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American Behavioral Scientist 2012 56: 300 originally published online 15 December 2011

DOI: 10.1177/0002764211426327

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American Behavioral Scientist
56(3) 300–317

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DOI: 10.1177/0002764211426327

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Regula Hänggli¹

Abstract

In this article, the author focuses on the relationship between political actors and the mass media. The author uses media frames as dependent variables and investigates the factors that influence the presence and frequency of frames applied by journalists (the frames in “news media”). This has come to be known as *frame building*. The author argues that there are at least three important factors in frame building: power, the salience of the frames in the media input, and the multiplication effect of the minister. Using data from content analyses of campaign material and news media and from interviews with political actors, the author finds support that for frame *presence*, power is important. For frame *frequency*, the salience of the frames in the media input and the minister are crucial.

Keywords

frame building, framing, news frames

Under contemporary conditions with the media as a key intermediary between political actors and citizens, the chain of communication from the political actors to the voters is essentially a multistep process that includes the flow of frames from the political actors to the journalists and from the journalists to the voters. The step between the political actors to the journalists is called *frame building* (Scheufele, 1999). Frame building uses media frames as dependent variable and investigates the factors that influence the creation or changes of frames applied by journalists (frames

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in news media or media frames). *Media frames* refer to the arguments, words, or images that journalists use when relaying information about an issue to an audience (see Gerth & Siegert, 2012). They are defined as working routines for journalists, which “organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7).¹ A news media frame “organizes everyday reality” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 193) by providing “meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, p. 143; 1989). The term *frame building* is borrowed from the concept of “agenda building,” which was introduced by Cobb and Elder (1971, p. 905) and is concerned with “how issues are created and why some controversies or incipient issues come to command the attention and concern of decision makers, while others fail” (see also Scheufele, 2000, p. 303). Whereas agenda building (e.g., Brandenburg, 2002) is concerned with the issue level, frame building looks at the different dimensions or aspects of the *same* issue. In communication science, frame building is also called “second-level agenda building” (e.g. Kioussis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer, 2006) and is concerned with the salience of issue-specific attributes in the media.

The factors that influence media frames have been largely neglected so far. Most studies have been concerned with the production and selection of news (e.g., Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978). “To turn the concept into a viable research avenue, future research should specify the conditions under which frames emerge” (De Vreese, 2005, p. 60). In this regard, Ferree et al. (2002, p. 296) state that “the relative roles of parties and movements in taking leadership roles in framing issues in the media is an important and understudied aspect.” By exclusively focusing on framing and the effects of framing on public opinion or on voters (see, for instance, Schemer, Wirth, & Matthes, 2012), the whole question of how frames originate is sidestepped. Because it has largely been neglected so far, this article focuses on frame building and identifies key factors.

Key Factors of Frame Building

My general approach for conceptualizing the relationship between political actors and the media is an actor-centered political process model, as introduced by Wolfsfeld (1997). Following Wolfsfeld’s lead, I believe that the best way to understand the role of the news media is to view it as part of a larger contest among political antagonists for the control of the public agenda and the public’s interpretation of specific policy issues. Such a viewpoint also has been recommended by public relation scholars: “Researchers would add significantly to the public relations body of knowledge simply by focusing their studies from the standpoint of the source” (Zoch & Molleda, 2006, p. 302). Given the crucial role of the news media for reaching out to the citizen public, the struggle for attention and for the meaning of political issues becomes a struggle for the control of the news agenda and for the framing of the news. The relationship between the political actors and the news media is one of mutual dependence: The political actors need the media to reach the public, whereas the media need the

input from the political actors for their news production. As Wolfsfeld (1997, p. 13) puts it, their relationship is one of a “competitive symbiosis . . . in which each side of the relationship attempts to exploit the other while expending a minimum amount of costs.” Or, as Gans (1979, p. 116) pointed out in an often-cited quote, “the relationship between sources and journalists resembles a dance, for sources seek access to journalists, and journalists seek access to sources.” But, significantly, Gans went on to stress that this relationship was likely to be an asymmetrical one, too: “Although it takes two to tango, either sources or journalists can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading.” Wolfsfeld’s (1997, p. 3) key hypothesis makes the same point: The political process is likely to be the driving force in this relationship. The reasons he provides for this hypothesis are numerous, but, most importantly, he suggests that the news media are much more likely to react to political events than to initiate them. The hypothesis has been supported by empirical results. Findings from public relation research have indicated that “PR messages are the cause and media content the effect” (Froehlich & Rüdiger, 2006, p. 24). It seems that public relations efforts are meaningful in triggering media coverage (Kiousis et al., 2006). For direct-democratic campaigns, it has been shown that political actors take the lead in frame building. The framing by the political actors significantly influences the framing by the media, whereas the reverse does not apply (Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010).

