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Foreign policy news and U.S. public opinion

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Foreign Policy News and U.S. Public Opinion

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ABSTRACT

Foreign Policy News and U.S. Public Opinion

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This research presents clear evidence that what is reported in the media influences the policy preferences of the American public. It also shows that different actors communicating with the public through the media demonstrate a wide variety of salience, credibility, and range of impacts.

One of the most important findings is the strong influence of "experts" on the public. Further, the media portrayal of expert testimony can be characterized by "expert pluralism"; the media offer a wide range of expert stances. Some actors, such as commentators, also appear to have important influences on public opinion, while others have negligible or even negative effects.

There are a variety of factors that affect the impact of media messages on public opinion, such as presidential popularity, issue salience, and perceptions of elite consensus. In general, popular presidents seem to wield more influence over public opinion than do unpopular ones.

Media portrayals of elite agreement and diversity have some impact on public opinions. Most importantly, perceptions of intraparty bickering generally lead to the inability of policy elites to influence the public's policy preferences.

There are some distinct differences between network television news and that provided by the New York Times. While official sources dominate both media, television appears to be the more powerful force in influencing public opinion.

There is little evidence that there is anything particularly unique about the way the public reacts to information about different types of policy issues; the public responds to foreign policy information in much the same way it responds to information concerning domestic policies.

This research cautiously concludes that despite certain evidence of hegemonic influence in the media, the general picture is one of a rather healthy pluralism. A number of conflicting viewpoints are presented in media treatment of policy debates. If the quality of public opinion reflects the quality of information and choices available, democratic theorists have cause for optimism. While "good" policy information and a discerning public do not ensure elite responsiveness, democracy certainly stands a better chance under these circumstances.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Chapter One

Introduction

Much democratic theory hinges on public opinion as a major determinant of government action. Public opinion is increasingly seen by many as a major factor in the formulation of American foreign policy. Aside from sporadic aberrations (such as the Iran-Contra affair) or certain specifically intelligence-sensitive or crisis issues, the formulation and choice of foreign policies in the United States and other democracies involves a great deal of public debate involving a variety of actors. These actors deliberate with one another and address the general public through the mass media. Policy makers necessarily participate in and pay attention to these public debates; not only are these debates valuable sources of information, but they also offer insight on public opinion to leaders who are concerned about popular approval. The nature and quality of public debate makes a difference.

U.S. foreign policy must depend, in the last analysis, upon what the American people want their country to do. To understand the domestic sources of foreign policy, then, and the domestic constraints and limits upon it, we must

understand what makes citizens prefer one sort of foreign policy or another. The fundamental purpose of this work is to investigate whether and how what is reported in the mass media influences the general public's foreign policy preferences. Questions to be addressed include whether the media have different sorts of influences on foreign than on domestic policy preferences. Also, do different actors or different news "sources" have different impacts on public opinion? Precisely who are the most potent news sources and what do they have to say to the American public? What are the implications of their potential power to persuade?

This work examines a number of policy cases, both foreign and domestic, in order to see which news sources most strongly affect public opinion. Any answers would provide for a better understanding of the influence of public opinion and the media upon U.S. foreign policy making and American policy making in general. This study has obvious and potentially substantial policy implications.

Mass Communications Research

According to McQuail (1979) the history of research on media effects can be broken into three main stages. The first stage, lasting from about the turn of the century until the late nineteen thirties, was a time in which the media were "attributed considerable power to shape opinion

and belief, change habits of life, actively mould behavior and impose political systems even against resistance" (p. 21). These claims were reinforced by the apparent successes of government propagandists in the First World War.

The second readily identifiable stage is roughly bounded from about 1940 to the early 1960s and is characterized by a tremendous growth in mass communications research, a more rigorous application of empirical methods, and a general consensus on the so-called "minimal effects" hypothesis. Led by the research on presidential elections by Paul Lazarsfeld and others, a number of research efforts (see, for example, Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954; Klapper, 1960; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960) led to the ultimate conclusion that the functioning mass media were "unlikely to be major contributors to direct change of individual opinions, attitudes or behavior..." (McQuail, 1979, p. 22).

Entman (1989) has identified two somewhat distinct variants of this minimal consequences view:

> The first emphasizes that audiences think about communications selectively, screening out information they do not like. The second holds that audiences pay so little attention and understand so little that the news cannot influence them. In practice, both the selectivity hypothesis and the hypothesis of inattention and

> incomprehension...hold that media messages tend only to reinforce existing preferences rather than help to form new attitudes or change old ones (p. 76).

Many more recent studies continue to hold to the minimal effects conclusions (Smith, 1989; Neuman, 1986; McGuire, 1975; Kraus and Davis, 1976; Chaffee, 1975). In practice, of course, press agents and media time are highly sought commodities.[1] This simple fact confirms that policy elites are driven to some degree by their interpretations of public preferences. There is a burgeoning research which challenges the "no effect" conclusions (see, for example, Graber, 1989; Wagner, 1983). This is the third phase of mass communications scholarship and it includes contemporary efforts. Initially, the most convincing attacks were the findings which demonstrated agenda-setting effects upon perceptions of the relative importance of different problems. (This literature is enormous; see Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; MacKuen, 1981; Cook, et al, 1983; Funkhauser, 1973; McCombs and Shaw, 1977).

Other contemporary research carries the agenda-setting positions even further. Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987),

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[1] Entman (1991) notes that the president requires at least perceived political support in order to wield foreign policy influence. The linkage between public opinion and effectiveness, he continues, has made the management of foreign policy news a central preoccupation at the White House (p.1).

for example, claimed that the minimal effects idea was not correct with respect to media impacts on the public's policy preferences. Research of this kind has attempted to show that news media influence not only the salience, but the content of public thought concerning government policy (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey, 1987). Entman (1989) dismisses virtually altogether the agenda-setting distinction between "what to think" and "what to think about," concluding that

> the way to control attitudes is to provide a partial selection of information for a person to think about, or process. The only means of influencing what people think is precisely to control what they think about (p. 77).

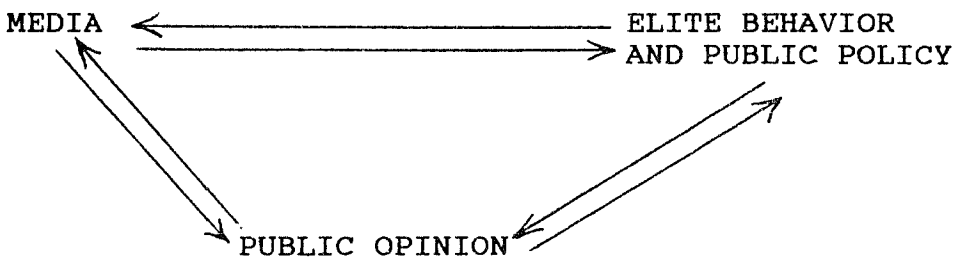
Much contemporary research on media effects, as shown above, is driven by suspicions that the minimal effects idea is not correct. While some claim that more modest expectations of the potency of media effects helps to facilitate more effective, realistic research (McQuail, 1979, p. 22), it seems that the major impetus to fruitful work on the relationships between media, public, and policy elites has been a recognition of the need for more appropriate research designs. One-shot experiments (or quasi-experiments) and surveys designed to measure short-term attitude changes in individuals may fall well short.

> Alternative research approaches might take a longer time span, pay more attention to people in their social context,...look at structures of

> belief and opinion and social behaviour rather than individual cases, take more notice of the content whose effects are being studied. In brief, it can be argued that we are only at the start of the task and have as yet examined very few of the questions about the effects of mass media, especially those which reveal themselves in collective phenomena (McQuail, 1979, p. 23).

This dissertation challenges the minimal effects conclusions and indicates that new ways of looking at mass communications are essential to productive research. It is predicated on a particular view of the relationships between media, public, and policy elites; a view which postulates the complexity and reciprocity of these relationships. This work focuses for the most part on the particulars of the relationship between the media and public opinion, while recognizing that any number of outside factors and forces are also important in the formulation, legitimation, and implementation of policy; factors which are not easily absorbed in the simple, three element model shown below in Figure 1.

-Figure 1-



The Nature of the Relationships: Media, Public Opinion, and Policy

This work focuses on the media-public opinion nexus. The disaggregation of news sources, however, allows for the identification of specific political elites and other groups, so that the policy-media link is also explored to some extent, as are the impacts of certain "outside" actors. Because this research has something to add to the analysis of all these causal links in the model above, it is appropriate to briefly examine the existing literature concerning these links. We may, for example, have something to offer hegemonic theorists as well as those who would refute them. Questions such as the market effects on the quality of news are also examined. It will be helpful to examine the literature concerning all these potential causal links.

One way to present a more complete survey of the vast mass communications literature (as well as examine what we know about the relationships between media, public opinion, and policy elites) may be to focus on the relationships among the three main elements of the simple model in Figure 1. Any treatment of the direct causal relationships between specific pairs of elements will necessarily suffer if we neglect to include potential indirect effects through the third element. In the review discussions that follow these

types of indirect effects will be noted and discussed whenever possible and appropriate.

The Public Opinion-Policy Nexus

Most analysts agree that there is some reciprocal relationship between public opinion and policy (or policy elites).[2] Waltz (1967), for example, noted that while leaders may be made timid by their fear of hostile public reaction, there was always the possibility that the public would move toward absorbing the opinion of the government position. We will take each of these causal connections in turn.

Public Opinion as a Driver of Policy

Perhaps one of the most important justifications for focusing on the media-public opinion connection is a belief that public opinion does have an important impact on policy. Economic theories of electoral competition, depending as they often do on perfect information, predict a high level of policy responsiveness to public opinion (the first section of Downs, 1957, for example). Recent evidence has indeed shown that public opinion is a significant factor in

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[2] There may be complex relationships among various elites and policy itself. I will focus on the media-reported actions and behavior of particular official elites as virtually equivalent to policy.

the making of American foreign policy (see Russett, 1990). A number of case studies have established its role in particular policy areas, such as U.S. relations with China (Kusnitz, 1984) and arms control issues (Graham, 1989). Analyses of aggregate data have indicated that foreign policies correspond with what a majority of Americans favors in more than 90% of the cases examined (Monroe, 1979), and that changes in collective public opinion are followed by congruent changes in policy about two thirds of the time (much more often than that when opinion changes are large and sustained) (Page and Shapiro, 1983, pp. 178, 181).

Other researchers have acknowledged that public opinion may be important in policy making, but despair of determining how or when (Cohen, 1973). As mentioned, certain earlier work had concluded that public opinion was in fact meaningless or non-existent, having little effect on policy (Almond, 1950; Rosenau, 1961; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960; Converse, 1964). This work, however, with its emphasis on "non-attitudes" or "doorstep opinions" (Converse, 1970), is now seen by many as misleading (see, among others, Key, 1961; Mueller, 1973; Erikson, et al., 1980; Hughs, 1978; Leigh, 1976; Weissberg, 1976; Levering, 1978; Page and Shapiro, 1991).

Still others foresaw the obstruction of the general will of the people by special interest groups

(Schattschneider, 1960; McConnell, 1966). Some economic theorists who assimilated information and transaction costs as well as free-rider problems into their analysis reached the same conclusion (Downs, 1957; Olson, 1965; Hardin, 1982. See Page and Shapiro, 1983, pp. 175-76 for a concise summary of some of these arguments).

Recent scholarship which moves away from micro-level analysis of relationships of individual leader behavior and constituent opinion and toward an examination of the relationships between government policy and collective public opinion seems to have been particularly fruitful in demonstrating the responsiveness of government policies. The instability and confusion in individual survey responses noted in earlier studies has been shown by some to be largely the result of random measurement error and short-term influences on opinion. The random individual errors tend to cancel out across the population (see Achen, 1975). Collective public opinion, as measured by aggregate survey responses is real, meaningful and stable (Shapiro and Page, 1988; Page and Shapiro, 1991). For some,

> examination of this collective public opinion, at the aggregate or macro level, is the key to understanding relationships between public opinion and policymaking in the context of democratic theory (Page and Shapiro, 1988, p. 213).

Arguments which posit an indirect influence of public opinion on policy, of course, depend heavily on the

"constructive" use (rather than manipulation) of the media by policy elites. Elite use of polls and other types of information (often channeled to elites through the media) to gauge the political environment is well documented. Specific approaches and work in these areas will be examined later.

Policy as a Driver of Public Opinion

We have already briefly mentioned the possibility that citizens' preferences may shift to come into agreement with governmental policies, especially in times of crisis or when faith in government is particularly high (see Waltz, 1967; Graber, 1989, pp. 305-325). There may be attempts to directly reach the public, either to educate, that is, help citizens understand policies which elites feel may further public interests (Mill, 1962; Key, 1961), or to deceive and manipulate (Edelman, 1964; Wise, 1973; Miliband, 1976). Despite the temporal evidence implying that public opinion "caused" some policy shifts, Page and Shapiro (1983) also noted that their findings were "consistent with policy affecting opinion in a substantial number of cases of congruence..." (p. 189).

The fact remains that there is very little direct contact between the public and policy makers. Inherent in strategies of "going public" (see Kernell, 1986), for

example, are requirements for such tactics as "mass media campaigns" (Patterson, 1980). The major conduit between policy makers and the public is the media. The path from policy maker to the public necessarily passes through the media, whether one accepts the rather ominous hegemonic theories (Gramsci, 1971; Miliband, 1969; Parenti, 1986) or the more optimistic approaches which allow for more benevolent opinion leaders or guardians (Mill, 1962; Key, 1961). More specifics on policy elite influence on public opinion through the media (that is, the media functioning as intermediaries for messages rather than independent influences) will be provided below.

The Media-Policy Nexus

The relationship between media and policymaker is quite clearly one of reciprocity; a relationship characterized by a frantic and often conflictual symbiosis. Larson (1986), for example, has shown both positive and negative effects of media on policy, as well as positive and negative effects of policymaking on the media. This relationship, which is both adversarial and cooperative, has been likened to a "cautious marriage."

> To retain public support and maintain its power, the government wants to influence what information is passed on to the public and to other officials...As critics of government, newspeople take special pains to expose wrongdoing by public

> officials...There is a love-hate relationship between government officials and the media. To perform their functions adequately, each needs the other. But they have conflicting goals and missions and operate under different institutional constraints (Graber, 1989, p. 235).

Media Impacts on Policy and Policy Elites

It seems undeniable that media have some direct impact on politics and policy. However, there are also some severe limitations on what the media can and will do.

> Despite their giant-killing reputation among politicians, the mass media are not powerful and merciless defenders or destroyers of the good society. Their influence is, in most cases, less than overwhelming, never monolithic...(Hennessey, 1975, p. 138).

Entman (1989), for example, sees media influence over government as often "too little, too late," noting that "the media can wield the power to alter public policy and cripple presidencies-yet cannot harness that power to serve democratic citizenship and promote governmental accountability as free press ideals demand" (p. 3).

The most obvious and oft cited impact the media has on policy makers is in serving as a conduit or purveyor of information (Cohen, 1963). This information, of course, may take many forms. Often, for example, the New York Times may provide more up-to-date, reliable political information on specific situations than is available through standard government information-gathering organizations. Perhaps

just as importantly, the media are often perceived, rightly or wrongly, as being able to provide this kind of information (see Cohen, 1973). Policy makers also pay attention to what the media tell them about what the public is thinking. As Hennessey (1975) notes

> (an) escalation of importance occurs with regard to the mass media because there are so few ostensibly impartial indicators of what people think about public policy...there are not many ways for the attentive decisionmaker to find out 'what the people really think.' The tendency is for political actors to believe that the mass media somehow have special insight into the 'public mind' (p. 138).

In this sense, then, the media are politically important specifically because political decision makers think they are important. "Elites think the media are the most powerful of all American institutions, despite many scholars' continued insistence that media influence is limited" (Entman, 1989, p. 86; see also Kelman, 1987).

Notions of media power through agenda setting have already been mentioned. The media are significantly more than purveyors of information and opinion. They can create a climate for political dynamics, not only for the American public, but also for the political elite. This impact on policy making is especially true when an issue becomes a matter of controversy among political elites (Graber, 1989, p. 287). The media "supply the context that...gives people

reasons for taking sides and converts the problem into a serious political issue" (Lang and Lang, 1983).

The picture of media impacts on policy that emerges from much previous research suggests that the media are most powerful in an indirect path through public opinion. The potential direct influences of media on political elite, however, should not be underestimated. There are arguments for potent direct impacts. Graber (1989) claims, for example, that

> (a) major problem with social science research on mass media effects is that it has concentrated on measuring the effects on ordinary individuals, rather than on political elites. The average individual, despite contrary democratic fictions, is politically fairly unimportant. Mass media impact on a handful of political decision makers is vastly more significant than similar impact on ordinary individuals. In addition, the impact on decision makers is likely to be far more profound because mass media information relates more directly to their immediate concerns. They may pay close attention to stories in which the public is not interested and which it often fails to understand (pp. 19-20).

In the case of impact of media on political campaigning and elections, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish between direct and indirect influences. Certainly the media can endorse candidates and deny or provide coverage of policy positions. These actions directly impact upon a candidate, yet in a broader sense they are only important if the public is affected (that is, pays attention, etc.). Whatever the case, the impact of television in particular

has been tremendous, not only on elections, but on political behavior in general. Television has changed election game rules, especially at the presidential level (Rubin, 1981). Television, it is argued, ultimately selects the candidates and dominates campaign strategies and schedules (Graber, 1989, pp. 193-234; Patterson, 1980).

The media have also had direct impacts on political institutional-structural arrangements in the United States. Crotty (1985) attributes the decline of American political parties in great degree to the growing power of the media. Because newspeople have the power to shape the images of public officials (Paletz and Guthrie, 1987), some scholars claim, the media can actually impact upon the power relationships of the various branches of government. These power "shifts" are matters of some dispute; Graber (1989), for example, claims that "television has tipped the political scales of power among the three branches of government in favor of the presidency (p. 239), while Smoller (1986) asserts that the emergence of television as a primary news source about presidents has contributed to the decline of the presidency. Other similar claims have been made concerning Congress and the courts (Graber, 1989; Pritchard, 1986).

The media, then, have both direct and indirect impacts on policy and policy makers. Policy makers listen to what

the media have to say. Policy elites believe the media ares powerful, as well as useful, and they respond to the media. It is important, however, to recognize that policy elites also have tremendous leverage over the media.

The Impact of Policy Elites on the Media

Governments everywhere attempt to control the media precisely because governments believe the media to be a powerful political force. The important debates involve, as alluded to above, the extent, nature, purpose, and the degree of success of these attempts to gain and maintain control (Graber, 1989, pp. 1-33; pp. 20-29 present an interesting summary of different governmental approaches used to pursue this control)

Notions of policy elite impact on the media and media output range from the rather optimistic, benign effects mentioned earlier to charges of virtually total control and manipulation. One of the most obvious impacts that policy makers can have on media output involves the media dependency on official news sources. Many information deprivation tactics can be used, from specific government officials avoiding the media to the implementation of media regulatory policies.

Aside from total denial of information, as in the case of classification of material for reasons of national

security, perhaps the most direct way policy elites can shape news is through federal regulatory policy (Linsky, 1986). The president, for example, can make appointments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Congress, of course, has the power to enact regulatory legislation, as was evidenced by the passage of the Communications Act of 1934. The courts interpret communications law. The Justice Department can have impacts, as when the Antitrust Division challenged the FCC's approval of a merger between the American Broadcast Company and the International Telephone and Telegraph Company.

On the whole, though, government control of the media through regulation is fairly weak (Krasnow, Longley, and Terry, 1984). There appears to be little coordination among the various governmental bodies which can affect policy.

> Even within the executive and legislative branches, where most policy should be made, control is dispersed among so many different committees and agencies that drift rather than direction has resulted. Few major policy decisions have been made except in times of crisis, and even then the weaknesses of government structures have made it easy for industry spokespersons to dominate decision making (Graber, 1989, p. 271).

The goal of federal regulation, of course, is not simply to provide the government with strict control over media output; regulation in theory should also provide for more and better information being made available to the public.

As Entman (1989) has shown in his examination of the Fairness Doctrine, however, regulatory policies highlight the schizophrenic nature of the government-media relationship.

> Federal broadcast regulation has pursued two goals. The positive goal is to provide diversity: a wide variety of facts and opinions on public issues so that Americans can discover truth and participate effectively in democracy. The second, defensive goal is to prevent the media (or the government through the media) from controlling public opinion by limiting the circulation of ideas...The goals restate Americans' ambivalence toward the media: the desire to have a press that is powerful enough to rein in government, but not so powerful as to dominate public opinion (p. 104).

Related to, yet somewhat aside from formal regulation, there are a host of approaches which claim that the media are simply a propaganda tool of a hegemonic elite; an ascendant class exists not only in the economic sphere, but through all social, political and ideological spheres, and has the ability "thereby to persuade other classes to see the world in terms favorable to its own ascendancy" (Scruton, 1982, p. 200). The media are seen as playing a major role in political socialization and other aspects of political learning. This literature is staggeringly voluminous and cannot be treated in detail here. There are a myriad of variations on the hegemonic theme (see Entman, 1990, for example, for a critique of "traditionalist" and

"revisionist" hegemonic theory, as well as a contemporary reconceptualization of the approach).

Variations in these hegemonic approaches depend somewhat on beliefs about the mechanism through which a capitalist state policy is produced (Stephens, 1986, p. 75). Miliband (1969) claimed that the capitalist class consciously and directly controlled the state and that the media, therefore, was simply an instrument pawn of the hegemonic class. Gramsci (1971) also envisioned complex modes of class domination. Because of his focus on manipulation of consciousness as a major state control mechanism, cooptation of the media by elites was particularly important for Gramsci. C. W. Mills (1956) also focused on a power elite manipulating the preferences of the masses through control of the mass media (for a good, brief critique of Mills, see Alford and Friedland, 1985, pp. 198-99).

There are any number of more recent works which make use of the hegemonic thesis (aside from Entman, mentioned above, see, among others, Chomsky, 1984, and Parenti, 1986). Inherent in hegemonic approaches is the notion that our "separation" of media from the policy elite is patently unrealistic. We have already noted the symbiotic relationship between the two. Hegemonic approaches simply

take this relationship a step further in relation to public opinion:

> 'public opinion' on foreign policies often becomes the jelling of the views of officials and media opinion leaders, and few if any other individuals are part of the process...this symbiosis of officialdom and media (especially the press) is a constant factor in decisionmaking (Hennessey, p.164).

Certain aspects of the hegemonic, elite-based arguments are indeed compelling and we must recognize some very real governmental impacts and controls on the media. However, as we have seen earlier, there is considerable evidence that the media do yield some significant power in isolation from and independent of policy elites.

The Media-Public Opinion Nexus

The link between the media and the American public is the focus of this investigation, especially the impact of media content on the public's policy preferences. We have already noted the minimal effects hypotheses, as well as more recent work on agenda-setting and other functions of the media. This section briefly examines the potential reciprocal relationship between the mass media and public opinion.

The Public as a Driver of the Media

Notions of the public significantly influencing the content and structure of media output obviously fly in the face of stricter hegemonic or conspiratorial theories. Other analysts note, too, that it is extremely difficult for the general public to gain access to the media (Graber, 1989, p. 112). Yet a number of interesting arguments suggest some degree of public influence on the content of the media.

Most discussions of the public's impact on media content and form focus on the market aspects of the relationship. Even the simplest notion of the role of the media, that they serve as a conduit of information from the public to the policy maker, has a market analogy. In this view the media simply provide policy elites with pertinent information concerning the "true" preferences of the general public. There is a demand for such information (Almond, 1960).

Most comprehensive discussions portray the media-public relationship in terms of more complex market arrangements. Entman (1989) delineates distinct impacts on the quality of news from both the supply and demand sides of the economic marketplace involving public and media. The media, he notes, must respond to public tastes. Because the public does not demand comprehensive, interesting, useful news,

such news is not provided (also see Bennett, 1988; Parenti, 1986).

The most disturbing impact of the circumstance outlined above is that it leads to a "vicious circle" of inactivity and/or low quality news. If the media are actually convinced that it is the public who should determine the character and amount of news coverage (Cohen, 1963), the public may be caught in the following Catch-22 situation: The media make the assessment that "the people" are not interested in an issue and do not give that issue coverage. Yet the public may not become interested in an issue precisely because they see little coverage of it; therefore it must not be important! The obvious impact is an uninformed public.

> ...the unsophisticated mass audience demands or accepts current news formats, or in many cases wants no news at all; the dearth of informative "accountability news" perpetuates an unsophisticated audience (Entman, 1989, p. 18).

