreover, these changes are not necessarily conscious editorial strategies; they can also be indirect results of a new political climate, which impacts on the journalists, their sources, and their public. Overall, immigration received less media attention after the attacks, critical debates were muted and the most vocal critics were pushed onto the defensive. Moreover, certain issues were largely moved into the sphere of consensus, narrowing the range of topics and viewpoints available in public discourse on immigration, signaling the adoption of a responsibility discourse. On the contrary,

actors and viewpoints from the sphere of deviance were to some degree allowed into the sphere of legitimate controversy, not by endorsing the views but by exposing their views (the pressure cooker model).

While the literature on disruptive news events has shown that the news media tend to move into consensus-oriented coverage, the analysis presented above integrates this perspective more coherently with Hallin's three-sphere model. This enables a more systematic and fine-grained review of the changes that occur after terror and crisis, which contributes to the theorization of disruptive news events. This systematic model, which analyzes the overall coverage of an issue, before and after the event, further extends the three-sphere model in several ways: It examines the magnitude of the issue and incorporates aspects pertaining to the volume of coverage itself. Moreover, it illuminates not only the news topics and actors that dominate the sphere of legitimate controversy but also what topics and actors disappear from the mainstream media debate. This elucidates sphere dynamics—how, and under what circumstances, certain subtopics and actors move from one sphere to another due to disruptive news events—to a larger extent than previous analyses. It further proposes a more nuanced model that includes online alternative media enabling the broadcasting and transmission of viewpoints previously confined to more closed social contexts. The model also illuminates the contradictory relations between these deviant online actors and the sphere of legitimate controversy: They perceive the mainstream media to be irrelevant, at the same time as they engage in massive media critique. Finally, the systematic source analysis clarifies the roles newsworthy (deviant) actors and authoritative (established) sources play in the sphere of legitimate controversy. The present article has started to address these important questions and offers an analytical point of departure that may be useful for scholars interested in studying changes in the sphere dynamics between the contemporary mainstream media and deviant voices in non-journalistic online and social media. Further theorizing is needed, particularly regarding the integration of the new media landscape into the model, as well as a more comprehensive analysis of the contradictory relations between deviant actors and journalists. Further research should also problematize how to conceptualize the topics and sources that are *not* covered by the mainstream media, how and why they disappear from the sphere of legitimate controversy, and the somewhat unclear relation between the sphere of consensus and the sphere of deviance.

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Notes

1. The extent to which scholars have emphasized the anti-Islamic political context as an explanation for his radicalization varies between academic disciplines: On one hand, terrorism scholars analyze his acts as typical of a “solo terrorist,” examining Breivik’s planning and preparations for the attacks with particular emphasis on what made him decide to turn his extremist, radical opinion into horrendous acts of violence (see, among others, Dafnos 2013; Meyer 2013; Ravndal 2013). On the other, experts on religion (Islam), media, and anthropology examine Breivik’s political network and motivation, analyzing the ideology and discourses in his manifesto in relation to other political texts, political movements, and mediated debates on Islam and immigration (see, among others, Bangstad 2013a; Berntzen and Sandberg 2014; Eide 2012; Gardell 2014; Hervik and Meret 2013; van Buuren 2013; von Brömssen 2013).
2. Breivik joined the Progress Party’s Youth in his early twenties in January 2002 (Seierstad 2013) and enlisted as the elected candidate for the Oslo city council the same year. When boycotted by the nomination committee, unable to make the nomination list, he stopped attending meetings and ended his activities in the youth party online discussion site (*ibid.*).
3. Defined as foreign-born immigrants and Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents by Statistics Norway.
4. Gullestad (2006) investigates this consensus and argues that racial boundaries are embedded in other discourses in Norwegian media debates on national identity and culture.
5. In the present article, the Progress Party is characterized as a right-wing populist party because it is both anti-immigrant, populist/antiestablishment and with authoritarian tendencies (see Jupskås 2013 for further discussion). It is more integrated in the party system than most European right-wing populists, however, and has affected the policy position of other parties, cooperated with other parties (Jupskås 2013), and from September 2013, the Progress Party formed government in coalition with the Conservative Party.
6. See Mancini (2013) for an overview of the media fragmentation literature and a discussion of the wider political implications of these developments.
7. Mean readership for the three newspapers were 663,000 (*VG*), 653,000 (*Aftenposten*), and 326,000 (*Dagbladet*) in 2012/2013 according to TNS Gallup. The average numbers of viewers for the main news shows were 736,000 (*Dagsrevyen*—NRK) and 407,000 (*Nyhetene 21*—TV2) in September 2013 according to numbers obtained from TNS Gallup and NRK. The total population of Norway is about 5,000,000.
8. Only reports with immigration and integration as the main topic are included here. For the media coverage of July 22, this includes all reports on the terrorist’s views on immigration and anti-Islamic activities, such as his political/ideological views, his networks and ideological inspiration, and his history in different anti-immigration forums and groups.
9. Institutional affiliation is coded in the following categories: *Political elite* (politicians, the judiciary, and the administration), *experts* (researchers, academics, and media experts [editors and commentators, etc.]), *interest groups* (NGOs and labor organizations), *professionals* (doctors, teachers, etc.), *sport/culture* (artists, publishers, athletes, trainers, etc.),

- unaffiliated individuals* (“ordinary people” speaking from their own personal experience), and *other*, see Figure 2.
10. Because ethnic background is very rarely explicitly addressed in media texts, we have categorized news sources’ ethnic background by looking at their names, appearances, and sartorial choices where no other information about ethnicity is given in the text. This operationalization of ethnic minority has been broadly used in related Scandinavian studies (see Figenschou and Beyer 2014 for an overview).
 11. Only the sources with institutional affiliations to the main anti-Islamic, contra-Jihadist Web sites (Honest Thinking and Document.no), anti-Islamic activist groups (Human Rights Service), organizations (SIAN [Stopp Islamifisering av Norge] and Norwegian Defence League), as well as influential individual bloggers such as Fjordman and Bjørn Stærk are categorized as deviant voices here. This sample coincides with other studies of the anti-Islamic community (see Berntzen and Sandberg 2014).
 12. Comparing news with some kind of reference to the July 22 attacks with all other immigration news, we find that opinion formats are used more frequently in the former category than in the general debate. However, there is also an increase in the opinion formats in the general immigration debate after the attacks.
 13. We here present the analysis of main sources in articles. We also registered up to nine subsequent sources per article. When inspecting the frequencies of these variables, we see a very similar pattern as with the main sources. Therefore, we use the variable “main source” as an indicator of source presence in general.
 14. Breivik contacted key figures in the Norwegian anti-Islamic sphere, proposing partnerships and new ideas but he was given a cold shoulder by other contributors to the anti-Islamic discourse, as his “radical views and unpleasant personality left him constantly on the periphery” (Berntzen and Sandberg 2014: 4, see also Ravndal 2013).

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Fact Checking the Campaign: How Political Reporters Use Twitter to Set the Record Straight (or Not)

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Abstract

In a multichannel era of fragmented and contested political communication, both misinformation and fact checking have taken on new significance. The rise of Twitter as a key venue for political journalists would seem to support their fact-checking activities. Through a content analysis of political journalists' Twitter discourse surrounding the 2012 presidential debates, this study examines the degree to which fact-checking techniques were used on Twitter and the ways in which journalists on Twitter adhered to the practices of either "professional" or "scientific" objectivity—the mode that underlies the fact-checking enterprise—or disregarded objectivity altogether. A typology of tweets indicates that fact checking played a notable but secondary role in journalists' Twitter discourse. Professional objectivity, especially simple stenography, dominated reporting practices on Twitter, and opinion and commentary were also prevalent. We determine that Twitter is indeed conducive to some elements of fact checking. But taken as a whole, our data suggest that journalists and commentators posted opinionated tweets about the candidates' claims more often than they fact checked those claims.

Keywords

journalism, elections, debates, fact checking, objectivity, norms and routines

If information is the currency of democracy, the problem of misinformation presents a serious challenge to the quality of democratic self-governance (Kuklinski et al. 2000).

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Particularly in this multichannel era marked by political polarization and selective exposure to media (Stroud 2011), high-profile policy debates can turn on stories and claims by political elites that stretch the truth or fundamentally distort it. Former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin's "death panels" claims, for example, indelibly shaped the contours and perhaps even the outcome of the debate over federal health-care reforms in 2010 (Lawrence and Schafer 2012; Nyhan 2010).

Over the past decade or so, the "fact checking" genre of journalism has developed an evidence-based method for assessing political claims that, anecdotal evidence suggests, may be exercising a growing influence on the news. At the same time, the rise of social media sites like Twitter has offered new possibilities for broad-based, instantaneous discussion of political claims. The free-flowing, wide-ranging arena of Twitter would seem to support fact-checking-like activities by journalists by making real-time commentary and crowd-sourcing possible. For example, Bill Adair, creator of PolitiFact.com, has claimed that his organization's fact checking is directly supported by Twitter (Adair 2013). During widely watched events like presidential election debates, Adair says, PolitiFact's reporters monitor Twitter to see which candidate claims are most heavily discussed, and readers use Twitter to submit calls for fact checking directly to PolitiFact.

At the same time, Twitter's opinionated ambience may invite mainstream journalists to step outside the constraints of traditional professional objectivity and the "he said/she said" style of journalism (Lasorsa et al. 2012; Lawrence and Schafer 2012; Pingree 2011). In both these ways, Twitter opens possibilities for new patterns of news reporting on politics.

This study analyzes how political reporters at a variety of news outlets used Twitter to cover the 2012 U.S. presidential election debates. The 2012 election was marked by the rising popularity of both Twitter and fact checking. Having grown exponentially since the previous presidential election, Twitter significantly shaped the campaign media environment for the first time in 2012. The first 2012 general election debate was the most-tweeted U.S. political event to that date in Twitter's short history (Sharp 2012a, 2012b). Commentators observed that Twitter had stolen from television the post-debate power to establish conventional political wisdom (Stelter 2012) but urged audiences to be wary of quick conclusions flowing through the Twittersverse (Gavin 2012).

The 2012 campaign was also "the most fact-checked in history" according to PolitiFact's Adair (2012, para. 11)—with greater demands from the public for journalists to expose political falsehoods and greater urgency to do so in Twitter time (Sullivan 2012). But as demand for real-time fact checking increased, fact checking also faced unprecedented resistance, led by a Mitt Romney campaign staffer's famous declaration that "We're not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers" (Simmons 2012, para. 9)—leading some critics to charge that fact checking had failed in its mission (Carr 2012; Shafer 2012).

Through close analysis of the "tweets" of over four hundred individual journalists, we determine that Twitter is indeed conducive to some elements of fact checking. Twitter is indeed a platform for candidate claims to be questioned, and public questioning of political claims is an important step in correcting misinformation. But the

fast-moving, opinionated commentary for which Twitter seems ideal is not the same thing as the “scientific” mode of objectivity upon which serious fact checking rests. Ultimately, Twitter’s 140-character form may not be conducive to the genre of fact checking advocated by many full-time fact checkers.

We begin with a brief analysis of the two modes of objectivity that underlie daily mainstream news on one hand and the fact-checking genre on the other. We then consider how these norms may be enacted in the rapidly swirling currents of political discourse on Twitter.

Literature Review

Objectivity and Fact Checking

Journalistic fact checking, with its aim to definitively judge the veracity or falsehood of political statements, operates against the backdrop of the profession’s objectivity norm. Indeed, its relationship with what might be called *professional objectivity* is one of its defining attributes.

The central principle of professional objectivity in American journalism is the notion that facts can and should be separated from values or opinions, with journalists reporting only the facts (Schudson 2001), a premise grounded in positivism’s strict binary between objectivity and subjectivity (Wien 2005). In practice, this norm manifests itself as “neutrality,” “balance,” and in news stories that are careful not appear to take a side (Chalaby 1996; Pingree 2011; Streckfuss 1990). Journalists often maintain this neutrality by adhering to the “he said, she said” reporting style that studiously quotes the claims of two sides of a dispute, leaving the reader to determine the truth of the matter, even for verifiable factual issues (Lawrence and Schafer 2012; Pingree 2011). Through this practice, professional objectivity is at least as much a performative and strategic ritual designed to protect journalism’s cultural authority (Boudana 2011; Tuchman 1972) as it is a philosophically guided professional norm.

A second form of the objectivity norm, what we might call *scientific objectivity*, also derives from positivism’s fact/value distinction, yet takes a very different shape in practice. In contrast to professional objectivity’s both-sides balance, scientific objectivity is built instead on the scientific method, with its process of testing hypotheses and then drawing—and declaring—conclusions based on the weight of evidence (Pingree 2011; Streckfuss 1990). Scientific objectivity remained in the margins throughout the twentieth century as professional objectivity defined American journalism, but it has gained cachet in recent years. Kovach and Rosenstiel’s (2007) influential treatise advocated it as the method of journalism’s core element of *verification*, and it has been foundational in the development of computer-assisted reporting and data-driven journalism (Wien 2005).

Political fact checking shares with mainstream journalism an emphasis on fact-centered discourse (Graves and Glaisyer 2012; Pingree et al. 2013). But it makes a crucial divergence from traditional journalism in its focus on *adjudicating* factual disputes. Such adjudication has been widely called for by critics of professional objectivity

(Cunningham 2003; Dobbs 2012; Graves 2013; Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007), but modern political journalism has performed less of it in practice (Hardy et al. 2009; Jamieson and Waldman 2003; Lawrence and Schafer 2012). This discomfort with adjudication in most mainstream news has spurred the growth of the “fact-checking” genre of journalism (Graves 2013), led by three national operations—PolitiFact, FactCheck.org, and *The Washington Post’s* Fact Checker. Each of these operations publishes detailed, annotated articles concluding with verdicts on the truthfulness of a wide variety of political statements; two of them include a graphical meter rating the veracity of each claim. This format is also the standard for similar fact-checking units run by regional news organizations, many of which have formed since the 2008 election (Graves and Glaisyer 2012).

The verification of claims in the fact-checking process involves three basic elements borrowed from the scientific method (Graves 2013): claims, evidence, and judgments. First, fact checkers select verifiable statements in the realm of fact, rather than opinion, especially those made by prominent political officials (see also Dobbs 2012). They draw claims from continual monitoring of political commentary, as well as reader contributions, and often gravitate toward claims they suspect are false (Adair 2013). As Graves documents, fact checkers then select evidence with which to evaluate the claim, often relying on a mixture of documents and experts and privileging information from official government and nonpartisan sources. Based on their interpretation of that evidence, they reach a judgment. The mainstream genre of fact checking then typically includes a rating or ranking that conveys the outlet’s judgment about the claim, such as PolitiFact’s Truth-O-Meter scale.¹

Fact checking constitutes an alternative to the mainstream practice of professional objectivity in that fact checkers “not only *report* fact, but publicly *decide* it” (Graves 2013: 18, emphasis in original). They thus offer a continual corrective and challenge to daily news that, by carefully observing the norms of professional objectivity, may end up serving as a megaphone for misleading claims. As Graves (2013) notes, fact checkers see themselves as working within the broad tradition of objectivity, even as they seek to reform it by adjudicating factual statements and emphasizing transparency and reproducibility of method. Fact checking is thus an embodiment of scientific objectivity rather than professional objectivity: Reporter/fact checkers do not simply pass along the claims of powerful sources, as journalists working within the professional paradigm of objectivity are often obliged to do. Although it appears anecdotally that scientific objectivity continues to be relegated to the margins of most political journalism, research has not yet determined the degree to which the fact checkers’ approach has been adopted by journalists not specifically devoted to that practice, a question this study aims to address.

Twitter and Journalism

As Twitter has become the central circulatory system of information among reporters (Hamby 2013; Lawrence, forthcoming), the possibilities for more widespread fact checking by all reporters—not just the established fact checkers—have arguably

become greater. Fact-checking politicians' claims is presumably made easier by Twitter's real-time, broad-based conversation, and the verdicts of the established fact checkers may gain broader exposure and influence over reporters working for other news outlets—particularly if social media audiences are calling for the news to fact check the candidates more diligently (see Brisbane 2012).

Yet Twitter (and social media platforms more generally) may simultaneously make fact checking more difficult because the networked, decentralized nature of the contemporary digital information environment presents challenges to both forms of objectivity. Since the 1990s, emerging online paradigms of inclusivity and multiculturalism have called into question the binary perspective of professional objectivity that positions journalism between just two sides on each issue (Deuze 2005), and the multiaxiality of networked digital media magnifies this challenge (Williams and Delli Carpini 2011). With more perspectives being presented and weighed within the arena of public discussion, the positivist line between subjectivity and objectivity is eroded as journalists are revealed to be situated within the world and their stories, just like everyone else who presents their perspective online (Blaagaard 2013; Williams and Delli Carpini 2011). This makes it more difficult for journalists to defend the notion that they alone can represent objective reality (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013). This is the contested environment surrounding objectivity in which contemporary political fact checking operates—one in which journalists' ability to either present competing truth claims as equally valid (as in professional objectivity) or to methodically draw independent, authoritative conclusions about reality (as in scientific objectivity) is being sharply questioned.

Twitter thus presents a proverbial double-edged sword, by making collaborative, real-time checking of political claims possible but enmeshing that effort in the abbreviated and contested forms of expression dominant there (Ausserhofer and Maireder 2013; Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012). Twitter's decentralization, immediacy, and penchant for opinion expression may undermine journalists' ability to serve as authoritative gatekeepers and truth-tellers (Barnard 2012; Hermida 2012; Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012).

Various studies and authors suggest that this enervation of authority has begun to pull journalists away from standard rules in their practice of professional norms on Twitter. Journalists are becoming more open to sharing personal information and opinions, using features of Twitter such as retweets to negotiate objectivity norms while dabbling in a blend of fact-centered reporting mixed with emotion, humor, "lifecasting," and their own and others' opinions (Lasorsa et al. 2012; Lawrence et al. 2013; Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012). As a result of these evolving norms and Twitter's technical and space limitations, political discourse on Twitter often resembles what Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) termed the "journalism of assertion."

Indeed, Twitter presents a particularly challenging setting in which to observe the norm of scientific objectivity and practice the journalism of verification. On Twitter, fragments of information (and misinformation) are introduced, spread, contested, and corrected in an interactive process involving both professional journalists and (at least in theory) nonprofessional Twitter users. The social media environment makes the traditionally opaque process of verification more open, iterative, and tentative

(Hermida 2012). The speed and volume of the information that rushes through Twitter's floodgates also confound the comparatively slow traditional journalistic processes of verification and fact checking (Meraz and Papacharissi 2013). It is not clear whether an effective form of political fact checking built on deliberateness and thoroughness (Graves 2013; Pingree 2011) can take place amid the speed and 140-character brevity of Twitter. What elements of the fact-checking process are actually performed by political journalists and how Twitter's affordances are used in the process are both critical factors determining how the emerging journalistic practice of fact checking manifests itself in a continually flowing information environment marked at its core by a fading distinction between fact and opinion.

This confluence of opportunities for and challenges to journalistic fact checking is at its most pointed and visible during live political events such as general election debates, which have become central moments in political discourse on Twitter (Larsson and Moe 2012). Twitter has come to serve as an integral backchannel to the narrative unfolding on television, where users annotate the proceedings and counter the messages of established media sources (Burgess and Bruns 2012), turning political monologue into dialogue (see also Mazumdar et al. 2013). Debates are also central to the practice of political journalism and fact checking (Pingree et al. 2012). Debates have traditionally served as an important stage for candidates to present their platforms to voters, and an important venue for journalists to weigh those claims (though research has consistently shown that journalists emphasize candidate character, strategy, and perceived "wins" and "losses" more than the substantive candidate claims; Benoit 2007; Kendall 1997).

Because the real-time, live event setting is a particularly rich context for studying Twitter, and because presidential debates are likely to contain a wealth of candidate claims, this study examines how journalists used Twitter during the three U.S. presidential candidate debates in the fall of 2012.

To that end, this study raises the following research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): To what extent do political journalists use Twitter to discuss the claims made during presidential debates?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What types of debate claims are discussed by journalists on Twitter?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How are journalists incorporating professional and/or scientific objectivity when discussing debate claims on Twitter?

Research Methods

Research was conducted in three main phases. During the collection phase, a custom software program archived tweets from a purposive sample of 430 political journalists and commentators who covered the 2012 presidential campaign for U.S. media outlets. In the sampling phase, a portion of the tweets posted during the presidential debates and the hours immediately following them was selected for analysis. In the final phase, this sample and other debate-related data were coded by a team of trained coders using a codebook developed by the authors.

Table 1. National News Outlets Included in Sample of Campaign Reporters.

Print	B-cast TV	Cable TV	Web-Only or Primarily	Radio	Wire Service
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	ABC	CNN	BuzzFeed	NPR	Associated Press
<i>The New York Times</i>	CBS	Fox News	Huffington Post		
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	NBC	MSNBC	Politico		
<i>The Washington Post</i>			Slate		
<i>Time</i>			Talking Pts. Memo		
<i>USA Today</i>					

Twitter Database

The first step was to identify a purposive sample of journalists at major media outlets who were covering the 2012 campaign. This was done using a media database curated by Cision, which has maintained media listings in the United States for more than seventy-five years. The sample included reporters from prominent national news outlets (see Table 1), as well as those working for seventy-six local and regional outlets in key swing states including Ohio, Florida, North Carolina, Colorado, Iowa, Virginia, Nevada, and Pennsylvania—the top eight states in campaign advertising spending through July 2012 (when the sample of reporters was created).² All journalists at each of these outlets who were identified in the Cision database as covering the campaign or politics were included in the sample (both reporters and commentators were included, but editors were excluded). The database listed a Twitter account for many of these journalists; a search was performed on Twitter for the rest to determine if they had an active account. The final sample included 430 political reporters and commentators with active Twitter accounts, 74 (17 percent) of whom were identified by Cision as an “analyst,” “columnist,” “commentator,” or “contributor”—in other words, journalists more likely to express their own opinions.

Postings to Twitter are available to the public, but for them to be saved and studied, they must be captured. This was done using a custom-built software program that queried Twitter’s Application Programming Interface (API) every fifteen minutes from August 26 to November 18, 2012, asking if anything new had been posted to the 430 accounts chosen. The full text of each new tweet by these reporters—roughly 261,000 tweets during this time frame—along with a time stamp and the user’s Twitter handle and profile description was then saved to a database.

Sample for Coding

Although it is reasonable to expect that much fact checking on Twitter occurred in real time, as each debate progressed, it is also possible that fact checking continued to emerge after each debate ended and reporters had time to review claims made during the debates. For this reason, we retrieved tweets from our sample of Twitter accounts

from one hour before each debate began until noon Eastern Time the following day, yielding a total of 17,922 tweets.

From this sample, we purposively selected all tweets relevant to the fact-checking questions in this study by identifying those that referenced (explicitly or implicitly) a claim by the candidates or by their supporters or critics (as reported below, the vast majority of claims referenced in our sample were from the candidates themselves rather than from their surrogates or critics from the political parties or ideological groups). These ranged from direct quotes from a candidate to a journalist's response to something a candidate said. Tweets that mentioned fact checking or called for a claim to be fact checked were also considered relevant. The sample included both the Twitter user's original tweets and those they retweeted from others.³ A total of 3,788 tweets and retweets relevant to candidate claims were identified. These relatively few tweets (compared with the total reporter tweets captured during the three debates) constitute the empirical record of how these political journalists negotiated norms and practices of objectivity and fact checking within the fast-paced setting of Twitter. (As discussed further below, this relatively small fraction constitutes a finding in and of itself, indicating that journalists often use Twitter for discussion of topics unrelated to politicians' claims.) A random sample of half of these tweets ($n = 1,895$) was selected for manual coding, using a random start point and choosing every second tweet.

To better assess which claims journalists selected for discussion on Twitter, coders coded the debate transcripts for all candidate claims, cataloging and categorizing by topic 1,040 distinct claims made during the three debates. Together, this data set tracks debate claims as they were originally made by the candidates and then as they were discussed by journalists on Twitter.

Measures

Fact checking fundamentally turns on claims (and sometimes counterclaims): statements, putatively factual, that are subjected to tests of evidence and then judged for their accuracy. Due to both Twitter's abbreviated form and to the norms of professional objectivity, and perhaps for other reasons as well, individual tweets may not contain all four elements. We therefore analyzed each tweet in our sample for each element of fact checking.

Claim. Coders examined each tweet for the presence of an original *claim* made by a candidate, their surrogates, or a debate moderator. These claims ranged from the specific (Obama saying the budget sequester would not happen) to the broad (discussion of Romney's vague tax plan). Coders also coded who made the original claim referenced in the tweet (Romney, Obama, Republican/conservative sources beyond Romney himself, Democratic/liberal sources beyond Obama himself, or a moderator) and noted the *topic* of those original claims. These open-ended topic codes were then inductively recoded into ten topic categories: foreign policy, economy or finance, health care, immigration, education, women's issues, military, energy, candidate or party records, and other.

Counterclaim. Reporters occasionally tweeted statements set in opposition to a candidate's original claim, which were coded as *counterclaims*. Sometimes, these statements were made by others and simply passed on in the reporter's tweet. For example, these two quotes were included in a single tweet during one debate—"Romney: 'We can't kill our way out of this mess.' Obama: 'I kept the American people safe the last four years.'" These were coded as counterclaims *by someone other than the journalist*. Journalists sometimes made the counterclaim themselves ("Romney auto answer is outbreak of #romnesia"). These were coded as counterclaims *by the author of the tweet*.

Judgment. As discussed earlier, the essence of the fact-checking genre is rendering a judgment on the veracity of a claim—proclaiming a claim either true or false (or, often, somewhere in between). On Twitter, this can take various forms. Sometimes the journalist or commentator includes an explicit judgment about the truth of the original claim. Key words indicating such a judgment include "true," "false," "wrong," "right," and so on. For example, the tweet "The difference between 5.6% and 7.8% unemployment is NOT 9 million jobs. Same lie in all three debates" was coded as containing a judgment because of the word "lie." Other times, journalists' tweets only hint at a definitive judgment, though the direction of the judgment (whether the claim was true or false) can be inferred. Coders were instructed that an implied *judgment* and a *counterclaim* present in the same tweet indicate the journalist's verdict that the candidate has made a false or misleading claim.

Evidence. Journalists sometimes mentioned factual evidence in their tweets, often to support a counterclaim or judgment, but sometimes just to add context to a candidate's claim. Tweets that included figures or statistics were coded as containing *data evidence* (for instance, "Debt is up by 50% since President Obama took office"). Tweets that included evidence in the form of an official position or quote from an expert source or an official document were coded as *statement evidence* ("U.S. Navy Adm. John Nathman (ret.) on Romney's defense budget: 'That's a lot of debt and deficit.'").

A key affordance of Twitter that could enhance fact checking is the ability to embed hyperlinks within a tweet that take the reader to other sources of news, conversation, and for purposes of this study, evidence. Coders were instructed to indicate whether each tweet in the sample contained a link, and if so, to where. Specifically, links were categorized as leading to (1) a *government* Web site, database, or document; (2) a *professional fact-checking* operation, like PolitiFact or FactCheck.org; (3) to any other type of *media* site; or (4) elsewhere.⁴

Intercoder reliability was tested in two different rounds using three coders who each coded the same two hundred tweets—approximately 10 percent of the sample. Raw agreement among the three coders was over 90 percent for six variables (claim, judgment, data evidence, statement evidence, link source, claim party) and 84 percent for one variable (counterclaim). Krippendorff's alpha reached the .80 standard for three variables (data evidence, link source, claim party). For variables that fell short of that standard, the coders reached agreement through discussion before proceeding.⁵

Results

RQ1 asked to what extent Twitter is used to discuss claims made by the candidates. Of the 1,894 tweets coded, 1,706 referenced identifiable, specific claims made by the candidates themselves.⁶ Compared with the total number of tweets collected during the relevant time frame from our sample of journalists (17,922), this number (based on our initial purposive sampling of all tweets relevant to fact checking) indicates that political journalists' tweets dealt with candidates' claims far less than with other subjects.

As might be suspected given previous research (Lawrence et al. 2013), much of the rest of the sample (i.e., tweets *not* dealing with candidate claims) included a mix of humor and opinion about the debates or the candidates sprinkled with reporters' comments on their own work experiences and working conditions. For example, one tweet from a reporter for *The News-Press*, of Florida, asked, "Is Obama thinking more about his 20th anniversary than tonight's debate?" A major focus was debate performance and strategy, such as in this tweet from a *Washington Post* reporter: "Thought Obama came out a little too fiery. Has modulated into the right space now."

