

**Berlin Re-visited: Nikita Khrushchev's Influence in the American Pressroom**

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**Abstract:**

*Existing research suggests that in most cases, foreign elites hold influence over the domestic media coverage of international crises only when they are considered to be hostile. This is unsurprising, as it is often their hostile rhetoric that drives the events of a crisis. Thus far, however, there has been no distinction made between the various types of rhetoric these hostile leaders engage in, or how different categories of statements might have different degrees of influence on domestic media coverage. For example, might these foreign leaders' more benign public utterances, that do not change the status quo of a crisis, still have an impact on how salient the press views the issue? This study attempts to fill this gap. Specifically, I study the influence of the non-status-quo-changing statements of Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev on American media coverage of the Berlin Crisis of 1958-1960. This period was selected as a case study for the following reasons: (1) U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower displayed a strong reticence to publicly commit to a specific course of action, largely forgoing his role as president to guide policy discourse at the outset of the crisis, (2) Premier Khrushchev was viewed in the American media as being the ultimate voice in the formation of Soviet foreign policy, giving him outsized influence on the direction of the crisis, and (3) the historical memory of the Berlin blockade of 1948-1949 predisposed the American media to pay attention to the crisis and view it as urgent. An analysis of New York Times articles was conducted and suggests that Khrushchev's non-status-quo-changing "propaganda" did have some influence on how salient the crisis was in the news; however, this influence was only seen during periods of high tension, suggesting that these effects are conditional on the media's preexisting levels of interest.*

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## **Introduction:**

Heads of state face a two front war during international crises. Not only must they define and promote the national interest, cognizant of the pressures of the international system of power and alliances, but they must do so in a way that takes into account their own domestic political incentives (Putnam 1988). Their rhetoric often demonstrates the existence of this dual audience, signaling intent and resolve to the opposition as well as framing the crisis in a way that can be “sold” to their domestic constituents. Rhetoric is not simply a product of the strategic situation, however. Leaders’ words can also actively alter their incentives and shape the course of events; in crisis diplomacy, words are often synonymous with actions.

Audience cost theory suggests one such possible use of crisis rhetoric: augmenting domestic political risks in order to strengthen bargaining positions. When leaders publicly escalate international crises they create the risk of political ramifications suffered in the case of reneging on their stated commitments. More importantly, the potential new consequences that these leaders would experience in the case of backing down from their threats are greater than those they would have received in the case of immediately capitulating to their opponent (Fearon 1994). When a leader makes a public promise to stand firm on an issue and then are forced to backtrack, they appear weak and incompetent. This reality implies that public escalating of a crisis is analogous to the idea of *burning bridges* in game theory, whereby a leader effectively cuts off the possibility of an action (in this case backing down), to lend credibility to their threats. Despite the perceived benefits of garnering potential audience costs, there are many cases in which a leader would instead choose to avoid actively escalating a crisis, opting to keep the

situation out of the public eye as much as possible. Baum (2004, 612) notes that in this situation, it would be advantageous for an opponent to co-opt the other leader's bargaining position by drawing attention to the delicate point of contention.

Is this *possible*, however? Even if unintentional, the ability to manipulate an opponent's domestic political payoffs would have significant implications for how crisis diplomacy is conducted. It seems evident that an opposing leader would attract press attention by making statements that threaten the status quo or provide new developments in a crisis—but what about more routine, non-status-quo changing statements that could be termed as “propaganda,” and that are not necessarily aimed at an international audience?

In order to answer this question, I will examine the Berlin Crisis of 1958-1961, a period in which U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's public rhetoric displays an avoidance of undue escalation and press attention in the face of domestic and international pressures. Using media content analysis of *New York Times* articles from this period, I will test to see if Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's own public rhetoric (which was much more hostile in tone than Eisenhower's) had any influence on the salience of the crisis in the American media. Part one of this paper builds a theoretical framework that explores the relationship between public opinion, presidential rhetoric, media coverage, and foreign elites. The second part explores the background of the crisis, arguing that the strategic conditions of the time made the American press susceptible to foreign influences. Finally, part three analyzes the ways in which the media framed the crisis, and how Khrushchev (inadvertently or not) influenced their coverage of the situation.