Thus, it is the political actors who introduce the most important frames into the public discourse. Now, I want to look at the processes more in detail and identify key factors of frame building. I conceptually distinguish between frame *presence* (= *non-absence*), on one hand, and frame *frequency*, on the other. There are not the same factors behind, as I will explain below. In a similar way, Tresch (2009) defines two dimensions of standing: presence and prominence. The key factors in frame building are derived from research in agenda building, media attention, and political communication.

Key Factor for Frame Presence: Power of the Political Organization

The key factor for frame presence is the *power* of the political organizations that promote a frame. This idea is based on numerous studies that have shown that media attention is biased toward the more powerful actors (e.g., Entman, 2007; Gans, 1979; Wolfsfeld, 1997) and that powerful actors have preferential access to the media (Danielian & Page, 1994).² Furthermore the idea is supported by the so-called “indexing hypothesis,” which predicts that “mass media news professionals . . . tend to ‘index’ the range of voices and viewpoints . . . according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic” (Bennett, 1990, p. 106). Accordingly, the frames of the weak actors will less likely be covered. I call this the *power bias* hypothesis.

The power of an organization is not conceived as responsible for frame *frequency* in the news media. Only the frames of prominent people such as the minister

responsible for the issue (or the president) are expected to get higher attention. Prominent figures have an advantage that does not hold for powerful organizations in general. In this respect, it is important to note that, for both camps, power is measured (see below) at the organizational level (not at the personal level). In addition, power is defined as having influence in the background or/and in the foreground. The organizations that are influential behind the scenes are not necessarily known in public. Sometimes they are even more influential because they stay incognito for the public. Thus, their frames cannot be expected to be covered disproportionately more.

Key Factors for Frame Frequency

Salience of Frames in Media Input

The *salience* of the frame(s) in the media input, that is, the frequency with which the frame(s) are mentioned in the media input of the political actor, is crucial for frame frequency in the news coverage. This expectation is in line with studies of agenda building, which have confirmed that the salience of *issues* in the media input is positively related to the salience of issues in news media (Kiousis et al., 2006; Wirth et al., 2010). Furthermore, in Western democracies, the neutral-informational professional journalism is dominant (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Based on this neutral-informational journalistic norm, the media should give an accurate account of important events, actors, and messages within the institutionalized arenas of the political system and make the political process transparent for the citizen public. In other words, the journalists are expected to disseminate information as neutral chroniclers and impartial observers. This norm is in line with the mirror approach, which conceives of the media as a mirror of political reality (e.g., McQuail, 1992; Schulz, 1976). Thus, the media are assumed to report the frames proportionally to the degree to which they are promoted (= frequency with which they are mentioned in the media input). I call this the *salience* hypothesis.

The salience of a frame in the media input is not crucial for *frame presence* because weak political organizations can make a great effort; they still do not earn media coverage, and their frames remain absent in the debate. Furthermore, direct-democratic campaigns are covered so prominently that the salience of a promoted frame does not make a difference for whether a frame is *present* in the news. In other words, all frames promoted by a powerful organization earn media coverage, not only the most important frame.

The Role of the Minister or the President

The messages of the *minister* or, in general, of very prominent institutional speakers of a debate such as the *president* in the United States, are expected to be met with higher response by the media than the messages of the other actors. I call this expectation the *multiplication* hypothesis. By *minister*, I am referring to federal councilor.

The Federal Council is the Swiss government, which has seven members. Federal councilors are confronted with a double task: They are members of the governing college, and they direct one of the seven federal ministries (Kriesi & Trechsel, 2008). Both the prominence and prestige of this actor are expected to increase the news value of a frame promoted by him or her (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Schulz, 1976; Price & Tewksbury, 1997). Accordingly, the minister responsible for the proposition submitted to the vote is expected to influence frame frequency. This is also in line with what campaigners reported in interviews: The minister is not forced to campaign. It seems that journalists are awaiting the minister's statements: Whenever the minister speaks, microphones are switched, on and journalists report extensively about her or his view. No other actor enjoys such an advantage. For reasons of generalizability, one could think of an influence factor such as "prominence" instead of "minister" (or the president). In any case, it should be noted that "power" and "minister"/"prominence" is not the same. The former is measured at the organizational level, whereas the latter is a personal characteristic. Frame frequency is depending on whether a frame is sponsored by such prominent figures as the minister. It is not depending on the power of the organization. Minister status is not responsible for frame presence, because many powerful actors other than ministers promote their frames and earn coverage. In other words, access to the media in direct-democratic campaigns is not restricted to the minister or very prominent figures but to powerful organizations in general.

