Conflict Management and Peace Science

[DOI:10.1177/0738894209104551]
Vol 26(5): 437–470

cmps

Journalists' Incentives and Media Coverage of Elite Foreign Policy Evaluations

TIM GROELING
UCLA, USA

MATTHEW A. BAUM
Harvard University, USA

Scholars have long recognized that public support for presidential uses of military force depends critically on elite support. Similarly, scholars have argued that the media "index" their coverage of foreign policy to reflect the responses of partisan (particularly congressional) elites. We argue that journalists' choices also play an important role by systematically (and predictably) skewing the elite rhetoric presented to the public. In particular, we argue that criticism of the president by his own party is disproportionately likely to be broadcast—particularly in unified government—and that such criticism should be exceptionally persuasive to citizens. To separate the media's independent effect from that of the actual tenor of elite discourse, as presented in the news, we investigate all interviews with members of Congress on network television Sunday morning political interview shows between 1980 and 2003. We then determine which comments were selected for inclusion on the evening news and compare the characteristics of such comments with those that were not selected, both during periods immediately following major US uses of military force and during "normal" periods. We find that the evening news presents a biased sample of elite rhetoric, heavily over-representing criticism of the president by his own party, while under-representing supportive rhetoric. Our findings indicate that future studies of public opinion and US foreign policy must take into account the intervening role of journalists, who function as strategic, self-interested gatekeepers of public information regarding foreign policy events.

KEYWORDS: Congress; elite cues; foreign policy; media and politics; news media; parties; political communication; presidency; rhetoric; television

Introduction

In July 2008, Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) touched off a minor furor when he appeared to change his position regarding the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. Obama's statement that he might "refine" his promised timetable for withdrawal drew heavy coverage throughout the news media and exposed the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee to sharp criticism from both the left and right. After calling another press conference to refine his stance mere hours after making his initial statement, Obama confessed that he was "a little puzzled by the frenzy that I set off with what I thought was a pretty innocuous statement" (Whitesides, 2008).

Obama's puzzlement reflects a larger uncertainty on the part of both politicians and analysts regarding the news choices of journalists. Given the seemingly infinite number of statements offered by political figures, predicting what will make it onto the news—and what will cause a frenzy of coverage—is a daunting challenge. Longtime CBS anchor Walter Cronkite neatly summarized the widely shared perspective of journalists when he said, "Our job is only to hold up the mirror—to tell and show the public what has happened."[1] However, while one may be forgiven for dismissing the overheated rhetoric that characterizes much of the literature on bias in the news (e.g. Efron, 1971; Alterman, 2003; Coulter, 2003; Franken, 2003; Goldberg, 2003), scholars have long argued that news organizations play a more active role in selecting the news (see, for example, the "gatekeeper" literature in political communication: White, 1950; Westley and MacLean, 1957; Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Others go farther, arguing that while negativity and conflict have long been staples of American journalism, the news media have increasingly embraced "attack journalism" and cynicism since the 1960s (e.g. Sabato, 1991; Patterson, 1996; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997).

However, finding convincing empirical evidence of such bias on the part of journalists presents a clear problem for researchers: even if news coverage is overwhelmingly negative, it remains unclear whether that coverage results from the mix of stories journalists *chose* to cover, or from the mix of stories *available* to cover. In Cronkite's parlance, observing that journalists run more stories critical of the administration than favorable toward it might simply mirror a reality in which the administration has failed more than it has succeeded.

To address this "unobserved population" problem (see also Hofstetter, 1976; Harrington, 1993; Groeling and Kernell, 1998; Niven, 2002), we investigate a class of stories for which we *can* observe the full population of potential elite praise and criticism of the president. Specifically, we analyze content from interviews with members of Congress (henceforth "MCs") on three Sunday morning political interview shows: NBC's *Meet the Press,* ABC's *This Week*, and CBS's *Face the Nation*. It would be impractical to conduct a detailed analysis of every interview with every MC ever appearing on any of these three programs. Hence, we instead narrow our focus to test our argument against a particularly consequential subset of MC appearances: those taking place in the month following so-called "rally-round-the-flag" events

[1] Cronkite continues by saying, "Then it is the job of the people to decide whether they have faith in their leaders or governments" (quoted in Alan and Lane, 2003).

(Mueller, 1973)—that is, major uses of military force by the United States (Oneal et al., 1996)—between 1980 and 2003. We focus on these events because the prevailing theory (frequently termed the "indexing" hypothesis) predicting the public's reactions to them presumes that public opinion during such periods reflects elite debate—and especially that emanating from Congress (Althaus et al., 1996; Bennett, 1990; Hallin, 1986; Oneal et al., 1996; Zaller and Chiu, 2000)—appearing in the media. The public, according to the theory, rallies to the president's cause when (in the media) elites appear united in support of the president, but not when they appear divided (Brody and Shapiro, 1989; Brody, 1991). The implication is that the media are largely passive and nonstrategic, faithfully reflecting the actual substance of elite debate, and especially that emanating from the most powerful elites (Bennett et al., 2006). This makes the fidelity of media coverage of elite debate regarding these "rally events"—and in particular any bias in such coverage—particularly important for our understanding of the rally phenomenon.

Such a determination may also prove important for presidential leadership in conflict situations. Recent presidents from both parties have asserted that public support is vital for the success of US national security policy, especially in the case of military conflicts. Former President Bill Clinton's 1997 National Security Strategy document thus declared: "One … consideration regards the central role the American people rightfully play in how the United States wields its power abroad: the United States cannot long sustain a commitment without the support of the public" (NSC, 1997). Similarly, President George W. Bush's *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* lists "Continued support of the American people" as one of six "conditions for victory" in the Iraq conflict (NSC, 2005).

Many theories concerning the domestic sources of foreign policy, including many arguments surrounding the Democratic Peace (Maoz and Russett, 1993; Oneal and Russett, 2001), also assume a central role for democratic public opinion. For instance, the oft-cited domestic audience cost argument (Fearon, 1994) holds that a leader's credibility abroad depends in significant measure on public opinion at home (Baum, 2004; Schultz, 2001). If, as the indexing hypothesis maintains—and as our own prior research (Groeling and Baum, 2008) substantiates—public opinion is indeed indexed to the tenor of elite debate appearing in the news, then determining whether and when the public is likely to rally behind a presidential use of force requires an understanding of which types of stories about a conflict are likely to make it into the news in the first instance. In fact, we argue that the nature and extent of media coverage of US military conflicts is driven less by political elites constraining journalists than by commonly held professional incentives and norms that lead journalists to strongly prefer certain stories over others. These incentives and norms can lead to a substantial gap between *actual* elite rhetoric and media coverage of elite rhetoric.

Such a gap affects the abilities of presidents to rally the nation behind the use of military force abroad, and thus perhaps also to successfully invoke domestic audience costs in international disputes. Only by understanding the individual incentives of, and strategic interactions between, elites, the public, and the press, can we account for variations in public responses to presidential foreign policy initiatives. Such an understanding may help future presidents to better understand and respond to the

dynamics of the public opinion environment they are likely to confront upon sending American forces into harm's way. To the extent that, as the aforementioned presidential national security statements maintain, public support is critical (politically) to the success of US overseas military operations, this may affect presidents' evaluations of their likelihood of success in different circumstances, as well as of their ability to attract and sustain public support, given an unforeseen conflict situation.

Of course, Sunday morning political interview shows clearly do not account for the full universe of potential MC rhetoric from which network news producers might select. Nor are they necessarily a random sample of elite rhetoric. After all, Sunday morning talk show producers presumably select guests in part based on their expectations regarding the newsworthiness of what those guests are likely to say. However, once on such a show, the guests essentially enjoy an extended "open mike" forum in which they are free to say whatever they like, with minimal editing and at most limited interjection from the interviewers. Such interviews thus afford elites a chance to present their views to a relatively small, politically attentive audience in an unfiltered format. Most important, because we have gathered *all* such rhetoric, we employ these data as representative of *one* complete sub-universe of rhetoric from which network newscasters might select elements for their broadcasts.

Sunday morning talk shows are a particularly appropriate sub-universe of rhetoric because they are produced by the networks themselves, which means that evening news producers have unfettered access to a relatively wide range of elite political rhetoric in a pre-packaged, readily accessible format. More important for our purposes, all three broadcast networks' evening news programs routinely comb these interviews for fodder.

We investigate which comments are selected for inclusion on the evening news, and compare the characteristics of such comments to those *not* selected. Wherever possible, we compare periods immediately following rally event initiation with pre-event time periods (prior to initiation). By doing so, we identify which types of comments, covering which types of topics, and under which types of external circumstances, the news media are most likely to feature in larger patterns of coverage. To provide a baseline for our analysis, we also code any MC appearances on these programs for the month *prior* to the initiation of each rally event.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, we present our theoretical framework and derive a series of hypotheses. We then discuss our data and methodology. The following section presents the results of our statistical investigations. The final section summarizes our findings and offers concluding observations.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

What Politicians Want from the Media

The most universally accepted assumption in US electoral politics is that politicians seek, first and foremost, re-election (Mayhew, 1974). We generalize Mayhew's famous observation by assuming that politicians seek re-election both for themselves and their fellow partisans. After all, winning a seat in the Congress holds dramatically different implications, both with respect to resources available for

subsequent election campaigns and for a member's ability to influence public policy, if one is a member of the majority party (Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Cox and Magar, 1999). Winning election or majority party status, in turn, requires making oneself and one's fellow partisans look good, while casting members of the opposing party in a negative light. The implication for politicians' preferences regarding media coverage is straightforward: politicians typically prefer stories that praise themselves and fellow partisans, or criticize their opponents or the opposition party.

In the context of inter-branch relations, this further implies that, notwithstanding any journalistic preferences for *covering* particular statements, members of the president's party in Congress are likely to *offer* rhetorical support for the president, while opposition party members should be more likely to oppose him. While there are certainly periodic incentives for individual members to depart from these strategies, particularly if they are running for president or wish to gain press coverage by taking "maverick" stances, the perceived novelty of such instances highlights the prevailing baseline from which they depart.

If journalists *do,* as we shall demonstrate, consistently report discord more frequently than affirmation among the president's fellow partisans, there can be only two explanations. Either such coverage must reflect journalists' preferences, or elites from the president's own party must be routinely criticizing the president more often than they praise him during times of foreign crises. Below, we explicitly test these two possibilities.

What Journalists Want from Politicians

Despite politicians' best efforts to control their public communication, news organizations maintain ultimate control over the content of their news programs because of their function as gatekeepers of political news content. In deciding what political material is or is not "news," certain characteristics of stories or sources make them more (or less) desirable for journalists. In particular, journalists generally prefer stories that are novel, conflictual, balanced, and authoritative (Graber, 1997; Groeling and Baum, 2008; PEJ, 2002).

