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U.S. Newspapers Coverage of the 2009/10 Healthcare Reform Debate:

A Content Analysis

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Communication

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Professional Communication

by

Dinah A. Tetteh

May 2011

Dr. John Mark King, Chair

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Dr. Karen Harrington

Keywords: healthcare reform, political orientation, newspapers, news framing, media gatekeeping, media dependency

#### **ABSTRACT**

U.S. Newspapers Coverage of The 2009/10 Healthcare Reform Debate:

#### A Content Analysis

by

#### Dinah A. Tetteh

The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which U.S. newspapers covered the chatter surrounding the 2009/10 healthcare reform debate at the expense of the substance. Also of importance was how the political leanings of newspapers influenced the coverage they gave the issue in terms of tone and page or story prominence.

Newspaper endorsement data from *Editor & Publisher* magazine were used to determine the political leanings of U.S. newspapers based on the candidate they endorsed in the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Newspaper articles related to the topic were retrieved from the Lexis-Nexis database and analyzed.

The results showed that overall the healthcare reform debate received substantial coverage in U.S. newspapers; but the major part of the coverage was dedicated to the arguments, protests, and thoughts of people concerning the issue (90.3%) rather than the substance of the issue (9.7%). Implications of the results for media practitioners, communication scholars, and researchers were discussed.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to the following people:

To my father Emmanuel Tetteh for sacrificing so much to see me through school and to my entire family in Ghana for their prayers, love, and moral support.

Also, to Mirabela Lazar-Vasile for her friendship, love, and care during the initial stages of my study at ETSU. I love you!

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to give the greatest thanks to the Almighty God for bringing me this far. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. John King, my committee chair, for his guidance and encouragement throughout this study and my entire stay at ETSU. Special thanks also goes to Dr. Stephen Marshal and Dr. Karen Harrington for their assistance and interest in this study. I am grateful to Weize Wang, the secondary coder for this study, for her time and assistance. Also, a very big 'thank you' to my professors in the Department of Communication especially Dr. Amber Kinser and Dr. Dan Brown. It was wonderful working under you and learning from you! I am grateful to you all!

# CONTENTS

		Page
	ABSTRACT	. 2
	DEDICATION	. 3
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	. 4
	LIST OF TABLES	7
Chapt	er	
	1. INTRODUCTION	8
	2. LITERATURE REVIEW	12
	Media Coverage of Healthcare	12
	Media Gatekeeping	13
	News Framing	14
	Media Dependency Theory	16
	Political Orientation of U.S. Newspapers	18
	Research Questions and Hypotheses	19
	3. METHODOLOGY	21
	Sample Frame and Unit of Analysis	22
	Inter-Coder Reliability Analysis	26
	Statistical Analysis	27
	4. RESULTS	28

Overall Frequencies	28
Research Questions and Hypotheses	32
5. CONCLUSIONS	37
Discussion	37
Limitations and Future Research	40
REFERENCES	42
APPENDIX: Coding Instructions	50
VITA	53

# LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Frequency of Mentions by Newspapers	28
2. Frequency of Mentions by Political Leaning of Newspapers	30
3. Frequency of Mentions by Tone	30
4. Frequency of Mentions by Story Placement	31
5. Frequency of Mentions by Page Placement	31
6. Frequency of Mentions by Topic	32
7. Political Leaning of Newspapers and Coverage by Topic	33
8. Newspaper Coverage by Story Prominence	. 34
9. Newspaper Coverage by Page Prominence	35
10. Newspaper Coverage by Tone	36

#### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION

People's perception of reality, their society, and the world at large to some extent is influenced by what the mass media present as news and how they frame this using words and images (Shoemaker, 1996). The decision of what to include as news and how to present this to audiences does not come about randomly but out of careful selection processes by media practitioners including journalists and editors. These selection and decision processes are influenced by the organizational policies of media houses and the personal beliefs and convictions of the individual media practitioners. "News content is the product or consequence of those [journalistic] routines, practices, and values" (Shoemaker & Reese as cited in Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998, p.7). The process by which news organizations judge events as newsworthy and others as not is known as media gatekeeping. As the information gatekeepers of society, it is expected of the media to be circumspect in their judgment of news-worthiness, making it a point to educate and inform audiences correctly on happenings around the globe, especially those issues that directly impact the lives of their target audiences. The gatekeeping role of the media is, therefore, important because what the media select as news, and how they frame this contributes greatly to what the public considers as news and how it thinks about issues. The effectiveness of media gatekeeping is judged by how well the media are able to determine which happenings on the local, national, and international scenes are newsworthy and accordingly inform audiences on these.

Also influential in the value audiences place on news and how they think about issues of national interest is how the media frame issues. The concept of news framing includes how the words and images used by the media to describe people and events influence public perception and judgment of those issues and personalities.

Media gatekeeping and framing studies are essential in understanding the processes of news production and dissemination, the effects these have on audiences, and subsequently how they affect the voting decisions of the public. These communication concepts are even more pertinent in societies where people depend on the traditional media (such as newspapers) for information as this informs whom they hold responsible for happenings on the national scene and to where or whom they turn for answers. This situation leaves newspapers with more responsibility than ever because despite the onset of new media and the Internet, a sizeable segment of the public, especially those in the United States, still depends on newspapers for information. Research has shown that newspapers remain a major source of local news for 41% of Americans, while 39% of the same public relies on newspapers for national and international news (Pew Research Center for The People and The Press, 2009). This situation presents newspapers as an important element of the American society. This being the case, how the mass media in this society judge what is news and how they frame this is very important. Thus, newspapers in this environment, and in fact all over the world, must endeavor to be what Alabama Press Association Executive Director Felicia Mason called "citizens' eyes and ears" (Harvey, 2008, ¶4).

How newspapers frame news and events is even more crucial when it comes to informing the public on an important issue such as healthcare. In the United States healthcare is an issue of major concern to policymakers and the masses alike. This is shown in the amount of money the U.S. government commits to the health sector annually. Available data indicated that the U.S. federal government spent \$2.5 trillion in 2008 on the nation's health sector alone (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Also indicative of the importance of healthcare is the role it played in the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Voters ranked it the third most important election issue, with the majority of them saying a candidate's stance on healthcare was more important to them than his experience (Blendon et

al., 2008). Indeed, healthcare was one of the issues on which the Democrat Party and President Obama capitalized to gain power. After assuming office, the Obama administration had gone to all lengths to get legislation passed to bring reform to the United States health sector. The healthcare reform process under the Obama administration started on April 8, 2009 with the establishment of the White House Office of Health Reform to coordinate efforts on national healthcare reform; a 2010 budget which set aside \$634 billion for healthcare reform; passage of congressional bills in three House committees and two Senate committees; efforts to reconcile the two bills; the House of Representatives passing the Senate bill on March 21, 2010 and subsequently sending it to the President to append his signature on March 23, 2010 (Kaiser Family Foundation, n.d.).