There is considerable disagreement over the degree to which constraints on news selection and production are rooted in political ideology, the profit motive, technical constraints, or a combination of these elements. Despite the arguments of cruder traditional versions of hegemonic theory, the media obviously respond to public tastes. Whether one thinks the media fail to do their job well enough (Bennett, 1984) or that they do their job only

too well in support of the corporate class and capitalist system (Parenti, 1986), there seems to be a great deal of agreement that "superficiality prevails most of the time" (Graber, 1989, p. 105). But does media content really influence the public?

Media Impacts on Public Opinion

Throughout the preceding discussions of possible relationships among media, public opinion, and policy elites, we have seen indications that the media have apparent effects on public opinion, despite early "minimal consequences" literature. We have briefly examined agenda-setting functions and the importance of the media in the political socialization of the general public. Quite aside from the notion of corollary or oblique unanticipated media effects (see Adams, et al., 1986; Graber, 1989, p. 16), there is some evidence that specific news content can have direct impacts on policy preferences. Real (1989), for example, has cited polls which show the impact of pro-boycott publicity on American opinion concerning the boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games (see Entman, 1990). On the surface, it seems that "contrary to earlier findings that indicated limited impact, the media are very influential and consequently a powerful political force" (Graber, 1989, p. 182). The purpose of this work is to more thoroughly

explore the proposition that media content does indeed affect the policy preferences of the American public.

As mentioned early in this introduction, some promising recent scholarship has attempted to move away from micro-level analysis and to focus on collective public as measured by aggregate survey responses. This dissertation attempts to build upon two specific examples of this kind of work.

Building Blocks and Their Improvement

This research builds upon past work by Page and Shapiro (1984) and Page, Shapiro and Dempsey (1987). The methodology will be outlined in some detail in the next chapter and will be only briefly sketched out here.

In "Presidents as Opinion Leaders: Some New Evidence" (Policy Studies Journal), June, 1984, Page and Shapiro attempted to examine to what extent and under what circumstances presidents can affect the public's policy preferences through the media. They examined levels of public opinion on several specific policy issues at times T1 and T2 and New York Times media content between each pair of two opinion survey dates. By coding media content and disaggregating the specific sources of policy news, they were able to correlate presidential (and other source) messages with shifts in public opinion on a variety of issues, both foreign and domestic. They concluded that

popular presidents did indeed appear to have substantial impacts on public opinion.

While this work was interesting and suggestive, there were certain serious flaws in the research design. The most important problem was that opinion level at T1 was simply given; no attempt was made to examine factors which determined the initial levels of policy preference. This may have led to bias in the estimates of the T1-T2 coefficients, especially if pre-T1 news had delayed effects, or had temporary effects that tended to fade away later. News content prior to T1 is extremely important and the model is misspecified without it. Further, no attempt was made by Page and Shapiro to examine potential differences in source impact between foreign and domestic issues.

In "What Moves Public Opinion?" (American Political Science Review, March, 1987), Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey attempted the same type of analysis using television news data. They corrected earlier shortcomings by adding pre-T1 news content into their analysis. Here again, they concluded that different actors have different impacts on public opinion. As in the newspaper analysis, the television data set was a mixed bag of foreign policy and domestic issues.

This dissertation utilizes the Page-Shapiro-Dempsey television news data set, as well as an expanded set of

newspaper data. The specific contributions of this work are as follows: First, this is a considerably more precise analysis of the impact of newspaper news content. I correct the earlier methodological shortcoming by including media content immediately prior to the T1 survey. This provides a more meaningful baseline for the T1 survey and leads to better, less biased estimations of T1-T2 coefficients. Second, I examine foreign policy issues specifically and compare them with domestic issues; this has been previously accomplished neither for the newspaper data nor for the television data. Third, the use of newspaper and television data allows for comparisons of their differential impacts, if any. These improvements and additions should contribute measurably to our knowledge and understanding of the influence of the media upon public opinion.

Again, we hope to learn more about differential impacts of various media sources, differences in information and media impacts between foreign and domestic issues, and differences in information and media impacts between print and the electronic media.

Hypotheses

The fundamental theoretical premise of this work is that news from different sources is likely to vary in salience and credibility and therefore to exert varying

impacts on the public (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey, 1987, p. 24; see also Hovland and Weiss, 1951-52). This premise leads to a number of interesting hypotheses which may be tested. For instance, a highly credible commentator or nonpartisan expert may have a greater impact on public opinion than a foreign leader, a popular president more impact than an unpopular president, and so on. Further, it has been shown that different elements of the media choose and utilize different sources in different ways (Hallin, et al., 1990). The potential differential impacts of various sources, then, may have substantial implications for the quality of journalism and the quality and conduct of public debate.

The disaggregation of sources utilized in this work is an attempt to ferret out some of these issues. However, it is important to recognize that this process is difficult. For example, we may delineate and code "interest groups" as a specific source, yet there is tremendous diversity among interest groups and their messages. An aggregation problem still remains. The important point here is that there is a danger that the gist of certain specific messages may be masked, as pro and con elements within a particular source may, in a sense, cancel each other out. Some progress can be made by informally disaggregating both within particular cases and particular source categories. This, of course, is

crucial to an understanding of a deeper idea of the quality of information that is conveyed. This attempt to recognize the differential impacts of specific actors or news sources is clearly an advance over approaches which utilize an aggregation of all media content.

It is expected that the president will have a major impact on American public opinion (Cornwell, 1965) and that regression results will bear this out. The executive is more than any other figure the embodiment of the nation and its policies. He should wield tremendous influence, at least under most circumstances. Certainly it is recognized, as others have argued, that the relationship between the president and public opinion is reciprocal (Page and Petracca, 1983; Edwards, 1983); as well as driving public opinion, the president anticipates and reacts to public opinion shifts. An examination of specific issues should help to buttress the claim that presidents, at least in some cases, do indeed lead the public. Moreover, it seems intuitively obvious that popular presidents should wield more influence than unpopular presidents. The relative influence of the president in the foreign and domestic policy arenas can also be explored, allowing for a test of the claim that "presidents have greater influence on public opinion in international than in domestic affairs" (Hurwitz, 1989, p. 222).

It is certainly expected that the president's administration will have some impact and in the same direction as that of the president.[3] Similar to the aggregation problem mentioned earlier, however, it seems likely that the overall impact of administration sources may mask specific and contradictory impacts of specific individuals among the president's partisans. If this is the case, it is possible that this source could have a rather negligible net effect. (Again, others have come to this conclusion; see Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey, 1987). Specific case studies will shed light on these nuances. It may also be that the greater public deference to the president on foreign policy issues will not transfer to a general public conception of the president's "administration," precisely because of the diversity within it.

The opposition party, of course, is subject to the same problems mentioned above, because of its size and diversity. In general one might expect a rather smaller or even negative overall impact, since the president's election should at least crudely point to some level of presidential approval and therefore disapproval of opposition platforms and policy proposals. (We must remember, though, that this

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[3] This is intuitively the case, though research on presidential coattails has failed to reach concrete conclusions (see Edwards, 1983, pp. 83-88).

is not a zero-sum game; failure in an election does not imply total rejection of policy or complete loss of credibility. Further, as we will see later, the opposition party is certainly not always opposed to administration policy proposals). In general, opposition impacts should rise proportionately as the president is less popular and fall when the president is popular.

Because there is some evidence that interest groups have an overall negative impact on public opinion, we might expect no different. Page and Shapiro (1989), for example, claim that "interest groups that are presumed to pursue narrowly selfish aims may serve as negative reference points" (p. 305). Bennett (1988) notes that a public perception that interest groups are narrow and self-serving is inescapable, since "when grass-roots groups do make the news, it is often in the context of negatively perceived events like demonstrations, sit-ins, and other protest activities that may offend the public and draw easy criticism from public officials" (p. 96). Graber (1988) also highlights this credibility problem, noting that groups of this kind can only be helped by media coverage if they do not "deviate too far from mainstream values" (p. 294). Yet these works fail to distinguish issues by policy type; I will examine possible foreign-domestic distinctions.

With regard to differences between foreign and domestic issues, there seem to be several possibilities. First, interest groups may have a greater positive impact in foreign affairs simply because the public is more malleable in this area. Conversely, interest groups may demonstrate the same negative impact in foreign affairs that studies which fail to distinguish between policy type have shown. Unfortunately, a general conclusion may be beyond our grasp, given the broad range of interest groups and issues. This range would imply, again, that an aggregation problem will dictate a net negligible effect, concealing offsetting impacts. More detailed work will be necessary to overcome these aggregation problems (see, for example, Danelian, 1989).

At first glance, one would expect that objective <u>events</u> such as anonymous terrorist actions, changes in economic indicators, etc., would have major impacts on public opinion. Some recent research has indicated, however, that events in and of themselves do not have direct effects, but are channeled through other sources. Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987), for example, believed that "much of the impact of objective events is indirect, mediated by U.S. political leaders and experts...affect(ing) public opinion through the interpretations and reactions of U.S. elites." (p. 38). It is expected that domestic events which seem to

strike "closer to home" would have some greater impact than more distant foreign events. The events source serves, in a sense, as a "residual" news category; actions, statistics, etc., which cannot be directly attributed to specific actors are considered to be "events."

It is expected that experts will have an important impact in general and both in foreign and domestic affairs. Experts generate an aura of expertise and nonpartisanship which seems to accentuate their credibility with the public. The fact that these experts are not "chosen" (that is, elected) by the people helps to contribute to the aura of nonpartisanship and, hence, impartiality. The impact of experts might be even more dramatic in foreign affairs, where the general public is less hesitant to defer to sources of new information. Finally, as confidence in government wanes (as perhaps measured by the unpopularity of presidents) experts may take on even greater importance. Again, the possibility of reciprocal processes is problematic. Surely, as mentioned above, the media seek audiences and react to public tastes and attitudes. Experts who espouse "popular" views may be asked to return again and again to offer their analysis. Again, case studies will be useful here.

As with experts, commentators are expected to have a major impact. Numerous studies have demonstrated instances

in which news commentators' statements paralleled public opinion shifts (see Page, Shapiro and Dempsey, 1987, p. 35). The tremendous popularity of, for example, Walter Cronkite leaves little doubt that the public responds to commentary. Again, one would expect a greater reliance on commentary when confidence in the government ("official" sources) is low. Differences between domestic commentary and commentary on foreign affairs may again reflect the predicted and general malleability of the public on international issues.

The courts are expected to have virtually no impact on public opinion concerning foreign affairs, mainly because they have so little to say about these issues. Indeed, a brief examination of the foreign issues in the television news data set shows that of 2,650 relevant items only three could be attributed to the courts, and these were all neutral in tone. Similarly, there were no court stories concerning foreign policy issues among the 1898 New York Times items examined. The courts may have more of an effect in domestic issues. In their study of a mixed set of issues Page, Shapiro and Dempsey (1987) concluded that the courts may actually have negative effects, in part because of their unpopular actions on issues such as busing and capital punishment. Because the courts have virtually nothing to say about foreign policy, they will not be treated in detail in this work.

Studies on the impact of foreign news sources (foreign news reported through the American media) on U.S. public opinion have generally centered on the paucity of foreign news (Parenti, 1986) and the cooptation of the foreign media into the Anglo-American model (Tunstall, 1977; Larson, 1984). If one accepts the claim that Americans are essentially ethnocentric and self-satisfied, foreign news might have little or no impact, or might even have negative effects as the public reacts to foreign "meddling" or perceived criticism. The public might react negatively to foreign news concerning American domestic concerns. It seems likely, however, that foreign reports concerning international affairs should be seen as more credible and persuasive than those concerning internal U.S. affairs. In general, however, it is predicted that the U.S. public will pay little attention to foreigners. Because the television news data set allows for differentiation between "unfriendly" foreign news and "friendly/neutral" foreign news, some interesting differences might emerge.

Information and the Public Debate

An investigation of the quality of information entering into the public debate, utilizing two distinct data sets, should yield useful results in two major areas: 1) foreign policy information as opposed to domestic policy information

and 2) "popular" (television news) information as opposed to "elite" (newspaper) information.

It seems possible that we may be able to draw some interesting contrasts between the newspaper and television data. It is generally accepted that the New York Times is an especially important source of information for policy elites,[4] while television news is directed more at the general public. It may be, for example, that different news sources tend to dominate these two media. Graber (1989) has noted that it is extremely difficult to separate out the effects of various types of media. Most work does focus on an end product which combines the impacts of all print and electronic media stimuli or considers only one medium (though Patterson (1980) is an exception). Yet there may be important differences.

There is no clear agreement on the relationship of the print and electronic media. Some see print as more credible (Bennett, 1988), while others have given the electronic media more credence (Hennessey, 1970). The use of two distinct data sets may offer some interesting results, even if they are only suggestive up to this point. (We must also

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[4] See Cohen, 1963. William F. Buckley (1970) corroborated this observation, noting that the State Department had called the Times in 1956 to ask if it was true that Russian tanks were pouring into Budapest. It seems clear also, though, that President Bush and Saddam Hussein watched CNN!

recognize that there are temporal problems with a proposed comparison. The New York Times date set includes a number of cases which predate the widespread availability of television news).[5]

We must be very careful to point our that there is considerable controversy over the actual relationship of the New York Times and other news sources. It can be argued that the Times is quite representative of other print news. It may indeed be the case that the Times ultimately drives the news agendas of other newspapers. Page and Shapiro (1984) went so far as to assume that news reported in the Times "finds its way, in diluted form, through other newspapers, magazines, television news, and word of mouth to the general public. That is, the Times may not be a bad indicator of the general thrust of news that reaches the citizenry" (p. 651). Others, of course, disagree. Robert Entman, for example, is quite wary of claims made about the general print media based on evidence depending solely on the Times, noting that it is an elite publication rarely

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[5] Interestingly, I ran analyses for only those New York Times cases taking place after the invention and widespread availability of television; results were very similar to those we will see with the complete data set. I also analyzed those Times cases which took place only after the date of the earliest TV case (January 1969); these results were also essentially the same.

read by the general public. It is difficult to determine the exact relationship of the Times and other print.

These two data sets together will also allow us to examine certain theoretical propositions concerning differences between domestic issue information and foreign affairs information. We have already seen a brief treatment of this issue in the above discussion of specific sources. For example, while official sources seem to dominate policy information in general, are they even more prevalent in foreign policy issues? (See Graber, 1989, pp. 327-364, for a rather detailed example of this argument).

The Importance and Implications of this Work

This work is related to several normative concerns. My view of the importance of media impacts on public opinion is driven and bounded by my beliefs that the public should indeed be involved in policy debates, that government has a responsibility to include public concerns in policy deliberations, and that a free press should function as both civic educator and a check on government.

From this point of view, the results of this research will be significant. If the quality of information available to the public is poor, the public can hardly participate effectively. If the media are dominated by specific potent actors, the manipulation of opinion can lead

to policies which are truly in less than the best interest of the general public. Or we may find that the public is impervious to media messages, that they care little or nothing for policy debate, a result which seems even more ominous. Mass inattention implies greater elite attention and potential for manipulation.

Yet, we may find more optimistic evidence. If we find that the public is extremely sensitive to media messages and therefore subject to demagoguery, we may still note that the public is at least involved and paying attention to the debates. Further, opinion leadership is certainly not incompatible with democracy. We might argue that "rational citizens do not and cannot inform themselves fully about complex policy questions; division of labor is as necessary in politics as in other activities" (Page and Shapiro, 1984, p. 659). Skillful and moral opinion leaders may educate and persuade; while this is not necessarily sufficient for democracy, it may represent some degree of political pluralism in the policy process.

It is possible that evidence of this political pluralism might emerge from this work, if we find specific news sources competing with other sources to provide varying points of view and guide the public. Political debate may be spirited and healthy.

Chapter Two

Methodology

This work is based on a multimethod design which essentially involves four major steps: collecting data from pairs of identically repeated policy preference questions used in national survey samples of U.S. citizens; coding TV news broadcasts aired or newspaper items printed between each pair of surveys; using statistical analysis to predict or explain variation in opinion change by variations in media content; and, finally, examining specific cases to add contextual richness, depth, and understanding to the quantitative results.[1] Two distinct data sets were utilized, based on a set of nationally televised news broadcasts and a collection of case pertinent newspaper items (see Page and Shapiro, 1984; Page, et al, 1987; and Appendices 2 and 3). These data sets contained twenty common cases which allowed for some investigation of the interplay between television news and news available in the New York Times.

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[1] Any number of scholars have argued that case studies can build on and enrich statistical approaches. See Tetlock, 1990; George, 1979; and Eckstein, 1975.

Importantly, this measurement tactic allowed for the crucial distinction between different sources of news. Further, it took into account news item relevance to policy issues and allowed for the identification of discrepancy between current and previous media content.

The television news data set is organized around 32 pairs of foreign policy survey questions and 48 pairs of domestic policy questions. These questions were drawn from the period 1969-1983 and were repeated within time intervals averaging about three months. These cases are not a sample from a hypothetical universe of policy issues or poll questions, but are quite diverse.

The newspaper data set is organized around 18 pairs of foreign policy survey questions and 33 pairs of domestic policy questions. These questions date back as far as 1939 and cover a wide gamut of issues. (The raw data here were also collected by Page and Shapiro, but required extensive verification and keypunching by this researcher before data analysis could begin).

Information about the dependent variables were obtained through the use of repeated opinion questions asked by the Harris and Gallup organizations, NBC, CBS, the New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times. For each case the dependent variable is the level of public opinion at the time of the second survey (T2), that is, the latter of the

identically worded survey questions. This is simply the percentage of the survey sample (excluding "don't know" and "no opinion" responses) that supported the most prominent policy alternative mentioned in the survey. Because these survey questions are identical at T1 and T2, it is hoped that we can for the most part avoid the serious problem of question-wording effects. As critics of survey research have shown, "one can sometimes obtain very different estimates of public sentiment by posing only subtly different versions of the same questions" (Tetlock, 1990, p. 356). We can not avoid, however, issues of "fair phrasing" of questions and the like.

Development of the independent variables involved substantive content analysis of specific news items. In the television data set, daily television network news stories from a randomly selected network[2] were coded using summaries found in the Television News Index and Abstracts of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. These items were coded for directional thrust, source, length, placement, type of policy issue, and other potentially pertinent characteristics (see Appendix 4 for an example of the coding sheets used). Coding began two months prior to the T1 survey and continued with every day up to T1 and through to

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[2] Entman (1991) has argued that network similarities can safely allow for this kind of generalization (p. 1).

the T2 survey date. Again, this coding had been accomplished by other researchers. (Coding, verifying, and keypunching the data for these 80 cases was a Herculean effort, with more than 10,000 manhours spent in preparing the case level, aggregate data file based on 10,950 source stories).

The reliance on survey organizations asking identical policy questions at times T1 and T2 highlights a major weakness of this research design concerning time intervals. The pre-T1 time period (two months), of course, offers no problems; coding simply began two months prior to the T1 date. Unfortunately, however, there is little or no consistency in how the T2 date was chosen by the survey organizations. This means that the length of the T1-T2 time period may vary greatly among the cases (indeed, in these data sets the T1-T2 time periods ranged from just over one month to almost seven months!). These discrepancies can become particularly problematic when we examine lag and falling-off hypotheses later.

News stories gleaned from the New York Times, predominantly front page stories, were also selected and coded as above. There were certain specific differences between the original coding of this data and that of the television stories. For example, the court source was not individually isolated, but was incorporated into the

administration source code. Also, no distinction was made originally between foreign-friendly and foreign-enemy news sources. A straightforward, although tedious, reexamination and recoding of all the New York Times data by this researcher corrected these problems. The two data sets are now essentially isomorphic, allowing for some interesting and useful comparisons.

Aside from the above scrutinization and recoding, four other particular data manipulations merit brief mention. First, an attempt was made to use all data available in all cases. In the television data set, which had been cleaned by previous researchers, there were no problems whatsoever. The Times data, on the other hand, were made available in pure, raw form. This required an examination of every news item for every case (1898 relevant news items). While there was very little disagreement with the coding that had been accomplished, this researcher did discover certain inconsistencies in and confusion over what constituted an "event." These items were inspected closely and certain items were recoded in the best judgment of this researcher.

The second manipulation concerned the "court" source. In the case of the newspaper data, there were only seven identifiable court source scories in the entire data set. More importantly, there were no relevant court stories concerning foreign policy issues, the major focus of this

research. Similarly, there were only three relevant court stories in the television data concerning foreign policy issues and these were all neutral in directional thrust. The decision was made to discard this source, based on the above.

Third, in the television data set two cases were incomplete; in the raw, handwritten form specific coding sheets were missing. These cases were of no use and were discarded.

Finally, one case involving price and wage freeze policies during the period December 1972 to June 1973 was discarded because official policy shifts occurred during this period, leading to a shift in the meaning of the opinion item between T1 and T2 (especially the definition of "present policy"). As a result, an extraordinary shift in public opinion of almost 27 percentage points was observed during this period.

As mentioned, a major focus in this work will be on the effects of particular actors or sources of information reported in the media. Examination of the television news items (and the newspaper items, following the recoding effort) allowed for the identification of 10 exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories: the president; fellow partisans and members of this administration; members of the opposing party; interest groups; experts; network

commentators; friendly (or neutral) foreign states or individuals; unfriendly foreign states or individuals; courts and judges; and objective conditions or events without clearly identifiable human actors (natural disasters, economic statistics, etc.). Again, the court source was discarded.

Reported statements or actions by a specified sources were examined over the time interval of each case, providing measurements of aggregate media content for each source on each policy issue. These aggregate source measurements, along with the level of opinion at T1, comprise the independent variables. Each news "message" was coded for relevance[3] to the policy question and the pro-con direction of intended impact of the item in relation to the most prominent policy alternative mentioned in the opinion item.

Pro-con direction was coded on a five-point scale with "clearly pro," "probably pro," "uncertain or neutral," "probably con," and "clearly con" in relation to the main policy alternative. For each type of news source the numerical values of pro-con codes (which ranged from +2 to -2, 0 neutral) were summed and averaged to provide measures of total and average directional thrust of the news from

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[3] That is, degree of relevance to the particular policy question (indirectly relevant, relevant, or highly relevant).

each source. These sums of directional codes prior to T1 and between T1 and T2 constitute the main independent variables.[4] The analysis is based only on those source stories deemed to be "relevant" or "highly relevant" to the particular opinion item.

The principal mode of data analysis was ordinary least squares regression analysis. This research estimates the impact of each news source (or all sources taken together), along with opinion levels at T1, upon the level of public opinion at T2. Dummy variables were used to compare and contrast results in the foreign and domestic policy arenas. Other manipulations were also undertaken, such as an examination of the data while controlling for the overall level of presidential popularity.

The direct result of the pursuing the above research, again, is an estimation of the impact of various actors or news "sources" on public opinion concerning policy issues. We are also especially interested in learning about public information concerning foreign policy. Some basic descriptive statistical techniques were useful here. For example, how many news stories were there on each issue?

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[4] For the television data Page, et al, performed some reliability analysis, with Dempsey and Shapiro coding cases independently. Their intercoder reliability coefficients for the variables code were in the range of .7 to .8. The two authors never disagreed by more than one unit for the five point scale of pro-con scores.

Was the public inundated with information on particular issues and deprived on others? Does the quantity of information vary with the type of issue? What type of sources, if any, dominate the foreign policy news?

Chapter Three

The Media and Foreign Policy: Whose Voices are Heard?

Before we turn to estimates of the impacts of specific actors on public opinion, it may be helpful to make a few observations about the frequency of news from various sources. While these descriptive statistics offer little insight into deeper, underlying notions of the quality of the debate (that is, what was actually being said, how news was framed, the length of the message, how audiences were prompted, and so on), the overall magnitudes of particular impacts is clearly influenced by how much access an actor has to the media. These frequencies, or relative shares of total coverage that each actor receives, can tell us something about the nature of foreign policy debate.

As we can see from Table 1, the president -- and even more so administration officials and fellow partisans -- had loud voices in foreign policy news, both in the newspaper and on television. Together they accounted for almost half of all foreign policy news items, in both the television (46.9%) and newspaper (46.7%) data sets. This, of course, is consistent with the familiar finding in communications research that official sources tend to dominate the news

(Sigal, 1973; Gans, 1979; Bennett, 1988). Note also that the proportion of news emanating from official sources is virtually identical in the two data sets.