The most obvious characteristic of newsworthiness is that it entails a premium on stories that are actually *new*. Informing readers or viewers of unexpected, inconsistent, novel, or surprising information is the core value provided by news organizations. In fact, without novelty it makes very little sense to speak of "news" organizations at all. This preference leads reporters to strongly resist attempts by politicians to deliver scripted, consistent messages to the public. In brief, journalists prefer stories that contain new or unexpected information to stories presenting old or expected information.

A second characteristic of "good" news is, ironically, a preference for bad news. As noted earlier, there seems to be consensus within the scholarly literature that negativity is pervasive and dominant in modern news coverage. While not all politicians go so far as former Vice President Spiro Agnew in characterizing the media as "nattering nabobs of negativism," recent politicians appear to have shared the view that the press favors negativity and conflict in their story choices. As one prominent journalist bluntly observed, "Well, journalists are always looking for conflict. That's what we do" (Saunders, in Kurtz,

2004). Therefore, we argue that journalists prefer stories in which political figures attack each other to stories in which political figures praise each other.

Considerable ink has been spilled debating whether the media might be more likely to attack liberal or conservative points of view in their coverage. Tuchman (1972) famously argued that in part to counter such accusations of bias, journalists have a strong incentive to use procedures or strategic "rituals" of objectivity in doing their jobs. The main ritual Tuchman and others discuss is presenting "both sides of the story." News organizations, particularly broadcasters, have long followed this balancing practice. For most of the 20th century, broadcast stations and networks were held to an exceptionally high standard of balance through FCC regulations (including the so-called "fairness doctrine"). Journalists have also internalized these standards through professional ethics and norms, which require them to make every effort "to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly" (ASNE, 2002). We thus anticipate that journalists prefer stories that include both parties' views to stories that only present the views of members of a single party.[2]

Finally, journalists place a premium on including the most authoritative and high-ranking sources in their stories. Sigal (1986: 20) observes that "by convention, reporters choose authoritative sources over other potential sources," and that "the higher up an official's position in government, the more authoritative a source he or she [is] presumed to be, and the better his or her prospects for making the news." Rosenthal (2007) concurs, noting, "When an editorial page comments on the government, it makes a lot more sense to comment on the party in power than the party in opposition…. The focus of all newsgathering tends to be on the party in power." In other words, journalists prefer to include sources with greater authority in their stories over less authoritative sources.

For our purposes, the key implication of this authority axiom is that newsworthiness varies systematically from unified to divided government. For instance, during unified government the non-presidential party will be relatively disadvantaged in attracting news coverage because it lacks control over either the legislative or executive branch. Conversely, during divided government the non-presidential party will be more newsworthy, all else equal, by virtue of controlling the legislative branch and its consequent relatively greater capacity to influence policy outcomes.

Because we are primarily concerned with coverage related to foreign policy rally events, we focus our attention here on party messages about the executive branch—especially the president. The top section of Table 1 applies the aforementioned assumed story preferences to four types of partisan evaluations of the president, allowing us to determine which types of stories are most likely to gain airtime.[3]

---

[2] Because our coding scheme does not capture rhetoric by members of the administration, we cannot test the balance assumption.

[3] Because these evaluations are all directed at the president or administration, the stories already implicitly contain some exposition of the president's or administration's position or actions.

Table 1. Newsworthiness of Rhetoric Regarding President by Elites from Presidential Party (PP) and Non-Presidential Party (NPP)

	PP Praise	*PP Criticism*	*NPP Praise*	*NPP Criticism*
A. Newsworthiness of Partisan Evaluations of the President				
Novelty	Low	High	High	Low
Conflict	Low	High	Low	High
Balance	Low	Low	High	High
Authority (UG)	High	High	Low	Low
Authority (DG)	Low	Low	High	High
B. Change in Newsworthiness During Rally Periods				
Novelty During Rally Periods	Low	*Higher*	Lower	*Higher*

Table 1 shows that evaluations of the president by the opposition (that is, non-presidential) party (henceforth "NPP") tend to be at least somewhat newsworthy regardless of which party controls Congress, albeit somewhat more so in divided government, when NPP rhetoric has greater authority by virtue of their legislative majority. Such comments are always either novel, if they support the president, or conflictual, if they criticize him. Airing NPP comments also adds balance to stories about the president and his policies.

In contrast, praise of the president by his own party (or presidential-party praise, henceforth "PP praise") has little novelty, balance, or conflict, and is thus of little interest to journalists. As Robin Sproul, ABC Washington Bureau Chief, observed, "[presidential party praise is] like the plane took off and flew safely … it's not really news unless that were a big change."[4] During divided government, PP praise is even less interesting to journalists than in unified government because the presidential party does not control the Congress. This makes all PP rhetoric less authoritative than in unified government. Thus, as Table 1 shows, PP praise is especially uninteresting, particularly in divided government, where it lacks appeal for journalists on all four dimensions.

Conversely, presidential-party criticism of the president ("PP criticism") is particularly attractive to journalists because it is highly novel, conflictual, and in unified government, authoritative (again, because the PP controls both branches). Sproul concurred, rating presidential-party criticism the most appealing type of story. She thus commented that during the Republican Bush Administration, "[The] number one [most appealing story] would be [a] Republican breaking from the President."[5] Sproul further explained that part of the reason she ranked Republican criticism of

[4] Interview with author, 10 October 2007, Cambridge, MA.

[5] For the second-most newsworthy story, she chose "[a] liberal Democrat who's supporting the president" (interview with author, 10 October 2007, Cambridge, MA).

President Bush as the *most* appealing type of story was "because it's the president's policy. With Clinton I would have led with the Democrat breaking away…. In this case, it's which party is in the White House."[6] Several hypotheses follow:

(H1) Negativity: Negative rhetoric on Sunday morning talk shows will be more likely than positive rhetoric to be selected to appear on the evening news.

(H2) Novelty: Praise (criticism) of the president by non-presidential (presidential) party elites appearing on Sunday morning shows will be more likely to be selected by evening newscasts than criticism (praise) by the non-presidential (presidential) party.

(H3) Authority: Relative to the available universe of rhetoric on Sunday morning talk shows, presidential party rhetoric will be more likely to be selected for the evening news during unified than during divided government.

If the top section of Table 1 delineates the newsworthiness of "politics as usual," the question arises as to how newsworthiness during a rally event might systematically differ. For much of the post-World War II era, the Republican and Democratic parties are commonly viewed as having achieved near-consensus in foreign policy, especially with respect to the Cold War. Indeed, implicit in the very notion of a "rally-round-the-flag" is that major international crises will induce each party to close ranks and increase its support for the president.

From a standpoint of newsworthiness, however, the impact is somewhat more complex. If journalists *expect* partisans from both parties to rally behind the president when American troops are in harm's way, criticism of the president by either party should become even more newsworthy than during non-crisis periods. After all, criticizing the president during a particularly high-profile foreign crisis is especially risky. Research (e.g. Zaller, 1994; Zaller and Chiu, 2000) has shown that risk-averse MCs typically prefer to avoid such criticism until the political ramifications of the crisis outcome are relatively clear. The bottom section of Table 1 illustrates this point. While this table tells us little about each party's *intent* to support the president in crisis periods, it does suggest that if any members of either party choose to criticize the president, they should find journalists even more eager to air their comments than during other times. This suggests a fourth hypothesis:

(H4) Rally Novelty: Because foreign policy criticism is especially novel during foreign crises, the extent to which MC criticism of the president will exceed praise will be greater on the evening news than on Sunday morning shows, especially for foreign policy rhetoric.

Returning to the top of Table 1, we see that the newsworthiness of the two most credible types of partisan evaluations (PP criticism and NPP praise) is systematically related to the partisan makeup of government. Because the presidential party is *more* (and the opposition party *less*) authoritative in unified government, shifting from unified to divided government decreases the newsworthiness of the most damaging type of message (PP criticism) while increasing that of the most helpful messages (NPP praise). After all, in unified government, PP criticism is not only novel and conflictual, but also authoritative, thereby making it exceptionally attractive to

[6] Interview with author, 10 October 2007, Cambridge, MA.

journalists. In contrast, in divided government, NPP praise is not only novel and balance enhancing, but also more authoritative than in unified government (since the opposition party controls at least one house of Congress), making it exceptionally newsworthy. A final hypothesis follows:

> *(H5) Divided Government Hypothesis: NPP praise (PP criticism) will be more (less) likely to be selected by the evening news during divided government.*

Data and Methods

Mueller (1973: 209) argues that for an event to be classified as a potential rally event, it should be international, directly involve the president, and be "specific, dramatic and sharply focused." Oneal et al. (1996: 265) further restrict their definition of rally events to "major uses of force during a crisis," insuring that they are "considering only cases that were truly consequential for the U.S. and salient to the public, necessary conditions for a rally…." Following Oneal et al., we restrict our analysis to major uses of force during foreign policy crises. We take our universe of cases from Groeling and Baum (2008), which represents an updated version of Blechman and Kaplan's (1978) dataset on political uses of force (see also Baum, 2002; Oneal et al., 1996; Fordham and Sarver, 2001). Again following Oneal et al. (1996), we code all uses of force measuring levels 1–3 on Blechman and Kaplan's (1978) scale as "major uses of force."[7] Our data include a total of 42 such events between 1980 and 2003 (henceforth "rally events"). (See Appendix B for a complete list of rally events employed in our statistical investigations.)

We analyzed the content of all congressional evaluations of the president and the executive branch of government that appeared in the aforementioned three network Sunday morning political talk shows, as well as those same networks' evening newscasts within identical 61-day time periods centered on the start date of these 42 rally events.

Network Evening Newscasts

For the evening news coding, we first searched the Vanderbilt Television News Abstracts to locate every appearance on the evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC by a senator or representative.[8] Our research assistants watched recordings or read transcripts of each story, coding the statement's valence (positive, negative, or neutral) along a number of issue dimensions (e.g. foreign policy, budget, taxation), as well as the characteristics of the speaker (e.g. party, leadership status).[9]

---

[7] Following Baum (2002), we exclude several events inconsistent with these definitions, such as long-scheduled military exercises, cancellation of previously scheduled force withdrawals, or events that clearly were not major uses of force during a US foreign policy crisis.

[8] Vanderbilt and the News and Public Affairs video archives supplied videotapes. Lexis-Nexis provided transcripts.

[9] Before coding, students attended an orientation session and then practiced using a series of five online interactive practice sessions.