RQ2 asked what types of candidate claims are discussed on Twitter. Our RQ1 findings suggest a context for the answer: Relatively few candidate claims were discussed, let alone fact checked, among journalists on Twitter. Moreover, less than half the claims made by the candidates during the three debates became fodder for discussion on Twitter: 499 (48 percent) of the 1,040 distinct claims made during the three debates were mentioned in our Twitter sample. Of these, 309 claims were mentioned only once or twice, and only 21 (2 percent) were mentioned ten or more times.

By far the most-tweeted set of claims was an exchange during the second debate about whether President Obama had immediately called the 2012 attack on the American diplomatic mission in Benghazi an act of terror. Three back-to-back claims (Obama saying he immediately called it an act of terror during his remarks from the White House Rose Garden, Romney saying it took the president fourteen days to call it an act of terror, and moderator Candy Crowley saying that yes, the president had immediately called it an act of terror) were mentioned a combined eighty-six times. The second most-mentioned claim was Obama's line in the third debate about today's U.S. Navy having fewer "horses and bayonets," mentioned thirty-three times. A qualitative look at journalists' most-tweeted claims reveals that most were one-line zingers from the debates, such as Romney saying, "We can't kill our way out of this mess" and Obama saying that, unlike Mitt Romney, he did not often look at his pension because "it's not as big as yours."

In terms of which candidate's claims were subject to more discussion, coders found 523 claims made by Romney and 491 made by Obama in the debate transcripts, a ratio of 1.065 times more claims by Romney. In the Twitter sample, reporters tweeted 940 times (50 percent) about Romney claims, and 751 times (40 percent) about Obama claims, a ratio of 1.245 times more Romney claims.⁷ This apparently greater scrutiny of Romney is not seen, however, when considering only the most-mentioned claims on Twitter. Obama's claims (particularly about Benghazi) were more likely to be

Table 2. Typology of Tweets Referencing Politicians' Claims.

Type	Elements of the Tweet	Form of Objectivity	%
Stenography	Claim alone	Professional	64
He said, she said	Claim with counterclaim by another source	Professional	2
You be the judge	Claim with evidence, no judgment	Scientific	11
Full fact check	Claim, evidence, and judgment	Scientific	4
Pushback	Claim with counterclaim by journalist	Disregarded	14
Believe me	Claim and judgment, no evidence	Disregarded	5

mentioned ten or more times by journalists in the Twitter sample (24 percent), compared with 14 percent of Romney's claims; $\chi^2 = 28.9(1)$, $p < .001$.

In terms of topical focus, the claims journalists tweeted about dealt most often with the economy (34 percent, $n = 579$) and foreign policy (31 percent, $n = 525$). The economy category included claims dealing with taxes, government spending, and jobs. The foreign policy category included claims dealing with Libya, Iran, Israel, China, and Iraq. Health care (8 percent, $n = 131$) and energy (6 percent, $n = 103$) were the next most common topics. Journalists also tweeted claims dealing with candidate records (5 percent, $n = 89$), women's issues (5 percent, $n = 79$), education (4 percent, $n = 64$), immigration (4 percent, $n = 63$), the military (3 percent, $n = 43$), and other subjects (1 percent, $n = 22$).

RQ3 asked how journalists are incorporating professional or scientific objectivity when discussing candidate claims. To answer this question, we offer a typology of tweets found in our sample, presented in Table 2. The *stenography* form, which proved by far the most common, simply records a candidate statement and offers no counterclaim, evidence, or evaluation of the claim—for example, this tweet from a reporter at *KUSA-TV* in Colorado—"Romney: I'm going to help women by creating a better economy. #Debate." The *he said, she said* type reflects the other prevailing practice of professional objectivity, introducing only a counterclaim by another source, usually the competing candidate—for example, this tweet from a *New York Times* writer: "Romney brings up 'apology tour.' Obama: 'This is the biggest whopper that's been told during the course of the campaign.' #Debate."

Tweets incorporating external *evidence* (which we dub *you be the judge* and *full fact check*) represent forms of scientific objectivity: They go beyond the partisan candidate debate to provide the reader with additional information and context and, in the case of *full fact check*, render an independent judgment on the veracity of the claim. For example, *Time* magazine's White House correspondent posted a *you be the judge* tweet during a disagreement over Romney's auto bailout plan in the third debate, inviting his readers to see Romney's previous claims for themselves: "Here is what Romney said on auto bailout: <http://t.co/uGfNIM09>." An example of a *full fact check* tweet is this one from an *ABC News* journalist: "Did Romney say the Arizona immigration law—#SB1070—was a model for the nation as Obama asserted? No, he did not—<http://t.co/EPOSaDd>." In terms of the types of evidence journalists relied on, the

Table 3. Journalists' Reliance on Forms of Objectivity.

	Form of Objectivity Used			
	Traditional	Scientific	Objectivity Disregarded	
Reporters	75%	14%	11%	100%
Commentators	52%	16%	31%	100%

$\chi^2 = 120.86(2), p < .001$

tweets in our sample were less likely to contain corroborating *data* within them—either in the form of authoritative statements or data facts—and more likely to contain *links* to external sources of corroborating evidence.

In keeping with our expectation that Twitter also offers opportunities for journalists to disregard objectivity, in the *pushback* and *believe me* types of tweets, the journalist directly expresses his or her own view—whether by making his or her own counterclaim, or by offering his or her own verdict on a candidate's claim—*without* providing external, corroborating evidence. An example of a *pushback* tweet is this one from a reporter for Talking Points Memo: “Romney’s 8 year balanced budget is the wildest claim of the election and comes up the least by far.” An example of a *believe me* tweet is this one from a *Fox News* commentator: “Obama flat wrong on Arizona law; Romney taking notes.”

Overall, professional objectivity was the most common form of objectivity practiced by journalists in our sample, comprising 66 percent of all tweets coded; nearly all of those tweets offered simple stenography rather than contrasting candidate claims. Signs of scientific objectivity were found in 15 percent of all tweets, and 19 percent of tweets did not follow either of these standards, instead offering counterclaims and judgments by the journalist without providing evidence to support that judgment.

As discussed above, the key distinguishing element of “scientific” fact checking is the rendering of a judgment by the reporter. Of the 155 judgments identified in the sample, 92 (60 percent) judged the candidate’s original claim to be false or misleading, and 62 (40 percent) found the original claim to be true. Romney was found to be wrong more often than Obama (74 percent to 42 percent) and, conversely, Obama was found to be right more often than Romney (57 percent to 26 percent). Of all the “false” verdicts, 69 percent were attributed to Romney and 31 percent to Obama; $\chi^2 = 15.56(1), p < .001$.

As might be expected, reporters in our sample acted somewhat differently than commentators. As shown in Table 3, those identified as columnists, commentators, or contributors were less likely to rely on professional objectivity (52 percent of their tweets) and more likely to disregard objectivity altogether (31 percent). Reporters’ tweets most often reflected professional objectivity (75 percent), but sometimes used scientific objectivity (14 percent) or disregarded objectivity (11 percent). Regarding specific tweet types, stenography tweets were more likely to come from reporters (73 percent) than commentators (50 percent), and pushback tweets were more likely to

Table 4. Use of Objectivity by News Outlet Type.

	Form of Objectivity Used			
	Traditional	Scientific	Objectivity Disregarded	
Radio	83%	4%	13%	100%
Print	73%	12%	15%	100%
Broadcast TV	72%	20%	9%	100%
Web	69%	17%	14%	100%
Cable TV	55%	15%	30%	100%

$\chi^2 = 83.726(8), p < .001$

come from commentators (23 percent) than reporters (8 percent); $\chi^2 = 123.35(5), p < .001$. Interestingly, commentators were more likely than reporters to post full fact checks that included a claim, evidence, and judgment in a tweet (6 percent to 3 percent); $\chi^2 = 9.48(1), p < .01$.

There were also differences in how news outlet types practiced various forms of objectivity (see Table 4). Journalists and commentators working for cable television stations were least likely to rely on traditional objectivity (55 percent of the time) and more likely to disregard objectivity (30 percent). Broadcast television journalists (20 percent) and journalists working for Web-only outlets (17 percent) were most likely to use scientific objectivity. The differences among these groups are significant; $\chi^2 = 83.726(8), p < .001$.

Discussion and Conclusion

Twitter's affordances—real-time conversation and the ability to easily link to external sources of evidence, for example—could make fact checking during live events like presidential debates easier and more widely practiced by journalists. Our data suggest that fact checking is not the most prominent use to which Twitter was put by reporters and commentators covering the 2012 presidential election. Indeed, only a fraction of tweets in our sample referenced specific candidate claims at all. Nevertheless, elements of fact checking were present in enough tweets to be worthy of study, particularly if there is a future upward trend in these practices as Twitter becomes even more widely used by journalists. Moreover, it is possible that some fact-checking tweets exercised outsized influence in the unfolding conversation about the debates online and beyond. For example, the heavy attention given by reporters on Twitter to the Obama–Romney exchange about the president's response to Benghazi seems likely to have shaped subsequent news coverage of that pivotal moment in the debate.

For now, our data show that the established norms and practices of mainstream journalism are more prominent among political journalists on Twitter than those associated with the emergent genre of fact checking. Among the tweets that referenced claims made by the presidential candidates, at least some of which were eligible for

fact checking, almost two-thirds (60 percent) reflected traditional practices of “professional” objectivity: stenography—simply passing along a claim made by a politician—and “he said, she said” repetition of a politician’s claims and his opponent’s counterclaim. A small but not insignificant portion (15 percent) reflected the “scientific” approach to objectivity that underlies the emergent fact-checking genre, by referencing *evidence* for or against the claim and, in a few cases, rendering an explicit judgment about the validity of the claim—though such tweets were more likely to come from commentators than from news reporters.

Interestingly, another 25 percent of tweets in our sample disregarded both notions of objectivity. These tweets either passed judgment on a claim without providing evidence for that judgment or pushed back against the politician’s claim with the journalist’s own counterclaim, again without reference to external evidence. These forms of tweets, both of which Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) might call the “journalism of assertion,” were more likely to come from commentators whose job description includes opinion, but 11 percent of tweets from regular reporters displayed similar disregard for objectivity. Taken as a whole, journalists and commentators posted opinionated tweets about the candidates’ claims more often than they fact checked those claims—leaving us to wonder whether Twitter’s 140-character form and the opinionated environment that has quickly evolved around it (Lasorsa et al. 2012) are conducive to the fully developed fact checking advocated and practiced by professional fact checkers. Indeed, as noted above, Twitter presents journalists with a double-edged sword: It enables collaborative, real-time checking of claims but enmeshes that effort in the highly abbreviated and opinionated forms of expression dominant in the twittersphere.

Our data provide an intriguing preliminary answer to the question of what *kinds* of claims were fact checked on Twitter during the debates, with what kinds of evidence. We find that claims by Mitt Romney, particularly about domestic policy issues, were subject to more discussion, and that Romney’s claims were more likely to be judged false—in one form of tweet or another. These findings do not necessarily indicate, however, that Romney’s claims were disproportionately fact checked. It could be, for example, that Romney made more claims that met journalists’ criteria of *verifiable* statements (see Dobbs 2012; Graves 2013; Lawrence and Schafer 2012). It could also be the case that one candidate engaged in more verifiable falsehoods than the other. So while these findings raise intriguing questions about a possible incumbent party bonus benefiting President Obama, or about journalistic adherence to partisan politics, closer study of the specific claims by each candidate is required before drawing firm conclusions. Interestingly, we find that overall, journalists’ use of *evidence* was evenly distributed between tweets that found the original claim right and tweets that found the claim wrong.

If combating and correcting misinformation is a crucial function of the press in a democratic society (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2010), then has the rise of Twitter as the new circulatory system of political reporting helped that effort? Certainly, our findings seem compatible with previous studies of traditional news coverage (Benoit 2007; Kendall 1997) showing that journalists render a skewed representation of presidential

debates. Beyond that, the findings and the typology of Twitter uses presented here may raise as many questions as they answer. First, because our data were limited to American journalists, our findings cannot be generalized beyond that context; further studies could examine and compare the confluence of fact-checking discourse and Twitter in various international environments. Second, as an examination of professional journalistic practice, this study does not include the reception and effects of that practice on its audience. We cannot therefore draw conclusions about how the journalistic authority involved with fact checking is received by audiences on Twitter, though applications of the fact-checking effects research of the sort conducted by Pingree et al. (2013) to the Twitter environment would be a useful avenue to explore. Finally, this study examines only one particular area of journalistic discourse—Twitter—and cannot necessarily be taken as indicative of political journalists' behavior across other platforms. Additional research could directly compare journalists' behavior on Twitter with their traditional-media output.

But overall, our findings suggest that the campaign was hardly “dictated by fact checkers,” as the Romney campaign famously suggested because most political reporters on Twitter relied mostly on traditional “stenography” and “he said, she said” forms of coverage and commentary—even during presidential debates that were identified as the most-tweeted and the most fact checked in history. As Twitter and other forms of social media continue to take hold and to evolve, the typology and findings presented here suggest useful questions for research as we look ahead to the 2016 presidential campaign.

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Notes

1. Graves (2013) argues this pseudoscientific device encourages fact checkers to objectify the rationales for their conclusions.
2. We chose states to include in our sample based on ad spending at the time the sample was compiled (see *Associated Press* 2012; *The New York Times* 2012). Pennsylvania was later surpassed by spending in Wisconsin and New Hampshire and was No. 10 in campaign ad spending as of October 23, 2012. Because many state and local outlets have at best one

reporter assigned to cover national politics, we chose all reporters who listed politics as a beat who were available in the database within each state.

3. Despite journalists' usual caveat that retweets do not equal endorsements, it is quite possible that journalists use retweets to disseminate fact-checking information (in addition to, as some studies indicate, disseminating opinions toward which they are sympathetic—see Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012).
4. The content at each link was not part of the coding and was not evaluated. This study was designed to measure whether journalists are using Twitter to point their readers toward evidence, not to check the validity of the evidence they point toward. Still, it is worth noting that, among the tweets containing links, the top five most frequently linked sites were well-recognized sources of news and information: *The New York Times* ($n = 34$, 14 percent), PolitiFact ($n = 25$, 11 percent), *The Washington Post* ($n = 13$, 5 percent), *Politico* ($n = 12$, 5 percent), and The White House ($n = 12$, 5 percent).
5. For two variables (counterclaim and judgment), alphas were between .66 and .79 before agreement was reached through discussion. For two other variables (statement evidence and claim), alphas were below .66 before discussion and agreement, though this was a result of a skewed distribution with a very small number of diverging values (Di Eugenio and Glass 2004).
6. A few tweets did not contain any identifiable candidate claims—(e.g., “Romney is lying” with no reference to any specific Romney claim). About 9 percent ($n = 162$) of tweets dealt with more than one claim, including a claim by the debate moderator. A very few (less than 1 percent) contained claims made by representatives of the candidates' parties.
7. There were small but significant differences in the types of claims journalists discussed for each candidate. Journalists more often discussed Romney's claims about economic and financial issues (38 percent, compared with 30 percent for Obama), and more often discussed Obama's claims about foreign policy (36 percent, compared with 25 percent for Romney). A chi-square test found these differences to be significant, $\chi^2 = 57.31(9)$, $p < .001$.

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Producing Protest News: An Inquiry into Journalists' Narratives

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Abstract

This article examines journalists' narratives of the constellations of factors that shaped the coverage of the 2011–2012 social protest in Israel, and how journalists used the protest to negotiate their roles, practices, and values against the backdrop of their own professional and economic struggles. Based on in-depth interviews with reporters and editors who were involved in the coverage of the protest movement, this article analyzes journalists' interpretations and negotiations of the various influences on their work during the two major waves of the protest. An analysis of patterns of collision and concurrence between individual, organizational, and professional domains of influence in journalists' narratives shows that while the norm of objectivity remains a key site of tension in relation to other factors, considerations of newsworthiness are constructed as complementing and justifying all other types of influence. An examination of diachronic patterns suggests that journalists' individual conditions and positions play a greater role in journalists' narratives in the first stage of the protest, giving way to professional values and organizational economic considerations in later stages. Although these findings further complicate the protest paradigm, they also show a dominant pattern of “paradigm repair” at the level of both journalists' professional ideology and protest coverage.

Keywords

social movements, journalism, news production

The wave of protests that spread around the globe at the start of the second decade of the new millennium—from the Arab Spring movements in North Africa and the Middle East to “Occupy Wall Street” in the United States and “The Indignadas” in Spain—has stimulated a new wave of research into the complex relationship between

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media and social protest. Set against the backdrop of the new media environment in which these protests took shape, this scholarship has tended to focus on either the role of social media and digital culture in relation to collective action (e.g., Castells 2013; Wolfsfeld et al. 2013) or the framing of recent protest movements in both new and established media (e.g., Hamdy and Gomaa 2012; Harlow and Johnson 2011). Largely missing from this growing body of literature has been research into journalistic production and the various factors that influence journalistic coverage of social protest. At the same time, existing research into general influences on news production has been mostly survey based, thereby capturing journalists' overall perceptions of the influence of different factors on their work (e.g., Hanitzsch et al. 2010; Hanitzsch and Mellado 2011), while missing the complex ways in which journalists interpret and negotiate these various influences in different topical and temporal contexts.

This article addresses these gaps through the case study of the 2011–2012 social protest in Israel. Based on in-depth interviews with reporters and editors who were involved in the coverage of the social protest, it analyzes Israeli journalists' perceptions, interpretations, and negotiations of the various influences on their work during different stages of the protest. This analysis aims to shed light on the synchronic and diachronic relationships between the different domains of influence in journalists' narratives, as well as on the ways in which the social protest was used by journalists to negotiate their own roles, practices, and values, especially in the context of journalists' and news organizations' precarious economic conditions.

Media Coverage of Social Protest

Although social media are an important platform for contemporary protest movements, established news media continue to play a significant role in both framing and giving public visibility to these movements (Cottle 2011; Gitlin 2012; Hamdy and Gomaa 2012). Early seminal studies on the treatment of social protest movements by mainstream news media (Gitlin 1980; Halloran et al. 1970) gave rise to what was later defined as the "protest paradigm" (Chan and Lee 1984). The protest paradigm, which has become a dominant framework in the large body of literature on protest coverage (McCurdy 2012), refers to the tendency of the news media to marginalize, criticize, and ultimately delegitimize social protest movements, as a result of the underlying conventions, conditions, and constraints that characterize both journalism and media systems more generally. However, as cogently argued by Cottle (2008), changes in the nature of both social protests and media environments require a rethinking of long-held assumptions. "Are there other dynamics and levels of complexity that now need to be taken into account?" asks Cottle; "Do the media always, invariably and necessarily impose 'definitions of the situation' on protests and dissent which de-legitimize the protesters' aims and coincide with dominant interests?" (2008, p. 856). Indeed, researchers have reassessed the protest paradigm based on longitudinal studies of protest coverage, as well as comparisons of the coverage of different movements by different types of media (e.g., Boyle et al. 2012; Harlow and Johnson 2011; Rauch et al. 2007; Weaver and Scacco 2013). The picture that emerges from this growing body of

literature suggests that while the protest paradigm still has traction, the characteristics of protest coverage are not uniform, and fractures in the protest paradigm have become increasingly apparent in the contemporary media landscape.

The protest movement that emerged in Israel in the summer of 2011 presents an instructive case study in this context, as it received a relatively high level of support from the Israeli news media. The protests, which focused on the mounting cost of living for the middle class and the government's neoliberal policies, drew hundreds of thousands of Israelis to the streets, as well as intense media coverage. Commentators and media-monitoring organizations tend to agree that both in sheer amount of coverage and in favorable tone, the Israeli media were generally on the side of the social protest during the summer of 2011 (see review in Keshev 2012). Our own examination suggests that during the first three months of the protests (mid-July to mid-September 2011), no fewer than 77 percent of the front pages of the three leading Israeli daily newspapers (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Israel Hayom*, and *Haaretz*) dealt with protest-related issues, 51 percent of them featuring the protest as the lead story.

By the time the protests started up again in the summer of 2012, both media attention and public participation had substantially subsided. According to a study by Ifat Media, coverage of the social protest declined by 40 percent in relation to the summer of 2011 and was considerably less supportive of the protest movement (Grunzweig 2012). The "law and order" frame, which is typical of the protest paradigm (Chan and Lee 1984; Wolfsfeld 1997), was more dominant in this second wave of the social protest (Keshev 2012).

How does one account for these features of the coverage? Based on the public discourse surrounding the social protest, the report by the media-monitoring organization Keshev (2012) identifies three main reasons for the intense and generally positive media coverage during the first stage of the protest: (1) wide public support for the protest; (2) lack of other more exciting, newsworthy stories during that summer; and (3) journalists' personal identification with the protest as a result of their own demographic profile and socioeconomic status. The decline in media visibility and favorable portrayals at later stages was interpreted by commentators not only as a consequence of decreased interest in a story that was no longer new, thrilling, and depoliticized but also as the reaction of media organizations to the loss of advertising revenues, caused by the unsettling effect of the social protest on their major advertisers (see Weimann 2012).

Although explanations concerning the degree to which social protests fit mainstream views, news values, and owners' interests are prominent in the scholarly literature on the factors that shape protest coverage (McCurdy 2012), journalists' individual identification with the protest is an area less explored. This gap in the literature can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that most research into the treatment of protest movements by the media is based on the analysis of the coverage itself, at times in combination with public opinion data or other indicators of protest characteristics. Production studies, focusing on journalists' accounts of their practices and motivations in protest coverage, are rare. However, in the context of journalists' increasingly precarious occupational conditions and economic realities (see Deuze 2007; Meyers and

Davidson 2013), the relationship between protest coverage and journalists' own positions and interests vis-à-vis social protests has become all the more relevant. The present study, which is based on interviews with Israeli journalists who were involved in covering the social protest, pays special attention to this dimension, while also examining the particular articulations and perceived constellations of other factors that influenced journalistic practices during the two major waves of the social protest.

News Influences and Cultures of Journalism

The question of how journalists interpret and negotiate the factors that shaped their treatment of the social protest is also situated within the broader literature addressing influences on news content. This strand of research stretches from Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) "hierarchy of influences" model, which includes five levels of influence—individual, routines, organizational, institutional, and ideological—to recent studies within the Worlds of Journalism project (Hanitzsch et al. 2010; Hanitzsch and Mellado 2011). Based on surveys of journalists around the globe, Hanitzsch et al. (2010) identified six domains of influence on journalists' work: political, economic, organizational, professional, procedural, and reference-group. Of these, organizational, professional, and procedural influences were perceived by journalists as most important. From a cross-cultural perspective, Hanitzsch and Mellado (2011) found that the perceived importance of political and economic influences on journalists' work was the major point of difference between journalists in different countries. Notably, among the seventeen studied countries, Israeli journalists reported the lowest levels of economic influences.

The individual domain—that is, influences associated with journalists' personal worldviews and conditions—was not included in The Worlds of Journalism questionnaire, which focused on external influences (Hanitzsch et al. 2010). There is some evidence that individual characteristics, particularly journalists' political-ideological beliefs, do affect news decisions (Patterson and Donsbach 1996), although researchers also point to the difficulties of exerting personal will within the constraints of professional and organizational imperatives (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Within the individual domain, the influence of journalists' working conditions and socioeconomic status on their treatment of news stories has received scant attention.

Another area that has received little attention in studies of influences on news production—partly because of the heavy reliance of this research tradition on survey-based approaches—is journalists' contextual interpretive frameworks of the various factors that shape their work. How do journalists negotiate different influences on their work in different contexts, and how do these negotiations play into journalists' identity definition and role perceptions? To address these issues, the present study imports into news-influences scholarship a cultural approach to journalism. This approach emphasizes, on one hand, the complexity and contingency of the various forces that drive journalism (Zelizer 2005), and on the other, the ways in which journalists function as an interpretive community that continually negotiates its identity and boundaries, particularly in connection to major news stories or "critical events" (Zelizer 1993).

Scholars who applied and developed this approach examined the journalistic discourses and practices surrounding events such as wars, terrorist events, deaths of major public figures, and the demise of important newspapers. They demonstrated the ways in which journalists oscillated between various journalistic loyalties and roles in the coverage of these events (Zandberg and Neiger 2005), while using these events for either paradigm repair (Berkowitz 2000; Carlson 2012) or the stretching of traditional boundaries and roles (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2013a, 2013b).

In bringing into full play the tension between journalists' professional norms, individual/group economic realities, and organizational/owners' economic interests, the Israeli social protest provides a particularly useful case study through which to examine the ways in which journalists negotiate and (re)interpret the various influences on their work. Furthermore, social protests are themselves characterized by the possibilities they open for rethinking and challenging existing structures. Drawing on Turner's notion of liminality, Livio and Katriel (2014) analyzed the Israeli social protest as a site of empowerment and possibility, where symbols, meanings, power structures, and notions of politics were playfully challenged and reconstructed. At the same time, they examined the ways in which these possibilities were constrained by structural impulses. Looking at a possible parallel between the protest and its coverage, the present study examines the extent to which journalists used the social protest as a liminal space of possibility, as well as the constraints and challenges of this experience.

The Israeli News Media

The Israeli news media present a rich context for examining journalists' negotiations of various influences. Within existing typologies of media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004) and journalistic cultures (Hanitzsch 2007), Israel represents a hybrid case. Israeli journalists' practices and role perceptions combine interventionist tendencies with western-oriented journalistic values (Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2013b), and although the system as a whole is closest to the Liberal model in its market orientation and journalistic professional ethos, it also bears the marks of other models (Peri 2012). Thus, while the Israeli media system has shifted in recent decades from party–press parallelism toward a highly developed commercial environment, some level of political parallelism exists in the system (*ibid.*). For example, of the news organizations represented in this study, *Haaretz* is known for its left-leaning editorial line, whereas *Israel Hayom*, owned by the conservative Jewish-American billionaire Sheldon Adelson, is known for its alignment with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's policies.

On the economic level, the Israeli media system has been characterized by an increasing neoliberal orientation (Peri 2012), a sharp decline in organized labor (Tsfati and Meyers 2012), and high concentration, with a few actors dominating the market (see Davidson 2012). While the level of news consumption and newspaper circulation is still relatively high in Israel (the main characteristic it shares with the Democratic Corporatist model; Hallin and Mancini 2004), the challenges facing the news industry worldwide have not passed over the Israeli news media. Stiff competition within a

small market, a decrease in advertising revenues, and struggles to find a viable economic model for the digital age have led to increasing financial difficulties for leading news organizations and substantial layoffs of Israeli journalists in recent years (see Kershner 2012). Against this background, the social protest movement, which fought against neoliberal policies, specifically targeted the major advertisers, and supported the interests of the working middle class whose wages and job security had been eroded, could be perceived by the journalistic community as both a threat and a promise.

Method

The study is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Israeli journalists—reporters and editors—who were involved in the coverage of the social protest movement that emerged in Israel during the summer of 2011. The selection of interviewees was based on a double logic of sampling, combining a representative approach (i.e., an attempt to represent the major news organizations and different types of journalists who covered the protest) with a theoretical sampling approach, where interviewees are selected based on evolving theoretical needs and the interviewing process stops when data saturation is achieved; that is, when additional interviews do not add in any significant way to the variability within the data and the identified patterns (see Corbin and Strauss 2008).

The journalists interviewed worked for eight leading Israeli news organizations, representing the most popular and/or influential news outlets within different types of media, as well as a mix of ownerships and political orientations. Among the eight news organizations, there are four print/online general news outlets (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Ynet*, *Israel Hayom*, and *Haaretz*) and two financial news outlets (*The Marker* and *Calcalist*), belonging to three owners: Yedioth Ahronoth Group (owner of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, *Ynet*, and *Calcalist*), Haaretz Group (owner of *Haaretz* and *The Marker*), and the American mogul, Sheldon Adelson (owner of *Israel Hayom*). In addition, two broadcast outlets were included in the sample: one commercial (*Channel 2 News*—the most watched television news in Israel) and one public (*Kol Israel*—the most listened-to news radio station).