## **Literature Review:**

### *The Public and the Shaping of Foreign Policy Consensus:*

According to traditional international relations scholarship, the general public's views on foreign policy were ill-informed, irrational, and inconsistent. This "Almond-Lippmann" consensus, based on realist models of foreign policy decision-making, did not face significant challenges until relatively recently when a series of studies suggesting that the public holds both rational and consistent views, brought civil society back into the conversation (Holsti 1992; Page & Shapiro 1988). Not only did the public appear rational, they also had a marked influence on how politicians chose and implemented their grand strategies. Attempting to bridge the gap between realist views of an international system that places certain demands on leaders, and the realities of domestic politics, Putnam (1988) proposed a two-level game analysis of heads of state, wherein these leaders must balance the demands of the electorate with developments and realities of the international system.<sup>1</sup> In this model, "diplomatic strategies and tactics are constrained both by what other states will accept and by what domestic constituents will ratify" (Evans, Jacobson, & Putnam [Moravcsik] 1993, 15). This focus on the domestic as a "limiting" force on international behavior has been particularly popular in research into democracies and how domestic political restrictions could be a possible explanation for the theory of the *democratic peace*.

However, the influence of the public on foreign policy is not always consistent (Monroe 1979). Explanations for this variation include different institutional structures (Soroka & Wlezien 2004; Prins & Sprecher 1999; Trumbore 1998; Risse-Kappen 1991),

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<sup>1</sup> Although I discuss public opinion in the context of democratic states, there are some scholars who argue that the same mechanisms of accountability apply to non-democratic regimes (*see*: Weeks 2008).

the nature of media coverage (Baum & Potter 2008), or even presidential beliefs on the role of politicians as democratic agents (Foyle 1999, 9). Despite the breadth of the extant literature, it is generally agreed upon that the influence of public opinion on the foreign policy agenda is contingent on the attention paid by the public to specific issues, often called *issue salience* (Soroka 2003; Page & Shapiro 1983).<sup>2</sup>

*Paying Attention: What makes the News?*

The study of issue salience, particularly what makes some issues more salient to the public than others, provides an important link between the demands of the public and the incentives of those with decision-making power. This process of determining salience, better termed *agenda setting*, has been studied extensively both in communications literature (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007; Dearing & Rogers 1996; McCombs & Shaw 1993) and by political scientists (Wood & Peake 1998; J. Cohen 1995; McCombs & Shaw 1972). One of the most marked findings of these studies is the link between media coverage and what the public considers salient (Soroka 2003; Wanta & Hu 1993; Semetko *et al.* 1992). In an oft-quoted line, Cohen (1963, 13) notes that the media, “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” The average American is more separated from and less directly influenced by foreign affairs than domestic ones,

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<sup>2</sup> It has been noted that while political scientists often use the concept of salience in reference to policy issues, rarely do scholars define what exactly they mean by the term (Wlezien 2005). While Wlezien notes that there may be a need to distinguish between “importance” and “status as a problem” when discussing salience, later studies suggest that in survey data, different wording does not generate statistically significant differences (Jennings & Wlezien 2011). For the purposes of my study, I will define salience as the degree to which voters consider a political issue to be a significant problem by which they can gauge their leaders’ performance.

making them even more reliant on media cues (Baum & Potter 2008; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon 2005).

The central role the media plays as an agenda-setter, and the implications that this may hold for foreign policy decision-making, begs a pertinent question: who or what determines what the press covers? The media acts as a key interlocutor between the public and political elites (Baum & Potter 2008; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon 2005; Zaller 1992; Page & Shapiro 1988; Rogers & Dearing 1988), but exactly how each of these three actors influence the act of news-making appears to be complex, conditional, and multifaceted. This interrelatedness has generated a wide range of findings, from studies suggesting that the media is mostly responsible for determining what the public and democratic leadership consider significant (Cook *et al.* 1983; McCombs & Shaw 1972) to other models suggesting that the leadership merely reacts to media coverage of events (Zhang & Meadows 2012; Edwards & Wood 1999) or even that elite discourse is the main driver of the political agenda (J. Cohen 1997; Dearing & Rogers 1996). Walgrave & Van Aelst (2006) deal with these theoretical difficulties by arguing that the media does hold significant agenda setting power, but that this power is contingent on the political climate.

Behr & Iyengar (1985, 53) find that televised journalism has an influence on the public agenda, but that “real-world events” and the issues that the president addresses also determine what voters consider significant. In fact, it appears that the president may have an outsized influence as a setter of the public agenda (Villalobos & Sirin 2012; Edwards & Wood 1999; J. Cohen 1997, 1995; Dearing & Rogers 1996; Kingdon 1995; Light 1991; Bond & Fleisher 1990; Downs 1972), and more specifically in the realm of foreign