(See supplemental appendix (http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/comm/groeling/warstories/welcome.html) for all coding forms and instructions to coders.) All coded statements were direct quotes of an identifiable MC pertaining directly to the president. Each observation consists of a summary of the content of a statement by a single MC in a single story. Although each statement might contain multiple, distinct instances of praise or criticism of the president, we code all statements dichotomously on both dimensions, separately recording the presence or absence of praise or criticism.[10]

We identified 5302 pertinent congressional appearances on network evening newscasts during the 2115 days falling within ±30 day windows surrounding our 42 rally events.[11] We assigned each story to two coders, working independently. Experienced graduate student research assistants then reviewed and arbitrated any disagreements in the coding. *Prior to arbitration*, inter-coder agreement on praise and criticism of the president was 95% and 88% for CBS and 86% and 96% for NBC, respectively.[12] The arbitration process increases the reliability of our coding. In a random sample of our data, our two graduate student arbitrators agreed on over 98% of all arbitration decisions, producing a post-arbitration kappa score for our key causal variables of .86.[13]

Sunday Morning Talk Shows

Our content analysis of the Sunday morning talk shows closely mirrors the evening news methodology, with several noteworthy (and necessary) differences. First, there exists no central index comparable to the Vanderbilt Television News abstracts that lists congressional appearances on Sunday morning political roundtable talk shows. To locate relevant member appearances on the evening news prior to the availability of online transcripts, we reviewed archival newspapers for program and guest listings or news stories following such appearances. We then ordered the videotapes from the UCLA News and Public Affairs video archive (if they were

---

[10] Any additional utility from coding each individual critique within an MC statement would be outweighed by the increase in complexity for our coding scheme. Our MC Appearances variable also accounts for appearances by MCs that did not include codable evaluations.

[11] About 8.6% of our coded evaluations (457) occur fewer than 30 days before one rally and fewer than 30 days after another rally. In all cases where sequence matters in our analysis, we count any overlapping days as "after" the prior event, rather than "before" the next event.

[12] Pre-arbitration kappa scores for these variables were .44 and .51, respectively, for CBS, and .52 and .48, respectively, for NBC. Altman (1991: 404) characterizes this as "moderate" agreement. Inter-coder agreement for ABC was 80%. (Due to differences in coding procedures, kappa is unavailable for ABC.)

[13] While the coding form has remained constant, we implemented some improvements in the coding process over time. For a subset of ABC data, students hand-coded the stories, met to compare their coding, and submitted their consensus results to a graduate student RA for further examination. All of the NBC and CBS data, and the remainder of the ABC data, were submitted online—with students unaware of the identity of their coding partner—prior to arbitration. We excluded a small subset of observations in which tapes or transcripts were damaged or unavailable.

available).[14] Students then transcribed the videotaped interviews, noting both the interviewer question and the source's response, and broke them up into individual records. To ensure like-sized observations, we limited each answer to no more than ten sentences. We treated any (relatively rare) answers longer than ten sentences as multiple observations.

Next, we randomly assigned the individual records to a second set of students, who coded both the question and the answer along a variety of dimensions, including our original evening news measures of issue area and valence.[15] As with the evening news coding, our main variables of interest consist of praise and criticism of the president, although unlike the evening news dataset, here we also code the reporter's questions along a variety of dimensions.

Dependent Variables

For our aggregate-level investigation, we separately tallied all incidents of praise and criticism of the president by MCs from both parties. Our tallies include all such comments during interviews from the Sunday morning talk shows as well as those appearing on the evening newscasts of the three broadcast networks. The aggregate analysis also tracks net evaluations of the president. To construct this measure, we simply subtracted negative evaluations from positive evaluations for each record, leading to a score of –1, 0, or 1 for each evaluation. (We exclude comments lacking any evaluations.)

For our individual-statement-level investigation, we employ two binary dependent variables. The first (cross-network) is coded 1 if a given comment—defined as any portion of a transcript paragraph or single complete thought—that appeared on a Sunday morning talk show subsequently appeared on the evening newscast of any of the three major networks, and 0 otherwise. The second (within network) is coded 1 if a comment subsequently appeared on the evening newscast of the same network as the originating Sunday morning talk show. We replicate all of our analyses with both dependent variables. Our coders collected these data by manually comparing all MC speakers and statements on the Sunday morning talk shows with MC statements on the evening news over the subsequent month.

Key Causal Variables

Our key causal variables encapsulate the partisan content of each MC comment. Specifically, we created a set of variables separately measuring whether and to what extent the presidential and non-presidential party praised or criticized the president. Because our units of analysis in this study are paragraphs, rather than soundbites or

[14] Vanderbilt's Television News Archive does not include Sunday morning interview programs. We were also unable to locate many early broadcasts (especially prior to late 1980) in the News and Public Affairs video archive. In addition, Sunday broadcast schedules seemed particularly vulnerable to pre-emption due to sporting events.

[15] The question coding used in our Sunday morning talk show coding form draws heavily on the question-coding scheme designed by Clayman and Heritage (2002) in their study of presidential press conference questioning.

entire interviews, each paragraph potentially includes several sentences that might be usable by news producers as soundbites. Thus our rhetoric variables reflect the number of different dimensions (i.e. topics) of praise or criticism within a given paragraph. Paragraphs, in turn, are limited to the previously noted maximum of 10-sentence comments by an individual speaker, with the occasional longer paragraph divided into multiple observations. For clarity, throughout the remainder of this study we refer to individual observations—defined as paragraphs of up to 10 sentences spoken by an individual MC in response to a question or comment by an interviewer—as *statements*.

For each statement, we coded eight possible issue dimensions: economic, international trade/finance, budget and taxation, other domestic policy, foreign policy/military, scandal, character or leadership, and other. Each record was limited to a maximum of one occurrence per dimension per statement recorded (e.g. one instance of praising the president on foreign policy and one instance of praising him on healthcare). Hence, our *overall* rhetoric indicators are not limited to one total occurrence of praise or criticism per observation. Rather, they tally up to one occurrence per coded issue dimension.

Because, as noted, we recorded only one evaluation per issue dimension per statement, our comparison of foreign policy versus overall rhetoric necessarily employs dichotomous measures. In other words, we compare the probability that an instance of praise or criticism on foreign policy in a statement was selected for broadcast on the evening news with the probability that the same type of evaluation source and valence (e.g. praise by the non-presidential party or criticism by the presidential party) on *any* issue dimension (e.g. foreign policy or domestic policy) in a given statement was selected for broadcast. (More detailed explanations and definitions are available in the online supplemental appendix.)

Control Variables

We also include dummies for the network that broadcast a given statement, whether the president was a Democrat, whether the interview took place during unified or divided government, whether the observation took place before or after the initiation of a rally event, and for the party affiliation of the speaker. In addition, we control for presidential approval, the number of days between approval polls, the state of the economy (measured by monthly changes in consumer sentiment and GDP), and specific characteristics of each of the rally events, including whether the event was terrorism-related, whether it constituted a major war, whether any Americans were killed in action during the conflict, whether it involved a US ally or occurred after the end of the Cold War, and whether the event was an instance of Foreign Policy Restraint, Internal Political Change, or Humanitarian Intervention (see Jentleson [1992] and Jentleson and Britton [1998] for a discussion of this typology). Finally, we controlled for the material capabilities of the adversary in the conflict relative to the United States, and the degree of trade dependence between the USA and the adversary. (See Appendix A for variable definitions.)[16]

[16] We tested a variety of additional controls, including dummies for different presidential administrations and political circumstances. Because they did not materially affect our results, we excluded them from the final models.

In addition, for a variety of reasons unrelated to our research question, broadcasts were sometimes unavailable (particularly in the late 1970s/early 1980s). Hence, our aggregate analysis examines only those evening news broadcasts occurring during a rally event for which we have coded at least one Sunday morning talk show interview with a member of Congress (two of our rally events had no interviews with MCs available).[17] Finally, the aggregate evening news coding includes statements taken from the evening newscasts of all three networks.[18]

Researchers have developed specialized estimation procedures to address the particular statistical problems associated with datasets in which positive occurrences on the dependent variable are relatively rare. In our case, the overall probability of a particular statement by a member of Congress appearing (in whole or in part) on a network newscast is quite low: about 1.4% in our dataset. This number is small, but probably not surprisingly so. Because each MC is interviewed for a considerable length of time on such shows, they provide multiple answers during each visit. Our dataset includes segments from 465 different stories, each of which averages around 20 paragraphs of interview answers. If every interview featured one soundbite selected for the evening news, this would only translate into networks selecting 5% of records—reasonably close to the 1.4% observed. In addition, the coded soundbites by MCs must compete with those of other figures, including administration sources, further driving down the likelihood that any individual statement will be selected.

Consequently, for our statistical analyses we employ *Rare-event Logit* (or ReLogit) (Tomz et al., 2003). ReLogit is specifically designed to correct for the bias introduced by either small sample case selection on the dependent variable or, more important for our purposes, rare positive occurrences in the overall population. While we believe this is the most appropriate estimator, given our data, it is worth pointing out that all of the results reported below remain comparable if we employ a standard logit estimator with heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors (which ReLogit employs by default).[19]

Results

Wherever possible, throughout this section we undertake multiple tests of our hypotheses, first investigating our data aggregated across programs and then

---

[17] In addition, there have been many changes over time to the Sunday morning programs, such as the expansion of Meet the Press from 30 minutes in the 1980s to 60 minutes under the late Tim Russert. This likely weights our dataset disproportionately toward events occurring after the expansion of the show. Moreover, the soundbites selected for evening news broadcast seldom match up precisely with our talk show transcripts. Hence, some characteristics coded in the talk show record might not apply entirely to the smaller portion shown on the evening news.

[18] We undertook extensive testing to determine if the three networks differed in any significant ways. No materially significant differences emerged.

[19] As a robustness test, we re-ran all models three additional ways, clustering the standard errors by rally event, as well as by date and by story number. Doing so had no material affect on the results. Hence, we do not cluster the errors in the reported results.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Sunday Morning Talk Show Data

	n
Total Observations Coded	9309
Presidential/Non-Presidential Party Source	3913/5361
Unified/Divided Government	2223/6998
Before/After Rally Event	4937/5103[1]
Republican/Democratic President	3075/6146
Statements Selected to appear on *any* Network Newscast/*Same* Network's Newscast	129/84
Observations in Stories with at Least One Statement on Evening News	2749
Negative/Positive Evaluations of the President	869/331[2]
Negative/Positive Foreign Policy Evaluations of the President	117/105[3]

[1] 731 observations took place before one event and after another, within our 61-day windows.
[2] Another 38 statements had both praise and criticism of the president, so there were 1162 total statements containing evaluations of the president.
[3] Two statements included both praise and criticism of the president regarding foreign policy.

disaggregated to the level of individual statements by MCs. In doing so we present simple cross-tabs highlighting the key relationships, as well as more rigorous multivariate analyses that allow us to better account for potential alternative explanations for the relationships.

Descriptive Results

In Table 2, we see that our dataset includes 9309 statements by MCs on *Meet the Press*, *This Week*, or *Face the Nation*, of which 870 statements explicitly praised or criticized the president. Of the 9309 total statements, approximately 58% originated from the non-presidential party, ¾ took place in divided government, 55% took place in the 30 days *after* the initiation of rally events, and ⅔ took place during Democratic presidencies.

Network evening newscasts selected only 129 of the 9309 statements by MCs (about 1.4%). However, 2749 statements came from shows in which the network newscasts selected at least one statement for broadcast. Of the 1162 statements in which the president was evaluated, three out of four were negative. Finally, of the 220 evaluations specifically directed at the president's handling of foreign policy, just over half (53%) were negative.