Four of these eight news organizations are each represented by two journalists in the sample (an editor and a reporter), and the remaining four outlets are represented by one each. The study also includes two independent journalists who are not part of mainstream news organizations: one working for the protest movement's news Web site (*J14*) and one freelance journalist/activist writing on protest-related issues. In total, the sample consists of fourteen journalists who cover a broad terrain of protest coverage in the Jewish-Israeli public sphere. They represent three generations and various journalistic positions (two senior editors, three midlevel editors, three senior reporters, four junior reporters, and two hybrid positions).

The interviews took place during the summer of 2012 (mid-June to early September). This allowed the journalists to look back and reflect on the media's treatment of the first wave of the social protest and to evaluate contemporary coverage of the second wave. The locations of the interviews were selected by the interviewees (their

workplaces, their homes, or cafés), and each interview lasted between one and two hours, with an average length of eighty-five minutes. All interviews were conducted face-to-face by the author (an Israeli and native Hebrew speaker), together with a graduate research assistant, in Hebrew. The interviews were guided by an interview plan, beginning with a very open question on what the journalist found most important about the media treatment of the protest movement since the previous summer. Follow-up questions addressed the interviewees' level of identification with the protest movement and the ways in which it affected their coverage of the protest as well as other practices (e.g., participation in the protests), the types of dilemmas and pressures the journalist and his or her colleagues experienced during various phases of the protest, and the journalist's assessment of the implications of the protest on both the news media in general and his or her own perceptions and views.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized. Inductive qualitative analysis of the interviews was carried out using qualitative analysis software (Narralizer), which supported the coding process and category development. Presentation of the findings proceeds in two stages: The first part of the analysis identifies the major domains that the interviewees raised as factors or considerations that influenced the treatment of the social protest, as well as their temporal dynamics, that is, how journalists interpret the functioning and influence of the various factors in different stages of the coverage (particularly in the summer of 2011 vs. the summer of 2012). The second part focuses on synchronic relationships between these different factors, as interpreted and negotiated by the journalists. Here, the analysis focuses on patterns of collision and concurrence in journalists' narratives: Where did journalists see conflicts that had to be resolved in one direction or another, and which factors or influences were described as coexisting comfortably? The quotes from the interviews throughout the analysis have been translated from Hebrew by the author.

Domains of Influence and Their Temporal Dynamics

The factors that emerged from the interviews as playing important roles in the treatment of the social protest movement by Israeli journalists belong to three major domains—the individual, the organizational, and the professional. The following analysis presents the major subdimensions of these domains and the ways in which journalists interpret their level of influence during different phases of the coverage (in particular, the first and second waves of the social protest in the summers of 2011 and 2012).

Individual Positions and Conditions

The individual domain refers to the level of individual identification with the protest at either the ideological level or as related to the journalists' own economic conditions. Unsurprisingly, these two dimensions were usually intermixed. Of the fourteen interviewees, eight expressed high levels of identification with the social protest movement, sometimes emphasizing general ideas of social justice and economic policies,

and sometimes connecting it very concretely to their own situations, as seen in the following quote from a junior reporter:

The protest helped me understand that I'm not alone—that I'm a young person who lives in this country and wants to raise a family, but can't do it financially, even though I work 24/7. It is very difficult in terms of the cost of living in this city [Tel Aviv], in this country. I can tell you that today my net [monthly] income is 6000 [NIS; ≈\$1700], and only the rent on my apartment is 3000 [NIS; ≈\$850]. It's very difficult to survive, very hard to live on a journalist's salary, if you are not one of the star reporters . . . The media in general have a very thick layer of journalists who make between normal salaries to salaries that are below the minimum wage, and a very thin layer of "talents" earning disproportionate amounts.

This quote corroborates commentators' arguments (see Keshev 2012) regarding the link between the average profile of Israeli journalists and that of the social protest leaders and activists (in terms of age, city of residence, and economic concerns). Many interviewees mentioned this correspondence as an important reason for the wide and positive coverage that the protest received in its initial stages, although only a few acknowledged that it shaped their own coverage. Another important parallel that emerges from this quote is that between the structure of the media field and the larger structures that the protesters in Israel and elsewhere fought against: specifically, issues of income inequality and unjust wealth distribution.

Identification with the protest movement was described as driven not only by cognitive-rational considerations but also by high levels of excitement. "We were carried away by the news," says a senior editor in a general news outlet, "I mean, the news was insane. Really, the atmosphere was amazing, it was totally cool." Indeed, the first stage of the protest in the summer of 2011 is often portrayed in journalists' narratives in carnivalesque terms (Bakhtin [1965] 1984). As an editor and reporter in a financial news outlet describes it:

It was out of control and without any guidance . . . and every morning meeting we got more excited. It also built up from Saturday to Saturday [Saturday was the day in which the big protests took place], each Saturday with a bigger climax. This is the craziest period I remember during my short time in journalism. The front pages were suddenly totally surreal.

The first stage of the social protest is thus described as a party or a carnival—not only in the sense of the energy and pleasure that accompanied the coverage of the protests but also in the partial suspension of conventional journalistic practices and considerations. Some journalists describe how their personal identification with the movement helped them find a new voice as journalists, which challenged existing notions of news:

It just clicked, I mean, we saw these people outside and you just understand what they want to say, even if they don't know what they want to say. And you just start saying what

you want to say. Suddenly, there is a public platform for that—it's under the guise of news, it really is news.

Notably, journalists' identification with the social protest was expressed not only in news production but also in participatory practices. All interviewees knew journalists who were involved to different degrees in the social protests, from participation in the protests to advising the movement's leaders, but had different opinions about the legitimate boundaries of participation for themselves and others. While some considered any type of participation to be in conflict with professional journalistic values, others were engaged in complex boundary definitions. This included distinctions between different types of journalistic roles in relation to the protest (a common view was that participation in the protests was illegitimate only for those who directly reported on the protests), as well as between different types of participatory activities. For example, one journalist, who had a protest-related tattoo on his body, said that despite his deep connection to the protest, he would never "raise a sign or pitch a tent" (one of the common acts of protest was setting up a tent in the middle of major cities in Israel to protest unaffordable housing). When asked about the difference between a tattoo and a tent, he drew a distinction between particular public events that are in the journalistic domain and private acts related to the broader significance of the protest. "When I pitch a tent I join someone else's event and accept its flaws rather than reporting on them," he explained, while the tattoo "does not belong to anybody else" but rather "signifies that something very important happened here—a formative event in the history of the country and in my own life."

However, personal identification and its perceived influence were not uniform across journalists and time. First, while none of the interviewees opposed the protest movement, six of them were fairly ambivalent about some of its ideological and tactical choices. It may not be coincidence that this group, which expressed only moderate levels of identification with the movement, included the older, more established generation of journalists in the study. Second, among those who expressed high levels of identification with the social protest, some insisted that it ultimately had no effect on their professional practices. Finally, for the second wave of protest, in 2012, the influence of individual positions and conditions was eliminated in nearly all of the journalists' narratives, giving way to other types of factors (see discussion below).

Organizational Agendas and Pressures

Two major factors belonging to the organizational domain were raised by the interviewees as shaping the protest coverage: (1) ideological/political agendas of the news organizations and (2) organizational economic considerations, most prominently advertising, but other interests of owners as well. When the journalists were asked in the first general interview question what they perceived as the most significant factor in how the Israeli media treated the social protest movement, the most frequent answer related to the influence of political/ideological agendas. Almost all interviewees mentioned this factor in relation to other Israeli news organizations and several of them

described their own experiences. Two organizations in particular stand out as representing opposite extremes: the financial newspaper *The Marker* (part of *Haaretz Group*), known for its ongoing campaign against the concentration of economic power in the hands of the few, and Adelson's newspaper *Israel Hayom*. The former is repeatedly discussed by the interviewees as being supportive of the protest movement and the latter as protecting the government and portraying the protest movement negatively. Journalists working in these two news organizations, particularly editors, describe how both the selection and framing of protest stories were heavily shaped by the organizations' editorial lines. *The Marker* was also an active participant in the social movement, with its editors providing lectures and consultations to the movement's leadership and members.

Organizational ideological agendas emerge from journalists narratives as a generally stable influence over the life cycle of the protest story. Journalists working in news organizations with distinct editorial lines describe the treatment of the social protest as equally shaped by ideology during every stage. As a journalist working in the left-leaning *Haaretz* disapprovingly puts it:

If last year [in 2011] the protest received twice the prominence it deserved, now [in 2012] it's also twice the prominence it deserves, but the prominence it deserves has become smaller because the protests are smaller, their impact is lower, and the chance that they'll make a difference is smaller.

In contrast, the perceived influence of economic pressures greatly differs between the two waves of the protest. With regard to the first wave of protest, most of the journalists either do not mention this factor or emphasize the lack of interference. As stated by a senior editor, "I can say unequivocally that last year, during the burning protest days, there was no interference [by the owners]." Or in the words of another editor,

There are normally limits to our autonomy, but this time it was different. All those who control the media were either on vacation or had disappeared . . . we were very aware of the fact that what we were doing hurt our biggest advertisers. It was clear that we were shooting ourselves in the foot, but nobody stopped us. They [the owners] just disappeared. I saw various other stories that were censored before going to print, but not in this area. That is, until this summer [2012] . . .

The change in the media treatment of the social protest in 2012 is attributed by eleven of the fourteen interviewees to economic pressures associated with the loss of advertising revenues as a result of the social protest. Four of the journalists interviewed cautiously described firsthand experiences of organizational economic pressures, as demonstrated in the following example:

When the editors wanted to get fired up again, they were told that it should be a bit milder this time . . . there was a clear loss of [advertising] revenue. The advertising market essentially disappeared this past year and this is a very significant blow. See what's going on with all the firing, it's crazy.

According to this line of narrative, the protest led indirectly to an exacerbation of the crisis in the journalism industry. Only one of the interviewees—a chief editor—raised doubts about the narrative connecting the protest to the loss of advertising revenues, defining it as “strategic spin.”

Professional Values and Conventions

Finally, professional values and conventions play an important role in journalists’ narratives of the factors that guided the coverage of the social protest, in particular their own practices (unlike the other domains of influence, described as central mainly in others’ practices). The journalists refer to two primary types of professional values: core ethical values and news values (i.e., newsworthiness criteria). The former includes values such as objectivity, truth, accuracy, and balance, and the latter includes values such as importance, novelty, and public interest.

The interactions between these professional values and the other domains of influence are at the center of journalists’ narratives and as such will be explored in length in the subsequent section. However, two trends are worth noting at this point: First, the interviews clearly demonstrate that the notion of journalistic objectivity is currently in a state of flux. Indeed, only a small minority of the interviewees adhere to traditional notions of objectivity and truth. Most journalists repeat some version of “there is no such thing as true objectivity.” At the same time, even the most interventionist journalists still hold to some notion of objectivity, leading to convoluted and often paradoxical arguments on the meaning and role of objectivity in protest coverage and journalistic practices more generally.

The second trend concerns the level of stability of different types of professional values over the course of the story. The core professional values of objectivity and balance are described by many of the interviewees as more pronounced at the second wave of the protest, or “restored” after being diminished during the first wave. As summarized by one editor,

It [coverage of the protest in 2011] was imbalanced, unobjective, disproportional. But it went against such strong forces, which lasted for so long and caused such profound damage, that a disproportional reaction was necessary. Now [in 2012] it seems logical to return to normal proportions and standards.

In contrast, news values in the sense of newsworthiness considerations remain central in journalists’ narratives throughout the course of the coverage, helping to justify any of the other influences (see discussion below).

Figure 1 presents the major dimensions of influence described in this section. The gradient fill of the different boxes represents the change (or lack thereof) in the perceived influence and centrality of the various factors over time: decrease in the influence of individual positions and conditions, increase in the influence of core professional values and organizational economic considerations, and stability in the centrality of organizational ideological agendas and newsworthiness considerations.

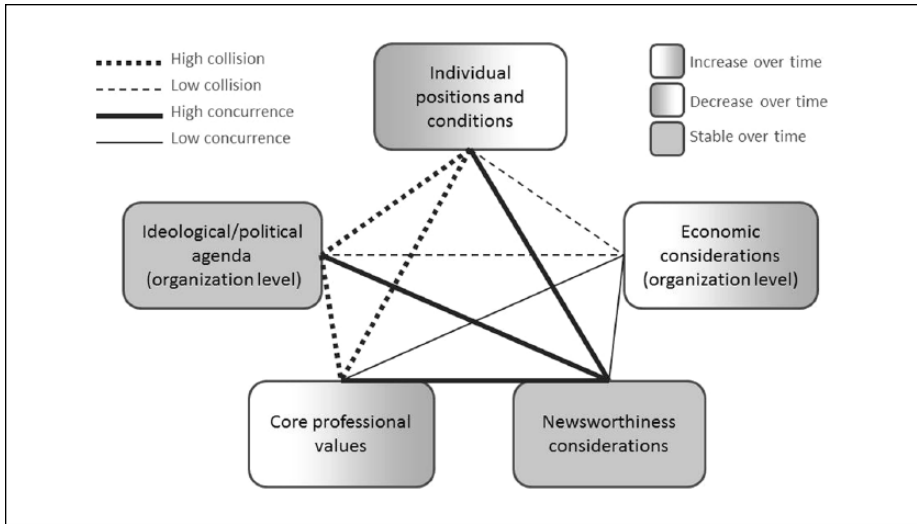


Figure 1. Influences on protest news production in journalists’ narratives: collisions, concurrences, and temporal dynamics.

Collisions and Concurrences

How did journalists negotiate these different considerations, values, and influences on their work in the context of the social protest? Which factors were perceived to be in tension with one another and which were described as harmonious, complementing, or coexisting with each other? Figure 1 summarizes the patterns of collision and concurrence between the various factors, as interpreted and narrated by the interviewees. The dashed lines represent collisions (i.e., conflicts, tensions) and the solid lines represent concurrences (i.e., relations of coexistence or harmony). The width of the lines (both solid and dashed) represents the degree to which the link/relationship between the different factors was addressed by the interviewees. The wide lines thus represent links that were addressed by at least five of the interviewees. Correspondingly, the narrower lines represent links that were addressed by fewer than five interviewees (in practice, three or less). The following analysis presents three central patterns that emerge from journalists’ narratives of collisions and concurrences between the different factors and that are visually represented in Figure 1: (1) the three-way strong tension between journalists’ individual positions, core professional values, and the organization’s ideological agenda; (2) the harmonious relationship between newsworthiness criteria and all other domains of influence; and (3) the relative isolation of organizational economic considerations.

The Conflictual Triad

The three major factors that are interpreted by journalists as colliding with one another are journalists’ individual positions, core professional values (most notably objectivity),

and the organization's ideological/political agenda. This pattern is represented by the three wide dashed lines in Figure 1. The first side of the conflictual triangle—the tension between journalists' positions or activist-interventionist impulses and professional values of objectivity and balance—is the most dominant conflict articulated in the interviews. The constant internal and external struggles surrounding this tension are vividly described by a junior reporter:

From beginning to end the thing that irritated me is that I have to look at things objectively. And then I receive a barrage of complaints from my friends in the protest movement, who say: "How can you write such a capitalist neo-liberal article?" And a barrage of complaints from my editors that I'm too pro-protest and I'm not objective, and I have to report and not to interpret, etc. I have all kinds of cool ideas about the protest that I can't execute. When there's something that I'm responsible for covering, I can take sides internally but I can't take sides in ways that will compromise my ability to cover objectively.

Within the narratives that address this tension, a central type is narratives of repair, where core professional values were initially subverted but eventually restored:

Do I support the social protest? Yes. Do I think that the coverage last year was a bit too biased in favor of the social protest? Yes. Did we go too far? Maybe so. And we learned a very important lesson: not to serve any agenda—also not my agenda, by the way. Because my personal agenda is to promote the social protest, and as a journalist I need to impose restrictions on myself, I need to draw boundaries. I'm not serving anybody's agenda, including my agendas. This is very important.

This type of narrative can be viewed as a reactionary narrative or a form of paradigm repair. In it, the protest experience is ultimately used to reinforce traditional journalistic values and return to an earlier, "purer" stage of journalistic work (at least rhetorically).

Journalists in news organizations with a distinct editorial line also struggled with the second tension in the triangle: between adhering to professional values and to ideological-political agendas. In these cases, the editorial line usually prevailed, although journalists also described small acts of resistance, as exemplified in the following account by an editor:

As time passed, I was vexed that the bashing of the social protest became more and more prominent in the newspaper where I work. I knew I couldn't do much at the level of the headlines—even if it was factual I couldn't put in the headline a reaction from Shmuly or Leef [two of the protest leaders]—it wouldn't pass. But I tried to insert a headline here and there that focused on the event itself and not on the reactions to it.

The third tension in this triangle—between individual positions and organizational ideologies—was experienced both by journalists who were ambivalent about the social protest movement but worked in organizations that markedly supported it, and journalists who identified with the movement but worked in news organizations that

were predisposed against it. A journalist at *Israel Hayom* described the discrepancy between the ideological leanings of the newsroom journalists and the newspaper's editorial line as a "state of schizophrenia." Notably, it seems that journalists in more partisan organizations were also more active in the protest movement (i.e., participated in protests and other activities), even when it was in conflict with their employers' political leanings. This may be interpreted as either the journalists' way of counteracting the constraints imposed on them in the workplace, or their belonging to a journalistic culture where demands for detachment and neutrality were less central to begin with.

The Elasticity of Newsworthiness

The second major pattern of interaction between the different factors, as narrated by the journalists, is the harmonious relationship between newsworthiness criteria and all other domains of influence (represented by the four solid lines connecting "newsworthiness considerations" in Figure 1). While ethical professional norms were perceived to be a major source of tension with other factors, newsworthiness complemented and reinforced the other influences. In other words, the news value of the story was often presented as a justification for the influence of other ideological and economic factors, or at least as working in the same direction of influence. Thus, the extensive coverage of the protest at the first stage was explained by a combination of the protest's high news value and other influences, as demonstrated in the following quote:

Each news outlet identified its agenda there [in the protest] and wanted to take the story in this direction. But there was also a story there—not only ideology. It was a sexy story. There are tents, hot girls dancing around the tents, a member of parliament is coming and is getting kicked out, a mayor is getting kicked out. It's an item; it's a story; it's something that hasn't been seen before.

There are different combinations of newsworthiness criteria and other factors. If the above quote emphasizes the combination of organizational ideological interests and news values such as newness and entertainment values (see Harcup and O'Neill 2001), the following quote makes the connection between journalists' personal identification with the social protest and the dearth of other newsworthy stories:

I think there are two central things that made the coverage what it was. First, it was "the cucumber season" [journalists' term for the slow summer news period], and second, it [the protest] really appealed to all the reporters and editors. Or at least the vast majority—those who are not "talents," those who sit on salaries ranging from 6000NIS [per month; ~\$1700] to 11,000/12,000NIS [~\$3100/3400].

Another prominent criterion of newsworthiness in journalists' narratives was the level of public interest in the protests, particularly in online news outlets where intensive monitoring of audience behavior increasingly feeds into news judgments (see Anderson 2011). The following quote by a senior editor presents a concurrence

between public interest and the owners' economic interests as an explanation for the change in the level of coverage during the second wave of the protest:

There was this overlap, identity of interests even, between the public interest that waned, and the owners' interest, which also diminished, for its own reasons.

This is a telling example of how less acceptable influences on news production are legitimated by their alignment with the public's interest. What remains unacknowledged in journalists' narratives is the media's own possible contribution to the diminished public interest in the protest in 2012. In other words, public level of interest is presented as a factor that helped decide on the importance of the events, and not as a possible outcome of how the media treated the story.

The Isolation of Owners' Economic Interests

The last quote represents one of the few cases in which owners' interests were discussed in relation to other domains of influence. In general, however, the interviewees rarely spoke about economic considerations at the organizational level in association with other factors that shaped the coverage of the protest. This pattern is represented in Figure 1 by the narrow lines (solid or dashed) connecting organizational economic considerations to all the other factors. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the previous section, when the issue of owners' interference was discussed in relation to other influences, it was often in the context of the absence of such interference during the first wave of the protests.

Notably, this pattern is not the result of lack of references in the interviews to owners' economic interests and pressures. Eleven of the fourteen interviewees referred to economic pressures associated with the loss of advertising revenues as a major factor explaining the change in the prominence and tone of coverage in 2012. However, these references were not elaborated and were not discussed in the context of journalists' dilemmas. This pattern may be interpreted as reflecting either the minor role that pressure from owners plays in journalists' role negotiations and professional dilemmas (i.e., owners' interests are acknowledged but remain an external "given"), or general discomfort in probing into this issue. Indeed, when journalists discussed this type of influence in the context of their own organizations, it was usually after they had requested reassurance of anonymity.

Conclusion

This article has explored journalists' interpretations and negotiations of the factors that shaped their coverage of the social protest movement in the Israeli news media during the two major waves of the protest. On the diachronic level, the analysis demonstrates how journalists' personal identification with the protest in the first stage gave way to professional values and owners' pressures in the second stage, while the influence of newsworthiness considerations and the ideological orientation of news organizations

remained relatively stable throughout the coverage. This pattern echoes, in part, familiar dynamics in crisis coverage, where initial mobilization of the news media is followed by restoration of professional norms and standard journalistic practices in later stages of the story (Schudson 2002; Zandberg and Neiger 2005). However, while national crisis situations tend to trigger patriotic sentiments and national identification in support of government action, the social protest in Israel initially triggered class/socioeconomic identification, in opposition to government policies. The degree to which such a pattern can also be identified in relation to other social protests in other journalistic cultures is a subject for future research. More broadly, however, this study suggests that future research on news influences can further develop by shifting the focus from identifying general, stable influences in different journalistic cultures to exploring the patterns underlying changes in these influences over the life cycle of different types of news stories.

On the synchronic level, the analysis reveals several major patterns of collision and concurrence between the different domains of influence in journalists' interpretive frameworks. Objectivity and newsworthiness emerge from this analysis as occupying contrasting positions in journalists' narratives: On the one hand, the ideology of objectivity remains a key site of tension and conflict. Despite the fuzzy conceptualization of objectivity by contemporary journalists, it is generally perceived as a defining component of journalistic professionalism and as inherently inconsistent with other types of considerations and influences. On the other hand, notions of news value/newsworthiness make for easy bedfellows. That is, they comfortably coexist with, or are used to justify, other influences on news production. Recent studies, which foreground the elasticity and growing audience dependency of newsworthiness criteria (Anderson 2011; Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2013b), suggest that this pattern may represent broader trends in contemporary journalism. However, further establishing the patterns identified in this study regarding the interrelationships between different professional norms and other domains of influence requires systematic application of the proposed framework to other journalistic cultures and topical contexts.

The findings regarding the influence of advertising considerations and owners' interests are harder to assess. This is because of journalists' reluctance to elaborate on this issue, the small number of journalists who described firsthand experiences with such pressures, the paucity of direct evidence on this sensitive topic in existing scholarship, and journalists' own uncertainty regarding the reasons that led to owners' apparent lack of interference in the first stage of the protest. However, the fact that despite the sensitivity and associated risks, some journalists did describe such firsthand pressures, and that the overwhelming majority of journalists perceived them as central explanatory factors for the dynamics of the protest coverage, is revealing. Considering this study in relation to the low level of economic influences reported by Israeli journalists in the Worlds of Journalism study (Hanitzsch and Mellado 2011) may suggest that these influences will be at least as pronounced in studies of protest coverage among non-Israeli journalists (in comparison with the present study) and/or may point to the advantages of in-depth interviews over surveys in identifying this type of sensitive influence.

This study also adds another layer to recent scholarship that rethinks the protest paradigm (Harlow and Johnson 2011; Weaver and Scacco 2013). The present analysis suggests that when journalists strongly identified with the protest—as individuals and as an occupational group—their protest-related practices diverged from the protest paradigm. However, it also shows that these practices had to be facilitated and justified by professional and organizational factors, whether economic or political. Furthermore, the study shows that, ultimately, Israeli journalists could not escape the “Catch-22” of social protest coverage: The occupational conditions that contributed to the extensive and generally favorable coverage to begin with were threatened by the implications of this coverage—at least as presented by the advertisers and owners. This led, in turn, to decreased and less favorable coverage, as well as to “paradigm repair” at the level of journalists’ professional ideology, thereby bringing together the journalistic and the protest paradigms.

Yet, the interviews also suggest that at the level of individual journalistic practices and perceptions, there remain pockets of resistance and narratives of transformation, as suggested by the following concluding quote from a journalist in a financial newspaper (in response to a question of whether the protest affected how he perceived journalism and his role as a journalist):

First of all, I came to realize that it is a crappy profession, because it has no future. One of the issues that the protest raised is lack of job security, which leads to all kinds of other things: you can’t buy an apartment, you don’t have a pension, etc. In view of what’s going on in this sector, I can be fired any day. And where will I go? The second thing is the change in my work. Before, I was a slave to the words: “bring a story, bring a headline.” As a young journalist, that’s nice: you screw the competitors; you don’t even notice that you’re working like a moron. All that interests you is to bring it, no matter what’s inside. It’s a bit like being a junky. Now, and it may sound very pretentious, when I write I feel a sense of mission, that I’m doing something meaningful. It’s enjoyable, but it will end. The privilege to write only about what interests me will run out. And at some point someone younger than me, who is willing to work for half the salary because he has no family, will replace me.

This narrative describes two types of change following the social protest: first, a new consciousness about the precarious economic-material conditions of journalists; and second, the discovery of new meaning and purpose in this profession, in its creative-symbolic aspects. Notably, the changes are on the individual level, accompanied by an acknowledgment that the system is not likely to change. And still, according to this narrative, it is a system that to some extent gives the journalist a platform to fight from within, through his or her writing on the issues raised by the protest and with a new voice that was discovered during the social protest. Interestingly, narratives of transformation were associated primarily with journalists working in the financial news outlets. This pattern seems to fit Davidson’s (2012) finding that while the general newspapers returned to a preprotest state in their coverage of protest-related concepts in 2012, the financial media incorporated the discourse of the social protest movement to greater degree. The protest thus seems to have had more lasting effects on the

financial media—a pattern that is worth exploring more deeply in the context of both the Israeli and other economic-based protests.

Finally, the findings in this article are shaped not only by this particular case study but also by the context of the interviews. Thus, the boundary between the factors that shaped news coverage of the social protest in actuality and journalists' narrative construction of these influences—if such a distinction exists—cannot be determined. Although there are many markers of sincerity in the interviews, the narratives are temporally contingent (they would be different if the interviews had been conducted today) and, much like news stories, are shaped by the conventions of the genre and the expectations of the audience. Thus, the framework presented in this article should be interpreted not as a reflection of extrinsic categories and their interrelationships but as journalists' negotiations and reflections on these matters in the context of their contemporary struggles and vis-à-vis their external observers.

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Crisis, Credibility, and the Press: A Priming Model of News Evaluation

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Abstract

This paper develops a model of press-priming in which public evaluations of press performance are examined in the context of media scandals where news organizations through their own ethical lapses become the subject and conduit of priming effects. We argue that judgments about the press during a crisis depend on the activation of standing attitudes toward press freedom and media responsibility, which come into play with close attention to ongoing developments. Our model is tested with original survey data collected around two salient press scandals in Britain, one involving the now-defunct *News of the World* tabloid, the other the storied British Broadcasting Corporation. Support for the model is found. In the aftermath of a press crisis, attitudes toward press freedom and media responsibility are situationally activated by the unique attributes of each scandal, and these attitudes shape evaluations of credibility and support for regulation. Implications for improved understanding of the news evaluation process are discussed.

Keywords

press crisis, media priming, media credibility, support for regulation, media attitudes, *News of the World*, phone hacking scandal, BBC Jimmy Savile scandal

When the *News of the World* (*NOTW*) phone hacking scandal broke in the international press in 2011, questions arose about the bounds of legitimate information gathering techniques. The notorious British tabloid had been suspected of nefarious

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news-gathering practices, but events came to a head when *The Guardian* published an exposé about the paper's purported use of hacked voice-mail messages from an abducted thirteen-year-old girl (Davies and Hill 2011). A year later, the storied British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) found itself embroiled in controversy for quashing a report critical of longtime host and accused pedophile Jimmy Savile—and then for falsely implicating a former member of parliament (MP) in a child abuse scandal. Such episodes, which precipitated sweeping governmental investigations and prompted considerable public debate, represent breaches of public trust for the news media as a civic institution, one already suffering from declining credibility and trust (Morales 2012; Ray 2011).

