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*THE JOURNALISM OF OPINION:
NETWORK COVERAGE IN U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS, 1968 – 1988*

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Abstract

This essay updates the research on sound bites in U.S. presidential campaign coverage by looking at the speech of journalists rather than sources. Using the metaphor of the election report as a political conversation among journalists and their sources, the authors apply Bales' categories to discover that journalists have become more dominant, increasing their share of air time in more tightly controlled, faster paced reports. A significant shift toward expressing opinions and judgments of campaign events confirms previous qualitative observations that newscasts have become more journalist-centered. The focus on journalists and their opinions may turn anchors into celebrities and attract larger audiences but provides information less often about the election.

“Echo had one failing: she was fond of talking, and whether in chat or argument, would have the last word.” —*Bulfinch*

Television journalists took an increasingly central role in presidential politics between 1968 and 1988. Entman (1989) documents the increased influence of journalists, which accompanied the shift to television as a Americans' source for most news about national issues. In *Out of Order*, Patterson (1994) criticizes the growing power of journalism in elections, although his critique focuses on institutions — the ways the media are replacing political parties. Kendall (1993), in her analysis of candidate speeches appearing on network news, has identified the importance of the reporter's language in reports as that which replaces candidate's language, thereby diminishing the significance of candidates' words.

In his essay on the shrinking sound bite, Hallin reported on the trend toward greater mediation in network news, which has become what he called “journalist centered” (1992, p. 11). Hallin's essay for the Wilson Center, along with an informal study by Adatto (1992), was widely discussed in the media and continues to be cited by scholars. Both these sound bite studies measured the length politicians spoke without interruption in a sample of network evening newscasts during presidential elections (along with other dimensions, such as the broadcast of candidates' commercial spots as news). They found independently that the length of politicians' sound bites decreased from 43 seconds in 1968 to 9 seconds in 1988.

The conclusion that election news had become journalist-centered was based on, and most of the ensuing discussion of the studies focused on, the idea that journalists were responsible for the shrinking sound bite. Because they examined only the *sources* of political news, the studies and the resulting discussions relied as much on inferences as on direct evidence of journalistic practice.

This essay expands the original research by pitting inference against measurement: what did the anchors and correspondents themselves (instead of the politicians) do on the air? Our goal was to supply much needed descriptive statistics on the role of *journalists* in political coverage. Closely following Hallin's (1992) framework,¹ we coded political reports on the evening news, selected only weekdays during September and October of election years, and, to make our study strictly comparable to the original sound-bite studies (including Adatto 1993), we stuck to the original time frame, spanning from 1968 to 1988.² Where Hallin and Adatto measured the length of sources' comments (the "sound bite"), we examined the reports to discover any changes in the journalists' comments.³

In this essay, we present the changes in broadcast journalism. We found that as the sound bite shrank, journalists also reduced their own speaking time, but by a much smaller margin. Although sources and journalists both spoke more often by 1988, reports got shorter and the journalists' share of the shrinking coverage grew. Our essay goes on to discuss ways to understand these changes. Did correspondents throw themselves into the breach, patching together and explaining the increasingly fragmentary political discussion using their own words and ideas? What tasks did they accomplish as they spoke more frequently?

The evolving style of television journalism has notable implications. As political discourse has shrunk to sound bites, journalists played a key role. Did the faster-paced, more-journalist-centered newscasts serve to enhance the journalists' own prestige, influence, and authority, as Hallin and Patterson imply? Our essay concludes with an examination of the political role of journalists in election news, presenting both evidence and arguments about the state of journalism and commenting on the consequences for political discourse in the United States.

What It Sounded Like

The following summaries and transcripts illustrate the trend. For 1968, two September 27 CBS reports on Humphrey's demand for a national television debate are fairly typical:

Cronkite: The presidential campaign today featured a long-range debate over presidential debates. From Portland, Oregon, Vice-president Humphrey issued another challenge to Richard Nixon.

Humphrey: (Speaks for 69 seconds, presenting his arguments for why the candidates should debate.)

(1-second pause)

Dean: Humphrey has been all fired up over this debate issue for weeks now and is especially miffed today. In a talk prepared for tonight, he scornfully labels Nixon as the Shadow and Brand X. "Where is he?" Humphrey taunts, "Where is the Shadow? When will you meet with me somewhere that the American people can look at both of us?" Hubert Humphrey on the attack — it's been just about that way at almost every campaign stop. Morton Dean, CBS News, with the Humphrey campaign in Portland, Oregon.

The report was followed by coverage of Nixon's response, including the anchor's introduction and wrap up (totaling 23 seconds), correspondent John Hart's introduction, description, and sign-off (48 seconds), and four sound bites (82 seconds) of Nixon rejecting any debates (including the quip, "It's one thing to 'Give 'em hell,' but it's something else to give 'em Humphrey, believe me!")

The following example from the 1988 campaign coverage shows how television journalism changed. The September 28 ABC newscast also includes two political reports. In the first, Peter Jennings introduces (in 27 seconds) Lloyd Bentsen's "strong words" against Dan Quayle: "I would pray for the good health of George Bush every night." Then, to describe "the new post-debate rock 'em, sock 'em Michael Dukakis," Sam Donaldson speaks six times (for a total of 78 seconds) and weaves in five sound bites, four by Dukakis and one by the Soviet foreign minister (47 seconds total). Coverage continues with a second report:

Jennings: Well, it was a shirt-sleeved George Bush who added a bit of country flavor to his campaign today. ABC's Brit Hume was with him.

Hume: The Bush campaign rolled up the spine of Illinois today in a bus caravan intended to portray the vice-president as a man in tune with rural America. Indeed, the tunes were supplied by country music stars Loretta Lynn, Crystal Gayle, and Peggy Sue.

(The three stars inside the tour bus sing, "Stand by George Bush," to the tune of "Stand by Your Man," for 9 seconds.)

Hume: Bush's bus, by the way, had a microwave oven, a fancy restroom, and, best of all, no reporters. They now travel with Bush, but not near him. At a series of small town rallies, a shirt-sleeved Bush was introduced by Loretta Lynn. He told folks he was with them, unlike the other guy who wants to tighten tax collection to cut the deficit 35 billion dollars, something Bush said would require doubling the Internal Revenue force.

Bush: (Speaks 19 seconds from video at a street rally.)

Hume: Earlier Bush also worked the IRS into an attack on Dukakis's college loan plan, which would be financed by continuing payments much like Social Security.

Bush: (Speaks 7 seconds.)

Hume: Polls show Bush behind in Illinois and he apparently thought getting out among the people would be just the thing. Did that also mean he would answer reporters' questions? Not today. After all, you can carry this accessibility stuff too far. Brit Hume, ABC News, Ottawa, Illinois.

In 1968, Humphrey's "Where's the Shadow?" comment and Nixon's quip alluding to Truman both illustrate their efforts to coin brief, quotable quotes. The most colorful phrases make it into the news in both years, but are journalists fully responsible for these sound bites? The original studies used sound bites to criticize journalism, but the data were inferential — what journalists could do depended on what words other people spoke. To escape that conundrum, we decided to study the journalists' speech directly, by measuring how they used their own voices on the air.

Consider how long journalists typically spoke. The length can be measured several ways: how long they went on each time they spoke, how often they spoke in a report, and the total time they spent talking in a report. By each of these measures, journalists' expanded their presence.

How long did each journalist's speech go on? We measured each time an anchor or correspondent spoke (the "speech act") and computed the mean length by year (Table 1). We found that, overall, journalists' speech acts gradually shrank, by an average of 9 percent annually. The shift was especially marked in between 1976 and 1980 (Table 2).