Hypotheses

In summary, the hypotheses are as follows: First, the *power bias hypothesis* states that powerful organizations get easier access to the media with their frames than weak actors. Second, the salience of the frames in the media input is crucial for its frequency in the media (*salience hypothesis*). Third, the minister's or the president's frames are multiplied more than the frames of the other actors (*multiplication hypothesis*).

Finally, external events taking place during the campaign can be relevant with regard to frame building as well. Lawrence (2000) argues that high-profile media coverage of unplanned events provide a special opportunity for reframing. The same has been shown by Baumgartner, De Boef, & Boydston (2008), where unexpected and scandalous events in and around the death penalty debate in the United States have triggered a shift in the existing debate towards the innocence frame. Also, banalities such as summer or Christmas holidays structure the debate.

Context of the Study

This article studies frame building in the context of a political campaign dealing with the issue of immigration in Switzerland. On June 1, 2008, the naturalization initiative of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) was voted down by 63.6% of the voters. The clarity of this verdict came as a big surprise and constituted a conspicuous defeat for the SVP, for whom this vote had been the most important test of its new opposition politics. The

party had won the federal elections in fall 2007, but it had lost the fight for the composition of the governmental coalition in December 2007: Its coalition partners had respected its claim for two out of the total of seven governmental seats, but they had not complied with the party's demand to reelect both of its incumbent ministers. Instead of the party's charismatic leader Christoph Blocher—the incumbent minister of justice, Parliament had chosen another member of the party—Evelyne Widmer-Schlumpf—to replace him. It was essentially a coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats that had unseated the SVP leader. As a reaction to the ousting of its leader, the SVP proceeded to exclude its two newly elected ministers from the party and decided to adopt a systematic oppositional stance. The exclusion procedure preoccupied the SVP and the Swiss public right up to the vote on the naturalization initiative, which explains why the campaign for the initiative began rather late, just 5 weeks before the vote. This vote provided the first important test for the party's new overall strategy.

To understand the thrust of the SVP's initiative for "democratic naturalizations," one needs to be aware that local municipalities play a key role in the naturalization process in Switzerland. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that naturalization has never been a completely administrative procedure in this country, but has always involved political elements as well. Prior to a decree by the Federal Court in 2003, such a decision could even have been taken by popular votes at the ballot box. In reaction to an infamous vote in the city of Emmen, where a series of applicants for Swiss citizenship from the former Yugoslavia had been denied Swiss citizenship in a popular vote, the federal judges decided to outlaw such popular votes on naturalizations. They argued that the rejection of naturalization requests required a justification and that such a justification was not possible in a direct-democratic vote. The popular vote had only been used in a limited number of places, but it could be shown that, in these places, the rejection rate of naturalization applicants was much higher than in the rest of Switzerland (Helbling & Kriesi, 2004).

It was in reaction to this decision by the Federal Court that the SVP launched its popular initiative in 2004. The initiative proposed that the voters in a given municipality should be able to decide which kind of procedure they wanted for naturalizations—in particular, whether they wanted to vote at the ballot box on individual naturalizations. Moreover, the initiative stipulated that it should not be possible to appeal against local rejections of naturalization requests. The initiative, in fact, demanded that the act of naturalization should become an exclusively political act of the citizens as sovereign.

The government rejected the initiative, arguing above all that it violated international law, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights, the UN Pact II, and the UN Convention against Racism. The debate in Parliament on the initiative was rather controversial, because several members of the moderate right felt a good deal of sympathy for the proposal. Eventually, the Parliament decided by a clear majority to reject the initiative. However, it provided the populist right with a substantial concession by elaborating an indirect counterproposal to the initiative in the form of a modification of the law on civic rights: This proposal stipulated that naturalizations in general local assemblies should still be possible. A rejection of a naturalization request should,

however, only be possible on the basis of a request providing explicit justifications, which was to be introduced during the assembly and that could serve as the basis of a possible later appeal. In the event that the initiative should be rejected, this counterproposal was to enter into force. In this case, the parliamentary and the direct-democratic debate slightly varied. In the Parliament, they were mainly concerned about the procedure they wanted for naturalization. The contra camp asked for fair procedures that complied with basic rights (“rule of law”), whereas the pro side conceived naturalizations as political acts and not as administrative ones and claimed that people should have the final say (“people final say”). In the direct-democratic phase, the pro camp additionally argued that “mass naturalizations” had to be stopped (also see for these frames Gerth & Siegert, 2012; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2012; Matthes, 2012; Schemer et al., 2012; Wettstein, 2012).

