jci.sagepub.com
ISSN 0196-8599

journal of communication inquiry

volume 40 number 2 April 2016

Article

Journal of Communication Inquiry
2016, Vol. 40(2) 111–127

DOI: 10.1177/0196859916637171
jci.sagepub.com

Dissolving the Other: Orientalism, Consumption, and Katy Perry's Insatiable *Dark Horse*

Rosemary Pennington[1]

Abstract

Pop star Katy Perry courts controversy with the performance choices she makes. She has been accused of peddling sex to young girls and of perpetuating racist stereotypes in her music videos and live shows. In early 2014, Perry stirred up controversy when she destroyed a necklace with the word *Allah*—Arabic for god—on it in her *Dark Horse* video. What received less attention was her destruction of Orientalized men of color in *Dark Horse*. Informed by postcolonial scholarship and research on music videos, this qualitative textual analysis examines how Orientalism manifests in Katy Perry's video. It uncovers a framing of Egypt as a mute object designed for consumption as well as a narrative that portrays men of color as a threat to Perry's liberated, Western, female pharaoh.

Keywords

orientalism, popular culture, postcolonial studies, Egypt, music video, feminism, Katy Perry

Introduction

> "...the core of white privilege is the ability to consume anything, anyone, anywhere" (Alcoff, 1998, p. 19).

[1]Miami University, Williams Hall, Oxford, OH, USA

Corresponding Author:
Rosemary Pennington, Miami University, 120 Williams Hall, 350 S. Oak St., Oxford, OH 45056, USA.
Email: penninrm@miamioh.edu

Pop star Katy Perry courts controversy with the performance choices she makes. In November 2013, Perry came under fire for a performance that was labeled an instance of yellowface after she chose to sing her song *Unconditionally* at the American Music Awards dressed as a Japanese geisha (Lang, 2013). Perry and her backup dancers were dressed in kimonos, Perry's cut to show off her cleavage, and sported white powdered faces as they danced on stage with rice paper umbrellas under falling cherry blossoms (Feeney, 2013). Whether the performance was racist or not was hotly debated in social media, with Dr Ravi Chandra (2013) writing on *Psychology Today's* The Pacific Heart blog "If you don't think Katy Perry was racist—let me ask you, what if she had performed in blackface? Perhaps a costume isn't the same as changing skin color to you, but it is agonizingly close for me." In July 2014, Perry was again accused of treating a racial identity like a costume when she wore a hair style frequently seen in the African American community and used a "blaccent" in her video for the song *This Is How We Do* (Callahan, 2014). This research is focused on a controversy that sits between these two. Earlier in 2014, Perry was fending off accusations of being anti-Muslim after she destroyed a piece of jewelry with the word *Allah* written in Arabic on it in the music video for her single *Dark Horse* (Lee, 2014). Drawing less anger was the fact that the brown-skinned man attached to that piece of jewelry was also destroyed in the process; audiences were also seemingly unbothered by White Perry's portrayal of a Cleopatra-like character nor the video's setting in a DayGlo version of ancient Egypt.

Dark Horse comes off Perry's fourth studio album, *Prism*. Released late 2013, more than 1 million copies of *Prism* were sold in less than 3 months, making it the singer's third million-selling album, after *One of the Boys* and *Teenage Dream* (Rutherford, 2014). The album also came out after Perry's divorce from British funnyman and activist Russell Brand. *Prism* was marketed as a showcase for a grownup Perry, featuring a darker mood than the bubble gum pop *Teenage Dream*. In the video for *Dark Horse*, it would seem as though Perry's artistic maturity came at a very destructive price. Guided by research coming out of postcolonial studies as well as scholarship on the function of music videos, this qualitative textual analysis shows that the maturity of Perry's character in *Dark Horse* is created through the destruction of Orientalized men of color, reproducing a centuries old discourse which frames the culture, people, and objects coming out of the East as things to be possessed, consumed, and tamed by those in the West.

Orientalist Imaginaries

Ancient Egypt has long held a special place in the Western imagination. The early 1800s saw a renewed interest in Egyptian history and culture in the United States and Europe (DeLapp, 2011; McAlister, 2005; Trafton, 2004), fueling the consumption of all things Egyptian (Trafton, 2004) including art objects and

mummies themselves (Meskell, 1998). In her discussion of European consumption of Oriental objects in the 19th century, Parameswaran (2002) argues this consumption was quite political in that it was designed to "contain the threat posed by the colonized and reinvent the Western Self through consumption of the non-Western Other" (p. 298).

Orientalism, Edward Said (1978) wrote, is a conceptualization of the *Orient*, or East, which places it in opposition to the *Occident*, or West. It is a discourse which serves to codify difference (Said, 1978) while also portraying "non-Western peoples as the Other of a Western Self" (Coronil, 1996, p. 52). Said, and Orientalism, have their critics—Prakash (1995) notes Orientalism has been criticized for painting both East and West with a too broad brush, essentializing both East and West. However, Said (1985) insists that "underlying much of the discussion of Orientalism is a disquieting realization that the relationship between cultures is both uneven and irremediably secular" (p. 100). It is that unevenness that is often reflected in media representations. One way it manifests is through rhetorical strategies deployed by Orientalists depicting *The East* as soft, feminine, and irrational, in need of the saving grace of rational Western masculinity (Said, 1978). The Orient has been feminized through visual depictions of harems full of veiled women and via language that links the very landscape to soft, curving, female bodies. The bodies of Western women also contoured the shape of Orientalism and empire but in a very different way.

Writing of the way bodies were surveilled during the height of European imperialism McCombe (2008) suggests that "as part of the process of maintaining power through discourse, the colonizer must insist that the colonial body be a known and predictable quantity" (p. 26). Colonial power was predicated upon the creation of racialized and gendered understandings of identity in which non-Whites were forever cast as the other who needed taming and from whom things could be taken (Lugones, 2007). Within colonial discourses of identity, men were framed as the actors in sexual relationships, the ones who controlled reproduction, while women were to be acted upon, used for reproductive purposes. Colonized women were seen as sexual objects (Hoganson, 2001; Lugones, 2007; Stoler, 1989) while White, colonizing women were seen as harbingers of gentility and civilization (Rafael, 1995; Stoler, 1989).

Woollacott (1997) reminds us that "critics of Orientalism tend to 'write out gender'" when White women were often just as invested in the maintenance of colonies, and colonial categories, as White men. One way to help maintain those boundaries was through the policing of sexual behavior (Hoganson, 2001). This, in turn, helped produce narratives in which colonized men were often reduced to little more than sexual beasts (Lugones, 2010; Mutekwa, 2009; Spanakos, 1998; Stoler, 1989). The focus on the sexual behavior of colonized men, on their supposed hypersexuality, was used to sharpen the conceptual contrast between colonizer and colonized—the colonizer was in control of his impulses;

the colonized was not. It served to sharpen contrasts between *Us* and *Them* in policy but also in media narratives of colonial life.

Orgad (2012) reminds us that media "representations call on viewers momentarily to become intimate with others . . . to develop an imaginary bond with, and then, usually, forget about and move on" (p. 190). Such representations give us access to images and narratives we can then use to craft moments of engagement with those we imagine as the other. This relates to Said's (1978) concept of *imaginary geography* in that imaginaries, such as imaginary geography, are constructions designed to orient us to our world. For Said (1978), the imaginary geography of Orientalism produced a physical understanding of the Orient that Orientalist artists, scholars, and painters helped fashion; an understanding designed to highlight differences and to mask similarities or, even, on the ground realities all in the pursuit of the commodification of the Orient and its consumption.

Music Videos, Commodification, and Liberation

Music videos "have an avowedly commercial agenda" (Railton & Watson, 2005, p. 52), often serving "as advertisement for albums and tours" (Roberts 1990, p. 4). Aufderheide (1986) suggests that they represent a "merging of artistic and commercial production" (p. 58), as they are designed to showcase the musical artist while also inducing the audience to consume the artist's merchandise. This commercial aspect of music videos has meant they often dwell in the familiar (Railton & Watson, 2005). Or, music videos can make the unfamiliar seem less strange by allowing "one to move past a number of strange or disturbing images while neither worrying about them nor forgetting them completely" (Vernallis, 2001, p. 22).

This tension between accessibility and novelty, or strangeness, can serve as both a site of resistance for female artists to wage "sex as a weapon" in the fight against gender stereotyping (James, 2015; Roberts, 1990) as well as a space where stale ideas about gender roles and what is appropriate female sexual behavior are reified (Andsanger & Roe, 2003; Bradby 1993; Railton & Watson, 2005). Female artists are more frequently sexualized than their male counterparts (Andsanger & Roe, 2003), with male artists often being framed as the authors of their music and female artists as an object through which a performance flows (Bradby, 1993). The representation of female artists in music videos is further complicated by its intersection with race and ethnicity.

Much as colonial discourses of femininity served to harden racial difference—colonized women of color were seen as fecund and hypersexual; White colonizing women were viewed as frail and in control of what little lust they had—the discourses of race produced in music videos work to codify the differences between White and Black performers. Music videos often zero in on parts of a Black female artist's body (particularly their buttocks), suggesting they are

little more than hypersexual beings with uncontrollable lusts while White female artists are most frequently framed so that all, or most, of their body appears in the shot, again suggesting a restrained White sexuality (Railton & Watson, 2005; Schoppmeier, 2015). White artists most frequently appear clothed or in some way covered up while Black artists are dressed in a more revealing manner (Railton & Watson, 2005; Schoppmeier, 2015). Artists can at times leverage sexual objectification to produce what James (2015) calls a "look, I Overcame" discourse—in that the artists seemingly break free of sexual expectations—or, in the case of Orientalist discourses, to create a kind of exotic multiculturalism in which race and ethnicity are deployed strategically to create a sense of sexual empowerment as women are portrayed as liberal subjects, free to be whomever they long to be (McGee, 2012). All of this shaped by a female artist's need to sell not only her music to her audience but herself as well (Andsanger & Roe, 2003; Bradby, 1993; James, 2015; McGee, 2012; Railton & Watson, 2005).

This research project examines Perry's *Dark Horse* music video through the lens of postcolonial studies in order to understand how the video perpetuates Orientalist framings of East and West. Shome and Hegde (2002) suggest postcolonial studies can be useful in the study of communication because it "provides a historical and international depth to the understanding of cultural power" (p. 252) while Fernandez (1999) points out both postcolonial studies and media studies (particularly the study of electronic media) provide entry points for the exploration of a multiplicity of cultural understandings. Orientalism and postcolonial studies were also judged pertinent to this study of a music video because of its location in Egypt—a country whose long experience of colonization dates to ancient times and which is still recovering from its encounter with Europe's more recent imperial expansions.

Method

Textual analysis was chosen as the best method to examine the narratives created by Perry's video and song. As a method textual analysis allows the researcher to interrogate a text to understand how it aids in the construction of meaning (McKee, 2003). It is a method that enables a researcher to get beyond the manifest content of media, Fursich (2009) writing that textual analysis "focuses on the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text" (p. 240).

The text examined for this research project is the official video for Katy Perry's song *Dark Horse*[1] which, as of this writing, has more than 1.2 billion views on YouTube. It was directed by Mathew Cullen, who has directed videos for artists such as Weezer, Green Day, and Black Eyed Peas, and edited by Douglas Crise (Mirada, n.d.) and features a rap interlude by rapper Juicy J (Rothman, 2014). Perry reportedly wanted to set the video in ancient Egypt in

a nod to Juicy J's hometown of Memphis, Tennessee (Rothman, 2014). My process for textual analysis of the video involves deploying a grounded theory methodology. In this approach, the researcher codes for themes in a text, then creates memos about those themes to help flesh out a model of how they fit together to communicate an idea (Bernard, 2011). In the following sections, I discuss the themes that appeared during this analysis of *Dark Horse*—themes that frame Katy Perry as an empowered woman whose strength comes from her destruction of men of color, and themes that paint Egypt as a mute, exotic backdrop against which liberation based upon consumption is played out.

An Orientalist's Egyptian Dream

The *Dark Horse* video opens as the camera zooms in on a boat silhouetted against the setting sun. One imagines the vessel floating down the Nile River as a pyramid and palm trees appear in the background. In case this was not enough to alert the audience to the fact we are now in Egypt, black text appears just above the boat which proclaims this to be "Memphis, Egypt a crazy long time ago . . ." There are five figures on what seems to be an Egyptian barge—two muscly men, painted green and blue, manning prow and stern while two females wearing all gold and sporting the heads of cats flank the reclining Witch of Memphis, Katy Perry.[2] Perry, the center of this tableau, wears a short white shift resembling those found on figures carved on buildings throughout Egypt as well as a white wig covered, in part, by what appear to be blue hieroglyphs. A series of four electronically produced musical notes is repeated several times as the camera zooms in on the barge, giving the scene an overall trippy feeling. As Perry, now framed in a close-up, turns to the camera and sings, "I knew you were, you were going to come to me," the audience gets the feeling they have come to her in an Egypt that is meant to reflect more a dream than reality. If so, it is the reflection of an Orientalist dream.

Dark Horse is a visual feast. Peeters (2004) suggests music videos are often more concerned with spectacle than narrative, and Perry's video is nothing if not spectacular. She embeds nods to ancient Egypt throughout *Dark Horse*, frequently through her use of hieroglyphics as accessories. They appear on wigs, on Juicy J's (her *Dark Horse* collaborator) sunglasses, and floating in the air around a centrally framed Perry as she sings "So, you want to play with magic?" Perry's deployment of hieroglyphics, among the most recognized products of ancient Egypt, works to make the Egypt she's created seem less strange—most viewers will have seen hieroglyphics at some point in their lives—while the way she deploys them, as accessories, positions herself front and center. They, and the Egypt they represent, are meant to be consumed by Perry as well as by her audience. The nonlinear way the video is edited together, moving from barge to throne room, to a Perry surrounded by gold, floating hieroglyphs helps the audience navigate this strange landscape, latching onto

what is familiar (Railton & Watson, 2005) while allowing the unfamiliar to fly by (Vernallis, 2001). It works to create both an idea of Egypt, and an idea of an Egyptian Perry, as consumable; easily swallowed by viewers.

This echoes the ways in which Egypt was produced as a consumable product during the colonial era. Although not a British colony at the time, Saglia (2002) points out that Egyptian art and culture were mimicked and replicated in early 17th century British luxury goods. Meskell (1998) reminds us that it was not simply culture and art that was consumed—actual Egyptian bodies were consumed, both figuratively in the unwrapping of ancient mummies as well as literally via their ingestion as ground powders meant to spark lax libidos. Egypt has long been made accessible through consumption; in this sense, Perry's video fits neatly beside expensive British China and snake oil salesman's wares.

In her work on *Sex and the City*, Arthurs (2003) notes that media narratives have fashioned a story of the modern woman that situates her liberation within the context of consumption. Globalized western feminism, as it moved from first to second wave, was woven into the tapestry of capitalism so that to be a fully modern and empowered woman one had to consume (Eisenstein, 2010). This commodity feminism (Goldman, Heath, & Smith, 1991) helps shape an understanding of the modern woman that does more to reinforce patriarchy and hegemonic understandings of gender roles than it does to challenge them (as the consumption is often focused on making women prettier or more attractive; McRobbie, 2008). Although the actions in her *Dark Horse* video take place "a crazy long time ago," Perry clearly situates herself within the context of the liberated woman being a consuming woman. If Marilyn Monroe taught us that "diamonds are a girl's best friend" and Carrie Bradshaw showed us that the modern woman is defined by what she buys, then Katy Perry in *Dark Horse* is the very epitome of modern femininity. This becomes all too clear as we begin to meet her *Dark Horse* suitors.

Eating Hearts and Marginalizing Men

After we are introduced to Perry via Nile River barge, the camera moves us into what seems to be an ancient Egyptian throne room. The space reminds viewers of pillars or ruins they may have seen in documentary programs about ancient Egypt; the structure is painted in bright colors that may, or may not, resemble those that once adorned the palaces and temples of various Egyptian kingdoms. The camera zooms in on Perry sitting atop a throne. The shot is framed at a low angle, establishing Perry's authority over the scene (Vernallis, 2001) as more of the cat-headed women and brightly painted male servants attend her. Looming just behind is the giant silver head of a sphinx. The staging of the space, and of Perry, is reminiscent of Elizabeth Taylor's entrance into Rome on the sphinx in the 1963 film *Cleopatra*. Shin (2012) suggests Taylor's depiction of the pharaoh was wrapped up in capitalist discourses of colonial whiteness which were driven

by excess and by consumption; a White Cleopatra was a Cleopatra that was easy for Americans to see and consume. Cleopatra has often served as an accessible stand-in for Egypt in Western media as her racial ambiguity (scholars debate whether she was White like her Greek forebears may have been or a Black African) has made any possible strangeness seem less potent (McCombe, 2008; Riad, 2011; Shin, 2012), and has made her sexuality less dangerous.

Danger lurks in Perry's throne room as what appears to be the first of five suitors walks a red carpet (a reminder of Perry's life as a superstar outside the video) toward her. The camera follows the man into the room so that the eye is focused on his glimmering golden cape and headdress, as well as the muscular blue backs of Perry's male servants. Typically, it is women who appear fragmented in music videos (Schoppmeier, 2015; Vernallis, 1998; Vernallis, 2008), with this fragmentation indicating their existence as sexual objects. In *Dark Horse*, this is reversed, as it is the men in the video who are sometimes reduced to close-ups of body parts, it is the men who will be on display, not the pop star. When we finally get a look of this first suitor's face, we see he wears a golden eye patch over his right eye, and he is covered in golden necklaces—originally one of those necklaces had the Arabic word for god, *Allah*, inscribed on it, but this was scrubbed from the video after it was heavily criticized by Muslim groups for being blasphemous. He rubs his hand along his chest as Perry sings "Make me your Aphrodite," and it is clear that she has found his appearance pleasing. The juxtaposition of the suitor's attractive body and the reference to the Greek goddess of love (and sex) conjures up the phantom of the hypersexual colonized man with his uncontrollable lusts (Lugones, 2010; Spanakos, 1998).

The camera cuts to Perry on the barge singing "Don't make me your enemy," and when we return to the throne room, we see the man pulling from his belt an enormous diamond. Perry inspects the diamond, runs her tongue over her teeth when suddenly we see blue lightning shoot from the sphinx above her throne and the man crumbles to dust as the sphinx tells him, too late to be a warning, "There's no going back."

We do not know why Perry has destroyed her suitor. The look of glee that washes over her face as she runs her eyes over his body and as she examines the jewel he has brought her seems to indicate she is pleased with the suitor and with his gift, and yet he is turned to dust. Both Mutekwa (2009) and Stoler (1989) have discussed the ways indigenous, colonized masculinities would be punished for the merest whiff of sexual impropriety with White women. The focus on sexual behavior reduced colonized men to little more than threatening beasts with threatening lusts that had to be controlled, avoided, and ultimately punished (Lugones, 2010). Perry, in her destruction of this first suitor, seems to be punishing him for the lust the glimpse of his body may have provoked in her. But she does not simply punish him, she utterly destroys him with his jewelry transformed into a glittering grill to adorn her blazing white teeth. Much as Coronil (1996) suggests happens in Occidentalist media representations of East

and West, Perry has dissolved the other into herself, in this instance by turning the other into an accessory to be worn and, later one imagines, discarded.

The next suitor to dare tempt Perry is a corpusculent man of vaguely Asian extraction. His body seems to be oiled, and he is clothed in robes that suggest a passing resemblance to rosewood Buddhas sold in tiny, cramped markets found in Chinatowns and hippy college communities all over the United States. As with the prior suitor, the camera lingers over his bare chest and the large golden ropes which adorn it, emphasizing both his wealth and his girth. Unlike his predecessor, this man does not offer jewels, instead the carts rolling down the carpeted walkway are laden with Twinkies, Cheetos, and other types of junk food that both emphasize his obesity as well as the wanton consumption on display in Perry's throne room. As she sings "It's a yes or a no, no maybe . . . ," the Buddha gestures to the large piles of food he's brought with him as Perry's eyes grow big and she licks her lips in anticipation. It is a cartoonish moment that heightens the absurdity of the spectacle taking place on screen. "Just be sure," Perry sings, "before you give it all to me" as she eats what seems to be a Cheeto—a Cheeto, it turns out, that is flaming hot. As Perry desperately gestures for something to drink, the suitor upends his enormous drinking vessel to find it empty. Suddenly, there's a flash of blue lightning, the man turns to dust and in his place stands a large metal goblet full of liquid that Perry then drinks. She literally consumes this second of her suitors, dissolving him utterly into herself.

Often music videos shirk narrative in the pursuit of spectacle (Peeters, 2004; Vernallis, 2008), but there seems to be a clear narrative developing in Katy Perry's throne room. One which positions her as all powerful and all consuming. The production company which helped shape Perry's vision for the *Dark Horse* video says it was imagined as an epic film, one focused on Perry's toying with her would be suitors (Mirada, n.d.). After the destruction of the first two men in the video, Perry's warnings "to be sure before giving it all" to her take on a particular urgency as other suitors arrive. After the dissolving of Perry's Buddha, two other men are quickly dispatched. One, a bare chested Black man, presents Perry a bouncing lowrider-esque golden chariot; the other, whose brown skin we can see only on his bare arms, walks in carrying two bowls laden with gold and jewels and wearing a golden chainmail veil. For no discernable reason, the charioteer is transformed into yellow fuzzy dice to adorn the new chariot; the second suitor is turned into a reptile skin purse when he pulls back his veil to reveal a crocodile's head. The case of this suitor is especially interesting, though he is given less screen time than any of the other men.

Many gods of ancient Egypt had human bodies with animal heads—among them Sobek, the Egyptian god of crocodiles (Oakes & Gahlin, 2002), whom the veiled suitor appears to be referencing. Sobek was a god associated with both fertility and death (Sebek, n.d.). He was a violent god and one, as Allen (2005) suggests, who was prone to hypersexual behavior. In her discussion of the way gender was produced in European colonies and the way that race and

gender intersected to create a hierarchy of civilized behavior, Lugones (2010) points out that colonized men were imagined as being hypersexual creatures, barely in control of their most animalistic urges. Perry's version of Sobek, wearing a broad grin that seems almost lecherous, conjures up this framing of men of color as hypersexed animals; this conjuring in turn serves as a kind of justification for the destruction of her suitors. By this point in the video, all the suitors have been men of color whose dress suggests they come from the historic Orient—their skin color and the imaginary geography they seem to inhabit makes them suspect and a threat that must be dealt with.

By the end of the video, the only suitor to have survived this dealing with is the man who most resembles *the familiar*—a man whose light skin seems to suggest he could be of the same Western background as Perry herself; or that he might, at the very least, be able to pass. Although his gift of a floating, neon pink pyramid seems pleasing, he is also the victim of Perry's brand of magic. However, unlike the other men, he is not annihilated; instead, he's turned into a small dog with a human head. His gift has pleased Perry enough that he now gets to exist as a lapdog while she climbs his pyramid and sprouts wings, suggesting a transformation from the pharaoh Cleopatra into the goddess Isis. Isis (n.d.), it is worth noting, was among the most important deities in ancient Egypt (Oakes & Gahlin, 2002; Shaw, 2004), worshipped as a mother goddess as well as "the giver of death" through her association with her husband Osiris, considered the judge of the dead (Murray, 1994). Andsanger and Roe (2003) suggest that metamorphosis in music videos can "create the illusion that an artist has evolved into a different being, generally a more mature and edgier version of his or her former self" (p. 88). In the *Dark Horse* music video, it is Perry's giving of death to the men of color who would woo her that leads to her transformation into a goddess; it is the dealing of destruction that suggests her transformation from bubble gum pop star into mature musical artist.

The destruction, transformation, and consumption of the Orientalist imaginings of men in *Dark Horse* exemplifies Bhabha's (1994) assertion that constructions of colonial otherness create objects of "desire and derision." We, the viewers, are meant to find Perry's annihilation of the suitors, her sporting of a glittery grill, and her wanton consumption amusing. The suitors are attractive, their presents are desired, but they themselves are nothing more than playthings at which we all laugh and then forget as the next victim, with his gifts, comes into view. A "brand of 'empowered' modern femininity" within capitalism is based on consumption that serves to reinforce patriarchy more than it serves to upend it (Parameswaran, 2002). At the same time, Orientalism has informed a strain of Orientalist feminism that has helped construct "a binary opposition between a civilised West and an uncivilised East" (Ho, 2010, p. 433). It's a strand of feminism in which liberated White, modern, Western women know best and, much like their colonial predecessors (Hoganson, 2001; Woollacott, 1997),

reinscribe Orientalist and racist understandings of difference instead of challenging them.