In addition to official government inquiries, the practices unearthed first at Rupert Murdoch's shuttered tabloid and then in the decisional labyrinth of the BBC sparked a broader discussion about media professionalism, press responsibility, and the susceptibility of political authorities to coercion and corruption (Tait 2012; see also Van Natta et al. 2010). Like other problematic episodes in media history involving plagiarism, miscalled elections, or unethical reporting, incidents of this magnitude trigger a period of sustained public evaluation, much of it negative, about the credibility of the news media and ability of the press to behave in a socially responsible manner without restrictive governmental regulation (see Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). Although crisis coverage can certainly inform audiences about individual journalists and news organizations at the core of an unfolding scandal, such coverage also begets a deeper and wider process of media evaluation.

Using priming theory, this paper introduces a model of press-priming that specifies how coverage of an unfolding press crisis focuses attention on problematic aspects of media performance, activating standing media attitudes and influencing evaluations about the press as an institution. Generally, priming refers to the activation of stored knowledge by new information, which forms a mental association subsequently used in a judgment task (Higgins 1996). Our model of press-priming rests on the premise that attention to news stories that report on media transgressions (new information) activate relevant attitudes concerning press freedom and social responsibility (stored knowledge), and through this interaction influence judgments about the news (media evaluation).

Guided by priming research in media studies, particularly stereotype priming (e.g., Dixon 2006), we expect that as attention to a press crisis increases, and individuals learn more about the details of problematic press performance, one's activated attitudes toward the press (the equivalent of standing racial attitudes in the stereotype priming literature) should play a significant role in shaping opinions about news credibility and support for press regulation. Press-priming effects should be most pronounced in individuals who hold strong attitudes about the news media at the time they encounter crisis coverage—and those with a high level of knowledge about the unfolding story.

In the following section, we discuss how and why coverage of journalists and news organizations develops into a press crisis—and, for our purposes, a message prime. After that, we examine news credibility in scholarly and industry research, focusing on

the utility of the construct for evaluations of media performance, and we distinguish credibility from standing attitudes about the media that relate to core values of press freedom and responsibility. We then test our conceptual model with a nationally representative sample of respondents from the United Kingdom, where the scandals occurred. Results from our analyses show support for hypothesized effects.

Press Crisis Coverage as a Message Prime

We define a press crisis as an incident or episode worthy of coverage that involves the news media itself and arises from a major professional or ethical lapse, even legal transgression, in the course of reporting in which the behaviors of journalists and products of journalism are the topic of persistent criticism and media attention (Frank 2003; Hindman 2005). Press crises may be triggered by a range of internal and external factors. For example, coverage may focus on sources who criticize how journalists or news organizations cover particular events, ranging from seemingly innocuous weather-related incidents to more obviously significant political incidents (e.g., the scandal over Dan Rather's reporting of President George W. Bush's military record). A press crisis can also be engendered by a pattern of transgressions within a particular newsroom, generating coverage about the offending news personnel and efforts to restore integrity (e.g., the Jayson Blair plagiarism episode at the *New York Times*). In either case, the criticism contained within crisis coverage stems from violations of established tenets of news gathering and reporting, which prompts periods of critical reflection about news norms and editorial decision making (Lule 1992).

Press criticism is the primary, or salient, message characteristic in crisis coverage. In priming theory, salience is defined as a message property that "occurs upon exposure, without a prior set [of stored knowledge] for a particular kind of stimulus, that draws attention selectively to a specific aspect of the event" (Higgins 1996: 135). When considering the potential of a press crisis to activate news-related values and attitudes, message characteristics unique to the unfolding drama should take precedence over other considerations—political ideology or prior experience, for example—that may prompt a person to think about how well or poorly the news covers an issue or event.

As a persistent topic in news, a press crisis becomes part of the broader news agenda. Research in political priming has found that a shift in the topic of a news agenda (or changing "issue regime") can temporarily alter the weight that topic receives in evaluations of the president or other political actors. Sometimes the shift is sudden and dramatic, sparked by an unforeseen event or situation, and sometimes the shift is more subtle. Research on the Gulf War examined priming in a news environment in which a change in topic meant a shift in focus from one aspect of the war story to another (Althaus and Kim 2006). Experimental research has followed a similar approach by embedding related policy issues into stimulus news stories about the same umbrella topic (see Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Miller and Krosnick 1996). In each case, what triggers a new evaluation and influences subsequent judgments is the cycling of stories in the news and the association of a new topic with an object of evaluation.

In our model, a press-priming effect is predicated on the notion that standing media attitudes are activated by exposure to *press criticism*, a salient attribute of crisis coverage, rather than by topical shifts in a story or set of stories that cover journalists or news organizations. Although still indexed by a sharp spike in coverage (often rising to the top of the news agenda), a press crisis differs from policy-related topics typically studied in political priming research because the focus is on the performance of *the press*, not a shifting issue regime covered by *the press* (Roskos-Ewoldsen and Roskos-Ewoldsen 2009). A press crisis represents a special case within the news agenda, one in which a critical mass of coverage not only brings the behavior of journalists and news organizations under close public scrutiny but also produces moral commentary in which a problem in news gathering, reporting, or dissemination takes center stage. The topical focus on press conduct serves as the message prime, which in our model activates standing attitudes and spurs a broader media evaluation process.

The potential for crisis coverage to activate standing attitudes about press performance gains force when members of the news audience are exposed to waves of press criticism that highlight moral lapses and ethical transgressions in offending news organizations. Importantly, press criticism should not be viewed as gratuitous lambasting of a competitor but as an integral part of an accountability process in which news organizations strive to reconcile the core values of press freedom and responsibility to their constituents (see Pritchard 2000). Despite the shortcomings of press criticism as an effective accountability mechanism (see Hindman 2005), an international press crisis presents a rich context in which to observe how news about media misdeeds foster “impressions, rooted in receivers’ values” (Plaisance 2000: 258) that then shape citizen evaluations of the press as an institution. In large measure, public response to this process is transacted in the language of credibility, an important evaluative dimension of press performance.

Credibility and News Performance

Credibility is the quality of being believable or worthy of trust. News credibility has long been a topic of scholarly inquiry, having a mixed ancestry in work of Carl Hovland and associates on source believability (Hovland et al. 1949) and commercial polling conducted by the Roper organization in the 1930s on newspaper credibility. More recently, researchers have focused on identifying the components of credibility (e.g., Gaziano 1988; Meyer 1988), the cognitive environment in which credibility resides (e.g., Kosicki and McLeod 1990; Tsfati and Cohen 2013), media use practices that predict credibility (e.g., Bucy 2003; Johnson and Kaye 2000), political judgments that credibility evaluations influence (e.g., Bennett et al. 1999), and credibility’s role in media processes and effects (McGraw and Ling 2003).

Despite the large volume of research on news credibility, and media evaluations more generally, we know relatively little about the formation of media impressions and attitudes (Metzger et al. 2003). Research in this area rarely explores how media evaluations are activated by coverage of particular topics or events, or which kinds of stories are prone to activate credibility as a consideration. One of the few studies to

examine credibility in the context of news performance began as an innocuous pre/post experimental evaluation of a children's feature section introduced by the Akron *Beacon Journal* (Meyer 1988). Unexpectedly, between the two data collection periods, the paper became embroiled in a controversy triggered by extensive coverage of its own role in reporting leaked safety data of Firestone tires. Findings showed that the newspaper lost credibility on a community affiliation dimension but retained its believability.

In contrast to academic researchers, news professionals and public opinion pollsters routinely link media performance on specific stories to credibility evaluations on the part of audiences. From the industry's perspective, the issue is whether perceived shortcomings of news performance adversely affect perceptions of professionalism, organizational reputation, ratings, and other indicators of market position. News organizations and industry associations periodically take stock of their own credibility precisely because of this belief that coverage of high-profile stories affects media trust. Shortly after the major broadcast television networks miscalled the 2000 U.S. presidential election, for example, the public was much more likely to agree that news media were "often inaccurate" than to agree that media organizations "get the facts straight" (Moore 2003).

Negative evaluations of the press are consequential because they can potentially affect the power balance between media and political institutions, putting news organizations on the defensive. Reporting of controversial topics might thus become more difficult than would otherwise be the case. Media credibility levels may affect editorial autonomy and press aggressiveness because a credible press presumably operates under less scrutiny and with more confidence to hold officials accountable.

Press-Priming and Crisis Coverage

As the media perceptions literature has shown, attitudes toward the news media are developed and activated in the course of news consumption (Tsftati and Cohen 2013). Our model of press-priming holds that citizens use standing attitudes activated by exposure to a press crisis to evaluate the performance of the news media at critical moments. These evaluations include judgments about media trust, fairness, believability, and reliability, concepts central to the credibility construct (Metzger et al. 2003). In extreme cases of press misconduct, media evaluations may include restrictions that policymakers feel are necessary to achieve a more socially responsible news culture (e.g., through press regulation). To better situate the role of standing attitudes in our model, we locate the core values of press freedom and responsibility within an individual's evaluative framework for news media performance.

Values and beliefs are the building blocks of attitudes within an intra-attitudinal structure in which mental constructs interact with one another to shape behavioral outcomes (Eagly and Chaiken 1995). Specifically, values are stable mental constructs in which favorable valences are associated with abstract concepts. Values activated in a specific behavioral context call up attitudes associated with objects found in communication. Notably for our model, the same value can activate different attitudes in

different people (Schwartz 1992). Attitudes are summary evaluations of particular objects along a continuum of positive to negative valence (Petty et al. 1997). Although attitudes are shaped by the activation of values, typically through beliefs an individual attaches to the attitude (see Dreezens et al. 2005), the values–attitude connection also shapes behaviors toward an object (e.g., decisions to support a politician or media practice) in the news environment.

The cognitive structure of news media performance consists, among other elements, of standing attitudes toward press freedom and responsibility, two cornerstone orientations toward the media widely articulated in historic treatises on free speech since Milton's *Areopagitica*. Press freedom concerns the information gathering and publication latitude journalists enjoy, while social responsibility addresses journalists' professionalism—and degree to which the news media serves the public interest. Concerns about freedom of the press and the media's social responsibility in preserving democratic society received considerable attention on both sides of the Atlantic in the periods surrounding World Wars I and II, persisting late into the Cold War.

Social responsibility theory was formulated in response to the perception that a successfully commercialized press was abusing its constitutionally protected freedoms and abdicating its responsibility to the public interest in pursuit of profits and influence (Siebert et al. 1956). Instead of providing a "truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events," along with "a representative picture of the constituent groups in society," the press was criticized for generating sensational and vacuous content while resisting social change, engaging in monopolistic practices, and endangering public morals (Peterson 1956: 87, 91). In the United States, the Commission on Freedom of the Press enumerated a clear set of expectations that democratic society required of its media system (Hutchins 1947), whereas in the United Kingdom, a Royal Commission on the Press was formed as a means of improving press performance and issued its own report and set of recommendations.

In the Anglo-American context, discussions about press freedom are linked to expectations of socially responsible media behavior, which are routinely invoked whenever a press crisis erupts. In our framework, attitudes toward press freedom may engender different outlooks at opposite ends of a continuum: At one end, a view holds that the news media must abide ethical restraints in the form of professional norms and standards, whereas the other end warily supposes in a libertarian sense that overemphasis on restraint can lead to a slippery slope of governmental intervention and oversight (McClosky and Brill 1983). While "press ethicists" and "press libertarians" could be exposed to the same media crisis coverage, individuals at opposite ends of this attitudinal continuum (i.e., with strongly held but divergent views) will likely have different opinions about the credibility of the press and support for media regulation.

Attitudes toward press responsibility can also entail different views: One holds that news media primarily serve their own material and professional interests, embracing a cynical outlook toward the press ("media cynics"), whereas another maintains that the news media faithfully serve the public interest, embracing a view of the news media as a "custodian" or watchdog of the public trust (Anderson 1977). Again, effects on credibility and support for regulation should differ depending on which standing

Table 1. Media Outlooks at High- and Low-Attitude Levels.

Media Attitude	Media Outlook	
	Low	High
Press freedom	Press ethicists	Press libertarians
Social responsibility	Media cynics	Media custodians

attitude is activated. Table 1 shows how the attitudes associated with press freedom and responsibility group at high- and low-attitude levels into four distinct outlooks on the press.

For both press freedom and responsibility, priming is conceptualized as an accessibility-based effect, where standards for evaluating the *news media as an institution* are activated through attention to press scandal coverage. Activation of press attitudes is not assumed to be automatic but rather the result of a conscious process of paying deliberate attention to crisis news. As with group stereotypes, attitudes toward the press, once activated, have the potential to bias the processing of incoming information in ways that are attitudinally consistent (Hamilton et al. 1994). Although priming research presumes activated knowledge will be used in a subsequent judgment task, *how* this happens depends on the perceived fit of activated information to one’s prior knowledge of the object being judged and the perceived usability of activated knowledge for the judgment task at hand (Higgins 1996).

During the press-priming process, exposure to ongoing coverage of a crisis can activate strongly held media attitudes. Values associated with press freedom and media responsibility that underlie press attitudes are hypothesized to play a pivotal role in subsequent judgment tasks the more that members of the news audience follow and learn about the details of a particular press crisis (see Valenzuela 2009). Based on this priming mechanism, we predict the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): As knowledge about a press scandal increases, attitudes toward press freedom and responsibility will become activated and used to form judgments about media performance.

Even if media attitudes are successfully activated, the extent to which they influence subsequent evaluations about the press should depend on the amount of attention paid to scandal coverage. We use story-specific knowledge as a proxy for self-reported attention because self-reports of media attention and exposure can be highly inaccurate (Price and Zaller 1993; Prior 2009). In the case of this analysis, both scandals were so widely covered in the British press that self-reported attention did not meaningfully differentiate between respondents—a large majority of our sample said they were aware of and paid attention to the stories. Surveillance knowledge resolved this problem by separating those who paid close attention and could answer factual questions correctly from those who reported paying close attention but had little command of the facts.

Based on this discussion, we predict that scandal knowledge will moderate the relationship between press attitudes and news evaluations. Different media outlooks (i.e., strongly but oppositely held attitudes toward press freedom and responsibility) should produce varying assessments of media performance and support for regulation. We expect standing attitudes toward the media's social responsibility to significantly influence credibility evaluations and attitudes toward press freedom to primarily influence support for regulation. With regard to credibility, we predict the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): As scandal-related knowledge increases, media custodians will rate the press as less credible than media cynics, who will improve their overall evaluation of the press as scandal attention increases.

Although media cynics, by definition, should rate the press poorly on credibility, we posit that media cynics paying close attention to the scandal will respond to the self-referential and repair elements in scandal news coverage and will be more prone to rate the press overall as believable and worthy of trust (i.e., credible).

Our final hypothesis specifies the relationship between scandal knowledge, attitudes toward press freedom, and support for regulation. In terms of our media outlooks, press libertarians, similar to media cynics, should respond positively to the accountability coverage contained in scandal news. Press ethicists who are generally supportive of press regulation regardless of whether the news media are embroiled in scandal should strengthen their support for restraints on the press. We therefore predict the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): As scandal-related knowledge increases, press libertarians will express less support for regulation than press ethicists, whose support for press regulation will strengthen as scandal attention increases.

Method

We test our model with original data collected in the United Kingdom in early December 2012 shortly after the release of the Leveson report, the culmination of a high-profile parliamentary inquiry into press conduct centering on the *NOTW* phone hacking scandal (*The Guardian* 2014). Missteps at the BBC, namely, controversy surrounding the quashing and possible cover-up of the Jimmy Savile pedophilia story and false accusations of child abuse by a former MP in a *Newsnight* program, were also receiving considerable press attention in the British media at the time. December 2012 also witnessed the release of a report called "The Pollard Review," an independent investigation into the BBC's organizational structure and handling of the Savile story (*The Guardian* 2013). Both reports were widely covered and remain actively indexed and updated in the British media.

The questionnaire addressed both of these media scandals using a split-sample design. Half of the sample answered questions about *NOTW* and the other half the BBC scandal involving Jimmy Savile. A total of 1,333 participants completed the

study. The study was fielded using a stratified sampling design matched to population estimates from the U.K. Office for National Statistics with an online panel collected through Survey Sampling International (SSI).¹ The sample demographics are broadly representative of the general population in the United Kingdom, particularly for gender, race, region, and partisanship (see Appendix A).

Scale Construction and Measurement of Key Variables

We use scandal-related knowledge in lieu of self-reported story attention. To measure knowledge, we used four fact-based questions about key actors and events related to each scandal (e.g., What happened to the *NOTW* after the phone hacking story became public? Do you happen to know which of the following people, if any, resigned once the phone hacking story was widely reported?).² A drawback to this approach is that individuals might have learned about scandal-related details through a source other than the press. This should not be a problem for our model of press-priming because it represents an even more conservative estimate of news influence. Even if an individual obtained detailed knowledge about one or both scandals through discussions with peers, those peers would most likely have learned about these events at some point through the media.

We measure attitudes toward *press freedom* through a series of items drawn from a press freedom subscale introduced by McClosky and Brill (1983). These items ask how much latitude the press should have in reporting the news. The final scale is an additive index of three individual press freedom scale items ($\alpha = .7842$). Attitudes toward the *social responsibility* of the press were measured with three items that probed the news media's role as an advocate for the public interest (see Anderson 1977). This scale is an additive index of these items ($\alpha = .7500$). Item wordings, descriptive statistics, and reliability scores are included in Appendix B.³

Our first dependent variable, media credibility, is an additive index of five items asking respondents to rate the news media for its believability, fairness, trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability ($\alpha = .9449$; see Metzger et al. 2003). Higher values on credibility indicate a higher degree of believability and trust in the press as an institution. To ensure our outcome measures were independent from standing attitudes, we measured press freedom and responsibility *before* credibility evaluations and support for regulation—and in the specific context of each scandal.

Support for press regulation was measured with a series of 7-point agreement questions about the British government's actual and contemplated regulatory posture toward the news media (see Appendix B). This additive index is based on responses to seven questions about press regulation specifically in the British context. Although the items asked about a range of regulatory options and considerations, respondents answered them with a good deal of internal consistency ($\alpha = .7551$). Higher values indicate more support for regulation.

Before fielding the final study, we pre-tested the survey instrument to ensure that questions were asked in an appropriate order for measuring priming effects. Based on the pre-test, we asked about standing attitudes before mentioning either press scandal.

The final questionnaire opened with questions about press freedom and responsibility, and then addressed support for press regulation and media credibility before asking questions specific to either scandal. Media use, political interest, and demographics were also gathered.

Results

Testing the Priming Effect

To test our hypotheses, we start with a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models estimating media credibility and support for regulation.⁴ Because we used a split-sample technique, we estimate separate models for the two scandals throughout.⁵ H1 predicts that standing attitudes toward press freedom and responsibility will become activated as scandal-related knowledge increases and that these attitudes will subsequently shape press evaluations. We start with a test of this hypothesis.

Consistent with research on media priming (e.g., Druckman 2004), we use interaction terms to test for priming effects. We included interactions between press freedom and scandal knowledge and media responsibility and scandal knowledge—as well as the constituent terms of each interaction to test for main effects (see Brambor et al. 2006). We estimated separate models for each interaction to isolate their unique effects.⁶ Table 2 presents the full set of results for the *NOTW* models and provides mixed evidence for priming effects. When credibility is the outcome measure, the scandal knowledge by media responsibility interaction is negative and significant ($p = .044$). The interaction for knowledge by press freedom is not significant ($p = .525$). When factoring in scandal-related knowledge, attitudes toward media responsibility significantly affect credibility perceptions, whereas attitudes toward press freedom do not.

In assessing support for regulation, attitudes toward press freedom become relevant. The scandal knowledge by press freedom interaction is negative and significant ($p = .028$), whereas the knowledge by responsibility interaction is not significant ($p = .837$). The extent to which attitudes toward press freedom negatively affect support for regulation seems to depend, then, on knowledge about (and therefore attention to) the scandal.

The results for the *NOTW* models support the first hypothesis and suggest differential effects for the influence of standing media attitudes. The next set of analyses focus on the BBC. If these results reveal the same priming pattern, where attitudes toward press freedom influence support for regulation and attitudes toward media responsibility influence credibility, then it is likely that scandal-specific attributes contained within coverage of a press crisis do not affect the types of attitudes that become primed; that is, attitudes are generically activated by a news crisis. Conversely, if the results differ from the *NOTW* analyses, then it is likely that standing attitudes are situationally activated depending on the unique news context.

Table 3 presents the results for the BBC and tests the same set of interactions. Examining the results for credibility reveals a different pattern from the first set of analyses. Whereas responsibility was the key attitude primed in the *NOTW* models, here press freedom is primed. The scandal knowledge by press freedom interaction is negative and significant ($p = .008$). The interaction for knowledge by media

Table 2. OLS Models for Media Credibility and Support for Regulation, *NOTW*.

	Media Credibility		Support for Regulation	
	Responsibility	Press Freedom	Responsibility	Press Freedom
<i>Priming variables</i>				
Media responsibility	0.378*** (0.291)	—	-0.224* (0.128)	—
Scandal knowledge	0.304* (6.625)	0.093 (1.057)	0.201 (9.510)	0.311*** (16.01)
Knowledge × Responsibility	-0.3176* (0.0657)	—	-0.0361 (0.1048)	—
Press freedom	—	0.022 (0.124)	—	-0.157† (0.129)
Knowledge × Press freedom	—	-0.0675 (0.0551)	—	-0.2447* (0.0824)
<i>Political and media variables</i>				
Political interest	0.067 (0.242)	0.133** (0.326)	-0.057 (0.208)	-0.076 (0.178)
News exposure	0.355*** (3.724)	0.367*** (4.207)	0.055 (0.878)	0.062 (0.910)
<i>Demographic variables</i>				
Income	-0.033 (0.191)	-0.022 (0.213)	0.056 (0.644)	0.042 (0.551)
Female	-0.009 (0.406)	-0.013 (0.401)	0.004 (0.792)	-0.021 (0.476)
Age	-0.055 (0.122)	-0.051 (0.129)	0.078† (0.362)	0.023 (0.264)
Race	0.018 (0.271)	0.041 (0.327)	-0.047 (0.242)	-0.041 (0.248)
Employment	-0.009 (0.114)	-0.009 (0.119)	-0.081† (0.132)	-0.095* (0.121)
Region	0.043 (0.0729)	0.033 (0.0741)	0.019 (0.113)	0.017 (0.109)
Observations	644	644	644	644
Adjusted R ²	.268	.213	.089	.138

Note. Standard errors in parentheses, standardized coefficients reported. OLS = ordinary least squares; *NOTW* = News of the World.

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

responsibility did not reach significance ($p = .120$). The different pattern of results for the *NOTW* and BBC models suggest that standing attitudes are situationally rather than generically activated. Upon exposure to a press crisis, the details of a specific scandal do affect the types of standing attitudes that become primed, and attitude reliance shifts depending on the nature of the crisis.

For support for regulation, the scandal knowledge by press freedom interaction is not significant ($p = .245$), but the knowledge by media responsibility interaction is negative and significant ($p = .002$). In the *NOTW* models, the knowledge by press freedom interaction was significant for this outcome measure. Taken together, these findings provide support for H1.

Table 3. OLS Models for Media Credibility and Support for Regulation, BBC.

	Media Credibility		Support for Regulation	
	Responsibility	Press Freedom	Responsibility	Press Freedom
<i>Priming variables</i>				
Media responsibility	0.415*** (0.111)	—	-0.094 (0.172)	—
Scandal knowledge	0.216† (0.779)	0.222* (0.521)	0.444** (1.204)	-0.041 (0.757)
Knowledge × Responsibility	-0.2205 (0.0581)	—	-0.4594** (0.0898)	—
Press freedom	—	0.258*** (0.0910)	—	-0.378*** (0.132)
Knowledge × Press freedom	—	-0.2616** (0.0497)	—	0.1134 (0.0722)
<i>Political and media variables</i>				
Political interest	-0.013 (0.175)	0.036 (0.182)	0.097* (0.271)	0.095* (0.264)
News exposure	0.177*** (0.112)	0.226*** (0.116)	0.050 (0.173)	0.053 (0.168)
<i>Demographic variables</i>				
Female	-0.029 (0.495)	-0.018 (0.518)	-0.031 (0.766)	-0.041 (0.753)
Age	-0.001 (0.173)	0.058 (0.183)	0.056 (0.268)	-0.025 (0.266)
Race	0.013 (0.263)	0.038 (0.275)	-0.083* (0.407)	-0.073† (0.399)
Employment	0.009 (0.133)	0.004 (0.140)	-0.009 (0.206)	-0.022 (0.203)
Region	-0.013 (0.0777)	-0.015 (0.0814)	0.025 (0.120)	0.019 (0.118)
Observations	636	636	636	636
Adjusted R ²	.178	.099	.086	.116

Note. Standard errors in parentheses, standardized coefficients reported. OLS = ordinary least squares; BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation.

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

Media Attitudes, Credibility, and Support for Regulation

H2 and H3 examine how the strength and direction of attitudes toward press freedom and media responsibility differentially influence press evaluations in light of scandal. Figures 1 and 2 plot the predictive margins for press freedom and media responsibility against the levels of knowledge about each scandal. The plots show how those who cluster on the high and low end of each scale evaluate the press. Each attitude scale (consisting of three 7-point items) ranged from 0 to 21. Those with low press freedom scores, termed “press ethicists,” include participants whose responses were at least one standard deviation below the mean ($M = 8.85$, $SD = 4.47$), whereas those with high press freedom scores, or “press libertarians,” include participants whose responses were at least one standard deviation above the mean. Turning to media responsibility, the value for “media cynics” at the low end of the scale is similarly set at one standard deviation below the mean ($M = 12.88$, $SD = 3.67$), whereas “media custodians” who cluster at the high end of the scale include those whose responses were at least one standard deviation above the mean.

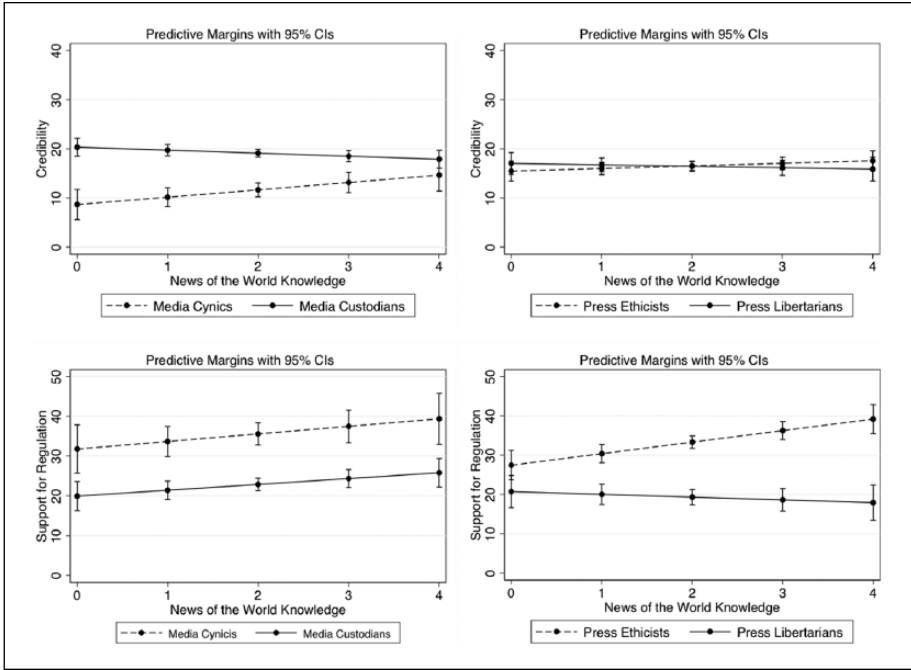


Figure 1. Influence of standing attitudes on press evaluations at different levels of knowledge, *News of the World* scandal.
Note. CIs = confidence intervals.