Table 1

Length of Speech

Mean length of journalist speech in seconds, 1968 – 1988

Year	All Journalists			Anchors			Correspondents		
	Mean	S.E.	n	Mean	S.E.	n	Mean	S.E.	n
1968	26.93	2.16	229	26.89	2.57	95	26.95	3.22	134
1972	26.13	1.59	250	28.13	2.84	73	25.30	1.92	177
1976	22.46	1.27	271	18.73	1.15	84	24.14	1.75	187
1980	17.47	.72	393	18.68	1.48	107	16.99	.81	269
1984	16.24	.75	331	18.67	1.58	70	15.53	.85	242
1988	15.85	.64	353	18.40	1.06	101	14.82	.78	252

Table 2

Tests of Significance

Two-tailed tests for journalist speech in seconds, 1968 – 1988

Year	All Journalists		Anchors		Correspondents	
	t value	Prob.	t value	Prob.	t value	Prob.
1984–1988	.39	.69	.14	.89	.61	.54
1980–1984	1.18	.23	.00	.99	1.23	.21
1976–1980	3.60 ^a	.00	.03	.97	4.06 ^a	.00
1972–1976	1.79	.07	3.21 ^a	.00	.45	.65
1968–1972	.30	.76	-.32	.74	.44	.66

^aBased on equal variance estimate. All other t-tests based on unequal variance estimates.

How often did journalists speak in each report? We counted the number of times journalists inserted their voices and computed the mean frequency for each election year (Table 3). The frequency jumped from 1968 to 1972, then increased gradually until 1988, when it dropped (Table 4).⁴ Nevertheless, journalists in 1988 spoke almost twice as often as they did in 1968.

Table 3

Frequency of Speech

Mean frequency of journalist speech per political report, 1968 – 1988

Year	All Journalists	S.E.	Anchors	S.E.	Correspondents	S.E.	n
1968	2.72	.28	1.13	.05	1.59	.26	84
1972	4.98	.50	1.44	.09	3.54	.43	50
1976	6.02	.64	1.86	.19	4.15	.55	45
1980	7.67	.62	2.18	.33	5.49	.55	49
1984	9.17	.75	2.05	.28	7.11	.67	34
1988	5.26	.39	1.50	.23	3.74	.39	67

Table 4

Tests of Significance

Two-tailed tests for journalist speech per political report, 1968 – 1988

Year	All Journalists		Anchors		Correspondents	
	t value	Prob.	t value	Prob.	t value	Prob.
1984–1988	4.56	.00	1.51	.13	4.29	.00
1980–1984	-1.53	.13	.29	.77	-1.86	.06
1976–1980	-1.83	.07	-.82	.41	-1.71	.09
1972–1976	-1.27	.20	-1.97	.05	-.87	.38
1968–1972	-4.24 ^a	.00	-3.00 ^a	.00	-4.03 ^a	.00

^aBased on equal variance estimate. All other t-tests based on separate variance estimates.

Finally, how much time in total did journalists spend talking in each report? We added the length of each voice insert until arriving at a total for each report, then computed the mean total for reports during the election year (Table 5). We found a general pattern of increases, despite some peaks and valleys (and some important differences between anchors and correspondents, which we will discuss later). The shifts were especially significant between 1968 and 1972 and between 1984 and 1988 (Table 6).

Table 5

Length of Speech

Mean length of journalist speech in seconds per report, 1968 – 1988

Year	All Journalists		Anchors		Correspondents		n
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
1968	74.13	6.50	31.88	3.24	42.25	6.43	84
1972	130.00	16.06	41.08	6.34	88.92	11.79	50
1976	135.02	14.71	34.68	3.32	100.33	12.89	45
1980	134.08	10.52	40.79	4.53	93.28	8.79	49
1984	149.02	11.95	38.44	4.65	110.58	9.91	34
1988	83.50	5.73	27.74	3.87	55.76	5.35	67

Table 6

Tests of Significance

Two-tailed tests for journalist speech in seconds per report, 1968 – 1988

Year	All Journalists		Anchors		Correspondents	
	t value	Prob.	t value	Prob.	t value	Prob.
1984–1988	4.94 ^a	.00	1.76	.08	4.86	.00
1980–1984	-.94	.35	.36	.71	-1.31	.19
1976–1980	.05	.95	-1.07 ^a	.28	.45	.65
1972–1976	-.23	.81	.89	.37	-.65	.51
1968–1972	-3.73 ^a	.00	-1.29	.20	-3.78 ^a	.00

^aBased on equal variance t-test. All other t-tests based on unequal variance.

Besides checking for important year-to-year shifts, we wanted to know whether our observations revealed a linear trend. To verify the overall direction of changes in political reporting from 1968 to 1988, we ran a set of regression models (Table 7), which compare the data to linear trends.⁵ The results confirm that journalists inserted their voices more often, by an increment of .17 times per report per year. This overall trend was gradual and progressive. Correspondents increased their total speaking time during a political report by 1.05 seconds each year, and, if historical patterns were to continue, anchors could expect to speak for 53.4 seconds in each report.

Table 7

Multiple Regression

Effects of time (year) on dependent variables

Independent Variable	Length of Speech			Number of Voice-overs		
	Anchor	Correspondent	Total	Anchor	Correspondent	Total
Intercept $-\beta$	53.48**	-10.39	43.08	-0.66	-7.65***	-8.37***
Net ^a ABC $-\beta^b$	-	-	-	-	-	-
-Beta	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net CBS $-\beta$	-5.84	10.63	4.79	.12	.00	.14
-Beta	-.08	.07	.02	.03	.00	.01
Net NBC $-\beta$	-.87	.77	-.10	.06	-.62	-.00
-Beta	-.01	.00	-.00	.01	-.00	-.00
Year 1968-1988 $-\beta$	-.21	1.05*	.84	.02*	.14***	.17***
-Beta	-.04	.11*	.07	.14*	.30***	.32***
R ² ^c	.007	.014	.005	.019	.091***	.101***
Adjusted R ²	-.001	-.005	-.003	.010	.082***	.093***

*** = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$.^aDummy variables coded for Network.^bEntries are unstandardized betas, standardized betas, and R²s, after controls for network influence.^cSignificance test of F ratio for equation. $n = 329$.

By all our measures, a shift in the structure of political news had clearly occurred. Whether or not they were responsible for shrinking the sound bite, journalists themselves spoke in shorter takes. However, they talked almost twice as often, and their total speaking time increased or stayed the same.

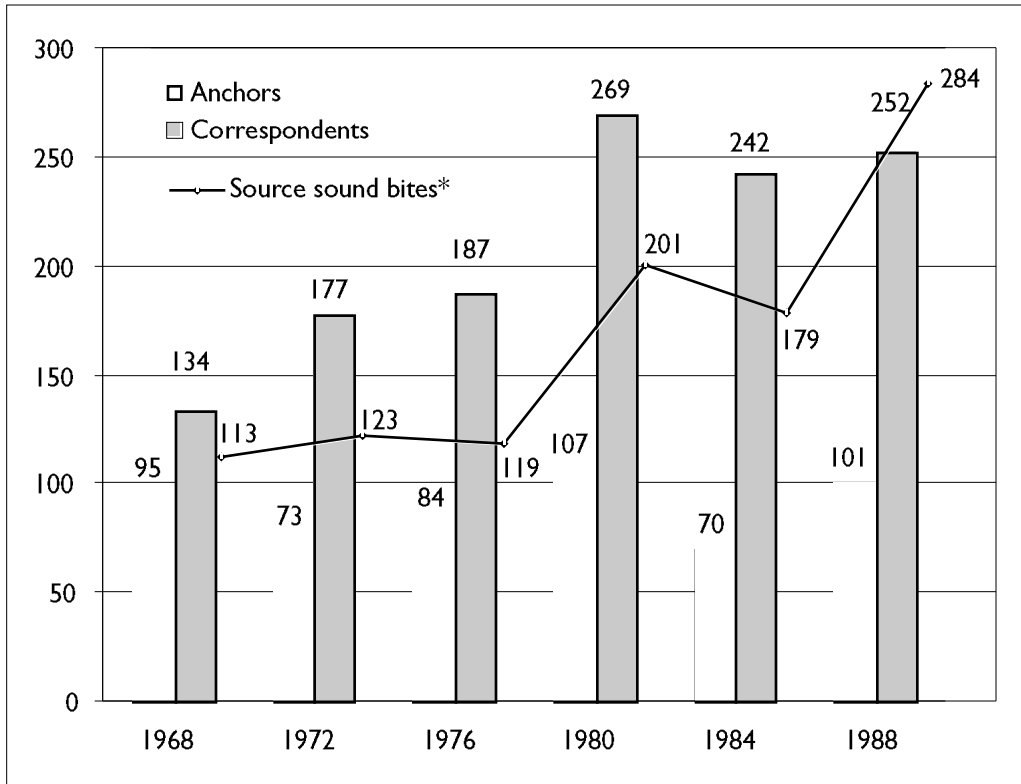
Comparing the Trends

How do these changes compare to the fate of sources? To make the comparison, we turn to Hallin's (1992) study of sound bites. Both studies, his and ours, reveal a general increase in sound bites, voice-overs, and other speech acts (Figure 1). However, Hallin found that the average sound bite from a politician shrank by 26 percent a year. That means journalists' speeches shrank at much less than half the rate (9 percent annually, see Table 1) that politicians' sound bites were shrinking.