Perry, through her performance of an empowered woman who symbolically consumes Orientalized men one after another, is reinforcing a hegemonic understanding of the place of men and women in, specifically, capitalist society even though her consumption takes place in ancient Egypt. She is a golden winged, liberated, powerful woman who owes her position to her ability to consume all she can. Given the song's lyrics and the video's visuals, we are left with the expectation that Perry's hunger for things and for power is insatiable and that she will ride her dark horse into the ground to get what she wants, but she will do so by reinforcing heterosexist and Orientalist understandings of male and female bodies.

Repackaging Orientalism as Empowerment

As with any media text, there are any number of meanings that could be drawn from this music video. One feminist reading of this text might suggest that the juxtaposition of lyrics about a strong, determined woman with the visual destruction of male suitors implies a kind of liberation but a liberation at the price of whom? In an interview, Perry claimed *Dark Horse* was the story of a man-eating woman; the kind of woman a man should love only if he was comfortable loving the machine of his destruction (Garibaldi, 2013) . That Perry, a White American woman, and *Dark Horse* director Mathew Cullen, a White American man, chose to visually represent this story through the destruction of men of color—men who seem to represent several Orientalist stereotypes—in the video suggests an understanding of East and West fueled by colonial prejudices and which accomplishes, in Coronil's (1996) terms, the "dissolution of the Other by the Self." It also reinforces Alcoff's (1998) assertion, quoted at the beginning of this essay, that "... the core of white privilege is the ability to consume anything, anyone, anywhere" (p. 19). That privilege is made clear not only by Perry's consumption of men of color but also through the adoption of Egypt as a backdrop and pharaoh then goddess as persona.

The core of White feminist privilege has, in part, been fleshed out by a capitalist framing of freedom where, to be free, is to consume (Eisenstein, 2010). Within this framework, the *Dark Horse* video becomes a reflection of a capitalist notion of liberation founded upon the consumption of "the other." It is difficult to overlook the way it reproduces a centuries old rhetoric of power and race in which "... whiteness can be read as the assertion of privilege, power, and historically specific, gender and class-related cultural identity in a racially hierarchical social system" (Woollacott, 1997, p. 1027). Katy Perry's position as a White woman in the video is not a problem because she destroys an amulet with the word *Allah* inscribed on it, though some might find it blasphemous, and it was

the action that caused the most criticism—it is a problem because her White privilege allows her to continue the domination of the symbolic West over the symbolic East and perpetuates the idea that the Orient is a fecund place ripe for consumption. Her wanton destruction of her suitors is evidence of their inferiority and recalls the ways in which colonized peoples were categorized as, at times, non-human within colonial structures of power (Lugones, 2010).

Stoler (1989) notes that, in European colonies, White women seldom enjoyed sexual freedom, and so Perry's performance could be read as transgressive in that she clearly has the freedom to do as she wishes with her suitors in her dreamscape Egypt; however, her seeming contempt for, her consumption of, and her destruction of men of color in her *Dark Horse* video perpetuates a discourse of White dominance over people categorized as other. Perry punishes each suitor for the possible threat they present to her position of power much the way colonized men of color were punished for the possible sexual threat they posed to White colonial women (Stoler, 1989). Orgad (2012) notes that "we need the other in order to establish and maintain a sense of who we are" (p. 81). Throughout *Dark Horse*, Katy Perry uses Orientalized men of color to define who she is—a liberated Western woman; a pop icon who can devour what she wants when she wants; a beautiful female who can allow herself to be momentarily objectified because, in the end, she holds all the power in her interactions with the men she encounters.

Repackaging a centuries old Orientalist discourse about East and West, Perry is free to consume, appropriate, and destroy while the men who visit her throne room are not. As Powell (2011) suggests, it is especially important to dig through this construction of race and power in popular media "because of the overload of information in society, it is almost impossible for the public to critique messages on race and culture in any useful way" (p. 93). Perry's AMA performance was quickly labeled yellowface because she chose to represent herself as a geisha; somehow, though, her dressing as a pharaoh and her destruction of men of color in *Dark Horse* did not create the same kind of outrage. Yes, there was the furor over the *Allah* necklace, but there were few, if any, bloggers declaring Perry's vision of Egypt a display of racism. The question to ask ourselves is why? Is it simply because the onslaught of media messages people receive every day wearies them? Or is it because the destruction of men of color in a former colony fits into larger Orientalist narratives of the inferiority of the East and, so, their destruction seems familiar and fails to provoke?

Conclusion

When Katy Perry first came onto the music scene, she was seen as just another iteration of the pop music ingénue. While bright blue wigs, whipped cream spurting breasts, and latex outfits might have signaled a one and done career for Perry, she's been rather savvy in not getting boxed into one particular type of

music or performance. She has proven to be a chameleon of sorts which has translated into huge international tours and immense wealth. In 2014 alone, Perry earned 40 million dollars (Forbes, 2015). Perry is not only one of the bestselling female artists of all time; she's one of the bestselling artists ever. *Prism* is her third album to sell at least one million copies (Caulfield, 2014).

Even with her success, it would be easy to write someone like Katy Perry off, to pretend that her music, her videos, and her costumes don't matter in the long run because they are little more than pop fluff. But that would be shortsighted. As of this writing, the official *Dark Horse* video has more than 1.2 billion views on YouTube. Unofficial uploads have received tens of thousands of views. Entertainment media are often treated as trivial and, yet, music videos like those produced by Katy Perry reach a wide audience. To overlook the power of popular media because it is fluff is to decide what that media tells a huge portion of the public is unimportant. Katy Perry, the framing of men of color in her video, and her cultural appropriation matter because they reach a broad audience and serve to reinforce a racist and prejudicial understanding of the world that only sharpens dichotomies.

In reflecting on *Orientalism* Said wrote, "The challenge to Orientalism and the colonial era of which it is so organically a part was a challenge to the muteness imposed on the Orient as object" (1985, p. 93). Although it is a music video, muteness abounds in Katy Perry's *Dark Horse* as the servants who seem to be stand-ins for ancient Egyptians, as well as her seemingly Oriental suitors, all say nothing. Egypt says nothing, it is simply an imaginary geography on which Perry places herself and which reflects a dream, her Orientalist dream, more than anything else.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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

Funding

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

Notes

1. Official *Dark Horse* video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KSOMA3QBU0
2. For the video Perry adopted the name Katy Pätra—a play on the name of Egypt's famous female pharaoh Cleopatra. However, for the sake of clarity, I will continue referring to her as Katy Perry during my analysis and discussion.

References

Alcoff, L. M. (1998). What should white people do? *Hypatia*, *13*(3), 6–26.

Allen, J. P. (2005). *The ancient Egyptian pyramid texts*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

Andsanger, J., & Roe, K. (2003). What's your definition of dirty, baby? Sex in music video. *Sexuality & Culture*, *7*, 79–97.

Arthurs, J. (2003). Sex and the city and consumer culture: Remediating postfeminist drama. *Feminist Media Studies*, *3*(1), 83–98.

Aufderheide, P. (1986). Music videos: The look of sound. *Journal of Communication*, *36*, 57–78.

Bernard, H. R. (2011). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London, England: Routledge.

Bradby, B. (1993). Sampling sexuality: Gender, technology and the body in dance music. *Popular Music*, *12*(2), 155–176.

Callahan, Y. (2014, July 31). Katy 'the Queen of Cultural Appropriation' is at it again. *The Root*. Retrieved from http://www.theroot.com/blogs/the_grapevine/2014/07/katy_the_queen_of_cultural_appropriation_perry_is_at_it_again.html

Caulfield, K. (2014, January 10). Chart moves: Katy Perry's 'PRISM' hits 1 million in sales, One Republic returns to Top 10. *Billboard.com*. Retrieved from http://www.billboard.com/biz/articles/news/5869527/chart-moves-katy-perrys-prism-hits-1-million-in-sales-onerepublic-returns

Chandra, R. (2013, November 24). Yes, Katy Perry's performance was racist, here's why. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-pacific heart/201311/yes-katy-perry-s-performance-was-racist-here-s-why

Coronil, F. (1996). Beyond occidentalism: Toward nonimperial geohistorical categories. *Cultural Anthropology*, *11*(1), 51–87.

DeLapp, K. M. (2011). Ancient Egypt as Europe's' intimate stranger'. In H. V. Bonavita (Ed.), Negotiating ide*ntities: Constructed selves and others* (pp. 171–192). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Rodopi.

Eisenstein, H. (2010). Feminism seduced: Globalisation and the uses of gender. *Australian Feminist Studies*, *25*(66), 413–431.

Feeney, N. (2013, November 25). Katy Perry's 'geisha-style' performance needs to be called out. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/11/katy-perrys-geisha-style-performance-needs-to-be-called-out/281805/

Fernandez, M. (1999). Postcolonial media theory. *Art Journal*, *58*(3), 58–73.

Forbes. (2015, May 30). *The world's most powerful celebrities*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/celebrities/list/#tab:overall

Fursich, E. (2009). In defense of textual analysis – Restoring a challenged method for journalism and media studies. *Journalism Studies*, *10*(2), 238–252.

Garibaldi, C. (2013, August 29). Katy Perry's "Dark Horse" is a "warning". *MTV News*. Retrieved from http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1713269/katy-perry-dark-horse-prism.jhtml

Goldman, R., Heath, D., & Smith, S. L. (1991). Commodity feminism. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *8*, 333–351.

Hoganson, K. L. (2001). As badly off as the Filipinos: U.S. women's suffragists and the imperial issue at the turn of the twentieth century. *Journal of Women's History*, *13*(2), 9–33.

Ho, C. (2010). Responding to Orientalist feminism: Women's rights and the war on terror. *Australian Feminist Studies*, *25*(66), 434–439.

Isis. (n.d.). In *Encyclopædia Britannica online*. Retrieved from http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295449/Isis

James, R. (2015). *Resilience & melancholy: Pop music, feminism, Neoliberalism*. Alresford, UK: Zero Books.

Lang, N. (2013, November 29). Settling the Katy Perry controversy: 'Yellowface' is not beautiful. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/2013/nov/29/news/la-ol-katy-perry-american-music-awards-yellowface-20131127

Lee, A. (2014, February 28). Katy Perry edits 'Dark Horse' video after petition objects to Arabic religious symbol. *The Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved from http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/earshot/video-katy-perry-edited-dark-684345

Lugones, M. (2007). Heterosexualism and the colonial/modern gender system. *Hypatia*, *22*(1), 186–209.

Lugones, M. (2010). Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia*, *25*(4), 742–759.

McAlister, M. (2005). *Epic encounters: Culture, media & U.S. interest in the Middle East since 1945* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

McCombe, J. P. (2008). Cleopatra and her problems: T.S. Eliot and the fetishization of Shakespeare's Queen of the Nile. *Journal of Modern Literature*, *31*(2), 23–38.

McGee, P. (2012). Orientalism and erotic multiculturalism in popular culture: From princess Rajah to pussycat dolls. *MSMI*, *6*(2), 209–238.

McKee, A. (2003). *Textual analysis: A beginner's guide*. London, England: Sage Publications.

McRobbie, A. (2008). Young women and consumer culture. *Cultural Studies*, *22*(5), 531–550.

Meskell, L. (1998). Consuming bodies: Cultural fantasies of ancient Egypt. *Body & Society*, *4*(1), 63–76.

Mirada. (n.d.). *Katy Perry 'dark horse': How to build a neo-ancient Egyptian hip-hop epic*. Retrieved from http://mirada.com/stories/katy-perry-dark-horse

Murray, A. S. (1994). *Who's who in mythology: Classic guide to the ancient world*. London, England: Bracken Books.

Mutekwa, A. (2009). Gendered beings, gendered discourses: The gendering of race, colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism in three Zimbabwean novels. *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, *15*(5), 725–740.

Oakes, L., & Gahlin, L. (2002). *Ancient Egypt: An illustrated reference to the myths, religions, pyramids and temples of the land of the pharaohs*. London, England: Hermes House.

Orgad, S. (2012). *Media representation and the global imagination*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Parameswaran, R. (2002). Local culture in global media: Excavating colonial and material discourses in national geographic. *Communication Theory*, *12*(3), 287–315.

Peeters, H. (2004). The semiotics of music videos: It must be written in the stars. *Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative*. Retrieved from http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/issue08/heidipeeters.htm

Powell, K. A. (2011). Framing Islam: An analysis of U.S. media coverage of terrorism since 9/11. *Communication Studies*, *62*(1), 90–112.

Prakash, G. (1995). Orientalism now. *History and Theory*, *34*(3), 199–212.
Rafael, V. L. (1995). Colonial domesticity: White women and the United States rule in the Philippines. *American Literature*, *6*(4), 639–666.
Railton, D., & Watson, P. (2005). Naughty girls and red blooded women: Representations of female heterosexuality in music video. *Feminist Media Studies*, *5*(1), 51–63.
Riad, S. (2011). Invoking Cleopatra to examine the shifting ground of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *22*, 831–850.
Roberts, R. (1990). "Sex as a weapon": Feminist rock music videos. *NWSA Journal*, *2*(1), 1–15.
Rothman, L. (2014, February 21). There's a very good reason why Katy Perry's 'Dark Horse' video is set in ancient Egypt. *Time*. Retrieved from http://time.com/9233/katy-perry-dark-horse-egypt/
Rutherford, K. (2014, January 10). Katy Perry's 'Prism' hits 1 million sold. *Billboard.com*. Retrieved from http://www.billboard.com/articles/news/5869538/katy-perrys-prism-hits-1-million-sold
Saglia, D. (2002). Consuming Egypt: Appropriation and the cultural modalities of romantic luxury. *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *24*(3), 317–332.
Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage.
Said, E. (1985). *Orientalism* reconsidered. *Cultural Critique*, *1*, 89–107.
Schoppmeier, S. (2015). "Hottentot Barbie" as a multicultural star: The commodification of race in Nicki Minaj's music videos. *Aspeers: Emerging Voices in American Studies*, *8*, 49–70.
Sebek. (n.d.). In *Encyclopædia Britannica online*. Retrieved from http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/531238/Sebek
Shaw, I. (2004). *Ancient Egypt: A very short introduction*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
Shin, G. (2012). If it be love indeed, tell me how much: Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, and White pleasure after empire. *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture*, *12*(1), 4.
Shome, R., & Hegde, R. S. (2002). Postcolonial approaches to communication: Charting the terrain, engaging the intersections. *Communication Theory*, *12*(3), 249–270.
Spanakos, A. P. (1998). The canvas of the other: Fanon and recognition. *DisClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*, *7*(1), 147–161.
Stoler, A. L. (1989). Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th century colonial cultures. *American Ethnologist*, *16*(4), 634–660.
Trafton, S. (2004). *Egypt land: Race and nineteenth-century American Egyptomania*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Vernallis, C. (1998). The aesthetics of music video: An analysis of Madonna's 'Cherish'. *Popular Music*, *17*(2), 153–185.
Vernallis, C. (2001). The kindest cut: Functions and meanings of music video editing. *Screen*, *42*(1), 21–48.
Vernallis, C. (2008). Music video, song, sound: Experience, technique and emotion in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. *Screen*, *49*(3), 277–297.

Woollacott, A. (1997). All this is the empire, I told myself: Australian women's voyages "home" and the articulation of colonial whiteness. *The American Historical Review*, *102*(4), 1003–1029.

Author Biography

Rosemary Pennington is an assistant professor in Miami University's Department of Media, Journalism & Film. She received her PhD in Mass Communication from Indiana University's Department of Journalism. Pennington's research interests include global communication as well as Muslims and the media.

Article

Journal of Communication Inquiry
2016, Vol. 40(2) 128–144

DOI: 10.1177/0196859915606974
jci.sagepub.com

A Critical, Rhetorical Analysis of *Man Therapy*: The Use of Humor to Frame Mental Health as Masculine

Richard Mocarski[1] and Sim Butler[2]

Abstract

To address high numbers of suicides by men in America, the mental health promotion campaign *Man Therapy* attempts to destigmatize mental health as staunchly opposed to masculinity through overtly humorous constructions of therapy designed for hegemonically masculine men. Through a critical analysis of the campaign, including the interactive website, modeled as the fictitious office of Dr. Rich Mahogany, this project addresses the influences of humor within the confines of hegemonic masculinity, mental health, and suicide. The goal of the analysis is to better understand, through a critical deconstruction, the ways in which *Man Therapy* successfully combats stigma in men's mental health, while at the same time, perhaps, reifying hegemonic discourses that have the potential to abject parts of the target audience.

Keywords

hegemonic masculinity, mental health, humor, health promotion

Introduction

> Welcome . . . Take a knee and get comfortable
>
> —Dr. Rich Mahogany

[1]The University of Nebraska at Kearney, NE, USA
[2]The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL, USA

Corresponding Author:
Richard Mocarski, The University of Nebraska at Kearney, 2134 Founders Hall, NE 68845, USA.
Email: mocarskira@unk.edu

The suicide of the beloved actor and comedian Robin Williams in the summer of 2014 gave society a glimpse into the world of depression. Williams' death created a national dialogue, one that raised important questions about mental health, humor, and masculinity. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), men account for 79% of all suicides in the United States, and non-Hispanic White men account for the highest rate of successful suicides among men (CDC, 2012a). Colorado has an extremely high rate of suicides, ranking eighth in the United States (CDC, 2012b). To address these rates, the Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention created a collaborative health promotion campaign to encourage men's mental health, arguing that men may have a greater need for mental health services and, at the same time, are less interested in and less likely to access these services (Spencer-Thomas, Hindman, & Conrad, 2012). Their collaborative mental health campaign, *Man Therapy* consists of a virtual doctor's office found at www.mantherapy.org. Unlike traditional health websites, which utilize homepages, links, frames, and text, *Man Therapy* presents users with a space and perspective of walking into and exploring a therapist's office. Guiding users through the space, Dr. Rich Mahogany, a cardigan wearing, mustache sporting, barrel chested host, addresses users on issues such as depression, suicide, aggression, and well-being. Both the space and the characters found at *Man Therapy* embrace comically exaggerated forms of masculinity. As an interactive, comedic liaison between traditionally masculine and health-seeking behaviors, Dr. Mahogany and the *Man Therapy* website raise interesting question about interactive health messages. This study explores the space and discourses that *Man Therapy* occupies and creates at the intersections of hegemonic masculinity, mental health and suicide, and humor. The goal of the analysis is to better understand, through a critical deconstruction, the ways in which *Man Therapy* successfully combats stigma in men's mental health, while at the same time, perhaps, reifying hegemonic discourses that have the potential to abject parts of the target audience.

Context and Artifact: Relevance

Virtual Office and Man Cave

Blending humor, gender construction, and mental health creates a unique space in health promotion communication. In particular, humor may play an integral part in relating to those who suffer from depression and masculinity identity issues. Nezlek and Derks (2001) found that "relatively more depressed people used humor as a coping mechanism almost as frequently as those who relatively less depressed" (p. 407). In her analysis of how humor can aid gender deconstruction, Crawford (2003) asserts that "for any socially subordinated group, developing a sense of a group identity and solidarity is the first step toward political and social change" (Crawford, 2003, p. 424). At the *Man Therapy*

website, the mustached Dr. Mahogany directs users to explore the online office space—festooned with moose heads, trophies, leather chairs, and pipes—and to use host of games, surveys, support portals, and educational information available. Clicking on "About *Man Therapy*," Dr. Mahogany tells users that "*Man Therapy* is a place where men come to be men. So here, we won't be whining or moping about... we will be form tackling feelings like anger and suicidal thoughts" (Cactus, 2012).

The paradoxes created by *Man Therapy*'s humor and format create an exemplary site for a critical study of a health promotion campaign, grounded in communication. Dutta (2010) posits that critical scholars offer an important and unique perspective in health communication as they are equipped to "engage with the taken-for-granted assumptions that circulate the dominant ideology of health communication... Critical scholarship in health communication interrogates the structures within which meanings of health are constituted" (p. 534). As will be demonstrated in the analysis, by critically interrogating *Man Therapy*, assumptions about what constitutes men's health and mental health are exposed. Understanding overlapping, intersectional networks of identity have significant ramifications for critical approaches to health campaigns. For that purpose, our analysis attempt to focus on the fissures between the means of targeting an audience and the reification of meanings of masculinity that has the potential to abject some of this audience. We do not claim that our reading of *Man Therapy* is the only, or even dominant, reading—or some type of truth. Instead we offer our readings as a pillar in the "process of argumentation whereby the general goal is to convince readers that their own insights into a text may be enhanced by reading the text similarly" (Cooper, 2002, p. 49). With this type of study and readings, the implications allow for the uncovering of the mechanisms of normalization and the power beneath the text, or as Avila-Saavedra (2009) states, this kind of reading "can be useful to uncover the normative themes of the narrative" (Avila-Saavedra, 2009, p. 10).

Literature Review

Health communication scholarship is plump with examinations of the effects of humor in health campaigns and strategies for addressing mental health in campaigns, with recent studies addressing issues of shame (Yoon, 2015), grandparent relationships (Mansson, 2013), and antistigma advocacy (Holland & Blood, 2009). While effects based health communication research serves to produce replicable and verifiable results, there is a simultaneous need to critically examine cultural and rhetorical manifestations of hegemony because they shape the social, political, and cultural salience that drive the effectiveness of these health campaigns, particularly within cross cultural audiences (Olivares & Pena, 2015), educational settings (Shah, Clayman, Glass, & Kandula, 2015), and disadvantaged populations (Guttman, Anat, & Aycheh, 2013). This analysis focuses on a

gap in the literature, specifically the intersection of cultural perspectives on masculinity, humor, and mental health when they manifest in health promotional campaigns (Cross, 2013).

Approaching a Culture of Suicide in America

This article explores the *Man Therapy* campaign, analyzing the website, promotional materials, and white papers as artifacts in a critical, cultural rhetorical study—following traditions of the critical turn in health communication scholarship outlined by Dutta (2010) and initiated by Lupton (1994). Specifically, this article is part of the rhetorical tradition which has been employed in health communication to understand outcroppings of hegemonic structures in health media. Scholars have applied this approach to communication involving sensitivity in breast cancer pamphlets (Kline, 2007), to assess the public understandings of medicine (Condit, Lynch, & Winderman, 2012) or "ethnomedical" understandings (Marks, Reed, Colby, & Ibrahim, 2004), to situate the use of personal narratives of illness in health promotional campaigns (Lumpkins, 2012), and to understand how the interplay of political ideologies work to create the environment for the adoption of new vaccines (Thompson, 2010), to name a few.

Utilizing a critical cultural approach to *Man Therapy* creates space to deconstruct the relationships between cultures of masculinity and mental health. There is a gender gap in suicide, with 63% of successful suicides worldwide committed by men each year (Payne, Swami, & Stainstreet, 2008), and, as we previously mentioned, the gap is even more drastic in the United States. These discrepancies, according to Kalish and Kimmel (2010), should be viewed, in part, as the enactment of hegemonic gender expectations.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity, first defined by Connell (1990), is the gender discourse which subordinates both women and nondominant forms of masculinity. As Butler (1990) demonstrates, gender is defined by the masculine in a heteronormative world, and therefore the masculine becomes the ideal. This construction makes "a petri dish for hegemonic orderings of gender, specifically hegemonic masculinity" (Mocarski, Butler, Emmons, & Smallwood, 2012, p. 251). Hegemonic masculinity is traditionally constructed around tenets of power and control, occupational achievement, and self-regulation or stoicism (Trujillo, 1991), all of which are at odds with seeking help, especially when coupled with the Cartesian dualism of gender where man is associated with the mind and intellect and woman is associated with the body and emotion (Grosz, 1994). Gough (2006) outlines further:

> Mental health is reduced to the brain (not the mind), which is the same for all men ("male brain"), and used to process information (not emotions) like a computer.

> This is ironic because one reason why some men suffer mental health problems is an overly rational, problem-focused approach to emotional difficulties. (p. 2484)

This rationality and problem-focused approach reifies hegemonic masculinity as ideal, while reminding men that only by taking action that runs counter to hegemonic masculinity can they seek mental health. *Man Therapy* offers a unique site of analysis of hegemonic masculinity in a health context, as the health message of the site is couched in a comically exaggerated form of hegemonic masculinity.

