

**News Corp Translated:
Framing the United States in Bulgaria**

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Abstract

This study examined framing in two Bulgarian television stations and their web sites. Framing within the web sites' news coverage of the United States was examined during the one-month period immediately following the 2008 United States presidential election. The news articles gathered from the two web sites were examined for amount of coverage, frame presence and valence, as well as hyperlinks, in order to offer insight into the fields of gatekeeping, framing, and corporate ownership bias. Suggestions of bias were found in terms of the overall tone of the articles but not in the amount of coverage. There was a significant difference between the two web sites in the tone of coverage concerning individuals and events.

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Nadezhda M. Sotirova

I. Rationale

Turning the television set on the BTV station in Bulgaria at about 5:30 p. m. on any given week day or during the weekend would provide a very pleasant surprise to any American having the chance to be watching television outside their country. During the Bulgarian prime time (6:00 – 11:00 p. m., the time of the day when most Bulgarians are back from work), this Bulgarian station offers a very American plethora of broadcast material such as “Grey’s Anatomy” (5:20 p. m.), “Kids’ Club Disney” (6:20 p. m.), “Desperate Housewives”, “Music Idol” (actual name, not translated from Bulgarian), “Survivor BG” (also actual name), “That’s Know to Every Kid!” (an exact replica of “Are you smarter than a fifth grader?”), “Ghost Whisperer” (8:00 p. m.), “Two and a Half Men”, “24”, “Everybody Loves Raymond”, “Friends”, “Dharma and Greg”, “Seinfeld”, “Malcolm in the Middle”, “Monk”, “O.C.”, “The Unit”, and “Beauty and the Geek”.

These are just a few, without mentioning all the evening American movies and reality shows (BTV web site). The television station’s programming, as of January 2009, includes predominantly American television shows, movies, sitcoms, or in the least, a Bulgarian version of them with an English name. The programming during the week runs in set blocks particularly after 4:30 p. m.—sitcoms (4:30 p. m. to 7:30 p. m.); news (7:30 p. m. to 8:00 p. m.); American movies (8:00 p. m. to 10:00 p. m.); news again (10:00 p. m. to 10:30 p. m.); and a television show (10:30 p. m. to 11:30 p. m.).

This was not the case nine years ago when the station broadcast for the first time and included very few American programs such as “Fox Kids” and the eight p. m. nightly movie. For these nine years the Balkan Television station (BTV) has slowly become the major Bulgarian television station with a claim to the largest audience in Bulgaria (BTV web site). Is this station

any different than other Bulgarian television stations? What is so striking about it? Does the fact that this is the first U. S. owned television station in Bulgaria, purchased and established by Balkan News Corporation (part of News Corporation), has any effect on its content?

Some information on the Bulgarian—United States relations is necessary. United States and Bulgaria have had diplomatic relations for more than 100 years. After decades of communism in Eastern Europe, during which the relations were restricted, the U. S. Congress passed the Support for East European Democracies Act (SEED) in 1989, which authorized financial support to countries in the Balkan region (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2009). Bulgaria has received over \$600 million since then (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2009) and successfully graduated from the program in 2007 and was accepted to the European Union.

Several agreements and treaties have been signed between the two countries (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2009) in the past two decades: the Bilateral Investment Treaty, in 1994, a 2005 defense cooperation agreement, which provided the U. S. military access to several Bulgarian military installations, a 2007 double-taxation treaty designed to promote U. S. investment in Bulgaria, a weapons-of-mass-destruction agreement, and a Second Line of Defense agreement, in 2008.

Bulgaria also provides troops for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, where a Bulgarian unit of military instructors conducts training (Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2009). Finally, Bulgaria hosts the only fully American university in the region, the American University of Bulgaria in Blagoevgrad, established in 1991 (American University in Bulgaria, 2008).

As the media conglomerates in the United States become fewer and fewer (Bagdikian, 2004), particularly so since the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Alger, 1998), many questions

on the effects of this consolidation arise. Some of these include: Would these new stations affect the culture of the countries they are reaching out to? What effect would the Western style of journalism, newsgathering, and presentation have on the audience? Would the ownership affect what news stories and how they are presented on television? What effect would there be on the image the audience has of the United States due to the ownership? Would there be economic effects from the ownership when the owning corporations have been accused of placing profit first (Baker, 1998)? How would advertisement practices and regulations be affected? All these are complicated questions that require further research, particularly due to raised concerns about the “commercialization” and “sensationalization” of the mass media for the sake of profit as a result of ownership in the United States (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Parenti, 1986; Patterson, 2000).

The following study attempts to answer some of these questions and provide a ground for future research by drawing on research into corporate ownership bias, framing, and gatekeeping. For the purpose of this thesis, the attention is focused on how the news coverage of the United States during one-month period is framed and whether it can be linked to ownership bias. The point of interest is the web site of BTV and its world news section in particular.

This study attempts to determine if there is evidence to suggest that there is media bias in the news coverage on the Bulgarian television’s web site through gatekeeping and framing. It examines the content of the television web site’s world news section and compares it to the news coverage on the web site of another privately owned non-U. S. Bulgarian television station (NOVA TV) in order to discover whether what and how issues are covered over a certain period of time.

A variety of research has been done on corporate bias and its effects, looking at media stations within the United States. However, less research has been done when it comes to the

possible effects of U. S. owned stations outside the United States, with possible implications for international relations. This makes looking into the possible effects of ownership and media bias and the potential implications of this of special importance.

Research so far, still struggles to present clear data on the presence of bias in television stations (Weatherly, Petros, Christopherson, & Haugen, 2007). Coe et al. (2007), however, mentions how the issue has been noticed and discussed predominantly in editorials such as the *Columbia Journalism Review* as well as by the *State of the Media* report between 2004 and 2006, which noted the rising “red/blue” division of the media and their inclination towards opinion mongering (2007). Even earlier, accusations of bias have been made towards both sides, for instance Goldberg (2002) and the liberal bias of CBS News as well as Franken (2003) and the conservatism of Bill O’Reilly and Fox News (Weatherly et al., 2007).

These examples of bias within Fox News Channel are of particular importance for this study, since Fox News Channel is one of News Corporation’s cable network programming segments for broadcast in the United States (News Corp, 2008). However, more direct research is needed to examine whether such bias exists and if so, what implications it may have. This thesis focuses on how ownership bias in terms of framing (e.g., framing politics as a game, focusing on individuals, commercialization, encouraging sensationalism and entertainment for profit, etc. [Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Parenti, 1986; Patterson, 2000] could potentially drive and affect coverage as opposed to partisan bias (political affiliation and interests).

The following study attempts to add to the existing research within gatekeeping, corporate bias, framing, and hyperlinking by examining the impact of corporate ownership on the world news coverage of the Balkan Television in Bulgaria. The television channel was created by News Corporation and its main team of investigative journalists and reporters have been trained according to American standards (Rusinova, 2001); therefore, it would be important to examine

the implications of the ownership on the news coverage regarding the United States and whether the American style of training of the journalists (since News Corp is a U. S. based corporation) would affect the way news is selected and framed.

II. BTV and News Corporation

The Balkan Television, or BTV, is the first privately operated television station in Bulgaria, which began officially broadcasting on January 1, 2000. The television station was purchased by News Corporation and, for more than eight years, it has “established itself as the most watched TV channel in Bulgaria with nearly 37% share of all viewers and with leading positions on the advertising market” as its web site claims (BTV, 2008). Bulgaria is only one of the many countries in which News Corporation owns stations; the list includes countries such as Serbia, Romania, France, Turkey, and Latvia (Neil, 2007).

An article found in the Bulgarian magazine *Sofia Echo* (2001) provides more information on the reasons for the purchase of a station within Bulgaria from the owners themselves. Martin Pompadour, the News Corporation’s executive director for Europe, discovered how easy it was to receive a television license in Bulgaria, considered it to be a great opportunity for development and growth, and offered the position of a managing director to Al Parsons, who immediately became the head of Bulgaria’s first independent national station (*Sofia Echo*, 2001). A paragraph from the interview is offered here as an illustration:

BTV’s news presentation is very different from other Bulgarian media. It is more directed to what the news means to the viewer. BTV’s reporters have been trained by U.S. journalists, and the head of BTV’s news department, Lyuba Rizova, got first hand knowledge in American-style reporting during internships at U.S. TV stations (Rusinova, 2001).

Since its establishment, the independent national station has become one of the most popular television stations in Bulgaria. Apart from claiming 37% share of all television viewers, BTV also reaches out with its online broadcast, where most of the television programming can be

viewed any time. The television station offers a 24-hour program aimed at a “family” audience, which includes predominantly American movies, reality shows, sitcoms, talk shows, and news, as well as the popular sports forums UEFA Champions’ League and Formula 1 (BTV, 2008). According to its own web site, the television has “established” itself as “the information leader with the highest ratings of viewers’ trust” and considers itself as a “socially responsible TV channel” whose “mission is to form positive values in the Bulgarian society (2008)”.