Methods

I rely on the content analysis of *all* the campaign material produced by the political actors for communication with the media—input for earned media coverage (“media input”: press releases, speeches from media conferences, or public statements), as well as on the content analysis of the media’s news reporting (“news media”). This material was coded with the same codebook on a daily basis for the three months prior to the vote. I also call the frames in the media input the “promoted frames.” For the media’s news reporting, I selected the 24 most important newspapers of the German and French parts of the country, based on the highest total audience. In addition, I also analyzed the most important news and political information programs of the public television stations in the two parts of the country.³

Operationalization

Power is operationalized by a reputation indicator and is based on a set of questions referring to the list of all organizations involved (Kriesi, Adam, & Jochum, 2006). The campaigners were interviewed twice. In the second interview, they were first asked to name the organizations on the list that, from their point of view, had been particularly influential (in the background and/or in public) during the campaign. Next, they were asked to name the three most influential organizations and, finally, the most influential one. For each actor, a summary indicator reflects the number of times he or she was mentioned by the other respondents in reaction to these questions: mentions as “most influential” are coded as 3, mentions among the “three most influential” as 2, and mentions as “influential” as 1. The values of the indicator range from 0, for an organization that was never mentioned as influential, to 3 times the number of respondents, for an organization that would have been considered to be the most influential actor by all of them. In a next step, the sum of daily power of the two sides is built. The sum of daily power is measured for both camps separately and corresponds to the total amount of power of the organizations that promote a given frame on a certain

day. For example, two actors of the pro camp hold a media conference together while no other actor of their camp is active on this day. Actor A is a powerful actor who scores 86 on the power measure, whereas actor B reaches only a score of 18. Together, they arrive at 104 points, the sum of daily power of the pro camp. Alternatively, one could have used the mean or median of the power of the actors involved. The results show little change if power is operationalized differently. It is important to note that power measures the *perception of the political actors*, and possibly, powerful actors were powerful *in the background*. More common measures of power such as the numbers of seats in Parliament or number of members were not used because I deal with different actor types like parties, economic interest groups, citizens' interest groups, authorities, and committees. There is no common power measure that could be applied to all these actor types. Power correlates very highly with the actors' degrees of centrality (correlation = .85 for nongovernmental actors⁴) and correlates highly with money that has been spent beyond the operating expenditures in the campaign (correlation = .71 for nongovernmental actors) or with *personnel*, a composite index that takes into account both staff members (workload in terms of full-time equivalent) and the approximate number of used volunteers deployed (correlation = .63 for nongovernmental actors) (see also Bernhard 2011).

I will measure the salience of a frame in the media input with the number of arguments in which a frame is used in the media input and a dummy indicator for the presence of the minister responsible for the campaign.

Frames constitute my unit of analysis. I operationalize substantive frames with the *arguments* that the two camps have produced to support their own position or to undermine the position of their adversaries. Frames and arguments are not entirely the same. Framing is the process by which political actors define the issue for their audience (e.g., Matthes, 2009; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). A frame highlights some aspects of a perceived reality and enhances a certain interpretation or evaluation of reality (Entman, 1993). In this respect, a frame is more than a single argument because it also provides a specific understanding of the world. When I am referring to this defining function of a frame, I will use the term *frame*. By contrast, I will rely on the term *arguments* when I am concerned with the specific statement or with the number of arguments an article contains. In each document—press release, newspaper article, TV news program, and so forth—I coded *all* the arguments provided by or reported for each one of the relevant actors (organizations or their individual representatives) in my study in great detail and then summarized them in a limited number of abstract categories (= frames), which I created on the basis of my reading of the controversy.⁵ For each side, the main frames are defined on the basis of the relative frequency in the media input.

I distinguish between two types of frames—contest frames and substantive frames. The unique feature of the contest frames is that they do not address the issue(s) at stake but focus on the actors involved or on the contest per se—on politics—whereas substantive frames focus on the substantive contents of the debate—on policy. I will illustrate the coding of the substantive frames with an example: the “mass naturalization frame.”