Emslie, Ridge, Ziebland, and Hunt (2006) studied hegemonic masculinity and depression via secondary analysis of 16 qualitative interviews with depressed men. Their findings suggest "that depression is 'incompatible' with masculinity" for three reasons:

> First expressing emotion and crying—common experiences in depression—are linked to femininity . . . secondly, masculinity is linked with competence and achievement, while depression is often accompanied by feelings of powerlessness and lack of control. Thirdly, masculinity requires men to be tough and self-reliant, whereas the experience of depression often leaves people feeling weak and vulnerable. (Emslie et al., 2006, p. 2247)

These findings echo the aforementioned studies of pop-science, which is unsurprising since men's access to health knowledge is likely grounded in popular mediated outlets.

Humor

Meyer (1997) argues that humor sets perceptions of normalcy and then breaks those norms, which can paradoxically encourage or inhibit individuals feeling included in groups. Further, a single instance of humor can have different effects for different audience members (Lee, 2010). Thus, "humor enacts both unifying and divisive communication strategies" (Meyer, 1997, p. 638). To better understand the effects of humorous communication on specific audiences, Meyer (2000) breaks humor into four distinct functions: identification, clarification, enforcement, and differentiation. The first two functions, identification and clarification, are based on unifying effects of humorous communication, while the second two, enforcement and differentiation, produce divisive effects.

Identification effects allow individuals to self-identify as group members (Meyer, 2000), even around subjects perceived as being taboo (Winick, 1976), like mental health. Along the same lines, clarification humor builds group cohesion, but by addressing a shared situation or experience. As Meyer (2000) explains, "There is some familiarity with the issue on the part of the audience, and some agreement on the issue involved, but the humor serves to teach or clarify

the socially expected behaviors relating to the issue" (p. 319). Enforcement effects of humor reinscribe societal norms and attitudes. For instance, laughing at a male child that wears a dress serves to enforce performative gender binaries by labeling an action as a deviation from an expected normative behavior. Differentiation humor clarifies group members from nongroup members by mocking those outside the group (Meyer, 2000). Thus, those within the group could feel cohesion, but clear boundaries and ridicule typically exclude individuals.

Humor research in the field of communication generally categorizes the motivations for humor into three common theories: superiority, relief, and incongruity (Lynch, 2002). "Superiority humor is usually associated with laughing at others' inadequacies" and can be used as both "a mechanism of control or a form of resistance" (Lynch, 2002, p. 426). Relief humor "focuses on releasing tension" and "incongruity" humor "singl[es] out violations of a leaned pattern" (Martin, 2004, p. 274). Humor based in incongruity folds less into the motivation for the humor, and more into the mechanisms of the humor (although, both superiority and relief can be mechanistic as well), where the humor points out inconsistencies in the world, present situations, artifact, and so forth (Lynch, 2002). As Lynch notes and Martin (2004) demonstrates, a humorous instance does not necessarily fall into one of these three categories or theories neatly—therefore, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, these three motivations for humor intersect with the aforementioned communicative functions and oftentimes overlap. Therefore, using humor for a subject like suicide and depression is tricky. As Lester (2012) notes, "humor is one way to deal with difficult issues" (p. 673) and it can even be "a valuable tool of gender deconstruction" (Crawford, 2003, p. 1427); however, it can also abject certain members of the audience. In the analysis, *Man Therapy's* humor is explored, and the overlapping effects and motivations of the humor are shown to create potential paradoxes in effects between intent and outcome and various groups of receivers.

Analysis

Constructions of Masculinity

The health promotion campaign hinges on Dr. Rich Mahogany's online office found at http://www.mantherapy.org. One of the more striking elements of the virtual office is the overemphasis on hegemonic masculinity, both in the décor and in the language of the site. Mahogany's office is all dark wood (mahogany) and leather, and adornments include a moose head, dart board, hatchet, doctoral degree, and mustache collection fastened to the wall; a cigar box, robot statue, and baseball on the desk; and trophies and leather books on the book shelf. Through depictions of traditionally hegemonic masculine markers of frontiersmanship, sports prowess, and professional achievements (Trujillo, 1991), the site situates masculinity as a central theme of men's mental health.

The interactive element of the site lets users navigate to the right or left, which zooms in on one of the walls. The right wall, "Gentlemental Health," includes the bookshelf, which has bowling trophies on top, as well as a model wooden ship. There is also a parlor hanging light—one that would normally hang above a billiard's table. As mentioned earlier, there is sports paraphernalia, including the aforementioned dartboard, as well as an umbrella holder filled with golf clubs, baseball bats, and ski poles. The back wall of the office, "Tales of Triumph and Victory," includes a movie screen hung above a leather couch that has throw-pillows featuring cowboys and dogs. The wall-mounted shelves to the right of the screen include old movie reels, while those to the left include testimonial videos of real men that visitors can watch. The left wall, "Man Therapies," includes three pictures of Mahogany, one a traditional portrait taken in the office (as evident by the identical wallpaper), one is of two Mahoganys doing a trust exercise with one falling into the other's waiting arms, and one of a naked Mahogany lounging seductively amidst a pile of trophies, a couple of which are positioned to block his genitals. This wall also features a taxidermed bear and two movie theater seats, as well as Mahogany's counseling license and a neon, flashing "Bus Depot" sign. The trophies and dead animals (also trophies, in a way) are markers of physical control, as to obtain these object, Mahogany, presumably, had to best both his fellow man and beast in physical trails. The frontiersmanship tenet is most obviously intoned in the dead animals, as they represent the wild that the frontiersman has tamed, but is also evidenced by the hatchet, cowboy motifs, and episodes in which Mahogany cleans a fish when the cursor has not moved for a couple of minutes.

With blatant symbols of physical control, occupational success, and frontiersmanship at every turn, the office constructs a hypermasculine space that conflicts with the social and cultural norms associating therapy and mental health with femininity (Barry & Martin, 2014). This incongruity primes the audience for the attempted humor within the campaign (Canestrari, Dionigi, & Zuczkowski, 2014), allowing visitors to use the rhetorical aspects of the site to potentially challenge hegemonic norms through the absurdly masculine visuals within space. As visitors interpret the hypermasculine humor they encounter, they can think critically about the content. As Canestrari et al. (2014) explain, "[t]he problem solving activity involved in humor understanding aims at resolving the incongruity" (p. 261). Thus, visitors are left to reconcile the incongruity of masculinity and mental health-seeking behavior by attempting to identify with one, the other, or both of the constructs. Essentially, hypermasculinity incongruity prompts the health seeker to stop and question their place in the space.

Mental Health Seeking as Identifiably Masculine

A 30-second commercial for *Man Therapy* first aired on July 17, 2012 in Colorado, statewide. This ad became a staple during Denver Bronco's football

games, as well as other traditionally male-targeted programs. The spot, dubbed a Public Service Announcement, stars Dr. Rich Mahogany and serves as the primary/introductory setting for the *Man Therapy* website. Mahogany sits in front of his desk in a dark leather chair, wearing an unbuttoned dark blue polo. Immediately, the audience is greeted by the exaggerated relics of masculinity that include sporting paraphernalia, dark wood and leather, and framed degrees.

Mahogany begins: "Men have a way of doing things." He then lists a slew of banal activities that are accompanied by humorous cuts of Mahogany behind his desk doing these things in hypermanly ways. In voiceover he says "A man has a way of eating," while he attacks a comically large subsandwich—double the width of a normal sub and at least a foot long; "Of exercising," voiced-over Mahogany doing curls with his bowling ball; "Of keeping his hands warm," Mahogany, in front of the desk again, leans against his desk, and puts both hands down the front of his pants; "And of straightening up," in the most exaggerated cut, Mahogany is again behind the desk, reclining with his feet up on the desk, using a leaf blower to clear papers from the top of his desk. After the list is complete, Mahogany is again shown sitting in front of his desk and says: "So, when a man faces a serious life problem like divorce, depression, or suicidal thoughts, shouldn't a man have a way to deal with that too? Well now he does. I'm Dr. Rich Mahogany, visit me at mantherapy.org." As he says this last line, the website address appears on screen with the subtitle "Therapy. The way a man would do it."

The actions act as markers of identification since the voiceover culls images of hegemonic masculinity—since "Men [DO] have a way of doing things" in hegemonic gender ordering. Male viewers are asked to identify with the idea that men have certain ways they go about their lives that differentiate them from women and nonmasculine men. Thus, masculinity becomes the entry point through which to engage visitors on mental health, by attempting to center mental health-seeking behavior within traditionally masculine forms of hegemony.

The white papers explain that "the goal of *Man Therapy* is to show working age men that talking about their problem, getting help, and fixing themselves is masculine" (Spencer-Thomas et al., 2012). The office creates a space where men are supposed to identify with the trappings of masculinity. Furthermore, Mahogany presents himself as someone who his audience should feel comfortable talking to and with about their problems. The comfort is derived from the absurd markers of hegemonic masculinity, and, as mentioned earlier, many men who struggle with depression and suicidal thoughts may be having trouble identifying with, or following, the heteronormative, and therefore hegemonically masculine, path.

On top of elements of identification humor are instances of clarification humor. As visitors begin to identify mental health-seeking behavior as masculine, the engagement of the health tools relies on clarification humor, within the

context of hegemonic masculinity. For instance, visitors are prompted by Mahogany to take a self-assessment quiz. The first question of the survey states, "did you know that koalas sleep more than 18 hours a day? Lazy little bastards. Tell me about your sleep habits" (Cactus, 2012). By removing mental health language, like insomnia or sleep deprivation, and replacing it with mocking koala bears, the site utilizes humor to clarify the difference between masculine behaviors, like taking a self-assessment survey, and nonmasculine behaviors, like being lazy or liking cute bears.

Clarification humor to masculinize health-seeking behavior bookends the introduction to and the conclusion of the survey. Selecting the survey option causes Mahogany to display an old fashion calculator with a paper printing reel. He holds it up to show the users what he will use to calculate the results of the test and after taking the test we see a cut of Mahogany using a calculator with the sound of the paper printing. This is offered as a humorous interlude, coupled with a few more jokes (the specific jokes are dependent upon the answers given on the quiz) before he gives you your diagnosis and directs you to read your results. By using the calculator as a tool of emotional analysis, Mahogany feeds into the Cartesian dualism reified by hegemonic gender orderings. The calculator could be read as a function to flatten emotion into something that can be solved with logic, like the "computer" (p. 2484) Gough (2006) equated the "male brain" to in traditional gender roles.

Differentiation Humor

While *Man Therapy* has many serious tools to help combat depression, these tools are buried in the apparatus of the office itself. For instance, on the home page, there are six navigable options for the user, three of which bring the user to other sections of the office, two of which prompt Mahogany to give a short speech about the site, and one of which is linked to an 18-point quiz to help diagnose the problems afflicting the user. It is safe to say that this last option is probably the most important for the site to function properly, but it is buried beneath these other options. Even the quiz itself is steeped in humorous, nonsequitur narratives, like the laziness of koala bears mentioned earlier. Users must work through the quiz in order to get Mahogany's "professional opinion," which he adds up on a calculator. By burying useful information under layers of humor, the likelihood that users will encounter differentiation or enforcement humor increases. The purpose of these jokes may be to clarify acceptable behavior, or providing situations in which "social norms are illuminated while the stress is on the expected norm rather than the seriousness of the violation" (Meyers, 2000, p. 319). An integral part of the conceptualizations of manhood within this campaign is the display of masculinity, both as an object of humor and as unifying element. Instances of clarification humor within the website depend heavily on audiences recognizing the parody of masculinity.

For instance, one of the opening explanations on the site has Mahogany tell users that some men are afraid that sharing their feeling makes them "girly men" but that being open and honest about their feelings is "the least unmanly thing a man can do" (Cactus, 2012). Within this discussion, Mahogany clarifies that there are things that men should never do, including riding ponies, skipping, and breaking a sweat on an elliptical machine. This type of clarification asserts that a societal expectation of masculinity in men exists, because men should never "slap fight," but the violation of the expectation is less egregious than the violation of masculinity by seeking mental health information. Thus, the rules for what counts as masculine performance are clarified, so that therapy is ok, but "manscaping" is not. By layering these jokes on top of important mental health information, the site runs the risk of abjecting an individual visitor whose behaviors mirror those being mocked. For instance, while talking to users about a self-assessment survey, Mahogany spurts, "Oh, and don't bullshit me, because there is nothing I hate more than bullshit. Except maybe shopping malls. And spandex" (Cactus, 2012). When Mahogany asserts that spandex or enjoying shopping are things he hates, clear lines of delineation are drawn between what is acceptable and what deviation should be mocked to be corrected. Considering that Colorado ranks in the top five states for bicycle friendliness (League of American Bicyclists, 2012), and most cyclists sport spandex (Quinn, 2010), the joke could easily be divisive for Colorado visitors who are male cyclists, thus limiting the accessibility of the site for mental health information seekers.

In specific instances, like when joking on shopping, *Man Therapy* runs the risk of using differentiation humor. Also divisive in effect, this type of humor isolates a specific group that is different and the target of mocking. When Mahogany states, "Did you know that men have feelings too? And no, not just the hippies" (Cactus, 2012), a specific group, hippies, is isolated from the discussion. Moreover, the site spends a considerable amount of time promoting a singular manliness. Men whose gender identity is associated with things other than traditional hegemonic masculine markers like sports, hunting, and heterosexuality are systematically abjected by the site. Essentially, the site is for men whose masculinity is challenged by mental health; therefore, the site emphasizes mental health as ultramasculine. Thus, if men seeking mental health information are not concerned with, or are opposed to masculinity in these traditional forms, they find themselves to be a group outside the humor.

Second, when the audience encounters humor at every turn, they may begin to question the validity of the mental health information within the website. In the group therapy section, where users can read posts and comments from mental health professionals and other men struggling with mental health issues, a letter head slogan reads "No kumbayas. No awkward group hugs. No soothing ocean noises. Just real man-to-man conversation" (Cactus, 2012). By heading a subsection of a subsection of the site with humor, there seems to be no escape from the humor. This type of heading is ubiquitous on the site and

seems to occlude the real health information. For instance, in the aforementioned example, the user is entering an interactive message board with other users and professional staff. By prompting the users to avoid unmanly interactions, *Man Therapy* clarifies manly behavior by differentiating unmanly behavior. In this case, the user has done a traditionally unmanly act, seeking mental health in an interactive environment, but is told to regulate how they seek that help within the environment. This type of constant barrage of humor, even in spaces that seem like they should be solely focused on health, is a major element of the site. Even during moments of inactivity, Dr. Mahogany might move through the office operating a leaf blower tiding up, clean a fish from a small cooler, or listen to the soothing sounds of revving engines. These actions not only represent masculine activities but do so in such an exaggerated form as to be comical. Humor is attempted at nearly every turn, which could muddy helpful mental health information with the presence of absurdity.

Conclusion

> Because contrary to popular belief, men can't fix everything themselves
>
> —Dr. Rich Mahogany

Targeting the Humor

Humor as a constitutive tactic utilized by *Man Therapy* does not guarantee cohesion of audience members, because masculinity is mocked and, simultaneously, embedded as a positive element of men in therapy. "Satire requires an audience to maintain multiple representations of a text" (Kreuz & Roberts, 1993, p. 101). "Therefore, viewers must have knowledge of the original acts in order to get the jokes" (Duffy & Page, 2013, p. 548). For a more insightful visitor, who is comfortable in their masculine identity, the site could highlight the absurd abstraction of hegemonic masculinity, while affirming the visitors' construction of masculinity within their identity as a man. Herein lies the most promising aspect of the *Man Therapy* campaign. For individuals who visit the site to learn more about men and mental health that may not be suffering from mental health issues, the site could act as an excellent artifact for destigmatizing men and mental health. Thus, if men who value masculinity can come to see therapy as acceptable for masculine men, then they may be more helpful in recognizing and providing support for men they know suffering from mental health issues. *Man Therapy* has good motives, and undeniably helps some men; however, the one-size-fits-all approach is problematic.

Aside from the obvious effects of hegemonic masculinity on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) persons that sees 45% of LGBTQ youth attempting suicide versus only 8% in heterosexual youth (Hong, Espelage, & Kral, 2011, p. 885), hegemonic masculinity also pushes heteronormative men toward suicidal behavior. In their study of suicidal behavior in men, Emslie et al. (2006) found compelling qualitative evidence that suggests some of this behavior is linked to the desire to reestablish hegemonic masculinity. In other words, suicide offered control and power to the men who felt they had lost it: "Some men saw suicide as a potential means of establishing control" (Emsli et al., 2006, p. 2252). Hegemonic masculinity, as an ideal that is not obtainable, creates a world where failure to achieve this ideal corners some men into a cycle of depression. This cycle can then lead to suicide being viewed as not only an escape from depression but also a valiant act to reestablish hegemonic masculinity within their lives. Masculinity is not homogenous and while societal pressure pushes people toward a hegemonic ideal, this ideal is also not static or uniform. Demographics and history affect the ideal that men strive to achieve, and some men are trapped in a shame-cycle as the pressure of the hegemonic ideal is what pushes them toward depression. *Man Therapy* questions this equation but also assumes that hegemonic masculinity, particularly a White, middle class version is what its visitors are striving toward or struggling against—thereby reifying the answers to the equation.

If the men visiting the site are struggling with their masculinity as it relates to their mental health issues, the absurdity of the site may have a different effect. Specifically, visitors who do not fit traditional construction of hegemonic masculinity may see the visual and verbal representations of masculinity on the site as additional evidence that they are not masculine enough. Conversely, men who embrace traditional markers of masculinity may see the site as mocking their identity construction, or that therapy, particularly for mental health issues, is a joke to masculine men. Furthermore, suicides or attempted suicides are most prevalent "among people not in contact with mental health services" (Owen, Belam, Lambert, Donovan, & Rapport, 2012, p. 419). Since "major depression underlies more than half of suicides" (Emslie et al., 2006, p. 2247), this lack of utilization of mental health services in this population is unsurprising. In its mission, *Man Therapy* states that it is aimed at "working age men" (Spencer-Thomas et al., 2012), and grounds itself in a heteronormative worldview through its overt lampooning of hegemonic masculinity and lack of representation of alternative masculinities. However, given the prevalence of sexual orientation discrimination that undergirds male suicide and depression, it is impossible to ignore these discourses when studying and combating suicide in America.

In some ways, the use of humor is always a risk: "Humor is tricky" (Martin, 2004, p. 286). No matter the context humor creates an opportunity for failure because in order for humor to be successful, the audience must be on the same page as the rhetor: "One key for successful humor initiation is the condition of

shared meaning between the audience and the rhetor. In other words, there must be an agreement and acknowledgement of a 'play frame' for humor to be successful" (Martin, 2004, p. 280). In casual, interpersonal situations, or in politics, or in popular culture, this risk is worth taking, as the negative consequences are relatively benign. But when it comes to suicide prevention, the negative consequences could be malignant, so it is vital that the messages are vetted. This does not mean that this type of humor must be funny to everyone, but it must not abject or offend anyone within the target audience, because, by definition, they are in a fragile state.

Hybrid masculinity. It should be noted that the presentation of masculinity within *Man Therapy* could be read as a type of hybrid masculinity. As Messner (2007) demonstrates with his analysis of Arnold Schwarzenegger's displays of masculinity postaction movie star, masculinities that rely on hegemonic markers can extend beyond those markers with elements that defy said markers. However, Messner suggests cautious deconstruction of these types of masculinities since masculinity is not static. In the case of Schwarzenegger, he was able to move between the forms in order to weld more power and, in turn, stifle movement forward in understanding of gender. In the context of this analysis, hybrid masculinity is an interesting angle of analysis because Rich Mahogany also shifts between tropes of masculinity—as shown earlier, this is how the humor functions. Therefore, his character can be read as an attack on hegemonic forms of masculinity because he is so exaggerated and relies on such tropes that we are expected to laugh at him and therefore deride what he intones. However, like Schwarzenegger, Mahogany is not clearly undercutting the hegemonic form, as at times, as shown earlier, he embodies that form in nonironic ways. Furthermore, since the representation is humorous, this type of reading necessitates a full understanding of the humor from the start. In the end, this reading, while a potentially useful study, falls outside of the scope of this article.

Joking on Suicide

We concur with the literature which positions suicidal tendencies as based on a complex web of factors. In other words: "Suicide is clearly the result of a complex interaction of a number of precipitating factors" (Payne et al., 2008, p. 24). Part of our premise that *Man Therapy* walks a thin line, where it will help some and offend/abject others, fits into Lester's (2012) observation that suicide jokes are not universally accepted, and the differences between people who find them funny and those who do not may lie in differences "in personality, attitudes, and possibly suicidal urges" (p. 672). Citing a study by Keith-Spiegel, Spiegel, and Gonska from 1972, Lester says "psychiatric patients who had attempted or threatened suicide in the past found suicide cartoons less funny than did nonsuicidal psychiatric patients and nonsuicidal insurance salesmen" (p. 672). However, other

findings (this time from 1969) demonstrate "that suicidal patients were more like to have an intropunitive joke (in which any anger is directed inward toward the protagonist of the joke) as their favorite joke than did nonsuicidal patients" (Lester, 2012, p. 673). Owens et al. (2012) turn to Goffman's theory of the presentation of self, and specifically *face-work* and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, which introduced *face-threatening acts (FTA),* in order to ground lay communication of suicide. Specifically, they found in their qualitative study that suicidal humor could be attributed to FTAs: "Talking about suicide can be face-threatening because the potential to impose upon autonomy and challenge the public self-image of both interlocutors" (Owen et al., 2012, p. 427). *Man Therapy* mitigates this risk through its online, anonymous format and through the elimination of one real-life interlocutor. Instead, the site offers Dr. Mahogany, whose face is never threatened due to his fictitious nature, and his overt masculinity. However, the elimination of a real life speaker presents other problems, which manifest in the one-size-fits-all approach.

Perhaps the key take-away from this analysis is that the apparatus of a health tool must be benign and also streamlined. The flashiness of *Man Therapy*—humor and production value—is clunky. This apparatus creates layers and multiple readings, both of which have the opportunity to turn away visitors. On the flip side, it may also attract visitors to the site who would have otherwise not sought help, or who do not really need help but still can glean value out of the destigmatization of mental health care. Mahogany says it best himself when the results of your diagnostic test are being prepared: "as soon as I'm done jibber-jabbering…" The valuable health information and tools of *Man Therapy* always come wrapped in a joke or two. On top of these layers, there are constant visual cues reinforcing the overt humor, with humor embedded in the apparatus and space of the campaign. This makes *Man Therapy* anything but streamlined, and the singular lens to view masculinity, and the continuous, humorous hammering of this masculinity, bars off certain segments of the population—some of which are at high risk for depression and suicide.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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

Funding

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

References

Avila-Saavedra, G. (2009). Nothing queer about queer television: Televized construction of gay masculinities. *Media, Culture & Society*, *31*(1), 5–21.

Barry, J., & Martin, S. (2014). *What can Tony Soprano teach men about therapy?* The Male Psychology Conference, University College of London, London, 41–68.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cactus. (2012). *Man therapy*. Retrieved from Man Therapy website: http://manthera py.org/#/center

Canestrari, C., Dionigi, A., & Zuczkowski, A. (2014). Humor understanding and knowledge. *Language & Dialogue*, *4*(2), 261–283.

Centers for Disease Control. (2012a). *Injury center: Violence prevention*. Retrieved from Center for Disease Control website: http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/suicide/datasources.html

Centers for Disease Control. (2012b). *Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2011*. Washington, DC: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Condit, C. M., Lynch, J., & Winderman, E. (2012). Recent rhetorical studies in public understanding of science: Multiple purposes and strengths. *Public Understanding of Science*, *21*(4), 386–400.

Connell, R. W. (1990). A whole new world: Remaking masculinity in the context of the environmental movement. *Gender and Society*, *4*(4), 452–478.

Cooper, B. (2002). Boys don't cry and female masculinity: Reclaiming a life & dismantling the politics of normative heterosexuality. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *19*(1), 44–63.

Crawford, M. (2003). Gender and humor in a social context. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *35*, 1413–1430.

