What Determines the News About Foreign Policy?
Newspaper Ownership, Crisis Dynamics and the
2011 Libyan Uprising¹

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Abstract: Why does media coverage of foreign policy vary across and within countries? We examine the sources of this variation using a new dataset of 102,568 articles on the 2011 Libyan uprising and subsequent NATO intervention published by 1,925 newspapers in 50 countries. We find that newspaper ownership structures and networks play an important role in shaping the nature and extent of foreign policy coverage. Higher circulation, independent newspapers offer more extensive coverage and place a greater emphasis on hard news topics and themes, while papers within larger ownership networks display the opposite patterns, net of circulation. In the context of the Arab Spring, we also find that -- compared to more selective forms of violence -- incidents of indiscriminate force by the Libyan regime tended to push newspapers toward a greater focus on policy-oriented stories and more open critique of a government’s performance in managing the crisis. By shaping the scope, tone and content of media coverage, these factors are likely to play important roles in determining whether and under what circumstances citizens support their countries’ foreign policies.

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What drives media coverage of foreign policy? Do news organizations tend to faithfully reflect the preferences of leaders? Or do they diverge in systematic ways, mediating the credibility, transparency and availability of information in the public debate? Rationalist theories of international conflict rest on the proposition that the efficient flow of information -- between political leaders and their domestic audiences, as well as between states involved in disputes -- can mitigate the prevalence of war. Yet a growing literature on comparative media systems has shown that information does not always pass efficiently from leaders’ mouths or actions to the intended recipients. Across and within countries, systematic differences exist in the scope, content and tone of foreign policy news coverage, with important consequences for both public attitudes and policy outcomes.

Until recently, however, the onerous data requirements of comparative media research have impeded our ability to uncover sources of variation at competing levels of analysis: within and between countries, within and between individual media outlets, and over time. Using new disaggregated data on newspaper coverage of the 2011 Libyan uprising and NATO-led intervention, we investigate the effects of ownership structure on the content and tone of foreign policy news coverage. We endeavor to explain three sorts of outcomes: (1) daily decisions to publish a news story on the Libyan crisis, (2) the type of coverage given to the story [a “soft news” focus on human interest and personalities, or a “hard news” focus on military and policy questions], and (3) the tone of that coverage with respect to a country’s foreign policy [critical, supportive or neutral].

We find that ownership structure and newspaper-level attributes can have a profound impact on the volume, content and tone of news coverage. Independent, privately-owned newspapers were significantly more likely to report on the Libyan crisis than their media conglomerate counterparts. Such outlets were also more likely to publish stories on hard news issues of military operations and policymaking, and tended to offer more critical coverage of their governments’ foreign policy. The likelihood of crisis reporting and hard news coverage is also greater among high circulation newspapers than among their smaller, regional and local counterparts. Contrary to previous research on American newspapers (Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2007), our cross-national results uncover compelling evidence of ownership network effects: ceteris paribus, newspapers owned by the same parent company tend to adopt very similar frames and perspectives.

Additionally, we find that the technology of government repression matters greatly in shaping newspaper coverage of uprisings and civil war. Selective violence against protesters and rebels -- arrests, detentions and targeted assassinations is generally followed by soft news stories about individual suffering and injustice. Indiscriminate violence -- such as the use of heavy artillery and air strikes against residential areas -- is followed by hard news stories that emphasize policy options and more open critique of a government’s performance in managing the crisis.

Our study is organized as follows. Section 1 offers an overview of existing research on comparative media systems and political communication, and derives several hypotheses on the determinants of foreign policy coverage at the national and subnational levels. Section 2 describes our data on foreign policy newspaper coverage and media ownership. Section 3 examines the empirical relationship between coverage, ownership

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structure and a range of other covariates at the newspaper, daily and country level. Section 4 evaluates these results in the context of broader academic and policy debates on media ownership and coverage, summarizes our findings, and identifies several directions for future research.

**Press Ownership and News Coverage of Foreign Policy**

One proposition shared by many rational choice theories of international conflict is that the prevalence of war depends on the transparency, reliability, and availability of information to actors involved in disputes (e.g., Fearon 1995, Lake & Rothschild 1996). The literature on domestic sources of foreign policy in general -- and domestic audience costs in particular (Fearon 1994, Schultz 2001, Smith 1998) -- emphasizes information credibility as helping to determine which inter-state disputes escalate to violence and which are resolved peacefully. Despite the centrality of information to extant theories of war, political scientists have devoted scant attention to the process by which states disseminate information within and between themselves. Most such research implicitly assumes that information -- and any credibility or transparency in conveys -- passes efficiently from leaders’ mouths or actions to the intended recipients. If so, the only remaining uncertainty -- which underpins much of the formal conflict literature -- concerns what information a leader transmits or withholds and whether or not the intended recipient(s) view(s) it as reliable. Where such information passes through an intermediary, however, this assumption seems problematic.

Throughout the post-WWII era, democratic citizens have primarily learned about their governments’ activities via the mass media. This raises the questions of whether and how the media -- as the primary intermediary for information transmission between citizens and leaders -- influence states’ behavior in international conflicts. The few scholars of international relations who have investigated this question (Van Belle 2000, Slantchev 2006, Choi & James 2006) have mostly emphasized the possibility that a free press might facilitate peaceful conflict resolution, by raising the domestic political costs to leaders of engaging in war abroad. Yet in order to draw such conclusions, it is necessary to first unlock the causal black box, and consider whether and how different media institutions vary in how they cover foreign policy. Do media tend to faithfully reflect the preferences of leaders? Or do they diverge in systematic ways, with potential consequences for public support of leaders’ foreign policy actions? What are the sources of such divergence?

Previous research (Iyengar 1991; Baum 2004a) has shown that different types of news can engender quite distinct public responses. For instance, “hard news” oriented, thematically framed news, with an emphasis on public policy themes and the broader political, or military context -- tends to engender a sense of collective responsibility for a given policy problem. This, in turn, raises the likelihood that consumers will look to the government for a solution.