Aggregate Level Analysis

For this analysis, we assume that the unfiltered MC statements on Sunday morning talk shows will more closely approximate MC preferences than the highly edited MC rhetoric selected for broadcast on the evening news. Similarly, rhetoric appearing on the evening news should presumably reflect journalists' preferences more closely than that appearing on Sunday morning interview shows. By comparing the

two aggregate populations for similar time periods, we can infer some differences in news values across the programs.[20]

Of course, a variety of uncontrolled factors may affect these relationships; for instance, Sunday morning interviewers might select guests who they know have a desired point of view. Nonetheless, such bivariate aggregate-level comparisons are a useful validity check before we move to a more rigorously controlled individual-statement-level analysis.

Beginning with our Negativity hypothesis (H1), in Table 3 we see that for nearly every type of congressional rhetoric targeting the president (15 of 16 comparisons shown in the table), the heavily-edited evening news rhetoric is more negative than that appearing on Sunday morning interviews for the same period.[21] In addition, our Divided Government Hypothesis (H5) anticipates that the evening news representation of PP rhetoric during unified government will be especially hostile to the president, and that divided government should see somewhat more favorable evaluations from NPP sources. Table 3 provides substantial support for this hypothesis, especially with regard to foreign policy evaluations. In particular, we see that in unified government, relative to divided government, criticism of the president by his own party rises substantially on both the morning and evening news programs for every comparison except non-foreign-policy evaluations on the Sunday interview shows. For the non-presidential party, again for unified government, compared with divided government, we see a slight rise on the relatively unfiltered Sunday interview show foreign policy rhetoric, but a large 17.1-point spike in negativity on the evening news for that same rhetoric. On the other hand, for NPP non-foreign-policy evaluations, the tallies are overwhelmingly negative in both unified and divided government. However, because foreign policy evaluations are likely to be especially salient during these crisis periods, it appears that the president is more likely to face a favorable rhetorical environment for rallies occurring in divided, relative to unified government. Indeed, further buttressing this conclusion, it is important to note that the most striking variations in foreign policy rhetoric across unified and divided government consist of relative declines during divided government in the most damaging type of rhetoric for the president (criticism from his own party) and increases the most helpful rhetoric (praise from the other party). (See Groeling and Baum [2008] for a discussion of the differential impact of the different types of partisan rhetoric on presidential support.)

---

[20] We consider it highly improbable that the president's fellow partisans are, in fact, criticizing their president far more than supporting him, especially given that in the most public of all representations—votes for or against presidential initiatives in the legislature—recent presidents have typically received overwhelming support from members of their own party and strong opposition from the NPP partisans (Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1953–2000).

[21] Note that for comparing the morning and evening news shows, the relevant cells in the top part of Table 3 are located next to one another (left-to-right), while in the before/after rally section of the table, the relevant morning/evening news comparisons are arrayed vertically (top-to-bottom).

Table 3. Aggregate Percent of Valenced Congressional Evaluations of the President that are Negative[1]

UNIFIED VS. DIVIDED GOVERNMENT					
			Foreign Policy Evaluations		
			Unified Government		
	Sunday Morning		*Evening News*		
	Pct. Negative	*n*	*Pct. Negative*	*n*	*Diff.*
President's Party	50.0	28	68.8	64	18.8^
Non-Presidential Party	65.1	83	91.8	61	26.7***
			Divided Government		
President's Party	29.5	61	46.4	97	16.9*
Non-Presidential Party	64.6	48	74.7	253	10.1
			Non-Foreign Policy Evaluations		
			Unified Government		
President's Party	34.4	64	65.3	72	30.9***
Non-Presidential Party	88.7	124	90.6	96	1.9
			Divided Government		
President's Party	53.8	143	50.0	100	–3.8
Non-Presidential Party	89.1	321	92.2	245	3.1
BEFORE VS. AFTER RALLY EVENTS					
			Foreign Policy Evaluations		
			Sunday Morning		
	Before Event		*After Event*[2]		
	Pct. Negative	*n*	*Pct. Negative*	*n*	*Diff.*
President's Party	40.0	40	33.3	36	–6.7
Non-Presidential Party	72.0	59	57.3	62	–14.8*
			Evening News		
President's Party	49.4	77	64.6	82	15.2*
Non-Presidential Party	75.2	161	85.6	125	10.4*
			Non-Foreign Policy Evaluations		
			Sunday Morning		
President's Party	36.3	113	59.0	105	22.8***
Non-Presidential Party	86.2	185	86.1	263	–00.1
			Evening News		
President's Party	54.8	84	63.4	82	8.6
Non-Presidential Party	92.3	169	92.1	151	0.2

***$p < .001$, *$p < .05$, ^$p < .10$

[1] Excludes 1998 evaluations on the topic of Monica Lewinsky.

[2] Excludes cases where evaluations occurred within 30 days after one event and before the next.

Somewhat (albeit imperfectly) consistent with the Novelty hypothesis (H2), in five of the eight comparisons between PP and NPP rhetoric shown in Table 3 (unified vs. divided government and before vs. after rally event initiation), the negativity bias in the evening news is larger for presidential party rhetoric. Consistent with our Authority hypothesis (H3), in turn, we see that in unified government the presidential party accounts for about 31% of evaluations of the president on the Sunday interview shows, compared with nearly one-half on the evening news. In contrast, in divided government, presidential party evaluations account for about 36% of all presidential evaluations on the Sunday interview shows, but only about 1 in 4 (28.3%) on the evening news.

Finally, the bottom portion of Table 3 divides the data according to whether the evaluations took place before or after the start of a foreign policy rally event. Recall that our Rally Novelty Hypothesis (H4) predicts that the greater novelty associated with criticism of the president during rally periods should make such criticism even more novel and newsworthy during a rally event. As a consequence, we expected to find evening news rhetoric skewed even more negatively against the president during rally event periods, relative to non-rally periods, especially for foreign policy evaluations.

The results shown in Table 3 provide considerable support for these predictions. On the Sunday morning interview shows (which should represent less-filtered rhetoric from MCs), foreign policy evaluations of the president actually become significantly less negative toward the president during rally events, relative to pre-event periods. Consistent with the Rally Novelty Hypothesis (H4), however, foreign policy MC evaluations broadcast on the evening news instead became significantly more negative for both parties after the onset of a rally event. In contrast, for evaluations unrelated to foreign policy, PP rhetoric is actually substantially and statistically significantly more negative following initiation of a rally event on the relatively unfiltered Sunday morning programs, but varies insignificantly on the evening news. NPP rhetoric unrelated to foreign policy is basically unchanged before and after a rally event begins.

Taken together, these results appear mostly, albeit imperfectly, consistent with our predictions. With this in mind, we now turn to a more systematic, multivariate analysis of our individual statement-level data.

Individual-Level Analysis

For our individual-level analysis, each statement by an MC appearing on a Sunday morning talk show represents a separate observation. The top and bottom halves of Table 4 each present eight models intended to test our Negativity and Novelty hypotheses (H1 and H2). Recall that the latter holds that evening newscasts will select costly rhetoric more frequently than cheap talk, while the former predicts that, all else equal, negative rhetoric on Sunday morning talk shows will be more likely than positive rhetoric to appear on the evening news. Table 4 also tests the Rally Novelty Hypothesis (H2), that there will be a larger criticism-to-praise ratio in foreign policy-related evaluations selected for broadcast on the evening news than for other evaluations.

As a robustness test, the top half of Table 4 presents a basic set of models, excluding all control variables. The results are strikingly similar to the fully specified models, shown in the bottom half of Table 4.[22] This increases our confidence that our results are not artifacts of model specification. We thus proceed somewhat more confidently to interpreting the results from our fully specified models.

For each test, we employ two variants of our dependent variable; the first (cross-network) measures whether a given statement was subsequently broadcast on *any* network newscast, while the second (same-network) measures whether a statement on a morning talk show was selected for broadcast by the talk show's own network. Models 1 and 3 in Table 4 test H2 (Novelty), with the former employing the cross-network dependent variable and the latter employing the same-network dependent variable. In Figure 1, we employ Clarify (King et al., 2000) to transform the coefficients into probabilities that a given evaluation was selected for broadcast on the evening news.

Figure 1 offers fairly strong support for H2 (Novelty). Recall that the cross-network dependent variable takes a value of 1 when an evaluative statement appears on *any* network evening newscast, while the same-network dependent variable only does so when a statement appeared on the evening newscast of the same network as the morning talk show. Across both dependent variables, we find that variations in cheap talk presidential party praise have no discernable effect on the probability that a statement will be selected for broadcast. In contrast, a maximum increase in presidential party criticism of the president (from 0 to 3 occurrences within a statement) is associated with a 5.1 percentage point increase in the probability that *at least one* network will broadcast a statement ($p < .10$) and a 6.1 percentage point increase in the probability that the same network as the talk show on which the statement appeared will broadcast some portion of it ($p < .05$). A comparable increase in non-presidential party praise of the president (again, from 0 to 3 occurrences) is associated with a 17.3 percentage point increase in the probability that *at least one* network will broadcast a statement and a 30.2 percentage point increase in the probability that the same network as the talk show on which the statement appeared will broadcast some portion of it ($p < .01$ in both cases).

Finally, a maximum increase in non-presidential party criticism (in this instance, from 0 to 5 occurrences) is associated with a 16 point increase in the probability that *at least one* network will broadcast a statement ($p < .01$) and an 11 point increase in the probability that the same network as the talk show on which the statement appeared will broadcast some portion of it ($p < .05$). In this case, though smaller in magnitude than the effects of costly NPP praise, the effects of NPP criticism are nonetheless substantial and statistically significant. This may be attributable, at least in part, to the relatively greater costliness of NPP criticism during foreign policy crises (the periods from which our data are drawn). It is also worth noting that, as is apparent in Figure 1, across both dependent variables the marginal effect of one incidence of relatively more costly NPP praise is considerably larger than that for NPP criticism. In the case of presidential party rhetoric, costly rhetoric trumps

[22] Incrementally layering in individual control variables or sub-groups of variables (e.g. international crisis characteristics, domestic politics, adversary characteristics) makes little difference. Consequently, we report only basic and fully specified variants of the models.