Cross, S. (2013). Laughing at lunacy: Othering and comic ambiguity in popular humour about mental distress. *Social Semiotics*, *23*(1), 1–17.

Duffy, M., & Janis, T. P. (2013). Does political humor matter? You Betcha! Comedy TV's performance of the 2008 Vice Presidential Debate. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *46*(3), 545–565.

Dutta, M. J. (2010). The critical cultural turn in health communication: Reflexivity, solidarity, and praxis. *Health Communication*, *25*, 534–539.

Emslie, C., Ridge, D., Ziebland, S., & Hunt, K. (2006). Men's accounts of depression: Reconstructing or resisting hegemonic masculinity?. *Social Science & Medicine*, *62*, 2246–2257.

Gough, B. (2006). Try to be healthy, but don't forgo your masculinity: Deconstructing men's health discourse in the media. *Social Science & Medicine*, *63*, 2476–2488.

Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile bodies: Toward a corporeal feminism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Guttman, N., Anat, G. E., & Seffefe, A. (2013). Communicating health rights to disadvantaged populations: Challenges in developing a culture-centered approach for ethiopian immigrants in Israel. *Health Communication*, *28*(6), 546–556.

Holland, K., & Richard, B. (2009). *Tensions between activism and advocacy in the mental health field: Identifying some tactical differences*. Conference papers, International Communication Association, Chicago, 1–27.

Hong, J. S., Espelage, D. L., & Kral, M. J. (2011). Understanding suicide among sexual minority youth in America: An ecological systems analysis. *Journal of Adolescence*, *34*, 885–894.

Kalish, R., & Kimmel, M. (2010). Suicide by mass murder: Masculinity, aggrieved entitlement, and rampage school shootings. *Health Sociology Review*, *19*(4), 451–464.

Kline, K. N. (2007). Cultural sensitivity and health promotion: Assessing breast cancer education pamphlets designed for African American women. *Health Communication*, *21*(1), 85–96.

Kreuz, R., & Roberts, M. R. (1993). On satire and parody: The importance of being ironic. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, *8*(2), 97–109.

League of American Bicyclists. (2012). *Bicycle friendly state program*. Retrieved from League of American Bicyclists website: http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/bicyclefriendlystate/

Lee, M. J. (2010). The effects of self-efficacy statements in humorous anti-alcohol abuse messages targeting college students: Who is in charge? *Health Communication*, *25*(8), 638–646.

Lester, D. (2012). Reflections on jokes and cartoons about suicide. *Death Studies*, *36*, 664–674.

Lumpkins, C. Y. (2012). Hollywood and breast cancer prevention among African American women: An analysis of breast cancer risk narratives in the California 'every woman counts campaign'. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, *4*(5), 95–106.

Lupton, D. (1994). Toward the development of critical health communication praxis. *Health Communication*, *6*(1), 55–67.

Lynch, O. H. (2002). Humorous communication: Finding a place for humor in communication research. *Communication Theory*, *12*(4), 423–445.

Mansson, D. H. (2013). College students' mental health and their received affection from their grandparents. *Communication Research Reports*, *30*(2), 157–168.

Marks, J. P., Reed, W., Colby, K., & Ibrahim, S. A. (2004). A culturally competent approach to cancer news and education in an inner city community: Focus group findings. *Journal of Health Communication*, *9*, 143–157.

Martin, D. M. (2004). Balancing on the political high wire: The role of humor in the rhetoric of Ann Richards. *Southern Communication Journal*, *69*(4), 273–288.

Messner, M. A. (2007). The masculinity of the governator: Muscle and compassion in American politics. *Gender & Society*, *21*(4), 461–480.

Meyer, J. C. (1997). Humor in member narratives: Uniting and dividing at work. *Western Journal of Communication*, *61*(2), 188–208.

Meyer, J. C. (2000). Humor as a double-edged sword: Four functions of humor in communication. *Communication Theory*, *10*(3), 310–331.

Mocarski, R., Butler, S., Emmons, B., & Smallwood, R. (2012). *A different kind of man: Mediated transgender subjectivity, Chaz Bono on dancing with the stars*. Phoenix, AZ: ICA.

Nezlek, J. B., & Derks, P. (2001). Use of humor as a coping mechanism, psychological adjustment, and social interaction. *Humor*, *14*(4), 395–413.

Olivares, M., & Carmen, P. (2015). Teaching health sciences students about culturally sensitive communication between health professionals and patients from diverse cultures. *International Journal of Bilingual Education & Bilingualism*, *18*(1), 113–126.

Owen, G., Belam, J., Lambert, H., Donovan, J., & Rapport, F. (2012). Suicide communication events: Lay interpretation of the communication of suicidal ideation and intent. *Social Science & Medicine*, *75*, 419–428.

Payne, S., Swami, V., & Stainstreet, D. L. (2008). The social construction of gender and its influence on suicide: A review of the literature. *Journal of Men's Health*, *5*(1), 23–35.

Quinn, E. (2010). *Bike shorts—Why do cyclists wear tight bike shorts*. Retrieved from About.com-Health and Sport Medicine website: http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/equipment/qt/bike-shorts.htm

Shah, A., Marla, L. C., Sarah, G., & Namratha, R. K. (2015). Protect your heart: A culture-specific multimedia cardiovascular health education program. *Journal of Health Communication*, *20*, 424–430.

Spencer-Thomas, S., Hindman, J., & Conrad, J. (2012). *Man therapy: An innovative approach to suicide prevention for working aged men*. Denver, CO: Carson J Spencer Foundation, Cactus Marketing and communications, and the Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention.

Thompson, M. (2010). Who's guarding what? A poststructural feminist analysis of Gardasil. *Health Communication*, *25*, 119–130.

Trujillo, N. (1991). Hegemonic masculinity on the mound: Media representations of Nolan Ryan and American sport culture. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *8*(3), 290–306.

Winick, C. (1976). The social contexts of humor. *Journal of Communication*, *26*(3), 124–128.

Yoon, H. J. (2015). Humor effects in shame-inducing health issue advertising: The moderating effects of fear of negative evaluation. *Journal of Advertising*, *44*(2), 126–139.

Author Biographies

Richard Mocarski is the director of Sponsored Programs and Research Development as well as an assistant professor of Communication at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. His research focuses on narrative inclusion and exclusion with emphasis in barriers to treatment in health in at-risk populations.

Sim Butler is an assistant professor in the Communication Studies Department at the University of Alabama. His teaching and research centers on critical, cultural, and rhetorical approaches to identity performance, particularly within the contexts of gender, sport, disability, and civic discourse. Drs. Mocarski and Butler are co-First Authors of this work.

Article

Journal of Communication Inquiry
2016, Vol. 40(2) 145–161

DOI: 10.1177/0196859915623493
jci.sagepub.com

Let Them Talk: New Year's Presidential Rhetoric in Russia, Belarus, and Poland

Tatsiana Karaliova[1]

Abstract

This comparative analysis examined how the presidents of Russia, Belarus, and Poland, the three countries with different political regimes, used the New Year's addresses to rhetorically construct social reality in terms of national identity and the positions of the countries in the world. Specifically, the study looked at how presidents used rhetorical means to build and reinforce solidarity and civil sphere, to appeal to the nations' historical consciousness, to include or exclude certain groups, to define the relationship of the state and society, and to rhetorically construct the image of conformity. The differences in how the presidents rhetorically constructed and reinforced solidarity and civil sphere were revealed in how the speakers stressed active role of either the government or the community in overcoming crises. It was observed that the image of solidarity and conformity could be rhetorically constructed not only with the help of unifying rhetoric but also by blaming and social exclusion of "enemies" to build sense of connectedness and conformity against "the other." The way the presidents spoke about status quo in their countries demonstrated how institutionalized uncertainty could be rhetorically constructed in democratic regimes and how stability could serve as an argument in sustaining regime legitimacy in nondemocratic regimes.

Keywords

political rhetoric, power, national identity, discourse, television

[1]Missouri School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

Corresponding Author:
Tatsiana Karaliova, Missouri School of Journalism, University of Missouri Columbia, MO 65211, USA.
Email: tkaraliova@gmail.com

The tradition of televised New Year's presidential addresses is common in many countries where people raise glasses of champagne while their leaders congratulate them and discuss the nations' past, present, and future. In these speeches, presidents typically do not propose new policies or announce important decisions, so from this point of view, the addresses represent ritualistic rather than deliberative acts. However, leaders of the countries use New Year's addresses as opportunities to rhetorically construct social and political realities for the nations in a certain way. In this sense, presidential New Year's rhetoric presents valuable material for comparative analysis that provides insight into how these ritualistic cultural acts are performed in different countries. In particular, this study examines the differences in how the presidents use the New Year's addresses to rhetorically construct social reality in terms of national identity formation and defining the positions of the countries in the world.

Scholars have argued the importance of presidential rhetoric and the agenda-setting power of presidents (Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis, & Bassette, 1981; Cohen, 1995; Ericson, 1997; Ryfe, 2005; Tulis, 1987, etc.). With easy access to the mass media and the populace, presidents have an advantage over other political actors in terms of public attention and interest and possess incredible rhetorical power. Until recently, presidential rhetoric scholarship was overwhelmingly U.S.-centered. It looked at different forms of presidential communication and addressed its various aspects. One of the important works by Campbell and Jamieson (2008), for example, used the generic framework to study presidential rhetoric and identify substantive, stylistic, and strategic similarities of presidential discourses defined by their pragmatic ends.

This article aims to contribute to the understanding of characteristics of presidential communication in other regions of the world and to offer certain global theoretical and practical implications for a specific genre, the New Year's address. According to Noije and Hijmans (2005), "[t]he strength of the New Year's speeches lies in their symbolic function" (p. 29). This symbolic function is understood in how people perceive presidents as the leaders who possess a certain degree of power in determining the destinies of their nations. In a discourse analysis of how French presidents express national identity and nationalism in New Year's speeches, Noije and Hijmans (2005) wrote about the importance of this type of presidential address as an event when the leader addresses the entire population irrespective of individual citizens' class differences or differences in political views. These characteristics allow for analysis of the rhetoric as a significant cultural artifact that provides insight into how political discourse is rhetorically constructed by heads of nations.

This analysis of how presidential rhetoric is used to build and reinforce solidarity, appeal to the nations' historical consciousness, and include or exclude certain groups will help understand how unifying and orienting functions are performed in countries with different political regimes, ranging from consolidated democracy to consolidated autocracy, and how presidential rhetoric serves

as a tactic of rule to rhetorically construct a sense of unity and conformity. Unifying and orienting functions of New Year's speeches are especially important in countries where the tradition of this type of presidential rhetoric has been well established. In this respect, the countries of the post-Soviet bloc are of particular analytical interest, as this address to the people became traditional more than four decades ago, is widely watched, and remains an important attribute of the New Year's celebration to the present day (Kondratenko, 2007).

This comparative analysis examines how presidential rhetoric in the form of televised New Year's speeches is performed in three countries: Russia, Belarus, and Poland. This study used the method of discourse analysis to examine how the presidents rhetorically constructed their addresses in terms of national identity and foreign policy.

Literature Review

The institution of the presidency in Russia, Belarus, and Poland was established only two and half decades ago. In the three countries, presidential rhetoric as such lacked traditions of deliberative public discourse that could have been inherited by elected leaders in the early1990s (Williams, 2006). This also contributed to the lack of scholarship on presidential rhetoric in the region. In contrast, presidential communication as an area of study has received a great deal of attention from U.S. scholars. The following section provides an overview of the literature on functions of presidential communication in an attempt to identify a common ground that could be helpful in understanding how popular presidential rhetoric is performed in Russia, Belarus, and Poland as well as how similarities and differences could be explained.

Functions of Presidential Communication and Popular Address Rhetoric

Communication in the system of government serves to unify a society, legitimize power, orient a society, resolve conflicts, and implement policies (Smith & Smith, 1994). Unifying and orienting functions appear to be particularly relevant to presidential New Year's rhetoric in the ongoing contestation over nations' identity formation and defining their positions in the world. For the unifying function, it is important to look at how presidents use rhetorical means for incorporation of certain groups into civil society as well as their exclusion from it (Alexander, 2006). Analysis of inclusive or exclusive solidarity rhetoric will help in understanding how common identities of particular nations are being constructed and how rhetorical means are being manipulated to create an image of unity and conformity.

In an examination of presidential rhetoric's influence on agenda setting, Cohen (1995) showed that increases in presidential attention to economic,

foreign, or civil rights issues led to an increase in public concern over those issues. Because of the televised format of New Year's speeches and the particular context and timing, presidents have unparalleled access to mass audiences and therefore possess incredible potential agenda-setting power. But presidents not only can potentially set agendas or tell audiences *what* to think about. They also use rhetorical means to define *how* to think about it. Specifically, this applies to presidential rhetoric on foreign policy issues, or defining the positions of the nations in the world. Here, it is important to look at how leaders talk about allies and enemies of their nations (Young, 2008). Relationships with other countries present measures of foreign affairs principles, and the rhetoric of "allies and enemies" is a vehicle for expressing those principles. Young (2008) described presidential foreign policy talk as a "rhetorical net used to capture allies, alliances, and enemies" (p. 161), which reveals a nation's estimation of itself and surrounding countries. By looking at how leaders address foreign affairs issues in their New Year's speeches, this study will help provide an understanding of how the presidents rhetorically construct the ideas of what positions their countries take in the global context. Studying such rhetoric comparatively will help identify and highlight the differences and offer explanations for those differences.

Comparative studies of popular presidential rhetoric examined the addresses of several presidents from the same country or presidents from different countries within identical timeframes. For example, Chung and Park (2010) looked at how rhetorical substance and style of inaugural addresses by two Korean presidents helped to explain political viewpoints of the leaders. New Year's addresses of presidents have been analyzed as a genre of political discourse with a focus on its specific characteristics (Kondratenko, 2007), on how presidents express national identity in popular communication (Noije & Hijmans, 2005), and on how presidents manipulate metaphors in their speeches to reach their ideological goals (Lu & Ahrens, 2008). In the U.S. scholarship, the popular address type of rhetoric was often studied in the contexts of State of the Union speeches (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Teten, 2007, etc.) and inaugural addresses as ritualistic performances (Beasley, 2001; Campbell & Jamieson, 1985; Ericson, 1997; Tulis, 1987, etc.). In his study of popular address rhetoric within State of the Union addresses, Teten (2007) examined three forms of presidential rhetoric, which were suggested in previous scholarly works (Beasley, 2004; Tulis, 1987): identification, authority, and directive rhetoric. The presidents used these forms of rhetoric to address different types of audiences to unite them while presidents as speakers remained particular and included at the same time.

Social Construction of Reality and National Identity

This study argues that the social constructivist approach to presidential rhetoric in countries with different political regimes is useful in explaining how

New Year's speeches are performed in terms of national identity formation and defining the positions of the nations in the world. According to Ryfe (2005), presidential rhetoric is socially constructed, historically conditioned, and basically a form of culture. Lippmann's (1922) idea of the social construction of reality suggests that because of the complexity of the surrounding world, people have to rely on learning about it indirectly, by the means of communication with other sources. To reconstruct the image of the world, people turn to mass media that help create "pictures in our head" (p. 3) on various issues that we cannot learn about directly. The mass media, Gitlin (1980) argues, "produce fields of definition and association, symbol and rhetoric, through which ideology becomes manifest and concrete" (p. 2). Televised presidential addresses in this sense serve as a way for presidents to communicate constructed social and political realities, signal their ideological authority, and define identities of their respective nations using rhetorical means. The idea of presidential rhetoric being socially constructed, historically conditioned, and viewed as a cultural practice (Ryfe, 2005) suggests that presidential rhetoric could be particularly helpful in understanding how presidents socially construct identities of their respective nations.

Of all the forms of collective identities, national identity is the most fundamental and inclusive one as it encompasses not only definite geographical space, or "historic land" to which people feel they belong, but also a shared sense of a political community with laws and institutions, and a common culture and civic ideology that are ensured by the agencies of socialization (Smith, 1991). Most important, national identity helps individuals define and locate themselves in the world through the prism of the collective personality of the nation. Presidents are among the main actors who help rhetorically construct such collective personalities or communities of the nations. Noteworthy for this study, national identity might serve as a powerful political tool that can be used for political manipulation (O'Hagan, 1995). Therefore, looking at how presidents use rhetorical means in their efforts to guide the contestations over national identity formation is crucial for understanding what implications the New Year's addresses, as acts of rhetorical construction of social reality, have for societies with different political regimes and foreign policy orientations.

Political Regimes and Foreign Policy Orientations

Different vectors of postcommunist transformations have led to differences in political development of the countries from the former Soviet bloc and to a broad spectrum of political regimes and ways power is distributed and reproduced in those countries (Melville, 2004). *Nations in Transit 2013*[1] by Freedom House (2013) provides an analysis of democratic development in 29 countries from Central Europe to Central Asia. According to the report, in 2013, Russia and Belarus belonged to the group of consolidated authoritarian regimes with

overall democracy scores of 6.75 and 7.00, respectively. Poland had a score of 1.25 and belonged to the group of consolidated democracies. However, these numbers do not speak to the particular characteristics of the political systems in the countries, the patterns of their development, and the foreign policy orientations. What follows is a brief description of such characteristics.

According to Levitsky and Way (2010), after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia was a competitive authoritarian regime with bureaucratic chaos and weak organizational power until the increased state and party capacity caused consolidation of the regime in 2008. With the emergence of a strong governing party *United Russia* and reaffirmed control over key economy sectors, central state authority in Russia strengthened while economic growth and high oil prices made Russia immune to pressure from western countries (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Russian foreign policy is sometimes described as difficult to define or predict. According to Kubicek (1999), since 1991, the general pattern of Russia's foreign policy has fluctuated from cooperation with the West to direct confrontation over issues such as Russia's assertion of a sphere of influence in other post-Soviet states. Russian diplomacy, according to Monaghan (2008), remains contradictory and reflects both confidence and insecurity with this tension of an international political posture being reflected in country's swaying between

> the fear of an "enemy at the gates" directly threatening Russia's interests and, alternatively, the impression given by official documents and statements of a Russia winning a string of diplomatic successes across the world, a Russia that marches "from victory to victory" in protecting and asserting its "national interests". (p. 719)

In Belarus, weak civil society and national identity had a negative impact on societal mobilization, political awareness, and support of political and economic reforms, which led to autocratic regime consolidation in the late 1990s (Kuzio, 2002; Way, 2005). In the absence of a commonly accepted national idea, weak anti-Soviet and pro-European Belarusian identity, and Russian intervention in support of the autocratic president, the sociopolitical context in the country is characterized today by weak civil society and private sector, lack of public involvement in politics, very limited activity by independent mass media, and a widespread net of ideological bureaucracy. In terms of foreign affairs orientations, Belarus is "balancing between two major geopolitical and civilization players" (Manaev, 2009, p. 156). Together with Ukraine and Moldova, Belarus became the battleground between Russia (Eurasian Orthodox cultures) to the east and the European Union (Western European Catholic or Protestant cultures) to the west.

The existence of an independent mass political movement Solidarity as well as strong national identity of Poles combined with efforts of the nationally unifying

figure of the Polish Pope John Paul II all played an important role in challenging Poland's communist rule and regime change in 1980s. Ten years after Poland joined the European Union in 2004, the country has become an economic and political role model for the EU demonstrating a notable success in democratization, effective market economy, and attracting foreign investments. According to The Economist Intelligence Unit (2014), Polish diplomacy evolved from mostly defensive or transactional forms of cooperation to a matured multivectored cooperation with Germany, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and other countries around the world. Poland's journey to Europe was notable for its economic success, from which the country received significant political dividends, The Economist Intelligence Unit (2014) reports.

This study attempts to uncover how ideological battles for national identity formation are reflected in New Year's presidential rhetoric in Russia, Belarus, and Poland, and how presidents rhetorically construct the positions of their nations in the world.

Methodology

This study examines the televised New Year's speeches by the presidents of Russia, Belarus, and Poland from 2009 to 2013. This timeframe includes a diverse sample of addresses performed by different presidents and allows the analysis to focus on rhetorical acts as performances of the presidential institutions while reducing the aspect of specific presidents' personal influences on the construction of speeches. In Russia, New Year's speeches were delivered by Dmitry Medvedev in 2009 to 2011 and by Vladimir Putin in 2012 to 2013. In Poland, Lech Kaczyński gave the speech in 2009, while Bronisław Komorowski addressed the nation in 2010 to 2013. In Belarus, New Year's addresses were delivered by Aleksandr Lukashenko. Thus, the sample included five speeches for each country plus an additional speech for Russia (16 speeches in total). In 2013, the Russian president delivered two New Year's speeches: a prerecorded address and a new one he decided to make during a reception for rescuers and people who lost their houses in the floods in Khabarovsk. In the new address, he spoke about the natural disaster in Khabarovsk and the recent bombings in Volgograd (RIA Novosti, 2013).

In their study of national identity and nationalism in the New Year's speeches of French presidents, Van Noije and Hijmans (2005) used discourse analysis to examine nationalist rhetoric and differences between the structures of frames. The authors identified the themes of national identity and nationalism addressed by the presidents. Additionally, they looked at the wording, key, and tone with which themes were framed, to reconstruct underlying meaning structures.

Apart from the analysis of how presidents participate in the contestation over national identity formation in their speeches, this study aims to look at how the positions of the three nations in the world are being rhetorically constructed in

the addresses. The method of discourse analysis is useful for this study because it helps in understanding the role of political discourse, or, as Van Dijk (2001) describes it, "the enactment, reproduction, and legitimization of power and domination" (p. 360).

The qualitative research data analysis software Dedoose (www.dedoose.com) was used to organize the process of analysis by allowing the researcher to view, transcribe, and systematically identify parts of the addresses that contained excerpts of references to foreign policy issues. Similarly, to understand how the presidents constructed their messages in terms of national identity, such references with specific excerpts were identified. The sets of excerpts were later sorted according to themes and rhetorical strategies, which helped with identifying patterns as well as demonstrating particular examples of observed patterns.

Findings

Rhetorical Construction of Unity and National Identity

To rhetorically construct a sense of unity in their respective nations, the presidents of Russia, Belarus, and Poland spoke about unified efforts while pursuing economic success and overcoming hardships, referenced major events and issues in their countries in the past years, thanked their citizens for their efforts, and stressed the greatness of their countries and people. The addresses differed, however, in the rhetorical strategies the presidents used to build and reinforce solidarity, appeal to the nations' historical consciousness, include or exclude certain groups, define state-society relationships, and construct an image of conformity.

Building and Reinforcing Solidarity and National Community

Both Polish presidents often emphasized solidarity, efforts, and optimism of Polish people in overcoming crises. They also spoke about the unity of the nation in celebrating achievements. In 2010 and 2011, Polish president Komorowski spoke about two significant events for the country: the plane crash in 2010, when 96 people, including Polish president Lech Kaczynski and his wife, died, and the beatification of Pope John Paul II. The plane crash, according to Komorowski, was a major exam for the Polish nation and for the Polish Constitution when "solidarity of millions of Polish citizens [. . .] has given strength to our state." Komorowski spoke about the beatification of John Paul II, who was a spiritual leader for Poland for many years and played a major role in the public and political life of the country, as a significant symbolic event uniting the nation and improving the international image of the country.

Both presidents of Russia, Medvedev and Putin, also named some events that could have served the function of building and reinforcing solidarity. However, the defining major role in such events, for example, in overcoming crises, was

assigned to the government or state rather than the people. For example, in Putin's rerecorded 2013 New Year's speech, he discussed the natural disaster (floods) in Khabarovsk and the bombings in Volgograd. He assured viewers that the government would do everything possible to help the victims of the disaster and stressed that the government would take all required steps to provide security for the people: "We will continue to struggle with terrorists confidently, consistently, and without any hesitations until we destruct them entirely." Efforts to unite the community were also evident when Medvedev spoke about preparations for celebrating the 65th anniversary of the victory in World War II as the nation's mutual duty.

To unite the audience against the common "enemy," the Belarusian president used a strategy of blaming others in his addresses about the economic crisis and the 2010 elections, which led thousands of Belarusians to protest the fairness of the elections. Although the economic crisis, according to the speaker, was "brought from outside,"[2] and, thus, outside enemies were blamed for it, internal enemies were blamed for the protest after the 2010 presidential elections. The protest was called "the infringement on the independence of Belarus" by some forces that "tried to weaken our country." This rhetorical approach delegitimized and radicalized the protestors by constructing them as dangerous "others," and the country was rhetorically equaled with the government, or regime itself, to substitute the real meaning of the events (a protest against the autocratic regime and what the protesters believed to be fraudulent elections).