policy (Lawrence 2004; J. Cohen 1995; Bennett 1990). Perhaps the best example of this elite influence on the media is in the observation that press coverage is closely “indexed” to elite discourse in both terms of content and media frames (Zaller & Chiu 1996; Bennett 1990). Whether due to an overemphasized respect for official versions of stories or merely journalistic laziness, the result is that ruling elites’ policy debates bound the national conversation and topics that fall outside of these constraints are usually passed over. In the realm of foreign policy, presidents are central to the agenda setting process, and their public addresses shape the topics that are discussed in the news (Druckman & Holmes 2004; Iyengar & Kinder 1987; Bennett 1990; Behr & Iyengar 1985). As the media seems to give a great deal of weight to presidents’ words, there seem to be certain strategic benefits to this influence during international crises, particularly when the relationship between the media and the public is considered. In their study of the relationship between public opinion, the media, and elite policies in shaping public views of foreign countries, Zhang & Meadows (2012, 89) argued that, “[their] findings support the postulate that the news media is a diplomatic device as powerful as diplomatic statements.” According to some lines of reasoning, the two might be more connected than these authors acknowledge.

#### *Audience Costs: Leveraging Deference to the Executive*

Audience cost theory has recently helped to operationalize presidential influence over agenda setting within the strategic framework of crisis diplomacy. According to this model of international crisis bargaining first proposed by Fearon (1994), every public statement that a head of state makes in an international crisis bargaining situation is expensive—that is to say, it generates some sort of risk for the speaker—and so is an

effective signal of resolve that weeds out “cheap talk.” Fearon and others (Tomz 2007; Slantchev 2006; Schultz 2001; Fearon 1997) have found that leaders who decide to verbally escalate an international conflict bestow upon themselves the risk of political ramifications that would hurt them if they were to eventually capitulate. Interestingly, these consequences are much greater than if they were to relent at the beginning of the conflict. This observation suggests that leaders are able successfully to leverage their domestic political capital to engage in *bridge burning* and thus strengthen their bargaining position. The generation of audience costs changes these leaders’ payoffs, making further conflict escalation more attractive for them after a “public battle of wills and honor” has begun. This change in personal incentives signals resolve much more effectively than sunk costs, such as military build-ups, do (Fearon 1997). According to this theory, leaders who are better at generating audience costs should prevail over their rivals in international crises as their political futures depend on the bargaining outcome (Fearon 1994). In their analysis of Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data, Partell and Palmer (1999) agree that there is some empirical evidence to support this claim.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these benefits, there are many cases in which heads of state choose instead to minimize their public exposure during crises (Baum 2004). This act of “going private,” however, can run into various problems. While leaders can choose not to

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<sup>3</sup> Despite these insights, audience costs have garnered a large amount of criticism due to difficulties in detecting them (Tomz 2007; Schultz 2001), their rarity (Trachtenberg 2012), doubts over the consequences of empty threats (Slantchev 2006; Gowa 1998), and the persistence of private crisis diplomacy (Baum 2004), among others (Snyder & Borghard 2011). While many of these problems might be accounted for by the theory itself (the rarity of occurrence is not surprising as leaders not likely to win would never incur this risk in the first place) or with slight modifications, others are part of an ongoing debate over the nature, or even existence of audience costs. Despite these theoretical schisms, audience costs have proven notably instructive in explaining other aspects of international politics (Schultz 2012), and have provided a newfound importance of public opinion and domestic politics in the formation and conduct of foreign policy.

escalate crises themselves, they are not always able to keep them out of the news, as more often than not, crises take on a life of their own in the media (Knecht 2010; Wood & Peake 1998). In cases where the president is in a particularly perilous diplomatic position, this public attention can negatively impact them given that greater public exposure often reduces a president's ability to diplomatically maneuver (Page & Shapiro 1983). Following this line of reasoning, Baum (2004, 612) postulated that an enemy leader would have the incentive to bring greater attention to a crisis in which their opponent was perceivably weak in order to force their hand.

#### *The Public Eye and the Foreign Statesman*

Is this sort of influence over media content even possible? Various studies of foreign voices in the news suggest that the opinions of foreigners count for very little in the eyes of the American public (Entman 2004; Page, Shapiro, & Dempsy 1987). While Hayes and Guardino (2013) argue that media sources and politically active members of the public can rely on foreign opinions in the face of a unified elite that acts against the wishes of the public, their study deals with foreign elites who are considered friendly and not acting against the best interests of the United States. For example, it is doubtful that an adversarial leader, such as Vladimir Putin, would be able to change the hearts and minds of the American public with claims that he is merely out to protect Russian citizens from Ukrainian oppression. After all, his expansive views of the Russian people were described in the American press as a “perverted version of the Western-developed and United Nations-sanctified humanitarian doctrine of the ‘responsibility to protect’” (Ash 2014, *New York Times*). Is it possible, however, for enemy leaders to alter Americans' views of issue salience by keeping sensitive issues in the news?