By contrast, “soft news” oriented, episodically framed news, with an emphasis on the experiences, characteristics, trials, and tribulations of specific individuals or small groups, tends to push consumers to attribute the problem’s cause and solution to the individual, rather than state. Such coverage may pull on peoples’ heart strings, but is less

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4 We define “soft news” as a set of story characteristics, including the absence of a public policy component, sensationalized presentation, human-interest themes and emphasis on dramatic subject matter (Patterson 2000)
effective at generating demand for public action, or engendering support for a government or societal response (Baum 2003). Hence, the way a problem -- including a foreign policy problem -- is framed can shape whether or not the public supports government intervention to address it, and whether it looks favorably on the government’s design and implementation of its foreign policy more broadly (Baum 2002; Strömberg 2004; Gentzkow & Shapiro 2004; Gentzkow 2006; DellaVigna & Kaplan 2007; Gerber et al. 2006; Baum & Groeling 2010).

A growing body of political science research indicates that this process can, at least under some circumstances, influence foreign policy decisions, typically by constraining leaders’ perceived freedom of action (Baum 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Sobe 2001). By shaping public and elite opinion, the media play a key intervening role between leaders seeking to build or sustain support for their preferred policy initiatives and the citizens they need to persuade.

Our goal is to pull back a few steps in this causal story, and explain why and when certain media institutions (a) choose to cover a foreign policy crisis in the first place, (b) choose to present the story from a “soft” or “hard” news perspective, and (c) choose to present it in manner critical or supportive of a country’s foreign policy. In answering these questions, we hope to gain insight into the circumstances under which the media can influence public opinion on foreign policy, and the likely nature of such influence.

Cross-national political science research on such questions is a rapidly developing field (Hallin & Mancini 2004, Iyengar et al. 2010), but has until recently been severely limited by data constraints (Picard 2001). Within this literature, most explanations of the sources of media coverage reside at the level of national political and economic attributes, like party systems, wealth and education. While these aggregate characteristics are surely important, an emphasis on cross-national differences leaves much subnational variation unexplained. Aggregate explanations describe the environment in which media organizations operate, and the broader systemic constraints they face. Yet two media organizations may not navigate the same environment in a uniform fashion, and similar environmental conditions could produce quite different outcomes in the nature and extent of media coverage. Family-owned newspapers, for instance, face very different resources and audiences than those owned by governments or multinational media conglomerates, and these differences may shape editorial choices about which stories warrant coverage and what type of coverage is appropriate.

In addition to country-level political and economic characteristics, many more immediate factors shape the incentives media outlets face and strategies they adopt. Their ownership structure, the size of their audience, and the day-by-day unfolding of events are three potentially important such factors. It is these sub-national variables that we investigate in the present study.

Ownership structure

Communication scholars (e.g., Bagdikian 2000, McChesney 2000, Herman & Chomsky 1998) have long worried that concentrated private ownership of media organizations stifles public debate. When newspapers are independently owned, they are relatively free to follow the whims of individual owners, which may be driven by profit, ideology, a sense of civic duty, or any combination thereof. While it is certainly possible that such outlets might be hesitant to criticize a particular government, perhaps for ideological rea-
sons, their profitability is primarily locally determined and hence less directly affected by national public policy. When, however, they are part of larger networks of media outlets, they are increasingly subject to the sorts of bottom-line pressures facing other corporate conglomerates. Herman thus argues that

“Private owners, especially those of major media, are likely to favor markets, of which they are a part and of which they are major beneficiaries. There is some dispute about the extent to which owners influence media behavior and performance. At a minimum...the controlling management will face strong pressure to focus on the bottom line. This in itself has policy implications, as such a focus implies catering to advertisers, cultivating relationships with dominant information sources, and avoiding conflict with other powerful constituencies” [emphasis added]. (Herman, 2002: 64)

Anecdotal evidence tends to support Herman’s argument. For instance, large media conglomerates, like Rupert Murdoch’s Sky TV Network, have consented to modify their news content -- indeed, Sky TV created a unique, dedicated channel -- to satisfy China’s media censorship laws in exchange for limited broadcast rights in China (Flitton, 2011).

Additional research suggests that editorial content tends to follow the economic interests of media ownership (Gilens and Hertzman, 2000). The empirical implication is that larger media conglomerates are more likely than their independently owned counterparts to emphasize relatively less controversial soft news over more controversial hard news, and are less likely to criticize government policy. After all, such companies are particularly beholden to government officials for favorable market policies as well as for authoritative information (Bennett 1990, Baum & Groeling 2010). Hence, the interests of ownership within larger media networks are more likely to reflect an emphasis on entertainment over politics (Davis & Owen, 1998; Zaller, 1999; Baum, 2003), and avoidance of conflict with powerful governmental interests. Their affiliated outlets, in turn, are likely to make more similar editorial choices across outlets within the network, and hence have more similar content, than outlets located within other networks, or independent outlets.

Finally, in order to exploit the market power that economies of scale provide, outlets within a larger network are likely to specialize, rather than attempt to appeal to the median consumer. This is analogous to the logic of the median voter theorem, which holds that in a two party system with a single left-right ideological dimension and single-peaked preferences, parties will tend compete for the median voter, who will be located in the center of the political spectrum. However, as the number of parties increases, each party has an increasing incentive to locate itself in a distinct space along the left-right political dimension, as they can no longer all compete effectively for the median voter. In other words, as the number of parties increases, parties become more ideologically specialized in order to maximize their vote share. The analogy to media content is clear: as the number of outlets within a network increases, the incentive to have each individual network member compete for the median reader recedes. Such a strategy would see network members competing with each other for the same viewers. Instead, the network can optimize its total audience by having individual outlets specialize and offer content that
appeals to individuals all along the “media preference” dimension. Two hypotheses follow:

- H1a: As the ownership network within which a newspaper is located increases in size, the newspaper’s coverage of foreign policy, its hard news coverage focus, and propensity to criticize the government will decline.

- H1b: The content of newspapers within a network is likely to be more similar in scope, style and valence than is the content between newspapers of similar circulation located in separate ownership networks.

**Circulation**

The size and composition of a newspaper’s audience (Gentzkow & Shapiro 2007), traditionally captured by its circulation, is likely to influence news content in important ways. The political economy literature frequently employs aggregate newspaper circulation statistics as a proxy for the volume of information available to the public (Besley & Burgess 2002; Adsera et al 2003; Keefer 2007). The argument is that larger newspaper circulation implies a better-informed population. This logic, however, has more to do with presumed exposure than assumptions about content.