Figure 1 shows the results for the *NOTW* models. Credibility is the outcome variable in the graphs along the top row, and support for regulation the outcome along the bottom row. Considering attitudes toward media responsibility, differences in credibility ratings between media cynics and media custodians are more pronounced at low levels of knowledge than high (upper left-hand quadrant). Media cynics improve their rating of press credibility with increased knowledge about the scandals, whereas media custodians, who group at the high end of the responsibility scale, report declines. The graph in the upper right-hand quadrant shows that differences between press ethicists and press libertarians do not vary by levels of knowledge. The moderating influence of knowledge on credibility ratings among cynics and custodians in the *NOTW* case provides support for H2.

With support for regulation as the outcome (bottom row of Figure 1), the effect of attitudes toward press responsibility again varies by level of knowledge. Press ethicists, who endorse limits to press freedom, show more support for regulation at higher levels of knowledge, whereas press libertarians, who oppose limits on the news media, show less support (lower right-hand quadrant). The finding that press libertarians reduce their support for regulation as they learn more about the *NOTW* scandal makes sense theoretically—as standing attitudes about press freedom become activated, ideas about press independence move to the forefront of consideration and media regulation becomes incompatible with this outlook. Analysis of attitudes toward press

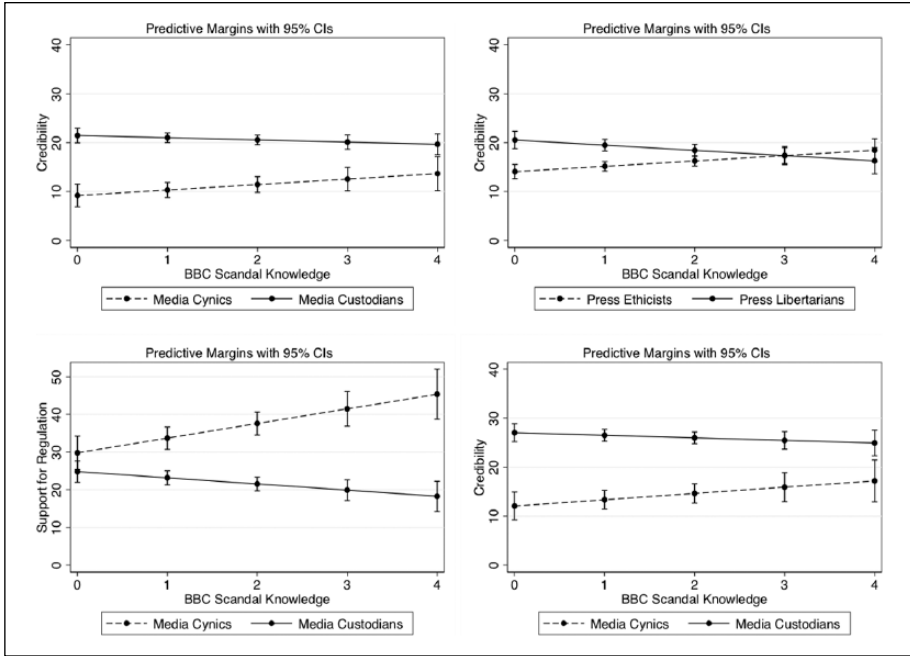


Figure 2. Influence of standing attitudes on press evaluations at different levels of knowledge, BBC scandal.

Note. BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation; CIs = confidence intervals.

responsibility show that media cynics believe more strongly in regulation than media custodians, and this support is positively associated with scandal knowledge (bottom left quadrant). These results support H3.

Figure 2 shows the marginal results for the BBC scandals. For credibility, the press responsibility by knowledge interaction was not significant, and the top left-hand graph shows little change among cynics and custodians, although cynics show a slight increase in credibility as knowledge increases. The interaction for press freedom shows that ethicists with more scandal knowledge give the press higher credibility ratings than those with less knowledge. Press libertarians lower their credibility evaluations as they learn more about the scandal. The differences between ethicists and libertarians dissipate as levels of knowledge increase.

Looking at support for press regulation, attitudes toward the news media’s social responsibility matter: Media cynics and media custodians evaluate the press differently as knowledge increases. Media custodians reduce support for press regulation as scandal knowledge increases while cynics increase support. Although initially counterintuitive, this pattern of results again makes sense theoretically. Media cynics are highly skeptical of the press’s ability to act as a responsible public watchdog, whereas media custodians adhere to a philosophy that the news media is capable of self-regulation. The press

freedom by knowledge interaction was not significant, although press libertarians showed a small uptick in support for regulation as scandal knowledge increased.

Discussion

When persistent coverage of a press crisis raises questions about media performance, priming can offer a useful theoretical framework for investigating how exposure to scandal coverage activates standing attitudes about the news media, influencing subsequent evaluations. Values relating to press freedom and social responsibility are not just textbook concepts discussed in the journalism and public-affairs literature but, as tangible principles arising from a long process of civic socialization, have real meaning to news audiences and play a substantive role in media evaluations. Segmenting audiences based on their valuative outlooks produces a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics underlying media credibility and support for regulation than broad-based approaches that do not consider media orientations.

Overall, our hypotheses predicting press-priming effects were supported. Importantly, the different value prisms individuals use to evaluate the press had different impacts, that is, standing media attitudes are situationally activated by the unique characteristics of a news crisis. In the *NOTW* models, the interaction for press freedom negatively influenced support for regulation, whereas attitudes toward the media's social responsibility interacted with knowledge to influence credibility assessments. In the BBC models, the opposite occurred: attitudes toward press freedom influenced credibility whereas attitudes toward the media's social responsibility affected support for press regulation.

Scandal-related knowledge also functioned as a moderator of attitudinal effects. In the *NOTW* models, an increase in knowledge led media cynics to evaluate the press more credibly than at low knowledge levels and dissipated differences between media cynics and media custodians. A similar finding occurred for press ethicists with support for regulation as the outcome. Without measuring knowledge or press attitudes, judgments about media performance would seem flat or uniform. Turning to the BBC example, we again see the directionality of media judgments moderated by scandal knowledge. As knowledge increased, support for regulation eroded among media custodians while dramatically increasing for media cynics.

In elaborating a model of situational, or context-dependent, media evaluations, this analysis sheds new light on the dynamics underlying shifts in public attitudes toward the news media and addresses a few deficiencies in the news evaluation literature. First, we identify and measure standing media attitudes and, second, we specify a role for key events (e.g., press crises) in the formation of judgments about press performance. While a coarser analysis might lead to blanket conclusions about news credibility or increased support for regulation in the aftermath of a media scandal, our typology of attitudinal outlooks detected considerable variation in summary evaluations and offers a useful prism for parsing public opinion about the press.

Because it demonstrates media influence, the moderating role of knowledge is central to our model of press-priming, but the directionality of effects is contingent on the value positions activated by scandal coverage. When scandal coverage primes

individuals to rely on core principles to evaluate media performance, priming effects vary in accordance with our four media outlooks. Press libertarians, who are almost dogmatic in their belief that a free press should have wide latitude to behave as it pleases, regard media regulation as undesirable whereas press ethicists are more circumspect in their views of how the news media should behave.

Attitudes toward the social responsibility of the press focus attention on normative expectations, in which the press is expected to maintain a vigilant eye on the social world, represent the public interest where possible, and not commit violations of the public trust. In the case of the *NOTW* phone hacking scandal, the press as an institution failed for years to head off corruption within its own ranks. Indeed, one of the central issues discussed by media and political elites in the aftermath of this scandal concerned how the paper was able to violate legal and ethical norms in the course of its reporting for so long. Thus, the low level of credibility attributed to the press by media cynics is not surprising. Yet, as knowledge about the scandal increases, and the nuances of journalistic self-policing become evident, even cynics rate the press overall higher in credibility.

Media cynics do not have a strong baseline belief in the media as a concerned watchdog acting in the public interest. But closely following other news outlets exposes media cynics to critical, self-referential coverage about media performance (a kind of self-regulation and news repair), and it is likely that the critical tone of this coverage from journalists themselves leads cynics at higher levels of attention to perceive the press as more credible than at lower levels of attention.

Press freedom and the news media's social responsibility are bedrock democratic values referenced in most normative analyses of news. With this investigation, we have only begun to explore their utility in priming research. An expansion of the press-priming model might examine other influences on judgments about the press, particularly the emotions evoked by press scandals. The questionable judgment evidenced by reporters and editors in both of these scandals no doubt evoked a range of emotional reactions in news audiences, including anger, outrage, and possibly disbelief in response to the revelations. Emotional responses to press crises could further illuminate how news evaluations are formed during a crisis. Open-ended and focus group responses segmented on the basis of our valuative outlooks could also provide useful insights into how audiences contend with such widespread breaches of public trust.

There are many limitations to making causal inferences from cross-sectional surveys, and our study is no exception. The split-sample approach to the design did allow us to make observational comparisons between two scandals. Future research into press-priming should ideally use panel designs to capture before/after differences in the same set of respondents, perform content analyses of scandal news to determine relevant framing, and perhaps use hybrid survey-experiments to test the direct influence of different frames present in scandal news (e.g., accountability coverage vs. recriminatory or blame framing).

Nevertheless, in light of our findings, it seems clear that the specific news context in which media scandals occur, the amount of attention paid to coverage, and standing attitudes activated by press crises are all potential influences that should be taken into consideration when assessing media performance and the perceptual consequences of

scandal. To obtain a fuller understanding of the news evaluation process, public opinion researchers would do well to prepare for unexpected press crises and consider values-based criteria in their research designs to investigate the various ways in which important dimensions of the news environment are activated in the minds of citizens. The catch, of course, is that research designs must plan for breaking news events, which by definition cannot be known in advance.

Appendix A

Sample Demographics

	SSI Sample	Oxford Internet Institute Survey	U.K. Office for National Statistics ^a
% female	48.5	57	49.1
% age			
18–24	13.3	9	6.8
25–44	34.0	30	27.2
45–64	30.8	30	13.8
65+	22.0	28	16.6
% white	89.3	—	89.7
% Labour Party	34.1	—	36.1 ^b
% college degree	43.7	—	31.8
% married	41.9	—	47

Note. “—” Data not reported. Data from Oxford Internet Institute survey are included for comparative purposes. SSI = Survey Sampling International.

a. Percentages based on total U.K. population.

b. Based on percentage of popular vote to the Labour Party in the 2010 national elections.

Appendix B

Question Wordings for Key Measures

Variable	Scale Items	Reliability Coefficient	Scale <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Item Range	Scale Range
Press freedom (agreement)	<p>PF1. There are times when news organizations, even if they break the law to obtain information, should <i>not</i> be punished for reporting on the information.</p> <p>PF2. News organizations should be allowed to publish or broadcast a story no matter how information is obtained by the news staff—even if obtained illegally from bribes or payoffs.</p> <p>PF3. Invading the privacy of citizens and news sources is acceptable as a journalistic practice, so long as there is news to report.</p>	.7842	8.85 (4.47)	1–7	3–21

(continued)

Appendix B (continued)

Variable	Scale Items	Reliability Coefficient	Scale <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Item Range	Scale Range
Social responsibility (agreement)	SR1. Most journalists who work for the mainstream media are dedicated professionals, and we should be grateful for the work they do.	.7462	12.89 (3.68)	1–7	3–21
	SR2. Most mainstream news organizations try to cover the news in a way that serves the public interest.				
	SR3. The mainstream media understand the challenges facing ordinary people.				
Support for press regulation (agreement)	PR1. The current Press Complaints Commission is sufficient to address any concerns that people have about the news media.	.7697	27.05 (9.60)	1–7	0–49
	PR2. A new press law is needed to ensure that the news media behave responsibly.				
	PR3. The proposal by Lord Justice Leveson for a new press law is potentially dangerous to Britain's centuries-old tradition of press freedom.				
	PR4. Television and radio should be regulated by the government but not the print press.				
	PR5. The print press should be regulated by the government, along with television and radio.				
	PR6. No form of news media, whether television, radio, print, or online news, should be regulated by the government under any circumstances.				
	PR7. A free press—free from governmental control—is necessary for a strong democracy.				

Note. PF = press freedom; SR = social responsibility; PR = press regulation.

Appendix C

An Alternative Test of Priming Effects

To validate whether press-priming effects are a function of people paying attention to and consuming news about the scandals, we present the results of an alternative priming measure here. Following Althaus and Kim (2006), we rely on a question that asked respondents how closely they were following news about the scandals (e.g., “How closely have you been following the *News of the World* (NOTW) phone hacking story since it became front-page news?”) measured with a 5-point scale, where 1 = “not at all” and 5 = “very closely.” We used this news following question in place of our story-specific knowledge questions and replicated the main analysis.

The results show similar patterns with negative coefficients, but the effects are more nuanced. With the NOTW evaluations, the interaction for press freedom and news following has a significant and positive effect on media credibility. The interaction for media responsibility and news following has a significant and negative effect on support for press regulation. The table below compares the key coefficients

	Media Credibility	Support for Regulation
<i>News of the World</i> evaluations		
Freedom × Knowledge	-0.0974 (0.0445)	-0.2447* (0.0824)
Freedom × News following	0.15282 (0.0365)	-0.0796 (0.0677)
Responsibility × Knowledge	-0.314* (0.0529)	-0.0361 (0.1049)
Responsibility × News following	0.0777 (0.0412)	-0.2771† (0.0815)
BBC evaluations		
Freedom × Knowledge	-0.262** (0.0404)	0.1134 (0.0722)
Freedom × News following	-0.0687 (0.0415)	0.1284 (0.0742)
Responsibility × Knowledge	-0.235† (0.0473)	-0.4594** (0.0898)
Responsibility × News following	0.0465 (0.040)	-0.3424* (0.0858)

Note. Standardized beta coefficients presented with the standard errors in parentheses. BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation.

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

against those in the original models. The only significant priming effect for analysis of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) scandals is a negative coefficient for press regulation for the interaction between media responsibility and news following.

This alternative test does not entirely replicate our main analyses, but it still shows a subtle priming effect. Given the ubiquity of these two scandals, the use of a news following measure presents a less precise but still significant test of priming effects. Overall, press-priming effects do appear to be a function of people paying attention to and consuming news about the scandals. Measurement does matter, though, and story-specific knowledge outperforms news following as a priming variable.

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Notes

1. Because individuals are constantly joining Survey Sampling International's (SSI) network of volunteers online, it is not possible to know the precise number of individuals who were exposed to the study invitation. "SSI recruits from a broad and diverse pool including proprietary panels, online communities, websites, and social media. All participants undergo quality checks upon entering the SSI system" (see http://www.surveysampling.com/ssi-media/Corporate/Fact-Sheets-2013/SSI_Verify_FactSheet12). The completion rate among those who started the study was approximately 94 percent.
2. A full account of the measures used in the study is available upon request to the lead author.
3. We specify press freedom and media responsibility as distinct attitudinal dimensions. Although these attitudes share the common object of "the news media," they are conceptually distinct in the literature and causally unrelated in our models. Future research should work to untangle other types of press attitudes that are activated when major news stories or crises erupt.
4. All analyses used STATA 12. Variables were entered into the model with the following format: regress "dependent variable," "independent variable 1," "independent variable 2," and so on. The order in which independent variables are entered in STATA does not affect the model results.
5. To ensure that the variables in our model were not highly correlated (and measuring the same constructs), we conducted a multicollinearity test for each regression using the variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF provides an estimate of how much of the variance of a coefficient is increased due to multicollinearity. Although there is no absolute standard for what constitutes a VIF value that is "too high," we looked for values that were below ten. All of the variables we included met this threshold.
6. For a discussion of alternative strategies for measuring priming effects, see Appendix C where we present results using self-reported news following in a comparison with story-specific knowledge.

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Complementary and Competitive Logics of Mediatization: Political, Commercial, and Professional Logics in Indian Media

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Abstract

In this article, we have sought to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the “mediatization” of politics that is of general applicability while seeking to apply that framework to India, thereby extending the reach of the concept geographically beyond the West. Theoretically, we reject the idea that media logic and political logic are involved in a zero-sum game (where less of one necessarily means more of the other) and instead develop a framework that investigates how commercial, political, and professional logics interact in competitive and complementary ways dependent upon prevailing circumstances and configurations. In the classic argument of mediatization, growing commercial logic sees a consequent falling away of political (or electoral) logic. Our argument is that it is not an either/or but rather a both/and scenario where mediatization and politization of television can go hand in hand. These logics interact in a complex fashion; at times they are complementary, at other times they are competitive. In the rapid development of Indian media, media have become commercialized, regionalized, and vernacularized. Political elites still attempt to maintain control in direct and indirect partisan and indeed in networked media systems. New pragmatic entrepreneurs have emerged with decidedly dubious records and with twin goals of maximizing their economic and political power. At the same time, there is a trend toward journalism that works in the public interest rather than those of narrow regional and/or national elites.

Keywords

journalism, market, Asia, liberalization, political parties, India

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The concept of “mediatization” has received considerable scholarly attention in recent years in communication research aimed at analyzing the extent to which media influence politics or the political process (Esser 2013; Landerer 2013; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999; Stromback 2008). Mediatization has intensified alongside technological innovation since the 1990s that has afforded new types of mediatized political experience beyond newspapers, radio, and television. During the same timescale, traditional media have become the most important source of political information in many less developed countries where television, for example, now with a mass audience is considered “new” to many, soon to be followed by the growth of the Internet. Mediatization is not confined to politics, but has permeated all aspects of human lives, which has led Deuze (2011) to proclaim that “our life is lived *in*, rather than *with*, media” (p. 138) although the spatial, class, and gendered limits of our media immersion remain to be seen. Despite the importance of the process of mediatization in a large number of societies and the growing literature on the topic, the study of mediatization in developing countries such as India has been almost nonexistent.

The purpose of this article, however, is not merely to contribute to the de-Westernization of media studies by extending the use of the concept of mediatization to a developing country, India, as we first need to undertake some conceptual repair work. Our intention, therefore, is to contribute to the mediatization debate theoretically, empirically, and politically. By drawing upon the work of Stromback (2008) and Landerer (2013), we develop a coherent conceptual framework for the analysis of the mediatization of politics in India. We reject the idea that media logic and political logic are involved in a zero-sum game (where less of one necessarily means more of the other) and instead develop a framework that investigates how commercial, political, and professional logics interact in competitive and complementary ways dependent upon prevailing circumstances and configurations (see also Downey 2012). We then use this framework to investigate an important and hitherto unexplored case of mediatization, namely, the growing importance of media in Indian politics. The Indian media landscape has undergone a massive transformation in recent years with the growth of mainstream media such as newspapers and television, as well as the increasing diffusion of the Internet. Growth has been accompanied, and to an extent caused, by media commercialization. This raises the question of the extent to which politics has been transformed as a consequence of media change. The link between the rapid transformation of Indian media and changes in politics is complex and nuanced because of the linguistic as well as cultural diversity of the country. Not only that, despite the tremendous growth of media, interpersonal face-to-face communication still occupies an important place in Indian society, and so political parties prefer to combine face-to-face interactions with their mediatized campaigns whether targeted at mass or niche audiences depending on the medium in question. This repertoire of campaign strategies is certainly not unique to India and is also found in advanced democracies. However, the degree of mediatization varies in different societies similar to the process of variations in industrialization, individualization, and globalization. It must be noted that media have certainly become important institutions of mediation in Indian society and provide an institutionalized arena of interactions to different social and political actors.

The framework we develop that seeks to capture the complex and dynamic relationship between three logics—the political, the professional, and the commercial—has broader applicability beyond the Indian case. In applying our framework to the Indian context we have drawn primarily upon secondary literature and data to illustrate our argument that the three logics may exist in complementarity or competitive relationships depending on context and circumstance. While drawing primarily on secondary data we also present new data on the use of social media in the capital city during the 2013 Delhi assembly elections, as this is an important new ingredient of mediatization.

Media Logic, Political Logic, and Mediatization: Toward a Complex, Dynamic Conceptual Framework

We primarily develop our arguments by critically analyzing Stromback's (2008) four-dimensional or four-phase model of mediatization and work by Landerer (2013) who builds on the work of Stromback to develop his own position. We examine how well this framework captures the complex interactions between political actors and mass media actors and develop concepts that can also be employed to analyze politicians' use of "social" media (Facebook, Twitter, websites, and so on) as part of their political activities. The uses of social media by politicians are simultaneously acts of disintermediation that bypass mass media actors to communicate with the electorate directly as well as acts of mediatization but have not as yet been adequately conceptualized within a framework of the mediatization of politics.

The first dimension or phase of Stromback's thesis of mediatization of politics, which he also refers to as *mediation*, is the extent to which mass media are the most important source of information about political events for the people of a particular territory. How are people informed about elections? Is this through attending meetings and rallies, through word-of-mouth, through reading party literature and newspapers, or through watching television? In principle, the degree of mediatization of politics in this dimension should be relatively easy to discern and track over time as mediatization is a process concept, of course, with the thesis being that mediatization is becoming more prevalent. Surveys that track how people source their political information over time should give a clear indication of whether mediatization on this dimension at least is increasing although assessing increasing intensity, which Stromback argues is key, is a more difficult proposition. Other indicators such as the number of people reading newspapers and households with television sets are also relevant here. For Stromback (2008), "mediated politics should be . . . understood as something different from politics experienced through interpersonal communication or something experienced directly by the people" (p. 231). This definition is problematic because interpersonal communication is often mediated (or mediatized) whether it is a telephone call on election day from a political party to supporters to encourage them to vote or the use of social media such as Facebook or Twitter which appear to have characteristics of both mass and interpersonal media. There is also the question of people discussing

politics using social media. The claim that this is not mediated politics is rather dubious and uses a very narrow definition of both the political and mediation.

The second dimension of mediatization for Stromback is the degree of independence that media institutions exhibit from political institutions which falls along a continuum. At one end are authoritarian media systems, where those with political power often directly control media institutions. In democratic media systems, however, political parties seek to exercise control either directly or indirectly. In some cases, we may speak of media clientelism or party–media parallelism where parties effectively determine the agenda of media institutions (which is prominent in the case of India). Moving along the continuum of independence, we may find media institutions that are more independent in terms of editorial decisions and finance and yet tend to support one political party rather than another; these are partisan media institutions (again prominent in India). Further along the continuum, there are media systems based on professional values of “objectivity,” but even here the influence of political institutions is profound. Political elites will seek to discipline media institutions through a system of incentives and sanctions in terms of providing information. In these systems, media institutions may not be clearly supportive of a particular party at least in terms of news coverage, but “objectivity” tends to mean that major, established political parties are covered more thoroughly than minor, emergent ones, and so media institutions may often serve to stabilize political systems by providing negative feedback or by dampening (though this is not to argue that media institutions do on occasion provide positive feedback and serve to amplify, for example, crises in economic and political systems). At the end of the continuum are media institutions that are purely commercial, that is, they base their coverage on the criterion of profit maximization. Whether a party receives media attention or not depends not on political influence over the media or the beliefs of journalists about whether they should be advocates or impartial observers but on a calculation about which coverage is the most profitable. This is what is often meant by “media logic” in the literature. This relates to what audiences are prepared to pay for and/or what advertisers are prepared to pay for access to audiences as well as the costs associated with producing news.

Stromback (2008) defines media logic with reference to the dominance in societal processes of news values, formats, and the storytelling techniques used by the media “to take advantage of their own medium and its format, and to be competitive in the ongoing struggle to capture people’s attention” (p. 233). These techniques include simplification, polarization, intensification, personalization, visualization, stereotypization, and framing politics as a strategic game. All of these, no doubt, go on within “the media,” but to claim that all of “the media” possess the same logic is to take characteristics within a particular type of media institution and to project them onto the rest. The argument also is in danger of implying that all of these processes are caused exclusively by “the media.” An examination of politics and political rhetoric before the advent of the mass media would find plentiful examples of all of these processes as part of political discourse. The supposed “golden era” of critical-rational political debate before the advent of mass media is a myth (see Schudson 1998). This is crucial as once the dichotomy between media and political logics falls, one must

envisage a much more complicated relationship between politics and the media than a simple zero-sum game of political logic versus media logic.

The third and fourth dimensions for Stromback refer to the extent to which media content is governed by political or media logic and the extent to which political actors are governed by a political or a media logic. Again, the root of the problem are the definitions of and distinctions between political and media logic.

For Landerer (2013), the problem with approaches such as Stromback's is that they lack sufficiently specified accounts of what political logic and media logic are. Landerer discusses how the development of the concept of media logic was tied very much to the idea of media formats, that is, the media categorize and select political information and decide how to present it (or not) more or less independently from political institutions (see Altheide and Snow 1979). If politicians ignored this media logic, then, because citizens receive most of their information about politics via the mass media, they would lose elections. When politicians accept media logic, this signals the mediatization of politics. The problem is, of course, as we have pointed to above, that the media are not governed by a single logic—there are different types of media institution, and there is variation within types. It is much more accurate to think of media institutions as sites of coexisting, sometimes competing, sometimes coterminous political, professional, and economic interests. To speak of “a” media logic is far too simplistic.

Landerer's solution to this is to see, instead of an essentially commercially driven media logic, two competing logics: an audience-oriented commercial logic and a normatively oriented public logic. While sympathetic to Landerer's attempt to differentiate between competing logics within media institutions, the question is, why stop at two? Normative logic contains two radically different conceptions of how journalists best serve the public. Journalists may, for example, see themselves as passionate advocates of a particular cause or ideology. They may also see themselves as impartial arbiters pursuing their profession. A second problem with Landerer's conception is that it essentially replaces a zero-sum trade-off between political logic and media logic with a zero-sum game between commercial and normative logic. The less commercial media are, the more they can serve the public. This ignores the historical role of commercial media institutions in the development of public spheres. The rise of commercial newspapers was accompanied by the rise of the idea of the public. It is not an either/or situation but can be both/and although that is not necessarily the case.

Landerer rightly argues that discussions of political logic have been rather thin in accounts of mediatization. Political logic is seen as being replaced by a media logic, and so extensive discussion of political logic appears to be beside the point or redundant. Landerer attempts to specify what political logic is. He divides it, in a similar manner to his discussion of media logic into two, namely, normative and electoral logic. The normative dimension refers to how political decision making should ideally occur in democratic societies (actually in all societies as this is a universalist normative theory of politics) and electoral logic is a more egotistic and audience-oriented perspective that refers to how politicians seek to win elections. The normative is concerned with substance and policy and finding solutions to societal problems through

critical-rational debate in parliament whereas electoral logic is about politicians' self-interested market behavior as they do anything necessary to persuade voters. Landerer presents these extremes as ideal types and suggests that no behavior is likely to be as selfless as the normative ideal and that egotistical behavior is often justified through reference to the public good (although this would be an act of deception and so does not show deviation from electoral logic).

In light of our critique of Stromback and Landerer, we suggest instead the following definition.

Mediatization of politics is a process with complex mediated relationships between three sets of actors:

1. **Mediatized publics:** The first is a heterogeneous set of people who are neither political actors (defined broadly as representatives of parties, pressure or lobby groups in civil society) nor media actors (defined as paid employees of media institutions). For analytical purposes, this group can be subdivided by class, gender, region, educational background, and so on. Mediatization occurs when this group(s) in a given territory over a defined period of time (whether living in democracies or in authoritarian societies) consumes an increasing amount of mediated content about politics produced either by political actors or media actors. They may be heavy or light consumers of political news, they may or may not engage themselves in mediated or nonmediated political discourse, and they may or may not engage in political activities (voting, attending protests, and so on). With the rise of social media, media publics may engage in political debate either with media or political actors or with other members of their media public.
2. **Political actors:** Political actors (representatives of political parties, pressure and lobby groups), recognizing the increasing importance of mediatized political information, seek to form public opinion and engage in electoral/political logic with the purpose of winning votes (most intensely during election periods but also more generally) either through the use of media institutions and/or media content that they control (1) more directly (political advertising, social media use, party-controlled newspapers, TV channels) or (2) seek to influence how their parties and policies are presented to the public by, more or less autonomous, media institutions (for example, by how they tailor the presentations of their policies for media institutions, by links with media professionals). A more sophisticated version would be where political parties consider how well policies will play directly with media institutions and indirectly with the public during policy formation, that is, the issue of public opinion formation is built into policy design. Political actors may also use media (e-mail, social media) to mobilize supporters, ask for donations, and so on.
3. **Media actors:** Media actors are owners or employees of media institutions. Media actors respond to attempts to manage their production of political news depending on a variety of factors (e.g., the degree of independence of media institutions from political power, professional norms of journalists, the extent

to which media professionals support the ideology and/or policies of the parties, the importance of commercial imperatives and the views of advertisers and audiences, the wishes of media owners to support certain policies and/or parties for commercial reasons). This is complex. Media owners may seek to use the media institution as a mouthpiece for their views. They may attempt to maximize profit by maximizing revenue and minimizing costs. They may enter into official and unofficial alliances with political actors perhaps forgoing profits in the short run to maximize profits in the longer run. Journalists may be placed under greater or lesser pressure by media owners to promote a particular political line or to profit maximize, but they may also be influenced by professional norms of serving the public interest (this may be through advocacy or campaigning journalism or through more “objective” styles). The complexity of the behavior of diverse media actors means that we should be wary of using a catch-all concept such as “media logic.” Commercial, political, and professional (or journalistic logic, see Waisbord, 2013) logics may be operating in the same institution simultaneously.