Figure 1

Frequency

How often anchors and correspondents spoke in political reports, compared to their sources, 1968–1988



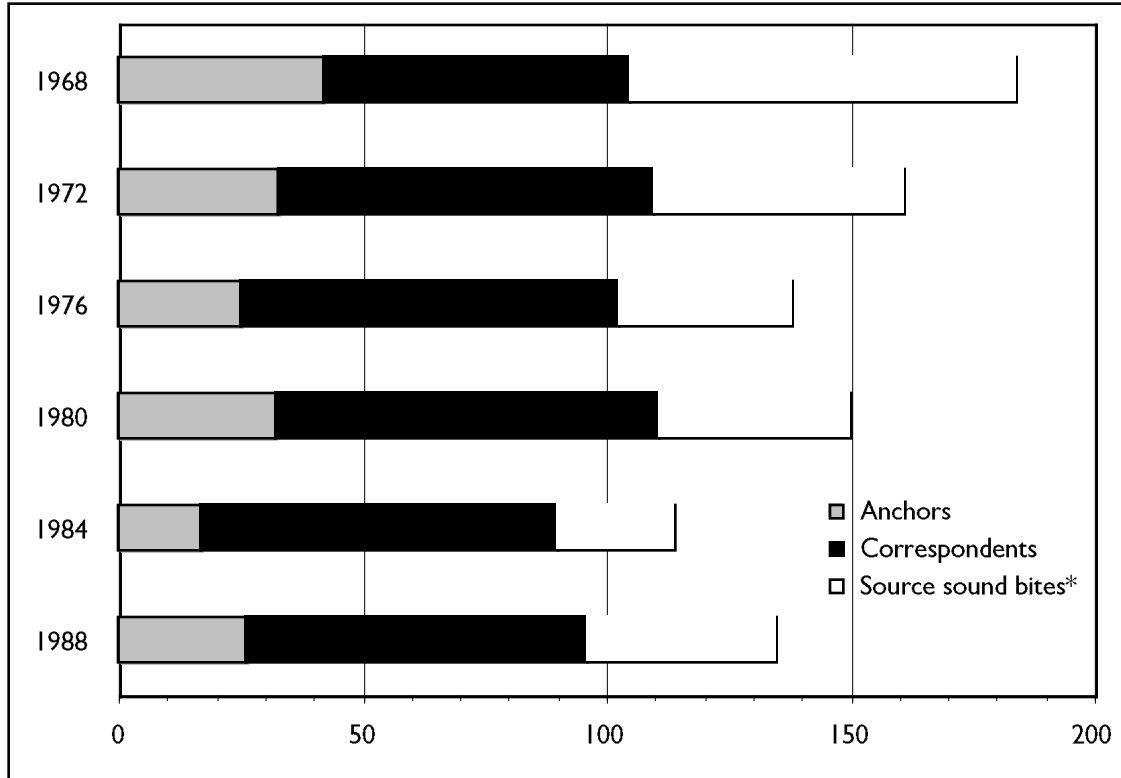
*Source: Hallin, 1992.

Letting journalists and sources speak more often may seem to mitigate in some way the effect of shortening each thing they say, but the change to faster pacing also accompanied a change in substance: political reports got shorter (Figure 2). The average report, according to Hallin, shrank by almost 20 percent, from 178 to 147 seconds.

Figure 2

Shares

Time in minutes of a typical political report that anchors and correspondents spoke, compared to their sources, 1968–1988



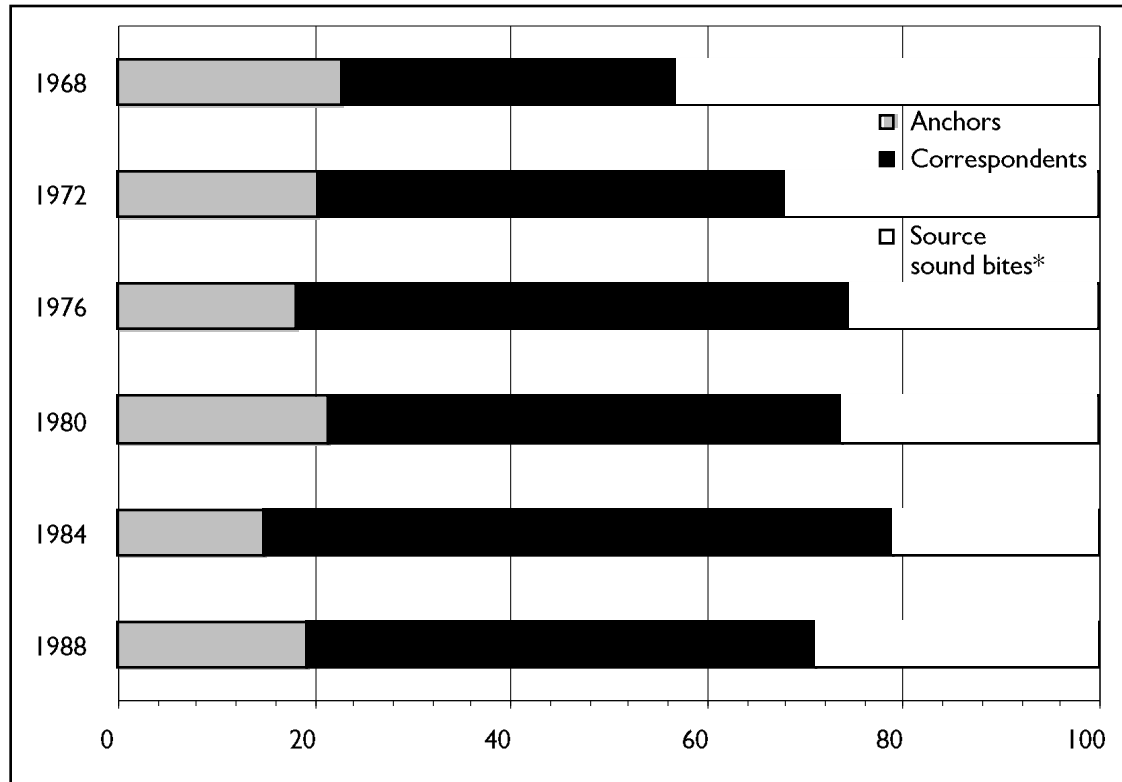
*Derived from Hallin, 1992, Footnote 1 and Table 1, pp. 5–6.

In the typical report, Hallin points out, politicians’ sound bites by 1988 took almost half the total time allotted to them in 1968. In our sample, the average time journalists spent talking about the campaign during the evening news got larger annually by an average of 1.47 percent (although the increase was not smooth). As the time available got smaller and the time spent on sources’ sound bites got smaller, the total time journalists spoke did not shrink proportionately; it grew. Journalists took a larger share of a shrinking pie (Figure 3).⁶

Figure 3

Standardized Shares

Time as a percentage of the typical political report that anchors and correspondents spoke, compared to their sources, 1968–1988



*Derived from Hallin, 1992, Footnote 1 and Table 1, pp. 5–6.