Zaller (1999) offers a different theoretical perspective that more directly links audience magnitude with news content. Arguing from the logic of Downs (1957), Zaller develops a “theory of media politics” based on the notion that market size drives the relative emphasis on hard vs. soft news content. He finds in a series of empirical investigations that in larger and more competitive markets, TV and newspaper outlets have a more limited hard news focus than in smaller and less competitive markets, and that each new entrant into a market tends to have a more limited hard news focus than the existing market actors. The reason is that viewers tend to prefer softer news than journalists prefer to provide. Hence, news outlets will tend to provide the highest hard-to-soft news ratio that the market will tolerate. Increased competition thus drives news down-market, as new entrants compete for viewers who want less hard news than the existing market provides. The implication is that as a market fragments, with new entrants competing for smaller niches of the overall audience, they will tend to offer consumers relatively more soft news and relatively less hard news.

Finally, higher-circulation newspapers tend to have greater financial resources, larger staffs, more pronounced international footprints and, by extension, greater capacity to produce original foreign policy news coverage (Chang & Lee 1992, Markham 1961). This combination of market incentives and resource effects leads us to the following prediction concerning circulation:

- H2: All else equal, as newspaper circulation increases, the hard-to-soft news ratio and propensity to criticize the government’s policies will increase.

**Dynamics of violence**

News coverage of foreign policy crises is necessarily event-driven. News producers have limited resources, time and page space, and are forced to set priorities in deciding

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5 While identification of an independent circulation effect is rendered difficult by the endogeneity of this variable to state policy, demographics and a host of other environmental conditions, its immediate impact on daily editorial decisions is more theoretically tractable.
which stories warrant coverage. The proposition that reporting on a foreign policy crisis is more extensive when there is more information to report is, in this respect, rather obvious. A potentially more interesting question is whether different types of events are covered differently. In the current context of civil conflict and military intervention, we may expect such differentiation in coverage to reflect alternative technologies of violence on the ground.

An emerging conventional wisdom in research on civil wars and insurgencies holds that selective and indiscriminate forms of violence provoke different responses from civilians, combatants and observers. Selective violence, which typically includes arrests, detentions, targeted killings and other operations executed on the basis of actionable human intelligence, is generally seen as less inflammatory than indiscriminate violence (Kalyvas, 2006; Kocher et al., 2011; but see Lyall, 2009). The latter approach selects its targets not necessarily on the basis of their actions, but based on some more general, collective criterion, such as location or ethnicity. Perpetrators often employ such violence where the individual “guilty” parties cannot be easily identified, or if they otherwise deem more selective forms of violence too costly. Its execution can entail a range of tactics often associated with conventional war, particularly the use of heavy artillery and air strikes against residential areas (Kalyvas & Kocher, 2009). Scholars widely view indiscriminate force as counterproductive. By violating norms of fairness, failing to create clear incentives for compliance, and by increasing demand for the opposition’s protection, such an approach may actually mobilize, rather than suppress support for the opposing side (Arreguin-Toft, 2001; Kalyvas, 2006: 153-60).

The project at hand offers a unique opportunity to explore another, relatively understudied aspect of indiscriminate violence: its potential tendency to tilt international news coverage toward a “hard news” focus on policy and military options and more open critique of government inaction. To the extent that more extensive, critical hard news coverage can increase public support for military action to protect civilians, leaders who use indiscriminate force may actually risk “inviting” third-party intervention against them. This relationship may operate through several mechanisms.

First, indiscriminate violence is more visible than selective violence. Compared with selective arrests and assassinations, it generally involves a larger military footprint, more firepower, more widespread destruction of property, and accounts for a larger share of overall casualties (Valentino et al., 2004; Downes, 2006). By virtue of its scale alone, news organizations may see indiscriminate violence as more newsworthy than selective violence.

Second, indiscriminate violence is generally used where perpetrators view the balance of military power and territorial control as unfavorable -- where the local population either supports the opposition, or is otherwise deterred from closer cooperation (Kalyvas, 2006; Zhukov, 2012). From this perspective, the use of indiscriminate force may simply signal to the media that the momentum of the conflict has shifted toward the insurgents, and intervention has become a less costly prospect.

A third hypothesis follows:

- H3: All else equal, hard news focus and propensity to criticize the government’s policies is increasing in the incidence of indiscriminate violence.
Libya News Coverage and Media Ownership Data

To test these propositions, we construct a new dataset from a corpus of 102,568 articles published by 1,925 newspapers in 50 countries between 18 December 2010 (first day of protests in Tunisia, which ignited the Arab Spring) and 12 April 2011 (two weeks following the conclusion of Operation Odyssey Dawn and the transfer of operational control from the United States to NATO). While news coverage certainly appears in various forms of electronic and print media, we confine our current focus to newspapers due to their international prevalence as primary sources of information on political, economic and social events, and our ability to collect a consistent and representative data sample across the largest possible set of countries.

Our current sample of 50 countries is shown in Figure 1. For each country, we conducted a census of all daily and weekly newspapers listed in the electronic databases Lexis-Nexis and ISI Emerging Markets. We identified a universe of 1,925 unique and active (i.e. currently in press) newspapers, excluding weekend supplements, inserts, evening editions and similar associated materials.

Ownership network data

Using a combination of industry organization listings (e.g. Audit Bureau of Circulations), international news media guides (e.g. Mondo Times), financial databases (e.g. WorldScope), annual company reports and the websites of individual news organizations and their parent companies, we collected information on each newspaper’s average daily circulation figures and ownership. We were able to find circulation data for 1625 (84%) of the newspapers in our data set and successfully identified the primary shareholders of

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6 Current list of countries includes Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela. As the dataset is being expanded to the global level, some regions are underrepresented (e.g. Africa, Persian Gulf, Central Asia). Despite these gaps, the dataset spans every continent and includes a broad cross-section of political and economic systems, allowing us to control for a range of cross-national variables like press freedom, party system and economic growth.
all 1925. Based on these data, we constructed the ownership network shown in Figure 2, where red dots represent parent companies and light blue squares represent individual newspapers.