Opposition stories, on the other hand, accounted for about the same percentage of stories as did the president alone, but much less than the administration of the elected executive. The administration wields a heavy hand in foreign policy news. Interestingly, the opposition gets much more attention on television than in print.[1] This falls directly into line with research which has concluded that television is less dominated by official sources (see Entman, 1991).

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[1] Significance testing with proportions in examining these marginals shows that all the differences discussed are indeed highly statistically significant. The test statistic used here was

$$Z(P_{tv}-P_{nyt}) = \frac{P_{tv} - P_{nyt}}{\sqrt{\frac{P_{tv}Q_{tv}}{N_{tv}} + \frac{P_{nyt}Q_{nyt}}{N_{nyt}}}}$$

where P = proportion of particular actor stories

Q = 1 - P

N = total stories

Table 1: Foreign Policy Frequencies

	Television News	New York Times
Source		
President	13.9% (368)	9.5% (82)
Administration	33.0 (873)	37.2 (321)
Opposition	13.6 (360)	7.5 (65)
Interest groups	12.0 (317)	6.9 (59)
Commentary	3.3 (86)	13.0 (112)
Experts	1.2 (31)	4.3 (37)
Events	1.5 (39)	.8 (7)
Foreign-friendly	15.5 (410)	15.2 (131)
Foreign-unfriendly	6.1 (163)	5.6 (48)
Courts	.1 (3)	0 (0)
	100% (2,650)	100% (862)

It is not surprising that news organizations rely heavily on foreign sources for news concerning international events. In both the television and newspaper data, over 20% of foreign policy news could be attributed to foreign actors and governments. This reliance is especially striking in the case of "friendly" foreign governments.

Interest groups evidently do not confine themselves to domestic matters. News stories from interest groups and concerning foreign policy issues were fairly numerous, especially on television (12.0%).

Events proved to be a meager category, accounting for a very small percentage (about 1%) of either television or newspaper foreign policy news.[2] This might seem disturbing if it indicates that the overall media coverage of foreign events is simply poor. As we will see later, this is in stark contrast to coverage of domestic "events." Yet, we must also recognize that most of what the media reports about foreign policy events usually involve either statements or actions from foreign countries (that is, "foreign" sources), or reactions to events by the administration, the opposition, and the like. It may simply be that events "seldom speak directly and unambiguously to the public; rather they affect public opinion mostly through the interpretations and reactions of U.S. elites" (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey, 1987, p. 38).

Stories from experts were relatively infrequent (1.2% on television, 4.3% in the Times), though we will see later that this source is rather potent. Media commentary was more frequent in the newspaper (13.0%) than on television, where it accounted for only a very small percentage (3.3%) of news stories. Yet, again, we will see that this is a

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Significance testing of observed differences between foreign and domestic policy arenas was similarly calculated. I am indebted to Tom Severini, Department of Statistics, Northwestern University, for his guidance here.

[2] Examples of a foreign event include world economic statistics and non-attributable terrorist acts.

powerful influence on public opinion concerning foreign policy issues.

As noted, the court source had virtually nothing to say about foreign policy. This source will not be considered an important one in our examination of foreign policy opinions.

Whose Voices are Heard?: Foreign vs. Domestic Issues

Does the public receive different messages about different types of issues? Do different news sources fare better in domestic matters than in the foreign policy debate? Table 2 depicts the contrast in media content between domestic and international issues. (This brief treatment makes a sharp foreign-domestic distinction, despite evidence that these issues may become intertwined. In general there was sufficient evidence concerning the type of issue as to facilitate a rather straightforward classification. Defense spending is included in the foreign policy issue area.

In general, official sources continue to dominate, regardless of policy type. While New York Times coverage of official sources was fairly consistent across policy type, the television data show that the president, his administration, and the opposition get more foreign policy coverage on television than they do on domestic issues.

Interest groups get a higher proportion of television coverage on domestic issues (15.8%) than on foreign policy issues (12.0%). This may simply be a function of heightened special interest attention to domestic concerns, rather than media biases, structural or otherwise.

Table 2: News Content/Foreign and Domestic-Television News

Source	Domestic Issues	Foreign Issues	Totals
President	8.2% (420)	13.9% (368)	10.2%(788)
Administration	27.7 (1410)	33.0 (873)	29.5 (2283)
Opposition	11.5 (584)	13.6 (360)	12.2 (944)
Interest Groups	15.8 (801)	12.0 (317)	14.4 (1118)
Commentary	2.9 (149)	3.3 (86)	3.0 (235)
Experts	1.2 (60)	1.2 (31)	1.2 (91)
Events	14.6 (746)	1.5 (39)	10.1 (785)
Foreign-friendly	10.8 (550)	15.5 (410)	12.4 (960)
Foreign-unfriendly	6.0 (306)	6.2 (163)	6.1 (469)
Courts	1.4 (73)	.1 (3)	1.0 (76)
	100% (5,099)	100% (2,650)	100% (7,749)

New York Times

Source	Domestic Issues		Foreign Issues		Totals	
President	10.5%	(108)	9.5%	(82)	10.0%	(190)
Administration	37.8	(388)	37.3	(321)	37.4	(709)
Opposition	9.7	(99)	7.5	(65)	8.6	(164)
Interest Groups	19.4	(199)	6.8	(59)	13.6	(258)
Commentary	8.6	(88)	13.0	(112)	10.5	(200)
Experts	4.5	(46)	4.3	(37)	4.4	(83)
Events	6.0	(62)	.8	(7)	3.6	(69)
Foreign-friendly	3.8	(39)	15.2	(131)	9.0	(170)
Foreign-unfriendly	0	(0)	5.6	(48)	2.5	(48)
Courts	.7	(7)	0	(0)	.4	(7)
	100%	(1,036)	100%	(862)	100%	(1,898)

As expected, media reliance on foreign sources for foreign policy news is obviously greater than is the case in American domestic affairs. Interestingly, though, foreign sources accounted for almost 17% of all television news items concerning domestic issues! Foreign sources were relied upon heavily in news concerning immigration laws, abortion, handguns, and the rationing of gasoline.

Note also that there is a great deal of coverage of domestic events information. This would seem to reinforce the idea that the media pay little attention to international "events," such as world economic conditions

and so forth, but pay more attention to domestic concerns. This might also call into question our earlier predictions that events have little impact on their own. Yet, as we will see later, despite the large number of domestic event items, events rarely speak for themselves.

Reliance on experts is fairly consistent (and low -- about 1.0% for television, 4.0% for the Times) across the board, regardless of medium or policy type. Commentators seem to have more say on foreign policy issues than in domestic concerns. Finally, as we might expect, the courts have more to say about domestic issues than foreign, but have a very slight voice in any case.

New York Times versus Television

Finally, we might look at these frequencies with an eye toward examining similarities and differences between the print and electronic media, keeping in mind the controversy mentioned earlier concerning the representativeness of the Times. Table 2 provides the entire news content picture, with marginal totals provided for issue type as well as totals.

We can see that in general the coverage of presidential messages is quite consistent across the media. It is interesting to note, however, that the administration seems to get more play in the Times (over 37%) than on television

(less than 30%). Similarly, the opposition party gets (relatively) much less print coverage (less than 9%) than television "time" (over 12%). In sum, the president and his partisans have an overwhelming advantage across the media. The opposition is at a severe disadvantage, and even more so in print. Television is much more hospitable to the opposition, though it still heavily emphasizes administration stories.

Official sources get even more television exposure on foreign policy issues, but so does the opposition. In print, there appears to be very little difference across issue type in the "amount" of exposure that the president, his administration, and the opposition receive. (In fact, all these sources seem to have more to say about domestic issues in print than international issues).

As we have seen, both television and the New York Times rely fairly heavily on foreign news sources, but the emphasis is clearly on foreign policy issues. There is some tendency for television news to provide more foreign perspectives on American domestic issues than does print.

If we disregard issue type, interest groups generally seem to get a great deal of coverage (around 15%). Yet the emphasis is on domestic issues, as mentioned earlier. It is interesting, however, that interest groups focusing on

foreign policy do seem to get a fairly heavy treatment on television (12%), but not in the Times (less than 7%).

Events are covered more heavily on television, but both media focus their coverage on domestic events, rather than foreign events. Again, it would seem that the impacts of events might be indirect, mediated through the reactions and interpretations of U.S. leaders and elites as transmitted by the mass media. Also, and similarly, the smaller figures for events coverage in the New York Times (vice television) may be due to the differing natures of these media coverage. For example, while domestic economic indicators may be presented fairly quickly and starkly on television (and may be coded as an event), these same indicators may be reported along with an in-depth analysis in a newspaper (and perhaps coded as expert, etc.). If indeed newspaper coverage is more "analytic" (see Anastaplo, 1974) than television, events may be masked or overwhelmed by other sources who interpret these events.

Times commentary generally comprises a much larger proportion of overall news content than does television commentary. Further, while television commentary is evenly distributed across issue type, print commentary is skewed toward foreign policy issues.

Experts, on the other hand, are not relied upon for a great deal of news, neither by the print media nor by

television. Also, issue area seems to have no impact at all on whether expert testimony is deemed newsworthy. Again, as we will see later, the paucity of expert news does not translate into a lack of expert impact.

What we see, then, is news presentation that is dominated by official sources. As Hallin, et al, (1990) point out, journalists may have a standard response -- isn't our job to report what government is doing? (p. 13). Government officials are, of course, "in the know." Nevertheless, the extent of this official dominance does raise some serious questions about the quality of journalism.

It is important here to reemphasize the point that this analysis is based on a large and diverse set of cases. This gives us some confidence that these data are <u>representative</u> of the actual policy reality that exists. We have identified only minor differences in coverage based on policy issue and based on media type. In general, we have a consistent picture of media content. As we have noted earlier, however, we must be careful to avoid immediate conclusions about the <u>quality</u> or <u>directional thrust</u> of foreign policy information and about the actual impacts that these news sources may have on public opinion. Now let us turn our attention to a more rigorous analysis of media impacts.

Chapter Four

Media Impacts on Policy Opinions: General Results

Despite the fundamental assumption that it is extremely important to distinguish between various sources of policy news, it may be useful for a moment to examine the effects upon public opinion of all news sources added together. The expectation here is that we may learn something about the general form of the relationships of pre-T1 news, T1-T2 news, the level of opinion at T1 and the level of opinion at T2.

One way to proceed here is to attempt to replicate the results of Page, et al, (1987) concerning the impact of television news content on levels of public opinion. Below is a regression of level of opinion at T2 (the percentage of respondents at time T2 who supported the most prominent alternative offered in the survey question) upon (a) the level of opinion at T1, (b) the total sum of pro-con scores in the two months before T1, and (c) the total pro-con sum in the period between T1 and T2.

Table 3: Total TV News Content and Opinion Change

Variable	Coefficient
Opinion at T1	0.95** (0.04)
TV news content for two months pre-T1	-0.32** (0.08)
TV news content between T1 and T2	0.10 (0.06)
Constant	1.04 (0.43)

R^2=.88 Adj R^2=.87 N=80

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from a regression of the percentage level of opinion at the time of the second (T2) survey on the level of opinion at T1 and the total media content variables (sums of pro-con scores) for all 80 cases. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

The results in Table 3 are virtually identical to those achieved by Page, et al.[1] We can see that the level of opinion at T1 is a very strong predictor of the level at T2. During short periods of time, then, at least periods of a few months, aggregate public opinion appears to be quite

[1] Thus my reconstruction of the Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987 data and results is faithful to the original research.

stable. In fact, in these cases the average magnitude of change was only about 5 percentage points.

One particularly interesting finding of Page, et al, and confirmed here is the substantial negative effect that pre-T1 news appears to have upon opinion at T2. As Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey noted "it follows directly from our point that opinion change should depend upon a discrepancy or change in media content, given that opinion change is partly temporary" (1987, p. 28).

> If, for example, the TV news for several months before T1 was full of stories favorable toward a particular policy, so that opinion moved strongly in a pro direction before T1, and if the media were then utterly silent about the policy between T1 and T2, we would expect support for the policy to drop off as people forgot about or discounted the news. Thus opinion at T2 would be negatively related to media content before T1 (emphasis added). If the discrepancy process worked in a particularly simple fashion (e.g., if all opinion changes were temporary and lasted exactly one period), we would find identical coefficients of opposite sign on corresponding pre-T1 and T1-T2 media variables, and we could use media content change scores to predict opinion change (pp. 28-29).

As these researchers point out, however, the reality of the situation is hardly so simple. Certainly media effects may be temporary, but some may last longer than others. Further, some effects may be lagged or delayed. These two-point time series, however, preclude a thorough examination of possible lag and decay rates (see Erbring, 1975, MacKuen, 1983, and Fan, 1984, for examples of more sophisticated

efforts to examine delayed effects based on longer time series analyses).[2]

Again, the entire effort above is complicated by the fact that no distinction is made between various news sources, which probably have varied impacts and delayed effects. This problem is "solved" below with the disaggregation of media sources.

Another problem (insoluble in this effort) is the fact that the T1-T2 periods examined differ in length from issue to issue and do not always correspond to the two-month pre-T1 period.

Another interesting phenomenon of polling may also be closely related to the negative coefficient for pre-T1 news. Page and his collaborators (1983b, 1984) have also posited a "falling-off" effect in polls:

> It appears that pollsters frequently decide to ask survey questions about a particular policy alternative (often phrased as the first or "pro" alternative in the question) when that alternative is a lively topic in the media and public discussion. Thus an initial poll at T1 may reveal high public support for a newly publicized policy idea. Then those initial effects fade, and news coverage may tend to become more mixed, with doubts and opposition beginning to be heard. By the time of a second survey at T2, public support tends to drop a bit (Page, et al, 1987, p. 29).

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[2] Given the appropriate data, full time series analysis could sort out lags and temporary effects. Unfortunately these data involve only two time points and unequal spacing of the T1-T2 intervals.

Indeed, in this data set there is a small negative opinion change (about 2.7 percentage points) on the average between T1 and T2.

Another interesting finding here is the relatively minor impact of gross, aggregated T1-T2 news content. Lag and falling-off hypotheses would lead one to predict T1-T2 variables with the opposite sign to pre-T1 variables and roughly the same magnitude. But we should also note that both variable estimates are very small, supporting our general claim that a failure to distinguish among different source of news does cloud the overall picture.

If our reservations about learning anything about the fundamental forms of the relationships of news and opinion are muddied further by discrepancy, lag and falling-off hypotheses, as well as the lumping together of news sources, an examination of the New York Times data set offers little clarification. As we see in Table 4 below, we do not find a negative relationship between pre-T1 and T1-T2 news variables (nor are these estimates close to statistical significance).

Table 4: Total Newspaper Content and Opinion Change

Variables	Coefficients
Opinion at T1	0.98**
	(0.05)

Newspaper content for two months pre-T1	0.09 (0.14)
Newspaper content between T1 and T2	0.07 (0.06)
Constant	-1.11 (2.73)

R^2=.91 Adj R^2=.90 N=51

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from a regression of the percentage level of opinion at the time of the second (T2) survey on the level of opinion at T1 and the total media content variables for all 80 cases. Standard errors for b's are given in the parentheses.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Again we encounter the same limitations in examining lag and discrepancy hypotheses. We do find some support for the falling off hypothesis in this data set; in the cases examined in this data set there was again a small negative opinion change (1.6 percentage points) on the average. We also find strong support for the notion that public opinion is relatively stable over short periods of time in the coefficient of T1 opinion (b=.98). (One consequence of these apparent simple first-order autoregressive structures in levels of public opinion is that regressions using the extent of opinion change rather than the level of T2 opinion

as the dependent variable produce virtually the same coefficients for all the media content independent variables. For a direct comparison, see the regression results below and compare with those in Appendix 1, which use opinion change as the dependent variable).

Again we also see the apparent minor effects of both pre-T1 and T1-T2 aggregated news. Returning to our basic assumption, this may be due to the fact that we have not yet distinguished among different sources of news. Yet if the general hypotheses posited earlier were to hold, the overall relationships should appear similar across these data sets. As they do not, this suggests that there may indeed be significant differences in the nature and overall impacts of television and print news concerning policy. We turn now to a specific examination of the differential impacts of various actors through television and print news.

Different Actors and Differential Impacts

The purpose of this section is twofold: first, to examine the general evidence concerning the impacts of various news sources on public opinion and, second, to briefly discuss the apparent differences in overall impacts of television and Times news.

The importance of distinguishing among various news sources becomes abundantly clear in the regression results

presented below. Beginning with a re-creation of the Page, et al, results of 1987, we immediately see the dramatic effects of specific source delineation.

Table 5: Effects of TV News from Different Sources

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.46*	0.25
	(0.20)	(0.24)
Administration and Partisans	0.02	-0.08
	(0.24)	(0.13)
Opposition Party	-0.58**	0.44
	(0.21)	(0.23)
Interest Groups	-0.27	-0.37
	(0.23)	(0.21)
Events	-0.51	0.52
	(0.56)	(0.45)
Commentary	2.21	4.36**
	(1.27)	(1.08)
Experts	-0.51	3.38*
	(1.61)	(1.53)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	0.20	0.14
	(0.68)	(0.59)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.27	0.48
	(0.55)	(0.51)
Courts	-1.38	2.09*
	(2.00)	(0.96)
Other Variables		
Public opinion at T1	0.96**	
	(0.04)	

Constant	-.57 (2.51)

R^2=.93 Adj R^2=.91 N=80

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of the relevant pro-con story scores from various sources for all 80 cases. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Similarly, the regression results for the New York Times data set are also engaging. These results show the fundamental failure of the Page and Shapiro 1984 analysis of newspaper data. In that analysis of 56 cases the researchers "were surprised to find little or no effects upon public opinion...It appeared that neither presidents nor their administrations, nor any other source (emphasis added) as reported in the Times had any significant impact upon public opinion" (pp. 651-52). My improvement upon the earlier design, adding pre-T1 news, leads to quite different conclusions, as seen below in Table 6.

Table 6: Effects of Times News from Different Sources

News Sources	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.83 (0.74)	-0.36 (0.75)
Administration and Fellow Partisans	0.24 (0.44)	0.06 (0.22)
Opposition Party	-1.26 (0.90)	-0.37 (0.41)
Interest Groups	-1.13 (1.03)	0.29 (0.38)
Events	1.84 (2.44)	0.77 (1.61)
Commentary	-1.29 (0.98)	0.85* (0.42)
Experts	-0.37 (1.76)	1.76* (0.80)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	1.30 (0.99)	-0.87 (0.74)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.03 (1.20)	-1.19 (1.51)
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	1.06** (0.06)	
Constant	-5.12 (3.32)	

R^2=.94 Adj R^2=.90 N=51

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regressions of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums

of the relevant pro-con news story scores for all 51 cases. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

In both of the above we see clearly that news from different sources has effects of different magnitudes and even different directions. We have already briefly alluded to some possible interpretations of the pre-T1 variables. Here we will treat these pre-T1 variables as controls and focus on the more easily comprehended coefficients in the second column (T1-T2), which indicate how much impact news from each source between the two surveys had upon changes in opinion from the first survey to the second.

The most striking result is the apparent impact of both news commentary and experts in both of these data sets.

Commentary

In television news commentary a single "probably pro" story is associated with over four percentage points of opinion change. This figure (which differs significantly from zero at the .01 level even with the large number of independent variables) is very substantial indeed, especially considering the general stability of collective

policy preferences demonstrated earlier. The impact of news commentary was also seen in the newspaper data set, where a single "probably pro" story resulted in almost a full one percent change in public opinion. This was also statistically significant to the .05 level.

We must temper these findings with a certain degree of skepticism, however. As noted in the introduction, there could be a number of reciprocal relationships, such as audience-seeking, at work here. As mentioned, commentators' remarks may serve as indicators of elite or public consensus (Hallin, 1984; McClosky and Zaller, 1984). Yet the correlations of specific source messages across pre-T1 to T2 appear to show that commentary at time T2 is virtually unrelated to public opinion at T1 (Pearson's correlation coefficient r=-0.07 in the Times data, r=-0.09 in the television data). Commentators, at least in the medium-term, do not appear to be particularly concerned with audience-seeking, nor do the media simply choose commentators who say what the public wants to here.

Still, commentators may be perceived by the public as reflecting a specific climate of opinion or emerging national consensus on an issue, "which may weigh heavily with citizens as they form their own opinions" (Page, et al, 1987, p. 35. See Lippmann, 1922). Further, we have also noted that reliance on statements alone in this analysis may

undercut deeper notions of the quality of information presented and ignore certain aspects of information framing, such as choice of visual footage, length, camera angle, etc. However, the general results here seem to indicate that further investigation into the role of news commentators is warranted. There appears to be some genuine influence of commentary on public opinion.

Perhaps more importantly, there is considerable evidence that commentary is influenced by other sources of news. Table 7 below is a regression of government elite actor (president, administration, and opposition) messages prior to T1 onto T1-T2 commentary in both data sets.

Table 7: Effects of Elite Actors on News Commentary

News Source (Pre-T1)	TV Commentary (T1-T2)	*Times* Editorials (T1-T2)
President	0.02	0.26
	(0.02)	(0.42)
Administration and Fellow Partisans	-0.02	0.50**
	(0.02)	(0.16)
Opposition Party	0.04	0.34
	(0.02)	(0.51)
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	0.01	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.03)
Constant	0.37	1.87
	(0.29)	(1.99)

R^2=	.05	.22
Adj R^2=	.01	.15
N=	80	51

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regressions of T1-T2 news commentary on elite messages prior to T1 and public opinion at T1 for both data sets. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

First we see that television commentary appears to be free from direct partisan and official elite influence. This is in line with those who would claim television is "freer" or "more loosely controlled" than print. For example, Entman's study of the KAL and Iran Air incidents led him to conclude that television offered a higher percentage of negative judgments of the U.S. than did the print media. This finding, he says, does suggest TV might enjoy somewhat greater autonomy..." (1991, p. 26). Similarly, and as expected, in both data sets news commentary displays little tendency toward audience-seeking (b=-0.01 for television, b=-0.03 for Times).

Most interesting, however, is the apparent impact of the administration on New York Times commentary (b=0.50,

standard error 0.16).[3] This is a highly significant relationship which provides a great deal of support for hegemonic theories of elite influence. In short, New York Times editorials appear to be driven, at least in the medium-term, by the administration position on policy issues.

Experts

The most striking result in our overall examination of the newspaper data is the potency of experts. One "probably pro" expert news story in the New York Times is associated with almost two percentage points of opinion change, significant to the .05 level. The impact of experts in television news is even more astonishing: a single "probably pro" expert story is estimated to produce almost three and a half percentage points of opinion change, also significant to the .05 level. This suggests that the public is very accepting of expertise on policy matters provided through the mass media. If it is true, as McCloskey (1990) has claimed, that "Americans say they don't hold much with experts" (p. 111), then these results may show that the public is self-deluded. It is likely that the public does

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[3] This relationship was suggested by an observed Pearson's correlation coefficient of r=0.44 between pre-T1 administration Times messages and T1-T2 Times editorials.

place a great deal of faith in experts. The reasons for and implications of this trust are numerous.[4]

There are several possible reasons for the apparent impact of "experts." Perceptions of non-partisanship may enhance the credibility of these experts. Certainly in complex matters where technical expertise and experience are seen as important to deliberation on policy alternatives, the public may defer to these experts.

Again, however, we must recognize the possible existence of reciprocal processes. The audience-seeking media may decide who is an expert precisely because of the popularity of his views. On the other hand, it seems possible that the views of "experts" could be relatively impervious to public opinion.

> ...experts do not face immediate electoral pressures--that is, public attitudes may ultimately influence who are considered experts and what their basic values are, but once established, experts are less likely than presidents or other elected officials to bend quickly with the winds of opinion (Page, et al, 1987, pp. 35-36)

The autonomy of experts is supported by some of the analyses undertaken here. First, an examination of the

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[4] See Beckwith (1972) for a rather compelling argument, foreseeing a time when present-day modernized democracies will evolve into a government ruled by experts chosen by experts. Beckwith also presents summaries of the arguments against government by experts and a detailed review of relevant earlier doctrines.

descriptive statistics concerning expert news shows that within a number of cases in both data sets expert testimony demonstrates relatively high standard deviation.[5] This indicates that there are a number of conflicting expert stories within particular cases.

Secondly, an examination of the correlations of expert news at T2 with other pre-T1 variables shows little relationship with any other news source. This is also consistent across both data sets.[6]

Further, Table 8 shows the regression of expert news between T1 and T2 onto elite news (president, administration, and opposition) prior to T1 and public opinion at T1.

