

Chapter 2

Evaluating Media Performance

Commentators commonly suggest that newspapers or television should fulfill certain goals, such as raising public awareness about AIDS, encouraging interest in international affairs, or stimulating community activism. During election campaigns, many believe that the news media has a particular responsibility to strengthen democracy, through political coverage that should educate the public about the major issues, inform citizens about the contenders for office, and mobilize people to turnout. Judged against these standards, videomalaise theories suggest that the news media largely fail in their democratic functions. Embedded in these claims are certain normative assumptions about what political coverage the news media *should* provide. What are the appropriate standards that should be used to evaluate the role of the news media?

This chapter starts with the theory of representative democracy developed by Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl, based on the concepts of pluralistic competition, public participation, and civil and political rights. We then consider the benchmarks available to evaluate journalism that flow from this understanding. The approach we use follows the idea of a democratic audit, developed to evaluate how institutions like elections, legislatures and the judiciary work in any particular society¹. Our approach identifies three core political functions of the news media system -- as a civic forum, as a mobilizing agent, and as a watchdog. Based on these functions, we develop more specific benchmarks, or a checklist, that can be used to audit the performance of the news media system in any democracy. Subsequent chapters go on to examine the evidence for media performance judged against these standards.

Democratic Theories of the News Media

Following the Schumpeterian tradition, we can define representative or liberal democracy in terms of its structural characteristics². Understood in this way, democracy involves three dimensions:

- ?? **Pluralistic competition** among parties and individuals for all positions of government power;
- ?? **Participation** among citizens in the selection of parties and representatives through free, fair and periodic elections; and,
- ?? **Civil and political liberties** to speak, publish, assemble and organize, as necessary conditions to ensure effective competition and participation³.

This definition focuses particularly upon how democracies function through elections, as the main mechanism for holding governments accountable for their actions. Representative democracies require competition for elected office allowing citizens to choose from among alternative candidates and parties. Information should be available from parties and the news media so that citizens can understand the alternative electoral choices and predict the consequences of casting their ballot. Citizens need opportunities to formulate their preferences, signify their preferences, and have their preferences

weighted equally in the conduct of government. Free and fair elections should occur at regular intervals to translate votes into seats and to allow alternation of the authorities in government. If these conditions are met then citizens can exercise an informed choice, hold parties and representatives accountable for their actions and, if necessary, 'kick the rascals out'. Of course many other definitions are available, especially those based on alternative conceptions of direct or plebicitary democracy, but the Schumpeterian perspective reflects one of the most widely accepted understandings of democratic institutions⁴. It has the advantage of being widely used for cross-national and longitudinal comparisons⁵. The conceptualization has been operationalized and measured with the Gastil Index which Freedom House have published annually since the early 1970s, ranking countries worldwide⁶.

On this basis, we can identify three political functions for the news media system in election campaigns, -- as a **civic forum** for pluralistic debate, as a **watchdog** for civil and political liberties, and as a **mobilizing agent** for public participation, -- which flow from this understanding of representative democracy (see Figure 2.1). Obviously many other criteria for evaluating the performance of the mass media are available, such as those concerning educational or cultural goals⁷. But only the core political functions for the news media that we have identified are central to the Schumpeterian understanding of representative democracy. What would this conceptualization imply for evaluating the performance of the news media?

[Figure 2.1 about here]

The News Media as Civic Forum

The concept of the news media as a civic forum is most closely associated with the work of Jürgen Habermas, who has been widely influential, although our argument does not depend upon his conceptualization. Habermas's ideal notion of a public sphere is predicated on the notion of widespread discussion about public affairs in civic society⁸. The idea of a public sphere is a meeting place or debating forum, facilitating informed deliberation about the major issues of the day and mediating between citizens and the state. In the 18th century, a diverse range of intellectual journals and public affairs periodicals among fashionable society were regarded as providing the ideal media in this process, along with the radical press, and meeting places in the political salons and coffee houses of London, Paris and Vienna.