Figure 2. **Newspaper ownership network.** Newspapers shown as light blue diamonds, parent companies shown as red dots. Organizations that own at least five newspapers are labeled with text.

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7 We collected circulation and ownership data for December 2010 or the closest date for which such data were available. Following La Porta et al. (1999) and Djankov et al. (2001), we identified legal entities (families, corporations, holding companies, political parties, governments) that own majority voting stakes in each newspaper.
We used these ownership data to calculate network-lagged versions of coverage variables (discussed below), as well as measures of network size (number of other newspapers owned by each media company), and an indicator of whether the parent company is a government organization or a majority government-owned firm (e.g. Gazprom in Russia). An independent newspaper is here defined as a “singleton” in the network, with no other newspapers owned by its parent company (network size of 0). A corporate-owned newspaper is defined as one that shares a parent company with at least one additional newspaper in the network.

Our sample includes 67 (3%) publicly owned newspapers, 293 (15%) privately owned independent newspapers and 1565 (81%) corporate newspapers. Countries with the largest proportion of independent newspapers include Slovenia (71%), Croatia (66%) and Armenia (66%). The countries with the largest proportions of state-owned newspapers are Russia (34%), Sri Lanka (20%) and Ukraine (13%). Corporate-owned newspapers are most common in countries like the UK (96%), Australia (94%) and Canada (93%).

**Foreign policy news coverage data**

For each newspaper, we collected every unique article archived in Lexis-Nexis or ISI, containing the term “Libya” (in English or the newspaper’s source language) and published between 18 December 2010 and 12 April 2011. These dates mark, respectively, the day of first protests in Tunisia following Mohamed Bouazizi’s self-immolation -- generally accepted as the beginning of the Arab Spring -- and two weeks following the conclusion of Operation Odyssey Dawn, which established a no-fly zone over Libya. We found 102,568 such articles in total.⁸

We used supervised learning methods to automatically classify the content and tone of each article according to a sample of reference texts coded by a team of human research assistants.⁹ Specifically, we used *wordscores*, a supervised learning method used to locate statements in a pre-determined issue space (Laver et al., 2003; Lowe, 2008). The

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⁸ The text corpus was multilingual, including articles in the native language and -- where available -- in English. Where the articles were in a language other than English, we used statistical machine translation (Google Translate API) to convert them to English. Although Google Translate uses statistical methods based on bilingual text corpora (using a training set of 200 billion words from United Nations materials), rather that grammatical or rule-based algorithms, this approach is well-suited for the automated content analysis techniques employed in this paper and discussed below -- which rely on natural language processing that discards grammar, stop words (e.g. “a”, “the”, “and”) and word order, producing an unordered array of terms (a “bag-of-words” model).

⁹ We selected this approach for several reasons. While traditional human coding of political texts capitalizes on researchers’ subject matter expertise, such an approach can entail high costs, and produce systematically inconsistent and difficult-to-replicate classifications. For a text corpus of our size, human coding would have proven extremely labor-intensive, involving months of tedious and painstaking work by large teams of undergraduate research assistants (King & Lowe, 2003, 618). Even experienced coders following well-defined tasks and classification rules will inevitably encounter tough calls, resulting in suboptimal inter-coder reliability (Mikhaylov et al., 2010). Humans have limited working memories and tend to rely on heuristics, resulting in informal, subjective and ad hoc decisions, inducing systematic biases through fatigue, inattention and prior knowledge of hypotheses (Grimmer & King, 2009: 4-5).

Automated coding methods are no panacea. They are effective at the types of tasks that humans do not perform well: minimizing the costs of manually reading and classifying hundreds of thousands of individual texts, and producing an output that is internally consistent, replicable and free of errors due to boredom, fatigue and coder bias. Yet they are also deficient where humans are strong: recognizing theoretically relevant patterns and nuances, and distinguishing between rhetorical flourishes and more substantively meaningful content. To be analytically useful, automated coding still requires a deep working knowledge of subject matter in the construction of coding rules, and a considerable time investment in data collection, pre-processing, programming and, indeed, the reading of individual texts (Grimmer & Stewart, 2011).
algorithm uses information from texts whose positions on some policy dimension are assumed known (‘training set’) to learn about a second set of texts whose policy positions are unknown (‘test set’). The training set is used to generate a score for each word, measuring the relative rate at which that word appears in each training text. These scores are then used to scale the documents in the test set, by taking a frequency-weighted average score of the words they contain.\(^\text{10}\)

Based on instructions and examples provided in a codebook (shown in appendix), our research assistants classified 50+350=400 randomly-selected texts by four dimensions of hard vs. soft coverage focus (policy, military, human interest, personality) and three dimensions of valence (positive, negative, or neutral with regard to foreign policy goals, execution, or personalitie\(^s\)).\(^\text{11}\) The first group of 50 documents was used for the sole purpose of training the human coders, and comparing their classifications against each other and a “gold standard” of the same 50 documents classified by the authors. On the basis of this evaluation set, the coders were then given feedback on their performance and any obvious irregularities or systematic sources of error evident from the sample. The remaining sets of 350 documents were held constant across the two research assistants to assess intercoder reliability. In addition to the coverage and valence categories mentioned above, the coders were asked to indicate whether each text was (a) ambiguous or otherwise presented a tough call for a given category, (b) a particularly clear, unambiguous example of a given category, or (c) incomprehensible, missing or written on a topic other than foreign policy.