Table 8: Effects of Elite Actors on Experts

News Source (Pre-T1)	TV Expert News (T1-T2)	*Times* Expert News (T1-T2)
President	-0.04*	0.07
	(0.02)	(0.15)

[5] In some cases as high as 2.12 -- this is possible because the statistical package used in this analysis computes an unbiased sample standard deviation rather than a conventional standard deviation.

[6] The logic here is that official elites may drive expert testimony, either directly, through the close contacts of experts and government officials, or more indirectly, through government influence (shared values, etc.) on media moguls and corporate elites.

Administration and Partisans	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.05)
Opposition Party	0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.18)
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.28 (0.23)	0.78 (0.68)
R^2=	.13	.04
Adj R^2=	.09	-.05
N=	80	51

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of T1-T2 expert news on opinion at T1 and pre-T1 elite news for both data sets. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Particularly interesting is the clear and statistically significant independence of television experts with regard to the president. Experts appear, then, to operate independently of official elite news drivers.

Finally, an examination of the 20 cases common to both the Times and television data sets showed no correlations between the reported positions of experts at any time and those of any other news source. Interestingly, experts, like commentators, do not even appear to be related to public opinion; audience-seeking arguments are not supported

in this analysis. Experts appear to by highly autonomous and independent; television and newspaper policy news appears to be characterized by "expert pluralism."

In the television data set we can identify seven cases where experts were particularly active. In five of the seven (71 percent) the expert testimony was in sum contrary to the presidential/administration policy position. These included a number of superpower relations issues, especially arms control, as well as Reagan's drive to increase defense spending. Experts generally fell into line with the administration on the AWACs sale to Saudi Arabia and the Panama Canal treaties. The Times reported expert testimony heavily when there appeared to be a broad general consensus, as in many Vietnam cases and in the question of support for England in the early stages of WWII.

It seems clear that the role of experts in public policy debate is worth a good deal more attention. We have already noted some of the potential implications for democratic theory of the existence of powerful and influential individual actors. Who are these experts? What do they say? When are they particularly potent drivers of policy opinions and when are they not?

A brief examination of some specific cases in these data sets confirms notions of some expert pluralism. In

many of the foreign policy cases a range of contending expert viewpoints were presented.

Although experts were generally opposed to SALT II in the debate during 1979, there was some expert dissensus. On NBC in June the former chief of Air Force intelligence General George Keegan stated simply that the treaty could not be verified. Other defense experts pointed to the lack of verification capabilities due to the loss of Iranian spy bases. Yet in the same broadcast former CIA official, Herbert Scoville, noted that there were several ways to verify the treaty, including the use of spy planes along the USSR border. Two days later on NBC a representative of the Federation of American Scientists,[7] Jeremy Stone, outlined the importance and viability of SALT II. On July 12 a former SALT negotiator, Ed Rowney, and Paul Nitze of the Committee on Present Danger (and also a former deputy secretary of defense) were shown on all three networks condemning SALT II as a threat to national security. In sum, expert testimony in the media appeared to be somewhat diverse, though ultimately opposed to the administration position.

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[7] This group seems to be quite active. Hallin, et al, (1990) found John Pike of the same Federation to be the only individual nongovernmental source in the top 5% of named individuals cited in their study of seven newspapers' coverage of national security issues in 1988 (p. 6).

Other cases examined demonstrated some expert pluralism. New items concerning the question of the need to relax tensions with the Soviet Union were tracked from April to June, 1982. One specific aspect of this debate involved a "refinement" of the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) concept and the Reagan administration's proposed move toward a counterforce doctrine. The head of the independent non-profit Center for Defense Information, Gene R. La Rocque (also a retired U.S. Navy admiral) spoke out strongly on national television criticizing this new policy. Similarly, a group including McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Gerard Smith, and Robert McNamara criticized NATO strategy and urged Reagan to adopt a no-first-strike position. Meanwhile, the GAO, considered here to be an independent "expert" organization rather than a dependent arm of the administration was urging the Pentagon to proceed with space-based laser weapon systems.

As mentioned, expert opinion is sometimes portrayed as one-sided. There were, as with all these cases, few expert stories on national news concerning the 1981 debate over the Reagan administration's plan to sell AWACs aircraft to Saudi Arabia, and little balance was presented. Pro-Israel retired USAF General George Keegan "supported" the sale, since this would give the Israelis an excuse to destroy it (this convoluted argument on ABC in September 1981 may

actually have shown both sides of the debate). A group of former U.S. policy officials, including Harold Brown, Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, Elliot Richardson, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Walt Rostow supported the sale more clearly on national news on all three major networks in October. Yet in the same broadcasts, opposing statements by Avraham Weiss, a spokesman for the National Anti-AWACs Committee, were also presented.

In the debate over national defense spending from March 1974 to January 1975 few expert stories aired, all former defense officials criticizing the budget as bloated and over-inflated. Few expert opinions were offered on television news from August 1977 to January 1978 concerning the proposal to give Panama control of the Panama Canal; all were supportive. On the domestic side, there were few instances of expert testimony on network news concerning the death penalty during the period examined here; all were strongly negative. Similarly, there was an onslaught of negative expert stories in the New York Times concerning increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam in late 1969; no dissenting testimony was offered. The Times also printed very few expert stories in late 1971 concerning increases Soviet involvement in the Middle East to promote peace; all were overwhelmingly positive.

The brief vignettes above allow us to make a number of points. First, as we have already seen, there are very few expert stories, though each on appears to be potent. Second, there appears often to be some balance in expert testimony; there is a degree of expert pluralism. Third, we can see a tremendous reliance on ex-government officials to give expert testimony. This is, of course, natural in foreign affairs. Just as it was logical for CNN to rely during the Gulf War on former military strategists, coverage of expert debate on foreign policy depends heavily on those who have been involved in foreign policymaking.[8]

Expert testimony on domestic issues is also heavily influenced by former government officials, but there appears to be a more independent expert influence. One example, that of tax cut debate from June to November 1982, showed reporting on the opinions of former assistant secretary of the Treasury Paul Craig Roberts, but also those of economists Laurence Chimetrine, a spokesman for Chase Econometrics, and Joseph Pechman. Their opinions varied widely in direction and tone. An examination of the busing issue in late 1976 also shows a diversity of expert opinion.

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[8] Interestingly, Hallin, et al, (1990) found that only 3.4 percent of all identifiable citations were attributable to former government sources.

In sum, there does appear to be some expert pluralism in the media. Although there are few expert stories, they are apparently potent and relatively diverse. Experts may also at times tend to agree on policy recommendations. Yet even when experts are in agreement, there appears to be a healthy debate, with the networks airing contending positions offered by special interest groups and governmental sources. Expert testimony does appear to be dominated by former government officials, though this is less so in domestic policy.

While we have noted this diversity of positions, the clear relationship of experts to the U.S. state apparatus and those cases which do not demonstrate diversity should make us wary of carrying these notions of expert pluralism too far. Entman (1991) has noted that elites can and do use components of the hegemonic ideology to legitimize policies that contradict each other. Yet, he continues, opposition to state policy (read the president) rarely questions the validity of the system and its core or hegemonic ideology (p.3). That is, diversity may be more tactical than it is strategic.[9] Experts may often claim to be positive as opposed to normative, but "concealing the ethical burden under a cloak of science is the master more of expertise"

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[9] Also see Page (1978) pp. 105-106.

(McCloskey, 1990, p. 139). Finally, we have seen little about just what influences the media's choice of experts.

The President and his Administration

One of the most puzzling results of this analysis may be the apparent ineffectuality of both the president and his administration and other partisan supporters. There can be no doubt that one of our strongest expectations would be the potency of elected officials in driving public opinions about policy. Yet in neither data set did the president or his administration help to explain any significant amount of variation in public opinion.

As Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987) noted, the actual effectiveness of presidential messages may be obscured here by an average figure which combines the effects of some popular presidents with those of some very unpopular presidents. Previous research has indicated that popular presidents in fact have substantial effects on public opinion, while unpopular presidents have virtually no effect at all (Page and Shapiro, 1984; Jordan and Page, 1991).

Furthermore, the above analysis depends on a particular notion of "effect", namely the impact of a single news story. As we saw in the discussion of news story source frequencies, the number of stories from different sources varies enormously. Many news stories, each having a small

effect, could add up to a substantial impact. This appears to be the case with the president and the administration.

Again we must also recognize the potential of reciprocal influences.[10] Certainly there may be times when rather than lead the public, presidents may adopt stances in reaction to perceived or anticipated public preferences.

Despite the probability of reciprocal influences, it does seem clear that there are instances in which the president wields significant weight in driving public opinion. A brief treatment of presidential impacts on the public's policy preferences will be offered in Chapters Six and Seven.

The Opposition

The opposition party seemed to have some positive effect in the television data set, although not quite significant at the .05 level. We would expect that opposition leaders are seen as serious figures who have some bipartisan credibility and can move public opinion. But this power to persuade was not apparent in the New York Times data set.

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[10] Reciprocal arguments, however, point toward overstatement of specific source effects; these results certainly do not show exaggerated presidential influence.

We must recognize again that the opposition party is sprinkled with a variety of actors and positions which may tend to negate each other in this overall regression. In looking at specific cases in these two data sets, for example, the opposition was particularly in line with public opinion shifts in attitudes toward the Vietnam conflict, tax policies, and general ideas about the efficacy of a grain embargo against the Soviet Union. The opposition party was, however, strikingly unsuccessful in their opposition to the AWACS sales to Saudi Arabia in 1981. The relationship between the opposition party, the administration, and the president will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

Events

The apparent lack of direct impacts on public opinion by objective events posited by Page, et al, is also confirmed in our further examination of the New York Times data. This does not mean that events do not matter to the public; examination of some specific cases indicates that certain types of events may indeed have tangible impacts. Changes in the consumer price index or unemployment rates, for example, do correlate with certain opinion shifts concerning economic policy proposals. The main point to be made here is that events are probably interpreted and reacted to by other news source actors, such as political

leaders, commentators, and experts. The impact of events, then, is indirect, mediated by other actors and transmitted through the mass media.

Interest Groups

Interest groups likewise appear to have little if any net influence on shifts in public opinions about policy preferences. The biggest problem here, of course, is that we have failed to adequately distinguish between the various groups who participate in public debate. Two different interest groups, for example, may offer starkly contrasting views on a particular issue. Taken together, these conflicting views cancel each other out. Further, the lack of distinction among issues also clouds the picture.

A brief examination of specific cases shows that certain groups may have positive impacts in certain issue areas, while others may not. Relatively high standard deviations of message direction within cases supports the notion of diversity within the interest group category.[11] Other researchers have pointed out that demonstrators and protestors are not generally well-received by the U.S. public (Page, et al, 1987; Graber, 1989). In our data sets

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[11] Unbiased sample standard deviations ranged as high as 2.83 on our four-point scale!

we can see this clearly in the case of Vietnam War protestors from 1969 to 1970.

Other differences in interest group effectiveness seem to depend on the public perception of the goals of the organization.

> In general, the public apparently tends to be uninfluenced (or negatively influenced) by the positions of groups whose interests are perceived to be selfish or narrow, while it responds more favorably to groups and individuals thought to be concerned with broadly defined public interests (Page, et al, 1987, p. 37).

Indeed, in our data sets there was evidence of striking failures of specific interest groups, such as in the case of electric company lobby efforts to influence opinion on energy costs.

The public does tend to respond well to groups which pursue broad public interests, such as in our cases of gasoline price freezes, pricing controls, and tax matters. Groups which pursued goals in the overall public interest, however, sometimes failed to persuade if their message was too strong, especially if it involved excessive federal government intervention and regulation.

The overall impacts of interest groups, then, appear to be negligible, but specific impacts may be masked by the variety of conflicting groups and a diverse set of issues. We must also recognize the possibility of indirect effects,

such as interest group contributions to politicians or to the experts they may subsidize.[12]

Foreign News

As predicted earlier, the American public appears to pay little if any attention to foreign news sources. The impact of foreign actors appears to be negligible (as in the case of the television data) or even negative (as in the New York Times data). Strangely, there does not appear to be any significant difference between foreign news from friendly or neutral sources and that from more hostile countries.

Looking at specific cases, though, does show some issues where foreign news was somewhat influential. Most foreign news concerning American involvement in Vietnam ran in parallel with changes in U.S. public opinion, although there were fundamental differences in ideas about the timing and conditions of the American withdrawal. There were disagreements over the general issue of relaxing tensions with the Soviet Union and pursuing arms control agreements (especially SALT II) at the time of these surveys. Finally, an overwhelming discrepancy was found between changes in

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[12] Interest group messages prior to T1, however, are virtually unrelated to T1-T2 expert messages or T1-T2 official elite source news.

American opinion and foreign news stories about the Middle East. Our allies, for example, advocated maintaining open access to oil at all costs, including three strategies which the U.S. public found repugnant: using American troops, allowing the Soviet Union to become more actively involved in the Middle East peace process, and appeasing the Arabs by cutting of aid to Israel. These observations concerning the Middle East, of course, have since been overcome by events, with the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the subsequent massive U.S. military response and defeat of the Baghdad regime.

The regressions discussed above point out that different actors have differential impacts, both in magnitude and direction. Consistent in both data sets, however, is the stability of policy opinions, as evidenced by the tremendous impact of T1 opinion: the percentage of the population supporting a particular policy at a given time is a strong predictor of the percentage supporting it at a later time. As mentioned earlier, these autoregressive structures do give us confidence that the results based on level of opinion can be equally well interpreted as effects on opinion change. The results of regression of various news sources on opinion change as the dependent variable shown in Appendix 1 confirm this. But the results in

Appendix 1 also show a striking difference in the effectiveness of television news when compared with the New York Times.

Television and the Times: Differential Impacts

As is quite clear in Appendix 1, television appears to be a somewhat more powerful force in influencing public opinion than is the New York Times. Analysis with opinion change as the dependent variable shows television news accounting for a substantial portion (about half) of the variance (R^2=.54; adjusted R^2=.39). Similar analysis with the New York Times data shows a notable difference (R^2=.43; adjusted R^2=.04). Of course, the small adjusted R^2 here is also a function of the smaller number of cases in the newspaper data. Nevertheless, the evidence supports the notion that television is a more powerful instrument for driving public opinion than is the Times.

The relative potency of print and electronic media is a matter of some considerable debate. Graber (1989), among others, has pointed out the difficulty in disentangling media information. Cohen (1963) saw radio and television as indistinguishable from newspaper reporting. Distinguishing between various media is difficult because they often are reporting the same news. Moreover, they are connected. Television journalists certainly take cues and learn of

"newsworthy" events from wire services. And, as Epstein (1974) has pointed out, the print medium is in competition with television and the press may at times emulate and take cues from television (see also Anastaplo, 1974).[13] Hegemonic theorists, of course, would see virtually no differences in news content and agenda building between press and television, since they maintain that the biases and interests of the dominant class structurally determine news selection and content. Differences in television and Times news pose problems for hegemonic theses. As Entman (1991) says

> the finding that television differs from print in its relation to state authority, while highly tentative at this stage, nonetheless suggests contradictions and complexities in hegemonic theory, and in the ideological functioning of the media (p. 29).

It does seem clear that television is a dominant force in American society. As Graber claims,

> Television is the primary source of news and entertainment for the average American. It is also the most trusted (1989, p. 3).

Arguments for the supremacy of television are persuasive. Television is particularly effective in transmitting

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[13] Epstein also finds, however, that there are few exclusive disclosures in film stories on network television. For example, he says, "of the more than seven hundred film stories on NBC Evening News between September 1968 and January 1969, only three stories which were exclusively reported on that program were subsequently reported by the New York Times" (p. 34).

emotional appeals (Weaver, 1975; Graber, 1989, Anastaplo, 1974) Television, depending as it does on visual impacts, helps to create illusions of audience participation and commentator omniscience. Regardless of arguments which see television as superficial and print as more informative and analytic, television may have a major impact on what Americans think. Little wonder that our results above indicate that television news has a greater impact on public opinion than does print.

> Television news is like newspaper news in that both mobilize public attention to public affairs and disseminate information -- but there the similarities end. For television news is all mobilization; it seems utterly to lack the liberal, privatizing characteristics of print journalism -- the discontinuities, the randomness, the ambiguities, and the diversity which give the ideal of individualism real substance. The television news emphasis on spectacle, it reliance on the single omniscient observer, and its commitment to the notion of a unified, thematic depiction of events, all make TV an extraordinary mobilizer of public attention and public opinion (Weaver, p. 93).

It is important not to slight newspaper impacts, however. We have already discussed the possibility of indirect newspaper impacts. The brief anecdote below highlights these indirect impacts, points out as well point that many people (including elites!) simply do not read the New York Times:

> During the spring of 1974 thousands of the veterans who were eligible for education benefits and who were not receiving them -- 6% of those

> eligible -- sought redress from the Veterans Administration. This was an injustice, and a blatant one in terms of our national feelings about war veterans. The New York Times and the Washington Post had covered this story intermittently since the previous autumn, when the academic year began. But there had been little, if any, noticeable effect. Immediately following an expose' on the NBS Nightly News -- based upon a lengthy story in the Post, it would appear -- the President contacted the VA, demanded a quick response, and eventually requested that VA director Johnson be retired (Robinson, 1975, p. 129).

Our unique data set consisting of twenty cases common to both the television and newspaper data sets allows us to further examine notions of television and newspaper interaction. Again, we can examine the correlations of various news actors at time pre-T1 and T1-T2. Most interesting is the relationship between pre-T1 Times editorials and T1-T2 television commentary. This relationship is suggested by the almost extraordinary correlation coefficient between the two variables of Pearson's r=0.64! Table 9 below shows the results of regression of T1-T2 television commentary onto pre-T1 elite messages and newspaper editorials.

Table 9: Effects of Elite News and *Times* Editorials (pre-T1) on Television Commentary (T1-T2)

News Source	T1-T2 TV Commentary as Dependent Variable
Television	
President	-0.75**
	(0.26)
Administration and Partisans	0.04
	(0.05)
Opposition Party	0.08
	(0.08)
New York Times	
President	-0.02
	(0.09)
Administration and Partisans	-0.03
	(0.02)
Opposition Party	-0.03
	(0.06)
Editorials	0.47
	(0.24)
Other Variables	
Public Opinion at T1	0.01
	(0.01)
Constant	0.83*
	(0.30)

R^2=.87 Adj R^2=.78 N=20

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regressions of T1-T2 television commentary on opinion at T1, pre-T1 elite television and *Times* news messages, and pre-T1 *Times* editorials for the twenty cases common to both data sets. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

There are two particularly interesting results here. First is the apparent obstinacy or belligerence of television commentary with regard to the president. Television commentary appears to react negatively (b=-0.75, highly significant) to presidential messages. This continues to support earlier results which showed television independence of elite influence. Further examination of the common items, however, shows that this data set consist of cases where the president was essentially unpopular. In fifteen of the twenty cases the president's approval rating fell below 50%; his average popularity rating over all twenty cases was 39.3 percentage points; one wonders if this finding, then, demonstrates the courage and independence of television commentary or simply highlights a vulture-over-a-dead-body dynamic. As others have noted, there may be a very real tendency for the media to feel justified in attacking an unpopular president (Entman, 1989).

Perhaps more interesting is the impact of New York Times editorials on television commentary (b=0.47). This coefficient falls just short of statistical significance, even with this small number of cases. In the medium-term, at least, Times editorials seem to affect television

commentary. Our earlier results which showed relatively small print impacts must be qualified; it seems that some newspaper effects may be indirect, mediated by other actors, especially television.

In sum, television may be the more powerful force in influencing public opinion, but television commentators are hardly independent. As we have seen, it appears that when a policy issue arises, the administration is able to influence newspaper editorials, which in turn affect television commentary. We have some evidence to support hegemonic theses, yet we also have noted an apparent pluralism of independent expert influence on the debate.

Chapter Five

Media Impacts on Public Opinion: Foreign Policy and Domestic Policy

Just as different news sources appear to have differing impacts on public opinion, we would expect that actors might have varying degrees of success in influencing policy preferences within specific issue areas. In general, we might expect that the public would be more susceptible to outside influence in the area of foreign policy, where Americans tend to have less first-hand information and less personal experience than on most domestic matters. In short, we would expect that the public may be even more dependent upon what they can learn from the mass media concerning foreign affairs.[1]

The greater susceptibility to influence in matters of foreign policy should not necessarily translate into larger impacts across the board by every news source. We have already seen that interest groups seem to have much less to

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[1] The underlying premises here may indeed be much more complex than outlined above. The public may be more susceptible to influence, but at the same time (and for the same reasons) they may also have less incentive to pay attention to foreign policy news. Yet recent evidence depicts an American public whose attentiveness to world affairs has been increasing steadily (Rielly, 1991).

say about foreign policy issues than domestic ones. Similarly, foreign news sources would appear to have much more to say about "foreign" issues than American domestic concerns. Yet regardless of how overall impacts change (or do not change) we might expect the influence of a particular news story to be larger in the case of foreign affairs (and reflected in the coefficient estimates).

The purpose of this section is to examine the subsets of foreign and domestic policy issues with an eye toward some of the claims concerning the potential differences between the two. Does, the president have greater influence on public opinion in international than in domestic affairs? Edwards (1983), for example, claims that

> foreign policy is more distant from the lives of most Americans than is domestic policy and is therefore seen as more complex and based on specialized knowledge. Thus people tend to defer more to the president on these issues than on domestic issues that they can directly relate to their own experience (pp. 42-43).

How does the opposition party fare in these two arenas? Are the impacts of experts and commentators even more dramatic in foreign affairs, where the general public may be more prone to defer to new sources of information? Are foreign news sources seen as more credible when they focus on international events as opposed to U.S. domestic affairs?

Foreign Policy, the Media, and Public Opinion

The regressions I performed on the foreign affairs subsets of both the television and newspaper data are striking in several ways (see Tables 10 and 11). First, in both data sets we can see the overwhelming impact of both editorial commentary and experts. The estimated magnitudes of these impacts are even more dramatic than in the overall regressions with the mixed-issue data set (although statistical significance is more difficult to achieve because of the smaller number of cases).

Table 10: Effects of TV News from Different Sources: Foreign Policy Only

News Sources	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.75 (0.90)	0.09 (0.44)
Administration and Partisans	0.57 (0.68)	0.18 (0.21)
Opposition Party	-2.49* (0.87)	1.05 (0.56)
Interest Groups	0.22 (0.53)	-0.20 (0.40)
Events	2.29 (2.74)	2.38 (3.49)
Commentary	-0.56 (2.87)	5.81** (1.75)

Experts	-3.30 (3.42)	5.35 (3.53)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	1.12 (1.32)	-1.03 (1.01)
Foreign-unfriendly	0.44 (1.03)	0.10 (0.84)
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	0.89** (0.10)	
Constant	3.38 (5.48)	

R^2=.96 Adjusted R^2=.89 N=32

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of the relevant pro-con story scores from various sources for the 32 television foreign policy cases. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

(Note that the very small number of New York Times foreign policy cases leads to extremely large standard errors. Even with the removal of both the events and administration source, which appeared to have little impact in the overall regressions, none of the sources approach significance).

Table 11: Effects of Times News from Different Sources: Foreign Policy Only

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.97 (1.88)	0.36 (2.41)
Opposition Party	-2.98 (4.40)	1.06 (1.76)
Interest Groups	-1.89 (3.58)	-1.43 (2.67)
Commentary	-0.35 (2.57)	0.85 (0.77)
Experts	-4.48 (6.90)	3.24 (6.12)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	3.09 (3.60)	-3.67 (2.62)
Foreign-unfriendly	2.38 (2.63)	-1.53 (3.42)
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	0.99* (0.12)	
Constant	-1.90 (8.08)	

R^2=.99 Adjusted R^2=.90 N=18

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of the relevant pro-con story scores from various sources for the 18 newspaper foreign policy cases. Standard errors for

b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Despite the limitations of the newspaper data set, there are a number of interesting results here. We have mentioned the apparent impacts of experts and commentary. As seen here, the impacts of editorial commentary is even more pronounced in the foreign affairs data sets.[2] Clearly the news media themselves may play an active role in shaping Americans' opinions about foreign policy. Similarly, the above suggests that the public is quite acceptant of media provided expertise in dealing with the complexities of foreign affairs, though these coefficients fall short of statistical significance.[3]

One interesting result is that while experts and commentators have generally positive impacts on public

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[2] In the television data commentators demonstrated an estimated coefficient of b=4.36 for all 80 cases, b=5.81 for the 32 foreign policy cases, both highly significant. Coefficient estimates remained fairly constant across policy issue in the newspaper data, (b=.85).