I coded the following pro arguments (in favor of the proposition): “Mass naturalization has to be stopped”; “There are too many foreigners in Switzerland”; and “We should avoid naturalization of criminals or welfare recipients.” The contra arguments against the proposition included “The share of immigrants among the Swiss population is not excessively large” or “The number of naturalizations is not excessive.” I summarized these (and other) related arguments in a single frame, the mass naturalization frame.

Overall, almost 8,000 arguments were coded by eight different coders. Cohen’s Kappa for intercoder reliability was .61, which is not high, but acceptable. I consider it acceptable, because I carefully checked all the arguments after the coding and corrected for coding errors and because, for the analysis, I summarized the detailed codes for arguments to broader categories (frames), which are less error-prone (Cohen’s Kappa = .87).

Data Analysis

I shall pursue a double strategy of data analysis and treat the campaign agenda both as a daily and an aggregate phenomenon. The purpose of such a double strategy is to find mutually reinforcing results. In the analysis of daily effects, I will use a zero-inflated negative binomial regression model. Given that I am dealing with count data, the Poisson model is appropriate; however, given the overdispersion found in the data, I will use the negative binomial, a special version of the Poisson model that is adapted to this particular type of problem.⁶ When interpreting zero-inflated models, it is easy to be confused by the meaning of the effect parameters (the incidence-rate ratios). Such models have two parts—an inflation model and a count model. The inflation model estimates the effects (incidence-rate ratios) on the possibility that an argument does *not* make it into the media, that is, on the possibility of its *absence* from the media. The count model estimates the effects (incidence-rate ratios) on the *frequency* of an argument’s presence in the media. When the same independent variables are included in the equation for both models, the effects from the two models often point in opposite directions; that is, the one is smaller, the other larger than one. This makes sense from a substantive point of view. In the inflation model, a ratio smaller than one implies a smaller probability that a frame remains absent in the debate; that is, it implies that the influence factor increases the probability that the frame is nonabsent (= present) in the media. Correspondingly, in the count model, a ratio larger than one increases the frequency in the media. Because both presence and frequency are measured on a daily basis, I refer in this context to the daily frame presence and the daily frame frequency.

For the estimation of the model, I will use a stacked file, with four cases for each day, one for each of the main frame categories, plus one for the residual category. I shall introduce a dummy variable for each one of the main frames to control for their variable salience. To control for contemporaneous correlation, I will cluster the standard errors over time (= robust *SE*).⁷ I shall also lag the dependent variable by one day to control for the autoregressive effect. Zero-inflated models may be very sensitive to

Table 1. Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Regression of Media Framing: Ratios, Robust Standard Errors, and *p*-Levels

	Ratio	Robust SE	<i>p</i>
Count model(frequency)			
Media (1)	1.018	0.013	.184
Contra input ($t - 1$)	1.034	0.006	.000
Pro input ($t - 1$)	1.071	0.034	.032
Minister/president ($t - 1$)	2.969	1.287	.012
Rule-of-law	3.076	0.586	.000
People final say	2.690	0.446	.000
Mass naturalization	2.285	0.380	.000
Inflation model(presence)			
Media ($t - 1$)	0.141	0.642	.002
Power contra ($t - 1$)	0.000	0.910	.000
Power pro ($t - 1$)	0.947	0.015	.000
Constant	1.734	0.015	.000
<i>N</i> total = 364			
<i>n</i> zero observation = 190			

the specification of the inflation model. It is therefore important to perform a sensitivity analysis (Long & Freese, 2006; Steenbergen, 2008).

In the time-series analysis of daily effects (see Table 1), I will study the lagged effects of power, salience of frames in media input, and minister status on the framing of the media. To do so, I can make use of the fact that political actors and the media do not communicate simultaneously, but in a stable morning-evening sequence in which the publication of (morning) newspapers precedes the events produced by the political actors during the day, which are in turn consistently followed by the broadcast of (evening) news bulletins and by the press of the next day. Lagging the key factors by one day ($t - 1$) provides the relevant influence factors for the framing of the press, whereas the framing of the political actors of the same day (t) provides the input for TV. The arguments from the newspaper and from TV were combined in the media variable.⁸

Results

Key Factors for Frame Presence and Frame Frequency

The results are presented in Table 1. First, let us look at the lower part of Table 1 (inflation model). The lagged dependent variable (media [$t - 1$]) controls for serial correlation and for continuing frame attention in the dependent variable. Both lagged power ratios (power contra, power pro) are smaller than one. This means that *power* reduces the probability that a frame is absent in the news media. In other words, the

more power the organizations presenting the arguments on a given camp on a given day have, the higher the chance that their argument will be covered (= present) in the media on the next day. All ratios are significant. This finding is also supported by the behavior of weak strategic actors: Weak actors join coalitions with powerful actors to increase the chance that their frames earn media coverage. Next, let us look at the upper part of Table 1, the count model (frequency). Overall, the lagged *number of promoted frames of both camps* and the lagged *minister* dummy significantly increase the daily frequency of the frame in the news media.