Table 1. Intercoder reliability statistics for training set.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Kappa</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Alpha (95% CI)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human interest focus (1=yes, 0=no)</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>0.56***</td>
<td>0.78***</td>
<td>0.55 (0.26, 0.80)</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military focus (1=yes, 0=no)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0.52***</td>
<td>0.77***</td>
<td>0.52 (0.25, 0.75)</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy focus (1=yes, 0=no)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0.57***</td>
<td>0.79***</td>
<td>0.56 (0.33, 0.76)</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality focus (1=yes, 0=no)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0.39***</td>
<td>0.72***</td>
<td>0.39 (0.08, 0.68)</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign policy valence (-1=negative, 0=neutral, +1=positive)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>0.55***</td>
<td>0.78***</td>
<td>0.51 (0.18, 0.76)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy execution valence (-1=negative, 0=neutral, +1=positive)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0.55***</td>
<td>0.79***</td>
<td>0.56 (0.32, 0.79)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality valence (-1=negative, 0=neutral, +1=positive)</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0.60***</td>
<td>0.82***</td>
<td>0.62 (0.33, 0.85)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance levels: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

We report four measures of training set intercoder reliability in Table 1: (a) percent agreement, (b) Fleiss’ Kappa (c) Kendall’s W, and (d) Krippendorff’s Alpha, with bootstrapping.\(^\text{12}\) Every test demonstrates positive and highly significant agreement between

\(^{10}\) Formally, let \(R\) be a set of reference texts included in the training set (e.g. a pair of news articles: one with a human interest focus and one without). Each text in \(R\) is assigned a position on dimension \(d\) (coverage type), denoted \(A_{rd}\). For example, \(A_{rd} = 1\) if article \(r\) has a human interest focus, and \(A_{rd} = 0\) otherwise. Let \(P_{rdw}\) be the relative frequency of word \(w\) in text \(r\), as a proportion of the total number of words in the text. Let \(P_{wd} = \sum_r P_{rdw}\). Let \(F_{wd}\) be the relative frequency of word \(w\) in text \(t\), given the occurrence of word \(w\). The wordscore is defined as the expected position of a text on dimension \(d\), given that we are reading word \(w\): \(S_{wd} = \sum_r P_{rdw} A_{rd}\). This statistic is an average of the a priori reference text scores \(A_{rd}\), weighted by the probabilities \(P_{rdw}\). Let \(T\) be a set of texts included in the test set. The scores calculated for the training set are used to estimate the position of any new text \(t\) on dimension \(d\): \(S_{td} = \sum_w (F_{wd} S_{wd})\), where \(F_{wd}\) is the frequency of scored word \(w\) in document \(r\) and \(S_{wd}\) is that word's score in the original training set.

\(^{11}\) Full codebook shown in appendix.

\(^{12}\) The first measure (percent agreement) was used due its intuitive interpretation as the proportion of documents in the training set, for which both coders gave the same value. Its obvious drawback is that it does not account for agreement
coders. For the purpose of training the wordscores algorithm, we used the 350 coded training texts to select a subsample of “ideal type” reference documents, which at least one of the coders considered a clear example of a given category, neither considered a tough call or incomprehensible, and which was assigned the same value (e.g. both human interest or both negative valence) by the two coders. The sizes of the resulting reference text corpora are indicated in the rightmost column of Table 1.

Once the wordscores algorithm was trained and each article in the corpus was assigned a score for the seven dimensions in Table 1, we created composite measures of “hard news” and “valence” from their subcategories as follows:

Table 2: Composite coverage measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operationalization</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HARDNEWS = Policy + Military - Human interest - Personality</td>
<td>[-2 (soft news) : +2 (hard news)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALENCE = Foreign policy + Execution + Personality</td>
<td>[-3 (negative) : +3 (positive)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We aggregated the results from the atomic level (individual articles) to panel data, where the unit of analysis is a newspaper-day and coverage variables (HARDNEWS_t and VALENCE_t) are corresponding average scores of the measures in Table 2. To balance the daily panels, we added a dummy variable, PUB_t, coded 1 if newspaper i decided to publish an article on Libya on day t, and 0 otherwise.

Libya violent events data

Because news coverage of foreign policy crises is by necessity event-driven, we sought to formally account for the day-by-day dynamics of those crises. We did so by collecting daily event data on the intensity and lethality of insurgent and government violence within Libya. To avoid overlap with our newspaper corpus, we relied on a mutually exclusive ensemble of electronic sources and newswires for this purpose (Al Jazeera, BBC News, CNN, Reuters, Xinhua). For each of 393 unique events identified during the window of observation, we recorded its location, timing, participants (unarmed civilians, armed rebels, government police or military forces, NATO), type (protest, arrest, use of ground force, use of artillery or air power), technology (selective vs. indiscriminate), and casualties (wounded and killed, grouped by target and perpetrator). We aggregated these data to daily event counts. Following claims that selective and indiscriminate forms of civil war violence provoke differential responses from civilians and combatants, we maintained this distinction in our aggregation scheme to examine whether news organizations respond to each technology of violence with different types of coverage.

---

that could be expected to occur by chance. The other three measures explicitly account for chance agreement among multiple coders, and test the null hypothesis that agreements can be regarded as random. Fleiss’ Kappa permits the assessment of agreement between more than two coders, but treats input data as categorical -- such that each value on an ordinal or interval scale is treated as a distinct category, and the “closeness” of adjacent values (e.g. +1, +2) is discarded. While this property poses no challenges for the nominal Coverage Focus variable (e.g. human interest or not), it also produces a harder test for variables like Valence, which can take negative, zero and positive integer values. For this reason, we also included Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance (W), which is appropriate when the data are of ordinal measurement and do not meet the assumptions of parametric methods. Finally, we calculated Krippendorff’s Alpha statistic, which is highly flexible, can be used with multiple coders, with ordinal, interval and ratio level variables. We obtained the Alpha distribution by bootstrapping, using 10,000 samples of each set of codings, and fit 95% confidence intervals based on the resulting distribution of the test statistic.
Country-level control variables

In addition to the article-, newspaper-, parent company- and daily-level variables described above, we collected a series of country-level controls commonly used in the literature on comparative media systems, including press freedom scores, economic growth and number of electoral parties. In the appendix we provide a full list of variables considered, their levels of measurement, summary statistics and source documentation.