Mentions of historical events also contributed to the ideological battles for national identity formation in popular presidential rhetoric in Russia, Belarus, and Poland. Russian president Medvedev spoke about the 65th anniversary of the victory in World War II, an event that has been frequently cited as a major victory of Soviets and source of pride for generations of Russians in an effort to build common historical identity among the people of the USSR and Russia.

The Polish president, in contrast, spoke about the significance of such historical events as the Battle of Grunwald (one of the largest battles in Medieval Europe, in which the alliance of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania defeated the German-Prussian Teutonic Knights), the Battle of Warsaw (when the Polish army defeated the Soviet army in 1920), and the social movement Solidarność (Solidarity), which led to the overthrow of the communist regime in the country in 1989. Interestingly, in his address, the Belarusian president made no reference to the anniversary of a common historical event for Poland and Belarus: the Battle of Grunwald. This exclusion signals the ideological choice made by the Belarusian president not to emphasize the common European history of Belarus.

Another important aspect that signals ideological choices made by the presidents in the formation of the national identities is the aspect of language. The presidents of Russia and Poland addressed the nations in Russian and Polish, respectively, while the Belarusian president spoke Russian. For the last two

decades, Belarusian language has been gradually pushed out from educational institutions, mass media, and the public sphere overall. Belarusian language is now often associated with oppositional forces and is presented by authorities "as the language of counterpower and instability, and as a source of violent acts," while Belarusian officials almost exclusively use Russian language (the second official language in the country) and "the president's discourses in Russian exhibit power, stability, and social peace" (Goujon, 1999, p. 673). In this way, Russian language spoken by the president serves as an additional marker that helps the speaker define the constructed collective personality of the nation.

State-Society Relationship and Image of Conformity

Both Russian and Belarusian presidents explicitly referred to patriotism as an important resource aspect that helps to build a strong state. In 2012, Putin said in his speech: "Our individual plans are inseparable from Russia, from heartfelt and noble feelings toward our Motherland." He also directly linked the well-being and happiness of individuals to the maintenance of a strong country: "Let every family live in joy and harmony, then Russia will stand strong and undestroyable." Similar patterns of rhetorical construction of state-society relationships and national identity emerged in the speeches of Belarusian president Lukashenko, who equated the destiny of the country with individuals' destinies and referred to himself and the nation as "one family."

When addressing the nation in 2010, soon after his reelection, the Belarusian president eliminated alternative discourses by presenting them as not significant while explicitly stating that he received a support of majority in the recent elections, thus creating the image of conformity and unity in the country:

> Dear friends. [. . .] First, I would like to address you, the absolute majority of the Belarusian nation. This is because of you I have a unique possibility during this exciting moments of history to visit homes of Belarusian people, your families with congratulations and wishes of peace and welfare.

In the next passage, the president referred to the people who questioned the fairness of the reelection of the longtime president and participated in a mass protest on the night of the elections. He called this group of people the "minority," which suggested they were less significant and had faulty views, although he said they were still worthy of fighting for: "Together with absolute majority of our nation we will fight for you, for your views. We will seek ways to your hearts and minds." In this way, people who oppose the regime were rhetorically devalued but then "forgiven" and included as a part of the nation whose views the president and the "absolute majority" will try to change. The Belarusian president also emphasized personal values of individuals, such as children, parents, home, personal well-being, and health. This theme reappeared in all the

addresses of the Belarusian president and served not only to reinforce the audience's understanding of the main societal values but also to orient the society specifically toward personal goals rather than toward a fulfilment of any form of civic or political roles.

The presidents of Poland described the values of freedom and democracy several times in their addresses. For example, in the speech from 2010, Komorowski addressed the new generation of young Polish people who grew up in a free country, are educated, know foreign languages, and travel the world. He also spoke about the important roles and "great capital" of local authorities and NGOs in sustaining democratic society and civic engagement. In his address in 2009, Lech Kaczynski also identified the country with its people: "Poland is you, dear fellow citizens."

The Russian and Belarusian presidents cited stability as one of the most important values for society, while, in one speech, the Polish president referred to modernization and change as "the investments into the future." Political science literature argues that democracy institutionalizes uncertainty both in terms of who will occupy the office next and the uses to which the authority will be applied (Przeworski, 1986). In autocratic regimes, then, maintaining a sense of stability is viewed as both an important strategy and an ultimate end, particularly when political elites work to prevent the formation of new, alternative power centers and promote an image of incumbents as the main source of stability. This idea explains why the leaders of the countries with two different types of political regimes—consolidated democracy or consolidated autocracy—have chosen to rhetorically emphasize either the value of change or stability.

Rhetorical Construction of the Nations' Positions in the World

The presidents used New Year's addresses to rhetorically construct the positions of the nations in the world by prioritizing foreign policy orientations and identifying primary allies and enemies. The addresses of both Russian presidents included very few references to other countries. In 2010, Dmitry Medvedev described Russia as an open, friendly, and young state, and in 2013, Putin mentioned that Russia "insistently defends its interests in foreign affairs." This notion might refer to the negotiations around the conflict in Syria, in which the Russian president played a major role. Most often, both presidents used the word "strong" to describe Russia's role in the world arena. In 2013, Vladimir Putin mentioned the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi as an effort that required hard work: "In the coming new year we have a lot to do, for economic life, to improve people's lives, to hold the Olympic Games on the highest level." The sporting event was presented as an opportunity to build a positive image of the country.

Although discussions of foreign policy were limited in the addresses of the Belarusian president, he stressed several times that the country has its own way

of development and is capable of making its own choices, while "those who predicted inevitable failure for us were wrong again." This type of rhetoric serves to create an image of self-sustainability and independence of the Belarusian regime from the influence of the east and west. On one occasion, the president described the goal of the nation "to become a developed European country"; on another occasion, he stressed that the country will chair the Commonwealth of Independent States in the following year. In reality, though, Belarusian foreign policy is heavily Russia-oriented, and the Belarusian regime remains highly dependent on Russia's economic support through loans and discounted energy prices (IMF Country Report, 2014). The president of Belarus was banned from visiting most European countries and the United States as a result of western sanctions, so the potential range of allies to be mentioned in the addresses is narrow. This likely explains why the speaker focused primarily on internal affairs in his New Year's addresses or chose to describe foreign policy orientations in vague terms.

In contrast, foreign affairs and the place of the country in the world were frequently discussed in the addresses of the Polish presidents. To signal the multivector foreign policy of the country, in 2010, Komorowski referenced international contacts with Russian president Medvedev and U.S. President Obama and also mentioned his visit to China in the 2011 address. Presidency of the country in the Council of the European Union in 2011 was presented as an opportunity to strengthen Poland's position on the world stage, deepen the continents' integration, introduce the economic success of Poland to the Europe and the world, and share freedoms and connect nations. According to Komorowski's address in 2011, a successful economy is one of the major reasons the country has authority on the world stage: "Today Poland is the 20th economy in the world, the sixth economy in the European Union. This is why we are recognized and respected in the world." Other major events, such as the 2012 Union of European Football Associations European Championship, were mentioned as opportunities to promote a positive image of Poland internationally.

Discussion

This comparative analysis examined how the presidents of three countries with different political regimes, ranging from consolidated democracy to consolidated autocracy, use their New Year's addresses to rhetorically construct social reality in terms of national identity formation and defining their countries' positions in the world. This study expanded analysis of the presidential communication beyond the United States and looked at how a specific genre of New Year's address is being performed in another region of the world: in Russia, Belarus, and Poland. The strategies the presidents used to rhetorically define national identities, construct the image of unity and conformity, and describe positions of

the countries in the world reveal how the presidents differently approached their ultimate goals in establishing their symbolic authority and legitimacy.

The differences in how the presidents used rhetorical means to build and reinforce solidarity and community in their respective nations were revealed in how they stressed the active role of either the government or of the national community in overcoming crises. For example, different roles were assigned to citizens in the addresses of the Russian and Polish presidents—either a more passive role, reliant on a strong government, or a more active role, with solidarity serving as the main source of resilience. The Polish president was willing to rhetorically share power, responsibility, and the economic success of the country with local authorities, NGOs, and citizens, which signaled his commitment to democratic principles. In the addresses of the Russian and Belarusian presidents, the state-society relationships were shaped quite ambiguously, with patriotism named as an important component that helps to build a strong state. The individuals' interests were equated with the interests of the state, and the president and the nation were presented as "one family," thus imposing a paternalistic view of presidential power.

The addresses of the Belarusian president demonstrated that an image of solidarity and conformity could be rhetorically constructed not only with the help of unifying rhetoric but also by blaming and socially excluding "enemies" to encourage listeners to unify against "the other." Blaming outside forces for economic crisis in the country could also be explained as an attempt to transfer full responsibility for the autocratic regime's failures to an outside enemy in order to support an image of a competent government. An internal "enemy," or people who oppose the regime, were rhetorically devalued through the speaker counterpositioning them as "minority" against "the absolute majority" who allegedly supported the president in the elections of 2010. Protesters then were symbolically "forgiven," deemed as worthy of being fought for by the president and his supporters, and included as part of the national community. This approach reveals the efforts of the president to rhetorically eliminate the sense of division in Belarusian society and reconstruct the image of conformity.

The presidents spoke about the status quo in their countries through either emphasizing modernization and change as important values or suggesting stability as a key virtue. These strategies demonstrated how an "institutionalized uncertainty" (Przeworski, 1986) could be rhetorically constructed as a primary value in democratic regimes and how stability, in contrast, could serve as an argument for sustaining regime legitimacy in nondemocratic regimes. Additionally, the theme of personal values of the individuals constantly reappeared in the addresses of the Belarusian president. According to O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), by depoliticizing the public sphere, authoritarian regimes often work to reorient their citizens toward their private goals and ignore their political identities so that citizenship becomes almost exclusively a matter of holding a passport or voting during elections. Although we cannot confidently claim

based on these few addresses that they served to reorient citizens toward their private goals, this limited evidence might be a signal about something worthy of further exploration in presidential rhetoric of autocratic leaders.

The presidents' decisions to mention particular historical events demonstrated their efforts to either connect or disconnect the historical identities of the nations to the Soviet past. These choices indicated how the presidents differently oriented the three nations in the process of national identity formation—by connecting the nation's historical consciousness to European history and celebrating their division from the Soviet rule (in the case of Poland), celebrating past victories of the Soviet state (in the case of Russia), or avoiding any historical references to common events and emphasizing the country's "own way" (in the case of Belarus).

In defining the positions of their countries in the world, the presidents made careful rhetorical choices to construct social reality for their respective nations based on the foreign policy orientations and specific contexts. This pragmatic end (social construction of an image for "internal consumption") and absence of the risk to be rhetorically challenged by any opponent at the moment of the address allowed speakers to be quite free in establishing and pursuing their rhetorical goals. However, certain exigencies showed to have some impact on how the presidents defined foreign policy orientations in their addresses. For example, the president of Belarus described the country as isolated with its own approach to development and outside enemies who are capable of bringing crises, while Poland's president described the country's multivector foreign policy and willingness to use every opportunity to support a positive image in the world. The use of these particular strategies are explained both by different foreign affairs orientations and external exigencies in the case of Belarus: Being cut off from contacts with western countries by imposed sanctions, the Belarusian leader preferred to emphasize an image of self-sustainability.

The current study showed that New Year's addresses as a genre of presidential rhetoric include some common features, such as a greeting, discussion of past achievements and future plans, and offer of congratulations. At the same time, the structures and lengths of the addresses sometimes differed for the three countries and even for the individual presidents. The presidents of Poland and Belarus more consistently followed a specific scheme, while the addresses of the Russian presidents varied from year to year and were generally shorter. Future inquiries in the area of the New Year's presidential rhetoric could continue exploring the unifying and orienting functions of presidential speeches. For example, research should look at how dynamic and responsive this type of address is to events in the national and international arena and what choices the presidents make in including or excluding specific events in their addresses. Specifically, scholars should consider how the recent crisis in Ukraine changed the way unifying and orienting functions are performed by the leaders of the

Russia, Poland, and Belarus in their New Year's addresses and how the presidents choose to define foreign policy orientations in such circumstances.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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

Funding

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

Notes

1. The report *Nations in Transit* is created based on indicators such as national democratic governance, electoral process, civil society, independent media, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption.
2. The alternative view on the crisis in the country in 2011 suggests that the crisis resulted largely from the opportunistic electoral cycle, when in 2010, the inflation rate was manipulated in order to raise real income to "buy" popular support before the presidential elections (Fredelius & Gelebo, 2012).

References

Alexander, J. C. (2006). *The civil sphere*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Beasley, V. (2001). The rhetoric of ideological consensus in the United States: American principles and American pose in presidential inaugurals. *Communication Monographs*, *68*(2), 169–183.

Beasley, V. (2004). *You the people: American national identity in presidential rhetoric*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press.

Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K. H. (1985). Inaugurating the presidency. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *15*(2), 394–411.

Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K. H. (2008). *Presidents creating the presidency: Deeds done in words*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Ceaser, J. W., Thurow, G. E., Tulis, J., & Bassette, J. M. (1981). The rise of the rhetorical presidency. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *11*(2), 158–171.

Chung, C. J., & Park, H. W. (2010). Textual analysis of a political message: The inaugural addresses of two Korean presidents. *Social Science Information*, *49*(2), 215–239.

Cohen, J. E. (1995). Presidential rhetoric and the public agenda. *American Journal of Political Science*, *39*(1), 87–107.

Ericson, D. F. (1997). Presidential inaugural addresses and American political culture. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *27*(4), 727–744.

Freedom House. (2013). *Nations in transit 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2013

Fredelius, M., & Gelebo, E. (2012). *Opportunistic political cycles in Belarus: An explanation to why dictatorship works*. Retrieved from http://arc.hhs.se/download.aspx?MediumId=1587

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley^: University of California Press.

Goujon, A. (1999). Language, nationalism, and populism in Belarus. *Nationalities Papers*, *27*(4), 661–677.

IMF Country Report. (2014). Republic of Belarus: 2014 Article IV Consultation-Staff Report; Press Release; and Statement by the Executive Director for the Republic of Belarus. Retrieved from https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.aspx?sk=41782.0

Kondratenko, N. (2007). Novogodee obraschenije kak ritualnyj zhanr politicheskogo diskursa: Makrostrukturnye komponenty i sredstva ih vyrazhenija [New Year's address as a ritual genre of political discourse: The components of macrostructure and their means of representation]. *Conference Computational Linguistics and Intellectual Technologies*. Retrieved from http://www.dialog-21.ru/digests/dialog2007/materials/html/45.htm

Kubicek, P. (1999). Russian foreign policy and the west. *Political Science Quarterly*, *114*(4), 547.

Kuzio, T. (2002). National identity and democratic transition in post-soviet ukraine and belarus: A theoretical and comparative perspective. *East European Perspectives*, *4*(15–16).

Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Lu, L. W., & Ahrens, K. (2008). Ideological influence on BUILDING metaphors in Taiwanese presidential speeches. *Discourse & Society*, *19*(3), 383–408.

Manaev, O. (2009). Belarus on the 'Huntington line: The role of media'. In M. Dyczok & O. Gaman-Golutvina, (Eds.), *Media, democracy and freedom: The post-communist experience* (pp. 129–156). Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Melville, A. I. (2004). On the trajectories of postcommunist transformations. *Sociological Research*, *43*(6), 6–28.

Monaghan, A. (2008). An enemy at the gates or from victory to victory? Russian foreign policy. *International Affairs*, *84*(4), 717–733 doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00734.x

Noije, L. V., & Hijmans, E. (2005). National identity and nationalism in New Year's speeches of French presidents. *Communications*, *30*(1), 23–54.

O'Donnell, G., & Schmitter, P. (1986). *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Comparative perspectives*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins.

O'Hagan, J. (1995). Civilisational conflict? Looking for cultural enemies. *Third World Quarterly*, *16*(1), 19–38.

Przeworski, A. (1986). Some problems in the study of the transition to democracy. In G. O'Donnell, P. C. Schmitter & L. Whitehead (Eds.), *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Comparative perspectives* (pp. 47–63). New York, NY: Johns Hopkins.

RIA Novosti. (December, 31, 2013). *Putin makes 2 New Year's speeches for 2014*. Retrieved from http://en.ria.ru/russia/20131231/186123925/Putin-Makes-2-New-Years-Speeches-for-2014.html

Ryfe, D. M. (2005). *Presidents in culture: The meaning of presidential communication*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

Smith, C. A., & Smith, K. B. (1994). *The White House speaks: Presidential leadership as persuasion*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Teten, R. L. (2007). We the people: Modern rhetorical popular address of the presidents during the Founding period. *Political Research Quarterly*, *60*(4), 669–682.

The Economist Intelligence Unit. (2014). *Poland politics: Poland's progress*. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1633288038?accountid=14576

Tulis, J. (1987). *The rhetorical presidency*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352–371). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Way, L. A. (2005). Authoritarian state building and the sources of regime competitiveness in the fourth wave: The cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. *World Politics*, *57*(2), 231–261.

Williams, D. C. (2006). Instant democracy: Rhetorical crises and the Russian federation, 1991–2007. *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, *9*, 227–242.

Young, M. J. (2008). Of allies and enemies: Old wine in new bottles or new wine in old jug? In J. A. Aune & M. J. Medhurst (Eds.), *The prospect of presidential rhetoric* (pp. 160–181). College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Author Biography

Tatsiana Karaliova is a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri, School of Journalism. Her research interests belong to the areas of political communication and journalism studies. Tatsiana Karaliova holds her master's degree in journalism from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and her bachelor's degree in journalism from the Belarusian State University (Minsk, Belarus). She worked as news reporter and editor for several newspapers in Eastern Europe and the United States.

Article

Journal of Communication Inquiry
2016, Vol. 40(2) 162–178

DOI: 10.1177/0196859915608915
jci.sagepub.com

Virginia's Invisible Candidate: News Coverage of the Virginia 2013 Gubernatorial Campaign

John F. Kirch[1]

Abstract

This study examines the 2013 Virginia gubernatorial campaign to see how the state's newspapers covered a third-party candidate in a year in which voters said they were looking for an alternative to the Democrat and Republican. The study found that the third-party gubernatorial candidate received significantly less news coverage than the Democrat and Republican, even though he had strong favorability ratings while the major-party nominees were highly unpopular. The Democrat and Republican were mentioned more frequently in stories, headlines, and leads; they were quoted more often; and their issue positions were discussed more frequently than were those of the Libertarian. The study supports critical studies theory that the mainstream news media protect established power rather than acting as a conduit through which citizens can learn about all of their choices in an election.

Keywords

hegemony, journalism, journalism and democracy, media and democracy, political discourse

[1]Journalism and New Media, Towson University, MD, USA

Corresponding Author:
John F. Kirch, Journalism and New Media, Towson University, 8000 York Road, Towson, MD 21252, USA.
Email: jkirch@towson.edu

The 2013 Virginia gubernatorial election was a contest between what one *Washington Post* columnist called the two "worst candidates for governor in years … a scary-extremist Republican, Ken Cuccinelli II, and a way-too-slick Democrat, Terry McAuliffe." (Dvorak, 2013, p. B1)

She was not the only one who was disgusted.

The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* announced in late October that it could not "in good conscience" endorse either candidate ("Our Choice for Governor," 2013), the *National Journal* told readers to "pity the Virginia voter" for having to deal with this "historically unpleasant" contest (Reinhard, 2013), the *Daily Beast* called the Virginia campaign a "sad, sleazy circus" (Bouie, 2013), and *Time* said the McAuliffe-Cuccinelli face-off was "the dirtiest, nastiest, low-down campaign in America" (Miller & Rogers, 2013).

These characterizations were not lost on the state's citizens. In interviews with journalists throughout the campaign, voters consistently expressed their objection to the two major-party candidates (see Dvorak, 2013; Zito, 2013). Between August 21 and the November 5 election, McAuliffe's approval rating never rose above 50.7% and eventually dropped to 48%, while Cuccinelli's hovered in the mid-40s ("Dem has Likely Lead," 2013; "Virginia Voters Dislike McAuliffe," 2013). Two weeks before the election, 47% of Virginians viewed the Republican unfavorably and 36% had a negative impression of the Democrat (Pulice, 2013). As one voter said, "They're just all so awful" (Dvorak, p. B1).

But voters did not have to settle for Cuccinelli or McAuliffe. Libertarian Robert Sarvis was a Harvard-educated mathematician who was mounting a serious third-party challenge for the governor's mansion. With a law degree from New York University and a Master's Degree in economics from George Mason, the 37-year-old Virginia native was campaigning on a platform to reduce taxes, end regulation, decriminalize minor drug offenses, bring marriage equality to all, restore civil liberties, and embrace immigrants (Doherty, 2013; On the Issues, 2013). His candidacy was significant enough that conservative commentator George Will (2013) called him a newsworthy contender who deserved more media attention. Daniel Payne (2013), writing for *Style Weekly*, said Sarvis was "a legitimate candidate representing a legitimate political party," and the *Roanoke Times* published an editorial saying he was "a bona fide candidate for governor" who should be included in the gubernatorial debates (Robert Who?, 2013). He was not. Even journalists who were covering the campaign began to ask themselves "why nobody is giving him the time of day" (Tuccille, 2013).

Sarvis also received backing from the electorate, with polls giving him between 8% and 10% support among likely voters throughout October and an approval rating of nearly 60% ("In the U.S., Perceived Need for Third Party," 2013; "McAuliffe Has 6-Point Lead," 2013; "'Too Conservative' Tag Hurts Cuccinelli," 2013). On Election Day, the Libertarian received 6.5% of the

vote, the largest percentage of any third-party gubernatorial candidate in the history of the South and the third largest total for a Libertarian in any state. In the 18- to 29-year-old age bracket, Sarvis won 15% of the ballots cast at the polls. Nevertheless, McAuliffe won the election, receiving 47% to Cuccinelli's 45% ("Virginia State Board of Elections, Official Results," 2013; see also, Beckel, 2013; Jacobs, 2013; "Virginia Libertarian for Governor Vote," 2013).

This study examines the 2013 Virginia gubernatorial campaign to see how the state's newspapers covered a third-party candidate in a year in which voters said they were looking for an alternative to two highly unpopular major-party nominees. This article is different from previous studies about minor-party candidates because it focuses on a governor's race rather than a presidential contest. Virginia offers a good case study because the state's demographics are similar to those of the United States as a whole; the state has a variety of news outlets in metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas; Virginia's governors are limited to one term, meaning its gubernatorial elections lack the incumbent advantage that might affect press coverage of minor parties; and neither the Democrats nor the Republicans dominate Virginia politics.[1] The study is important because the Libertarian who ran in 2013 was a credible candidate who could not be easily discarded as either outside the mainstream or obviously unqualified for the position. Moreover, voters expressed interest in knowing more about Sarvis as the campaign progressed. Understanding how the news media responds to a third-party challenge that is both serious and welcomed by the voters can shed light on whether American journalism fosters a healthy marketplace of ideas or stifles debate.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The mass media help set the nation's political agenda by choosing which candidates to highlight and which ones to ignore (Funkhouser, 1973; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Shaw & McCombs, 1977; Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981; Winter, 1981). But the press does more than tell citizens *what* candidates to think about—it tells voters *how* to think about them (McCombs, 2004, 2005; Son & Weaver, 2006). Through the news frames reporters use to tell stories, they "promote a particular interpretation" of an event (Entman, 2007, p. 164) and tell readers "which policy issues to use as criteria to evaluate the candidates" (Ramsden, 1996, p. 66; see also, Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Entman, 1993; Golan & Wanta, 2001; Iyengar, 1987, 1991; Kim, Scheugele, & Shanahan, 2002; Kiousis, Bantimaroudis, & Ban, 1999; McCombs, 2005; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Son & Weaver, 2005; Weaver, 2007). Through this priming function, the news media "can shift the grounds on which campaigns are contested" and thus "may … determine who takes office … and who is sent home" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 121).