In the late 19th century, changes in the nature of liberal democracy, --particularly the expansion of the franchise beyond the bourgeois elites, the growth of the popular press, and the increasing specialization and complexity of government, -- transformed the conditions facilitating the traditional channels of elite political discussion and enlarged the public sphere. Habermas deplored the effects of developments in the news media, including the growing role of the mass-circulation popular press, the concentration of corporate ownership in large media groups, and the rising power of advertisers, a process which, he argued, led to a homogenization of political information and the shift from 'real' to 'virtual' political debate.

Despite these developments, today the ideal of the press as a civic forum for pluralistic debate, mediating between citizens and the state, remains highly influential⁹. Traditional meeting places have altered, but not beyond recognition, as venues such as newspaper 'op-ed' features, editorial columns and letter pages, and public affairs magazines, along with newer outlets like talk radio programs, CNN's '*Larry King Live*', BBC2's *Newsnight* or *Meet the Press*, and internet discussion forums, all provide regular opportunities for political debate for a network of politicians, government officials, journalistic commentators, advocacy group spokespersons, think-tank analysts, and academic policy experts, as well as providing opportunities for public input through phone-in or studio discussions.

As a civic forum we assume that the news media should function at the most general level as a conduit providing government and the governed with opportunities to communicate effectively with each other¹⁰. In this regard, the news media serves as an essential linkage connecting horizontally between political actors and vertically between these actors and the electorate. Central priority in this process should be accorded to parties, as the core representative institution aggregating interests, nominating candidates, and providing collective responsibility for government. Parties attempt to influence newspapers and television headlines, and thereby reach 'downwards' towards the electorate, through agenda-setting activities such as news conferences, photo opportunities and professional political marketing techniques. Equally importantly, to make sure that electoral choices reflect public priorities, citizens need to be able to express their concerns and convey their preferences 'upwards' to parties and elected representatives. Opinion polls, focus groups and traditional doorstep canvassing are all ways that representatives can learn about the preferences of the electorate but often politicians rely upon the news media as a proxy for public opinion. The process of communications is important at any stage of the political cycle but particularly during election campaigns, when citizens have the greatest opportunities to influence the political process and choose the government.

Opportunities for Civic Debate

If we accept that the news media should function as a civic forum, then specific indicators can be used to audit how well the media performs. To prove effective, we assume that the news media should provide extensive political coverage that is widely and easily available to all sectors of society. A rich information environment, with multiple sources of regular news about politics available from different outlets, is most likely to promote effective government communications, to provide multiple venues for public debate, and to reduce the costs of becoming informed about public affairs. In contrast, if, as some claim, there has been a decline in the amount of political coverage, due to trends such as the decline of public service broadcasting, or the rise of 'infotainment', then civic affairs may be impoverished.

Yet the extent of political news tells us nothing about its quality. Pluralist theory emphasizes that as a civic forum the news media system should reflect the political and cultural diversity within each society, in a fair and impartial balance, so that all voices are heard in political deliberation. 'Balance' can be defined in terms of either external or internal diversity.

Notions of external diversity stress competition between different media outlets. In Britain, for example, although direct financial links between parties and newspapers have weakened, the press remains broadly partisan in their political leanings. Papers like the *Daily Telegraph* and *Mail* have sympathized with the Conservative party while the *Daily Mirror* and *Guardian* have provided a more left-liberal slant to news and editorial commentary. Although the overall balance of the press has traditionally leaned towards the right in the post-war era, competition between papers, offering voters a choice of alternative political perspectives at the newsstand, preserves pluralism. The role of the news media as a civic forum becomes problematic if most major news outlets consistently favour only one party or viewpoint, if they exclude minor parties or minority perspectives, or if citizens rely upon only one news source.