Given the importance of healthcare to the American society, it is expected that the media, particularly the print media, being the information gatekeepers of society, would inform the public on the core issues surrounding the debate on national healthcare reform. This was, however, not the case. Citing research conducted by The Project for Excellence in Journalism, Masnick (2009) noted, "... only 8 percent [of news coverage of healthcare] was about substantive issues like how the system works now, what will happen if it remains unchanged, and what proposed changes will mean for ordinary people" (¶2), with the bulk of the coverage dedicated to the chatter about the issue.

In March 2010 the healthcare reform debate topped issues covered by the U.S. media according to a News Interest Index survey conducted between March 12-15, 2010 by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. But what was not clear was the extent to which newspapers covered chatter at the expense of the substance of this important national issue, and how this might have influenced public understanding of the issue. Also, did the political leanings of newspapers influence the kind of coverage they gave the issue? That gap in research is what this researcher sought to address.

The aim of this researcher was to examine U.S. newspapers' coverage of the healthcare reform debate between April 8, 2009, when the White House Office of Health Reform was set up as part of efforts to reform the American health sector, and March 21, 2010, when the House passed the Senate bill—the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The researcher sought to investigate if indeed U.S. newspapers covered the chatter surrounding the healthcare reform to the neglect of the substance, as noted by earlier studies on the issue. Also of importance was the prominence given the issue in newspapers with different political leanings; and how the political orientations of newspapers influenced coverage of the issue.

This study is different from previous ones in that data for this study were gathered from newspapers only; while a similar study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) (2010) collected data from U.S. network TV news, newspapers, online news, cable news, and radio news. Moreover, to further knowledge in this field of research, the political leanings of newspapers was used as a variable in this study—an element absent in the PEJ study—to determine how the political leanings of newspapers interfere with their gatekeeping role. The timeframe that this study covered also made it different from previous ones. Whereas the PEJ study, for instance, was done on a weekly basis, this study covered an 11-month period (April 2009 - March 2010).

It is hoped that the findings of this study will offer insights into the state of newspaper coverage of the recent healthcare reform debate to media practitioners, communication scholars, and researchers in the U.S. and elsewhere. It is also expected that this study would help throw more light on the current nature of the gatekeeping role of newspapers and how their political leanings can influence this role.

#### CHAPTER 2

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

## Media Coverage of Healthcare

Research indicated that news media coverage of healthcare and related issues has been skewed towards factors other than the substantive issue. Newspapers tend to report on factors that shift the public's attention from the core issues of healthcare, thus negatively influencing public opinion on issues concerning healthcare. Leper, Walsh-Childers, and Chance (2003) found that newspaper coverage of managed care fell short of informing the public and policymakers about the intricacies of the managed care sector. The reports presented managed care organizations in a negative light, thus distorting public perception of the sector. Also, research conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2008) revealed that between January 2007 and June 2008 news about health and healthcare constituted less than 4% of all news content in U.S. media. The study also found that despite debates about the health sector going on at the time of the 2008 presidential primaries, less than 1% of media coverage of the primary campaign was about healthcare. Moreover, Alexander (2009) reported that in the heat of the 2009/10 healthcare reform debate, readers of the Washington Post newspaper had complained to editors of the paper about the need for coverage of the healthcare reform to be about the substance and not what he-said-she-said. But editors of the paper defended the trend of coverage of the debate, explaining that they were trying to create a balance in serving their diverse audience.

While some studies have indicated that media coverage of the healthcare reform debate had increased since August 2009, leading to increased public interest in the issue, those same studies reported that the

majority of Americans faulted the media for doing a poor job in explaining the details of the healthcare reform proposal—that is, how it would affect ordinary citizens (Dionne, 2009; Pew Research Center, 2010).

## Media Gatekeeping

Shoemaker (1996) defined media gatekeeping as "the process by which countless messages are reduced to the few messages we are offered in our daily newspapers and television news programs" (p. 79). The concept of gatekeeping involves numerous decision processes beginning from what to cover as news, how to write or present the news, and how to disseminate it to the public. In the same way that there are gates to houses that control what or who comes in and goes out, so are there *gates* in news production and dissemination. At each stage or gate of the news production process, decisions are made by practitioners in that organization that in the long run determine which issues or events are presented to the public as news and which ones are eliminated.

The term *gatekeeping* was first coined by Kurt Lewin mainly to describe how decisions at various levels and by different people bring about change in a community (Shoemaker, 1996). Later studies on the concept focused on how *gatekeepers* in the media (journalists, editors, policies of the media organization, etc) influence what gets to audiences as news. The basic idea of media gatekeeping is selection—the idea that due to the numerous happenings crying for public attention but limited media space, media practitioners select some events over others to present as news. According to Shoemaker and Reese (as cited in Shoemaker, 1996) media gatekeeping can be studied on five levels: individual, routines of communication work, organizational, social and institutional, and societal. Gatekeeping studies at the individual level look at how the characteristics or personal choices of journalists, editors, etc. influence what passes as news and what does not. On the routine of work level, the house-style of

media organizations influences what is selected as news or what event is considered newsworthy. The organizational level of the analysis looks at how the "the gatekeeper's position within the [media] organization" (Shoemaker, 1996, p. 83) and the power that comes with that position affect news selection decisions he or she makes. On the social and institutional level, studies look at how *extramedia* factors such as audiences and advertisers, among others, influence what passes as news and what does not. Lastly, the societal level looks at how the society in which the media is located affects what is covered as news mainly because of what audiences in that locality consider as news. These factors or levels influence what is selected as news and what is not, and how news is presented (framed).