[3] In the television data the expert source demonstrated a coefficient of b=3.38 for all 80 cases, b=5.35 for the foreign policy population. In the New York Times data, the estimation of expert impacts was b=1.76 for all 51 cases, b=3.24 for the foreign policy cases. In both instances these estimates were statistically significant for the full data sets, but fell just short of significance when only foreign policy cases were examined.

opinion concerning foreign affairs, both their size and significance levels imply a much more potent impact on television. This is, of course, consistent with our earlier evidence that television is the more powerful instrument.

Another striking finding is the substantial positive effect the opposition party is estimated to have in foreign affairs debate. The opposition source coefficient does approach significance in the television data set. In order to look more closely at the newspaper data, an opposition dummy variable controlling for the foreign-domestic dichotomy was included in regression analysis. This issue-type/opposition party interaction variable was found to be very potent (b=3.57) and highly significant (standard error of b=1.19), see Table 12.

Table 12: Dummy Variable Analysis: Opposition Party-Foreign vs Domestic-New York Times

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.20 (0.84)	-1.07 (0.74)
Administration and Partisans	0.83 (0.45)	0.10 (0.20)
Opposition Party	-0.74 (0.90)	-0.38 (0.38)
Interest Groups	-0.82 (0.96)	0.26 (0.35)

Events	-0.05	0.11
	(2.34)	(1.48)
Commentary	-1.92	0.59
	(0.98)	(0.39)
Experts	0.42	1.33
	(1.68)	(0.74)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	0.53	-0.84
	(1.29)	(0.68)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.13	2.02
	(1.17)	(1.79)
Other Variables		
Opinion at T1	1.03**	
	(0.05)	
Constant	-3.66	
	(3.15)	
Dummy	2.19	
	(2.53)	
Interaction of dummy and opposition party pre-T1	-3.16	
	(2.38)	
Interaction of dummy and opposition party T1-T2	3.57**	
	(1.19)	

R^2=.96 Adj R^2=.92 N=51

Notes: Dummy=1 when foreign policy issue, 0 when domestic. Interaction variables are dummy multiplied by opposition party source.

Entries in all tables are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on the sums of the relevant pro-con stories from various sources and dummy and interaction variables. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

This indicates that the opposition party has a greater impact in foreign policy issues than in domestic policy. Presumably, opposition leaders are serious figures who have some bipartisan credibility and can move public opinion their way, especially in foreign affairs. The impacts of the opposition will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

Again the president seems to have little significant impact on foreign policy debates through the media. This result seems scarcely credible, suggesting a statistical anomaly. As mentioned earlier, there may be several explanations for these results. These will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six where attempts will be made to examine other factors which may affect the president's ability to influence..

Foreign news sources tend to have generally negative or minimal impacts across both data sets. Most Americans pay attention to their own commentators, experts, and political leaders, discounting the views of foreigners.

As expected, interest groups have consistently negative estimated impacts, though the coefficients are not significant. As noted earlier, interest groups in general

have little to say about foreign affairs, and when they do speak out (as in the cases of war protest), they seem to be perceived as disruptive and abrasive. It is possible, of course, that there are popular and unpopular interest groups with differential impacts, but the data do not permit comprehensive exploration of those possibilities.

One final note about interest groups: strangely, interest groups have a less negative impact through television than through the Times. This result is intuitively unsettling, since we would expect the visual nature of television to provide starker and fuller negative portrayals. It is possible that combative, unpopular interest group stances which seem cold and rigid in print may be tempered by images of the human side of interest group participation.

Domestic Policy, the Media, and Public Opinion

Since we have already seen the results concerning overall mixed-issue data sets and the foreign policy item subsets, the results that emerge from looking only at domestic issues do not offer any real surprises (see Tables 13 and 14).

Table 13: Effects of TV News from Different Sources: Domestic Issues Only

News Sources	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.53*	0.34
	(0.22)	(0.46)
Administration and Partisans	0.31	-0.06
	(0.43)	(0.32)
Opposition Party	-0.35	0.09
	(0.25)	(0.35)
Interest Groups	-0.57*	0.22
	(0.23)	(0.36)
Events	-0.49	1.59
	(0.79)	(1.06)
Commentary	1.37	3.60
	(1.78)	(2.08)
Experts	7.18	5.14
	(4.97)	(4.52)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	-15.90	8.33
	(16.59)	(13.34)
Foreign-unfriendly	-17.50	-----
	(33.71)	
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	1.05**	
	(0.05)	
Constant	-6.76	
	(3.34)	

R^2=.95 Adjusted R^2=.92 N=48

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of

the relevant pro-con story scores from various sources for the 48 television domestic policy cases. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

Note also that because there was no variation at all in foreign-unfriendly domestic issue stories between T1 and T2, it was dropped from the regression procedure.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

As expected (and arithmetically inevitable), we again see the impact of experts and editorials in domestic affairs, though these coefficients are not statistically significant. Interest groups continue to have a minimal impact, though this is less pronounced than the negative impact in foreign issues. Again, this is almost certainly due to the domestic focus of the majority of interest groups. The opposition had minimal impact here on domestic issues.

Analysis of the domestic cases in the New York Times data set support these general results. Note again that events and the administration were removed from the regression to accommodate the small number of cases available. Further, because there was no variation in foreign-unfriendly news (no stories), it was also procedurally dropped from the regression.

Table 14: Effects of Times News from Different Sources: Domestic Issues Only

News Sources	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	1.15	1.23
	(1.42)	(0.69)
Opposition Party	-1.48	-0.91*
	(0.82)	(0.34)
Interest Groups	-1.37	-0.09
	(0.77)	(0.31)
Commentary	-1.96*	2.94**
	(0.95)	(0.72)
Experts	2.88	1.29*
	(2.18)	(0.60)
Foreign-friendly-neutral	-4.94	0.42
	(5.37)	(0.47)
Other Variables		
Public Opinion at T1	1.16**	
	(0.06)	
Constant	-11.89**	
	(3.47)	

R^2=.97 Adjusted R^2=.95 N=33

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of the relevant pro-con story scores from various sources for the 33 newspaper domestic policy cases. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Again we see the large and highly significant impact of experts and commentary, though, as expected, it is less pronounced in the case of print than television. Again we also see the minimal impact of interest groups. Yet there are also some interesting contrasts here between television and print.

Perhaps most striking finding here is the apparent major and significant negative impact of the opposition in the newspaper data (coinciding, of course, with the positive effect mentioned above in the foreign policy arena). Again, this finding was confirmed in the newspaper data using dummy variable analysis. This relationship, however, was not borne out in the television data.

The president seems to have more of a positive impact on domestic affairs than in foreign policy issues. This finding was not supported decisively with dummy variable analysis. Though dummy coefficient signs were invariably in the right direction, they were small and insignificant statistically.

Results concerning the impacts of foreign news were somewhat confusing. Foreign news was not well received in the foreign affairs arena. One can revert to arguments

which depend on American chauvinism and ethnocentrism to conclude that the U.S. public simply discounts the views of foreigners (though certainly Winston Churchill may come to mind). While these coefficients are nowhere near significance, they may point to something unusual about the way Americans respond to foreign news.[4]

In sum, then, there seems to be little evidence that there is anything unique about the way the public responds to messages about foreign policy as opposed to information concerning domestic issues, despite talk of "two presidencies" and the like. Findings here concerning discrepant impacts of the president, the administration, and the opposition, however, indicate that some further digging is warranted. The remainder of this work will focus on the impacts and relationships of the president, the administration, and the opposition.

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[4] We must also keep in mind the nature of those cases where foreign news was relied upon more heavily. A tendency toward "liberalization" in U.S. public opinion concerning abortion, gun control, and resource conservation would account at least in part for these apparent correlations.

Chapter Six

Media Impacts and Presidential Popularity

The analysis up to this point has shown little or no apparent presidential influence on the public's policy preferences. This is intuitively unsettling. This non-finding may be misleading for at least two reasons. First, it is likely that a president's ability to persuade is related to his popularity. These data comprise a large number of cases in which the president's approval level fell below fifty percentage points. We can examine this credibility issue directly. Secondly, presidential influences may be masked when we examine the impacts of single news stories; the cumulative impacts of a number of stories may be large indeed.

We have already noted that our discussion has depended for the most part on a particular concept of "effect", that is, the impact of a single news story. This approach disregards the fact that frequencies of stories from different sources may vary enormously and that, as we have

seen, a tremendous number of policy news stories may originate with the president.[1]

In this section we will assume a president's popularity -- as measured by the percentage of American citizens who approve of his "handling of the job" according to Gallup polls -- may be a good measure of the general level of confidence in a particular president. We can then examine hypotheses concerning presidential popularity by partitioning the data into two subsets in which the president has approval ratings of either more than or less than fifty percentage points.[2]

Numerous analyses suggest that a popular president is more persuasive than an unpopular one. Neustadt (1960, 1980), for example, stresses that a president's ability to influence other official elites is directly related to his professional reputation and prestige. In this view,

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[1] Further, presidential impacts may come in ways not measured here. It is often claimed, for example, that the president essentially sets the policy agenda and helps to define the boundaries of discourse. Others have noted that the president can be limited; the media can in fact keep items off the agenda that the president would like to see raised. Bennett (1988) notes that "in some cases there is very little that a political actor can do to turn a political message into a widely reported news story" and cites Jimmy Carter's failure to muster publicity for his war on America's energy problem (p. 83).

[2] These analyses were repeated with a variety of different measurements of popularity (upper and lower third of cases by approval rating, etc.). In no instance were the results significantly different from what is reported here.

a popular president has more power to persuade because public support is a resource that can be used in the bargaining process. Member of Congress who know that the president is highly popular with their own constituencies have more incentive to cooperate with the administration. If the president and his aides know that a member of Congress does not want to be seen as hostile to the president, they can apply more leverage in pressing their own policy initiatives.

The degree to which one accepts the importance of presidential popularity of course depends on a number of assumptions about policymaking. In general, however, it seems clear that "when a president is popular we would expect people to put more faith in what he says and does and to be more prone to change their opinion accordingly" (Page, et al, 1987, p. 32).

The inclusion of presidential popularity in a model of media impacts has significant implications. We have already noted conflicting arguments concerning the positive or negative impacts of television on presidential image (Smoller, 1986; Graber, 1989; Paletz and Guthrie, 1987). Parenti (1986), among others, notes that television coverage tends to focus on personal attributes rather than policy stances, reducing debate to notions of popularity. Entman's (1989) study of Reagan led him to conclude that the

president's "perceived popularity and professional reputation helped to insulate him from assault in the press" (p. 62), while an unpopular president (read Carter) is more open to media criticism.

All of the above says little, however, about the actual relationship of presidential popularity and the public's policy preferences. Visions of this relationship (or non-relationship) depend on one's notion of elite responsiveness. Certainly we could hardly conclude that a popular president can run rough shod over the rest of the policy community. Neustadt (1980) believed that presidential popularity was

> a factor operating mostly in the background as a conditioner, not the determinant, of what Washingtonians will do about a President's request ...What happens at the Capitol rarely will reflect the full extent of his apparent popularity (pp. 65-66).

Some more recent scholarship places greater emphasis on general public approval of the president. Kernell (1986), for example, claims the elite bargaining model of the presidency which characterized, for example, Truman's time, has broken down and that the executive can (and must) now appeal directly to the populace. This implies an even greater role for notions of presidential popularity.

Presidential Popularity and Television News

Past research has indicated that popular presidents in fact have substantial effects on public opinion, while unpopular presidents have virtually no effect at all (Page, et al, 1987, pp. 33-34; Page and Shapiro, 1984). An analysis of the television data in Table 15 below appears to corroborate these results.

Table 15: Presidential Popularity and TV News Effects on Opinion

	Popular Presidents		Unpopular Presidents	
News Source	Pre-T1 News	T1-T2 News	Pre-T1 News	T1-T2 News
President	-0.98 (1.17)	0.75 (0.41)	-0.49 (0.26)	-0.81 (0.53)
Administration and Partisans	0.54 (1.02)	-0.36 (0.24)	-0.21 (0.38)	0.52 (0.35)
Opposition Party	-0.32 (0.71)	0.48 (0.56)	-0.55 (0.35)	0.06 (0.72)
Interest Groups	-0.79 (0.68)	-0.25 (0.50)	-0.70* (0.30)	-0.23 (0.47)
Events	0.81 (1.82)	0.02 (0.89)	-0.05 (0.84)	0.85 (1.77)
Commentary	-2.47 (5.51)	4.63 (2.48)	1.20 (1.87)	7.57** (2.48)
Experts	4.47 (5.55)	1.83 (5.61)	-4.10 (3.16)	4.55 (2.62)

Foreign-Friendly or Neutral	1.15 (2.00)	-0.12 (1.10)	0.13 (1.22)	0.45 (1.13)
Foreign-Unfriendly	-2.10 (2.08)	0.31 (0.83)	-0.76 (1.02)	0.50 (2.20)
Other Variables				
Public Opinion at T1	0.94** (0.07)		1.13** (0.08)	
Constant	0.58 (5.16)		-11.07* (4.89)	
R^2=	.96		.93	
Adj R^2=	.91		.88	
N=	36		44	

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regressions of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of relevant news story pro-con scores from various sources. "Popular" presidents had Gallup poll approval ratings of 50% or more at T2; unpopular presidents had ratings under 50%. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses. Also note that the court source was removed from this regression to allow for a more complete comparison with the newspaper data.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

As we can see from the above, popular presidents do seem to have a positive effect on public opinion, at least through television news. Each "probably pro" statement or action is estimated to produce over three-quarters of a

percentage point of opinion change. This coefficient is very nearly statistically significant, despite the very small number of cases in this subset. Again we must temper this result with the recognition of both temporary and reciprocal effects. Nevertheless, we can also see above that unpopular presidents may actually have a substantial negative impact on public opinions, although the coefficient is not quite significant. Just as we expect a discriminating public to put more faith in a popular president, this public will also change its opinions accordingly when it has little confidence in an unpopular president. The popularity of a president apparently affects his ability to influence the American public's policy preferences through television news messages.[3]

The effects of other news sources seem to interact with presidential popularity as well. As we expected, while editorials are consistently potent, they seem to have their strongest effects when presidents are unpopular. This was also supported with dummy and interaction variable analysis.

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[3] In support of this analysis a dummy variable was created where the dummy=1 when popularity was greater than or equal to 50% and dummy=0 when popularity was less than 50%. The dummy was then multiplied by the presidential source message sums and the dummy and new "interaction" variables were entered into the regression. The coefficient of this interaction variable (for T1-T2 presidential messages) was positive (b=+0.28) but failed to achieve statistical significance. Nonetheless, it is suggestive of direction. (See Appendix 5).

Similarly, expert testimony seems to have a greater impact when presidents are unpopular. Although the small number of cases here precludes a statistical confidence in these results, it does seem possible that in time of low presidential popularity and lower confidence in government, the public will turn readily and acceptingly to other sources of policy information.

Interestingly, the administration seems not to ride on the popularity of the president, but is actually more effective when the president is unpopular. This may indicate that the public transfers its faith to a broader range of political actors when a particular president loses their confidence. However, one would think that the opposition would also benefit (and perhaps even more) from presidential unpopularity. Strangely, however, the opposition party seems especially potent when presidents are popular. Yet we must remember that the "opposition" does not always oppose presidential policies. We will see this more clearly in Chapter Seven. Whatever the case, the television data appear to confirm that "there may be some substantial differences in the dynamics of opinion change depending upon whether the president in office at a particular time is popular or not" (Page, et al, 1987, p. 34).

Foreign news effects are also predictable. There appears to be more of a willingness to listen to foreign news sources when the president is unpopular; again, the public seeks out other sources of information when faith in governmental leadership is low.

Interest groups seem to have little connection at all with presidential popularity; their impact is uniformly negligible or negative.

Presidential Popularity and Television Foreign Policy News

An investigation of the foreign policy issues is again hampered by the small number of cases, but is interesting as well. Here we had fifteen cases where the president was popular and seventeen where he was not (several sources were removed from this regression to allow for examination of the small data set).[4] Table 16 suggests again that popular presidents have a strong positive impact (b=1.74), while unpopular presidents have a strong negative effect (b=-1.35). This result was supported by dummy analysis, where the president/popularity interaction variable had a coefficient of b=.82, falling just short of statistical significance (see Appendix 5). Both experts (b=2.88) and

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[4] The sources chosen for removal were those deemed to have little or no impact in the overall regression analysis -- foreign news, interest groups, and events.

editorials (b=4.30) have more impact when presidents are unpopular. Again the administration is weaker when a president is popular. The only major difference between foreign and domestic policy, as we identified earlier, concerns the opposition. In line with the earlier finding that the opposition appears to be much more powerful in foreign affairs, we now see that the opposition has stronger positive coefficient when the president is unpopular. Aside from this nuance, we see again that there appears to be little difference in the way the public reacts to foreign policy news as opposed to domestic news.[5]

Table 16: Presidential Popularity and TV News Effects on Opinion: Foreign Policy

	Popular Presidents		Unpopular Presidents	
News Source	Pre-T1 News	T1-T2 News	Pre-T1 News	T1-T2 News
President	-1.63	1.74	-0.50	-1.35
	(2.31)	(1.28)	(0.54)	(0.60)

[5] This is not to say that approval ratings are unrelated to policy type. On March 7, 1991 a New York Times/CBS News Poll reported that 83% of the American public approved of the way President Bush was handling foreign policy; only 42% gave approval to the way he was handling the economy. While this is certainly a spillover effect of the post-Gulf crisis euphoria, it does show that the public seems to discriminate and make judgments among policy issues somewhat aside from general presidential popularity.

Administration and Partisans	-0.50	-0.23	0.27	0.78
	(1.76)	(0.38)	(0.26)	(0.31)
Opposition Party	0.17	0.96	-3.00*	1.30
	(1.75)	(0.74)	(0.75)	(0.79)
Commentary	13.18	2.45	-1.79	9.54
	(10.18)	(2.52)	(2.22)	(4.30)
Experts	8.78	1.34	-3.55	3.79
	(12.07)	(19.78)	(2.71)	(2.88)
Other Variables				
Public Opinion at T1	0.88**		1.16**	
	(0.15)		(0.12)	
Constant	3.25		-12.68	
	(10.12)		(7.65)	
R^2=	.95		.99	
Adj R^2=	.83		.96	
N=	17		15	

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of relevant news story pro-con scores from various sources. "Popular" presidents had Gallup poll approval ratings of 50% or more at T2; unpopular presidents had ratings under 50%. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses. Television foreign policy cases only.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Presidential Popularity and the New York Times

Our analysis indicates that the impact of presidential popularity is especially powerful in television messages, but almost negligible in the Times. This is not surprising at all, given research which shows that television gives more emphasis to personality than the printed media (Parenti, 1986, p.15). Table 17 shows that while a popular president may be able to manipulate public opinion through the more personalized, visual, and spectacular messages of television, popularity does not translate into influence through the print media (or at least through the New York Times).

Table 17: Presidential Popularity and Times News Effects on Opinion

	Popular Presidents		Unpopular President	
News Source	Pre-T1 News	T1-T2 News	Pre-T1 News	T1-T2 News
President	5.71	-1.13	-1.18	0.67
	(3.29)	(0.89)	(1.61)	(2.49)
Administration and Partisans	1.04	0.63	0.41	0.38
	(0.75)	(0.32)	(0.98)	(0.83)
Opposition Party	3.24	-1.41	-1.45	-1.43
	(3.17)	(1.44)	(1.23)	(0.82)
Interest Groups	-6.40*	0.12	-0.97	-0.10
	(1.96)	(0.56)	(1.95)	(0.54)

Events	0.06	2.48	-5.91	5.05
	(3.49)	(1.97)	(6.63)	(4.41)
Commentary	-3.26*	1.50*	-1.06	2.75
	(1.00)	(0.45)	(2.94)	(1.69)
Experts	-2.28	2.74*	1.60	0.36
	(3.43)	(1.00)	(3.16)	(2.20)
Foreign-Friendly Neutral	8.68**	-22.45*	-2.80	-1.40
	(1.98)	(8.96)	(7.11)	(2.02)
Foreign-Unfriendly	13.23*	-1.58	1.24	2.22
	(4.40)	(1.71)	(6.22)	(21.30)
Other Variables				
Public Opinion at T1	1.14**		1.23**	
	(0.06)		(0.18)	
Constant	-11.75*		-15.79	
	(4.64)		(10.10)	
R^2=	.99		.98	
Adj R^2=	.97		.92	
N=	26		25	

Note: Entries are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regressions of opinion at T2 on opinion at T1 and the sums of relevant news story pro-con scores from various sources for the newspaper data set. "Popular" presidents has Gallup poll approval ratings of 50% or more at T1; unpopular presidents had ratings under 50%. Standard errors for b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

It is clear, then, that presidential popularity does not translate into increased effectiveness of the executive through the Times. The nature of public perceptions of popularity may be intertwined with visual images and anecdotal details of a president's personal life; these types of information are less likely to be presented in newspapers (and maybe especially less so with the New York Times) than on television, for instance.

Other "official" sources are seemingly unaffected by presidential prestige: the administration and opposition party coefficients remain virtually unchanged. None of these impacts is close to statistical significance. The popularity of elected officials may mean a greater potential impact through television messages, but this is not the case with newspaper messages.

Again we see that foreign news seems to have more impact (or at least less negative impact) when a president is unpopular, that is, when the population is more open to "outside" sources of information. When the president is popular, the public reacts strongly and negatively to foreign news.

Also again we see that interest groups are unaffected by the popularity of the president; special interest impacts are consistently minimal.

We also again see the increased importance of commentary when the president is unpopular. Strangely, though, the results concerning experts does not parallel that of the television data set. This could indicate differences in the overall nature of television and newspaper "expert" testimony. In fact, an examination of correlations indicates that there is no relationship between the messages offered by television and newspaper experts.

In sum, then, presidential popularity does seem to have some particular effects on dynamics of opinion change, especially through media messages. But these impacts seem to be largely related to the television news rather than print. In some ways this is not surprising at all. Television does provide the opportunity for presidents to control their visual images. As Paletz and Guthrie (1987) have noted, presidents can provide good pictures to soften or even override a story's negative content (see Graber, 1990, p. 226). This opportunity is much less available in newspapers.

On the other hand, this is a somewhat ominous finding. If popularity (read television image) is a major factor in influencing public policy preferences and actual policy stances (as more evidenced by newspaper reporting) have little impact, what does this say about the conduct of American politics? Are we doomed to a series of "Teflon"

presidencies, with little hope of serious (or rather effective) news criticism of policy, as Bennett (1988, pp. 56-57) has implied? Or is there really a connection between presidential popularity and policy preferences? Edwards (1983) has noted that the public may "like" presidents, but still disapprove of the way they are handling their jobs (p.224).[6] Neustadt (1960, 1980) pointed out that sharp changes in presidential approval have occurred for presidents whose public manners have remained consistent (pp. 69-73).[7] Presidential popularity, then, may not be as powerful a force as sometimes imagined. Entman (1989) further notes that "a president's popularity is determined by a combination of real events and conditions and how the media cover them" (p. 41); just as policy stances alone do not necessarily determine popularity, popularity may not

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[6] Edwards goes on to note that "a poll near the middle of President Carter's term found that almost twice as many people liked the president as approved of the manner in which he was handling the presidency. In November 1981 a Gallup poll found that 74% of the public approved of President Reagan as a person, but only 49% approved of his performance as president" (p. 224).

[7] Entman (1989) has also noted that public perceptions of actual presidential popularity may be perverted by the media. "For example," he says, "Ronald Reagan's average Gallup approval rating for the first term was barely higher than Carter's, and neither averaged over 50 percent or majority approval. During Reagan's first two years, his rating was considerably lower, on average than any of his predecessors. These data did not prevent the media from repeatedly asserting that Reagan was unusually popular" (p. 65).

necessarily translate into public acquiescence in policy matters.

More optimistic evidence has been provided above. Despite the potential importance of presidential prestige, other sources of information continue to be important relatively independent of executive popularity. And if the public does turn to nonpartisan and independent sources of information, such as experts, commentators, and foreign news (and even more so when a president is unpopular), doesn't this indicate that some political pluralism (as well as public rationality) is at work? The real questions, of course, are whether or not these other actors are indeed "nonpartisan" and "independent" (that is, truly positivistic) and, if not, whether a variety of contrasting viewpoints are aired in order to provide the public (and elites) with quality policy information.