The transcripts we began with illustrate these changes. In the 1968 reports, journalists spoke seven times. In 1988, they spoke twelve times. The candidates also spoke more often, but their total time was cut by more than half. In the 1968 examples, Humphrey spoke for 69 seconds, and Nixon spoke for 82 seconds in four sound bites. In the 1988 examples, Dukakis had 47 seconds in four sound bites, and Bush, 26 seconds in two bites.

The changes in the numbers reveal a substantial shift in the structure of political reports on network news. In the 1968 transcripts, candidates speak at length. Humphrey circles and repeats himself, Nixon rambles and dodges. Correspondents seem to take their time as well. In the 1988 examples, shorter comments by Bush and Dukakis get crowded into much tighter reports. Instead of emphasizing the candidates and their voices, television election reports now centered on the journalists.

Understanding the Change

One way to understand the changes in the journalists' roles played in U.S. election newscasts is to think of each campaign report as a political discussion.⁷ This conversational metaphor became increasingly apt as the style of local news, called happy talk, grew in influence during the 1970s.

Under pressure to maintain or increase the larger audiences passed on from local newscasts, network news by 1976 had adopted a subtle version of the same conversational tone (Powers, 1978).

The average report, or “conversation” about presidential elections not only shrank by almost 20 percent (Hallin, 1992), but in addition, in our sample, the *number* of reports dropped by 20 percent (See Footnote 3). Whether measured by length or frequency, political discussions on network news got briefer. In the 1968 transcript, Cronkite helped candidates carry on a long-distance debate about whether to hold debates. In 1988, the same sort of interchange, still somewhat present, was reduced to more strident attacks that were tightly scripted not only by candidates but also by the journalists.

As a result, the political conversation had become more one-sided, and the pacing, as Hallin noted, also picked up. Our examples illustrate what Hallin observed, that journalists left fewer pauses in their campaign reports by 1988. We found that journalists were talking more than twice as often in the average report (see Table 3) and were also talking somewhat longer (see Table 5). Part of this increase was in the final “wrap” comments of journalists, which Hallin found entirely absent in 12 percent of the 1968 reports but present in every report by 1976 (1992, p. 10).

Studies of interpersonal communication describe speakers in a discussion as dominant when they exhibit certain behaviors (see summary in Giles & Street, 1985): A faster pace of communication raises status, making the person talking appear more competent. Those considered most capable and trustworthy pause the least. The longer they speak and the greater their share of talk, the more conscientious, proficient, and dominant the speakers appear. In short, talking longer, leaving fewer silent pauses, and speaking more often all characterize the most powerful voices.

Clearly, television journalists exhibit all these traits. Because they control the reports and because their conversation is in some ways a monologue, it would be surprising if they did not dominate. Much of the reaction to the original sound bite research resulted from the implication that television journalists, already dominant, had taken so much more control. From 1968 to 1988, they increased the pace of political discussion in the news. They paused less often. Compared to their sources, they talked longer, and they increased their share of the talking time, even as they reduced (for various reasons) the total time available for the campaign discussion.

What the Changes Accomplished

Speech communication studies also suggest that effective speakers may be attributed higher status as they also concentrate on the job of communication (Giles & Street, 1985, p. 218). Although journalists assumed a more dominant role in election news, perhaps they also communicated more effectively. One way to measure the journalists’ effectiveness is to code their political reporting by a set of communication tasks developed by Bales (1951, 1970). These tasks classify not *what* facts or content came under discussion but *how* (or in what manner) the journalists spoke.⁸ We expected that television journalists would spend the bulk of their effort on the task of conveying information to orient the public, perhaps posing a few questions to be answered using sound bites.⁹

When we classified their speech acts according to Bales’s criteria (Table 8), we found journalists did use the bulk of their energy on the tasks Bales defined as required to communicate effectively (4 through 9). The profile shows the highest rate of activity in giving opinion (Task 5) for each year. This category is often the highest in all sorts of settings where people talk, and is a good index of the amount of effort journalists in this case devoted to solving problems of evaluating what was right, good, or desirable in the election campaign. The second most frequent

incidence came in giving information (Task 6). This category is an index of how often journalists tried to solve problems of factual perception and orientation within their campaign coverage.¹⁰ Although news normally lacks the give and take of conversation, journalists still sometimes asked for opinions (Task 8), the category that shows how frequently they indicated to others the need to judge or evaluate what was desirable within the reports of election campaigns.

Table 8

Tasks

Communication tasks for anchors and correspondents by percentage, 1968–1988

	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988
1. Seems Friendly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2. Dramatizes	0.0	2.4	4.4	2.8	3.0	0.3
3. Agrees	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.3	4.5	0.3
4. Gives Suggestion	2.2	4.8	8.1	7.1	16.0	0.6
5. Gives Opinion	52.0	49.6	56.1	46.3	45.9	67.1
6. Gives Information	35.8	36.8	23.6	31.3	17.8	26.3
7. Asks for Information	1.7	1.2	1.5	0.8	0.3	1.4
8. Asks for Opinion	7.4	3.6	4.8	4.8	7.6	3.4
9. Asks for Suggestion	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	2.1	0.6
10. Disagrees	0.4	0.8	1.1	2.3	2.1	0.0
11. Shows Tension	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
12. Seems Unfriendly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
TOTAL*	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	229	250	271	393	331	353

*Variations due to rounding.

The general emphasis on the tasks most central to communication (Tasks 4 through 9), increased over the period. The existing emphasis on expressing opinions, evaluations, and analysis (Task 5) grew by about 36 percent between 1968 and 1988, although the increase took an uneven path. The task of giving information and orientation, repeating, clarifying, and confirming (Task 6) also increased slightly in frequency but its share overall declined about 1.9 percent, on average, annually. Together these tasks absorbed the bulk of the increase in the number of times journalists spoke on air by 1988. All other tasks, which were small to begin with, decreased or remained about the same.

Our data support the trend toward an increase in the expression of opinions by journalists (Table 9). We grouped the tasks to illustrate journalists' orientation when communicating, classified according to Bales. Activities subsumed under communication orientation (Tasks 6 and 7), defined as a fairly neutral expression of information through statements and questions, declined by about 10 percent between 1968 and 1988. Journalists' evaluation activities (Tasks 5 and 8), as the giving and asking of opinions, increased by about 10 percent for the same period. As we have seen, the task of giving opinions accounts for most of the latter increase.

The transcripts we began with clearly illustrate this increase in expressing opinion. The 1988 reports convey two judgments common to the campaign that were largely absent in 1968. One interprets Bush's shirt-sleeve activity as an *intentional* effort to portray himself "as a man in tune

with rural America.” With a description of a luxury tour bus, Hume implies that the Bush image is false, perhaps even cynical. The other judgment condemns the effort by the Bush campaign to control the flow of information. Hume notes the press travels separately and reports with considerable irony Bush’s refusal to answer correspondents’ questions. In 1988 coverage for NBC, Lisa Myers, during reports we watched, repeatedly pointed out that politicians weren’t talking to her. These sorts of judgments resemble what Levy (1981) calls disdain for the news.