While the current study is not so much concerned with the process of gatekeeping within news organizations, the concept of gatekeeping is worth looking at as it helps in understanding the fact that the processes media organizations go through in selection of news is not random. The concept also helps in understanding why various media houses present the same issue from different angles using different framing mechanisms including "photographs, quotes, headlines, and subheads" (Yang, 2008, p. 81). This is due to "extramedia influences" (Shoemaker, 1996, p. 83) such as audiences and advertisers, government, and interest groups that affect the gatekeeping process. This is why, for instance, media houses with liberal political leanings present certain national issues differently from those with conservative backgrounds. Moreover, "the way in which stories are shaped, timed, and presented is also part of the gatekeeping process" (Shoemaker, 1996, p. 90). Thus, there is a connection between media gatekeeping and news framing.

## News Framing

The framing theory of mass communication is one of the theories on which this study was based.

Basically, framing theory holds that how an idea, issue, or personality is presented (framed) in the media

influences how people think about the same issue. The words and images the media use to describe issues and policies influence how audiences interpret these issues and to whom they assign responsibility (Iyengar, 1991; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2009). Scheufele and Tewksbury (2009) expanded the theory further by stating that "frames invite people to *think* [italics added] about an issue in a particular way" (p. 19); indicating that media frames are powerful tools in communication. Price, Tewksbury, and Powers (1997) also argued that how events are framed in the mass media can affect how the public comes to understand and think of those events.

Two forms of frames have been identified in news framing studies; episodic or individual frames and thematic or media frames (Iyengar, 1991). Iyengar (1991) noted that episodic frames describe public issues and events in concrete terms using specific instances. For instance, bringing poor people into the news in an attempt to inform the public about poverty; or covering the bombing of an aircraft in order to highlight the activities of terrorists. By using concrete instances in news coverage, episodic frames aim to draw an idea home by painting a good picture of the issue in the minds of viewers or readers. On the other hand, thematic frames present a public issue or event in a more general way by using abstract instances and happenings; for instance, citing the national rate of poverty to highlight the issue of poverty. The main difference between the two forms of news frames is, "episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate, while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence" (Iyengar, 1991, p. 14). Yang (2008) also noted that "media frames are more likely to be analyzed from a content analysis approach, but individual frames are frequently explored from a media effect approach" (p. 81). Despite the differences between these two forms of frames, it must be emphasized that very few news stories are exclusively thematic or episodic. Most times both types of frames are mixed in news reports; however, newspaper reports contain a greater amount of thematic frames, "given their practices of

publishing more in-depth analyses (e.g., editorials, op-ed pieces, columns)" (Collins, Abelson, Pyman, & Lavis, 2006, p. 91).

Tuchman (1978) observed, "the news media set the frame in which [readers or viewers] discuss public events" (p. ix); indicating the importance of news frames as these can influence how audiences interpret issues of national interest. As the media employ certain images and words to highlight some aspects of issues over others, they direct public attention away from other aspects of the issue and influence how the public think about the issue. Also, as previous studies have established, the explanation the news media give issues set the context in which the public understands and debates the same issues (Halloram, Elliot, & Murdock as cited in Tuchman, 1978). Thus, reporting about protests and arguments on the healthcare reform bill to the neglect of definitions, explanations, and evaluations of the issue, U.S. newspapers might have directed public attention away from the substance of the healthcare reform bill, which might invariably have affected how the public interpreted the healthcare reform proposal and the importance they attached to such a significant national issue. "The news media have the power to shape news consumers' opinions on topics about which they are ignorant," noted Tuchman (1978, p. 2). Tuchman (1978) explained that public perception of society and the world at large is not shaped by news reports alone but also by mass entertainment, TV, among others. It is therefore important to study how people's dependence on the media influences their perception and behavior towards issues of national interest, such as healthcare reform.

## Media Dependency Theory

The media dependency theory was originally proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. This theory holds that the more people depend on the media for information, the more they see the media as important to their lives. The effects of media messages on audiences depend on audiences'

social realities and the degree to which audiences depend on the media for information. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) explained ways in which people are dependent on the media for satisfaction of their information needs including the need to understand one's world and the need to act meaningfully and effectively in that world (p.4). The theory proposes a "tripartite" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) relationship among audiences, mass media, and society; where people and society depend on the media to meet certain needs and the media in turn depend "on both the audience and social systems for resources related to programming content and revenues" (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1998, ¶10). The greater the need of audiences, the greater the likelihood of their dependence on media for information to satisfy those needs and subsequently the greater the effect the media will have on how they think, feel, and behave. The information needs of people and their dependence on media to get these needs met are greatest when "a relatively high degree of change and conflict is present in a society" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 7). The University of Twente (n.d.) explained this situation further by noting that audiences' dependency on media is influenced by social stability, which can increase or decrease dependence. "When social change and conflict are high, established institutions, beliefs, and practices are challenged, forcing [audiences] to reevaluate and make new choices. At such times [audiences'] reliance on the media for information will increase" (¶2). Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) stated that mass media can influence cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in people because of the role the media play in society. They noted that the mass media can either create or resolve confusion in the public sphere when there is inadequate or conflicting information about events and policies of national interest—what they termed ambiguity. Ambiguity occurs when there is incomplete information about events and national policies; this ambiguity can be resolved by the media's continuous information and education on the events/policies. Even though the media cannot control the opinions people form about issues and events, "by controlling what information is and is not delivered and how that information is

presented, the media can play a large role in limiting the range of interpretations that audiences are able make" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p.10). Thus, the mass media have the power to influence how the messages they send out affect public perception about and behavior towards issues of national concern such as healthcare reform.

Relating the media dependency theory to the 2009/10 U.S. healthcare reform debate, it can be argued that the U.S. public would depend more on the media systems in the country (particularly newspapers) for information during the time of the healthcare debate because the bill proposed making some changes that could challenge existing beliefs and practices in the health sector. Incomplete and sometimes scanty information on the issue in the media created *ambiguity* among the U.S. public who knew there were some proposed changes in the healthcare industry but did not know exactly what those changes were and how they might impact the healthcare services they were receiving. Therefore, as indicated earlier, citizens' reliance on the media during that time would increase as they seek more information to resolve the ambiguity, subsequently leading to an increase in the effect media presentation of the issue would have on them

## Political Orientation of U.S. Newspapers

Debate has been going on for some time now about how to determine the political orientation of newspapers. The debate notwithstanding, studies have shown that it is possible to establish the political leanings of newspapers by the endorsements they give in an election. These endorsements are conscious acts of the editors or publishers; so to some extent, they reveal the political orientations of the newspapers involved (Ansolabehere, Lessem, & Snyder, 2004; Kahn & Kenny, 2002). It has been documented that newspaper endorsements can in fact influence voting behavior because "voters generally regard newspapers as credible sources of information" (Erikson, 1976, p. 208). Thus it is in

the literature that endorsement decisions can be used to determine the political ideology of a newspaper (see Coombs as cited in Dalton, Beck, & Huckfeldt, 1998; Erikson, 1976; Robinson, 1972).