The difficulty in answering this question is highly rhetorical in nature. The words of foreign leaders do not have a direct connection to the public; instead they must first pass through the interpretive and conceptual frameworks of members of the media and domestic elites. One aspect of this information processing is known as *framing*.<sup>4</sup> By Entman's (1993, 52) definition: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (as quoted by Scheufele 1999). Unlike agenda setting, which deals with the salience of individual issues and events, framing can be seen as the aspects of those events that are pulled out by the press in order to construct a narrative (Scheufele 1999). Consider news headlines: the press engages in the act of reducing an entire event or situation into a short phrase necessitates that a simplified narrative of the story be created. In the case of public diplomacy, the way in which the media frames elites' statements creates new realities in the rhetorical landscape by placing the emphasis on information that fits into their preconceived notions of what is, or rather should be, considered important. These frames have a significant impact on the national discourse and on how people view an event (Terkildsen & Schnell 1997; Iyengar 1991). In the case of my study, the categorization of a statement being status-quo-changing or not largely depends on media frames; leaders sometimes have little control over how their statements are received by foreign audiences. Ultimately, framing theory provides a useful methodological scaffold to approach this rhetorical ambiguity and explore how Khrushchev influenced the American media.

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<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Rolf Norgaard of the Program for Writing and Rhetoric for pointing out the usefulness of framing to me as a possible approach to this problem.

## **Historical Background:**

There are several reasons that the Berlin Crisis, specifically the period between November 10, 1958 and May 1960, presents an ideal case study for examining the influences of foreign elite rhetoric on the salience of foreign policy issues. The legacy of the Berlin blockade a decade earlier left the American media and public predisposed to pay attention to the situation and consider it to be urgent. In contrast with these naturally raised levels of interest, U.S. President Eisenhower displayed many of the signs of “going private” as modeled by Baum (2004), due to a precarious diplomatic situation in which the United States had staked too much of its prestige on the isolated city’s fate. Lastly, a view in the American media perpetuated by certain American government officials that Premier Khrushchev was the sole voice of import in Soviet foreign policy led the media to pay more attention to his words than they might have otherwise.

### *Berlin and the Legacy of the Blockade: Defining the Crisis*

As the defeat of the Third Reich appeared imminent, Allied leaders met at Potsdam, Germany in July 1945 to discuss the future of Europe, and perhaps most important, the future of Germany. On August 1, it was decided that the defeated state would be divided into four occupation zones, run by the US, USSR, UK, and France. Although it was understood that “Germany [would] be treated as an economic unit,” it was to be politically decentralized with the goal of “the complete disarmament and demilitarization of Germany,” “to destroy the National Socialist Party,” and “to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis” (Art. 2, sec. A). It is not surprising, however, that in the context of the burgeoning Cold War, these accords were never implemented within the confines of strict legalism.

Complicating matters was the 1949 consolidation of the three Western zones into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and the creation of the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) out of the Soviet zone. While these two Germanys ostensibly became sovereign nations, the GDR was not recognized by any of the Western powers—instead, they adopted a unified stance, asserting that the formation of the FRG fulfilled the original goal of reunifying Germany, and that the GDR, or “Soviet occupation zone” should join with the others through democratic elections, a proposition the Soviets would never have agreed to (*Foreign Relations of the United States* 1949, vol. III doc. 131; hereafter *FRUS*). Situated a hundred miles behind the border of the GDR, and increasingly at the center of a volatile geopolitical situation, Berlin existed under a unique and contested legal regime. According to the *Protocol on the Zones of Occupation in Germany and the Administration of Greater Berlin* of September 1944, Berlin was considered an entity separate from the other occupation zones. Despite the fact that West Germany considered the city to be one of its states, the GDR claimed it as its capital and the Western powers considered it to be a separate entity occupied under the auspices of international law (*Central Intelligence Agency*, 1961).

Conflict regarding the city’s status first erupted when the Soviet Union blocked the Western powers’ overland access to the city on June 24, 1948, in reaction to proposed currency reforms aimed at improving the West German economy (Schick 1971). Unwilling to risk armed conflict over Berlin, the Western powers instead airlifted supplies to the city for nearly a year. Ultimately an end to the blockade was successfully negotiated in May 1949 with the promise of a foreign minister’s meeting to discuss issues surrounding the city (*FRUS* 1949, vol. III doc. 374). Despite this lull in tensions and

increased East-West dialogue, there was now a precedent for using the isolated city as a political lever, a possibility that did not escape the American government. In May 1955, a disagreement over increased tolls on the German Autobahn leading into West Berlin led U.S. State Department officials to privately consider contingency plans in the case of “further deterioration of the situation,” and the possibility that “we might find ourselves again in a blockade” (*Digital National Security Archive*, May 10 1955; hereafter *DNSA*).