Empirical Analysis

We are interested in how variation in newspaper ownership structure and circulation -- as well as the dynamic unfolding of violent events -- shapes the volume, content and tone of news coverage of foreign policy crises. If media concentration -- either in the hands of large corporations or government institutions -- stifles substantive political coverage, we would expect privately-owned newspapers with smaller ownership networks to (a) be more likely to feature news stories about the Libyan crisis, (b) to cover such stories with a “hard news” focus on military and policy issues as opposed to human interest and personalities, and (c) assume a more critical tone with respect to government management of such crises. We estimate three regression models:

\[
PUB_{it} = \logit^{-1}[\alpha + x_{it}\beta + W \cdot PUB_{i,t-1} \lambda + u_i + \epsilon_{it}] \tag{1}
\]

\[
HARDNEWS_{it} = \alpha + x_{it}\beta + W \cdot HARDNEWS_{i,t-1} \lambda + u_i + \epsilon_{it} \tag{2}
\]

\[
VALENCE_{it} = \alpha + x_{it}\beta + W \cdot VALENCE_{i,t-1} \lambda + u_i + \epsilon_{it} \tag{3}
\]

Where \(PUB_{it}\) is an indicator of whether newspaper \(i\) publishes a story on Libya on day \(t\), \(HARDNEWS_{it}\) is a normally-distributed score with lower values indicating a “soft news” coverage focus on human interest and personalities and higher scores indicating a “hard news” focus on military and policy issues, and \(VALENCE_{it}\) is a normally-distributed score in which low values indicate greater criticism of a country’s foreign policy performance and higher values indicate greater support. The vector of covariates \(x_{it}\) includes measures of network size, public ownership, circulation (per 1,000 inhabitants), RSF press freedom score (higher = less free), GDP growth, estimated number of electoral parties, and daily event counts of selective and indiscriminate uses of violence by the Libyan regime. \(W\) is a row-normalized connectivity matrix of the ownership network shown in Figure 2. The autoregressive terms \(W \cdot PUB_{i,t-1}\), \(W \cdot HARDNEWS_{i,t-1}\) and \(W \cdot VALENCE_{i,t-1}\) represent, respectively, the proportion of co-owned newspapers that featured Libya news stories on day \(t-1\), and the average HARDNEWS and VALENCE scores of articles printed by co-owned newspapers on day \(t-1\).

Finally, we cannot exclude the possibility that unobserved heterogeneity in newspapers’ individual attributes, such as editorial idiosyncrasies, niche market characteristics and stylistic norms, could simultaneously drive variation in ownership structure and the three outcomes being considered. If such unobserved characteristics are correlated with the error terms of our models, pooled estimation will produce biased parameter estimates. We therefore include newspaper-level random effects \((u_i)\) to control for bias induced by this unobserved heterogeneity and to examine variation within and across newspapers over time.
Figure 3. **Determinants of Libyan crisis coverage.** Predicted values shown with solid lines. 95% confidence intervals shown with dashed lines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1: Probability of publishing story on Libya</th>
<th>Model 2: Hard news coverage focus</th>
<th>Model 3: Valence of news coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a: Size of ownership network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b: Coverage in co-owned newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Circulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Dynamics of violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Newspaper coverage of the Libyan crisis**

Coefficient estimates for the three models are reported in Table 3. The most theoretically relevant empirical relationships are summarized in Figure 3. The results of Model 1 lend support to the view that media concentration is associated with more limited cover-
age of foreign crises. All other variables held constant at their means, a one standard deviation increase from the median ownership network size (25 co-owned newspapers to 65) makes a report on Libya 52 percent less likely (-.61, -.41). Public ownership has a similar effect, reducing the relative risk that a newspaper will cover the Libyan crisis on an average day by 66 percent (-.90, -.13). Higher circulation numbers, meanwhile, appear to make crisis coverage significantly more likely.\textsuperscript{13}

The results further show that network autocorrelation is quite strong among co-owned newspapers. A one standard deviation increase in the proportion of co-owned newspapers reporting on Libya makes a newspaper 1.8 times more likely do the same on the following day.\textsuperscript{14}

As one would expect, newspaper coverage of Libya is highly responsive to any type of government violence against protesters and rebels, although indiscriminate force has a slightly larger impact. An increase from 0 to 3 acts of selective violence makes coverage 2.3 (2.0, 2.6) times more likely, but the same increase in indiscriminate violence yields a relative risk of 3.1 (2.9, 3.2).

\textit{“Hard news” focus among newspapers that report on Libya}

The results from Model 2 are consistent with the view that concentrated media ownership is associated with sensationalized coverage of human interest and personality-oriented themes, as opposed to a “hard news” focus on public policy. A one standard deviation increase in network size from 25 to 65 co-owned newspapers reduces the expected “hard news” score by .16 (-.22, -.09) standard deviations. While high-circulation newspapers are more likely to offer military and policy-oriented coverage, public ownership appears to have no discernible impact on coverage one way or the other.\textsuperscript{15} As before, ownership network effects are positive and highly significant -- if co-owned outlets tend to focus on “hard news” themes on the previous day, the average newspaper is very likely to follow suit.\textsuperscript{16}

The technology of Libyan government violence, meanwhile, has a heterogeneous effect on coverage focus. The use of selective violence tends to be followed by relatively accessible themes of individual hardship and suffering. The use of indiscriminate force tends to be followed by a more policy-oriented focus on military strategy and diplomacy. An increase from 0 to 3 acts of selective violence reduces the expected “hard news” score by .30 (-.34, -.26) standard deviations, while the same increase in indiscriminate violence increases the score by .36 (.34, .38) standard deviations.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Critical foreign policy coverage among newspapers that report on Libya}

Model 3 indicates that the valence of newspaper coverage is strongly influenced by ownership structure, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent than in the case of “hard news” focus. Compared to their independent counterparts, newspapers owned by large con-

\textsuperscript{13} A one-SD increase above the mean (2.6 newspapers per 1,000 inhabitants to 10.2) produces a relative risk of 1.44 (95\% CI: 1.21, 1.70).
\textsuperscript{14} An increase in $W \cdot \text{PUB}_{i,t-1}$ from .08 to .28 is associated with a relative risk of 2.76 (2.70, 2.84).
\textsuperscript{15} A one-SD shift in circulation from 2.6 to 10.2 increases the “hard news” score by .06 (.02, .10) SD’s.
\textsuperscript{16} An one-SD increase in $W \cdot \text{HARDNEWS}_{i,t-1}$ from .36 to .65 increases the predicted “hard news” score by .37 (.35, .39) SD’s.
\textsuperscript{17} The corresponding changes in “hard news” score are, respectively, .569 (.564, .573) to .533 (.528, .540) and .539 (.534, .544) to .581 (.576, .586).
glomerates are less likely to offer critical coverage of a government’s foreign policy and the personalities involved in their design and implementation. An increase in network size from 25 to 65 increases the expected valence score by .09 (.04, .15) standard deviations. Tendencies to critique or support a government’s handling of the Libyan crisis are shared across co-owned newspapers, as suggested by the positive and highly significant network autoregressive parameter. \(^{18}\) Neither circulation nor public ownership, however, seems to affect valence in a significant way.