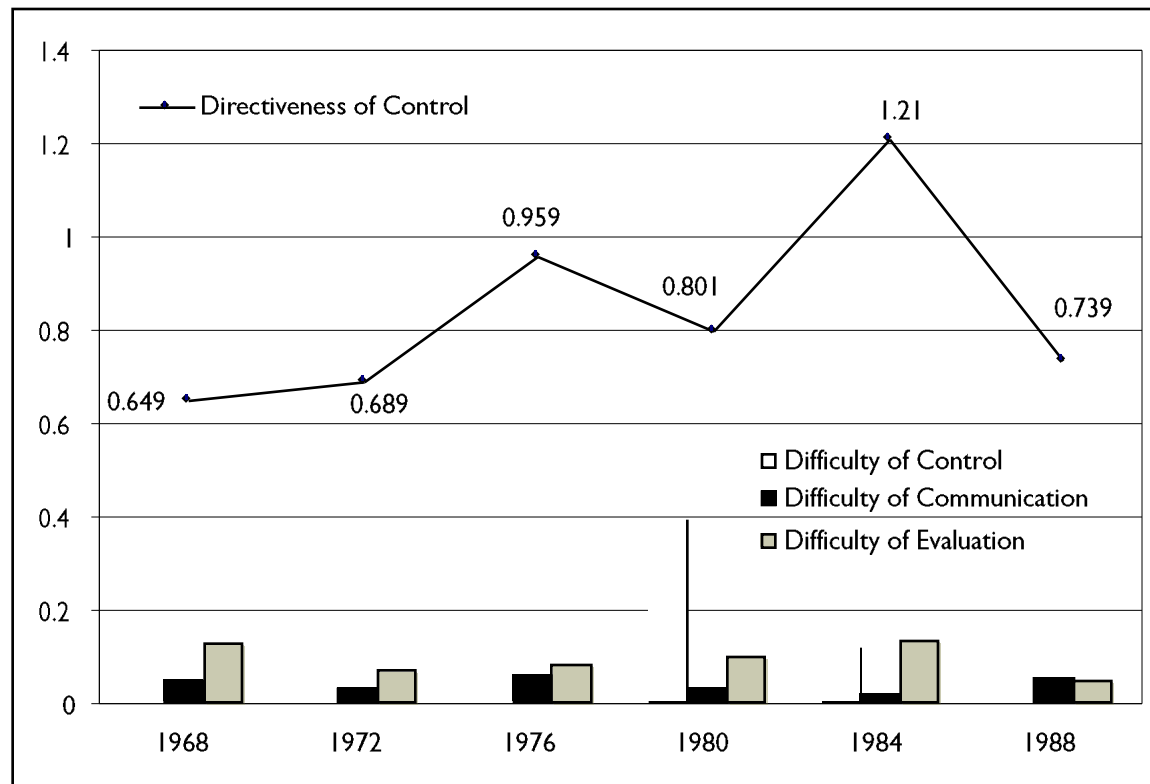
By combining and comparing his categories, Bales also developed a series of indexes to rate the dynamic tendencies of speakers.¹¹ The index that measures any difficulty of *control* indicates the relationship between frequency of asking for direction and giving suggestion. A high score suggests a speaker holds high status and authority. The index of difficulty with *communication* rates the relative contribution of two activities: giving and asking for information. On this index, a high score indicates less activity in asking for information. The index of difficulty of *evaluation* balances the giving of against the asking for opinion, evaluation, and analysis. A high score marks a greater asking of opinion. The last index, directiveness of control, is based on the rate of giving suggestions and opinions as compared to the rate of giving information. On this index, a high score signifies that the speaker is exercising greater control.

For our sample, these indexes show a clear pattern, all tending to indicate journalists’ increased control over the news (Figure 4). The index that measures any difficulty of *control* was zero for four of six years. The index of difficulty with *communication* stayed about the same and was extremely small. Difficulty in *evaluation* of what is right or desirable was also small and shrank over time, reflecting the great increase in journalists giving opinions, while asking fewer questions. It appears that the newscasters showed less evidence of difficulty with either communicating generally or expressing judgments in the process of reporting on the elections. These indexes suggest a more polished, professional delivery.

Figure 4

Problems of Communication

Indexes of dynamic tendencies for all journalists, based on frequency of data, 1968 – 1988



	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988
Difficulty of Control	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.3860	0.1160	0.0000
Difficulty of Communication	0.0460	0.0310	0.0580	0.0258	0.0160	0.0510
Difficulty of Evaluation	0.1250	0.0670	0.0780	0.0970	0.1330	0.0480

This greater control might be evidence of growing professional skill, but what was the manner of that control? Bales' directiveness index, which relates the pattern of giving suggestions and opinions to the frequency of providing information, is a rough indicator of whether the control exercised was democratic and open. The index began higher than the others increased from 1968 to 1988, suggesting that journalists became more dominating in their control of the election news. A consequence of this greater professional polish appears to be that journalists paid more attention to the process and craft of journalism itself. For example, Brit Hume's opinion that the campaign was cynically manipulating Bush's image while controlling media access foregrounds the role of the journalist as arbiter, actively passing judgments on campaign events and strategies.

The increased dominance we measured was largely produced by the journalists' shift toward expressing opinions more frequently. In the 1968 reports, we began with both candidates speaking for extended clips central to the coverage, and Humphrey directly calls for *more* media involvement in the campaign. The journalists respond by taking a disinterested, almost impassive

stance, reporting Humphrey's plea as yet another event of the day. By contrast, the 1988 journalists insert their voices most often to give opinions — more than half the time, on average — and provide orientation to listeners only about one third the time (see Table 8). As a result, their dynamic control over the discussion has increased, becoming more directive and dominant.

The significance of the change in broadcast journalists' judgments may also be established with illustrative transcripts. Each passage chosen as emblematic for the election year coverage brings with it greater frequency and intensity of journalists' comments. The steady year-to-year progression contrasts the factual approach prevalent in the earlier reports with the rise of opinion in journalism.

For 1972, Richard Valeriani's report filed for NBC essentially repeats the facts three times.

Chancellor: In the presidential campaigns, just about everybody was on the road today, except the president who was in Washington. Mrs. Nixon was out west. The vice-president, as we'll see in a moment, was in Minnesota. George McGovern was in Chicago where he came out in favor of some aid to parents who send their children to parochial school. This is a position already held by President Nixon. Richard Valeriani is covering McGovern and here is his report. (25 seconds)

Valeriani: Senator McGovern came to Gordon Tech, the biggest Roman Catholic school and the biggest archdiocese in America, to announce his support for the principle of major federal aid to parochial and other non-public schools. Such federal assistance already has the backing of President Nixon, and it has become a major campaign issue among this country's millions of Catholic voters. (22 seconds)

McGovern: (Speaks for 46 seconds, offering his reasons for allowing the tax credits.)

Valeriani: Then on to rainy Wisconsin where McGovern won his first primary victory. Rallies for Michigan and Ohio were scheduled for later. Today's schedule reflects McGovern's basic campaign strategy which is to concentrate heavily on the big electoral vote states with frequent forays into smaller nearby states which hold some promise for him. But McGovern is finding that his image is still blurred among many regular Democrats, and he can't reach all of them personally so he is considering a nationwide television speech to clarify his position on a number of controversial issues. Richard Valeriani, NBC News, with the McGovern campaign. (38 seconds)

Chancellor's opening is neutral and informational, as is Valeriani's first voice-over. After McGovern's sound bite, Valeriani ventures slightly beyond neutral grounds by stating McGovern's image is blurred — an opinion subdued by its implied source, "many regular Democrats." Contrast Valeriani's repetition of information and infrequent, subdued insertion of opinion with Sam Donaldson's colorful narrative for his ABC News report filed in 1976:

Barbara Walters: Jimmy Carter lost no time in exploiting the president's money problems as a campaign issue. Sam Donaldson also found him taking a couple jabs at the president on several matters that came up in this week's debate. (13 seconds)

Donaldson: Jimmy Carter moved into New Mexico today like a prize fighter moving in for the knockout. President Ford was wrong on Eastern Europe, said Carter. President Ford reneged on his promise to spotlight companies cooperating with the Arab boycott, said Carter. President Ford has in fact stymied legislation to prevent nuclear weapon proliferation, said

Carter. But those were all softening up blows. The stiff uppercut came on the question of Mr. Ford's finances. (25 seconds)

Carter: (Speaks for 73 seconds, making public the Internal Revenue Service report on Ford's finances. (25 seconds)

Donaldson: Today, Carter is charging only a discrepancy. but tomorrow the charge could be sharper. Before his speech, one of Carter's aides was asked, "Are you going to say Mr. Ford committed a crime?" Not yet, he replied. Sam Donaldson, ABC News, Albuquerque. (15 seconds)

By using a prizefighter metaphor and signing off by speculating on what may come next from the Carter camp, Donaldson asserts his own judgments of the events. Leslie Stahl's report for CBS News filed in 1980 illustrates the progression from Donaldson's speculation:

Walter Cronkite: President Carter today began a two-day campaign that would take him into four states he lost in 1976. He was asked about last night's Reagan-Anderson debate, and Lesley Stahl reports. (12 seconds)

Stahl: Springfield, a traditional Republican area, but with his polls in Illinois showing a significant improvement, Mr. Carter now believes he can carry this state, if he picks up support here, and merely holds firm in Chicago. His absence last night, however, seemed to bother people in Springfield, the home of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. But Mr. Carter ignored all that, he plugged his gasohol program by showing off a still that converts corn into alcohol, and flew off to California where at a town meeting in Torrance, he was asked — that's right — about last night's televised debate. (37 seconds)

Carter: (Speaks for 21 seconds, defending his decision not to participate in the debate.)