The continued existence of an occupied Berlin within the GDR’s territory, the refusal of America and its allies to recognize the GDR, and the increasing involvement of the FRG in the economic and military structures of Western Europe all became a significant source of contention with the Soviet Union. In 1957, the USSR sent a strongly worded diplomatic note to the FRG loudly protesting an American plan to store nuclear weapons on its soil, warning against any attempt by the West Germans to obtain such weapons for themselves (*Documents on Germany*, 496; hereafter *DG*). The Soviet Politburo had considered preventing a nuclearized FRG as a top priority since 1955 (Zubok 1993) and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s seeming refusal to give up on either the idea of a nuclear arsenal or on his claims on German territory ceded to Poland continued to provoke hostilities. In early 1958, a Polish plan to create a denuclearized zone in Central Europe was rejected by the Americans (*DG* 517, 528) and the issues surrounding armaments and the FRG’s policies remained unsolved. Against this diplomatically strained backdrop, the standards of living between West Berlin and the surrounding GDR were becoming much more pronounced, as the West began to experience rapid economic growth while the GDR stagnated (Harrison 1993).

Speaking on November 10, 1958 at a Soviet-Polish friendship meeting in Moscow, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev finally went on the offensive, unleashing one of the longest-lasting crises of the Cold War (Schick 1971). Accusing the United States and other Western powers of allowing Bonn, the FRG's capital, to become a hotbed of growing Nazi militarism and of using their position in Berlin to engage in "subversive activities" against the community of Communist states, Khrushchev declared that the West had dishonored the spirit of the Potsdam Accord. According to the Premier, the agreements guaranteeing Western rights in Berlin were now invalidated. He suggested that the Soviet Union replace its agents stationed at checkpoints with East German officials, and to "let the United States, France and Britain themselves build their relations with the German Democratic Republic...if they are interested in any questions concerning Berlin" (DG 542). Khrushchev's proposal/declaration seemed to do several things at once; in addition to attempting to force *de facto* recognition of the GDR by the West, the Premier's words were seen as a direct threat against the Allies' occupied status of Berlin.

This surprise statement triggered a flurry of internal telegrams and notes among U.S. State Department officials as ambassadors, analysts, and decision-makers attempted to decipher what exactly Khrushchev had meant by his speech. While most of his threats were veiled, they broached exceedingly sensitive points of East-West contention with high margins for escalation. The idea that this was mere propaganda was quickly dismissed. U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn Thompson called it "a most dangerous move," and posited that Khrushchev was using the vulnerable position of Berlin to force Western recognition of the East German regime (FRUS 1958-1960, vol.



VIII doc. 25). Political Officer at the Embassy in Berlin Findley Burns agreed with this appraisal, arguing that Khrushchev's mentions of Berlin were "intended to include access thereto" (*FRUS* 1958-1960, vol. VIII doc. 27).

Despite these initial worries, internal correspondence within the State Department suggests that the majority of American government officials did not see a new blockade as a strong possibility. In a November 13 telegram sent to various American embassies, Under Secretary of State Christian A. Herter expressed the belief that the Soviets would not attempt anything as blatant as a full blockade again, due to their failure in 1948 and the potential consequences such a reprisal would have on world public opinion. Furthermore, he stated that "in discussing [the] subject addressees should not convey impression of excitement or undue anxiety" and that they "should point out Communist threats against Berlin [were] frequently made but not often implemented and [that] whether and how [the] latest threat [would] be implemented [would] depend greatly on [the] firmness of [the] Western reaction" (*FRUS* 1958-1960, vol. VIII doc. 31).

In spite of this endeavor by the American government to appear calm and to make the explicit argument that Khrushchev's speech did not foretell "a reimposition of the Berlin blockade of 1948-49" (Kenworthy 1958, 11 *New York Times*; hereafter *NYT*), the American press quickly drew parallels to the previous crisis. Interestingly, the connection was often used to suggest that "Mr. Khrushchev [had] presented the Western Powers with a problem potentially far more difficult for them than the Berlin blockade of 1948-49" (Frankel 1958, 1 *NYT*). This return to the language and imagery of the blockade also included the implication of conflict. In a private telephone conversation with Herter, days after the Khrushchev speech, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles expressed his

displeasure at the reports in the news that there were 600 planes at the ready, prepared to resume an airlift at any moment (Log, Nov. 13 1958 *DNSA*).