News is produced and agendas are built through a complex negotiating process that occurs each day between reporters and sources (Berkowitz, 1992; Sigal, 1973, 1996). This relationship is in a constant state of flux in which power to influence the news agenda continuously shifts between the holders of information and the journalists themselves (Reese, 1991). This process is affected by such factors as journalistic competition, objectivity, newsroom routines, and culture (Berkowitz, 1992; Sigal, 1973). Yet, of all the dynamics that go into producing news and eventually building the media or public agenda, "those governing the choice of sources are of prime significance" (Gans, 1979, p. 281). Research over the past 35 years has shown that reporters rely heavily on elites to tell stories, particularly public policymakers (Alexseev & Bennett, 1995; Berkowitz, 1987; Berkowitz & Beach, 1993; Brown, Bybee, Wearden, & Straughan, 1987; Dunn, 1969; Graber, 1997; Mason, 2007; Sigal, 1973; Smith, 1993). These government officials are not only used by reporters to counter the opinions of those who challenge the system, they are often considered the authoritative sources of the "objective" and "factual" information that establishes the context of the debate (Hallin, 1984). What's more, when government officials are quoted in most political news reports, they are rarely challenged by reporters (Joslyn, 1984).

The process journalists use to frame news stories has serious ramifications for third-party candidates. At the presidential level, studies going back to the 1960s have shown that contenders who run as independents or from smaller political parties receive substantially less news coverage than candidates from the Democratic and Republican establishments (Joslyn, 1984; Sifry, 2003; Stempel, 1969; Stempel & Windhauser, 1984; Zaller, 1999; Zaller & Hunt, 1994). Stovall's (1985) analysis of the 1980 presidential election found that political events held by President Jimmy Carter and Republican Ronald Reagan were 50% more likely to generate press coverage than were events held by Independent John Anderson. Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus (1996) reported that leading newspapers and news magazines gave Reagan and Carter 10 times more coverage than all 11 third-party and independent candidates combined. The same phenomenon may occur at the state level. One of the few studies to examine governor races reported that the 2002 third-party gubernatorial candidates in California, Wisconsin, Oregon, and Maine appeared in 26% of the 2,241 newspaper stories about those elections while Democrats and Republicans appeared in 86% and 73%, respectively (Kirch, 2013).

The lack of news coverage can impact the election results. According to Joslyn (1984), "a candidate who is ignored will have a difficult time producing the voter awareness necessary for electoral success" (p. 12). McLeod and Hertog (1992) said that reporters may affect election outcomes by telling readers that minor-party candidates have little public support, thus decreasing the chances that anyone would vote for them. And Zaller (1999) said that while "media coverage could … reflect reporters' anticipation of election results … it could also be a cause of election results" (p. 103).

Third-party candidates are typically ignored by the news media because reporters believe they have little chance of winning the election (Zaller, 1999). This should not be surprising given that journalists cover political campaigns as horse races, providing more coverage to candidates who are ahead in the polls and less coverage to those who are behind (Adams, 1984; Atkin & Gaudino, 1984; Harmon, 2000; Patterson, 1994; Robinson & Sheehan, 1980). In addition, third-party candidates fail to get on the news media's agenda because they are not qualified for the offices they seek, they represent small constituencies that generate little interest among the general population, they fail to build long-lasting coalitions that can seriously challenge the Democrats and Republicans, and they run in a system that has traditionally and legally favored only two major parties (Abramson, Aldrich, Paolino, & Rohde, 2000; Berggren, 2005; Dwyre & Kolodny, 1997; Lowi, 1999; Rosenstone et al., 1996). Robinson and Sheehan (1980) determined that third-party presidential candidates are unlikely to have any credibility with the press unless they start their careers in one of the major parties. Pirch (2004) concluded that minor-party candidates will get on the news media's radar only if they present a compelling story; and Meyrowitz (1995) showed that when it comes to campaigns, journalists look for reasons to exclude candidates from their coverage because news companies lack the resources to report on everyone.

Ideology may also play a role. According to cultural studies theory, the news media essentially undermine the democratic process by systematically ignoring or ridiculing alternative viewpoints that run counter to cultural and political assumptions that are accepted as natural to American democracy (Altschull, 1995; Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). Rachlin (1988) argues that journalists are socialized under the same cultural norms as the rest of society and so tend to present news within a framework that supports existing power relationships. Hall (1977) made the link between hegemony and the mass media through the concept of "encoding"—the idea that media organizations construct social reality by giving meaning to events through the use of certain codes or news frames (see also Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson 1992; Jansen, 1994; Joslyn, 1984; Tuchman, 1978). Although the media do not intentionally choose to support a dominant ideology, Hall says, it nevertheless operates within boundaries established through a social discourse that eventually reaches a consensus reflective of elite opinion. "Precisely because they have become 'universalized and naturalized'," Hall writes, the value systems of the privileged class "appear to be the only forms of intelligibility available … The premises and preconditions which sustain their rationalities have been rendered invisible by the process of ideological masking … " (Hall, 1977, p. 343).

Hallin (1984) found that reporters often make value judgments about which viewpoints are legitimate and which ones are deviant based on the consensus of top policymakers; and Graber (1997) has said that mainstream political institutions such as Congress and the presidency are routinely legitimized by the news

media while outside groups are marginalized. It is true, Graber says, that the press occasionally does investigative pieces that disparage a public official or reveal corruption within public institutions, but these are usually portrayed as a deviation from the system rather than as a problem with the system itself. For the most part, Graber writes, the press displays "a supportive attitude toward political leaders and the American political system in general," adding that "news stories cast a negative light on antiestablishment behavior, such as protest demonstrations that disrupt normal activities, inflammatory speeches by militants, or looting during a riot" (p. 123). In short, the news media support the hegemony of Democrats and Republicans in the political arena (Altschull, 1995; Gitlin, 1980; Rachlin, 1988; Tuchman, 1978).

The cultural studies perspective is not without its critics, though, and over the years, there has been a wealth of research both exploring and refuting the notion that the press supports established power (see Carragee, 1993 for a comprehensive review). Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980) said that it is difficult to support the notion of hegemony in the media because elite opinion has rarely, if ever, been monolithic and all encompassing. As the authors put it: "What is the dominant ideology? While it is often assumed that the dominant ideologies are clear, coherent, and effective, we show that, on the contrary, they are fractured and even contradictory in most historical periods" (Abercrombie et al., 1980, p. 156). Altheide's (1984) examination of hegemony within news reports found that reporters not only resist socialization into a dominant ideology, but that news organizations have frequently challenged the status quo and acted as "agents of change" (p. 477). This is supported by Streitmatter (1997), who highlights 14 case studies from American history to illustrate how journalism has frequently played an instrumental role in bringing change to society—both good and bad.

Despite this debate over the ideological predispositions of the American mass media, it is worth examining whether coverage of third-party candidates supports the notion that the media backs the established political order. By examining a campaign in which the third-party candidate was considered a mainstream contender who was seriously campaigning for public office, the study can highlight the extent to which the media plays its role as a neutral conveyer of objective information designed to help the electorate make sound decisions at the ballot box. It can also expose blind spots in the media and inform political journalists about ways in which they might improve their coverage of campaigns to include more voices. Finally, a study that examines a gubernatorial election has an advantage over those that analyze presidential contests because third parties have historically found it easier to win at the state level than in a national contest, where the winner-take-all Electoral College system makes it virtually impossible for anyone other than a Democrat or Republican to win the White House. Since a gubernatorial candidate can win with 34% of the vote in a three-way race, state campaigns take away the most common

excuse reporters use to ignore independent presidential candidates—namely that they cannot waste time writing about someone who has no chance of victory. Examining a governor's race provides a better opportunity to expose ideological biases in favor of two-party hegemony. In that light, this study asks the following research questions (RQs):

1. How much coverage will a third-party gubernatorial candidate receive when running in an election in which the two major-party nominees are unpopular while the minor-party candidate has high favorability ratings?[2]
2. How did newspaper coverage of Virginia's third-party candidate fluctuate over the course of the campaign?
3. How did newspapers report on the third-party candidate's issue positions compared with those of the Democrat and Republican?
4. What adjectives did reporters use to describe the third-party candidate and did those words hint at any ideological bias against the Libertarian?

Methodology

The content analysis examined every article published about the 2013 Virginia gubernatorial campaign in the *Washington Post* and 11 daily newspapers in Virginia between September 4 and November 6. The state newspapers included *The Virginian-Pilot* of Norfolk, *Richmond Times Dispatch, The Roanoke Times*, the *Daily Press* of Newport News, the *Daily News-Record* of Harrisonburg, *The News & Advance* of Lynchburg, *The Daily Progress* of Charlottesville, the *Daily News Leader* of Staunton, the *Register & Bee* of Danville, *The Progress-Index* of Petersburg, and *The News Virginian* of Waynesboro.

These newspapers were chosen because they all published at least one staff-written article about the campaign in the fall. The sample represents every region of Virginia and includes publications from large metropolitan areas to rural communities, with circulations ranging from more than 500,000 in the case of the *Washington Post* to the 6,000-circulation *News Virginian*. News stories were the unit of analysis and were identified by conducting a LexisNexis search using each candidate's name and the terms "gubernatorial" and "governor." The variables included the newspaper that published the story, the date the story was published, and where the story appeared in the newspaper (front page, inside page, etc.). The study coded for how often each candidate's name was mentioned in a story, whether a candidate appeared in a headline or lead paragraph, whether the candidate or other sources were quoted in the story, the adjectives used by the journalists to describe the candidates, and whether the story outlined each candidates' issue positions. An issue position was coded as "present" if it appeared in the same paragraph as the candidate and was clearly associated with that candidate's policy proposals.

Three coders examined 332 news stories. Training sessions were held to familiarize each researcher with the code book. Practice sessions were held before formal coding began to ensure general agreement among the coders about how each variable was operationalized. Thirty-five articles, or about 10% of the population, were analyzed by all three coders to test intercoder reliability using Kippendorf's alpha. Results obtained an alpha of between .830 and .874 for most of the variables reported here, well within the acceptable agreement rate described by Krippendorff (2004) for content analyses. One variable (whether a McAuliffe campaign official was quoted in the story) had an alpha of .791, which is considered less reliable. Several variables (such as whether McAuliffe, Cuccinelli, or Sarvis were mentioned in the story) had an alpha of 1.0. Variables with alpha's below .791 were not included in this analysis because they were considered unreliable. The analysis did not include a comparison of where a candidate appeared in the newspaper (front page or inside page) because a Pearson's chi-square test indicated no statistical significance in the results for this variable.

Results

RQ 1 asked how much coverage a third-party gubernatorial candidate would receive compared with his major-party opponents. The frequency tables that were analyzed illustrate that major-party candidates continue to receive substantially more news coverage than minor-party contenders even in elections in which the Democrat and Republican are unpopular while the third-party challenger has a high favorability rating. McAuliffe and Cuccinelli appeared in 97.9% and 96.4%, respectively, of all newspaper stories about the Virginia gubernatorial campaign. Sarvis appeared in 39.8%. Put another way, the major-party candidates appeared in 2.5 times more articles than did Sarvis. Cuccinelli's name appeared 3,047 times while McAuliffe's name appeared 2,980 times, for an average of about nine mentions per candidate, per article. By contrast, Sarvis's name appeared 489 times, or less than two times per article. In other words, Cuccinelli received 47% of all candidate name mentions in the coverage period, McAuliffe received 46%, and Sarvis 0.08%.

McAuliffe's and Cuccinelli's names were used in a headline in 39.2% and 33.1% of the stories, respectively. Sarvis was mentioned in a headline in 4.5% of the articles. McAuliffe and Cuccinelli were mentioned in 48% of all the news leads while Sarvis was mentioned in 5.4%. All three candidates appeared in 39% of the stories while McAuliffe and Cuccinelli were the only two candidates mentioned in more than 60% of the news reports. The Democrat appeared alone in 2.7% of the stories and the Republican appeared alone in 1.2%. Sarvis was the only candidate mentioned in 0.8% of the articles published in the study period.

Another way to look at the results is to subtract the percentage of the news coverage each candidate received from the percentage of their overall vote total

to determine how closely the news coverage matched each candidates' political strength. This technique is borrowed from Zaller (1999), who measured the amount of news coverage third-party presidential candidates received compared with their overall political support between 1914 and 1996 and found that in all but one case, third-party candidates received a higher percentage of news coverage than they did votes at the polls.[3] In Virginia, Sarvis was mentioned in close to 40% of the newspaper stories studied but received only 6.5% of the vote, meaning he received 33.5 percentage points more in news coverage than in votes. But the same can be said about the major-party candidates. McAuliffe received 50 percentage points more in news coverage than votes while Cuccinelli's differentiation was 51 percentage points. Major-party candidates received a higher percentage of the news coverage compared with their political strength than did the Libertarian.

The major-party candidates and their campaign officials were also more likely to be quoted in the news stories than was Sarvis or his campaign. Overall, Cuccinelli was quoted in 22.9% of the stories, McAuliffe was quoted in 19.6%, and Sarvis in 9%. Cuccinelli campaign officials were quoted in 24.4% of the stories, McAuliffe campaign officials were quoted in 23.8%, and Sarvis campaign officials in 1.5%. However, Sarvis was quoted at the same rate as was McAuliffe and Cuccinelli when he was mentioned in stories. For example, Sarvis was quoted in 22.7% of the stories in which he was mentioned while McAuliffe was quoted in 20% of the stories in which he appeared and Cuccinelli was quoted in 23.8%. When all three candidates were mentioned in a story, Sarvis was quoted in 21% while McAuliffe and Cuccinelli were each quoted in 24%.

To answer RQ 2, a cross tabulation examined whether the percentage of stories that Sarvis was mentioned in increased as the campaign progressed. The campaign cycle was broken into six periods, each corresponding with the dates of five polls published by Quinnipiac University as well as the election results themselves. This was then compared with the percentage of stories in which Sarvis was mentioned for each time period, which ranged from 2 weeks to 5 days. Sarvis appeared in 6.8% of the stories published between September 4 and September 18, but 25% of the stories that appeared between September 19 and October 10. The Libertarian's percentage of news coverage dropped to 14.4% of the stories that were published between October 11 and October 23, but then increased to 30.3% in the October 24 to October 30 period. The percentages of stories in which Sarvis was mentioned decreased to 9.8% in the final 5 days of the campaign. The results were statistically significant (Pearson's chi-square, $\chi^2(5) = 20.846$, $p < .001$). A Cramer V value of .251 indicates a moderate relationship between the date a story was published and the percentage of stories in which Sarvis was mentioned.

Interestingly, news coverage of Sarvis seemed to fluctuate somewhat with his poll numbers. For example, the Libertarian's overall news coverage increased from 6.8% to 25% following a September 18 poll in which 7% of respondents

said they planned to vote for Sarvis—the first time pollsters asked voters about the third-party candidate. His coverage increased again from 14.4% to 30.3% after an October 23 poll put his electoral support at 10%. Unfortunately, the study cannot draw a direct correlation between the polls and the coverage—a subject that should be explored more deeply in future research.

The analysis answers RQ 3 by illustrating that the newspapers rarely explained the Libertarian's position on public policy issues. While Cuccinelli's opinion on issues were reported in 42.2% of the stories and McAuliffe's positions appeared in 36%, Sarvis's policy proposals were only mentioned in 7.2% of the stories. For example, Sarvis's statements about the economy appeared in almost 4% of the stories published, while McAuliffe's and Cuccinelli's statements about the economy appeared in 22.2% and 16% of the stories, respectively. On taxes, Sarvis's opinion appeared in 3.6% of the stories studied, McAuliffe's in 17.5%, and Cuccinelli's in 29.5%.

The same is true when looking at how often each candidate's issue positions were presented in the stories in which they appeared. Sarvis's positions on the issues were stated in 17.4% of the stories in which he appeared. Cuccinelli's policy proposals were outlined in 43.8% of the stories he appeared, while McAuliffe policy positions were included in 36.6% of the stories in which he was mentioned. The numbers for Sarvis and Cuccinelli reached statistical significance ($\chi^2(1) = 33.962$, $p < .000$ for Sarvis, and $\chi^2(1) = 9.078$, $p < .003$ for Cuccinelli) while McAuliffe's did not. When all three candidates were mentioned in a story, Sarvis's positions on the issues were stated in 15.5% of the stories ($\chi^2(1) = 21.542$, $p < .000$), while McAuliffe's were discussed in 35.7% ($\chi^2(1) = .003$, $p < .955$) and Cuccinelli's in 39.5% ($\chi^2(1) = .600$, $p < .439$). As indicated by the chi-square test, this variable reached statistical significance for Sarvis but not for the major-party nominees.

In regard to RQ 4, an analysis of the adjectives reporters used to describe each candidate did not indicate any linguistic ideological bias against Sarvis. The main adjective used by reporters to describe Sarvis was "Libertarian," which was used in 96.6% of the articles that mentioned him ($\chi^2(1) = 557.724$, $p < .000$). His occupation was used to describe him in 5.6% of the stories in which he appeared ($\chi^2(1) = 20.874$, $p < .000$). He was also described as a little known candidate in 3.9% of the stories in which he appeared ($\chi^2(1) = 14.353$, $p < .000$), a protest vote in 3.6% of the stories ($\chi^2(1) = 12.737$, $p < .000$), a political novice in 2.6% ($\chi^2(1) = 9.520$, $p < .002$), a college graduate in 2.6% ($\chi^2(1) = 9.520$, $p < .002$), and a wild card in 1.7% ($\chi^2(1) = 6.326$, $p < .012$)—all of which reached statistical significance. No other adjectives appeared in more than 1% of the stories in which Sarvis was mentioned.

McAuliffe was described as the Democrat in 91.3% of the stories in which he appeared ($\chi^2(1) = 117.768$, $p < .000$), the former chairman of the Democratic Party in 26.7% ($\chi^2(1) = 5.048$, $p < .025$), and the leading candidate in 22.6% ($\chi^2(1) = 4.052$, $p < .044$). All but the reference to his chairmanship reached

statistical significance. Reporters referred to Cuccinelli as the Republican nominee in 85.9% of the stories in which he was mentioned ($\chi^2(1) = 117.627$, $p < .000$), the attorney general in 63.1% ($\chi^2(1) = 38.456$, $p < .000$), and as a conservative in 16.9% ($\chi^2(1) = 4.831$, $p < .028$). Only his ideological label failed to be statistically significant.

Conclusion

Journalists play a vital role in American political campaigns. Since the world of politics is often "out of reach" to the citizenry in that most people will have no direct contact with the candidates or the campaigns (Lippmann, 1965, p. 18; see also Patterson, 1980), the main conduit through which citizens have traditionally received information about public affairs is the mass media (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). It is through the news media, Lippmann (1965) said that the democratic citizen is able to reach beyond his or her personal experience and learn about "vast portions of the world that he could never see, touch, smell, hear, or remember" (p. 18). Without this capability to learn about events for which the public does not participate in directly, Lippmann said, representative government itself could not work successfully. It is up to the news media to provide voters with "fair and full information so citizens can make sound political choices" (Schudson, 2008, p. 8) and to "treat various views and ideas in such a way that no view is unduly favored or discounted" (Asp, 2007, p. 35).

Although most reporters would likely agree with this assessment, they nevertheless demonstrate a blind spot when it comes to covering various forms of dissent, such as third-party challenges. News coverage of the 2013 Virginia gubernatorial election was no different and followed a similar pattern as previous campaigns involving serious third-party challengers. The third-party gubernatorial candidate received significantly less news coverage than did the Democrat and Republican, even though he had strong favorability ratings while the major-party nominees were highly unpopular. The Democrat and Republican were mentioned more frequently in stories, headlines, and leads; they were quoted more often; and their issue positions were discussed more frequently than were those of Sarvis. The coverage of Sarvis fluctuated throughout the fall, with the Libertarian receiving the least amount of coverage in the first two weeks of the campaign and the most coverage in the final 7 days of October. The study hints at a possible relationship between the Libertarian's news coverage and his support at the polls, but there is not enough data to draw any definitive conclusions on this correlation.

If reporters were ideologically biased against the third-party challenge, it is illustrated in the lack of coverage rather than the language used to describe the Libertarian. The findings support cultural studies arguments that the news media accept the hegemony of political elites at the expense of alternative voices. Sarvis's campaign received less coverage despite the fact that Virginia

voters said they were looking for a third option. What is particularly surprising is that news organizations essentially ignored Sarvis even as reporters seemed to recognize that the Libertarian was a legitimate candidate. Such coverage patterns act to stifle debate rather than promote a diversity of political voices. In this way, newspaper reporters acted as agents of the status quo and became yet another contributing factor in the continued two-party dominance of the American political system.

The findings suggest that Democrats and Republicans have nothing to fear from outside voices because the press will not allow those challengers to blossom—at least in the mainstream news outlets. Such coverage patterns allow the major parties to nominate candidates who are deeply unpopular. The findings also suggest that journalists should reevaluate their coverage decisions. For if reporters truly want to provide the citizenry with the information it needs to govern itself, then they should consider breaking from the two-party system and offering voters more voices.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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

Funding

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

Notes

1. Information about Virginia's demographic makeup is available at the U.S. Census Bureau, "Virginia QuickFacts," http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51000.html; for information about newspapers in the state of Virginia, see *Editor & Publisher: International Data Book: The Encyclopedia of the Newspaper Industry, Book 1: Dailies 2012*, 91st. ed. Virginia's status as a swing state in presidential politics has been widely discussed in the news media. Two examples include the following: Ginger, 2012; and Simon, 2014.
2. Popularity was defined as a candidate whose favorability rating was less than 50%.
3. For example, Zaller pointed out that the *New York Times* devoted more than 15% of its coverage to 1948 presidential candidate Henry Wallace even though the Progressive Party nominee received less than 5% of the vote.

References

Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., & Turner, B. S. (1980). *The dominant ideology thesis*. London, England: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Abramson, P. R., Aldrich, J. H., Paolino, P., & Rohde, D. W. (2000). Challenges to the American two-party system: Evidence from the 1968, 1980, 1992, and 1996 presidential elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, *53*(3), 495–522.

Adams, W. (1984). Media coverage of campaign '84: A preliminary report. *Public Opinion*, *7*, 9–13.

Alexseev, M. A., & Bennett, W. L. (1995). For whom the gates open: News reporting and government source patterns in the United States, Great Britain, and Russia. *Political Communication*, *12*(4), 395–412.

Altheide, D. L. (1984). Media hegemony: A failure of perspective. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *48*(2), 476–490.

Altschull, J. H. (1995). *Agents of power: The media and public policy* (2nd.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Asp, K. (2007). Fairness, informativeness and scrutiny. *Nordicom Review*, *28*, 31–49.

Atkin, C. K., & Gaudino, J. (1984). The impact of polling on the mass media. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *472*(1), 119–128.

Beckel, M. (2013, November 7). Libertarians declare "mission accomplished" in Virginia. *Public Integrity*. Retrieved from http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/11/07/13697/libertarians-declare-mission-accomplished-virginia-after-super-pac-help

Berggren, J. D. (2005). Ralph Nader and the green party: The double-edged sword of a candidate, campaign-centered strategy. *The Forum*, *3*(1), 1–12.

Berkowitz, D. (1987). TV news sources and news channels: A study in agenda-building. *Journalism Quarterly*, *64*(2), 508–513.

Berkowitz, D. (1992). Who sets the media agenda? The ability of policymakers to determine news decisions. In J. D. Kennamer (Ed.), *Public opinion, the press, and public policy* (pp. 81–102). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Berkowitz, D., & Beach, D. W. (1993). News sources and news content: The effect of routine news, conflict and proximity. *Journalism Quarterly*, *70*(1), 4–12.

Bouie, J. (2013, August 6). Virginia's gubernatorial race has turned into a sad, sleazy circus. *Daily Beast*. Retrieved from http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/06/virginia-s-gubernatorial-race-has-turned-into-a-sad-sleazy-circus.html

Brown, J. D., Bybee, C. R., Wearden, S. T., & Straughan, D. M. (1987). Invisible power: Newspaper news sources and the limits of diversity. *Journalism Quarterly*, *64*(1), 45–54.

Callaghan, K., & Schnell, F. (2001). Assessing the democratic debate: How the news media frame elite policy discourse. *Political Communication*, *18*(2), 183–212.

Carragee, K. M. (1993). A critical evaluation of debates examining the media hegemony thesis. *Western Journal of Communication*, *57*(3), 330–348.