Even though some effects of ownership may seem obvious to a Bulgarian viewer unaccustomed to the excess of “reality” shows, a positive connection between the two cannot be established or even suggested without any detailed research. However, the effects of ownership have proven quite difficult to measure (Chomsky, 2006). In the case of BTV, the presence of American television shows, sitcoms, and movies may be attributed to other reasons such as an overall trend towards Westernization and Americanization. Therefore, a stronger indicator of ownership influence would be any evidence of intervention found on the news section, according to Chomsky (2006). Thus, examining the world news section of BTV’s web site through the gatekeeping (how much and what news are made available) and framing (what focus or spin on the news is offered) theories would provide more insight as to whether ownership has impact on the station or not.

III. Literature Review

Media bias is a topic very extensively researched within communication studies in the United States, in particular due to the large-scale mergers and consolidations within the mass media. Nowhere else is the impact of media consolidation on the product as obvious as in the United States, where the hundreds and hundreds of channels and media outlets can be traced back to as few as five media giants (Bagdikian, 2004). According to Bagdikian, who made several attempts to trace back the roots of ownership, all television channels can be traced back to a few

major corporations: News Corp, Viacom, Vivendi Universal, General Electric, Walt Disney, Time Warner, and Bertelsmann (2004). This list contains only television channels without including any print or radio outlets.

It is important to study the implications of these mergers in times when the mass media have permeated every aspect of life. As Jeffrey Blevins (2007) says, it is of a great importance to study media politics and economics, because the United States' broadcast industry continually transform from the regulated public trust it used to be to a more commercial enterprise, where conglomerates are able to reach world-wide. It is important to study the impact of the media consolidation also because companies now have become "mega media carriers" who deliver and control not only the news but also the entertainment through various media channels (Williams & Kiouisis, 2004). Since the media channels such as daily newspapers, television and radio stations, as well as the Internet play a crucial role in the "marketplace of ideas" (Chamber, 2003) the understanding of how media ownership affects them becomes of particular importance.

This thesis intends to add to the literature on media bias as well as gatekeeping and framing by examining what effects corporate ownership has on the news coverage within the Bulgarian television channel and its web site: what news is presented and how it is covered.

IIIa. Ownership Bias

Many researchers have raised concerns about potential corporate bias in connection to the media consolidation (Bagdikian 2004, Lee & Hwang 1997, Williams 2001). To define bias, however, is more difficult. A single specific definition of bias does not exist even though many researchers have investigated aspects of it. The reason for this is the fact that bias can take different forms in the media, from the choice of stories to be reported (Goldberg, 2002) to taking a non-neutral stance on an issue and showing a preference or an inclination. Herman and Chomsky (1988) have even suggested a "propaganda model", which presents bias as

“inculcat[ing] and defend[ing] the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups” (p. 298).

The concentration of the media outlets to several major companies has been widely studied, whether criticized or commended, for its effects and implications (McConnell, 2002). McChesney discusses the bias of the late nineteenth century media outlets, newspapers, and radio, all of which, he argues, used to be very opinionated in one way or another, highly partisan, and often linked to the political process (2003). Later, newspapers started to become more and more dependent on advertising, which opened the doors to a buying off of smaller business and consolidating them into the bigger companies. This, however, only led to a press where there were fewer newspapers and much sensationalism, which was noticed by critics who called for something to be done (Maloney, 2005).

The response came from the publishers as a “code of professional journalism” which was a set of standards and procedures that were meant to keep in check the biases and provide for a more objective process of gathering and dissemination of information. This “code” though, according to McChesney (2004), only provided for the unchecked rise of consolidation throughout the twentieth century and many places were left with single newspapers where even if there was “competition” it was owned by the same company.

Continuing on the same line of research, Einstein looked at television and the multiple attempts of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to impose regulations on major companies through two key restrictions: the Fin-Syn (Financial Interest and Syndication Rules) as well as the PTAR (Prime Time Access Rules) in the 1970s, both restricting the time of access and the amount of self-produced material but both were removed in the 90s (Maloney, 2005).

More recently, Blevins examined the effects of the FCC reviewing the broadcast ownership limits. This was not the first occasion—the case of Fox Television challenging the rationale for

the 35% cap, in which, as a result the FCC allowed a company to reach 40% of the national audience (Blevins & Brown, 2003).

These are just a few examples of the criticism toward the consolidation of media and its implications. One of the biggest critics of media ownership and its effects, McChesney (2003), argued that according to the democratic theory the main “job” of journalists in society is to be the watchdogs that keep in check those in power. This, however, becomes problematic in a society where powerful interests tend to try and dominate the flow of ideas (McChesney, 2003).

This leads to the important question: how does this connect to the corporate ownership abroad? Albarran (1998) suggested that more research is needed when it comes to political economics and its implications for the mass media. He examined the different fields of research existing within media economics, a field, which has been growing since 1965 (Albarran, 1998). After examining this research within the paradigms of policy studies, microeconomics, and industrial organization, Alberran argued that a more comprehensive examination of media economics and its horizontal distribution is needed, not only within the intraindustrial plains but also within the horizontal markets, or namely, all the levels within the same ownership corporation with all its publishing, radio, television, movie, and Internet outlets.

This becomes very important with the consolidation of so many media outlets. At this point the media and economics have blended into a very interesting synergy, where it could be argued the process of producing information has become cyclical. On one side, the information impacts the audience and attempt to frame issues, while on the other side, the audience’s demands shape what is being offered as information as well. Therefore, the examination of the news and the news broadcast content as product and how it is framed becomes very important.

Corporate bias is not necessarily a specific prejudice that is explicit within the corporation. Very often it could be the choice of issues presented, the way they are framed, and in what order

they are ranked. An example of such media bias mentioned by McChesney (2000) is the incident of Disney owned ABC News rejecting a report on exposing the labor and safety practices in Disney World in Florida in 1998. Even if ABC News attempted to present the case, as not due to the obvious conflict of interests, the fact remains that they refused the report by one of their very prominent investigative journalists.

McChesney (2000) also summarized some trends: international news has declined since 1990, while on the flip side, the number of crime-related stories in the news has increased with local news focusing predominantly on crime, violence, triviality, and celebrity with some stations devoting more airtime to commercials than to news.

Even though many documentaries have examined the impact of ownership consolidation and its effects, *The Merchants of Cool* (2001) being one example, the influence of media ownership is still considered a difficult aspect to measure (Chomsky, 2006). Additional concerns raised by the concentration of media ownership include whether the corporate owners would encourage sensationalism and entertainment over objectivity (Bagdikian, 1992; McChesney, 1999) in order to improve profits (Bennett, 2003) and demand coverage that reflects their corporate and ideological interests (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Parenti, 1986; Sparrow, 1999).

Due to varying conceptions of what exactly constitutes ownership bias and how it might affect programming, research so far has looked predominantly at ownership in terms of chain vs. independently owned media outlets, the emphasis on profit over content, and the impact on editorial sections. This, however, is to simplify the complex relationship between ownership and product (Demers, 1991, 1997). A more comprehensive analysis of bias should also consider the impact of professionalism (and the resulting homogenization of journalistic practice) and corporate structure, examine the types of frames used and their tone, and include news coverage in addition to editorials.

Comparing two media outlets (a U. S. owned one and a non-U. S. owned one) and examining their web sites for potential frames is one potential way to offer insight on whether such bias exists. News Corporation, which owns BTV, is a U. S. based corporation, whereas Antenna Group, which owned NOVA TV, is a Greek company. As of October 2008, the Swedish company Modern Times Group bought NOVA TV. Since the deal was completed in October 2008, just a month before this study, the ownership switch should not have an immediate effect on the programming of NOVA TV. The reason NOVA was chosen to be the television to which BTV is compared is that both are privately owned stations that are very similar in structure and programming and are also the two leading in audience ratings stations in Bulgaria (BTV, NOVA TV).

IIIb. Gatekeeping Theory

In the case of the Bulgarian television station, one theory that relates directly to the question of bias and ownership influence is the gatekeeping theory—one of the oldest and most enduring communication theories (Cassidy, 2006). The basic idea of gatekeeping, as defined by Shoemaker (1996), is that there is some selectivity in how and how many news items are presented to the audience, or in even simpler terms, as the process by which “the vast array of potential news messages are winnowed, shaped, and prodded into those few that are actually transmitted by the news media” (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001, p. 233).

The first scholar to suggest the term was the social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1975), who proposed the theory of how things flow through channels operated by gates (forces), which either constrain or facilitate the passage of items and, therefore, the term gatekeepers (Shoemaker, 1996). Later, Lewin’s theory was applied to communication (Westley & MacLean, 1957) and the channels as gates were explained to be managed by individuals or organizations in

the communication process that alter the message in a variety of ways (Westley & MacLean, 1957).

As Lewin suggested gatekeepers are any individuals or set of routine procedures that determine what passes through the gates (1975). Examples of such forces include the reporter's prestige, the routine of assessing newsworthiness, organizational forces such as policies, or social institution forces (Shoemaker et al., 2001). The choosing of more visual news for television or time left before publishing for a newspaper determining how many stories make it are just a few examples of such routines as forces (Abbott & Brassfield, 1989).