U.S. officials continued to assert that this was not a crisis—at a news conference Dulles even quipped that he was “not surprised that this Berlin probe took place,” claiming to have thought it a probable scenario (*DG*, 549). Media figures and certain foreign allies had adopted a tone very much in opposition to this view, and one that carried a greater degree of influence in the public discourse of the time. West German Chancellor Adenauer immediately donned a mantle of defiance against the Soviet threat, publicly warning them that “an extremely dangerous situation had been created,” and that any unilateral actions would be met with a strong Western response (*NTY*, Nov. 16 1958, 29). A tense situation would have benefited the leader of the FRG; an imminent threat to Berlin would force the public implementation of American security guarantees, whereas bureaucratic disagreements and back-channel deals would give the U.S. the option to quietly compromise without losing face. West Berlin’s Mayor Willy Brandt also contributed to the public’s sense of urgency; an article at the time noted that when the Mayor “asserts...that ‘Berlin belongs to the free world,’ the city stands as a new kind of symbol” (*NYT* Nov. 23 1958).

Viewing Berlin as a symbol was certainly not a new construct—both the press and the West Germans were drawing on the legacy of the first crisis. Arguably, the Berlin blockade of 1948 shifted the perception of the city from an ex-Nazi capital that needed to be controlled to a symbol of budding democracy that needed to be protected. During the blockade, then-President Harry S. Truman hailed the “courage that [its inhabitants were] displaying in their beleaguered outpost,” calling it “proof to the world of the strength of

the democratic spirit” (*Public Papers of the Presidents* March 1948; hereafter *PPP*). The success of the airlift in outlasting the Soviet blockade led to an association between the city and the fight against communism. Then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson claimed that the city was a “symbol of courage,” and that issues surrounding Berlin were due to Soviet attempts to “interfere with the whole environment of freedom and liberty” (Middleton 1949, 1 *NYT*). Thus, an attack on Berlin became an attack on the West and its democratic principles.

This symbolic language, combined with repeated and emphatic guarantees to protect the city, created a schema of the city’s importance within the media that effectively tied the hands of future leaders. The United States would not be able to back down on issues surrounding the city without serious political consequences (*DNSA*, May 10 1955). As one journalist at the time noted, despite the fact that many points of contention during the crisis were “about seemingly trivial details,” the situation, and the city, had “become a test of the value of the United States’ solemn word” (Lewis 1959, SM14 *NYT*). A separate opinion piece aptly claimed, “We Painted Ourselves Into the Corner” (Krock 1958, 32 *NYT*). These high stakes make Eisenhower’s relative silence at the time all the more striking.

#### *Eisenhower and Berlin:*

President Eisenhower’s role at the beginning of the Berlin Crisis has been given surprisingly little attention considering its unusual nature in comparison to other Cold War crises. For several weeks following Khrushchev’s November 10 speech, the President maintained total silence on the issue. Declassified documents suggest that the President was well informed on the pronouncement (Memorandum, Nov. 18 1958

*DNSA*); however, the vast majority of internal communication ran through Secretary Dulles and Under Secretary Herter. In addition to staying out of the public eye, Eisenhower ensured that other members of his Administration were not engaging in any behavior that could be interpreted as escalatory. At a meeting at which a potential visit by Vice President Nixon to Berlin was floated, Eisenhower insisted that no speech on the issue be made, lest it be interrupted as a provocation. Tellingly, a party to the conversation noted that the visit would be “psychologically a good gesture,” but that there was a risk that, “things will happen that will make [the President] a prisoner later on as to what to do” (Memorandum, Nov. 26 1958 *DNSA*).

This provides one explanation for Eisenhower’s preliminary caution: at the time, his Administration’s policy was not entirely clear. Considering the vague nature of Khrushchev’s November 10 announcement and the need for the U.S. to appear to be in total agreement with the FRG, Britain, and France, this is unsurprising. Trachtenberg (1991) argues that Eisenhower eventually adopted a very flexible stance on Berlin, pointing out that the President was later willing to consider the Soviet’s “free city” proposal. However, this would have put him in direct odds with Adenauer and other elements of the West German government who quickly adopted a hardline stance on issues of both reunification and Berlin’s status (*DG*, 577). In balancing the diverse interests of his allies and attempting to take accurate stock of the situation, Eisenhower evidently did not want to tie his hands by making any sort of public statement that could be seen as a commitment to a specific course of action, particularly in the context of Berlin’s emblematic importance in the fight against communism.