Again, selective and indiscriminate forms of violence have opposite effects on valence. The former is generally followed by less critical coverage, while the latter is followed by more critical coverage. An increase from 0 to 3 acts of selective violence increases the expected “valence” score by .30 (.25, .34) standard deviations, while the same change in indiscriminate violence reduces the score by .03 (-.05, -.01) standard deviations.

**Discussion and Directions for Future Research**

Using the 2011 Libyan Uprising as an example, we set out to explain three types of variation in newspaper coverage of foreign policy: daily decisions to publish a news story on a developing crisis, the type of coverage -- hard vs. soft news -- given to the story, and the tone of that coverage -- critical or supportive -- with respect to a country’s execution of its foreign policy. We hypothesized that much of this variation can be explained by differences between and within media organizations, and the daily unfolding of crisis events. All other things equal, we expected a newspaper’s coverage of foreign policy, its focus on hard news, and its propensity to criticize the government to decline with the size of the newspaper’s ownership network (H1a), co-owned newspapers to feature coverage similar in scope, focus and valence (H1b), breadth of coverage, hard news focus and policy criticism to be more prevalent in higher-circulation newspapers (H2), and hard news coverage and criticism to increase in the incidence of indiscriminate -- but not selective -- violence (H3).

The results, summarized graphically in Figure 3, show strong initial support for these hypotheses. Consistent with H1a, independently owned newspapers were significantly more likely to report on the Libyan crisis than their corporate counterparts. Such outlets were also more likely to publish stories on hard news issues of military operations and policymaking, and tended to offer more critical coverage of their governments’ foreign policy. Public ownership, meanwhile, has a strong negative impact on the propensity to cover the Libya crisis, but a statistically negligible influence on the content and tone of that coverage among newspapers that decide to report on the topic. Consistent with H2, the likelihood of crisis reporting and hard news coverage tends to increase with newspaper circulation. Consistent with H1b, in turn, we also find compelling evidence of ownership network effects: *ceteris paribus*, newspapers owned by the same parent company tend to adopt very similar frames and perspectives.

Across the board, and consistent with H3, our results also confirm that the technology of government repression matters greatly in shaping newspaper coverage of political unrest. Selective violence against protesters and rebels -- arrests, detentions and targeted

\(^{18}\) A one-SD shift in W-VALENCE\(_{i,t-1}\) from -.279 to -.052 is associated with a .18 (.16, .20) SD shift.
assassinations -- is generally followed by soft news stories about individual suffering and injustice. Indiscriminate violence -- such as the use of heavy artillery and air strikes against residential areas -- is followed by hard news stories that emphasize policy options and more open critique of a government’s performance in managing the crisis.

While these results strongly suggest that media concentration may be harmful to the public debate on foreign policy, our findings should not be considered as conclusive evidence for or against the hypotheses we set out to test. At best, this draft presents preliminary results from the analysis of only a portion -- sizeable as it may be -- of a larger ongoing data project. Here, we examined data from 50 countries out of a total target of 166. While the current sample contains substantial cross- and sub-national variation on most of our variables of interest, important gaps remain.

First, the in-sample countries (dark blue in Figure 1) are mostly democratic, with a few prominent exceptions like Russia and Venezuela, in which media outlets navigate a shaky middle ground between relative freedom and onerous restrictions on the activities of the press. Our sample currently lacks -- but is being expanded to include -- data from countries with more comprehensive media restrictions, like China and Saudi Arabia. To the extent that the relationships we uncovered operate differently in more repressive political environments, we would expect to detect more of these nuances with an expanded set of data.

Second, by virtue of the current cross-national distribution of publicly owned media outlets, most government-owned newspapers in our sample are from Eastern Europe and South Asia, rather than the more stable democracies of Western and Northern Europe. Previous research has been divided on the risks and benefits of public media ownership (e.g. Djankov et al., 2003; Iyengar et al., 2010), and we suspect that some of these conflicting findings may be attributable to a combination of data limitations and an under-emphasis on heterogeneity in the relationship between ownership structure and content. While some forms of public ownership may indeed lead to a stifling of dissenting views, others may be associated with more substantive and diverse political content than their privately held counterparts. As our sample of countries expands, we will be able to evaluate this potential heterogeneity in a more systematic way.

Finally, one clear limitation of our current data sample is the lack of coverage from Libya’s most immediate geographical and cultural neighbors in North Africa and the Greater Middle East. These states are at once more repressive than the median country in our sample, and are more directly affected by the consequences of policy intervention in Libya. A failure to account for the determinants of coverage in these countries -- and the extent to which they differ from those in other parts of the world -- leaves unanswered many substantively important questions, and circumscribes the scope conditions and generalizability of our empirical models.