In the following sections, we will illustrate these complex relationships between three sets of actors with reference to the mediatization of politics in India.

Mediatized Publics

Mediatization of politics in India is highly complex. This complexity results from the nature of the news media market, which is occupied by multiple vernacular Indian languages and English. The linguistic diversity of the Indian mass mediated public sphere facilitates a highly complex space of subnational deliberation among a variety of publics, which is very different from most European states, which largely have relatively homogeneous linguistic groups. The news media for each linguistic group and public though creates its own unique vernacular universe in the diverse Indian public sphere and they are, in turn, mediated and held together by a common market place and the state. The political actors, who need to reach to diverse Indian publics, often need to negotiate with the media actors, who have their own agenda, format, and logics as well as with nonmedia actors operating at the grassroots using interpersonal channels of communication. The mediatization of political process, events, and discourses in India has been facilitated by the rise of the vernacular newspapers since the 1980s. This process of mediatization has intensified after the spread of television in the 1990s and 2000s. Of particular interest here is the rise of the 24-hour news channels that has also created a kind of “media complex,” affecting democratic process (see Table 1). Critics argue that the rise of the 24-hour news channels has also been accompanied by media increasingly prioritizing commercial interests/logics and operating as “show biz,” abandoning ideals, issues, and public concerns. However, instead of treating this as a zero-sum game, we argue that there is a complex interaction between political, professional, and commercial logics. This is reflected in the ways the Indian media market has transformed over the years. What is important in

Table 1. Penetration of Television in India, 1984-2013 (in Million).

Years	Total TV Homes	C&S Homes
1984	3.6	NA
1989	22.5	NA
1991	30.8	NA
1996	57.7	18
2001	79	40
2006	112	68
2011	142	126
2013	153	140

Source. Cited in Kohli (2006: 62). Figures for 2011 and 2013 are from TAM Media Research.

Note. C&S = Cable and Satellite; TAM = Television Audience Measurement.

this transformation is the mediatization of publics in the regional and the vernacular languages.

In newspaper industry, it is the Hindi dailies that have seen extraordinary growth both in readership and circulation. According to the Indian Readership Survey (2013), of the top ten daily newspapers, only one is an English newspaper, and it is ranked sixth in readership. The *Times of India*, the largest English-language newspaper has a readership of 7.6 million, while *Dainik Jagran* and *Dainik Bhaskar*, the top two Hindi newspapers have a readership base of 16.5 and 14.5 million, respectively.

Similarly, Television Audience Measurement (TAM), which measures viewership for different programs, found that there was not a single English news channel in the top twenty news channels in India out of 122 channels; moreover, eight of the top ten news channels are in Hindi (TAM Report for 2010). If we look at the viewership shares of different news channels in English, Hindi and other vernacular languages, in 2013, Hindi and other regional language news channels had a share of 3.18 and 2.78 percent, respectively, while it is 0.23 percent for English news channels (TAM Report for 2013). This shows the mediatization of Indian publics in regional languages. Yet, the discussion of mediatization would be incomplete in today's political communication networks without analyzing the Internet as it has emerged an important channel of communication bridging the divide between the interpersonal and mediatized politics.

Starting from a very low base, the Internet has been growing rapidly in India. A report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India shows that as of October 2013, there were 205 million claimed Internet users: 137 million in urban cities and 68 million in rural villages. This is nearly 16.9 percent of India's population. In terms of usage, more than 50 percent of urban Internet users access the Internet daily. To encourage Internet usage in India, several software providers including Google have now started providing content in Indian languages. The simultaneous growth of print, television, and the Internet has not only mediatized politics but has also enabled the diverse publics to participate more actively in this process of mediatization. This participation, in turn, is challenging both media actors and political actors. Here we first

look at the media actors and how they have come to occupy a unique place in the ever-expanding space of socio-political negotiations and interactions among the multiplicity of vernacular and the universality of the publics.

Media Actors: Political, Professional, and Economic Logics

Media actors are media owners and the paid employees of media institutions. Media actors are a heterogeneous group subdivided by class, gender, region, educational background, and so on. Another important division unique to India is along linguistic lines, between the English-language and the vernacular media. From Independence until the 1970s, the Indian news landscape was dominated by the English media; politicians and bureaucrats at the national level hardly bothered about news published in Hindi or other Indian language newspapers. Several social, political, and economic transformations during the late 1970s and 1980s enabled Hindi newspapers to challenge the dominance of English newspapers (see Neyazi 2014). In addition, with the decline of the Congress system after the 1967 general election, there was a parallel rise of regional consciousness in which the regional and vernacular press played an important role.¹ The regional press began to align with regional political classes to provide support to the regional cause. Here we can notice the development of partisan media system where the media supported one political ideology over another. Yet, not all regional media had supported regional political actors, which would have brought them an easy access to political power and government advertising. Many media groups operated independently of the political class despite being financially weak. There thus operate diverse types of media systems across different regions of India, making it difficult to analyze the Indian media system.

Chakravarty and Roy (2013) use a tripartite model to analyze the intranational differences in the relationship between media and politics in India. Exclusively or largely directly partisan media systems can be found in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal where the strong tradition of a partisan press has been transferred into cable news provision. Media institutions are either owned by political parties or by individuals who are explicitly committed to a political party, and electoral gain is usually privileged over commercial gain. Indirect partisan media systems exist in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Here political parties exert control or influence over media institutions through control of state-funded advertising, formal and informal control over distribution, and paid news (where parties and corporations pay for news that is presented as news and not as advertising). This is politicization of television news media essentially through media institutions that follow a commercial logic. This shows how political logic and commercial logic can be complementary as well as competitive depending on circumstance. Political control over the media system is here more indirect than in the direct partisan system. The third and most prevalent type of media system in India is the networked system, which is seen in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa. In this system, it is not clear who

owns and controls the media and some of the capital comes from dubious or illegal sources. Entrepreneurs who invest their surpluses from other sectors, often real estate or private education, are seeking to win political influence through their ownership of channels presumably ultimately for economic advantage, again showing the complementarity of political and commercial logics. Paid news is common in networked systems, and these systems tend to be opaque, polyvalent, and pragmatic because they are often not driven by ideology but by pragmatic considerations of short- and long-term profit maximization. As Chakravarty and Roy argue, here we have an “interweaving of these at once profit-seeking and power-seeking interests” (p. 363). Their analysis tends to emphasize the dominance of political and commercial interests that are sometimes at odds but are often allies.

The compelling analysis offered by Chakravarty and Roy, however, needs to be supplemented by another factor that needs to be considered if we are to develop a complex and dynamic understanding of mediatization in India—that of professionalization where journalists perceive that they are acting in the public interest. Are journalists merely serving political and/or their economic masters, or do they have a sense of their profession that means that they have a relative autonomy from political and commercial pressures?

We find strong evidence of the diversity of professional logic when we look at the history of the growth of Indian newspapers. The first major challenge for Indian media came during the Emergency of 1975–77, when censorship and several repressive laws were imposed on press freedom.² The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi held the press responsible for the declaration of the Emergency as “it was the newspapers which were inciting the people and creating a terrible situation” and that “the agitation was only in the newspapers and once the newspapers were placed under censorship there was no agitation” (Shah Commission Report 1978: 33). The government categorized all newspapers based on their response to the Emergency: A denoted friendly, B meant hostile, while C signified neutral reporting by newspapers. The response by the media was sharply differentiated along linguistic lines. In the English press, noted national dailies such as *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, and *Hindustan Times* were categorized as friendly. In contrast, there were only two Hindi newspapers in the friendly category: one was *Hindustan*, which is published by the Hindustan Times group, and the other was *Naveen Duniya*, a small newspaper from Madhya Pradesh. Three important Hindi newspapers at that time—*Swadesh*, *Vir Prataap*, and *Pradeep*—were placed in the hostile category. Another important Hindi daily of that time, *Nai Duniya*, published from Madhya Pradesh, used to leave its front page blank to register its protest against the government. In short, Hindi newspapers challenged the authority of the government, whereas major English dailies fell in line with or even supported the government’s *diktates*. Despite knowing that going against the government can affect the flow of government advertising, the most important source of revenue for the newspapers at that time, many Hindi newspapers took on the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi. The professional logic seems to inform the functioning of the Hindi newspapers.

Until the 1980s, the press depended on government advertising as private advertising was almost negligible, but the liberalization of Indian economy from the 1990s and

the growth of market economy have freed the press to some extent from the government control exercising political influence through economic power although several scholars argue that the market has eroded the substance of politics. In contrast, we argue that the development of the Indian media landscape shows that the market can help create more democratic debates among multiple stakeholders. Jeffrey (2000) argues that advertising in India has presented a “tantalizing paradox” that has not only created consumerism but has also contributed to the expansion of the public sphere by taking newspapers into ever more remote corners. While acknowledging the power of advertising in generating consumerism, Jeffrey also recognizes the positive impact of advertising in increasing the circulation of newspapers, thus making it possible for the hitherto marginalized classes to participate to a certain degree in the public sphere.

The increasing circulation of newspapers and diffusion of television have been accompanied by new technologies and practices of journalism that have to some degree enlivened the public sphere. S. Rao (2009) argues that there has been a glocalization of Indian journalism. Technological advances, particularly the availability of small digital video camcorders, have allowed the development of a contested hidden camera journalism that has uncovered corruption in the public, if not the private sector. Interactive technologies have also increased audience feedback and encouraged the idea that despite the presence of commercial and political party interests, journalism should be for the people and should serve the public interest (S. Rao 2009). Since the 1990s, the demand for journalists has increased, which has led to the proliferation of journalism schools that are skill based. S. Rao does not argue that the “development journalism” of the 1970s has been completely annihilated by what she sees as essentially Western models of commercial journalism based on entertainment, profits, and ratings. Rather, many journalists see the public interest as being of paramount importance: “it is the abstract notion of ‘public good’ that impels decision-making about content” (S. Rao 2009: 482). S. Rao concludes,

The new media landscape, despite having been made possible by globalization and configured by pro-market logic, has created the opportunity for a journalism of *janapakshi* (pro-people) to evolve. It has fundamentally reconfigured the relationship between the journalist and the reader/viewer as a democratic and equitable one. (p. 486)

She argues that the regionalization of both politics and the media gives added impetus to this process of democratization. It may well be that S. Rao paints too rosy a picture of trends in journalism in India, but it is clear that Indian media are not merely subservient to the interests of political and economic elites but are encouraged through both professionalization and commercialization to consider the public interest.

In stark contrast to this narrative of new media permitting a “pro-people” journalism to emerge, there is a competing narrative of the emergence of “paid news” in Indian press and broadcasting over the last decade. “Paid news” is the production by media companies of promotional content on behalf of politicians, celebrities, and companies that is passed off as news not advertising in return for payment. This is a clandestine practice that contravenes journalistic ethics codes in India. Most of the evidence

that paid news is occurring is circumstantial and is difficult to assess how widespread it is. There are grounds for suspecting it to be widespread and also to doubt the degree to which the Press Council of India (PCI) or the Indian government are either able or willing to deal with the issue.

The rise of “paid news” as an issue in the public sphere dates to the 2009 General and subsequent state elections. The Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ) organized a seminar on the issue on the final date of the 2009 general election in Hyderabad. The APUWJ claim to have invented the term “paid news” in 2009 bringing the issue to broader attention through conducting research into paid news and holding a seminar (APUWJ 2010). Such activities contributed toward precipitating a PCI report in 2010.

The damning PCI report, which argued that paid news is widespread, was initially suppressed by the PCI itself. At the meeting to decide whether to publish the report, nine out of a membership of thirty voted to publish the report, a decision that casts doubt on the efficacy of self-regulation. The report was subsequently leaked and then made available through legal recourse via the Right to Information Act.

An equally damning 2013 report to Parliament by the Standing Committee on Information Technology that heavily criticized the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for its inaction in dealing with paid news received very little media attention on publication. When the phenomenon is mentioned by mainstream news organizations, it is either deemed to be an infrequent occurrence or something that has been satisfactorily dealt with through self-regulation.

For the 2014 general election, the Election Commission established Media Certification and Monitoring Committees claiming almost 800 cases of paid news (R. Rao 2014). It does not have the ability to take any action in these cases, however. It can act though in cases where electoral law appears to have been broken, for example, when candidates do not issue accurate accounts of electoral spending as in the high profile cases of former Chief Ministers Ashok Chavan and Madhu Koda of the states of Maharashtra and Jharkhand, respectively.

While much of the evidence for paid news is circumstantial, there is enough to suggest that the practice could be widespread and that there is a certain amount of collusion between media institutions and government. Media companies tend either to deny its existence except as isolated cases or insist that their houses are now in order. The PCI appears to be unwilling to act as does the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The phenomenon of paid news, therefore, highlights the complementarity of, rather than competition between, political and commercial logics in certain circumstances. While politicians would, of course, prefer not to have to pay for positive coverage, they also do not wish to admit having paid in front of either the electorate or the Election Commission. However, this complementarity between business and political interests is not the full story by any means. Indeed, we only have a story because of the activities of journalist unions, senior independent journalists, some members of the PCI (albeit a minority), a Standing Committee of Parliament, and a small number of newspapers and websites determined to bring the issue to the light of day. It is only because of the presence of a professional logic advocating journalistic independence

that the issue is being raised. During the 2014 general elections, the issue, for example, received coverage on the BBC and Al Jazeera. The paid news phenomenon, therefore, shows not only the complementarity of political and commercial logics but also on this occasion the competitive and adversarial relationship of professional logic to both commercial and political logics. To understand the development of Indian media, we need to consider the complex and dynamic relationship between all three logics. There are clearly democratic as well as antidemocratic forces at play.

Political Actors: Political Logic in a Mediatizing Society

We need to go back to the decades of 1980s, if not earlier, to trace the development of a convoluted relationship between commercial and political logics that was played out in the emerging public arena and that subsequently affected the outcome in the electoral arena. Along with the rise of vernacular newspapers, there was significant growth in the number of households with television sets that had different ramifications for the mediatization of politics. Rajagopal (2001) has analyzed very well how the advent of television provided fertile ground for the rise of the “Hindutva” or the right-wing politics that has long-term repercussions on the nature and the course of Indian politics. The serialization of *Ramayana*, a Hindu epic, on state-run television (Doordarshan) was exploited by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to mobilize Hindu upper caste voters, particularly in north India. The Ram Janmabhumi–Babri mosque controversy received greater national attention because of the popularity of the serialization of *Ramayana* (Rajagopal 2001).³ The controversy also empowered the “Hindutva” forces to gain national significance. From just two seats in the Parliament in 1984, the BJP got 85 seats in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections. There were multiple factors that facilitated the rise of the BJP in the late 1980s, but television helped in reaching and appealing to large sections of diverse publics with its powerful visual imageries. Hindi newspapers, at the same time, by misreporting and misrepresenting the incident played a leading role in this mobilization. This also led several scholars to view the rise of Hindi newspapers as part of the rise of communal and identity politics in India and hence, doubt its role as a vehicle of democratization (Rajagopal 2001).⁴ Viewing news media as providers of information and creating an informed citizenry is only one way of thinking about their political role. News media can also play the role of mobilizer of social groups, or at times as a vehicle for political intervention by elites. McCargo (2002) in his work on Thai media has demonstrated the very different role often played by media in developing countries from the standard Western assumption about providing information to citizens. Hallin and Mancini (2004) show that even in the West, newspapers play many different roles, often serving more to represent organized social groups or as tools for elite intervention than just the “liberal” function of providing neutral information.

Political developments during the 1980s and the ways television and newspapers were used by an emerging political party for the first time made the politicians realize the potential inherent in the mass media for mobilization. This realization also led to the development of increasing contestation between commercial logic and political logic in the decades that followed. The development of the market economy from

1991 that freed media outlets to some extent from dependence on government advertising also created a more autonomous sphere for media operation in the public sphere. Many media outlets, motivated by ideological viewpoints, supported one political party or another. Yet, Indian media also learnt to assert its autonomy in the face of the emergence of a multitude of political actors along with the regionalization of Indian politics. The central government since 1989 has always been a coalition government of one or two national parties and numerous regional parties. This also means more power and influence for regional and local media as against national and English-language press. This is evident from the ways the transformation has taken place in the satellite news channels market. When satellite channels entered in the early-1990s, the programming was mainly entertainment oriented and predominantly in English. However, from the late 1990s onward, most of the expansion in the satellite channels market has taken place in Hindi and regional languages with the massive expansion of the 24×7 news channel market.

From just one government-controlled television channel until 1990, India now has more than 800 channels, of which at least 386 broadcast daily news in fourteen regional languages (MIB 2013). The staggering growth of 24-hour news channels in the late 1990s and 2000s has opened up new possibilities for politics and changed how the business of politics is conducted. Political parties and leaders are adapting to the coming of satellite channels to gain the support of television-mediated publics. Political parties have started providing training to their members in the art of dealing with 24-hour news channels; this has also created the new television politicians, who are better in front of camera, and are sought by news channels for sound bites.

Television has been held responsible for public disenchantment with the political process that has led to the crises of political communication in developed countries (see Norris 2000). Is India witnessing a similar trend? The rise of television news and its increased focus on scams and corruption has been accompanied by a decline in public trust in both the “news” as well as political leaders. Yet, this has not led to a decline in institutional participation, which is evident from the increasing voter turnout both in the assembly and national elections. At the same time, there has been a rise in alternative politics beyond party politics as seen in the Anna Hazare movement, discussed later.

However, there are several questions about whether television news is becoming more independent of politics. In the classic argument of mediatization, growing commercial logic sees a consequent falling away of political (or electoral) logic. Our argument is that it is not an either/or but rather a both/and scenario where mediatization and politization of television can go hand in hand.

The enormous growth of news channels and newspapers in the 2000s was utilized by politicians to reach out to potential voters. In the 2004 national election, the BJP launched a massive campaign with the slogan “India Shining” to promote the image of India internationally. However, it was soon incorporated into the election campaign strategies to win voters, at least in urban India. It is estimated that the government spent nearly US\$20 million on the advertisements. The use of taxpayer’s money for personal campaigns was criticized by the opposition.

Indian voters are known for casting their vote based on caste, religion, and regional identities, though there has been a shift in the voting behavior of Indian voters in recent times (Kumar 2013). By making the economy the central agenda of their election campaign, the BJP, known for Hindutva ideology, was ostensibly trying to present them as development-oriented party so as to appeal beyond its core constituencies of voters, without any success. However, it must be noted that the economy has also been made the central campaign strategy in the past. Indira Gandhi, the former prime minister of India, used the slogan “garibi hatao” (remove poverty) in the 1971 general election, and the result was the massive win for her party in that election.

Both these slogans, though informed by electoral logic, not only are separated by more than three decades but also produced contrasting results. The BJP’s use of marketing slogans failed to attract voters, and they lost the election. The failure can also be attributed to their inability to translate the slogan to the rural and the vernacular world, where the large mass of people live. The crucial difference between Indira Gandhi’s *garibi hatao* and the BJP’s *India Shining* was the nature of popular appeal. No doubt, the rhetoric of *garibi hatao* was more populist as it appealed to the vernacular mass directly, while the *India Shining* slogan was “lost in translation” for the vast majority of the non-English speaking population. The intensification of mediated politics provides space to convert substantial problems to symbolic issues to gain electoral mileage.

The coming of the Internet has further transformed political communication in India by expanding the scope of participation, as anyone with an access to the Internet can in principle raise an issue in the public arena even if it may not resonate with a substantial audience. It would not be possible for new media alone to influence wider sections of society unless they collaborate with traditional media. Similarly, for traditional media to reach transnational audiences, they need to use new media.

Such connectivity and convergence between traditional and new media was quite evident in the Anna Hazare campaign against corruption. Anna Hazare, in his agitation over the issue of the Jan Lokpal Bill, effectively used social media to mobilize the youth and the middle classes. The effective use of social media not only brought the issue into cyber space and made it more global but also garnered huge support for the anticorruption campaign. Although the movement lost its vitality due to several factors including internal dissent among its core members, it showed the effectiveness of social media for political mobilization. In a statement, the then Law Minister, Salman Khurshid said, “We were caught unawares because Anna’s movement was a remarkable combination of traditional politics and unconventional modern practices. We were at a disadvantage because we did not use the social media as effectively as Anna’s movement did” (Express News Service 2011). Such a perception is not without reason, as a report released by Facebook revealed that Anna Hazare and the Jan Lokpal Bill were mentioned the most in status updates in 2011 in India. The general perception that people use the social media largely for entertainment does not hold true in this case. At the same time, using social media for entertainment does not stop one from using it for political activities. Politics has certainly entered social networking sites, which has opened up new avenues for conducting politics. The Anna Hazare

movement was not necessarily informed by electoral logic but wanted to influence policy outcomes.

The recent success of the Aam Adami Party (AAP), an offshoot of the Anna Hazare movement, in the 2013 Delhi assembly election also shows how social media can be used to reach first-time voters. AAP went online to declare their list of candidates along with their backgrounds including education, income, past history, and so on. They were very active on social media, interacting with online citizens and responding to their queries. But the use of social media was supplemented by door-to-door campaigns, political rallies, and pamphlet distribution. A postelection survey during the Delhi assembly election 2013 conducted by the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, found that nearly 87 percent of social media users voted either for AAP (51.7 percent) or BJP (35.4 percent), and both of these parties had a higher online presence than the Congress or others parties. What is important to recognize in Anna Hazare and AAP's success is the capacity of the social media to influence traditional media. All newspapers and television now have reporters who continuously monitor Facebook and Twitter for breaking news. The way traditional and social media connect and converge has a profound impact on modern day political communication. This connectivity and convergence between traditional and social media becomes imperative in the case of India and other developing countries where the reach of the Internet is still limited.

The Anna Hazare movement, which began through social media, gained momentum after news channels started providing relentless coverage. Similarly, AAP would not have been successful if they had depended exclusively on social media for political communication. It is important, therefore, to understand the different roles played by traditional and social media in reaching to different segments of the population. However, a presence in social media has become imperative for politicians who want to connect with the youth and the middle classes and want to play a larger role in the national political arena.

Despite the low level of the Internet penetration in India, social media has been able to reach beyond its core audience. This is because of the new hybrid media space created by the interface between print, television, and the Internet that can change the way the business of politics is conducted in India (Chadwick 2013). All political parties now have their presence on social media and maintain a party website that details their activities and programs. The majority of politicians have a Twitter account or Facebook pages. During major events such as budget sessions or parliamentary debates, politicians post breaking news on Twitter. Political parties now tailor their content for multiple forms of consumption that can be reappropriated and reassembled in different platforms to suit the requirements of a particular medium. Howard (2006) refers to this as a hypermedia campaign where communication is relayed simultaneously across a wide range of outlets. This helps reach not only journalists but also their supporters and web browsers. Chadwick (2011) has highlighted the emergence of "hybrid" media systems where political elites and nonelites together contribute in constituting political events. What we are witnessing in India is a politicization of social media where political parties adopt the formats of social media to

reach the electorate with mediation by more independent media institutions. There is no competition here between political and commercial logics as parties use the formats of Facebook and Twitter in pursuit of votes while these corporations benefit in terms of profit; the logics are complementary.

Conclusion

In this article, we have sought to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the mediatization of politics that is of general applicability while seeking to apply that framework to India, thereby, extending the reach of the concept geographically beyond the West. Politics becomes mediatized when increasing numbers of people rely on the mass media and new media as their primary source of political information. Previous work on the mediatization of politics essentially sees a zero-sum game between political logic and media (or commercial) logic, with media logic winning and politics becoming subservient to media demands, which ultimately it is argued has baleful effects on the quality of democracy. Instead, we argue that we should investigate three groups of actors—mediatized publics, media actors, and political actors and see three logics at play simultaneously—a political logic (driven by the goal of electoral success), a commercial logic (driven by the goal of profit maximization), and a professional logic (driven by the goal of serving the public interest). These logics interact in a complex fashion; at times they are complementary, at other times they are competitive. We have demonstrated this through analysis of the mediatization of Indian politics. In the rapid development of Indian media, media have become commercialized, regionalized, and vernacularized. Political elites still attempt to maintain control in direct and indirect partisan and indeed in networked media systems. New pragmatic entrepreneurs have emerged with decidedly dubious records and with twin goals of maximizing their economic and political power. At the same time, there is a trend toward journalism that works in the public interest rather than those of narrow regional and/or national elites. This has led scholars such as Rao (2009) to see a democratization of Indian media, and of course, the rise of the Internet holds out the promise of greater participation in the public sphere. This stands in contrast to the idea that the mediatization of politics is “bad” for democracy. It is too early to decide whether India is moving toward a “democratization” of media and whether mediatization of politics is good for democracy in India, but if we wish to understand present and future developments, then we should attempt to understand the dynamic, complex, at times complementary, and at times competitive relationships between political, commercial, and professional logics.

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Notes

1. Rajni Kothari has termed the one-party domination of Indian politics from 1951 to 1967 led by the Congress as the “Congress system.” Opposition parties, who were sharply divided among themselves, were unable to create a viable alternative to the ruling party and acted instead as pressure groups outside it. Furthermore, the Congress was quick to co-opt the programs of the opposition and absorb their leadership into its fold, which limited the growth of opposition parties. For a detailed discussion on the Congress system, see Kothari (1964).
2. For a detailed analysis of the repression of the press during the Emergency, see Shah Commission of Inquiry, Interim Report I (March 11, 1978) and Interim Report II (April 26, 1978).
3. The Ram Janmabhumi–Babri mosque controversy is arguably the most important political event of Independent India in the twentieth century. According to the Hindu holy book, the *Ramayana*, Lord Ram was born in Ayodhya. Advocates of Ayodhya movement claim that the first Mogul emperor Babar built Babri mosque on the same site in 1528 by destroying the temple. Some radical Hindu groups have demanded that the temple be rebuilt at the original site. The Ram Janmabhumi movement to rebuild the temple accelerated in the late 1980s and early-1990s, which ultimately led to the destruction of the Babri mosque on December 6, 1992. In this entire controversy, the Hindi press played a leading role by misreporting events during the movement which increased the circulation of Hindi newspapers. For a detailed study of the leading role of Hindi newspapers in the controversy, see Nandy et al. (1995) and Rajagopal (2001).
4. For a critique of this view, see Neyazi (2010).

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Book Reviews

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Danny Hayes and Matt Guardino

Influence from Abroad: Foreign Voices, the Media, and U.S. Public Opinion. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 197 pp. ISBN: 978-1107691025

Reviewed by: Amelia Arsenault, *Georgia State University, USA*

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On March 19, 2003, U.S. bombs began to fall on Iraq, bolstered by the support of 72 percent of the American public (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2014). During the war-torn decade that followed, 4,410 American military personnel who served in Iraq died, forty thousand were wounded, upward of one hundred thousand suffered posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and unknown number of Iraqi civilians—perhaps in the hundreds of thousands—became casualties of war (Fisher 2014). Not surprisingly, as of early 2014, the percentage of Americans who believe that going to war was the “right decision” plummeted to 38 percent, according to the latest Pew poll. As the scholarly community continues to weigh the ultimate geopolitical, humanitarian, and social consequences of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” and as future conflicts loom on the horizon, understanding the mechanisms through which public support for military intervention is lost or won is a vital subject of inquiry. How does public opinion evolve and who holds sway in debates over U.S. foreign policy decisions?

Just as the media played a vital role in covering the Iraq War, Hayes and Guardino’s impressive new book *Influence from Abroad: Foreign Voices, the Media, and U.S. Public Opinion* highlights the important and complex role that the media played in mobilizing public opinion in favor of initiating and sustaining the war.