The theory has been examined in many variations since the 1950s. Initially, the focus was on the lone gatekeeper where White (1950) applied gatekeeping theory to journalism and examined what stories were selected by the editor of a newspaper wire for publishing. Snider and Bleske (1991), who duplicated White's study, confirmed his observations multiple times later. Even though White concluded that the editor's decisions were highly subjective, later studies demonstrated that gatekeeping is a process that includes forces, which operate on more than just the individual level (Cassidy, 2006).

Later on, more complex aspects of the theory came into examination, and researchers started investigating the professional routines of the journalists as well as the influence of the news organization (Snider, 1967). This focus on the routines better explained the gatekeeping process than just subjectivity and included examination of wire services acting as gatekeeping forces (by suggesting the appropriate combination of news) and their perceived legitimacy by the reporters as well as deciding on what news are newsworthy (Hirsch, 1977). This shifted the research interest from a potentially partisan orientation to one that focused more on the routine forces behind gatekeeping.

Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien (1972) argued that gatekeeping plays a role in how messages are not only shaped but also how they are handled and timed for dissemination. In 2001, gatekeeping was redefined again even more critically “as the overall process through which the social reality transmitted by the news media is constructed” (Shoemaker et al., 2001, p. 233).

The shift in more recent research on gatekeeping has been moving towards online, print journalism, where the fast flow of information requires quick decisions on the journalists’ side on whether and what information to be included and a lot of questions on ethics are raised (Arant & Anderson, 2001; Cassidy, 2006; Singer, 2001, 2006).

The Internet offers a possibility that gatekeeping roles would change due to Internet’s more democratic state. Yet, Singer (2001) suggested that these roles, instead of disappearing, are only evolving, and many online reporters see themselves as credible interpreters of the stories. One could argue that online reporters help the audience make sense and order of what the audience see (Kovach & Rosenthal, 2001). Singer (2001), for example, examined six Colorado newspapers and found that the editors were more likely to report local than global news, therefore presenting a narrower view of the world.

Williams (2002) suggested a connection between gatekeeping and bias, offering the term “synergy bias”, and he argued that it has emerged as a result of the amount of media consolidation and mergers. His argument was that in this case, the news coverage becomes biased in favor of the organizations, with which a particular outlet is associated. In addition, Williams (2004) added that evidence has been found pointing that media ownership as well as cross-promotion do have a direct effect on what is or is not covered in the media.

The documentary *The Merchants of Cool* (2001) was a very detailed example of how synergy bias and media consolidation affect media content. The documentary examined the impact of

marketing on teen brand loyalty and created an anthropological study of corporate bias, hegemony, and media effects, offering a different perspective into gatekeeping.

Another potential aspect of gatekeeping that has been examined is hyperlinking.

Hyperlinking, or creating a link between items on the Internet, allows users to navigate around the World Wide Web by clicking on words, phrases, or images in order to move between pieces of information or web sites (Dimitrova, Connolly-Ahern, Williams, Kaid, & Reid, 2003; Peng, Tham, & Xiaoming, 1999). Hyperlinking has recently been examined in its connection to framing, and is suggested to give cues to what information a given website views as similar or related to the one already offered (Halavais, 2003). Studies indicate that online newspapers were not very likely to provide links to outside resources (Dimitrova et al., 2003).

The comparison of online news coverage on two Bulgarian television stations and their web sites during one-month period for any evidence to suggest corporate bias would add to the literature not only on gatekeeping in terms of ownership bias but also on framing through hyperlinking.

IIIc. Framing Theory

IIIai. The Concept of Framing

Corporate ownership bias can present itself in diverse ways, from a direct agenda promoted by the organization to determining what news is to be covered and how it is to be framed (Weatherly, 2007). Lippman (1922) was one of the first researchers to examine framing, and since then framing has been studied from many diverse perspectives, and no one single definition has emerged (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Some of the ways framing has been defined include: as organizing everyday reality (Tuchman, 1978); as a central organizing idea, which provides meaning (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987); and as organization principles governing events (Goffman, 1974).

Similar to Heider (1959), Goffman (1974) argued that individuals cannot fully comprehend the world and therefore actively classify and interpret their experiences to make sense of the world, which he called schemes of interpretation. This has implications not only for journalism but also for news coverage since a frame suggests what the issue's essence is (Constantinescu & Tedesco, 2007).

Multiple perspectives on framing have been pursued, and two main types of framing have been differentiated: media and audience frames (De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). The media frames are the ones that can be observed within the media content, whereas the audience frames are the way individuals perceive, organize, and interpret events and issues (Domke & Torres, 1999).

Within media frames, De Vreese (1999, 2001) defined generic (describing a range of different news topics) and issue specific (more detailed examination of a specific issue) frames. Research on issue specific frames examines events or issues across different media and news outlets (Newman, Just, & Cringler, 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) and includes examples such as the coverage of two international airline accidents (Entman, 1991) and specific electoral processes (Mendelsohn, 1993; Neijens, 1999) among others. Issue specific frames, however, often are too detailed and difficult to generalize, whereas generic frames are easier to generalize and compare (De Vreese, 2003). Research within generic frames examines campaign news (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996, 1997), crisis (Iyengar, 1991), and framing in different news outlets (Newman et al., 1992), to name a few.

Prior research has found that in news coverage, the most often used generic frames include conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, responsibility, and political consequences (Valkenburg & Semetko, 1999) as well as human impact, powerlessness, and moral

values (Gamson, 1992; Graber, 1988; McManus, 1994; Newman et al., 1992). De Vreese (2001) suggested that there is the need for broader examination of generic frames.

Gerhards and Rucht (1992) also suggested three types of generic frames: diagnostic (identifies a problem and attributes blame), prognostic (suggests what needs to be done), and motivational (calls for action). For this thesis, diagnostic and prognostic frames were examined within the two web sites, since motivational frames are not likely to appear within the news section due to criteria of objectivity.

Other perspectives within framing include the examination of frames within politics as well as the economy in the United States (Gamson, 1992), from specific events (Entman, 1991) and issues to international implications and the EU (Kaid, Ballotti, & Wawrzyniak, 1993). Research interests within framing has focused on political communication (Iyengar & Simon, 1993), news coverage (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, Techman, 1978), as well as framing in the context of the Internet (Han, 2007).

So far, a limited amount of international research has examined framing within news coverage comparing the United States and Sweden (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005), examining the European Union (Kaid et al., 1993), as well as China's news coverage of the Taiwanese presidential elections (Han, 2007), and the localization of news in different media outlets (Kaid et al., 1993). More systematic research, however, is needed not only on the framing of international and cross-national news coverage but also on framing within Internet context particularly since research so far has focused mainly on newspaper or television coverage (Chomsky, 2006; De Vreese et al., 2001; Han, 2007; Scheufele, 1999).

As it becomes obvious from the reviewed literature, framing is a very complex and disputed concept. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, framing is operationalized as selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient than others (Entman,

1993). Entman (1993) also offered four functions of framing: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies, where frames can often serve several of those functions at the same time. For example, a news article could attempt to define a specific problem in a particular fashion, suggest solutions offered by the people involved, and also provide an evaluation of the issue by the way the article focuses attention. Therefore, differences in the degree to which articles frames that attempt to diagnose the causes of a problem, attribute blame, and suggest solutions might be taken as evidence of the influence of bias.

IIIcii. News coverage and frames

One of the major interests within framing, however, remains on how issues are presented and covered in the news (de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). According to Tankard (2001) the news content is organized by news frames, which provide the context and also suggest what the issue is through means of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. The valence of frames was examined also by de Vreese (2003), who suggested that it was exemplified by positive or negative aspects, solutions, and treatments. Framing theory also implies that the media can be responsible for what is being covered as well as how it is covered (Williams, 2004).

It is argued that framing is not always intentional (Han, 2007) but can be due to the working routines of journalists who have to quickly choose how to package the information (Gitlin, 1980). In the same line of thought, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) as well as Tuchman (1978) have identified several key factors in how journalists frame an issue, among which are ownership, organizational and interest groups' pressures and constraints.

The focus on how news coverage is framed in this study includes objects or individuals, issues, and events (if and how they are mentioned—their selection and packaging), instead of listing the presence of frames, since the presence of such frames would indicate bias. The chosen

time frame is immediately after the elections, in order to examine a timeframe that is not considered “hot”, or comparatively too busy, and is not event driven. Analyzing frames during this period should make it easier to detect bias, if such is present. For example, if during this period one of the television stations were to focus more significantly on certain issues (through frame presence and frame valence) and used more prognostic or diagnostic frames, this might suggest bias. Following de Vreese (2003), this study explored for the presence of diagnostic and prognostic frames, frame valance, and the overall tone.

Another indicator of potential bias that has been suggested by scholars was hyperlinking—amount and what information it links to, since the presence of links leading to internal sources as opposed to external would be an indicator of bias. The use of hyperlinks, whether comprehensive (including links to multiple variety of outside sources) or internal (within the same central site) would be suggestive of bias and might be considered a type of framing. So far research within hyperlinking has focused mainly on its connection to social networking and the ideological landscape (Park & Thelwall, 2008) or its cognitive effects concerning reading and perception (Soon & Kluver, 2007; Spyridakis, Mobrand, Cuddihy, & Wei, 2007). The connection between hyperlinking and framing (whether hyperlinking can be considered a type of a frame), however, still needs to be explored.