The Administration's avoidance of explicit commitments appears to be justified in light of the public reaction to Dulles's press conference on November 26. During the conference, the Secretary of State suggested that the United States might treat East German officials as "agents" of the USSR. This undermined the previous American policy of no-tolerance regarding the transfer of functions from the Soviet Union to the GDR, and therefore made American threats seem less credible. The comment generated a great deal of bad press for the Secretary. Accusations of tacit recognition of the GDR and of abandoning the West Germans were widespread and enflamed by the ridicule of French and other American officials (Gruson 1958, *NYT*). Interestingly, the President was never connected with the incident, but it did demonstrate the dangers of needing to backpedal, and it was the first in a series of episodes that made the West look divided (an issue that never seemed to exhaust the press' imagination over the ensuing months).<sup>5</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles may have appeared reticent at the beginning of the crisis, but their general avoidance of the public eye is a poor indicator of the political importance that they placed on Berlin. The city, defeated German capital turned island of democracy, came to represent many of the geopolitical, ideological, and class struggles of the Cold War, but, more importantly, it was a test of American and NATO security guarantees (trust in which was considered so vital that war was preferable to reneging on them) (*DG*, 612). Imagery drawn from British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's visit to Munich on the eve of the Second World War fueled a mantra that any form of

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in the months leading up to the summit of heads of state in spring, 1960, a slew of news articles were published on the perceived differences in goals of the different Allies going into the conference. While the negotiations and disagreements between the U.S., Britain, France, and West Germany were arguably a natural part of the diplomatic process, many articles presented the issue as if the West was tearing itself apart before it could face the Soviets. For an example, see (Middleton, Nov. 22 1959, 39 *NYT*).

appeasement would increase the risk of war, and that war was preferable to capitulation. Privately, Eisenhower made it clear that he was willing to wage nuclear war to protect Berlin if necessary, asserting that using this threat was the best way to force the Soviets to be “reasonable” (*DNSA*, March 31 1959). Burr (1994, 179) argues that this extreme stance was responsible for the President’s desire to keep press exposure on the crisis to a minimum. While threatening military action over the relatively minor incident of the transfer of functions to the East Germans might be considered a good coercive tool, it would have been “politically disastrous” if made public. Another confounding factor was the (later confirmed) presumption “that turn over to [the] GDR would be implemented gradually,” and owing to the fact that “GDR pressure would be applied in stages,” communist forces would consciously “avoid any action which...would bring into force [the American] security guarantee” (*FRUS* 1958-1960, vol. VIII doc. 27).

This begs the question: how would one decide which minor infraction in a series of many would justify the use of military force? In this scenario, any retaliation would seem too disproportionate and it would become impossible to garner domestic or international support. However, loss of the city was not considered an option under any circumstance. Later on in the crisis, Eisenhower argued in conversations with congressional leaders that it was necessary for the U.S. to be willing to “engage in general war” to preserve access to Berlin because appeasement would lead to total defeat (*Declassified Documents Collection*, Mar. 6, 1959, 597 [cited by Trachtenberg 1991]). This deterrence was both necessary and risky: how long would American allies and the public accept a strategy that could lead to total annihilation over the political status of a single, isolated city?

This scenario is much like the one described in Baum's (2004) model of audience costs, in which leaders often have an incentive to "go private" and engage in less public forms of diplomacy to minimize the salience that the public attributes to a crisis. Internal and external pressures, as well as the vulnerable geographic location of Berlin, made escalation of the crisis dangerous. In a private conversation with Eisenhower, Dulles admitted that they were "boxed in" to the point that the situation in Berlin had become "untenable" (*DNSA*, Jan. 7 1959). Despite this precarious position, there is no conceivable way that Eisenhower could have smothered discussion of the city. The ability of presidents to act as gatekeepers of public attention is largely limited to minor events—crises tend to take on a life of their own in the media, the political landscape, and the public imagination (Knecht 2010, 42). Although Eisenhower waited for a long period of time to publicly discuss the Berlin situation, remaining silent for too long would have made him appear weak and he would have forfeited his unique ability as president to mold public opinion and the general discussion of the crisis (Baum & Potter, 2008). As such, he was forced to respond, trying to set a tone that maneuvered the treacherous backdrop of alliances, the Soviet Union, the press, and the public.

Eisenhower's crisis rhetoric reflects this need for balance. Many of the President's statements followed the same rhetorical line, and displayed consistency to the point of redundancy as time progressed. His strategy seemed to be two-fold: to appear firm and resolute (but not hostile), and to justify his actions by emphasizing the legal and moral responsibility that the United States had toward the people of West Berlin. During his first press conference after the crisis began, Eisenhower stated that:

There is no attempt on the part of the United States in this position to be arbitrary in the sense of trying to irritate or anger anybody else...I want to be clear that we are not doing anything for ourselves. We are doing it for a free people that have a right to this kind of cooperation, promised them in the pledged word of a number of governments (*PPP*, Dec. 10, 1958).