Table 4. Relogit Investigations of Probability of Story Selection as Rhetoric Characteristics Vary

	Part I. Basic Models							
	(1) *Cross-Network*	*(2)* *Cross-Network*	*(3)* *Same-Network*	*(4)* *Same-Network*	*(5)* *Cross-Network*	*(6)* *Same-Network*	*(7)* *Cross-Network*	*(8)* *Same-Network*
PP Criticism	0.568^	–	0.683*	–	–	–	0.931*	1.189*
	(0.291)	–	(0.313)	–	–	–	(0.428)	(0.475)
NPP Criticism	0.497***	–	0.458**	–	–	–	0.825**	0.588
	(0.136)	–	(0.177)	–	–	–	(0.286)	(0.392)
PP Praise	–0.0977	–	0.217	–	–	–	–0.232	0.167
	(0.528)	–	(0.476)	–	–	–	(1.016)	(1.025)
NPP Praise	0.858*	–	1.155***	–	–	–	0.257	0.779
	(0.352)	–	(0.337)	–	–	–	(0.998)	(0.997)
NPP Criticism (FP)	–	1.560***	–	1.763***	–	–	1.643***	1.827***
	–	(0.461)	–	(0.513)	–	–	(0.463)	(0.516)
PP Praise (FP)	–	0.776	–	1.232	–	–	0.815	1.245
	–	(1.013)	–	(1.015)	–	–	(1.015)	(1.020)
NPP Praise (FP)	–	1.661**	–	2.091***	–	–	1.735**	2.162***
	–	(0.586)	–	(0.590)	–	–	(0.587)	(0.592)
Foreign Policy Related	–	–	–	–	0.0260	0.0955	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.600)	(0.712)	–	–
Post-Deployment	–	–	–	–	–0.379*	–0.411^	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.185)	(0.232)	–	–
Foreign Policy x	–	–	–	–	1.001	1.141	–	–
Post-Deploy	–	–	–	–	(0.697)	(0.813)	–	–
Praise	–	–	–	–	0.144	0.352	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.287)	(0.270)	–	–
Criticism	–	–	–	–	0.495***	0.496**	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.134)	(0.166)	–	–

(Continued)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Part I. Basic Models							
	(1) *Cross-Network*	*(2)* *Cross-Network*	*(3)* *Same-Network*	*(4)* *Same-Network*	*(5)* *Cross-Network*	*(6)* *Same-Network*	*(7)* *Cross-Network*	*(8)* *Same-Network*
Presidential Party Source	–	–	–	–	–0.00707	0.148	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.184)	(0.227)	–	–
Constant	–4.363***	–4.310***	–4.816***	–4.766***	–4.175***	–4.681***	–4.395***	–4.846***
	(0.097)	(0.0919)	(0.120)	(0.115)	(0.153)	(0.196)	(0.101)	(0.126)
Observations	9309	9309	9309	9309	9221	9221	9309	9309
	Part II. Fully Specified Models							
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*	*(8)*
PP Criticism	0.586*	–	0.636^	–	–	–	1.027*	1.180*
	(0.295)	–	(0.327)	–	–	–	(0.435)	(0.479)
NPP Criticism	0.575***	–	0.492*	–	–	–	0.975***	0.667
	(0.144)	–	(0.195)	–	–	–	(0.294)	(0.408)
PP Praise	–0.036	–	0.212	–	–	–	–0.162	0.173
	(0.521)	–	(0.485)	–	–	–	(1.016)	(1.026)
NPP Praise	0.965**	–	1.232***	–	–	–	0.312	0.753
	(0.365)	–	(0.357)	–	–	–	(1.013)	(1.009)
NPP Criticism (FP)	–	1.499**	–	1.647**	–	–	1.589***	1.691**
	–	(0.470)	–	(0.538)	–	–	(0.476)	(0.548)
PP Praise (FP)	–	0.859	–	1.169	–	–	0.908	1.185
	–	(1.020)	–	(1.041)	–	–	(1.022)	(1.043)
NPP Praise (FP)	–	1.729**	–	2.126**	–	–	1.806**	2.194**
	–	(0.633)	–	(0.671)	–	–	(0.640)	(0.680)
Foreign Policy Related	–	–	–	–	–0.293	–0.028	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.710)	(0.723)	–	–

(Continued)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Part II. Fully Specified Models							
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*	*(8)*
Post-Deployment	–0.433^	–0.402^	–0.417	–0.390	–0.502*	–0.499^	–0.455*	–0.435
	(0.224)	(0.224)	(0.269)	(0.270)	(0.226)	(0.275)	(0.227)	(0.274)
Foreign Policy ×	–	–	–	–	1.218	1.188	–	–
Post-Deploy	–	–	–	–	(0.805)	(0.830)	–	–
Praise	–	–	–	–	0.259	0.397	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.278)	(0.263)	–	–
Criticism	–	–	–	–	0.552***	0.499**	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.144)	(0.188)	–	–
Presidential Party Source	–	–	–	–	–0.092	0.080	–	–
	–	–	–	–	(0.194)	(0.238)	–	–
Meet the Press	0.079	–0.000	0.105	0.007	0.069	0.083	0.012	0.014
	(0.246)	(0.239)	(0.280)	(0.273)	(0.244)	(0.276)	(0.239)	(0.271)
This Week	0.330	0.253	–0.143	–0.238	0.318	–0.145	0.281	–0.216
	(0.255)	(0.250)	(0.341)	(0.330)	(0.255)	(0.338)	(0.250)	(0.331)
Days Between Polls	0.013	0.013	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.016	0.013	0.015
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Presidential Election Year	–0.363	–0.381	–0.844^	–0.873^	–0.357	–0.815^	–0.372	–0.847^
	(0.341)	(0.338)	(0.473)	(0.468)	(0.339)	(0.475)	(0.342)	(0.471)
Presidential Approval	0.009	0.007	–0.005	–0.008	0.010	–0.004	0.008	–0.006
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.017)
Divided Government	–0.765	–0.730	–0.518	–0.478	–0.746	–0.535	–0.776	–0.539
	(0.483)	(0.479)	(0.615)	(0.610)	(0.483)	(0.622)	(0.485)	(0.619)
Post-Cold War	–0.643	–0.612	–0.019	0.006	–0.678	–0.089	–0.702	–0.094
	(0.534)	(0.540)	(0.693)	(0.698)	(0.535)	(0.672)	(0.543)	(0.691)
Democratic President	–0.626^	–0.595	–0.947^	–0.890^	–0.625^	–0.962^	–0.594	–0.904^
	(0.371)	(0.377)	(0.499)	(0.508)	(0.375)	(0.504)	(0.379)	(0.507)

(Continued)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Part II. Fully Specified Models							
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*	*(8)*
ΔConsumer Sentiment	–0.053**	–0.052**	–0.074***	–0.073***	–0.055**	–0.075***	–0.052**	–0.072***
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.021)
ΔGNP	6.277	6.566	13.684^	13.779^	5.756	12.725	5.579	12.673
	(6.795)	(6.861)	(8.130)	(8.123)	(6.788)	(8.040)	(6.841)	(8.078)
U.S. Ally	0.810	0.640	1.033	0.849	0.800	0.993	0.658	0.847
	(0.842)	(0.847)	(1.050)	(1.066)	(0.847)	(1.060)	(0.852)	(1.075)
Capability Ratio	–0.025	–0.187	–4.269^	–4.766^	0.054	–4.393^	–0.135	–4.608^
	(2.399)	(2.528)	(2.519)	(2.577)	(2.477)	(2.633)	(2.475)	(2.576)
Terrorism Related	–0.265	–0.218	–0.003	0.096	–0.287	–0.049	–0.256	0.022
	(0.329)	(0.336)	(0.440)	(0.446)	(0.330)	(0.435)	(0.328)	(0.431)
Major War	0.277	0.327^	0.375	0.429^	0.296	0.421^	0.300	0.411^
	(0.181)	(0.182)	(0.246)	(0.249)	(0.182)	(0.248)	(0.185)	(0.250)
Trade Dependence	–23.818	–24.174	–54.678*	–57.048*	–22.731	–56.346*	–24.038	–56.627*
	(21.088)	(21.856)	(26.231)	(26.619)	(22.025)	(27.559)	(21.552)	(26.640)
Foreign Policy Restraint	0.022	–0.022	–0.023	–0.070	0.012	0.010	0.002	–0.039
	(0.582)	(0.584)	(0.728)	(0.732)	(0.577)	(0.728)	(0.586)	(0.734)
Internal Political Change	–0.725	–0.724	–0.419	–0.403	–0.682	–0.351	–0.658	–0.330
	(0.446)	(0.455)	(0.530)	(0.534)	(0.447)	(0.541)	(0.450)	(0.542)
Humanitarian Intervention	1.060^	1.042	1.397^	1.385^	1.028	1.354	0.983	1.326
	(0.632)	(0.642)	(0.810)	(0.816)	(0.635)	(0.824)	(0.637)	(0.822)
Pre+Post Deployment	0.232	0.298	–0.045	0.024	0.203	–0.092	0.250	–0.016
	(0.362)	(0.355)	(0.506)	(0.490)	(0.364)	(0.511)	(0.358)	(0.499)
Any KIA	–0.112	–0.139	0.088	0.067	–0.111	0.095	–0.067	0.106
	(0.806)	(0.801)	(1.060)	(1.059)	(0.811)	(1.065)	(0.806)	(1.063)
Constant	–4.317^	–4.089	–1.020	–0.484	–4.388	–0.989	–4.119	–0.594
	(2.613)	(2.706)	(2.879)	(2.897)	(2.674)	(2.984)	(2.667)	(2.917)
Observations	8479	8479	8479	8479	8479	8479	8479	8479

Robust standard errors in parentheses; ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, ^p<.10.

cheap talk both in terms of marginal and total effects. Consequently, these results are largely consistent with our Novelty hypothesis (H2).

Figure 1 also tests H1 (Negativity). Because the Negativity and Novelty hypotheses can offset one another, we cannot test the former prediction merely by comparing the overall amount of negative rhetoric on the two venues. After all, novel positive rhetoric (from the NPP) will be highly appealing to journalists, and most likely more so than cheap negative rhetoric (again, from the non-presidential party). Consequently, a relatively pure test of H1 requires isolating the novelty component of MC rhetoric. To do so, we explicitly compare the two types of cheap talk: PP praise and NPP criticism. Neither is novel. Consequently, after controlling for authority (by including a divided government dummy in our models), the Negativity hypothesis clearly implies that NPP criticism ought to be preferred by evening news broadcasters over PP praise.

In fact, looking over the four graphics comprising Figure 1, this is precisely what we find in every instance. As noted previously, the PP praise curves are relatively flat and statistically insignificant across both dependent variables, both for overall and foreign policy rhetoric. In contrast, again in every instance, increases in NPP criticism are associated with large (always larger than that associated with PP praise) and statistically significant ($p < .05$ or $p < .01$) increases in the probability that a statement will be selected to appear on the evening news. These results are clearly consistent with our Negativity hypothesis (H1).[23]

Turning to H4 (Rally Novelty), here we compare the patterns of story selection for foreign policy-related rhetoric with the corresponding patterns for non-foreign policy rhetoric. Models 7 and 8 in Table 4 present the results of this analysis for the cross-network and same-network dependent variables, respectively. In this instance, we include a set of dummies that take positive values when a given type of rhetoric appears in a coded statement, separately accounting for foreign policy and non-foreign policy rhetoric.