Figure 1 illustrates the effect of the *number of promoted frames of both camps*. It compares the percentage shares of the frames in the media input with the shares of the frames in the media's news reporting. There are two graphs for each campaign—one with the shares of the contra camp (on the left) and one with the shares of the pro camp (on the right). The overall impression is that, in general, the news *media* rather faithfully reproduce the framing by the two camps. Thus, the percentage shares of the frames in the news media are generally similar to the shares found in the media input. There is one instance (the mass naturalization frame of the pro camp) where the news media increased the share of the *main* frames compared to the media input. This finding is probably due to the advertisements: The pro camp was very active with advertisements and focused on the respective frames in the ads (Hänggli, 2012).

Table 2 gives a more detailed overview of the frames in the media input and in the news media of the campaign. Compared to Figure 1, it reports the “others” and the “contest” frames. The media input corresponds to what has been shown by Hänggli and Kriesi (2012). Compared to the media input, there are few differences in the media's news reporting. First, the media made no special effort with their own or other frames (also see Gerth & Siegert, 2012). Second, as one might also have expected on the basis of the American and British experience, the media rely more heavily on contest frames in their news reporting. However, even in their case, substantive frames largely predominate. Thus, we can state that in Swiss direct-democratic campaigns, framing is primarily conducted in substantive terms.

Next, we go back to Table 1. In both count and inflation models, the lagged dependent variable (media [$t - 1$]) controls for serial correlation. The significant ratio in the inflation model (presence) is smaller than one, which means that the frames in the news media reduce the probability of a zero count on the following day. In other words, the media also writes about the campaign independently of the explicit input of the two camps. It has *established its own routines* for how to deal with a direct-democratic campaign. As is shown by the panels in Figure 2, which present the daily development of the media coverage of the two camps, these routines imply a “critical period” of press coverage towards the end of the campaign, when the citizens have received their voting material and are doing their voting (mainly by mail). Furthermore, *external events* structure the debate. The first 100 days of Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf in office as a minister clearly structured the campaign. Only when this first 100 days had passed in the 8th week before the vote did the campaign and media coverage about this issue start. Finally, in Figure 2 we see patterns that look like “mountains”: When

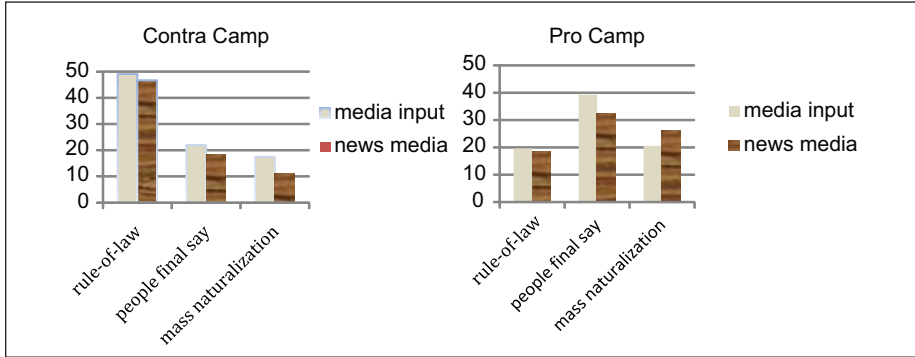


Figure 1. Comparison between the percentage shares of the frames in the media input and in the news media

Table 2. Substantive and Contest Frames of the Two Camps in the Media Input and the News Media: Percentages

	Media input		News media	
	Con	Pro	Con	Pro
Substantive frames				
Rule-of-law	49.1	19.6	46.7	18.7
People final say	21.9	39.3	18.4	32.5
Mass naturalization	17.4	20.6	11.2	26.2
Others	5.1	7.4	7.3	5.9
All substantive frames	93.5	86.9	83.5	83.3
Contest frames	6.5	13.1	16.5	16.7
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	675	107	1,248	766

the core frame is covered, the second frame and the opponents’ core frame are covered as well and vice versa. The patterns look similar when looking at media input (not shown here). This supports the idea that in direct-democratic campaigns the salience with which a frame is promoted is not important for frame *presence* because media coverage is not restricted to the most important frame. By contrast, it further supports the idea that the salience is relevant for frame frequency because the pattern look so similar in media.