A new look on framing, gatekeeping, and corporate ownership bias beyond the U. S. news coverage was provided, which adds to the literature on the abovementioned theories by offering a cross-national perspective and exploration of multimedia such as hyperlinking.

IV. Research Questions

Based on the reviewed literature, this thesis explores the following two broad areas:

(1) Is News Corp’s ownership of the major Bulgarian station associated with how U. S. political news is covered in Bulgaria? (2) What issues and frames are presented to the Bulgarian

audience as most prominent immediately after the election, and do they suggest the influence of bias?

The following research questions examining these areas were developed after review of the literature:

RQ1: How much news coverage of the United States is there on the BTV and NOVA TV's web sites?

This question helps assist in determining if there is more coverage of the United States on one of the web sites and possibly indicates if the effects of corporate bias can be supported. More coverage of the United States would possibly be indicative of bias.

RQ2: Does the presence of hyperlinks on each of the web sites suggest corporate bias?

The comparison of specific links and their amount, even repetition, on the two web sites would be helpful in determining potential corporate bias effects. More internal links as opposed to external could possibly be indicative of bias, since there is no attempt of providing a comprehensive view.

For research questions three through five, based on prior research within framing, the study examines whether (amount) and how objects, events, and issues are framed (positively, negatively, or neutrally) and whether this could be suggestive of bias.

RQ3: Does the presence of objects and individuals and how they are covered (positive, negative, or neutral) suggest media bias?

RQ4: Does the presence of events and how they are covered (positive, negative, or neutral), suggest media bias?

RQ5: Does the presence of issues and how they are covered (positive, negative, or neutral), suggest media bias?

RQ6: Do frame presence and valence suggest media bias?

Based on prior research within framing, this question aims to examine whether the presence of certain frames and their valence could be linked to bias.

V. Research Methodology

The study was a content analysis of two Bulgarian televisions' web sites and their world news sections. The content analysis examined the sections for the total number of articles, the number of articles about the United States, hyperlinks, as well as frame presence and frame valence. Two coders whose first language was Bulgarian coded the articles.

Va. Sample

The world news sections content analyzed were from two Bulgarian television stations' web sites: http://btv.bg/news/news_by_cat.pcgi?cat_id=27 (BTV) and <http://www.ntv.bg/news/> (NOVA TV) using the attached code book (Appendix 1). The content of the two web sites was saved over a month period—from November 5, 2008, to December 5, 2008. This time frame allowed for the analysis of specific frames during a period of time (post-U. S. election), which is rarely examined by research. Examining news coverage after the election would provide a sample frame that might be subject to less influence of particular political news events while still providing a sufficient amount of U. S. political news. Most research on news coverage during elections focuses either on the news immediately before or during the election period with little emphasis on the post-election period (Han, 2007). The sample ($N = 77$) included 34 articles from BTV and 43 from NOVA. For the purpose of the study, the unit of analysis was the news articles—generally agreed upon to be news items defined as a set of contiguous verbal content elements (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006).

Vb. Data Collection

The content of the web site (a view of the world news section, which shows all world news for the day) was systematically downloaded and saved as a PDF file as well as Word documents

every day at a consistent time. Each story about the United States was also saved as a separate Word file. The web site view of each hyperlink (if available) was also to be saved as a PDF file.

The world news section is usually updated around 7 p. m. Bulgarian time (12 p. m. for Virginia) or around the time the evening news is offered; therefore, the web sites were saved early afternoon for Virginia (3:00 – 4:00 p. m.), since this is immediately after the time the web site is updated finally for the day.

Vc. Coding Scheme

Each story was then content analyzed for occurring frames, amount of coverage, visual aspects as well as the presence of hyperlinks. Two native Bulgarian speakers performed the coding. A test for intercoder reliability was conducted using a randomly selected subsample of 18% of the news articles. Scott's pi was .994 and was calculated using Program for Reliability Assessment of Multiple-coders (2008).

Each story's content was analyzed for number of times news about the United States was mentioned directly or indirectly; length of the story and its "shelf-life", or duration for which the article was available on the web site; whether there were positive, negative or neutral frames; what issues, events, and individuals were covered; and how and whether the news were related to Bulgaria. For the purpose of clarity in the analysis BTV articles were all labeled as 1 and NOVA articles—as 0.

After all articles were coded, the data were examined and theoretical relationships were tested using Chi-square, *t*-tests, and nominal logistic fit. The data were studied deductively as well as inductively, which allowed not only for the recording of patterns within the definition of existing frames but also allowed for the classification of emerging new ones as well.

VI. Results

The content analysis in this case study yielded a total of 34 news articles from the BTV website and 43 news articles from the NOVA TV web site. To answer the research questions Chi-square analysis was predominantly used. The analysis revealed interesting details about differences in the news coverage of the United States on the two Bulgarian television web sites.

RQ1 asked how much news coverage of the United States there is on the BTV and NOVA TV's web sites, and a simple distribution was used to examine the number of articles. The amount of coverage for each web site includes 34 news articles for BTV and 43 news articles for NOVA TV. This result was not significantly different, $\chi^2(1) = 1.05, p = .3045$. However, the ratio of the number of articles about the United States compared to the total number of articles per day for each channel was significantly different, $t(75) = -3.68, p = .0004$. The mean ratio was .366 for BTV and .554 for NOVA. For example, some days NOVA had up to 5 (out of a total of 6) articles about the United States. There was also a significant difference when examining the duration, or "shelf-life", of the news articles on each web site, $t(75) = 2.91, p = .0047$, where articles on the BTV web site lasted a mean of 2.38 days and articles on the NOVA web site stayed a mean of 1.65 days.

RQ2 asked whether the presence of hyperlinks on each of the web sites would suggest corporate bias by redirecting the reader to another source, either inside or outside the web site. There was a significant difference in the number of hyperlinks, $t(75) = 3.11, p = .0026$, with a mean of 1.08 links for BTV articles and a mean of .55 links for NOVA articles, and the number of internal links (links connecting to information within the same web site), where $t(75) = 2.89, p = .0049$, with a mean of 1.05 links for BTV and a mean of .55 links for NOVA. However, all of these links were internal links to videos covering the same material within the same web sites. There was no significant difference, however, in the number of external links, $t(75) = 1.12, p =$

.2635, with the only instance found on the BTV web site, an outside web address to a U. S. immigration visa lottery web site.

The analysis of the articles' general categories (objects or individuals, events, and issues) and the way they were covered (positive, negative, or neutral) for both web sites combined was inconclusive, $\chi^2(6) = 12.18, p = .0580$. The categories of other (primary focus) and negative (overall tone) were excluded since they amounted to less than five instances resulting in $\chi^2(2) = 5.90, p = .0522$.

However, research questions 3-5 asked whether the articles' overall tone might vary as a function of the web sites and/or the primary topic of the articles. To examine these questions, a nominal logistic fit was used in which the type of web site and the articles' primary topical focus were entered as independent variables and the overall tone was the dependent variable. The overall test revealed a significant difference, $\chi^2(5) = 12.83, p = .0249$. The tone varied by the web site, $\chi^2(1) = 5.34, p = .0207$, and by the articles' primary focus, $\chi^2(2) = 9.46, p = .0088$, but the interaction was nonsignificant, $\chi^2(2) = 0.80, p = .6697$ (Figures 1 and 2).

When the articles focused primarily on objects or individuals, their overall tone (RQ3) varied significantly between the web sites, $\chi^2(15) = 35.25, p = .0023$. BTV had more positive coverage than NOVA when the primary focus was U. S. President-elect Barack Obama (Figure 3). When the articles focused on events (RQ4), their overall tone on each web site also showed a significant difference, $\chi^2(11) = 40.39, p < .0001$. NOVA had more neutral coverage than BTV when covering press conferences, for example (Figure 4). When the articles focused on issues (RQ5), however, the web sites did not seem to differ significantly in their overall tone, $\chi^2(8) = 13.42, p = .0982$.

Articles on the two web sites were examined for presence of a variety of dominant frames (RQ6). BTV was significantly more likely to feature a prognostic frame or to discuss the

consequences to Bulgaria, whereas NOVA was more likely to employ a military conflict frame or a variety of other frames (Table 1).

Before testing for differences in the valence of the frames (RQ6), the data were examined to ensure that they met the assumptions for chi square tests. Only two instances of a negative valence were found, so the analysis was restricted to differences in a neutral valence versus a positive valence. Specific frames that occurred rarely (fewer than five instances) were not analyzed (Table 2). In terms of the valence of these frames, articles on BTV were significantly more likely to have a positive tone for economic consequence frames, $\chi^2(1) = 4.55, p = .0329$, and prognostic frames, $\chi^2(1) = 3.85, p = .0496$.

VII. Discussion

This content analysis was aimed to examine the impact of corporate ownership and its implications on a television station in Bulgaria, and more specifically the television's web site and its news coverage of the United States. Since News Corporation purchased the rights to develop a new television station in Bulgaria in 2000, the television's programming has slowly changed. This change might be due to the general Westernization of media content (with its incline towards reality shows and sitcoms).