Dem has Likely Voter Lead in Virginia Governor's Race. (2013). *Quinnipiac University poll*. Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University.

Doherty, B. (October 2, 2013) Robert Sarvis: Libertarian candidate for governor of Virginia with double-digit poll numbers. Retrieved from Reason.com, https://reason.com/archives/2013/10/02/robert-sarvis-libertarian-candidate-for

Dvorak, P. (2013, October 15). Virginia is not for lover of either gubernatorial candidate. *Washington Post*, pp. B1,.

Dunn, D. D. (1969). *Public officials and the press*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Dwyre, D., & Kolodny, R. (1997). Barriers to minor party success and prospects for change. In P. S. Herrnson & J. C. Green (Eds.), *Multiparty politics in America* (pp. 173–182). New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58.
Entman, R. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. *Journal of Communications*, *57*(1), 164.
Funkhouser, R. G. (1973). The issues of the sixties: An exploratory study in the dynamics of public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *37*(1), 62–75 (Spring).
Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *18*, 373–393.
Gans, H. J. G. (1979). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
Ginger, G. (September 30, 2012). Is Virginia going purple? *Politico*. Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81829.html
Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Golan, G., & Wanta, W. (2001). Second-level agenda setting in the New Hampshire primary: A comparison of coverage in three newspapers and public perceptions of candidates. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *78*(2), 247–259.
Graber, D. A. (1997). *Mass media and American politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
Hall, S. (1977). Culture, the media and the 'Ideological Effect.'. In C. James, G. Michael & W. Janet (Eds.), *Mass communication and society*. London, England: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd.
Hallin, D. C. (1984). The media, the war in Vietnam, and political support: A critique of the thesis of an oppositional media. *The Journal of Politics*, *46*(1), 2–24.
Harmon, M. D. (2000). Casting the 2000 U.S. Presidential primaries. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, *12*(2), 93–104.
In U.S., perceived need for third party reaches new high. (2013). *Gallup poll*. Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University.
Iyengar, S. (1987). Television news and citizens' explanations of national affairs. *The American Political Science Review*, *81*(3), 815–832.
Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
Jacobs, B. (2013, November 8). Libertarian Robert Sarvis drew record high votes in Virginia. *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved from http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/08/libertarian-robert-sarvis-drew-record-high-votes-in-virginia.html
Jansen, S. C. (1994). Market censorship revisited: Press freedom, journalistic practices, and the emerging world order. *Communication Yearbook*, *17*, 481–504.
Joslyn, R. (1984). *Mass media and elections*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
Kim, S., Scheugele, D. A., & Shanahan, J. (2002). Think about it this way: Attribute agenda-setting function of the press and the public's evaluation of a local issue. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *79*(1), 7–23.
Kiousis, S., Bantimaroudis, P., & Ban, H. (1999). Candidate image attributes: Experiments on the substance dimension of second level agenda setting. *Communication Research*, *26*(4), 414–428.

Kirch, J. F. (2013). News coverage different for third-party candidates. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *34*(4), 40–53.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lippmann, W. (1965). *Public opinion*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Lowi, T. J. (1999). Toward a responsible three-party system: Plan or obituary? In J. C. Green & D. M. Shea (Eds.), *The state of the parties: The changing role of contemporary American parties* (3rd., pp. 171–189). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Mason, A. (2007). Reporting the Fiji coups: Elite sources, journalistic practice and the status quo. *Pacific Journalism Review*, *13*(1), 107–123.

McAuliffe has 6-point lead in close Virginia government race. (2013). *Quinnipiac University poll*. Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University.

McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

McCombs, M. (2005). A look at agenda-setting: Past, present and future. *Journalism Studies*, *6*(4), 543–557.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *36*(2), 176–187.

McLeod, J. M., Becker, L. B., & Byrnes, J. E. (1974). Another look at the agenda-setting function of the press. *Communications Research*, *1*(2), 131–165.

McLeod, D. M., & Hertog, J. K. (1992). The manufacture of public opinion by reporters: Informal cues for public perceptions of protest groups. *Discourse & Society*, *3*(3), 259–275.

Meyrowitz, J. (1995). The problem of getting on the media agenda: A case study in competing logics of campaign coverage. In E. K. Kathleen (Ed.), *Presidential campaign discourse: Strategic communication problems* (pp. 35–67). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Miller, Z., & Rogers, A. (2013, June 3). The dirtiest, nastiest, low-down campaign in America: Cuccinelli vs. McAuliffe. *Time*. Retrieved from http://swampland.time.com/2013/06/03/the-dirtiest-low-down-campaign-in-america-cuccinelli-vs-mcauliffe/?iid=sl-main-lead

On the Issues. (2013). *Robert Sarvis*. Retrieved from http://www.ontheissues.org/Robert_Sarvis.htm

Our choice for governor in 2013: None of the above. [Editorial]. (2013, October 20). *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, pp. E2. Retrieved from http://www.richmond.com/opinion/our-opinion/article_6a2c5e41-20f3-561a-a25d-52eedf4741f3.html

Patterson, T. E. (1980). *The mass media election: How Americans choose their president*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.

Patterson, T. E. (1994). *Out of order*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Payne, D. (2013, September 17). Three's a crowd. *Style Weekly*. Retrieved from http://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/threes-a-crowd/Content?oid=1953994

Pirch, K. A. (2004). *The others: Third party presidential candidates and the elite print media, 1968–2000* (Unpublished dissertation). University of Oregon, IL, USA.

Pulice, J. (2013, December 14). Distasteful elections. *Harvard Political Review*. Retrieved from http://www.iop.harvard.edu/distasteful-elections

Rachlin, A. (1988). *News as hegemonic reality: American political culture and the framing of news accounts*. New York, NY: Praiger Publishers.

Ramsden, G. P. (1996). Media coverage of issues and candidates: What balance is appropriate in a democracy? *Political Science Quarterly*, *111*(1), 65–81.

Reese, S. D. (1991). Setting the media's agenda: A power balance perspective. *Communication Yearbook*, *14*, 309–340.

Reinhard, B. (2013, August 8). What Virginia voters really think of terry Mcauliffe and Ken Cuccinelli. *National Review*. Retrieved from http://www.nationaljournal.com/s/73429/what-virginia-voters-really-think-terry-mcauliffe-ken-cuccinelli

Robert Who? [Editorial]. (2013, July 18). *Roanoke Times*. Retrieved from http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/editorials/robert-who/article_f089e631-ef8d-5b5b-b900-6548c6b1fa48.html

Robinson, M. J., & Sheehan, M. A. (1980). *Over the wire and on TV*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Rosenstone, S. J., Behr, R. L., & Lazarus, E. H. (1996). *Third parties in America: Citizen response to major party failure* (2nd.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Scheufele, D., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, *57*, 9–20.

Schudson, M. (2008). News and democratic society: Past, present, and future. *The Hedgehob Review*, *10*(2), 7–21.

Shaw, D. L., & McCombs, M. E. (1977). *The emergence of American political issues: The agenda-setting function of the press*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co.

Sifry, M. L. (2003). *Spoiling for a fight: Third-party politics in America*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sigal, L. V. (1973). *Reporters and officials: The organization and politics of newsmaking*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company.

Sigal, L. V. S. (1996). Sources make the news. In R. K. Manoff & M. Schudson (Eds.), *Reading the news* (pp. 9–37). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Simon, M. (April 14, 2014). GOP's purple-state problem. *Salon*. Retrieved from http://www.salon.com/2014/04/18/gops_purple_state_problem_how_a_virginia_medicaid_battle_augurs_huge_risks_for_the_party/

Smith, C. (1993). News sources and power elites in news coverage of the Exxon Valez oil spill. *Journalism Quarterly*, *70*(2), 393–403.

Son, Y. J., & Weaver, D. H. (2005). Another look at what moves public opinion: Media agenda setting and polls in the 200 U.S. Election. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *18*(2), 174–197.

Son, Y. J., & Weaver, D. H. (2006). Another look at what moves public opinion: Media agenda setting and polls in the 2000 U.S. Election. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *18*(2), 174–197.

Stempel, G. H. (1969). The prestige press meets the third-party challenge. *Journalism Quarterly*, *46*(4), 699–706.

Stempel, G. H., & Windhauser, J. H. (1984). The prestige press revisited: Coverage of the 1980 presidential campaign. *Journalism Quarterly*, *61*(1), 49–55.

Stovall, J. G. (1985). The third-party challenge of 1980: News coverage of the presidential candidates. *Journalism Quarterly*, *62*(2), 266–271.

Streitmatter, R. (1997). *Mightier than the sword: How the news media have shaped American history*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

"Too Conservative" Tag Hurts Cuccinelli in Virginia. (2013). *Quinnipiac University poll*. Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University.

Tuccille, J. D. (2013, August 26). Journalists wonder why they're not paying attention to Virginia's libertarian candidate for governor. *Reason*. Retrieved from http://reason.com/blog/2013/08/26/journalists-wonder-why-theyre-not-paying

Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Virginia Libertarian for governor vote total shows Libertarian Party rising. (2013, November 6). *OC Politics Blog* [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.lp.org/news/press-releases/virginia-libertarian-for-governor-vote-total-shows-lp-rising

Virginia State Board of Elections. (2013). *Official results for 2013 general election*. Retrieved from http://elections.virginia.gov/Files/Electionresults/2013/November-5/electionresults.virginia.gov/resultsSWde2d.html?eid=7&type=SWR&map=CTY

Virginia voters dislike McAuliffee less than Cuccinelli. (2013). *Quinnipiac University poll*. Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University.

Weaver, D. H. (2007). Thoughts on agenda setting, framing, and priming. *Journal of Communication*, *57*(1), 142–147.

Weaver, D. H., Graber, D. A., McCombs, M. E., & Eyal, C. H. (1981). *Media agenda-setting in a presidential election: Issues, images, and interest*. New York, NY: Praiger Publishers.

Will, G. (2013, October 25). Despite voter anger, third-party candidate has no chance. *Las Cruces Sun-News*. Retrieved from http://www.lcsun-news.com/las_cruces-opinion/ci_24380193/despite-voter-anger-third-party-candidate-has-no

Winter, J. P. (1981). Contingent conditions in the agenda-setting process. In G. C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook* (pp. 235–243). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Zaller, J. (1999). *A theory of media politics: How the interests of politicians, journalists, and citizens shape the news*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Zaller, J., & Hunt, M. (1994). The rise and fall of candidate perot: Unmediated versus mediated politics—Part I. *Political Communication*, *11*(4), 357–390.

Zito, S. (2013, October 27). Virginia governor hopefuls struggle to appeal to bases. *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*. Retrieved from http://triblive.com/politics/politicalheadlines/4888413-74/cuccinelli-mcauliffe-virginia#axzz3LihuT6qz.

Author Biography

John F. Kirch is an assistant professor of journalism and new media at Towson University. His research focuses on media history and news coverage of dissent, particularly third-party political candidates. His recent work includes "Turning a blind eye: Why journalists ignore third-party gubernatorial candidates," which will be published in the *Newspaper Research Journal* in Fall 2015, and "Conflicting narratives: Raymond Bonner, the *New York Times*, and *El Salvador* in the 1980s," which will be published in *American Journalism* in Fall 2015.

Article

Journal of Communication Inquiry
2016, Vol. 40(2) 179–195

DOI: 10.1177/0196859915609401
jci.sagepub.com

Representations of the Police in Contemporary Russian Police TV Series: The Case of *Glukhar'*

Arseniy Khitrov[1]

Abstract

This article answers the question of how contemporary Russian TV series portray the police. The results derive from a single-case thematic and functionalist study of the popular Russian TV series *Glukhar'* (which aired from 2008 to 2011). The show merits special attention because it was on air when the Russian police were undergoing a legitimacy crisis, which lead to the 2009 police reform. The series recognized the crisis and responded to it with a set of justifications. I analyze the show's social and cultural contexts, its plot patterns, and the functions of its characters. I build a typology of justifications and claim that the show justifies the police through an open discussion about the reasons for and consequences of their lawlessness. The series shows that the legitimacy of the police is repeatedly questioned, but trust in the police is always restored because police officers are depicted as estranged from the state but not from the community. Thus, the show contains an interesting example of overcoming a legitimacy crisis through its recognition. The study opens the floor to further discussions about how popular culture resolves intense social debates about policing by symbolic means in a moment when police legitimacy is contested.

Keywords

representation, police, TV series, legitimacy, Russia

[1]National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russian Federation

Corresponding Author:
Arseniy Khitrov, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 20 Myasnitskaya Ulitsa, Moscow 101000, Russia.
Email: akhitrov@hse.ru

Introduction

As police scholars, Reiner (2010, pp. 187–188, 194, 195) and Leishman and Mason (2003, pp. 67–86) have shown transgression of the law by police officers is a common motif in contemporary police television series. However, as these scholars have demonstrated in their typologies of law enforcement narratives, series differ on the degree of transgression and on the combination of transgression and its justification. Series usually represent transgression as a continuum, stretching from mild rule-bending to harsh rule-breaking; furthermore, some series legitimate the police's wrongdoings, and some do not (Leishman & Mason, 2003, pp. 89–93; Reiner, 2010, pp. 188–199).

These authors mention some types of justifications, but overall they do not elaborate a typology of justifications.[1] In the contemporary world, as well as in the police series, as Reiner (2010) claims, justifications are usually invented in an ad hoc fashion: "There is no new legitimating myth, however. A more sophisticated public awareness of conflict, inside and outside the police organization, precludes anything but a pragmatic, conditional legitimation in specific narratives, challenged by others" (p. 201).

This study builds on these works and investigates the justification strategies of the police in police series in a situation where "public awareness of conflict, inside and outside the police organisation" is particularly tense. In Russia, the police recently underwent a legitimacy crisis that the state tried to ease by carrying out major police reforms in 2009. For this reason, it is productive to study Russian police series from that time period in order to examine whether the shows followed and responded to public debates, and whether the police were depicted in terms of the legitimacy crisis in these shows. More specifically, we can ask how exactly shows deal with crises in society, whether they justify the police, what legitimation strategies they use, and whether counter-narratives are offered.

Answers to these questions will build upon research conducted by Reiner, Leishman, and Mason, as well as other scholars who study images of the police.[2] More specifically, answers to the questions posed here will help us better understand how the police's unstable legitimacy is negotiated or challenged at times of crisis.

The Case of *Glukhar'*

In this study, I examine the first episodes of one of Russia's most popular police shows, *Glukhar'* (which aired from 2008 to 2011).[3] This show launched at a time of intense public debate about police legitimacy, one year before major police reform began in Russia. The show depicted the police as lawless. Methodologically, this study is a single-case (George & Bennett, 2005), sequential,[4] thematic, and functionalist (Fiske, 2011; Turner, 1999) analysis of the show

Glukhar'. Before proceeding to my analysis, I will substantiate my choice of Russian television at large and of *Glukhar'*, in particular, by showing how the country and this show are related to the aforementioned topics of legitimacy crises and justification strategies.

Russia is an important case because it was perceived globally as one of the most corrupt countries in the world in the 2000s.[5] This was mirrored by domestic sentiments. Due to public perceptions of Russian police as corrupt, President Dmitrii Medvedev launched a police reform in December 2009 ("Dmitrii Medvedev Podpisal Ukaz o Masshtabnoi Reforme v MVD", 2009).

There are two reasons for focusing on *Glukhar'*. First, the show began to air during a time when actors from the Russian media were systematically challenging the police. Second, the show has enjoyed exceptional popularity in Russia. I discuss these points in greater detail later.

Legitimacy Crisis in the 2000s

When the show *Glukhar'* appeared on Russian television in 2008, Russian media were saturated with images of corrupt police officers engaging in various highly unprofessional activities.

In April 2009, for example, police major Denis Evsiukov killed several civilians in a supermarket. This event caused a great uproar and discussion. Deputy Interior Minister Arkadii Edelev stated that this killing was an isolated incident. In response to his remark, in January 2010, the Russian edition of *Esquire* magazine published a piece called "We are working 24/7," which resembled a calendar and contained daily reports about police crimes from 2009.[6] The Interior Ministry responded to this by publishing a "Calendar of virtue" on their website, which listed police officers' daily acts of bravery from 2009 ("MVD Sostavilo Sobstvennyi "Kalendar' Muzhestva" Militsionerov", 2010). Later that year, a police officer named Alexei Dymovskii uploaded several *YouTube* videos addressed to then-President Dmitrii Medvedev, condemning the police for corruption. *Glukhar'* reenacted both events in its last episodes.

Contemporary artists also addressed the legitimacy crisis. For instance, from 2008 until 2011, the police was a central theme for the *War art-group*. In 2011, some of the members of this group entered the band *Pussy Riot*, which continued to challenge authorities in Russia more recently. This constant symbolic exchange between the media, artists, and the state indicates that the issue of police representations was central to Russian society at that moment. The dominant image was that of a bad cop transgressing the law and threatening society through uncontrolled power. As I will show in this article, the show *Glukhar'* fits this pattern.

Glukhar' launched as these media scandals unfolded, and it continued to air as the 2009 police reform began. These circumstances make *Glukhar'* worth studying as a case of symbolic production dealing with a highly contested topic.

My analysis of *Glukhar'* revealed that the show acknowledges the legitimacy crisis by depicting the police as involved in activities that the show's characters consider illegal.[7]

Production and Popularity of the Show

Glukhar' was aired from 2008 until 2011. It was divided into three seasons and comprises 160 episodes, 45 minutes each. According to *TNS Russia Media & Custom Research* data, during its last week on air, *Glukhar'* was the most popular TV program on Russian television in general, the most popular TV show, and the most popular program on the channel which broadcast it.[8] Moreover, *Glukhar'* became an umbrella brand. There were two feature films based on the show and four derivative TV shows based on its characters.

Glukhar' was produced by a private production group called *Dixi Media*. The company was established in 1992 and made significant contributions to the Russian advertising industry and to Russian television (70 documentary movies, films, and shows, and 6 police television series). *Glukhar'* was aired by one of Russia's most popular private television channels, *NTV*.

The show's scriptwriter Ilya Kulikov said in an interview that he based the series on stories that two of his friends, an investigator and a traffic police officer, told him (Gusiatinskii, 2011). He also said that he purposefully did not invite any police officers to consult him, as this would reveal their identities and could attract pressure on them from police chiefs who might have their own agendas.

The show's producer Efim Liublinskii said that lower ranking police officers liked the show, while their higher ranking bosses did not. The latter were unhappy show's depiction of officers. Liublinskii said he received calls from police chiefs who accused him of creating a negative image of the police. He contested these allegations, claiming that "Glukharev is a good person despite all his surface negativity" (""*Glukhar*"', "Varen'ka" i Drugie Po-Nastoiashchemu Populiarnye v Rossii Serialy", 2012).

Scriptwriter Ilya Kulikov also said that he wanted viewers to empathize with the show's protagonists. To enable this empathy, he aimed to make the show "more realistic" than other police shows broadcast on Russian TV. Explaining the show's success, he emphasized positive images of characters: "they are good people who do good things. And good people who do good things are always appealing" ("Interv'iu/'*Glukhar*": Novyi Geroi Na Ekrane Ili Kleveta Na Militsiiu/Efim Liubinskii, Denis Rozhkov, Il'ia Kulikov").

One of the main actors in the show, Denis Rozhkov, said that his fans often tell him that the show changed their attitudes toward the police for the better by helping them understand police officers. He added that many fans said that after watching the show, they wanted to attend police school and get police jobs

("Interv'iu/'*Glukhar'*": Novyi Geroi Na Ekrane Ili Kleveta Na Militsiiu/Efim Liubinskii, Denis Rozhkov, Il'ia Kulikov").

Actor Maxim Averin, who played Glukharev, said in an interview that he believes the show was successful because viewers recognized a familiar person in Glukharev: "Single mothers saw their son, some guys saw a buddy, women saw their beloved. . . . People needed a person who would give them warmth" (Veligzhanina, 2011). Moreover, Averin said that his character is simultaneously close to ordinary people and from the *intelligentsia* circles, "which are disappearing in Russia today." Averin also said,

> the heroes of our country are those who wear uniforms, those who serve. Because people need protection. Some people need police protection; some people need protection from the army; some need protection for their souls, and this is my job. I sometimes feel that I am a warrior. (Gusiatinskii, 2010)

Averin adds that he believes he "restored people's trust in the police" (Gusiatinskii, 2010).

In his interview, Averin claims his protagonist is a contemporary Hamlet who is "not so bad after all" and is "sometimes funny, sometimes tragic," but, most importantly, helps people feel close to each other after the tragic disintegration of the USSR created general alienation in society. He added that the 2014 Olympic Games in Russia and Crimea's "unification" with Russia contributed to the healing of this trauma as well (Chornykh, 2014). When asked if the show's ideology, which consists of justifying crimes in order to solve other crimes, makes him uncomfortable, Averin said it does not: "Glukharev is the son of his country and a hero of his time. There is a considerable number of cops like him in contemporary Russia" ("Gnezdo Glukharia").

The series was received well by professional police officers and TV critics. It received four television prizes: three in Russia and one in Ukraine. Top police officials approved the show. Russia's Interior Minister at the time, Rashid Nurgaliev, said in an interview in 2011 that he liked *Glukhar'* and thought this was the first show to demonstrate "our life and our psychology," referring to the police and those under his command ("Nurgaliev smotrit serial "*Glukhar'*", schitaia ego samym ob"ektivnym", 2011).

While the issue of audience perceptions merits separate discussions, this article addresses only the show itself. In this way, this study contributes to the existing body of research on images of the Russian police (Bondarenko, 2006; MacFadyen, 2008; Oushakine, 2007; Rawlinson, 1998; Tishler, 2003; Vatulescu, 2010; Vishevsky, 2001). It also helps develop categories that will be useful for further studies of audience receptions of Russian cop shows, of fictional representations of the police in TV series beyond the Russian context, and, finally, it will contribute to a better understanding of how culture and society function.

Protagonists

There are four major protagonists in the episodes of *Glukhar'* selected for analysis: Sergei Glukharev, Denis Antoshin, Irina Zimina, and Nikolai Tarasov.

Glukharev is an interrogating officer working at a Moscow police station called Piatnitskoe. He is in his 30s, lives with his mother, and has romantic relationships with his boss Zimina, a single woman with a child. Glukharev has a close friend, Antoshin, who works as a traffic cop. They know each other since childhood. Tarasov is a law student who gets an internship at the Piatnitskoe office.

Police officers are involved in the same types of crimes as their prototypes in the media: They take bribes, they beat and torture civilians (sometimes during interrogations, sometimes without reason), and they even kill people. At the same time, the show distinctly separates the main protagonists from much more violent characters, who are described as cynics scrambling up the career ladder. Sometimes, this is a fine line, for example, when both the protagonists and the "real villains" kill people. But even in such situations, the former are justified as people with good intentions who are fundamentally kind, while the latter are devoid of such characteristics. Thus, the show does not necessarily whitewash or try to hide problems of the real Russian police, but rather the show reframes them: In the case of the protagonists, we see good people caught in bad situations, and in the case of the villains, we see bad people making every situation worse. As a result, the police depictions look realistic because they correspond to (or directly reenact) prominent media stories. Yet, unlike the media stories, the show justifies the police by suggesting that some officers who behave badly are essentially good people.

Methods

The method employed here is twofold. The first element consists of tracing narrative patterns and character functions (Fiske, 2011). A functionalist treatment of the character means that he or she is seen as "a paradigmatic set of values that are related through structures of similarity and difference to other characters" and "an embodied ideology" that "is used to make sense of the world by the relations of discourses and ideology that it embodies" (Fiske, 2011, p. 161). In other words, the character is seen as "a function of the plot," and his or her individual traits are treated as "an ideological hook for the audience" (Fiske, 2011, p. 131) that enable the viewer's identification with the character and hide the ideological agenda of the plot. In my analysis, I focus on plot patterns and corresponding character functions.

The second element of my method consists of coding scenes and memo-writing based on a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998; George & Bennett, 2005). Coding was done in the following stages:

First, open coding of the TV show's scenes. This means I watched the first several episodes of the TV show in order to identify the key and reemerging category related to my initial question. This analysis allowed me to conclude that the motif of the police transgressing the law and the subsequent justification of this transgression was the most often-repeated motif. "Legitimation" and "justification" became the core categories of my analysis.