Table 3 shows the predicted change in the news media counts depending on a change from the minimum to the maximum value in the key factors. We can see that the counts are most sensitive to the salience of a frame in media input and the minister’s presence, whereas the predicted change based on a change of power is relatively small. There are two reasons for the significant but negligible small effect of power of

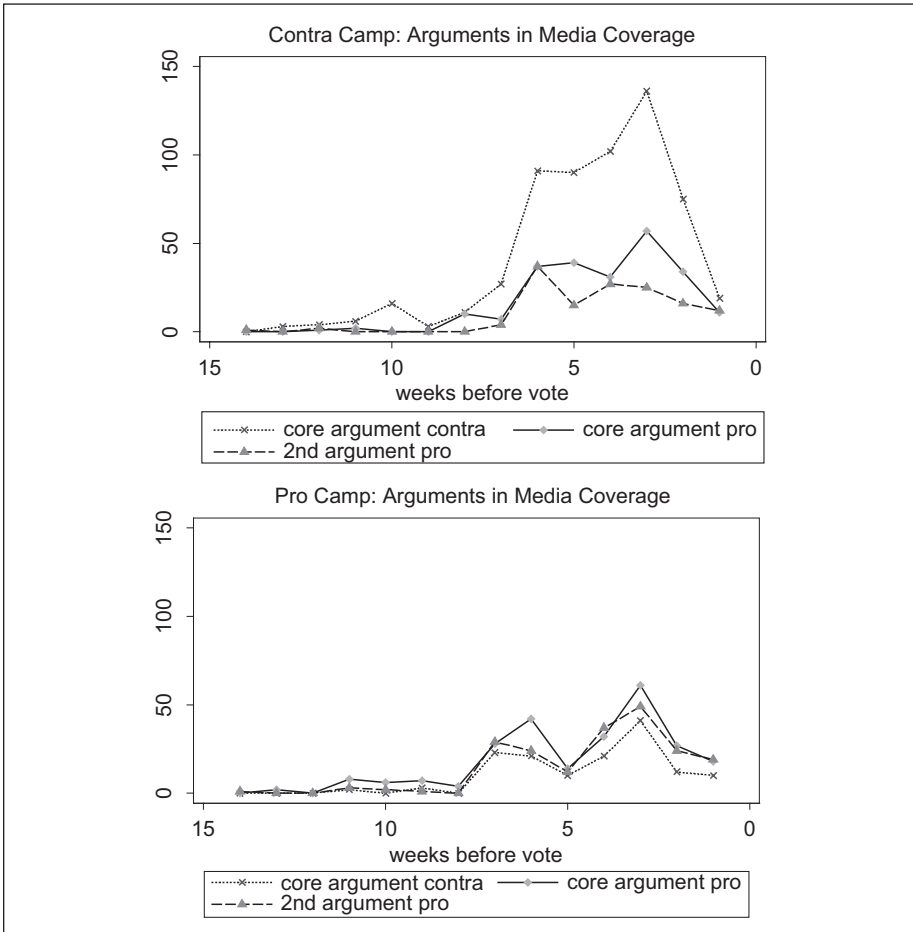


Figure 2. The development of the campaign on a weekly basis—by camp and campaign: Absolute counts of substantive frames

the pro camp. First, only two actors were involved on the pro side. One of them produced 75% of all frames, meaning that there is almost no variation in the power variable. In addition, the pro camp only promoted few arguments; that is, 94% of the counts are zero counts, because for most of the time, no frame was promoted.

Conclusion

My analysis confirms that the input of the political actors plays a decisive role in direct-democratic campaigns. With regard to the daily frame presence, the campaign-specific power of a political organization is important. This result lends strong support to the

Table 3. Predicted Change in the News Media Counts

Predicted change	Change in ...
6	Power contra ($t - 1$)
0	Power pro ($t - 1$)
90	Contra ($t - 1$)
12	Pro ($t - 1$)
14	Minister/president ($t - 1$)
280	Cumulative effect: minister ($t - 1$) + contra ($t - 1$)

The predicted change is based on a change in the key factors from the minimal to the maximal value. The remaining variables were set at the mean or at zero (minister/president [$t - 1$]), and the main frame of the respective camp was used.

power bias hypothesis. To reiterate, the “power bias hypothesis” predicts that powerful organizations have a higher chance of finding access to the media news. In line with the salience hypothesis, the media report the frames proportionally to the degree to which they are promoted (= frequency with which they are mentioned in the media input). Thus, the number of promoted frames is crucial for frame frequency. The minister plays also an influential role for the daily frame *frequency*. The minister’s frames are met with higher response by the media than the messages of the other actors (multiplication hypothesis). Finally, external events can moderate the influence of frame building.