The 2008 United States presidential election presented an ideal opportunity to examine this situation. Comparing how much and how the United States was presented to Bulgaria by the News Corporation owned station (BTV) and NOVA through the stations' web sites offered the chance to look into the very important question of bias.

The first research question examined the amount of news coverage per stations' web site. During the one-month period immediately after the U. S. presidential election there were 34 articles on the BTV web site and 43 on the NOVA web site. Since News Corporation owns BTV, the opposite was expected—more articles to be reported by BTV. Even the ratio of

articles about the United States to the total number of articles each day was expected to be higher for BTV than NOVA, which, again, was not the case. Only the “shelf-life” of the articles about the U. S. on the BTV web site was significantly higher than the one of NOVA.

The second research question was aimed to examine whether the presence of hyperlinks on each of the web sites suggested corporate bias. The presence of internal links (leading to other web sites property of News Corporation) as opposed to external ones (leading to various other web sites) would have been suggestive of corporate bias in the form of gatekeeping. The analysis showed that BTV had a significantly higher total number of subject links as well as a higher number of internal links than NOVA. Also, the internal links within the articles were all links to video coverage of the same news items. No significant difference was observed in respect to external links.

Research questions 3-5 focused on whether the presence of objects and individuals and how they were covered (positively, negatively, or neutrally) would suggest media bias. The analysis of the overall tone of the articles per organization was inconclusive. The categories of other (general focus of the article) and the negatively covered (tone) had to be excluded from the analysis due to their small number. When these were excluded, the analysis showed that BTV had more positive in tone coverage in all three categories (individuals, events, and issues) as opposed to NOVA. Even though small in number, all negative in tone articles were also on the BTV web site. Regarding Research Question 3 in specific, BTV also showed a significant difference in terms of positive coverage when reporting about President-elect Obama (when examining the coverage of objects and individuals).

The fourth research question asked the same about the coverage with a primary focus on events. Would the presence of events and how they are covered (positively, negatively, or neutrally) suggest media bias? The analysis indicated a significant difference for NOVA when

reporting on candidates' press conferences, which was predominantly neutral in tone. The only negatively covered events appeared on the BTV web site (two articles).

When the same question was asked about the coverage of issues (RQ5) no significant difference was found between the two web sites and their coverage.

The sixth research question asked whether the frame presence and valence suggested media bias. The analysis indicated that, when looking at the dominant frames per web site, there was a significant difference for BTV where consequences to Bulgaria and prognostic frames were predominant as opposed to NOVA, which showed a significant difference in terms of military conflict and other frames. In terms of valence, BTV showed a significant difference in terms of positive tone when reporting articles with economic consequences and prognostic frames.

In other words, most prevalent type of frames for the two web sites were prognostic frames (which offered solutions), consequences for Bulgaria, and positive frames of individuals (President-elect Obama) for BTV, and military conflict and other frames for NOVA. Hyperlinks also were significantly more for BTV, where they served almost as a repeated frame (the frame appearing in the initial news article) being just a video repetition of the news article.

VIIa. Implications

Previous research within the fields of gate keeping, framing, and corporate ownership bias has examined a variety of ways the mass media has been affected by and affects people. By narrowing down the information being offered to the audience to just a few options (selectivity), focusing on some and not other issues, as well as utilizing the consolidated outlets of the mass media to promote certain products or ideas, intentionally or not, people affect and are affected by the media. Many scholars have examined these very different, yet complementary, areas in their attempts to understand and categorized the way the media functions.

As mentioned earlier, this particular study of what impact ownership might have on how the news about the United States was covered by a Bulgarian television station incorporated these three areas and added to the existing research not only on gatekeeping, framing, and corporate ownership bias, but it also raised questions within areas such as news coverage within the Internet space, coverage of political events, international news coverage and communication, and framing through technology (hyperlinking).

The content analysis performed on the news coverage of the United States on the two Bulgarian television stations' web sites does not provide a clear conclusion as to whether there is ownership bias since such a causal link cannot be established through content analysis alone. However, the differences that were identified in terms of the presence of certain frames and their valence are consistent with the influence of bias.

Contrary to expectations, the non-U.S. owned station's web site had more news coverage of the United States than the one owned by News Corporation. The News Corporation owned station had less coverage of the United States than the other station's web site. However, compared to the articles on NOVA, the articles on BTV had a longer "shelf-life." In addition, they were significantly more likely to employ a prognostic frame or focus on the consequences for Bulgaria, and they were more likely to use more positive tone for frames such as President-elect Obama, economic consequences, and prognostic frames, as well as used more positive tone on all general focus categories.

The news section of BTV includes different categories such as world, curiosities (amusing facts), economy and business, road conditions, Bulgaria, accidents, and health, among others. The focus of this study was the world section of the news. At the time of the analysis, both web sites had a category such as BTV's world news. Since then, however, most likely due to the change in ownership, NOVA TV has also changed its organization of the news and, if the

content analysis was to be performed now, the data would have to include all the categories within BTV and then compare them to the one general news section of NOVA in order for the two web sites to be compared equally. However, when combining all articles about the United States from all these categories for BTV, then its coverage of the United States would certainly be significantly greater than the coverage on NOVA's web site.

In term of frames, NOVA, had more other frames than BTV, which included entertainment figures and news. BTV, overall, focused more on politics and economic consequences as well as consequences for Bulgaria (which also included a referral to an immigration visa lottery offered by the United States and a hurry towards the audience to meet the deadline for it). The titles of each article were also a form of framing, which was not analyzed in this study, but which were a lot more sensational and direct on the NOVA web site.

The presence of hyperlinks was also somewhat inconclusive. There were significantly more total as well as internal links on the BTV web site, but they were all links to videos of the same material. An analysis of these videos would offer more insight into whether more information is offered in these videos or the information, and thus, the same frames and frame valence, is offered through them. At the same time, it could be argued that just the mere presence of more internal links, videos or not, is indicative of bias since they take the audience back to materials within the same web site, repeating the same frames of the original article, without providing other resources or points of view.

As stated before, bias has multiple dimensions, which cannot be fully understood when only one of them is being examined at a time—such as news coverage only through a content analysis, as it is in this case. However, television stations and channels in other than United States countries owned by U. S. corporations provide the unique opportunity to research bias exactly because of the cultural differences and understandings, where any form of bias (whether

amount of coverage, presence of certain frames over others) would be more easily spotted and measured. This study was a small but important step towards a more comprehensive international research on corporate ownership bias and its effects.

Indications of ownership bias on the BTV web site were observed in terms of more positive frames as well as a higher number of hyperlinks (double framing) but not in the amount of coverage. This, however, is due to the study's focus on a specific section of the BTV web site. Were all other categories of news (e.g., curiosities, economy and business, and science and technology) included in the sample and compared to the news section of NOVA, ownership bias would have been observed in terms of amount as well.

VIIb. Limitations

The reasons for these results are most likely rooted in the nature of bias as well as the small sample. The term bias is a very all-encompassing and difficult to measure concept, especially when only one source or outlet is being examined. Content analysis, also, cannot provide strong evidence of a causal relationship. The method can only offer an insight of what and how many frames were present on a web site.

Focusing only on the news articles on the television's web site is an efficient but insufficient unit of analysis when attempting to measure corporate ownership bias. The small sample of articles during the one-month period should also be extended in order for the news coverage to be more thoroughly evaluated. The one-month period immediately after the elections is a very compelling period for examination, because it is often neglected by research as a not too busy of news period. It also provides this in-between time when the news is starting quickly to subside after the horserace during the last weeks of the elections and after the quick news boon immediately following the election results. However, future research should expand

this one-month to a longer period in order for “hot” as well “cold” news periods to be included, thus expanding the opportunity and time frame for potential bias to be observed.

Also, restricting the news coverage on BTV to include only the world news section in order for it to be comparable to the world news section of NOVA probably affected the total coverage. However, such a comprehensive examination of the coverage would require a more detailed and complex analysis.

VIIIc. Future Research

Future research, almost necessarily, has to endeavor on a more comprehensive methodology that either systematically focuses on several consecutive analyses or utilizes a combination of rhetorical as well as quantitative methodologies that examine not only the news coverage of the United States but also the content of the web site itself, the station’s programming, and specifically the documentaries created about the United States by the same station, as well as the advertisements that run on it (even more—their placement during certain programming and cross promotion).

If research is to continue with the focus on the stations’ web sites, the next step should be examining the side links available on each web site, which frame the visual field of the web site such as the most read, most commented on, most videos accessed, related topics, and other. For example, beside the related links available on the general world news section of BTV’s web site there were many visual links to some of the reality shows available on the station such as “Music Idol”, “Big Brother” (both literal names, not translated from Bulgarian), “Desperate Housewives”, whereas, on NOVA’s web site, the news site is almost a separate entity titled “Kalendar”.

Also, as mentioned in the implications, expanding news coverage on the BTV web site to include articles about the United States within all news categories (economy and business,

curiosities, and other) and then comparing it to the similar general news section of NOVA's web site would provide a more in-depth information about the coverage and framing of the news about the United States.