In the run-up to the 2008 U.S. presidential election, major media outlets across the nation endorsed one candidate or the other, while others did not endorse any candidate at all out of a matter of policy. The editorial pages of some newspapers can be conservative while their news pages are liberal (Sullivan, 2005), thus not giving a clear indication of their political leaning. However, research has shown that news stories and editorials tend to favor the candidates various media outlets have come out to openly endorse in an election (Ansolabehere et al., 2004; Kahn & Kenny, 2002).

The review of literature relevant to the present study has led to formulation of the following research questions and hypotheses.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: Will the overall newspaper coverage of the healthcare reform debate focus more frequently on the chatter (arguments and protests) than the substance?

H1: The overall newspaper coverage of the healthcare reform debate will focus more frequently on the chatter (arguments and protests) than the substance.

RQ2: Will liberal newspapers report more frequently on the substance of the healthcare reform than conservative and independent newspapers?

H2: Liberal newspapers will report more frequently on the substance of the healthcare reform than conservative and independent newspapers.

- RQ3: Will mentions of healthcare reform receive more story-prominence in liberal newspapers than in conservative and independent newspapers?
- H3: Mentions of healthcare reform will be given more story-prominence in liberal newspapers than in conservative and independent newspapers.
- RQ4: Will mentions of healthcare reform receive more page-prominence in liberal newspapers than in conservative and independent newspapers?
- H4: Mentions of healthcare reform will be given more page-prominence in liberal newspapers than in conservative and independent newspapers.
- RQ5: Will conservative newspapers associate the healthcare reform with the Democratic party/President Obama more frequently than liberal and independent newspapers?
- H5: Conservative newspapers will associate healthcare reform with the Democratic party/ President Obama more frequently than liberal and independent newspapers.

#### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which U.S. newspapers covered the chatter surrounding the healthcare reform debate at the expense of the substance, and how the political leanings of newspapers influenced the tone and prominence they gave the issue. To determine this the content of newspaper articles related to the issue published within the period under discussion was analyzed.

Content analysis is a research methodology used widely in the social sciences discipline including mass communication. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998) defined the technique as "the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values . . . and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods . . ." (p. 20). Neuendorf (2002) defined it as ". . . the quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method . . . and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented" (p.10). Also, Kassarjian (1977) defined content analysis as "a scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative and generalizable description of communication content" (p. 10). For any study to be considered a content analysis, it must be objective (replicable or reliable), systematic (that is, findings must be generalizable and theoretically relevant), and quantitative. These characteristics give "scientific standing to content analysis and differentiates it from literary criticism" (Kassarjian, 1977, p. 9).

Previous studies used the method to measure media effects on various levels. For instance, Collins et al. (2006) used content analysis to determine how Canadian newspapers' presentation of the 2002 Canadian healthcare reform debate performed one of the following: informed the public on the issue, set

the public agenda, persuaded the public, and the framing effects coverage of the issue had. Druckman and Parkin (2005) combined content analysis with Election Day exit poll to determine the effect newspaper editorial slant had on voters. Leper, Walsh-Childers, and Chance (2003) content analyzed articles published in U.S. newspapers in the year 1996 to determine how the news media framed issues related to the U.S. healthcare system such as organization, delivery, and financing. King (2008) used content analysis in a study that looked at how the nation Qatar was framed in newspapers in the West (North America, Europe, Australia/New Zealand, and Israel) and East (Asia, the Middle East, and Africa) between 2006 and 2007. Thus, content analysis has been, and can be, used to study healthcare, health-related issues, and other communications problems.

#### Sample Frame And Unit of Analysis

The sampling period for the present study was between April 8, 2009, when the White House Office of Health Reform was set up as part of efforts to reform the American health sector, and March 21, 2010, when the House passed the Senate bill—the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. News stories related to the topic under discussion were drawn from the Lexis-Nexis database over the 11-month period using the unit of analysis "healthcare bill/health care bill/health bill/healthcare debate/health care debate/healthcare reform/health care reform/health reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform bill" as the search terms. The Lexis-Nexis database has been described by Neuendorf (2002) as the "most comprehensive and well-constructed message archive on earth" (p. 219). The database has been used by several researchers for media content analyses since its establishment in the 1960s as a legal database (Lexis) and the later addition of news sources (Nexis). The database was originally not created for content analysis purposes, but it became a useful research resource due to "its extensive and systematic database storage, search, and download capabilities" (Neuendorf, 2002, p.

220). Ansolabehere et al. (2004) used the Lexis-Nexis database in addition to newspaper websites and microfilms to document the political orientation of newspapers as reflected by their endorsements of candidates between 1940 and 2002. King (2008) also used the database to gather data on newspaper mentions of Qatar in an analysis of how the nation was framed in major world newspapers between 2006 and 2007 inclusive. These, among other factors, show that the database is a reliable online news source.

For this study also the Lexis-Nexis database was used to gather data. The unit of analysis was each mention of "healthcare bill/health care bill/health bill/healthcare debate/ health care debate/healthcare reform/ health care reform/health reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform bill". The *News* and *Newspapers & Wires* sections of the database were selected sequentially. The unit of analysis was used as the search terms and entered under the *US Newspapers & Wires* section of the *Newspapers and Wires* menu between the timeframe April 8, 2009, and March 21, 2010. This yielded a total of 294 articles under the *Newspapers* column. All the articles were coded, generating a total of 2,894 mentions of the unit of analysis. Mentions of the unit of analysis that were not related to the 2009/10 healthcare reform were eliminated. Also, because the aim of this study was to examine how the political leanings of U.S. newspapers influenced the kind of coverage they gave the healthcare reform, letters to the editor and opinion pieces were not coded. This was because the political leanings of newspapers could be determined by the party or candidate they endorsed, but the political affiliations of the individuals who wrote the letters to the editor and opinion pieces could not be accurately predicted. However, mentions of "healthcare" and "bill" that referred to the 2009/10 healthcare reform were coded.