The first thing to note in Models 7 and 8 is that foreign policy-related criticism of the president by his own party drops out of both models, indicating either that network newscasts picked up *no* such criticism offered on Sunday morning talk shows, or that little or none was offered in the first place. A review of the data supports the latter explanation. In our individual-level sample, we find a total of only four instances of a member of the president's party criticizing the president on foreign policy on a Sunday morning talk show that subsequently aired on the evening news. Overall, we found significantly fewer instances of PP criticism than any other type of rhetoric on the morning talk shows. Consequently, we are unable to test the Rally Novelty Hypotheses with respect to MCs from the presidential party.

---

[23] One potential criticism might be that PP praise might be less likely to be selected to appear on the evening news because the president or his representatives will often appear supporting their own position. The balance assumption thus anticipates that journalists will seek a counter-balance to self-praise from the presidential party. However, this is likely to be true both on the Sunday talk shows and on the evening news. Hence, the presence of administration self-praise is effectively held constant across the two venues and cannot account for the disparity in selection.

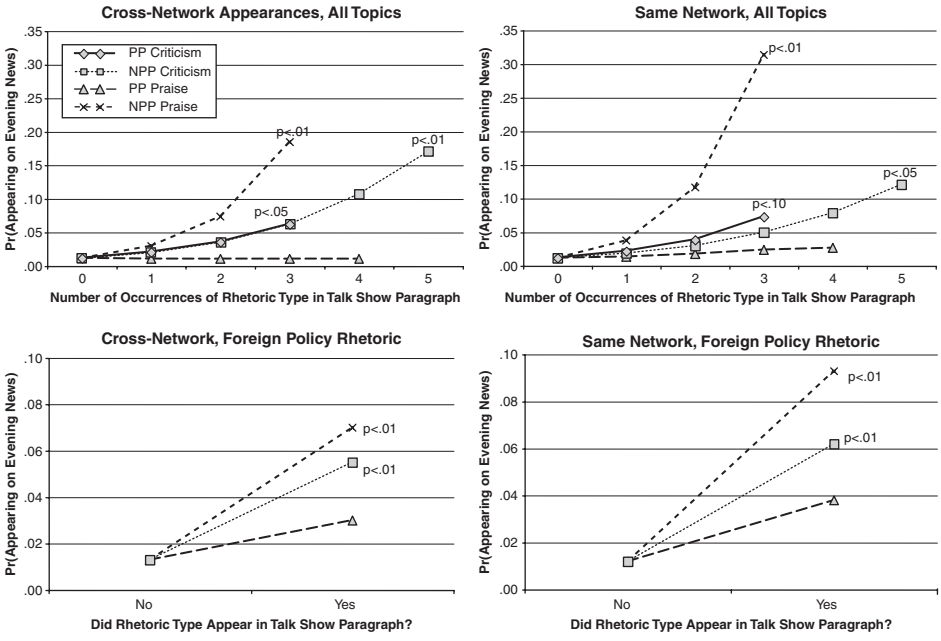

Figure 1. Probability that Sunday Morning Talk Show Evaluation Appears on Evening News

Despite these limitations, we *are* able to test the hypothesis with respect to rhetoric from the non-presidential party. In Figure 2, we transform the results into probabilities that a given type of rhetoric appearing on a morning talk show will be selected to appear on the evening news.

As Figure 2 indicates, when we employ the raw predicted probabilities from the ReLogit analysis, we find a substantially larger criticism-to-praise ratio for non-foreign policy rhetoric than for foreign policy rhetoric. This appears directly counter to our prediction. However, the unweighted probabilities are deceiving in a key respect. Recall from our descriptive analysis that the non-presidential party rarely ever praises the president, except in the realm of foreign policy, while being substantially more prone to criticize in non-foreign policy issue areas. Approximately 88% of all NPP rhetoric directed at the president on non-foreign policy topics is negative, compared to 64% on foreign policy. This means that when journalists are combing the morning talk shows for rhetoric to include in the evening news, they are not encountering a level playing field. That is, they are not equally likely to encounter all types of rhetoric. Rather, they have a much larger (relative) likelihood of encountering NPP criticism on non-foreign policy issues, and of encountering NPP praise on foreign policy-related issues. This presumably influences the net likelihood of selecting one form of rhetoric or another, independent of journalists' preferences.

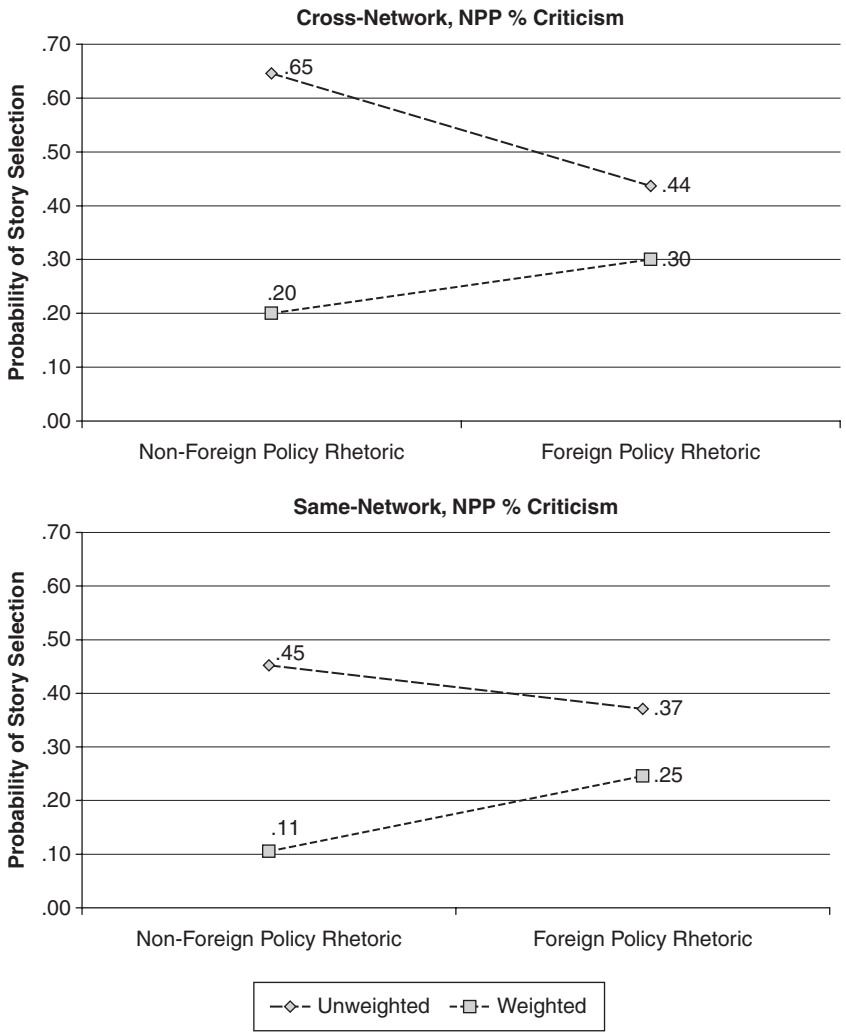

Figure 2. Proportion of All Valenced (Positive & Negative) Morning Talk Show Evaluations Appearing on Evening News that are Negative, Foreign vs. Non-Foreign Policy Rhetoric

Consequently, in order to level the playing field—that is, to equalize the probability that a given type of rhetoric appears in the overall population of evaluations on Sunday morning talk shows—we weight the predicted probabilities of praise and criticism by the proportions of praise and criticism, respectively, appearing in the overall population of rhetoric. So while the unweighted proportions are given by Equation (1) $c / (p + c)$ (where p = probability of selection given praise and c = probability of selection given criticism), the weighted proportions are given by

$$\text{Equation (2)}\ \frac{{}^{c}/_{\%C}}{{}^{c}/_{\%C} + {}^{c}/_{\%P}}$$

(where $\%P$ and $\%C$ represent the proportions of praise and criticism in the underlying population that are positive (P) and negative (C), respectively).

Beginning with the unweighted probabilities, the presence of NPP criticism or praise on a foreign policy topic is associated with 4.4 and 5.9 percentage point increases, respectively, in the probability of selection by any network newscast ($p < .01$ in both cases) and 3.8 and 5.8 point increases, respectively, in the probability of selection by the same network as the morning talk show ($p < .01$ in both cases). The corresponding effects of non-foreign policy-related NPP criticism and praise are increases of 1.9 ($p < .05$) and 0.4 (insig.) points, respectively, for the cross-network dependent variable (Model 7) and 1.0 ($p < .10$) and 1.0 (insig.) percentage points, respectively, for the same-network dependent variable (Model 8). Based on the calculus shown in Equation (1), above, the curves marked with diamonds in Figure 2 indicate that 65 and 45 percent, respectively, of valenced (positive or negative) cross- and same-network non-foreign policy rhetoric selected for the evening news was critical, compared with 44 and 37 percent, respectively, of foreign policy rhetoric. In both instances, we thus see more relative criticism for non-foreign policy issues.

However, when we apply the weight factor included in Equation (2), the results shift markedly, as shown by the curves marked with squares in Figure 2. After weighting the probabilities of praise and criticism by their overall proportions in the underlying population of valenced rhetoric on the morning talk shows, the directions of the curves reverse. In this instance, 20 and 11 percent, respectively, of valenced cross- and same-network non-foreign policy rhetoric selected for the evening news was critical, compared with 30 and 25 percent, respectively, of foreign policy rhetoric. In other words, once we level the playing field by accounting for the underlying propensity of each type of rhetoric to be available for selection, we find substantially greater likelihood—by 1.5-to-1 and 2.3-to-1 for the cross- and same-network models, respectively—that a given instance of criticism will be selected when it involves foreign policy than when it does not. These results support our Rally Novelty hypothesis(H4).

Finally, Models 5 and 6 in Table 5 provide a second test of the Rally Novelty hypothesis. In this instance, we compare the probability of story selection for foreign policy-related rhetoric *prior* to the start date of each rally event with that for comparable rhetoric appearing *after* the start date of each event. Once again, we transform the logit coefficients into predicted probabilities. The results indicate that prior to a use of force, a foreign policy-related MC statement on a Sunday morning talk show is not statistically significantly more likely than any other type of statement to appear on the evening news. However, following uses of force, a foreign policy-related statement is statistically significantly more likely than other types of statements to appear on the evening news, either across networks (+1.4 percentage points, $p < .05$) or on the same network (+2.1 points, $p < .01$). This result further supports H4.

Conclusion

In this study, we investigated an aspect of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy that most previous scholars have overlooked. We sought to determine whether the preferences of journalists play a meaningful independent intervening role between elites and the public in the context of foreign policy crises, or whether, as assumed by indexing theory, press coverage merely reflects the true nature and extent of elite rhetoric. The results from our individual- and aggregate-level analyses largely support our theory. This suggests that whether or not the public will rally behind a president when he takes the nation to war turns, at least in part, on the strategic interests and preferences of the news media.