Also, rhetorical analysis would be the next appropriate step for examining even just the news articles already gathered for this study. Even though the news articles present on NOVA's web site were more neutral, the titles of those articles were much more inductive of sensationalism than the titles of the articles available on BTV's web site. Frames within those titles should be carefully examined on an equal base as the articles themselves (some were quite negative and suggestive, unlike the articles themselves). For example, one of them read "Berlusconi: 'Obama has a very sunny tan!'"

VIII. Conclusion

Some indications of bias were found when comparing the U. S. coverage on the web site of the owned by News Corporation television station BTV to its non-U. S. owned counterpart NOVA TV. BTV had more internal hyperlinks, longer "shelf-life" of articles, had more positive coverage in terms of general focus as well as frames such as selected presidential candidate and economic consequences. However, could this be qualified as bias and can it be concluded that the news coverage of the United States on the BTV web site biased? More research is needed, not only more research on this particular web site as well as the television station itself but also research on what specifically is deemed as bias and how it could be measured.

A more strict definition of corporate bias is needed and particularly one that includes not only news coverage and reporting but also the programming as well as advertisement on a particular mass media outlet. Bias is a broad term that should not be analyzed one aspect or one issue at a time. Mass media outlets at a time should be examined for their overall programming for a more comprehensive understanding of corporate bias to be achieved.

The reach of corporate ownership towards other countries also offers an opportunity to more easily observe the influence of ownership on mass media outlets. The effects of ownership bias on the specific audience would also be more easily noticeable in such a different environment. As for the measuring of these effects, a broader variety of research methodology would be necessary.

Research examining the bias of media ownership is of much importance in the present time of globalization, Westernization of the news and programming, and mainly mass media consolidation. Just as the present study was under way the Swedish media group Modern Times Group, MTG AB (MTG), as mentioned earlier, purchased NOVA television from its former owner Antenna Group SA of Greece (SeeNews, 2008). Even in Bulgaria, as a quickly growing advertisement market open for grabs, consolidation of the mass media is making an attempt to catch up with the consolidation trends in the United States as we speak. Therefore, due to all of the abovementioned changes in this new world, the changing economy, cultural and national boundaries, the understanding of the forces working behind the mass media become of even greater importance.

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X. Appendixes

Appendix A

Content Analysis of BTV website news stories

Coder: _____ Date of article (1st available): _____

- 1. Number of articles for the day: _____
- 2. Number of articles about the USA that day: _____
- 3. Headline of article:

-
- 4. Story Number: _____
 - 5. Story Length (# of words): _____
 - 6. Number of days the article has been on the website/available: _____

- 7. Presence of link to a visual (video):
(1) Yes (0) No

- 8. Story's primary category:
(1) Issue(s) (2) Individual(s) (3) Event(s) (4) Other
If other, please specify:

9. Story's secondary category(ies):

Issue(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Individual(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Event(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

-
- 10. Overall tone of the story:
(1) Positive (2) Negative (3) Neutral (4) Not Applicable
If negative or positive, please give a noteworthy example:

-
- 11. How many subject hyperlinks are present? _____
 - 12. How many of these are internal hyperlinks? _____
 - 13. How many of these are external hyperlinks? _____
 - 14. Where do(es) the link(s) lead to?
URL: _____

-
- 15. Story's primary focus (Objects – Individuals):
(1) Selected presidential candidate (2) Selected vice presidential candidate (3) Family of selected presidential candidate/vice presidential candidate (4) Present president (5) Present vice president (6) Other political figure(s) (7) Business/corporate official(s) (8) Government official(s) (9) Non-government official(s) (10) Entertainment figure(s)

(11) Everyday people (12) Media outlets (13) None of the above (14) Other

If other, please specify:

16. Story's secondary focus (Objects – Individuals):

Selected presidential candidate	PRESENT	ABSENT
Selected vice presidential candidate	PRESENT	ABSENT
Family of selected presidential candidate/vice presidential candidate	PRESENT	ABSENT
Present president	PRESENT	ABSENT
Present vice president	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other political figure(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Business/corporate official(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Government official(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Non-government official(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Entertainment figure(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Everyday people	PRESENT	ABSENT
Media outlet(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
None of the above	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

16. Story's primary focus (Issues):

(1) Politics (2) Economy (3) Environment (4) National security (USA) (5) Entertainment (6) Other

If other, please specify:

17. Story's secondary focus (Issues):

Politics	PRESENT	ABSENT
Economy	PRESENT	ABSENT
Environment	PRESENT	ABSENT
National security (USA)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Entertainment	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

18. Story's primary focus (Events):

- (1) US Presidential Elections (2) Candidates (Press conference) (3) Political gaffe (4) Appointed officials
 (5) Change of policy (6) Civil Lawsuits (7) Response to a crisis (8) Other

If other, please specify:

19. Story's secondary focus (Events):

US Presidential Elections	PRESENT	ABSENT
Candidates (Press Conference)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Political gaffe	PRESENT	ABSENT
Appointed officials	PRESENT	ABSENT
Change of policy	PRESENT	ABSENT
Civil Lawsuits	PRESENT	ABSENT
Response to a crisis	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

20. Frames:

Election outcome	Present	Absent
Political consequences	Present	Absent
Supporter backlash	Present	Absent
Economic consequences	Present	Absent
Consequences for Bulgaria	Present	Absent
Foreign policy	Present	Absent
Social consequences	Present	Absent
Conflict of interest	Present	Absent
National security	Present	Absent
Military conflict	Present	Absent
Terrorism	Present	Absent
Conflict (general)	Present	Absent
American patriotism	Present	Absent
Protest	Present	Absent
Morality	Present	Absent
Responsibility	Present	Absent
Prognostic	Present	Absent
Diagnostic	Present	Absent
Other	Present	Absent

If other, please specify:

21. Frames (valence):

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Not Applicable
Election outcome				
Political consequences				
Supporter backlash				
Economic consequences				
Consequences for Bulgaria				
Foreign policy				
Social consequences				
Conflict of interest				
National security				
Military conflict				
Terrorism				
Conflict (general)				
American patriotism				
Protest				
Morality				
Responsibility				
Prognostic				
Diagnostic				
Other				

If other, please specify:

If there are emergent frames not identified above, please make a note below and add a few words explaining their tone (positive, negative, neutral, not applicable):

22. Identify the dominant frame:

	Yes	No	Cannot determine
Election outcome			
Political consequences			
Supporter backlash			
Economic consequences			
Consequences for Bulgaria			
Foreign policy			
Social consequences			
Conflict of interest			
National security			
Military conflict			
Terrorism			
Conflict (general)			
American patriotism			
Protest			
Morality			
Responsibility			
Prognostic			
Diagnostic			
Other			

If other, please specify:

Any noteworthy statement(s) or example(s) from the article:

Appendix B

CODEBOOK

Content Analysis of BTV website news stories

Coder: _____ Date of article (1st available): _____

Coder: Name of coder

Date of article(s): (mm/dd/year)

1. Total number of articles for the day: Total count of the articles posted on the website for the date. Look at the PDF of the website saved for the date.
2. Number of articles about the USA that day: Number of articles on the PDF file that concern anything to do with the USA.
3. Headline of article: The headline
4. Story Number: The number of the article in order of coding – each article is assigned a number for an easy identification later during entering data. The BTV articles will start from 1000 and the NOVA TV – from 2000, starting from the first day, first article for the day, continuing in a consecutive order.
5. Story Length (# of words): Number of words in the article. For consistency, these are done through the word count tool in Word Document.
6. Number of days the article has been on the web site/available: Total number of days the article is present on the site.
7. Presence of link to a visual (video): Is there a video link present under the title of the article. Circle: (1) Yes (0) No Enter the corresponding numbers when data entering.
8. Story Primary Category: What is the story's primary focus – an issue, individual person, event, or something else. Enter the corresponding number when data entering.
(1) Issue(s) (e.g., crisis, economy, politics, etc.) (2) Individual(s) (e.g., people)
(3) Event(s) (e.g., elections, change of policy, etc.) (4) Other
If other, please specify:

-
9. Story's secondary categories: Are there any other categories this article fits into but are not the primary focus of it? Circle whether they are present/absent.

Issue(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Individual(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Event(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

10. Overall tone of the story: How would you describe the story in terms of tone?
- (1) Positive (e.g., uses positive words to describe such as “bright”, “good”, “optimistic”, “positive”, etc.)
 - (-1) Negative (e.g., uses negative words to describe such as “gloomy”, “unfortunate”, “tragic”, etc.)
 - (0) Neutral (e.g., uses objective words that do not indicate positive or negative attitude/inclination towards the topic)
 - (2) Not Applicable (cannot determine or unavailable item)

If negative or positive, please give a noteworthy example: What terms made you consider it positive or negative.

11. How many subject hyperlinks are present? (Hyperlinks are any parts of the text that lead to another, additional Internet space and are usually highlighted in some way. How many are present for each article?)_____

12. How many of these are internal hyperlinks? Internal links are any links that lead to Internet space within the same website (BTV or NOVA TV respectively)_____

13. How many of these are external hyperlinks? Internet links that lead to information outside the website (BTV and NOVA TV respectively)_____

14. Where do(es) the link(s) lead to? (Copy and paste the Internet address and add the name of it if possible)

URL:_____

15. Story’s primary focus (Objects – Individuals): Does the story focus on individuals and if so, is it one of the following?