Stahl: The president's campaign advisers seem genuinely confident. First, they are beginning to reap the benefits of their reconciliation with Senator Kennedy who flew here to join Mr. Carter in a big party fund raiser tonight. Second, even though Jimmy Carter has never won and Reagan never lost in California, the Carter people think the president has a good chance here. They say Ronald Reagan's negative ratings in California are higher than anywhere else in the country. And third, the advisers feel that Reagan came across as shallow in last night's debate. They say the president made the right decision not to attend. Leslie Stahl, CBS News, Torrance, California. (37 seconds)

Stahl's judgment came through clearly in her choice of charged terms — Carter "ignored all that," "plugged the program," and showed off a still. She then quips "That's right" as a sort of insider wink, and supports her judgment that the campaign advisers "seem genuinely confident" by ticking off the evidence.

A final example from the 1984 election campaign moves to a full-blown narrative weaving politicians' comments into a correspondent's thesis.

Dan Rather: What with the Reagan-Gromyko meeting today, the Mondale-Gromyko meeting yesterday, not much attention has been focused lately on the Democrat and Republic number two on the ticket. Still what George Bush and Geraldine Ferraro are saying and doing has a lot to do and say about the presidential campaign. Tonight, two reports — David Dow on the upbeat, everyone-is-very-pleased Bush campaign, and Phil Jones covering the up-and-over-the-hurdles Ferraro. (27 seconds)

Bush: (A 5-second medley of visual clips of Bush uttering a stream of values in an incomplete sentence.)

Dow: Some call it the politics of optimism. And George Bush, the president's chief cheerleader, has blazed a trail of joy from Boise to Bangor. (10 seconds)

Bush: (CBS edits a 6-second medley of Bush's values by drawing on a number of visuals from various speeches.)

Dow: In an age where the polls portray an upbeat America, Reagan-Bush strategists clearly believe that good news is good politics. That's not new, of course, but rarely has it been mixed with such a gushing appeal to patriotism. (13 seconds)

Bush: (Speaks for 14 seconds. His sentence offers a stream of patriotic symbols like referring to fireworks on the fourth of July.)

Dow: There's another dimension to today's good news politics, portray the opposition — those who insist on worrying about the budget deficits and the like — as party poopers. (9 seconds)

Bush: (Speaks for 12 seconds on the opposition.)

Dow: Some lessons: keep away from the issues that have troubled your opponent, her finances, for instance . . . (5 seconds)

Bush: (Speaks for 3 seconds, deflecting a question.)

Dow: Or abortion . . . (1 second)

Bush: (Speaks for 9 seconds, refusing to answer a question on abortion.)

Dow: And expand on the record. (3 seconds)

Bush: (Speaks for 5 seconds, referring the reporter to Reagan's record.)

Dow: According to polls, the politics of optimism is working, pointing to a happy ending, somewhere down the line. (A train toots its horn.) David Dow, CBS News, Washington. (10 seconds)

In this example, the reporter's story controls — candidates supply the grist for a narrative journalists create. Dan Rather frames the story as addressing the lack of attention (by journalists) to the vice-presidential campaigns. He uses flip opinions to characterize the opposing camps. David Dow then uses fragments of candidates' words and images to support his narrative concept. He calls Bush a "cheerleader," and in each succeeding speech expresses judgments: "Gushing appeal," "party poopers," and so forth. The reporter's story dominates and reiterates a disdain for the campaign — an opinion the viewer may or may not share.

This sequence of four reports taken from successive election years illustrates just how correspondents have changed the report structure to a more boldly journalist-centered script.

The Changing Role of Anchors

Although we have been speaking of journalists as a group, the roles of anchors and correspondents diverged over the period. In some ways, the role of anchors remained the same. The length of anchors' speech, like the sources' sound bites, declined, but not as sharply as everyone else's (see Table 1). While the political reports got smaller, anchors' share of the total time stayed about the same (see Figure 2), and they tended to speak more often over time (see Tables 3 and 4). In other words, anchors tended to hold onto their share of the newscast, while the correspondents' role grew and sources' declined. In our initial examples, Cronkite and Jennings both introduce topics, read brief updates, and tie the campaign report together similarly. The anchors' stability reflects their central role in on-air presentation.

We did find some interesting changes for anchors. The largest decline in the length of anchors' speech acts occurred in the 1976 election year, when they shortened by one-third. (Correspondents followed suit, with a decline of one quarter in 1980.) Tests confirm these shifts are statistically significant (see Table 2). This sudden shift toward crisp, foreshortened anchoring coincided with ABC's highly publicized hiring of an anchor, Barbara Walters, at a salary of over a million dollars a year (Bliss, 1991). Hiring Walters marked the networks' more conspicuous display of luminaries, creating a star system of broadcast journalism and signaling the rise of more polished performances by both anchors and correspondents. Broadcasters had found it profitable to call attention to journalists through a star-studded cast.

A more important change occurred in the communication tasks for anchors and correspondents (Table 10). Both anchors and correspondents gave opinions more often, but the change came more rapidly for anchors. While anchors' shift toward opinion-giving was slight, it was underlined by a decline in information-giving. The frequency of other tasks also generally increased. This growing imbalance between opinion- and information-giving is illustrated in the contrast between Walter Cronkite's neutral approach to framing Leslie Stahl's story in 1980 and Dan Rather's judgments prefacing David Dow's report filed in 1984. In contrast, correspondents' trend toward opinion-giving was more gradual and inconsistent. While they to saw other tasks increase, they more than doubled the proportion of one — information giving.

Table 10

Tasks for Anchors and Correspondents

Communication tasks for anchors and correspondents by percentage, 1968–1988

	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988
Anchors						
1. Seems Friendly						
2. Dramatizes		1.4	4.8		2.9	
3. Agrees			1.2		4.3	1.0
4. Gives Suggestion	1.1	2.7	8.3	1.9	11.4	1.0
5. Gives Opinion	27.4	39.7	29.8	25.2	27.1	46.5
6. Gives Information	71.6	56.2	46.4	52.3	28.6	36.6
7. Asks for Information			1.2		1.4	4.0
8. Asks for Opinion			8.3	6.5	18.6	8.9
9. Asks for Suggestion				13.1	1.4	
10. Disagrees				.9	4.3	2.0
11. Shows Tension						
12. Seems Unfriendly						
TOTAL*	100.1	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0
Number	95	73	84	107	70	101
Correspondents						
1. Seems Friendly						
2. Dramatizes		2.8	4.3	4.1	3.3	.4
3. Agrees	.7			.4	4.5	
4. Gives Suggestion	3.0	5.6	8.0	9.3	18.2	.4
5. Gives Opinion	69.4	53.7	67.9	55.4	51.2	75.4
6. Gives Information	10.4	28.8	13.4	21.2	14.0	22.2
7. Asks for Information	3.0	1.7	1.6	1.1		7.1
8. Asks for Opinion	12.7	5.1	3.2	4.5	3.7	1.2
9. Asks for Suggestion				1.1	2.5	
10. Disagrees	.7	1.1	1.6	3.0	1.7	
11. Shows Tension		1.1			.4	
12. Seems Unfriendly					.4	
TOTAL*	99.9	99.9	100.0	100.1	99.9	106.7
Number	134	177	187	269	242	252

*Variations due to rounding.