The alternative conception emphasizes the internal diversity of reporting. In this model, typified by the American press, each paper provides multiple and contrasting perspectives within its columns, often balancing liberal and conservative op-ed commentary. Internal diversity preserves pluralism, even with a restricted choice of newspapers within a particular market. The monopoly enjoyed by public broadcasters meant that most emphasized the need for strict partisan balance in news coverage, especially during election campaigns. Television editors and producers commonly stress the need for equidistant coverage of the main political parties, balancing favourable and unfavourable stories about each party, as well as even-handedness in coverage of all sides of an issue¹¹. The typical story in this regard tends to present one party's policy proposals or record, followed by a rebuttal from opponents, in a familiar "on the one hand and on the other" sort of format. Studies have found that balance, or "expressing fairly the position on both sides of a dispute" is one of the most common ways for journalists to understand objectivity, especially in the United States and Britain¹². Many broadcasters seek to ensure that the major parties or candidates are given equal, or proportional, airtime during election campaigns. This is also the principle commonly used for allocating political or election broadcasts¹³, as well as for the time rules governing presidential debates. A comparison of election coverage in the early 1990s found that the British and Spanish press displayed greater external diversity, while in contrast the American and Japanese press, and broadcast news in most countries, displayed higher internal diversity¹⁴. The potential danger of internal diversity is a possible bias towards the middle-of-the-road, excluding the radical left and right. The multiple and conflicting signals in news coverage may also complicate the process of using the news media as cue-giver in political choices and reduce the ability of the news media to mobilize voters.

We can compare these notions by examining the amount and direction of news about major issue controversies that divide European society, such as the debate about the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the adoption of the single currency (the Euro). If the European news media system works well as a civic forum on this issue, then we would expect to find extensive political coverage of the EMU debate available in newspapers, television and the Internet, and this coverage would provide a platform for the voices of a wide range of different political and cultural viewpoints, for and against monetary union. On the other hand, the news media can be seen to fail by this standard if serious political coverage of Europe is driven out by 'infotainment'

values, 'soft' news, and 'tabloidization', if news systematically excludes major voices in public debate, or if only one perspective for or against monetary union is given a platform.

Watchdog of the Powerful

Equally important, a viable democracy requires extensive political rights and civil liberties, to protect the interests of minorities against the abuse of power. In their watchdog function, it has long been recognized that the news media should scrutinize those in authority, whether government institutions, non-profit organizations or the private sector, to hold officials accountable for their actions¹⁵. Ever since Edmund Burke, the 'fourth estate' has traditionally been regarded as one of the classic checks and balances in the division of powers. In this role, investigative reporters seek to expose official corruption, corporate scandals, and government failures. In the more popular notions, the press is seen as a champion of the people guarding over the popular interest, taking up grievances, and able to challenge the government¹⁶.

In political coverage, this implies that journalists and broadcasters should not be just reporting political speeches, campaign rallies or photo opportunities 'straight' or unfiltered, from politicians to the public, without also providing editorial commentary, critical analysis, and interpretative evaluations of political messages, to help readers and viewers place these events in context. Critical coverage can be seen to promote the conditions of effective political competition since claims, for example about the government's record or a candidate's qualifications for office, are open to external scrutiny and evaluation. The analysis of party strategy and tactics can also be regarded as part of this 'watchdog' role, since providing contextual information about the aims of the spin-doctors or campaign managers can help citizens to evaluate the reliability and meaning of political messages. The watchdog role can also be seen as vital for the protection of civil liberties and political rights, because it opens the actions of governments and major corporations to the light of public scrutiny.

Clearly there is potential conflict between the need for the news media to act as a pluralistic civic forum, setting the platform and rules of engagement for others to debate public affairs, and for journalists to function as active watchdogs of the public interest. The conventional distinction between 'factual' reporting on the front-pages and 'editorial' commentary in the middle of the paper is one way to make this distinction, although the line between 'reporting' and 'interpretation' has often become increasingly blurred in practice. To see how journalists balance these different functions we can examine case studies of coverage of issue debates or incidents of government failure. This approach allows us to examine whether the news media acted as an independent, fair and impartial critic of powerful interests, or whether abuses of public standards went unchecked.