The articles were coded according to the following independent variables: date, name of newspaper, and liberal or conservative leaning of newspaper; while the dependent variables were the tone, page,

story, and topic. The tone variable identified whether the tone toward the unit of analysis was political (that is, associating it with the Democratic Party or President Obama) or nonpolitical. For example, expressions such as "President Barack Obama's healthcare legislation" (Hill, 3/18/2010), "Democratic healthcare reform" (Hill, 6/17/2009), and "Obama's healthcare plan" (Christian Science Monitor, 2/22/2010) were coded as political in tone. The *story* variable measured where the unit of analysis was mentioned in the story: whether in the headline, in the body, lead, or whether it was paired with graph, chart, photo, or a table. The *page* variable indicated the page of the newspaper where the mention was found—whether on the front page, section front, or inside page. The topic variable described whether the mention discussed the chatter (arguments, protests, opinions) surrounding the issue or if it explained the substance of the issue (including the background of healthcare reform in the U.S.). For example, statements such as "Karen Ignagni said . . . specific provisions in the Senate bill would increase healthcare costs, reduce coverage options, and disrupt current insurance arrangements" (Christian Science Monitor, 12/24/2009); "Korzen suggests that healthcare reform could actually cut the number of abortions" (Christian Science Monitor, 12/11/2009); "... these salvos signal that congressional Democrats are not fully united behind their leaders' approach to healthcare reform" (Hill, 5/13/2009); "and polls have shown senior citizens to be the hardest segment of society to win over on healthcare reform" (Hill, 11/6/2009) were coded as chatter because they did not explain the core substance of the healthcare reform. However, expressions such as "The reform bill . . . extends coverage to younger people under their parents' plan up to age 26. It expands the federal-state Medicaid program, with the federal government paying all the costs for the newly eligible through 2017" (Miami Herald, 3/18/2010); and "The Finance Committee health reform bill would increase doctors' payments by 0.5 percent in 2010 at a cost of \$10 billion, but it would leave doctors facing a 25 percent cut in 2011" (Hill, 10/20/1009) were coded as substance because they sought to explain what was entailed in the healthcare

reform and how it might impact the lives of citizens. In all, nine variables including story ID and coder were coded.

The political leanings of newspapers were determined by the political party or candidate newspapers endorsed in the 2008 U.S. presidential election. *Editor & Publisher* (E&P) magazine, which does a yearly compilation of all endorsements, was used as the dataset. Endorsement information that could not be obtained from E&P was searched from the websites of individual newspapers. However, it could not be determined who *The Hill* newspaper endorsed; and several emails to editors of the newspaper regarding that were not answered. The researcher, therefore, concluded that the newspaper did not endorse any candidate based on the information the newspaper provided on its website about its policies: "In an environment filled with political agendas, *The Hill* stands alone in delivering solid, non-partisan and objective reporting on the business of Washington, covering the inner-workings of Congress . . ."

(*The Hill*, n.d.).

The method used in this study to determine the political leanings of newspapers is similar to what Ansolabehere et al. (2004) used in their study on political orientations of newspapers. They affirmed the credibility of the *Editor & Publisher* magazine as a good source of newspaper endorsements when they wrote: "*Editor and Publisher* tabulate the number of papers endorsing Democratic and Republican presidential candidates each year" (p. 11). Also, Gentzkow & Shapiro (2009) used information from the 2000 *Editor & Publisher* International Yearbook to verify data they had collected in their study on media slant. Moreover, Erikson (1976) got data about newspaper endorsements in the 1960 and 1964 presidential elections from the *E&P* magazine, among other sources, in his study on the influence newspaper endorsements have on voting behavior in presidential elections.

#### **Inter-Coder Reliability Analysis**

Two trained coders, including the primary researcher, coded the stories after a detailed training session and series of trials. The topic under discussion was used for a semester project and the coders who coded the data for that project were the same as those who coded data for this study. As such, both coders had an understanding of the variables in the study and what to look for when coding. That notwithstanding, a training session was organized again to ensure that the coders were on the same page with regard to the variables in the study. During the training session each coder coded several stories independently using the coding scheme (see Appendix). They analyzed the sentences and phrases within which the unit of analysis was found to determine the tone and topic of the mention. In cases where more than one mention of the unit of analysis was found in a sentence, each mention was coded using the nearest words preceding or succeeding it or by the general meaning of the phrase, sentence, or paragraph. During the training session, the coders had 100% level of agreement on all the variables except the tone and topic variables on which they had 80% and 70% respectively during the first trial coding; 80% for both variables during the second trial coding; and 90% for the two variables during the third trial coding. The coders had a last trial coding during which they each coded 32 mentions of the unit of analysis and agreed on 27 of these for all the variables. To measure the inter-coder reliability, these numbers were plugged into Holsti's (1969) formula: 2M/N1+N2, where M is the number of coding decisions which the two judges agree on; N1 represents the coding decisions by coder 1; and N2, the decisions by coder 2. Thus, 2(27)/32+32; this yielded .84 as the agreement coefficient. Neuendorf (2002) explained the range for the statistic of Holsti's (1969) formula as being "from .00 (no agreement) to 1.00 (perfect agreement)" (p. 149). Because a significant level of reliability was achieved during the training session, the coders proceeded to code for the main study. With 2,894 mentions of the unit of analysis in the sample, the significance level for the study was set at .01.

#### **Statistical Analysis**

The coded data were entered into the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software for analysis. The software was used to calculate the frequency distributions of all the variables and crosstabulations of the dependent and independent variables. Chi-square analyses were used to test the hypotheses and the significance level of the study. Collins et al. (2006) used the SPSS software to analyze coded news articles in their study on how newspapers covered the 2002 Canadian healthcare reform debate. Neuendorf (2002) also affirmed the credibility of the software for statistical analyses.

#### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **RESULTS**

## **Overall Frequencies**

The frequency for each variable was calculated and presented in tables below. As indicated in Table 1, the *Hill* newspaper alone had half of the total mentions of the unit of analysis (50.1%); *Christian Science Monitor* followed with 16.7% of the mentions, and *Miami Herald* at 9.8%. The least mentions of the unit of analysis (0.2%) were found in the *Union Leader*, *Contra Costa Times* (California), and *Pasadena Star-News* (Wilmington).