(1) Selected presidential candidate (2) Selected vice presidential candidate (3)

Family members of selected presidential candidate/vice presidential candidate

(4) Present president (until the 2009 inauguration)(5) Present vice president (until the 2009 inauguration) (6) Other political figure(s) (any) (7) Business/corporate official(s)

(8) Government official(s) (9) Non-government official(s) (administration) (10)

Entertainment figure(s) (Show business, actress, singer, etc.) (11) Everyday people (12) Media outlets (newspapers, televisions, radio stations, etc.) (13) None of the above (14) Other

If other, please specify:

16. Story’s secondary focus (Objects – Individuals): Circle all that apply

Selected presidential candidate	PRESENT	ABSENT
Selected vice presidential candidate	PRESENT	ABSENT
Family of selected presidential candidate/vice presidential candidate	PRESENT	ABSENT
Present president	PRESENT	ABSENT
Present vice president	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other political figure(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Business/corporate official(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Government official(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Non-government official(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Entertainment figure(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Everyday people	PRESENT	ABSENT
Media outlet(s)	PRESENT	ABSENT
None of the above	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

16. Story's primary focus (Issues): If you could generalize what is being discussed within a general category.

- (1) Politics (2) Economy (3) Environment (4) National security (USA) (5) Entertainment (6) Other

If other, please specify:

17. Story's secondary focus (Issues): Circle all that apply

Politics	PRESENT	ABSENT
Economy	PRESENT	ABSENT
Environment	PRESENT	ABSENT
National security (USA)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Entertainment	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

18. Story's primary focus (Events):

- (1) US Presidential Elections (outcomes, results, inauguration, White house visits of the new president, etc.) (2) Candidates (Press conference) (3) Political gaffe (publicly humored mistake) (4) Appointed officials (rumored or official) (5) Change of policy (6) Civil Lawsuits (7) Response to a crisis (government, the mass media, administration, every day people, etc.) (8) Other

If other, please specify:

19. Story's secondary focus (Events): Circle all that apply

US Presidential Elections	PRESENT	ABSENT
Candidates (Press Conference)	PRESENT	ABSENT
Political gaffe	PRESENT	ABSENT
Appointed officials	PRESENT	ABSENT
Change of policy	PRESENT	ABSENT
Civil Lawsuits	PRESENT	ABSENT
Response to a crisis	PRESENT	ABSENT
Other	PRESENT	ABSENT

If other, please specify:

20. Frames: How is the story presented/in what terms explained? Which one of these, if any, can be found in the article? Circle if present or absent.

Election outcome	Present	Absent
Political consequences	Present	Absent
Supporter backlash	Present	Absent
Economic consequences	Present	Absent
Consequences for Bulgaria	Present	Absent
Foreign policy	Present	Absent
Social consequences	Present	Absent
Conflict of interest	Present	Absent
National security	Present	Absent
Military conflict	Present	Absent
Terrorism	Present	Absent
Conflict (general)	Present	Absent
American patriotism	Present	Absent
Protest	Present	Absent
Morality	Present	Absent
Responsibility	Present	Absent
Prognostic	Present	Absent
Diagnostic	Present	Absent
Other	Present	Absent

If other, please specify:

21. Frames (valence): How are they presented – what tone is used? See explanation for Question 10.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Not Applicable
Election outcome				
Political consequences				
Supporter backlash				
Economic consequences				
Consequences for Bulgaria				
Foreign policy				
Social consequences				
Conflict of interest				
National security				
Military conflict				
Terrorism				
Conflict (general)				
American patriotism				
Protest				
Morality				
Responsibility				
Prognostic				
Diagnostic				
Other				

If other, please specify:

If there are emergent frames not identified above, please make a note below and add a few words explaining their tone (positive, negative, neutral, not applicable):

22. Identify the dominant frame: Circle those that are overarching, main.

	Yes	No	Cannot determine
Election outcome			
Political consequences			
Supporter backlash			
Economic consequences			
Consequences for Bulgaria			
Foreign policy			
Social consequences			
Conflict of interest			
National security			
Military conflict			
Terrorism			
Conflict (general)			
American patriotism			
Protest			
Morality			
Responsibility			
Prognostic			
Diagnostic			
Other			

If other, please specify:

Any noteworthy statement(s) or example(s) from the article:

Frames (details):

Election outcomes – general results of the elections.

Political consequences – effects from the elections, candidates, implications for the parties, the losing side, etc.

Supporter backlash – the public’s response to the election’s outcome, discontent, dissatisfaction with outcome, etc.

Economic consequences – economic implications in general, market situation, etc.

Consequences for Bulgaria – direct implication of any US actions for Bulgaria.

Foreign policy – relationships between the US and other countries.

Social consequences – social implications such as taxes, health care, prices, etc.

Conflict of interests

National security – policies, news, etc.

Military conflict – military implications, actions, proposals, etc.

Terrorism – threats, concerns, cases, etc.

Conflict (generally)

American patriotism

Protest

Morality – issues of worldviews.

Responsibility

Prognostic – expectation, synopsis for the future

Diagnostic – explanation, reasoning, analysis

Other

XI. Tables

Table 1: The likelihood for frames by web site.

	χ^2	DF	p	Fisher's L	Fisher's R	Fisher' 2-T
Election outcome	0.04	1	.8407			
Political consequences	0.80	1	.3701			
Supporter backlash	0	0	0			
Economic consequences	0.02	1	.8690			
Consequences for Bulgaria	3.94	1	.0469*			
Foreign policy	2.07	1	.1502			
Social consequences	0.84	1	.3584			
Conflict of interest	0.54	1	.4623			
National security	0.05	1	.8096			
Military conflict	4.51	1	.0336*	.0341*		
Terrorism	0.15	1	.0075			
Conflict (general)	1.33	1	.2477			
American patriotism	1.40	1	.2365			
Protest	1.17	1	.2783			
Morality	3.13	1	.0765			
Responsibility	0.09	1	.7647			
Prognostic	7.76	1	.0053*		.0055*	.0074*
Diagnostic	1.49	1	.0382			
Other	9.31	1	.0073*	.0020*		.0034*

Note: * indicates a significant difference in both tables.

Table 2: Likelihood for frames by web site and tone.

	χ^2	DF	<i>p</i>
Election outcome	3.73	1	.0535
Political consequences	3.17	1	.0748
Supporter backlash	0	0	0
Economic consequences	4.55	1	.0329*
Consequences for Bulgaria	0	0	0
Foreign policy	0.71	1	.3977
Social consequences	0.24	1	.6219
Conflict of interest	0.00	0	.00
National security	0.00	0	.00
Military conflict	0.00	0	.00
Terrorism	0.00	0	.00
Conflict (general)	0.00	0	.00
American patriotism	0.73	1	.3904
Protest	2.77	1	.0959
Morality	1.24	1	.2649
Responsibility	1.58	1	.2077
Prognostic	3.85	1	.0496*
Diagnostic	0.25	1	.6153
Other	0.46	1	.4935

Note: * indicates significant difference for both tables.

XII. Figures

Figure 1: The likelihood of a positive or neutral tone given the web site and the general primary focus.