We find a clear and substantial differential between the valence of unedited MC rhetoric on Sunday morning talk shows and that appearing on the heavily edited network evening newscasts. As Figures 1 and 2 decisively demonstrate, and as our theory predicts, PP rhetoric on the evening news strongly over-represents criticism of the president. This is especially the case with respect to foreign policy and in situations where the president's party controls the legislature. According to these data, if the press were the mirror described by Cronkite, most presidential party MC comments regarding foreign policy on the evening news would be *supportive* of the president, as is in fact the case on the Sunday morning talk shows. Yet, a majority of presidential party MC rhetoric on the evening news is *critical* of the president. And as we argue elsewhere (Groeling and Baum, 2008), the sight of the president's own partisans turning against him (or of the opposing party rallying to his side) should be particularly consequential for moving public support.

Similarly, when we trace the ultimate fate of PP and NPP rhetoric from the interview shows in our controlled analysis, we again find PP praise of the president to be far less likely to be selected for the evening news than PP criticism. For statements from the other party, we actually find journalists assigning greater newsworthiness to NPP praise, relative to NPP criticism. Overall, across our measures it seems clear that the evening news provides its audience with a heavily biased representation of elite views concerning presidential foreign policy initiatives.

This finding is likely to be troubling to democratic theorists and political communication scholars who believe that an informed public is necessary for the proper functioning of democracy (Dahl, 1961; Patterson, 2000, 2003; Bennett, 1997, 2003). It may also call into at least some question the prevailing counter-argument to media critics (e.g. Patterson, 2000; Bennett, 2003) offered by advocates of "low information rationality" (e.g. Popkin, 1994; Lupia and McCubbins, 1998), who argue that citizens can make reasoned decisions with relatively little information by using information shortcuts, or heuristic cues. The opinions of trusted elites represent an important and widely employed information shortcut (Popkin, 1994; Sniderman et al., 1991), especially for citizens attempting to determine whether to support or oppose a president's foreign policy, an issue area where typical Americans are particularly ill informed (Delli-Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Holsti, 2007; Baum, 2003). If, as our data suggest, the media present an inaccurate representation of elite rhetoric, then reliance on this shortcut may produce perverse results, leading many citizens to draw

conclusions they might not otherwise have drawn had the media exposed them to a truly representative sample of elite rhetoric.[24]

Regardless of their implications for democratic theory, our results hold clear implications for the study of public opinion and American foreign policy. Any such study that assumes a relatively passive media, thereby ignoring the strategic intervening role of journalists, is likely to paint an inaccurate picture of the relationship between political debates surrounding American foreign policy and subsequent public reactions to the nation's foreign policy initiatives. Such inaccuracies in scholarly research, in turn, could lead future policy-makers astray as they seek to build and maintain public support for presidential foreign policy initiatives.

For instance, many theories concerning the effects of politicians' domestic political circumstances on their foreign policy behavior—most notably the diversionary theory of war (Levy, 1989; Smith, 1996)—implicitly assume that leaders can use military force abroad to bolster their domestic political standing. Our findings call this assumption into question. Indeed, we find little evidence that presidents can, at least under most circumstances, anticipate the media coverage of bipartisan elite support necessary to generate substantial public opinion rallies when they send the nation's military forces into harm's way. This makes using military force abroad in order to gain a political windfall at home a highly risky—and arguably in many circumstances self-defeating—endeavor.

Appendix A: Control Variable Definition and Coding

ChGDP: Monthly percent change in US Gross Domestic Product.

Presidential Approval: Most recent prior Gallup presidential approval poll rating.

Days Bet. Polls: Number of days between Gallup polls at time t and t+1.

Pres. Elec. Yr.: Coded 1 for cases within 365 days before a presidential election, 0 otherwise.

Δ*Cons. Sent:* Subtracts prior month's consumer sentiment score from the current month's score as measured by the University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment.

Divided Gov't: Coded 0 if presidential party had majority control of both chambers of Congress, 1 otherwise. Control passes with the election of a new speaker or majority leader.

Dem. President: Coded 1 if a Democrat was in office at the time of a given poll, 0 otherwise.

---

[24] Moreover, as we report elsewhere (Groeling and Baum, 2008), not all types of partisan rhetoric are equally effective at moving public opinion. If the president's party receives disproportionate coverage in unified government, journalists are unlikely to select for broadcast any praise they offer and most members of the public are unlikely to find such praise persuasive. Conversely, any criticism they offer should be exceptionally newsworthy and influential on opinion. In contrast, in divided government, the opposition party tends to dominate the news, paradoxically to the benefit of the president. Under such circumstances, any NPP praise is exceptionally newsworthy and influential on public opinion, and while NPP criticism is newsworthy, the public is likely to discount it as "cheap talk."

Any KIA: Coded 1 if the United States suffered any combat deaths during a given poll period.

Post-Deployment: Coded 1 if the statement was made on the day of the major US force deployment, or within 30 days after such an event.

Pre+Post Deployment: Coded 1 if statement was made both within 30 days *after* a force deployment and within 30 days *before* another deployment.

Major War: Coded 1 for invasions of Grenada, Panama, Iraq (1991 and 2003), and Afghanistan.

Post-Cold War: Coded 1 if observation occurred after fall of Berlin Wall (11/9/89).

Capability Ratio: Correlates of War National Material Capabilities summary statistic, $C_A/(C_A+C_B)$, where C_A = US capabilities and C_B = adversary capabilities (Singer and Small, 1993).

Terrorism: Coded 1 if the event involved international terrorism, 0 otherwise.

US Ally: Coded 1 if the adversary was involved in a formal alliance relationship with the United States at the time of a rally event (Gibler and Sarkees, 2004).

Trade Depend.: Sum of US exports to the adversary, as a proportion of all US exports, plus US imports from the adversary, as a proportion of all US imports (Feenstra et al., 2005).

Foreign Policy Restraint (FPR), *Internal Political Change (IPC)*, *Humanitarian Intervention (HI):* Coded 1 if a US goal in conflict was imposing FPR, IPC, or HI, respectively (Jentleson, 1992; Jentleson and Britton, 1998).

Appendix B: Chronological Listing of "Rally Events"

1. Hostage crisis in Iran. November 1979.
2. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan: Carter Doctrine. January 1980.
3. Lebanon Marine Barracks Bombing. October 1983.
4. Invasion of Grenada. October 1983.
5. Further attacks on/by US troops in Lebanon. December 1980.
6. Operation El Dorado Canyon: US airstrikes against Libya in response to Berlin disco bombing. April 1986.
7. Operation Prairie Fire: US engages Libyan aircraft, ships, and missile sites around Gulf of Sidra. April 1986.
8. USS Stark attacked by a missile. May 1987.
9. USS Vincennes shoots down Iranian civilian airliner. July 1988.
10. Response to Pan Am Flight 103 destruction. December 1988.
11. Two carriers, battleship groups moved to eastern Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea after killing of Col. William Higgins in Lebanon. August 1989.
12. Invasion of Panama. December 1989.
13. Immediate US response to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. August 1990.
14. Larger US deployment to Middle East in response to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. August 1990.
15. First Gulf War begins (air war). January 1991.
16. First Gulf War begins (ground war). February 1991.
17. Military exercises conducted in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf to get Iraqi compliance with weapons inspections. July 1992.

18. 200 Air Force and Navy aircraft used to enforce "no-fly zone" in Southern Iraq. September 1992.
19. 30,000 US troops, carrier group deployed in Somalia to facilitate famine relief. December 1992.
20. Troops deployed in Kuwait and aircraft and missiles used to attack Iraqi military installations. January 1993.
21. Additional troops, aircraft carrier deployed to Somalia in October and November after US soldiers killed in October 1993 clash with Somalis.
22. Military exercises in Caribbean simulate an invasion of Haiti. July 1994.
23. 20,000 troops occupy Haiti after agreement with military regime. September 1994.
24. Large ground force, ships, aircraft sent to Persian Gulf region in response to Iraqi threats to Kuwait. October 1994.
25. Carrier task force, Marine contingent, attack submarine, and other ships move into Adriatic on May 29–30 after UN observers taken hostage by Serbs in Bosnia. May 1995.
26. Troops, ships deployed to Persian Gulf region in response to Iraqi threats. August 1995.
27. Troop deployment to Bosnia as part of Dayton Agreement begins. December 1995.
28. Cuba shoots down US civilian plane. February 1996.
29. The US military launches cruise missile attacks against 14 Iraqi air defense bases following Iraq's invasion of the Kurdish "safe haven." September 1996.
30. Troops mobilized; B-52s, Patriot missiles deployed near Iraq in response to Kurdish area invasion and inspection violations. September 1996.
31. Iraq ceases cooperation with UN inspectors. October 1997.
32. Iraq expels UN inspectors. November 1997.
33. Clinton threatens major attack on Iraq. February 1998.
34. Operation Infinite Reach: Cruise missile strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan in response to Osama bin Laden-orchestrated bombings of two US Embassies in Africa. August 1998.
35. Operation Desert Fox: Attacks on Iraq for inspections violations. November 1998.
36. Iraq orders UN inspectors to leave (again). December 1998.
37. Kosovo Air Campaign. March 1999.
38. Bombing of USS Cole in Yemen. October 2000.
39. Chinese Air Force forces down US reconnaissance plane. April 2001.
40. Initial deployment of troops to Afghanistan. September 2001.
41. Afghanistan invasion. October 2001.
42. Second Gulf War. March 2003.

Acknowledgements

The authors are co-equal contributors to this study and are listed in a randomly designated order. An early draft of this paper was presented to the 2005 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. This work was completed with

the assistance of faculty research grants from the UCLA Academic Senate and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. We gratefully acknowledge the research assistance of Catie Bailard, Kim Yi Dionne, Phil Gussin, Delynn Kaufman, Phil Potter, and Alan Potter. For valuable comments on earlier drafts, the authors thank participants in the following meetings and workshops: University of Wisconsin, Madison's Department of Communication Colloquium; Harvard University Kennedy School of Government's Faculty Workshop; Harvard Department of Government's Political Psychology and Behavior Workshop; and Stanford Department of Political Science's International Relations Workshop. We also wish to thank several anonymous reviewers and the editor for helpful comments. For their assistance with content analysis, we thank Alexander Akerman, Raul Alvarez, Jennifer Arnold, Jeff Barry, Suzanne Bell, Alexandra Brandt, Ross Bul, Stephanie Chambers, Frank Chang, Tim Chettiath, Connie Choe, Francis Choi, Blaire Cirlin, Jenny Cocco, Nicole Corpuz, Elizabeth Cummings, Sarah Davis, Jennifer Dekel, Melinda Dudley, Betty Fang, Brette Fishman, Nicole Fiss, Roxana Fouladian, Kristin Gatfield, Jamie Georgia, Rita Ghuloum, Christina Gibson, Angela Gill, Daniel Gordon, Sasha Gorelick, Anjana Gupta, Kazue Harima, Megan Hayati, Julia Heiser, Jennifer Herriot, Candice Hyon, Marchela Iahdjian, Ruoyang Jin, Avraham Kalaf, Sangeeta Kalsi, Robin Kelly, Robert Kelly, Angela Kim, Jihyun Kim, Alain Kinaly, Daniella Knelman, Priya Koundinya, Lauren Kubota, Matt Lacoff-Roberts, Jennifer Lee, Leona Lee, Marissa Levi, Yanyi Mao, Blake Marchewka, Gerri Marshall, Frank Martinez, Joe Mason, Jennifer Murakami, Jennifer Muise, Jenna Murphy, Shaudee Navid, Kim Newin, Maria Nickerson, Maya Oren, Justin Pak, Leeja Patel, Lauren Patterson, Andrea Peterson, Kate Pillon, Anthony Pura, Lee Razo, Brittney Reuter, Tate Rider, Bryan Riggs, David Rigsby, Brooke Riley, Justin Ryan, Dean Sage, Sundeep Sahni, Nirmaljit Samra, Michael Sefanov, Matthew Seibert, Taleen Serebrakian, Sara Shamolian, Mariel Shaw, Paula Simon, Eric Simpson, Erin Skaalen, Ashley Skipwith, Skye Smith, Jessica Spivey, Katherine Steele, Mark Stefanos, Benjamin Steinlechner, Casey Tillett, Julia Tozlian, Jonathan Tran, Jenny Triplett, Elisabeth Turner, Ummkulthum Vakharia, Caroline Van Der Harten, Phuong Vu, Andrew Wang, Spencer Westcott, Shira Wheeler, William Whitehorn, Barri Worth, Sossy Yazaryan, Jordan Yurica, and Jennie Zhu. Finally, we are grateful for the meticulous and insightful research assistance of Kellan Connor, Andrea Evans, Kuros Ghaffari, Daniel Prager, Clare Robinson, Alyson Tufts, and Kate Wagner.