The News Media as a Mobilizing Agent

This brings us to the issue at the heart of this book, which is concerned above all with unraveling the impact of political communications on the public. The roles of the news media as civic forum and as watchdog are essentially about the appropriate conditions

for maintaining political competition at the elite level. As defined earlier, public participation through free, fair and periodic elections is the third Schumpeterian precondition for representative democracy. By this criterion, the news media succeed if they encourage *learning* about politics and public affairs so that citizens can cast informed ballots, if they stimulate grassroots *interest* and discussion, and if they encourage the public to *participate* through the available channels of civic engagement, including voting turnout. For classical liberals, like John Stuart Mill in *Representative Government* and *On Liberty*, one of the major functions of expanding the franchise to the working classes was to encourage civic education, because he believed that citizens would learn about public affairs primarily through active engagement with the democratic process.

Does the news media system perform according to these expectations? As discussed in the introduction, videomalaise theories blame the news media for public apathy about public affairs, cynicism about political leaders and institutions, ignorance about the basic facts of politics, and low turnout at the ballot box. Recent decades have seen an erosion of support for the core institutions of representative government in many advanced industrialized societies, while support for parliaments, parties and the political regime remains low in many new democracies¹⁷. Many hold common practices in journalism responsible for this situation, particularly the way that routine news headlines are often dominated by 'negativism', conflict, personalization, crime and violence, with political coverage characterized by a focus on 'horse-race' polls and insider strategy, rather than political issues¹⁸. Yet, as discussed further in Part III, the evidence for the effects of exposure to the news media on political learning, interest and participation remains a matter of considerable debate.

We make three simple assumptions about the ideal conditions for the acquisition of political knowledge in this chapter, as the basic premises for our argument, before examining the empirical evidence supporting these propositions in Part III. There is much controversy about whether the public learns enough from the news media to cast an informed ballot because no consensus exists about what counts as 'political knowledge'. We start with the premise that what voters need for effective citizenship, and therefore what the news media should provide, is *practical knowledge about the probable consequences of their political actions*. To cast an informed vote, citizens need to be able to minimize uncertainty and predict the results of their political decisions, such as whether voting for X or Y will maximize their preferences¹⁹. As discussed later, practical knowledge is only one form of knowledge - it focuses on prediction, not explanation or analysis characteristic of knowledge in the social and natural sciences. For example, understanding the principles of the internal combustion engine, while of intrinsic interest for engineers, provides no practical guidance to a driver wanting to know how to accelerate the car. In the same way, understanding 'how a bill becomes law' civics, or even all the details of the government's transport policy, or party manifestoes on regional aid, is redundant for citizens who want to know what will happen to the issues they care about if they vote for a particular party of the left or right. We therefore assume a distinction between prediction and explanation: we can explain without necessarily being able to predict, and predict without necessarily being able to explain.

In seeking practical knowledge we further assume that *the type of information most useful for citizens is contextual to the electoral decision they face*. The reason is that the information most relevant for voting choices depends upon the electoral and party system. There is no single 'gold' standard. Information about political issues, party platforms, and the government's record, may well prove useful in predicting the consequences of casting a ballot in parliamentary general elections contested by programmatic parties. But in other contexts, alternative types of knowledge may also help voters predict the consequences of their actions. For example, information about the probable party in the lead, available from opinion polls, may be useful for tactical voting. Insights into party strategy may be important to evaluate the reliability and meaning of party messages. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different leaders may be invaluable in presidential races. Insights into the experience and issue stance of legislative candidates is useful to voters in some contexts, such as in races for the United States Senate, where party discipline remains weak, but this information is largely irrelevant in strong parliamentary democracies where party discipline governs backbench activities, such as in elections for the British House of Commons. This implies that although information about policy issues can provide the basis for practical knowledge, voters may also seek many different types of information to guide their decision-making in different contexts.