The most striking change took place in the work anchors performed, which can be highlighted by grouping tasks into questions and answers (Table 11). In 1968, any questions got asked by correspondents, and anchors gave nothing but answers — opinions (71.6 percent), information (27.4), and suggestions (1.1), in that order. In 1988, the opposite became more common. Correspondents asked fewer questions, while anchors asked more (Table 11). At the same time, correspondents gave more answers. This shift in tasks is significant statistically (the slight increase in positive and negative responses among journalists is not).¹²¹²

Table 11

Tasks for Anchors and Correspondents

Communication tasks for anchors and correspondents by percentage, 1968–1988

	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988
Anchors						
Answers (Tasks 4–6)	100.0	98.6	84.5	79.4	67.1	84.2
Questions (Tasks 7–9)			9.5	19.6	21.4	12.9
Positive (Tasks 1–3)		1.4	6.0		7.1	1.0
Negative (Tasks 10–12)				0.9	4.3	2.0
TOTAL*	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.1
Number	95	73	84	107	70	101
Correspondents						
Answers (Tasks 4–6)	82.5	88.1	89.3	85.9	83.5	98.0
Questions (Tasks 7–9)	15.7	6.8	4.8	6.7	6.2	1.6
Positive (Tasks 1–3)	.7	2.8	4.3	4.5	7.9	.4
Negative (Tasks 10–12)	.7	2.3	1.6	3.0	2.5	
TOTAL*	99.6	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.1	100.0
Number	134	177	187	269	242	252

*Variations due to rounding.

As sound bites shrank, anchors enhanced their role in the political reports, by in effect conducting interviews with subordinate journalists and pronouncing judgments on the elections. The change can be illustrated by the following example. In a 1988 ABC broadcast, Peter Jennings led into a report this way:

Jennings: Well, with both candidates claiming the high ground on defense and painting each other as unrealistic on the issue, we've asked our national security correspondent John McWethy to look at what each candidate is saying and at the realistic choices which the next president will actually face.

In his revised role, Jennings treated the correspondent as a source. Hallin accounted for part of this shift by noting an increase in what he called "truth squad stories," in which journalists corrected the claims of candidates and their advertising (1992, p. 19). As answer-providers, correspondents also acquired higher status by being recast as specialists. McWethy, as a specialist in national security, gets asked to make judgments about the future.

The change may reflect larger social and economic forces, such as the emphasis on news personalities that emerged over the period. As Bliss (1991) and others have noted, promoting journalists to star status encouraged a sort of brand loyalty that built ratings but also demanded even greater emphasis on the journalists, their ideas and opinions.

The Consequences

Whether journalists ought to be broadcasting these judgments is the subject of great controversy. Conservative critics such as Ranney cite complaints that networks slant their news reports by “imposing their own value judgments” (1983, p. 35). Conservatives recommend a standard of impartiality, in which newscasts keep broadcasters’ opinions and preferences completely absent. “The news is not a reporter’s perception or explanation of what happens,” Ranney argues, “*it is simply what happens.*” (p. 18, italics in original).

Liberal thinkers reject such a view, calling it naive empiricism. The problem, according to critics such as Gitlin, is that television news does not provide *enough* context for events (1980, 1987). In a study of how viewers attribute responsibility for political issues, Iyengar (1991) found that the preponderance of network news is episodic rather than thematic, that is, focused narrowly on specific events rather than on the broader context of socioeconomic or political antecedents.

At first blush, our study might seem to provide evidence to the contrary: that journalists have shifted away from reporting facts and toward giving their judgments of events (See Table 9). In 1988, they were less involved in the basic informational task of communication, at the same time they dedicated a greater share of their activity to evaluation — the tasks of providing and seeking interpretations and judgments about the campaign.

Television news seems to have wandered away from the journalism of “facts,” as conservatives claim, but it does not provide the context liberals demand, which would require *more* and deeper factual information, not less. To do so, the newscast would need to approximate not news but what Lippmann called truth: “to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men [sic] can act” (1922, p. 226). As Lippmann argued and Patterson has amply demonstrated, the media cannot substitute for public institutions as sources of information in a democracy.

Instead, the newscasts of 1988 provided a thin substitute, woven of “abstractions, emotions, and opinions” (Yankelovich, 1991, p. 197). Rather than providing more information, journalists appear to provide less, and the context for the shrinking sound bite becomes not deeper, hidden fact, but a growing embroidery of journalistic opinion. Our study found that journalists’ opinions predominated not only overall in the tasks but also in the structure of their reports (Table 6).

Our study deals with the manner in which journalists have used their appearances in the media to become the dominant element of news. Instead of news and information, newscasts by 1988 provided a thin substitute, woven of “abstractions, emotions, and opinions” (Yankelovich, 1991, p. 197). In a sense, journalists as entertainers have replaced or supplanted news itself. In the 1984 CBS broadcast, the correspondent structures everything politicians do to fit his judgment of the campaigns as a whole. Rather than providing more information, journalists appear to provide less, and the context for the shrinking sound bite becomes not deeper, hidden fact, but a growing embroidery of journalistic opinion.

At what moments, during the report, did journalists insert opinions? By examining the structure of reports to analyze *when* journalists expressed opinions, we found that the pattern of opinion-giving in campaign reports has changed.¹³ Journalists gave information at the first of a report less often as years went by. At the same time, they gave more opinions in their first, second, middle, penultimate, and final comments during political reports.¹⁴ In other words, journalists in 1968 more often began and ended their reports by orienting the viewer, providing factual information. By 1988, starting off the report with an expression of opinions and judgments had become almost as common as starting with information.

Our study also confirms the growth in wrap up comments Hallin observed. The number of final tasks, which is smaller because journalists speak continually or only once during some reports, also shifted. Comparing data from 1968 and 1988, we found that when journalists spoke at the end of a report, they gave factual information much less often, by a factor of ten (from 24.6 to 2.4 percent). Making judgments about the election events grew to almost 90 percent of these final remarks. Journalists made their opinions the last word, the final say. Other research has shown the last task, or “wrap up,” leaves a powerful impression (Liebler and Bendix, 1994).

The reports in 1988 are livelier and more entertaining. The journalists’ opinions, like insider secrets delivered rapid-fire, without pauses, draw viewers into what Lippmann calls the tent of news. The tighter coverage puts anchors and reporters more firmly in control of the megaphone, while candidates sound abrupt and disjointed. The resulting contrast between journalists and politicians illustrates the journalists’ role as “omniscient narrators” who use politicians’ speech chiefly as a form of proof (Kendall, 1993).

It is when anchors begin interviewing other journalists on screen that the new structure of the newscast comes clear. By adopting the tactics of dominant speakers, television journalists bring down the condemnation of conservatives, who naively demand that judgment enter not at all. Although the newscasts may seem more interesting to watch and do get higher ratings, they still lack the substance liberal critics demand. If this new, opinionated journalism does not serve the political process, as Patterson and others have argued, it is perhaps because it pays more attention not to the news but to the journalists.

As the journalism of opinion elevates the judgments of correspondents and anchors over their sources, who is responsible? Newswriters perform within a complex of factors influencing their decisions about content, and pinpointing the responsible agents demands additional analyses beyond a study of news form and discourse. Additional research may identify important influences at several levels of analysis.

News is the product of employees who, in good faith, strive toward standards set by their bosses. Anchors and correspondents, like camera operators and editors, serve at the pleasure of managers. Managers affect not only employee morale but also the routines of gathering and producing news. For example, in the 1980s news managers pioneered tight controls over packaging news so that correspondents would “conform to the formula” (Underwood, 1993, p. 61). To the extent that news content reflects management philosophy, future research might obtain direct evidence of anchors’ and correspondents’ perception of the pressures to conform (Adatto, 1993, has already reported some anecdotal evidence).