Table 1

Frequency of Mentions by Newspapers

Name of Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage
Hill	1,451	50.1
Christian Science Monitor	482	16.7
Miami Herald	284	9.8
Fort Worth Star-Telegram	183	6.3
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (Little Rock)	84	2.9
Austin American-Statesman (Texas)	44	1.5
San Bernardino County Sun (Cal.)	40	1.4
San Bernardino County Sun (Cal.)	40	1.4
San Jose Mercury News	33	1.1
San Antonio Express-News	22	0.8

Table 1 (Continued)

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)	24	0.8
East Bay Express	19	0.7
Olympian (Olympia, Washington)	20	0.7
Patriot-News	21	0.7
Bradenton Herald (Florida)	18	0.6
Star-News (Wilmington)	16	0.6
Sun	18	0.6
Bakersfield Californian	15	0.5
Mobile Register	14	0.5
Lexington Herald Leader (Ken.)	13	0.4
Marin Independent Journal (California)	12	0.4
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	11	0.4
Times-Union	12	0.4
Albuquerque Journal (New Mexico)	11	0.4
Huntsville Times (Alabama)	9	0.3
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	10	0.3
Roanoke Times (VA)	8	0.3
Contra Costa Times (California)	7	0.2
Pasadena Star-News (Wilmington)	6	0.2
Union Leader	6	0.2

Note: N=2,894

The majority of mentions of healthcare reform was in independent newspapers or newspapers that did not endorse in the 2008 presidential election (67.7%), followed by liberal newspapers (25.9%), and conservative newspapers (6.5%). This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency of Mentions by Political Leaning of Newspapers

<b>Political Leaning of Newspaper</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Independent	1,958	67.7
Liberal	749	25.9
Conservative	187	6.5

Note: N=2,894

Regarding the tone toward healthcare reform, the results showed that the overall tone was nonpolitical (95%), with only 5% of mentions portraying healthcare reform as a political issue. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of Mentions by Tone

Tone	Frequency	Percentage
Nonpolitical	2,748	95.0
Political	146	5.0

Note: N=2,894

The prominence given the issue was determined by the place in the story where the mention was located. Headline is the most prominent position, followed by the lead of the story, paired with graph or chart, and then the body of the story. The results of this study showed that the majority of mentions of

healthcare reform was in the body of the story (79.4%), followed by the lead (14.2%), and then the headline (6.1%). Table 4 illustrates this.

Table 4

Frequency of Mentions by Story Placement

<b>Story Placement</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Body	2,299	79.4
Lead	411	14.2
Headline	177	6.1
Graphic or Photo	7	0.2

Note: N=2,894

The *page* variable was designed to measure the page of the newspaper on which the mention was found. The results showed that most of the mentions were in the inside pages (63.2%); but a significant number also appeared on front pages (32.3%) and section fronts (3.5%). This is quite interesting because it is not common to find such large percentages of mentions on prominent pages of newspapers. This result is depicted in Table 5.

Table 5
Frequency of Mentions by Page Placement

Page	Frequency	Percentage
Inside	1,829	63.2
Front Page	936	32.3
Section Front	100	3.5

Note: N=2,894

The *topic* variable measured whether the healthcare reform mention was about the substance of the reform—for instance, what the reform entailed and how the law would affect the ordinary citizen—or whether the mention was about the protests and arguments surrounding the issue. As indicated in Table 6, the results of this study showed that the greater part of newspaper mentions of healthcare reform talked about the chatter (90.3%), with only 9.7% of the mentions discussing the substance of the issue.

Table 6

Frequency of Mentions by Topic

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Chatter	2,613	90.3
Substance	281	9.7

Note: N= 2,894

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Chi-square analyses were used to test the hypotheses; the results are presented in tables below. The data on story placement were collapsed to improve the accuracy of the statistics due to low frequency in some cells. Data on whether the mentions were paired with graph, chart, or photo were combined with data on whether the mention was found in the lead of the story, creating a new variable named *graphic* or lead.

The first analysis was designed to test the first hypothesis that the overall coverage given the issue would focus more on the chatter than the substance of healthcare reform.

H1: The overall newspaper coverage of the healthcare reform debate will focus more frequently on the chatter (arguments and protests) than the substance.

As demonstrated in Table 6 above, this hypothesis was supported. A total of 2,613 mentions, representing 90.3%, were about the chatter surrounding the issue, while only 281 mentions, representing 9.7%, were dedicated to explaining the substance of the healthcare reform.

H2: Liberal newspapers will report more frequently on the substance of the healthcare reform than conservative and independent newspapers.

The result for this hypothesis is shown in Table 7. Liberal newspapers reported on the substance of the healthcare reform debate the most, dedicating 11.7% of their total coverage to the substance. This was followed by independent newspapers (9.1%) and conservative newspapers (8%). However, all three categories of newspapers reported more on the chatter than the substance of the issue. Independent newspapers had 1,780 mentions of healthcare reform, representing 90.9%, dedicated to the chatter; conservative newspapers had 172 mentions (92%), and liberal newspapers had 661 mentions (88.3%) discussing the chatter. The result is, however, not statistically significant, meaning that the outcome could have been due to chance.

Table 7

Political Leaning of Newspapers and Coverage by Topic

<b>Type of Newspaper</b>	Substance	Chatter
Liberal	88 (11.7%)	661 (88.3%)
Independent	178 (9.1%)	1,780 (90.9%)
Conservative	15 (8%)	172 (92%)

Note: N=2,894; chi-square=5.01; df=2; p= n.s.

H3: Mentions of healthcare reform will be given more story-prominence in liberal newspapers than in conservative and independent newspapers.

This hypothesis was supported. Story prominence measured whether the mention appeared in the body of the story, headline, or lead or paired with graph, photo, or table. As shown in Table 8, liberal newspapers had 6.4% of the total mentions in the headline; followed by independent newspapers at 6.0%, and conservative newspapers with 5.9%. In terms of placement of the issue in the lead or accompanying it with graphic or photo, independent newspapers had the highest record of 17.1%. Liberal newspapers followed at 9.25%, and conservative newspapers at 7.5%. However, all three categories of newspapers had the bulk of the mentions in the body of stories—conservative newspapers (86.6%), liberal newspapers (84.4%), and independent newspapers (76.95%). However, looking at just liberal and conservative newspapers and the prominence they gave the issue in terms of story placement, liberal newspapers had 6.4% of the mentions in the headlines and 9.2% in the lead or paired with graphic or photo; while conservative newspapers had 5.9% in the headlines and 7.5% in the lead or paired with graphic/photo.