While public opinion polls demonstrated overwhelming public support prior to the Iraq War, Hayes and Guardino take as their starting point an interesting but underreported partisan division:

Bush’s backing among Republican identifiers was overwhelming—monolithic even—with upward of 90 percent of his fellow partisans favoring the assault on Baghdad. Democratic support, however, fell below 50 percent in many polls, creating a level of partisan polarization more typically associated with hot button social issues rather than with matters of national security. (p. 2)

They attribute this partisan divide to the influence of foreign opposition to the war, conveyed through the U.S. media. Once Congress authorized military force in Iraq on

October 11, 2002, Congressional opponents of the war no longer had the power to impact the developing narrative. As attention turned toward United Nations (UN) authorization and then to the creation of a “coalition of the willing,” foreign elites—those who actually still had the power to influence outcomes—supplanted domestic opponents as the featured voices of dissent in American media coverage. This in turn swayed Democrats against the war effort.

Hayes and Guardino’s work represents a major revision to the indexing hypothesis (Bennett 1990), which, for the last two decades, has stood as one of the most influential theoretical frameworks for examining the relationship between media coverage and foreign policy. Across a range of case studies (e.g., the Vietnam War; the 1986 bombing of Libya; U.S. actions in Somalia, Haiti, Grenada, Panama; and the Abu Ghraib scandal), indexing studies have purportedly demonstrated that American media coverage of foreign policy issues is closely “indexed” to the range of opinions expressed by American domestic political elites.¹ If no domestic dissent is present, then the media present a rather one-sided version of foreign policy issues, regardless of the presence of international opposition.² This coverage, in turn, bolsters public approval for the dominant domestic elite position.

The Iraq War debates, according to Hayes and Guardino, followed a distinctly different path; foreign elites were central to the conversation—and to mobilizing Democrats against the war. Previous researchers studying the role of the media in public opinion formation about the Iraq War (e.g., Baum and Groeling 2010; Berinsky 2009) disregarded the importance of these “foreign voices,” because they failed to disaggregate public opinion data by political party, focused narrowly on the impact of military events on public opinion while neglecting media coverage, or omitted foreign elites entirely from their study.

The range of evidence that Hayes and Guardino mount in service of this argument is impressive for its depth and multi-methodological rigor. First, they present the results of a systematic content analysis of all nightly network news coverage related to Iraq between August 2002 and March 2003. They find that following the Iraq War resolution of October 2002, domestic elite opposition all but disappeared from nightly news coverage, replaced almost entirely by foreign elite opponents, such as Jacques Chirac, Gerhard Schroeder, and Vladimir Putin. Second, they test the faithfulness with which the press indexed domestic elite voices through a content analysis of nearly one thousand Iraq-related speeches made by members of Congress. Contrary to the indexing hypothesis’ prediction, domestic elites from both parties continued to regularly voice opposition to the war. The media, however, stopped paying attention. Third, using Council on Foreign Relations and Pew data, disaggregated by political party, they track changes in public opinion regarding a host of foreign policy issues in the run up to the Iraq War. They then track shifts in media coverage and public opinion, finding significant relationships between increases in the presence of Foreign Elite criticism of the war in the media and opposition to the war among Democrats.

Hayes and Guardino argue persuasively that, in the post-cold-war era, scholars interested in the influence of media on American public opinion on foreign policy issues need to reconsider their narrow focus on domestic elite discourse. No longer

constrained by a totalizing cold-war ethos of East versus West, foreign elites—particularly U.S. allies—are more likely to break with U.S. foreign policy in multilateral negotiations and to criticize U.S. actions in the U.S. press. Thus, they are more able to sway domestic public opinion about foreign policy issues. In other words, foreign dissent exerts more influence on U.S. military actions abroad, thus suggesting a new era in international strategic communication.

While Hayes and Guardino should be commended for their depth of analysis, the study at times lacks breadth. They choose to focus on the coverage of the major U.S. Broadcast TV networks, arguing, “Iraq represents the rare case in which commercial television news was actively involved in covering a policy debate” (p. 33). However, polls conducted by Pew (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2003) and others during the period under investigation suggest that cable news was the dominant source of news and information about the war.³ Did MSNBC, Fox, and CNN rely on dissenting foreign elite voices to the same extent? The authors also choose to focus exclusively on the 2003 Iraq War. One wonders, as the Cold War and the September 11th terrorist attacks recede into political memory and as the American communications environment continues to fragment, whether case studies of subsequent events will uncover similar patterns. Is the presence of foreign elite voices in the U.S. media during the Iraq War debates a unique case? Moreover, studies examining pre-2003 Iraq War case studies that replicate Hayes and Guardino’s multi-methodological approach would be equally instructive. Have foreign voices always been more likely to influence U.S. foreign policy debates in military actions where multilateral support is considered critical? Or is this a feature of the post-cold-war era? Given the rapid changes in the global and American communications environment that have taken place in the ensuing eleven years, comparative case studies that include analyses of the widening array of news sources and coverage on more recent foreign policy issues would certainly be warranted.

Like all good books that provoke ideas for future research and discussion, *Influence from Abroad* is a must read, especially for scholars of international political communication and public opinion research. Professors of international communication will also find it a useful pedagogical tool for introducing graduate students to case study research. Written with clarity and probity, it represents a welcome addition to the growing body of books examining the media, government, public opinion, and war nexus (e.g., Baum and Groeling 2009; Bennett et al. 2007; Nacos et al. 2011).

Notes

1. See, for example, Hallin (1986), Mermin (1999), and Bennett et al. (2007).
2. There have been notable exceptions. Althaus et al. (1996), for example, found that journalists covering the United States–Libya crisis of 1985–86 sought out foreign opinions in their coverage.
3. In a March 2003 Pew poll, 50 percent reported Cable News as their most important source of news about the war compared with 23 percent who relied mainly on network news (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2003).

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Stephen Harrington

Australian TV News: New Forms, Functions and Futures. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2013. 195pp. ISBN: 978-1841507170.

Reviewed by: Beate Josephi, *Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia*
 DOI: 10.1177/1940161214535803

This book, despite its title, is not a study of conventional Australian television news. Taking its cue from cultural studies, it promotes a more inclusive perspective with regard to news formats. Harrington puts forward that, as the subtitle states, the new forms, functions, and futures of news are to be found in the "larger cultural practice than the core of the profession often recognises" (p. 6). To this end, he has chosen to

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Reviewed by: Beate Josephi, *Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia*
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This book, despite its title, is not a study of conventional Australian television news. Taking its cue from cultural studies, it promotes a more inclusive perspective with regard to news formats. Harrington puts forward that, as the subtitle states, the new forms, functions, and futures of news are to be found in the "larger cultural practice than the core of the profession often recognises" (p. 6). To this end, he has chosen to

look at one of Australia's commercial channels' breakfast news, *Sunrise*; a now defunct panel show on another commercial channel that discussed current affairs in a nonexpert, light-hearted fashion titled *The Panel*; and Australia's arguably most successful satire show, *The Chaser's War on Everything*, which was broadcast on the public broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

In his opening chapter, Harrington argues, along the lines of Hartley, Lumby, Fiske, and others, that popular news formats, like tabloids, should not be simply dismissed as entertainment but be seen as less hierarchical, more comprehensible, and hence more democratic forms of news. Emotionalism and simplification can draw audiences who may otherwise feel left untouched by and unaware of public events.

In putting his case for a latitude of forms that open possibilities of political commentary and engagement, he also uses the instance of the United States after 9/11 and during the early stages of the Iraq war as a time when satirical shows were the only ones that could dare to be less patriotic and thus come closer to a more balanced and factual view of the world. But in the main, it is the notion of democratization and connectivity to a wider audience that underpins Harrington's reasoning for studying a breakfast show, a panel, and a satirical program.

Given this rationale, the book seems strangely ahistorical. Its narrowly drawn approach gives the impression that it was written in a time before digital and social media had an impact on traditional media and their use, and changing the format on television was the only way to reach people otherwise disconnected from public life. Little mention is made that digital publishing, user generated content, social media, and Twitter have also caused a considerable democratization in news creation and consumption. Their influence, for example, on the breakfast show, is hardly taken under scrutiny.

This lack of contextualization is unfortunately a major shortcoming of the book, not only with regard to the changing media landscape but also in other areas. The reader is given very few and interspersed facts about the Australian news media, which makes it hard to assess the impact of the programs used as case studies. It would have been good to learn where Australians get their news, whether television, radio, print, or online. It also would have helped to know about the popularity of traditional news and current affairs broadcasts in Australia. Some of these, such as Channel Seven's *Today Tonight* range among the highest ranking weekly television programs. Appropriate data would have underpinned Harrington's claim that television is the most important medium in Australia and that, in the period of Harrington's case studies, at least half of Australia's population got their local news from television, rising to two-thirds for international news.

As it is, all the reader learns is that the breakfast show's ratings are "far from enormous (to have a little over 400,000 viewers in a day would be fairly typical, whereas Seven's nightly news could expect over 1 million)" (p. 47). In view of the argument of new formats reaching out to new audiences, it would have been valuable to know whether these 400,000 viewers who watch the breakfast program also watch the nightly news or whether the breakfast program is the viewers' only connection to public events.

Harrington, however, in his methodology chose qualitative analysis and makes it clear that he wanted to go beyond using the three shows as “texts.” To this end, he interviewed the shows’ producers and hosts and conducted focus group interviews for each of the three shows. While on one hand, the interviews with producers provide valuable insight into industry thinking, the focus groups answers on the other hand are also liberally reproduced, which makes for lengthy and repetitive reading. It would have been better had these answers not been presented as prima facie evidence but had been offered in a briefer form, filtered through analysis and interpretation.

The majority of the chapters are devoted to the case studies of shows, which Harrington considers as “reciprocal” journalism due to its claimed interplay between news, opinion, and emotions. With regard to opinion and emotions, the producer of the *Sunrise* program points out that the structure of the show was influenced by radio talk-back show logic (p. 30), which thrives on opinion and emotion. Being “radio on TV” (p. 35) brings other advantages. Australia has a deeply ingrained tradition of radio listening, and the comment of some viewers that they listen more than they watch comes as no surprise. On the emotional level, the show tries to function as “family” to the viewers and encourages the presenters to react emotionally to news, which in Australia can be disastrous fires and floods. As to opinions, the show actively solicits e-mail feedback, some of which is read out on air. Harrington claims that these elements make for effective and satisfactory communication with viewers that counteract accusations that shows such as *Sunrise* are merely infotainment. In his view, the Habermasian modernist demand for a rational-critical public sphere has blended with postmodern stylistics that incorporate celebrity, personal chat, and show biz without losing its highly political nature (p. 59), transcending the entrenched binary of high and low culture.

The strongest chapters of the book are devoted to *The Chaser’s War on Everything*. Harrington is Australia’s foremost scholar on television satire. One of the *Chaser* team’s stunts came to worldwide attention when in 2007 at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting, one of the team members, dressed as Osama bin Laden, managed to pass all security without checks to arrive at the hotel where President George W. Bush was staying. Another stunt included giving out the then Prime Minister’s home phone number so that all those protesting about Australia’s involvement in the Iraq war could complain to him personally. *The Chaser’s War on Everything*, which now has changed into a less acclaimed series, was highly political but also at times, grossly unethical. Harrington does not elaborate this point, which has been a characteristic of Australian practical jokes, or pranks, one of which—coming from a radio station—has led more recently to the suicide of a British nurse. Instead, he emphasizes that satirical shows have a latitude that allows them to express what, as it were, can only be said in jest. Shows like *The Chaser* can also throw a light on the weaknesses of the “public conversation” enabled by the traditional media.

The last two chapters serve to drive home again the point that “orthodox forms of journalism simply [can] no longer lay exclusive claim to the domain of news and political discourse in the public sphere” (p. 149). This is successfully argued from the popular culture perspective with regard to some television shows. But no attempt is made to place this argument into the wider frame of the newly evolving media

ecology, which not only involves a higher degree of interactivity but also points to the diminishing role of institutionalized media. This intensifies the sense of a book that tries to show new ways of an old medium without breaking new ground.

Daniel Kreiss

Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Networked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012. 248 pp. ISBN: 978-0199936786

Reviewed by: Chris Wells, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA.

DOI: 10.1177/1940161214532829

Contemporary efforts to understand digital media's roles in politics tend to rely, implicitly or explicitly, on connecting characteristics of new media (e.g., reduced costs of communicating) to outcomes of their use (e.g., reduced need for formal organization). There is determinism lurking in this approach, but few of us have collected the data and developed the conceptualization needed for a more complete account.

Daniel Kreiss has, as he demonstrates in *Taking Our Country Back: The Crafting of Networked Politics from Howard Dean to Barack Obama*. The book is a historical account of the events, people, and new media (software in particular) that shaped the presidential bids of Howard Dean, in 2004, and Barack Obama, in 2008.

Kreiss draws on dozens of interviews with staffers, managers, strategists, and technologists involved in the campaigns; academic and journalistic accounts; and participant observation to document the human and organizational work that made possible the new media tools that have received glowing attention. The core of his argument is that understanding digital politics involves exploring not only technical innovations but also the infrastructural and organizational work necessary to make the deployment of new technologies successful.

Kreiss is no Luddite, and describes with great respect the digital tools that the campaigns adopted and innovated. But both campaigns' innovations were possible only because of particular contexts enabled and shaped by infrastructure and organization. These began with Dean, whose campaign fortuitously combined resource deficits with a manager, Joe Trippi, who was willing to experiment. There was little knowledge of how to run a campaign online, which proved a source of both challenge and inspiration to the Internet team. Staffers adopted, developed, and tested programs and methods for core campaign tasks such as e-mailing and fund-raising. In the process, Kreiss shows, they laid the infrastructural groundwork on which Obama's team would build. This included a host of experienced veterans, a developing voter file, best practices, a Democratic party oriented toward online campaigning, and specialized, partisan consultancies such as Blue State Digital.

Similarly, whereas no prior campaign had understood the Internet as a vital tool, Dean's campaign elevated its new media division within the campaign and began

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Similarly, whereas no prior campaign had understood the Internet as a vital tool, Dean's campaign elevated its new media division within the campaign and began

integrating its work with that of other divisions. This was also no trivial task, and Kreiss's detailing of this organizational work, toward what would ultimately become the fund-raising and voter-to-voter contacting systems for which Obama won such acclaim, is engrossing reading. Undoubtedly, there was remarkable technological innovation, especially databases that could be queried to generate lists of targeted voters. But those innovations could not independently deliver value to the campaign: careful coordination and organizational innovation were required to make them useful to the field operation and its volunteers.

This is a book that will be of great interest to scholars of politics, campaigning, new media, and organization. Scholars interested in social movements' uses of digital (and especially social) media should also take notice: Kreiss shows the value of the human work of integrating digital media into movements.

Another area that will be of interest to many is Kreiss's depiction of citizen participation in electoral campaigns. Obama's campaign in particular became powerfully associated with active supporter participation; Kreiss shows the complexity of this reputation and particularly the delicate balance between fostering participants' sense of involvement and structuring that participation toward calculated electoral goals. Kreiss shows how the campaign consciously maintained communications with supporters and the media to associate Obama's brand with participatory activity. Students of citizen participation in politics should take note of the "structured interactivity" Kreiss sees at work here.

One challenge of writing a book based on the campaigns of Dean and Obama must be that the stories themselves are so compelling. And though the scholarly reader will find plenty to appreciate in Kreiss's treatment, it should be said that the book occasionally leaves its conceptual roots for less edifying campaign minutiae. Undoubtedly, there is historical value in documenting these, but many readers will find certain passages to be distracting lists of only vaguely familiar names and events.

But these complaints are small in comparison to the great value of the overall work. It is an illuminating account of Dean's and Obama's uses of digital media, the connections between them, and most importantly, the meticulous "crafting" that goes on behind what we too often blithely refer to as "networked politics."

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

Ground Wars. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012. 256 pp. ISBN: 978-0691153056

Reviewed by: Dennis W. Johnson, *George Washington University, USA*

DOI: 10.1177/1940161214532828

My bookshelves groan from the weight of academic and journalistic studies on campaigns and elections. From them, we know much about how candidates conduct themselves, how money impacts campaigns, and how candidates and others employ television and online communication to inform and persuade voters. Nielsen's book is

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different: He presents a compelling analysis of an often neglected aspect of modern campaigns—the ground game, or what he properly calls “personalized political communication.” His main objective, nicely put, is to understand how such personalized communication works and is employed by individuals, candidates, and interest groups. He deftly couples personalized communication with the latest techniques of targeting and micro-targeting. Nielsen challenges the idea that campaign communication must be tightly controlled, scripted, and presented by select groups of professional media consultants. He correctly argues that such personalized communication represents American democracy in action. Nielsen’s most important conclusion is this: How campaigns are waged does matter, not only for the immediate election but also for our concept and practice of democracy.

Nielsen’s scholarship combines ethnographic fieldwork along with a review and analysis of salient literature drawn from several different academic fields. Of particular interest are the episodes drawn from actual field observation. In 2008, Nielsen went into the political trenches of two congressional campaign elections, one in New Jersey and the other in Connecticut, to observe how campaign volunteers engage often reluctant voters, trying to get them to pay attention and ultimately to vote. Nielsen shows, poignantly at times, the challenges and opportunities of personalized political communications. Much of this is done through storytelling, where we learn the frustrations and small triumphs as campaign volunteers reach out to potential voters.

This is a groundbreaking study; I have learned much from it and believe it will be an important addition to the field of campaigns and elections. It will be just as valuable as Green and Gerber’s *Get Out the Vote*, with its analysis of various communications techniques and ground-war activities. The Obama presidential campaigns set the gold standard for technology and ground-war effectiveness, and many other state and local campaigns have followed suit. As campaign technology becomes more sophisticated and the ground war becomes more of a strategic tool, other scholars should be looking into this important field as well.

Giovanna Dell’Orto

American Journalism and International Relations. New York:
Cambridge University Press, 2013. 294 pp. ISBN: 978-1107031951.

Reviewed by: John Maxwell Hamilton, *Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, USA*
DOI: 10.1177/1940161214529655

“Independent journalism was more alert than international statesmanship,” observed Vincent Sheean of foreign correspondents’ reckoning in the 1920s and 1930s that a second world war was inevitable. Sheean himself stands out as one of the most prescient journalists in an age when many were knowledgeable and wise. Consider his bold prediction on the front page of the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1938, following the *Anschluss*:

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I am unable to name any sources or any authority for what I say since nobody in Vienna is willing to be quoted but investigations in the last ten days have given me one firm belief—that nothing with shake the power of national socialism here until it has completed its historic functions and has reached its natural and inevitable conclusion in general war.

The ingredients that produced such insights included long years abroad learning about foreign affairs and the freedom to pursue news based on that deep experience as well as curiosity. In those days, men and women like Sheean could make a handsome living as freelance reporters for newspapers and magazines, while on the side writing important books and occasionally offering their analysis via the nascent news medium of radio. To understand how this has changed, consider that it is nearly incomprehensible that a freelance reporter would write the lead story in the *New York Times* today.

These journalists are remembered today as an artifact of a better time when journalism was self-confident, and foreign correspondents were glamorous and courageous, as portrayed in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Foreign Correspondent*—which grew out of Sheean's book, *Personal History*. Today's movie-version correspondents typically are conflicted about their roles. Meanwhile, real correspondents in traditional mainstream news media find themselves much more heavily supervised by stewards of a corporatized newsroom culture that has in many cases downsized its costly foreign reporting staffs.

"The news media have a crucial responsibility to provide complex and nuanced understandings of the world," Giovanna Dell'Orto argues in her thoughtful and passionate book, *American Journalism and International Relations*, "and their only chance of doing it is, quite simply, by going there" (p. 237).

Dell'Orto, a journalism professor at the University of Minnesota, has written other important books on foreign news. This one comes essentially in two parts.

One of these parts traces the evolution of American foreign reporting "through an extensive discourse analysis, based on more than 2,000 news articles, of how the American press has covered the world and what images it has brought back to its readers" (p. 2). The author argues that correspondents' accounts shape the thinking of policymakers.

The author's case studies range from revolutions, of which she looks at quite a number, to the opening up of Japan, the Japanese attacks on Shanghai in 1931, the 1967 Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel, and Nelson Mandela's election in 1994, among others. In each of the four time periods Dell'Orto groups these case studies, she assembles a different set of news media, a logical approach given that no single group of newspapers or wire services has consistently excelled at foreign affairs. The *Chicago Daily News*, once the best of all newspapers in its foreign affairs coverage, did not even exist in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Dell'Orto shows a great deal of courage in some of the case studies she selects, especially the extensively examined Bolshevik Revolution. And to her credit, her research adds perspective on this topic, namely, that readers of the newspapers she evaluates "never lacked news, even though war and censorship certainly posed significant logistical challenges" (p. 84). Scholars often have judged American reporting on the Soviet Union during the revolution and World War II as if those dispatches had

never been touched by the censor, an oversight that creates its own distortions—in this case, distortions of historical analysis. The author’s overall finding on the Bolshevik revolution is one that cannot be stated too often: Journalists tend to see revolutions, as Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz wrote, through the prism of their “hope and fear,” rather than dispassionately.

Other findings are as wide ranging as the news events the author studies. The Japanese in 1853 were depicted as quaint primitives. The coverage of Shanghai in 1931 “brought home the horrors of modern warfare” (p. 100). The Six-Day War was portrayed as a “conflict between righteous Israel and a mass of undifferentiated ‘Arabs’” (p. 133). In their coverage of the Mandela election, correspondents

continued to show awareness of being used for publicity in an increasingly mediated world, but also chased the story across the country, producing a veritable flood of articles and analysis that represents, in this book, a swan’s song of foreign correspondence. (p. 185)

The second part, which draws on interviews with a number of journalists, evaluates the aftermath of this “swan song of foreign correspondence” (p. 185). As suggested by Dell’Orto’s quote above, she finds foreign reporting seriously wanting.

At heart, Dell’Orto is an unashamed traditionalist. In her analysis, she favors mainstream journalists, especially those representing newspapers, and believes in the old model in which large corps of these correspondents fan out across the world. Her view is that “professional journalists with enough background knowledge, interest, and language fluency are best positioned to serve as mediators between an easily distracted public and a vast mass of realities out there in the world” (p. 22).

She evaluates the newer versions of correspondents who have emerged, most particularly the blogging, digitally oriented reporter. These journalists, she points out, can fill in gaps in our knowledge about the world. But they often are not skilled in what they do—the citizen bloggers especially—and do not have quality editors to vet their reporting. “A Web deprived of trusted traditional international news sources like the AP and the national U.S. newspapers risks becoming, in the word of Google’s chief executive, a ‘cesspool’ of useless information” (p. 206). She is also concerned about the distractions that arise when a single journalist has to report on so many platforms: “Do correspondents covering a continent, who have to feed Twitter and Facebook and perhaps also shoot photos and edit audio slideshows, have any time to investigate?” (p. 212).

In addition, Dell’Orto writes, digital reporting requires the news consumer to hunt for foreign news, rather than have it spread before them in their daily morning paper. “Very few people,” she says, “actively seek out foreign news, raising the specter of a vast digital divide in political awareness and knowledge that cannot benefit a democratic system of government” (p. 233).

Dell’Orto goes out of her way to cite hundreds of books and articles, so that her book serves as a kind of extended literature review. But all these citations are deceptive. Not only is foreign affairs reporting understudied considering its importance but

also a large number of basic questions remain to be unanswered. Curiously, in our information-heavy world, we really do not know how many people are providing foreign news. Previously, scholars could conduct a census of correspondents by acquiring mailing lists of bureaus from the home offices of newspapers, magazines, and broadcast networks. Now there are simply too many avenues through which foreign affairs news flow. We need to develop a clearer and more complete picture of the full range of foreign correspondents and then turn to the next tasks of analyzing the breadth and depth of their coverage and, just as important in this new digital work, determining who is consuming this information.

Dell'Orto is to be commended for pointing to one area that particularly requires study:

A paradox seems to be forming—as discourses about the world turn markedly inward to reflect more the United States than the foreign realities, in ways not found in this research since 1911, the uncertainty about how Washington should act toward them increases. (p. 203)

New technology has not only introduced a large number of untrained and often unprincipled correspondents into the mix of foreign affairs information. The Internet and satellite phones that work from any spot on the planet also have made it easier for editors to shape on a daily basis what correspondents cover and how they report it. This is a big change from Sheean's day, when communications were far more difficult, and correspondents went about their jobs without much direction from editors at home. It is not far-fetched to conclude that greater supervision of correspondents has made their reporting more closely tied to Washington views, which editors follow carefully. But no one yet has tackled this question as it needs to be done.

History tells us that our leaders have often misunderstood or failed to apprehend events abroad, sometimes dragging us into wars that we should not have fought and ill-preparing us to manage our quotidian foreign affairs in an increasingly interdependent world. We need reporters like a *New York Times* correspondent whom Dell'Orto quotes in her examination of the Bolshevik Revolution. "The State Department," he reported, "is unable to understand what is occurring in Russia" (p. 83).

Karen Sanders and María José Canel (Eds.)

Government Communication: Cases and Challenges. London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013. 336 pp. ISBN PB: 978-1-8496-6508-7.

Reviewed by: Kees Brants, *University of Amsterdam's School of Communication Research ASCoR, The Netherlands*

DOI: 10.1177/1940161214537354

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Sweden, Australia, France, or, while on it, Spain, Chile, India, Singapore, or South Africa, Karen Sanders and María José Canel's collection of case studies is a must-read. In fourteen chapters (unfortunately the two African states have to share one chapter), it covers in depth countries from all conceivable continents. The result is an amazing amalgam of width and variety, although the logic of the choice is not geographical but political.

Using democracy indicators taken from Freedom House's rankings of political and press freedom, the fifteen countries are pooled into three groups: eight countries with established democratic institutions and practices, four with a rather authoritarian political tradition and lack of media freedom, and three more middle ranking, recent democracies. That does not explain the difference in number per group and the choice of countries, but I suspect there are practical explanations for that. Availability and willingness of and familiarity with other researchers is usually the practical reason, a theme conference often the reasonable practice. At the same time, that means countries are included of which a lot of information is already available (e.g., Western Europe, North America), while others of which we may know little or where access to information is more difficult (e.g., Russia and the former Soviet republics, the Arab world, most of Africa and South America) are excluded.

On the countries covered, however, the student of government communication, public affairs, or political public relations will find in this book a plethora of information. The different chapters give a more or less "deep description" of the structure and process of government communication in each country, including (1) its regulatory and normative framework—is there and what are the legislation and policies regarding non-partisanship of communication, advertising, public relations, and what the legislation of access to information/transparency; (2) the kind and level of human resources used—principal government communication structure, number of government communicators, spokesperson's profile, their professional background, specialized training for civil servant communicators, and the use of a designated chief executive and a government spokesperson; and (3) the level of financial resources—cost of advertising campaigns and other communications. What more do you want to know?

Well, that depends on whether the book wants to go beyond presenting and juxtaposing descriptions of countries and venture into the comparative. That is indeed what the editors aim for: to elucidate trends, examine and explain similarities and differences, and to assess whether the structure and activity of government communication bears some relation to systemic conditions inherent within the three groups of countries. That is ambitious, because for a comparison to be solid and informative, at least three conditions need to be fulfilled: the dimensions of the comparative framework have to be relevant, the collected data should be reliable, and framework and data should have an inherently explanatory value. On all three counts, *Government Communication* raises questions.

First, approaching the concept from the angles of what *it does* and what *it is*, the editors see government communication as the

role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of public institution(s) whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that are constituted on the basis of the people's indirect or direct consent and charged to enact their will. (p. 4)

That sounds fine and useful for analyzing established and recent democracies, but whether and how much government communication in China or Zimbabwe is concerned with the enactment of people's consent is very much the question. That is not so much a problem for a reference book, but it is in a comparative study where applying such a concept to countries with completely different systemic contexts may lead to confusion about "functional equivalents" of specific communication institutions, to normative bias in assessing the linkage between political-media parallelism and, for example, democratic functioning, and to ambiguous interpretations.