The question is what the results imply for the quality of direct-democratic debates. Overall, the findings correspond to the criteria of the representative liberal theory (Ferree et al., 2002, p. 206). This elitist stance accepts that general public participation in the public sphere is largely indirect and limited. From this perspective, *elite dominance* is an important criterion for good public discourse. It means that powerful actors should earn voice in the media. In addition, the content of public discourse should be a *free marketplace of ideas*, which suggests that there should be no restrictions on content. The finding that the share of media frames is proportional to the share of frames in the media input indicates that we have such a marketplace in direct-democratic debates. The *civility criterion* claims that contest frames, indeed, should be rare. Finally, the norm of *closure* is about the idea that the debate can be decided. This criterion is also met in direct-democratic campaigns. Alternatively, we can link the findings to the watchdog norm (Bro, 2008). In this view, journalists are *passive*, that is, they focus on disseminating news stories and not on attempting to prompt a certain behavior. In addition, news reporting has a *representative focus* instead of a deliberative one. It anticipates that news media focus more on powerful figures than on citizens.

Acknowledgment

I thank participants (in particular Stefaan Walgrave) of the Agenda-Setting and Media Workshop and the participants of the NOPSA conference in 2011 for helpful comments.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article: This work is based on research done in NCCR Democracy and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Notes

1. See also Hall (1973).
2. Direct-democratic procedures have been shown to increase the media standing of actors who are notoriously weak, such as social movement organizations or the political parties (Höglinger, 2008). However, whereas outsiders might find more standing in the media due to direct-democratic instruments, I expect that their influence on the *content* of the debate (i.e., on frame building) is restricted because they still have difficulties bringing their message into media coverage.
3. The Swiss-German media include Neue Zürcher Zeitung, NZZ am Sonntag, Sonntagszeitung (elite), Tagesanzeiger, Aargauer Zeitung, Basler Zeitung, Berner Zeitung, Neue Luzerner Zeitung, Die Südostschweiz, St. Galler Tagblatt, Sonntag (AZ), Die Südostschweiz am Sonntag (regional), 20 Minuten, Punkt CH (free), Blick, Sonntagsblick (tabloid), Tagesschau (TV). The French-speaking media include Le Temps (quality), Tribune de Genève, 24 heures (regional), 20 Minutes (free), Le Matin, Le Matin Dimanche (tabloid), journal (TV). I did not analyze the media from the small Italian-speaking part of the country.
4. Governmental actors are excluded because they are expected not to campaign.
5. The codebook is available from the author upon request.
6. Overdispersion implies the presence of greater variability (statistical dispersion) in the predicted counts for a given value of x than would be expected based on the Poisson regression model. STATA provides a likelihood-ratio test for overdispersion. In addition, due to the excess zeros in the data, also called zero inflation, a zero-inflated count model is necessary. Greene (2000) has proposed the Vuong (1989) test for nonnested models to establish whether a zero-inflated model is necessary. Zero-inflated count models assume that there are two latent (i.e. unobserved) groups—an “always zero” and a “not always zero” group—and that zero counts are generated by two independently operating processes. In the first process (inflation model), the zeros belonging to the “always zero” group are generated. An argument in this group has an outcome of zero with a probability of one. This process is binary; it generates zeros or ones. If this first process results in one, the second process is assumed to come into play: a negative binomial regression process (count model) that generates zeros of the “not always” group. An argument in this group might have a zero count, but there is a nonzero probability that it has a positive count.
7. This correction was designed for linear models, and it is not completely clear whether it works as well for this kind of model. However, the results are also robust without the clustering with the exception of the contra camp’s power.

8. I will use the following abbreviations for the variables: media ($t - 1$) is the number of arguments reported in the media on day $t - 1$. Contra ($t - 1$) and pro ($t - 1$) is the number of arguments presented as input material by the pro and the contra camps, respectively, on day ($t - 1$). Minister ($t - 1$) is the minister dummy of day $t - 1$. Power contra ($t - 1$) and power pro ($t - 1$) are the sum of daily power of the respective camp. Rule-of-law, people final say, and mass naturalization are dummy indicators for the three main framing categories, with the residual category ("others") forming the reference category.

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Bio

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