Thirdly, we assume that *the news media should provide citizens with political information at a variety of different levels, ranging from the most technical detail through to the most popular account*. The reason is that citizens come to politics with different backgrounds, interests, and cognitive skills. Some may seek detailed policy briefings and analysis, provided by journals such as *The Economist*, newspapers like the *New York Times*, or radio programs like the *BBC World Service News Hour*. Others require information in more popular, simple or accessible formats, typified by sources like tabloid newspapers, brief radio news headlines carried on on-the-hour by music stations, or local television news. In some contests the hurdles for informed choice are exceptionally high, for example to decide about the pros and cons of ballot initiatives about protecting the environment or electoral reform. In other political choices, the information barriers are relatively low, for example in deciding how to cast a ballot in a parliamentary general election contested by only two major parties. Given the different skills, experiences and understandings that voters bring to the table, we assume that news should be available at different levels, rather than assuming one format is the ideal for all. The serious image of the gray columns of the *New York Times* may well suit the political cognoscenti within the beltway or East Coast establishment, but we assume it will thereby exclude many other types of voters. In this regard, the political role of the down-market tabloids can be seen as playing a legitimate role in democracy, by reaching the groups uninterested in the up-market broadsheets. Just as democratic elections require competition for office, we assume there should be pluralistic competition for levels and types of information.

Lastly, the role of the news media as mobilizing agent assumes that journalists share some responsibility, along with parties, in stimulating interest in public affairs and encouraging the different dimensions of civic engagement. Citizens have many opportunities for political participation, ranging from following events during the

campaign to discussing the options with friends and family, voting in elections and referendums, party work like fundraising and canvassing, helping in voluntary organizations, new social movements or community associations, and 'unconventional' activities like direct action. Ever since the early studies by Paul Lasarsfeld and colleagues, traditional theories of the news media have emphasized its mobilizing potential in election campaigns²⁰. More recently in the US the decline in turnout is commonly blamed on negative campaign coverage in the news media, while Putnam has argued that television is largely responsible for a long-term erosion of social capital in the baby boom generation²¹. The conception of the news media as a mobilizing agent - generating practical knowledge, political interest and civic engagement, - is therefore widely accepted, although many doubt its capacity to perform against this ideal.

Conclusions: Evaluating Performance

There are many approaches to defining appropriate standards that can be employed to evaluate the performance of the news media. Discussions are commonly based on certain 'middle range' ethical principles understood as given ends in themselves. Debate often revolves around the priority that should be given to different values, such as those of 'balance', 'freedom of expression', 'objectivity', 'accuracy', 'independence', 'impartiality' or 'diversity' in the news²². Blumler, for example, identifies certain general values underlying public service broadcasting in Western Europe, including programme quality, the maintenance of regional, linguistic, and political diversity, the protection of cultural identities, the welfare of children, the independence of program makers, and the integrity of civic communication²³. Gurevitch and Blumler argue that the news media should fulfill eight different functions for the political system, including agenda-setting, providing platforms for advocacy, and holding official to account²⁴. These are all arguably important standards but it is difficult to rank these values, if they conflict, in the absence of any broader theoretical principles. Moreover these values are accorded different priority by those who lean towards the libertarian or social responsibility views of the news media²⁵.

Other have attempted to identify common features in the principles embedded in public policy regulations, or in the values held by journalistic cultures, but it has proved difficult to find generally agreed standards from these sources. Within Western Europe, communication policies differ significantly in their relative emphasis on broadcasting independence, diversity of access, the protection of national languages and cultures, and promoting local media²⁶. Worldwide, the sharp contrasts between the free market and developmental visions of the role of the media were illustrated by the heated debate that erupted in the mid-1980s over UNESCO's proposed New World Information and Communication Order²⁷. American, British and German journalists place different priorities on core values such as 'objectivity'²⁸. Any attempt to specify certain 'universal' yardsticks to evaluate the functions of the news media therefore runs the risk of ethnocentrism - assuming one set of cultural values which may be seen as inappropriate elsewhere. An important reason for the lack of consensus about the appropriate standards for the political performance of the news media is that values are often only loosely linked to broader notions embedded in democratic theory.