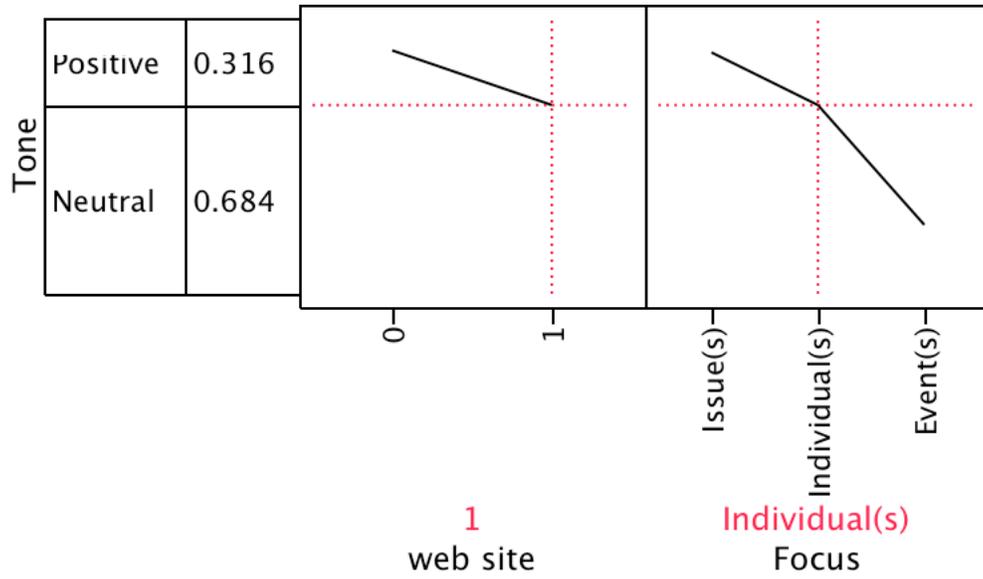
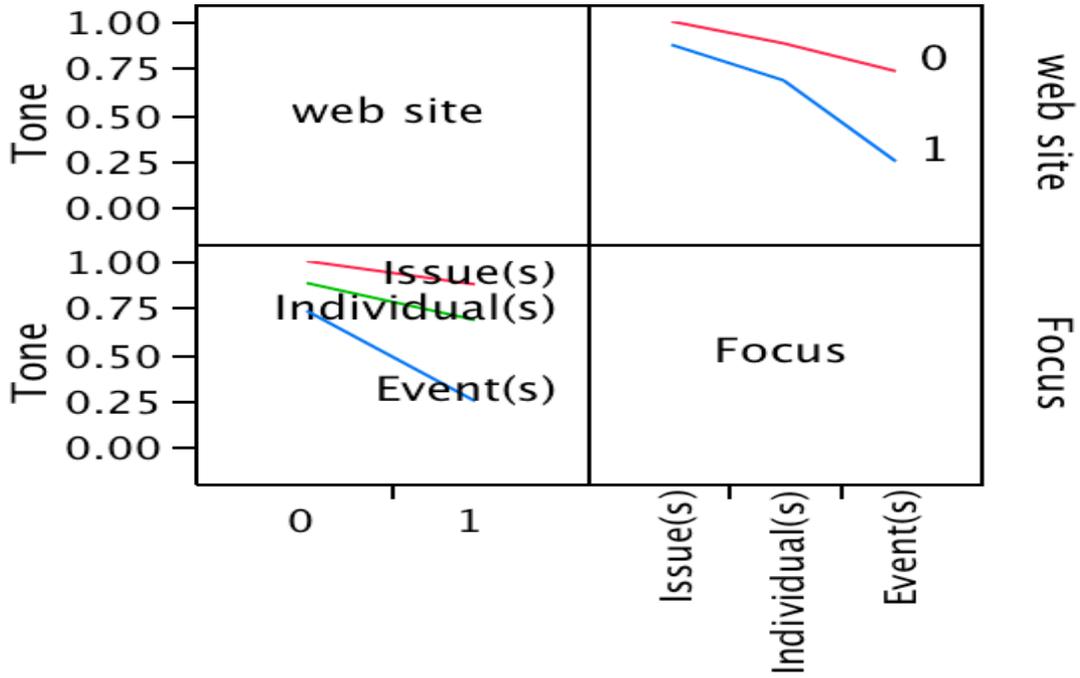
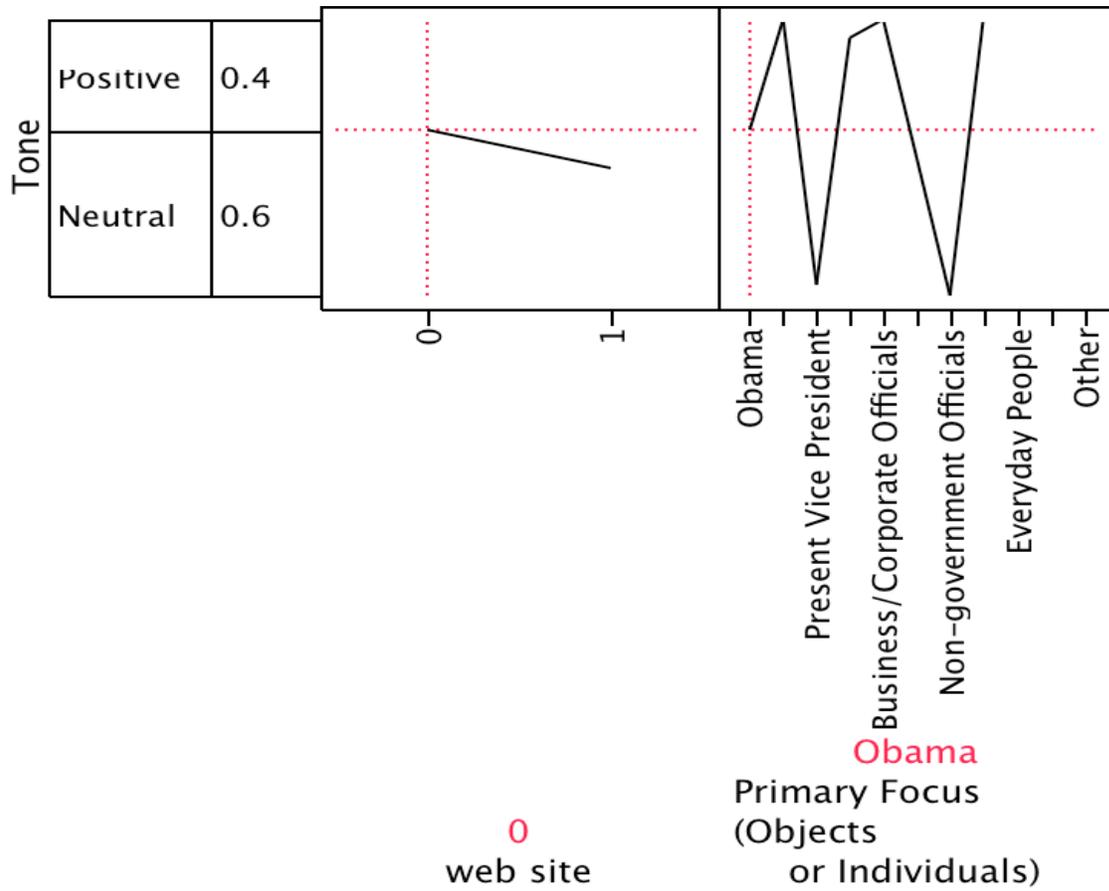


Figure 2: Interaction of the likelihood of the overall tone given the web site and general primary focus.



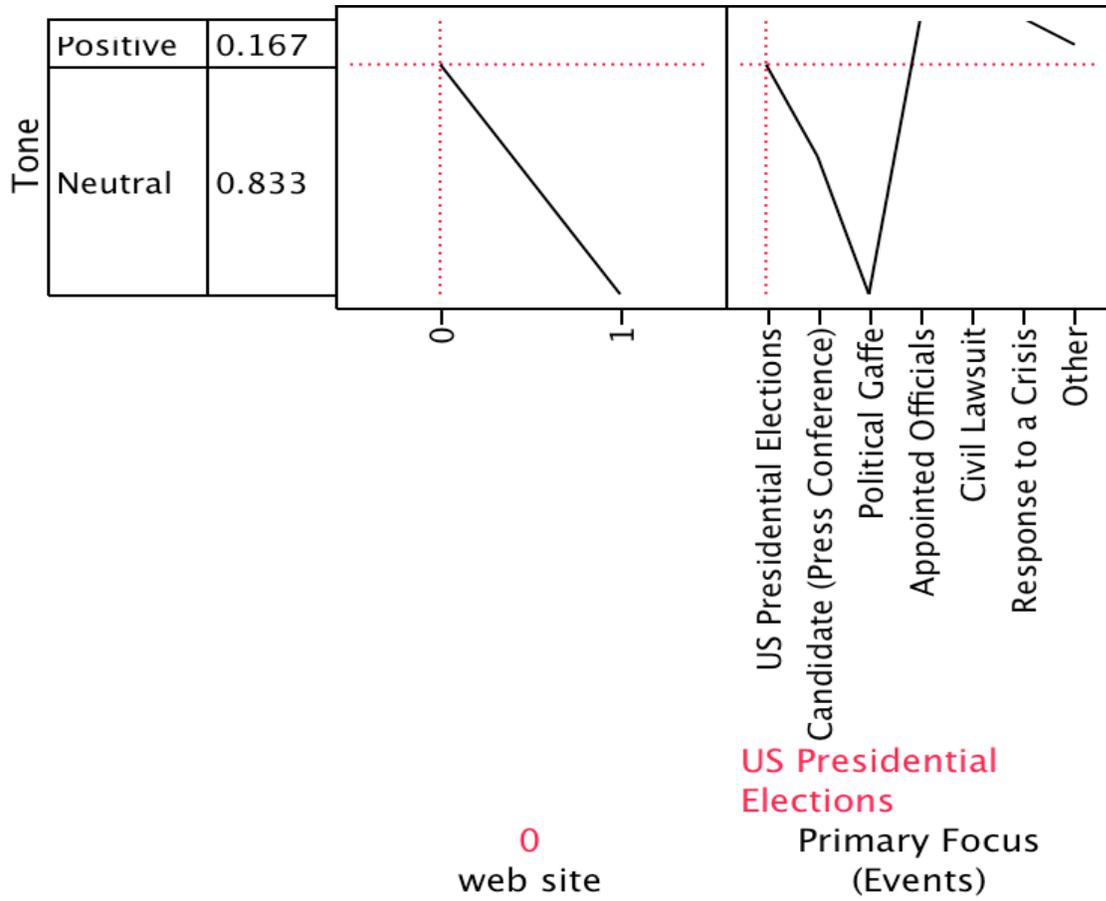
Where NOVA is more likely to use positive tone than BTV

Figure 3: The likelihood of a positive or neutral tone given the web site and focus on objects or individuals.



Note: 0 = NOVA; 1 = BTV

Figure 4: The likelihood of a positive or neutral tone given the web site and event focus.



Note: 0 = NOVA; 1 = BTV