The second stage consisted of axial coding, during which I noticed that when actions labeled initially as "illegal" are in the end justified in the show, new categories also come into play. Namely, these are law, order, violence, justice, power, security, crime, morality, norms, and control. I also noted the characters' judgments of police work and officers' self-descriptions. Then I coded the scenes with these additional categories.

The third stage consisted of selective coding, during which I grouped transcripts of scenes by the categories mentioned earlier and wrote memos. Through memo-writing, I developed a model of illegal action justification in the show. In choosing between an extensive analysis of a large number of episodes and an intensive analysis of a limited number of episodes, I preferred the latter. I paid attention to both narrative development and to specific scenes within the episodes. I define "scene" as the representation of a completed social action. My total corpus consisted of 46 scenes from the first 9 episodes. All 46 scenes were selected on the basis of their relation to the key category, surrounding categories, and presence of verbal accounts about police work.

My model can be summarized as follows. The TV show is based on a narrative pattern which consists of the following sequence of actions: police officers act, someone claims that the police officers' actions transgress the law, and police officers propose explanations that justify and legitimize the transgression. There are four stable patterns of justification: through the figure of the outsider who becomes the informant, through description of the seemingly illegal actions as humane and performed in the interest of the community instead of in the interest of the state, by deconstructing media stereotypes of police violence, and, finally, through pointing out the moral mission of the police.

In the subsequent parts of the article, I will address these four types of justification.

Analysis

From the Outsider to the Informant

The first type of justification is reflected in the following plot pattern: The outsider has a number of normative assumptions about how the police should work, she or he openly criticizes the police by saying that they are violating certain legal or moral norms. This criticism faces counterarguments in either a form of practical demonstration of how the police actually work or in the form of an

explanation to the outsider of why existing policing principles are good. The outsider accepts these arguments, and then becomes an insider who later also partakes in explaining the situation to other outsiders.

At the beginning of the show, Nikolai Tarasov is such an outsider who is on his way to becoming an insider. The first shot of the show is filmed in a subjective manner, from the point of view of Tarasov as he walks to the police station. It seems that this is one of his first visits. This technique might facilitate the viewer's identification with Tarasov, if the viewer is unfamiliar with the work done at a police station.

Tarasov has normative expectations of the police. He believes that police officers should obey the law. He thinks that all of society should function in accordance with formal laws, and, by extension, he thinks the police should be structured in this way too. Instead, he sees the police acting on informal, personal ties, and ad hoc contracts. This opposition resembles a pair of categories proposed by the 19th-century German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies: civil society on one hand and community on the other hand (Tönnies, 2001). By using these categories, Tönnies tried to show that European societies had shifted from a stage in which the prevailing form of social interaction was based on personal contacts to a stage in which social interactions became regulated by impersonal rules.

In *Glukhar'*, Tarasov gradually abandons his normative expectations and changes his preferences from the civil society model to the community model. Glukharev's and Antoshin's explanations of how policing is done show Tarasov that those actions which seemed simply illegal to him at the beginning are actually sometimes pragmatic, or, even more often motivated by certain values. While Tarasov is the main object of persuasion during the first three episodes, by Episode 5, he already starts to explain the inner logic of the organization to outsiders such as his relatives and his girlfriend Viktoria. Those explanations create conditions for a possible reconciliation of the viewer with the police corruption depicted on the screen.

Formal Norms Versus Humane Values

The second type of justification for the police's illegal action is based on a binary opposition between the idea of formal norms and humane values. People outside the organization see the police's illegal actions as determined by either police officers' emotions and feelings (most often aggression) or habit and tradition. Glukharev explains his actions as if he is driven by the value of humanism. These interpretations of the police's actions can be described through Max Weber's classification of social actions. Weber (1978) divides social action into four categories: instrumental rational, value rational, affectual, and traditional (pp. 24–25). In relation to the show, we can say that people outside the police are disappointed with the police because they expect police officers to act

instrumentally rationally or value rationally, with the law as the value. The police, however, seem to act affectually or traditionally. Members of the police see themselves as acting value rationally, with humanism being the core value. Humanism should be realized flexibly and informally, and it opposes to formal norms, which are seen as inhumane because of their strictness.

Formal norms stem from the state, and either the state or regular citizens force the police to follow them. Norms are expressed in a bureaucratic language. Bureaucratic language has to be respected in protocols and opposed to the language of everyday conversation (Episode 3, 14:50; Episode 7, 26:23–26:45). Police officers react negatively when people voice their concerns or disappointment with how informally police work is conducted.

The most emblematic example of this opposition can be found in Episode 4, in which three minors steal a car, and the car's owner, Vadim, demands the most severe punishment for them:

> Vadim: Excuse me, how many years of prison will they get?
> Glukharev: Two of them will get a one-year conditional sentence, and the third one, who's faced trial once already, will get a two-year conditional sentence, perhaps, but maybe not even that.
> Vadim: What?! And you call this a justice system? Hand me a piece of paper, please.
> Glukharev: What for?
> Vadim: What do you mean? Do you realize how long I've been saving up for this car? And now they'll only get a one-year conditional sentence? Hand me a piece of paper, please, I'm going to write up another claim!
> Glukharev: And what are you going to claim?
> Vadim: Firstly, (he takes an edition of the criminal code out of his bag) a claim about hijacking. Secondly, (opens the book and quotes from it) about large-scale property damage. Third, what's it called? Hooliganism . . . Drunk driving without a license. They will really be in for it this time!
> Glukharev: Listen, man, are you sane? You got your car back. So it's a little dented. I'll talk to the parents; they will pay you for the repair.
> Vadim: No!
> Glukharev: Why 'no'? Don't you get it? They are just kids! What? They have to go to jail because of you?
> Vadim: Exactly! That's exactly where they belong! (Episode 4, 17:03–19:49)

Vadim demands implementation of the formal norm, while Glukharev is depicted as the agent who customizes law implementation to concrete circumstances. Moreover, Glukharev is guided by the value rational principle, that is, the idea that the law is a flexible tool of normalization and inclusion of the delinquent person back into society, and not as a stern instrument of punishment and exclusion. Vadim insists on the implementation of abstract principles

and does not take the circumstances into account. Glukharev, on the contrary, does take them into account and functions as a mediator between the law and the community, rather than as a force external to the community. Furthermore, it can even be said that interests of the community are more important for Glukharev than the abstract and impersonal implementation of the law. He can ignore the law, he is able to withdraw himself from the obligation to carry it out, but he is depicted as incapable of ignoring people's requests if they coincide with his personal vision of humane norms and justice. In the follow-up of Vadim's car case, Glukharev suggests that one of the children's parents should propose to Vadim to pay for the repair of his car; then, later in the episode, when they fail to make this arrangement, Glukharev himself organizes the repair through his informal connections at a car repair shop, also involving one of the children who happens to have a part-time job there. This work is paid for unofficially as well.

There is an additional dimension of the formal norms versus humane values motif here: It touches upon the parallels between parenting and implementing the law. The police's informality is represented as their parenting of a community.

Thus, the police are represented in the TV show as separate from the state and society with their official, impersonal, and abstract norms, and as close to the community of people based on personal contacts. What is described as illegal at first is later interpreted as flexible and humane normalization. What seems to be uncontrolled violence turns out to be action regulated by moral ideas.

Counterclaims to Media Stereotypes of the Police

Several *Glukhar"* scenes put forward a counterclaim that the image of the police as a corrupt and violent organization is a media stereotype and not a true depiction of the actual condition.

The plot pattern of this type of legitimizing narrative is the following: At first, some characters are described as those whose only source of information about the police is the media. In their opinion, the police are gangs of violent and corrupt criminals. Then, a representative of the police, an insider, establishes informal contact with people who mistrust the police. Finally, the insider persuades these people to suspend their mistrust and even to change their attitude toward the police from a negative to a positive attitude.

It should be emphasized here that media stereotypes about the police are deconstructed not so much for characters who express critical opinions about the police in the first place, but for viewers of the show who know these opinions from previous scenes. People who expressed their concern with the police are not usually present in scenes where these concerns are addressed. Thus, the show's police characters seem to justify their actions to the viewer, not to characters who voiced their criticism. This circumstance can be interpreted as an indicator

of the fact that the viewer's opinion about the police matters more than the opinion of the character who expresses his or her mistrust in the show.

Policing as a Moral Mission

There are several scenes in which policing is depicted as a moral, even semireligious, mission. This mission aims to implement certain high-order principles. Within this pattern, the police officer is represented as a person who is either an agent of these principles or a witness of their realization that happens by itself, independently from human action. The following scene illustrates this point:

> [In a bar. Glukharev and Denis Antoshin are sipping beers]
> Glukharev: Den [diminutive form of Denis], I think I want the Apocalypse to come.
> Antoshin: What are you talking about?
> Glukharev: You know . . . I want the global overturn to come. So that all this crap, all this dough, you know—statuses, positions, laws, decrees—so that all of that would lose its meaning in just one second. And then everything would start over. From scratch. (Episode 2, 28:51)

Here, Glukharev equates social statuses and laws: He wants them both to lose their meanings. We can determine from this phrase that in Glukhrev's vision, the Apocalypse is not the final and the highest court where those who have not obeyed the rules would be punished, as it is stipulated in Christian texts, but the moment when all rules are simply dismissed. Thus, we can say here that rules are neither ultimate nor are they entirely arbitrary and subjective. The reason they are not ultimate is that they can be dismissed. The reason they are not arbitrary or subjective is that it is only during the Apocalypse that they can be taken away. However, an individual cannot get rid of them. Rules belong to a higher order, and thus only the higher order can dismiss them.

Other instances where the semireligious motif surfaces in *Glukhar'* further prove the point that the police's actions and judgements are based on the assumption that moral values are not products of interpersonal arrangements, conventions, or education, but that they exist independently of people's opinions about them. There is an objective order of things that divides people into two groups: those who live out of prison and of those who do not. A crime is thus equivalent to an attempt to surpass a physical law: This attempt will inevitably have material consequences. The police officer is depicted as a referee standing on the outside and giving an account of what is going on in the world. She or he does not have to actively implement the law. The law would carry itself out, and the police officer would just witness it. The police officer is a mediator between God or the moral standard and human beings, a prophet who delivers the truth to people.

In ethics, the belief in a division between of moral norms and subjective opinions is called "moral realism." Thus, it can be said that *Gkukhar'*s moral metaphysics is in fact a version of moral realism.

Conclusions and Perspectives for Further Studies

The analysis presented here revealed that the show depicts the police as a group which operates via informal and personal connections in the interests of community. This function is not presented in a straightforward manner, but rather results from the struggle of characters to label certain actions as either legal or illegal. The police's actions defined in the show as illegal do not remain uncontested, but instead they are repeatedly challenged and are usually justified and legitimized. Thus, *Glukhar'* does not instil radical doubt in police legitimacy. The show first problematizes only some patterns of police functions, such as its use of informal rules and its recourse to illegal means, and subsequently justifies them.

My analysis has shown that there are four justification strategies present in the show. First, police work is portrayed from the point of view of an outsider who becomes a participant observer, who then also gradually takes on the values of those he is observing. Second, transgression of the law is presented as a form of disregard for formal norms of the state and society, and in favor of more pragmatic, experience-based, humane principles of community. Third, media stereotypes of corrupt police officers are challenged. Finally, the mission of the police is described in semireligious terms.

Glukhar' offers an opposition between society and community. Civil society is based on formal contracts with no feelings and no emotional belonging, while the community is constituted by internal and emotional links and informal contacts. It can be further argued that the first and the second legitimation strategies reinforce the image of Russia as composed of communities, and the image of such communities, in turn, reinforces the legitimacy of illegal police actions in the TV show: Community can only be policed informally, and such informal policing produces and reproduces communities.

If we relate *Glukhar'* to Reiner's and Leishman and Mason's typology of law enforcement narratives, then the show reflects the vigilante type of law enforcement narrative most closely. In accordance with this narrative type, *Glukahr'* portrays the police officer as "the street-wise cop, understanding the vicious nature of criminals, can deal effectively with them, defying any restraints posed by legal or departmental rules and regulations" (Reiner, 2010, p. 194), who is also in conflict with "management cops." The citizenry is "nominally the justification for the vigilante's battle" but "do not adequately appreciate or support his actions" (Reiner, 2010, p. 194). However, the show *Glukhar'* ultimately goes beyond this type because it portrays not a "lone-wolf cop," as the

vigilante type stipulates, but rather a group of officers. Also, unlike the vigilante narrative type, we see that *Glukhar'* depicts citizens who do not justify corruption. In addition, the show deals first and foremost with the police as a community, rather than with the theme of fighting crime. In this respect, the show might also fall within "the deviant police," "the police community," and even the "community police" types of stories, never fully coinciding with any particular type.

I do not believe that *Glukhar'*s cultural specificity explains its inconsistency with the mentioned typologies. Even though the show's stories are richly ornamented with details of contemporary Moscow life, deep narrative patterns and character functions can easily be described by the language proposed by Reiner and Leishman and Mason. In other words, while superficial aspects of the show are culturally specific, its deep structure is not; and while some types of transgression might be seen as culturally specific, their justifications are not culturally specific at all. Regarding justifications, I would argue that *Glukhar'* adds to the list of possible justifications that Reiner and Leishman and Mason have discussed. The show proposes an additional, unique justification through its open recognition of a crisis of legitimacy, and through its subsequent resolution of the crisis through the strategies I described earlier. *Glukhar'* does not try to hide the legitimacy problem; on the contrary, it admits there is a crisis and discusses it openly. The series does not show the police as a homogenous organization; it gives voice to characters who challenge police authority. It does not try to establish a single and totalizing myth of the police. Instead, it shows the complexity and ambivalence of policing in the society where the police do not enjoy universal trust. However, this openness about the problem functions as a new way of justification, a type that has not been widely discussed in the research literature. Thus, a thematic and functionalist analysis of *Glukhar'* contributes to our understanding of how popular culture can symbolically justify the police whose legitimacy is contested.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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

Funding

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

Notes

1. They talk about justifications through references to ideas of the magnitude of the threats (Reiner, 2010, pp. 187–188), good people being in "trying circumstances" (Leishman & Mason, 2003, p. 67), "noble cause" corruption

(Leishman & Mason, 2003, p. 70), villains who can be combatted only by those who are equally ruthless (Leishman & Mason, 2003, p. 74), and to the idea that procedures come from bureaucracy and restrain the police (Leishman & Mason, 2003, p. 74).

2. The present research contributes to the existing field of studies of media representations of the police in general (Clarke, 1992; Inciardi & Dee, 1987; Leishman & Mason, 2003; Meyer, 2012; Newburn, 2008; Reiner, 2008, p. 317), to studies of the images of the police in fictional films (Allen, Livingstone, & Reiner, 1997, 1998; McLaughlin, 2005; Newburn, 2008; Reiner, 2008), and to studies of fictional television images of the police (Clarke, 1983, 1992; Inciardi & Dee, 1987, pp. 95–97; Leishman & Mason, 2003; Loader, 1997; McLaughlin, 2005; Newburn, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2005; Reiner, 2008). For a more detailed bibliography on studies of images of the police, see Reiner (2010, pp. 176–188). A similar bibliographical overview of the literature on fictional images can be found in Leishman and Mason (2003, pp. 49–104).
3. "*Glukhar'*" ("Capercailye" in English, with no connection with the bird) is a nickname of the major protagonist of the series, whose full name is Sergei Glukharev.
4. I have chosen a single-case analysis of one TV show and a sequential reading of its several episodes for the following reason: An in-depth analysis of TV series requires knowledge of the plot and character development which is better acquired through the sequential reading of several episodes of one series, rather than through the cross-case comparison of various series, or through a nonsequential reading of the same show's episodes. A cross-case comparison of several TV series or a nonsequential reading of one TV series would allow the analyst to find categories that originate from the show's scenes only, instead of from the plot's and characters' development. This design allows me to discover categories that could then be further used in comparative, cumulative, and even quantitative studies. I will discuss my sampling method in more detail in the Methods section of the article.
5. In the annual *Corruption Perceptions Index* by Transparency International, Russia's position was low at the beginning of the 2000s and became even lower by the end of the 2000s and at the beginning of the 2010s: It was 79 in 2001, 71 in 2002, 86 in 2003, 90 in 2004, 126 in 2005, 121 in 2006, 143 in 2007, 147 in 2008, 146 in 2009, 154 in 2010, 153 in 2011, 133 in 2012, and 127 in 2013 ("What We Do – Research – Corruption Perceptions Index", n.d.).
6. The copy of the material can be found in Drugoi (2010). Its textual version can be accessed in "Kalendar'|Zhurnal Esquire" (2010).
7. I would like to emphasize that I do not judge fictional police officers' actions as legal or illegal because I consider the show's characters as belonging to a symbolic universe that cannot be evaluated on the basis of legal codices that exist in the real world, no matter how realistic the show might look. When I speak about illegality or criminality of the police's actions in *Glukhar'*, I refer to such judgments made by the show's characters, to judgments-from-inside, not from-outside the symbolic universe of the show.
8. These data come from the website of *TNS Russia Media & Custom Research* company in April 2013, but they were no longer available upon examination of the website in March 2014. However, some *TNS* data can be seen in the article by television critic Arina Borodina and other news reports (Borodina, 2011a, 2011b; "Ekho Moskvy/Interv'iu/Arina Borodina", n·d·, "Telereitingi: Glukhar pribavil i v reitinge, i v dole", n·d·).

References

Allen, J., Livingstone, S., & Reiner, R. (1997). The changing generic location of crime in film: A content analysis of film synopses, 1945–1991. *Journal of Communication*, *47*(4), 89–101.

Allen, J., Livingstone, S., & Reiner, R. (1998). True lies: Changing images of crime in British postwar cinema. *European Journal of Communication*, *13*(1), 53–75. http://doi.org/10.1177/0267323198013001003

Bondarenko, T. A. (2006). Imidzh organov MVD v "militseiskikh" teleserialakh [Public image of the Russian police in the police television series]. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniia*, *9*, 114–119.

Borodina, A. (2011a, February 11). Kak na NTV razgovarivaiut so stranoi [How does the NTV channel talk to the nation]. *Gazeta "Kommersant"*, *206*, 4.

Borodina, A. (2011b, December 10). *Glukhar'* "nakryl" Doiarku iz Khatsapetovki [*Glukhar'* has beaten *Doiarka iz Khatsapetovki*]. *Gazeta "Kommersant"*, *191*, 4.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London, England/Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Chornykh, N. (2014). "*Vot kogda liudi nachnut zhit' i liubit', togda slova*" *zhenshchina*"*i*"*muzhchina*"*vstanut na svoi mesta*" [Maksim Averin: It is only when people start to live and love, the words 'woman' and 'man' will click into place]. Retrieved from http://www.mk.ru/culture/2014/05/16/maksim-averin-vot-kogda-lyudi-nachnut-zhit-i-lyubit-togda-slova-zhenschina-i-muzhchina-vstanut-na-svoi-mesta.html

Clarke, A. (1983). Holding the blue lamp: Television and the police in Britain. *Crime and Social Justice*, *19*, 44–51. http://doi.org/10.2307/29766190

Clarke, A. (1992). "You're nicked!": Television police series and the fictional representation of law and order. In S. Dominic & W. Stephen (Eds), *Come on down? Popular media culture in post-war Britain*. London, England/New York, NY: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dmitrii Medvedev podpisal ukaz o masshtabnoi reforme v MVD [Dmitrii Medvedev has signed a decree on major police reform]. (2009, December 25). *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*. Retrieved from http://www.rg.ru/2009/12/25/mvdref.html

Drugoi. (2010, January 18). *Kalendar' ot "Eskvaira" (01/2010)* [A calendar by Esquire magazine]. Retrieved from http://drugoi.livejournal.com/3153593.html

Ekho Moskvy/Interv'iu/Arina Borodina [Echo of Moscow]. (n.d.). *Ekho Moskvy*. Retrieved from http://echo.msk.ru/programs/programm/716474-echo/#element-text

Fiske, J. (2011). *Television culture*. London, England/New York, NY: Routledge.

George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

"*Glukhar'*", "Varen'ka" i drugie po-nastoiashchemu populiarnye v Rossii serialy [*Glukhar'*, *Varen'ka* and other truly popular Russian television series]. (2012, May 21). *Afisha Gorod*. Retrieved from http://gorod.afisha.ru/archive/gluhar-varenka-i-drugie-populjarnie-seriali

Gusiatinskii, A. (2010). *Zvezda seriala Glukhar Maksim Averin: Ia vernul liudiam veru v khoroshego militsionera!* [*Glakhar'*s star Maksim Averin: I have given people back faith in good police officers!]. Retrieved from http://www.kp.ru/daily/24478.3/635175/

Gusiatinskii, A. (2011). *Pochemu Glukharia otpravili v otstavku?* [Why was Glukhar' dismissed?]. Retrieved from http://www.kp.ru/daily/25723.4/2714578/

Inciardi, J. A., & Dee, J. L. (1987). From the keystone cops to Miami vice images of policing in American popular culture. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *21*(2), 84–102.

Kalendar'|Zhurnal Esquire [Calendar | Esquire magazine]. (2010, January 21). *Esquire*. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/20100121183439/http://esquire.ru/calendar

Leishman, F., & Mason, P. (2003). *Policing and the media: Facts, fictions and factions*. Devon, England/Portland, OR: Willan.

Loader, I. (1997). Policing and the social: Questions of symbolic power. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *48*(1), 1–18.

MacFadyen, D. (2008). *Russian television today: Primetime drama and comedy*. London, England/New York, NY: Routledge.

McLaughlin, E. (2005). From reel to ideal: The blue lamp and the popular cultural construction of the English "bobby". *Crime, Media, Culture*, *1*(1), 11–30. doi:10.1177/1741659005050241

Meyer, M. (2012). *Médiatiser la police, policer les médias*. Lausanne, Switzerland: Antipodes.

MVD sostavilo sobstvennyi "kalendar' muzhestva" militsionerov [The Interior Ministry has made its own 'calendar of virtue' of police officers]. (2010, April 16). Retrieved from Lenta.ru: http://lenta.ru/news/2010/03/16/calendar/

Newburn, T. (2008). *Handbook of policing*. Devon, England/Portland, OR: Willan.

Nurgaliev smotrit serial "*Glukhar'*", schitaia ego samym ob"ektivnym [Nurgaliev watches *Glukhar'* and believes it is the most objective]. (2011, June 9). *RIA Novisti*. Retrieved from http://ria.ru/society/20110906/431032478.html

O'Sullivan, S. (2005). UK policing and its television portrayal: Law and order ideology or modernising agenda? *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *44*(5), 504–526.

Oushakine, S. (2007). Aesthetics without law: Cinematic bandits in post-soviet space. *The Slavic and East European Journal*, *51*, 357–390.

Rawlinson, P. (1998). Mafia, media and myth: Representations of Russian organised crime. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *37*(4), 346–358.

Reiner, R. (2008). Policing and the media. In N. Tim (Ed.), *Handbook of policing* (pp. 313–335). Devon, England/Portland, OR: Willan.

Reiner, R. (2010). *The politics of the police* (4th ed.). Oxford, England: OUP.

Telereitingi: Glukhar pribavil i v reitinge, i v dole [Television rankings: *Glukhar'* ranking and shares have increased]. (n.d.). Retrieved from Newsru.com: http://www.newsru.com/cinema/28jul2010/gl.html

Tishler, J. R. (2003). Menty and the Petersburg Myth: TV cops in Russia's "Crime Capital". *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, *10*(2), 127–141.

Tönnies, F. (2001). *Community and civil society*. In J. Harris (Ed.), M. Hollis & J. Harris (Trans.). Cambridge, England/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, G. (1999). *Film as social practice*. London, England/New York, NY: Routledge.

Vatulescu, C. (2010). *Police aesthetics: Literature, film, and the secret police in soviet times*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Veligzhanina, A. (2011). *Tainaia liubov' Maksima Averina* [Maksim Averin's secret love]. Retrieved from http://www.kp.ru/daily/25628.3/792975/

Vishevsky, A. (2001). Answers to eternal questions in soft covers: Post-soviet detective stories. *Slavic and East European Journal*, *45*, 733–739.
Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
What we do – Research – Corruption perceptions index. (n.d.). *Transparency International*. Retrieved from http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi.

Author Biography

Arseniy Khitrov is an associate professor at the School of Cultural Studies, National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russian Federation. His work is focused on social constructionist analysis of social norms through critical media analysis.