The problem with the dimensions of the framework is that the information they provide is mostly of a (for comparison sometimes relatively irrelevant) descriptive and not of an analytical nature. What is the added value of knowing the number of government communicators if the size of the country is not part of the framework? The number in Group 1 countries—established democracies—ranges from 140 (Sweden) to 3,000 in Australia; how should I interpret that difference? Apart from the explanatory relevance of finding out whether there is a "designated chief executive spokesperson," does that position mean and cover the same in all countries? And how does the "principal government communication structure" in a presidential democracy compare with that of a parliamentary or single-party system, or in a predominantly commercial to that of a public broadcasting system?

Second, some of the data are missing, dubious, or raise an eyebrow. The number of government communicators is only one example. The variety is so enormous that it is very likely, and sometimes mentioned explicitly, that the data cover different things: Australia refers to federal and state government employees, data for Sweden are limited to central government, while the ninety communicators of Zimbabwe only cover the Information Ministry. And data from three countries are missing. That is not so much a problem with the number of government communicators, but it does become so when no information is available on advertising campaigns (ten out of the fifteen countries) or communication costs (five countries). Some chapters, like Germany, are also substantially shorter (and surely thus less informative) than others, like Singapore.

Next to that, some information is dubious or in its meaning of a problematic comparative nature; for example, that, like the United States and Germany, China has a Freedom of Information Act covering access to information and transparency. Other facts are plainly wrong: that spokespeople in the United Kingdom are said to be public servants and not political appointees. Prime Minister Cameron's former director of communication, Andy Coulson, once editor of the deceased *News of the World*, will be pleased to know. The lack, reliability, or problematic interpretation of data might have to do with the different backgrounds of the chapter authors. Most of them are, one way or the other, linked to universities, but, for example, China is covered by a freelance

journalist, a strategic planner of an advertising agency, and a professor of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Academy of Socialism. That combination might well have proved beneficial for access to data, but, with all due respect, it raises questions as to the reliability of description and interpretation.

Finally, the explanatory value of framework and data raises questions. With missing specific country data and relevant explanatory variables, it is limited to begin with. That the chapters on the United States and Singapore use another definition of government communication is also not very helpful. But I have two more problems. One, I am not sure about the purpose of the comparison. What am I supposed to know about government communication in different countries having read the book? Some indices of the framework help explain the level of professionalization within government communication, others could be an indication of the level of politicization, but there is no thorough discussion or comparison of either. In the end, the book does hardly go beyond juxtaposing countries and indices.

Two, that leads to comparisons which beg questions, but without them answers can hardly be given. Some countries will be *bien étonnés de se trouver ensemble* with others—in both China and the United States, the spokespersons are defined and fixed in an organizational chart. Some comparisons are self-evident—that Singapore, China, and Zimbabwe do not have legislation, policies, and conventions regarding government communication functions and that all the established democratic countries do. But what do those similarities and differences, within and between the groups of countries, explain? Moreover, there is law in books and law in action, and I am sure the three authoritarian countries do have unwritten rules or covert actions regarding government communication functions.

In the end, my conclusion about *Government Communication* has to be one of disappointment. I can check on the structure and process of government communication in fifteen countries, but I do not know how to explain similarities and differences. Nor whether and how function, organization, and performance of government communication relate to and differ across the systemic conditions. That comparative approach was the aim of the study, but I am afraid it does not go beyond a well-structured reference book. In itself that is useful.

Katrin Voltmer

The Media in Transitional Democracies. Polity Press, 2013,
286 pp. ISBN: 978-0745644592

Reviewed by: Lindita Camaj, *University of Houston, TX, USA*
DOI: 10.1177/1940161214529657

Much of the literature on the relationship between media and democratization questions whether media freedom leads or follows democratic change and whether free media are beneficial to democratization or represent a hindrance to democratic consolidation (Curran

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and Park 2000; Gross 2002; Gunther and Mughan 2000; Hydén et al. 2002; O'Neil 1998; Price et al. 2002; Randall 1998). The book *Media in Transitional Democracies* by Katrin Voltmer provides a much-needed integration of this literature, showing that there is no clear-cut answer to the above inquiries. This analysis emphasizes that media and democratization have a symbiotic relationship, while media play different roles at different stages of this process. As Voltmer declares, "the media can promote, and sometimes obstruct, democratization, but are also shaped by the dynamics of the transition process" (p. 115). Yet, Voltmer is careful not to presume the well-worn determinative approach with regard to the end-game of democratic transition, an approach prevalent in previous literature. While focusing on the process rather than the outcome of transitions in the "Third Wave" (Huntington 1991), she conceptualizes democratization as "open-ended with regard to both its beginning and its end point" (p. 10).

The book is divided in three sections. Part one of the book engages with the ongoing debate about the normative definitions of democracy, democratization, and media freedom, recognizing that these are socially constructed concepts. Voltmer is a strong believer that the media do have a democratic role to play, but only when they meet certain normative standards. Prescribing to the *social responsibility* theory of the press (Siebert et al. [1956] 1963), she conceptualizes media independence not only in terms of the rights of the media, but the communication process as a whole that includes the rights of the listeners and offers representation to a wide spectrum of public opinion. She has no illusions that, as in older democracies, achieving these goals in new democracies is a particular challenge. Thus, a key argument emphasized in this section is "that norms of democracy and free media have to be contextualized in the light of the specific historical, cultural and political circumstances in which a particular new democracy emerges" (p. 11). This normative approach sets the tone for the rest of the analysis in this book in which each aspect of the relationship between media and democratization is interpreted via the "path-dependency" lens.

In section two of the book, Voltmer embarks on an exploration of the role of the media as an agent of change in transitional processes investigating circumstances that determine their impact. Perhaps one of the major contributions of this book is the introduction of a set of key concepts from political science that help develop a more differentiated understanding of the way in which the media effect democratic regime change and consolidation across time and space. Drawing on a long-standing debate about the relationship between structure and agency, chapter 3 distinguishes between communication technologies and editorial content in demonstrating how these dimensions of media performance result in very different consequences at different times. Chapter 4 uses the notion of a staged democratization—distinguishing between liberalization, transition, and consolidation—to demonstrate that the role of the media in democratization, in terms of technological structures and purposeful agents, takes on different forms. Media seem to take a more positive role during the early phases of political transition, particularly in terms of its technological dimension. Before regime change, media mainly serve as instrumental tools in the hands of the political elites, leaving very little room for journalistic agency. The media's agency role becomes more prominent once the old regime topples and some media freedom is established. Yet, even though "the media play an

important role as initiators and catalysts of political change” (p. 105), their role in democratic consolidation is questionable. Voltmer claims that in situations when the

institutions are weak, democratic norms and rules are not firmly established and public opinion is divided over the future of the country, then the mediatization of politics can be a severe impediment to the long-term consolidation of sound political processes. (p. 98)

Part three of the book shifts the discourse from the analysis of the media as agents of change to the analysis of the transformation of media institutions during the rebuilding of new political regimes. Building on Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) conceptual framework, chapters in this part of the book explore four key arenas of media transformation: political, economic, social, and professional. Chapters 6 and 7 survey the role of the state versus market for media independence, whereas chapter 8 analyzes the role of media parallelism for external diversity of media markets.

Instead of merely assessing whether media systems in “Third Wave” transitional countries fit into Hallin and Mancini’s analytical framework, like many previous works in comparative communication, this book examines the explanation of differences across media landscapes in these transitional countries. Building on her path-dependency arguments, Voltmer identifies “the legacies of the preceding regime together with enduring cultural patterns and the immediate turmoil of the transition itself” (p. 130) as main constraints on media freedom. Whereas plenty of literature identifies culture as the culprit of the failed transitions, Voltmer emphasizes its interlocked relationship with institutional structures. The source of values and behavioral patterns that are detrimental to a free media is a “weak state that lacks the capacity to introduce and enforce reforms and a state that dominates the various non-state sectors of society” (p. 134).

Voltmer challenges the widely held belief that media commercialization provides the answer to protect the media independence. While it can be an effective measure that safeguards against state pressure, it also can undermine the quality of information due to the impositions of the market forces and the fact that in most transitional societies the political and economic elites have joint interests. Similarly, partisan and advocacy media play a dual and sometimes conflicting role in democratization. They can help build political identities and mobilize politically depressed citizens, but at the same time, they can be a source of division and intolerance that inhibits cooperation and unity and undermine the integrity and professionalism of journalism. The final chapter reiterates the role of culture and structural constraints that impede the import of journalistic professional ideals developed in the West.

The analysis in this book reiterates and reinforces previous claims (Jakubowicz and Sükösd 2008) that, instead of a copy–paste import of Western media institutions, norms, and expectations, the emerging media in new democracies need to be restructured and judged from “within the framework of their particular trajectories” (p. 128). As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the outcome of the media transition across regions is path-dependent on the role media have played in the previous regime. Despite the similarities in the recent history of the “Third Wave” transitions, major differences prevail among them on how media affect and are affected by such processes.

The Media in Transitional Democracies promises to fulfill three ambitious goals in the area of comparative communication scholarship: (1) provide a thorough analysis of the media in transitional democracies by relying on a large range of regional research that encompasses different parts of the world, (2) offer an inter-disciplinary approach by merging political science scholarship with communication studies, and (3) suggest a theoretical framework to explore the media–politics nexus across time and different national and cultural contexts (p. 7). Indeed, the book delivers on all these three areas. First, it masterfully escapes the trap of previous cross-national studies that treat “the nation” as a unit of analysis (Livingstone 2012). Instead, engaging in a multilevel approach, it emphasizes supranational-level variables (Esser and Pfetsch 2004) such as culture and traditions, while exploring hypotheses about the path-dependent development of democracy and media systems. Arguments put forth in this analysis are built on a wealth of research from comparative politics and comparative communication research—two areas that have long ignored each other—providing one of the most comprehensive examinations of the pressing questions on the relationship between media and democratization. Even if a critical reader might lament the lack of a novel unified theory that helps channel the discourse from explanatory perspective toward predictive modeling, the book is a great contribution to the field. It certainly advances the ongoing debate on the role of the media in democratization, and students of comparative communication research will find great satisfaction and stimulation from this thought-provoking book.

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Matthew Levendusky

How Partisan Media Polarize America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013, 208 pp. ISBN: 9780226069159

Reviewed by: R. Lance Holbert, *University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA*

DOI: 10.1177/1940161214529656

Aptly titled, *How Partisan Media Polarize America* by Dr. Matthew Levendusky addresses how partisan media polarize voters, decrease beliefs in bipartisanship and compromise, shape electoral engagement, and generate impact regardless of attracting a relatively small audience (p. 135). The mark of any good teacher is an ability to outline a topic of discussion, offer instruction on that topic, and then provide an overview of the material just covered in a lesson. In the spirit of quality education, Levendusky does a fine job spelling out his points of interest, detailing his evidence to support various claims, and offering a summary assessment of the major themes covered in the book. Readers of this work will gain a general understanding of why partisan media can shape basic democratic processes and outcomes.

I would argue the intended audience for this work is not experienced academic researchers who are devoted to the study of political media influence. The style of the work is best suited for a broader public or academics new to the field of political communication. It is clear Levendusky does not wish to burden the reader with overly expansive methodological details or analytical minutiae, and this approach is perfectly fine if the desire is to reach a broader audience. The results are offered in a manner that allows those individuals without a sufficient analytical acumen to gain quality insights. Individuals who wish to comb through the more refined elements of high-quality academic research should turn to Levendusky's published works in peer-review journals.

From the standpoint of a theoretical foundation, it is always worthwhile to identify the explanatory principles that undergird a researcher's framework. As articulated by Levendusky, two of the primary explanatory principles driving the empirical study of political media influence are understanding and consistency. With his grounding of *How Partisan Media Polarize America* in motivated reasoning (p. 21), Levendusky has placed his work clearly in the consistency camp. This approach treats human beings as creatures who desire to see the world as they wish it to be (or how they envision the world already), rather than wanting to see the world as it actually is (i.e., understanding). Taking a consistency-based approach places Levendusky in good

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standing within the field given the return of this explanatory principle as dominant within political communication (see Holbert et al. 2013). However, it is important to compare and contrast consistency-oriented findings with those generated from alternative explanatory principles (e.g., understanding). Given the importance of this topic, the field needs to generate a wealth of knowledge derived from varied research agendas reflecting different assumptions concerning what is driving citizens to consume partisan media.

The work is diverse in method, with Levendusky using a combination of content analysis, experimentation, and national survey data. The strongest work can be found in the experimentation. Levendusky includes the use of some advanced techniques (e.g., addressing of preference effect, p. 80) and moves beyond the measurement of immediate post-exposure assessments to look at longer-term influences (i.e., forty-eight hours). Levendusky does a solid job of discussing the strengths and weaknesses of forced exposure versus introducing choice into experimental designs. He rightfully points out that each type of experimental design generates its own form of knowledge. In line with this insight, I would encourage the *International Journal of Press/Politics (IJPP)* audience to take a look at some recent work by Feldman et al. (2013) addressing advanced techniques for studying partisan selective exposure experimentally. The weakest of Levendusky's offerings can be found in the content analysis. There is no clear sense of the establishment of intercoder reliability and the use of case studies is a poor substitute for more generalizable findings. The survey-based work is a secondary analysis of 2008 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) data that is most ably performed. It is in the presentation of the survey-based methodology that Levendusky steps furthest away from appealing to a more general audience with the offering of formal equations and use of language like "stochastic disturbance term" (p. 117). Overall, the mark of a solid bit of systematic scholarship is the use of multiple methods and Levendusky employs all of the fundamental tools utilized in the social scientific study of political media influence.

Since *IJPP* is listed dually as a Communication and Political Science outlet, it is important to have a sense of how representative *How Partisan Media Polarize America* is of each field. There is a wealth of communication scholars and political scientists taking on the social scientific study of political media influence, but each field retains its own sets of questions and regard different types of knowledge as primary versus secondary versus tertiary. One means by which we can assess where a particular work falls on the communication versus political science continuum is to look at its reference section. I conducted a quick content analysis of this section of the book (single coder only), assigning each work to a discipline-specific category (I also included an "other" category for general methods, the popular press, and any works from disciplines that did not represent at least 10 percent of all references). I wish to also note that several of the outlets defined as "communication" for this exercise are, like *IJPP*, listed dually as communication and political science (e.g., *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Communication*). With these details in mind, the Levendusky reference ($N = 304$) breakdown is as follows: Political Science ($N = 139$, 45.7 percent), communication ($N = 49$, 16.1 percent), and psychology ($N = 36$, 11.8 percent)—the "other"

category ended up comprising the remaining 26.4 percent ($N = 80$). So, there is a decided political science bent to the work as a whole, perfectly appropriate and understandable given this is the field within which Levendusky is housed. Nevertheless, the *IJPP* readership should know where this work falls along the communication-political science continuum.

Every book review should include a summary of what the reviewer would like to have seen addressed in a work. For this reviewer, I think it is important to look at the role and influence of partisan media alongside traditional, non-partisan, mainstream media. Yes, there is the FOX News audience and the MSNBC audience, and there is some overlap between these two communities. However, the one place where both the FOX News and MSNBC audiences meet most frequently is with the nightly TV news broadcast. As stated by Garrett (2013), "a large and stable majority of Americans maintain a diverse news diet, relying heavily on less partisan mainstream media and consuming smaller amounts of both pro- and counter-attitudinal partisan sources" (p. 248). It will be important to assess the complementary relationships formed between these diverse outlets to continue to advance our understanding of the role of partisan media within a democracy. In addition, there needs to be an acknowledgment that the consumption of bipartisan political media can produce a similar set of effects as presented by Levendusky, and these effects are due to the same set of consistency-oriented cognitive processes (e.g., motivated reasoning, reducing cognitive dissonance, biased processing) dominating the study of partisan media. For example, it has been shown that the consumption of non-partisan political media events like a presidential debate can lead citizens to question the legitimacy of election outcomes due to a desire to reduce cognitive dissonance (Holbert et al. 2009). There is a need to step back and reflect on the degree to which partisan media are producing truly unique effects relative to the ways in which people are consuming non-partisan media. Both of the points raised in this paragraph speak to the need to look at how partisan and non-partisan political media work in coordination with one another to affect democratic processes and outcomes.

Overall, Levendusky's *How Partisan Media Polarize America* is a quick and valuable read, especially for those individuals new to the study of political media influence. The book is a reflection of the field's current proclivities with its embracing a consistency-center approach to assessing partisan media influence. Levendusky has built a strong reputation as a solid researcher and *How Partisan Media Polarize America* will only add to his audience as he continues to promote insights on the potentially damaging effects of partisan media in the post-broadcast age.

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Margaret Scammell

Consumer Democracy: The Marketing of Politics. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 213 pp. ISBN: 978-0-521-83668-5

Reviewed by: Ralph Negrine, *University of Sheffield, UK*

DOI: 10.1177/1940161214545534

At the start of the book, Maggie Scammell poses an apparently simple question, "What constitutes a good campaign" (p. xxi), but as the argument around that question develops, other questions and other answers come thick and fast. As she points out, this simple question has two dimensions: one, about the nature of democratic processes; the other about the effectiveness of campaigns. This book attempts to deal with both; though the larger part is seemingly devoted to the latter, the more challenging question—the former—provides much food for thought. The reason for that, as will become clear, is that Scammell does not see political marketing as antithetical to modern democratic practices. In fact, the opposite is the case: It is a possible contributor to solutions to the problems in contemporary democratic practices.

In bringing these issues to the foreground, Scammell draws on her expertise and her contribution to this field of study over the last two decades. The questions she poses and the issues she highlights remind us of her central concerns, namely, how should we better understand campaigns and their effectiveness not in isolation but within our commonplace understanding of political communication and even political science. As she has long argued, political marketing has much to contribute to both: "marketing might enhance democratic politics, for parties and for citizens" (p. 1).

She reminds us—insists, in a way—that we live in competitive political environments ("the competitive structures of democratic politics"), and this means that we have to accept "the idea that politics *are* sold in similar [though not exactly the same] ways to products" (p. 1). Hence the title of the book, *Consumer Democracy!* This does not mean, in her view, that it is a downgraded version of "proper politics." It is a different form of politics and one that takes into account both the rational and emotional factors that motivate politicians and voters.

The book builds on these, and related, ideas in a logical sequence. Chapter 1 offers an overview of the political marketing literature under the subheading of "Why It Matters." This contains a comprehensive discussion of the field of study as well as a critique of many of the contributions in the field. There is also a very useful account of how changes in the political landscape—political parties, technologies, socio-cultural change—have been discussed and the weaknesses and strengths of these different accounts. One of the key points she makes here is that we need to "emphasize the neglected importance of competition as a key driver of political marketing" so that

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Reviewed by: Ralph Negrine, *University of Sheffield, UK*

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At the start of the book, Maggie Scammell poses an apparently simple question, "What constitutes a good campaign" (p. xxi), but as the argument around that question develops, other questions and other answers come thick and fast. As she points out, this simple question has two dimensions: one, about the nature of democratic processes; the other about the effectiveness of campaigns. This book attempts to deal with both; though the larger part is seemingly devoted to the latter, the more challenging question—the former—provides much food for thought. The reason for that, as will become clear, is that Scammell does not see political marketing as antithetical to modern democratic practices. In fact, the opposite is the case: It is a possible contributor to solutions to the problems in contemporary democratic practices.

In bringing these issues to the foreground, Scammell draws on her expertise and her contribution to this field of study over the last two decades. The questions she poses and the issues she highlights remind us of her central concerns, namely, how should we better understand campaigns and their effectiveness not in isolation but within our commonplace understanding of political communication and even political science. As she has long argued, political marketing has much to contribute to both: "marketing might enhance democratic politics, for parties and for citizens" (p. 1).

She reminds us—insists, in a way—that we live in competitive political environments ("the competitive structures of democratic politics"), and this means that we have to accept "the idea that politics *are* sold in similar [though not exactly the same] ways to products" (p. 1). Hence the title of the book, *Consumer Democracy!* This does not mean, in her view, that it is a downgraded version of "proper politics." It is a different form of politics and one that takes into account both the rational and emotional factors that motivate politicians and voters.

The book builds on these, and related, ideas in a logical sequence. Chapter 1 offers an overview of the political marketing literature under the subheading of "Why It Matters." This contains a comprehensive discussion of the field of study as well as a critique of many of the contributions in the field. There is also a very useful account of how changes in the political landscape—political parties, technologies, socio-cultural change—have been discussed and the weaknesses and strengths of these different accounts. One of the key points she makes here is that we need to "emphasize the neglected importance of competition as a key driver of political marketing" so that

contemporary elements of modern campaigning “are explained better by competition than by reference to communications technology” (p. 27).

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 then take up the challenges set out in the scene-setting “Introduction” and chapter 1: Chapter 2 looks at the marketers (“Who are they and what do they think they are doing?”), whereas chapters 3 and 4 look at brands and are case studies of Tony Blair (chapter 3) and George W. Bush (chapter 4) as brands. Although useful in exploring how brands work and how they were marketed, these chapters have the quality of historical—and perhaps unique/specific—case studies, rather than universally applicable examples. Admittedly, they are used as case studies of politicians as brands, but the point remains that more extended studies of contemporary examples would have been welcome. Although there are references to more recent elections, a more extended consideration of these would have been very welcome.

Questioning how campaigns work (chapter 5) takes us back to one of Scammell’s central questions about the effectiveness of campaigning and marketing and how one makes such judgments. Some key indicators are long-standing ones, as she acknowledges—money, strategy, messaging, agenda setting, and candidate qualities. Importantly, though, the questions posed about how campaigns are organized and run are placed within the wider context of democratic behavior and why campaigns matter for democracy itself. Indeed, Scammell claims that “there is nothing inherently anti-thetical about [presumably, good political marketing driven] campaigning practice and democratic ideals” (p. 137). The task is to explore how “marketing insight can help us find ways to bring closer the fit between the ideals and the practice” (p. 137). Political marketing must, in her view, be part of the solution rather than part of the problem of modern democracy with its declining party memberships, crises, disengagement, cynicism, and the like.

What needs to be done? Briefly, it is to create a system of political representation that enables citizens—as consumers or behaving as consumers (as the old models no longer apply)—to make better choices, because the choices available are offered in a better way. To take one example, if electoral systems make the marginal vote a premium vote, it is because the electoral system is not a level playing field. The problems of modern democracies are, in this account, problems of structures and opportunities. Just as imperfect consumer markets disadvantage consumers, so too imperfect electoral structures disadvantage consumer democracy. Within this book, then, there is an analysis of modern democracy (and mainstream studies of political communication) from the vantage point of political marketing, a position that, as far as Scammell is concerned, can offer much more.

In this way, Scammell is seeking to do something quite challenging by providing a different take on modern politics and its problems, modern technologies and its practices, and modern electoral behavior and the lack of participation. Political marketing—better political marketing—seeks to connect with the consumers of politics and meet their needs, so making them more central and critical for the whole democratic process. While political marketing seemingly “widens the professional-amateur divide,” it does offer many new and different opportunities for public engagement. In

her view, in the “brand,” we see the ways in which “politics adopts the insights of marketing” (p. 166), and the “brand is the symbol of the triumph of consumer capitalism (and our complicity) and it is also the means by which democratic principles and ethics are brought into the marketplace (and thus reflect our expectations of social justice)” (p. 167).

For Scammell, political marketing offers a way for citizens to reengage with politics. In this respect, Scammell recasts the questions posed by those who adopt a more traditional approach to political communication. For her, what matters is less “the media/politics relationship” and more “politics/citizen relations within the overall structure of competition” (p. 180).

Cherian George

Freedom from the Press: Journalism and State Power in Singapore. Singapore: NUS Press, 2012. 272 pp. ISBN 978-9971-69-594-1.

Reviewed by: Ross Tapsell, Australian National University, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

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Cherian George is a former journalist at *The Straits Times*, now leading scholar of Southeast Asian media. His previous important works on the media in the region include *Free Markets, Free Media* (2008) and *Contentious Journalism and the Internet* (2006). George was controversially denied tenure by Nanyang Technological University [NTU] for the second time in 2013. He left Singapore for Hong Kong Baptist University’s school of communication in early 2014. For those in the Singaporean government hoping George might have limited his critique in this book to continue gainful employment at a Singaporean university, they would certainly be disappointed upon reading it. George’s incisive and detailed analysis highlights the intricate role of Singapore’s ruling power, the People’s Action Party (PAP), in influencing and shaping the way news and information are disseminated in the country. George’s analysis exposes the nuanced modus operandi of the State in hindering media freedom. He defines this as “calibrated coercion,” and in doing so, provides one of the most detailed and forthright accounts of the “mechanics” of Singaporean State control. The book is a credit to George for practicing what he preaches in writing a book that pulls no punches directed at the Singaporean government.

Yet, this is not an all-out, brazen attack of the PAP. George explains in earlier chapters how intricacies surrounding media and State control have been missing in previous studies. The tendency has usually been to see the media as democratic Fourth Estate model versus a government-controlled authoritarian regime. Or, the focus has been on an identifying an “Asian values” or “developmental” journalism. George states that “there is no evidence that the benchmarks being applied in Singapore are fundamentally different from those used elsewhere” (p. 54). The chapter that explains

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“Asian media’s radical past” is an important section where George explains the limitations of this description of “developmental journalism” and thereby, broadens the definition of journalism in the region. While this discussion of journalism provides a useful sub-plot to the book, it is the aforementioned analysis of the “success” of the State (the PAP) in maintaining its control over the mainstream media that is most prevalent throughout. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Singaporean politics and society.

The book jacket states that it “makes a significant contribution to the comparative study of journalism and politics,” and this statement is worthy of further discussion in any review of this book. George’s examination of State control ties nicely into scholarly debates surrounding the way States release “pressure valves” of freedom of expression. “Semi-democracies” such as Singapore or Malaysia, do not crackdown heavily on dissent (including in the media). Rather, they manage it in a way that the regime is seen to be liberalizing but, in fact, is deliberately hindering the potential for democratic change. As George writes, “This book has taken seriously the possibility that the PAP may have indeed found ways to buck the global democratic trend” (p. 201).

Furthermore, those who look at journalism and politics in other countries or regions might be drawn into the book’s discussion of new media technologies as a force for democratization. One particularly juicy sentence stands out here: “If technology was a determining factor, Singapore’s alternative online media should have raced ahead.” But indeed, it has not. As George points out, online activism has been far more prevalent in neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia, where Internet penetration is naturally far below that of the city-state of Singapore. Why has online activism not been as prevalent in Singapore despite greater access to the Internet? Because the PAP has “managed” new technologies effectively, growing with them and adapting to them accordingly. This analysis would no doubt be of interest to scholars who examine the media and politics in countries with similar “semi-democracies” or “electoral authoritarian” regimes.

Yet, we might be wary of comparing Singapore (and hence this book) with other countries where online activism is more prevalent. George declares that his focus is predominantly on the PAP’s control of newspapers, because “they are in strong economic health” and “the main institutional home for professional journalism.” While this is the case in some other Asian countries, for most countries around the world (including some in Southeast Asia) newspaper circulation is largely declining where Internet penetration is rapidly rising. George’s chapter on the “alternative online media” explains the nature of online activism and more independent news sites on the Internet in Singapore, but overall, this online activism is small compared with elsewhere in the region and the world. Furthermore, the increasing platform convergence of mainstream, online and social media has led some scholars to argue that the “alternative” is becoming the “mainstream.”

The key argument in this book is that the State will adapt and learn to control whatever new technology is developed. So it may be, but the dynamic and transformative nature of digital media and platform convergence seemed rather underplayed in the overall motif of this book. The focus has been on the State’s ability to coercively

control the mainstream print media, which of course it owns. There is little doubt Singapore's government-owned media monopoly, Media Prima, is looking toward using digital technology as a new means of production to usurp other online initiatives, and this battlefield is of particular interest as we move further into the "digital era."

The density of material and analysis of the Singaporean State does lead to what seems as a series of ideas which shifts and morphs into a full book. In this regard, one review online has said that the book "lacks an overarching theoretical framework," to which George responded that he did not want his book to be "yet another turgid text read only by researchers and reluctant graduate students." To this reviewer, both these statements seem fair. The book does conclude with an interesting theory of "networked hegemony," where a more politically conscious Singaporean society is acknowledged, but where the "undoing" of the PAP will not be its own "inertia." This is because "the PAP's form of authoritarianism is intelligent enough to avoid catastrophic collapse." It is a sober conclusion to a book rich in details of how the PAP has consolidated its power by "taming" journalism and by limiting dissent through the mainstream media.