As we make steps to address these gaps, we believe that our initial set of results shows promise for the next stage of studies. Unless we are willing to accept the assumption that the volume, content and tone of information communicated between leaders and citizens is unfiltered by the characteristics and incentives of its messengers, then the determinants of variation in news coverage of foreign policy should be a critical concern for scholars and practitioners alike. By utilizing recent advances in data availability, automated text analysis and network statistics, we offered the first quantitative analysis of foreign policy news coverage on a comparable cross-national scale and fine-grained level
of disaggregation. This is a research area of exciting potential, and we foresee an explosion of applied research on comparative media systems over the next decade that may uncover new insights and challenge existing views on the role of information in international conflict. The preceding study offered an initial glimpse at how this might be done, and what some of these insights might be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Coefficient estimates.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Circulation (per 1,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network size</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public ownership</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W·PUB₂ₜ</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W·HARDNEWS₂ₜ</td>
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<tr>
<td>W·VALENCE₂ₜ</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RSF Press Freedom Score</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth in GDP per capita</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Est. number of pol. Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selective violence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate violence</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>σ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ min</td>
</tr>
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<td>Time units (min, max)</td>
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<tr>
<td>χ²</td>
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<tr>
<td>ll_i</td>
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<tr>
<td>R² (within)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R² (between)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R² (overall)</td>
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</table>
Table 4: Summary statistics

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>Dependent variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PUB</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.307</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>HARDNEWS</td>
<td>23,469</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<td>VALENCE</td>
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<td>-.451</td>
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<td>-1.027</td>
<td>.524</td>
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<td><strong>Network lags</strong></td>
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<td>W-PUB</td>
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<td>W-HARDNEWS</td>
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<td>.290</td>
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<td>.953</td>
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<td>W-VALENCE</td>
<td>23,447</td>
<td>-.279</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>-1.025</td>
<td>.025</td>
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<td><strong>Newspaper-level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation (per 1,000 ppl)</td>
<td>188,036</td>
<td>2.637</td>
<td>7.547</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>110.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network size</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>25.244</td>
<td>40.172</td>
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<td>Public ownership</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Country-level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSF Press Freedom Score</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>14.811</td>
<td>16.780</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Growth in GDP per cap.</td>
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<td>1.929</td>
<td>-3.03</td>
<td>8.22</td>
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<td>Est. num of pol. parties</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>3.782</td>
<td>1.389</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>10.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence daily counts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>1.449</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Appendix: Training set codebook and prompt

The following online survey was used to record manual codings for the training set. Note that the format integrates the codebook and coding mechanism into a single document, to ensure that variable definitions are clear to coders at every stage of the process.

**Training Set**

* Required

**Document ID** *
Copy and paste from first column of spreadsheet

[ ]

**Coder** *

[ ]

**Coverage Type**

We distinguish between episodic and thematic framings, depending on which one is primarily used in the article. The two are seen as mutually exclusive. EPISODIC coverage depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events -- an airstrike, a press conference, reports of casualties, etc. THEMATIC coverage places public issues in some general or abstract context (a 'backgrounder') -- general history of the Libyan conflict, changes in the nature of the offensive strategies on the ground, the social and political grievances of rebels, etc.

[ ] EPISODIC
[ ] THEMATIC
[ ] None of the above

Coverage Type: Tough Call? Check box if text is ambiguous, or if you were otherwise uncertain about how to code it.

[ ] TOUGH CALL
Coverage Type: Good example? Check box if text is a particularly clear, unambiguous example of thematic or episodic coverage.

[ ] GOOD EXAMPLE

Coverage Focus
This category is divided into four subcategories that are not mutually exclusive: HUMAN INTEREST (issue is described from a general human interest perspective with emphasis on human needs, concerns or achievements), MILITARY (issue is described from a general military perspective with focus on the ‘factual’ execution of the foreign policy on the ground but not with direct reference to the personal), POLICY (any discussion of the content of a foreign policy, outside the two categories above), and PERSONALITY (article contains direct reference to the personality/personal story/motivation/feelings of a political, military or civilian person). Check all that apply.

Focus

[ ] HUMAN INTEREST
[ ] MILITARY
[ ] POLICY
[ ] PERSONALITY
[ ] None of the above

Coverage Focus: Tough Call? Check box if text is ambiguous, or if you were otherwise uncertain about how to code it.

[ ] TOUGH CALL

Coverage Focus: Good example? Check box if text is a particularly clear, unambiguous example of coverage focus.

[ ] GOOD EXAMPLE

Valence
Valence is defined as the positivity/negativity/neutrality of the document with regards to (1) a government's foreign policy, (2) its execution thereof, or (3) the personalities involved in policy planning and execution. A POSITIVE evaluation would include direct praise of the official foreign policy/execution/personality such as 'Sarkozy has impressed the Americans with his commitment to Libya' or 'Secretary Clinton has really mastered dealing with the Arab League'. You may also count self-defensive statements as praise. For instance if a journalist asks whether the intervention in Libya is motivated by Obama's political ambitions, and the White House Press Secretary says 'that's not true' it would be coded as praise. Contrary, a NEGATIVE evaluation would include direct criticisms of the official foreign policy/execution/personality as in 'Obama failed to grasp the costs of the Libyan intervention'. NEUTRAL statements either raise the issue without making any explicit judgment, or feature a balance between positive and negative statements. As for all other coding, the coding for valence must be unambiguous and defensible. You should be able to point out the statement containing the praise and criticism to another person and have them agree.

Foreign Policy
Praise of criticism of a government's foreign policy goals, strategies, priorities.

[ ] POSITIVE [article explicitly expresses support for a government's foreign policy.]
[ ] NEUTRAL [article is either balanced between criticism and praise, or does not take a position.]
[ ] NEGATIVE [article explicitly expresses opposition to a government's foreign policy.]

Execution
Assessments of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the conduct of diplomacy or military operations.

[ ] POSITIVE [article explicitly expresses praise for a government's execution of its foreign policy.]
[ ] NEUTRAL [article is either balanced between criticism and praise, or does not take a position.]
[ ] NEGATIVE [article explicitly expresses criticism of a government's execution of its foreign policy.]

Personality
Praise or criticism of a head of state, foreign minister, military commanders, or other senior public officials involved in foreign policy planning or execution.

[ ] POSITIVE [article explicitly expresses praise for specific personalities involved in foreign policy.]
[ ] NEUTRAL [article is either balanced between criticism and praise, or does not take a position.]
[ ] NEGATIVE [article explicitly expresses criticism of specific personalities involved in foreign policy.]

Valence: Tough Call? Check box if text is ambiguous, or if you were otherwise uncertain about how to code it.
[ ] TOUGH CALL

Valence: Good example? Check box if text is a particularly clear, unambiguous example of positive or negative valence.
[ ] GOOD EXAMPLE

Other
[ ] Gibberish / Incomprehensible / Mistranslated / Missing text
[ ] Topic is not foreign policy

[ ] SUBMIT
References


Grimmer, Justin and Brandon Stewart. "Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Documents." Harvard University Mimeo.