The premise for our argument therefore starts with general propositions about the nature of representative democracy, and about the role of the news media within this context, which serve as normative assumptions for the book. We then develop certain specific indices of media performance which we argue flow from these premises. To summarize our argument, in the Schumpeterian tradition we define representative democracy procedurally as a set of institutions which function to allow pluralistic competition for power, public participation through free, fair and period elections, and civil rights and political liberties. If this conception of representative democracy is accepted as a starting point we argue that the following specific indicators can be used to audit the performance of the news media in any political system:

In order to facilitate *pluralistic competition* we assume that the news media should act as a **civic forum** for debate. As such, to judge its performance we can ask:

- ?? Does the news media provide extensive coverage of news about politics and government, especially during election campaigns?
- ?? Over time has the total amount of political coverage diminished, for example due to the decline of public service broadcasting and newspaper sales, or has it increased and diversified across different media outlets?
- ?? Does the news media provide a platform for a wide plurality of parties, groups and actors?
- ?? Does the news media provide equal or proportional political coverage for different parties in terms of stopwatch balance, directional balance and agenda balance?

The most appropriate way to evaluate whether the news media system meets these standards is systematic content analysis of the amount and type of news and current affairs coverage, comparing media outlets like newspapers and television over time and across different countries.

In order to preserve the conditions for *civil rights and political liberties*, we assume that the news media should act on behalf of the public as a **watchdog** holding government officials accountable. To see how well the news media fulfill this function we can ask:

- ?? How far does the news media provide independent, fair and effective scrutiny of the government and public officials?

The most effective way to explore this issue is with historical case studies describing the role of the news media in classic examples of the abuse of power, public scandals and government corruption, to see how far journalists act fairly and independently in the public interest to hold officials to account.

Lastly, to promote conditions for *public participation*, we assume that the news media should act as a **mobilizing agent** encouraging political learning, interest, and participation. To evaluate how well the news media function in this regard we can ask:

- ?? How far does the news media succeed in stimulating general interest in public affairs?

?? How far does the news media encourage citizens to learn about public affairs and political life?

?? How far does the news media facilitate and encourage civic engagement with the political process?

The videomalaise thesis casts doubt on the capacity of the news media to function according to these standards. If the public remains stubbornly unaware of the political facts of life and choose to stay home on election day, if civic debate about the major issues of the day degenerates into a dialogue of the deaf, incivility and personal name-calling, and if abuses of public standards go unchecked, then often the news media are blamed. Before we can start to evaluate the empirical evidence we need to consider the methodological approaches available to analyze these issues.

Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (NYU Press, Fall 2000)

Figure 2.1: Standards of Media Performance

Conditions for Representative Democracy	Pluralistic Competition	Public Participation	
Role of the News Media	Civic Forum	Mobilizing Agent	
Performance Indices	Availability and balance of news in terms of: ?? Stop-watch balance ?? Directional balance ?? Agenda-balance	Civic engagement of news users in terms of: ?? Practical Knowledge ?? Political Interest ?? Civic Activism	Ind eff med ?? ?? ??
Measurement of performance	Content analysis: Amount and balance of news coverage	Mass surveys: Knowledge, interest and activism of news users	The i pow

¹ David Beetham. 1994. *Defining and Measuring Democracy*. London: Sage.

² Joseph Schumpeter. 1952 (1943). *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. London: Allen and Unwin. Certain conceptions of the role of the news media draw more strongly on direct or plebicitary notions of democracy, particularly the recent public journalism movement in the United States which emphasises that news organizations need to reconnect with their communities to engage citizens in problem solving. See, for example, Anthony J. Eksterowicz, Robert Roberts and Adrian Clark. 1998. 'Public Journalism and Public Knowledge.' *The Harvard International Journal of Press-Politics*. 3(2):74-95. Nevertheless, the public journalism movement can also work within the liberal or representative conception of democracy used in this book.

³ See also Robert A. Dahl. 1956. *Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Robert A. Dahl. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Robert A. Dahl. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

⁴ For a discussion of the conflict between 'classical' and 'realist' models of democracy, and their implications for theories of the press, see Michael Schudson. 1995. 'The News Media and the Democratic Process.' In Michael Schudson *The Power of News* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. For an alternative view see also Benjamin Barber. 1984. *Strong Democracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵ Davis Beetham. 1994. *Defining and Measuring Democracy*. London: Sage.