Managers and their policies function within institutions that profit from producing the news, and each company cultivates a distinct corporate culture. Because these cultures compete for audiences and advertisers, they also respond to each other, and their news products come to resemble each other. This effect has been evident recently in the blurring of boundaries between news and fictional programming — where information increasingly resembles entertainment (Cook, Gomery & Lichty, 1992). What results is the wholesale manufacture of culture by corporations (Schiller, 1989). That is, the changes in broadcast journalism we documented may reflect a type of market control over salable political expression that Schiller would take as evidence of the corporate culture’s influence.

The steady metamorphosis to opinionated broadcast news is part of a national trend in the news industry, broadly defined. From 1968 to 1988, newspapers increased their emphasis on in-depth reporting, interpretation, and analysis in order to compete effectively with television (Barnhurst & Mutz, 1997). Newspapers emphasized their name-brand columnists and investigative reporters in the print equivalent of the star system in broadcast journalism.

Global influences may have begun to counter the growth of opinion as news. National boundaries have become more permeable, and the U.S. networks have begun to build worldwide links (Auletta, 1995a & 1995b). As corporations like General Electric (NBC), Disney/Capital Cities (ABC), and Westinghouse (CBS) pursue global programming strategies to compete with Turner's CNN and Murdoch's Sky and Star TV satellite system in Europe and Asia, respectively, their freedom to express opinions may be curtailed. Murdoch's move to drop the BBC from Star TV suggests a more limited news style, although global exposure could ultimately create a megastar system among journalists.

Factors in the workplace, the corporation, the industry, and worldwide markets cannot entirely erase the responsibilities of individual news professionals. Within relatively tight limits, journalists can and do decide how long to talk and whether to emphasize their own opinions or their sources' speech. Our analysis of the form and structure of election coverage contributes significantly to an understanding of journalists by documenting changes in how they have expressed themselves. In the American democracy, where the press acts as the Fourth Estate and provides voters with a critical source of information, journalists must accept some responsibility for their own speech on the air during elections. They can then adopt practices consonant with their inescapable role as influential citizens.

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Appendix A

A hierarchical ordinary-least-squares multiple regression model was computed as equation: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1A + \beta_2C + \beta_3N + \beta_4R + e_{ij}$, where Y = the dependent variable (anchor speech length in seconds, correspondent speech length in seconds, number of anchor voice-overs, number of correspondent voice-overs, or total number of voice-overs); A = independent variable network where 1 = ABC and 0 = other; C = independent variable network where 1 = CBS and 0 = other; N = independent variable network where 1 = NBC and 0 = other; and R = year (1968 to 1988).

We included network variables to control for possible network differences that might account for change; however, none was significant. Significant coefficients show that increases in length and frequency of journalists' speech and to increases in the number of voice-overs per report. The model was statistically significant in its relationship to frequency of correspondents' voice-overs ($R^2 = 9.1$ percent, $p < .001$, $n = 329$) and to frequency of voice-overs overall ($R^2 = 10.1$ percent, $p < .001$, $n = 329$), thus supporting linearity between time (year) and these dependent variables.

Data interpretations are straightforward. A significant beta coefficient indicates that change per unit change in year. R^2 , as the coefficient of determination, supports the idea of a linear relationship when significant, and it indicates the proportion of variance explained by the model.

Appendix B

Dunn's planned contrasts were calculated for differences in proportions of anchors' speech (i.e. gives opinion, gives information, asks for information, asks for opinion) between 1968 and 1988. Results indicate anchors expressed opinions more often ($z = -2.85$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$), and asked for others' opinions more often ($z = -3.04$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$) in 1988 than in 1968. However, they gave information more often in 1968 than in 1988 ($z = 4.89$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$).

Dunn's planned contrasts were also calculated for differences in proportions of correspondents' speech. Significant results indicate correspondents gave information more often in 1988 ($z = -2.67$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$) but asked for information more often in 1968 ($z = 3.16$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$).

Dunn's planned contrasts were calculated separately for differences in proportions of anchors' and correspondents' combined communication tasks. Anchors attempted more answers in 1968 ($z = 4.13$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$) but asked more questions in 1988 ($z = -3.69$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$). Correspondent attempted more answers in 1988 ($z = -5.64$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$) and asked more questions in 1968 ($z = 5.72$, $c = 4$, $df = \infty$, $p < .05$).

¹The random sample drawn from six election seasons included Hallin's original videotapes for the years 1968 and 1988. The intervening years relied on a new sample because the original tapes were unavailable. Following Hallin's (1992) method, we selected 20 broadcasts of the evening news on ABC, CBS, and NBC. We diverged from Hallin by selecting only 20 of his 25 broadcasts for the bookend years, in order to make all six years fully comparable.

²For the 1992 and 1996 elections, we are collaborating with Hallin to replicate this and his previous studies, using as a framework the network responses to criticism of the shrinking sound bite which were widely discussed in the media after the original results were released, and also allowing for the emergence of additional news outlets in recent elections.

³We coded the frequency, length, and communication tasks each time an anchor or correspondent spoke during reports. Our analytical strategy required two levels of analysis — the journalist's speech act and the full political report — resulting in two different sample sizes. The number of political reports each year are 84, 50, 45, 49, 34, and 67 (n=329). The number of journalist speeches during the reports for each year are 229, 250, 271, 376, 312, and 353 (n=2156).

⁴Tests of significance were based on the total number of reports, including those in which either the anchor or correspondent did not speak. By analyzing reports, we suggest it's meaningful when journalists speak themselves or when they allow others to speak.

⁵The multiple regression was a hierarchical ordinary-least-squares model. See Appendix A for the relevant equation and definition of terms. Using the networks as dummy variables made the model a conservative test of linearity (none of the network differences was significant).

⁶From 1968 to 1988, the journalists' share went from 55.8 to 68.7 percent (correspondents alone went from 32.7 to 45.9 percent). The sources' share declined from 44.1 to 31.1 percent in the same period.

⁷News as discourse is a growing field of analysis. Most studies so far have measured the semantic or syntactical structures of news content. By analyzing the structure of speech acts within news, our approach connects broadly to the study of pragmatics within discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1988).

⁸Most studies of journalism adopt the terms of discourse directly from the profession, which limits what can be seen and measured to parameters set by journalists. Adopting a set of categories from outside journalism provides an alternative view and reveals what journalists themselves might prefer to keep tacit.

⁹Two coders determined which of Bales' twelve tasks best described each instance when a journalist spoke in the sample newscasts. We then compared the two coders' independent decisions for a systematic selection of about 10 percent of the news reports from the sample. The coefficient of reliability (Scott's pi) between coders as .74 for the task variable (n=452), a reasonable level of consistency given the complexity of the categories.

¹⁰In cases where more than one category applied, we instructed coders to assign the task farthest away from the middle of the list. Bales developed this instruction to allow for several traits common to human communication: that most speech acts incorporate tasks at the center of the list; that small cues often indicate the tasks farther from the center, and that these tasks are less common (as so of more interest) than those at the center.

¹¹From 1968 to 1988, the journalists' share went from 55.8 to 68.7 percent (correspondents alone went from 32.7 to 45.9 percent). The sources' share declined from 44.1 to 31.1 percent in the same period.

¹²Dunn's planned contrasts were calculated for differences in proportions of anchors' and correspondents' speech and separately for differences in proportions of anchors' and correspondents' combined communication tasks. The results reported were significant (at the $p < .05$ level), as shown in Appendix B.

¹³For our analyses, we used a constructed report. Coders determined which task appeared in each of five positions for each report (first, middle, penultimate, and last). Logistic regression models determined the probability of journalists giving information or opinion in each position.

The composition of the logistic regression models was similar to the ordinary-least-squares hierarchical regression model described earlier. The dependent variables for task position were dichotomous, where 1 = information (or alternatively opinion) and 0 = all other tasks. The predictors of type of reporting task (information or opinion) included both networks (coded as dummy variables) and year.

¹⁴The beta coefficients in logistic regression models predicting opinion are as follows: first task, $\beta = .03$, $p < .05$; second task, $\beta = .05$, $p < .001$; middle task, $\beta = .05$, $p < .001$; penultimate task, $\beta = .06$, $p < .001$; and last task, $\beta = .06$, $p < .001$. The model controlled for network influences; none was statistically significant.