Table 8

Newspaper Coverage by Story Prominence

Newspaper	Body	Headline	Graphic or Lead
Liberal	632 (84.4%)	48 (6.4%)	69 (9.2%)
Independent	1,506 (76.9%)	117 (6.0%)	335 (17.1%)
Conservative	162 (86.6%)	11 (5.9%)	14 (7.5%)

Note: N=2,894; chi-square=35.35; df=4; p<.01

H4: Mentions of healthcare reform will be given more page-prominence in liberal newspapers than in conservative and independent newspapers.

This hypothesis was not supported. Page prominence measured whether the mention appeared on the inside page of the newspaper, section front, or front page. The front page is considered the most prominent page, while the inside page is the least prominent page. Independent newspapers gave more prominence to the issue on the front page than did liberal or conservative newspapers. For independent newspapers, 42.1% of the mentions was on the front page, with only 25.1% and 9.7% on the front pages of conservative and liberal newspapers, respectively. Liberal newspapers had 13.4% of the mentions on section fronts; while independent and conservative newspapers did not mention the issue at all on the section fronts. The large chunk of the mentions appeared in the inside pages of all newspapers: liberal newspapers had 76.9%, conservative newspapers had 74.9%, and independent newspapers had 57.9%. This is indicated in Table 9.

Table 9

Newspaper Coverage by Page Prominence

Newspaper	Inside Page	Section Front	Front page
Independent	1,133 (57.9%)	0 (0.0%)	825 (42.1%)
Conservative	140 (74.9%)	0 (0.0%)	47 (25.1)
Liberal	576 (76.9%)	100 (13.4%)	73 (9.7%)

Note: N=2,894; chi-square=498.38; df=4; p<.01

H5: Conservative newspapers will associate healthcare reform with the Democratic party/ President Obama more frequently than liberal and independent newspapers.

This hypothesis was not supported. A mention was measured as political in tone if it sought to associate healthcare reform with the Democrat Party or President Obama; on the other hand, it was

measured as nonpolitical if it did not associate the issue with any political party. For instance, mentions such as "Democratic healthcare reform" (*Hill*, 6/17/2009), and "Obama's healthcare plan" (*Christian Science Monitor*, 2/22/2010) were coded as political in tone. As demonstrated in Table 10, independent newspapers gave the issue a more political tone (6.2%) than did liberal newspapers (3.1%) or conservative newspapers (1.1%). Moreover, conservative newspapers gave the issue a more nonpolitical tone (98.9%) than did liberal (96.9%), or independent newspapers (93.8%).

Table 10

Newspaper Coverage by Tone

Newspaper	Political	Nonpolitical
Independent	121 (6.2%)	1,837 (93.8%)
Liberal	23 (3.1%)	726 (96.9%)
Conservative	2 (1.1%)	185 (98.9%)

Note: N=2,894; chi-square=17.52; df=2; p<.01

#### CHAPTER 5

### **CONCLUSIONS**

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which U.S. newspapers covered the chatter surrounding the healthcare reform debate at the expense of the substance. Also of interest to the researcher was how the political leanings of newspapers (measured by the endorsements they made in the 2008 presidential election) influenced the prominence they gave the issue and the tone towards the issue. The timeframe was between April 8, 2009, when the White House Office of Health Reform was set up, and March 21, 2010, when the House passed the Senate bill—the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It was predicted that newspapers would give the greater part of coverage to the chatter than the substance of the healthcare reform; that liberal-leaning newspapers would give the issue more page and story prominence, using a less political tone; and that conservative newspapers would give the issue a more political tone and less page and story prominence. As previous studies have indicated, the results of this study showed that overall, the healthcare reform debate received substantial coverage in U.S. newspapers; but the major part of the coverage was dedicated to the arguments and protests surrounding the issue (90.3%) rather than the substance (9.7%). Moreover, the overall tone toward the issue was nonpolitical: total newspaper mentions that associated the healthcare reform with the Democrat Party or President Obama (5%) was less than those mentions that did not associate the issue with a political party (90%). Furthermore, findings of this study showed that though a large percentage of coverage of the issue was on the inside pages of newspapers (63.2%), a sizeable percentage of mentions also appeared on the front pages of newspapers (32.2%).

Results of the present study indicated that the political leanings of newspapers do not influence the tone and prominence given the issue in any significant way. In fact, more than half of the total mentions were in the inside pages of all categories of newspapers; although independent newspapers gave the issue the most page-prominence—42.2% of mentions were on the front pages. This was followed by conservative newspapers which had 25.1% of mentions on the front pages, and liberal newspapers with 9.7% of mentions on the front pages. This finding supported the literature that newspapers try to separate their opinions (including political leanings) from news reports; they try to be neutral in coverage of issues (Sullivan, 2005).

These findings show that even though U.S. newspapers did a good job by devoting enough time and space to the healthcare reform debate, the coverage did little in explaining to citizens what the bill entailed or how the bill might impact the quality and cost of healthcare services citizens were receiving. Rather, newspaper coverage of the healthcare reform focused on protests and arguments surrounding the issue. This supported earlier research findings on the issue (Dionne, 2009; The News Interest Index, 2010). This situation might help in understanding why there was confusion among sections of the U.S. public about the healthcare reform bill, in line with the news framing theory—the words and images the mass media used to describe the healthcare reform influenced how the public came to think about the issue. The bill was complex and the public relied on the mass media for explanation and information on this important national issue. But as the mass media, particularly newspapers, reported more on the chatter and less on the substance, the public was left hungry for information—a situation that created a vacuum later to be filled by speculations and misinformation. As explained by the media dependency theory, the ambiguity created in the public sphere by incomplete media information on the issue could have been resolved by consistent, complete information by the media. But as the results of this study have shown, the media reported on the protests and arguments surrounding the healthcare reform,

thereby further deepening the feeling of ambiguity the public had about the issue. On the other hand, coverage of the chatter at the expense of the substance could be attributed to the notion that hard facts do not sell as news. Audiences want their news sources to entertain them while informing them about national issues and policies (Mullainathan & Shleifer, 2003). "To meet this demand, media outlets do not provide unadulterated information, but tell stories that hang together and have a message" (Mullainathan & Shleifer, 2003, p.1032). Therefore, in a competitive media environment, U.S. newspapers needed to sell news while informing audiences—this meant presenting the facts in ways that both entertained and educated audiences.