References

Alan, Jeff, and James Martin Lane. 2003. *Anchoring America: The changing face of network news.* Chicago: Bonus Books.

Alterman, Eric. 2003. *What liberal media?* New York: Basic Books.

Althaus, Scott, Jill Edy, Robert Entman, and Patricia Phalen. 1996. Revising the indexing hypothesis: Officials, media, and the Libya crisis. *Political Communication* 13(4): 407–21.

Altman, D. 1991. *Practical statistics for medical research*. London: Chapman and Hall.

American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE). 2002. ASNE Statement of Principles. Revised 28 August 2002.

Baum, Matthew A. 2002. The constituent foundations of the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon. *International Studies Quarterly* 46: 263–98.

Baum, Matthew A. 2003. *Soft news goes to war: Public opinion and American foreign policy in the new media age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Baum, Matthew A. 2004. Going private: Presidential rhetoric, public opinion, and the domestic politics of audience costs in U.S. foreign policy crises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(October): 603–631.
Bennett, W. Lance. 1990. Toward a theory of press–state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication* 40: 2.
Bennett, W. Lance. 1997. *News: The politics of illusion*, 3rd edn. New York: Longman.
Bennett, W. Lance. 2003. The burglar alarm that just keeps ringing: A response to Zaller. *Political Communication* 20 (April/June): 131–138.
Bennett, W. Lance, Regina Lawrence, and Steven Livingston. 2006. None dare call it torture: Indexing and the limits of press independence in the Abu Ghraib scandal. *Journal of Communication* 56(3): 467–485.
Blechman, Barry, and Stephen Kaplan. 1978. *Force without war: U.S. armed forces as a political instrument*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
Brody, Richard. 1991. *Assessing presidential character*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Brody, Richard, and Catherine R. Shapiro. 1989. Policy failure and public support: The Iran-Contra Affair and public assessment of President Reagan. *Political Behavior* 11(4): 353–69.
Cappella, Joseph N., and Kathleen H. Jamieson. 1997. *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Clayman, Steven, and John Heritage. 2002. Questioning Presidents: Journalistic deference and adversarialness in the press conferences of U.S. Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan. *Journal of Communication* 52(4): 749–775.
Congressional Quarterly Almanac. 1953–2000. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
Coulter, Ann. 2003. *Treason.* New York: Crown Forum.
Cox, Gary, and Eric Magar. 1999. How much is majority status in the U.S. Congress worth? *American Political Science Review* 93(2): 299–309.
Cox, Gary, and Mathew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative leviathan: Party government in the House.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who governs?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Delli-Carpini M., and S. Keeter. 1996. *What Americans know about politics and why it matters.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press
Efron, Edith. 1971. *The news twisters*. Los Angeles: Nash.
Fearon, James D. 1994. Domestic political audiences and the escalation of international conflict. *American Political Science Review* 88(3): 577–592.
Feenstra, Robert C., Robert E. Lipsey, Haiyan Deng, Alyson C. Ma, and Hengong Ma: 2005. World trade flows: 1962–2000. Working paper 11040. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. (http://www.nber.org/papers/w11 40, accessed 1 December 2008).
Fordham, Benjamin, and Christopher Sarver. 2001. Militarized interstate disputes and United States uses of force. *International Studies Quarterly* 45(2): 455–66.
Franken, Al. 2004. *Lies (and the lying liars who tell them).* New York: Plume.
Galtung, J., and M. Ruge. 1965. The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four foreign newspapers. *Journal of International Peace Research* 1:64–90.
Gibler, Douglas M., and Meredith Reid Sarkees. 2004. Measuring alliances: The Correlates of War Formal Interstate Alliance Dataset, 1816–2000. *Journal of Peace Research* 41(2): 211–222.
Goldberg, Bernard. 2003. *Bias*. Washington, DC: Regnery.
Graber, Doris. 1997. *Mass media and American politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Groeling, Tim, and Matthew A. Baum. 2008. Crossing the water's edge: Elite rhetoric, media coverage and the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon. *Journal of Politics* 70(4): 1065–1085.

Groeling, Tim, and Samuel Kernell. 1998. Is network news coverage of the president biased? *Journal of Politics* 60(4): 1063–87.

Hallin, Daniel. C. 1986. *The "Uncensored War": The media and Vietnam.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Harrington, J. E. 1993. Economic policy, economic performance, and elections. *American Economic Review* 83(1): 27–42.

Hofstetter, C. R. 1976. *Bias in the news: Network television coverage of the 1972 election campaign.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Holsti, Ole. 2007. *Public opinion and American foreign policy*, Revised edn. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Jentleson, Bruce. W. 1992. The pretty prudent public: Post post-Vietnam American opinion on the use of military force. *International Studies Quarterly* 36(1): 49–74.

Jentleson, Bruce. W., and Rebecca L. Britton. 1998. Still pretty prudent: Post-Cold War American public opinion on the use of military force. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42(4): 395–417.

King, Gary, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. Making the most of statistical analyses: Improving interpretation and presentation. *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2): 341–355.

Kurtz, Howard. 2004. Republican Convention gets under way; Kerry interviewed on "The Daily Show." CNN's *Reliable Sources*. 29 August.

Levy, Jack S. 1989. The diversionary theory of war: A critique. In *Handbook of War Studies*, ed. M. I. Midlarsky, pp. 259–288. New York: Unwin-Hyman.

Lupia, A. and M. D. McCubbins. 1998. *The democratic dilemma: Can citizens learn what they need to know?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maoz, Zeev, and Bruce M. Russett. 1993. Normative and structural causes of democratic peace, 1946–1986. *American Political Science Review* 87(September): 624–638.

Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The electoral connection.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Mueller, John E. 1973. *War, presidents and public opinion.* New York: John Wiley.

National Security Council (NSC). 1997. *A National Security Strategy for a new century.* (http://clinton2.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/Strategy)

National Security Council (NSC). 2005. *National Strategy for victory in Iraq.* (http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/iraq_strategy_nov2005.html)

Niven, David. 2002. *Tilt?: The search for media bias.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Oneal, John, and Bruce M. Russett. 2001. *Triangulating peace: Democracy, interdependence, and international organizations.* New York: Norton.

Oneal, John R., Brad Lian, and James H. Joyner, Jr. 1996. Are the American people pretty prudent? Public responses to U.S. uses of force, 1950–1988. *International Studies Quarterly* 40: 261–280.

Patterson, Thomas. 1996. Bad news, period. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29(1): 17–20.

Patterson, Thomas. 2000. Doing well and doing Good. Research Report. Cambridge, MA: Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University.

Patterson, Thomas. 2003. The search for a standard: Markets and the media. *Political Communication* 20(April/June): 139–43.

Popkin, Samuel. 1994. *The reasoning voter*, 2nd edn. New York: University of Chicago Press.

Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ). 2002. Local TV News Project–2002. http://www.journalism.org/node/225.

Rosenthal, Andrew. 2007. Talk to the Times: Editorial page editor Andrew Rosenthal. *New York Times* 17 September. (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/17/business/media/24askthetimes.html?pagewanted=1)

Sabato, Larry. 1991. *Feeding frenzy: Attack journalism and American politics*. New York: Free Press.

Schultz, Kenneth A. 2001. *Democracy and coercive diplomacy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sigal, Leon V. 1986. Sources make the news. In *Reading the news: A Pantheon guide to popular culture*, eds R. K. Manoff and M. Shudson, pp. 9–37. New York: Pantheon Books.

Singer, David J., and Melvin Small. 1993. Correlates of War Project: International and Civil War Data, 1870–1992. [Computer File]. Ann Arbor, MI [producers]. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor].

Smith, Alastair. 1996. Diversionary foreign policy in democratic systems. *International Studies Quarterly* 40(1): 133–154.

Sniderman, P., R. Brody, and P. Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and choice: Explorations in political psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tomz, Michael, Gary King, and Langche Zeng. 2003. ReLogit: Rare events logistic regression. *Journal of Statistical Software* 8(2): http://www.jstatsoft.org/v08/ i02/paper.

Tuchman, Gaye. 1972. *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York: Macmillan.

Westley, Bruce H., and Malcolm S. MacLean. 1957. A conceptual model for communication research. *Journalism Quarterly* 34(Winter): 31–38.

White, D. M. 1950. The "Gate Keeper": A case study in the selection of news. *Journalism Quarterly* 27: 383–390.

Whitesides, John. 2008. Obama "Puzzled" by Iraq Comment Frenzy. Reuters.com. July 5. Downloaded from http://www.reuters.com/article/wtMostRead/idUSN03103120080705?sp=true.

Zaller, John. 1994. Elite leadership of mass opinion: New evidence from the Gulf War. In *Taken by storm: The media, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy in the Gulf War*, eds W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz, pp. 82–101. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zaller, John, and Dennis Chiu. 2000. Government's little helper: U.S. press coverage of foreign policy crises, 1946–1999. In *Decisionmaking in a glass house*, eds Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Pierangelo Isernia, pp. 61–84. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

TIM GROELING is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at UCLA. His research focuses on political communication, bias, new media, the presidency, public opinion, and partisan communication.

MATTHEW A. BAUM is Marvin Kalb Professor of Global Communications at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and Department of Government. His research focuses on delineating the effects of domestic politics on international conflict and cooperation in general and American foreign policy in particular, as well as on the role of the mass media and public opinion in contemporary American politics.