Chapter Seven

Elites, the Media, and Foreign Policy Opinion

Elite theory holds that the history of politics is a history of elites, the character of a society is determined by the character of its elites, and that the goals of society are established by elites and pursued under their direction. Social change comes about as the composition and structure of the elite is transformed (Prewitt and Stone, 1973, p. 4). All versions of the ruling elite model assume that the policy process is undemocratic. Many familiar facts and anecdotes seem to support this analytic model (Brewer, 1986, p. 45). Richard Reeves (1982) has claimed that the U.S. policymaking community is "the closest thing to a governing aristocracy that has survived in American democracy..." (p. 349). It may be useful, then, to examine some trends and themes in the theories of political elites.

At the close of the 19th century, elite theorists began to question the prevailing democratic optimism. The most prominent of the classical theorists were Mosca, Pareto, and Michels. Mosca was typical of the classical theorists when he claimed that

> (i)n all societies...two classes of people appear- a class that rules and a class that is ruled.

> This first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power, and enjoys the advantage that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first (Putnam, 1976, p. 3).

For the classical elite theorist, power was distributed unequally. The elite was internally homogeneous, unified and self-conscious, self-perpetuating, drawn from an exclusive segment of society, and autonomous.

The study of elites rests on the premise that elites have power. Within the context of politics it seems clear that by "power" we mean the ability to influence outcomes. Putnam (1976) defined political power as the probability of influencing the policies and activities of the state. Power is also seen by some as a sharing in decisions (Bachrach, 1971, p. 16). The study of this process of power and elites, while a dominant approach in American thinking, has been attacked by some who claim that this ignores the idea that the outcome rather than the process defines power (see Domhoff, 1978). William Mitchell (1969) admonished scholars to

> try defining power not as one who makes decisions but as who gets how much from the system. Those who acquire the most goods, services and opportunities are those who have the most power" (p. 114).

Note that these definitional obstacles become especially problematic when one attempts to bound his

research to the study of, say, "political elites" or "foreign policy elites." Captains of industry, union leaders, and popes technically are not political leaders, yet they do certainly wield power that ultimately affects public policy. This problem of defining power and identifying who has power is necessarily a central theme in elite studies.

Verba (1987) highlighted the problem of locating elites when he noted that "no one agrees how such a theoretical list should be drawn up" (pp. 58-59). Social scientists have generally relied on three basic strategies for elite identification: positional analysis, reputational analysis, and decision analysis (Putnam, 1976; Frey, 1970; and Hough, 1975).

In our examination of policy elites here we will rely on positional analysis, which refers ultimately to the use of hierarchical organizational diagrams to identify those likely to by politically powerful.[1] In particular, we will

[1] There are some strong arguments for positional analysis, despite its shortcomings. C. Wright Mills (1966) claimed that "...to have power requires access to major institutions, for the institutional positions men occupy determine in large part their chances to have and hold these valued experiences" (pp. 10-11). Putnam (1976) noted that because institutions maintain good records, positional analysis is the easiest and most common technique for finding the powerful (p. 16). However, Pahl and Winkler (1974) claimed that positional analysis fails to take into account that power is more than role structure; one may, as noted earlier, have power outside the normal hierarchy.

rely on the coding of three of our original categories: the president, his administration and partisans, and the opposition party. Our notions of power will tend to focus on the ability of the elite to influence the public's policy preferences.

The integration or unity of the ruling elite is another area of considerable research in elite theory. Work in this area seems to center on two major topics: the dimensions of integration and the consequences (and therefore desirability) of integration. By and large most analysts agree that the central dimension of elite integration is value consensus, that is, agreement on "what is to be done." The notions of U.S. policy elite agreement and diversity as reported by the media and consequent effects on the American public's policy preferences will be the major focus of this chapter.

Students of the consequences of elite integration generally fall into two categories: those who see elite unity as stabilizing and promoting governmental effectiveness, and those who argue that elite unity guarantees unresponsive oligarchic politics. Field and Hegley (1973) claimed that "the normal situation of political instability is abrogated in societies where a unified elite is present" (pp. 12-13) and noted in a later work (1980) that "disunity is easily the most common

condition in the world over" (p. 36). Ake (1967) pointed to the turmoil in Nigeria as an example of the consequence of low elite integration. Robins (1976) saw elite integration as positively affecting coherence, autonomy, and adaptability of institutions, and therefore enhancing effectiveness. Yet others claimed that elite integration encourages oligarchy and limits popular participation in decisionmaking (Aron, 1950; Lijphart, 1969).

The relationship of democratic thought and elite theory is also a subject treated extensively in the literature concerning elites. Prewitt and Stone (1973) noted that once democratic theorists accepted the inevitability of a division of political labor, they were forced to accept many of the consequences of elite theory. Lele's (1981) study of elite pluralism in India concluded that democratic theory had essentially become a hegemonic elite ideology because of "the creation of a diffuse mass loyalty in which the ritualistic vote becomes a substitute for meaningful participation" (p. 210). The consistencies and inconsistencies of elite and pluralist theories comprise major debate among social theorists.

The purpose of the remainder of this chapter is to examine more specifically the media coverage of elite debate about U.S. foreign policy and the relationship of this debate with the public's foreign policy preferences. A

closer examination of both the New York Times and the television foreign affairs cases provides some extremely compelling evidence that media coverage as a whole is diverse and presents the public with a wide ranges of policy stances within the range of choices that are involved in these survey questions. Rather than simply providing a regular picture of elite agreement, television news appears to offer stark and conflicting policy stances. This diversity is less apparent in the Times. Regardless, even when there is a high degree of agreement reported, elites apparently are rarely successful in swaying public opinion in the direction they may desire. Further, not only are "pure partisan" debates presented, the media also uncover and publicize intra-party "bickering" in both the administration and the opposition, and note president-administration disagreements.

A major determinant of partisan failure to influence public opinion appears to be intraparty diversity, as highlighted by the media. The active nature and prevalence of the official elite discourse in policy debate is, of course, no surprise. But this high level of activity does not insure success in persuading the public. Public opinion appears to be resilient, bending at times to elite media messages, resisting at other times.

Television again appears to be more "democratized" than does the New York Times. Television coverage tends to offer fuller treatments of diversity, while the Times seems to downplay partisan battles.

In short, what we see below is that the elite debate as presented in the media is essentially pluralistic. And even when elites are depicted as in accord with one another, they are more likely than not to fail to sway the public's policy preferences.

Measuring Reported Elite Agreement

These data offer some unique opportunities for examining notions of elite agreement and diversity as reported by the media. Throughout the rest of this chapter the following definitions will be used:

1) Reported elite agreement will be defined as existing in those cases where the overall tone (as measured by directional thrust of the procon sums) of the presidential, administration, and opposition party messages are in agreement or if media coverage of the case is dominated by a particular viewpoint. One possible way to measure agreement level is by examining the ratio of the magnitude of official elite stories in agreement with a policy option to the total

magnitudes for all elite messages (in agreement or disagreement) .

E_X= reported elite agreement ratio for case x

$$= \frac{\sum_X (P_P + A_P + O_P)}{\sum_X (P_P + A_P + O_P) + \sum_X |(P_N + A_N + O_N)|}$$

where P_P=thrust of positive presidential messages

A_P= " " " administration "

O_P= " " " opposition "

P_N= " " negative presidential "

A_N= " " " administration "

O_N= " " " opposition "

An "elite agreement" is being reported if

$$E_X < .30 \text{ or } E_X > .70$$

2) Pure partisanship is said to exist when the parties are clearly in conflict (signs of procon sums in a particular case are different) and intra-party "bickering" does not exist.

3) Bickering is said to exist within a party when the ratio of positive sum thrust to total message thrust (excluding neutral messages) is less than .65 but greater than .35.

For example,

B_x(admin)=bickering ratio of administration in case x

$$= \frac{\sum_x A_P}{\sum_x A_P + \sum_x |A_N|}$$, and so on for other sources.

Bickering occurs if $.35 < B_x < .65$

Television News and Policy Elites

American foreign policy has a tradition of bipartisanship. This was especially evident in the immediate post-WWII years, when the major foreign policy initiatives appeared to have substantial support across political parties. The Bretton Woods agreement, the United Nations Charter, the Greek-Turkish aid program, and the Marshall Plan, for example, passed Congress with over 83 percent support on the average (McCormick, 1985, p. 253; Dahl, 1950). McClosky, et al, (1960) reported that the average difference between Democratic and Republican leaders was smaller for foreign policy than any of the domestic policy areas they examined.

Despite the claim that television is presenting a range of debate, an apparent elite agreement on particular issues is sometimes presented. In the television data set ten of the thirty-two foreign policy cases (31%) received coverage which implied elite agreement (see Table 18).

Table 18: Television Foreign Policy Coverage and Official Elite Agreement

Case Type	TV Coverage
Elite Agreement	31% (10)
Pure Partisanship	22% (7)
Partisanship/bickering	16% (5)
President/Admin conflict	19% (6)
Neutral or no coverage	13% (4)
Totals	100% (32)

Of course, this agreement does not necessarily imply that the media are failing to provide important dissenting viewpoints. It may certainly be the case that the opposition party "genuinely" agrees with the president's position. This is almost surely the case in the Vietnam withdrawal issues which demonstrate elite agreement and parallel public opinion shifts.2 As Epstein (1973) noted

> in late 1968 and early 1969, the disengagement of American from Vietnam was virtually a consensus opinion, espoused by politicians on opposite sides of the spectrum, from George Wallace to Richard Nixon to Hubert Humphrey and President Johnson. Indeed, during the 1968 election campaign, it was hard to find any political figure openly

2 Opinion levels at T1 and T2 are presented in Appendices 2 and 3, along with calculated opinion change during this time.

> supporting an indefinite continuation of the war (p. 211).

More interesting perhaps is another single case of reported elite agreement and apparent success in shifting public opinion: the debate over American relations with the Arab world during late 1977. During the time period examined, over 70 percent of the official elite messages reported on television news were in favor of paying more attention to Arab demands because of our need for oil, even at the expense of our relations with Israel. The Republican opposition was relatively divided on the issue, but was virtually shut out of the television debate.

The U.S. abstention in the U.N. vote in October 1977 to censure Israel for developing settlements in occupied territories was generally seen on television as an action sympathetic to the Arabs. As Carter began to intensify his efforts to court Anwar Sadat, these overtures were reported extensively. While the president did seem to hedge his bets somewhat by remaining cautiously opposed to an independent Palestinian state, the time period under examination ended soon after the White House announced plans to sell warplanes to Egypt and other Middle East countries, sales which would mean proportionate cuts in sales to Israel.

As noted, elite opposition was somewhat muted. Senator Howard Baker did publicly criticize Carter's move toward the

Arabs (most notably in an address to a Jewish audience),[3] but the overall official elite "debate" was presented as one-sided in television news. Television commentary also fell into step with the president's line. Peter Jennings of ABC, for example, sympathetically compared the homeless Palestinians with the nomadic Jewish past. Sam Donaldson, also of ABC, was more pointed, focusing on the geostrategic importance of the area, and especially the importance of the oil supply to the U.S. Howard K. Smith, again of ABC, compared Begin to Kruschev and remarked that Israeli inflexibility was putting the U.S. in a difficult situation. There was coverage of some Jewish lobbies, but the overwhelming television message in the end was pro-Arab and public opinion appeared to shift in this direction (up seven percentage points, to over 40 percent).[4]

Yet the public displays remarkable resilience in the face of reported official elite agreement. More often than not, reported elite agreement did not translate into the desired public opinion shift. In seven of the ten elite

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[3] See Page (1978) for a discussion of shaping stands to a particular audience.

[4] These results contrast significantly with the same survey question results during the Ford presidency. Page and Shapiro (1984) note that the Times coverage during the Ford administration "gave no hint of reducing support for Israel...The apparent logic of U.S. dependence on Arab oil appears to have overwhelmed contrary sentiments" (P. 658).

agreement cases (70%), the consistent official messages either failed to shift public preferences at all, or opinion actually moved in the opposite direction.
This may be intuitively unsettling. We would expect that consistent official media barrages would have some positive effect.

Closer examination of the elite agreement "failures" shows that the public is indeed resistant to official elite messages. Two cases examined here seem to indicate that the public can be especially defiant when it comes to defense spending.

Defense spending was a focus of the 1976 presidential campaign and television news painted a picture of elite agreement: defense spending would have to be increased. Henry Jackson highlighted a strong defense in his campaign, as did Ronald Reagan, who warned that the U.S. was falling dangerously behind the Soviet Union militarily. President Ford continued to fight for a strong defense budget, promising to veto Congressional attempts to cut proposed military spending. There was some coverage of elite disagreement over specific programs (such as the Cranston-McGovern debate over the viability and necessity of the B-1 bomber), but over 82 percent of the elite messages examined in this time period were positive in tone in favor of increased defense spending.

Yet during this media bombardment, public opinion concerning the military budget remained virtually unchanged, with only about 45 percent favoring increased defense spending.

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 appeared to signal that a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy was forthcoming (Jordan, 1987). Reagan supporters believed that the new president

> was keenly aware of the nature of the threat and the American responses necessary to meet this threat: to restore the military balance; to contain Soviet expansion and reverse it...(Hyland, 1982, p. 527).

The rhetoric of the campaign changed little following the inauguration in January 1981. Throughout the first few months of the year alarmist views were aired widely on network news with few opposing viewpoints offered. Over 85 percent of the messages examined favored increased military spending, focusing on American impotence in the face of Cuban "adventurism," unrest in eastern Europe, instability in Central America, and, always, the Soviet "threat." Notions of agreement were not just television images; ultimately, some twenty-five Democrats in the House fully supported Reagan's budget proposals.[5]

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[5] One of these "boll weevils," as they came to be called, Phil Gramm of Texas, was later stripped of a committee assignment, resigned from the party, became a Republican,

Despite this blitz of elite agreement coverage, public support for increased defense spending during this time in fact declined by almost eight percentage points. There was little on the television news to explain this decline; some ecological concerns over the development of the MX missile were aired, as was some dissent on military involvement in El Salvador.

We should highlight two points on the above discussion of defense spending. First, we have underscored the fact that success in pushing through policy legislation may be quite different from success in influencing public opinion, that is, policy may at times appear to bypass public preferences. This supports many aspects of the ruling elite models. Yet the resilience of public opinion, the ability to withstand media barrages of the military-industrial complex and official elite agreement should offer some optimism.

At other times public opinion may not respond at all to elite messages. In his 1980 State of the Union address President Carter announced his intention to reinstate registration for a military draft. In the seven month period examined here over 80 percent of the elite messages offered by television news were in support of this measure.

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ran for reelection as a Republican, and won. (Dull, 1985, p. 135).

What little official discord there was was tactical, centering on the question of whether women should be expected to register. Still, the level of public approval for a return to a military draft at this time remained static.

Why did this official agreement fail to influence public opinion? First, it should be noted that the level of public approval of the draft was quite high (around 63 percent) and remained there. Perhaps public opinion had already reached an equilibrium of sorts (there had been a similar debate the year before, resulting in a bipartisan defeat of a draft registration bill; 63 percent, though, is far from a ceiling effect). Secondly, there was abundant television coverage of student unrest on campuses across the nation. Other interest groups opposed to registration were also cited (for example, the ACLU's promise to battle the measure in court was publicized). These types of messages, however, usually have negative effects. Television coverage was far from "saturated" (see Entman, 1991), but it seems likely that this equilibrium was sustained by factors other than media messages.

There are other instances of opinion immutability. In early 1980 the Carter administration began to give tangible expression to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and one of the most interesting proposed retaliations was boycott of

the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow. Television coverage of the policy community was virtually free of official elite dissent; over 97 percent of elite messages favored the boycott in the time period studied. The administration showered the evening news with positive support for the president, while the opposition was relatively silent, but generally supportive (George Bush publicly came out in favor of the boycott). Official support appeared to be total; in March the U.S. Post Office suspended sales of its Olympic stamp series. Yet public support for the boycott remained unchanged throughout this time.

Again we see that public preferences may reach floor or ceiling levels,[6] for in this case the public was already overwhelmingly in favor of the boycott early on (around 77 percent) and remained there. It is likely that shifts occurred earlier and cannot be seen in this data.[7] Again we also see that this issue was not an example of complete media saturation, since competing viewpoints outside of the

[6] Here I do not use the terms floor and ceiling in the strictest sense. It is possible, however, that a portion of the public may simply have evaluated the evidence and is not influenced by other messages. Conversely, see Page and Shapiro (1983) for a discussion of policies that have reached floors or ceilings, making it impossible for them to respond any further to opinion (p. 178).

[7] Real (1989) claims that there was a shift from 49-41 in favor to 73-19 after pro-boycott publicity.

official elite debate were offered on television. The U.S. Olympic President, Robert Kane, struggled against the proposed boycott and any number of athletes were interviewed, most expressing disappointment that they had trained for four years and would not have a chance at their dream. There was also coverage of those private citizens who supported the boycott; in January 1980 NBC ran a story in which the residents of Moscow, Kansas offered their town as an alternate site for the Games.

We can make a number of points with regard to the cases above in which television news depicted an official elite agreement. First, it may indeed by the case that there is an elite agreement in some policy situations. If so, there seem to be three possible outcomes: a) the public may agree with the official view independent of substantial elite manipulation. This may be the case in the items concerning withdrawal from Vietnam; b) the public may initially disagree with the elitist position, but be "persuaded" to some degree by television portrayals of a consistent official elite stance. This may have occurred in the U.S.-Arab policy case above, as well as in the case of the Olympic boycott (though our limited analysis does not support this conclusion); and c) the public may be impervious to or even defiant of media images of elite agreement, regardless of initial opinion levels. This

appears to be the case in the defense budget debates examined. The underlying mechanism that accounts for these diverse potential outcomes is a complex blend of the quality of information available, the salience of particular issues, and public predispositions and mutability.

Second, it may be that there is no true elite agreement. Using my measure of agreement I will show below that this is indeed often the case. But if dissent is muffled by a coopted media, and a false elite agreement is often portrayed, this is surely disturbing. Limited by these data and these analytic tools, we have little to offer, but further research with other data and methods may be helpful.

In sum, the television data offers some evidence to support notions of an elite which uses hegemonic ideology (especially appeals to anti-communism) in specific instances as a mobilizing tool operating through the mass media (Entman, 1990, p. 9). However, we have seen that these attempts may be unsuccessful, especially when the media is not completely saturated, that is, despite a portrayal of elite agreement, opposing views of other actors are offered. More importantly, as we see below, television news portrayals of elite agreement are not the norm in day-to-day foreign policy coverage.

Reported Elite Diversity

Many observers of U.S. politics have asserted that at the mass level there is little difference between the two major American political parties. Using party identifiers as a measure of party cleavage, Page (1978) found that issues of foreign policy involved little or no party cleavage (p.66). Others have shown that voters do not perceive differences between the two major parties and that Republicans and Democrats in nearly identical proportions favor certain policy options (McClosky, et al, 1960). Still others, though, find that on central foreign policy issues, Republicans and Democrats in Congress have typically taken opposite positions. As Brewer (1986) claims,

> ...although party differences in Congress have typically been substantial, they have been somewhat unstable over time and diluted by intraparty differences. Yet the congressional party differences on foreign policy issues have been much greater than the differences among the general public. These findings suggest that the two parties in Congress do offer voters a meaningful choice of general policy preferences...(p. 104).

Our concern here is in just how television presents these potential differences. We have seen that in some instances an official elite agreement is portrayed. Does television also show partisan debates and bickering? If so, which actors are successful and when?

The television networks actually do appear to present "balanced" coverage of some elite foreign policy debates. In this data set, using our measures outlined earlier, there were a total of seven "pure partisanship" cases, as well as five partisan cases where "bickering" occurred; a total of 38% of the cases demonstrated conflicting elite message directional thrusts along party lines.

The most striking portrayal of a pure partisan battle by television news in this data set was the Reagan administration's proposed sale of airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) aircraft to Saudi Arabia in late 1981. A full 78 percent of all presidential and administration stories favored the sale, while 79 percent of the opposition messages opposed it.

After a series of informal notifications of Congress (a feeling out process which continued for some months), the administration provided formal notification on October 1, 1981. The arms package consisted of five AWACS aircraft as well as other armament and equipment. After an overwhelming defeat in the House, the Senate voted 52-48 to reject a resolution to disapprove the arms deal. Further debate in the House was then suspended and the sale went forward.

It seems in the case of the AWACS sale that television news actually went so far out of its way to present the partisan battle that the extent of intraparty bickering was

slighted. Although it was noted that Senate opposition to the package was led by Robert Packwood (a Republican from Oregon), most of the media attention focused on the president himself. Republican opposition to the sale was underplayed on the whole, while the debate degenerated into questions of Reagan's own prestige and ability to persuade. A good number of the presidential source stories were staged eavesdroppings on Reagan's personal phone calls to reluctant lawmakers. Our analysis in this case appears to confirm the conclusions of those who see a personalization of elite debate in the news and an undue emphasis on a "winning-losing" theme which trivializes news and neglects major political issues.

> Thus the distorted emphasis on the AWACS vote in the Senate conveniently narrowed the whole issue to its purest personal form: the clash of individual power and human egos at the highest levels of government. The measure of this power and status was the simplistic matter of how the Senate would vote (Parenti, 1988, p. 29).

There was a good deal of interest group testimony provided on television which provided various positions. Pro-Arab groups, backed by the Saudi government (which hired an American public relations firm) were active, as were specific pro-Israeli lobbies (see Burke, 1986).

Evidently, these personal presidential snapshots were themselves seductive to the public. During the time in which we studied this debate, public approval for the AWACS

sale rose almost eight percentage points (though still only to 46 percent). Notably, Reagan's popularity rating during this time was approaching 60 percent.

In other partisan battles, however, the opposition party appears to come out with the upper hand in influencing public opinion. Jimmy Carter's battle for SALT II was futile and he ultimately found it politically expedient to withdraw the treaty from Senate consideration. The astounding drop of almost twenty percentage points in public approval of the treaty during the time we observed almost certainly had more to do with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 than with the televised reports of Republican opposition to the treaty (78 percent of opposition source stories were in opposition to the treaty).[8] Further, Carter's popularity rating was hovering at just over 30 percent during this time.

In some cases a partisan battle fails to sway public opinion at all. President Carter's pursuit of a Panama Canal Treaty was portrayed as a clear partisan debate[9] (84

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[8] I would disagree with Page, et al (1987) and Page and Shapiro (1991) that television news expert testimony was dominated by opponents of SALT II; although experts apparently split 60/40 in opposition to the treaty, this is hardly an example of overwhelming expert influence.

[9] Again, we should take care not to overstate the "pure" nature of the debate. Brewer (1986) notes it is true that "the Democrats voted overwhelmingly in favor of ratifying the treaties, whereas most Republicans voted against

percent of president/administration stories pro and 77 percent of opposition stories con); American approval of the treaty remained unchanged during the time period examined.[10]

Again we see the fundamental difference between influencing public opinion (at which Carter failed) and enacting legislation (at which he succeeded).[11] Perhaps most important here is the notion of salience. While certain groups claimed to have vested interests in the outcome of the debate (the AFL-CIO, the American Nazi Party, and Americans living in the Canal Zone), the general public probably had little interest in the Canal.[12]

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ratification." But, he continues, "there were also splits within the parties. Over three-fourths of the eastern Republicans voted yea; nearly three-fourths of the other Republicans voted nay. Two thirds of the southern Democrats voted in favor, but nine-tenths of the other Democrats did so" (pp. 103-104).

[10] Smith and Hogan (1987) claim that faulty polling data interpretation wrongly influenced policymakers to believe that the public approved of the treaties.

[11] Kegley and Wittkopf (1982), among others, make the interesting observation that public opinion is at times blindly obedient to almost any policy change...following the signing of the Canal treaties they claim there was an 18 percent increase in public support for turning the Canal over (from 8 percent to 26 percent). Page and Shapiro (1991), for example, note that public opinion responded to the objective levels of troop withdrawals from Vietnam.

[12] Throughout the period examined 22 percent of the population expressed no opinions about the Canal treaties.

Our study of intraparty bickering leads to one strong implication: In policy battles which are broadly characterized as partisan, publicized bickering within the party may spell disaster in attempts to influence public opinion. Using our earlier guidelines, five cases were categorized as partisan with intraparty bickering. In four of those cases (80 percent) the party which demonstrated internal cleavages failed to influence public opinion in the desired manner.