⁶ See Freedom House. 1998. 'The Comparative Survey of Freedom, 1998.' *Freedom Review*.

⁷ See Denis McQuail. 1996. *Media Performance*. London: Sage.

⁸Jurgen Habermas. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. London: Heinemann; Jurgen Habermas. 1998. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

⁹ See Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks. 1995. *Communication and Citizenship*. London: Routledge; Peter Dahlgren. 1995. *Television and the Public Sphere*. London: Sage.

¹⁰ These standards are intended to apply to all the news media available to citizens within a polity, not to specific media outlets. What is important, in this understanding, is the availability of information and a plurality of political viewpoints across all channels of newspapers, television, radio and the internet, rather than diversity of viewpoints within any particular media outlet.

¹¹ Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch 1995. *The Crisis of Public Communication*. London: Routledge.

¹² Thomas Patterson. 1998. 'Political Roles of the Journalist' In *The Politics of News: The News of Politics* edited by Doris Graber, Denis McQuail and Pippa Norris. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

¹³ See Christina Holtz-Bacha and Linda Lee Kaid. 1995. 'A Comparative Perspective on Political Advertising.' Table 2.4. In Lynda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha. *Political Advertising in Western Democracies*. London: Sage.

¹⁴ Russell J. Dalton, Kazuhisa Kawakami, Holli A. Semetko, Hiroshisa Suzuki and Katrin Voltmer. 1998. 'Partisan cues in the media: Cross-National Comparisons of Election Coverage.' Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago 25-28th April 1998.

¹⁵ See, for example, George A. Donohue, Philip Tichenor et al. 1995. 'A Guard Dog Perspective on the Role of the Media.' *Journal of Communication*. 45(2): 115-128.

¹⁶ See the discussion in George A. Donohue, Phillip J. Tichenor and Clarice N. Olien. 1995. 'A Guard Dog Perspective on the Role of the Media'. In *Journal of Communication*. 45(2):115-128; Renate Kocher. 1986. 'Bloodhounds or Missionaries: Role Definitions of German and British Journalists.' *European Journal of Communication*. 1: 43-64.

¹⁷ Pippa Norris. 1999. *Critical Citizens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁸ Thomas Patterson. 1993. *Out of Order*. New York: Vintage.

¹⁹ Our conception is similar to the understanding of political knowledge in Arthur Lupia and Mathew McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁰ Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1944. *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press.

²¹ Robert Putnam. 1995. 'Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America.' *P.S.: Political Science and Politics* XXVIII(4):664-83.

²² Denis McQuail. 1992. *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest*. London: Sage. P.17.

²³ See, for example, Jay Blumler. (Ed) 1992. *Television and the Public Interest: Vulnerable Values in West European Broadcasting*. London: Sage.

²⁴ See, Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler. 1991. 'Political Communication Systems and Democratic Values.' In Judith Lichtenberg *Democracy and the Mass Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. There is a large literature on the ethical principles for individual journalists, such as issues of libel, privacy and conflict of interests, but these differ from broader normative criteria for the appropriate function of political communications in a

democracy. See, for example, Elliot D. Cohen and Deni Elliott. 1997. *Journalism Ethics*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

²⁵ Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schram. 1984. *Four Theories of the Press*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

²⁶ Denis McQuail. 1992. *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest*. London: Sage. P.17.

²⁷ McBride Commission. 1980. *Communications and Society Today and Tomorrow*. Paris: UNESCO. For the history of this debate and subsequent developments see UNESCO. 1997. *World Communication Report: The Media and Challenges of the New Technologies*. Paris: UNESCO.

²⁸ David H. Weaver. 1998. *The Global Journalist: News People Around the World*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press; Thomas E. Patterson and Wolfgang Donsbach. 1991. 'News Decisions: Journalists as Partisan Actors.' *Political Communication*. 13(4):455-468; Renate Koecher. 1986. 'Bloodhounds or Missionaries: Role Definitions of German and British Journalists.' *European Journal of Communication*. 1:43-64.