Also, the result of this study that the tone toward healthcare reform in liberal newspapers was more political (3.1%) than the tone toward the issue in conservative newspapers (1.1%) revealed an interesting fact about the political orientations of newspapers and how they cover issues noted as belonging to a particular political party. One explanation for this trend could be that liberal newspapers sought to give credit to the Democratic Party and its leaders for the healthcare reform bill, which was why they associated the party with the majority of mentions of the issue. However, there is currently no theoretical backing for this line of reasoning. Further research is, therefore, needed to explain whether this is the case.

One major implication of the present study is that the results would help media practitioners, researchers, and communications scholars in developing strategies to help the mass media better serve society. This study sheds light on the role newspapers are playing in informing the public about issues and policies of national interest. While newspapers are doing well in reporting on issues of national interest such as healthcare reform, more work still needs to be done in explaining the basics of such a reform to citizens, in order for newspapers to be considered as effectively playing their role as gatekeepers of society. For editors and journalists, findings of this study could remind them of their

core duty to the public: to educate and inform. So, while it is important to present news that sells in order to make money, that should be seen as secondary.

### Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study is the fact that data was collected from just one genre of U.S. media newspapers. The results might not be the same if data were collected from newspapers, television, and radio. Moreover, the unit of analysis, "healthcare bill/health care bill/health bill/healthcare debate/ health care debate/healthcare reform/ health care reform/health reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform bill," was seen to have posed a limitation to this study. It was noted during the data coding process that various newspapers used different terms to describe the issue, other than the terms used in this study. Therefore, the search terms probably did not pull up all stories related to the issue. Another limitation to this study was the method used to determine the political orientations of U.S. newspapers. Most newspapers are not consistent in their endorsements: some newspapers that endorsed, for instance, the Republican candidate in previous elections did not endorse that party's candidate in the 2008 elections. For instance, San Bernardino Sun, Austin American-Statesman, Pasadena Star-News, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, and Fort Worth Star-Telegram newspapers endorsed George Bush (the Republican candidate) in the 2004 presidential election but endorsed Barack Obama (the Democrat candidate) in the 2008 election. Also, Bradenton Herald, which endorsed John Kerry (Democrat) in 2004, endorsed John McCain (Republican) in 2008. Thus, the political candidate a newspaper endorses in an election may not consistently reflect the political leaning of the newspaper. Future studies could use other means of judging the political orientation of newspapers, so as to better determine how that influences the gatekeeping role of newspapers.

Another limitation to this study was the use of Lexis-Nexis database to gather data. All newspapers in the U.S. do not have their contents indexed by Lexis-Nexis; this means that news articles related to the issue under discussion that appeared in those newspapers could not be reached for analysis. Future research could probably supplement data from Lexis-Nexis with those from other recognized databases to ensure the inclusion of more newspapers. The results of this study could be used as the basis for future research to establish if public reliance on the U.S. media for more information on the healthcare reform bill—to resolve the ambiguity created about the issue due to incomplete information (in accordance with media dependency theory)— and the fact that the U.S. media reported more on the chatter than the substance, influenced the misconceptions and confusion about the reform bill. This is to determine if failure of U.S. newspapers to report on the substance of the healthcare reform bill and how they framed the issue influenced how the public felt and thought about the issue.

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6502%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%28vo%2CNone%2C2%2925%24&sgHitCountType=None&inPS =true&sort=DateDescend&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&s earchId=R1&currentPosition=1&userGroupName=tel\_a\_etsul&docId=A20608418&docType=I AC

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http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Media,%20Culture%20and%2 0Society/Dependency%20Theory-1.doc/ **APPENDIX** 

**Coding Instructions** 

Date: Between April 8, 2009 and March 21, 2010

Unit of Analysis: healthcare bill/health care bill/health bill/healthcare debate/ health care

debate/healthcare reform/ health care reform/health reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform

bill

Instructions

Examine each mention of "healthcare bill/health care bill/health bill/healthcare debate/ health care

debate/healthcare reform/ health care reform/health reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform

bill" when coding. Consider the sentence in which the mention is located to determine the **Tone** of the

mention; the **Topic**, and whether the mention explains what the health care reform is about or whether it

reports protests and arguments about health care; and whether the mention associates health care with

the Democratic party/Obama or not.

**Independent variables** 

**Date - date of publication** 

enter actual date as mmddyy with no spaces or punctuation (eg. 71009 = July 10, 2009)

Name - newspaper name

enter the full name of the newspaper (eg. New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal)

Lib/Con – liberal or conservative leaning of newspaper

(leave blank; first coder will determine that later based on data from Editor & Publisher magazine)

1= liberal

50

2=independent

3= conservative

## **Dependent Variables**

Tone - tone toward "healthcare bill/health care bill/health bill/healthcare debate/ health care debate/ health care reform/health reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform bill/healthcare reform bill/health care reform bill" in the sentence/phrase containing the mention

(If the mention associates health care with the Democratic Party/Obama, code it as political. Anything other than that is nonpolitical)

1= political

2= nonpolitical

# **Story - story prominence**

1= in the body of the story

2= paired with a graphic (chart, graph, table) or photo caption

3= in the lead of the story (first sentence or first paragraph break)

4= in the headline of the story

## Page - page prominence

1=inside page of newspaper (also if no page number is given)

2= section front of newspaper (ex: B1, G1, business front page, sports front page)

3= front page of newspaper (page A1, Front Page, page 1 only)

## **Topic**

1=substance: explains the intricacies/substance of healthcare reform bill OR stage of the bill for passage into law OR the background of the healthcare reform in the U.S.

2=chatter: reports protests/arguments/opinions of people about healthcare reform OR reports frustrations of political leaders about the stage of the bill for passage into law/fear of what passage of the bill might mean for Democrats (eg. Losing their seats or losing the next general election) / / reports activities of healthcare providers/companies/politicians in regard to the healthcare reform (for example, politicians who voted for or against the healthcare reform bill at the Senate and House levels; or campaigns/summits/Town Hall meetings organized to garner support for the healthcare reform)

### Coder

1=Weize

2=Dinah

#### VITA

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