The nuclear freeze debate in 1982 shows how detrimental bickering can be to a president. Reagan publicly pronounced that a nuclear arms freeze would be dangerous to the U.S. and, in order to solidify a bargaining position, in May he proposed a program to build up the American nuclear weapons stockpile. Later in the year he alarmed many with his statement that he "could see where you could have an exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the buttons" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1982, p.93).

Meanwhile, television coverage of the administration showed a fifty-fifty split in freeze policy stands. Despite the anti-freeze positions of Alexander Haig and the efforts of State Department spokesman Richard Burt to explain the "need" for an arms build-up, a television viewer could not help but notice that Senator Mark Hatfield (Republican-

Oregon) had joined Edward Kennedy in introducing freeze legislation.[13]

We must be careful, however, not to rely too heavily on this notion of bickering as the determining factor in failure to sway public opinion. In our cases of arms limitation policies, it seems that the public has very strong, immutable preference for general notions of arms limitation (though as we saw in the SALT II debate, specific programs can be thought of in different ways based on specific circumstances, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan). Our data show very high levels of public support for general conceptions of arms control (around 85 percent). Little wonder Reagan could not influence them strongly in the other direction. Nevertheless, a television portrayal of administration inconsistency and bickering could hardly add to the ability of the president to persuade. Furthermore, in this case there was a tremendous amount of civil (non-official) coverage provided, virtually all of it in favor of the freeze. From demonstrations to Ground Zero Week to New England town meetings and a California referendum, television coverage of non-official messages was pro-freeze.

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[13] Hatfield and Kennedy also co-authored the book, Freeze, New York: Bantam Books, 1982.

Presidential and Administration Battles

Network television news also depicts some situations as battles between the president and his administration. In six of our foreign policy cases (19%), the directional thrusts of the president and his administration were in conflict. Rarely are the president and his administration at complete loggerheads; more often the president has taken a stand which goes against the grain of specific partisan actors. Partisan discord in many cases is simply the result of congressional parochialism which the president is able to remain above. While the specific congressman must be more sensitive to private pressures,

> ...the president's vantage point is much different. Because he has a nationwide constituency and a government-wide perspective on foreign policy problems, he necessarily brings a much broader outlook to them. And more to the point, perhaps, he can usually afford to alienate some local or narrow interests...without fear of electoral retribution. He can be rewarded for thinking in terms of the long run instead of problems of the moment. A senator or representative can not (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1982, p. 404).

The Carter administration's implementation of the grain embargo against the Soviet Union in response to the invasion of Afghanistan has been heralded by some as proof of a cooperative, conservative Congress deferring to presidential leadership in foreign policy. Perhaps more interesting, though, was the debate surrounding the maintenance of this

embargo early in the Reagan administration. This case highlights a number of interesting points.

Reagan, ironically, capitalized on Carter's hardline embargo stance in the 1980 presidential campaign. Despite the fact that his own career had been built on a hawkish response to communism, Reagan condemned the embargo as government interference into free markets.[14] Reagan the president, however, sang a much different tune, at least as portrayed on the television news; immediately following his inauguration he announced he was in favor of continuing the embargo. He was supported by other hardliners in his cabinet, the most vocal being Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

Although the scope of the debate was much smaller than that which occurred during the initial decision to apply the embargo, the ultimate impression presented by the television news was one of administration bickering, with the president's partisans ultimately (as measured by procons) calling for an end to the embargo. The Democrats were, interestingly, in concert in opposition to the embargo and, during the time examined, public support for the measure also dropped slightly. A vocal agricultural community,

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[14] Entman (1990, pp. 9-10) claims that this incident and others reveal that elites easily and frequently mold the hegemonic ideology to suit practical contingencies.

interested in Soviet grains sales, was supported, not surprisingly, by a sympathetic Secretary of Agriculture. The embargo was lifted.

The grain embargo case shows that policy cleavages may indeed shift over time. These "policy realignments" may occur for a variety of reasons (Page, 1978, pp. 99-100) and they are reported by television news. This case also highlights differences between candidate and elected official.[15]

Sometimes a candidate or candidates can give the impression of considerable dissension within a party, especially if he is attempting to wrest the nomination from an incumbent.[16] This appears to have been the case in the defense budget debates in early 1976, where Republican candidate Reagan and incumbent Ford were falling over themselves in attempts to be seen as the "strongest" on defense. Administration bickering over Soviet relations during this time was also attributable in large part to

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[15] Melanson (1991) points out that Jimmy Carter also fell prey to this phenomenon. "Whereas candidate Carter in 1976 had pledged to cut at least five billion dollars from the defense budget, in 1980, when running for reelection, he sought to take credit for reversing 'a dangerous decline in defense spending, from 1969 to 1976, when 'real defense outlays, that is constant dollars spent declined every year'" (p. 112).

[16] This is somewhat similar to Page's notion of "insurgent candidates" (1978, p. 118).

Reagan's attacks on Ford. Considerable administration confusion over whether Henry Kissinger should be retained as Secretary of State was also portrayed on television, mostly a result of Republican campaign politics.

Another case in which television news portrayed differences between the president and his administration and partisans was the question of response to the storming of the American Embassy in Teheran by militant followers of the Ayatollah Khomeini on November 4, 1979, and the capture of 51 U.S. official diplomatic representatives. Considerable turmoil within the administration was evidenced in the coverage put forth by the networks. While resort to force was generally opposed by the administration as a whole (led by the State Department and Cyrus Vance), much attention was also given to dissenting partisans, most notably the National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Carter himself was shown as "waffling" somewhat, rejecting the use of force altogether, then amending so as not to rule out altogether the military options.

While public opinion was highly supportive of the economic rather than military options, that support eroded somewhat in the time period examined (a drop of 6 percentage points, with still almost 75 percent opposed to the use of force). Ultimately, the abortive hostage rescue mission in

April 1980 led to the resignation of Vance in protest[17] and may have contributed to President Carter's defeat later in the year.

The general image of the Carter administration was one of conflict. The image of Carter himself, as presented on television, was one of inconsistency and indecision. Ultimately,

> inconsistency or variation of any sort leads to charges of "trimming" or "waffling," and to negative evaluations of a candidate's personal characteristics. It is seen as incompatible with a high level of knowledge and integrity. The media ensure that blatant changes or contradictions are reported or indeed magnified...(Page, 1978, p.150).

There may also be issues where official messages on television news are essentially neutral, that is, the total thrust is close to zero, the percentage of neutral stories is very high, or there is very little coverage at all. One survey question in 1972, for example, asked whether the U.S. should accept a coalition government in Saigon if it included communists. Official television messages were many, but ninety-seven percent were neutral in tone. The official debate was no debate at all. There may indeed have

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[17] Vance's resignation was primarily attributed to his objection to the hostage rescue mission, but was probably also a reaction to deeper feelings of exclusion from Carter's inner circle and turmoil in the foreign affairs bureaucracy, especially the rift with Brzezinski (Melanson, 1991, pp. 109-110).

been no real position-taking on this issue; policymakers may have been cautious, hopeful for peace, but unwillingly to publicly "give in" to communist participation.

Sometimes issues (or non-issues) simply do not get covered. Perhaps the official sources refuse to speak out. More likely, the issue is not considered salient by newsmakers and those who select the news. However, a lack of debate may shortchange the public. For example, in our examination of television news concerning new laws to prohibit corporations from making illegal political contributions only two stories were aired. Yet an astounding 90 percent of the public was consistently in favor of tougher contribution laws. Surely this level of preference meets the criteria of some test of salience or newsworthiness.

The New York Times and Official Elite Discourse

The most striking finding in an examination of Times elite debate coverage is the tremendous emphasis on agreement. As we can see in Table 19, eleven of the eighteen (61%) foreign affairs cases examined met the elite agreement presentation criteria.

Table 19: Media Foreign Policy Coverage and Elite Agreement

Case Type	Television	New York Times
Elite Agreement	32% (10)	61% (11)
Pure partisanship	22% (7)	11% (2)
Partisanship/bickering	16% (5)	-- (0)
President/Admin conflict	19% (6)	11% (2)
Neutral or no coverage	13% (4)	17% (3)
Totals	100% (32)	100% (18)

Again, this may be further evidence of hyperbolic policy elite influence on Times news. We do find again, however, that elite agreement does not necessarily translate into success in shaping public opinion.[18] In this data set reported elite agreement coincided with a shift in public opinion in only four of the eleven cases (36%).

In late 1939 the question of whether to aid the allied effort and enter the war against Germany appeared to be dominated by the public's isolationist sentiment and elite emphasis on neutrality. In November President Roosevelt

[18] Viewing this result as an optimistic one is a position which can certainly be overstated. There are, of course, notions of democracy in which a rational public, yielding to information and transaction costs, delegates the burden of political decisionmaking to a well-informed elite, which in turn educates, informs, and consults the public.

signed the Neutrality Act of 1939, which prohibited American ships from carrying passenger or cargoes to belligerent nations and required military and nonmilitary exports to warring countries to change ownership before leaving American ports. While there was some debate over the appropriate means of avoiding involvement, there was virtually no elite dissent presented in the Times. During the time period examined, public support for neutrality actually rose 6 percentage points, to 77 percent.

One year later both public preferences and New York Times assessments of the elite debate had changed dramatically. The policy option of helping England financially even at the risk of U.S. involvement in the war was supported by an increasing proportion of the public, up seven percentage points to 67 percent. This rise followed a blitz of elite messages in the Times which supported increased American involvement (97 percent of elite messages were positive). While elite media messages may have influenced the American people, it may be that they had already been shocked out of complacency (as were the elites themselves) by the fall of Norway and Denmark, the invasion of Belgium and Holland, and the overrunning of the Maginot Line, all prior to the time that this new policy question was posed (indeed, in the time period examined in this case, public preference for greater U.S. involvement already stood

at a 60 percent approval level). The Lend-Lease Act became law on March 11.[19]

Again we seem to see that a portrayal of elite agreement may coincide with a shift in public opinion, but causal connections are difficult to discern and complicated by clear evidence that the public reacts to outside events and circumstances (again, usually mediated by other actors). This case does point to some evidence of opinion leadership, yet given the tremendous popularity rating of Roosevelt at this time (over 70 percent), the opinion shift may seem rather modest.[20] The above also appears to show the tendency for the New York Times to, perhaps falsely, present a picture of elite agreement when one does not exist. As others have noted, the Lend-Lease Act proposal provoked a titanic debate in Congress, a debate in which elite neutralist sentiment was slighted by the Times coverage.

The overall impression of elite agreement given by the New York Times as opposed to television is dramatically

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[19] This may appear to suggest an "events" explanation of opinion shift which is not supported by statistical analysis. It is important to remember that events are important, but are probably mediated by other actors. The actions of an aggressive nation are interpreted and reported by a variety of other sources and would be coded accordingly.

[20] Page and Shapiro (1984) note that this rather small change suggests that there are severe limits to any president's powers of opinion leadership (p. 657).

highlighted by an examination of the seven common foreign policy cases. In six of the seven cases television coverage was classified as neutral or demonstrating substantial bickering. In all six of these cases New York Times coverage of these issues portrayed elite agreement.

Strikingly, three of these cases of divergent media coverage involved the Middle East, with two directly examining proposed U.S. policy moves toward favoring the Arab countries at the potential expense of our relationship with Israel. In comparison with television coverage, the New York Times was clearly pro-Israel in the tone of its treatment of specific policy initiatives.

In October 1974 the Palestinian Liberation Organization won the right to appear before the United Nations General Assembly. I examined the five month period following this event. Differences between television and Times coverage become apparent almost immediately. While Kissinger's famed "shuttle diplomacy" was treated by television news in a neutral or even positive manner ("...another Kissinger trip to get peace talks moving..."), the Times coverage was much less optimistic, depicting the trips as "salvage efforts" and the like.

Network news in this case seemed to focus on new defense cooperation agreements with Arab states. There was abundant coverage of U.S. plans to sell a nuclear power

plant to Egypt, the supplying of Jordan with American-made missiles, and the training in San Diego of Iranians and Saudi Arabian National Guardsmen to protect oil fields. The Times seems to slight these stories and focus on administration efforts to initiate and implement energy savings programs; austerity programs and achieving independence from foreign oil are presented in a pro-Israeli light.

In all, television news in this case portrayed the administration as relatively balanced, though slightly in favor of movement toward the Arab countries (62 percent of the administration story sums were in favor). In contrast, the Times depicted the administration as reluctant to move toward the Arab countries at the expense of Israel (75 percent of the administration story sums rejected this notion). Television also provided more balanced coverage of interest groups and aired conflicting viewpoints. Times coverage, on the other hand, focused on pro-Israeli groups and rallies, and consistently interpreted business interest oil conservation moves as anti-Arab.

The conclusion that the Times was overwhelmingly pro-Israeli is, of course, not demonstrated. However, there is considerable evidence that the New York Times tended to depict elite agreement more than did television and that Times coverage of Arab-Israeli issues may have been

significantly different from that of network television news.[21]

Because the Times appears often to present an image of official elite agreement, there are naturally fewer instances of reported elite diversity. Though our data set here is small, we see only two cases which meet our criteria of "partisan debate," neither of which demonstrates party bickering. Interestingly, the administration position was in line with public opinion shifts in both cases.

At first glance our findings here regarding American attitudes toward secrecy may seem puzzling. In the brief time period examined, the proportion of the public agreeing that the government officials in charge of our foreign policy were telling the people all they should rose by over four percentage points. Yet during this time, in mid-1948 Senator Robert Taft (Republican-Ohio) was directly challenging Truman, claiming that U.S. foreign policy baffled both Congress and the American people because they

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[21] There have been a number of studies which allege pro-Israeli bias. Terry (1971) found "a rather consistent pro-Israeli and anti-Arab bias" in her study of three American newspapers, including the Times. Mousa (1984) claimed that "Jewish sources could have an important influence on unfavorable reporting about Arabs" (p. 165). Yet, also see Talese (1969), who claims that the Times "does not want to be seen as a 'Jewish newspaper,' which indeed it is not, and it will bend over backwards to prove this point, forcing itself at times into unnatural positions, contorted by compromise, balancing both sides, careful not to offend..." (p. 93).

were seldom provided sufficient information (NYT, May 23, 1948). Meanwhile, the Truman administration was grappling with a fundamental democratic dilemma: how can the secrecy needed for effective foreign policymaking be reconciled with open access to information?. Furthermore, the Hiss-Chambers trials were also underway.

Yet, it is not surprising that an incumbent administration guards its right to secrecy, while the opposition challenges it. Nor is it surprising that during a time of "atomic spy ring" publicity the public might paranoically shift toward greater foreign policy secrecy. Finally, it should be noted that despite the four point shift mentioned above, a majority of Americans still questioned whether they were getting enough information from the government (61 percent).

In our other Times portrayal of a partisan battle the Eisenhower administration had some apparent success in persuading the public that the U.S. should unilaterally (if need be) defend Formosa in the event of Chinese Communist attack. In this case a good number of Americans already agreed with this option (62 percent) early on in our observations, rising to 67 percent at our second survey date. Much of this rise may be attributed to the fact that the U.S. had concluded a bilateral defense treaty committing itself to the defense of Taiwan and the nearby Pescadores

Islands in December 1954 (we have already noted the apparent tendency of the public to be positively influenced by policy actions).

We do see Times coverage of two cases of president-administration conflicts, both late 1969 Vietnam items. Again we also see that the president does not necessarily dominate public perceptions in these types of cases, despite claims that the president enjoys advantages in the contest to shape news, even in the face of sharp elite criticism (Entman, 1991, p. 3).

Interestingly, the Times data set contained three cases in which no official debate was offered. The fact that public opinion did shift in the time period examined certainly points out that other factors and actors may be drivers of public preferences.

As portrayed in the media, the U.S. policymaking elite do not appear to be united. Despite our very real concerns about hegemonic ideology and media framing (Entman, 1991), elite dissent in many cases appears to be real.[22]

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[22] The important question, of course, is just how major and fundamental this diversity is. We must remember that our opinion items themselves do not attempt to measure notions of serious challenges to hegemonic ideology; we must temper this finding with the recognition that disagreement and debate often does simply involve matters of tactics, rather than strategy.

"Consensus remains an inappropriate description of the (contemporary) domestic context in which American foreign policy is formulated and sustained" (Wittkopf, 1990, p. 445). Media coverage appears to be diverse and though this hegemonic framing does occur, the media seem to present a wide variety of policy stances and attempt to track policy "realignments."

On some issues the media do present a picture of elite agreement. Sometimes this picture of agreement may be justified, sometimes it may not. Diversity in elite views is less likely to be presented in the New York Times than on network news. Reported agreement in any case does not translate into elite success in influencing public opinion, and there are few instances of complete media saturation with the elite view. However, elite agreement may often lead to policy success.

The media quite often present policy debates in terms of partisanship and even intraparty bickering, though this is more likely to be the case on television news than in the Times. Perceptions of bickering are sometimes related to campaigns, when "rogue" candidates are more likely to attack the party line (if there is one). The media also seem to

have few qualms about highlighting president-administration squabbles.[23]

There are issues where the media provide predominantly neutral coverage and those where no coverage at all is offered. This may be acceptable from almost any standpoint if these issues are not salient. Issues on which the public or even an attentive public may have interest, though, deserve treatment, both by policy elites and by the media.

There does appear to be a rather healthy pluralism in the policy debate as presented by the American media (and especially so on television). Again, however, we must remember that this debate takes place within some very real boundaries. These data do not allow us to explore the extent of these boundaries. Further, notions of reported elite agreement and diversity are complicated by the nature of polling data. There is clearly some relationship between what opinion items are explored by a polling organization and what is important to official elites. For example, the very fact that these items have been measured at two points in time may indicate that there is some controversy surrounding these items; that is, there is more elite debate and hence a tendency to see diversity reported in the media.

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[23] See Entman (1981) for some interesting advice to a president on how to reduce publicized conflicts with Congress (most importantly, negotiating in private and encouraging party revival).

Finally, the generalizations above depend heavily on the selection of particular case studies, however broad the range of items examined.

Despite the fact that public preference shifts do not always coincide with policy pronouncements or legislation, it appears that public interests are often represented by leaders who are themselves in competition. There is much conflict among American policy elites and that conflict is reported to the public by the media.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Afterthoughts

We have seen clear evidence that what is reported in the media influences the policy preferences of the American public. Despite the fact that public opinions appear to be quite stable over the medium-term, media messages can drive the general population to adopt new preferences or more strongly reinforce those already held.

Different actors communicating with the public through the media, however, demonstrate a wide variety of salience, credibility, and range of impacts. Perhaps the most important finding here is the strong influence of "experts." One "probably pro" expert news story in the New York Times is associated with almost two percentage points of opinion change (b=1.76), significant to the .05 level. The impact of experts in television news is even more astonishing: a single "probably pro" expert network news story is estimated to produce almost three and a half percentage points of opinion change (b=3.38), also significant to the .05 level. The impact of these experts is even more pronounced in foreign affairs than in domestic issues.

In many cases expert testimony does fall into line with administration positions and these experts are often ex-government officials. Yet there is a good deal of evidence to support the notion of "expert pluralism." Experts, despite close ties with the government establishment, seem to demonstrate a fundamental independence from official elite influence. The expert testimony examined here also refuted notions of audience-seeking; the thrust of expert news was virtually unrelated to public opinion. Experts appear to offer a wide range of policy analyses and stances and contribute to a healthy public debate over many issues in U.S. policy.

Commentators also appear to wield a good deal of influence over the public. In television news commentary a single "probably pro" story is associated with over four percentage points of opinion change (b=4.36). This figure differs significantly from zero at the .01 level. The impact of news commentary was also seen in the newspaper data set, where a single "probably pro" editorial in the New York Times resulted in almost a full one percent change in public opinion (b=.85). This was also significant to the .05 level. Again commentators had an even greater impact in foreign affairs.

The author is more skeptical concerning the independence of this commentary, however. We have seen

strong evidence of elite influence on New York Times commentary as well as an apparent effect of Times editorial stances upon television commentary. While news commentators either constitute or stand for major influences on public opinion, potential elite manipulations make the exact nature of those influences hard to judge.

Our examination of the impact of political elites clearly highlights the complexity of the causal relationships we are attempting to ferret out. There is a wide range of factors, such as presidential popularity, issue salience, and perceptions of elite consensus, which may affect the policy preferences of the public.

The initial results which showed little or no presidential influences on public opinion were puzzling. However, in the case of presidential messages we were able to introduce, without loss of generalization, controls which allowed us to see more clearly the complexity of elite influences. In general, popular presidents seem to wield more influence over public opinion than do unpopular ones. This is especially true in the case of television messages, where, for a number of reasons, notions of popularity, winning and losing, and the like are heavily relied upon in constructing and presenting the news. Presidential popularity seems less important in print news. Despite the importance of presidential credibility, we also have

evidence that the public does discern between policy and popularity. Executive popularity also appears to interact with the effects of other news sources as well; for example, as might be expected, experts and commentators seem to have more influence in times of low confidence in government (as measured by presidential popularity).

News portrayals of elite agreement and diversity appear to have some impact on public opinion. However, elite consensus in the media is no guarantee of success in influencing policy preferences. The public appears to be fairly resilient, often resisting media saturation with a cohesive elite position. Perceptions of intraparty bickering in fact appear to negatively influence the ability of a political party to drive public opinion. While some issues are portrayed by the media in terms of elite agreement, this is not the norm, especially in the case of television news. In general a healthy range of debate and positions are provided to the American public. However, the New York Times is much more prone to characterize official elite discourse as consensual, while television more often presents diversity and bickering.

Events in and of themselves appear to have little independent impact on policy preferences. The influence of specific events is usually mediated through other actors, especially policy elites, news commentators and experts.

Interest groups are generally viewed in an unfavorable light by an American public which may see these groups as self-serving. The nature of our data do not allow for a comprehensive disaggregation of these groups, though, and the impacts of specific groups may be masked in this analysis.

We have also seen that foreign news is scorned by the public. Interestingly, though, foreign sentiment (as presented by the American media) concerning certain issues is in line with some apparent trends in U.S. opinions, especially gun control and abortion.

The differences between television news and the New York Times highlight an important finding. Television appears actually to be the more powerful force in influencing public opinion (though we must remember the indirect influences which the Times may wield). Official sources dominate both media. However, television appears to offer a wider range of debate and is generally more loosely controlled than is the Times. This finding does cause problems for cruder versions of hegemonic theses.

There is little evidence that there is anything unique about the way the public reacts to information about foreign policy as opposed to domestic issues, despite our expectation that the populace would be more dependent on the media in issues of foreign affairs.

In sum, we have found some evidence for certain notions of hegemonic influence and media framing. Yet, the general characterization of policy debate as portrayed in the media (and especially so on television) appears to be one of rather healthy pluralism. Elites obviously exist, but are pluralistic and constrained. The picture painted by the media appears to be one of multiple public interests being represented by leaders and other actors who are themselves in competition with one another. Further, the relatively neutral and independent information providers like experts seem to have more potent direct effects on public opinion than do more self-serving groups such as special interest organizations. These findings are very much in line with other research which suggests that

> objective information may play a significant part in opinion formation and change and that certain of the more blatant efforts to manipulate opinion are not successful (Page, et al, 1987, p. 40).

If indeed the quality of public opinion reflects the quality of information and choices available, democratic theorists have cause for optimism and those who would fear public participation can safely rethink their position. While "good" policy information and a discerning public do not ensure elite responsiveness, democracy certainly stands a better chance under these circumstances.

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Appendix 1

Effects of TV News from Different Sources:
Opinion Change as Dependent Variable

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.44*	0.24
	(0.20)	(0.24)
Administration and Partisans	-0.04	-0.08
	(0.24)	(0.13)
Opposition Party	-0.62**	0.42
	(0.21)	(0.23)
Interest Groups	-0.28	-0.35
	(0.23)	(0.20)
Events	-0.50	0.49
	(0.56)	(0.45)
Commentary	2.15	4.50**
	(1.26)	(1.07)
Experts	-0.36	3.56*
	(1.61)	(1.51)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	0.24	0.08
	(0.68)	(0.59)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.38	0.54
	(0.54)	(0.50)
Courts	1.71	-1.97*
	(1.97)	(0.95)
Constant	-2.74**	
	(0.79)	

R^2=.54 Adjusted R^2=.39 n=80

Effects of Print News from Different Sources:
Opinion Change as Dependent Variable

News Source	PreT-1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.84	-0.29
	(0.74)	(0.76)
Administration	0.28	0.02
	(0.44)	(0.24)
Opposition Party	-1.16	-0.46
	(0.90)	(0.41)
Interest Groups	-1.13	0.32
	(1.15)	(0.40)
Events	1.99	1.15
	(2.65)	(1.68)
Commentary	-0.84	0.65
	(0.96)	(0.40)
Experts	0.39	2.54*
	(1.85)	(1.08)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	0.90	-0.82
	(0.99)	(0.72)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.17	-1.60
	(1.21)	(1.56)
Constant	-1.82	
	(1.14)	

R^2=.43 Adjusted R^2=.04 n=51

Note: Entries in both tables are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of shift of opinion from T1 to T2 on the sums of the relevant pro-con story scores from various sources for each data set. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

Appendix 2

Policy Item Descriptions: Television Cases

Case Number	Survey Item	Change in % favoring or agreeing T1,T2	Survey Org.	T1-T2 Dates*
1-115	Break up major oil companies	-0.4 63.8 63.4	Harris	11/25/75- 3/17/76
2-116	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by selling tax free bonds to finance nuclear power plants**	+0.6 61.8 62.4	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
3-117	Continue withdrawal of US troops even if South Vietnam government collapses**	13.4 54.6 68.0	Harris	10/10/69- 4/15/70
4-122	Set up new govt. agency to protect consumers**	-1.3 74.5 73.2	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
5-123	Better relations w/ Arabs because of our need for oil even if it means supporting Israel less**	+10.2 19.4 29.6	Harris	12/15/74- 3/8/75
6-124	Dissolution of each federal agency every four yrs. unless it can justify its expenditures	+3.1 75.3 78.4	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
7-125	Vietnam war morally wrong and we should get out as soon as possible	-6.0 49.2 43.2	Harris	10/10/69- 12/11/69

8-126	Pay Board should get tougher with requests for pay increases**	-9.6 64.7 55.1	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
9-127	Coalition govt. in Saigon including Communists if only way to get peace in Vietnam**	-1.5 42.5 41.0	Harris	8/30/72- 10/4/72
10-132	Present system of price and wage controls rather than a wage-price freeze	-26.5 63.2 36.7	Harris	12/14/72- 6/15/73
11-134	Alleviate oil. gas and electricity shortages by establishing a progressive tax that would penalize owners of larger cars**	-10.8 35.7 24.9	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
12-135	Federal economic policy: lowering inflation more important than lowering unemployment**	-2.0 64.3 62.3	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
13-137	Federal program giving jobs to unemployed	-3.0 66.6 63.6	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
14-138	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by leasing more federally owned lands to oil companies for exploration**	-7.1 84.9 77.8	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
15-139	US can't leave until it has insured South Vietnam's independence**	+4.3 58.6 62.9	Harris	10/10/69- 12/11/69
16-143	Raise taxes on US companies**	-6.5 39.0 32.5	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75

17-146	Agreement between Russia and US for settlement of Middle East problem**	-8.6 90.6 82.0	Harris	6/15/71- 2/15/72
18-147	Tough law prohibiting corporations from making illegal political contributions at home and abroad**	-1.0 90.9 89.9	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
19-149	Get enough Arab oil at lower prices by stopping military aid to Israel**	-8.5 37.9 29.4	Harris	12/15/74- 3/8/75
20-150	Too much tax money goes to military for defense**	-7.6 56.1 48.5	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
21-152	Eliminate depletion allowance for oil tax shelter**	-9.1 58.0 48.9	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
22-154	Immediate cease-fire in Vietnam with each side holding the ground it now occupies	-5.9 84.9 79.0	Harris	10/10/69- 12/11/69
23-155	Federal capital gains taxes are too high	-8.5 56.0 47.5	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
24-158	State sales tax is too high	-6.9 61.4 54.5	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
25-159	Busing for desegregation	-2.6 20.4 17.8	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
26-161	Liquor taxes are too high**	-14.2 48.2 34.0	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
27-164	Use of Phase 4 system of controls for another year**	+8.6 47.5 56.1	Harris	10/13/73- 1/2/74

28-165	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by freezing all gasoline, home heating, and power prices that consumers pay**	+2.1 50.2 52.3	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
29-167	Price Commission should get tough on enforcing price controls on clothing stores**	+1.4 74.8 76.2	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
30-301	Constitutional amendment prohibiting abortions	-8.3 35.6 27.3	NYT/CBS	9/20/80- 10/01/80
31-302	Balance budget even if less money for programs such as health and education	-1.1 47.3 46.2	NYT/CBS	3/21/76- 6/17/76
32-303	Smaller govt. providing less services	+7.6 49.4 57.0	NYT/CBS	6/17/76- 10/10/76
33-304	Busing for desegregation	-0.9 18.1 17.2	NYT/CBS	1/28/81- 6/24/81
34-305	Increase govt. spending for military defense	+0.9 42.8 43.7	NYT/CBS	4/12/76- 6/17/76
35-306	Increase govt. spending on domestic programs	-4.2 72.4 68.2	NYT/CBS	2/15/80- 3/14/80
36-307	Relax pollution laws to help solve energy crisis	-2.8 51.1 48.3	NYT/CBS	2/5/76- 4/12/76
37-308	Govt. should ration gasoline	-11.5 67.4 55.9	NYT/CBS	6/5/79- 7/10/79

38-309	Equal Rights Amendment	+1.9 60.0 61.9	NYT/CBS	6/20/80- 10/18/80
39-310	Increase federal spending on military and defense	-7.8 63.5 55.7	NYT/CBS	1/28/81- 4/24/81
40-311	Increase federal spending on Food Stamps	-2.6 50.0 47.4	NYT/CBS	1/28/81- 4/24/81
41-312	Increase federal spending on domestic programs	+0.7 62.6 63.3	NYT/CBS	9/12/80- 10/18/80
42-313	Large income tax cut	+0.3 25.8 26.1	NYT/CBS	9/20/80- 1/28/81
43-314	Reagan's proposed cuts in income taxes	-5.4 77.1 71.7	NYT/CBS	4/24/81- 6/25/81
44-315	Use of non-military (economic) weapons on Iran	-6.0 80.7 74.7	NYT/CBS	1/11/80 4/12/80
45-316	Replace Kissinger as Secretary of State	+0.7 46.4 47.1	NYT/CBS	5/21/76- 6/18/76
46-317	Pay more attention to Arab demands because of our need for oil even if it means antagonizing Israel	+7.0 33.3 40.3	NYT/CBS	10/25/77- 4/5/78
47-318	Send troops to protect our oil sources in Middle East if supply is threatened	-3.8 71.9 68.1	NYT/CBS	2/15/80- 3/14/80
48-319	US participation in 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow even if Soviets remain in Afghanistan	+1.3 22.6 23.9	NYT/CBS	2/15/80- 4/12/80

49-320	Treaties giving Panama control of the Panama Canal in the year 2000	-1.0 37.2 36.2	NYT/CBS	10/25/77- 1/10/78
50-321	It is not in our interest to be so friendly with Russia because we are getting less than we are giving them	-1.2 68.2 67.0	NYT/CBS	4/13/76- 6/18/76
51-322	Relax tensions with Russia	-10.2 56.5 46.3	NYT/CBS	5/21/82 9/16/82
52-323	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II)	-19.4 75.0 55.6	NYT/CBS	6/5/79- 11/1/79
53-324	Strengthen Social Security system even if higher taxes are needed	0.4 65.2 65.6	NYT/CBS	3/21/76- 6/18/76
54-325	Elimination of most welfare programs	-4.7 47.1 42.2	NYT/CBS	3/21/76- 6/18/76
55-326	Reduce govt. spending for health, education, and programs for the poor	+1.8 34.4 35.9	NYT/CBS	3/21/76- 4/13/76
56-327	Favor federal govt. seeing that every person who wants to work has a job	+3.4 71.3 74.7	NYT/CBS	3/21/76- 6/18/76
57-341	Allow women to have abortions	+3.4 56.0 59.4	LA Times	8/1/81- 1/5/82
58-342	Law requiring police permit before purchasing handgun	-3.4 77.1 73.7	LA Times	1/20/81- 4/15/81

59-343	Embargo of grain to Russia	-1.3 54.2 52.9	LA Times	11/11/80- 4/15/81
60-344	SALT II nuclear weapons agreement	+2.1 47.2 49.3	LA Times	11/11/80- 4/15/81
61-345	Reduce taxes in order to stimulate business	+9.5 67.9 77.4	LA Times	8/24/82- 11/16/82
62-401	Federal govt. provide a fixed amount for presidential and congressional candidates and private contributions prohibited	+6.3 66.7 73.0	Gallup	6/2/73- 9/9/73
63-402	Bring back wage and price controls	+2.5 58.4 60.9	Gallup	4/15/78- 7/9/78
64-403	Make wage-price controls more strict	-7.0 57.6 50.6	Gallup	3/25/72- 8/27/72
65-404	Should be against the law to employ a person who has come into the US without proper papers	-9.6 84.5 75.8	Gallup	3/26/77- 10/2/77
66-405	Forbid the possession of handguns except by the policy and other authorized persons	+3.0 40.2 43.2	Gallup	4/4/81- 6/1/81
67-406	Keep the present 55 mile-per-hour speed limit	-6.2 82.7 76.5	Gallup	9/13/80- 2/15/81
68-407	Death penalty for persons convicted of murder	-0.2 55.1 54.9	Gallup	10/30/71- 3/4/72

69-408	Busing Negro and white children from one school district to another	-2.6 20.7 18.1	Gallup	8/28/71- 10/10/71
70-409	Bring home all US troops from Vietnam before the end of this year	-6.6 78.3 71.7	Gallup	1/9/71- 2/20/71
71-412	Withdraw all our troops from Vietnam immediately	-9.6 31.9 22.3	Gallup	6/15/69- 11/15/69
72-413	Reduce month by month the number of US troops in Vietnam	+4.0 67.1 71.1	Gallup	1/15/69- 6/25/69
73-414	After withdrawal of troops, US should continue to send military aid to South Vietnam	-15.1 56.7 41.6	Gallup	7/15/72- 12/1/72
74-415	Return to military draft at this time	+0.9 62.1 63.0	Gallup	2/2/80- 7/13/80
75-501	Diplomatic recognition of Cuba by the US	-14.6 58.8 44.2	NBC	4/25/77- 6/22/77
76-503	US-Russia agreement which would limit nuclear weapons	-5.5 85.3 79.8	NBC	2/5/79- 3/20/79
77-504	Freeze on the production of nuclear weapons by US and Russia	-0.6 83.0 82.4	NBC	6/14/82- 10/19/82
78-505	Fair housing and fair employment laws for homosexuals	+1.1 54.9 56.0	NBC	6/27/78- 10/17/78

79-509	Constitutional amendment permitting organized prayers in public schools	-2.5 71.6 69.1	NBC	5/10/82- 8/10/82
80-519	Sell AWACS advanced radar planes to Saudi Arabia	+7.5 38.5 46.0	NBC	9/28/81- 10/26/81

*T1 and T2 survey dates are midpoints for the interviewing periods, which cover less than one week.

**These cases are common to the television and New York Times data sets.

Appendix 3

Policy Item Descriptions: Newspaper Cases

Case Number	Survey Item	Change in % favoring or agreeing, T1,T2	Survey Org.	T1-T2 Dates*
1-102	Too many Price Commission roll back orders	-2.8 74.5 71.7	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
2-103	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by govt. supervision of production	-6.5 84.3 77.8	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
3-104	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by govt. setting priority of use for the public of available supplies	-2.0 64.8 62.8	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
4-105	Federal government take all controls off all prices and wages	-12.2 34.0 21.8	Harris	10/13/73- 1/2/74
5-116	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by selling tax free bonds to finance nuclear power plants**	+0.6 61.8 62.4	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
6-117	Continue withdrawal of US troops even if South Vietnam government collapses**	+13.4 54.6 68.0	Harris	10/10/69- 4/15/70

7-122	Set up new govt. agency to protect consumers**	-1.3 74.5 73.2	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
8-123	Better relations w/ Arabs because of our need for oil even if it means supporting Israel less**	+10.2 19.4 29.6	Harris	12/15/74- 3/8/75
9-126	Pay Board should get tougher with requests for pay increases**	-9.6 64.7 55.1	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
10-127	Coalition govt. in Saigon including Communists if only way to get peace in Vietnam**	-1.5 42.5 41.0	Harris	8/30/72- 10/4/72
11-130	Price Commission should get tougher with electric and gas companies in enforcing price controls	+7.9 67.6 75.5	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
12-131	Use federal govt. to try to make a fairer redistribution of the wealth of the country	-4.3 49.1 44.8	Harris	8/30/76 10/24/76
13-133	Cut back number of people employed by federal govt. even if must cut back on education, health, and other social programs	-0.5 43.4 42.9	Harris	8/1/76- 10/24/76
14-134	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by establishing a progressive tax that would penalize owners of larger cars**	-10.8 35.7 24.9	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74

15-135	Federal economic policy: lowering inflation more important than lowering unemployment**	-2.0 64.3 62.3	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76
16-138	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by leasing more federally owned lands to oil companies for exploration**	-7.1 84.9 77.8	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
17-139	US can't leave until it has insured South Vietnam's independence**	+4.3 58.6 62.9	Harris	10/10/69- 12/11/69
18-140	US should increase its military effort in Vietnam	-7.5 52.7 45.2	Harris	9/15/66- 10/15/66
19-141	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by allowing companies tax deductions for equipment which will conserve fuels	+1.4 61.9 63.3	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
20-142	Price Commission get tougher in enforcing price controls on repairservice providers	+0.2 83.0 83.2	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
21-143	Raise taxes on US companies**	-6.5 39.0 32.5	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
22-146	Agreement between Russia and US for settlement of Middle East problem**	-8.6 90.6 82.0	Harris	6/15/71- 2/15/72
23-147	Tough law prohibiting corporations from making illegal political contributions at home and abroad**	-1.0 90.9 89.9	Harris	8/30/76- 10/24/76

24-148	Raise income taxes to keep inflation in check	-2.3 19.5 17.2	Harris	4/15/66- 7/15/66
25-149	Get enough Arab oil at lower prices by stopping military aid to Israel**	-8.5 37.9 29.4	Harris	12/15/74- 3/8/75
26-150	Too much tax money goes to military for defense**	-7.6 56.1 48.5	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
27-151	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by govt. breaking up the major oil companies to create more competition	+4.4 61.8 66.2	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
28-152	Eliminate depletion allowance for oil tax shelter**	-9.1 58.0 48.9	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
29-153	Price Commission get tougher enforcing price controls on restaurants	-4.4 58.2 53.8	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
30-160	American troops withdraw to their bases, stop any aggressive activity and shoot back only if fired upon	-3.9 51.9 48.0	Harris	10/10/69- 12/11/69
31-161	Liquor taxes are too high**	-14.2 48.2 34.0	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75
32-162	Taxes on new automobiles is too high	-0.6 69.8 69.2	Harris	5/22/74 1/15/75
33-163	Taxes on airline tickets are too high	-8.1 59.3 51.2	Harris	5/22/74- 1/15/75

34-164	Use of Phase 4 system of controls for another year**	+8.6 47.5 56.1	Harris	10/13/73- 1/2/74
35-165	Alleviate oil, gas and electricity shortages by freezing all gasoline, home heating, and power prices that consumers pay**	+2.1 50.2 52.3	Harris	9/25/73- 4/3/74
36-166	Keep present system of price and wage controls or a wage-price freeze	+11.3 51.9 63.2	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
37-167	Price Commission should get tough on enforcing price controls on clothing stores**	+1.4 74.8 76.2	Harris	6/15/72- 12/14/72
38-401	Declare war on Germany and send troops if it appears England and France are being defeated	-6.0 29.0 60.0	Gallup	10/5/39- 2/7/40
39-402	Help England win the war even at the risk of getting into the war	+7.0 60.0 67.0	Gallup	1/2/41- 3/14/41
40-403	Approve of a unified command for the armed forces of the US	+7.0 52.0 59.0	Gallup	12/12/45- 4/17/46
41-405	Approve of US loan to England	-7.5 47.8 40.3	Gallup	12/12/45- 2/2/46
42-406	Government officials in charge of our foreign policy tell the people all they should	+4.1 34.9 39.0	Gallup	6/2/48- 11/23/48

43-409	Campaign reform	-5.8 64.4 58.6	Gallup	8/27/64- 11/11/64
44-410	US government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living	-8.0 20.0 12.0	Gallup	9/7/76- 1/15/77
45-411	Remove all price ceilings now	+4.5 17.7 22.2	Gallup	8/10/45- 10/5/45
46-412	Add a new welfare post to the president's official cabinet	+5.3 65.9 71.2	Gallup	11/14/52- 2/22/53
47-413	Direct application to military academies	+1.5 77.3 78.8	Gallup	7/24/41- 12/21/41
48-416	Socialist Party should be allowed to publish newspapers in the US	-2.8 52.2 49.4	Gallup	12/28/56- 4/26/56
49-417	US should defend Formosa against Communist Chinese attack	+5.0 62.0 67.0	Gallup	11/26/54- 1/21/55
50-418	Minority groups should be given preferential treatment in getting jobs and places in college	+1.0 11.0 12.0	Gallup	5/1/77- 11/20/77
51-419	Should US govt. strive to provide a full, fair picture of American life and aims and policies of our government to other countries	-7.0 87.0 80.0	Gallup	11/8/45- 2/2/46

*T1 and T2 survey date are midpoints for the interviewing periods, which cover less than one week.

**These cases are common to the television and New York Times data sets.

Appendix 4

TELEVISION NETWORK CODING SHEET

T_1 = 11/11/80
T_2 = 4/15/81

Coder's Name D. SAKURA

Date Completed

COL	DATE 1	2	3	4	5	6	Network ID 7	Rptr. ID 8	Location 9	Source 10	Pro/Con 11	Relevance 12	Factuality 13	Logic 14	Truth/Falsehood 15	Elapsed Time 16	17	18	Time Into Broadcast 19	20	21	22	Visual Location 23	Summary Description of Source and Message
	0	7	2	6	8	0	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	3	4	0	2	0	1	0	4	0	4	Senator voted to halt grain embargo, against USSR. T.C. John [illegible]
	0	7	2	6	8	0	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	[illegible] senators Bob Dole [illegible] R. lead effort to end embargo
	1	0	2	2	8	0	2	1	2	0	2	2	3	3	5	0	2	0	1	8	4	0	1	USSR [illegible] disastrous grain shortage. W.C.
	1	0	2	2	8	0	2	1	2	0	2	2	3	3	4	0	3	0	1	9	0	0	1	Soviets [illegible] to pay for [illegible] Afg. invasion W.C.
T_1 — 11/11/80	1	1	1	3	8	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	1	1	0	1	1	4	0	4	US delegate to European Security Council [illegible] criticizes Soviets for human rights [illegible]
	1	2	2	7	8	0	3	2	2	1	5	3	3	3	4	0	1	0	1	4	5	5	4	Carter's grain embargo [illegible] on anniv of USSR invasion of Afg. [illegible]
	0	1	0	4	8	1	3	2	2	4	1	3	3	3	4	0	3	0	0	7	0	0	3	Farmer Rich [illegible] grain embargo, notes his loss [illegible]
	0	1	0	4	8	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	4	0	2	0	0	9	3	0	2	Ag. Sec designate John Block raises possibility of lifting embargo. [illegible]
	0	1	2	8	8	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	0	3	0	1	7	4	0	1	Sec. Agric. John Block announces that Reagan will soon make decision on US grain [illegible]
	0	2	1	7	8	1	2	3	1	1	5	3	3	3	4	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	Pres Reagan in favor [illegible] continuing grain embargo against USSR

Appendix 5

Dummy Variable Analysis: Presidential Popularity/Television

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.47*	-0.03
	(0.24)	(0.36)
Administration and Partisans	-0.10	-0.09
	(0.25)	(0.13)
Opposition Party	-0.44*	0.33
	(0.22)	(0.23)
Interest Groups	-0.44*	-0.32
	(0.21)	(0.22)
Events	-0.19	0.26
	(0.60)	(0.47)
Commentary	1.52	4.86**
	(1.37)	(1.16)
Experts	-0.81	2.87
	(1.86)	(1.75)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	0.28	0.26
	(0.71)	(0.62)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.67	0.62
	(0.57)	(0.53)
Other Variables		
Opinion at T1	0.98**	
	(0.04)	
Constant	-2.35	
	(2.47)	
Dummy	0.86	
	(1.51)	

Interaction of pre-T1 President and dummy	0.30 (0.43)
Interaction of T1-T2 President and dummy	0.28 (0.38)

R^2=.93 Adj R^2=.90 N=80

Notes: Dummy=0 when president unpopular, 1 when popular. Interaction variables are dummy multiplied by presidential source.

Dummy Variable Analysis: Presidential Popularity
Television-Foreign Policy Only

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.05 (1.18)	-0.41 (0.60)
Administration and Partisans	0.60 (0.71)	0.21 (0.24)
Opposition Party	-2.61* (1.08)	1.35 (0.70)
Interest Groups	0.52 (0.59)	-0.24 (0.46)
Events	3.54 (3.35)	2.28 (3.62)
Commentary	0.07 (3.10)	6.27** (1.87)
Experts	-1.50 (3.75)	5.54 (5.10)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	1.42 (1.45)	-1.35 (1.15)

Foreign-unfriendly	0.58 (1.06)	-0.17 (0.93)
Other Variables		
Opinion at T1	0.84** (0.10)	
Constant	4.65 (5.70)	
Interaction of dummy and President pre-T1	-1.05 (1.17)	
Interaction of dummy and President T1-T2	0.82 (0.70)	

R^2=.96 Adj R^2=.88 N=32

Notes: Dummy=0 when president unpopular, 1 when popular. Interaction variables are dummy multiplied by presidential source.

Dummy Variable Analysis: Opposition Party-Foreign vs Domestic-New York Times

News Source	Pre-T1 News	News Between T1 and T2
President	-0.20 (0.84)	-1.07 (0.74)
Administration and Partisans	0.83 (0.45)	0.10 (0.20)
Opposition Party	-0.74 (0.90)	-0.38 (0.38)
Interest Groups	-0.82 (0.96)	0.26 (0.35)
Events	-0.05 (2.34)	0.11 (1.48)

Commentary	-1.92	0.59
	(0.98)	(0.39)
Experts	0.42	1.33
	(1.68)	(0.74)
Foreign-friendly/neutral	0.53	-0.84
	(1.29)	(0.68)
Foreign-unfriendly	-0.13	2.02
	(1.17)	(1.79)
Other Variables		
Opinion at T1	1.03**	
	(0.05)	
Constant	-3.66	
	(3.15)	
Dummy	2.19	
	(2.53)	
Interaction of dummy and opposition party pre-T1	-3.16	
	(2.38)	
Interaction of dummy and opposition party T1-T2	3.57**	
	(1.19)	

R^2=.96 Adj R^2=.92 N=51

Notes: Dummy=1 when foreign policy issue, 0 when domestic. Interaction variables are dummy multiplied by opposition party source.

Entries in all tables are unstandardized (b) coefficients from regression of opinion at T2 on the sums of the relevant pro-con stories from various sources and dummy and interaction variables. Standard errors for the b's are given in parentheses.

*Significant at the .05 level or better by a two-tailed test.

**Significant at the .01 level or better by a two-tailed test.

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Ph.D. Political Science, Northwestern University, 1991
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M.S. International Relations, Troy State University, 1983
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B.A. Mathematics, Southern Illinois University, 1978

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Charles Coble Award for Research Excellence, U.S. Air Force Academy, 1988
Graduation with Distinction, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, 1985
Graduation with Honors, Department of French, Defense Language Institute, 1985

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Assistant Professor of Political Science, U.S. Air Force Academy, 1987-88
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Consultant-The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1990-91. (Contributor to American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1991 edition, ed. John Rielly)

Director-Ira C. Eaker Distinguished Lecture on National Defense Policy series, 1986-88, U.S. Air Force Academy

Assistant Director-Superintendent's Distinguished Speakers Program, 1986-88, U.S. Air Force Academy

PUBLICATIONS

"Shaping Foreign Policy Opinion: The Role of TV News" Journal of Conflict Resolution, forthcoming (with Benjamin Page), 1991

"Policy Implications of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative on National Strategy: Two Perspectives" US Air Force Academy, 1988 (editor)

Changing American Assessments of the Soviet Threat in Sub-Saharan Africa: 1975-1985, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987

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"The US and Africa, 1985: A Year of Contradictions..." Africa Contemporary Record New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1987

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