Several months later, he maintained this argument that the US's goals were benign and selfless, and that he was compelled by a solemn "responsibility" not to give in or compromise. In response to more pointed questions, Eisenhower remained cagey, unwilling to lay out firm plans or promises other than the general commitment to maintain access to Berlin and to preserve the freedom of the people living there. The following interaction is characteristic:

Reporter: Is there an agreement to use force, if necessary, to defend our rights in Berlin?

Eisenhower: We have not said we are using force. We are saying we do not abandon our responsibilities. We will continue to carry them out, and it will be the responsibility of the other side if there is going to be any force; they have to use that to block our carrying out our responsibilities (*PPP*, Feb. 18, 1959).

Fortunately for the President, the press of the 1950's was more deferential to the executive on matters of foreign policy than it is today, and did not often pick apart the rhetorical pretzel into which the President had to twist himself. The President also had the advantage of muted public awareness of the details of the crisis despite high levels of press coverage. A survey done by the *New York Times* found that most of the public was "ill-informed but trustful of the Administration and particularly of the President, nonpartisan in their approach and confident that somehow this crisis will pass" (Reston,



1959, 1 *NYT*). The public's certainty of a successful outcome most likely owed to the tone of calm resoluteness that Eisenhower adopted, thereby avoiding hysteria or a sustained questioning of his policies. The various turns, dead-ends, and tensions that were created during the crisis were largely handled by the State Department through diplomatic channels, allowing the President to largely remain aloof, and left usually only to comment on the situation when directly questioned at press conferences.

There were notable exceptions to this rhetorical approach, however. Following Khrushchev's rejection of a foreign minister's conference and renewed threats of a separate treaty with the East Germans in early March 1959, Eisenhower gave one of his most public addresses on the state of the Berlin situation. Broadcast on television and the radio, and announced several days prior, the speech was clearly meant to bring attention to his Berlin policies. However, an examination of the text and context of the speech demonstrates that it represents more continuity than a transformation of tactics.

Going in the opposite direction of "private," Eisenhower, in his address, cultivated a sense of urgency surrounding Berlin, presenting it as being besieged by a Soviet Union that wanted "no less than world domination, to be achieved by gaining political power successively in each of the many areas which had been afflicted by war, so that in the end the United States... would be isolated and closely encircled." Themes concerning morality sought to label the USSR as an aggressor, while his use of historical precedent established the legal defense of the Western position. Eisenhower denounced the Soviet's "free city" proposal, famously saying: "It is by no means clear what West Berlin would be free from, except perhaps freedom itself." The President, after presenting the crisis as an urgent situation in which the United States had a vital and justified role to

play, laid out three possible courses of action: acquiescence to the Soviets' wishes, which would threaten "the mutual confidence upon which our entire system of collective security is founded"; "the possibility of war"; or negotiation given that the Soviets demands were reasonable. Naturally, the President advocated the third option (*DG*, 612).

Despite the harsh words, escalatory language, and list of reasonably definitive boundaries that he would not cross, Eisenhower's speech did not say anything new in the way of policy proposals. Perhaps owing to this, the report received minimal press coverage, generating a few articles at most in the *New York Times*. Whether intentional or not, its purpose was received as informational rather than as a diplomatic exchange with the USSR. While the President generally used his rhetoric to frame the crisis as a struggle to protect freedom and uphold the rule of law, he rarely acted in a proactive way, instead reacting to new developments and depending on officials at the State Department to conduct diplomacy. Unlike Khrushchev, Eisenhower's rhetoric rarely presaged new crisis developments, and so did not capture the press' attention; instead the media turned to other sources of information, including the Soviet Premier.

#### *Khrushchev and the Russian Monolith*

During the crisis, Khrushchev was much more diplomatically active than his American counterpart. While the exact purposes the Premier had in mind when he began the crisis are contested (Fursenko & Naftali 2006; Richter 1994; Zubok 1993; Harrison 1993) evidence suggests that his decision represented a clear break from previous Soviet policies. In the months leading up to the crisis, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs had adopted a noncommittal, and relatively uninteresting, policy of non-action toward Berlin and the German question (*Archive of the President, Russian Federation* Nov. 3, 1958,

185 [cited by Fursenko & Naftali]). Tellingly, a peace treaty with the GDR had not yet been drafted at the time of Khrushchev's speech (Zubok 1993). Fursenko & Naftali (2006) go as far as to argue that the November 10 speech caused an internal policy struggle between an aggressive faction led by Khrushchev and a more conciliatory one led by Deputy Premier Anastas I. Mikoyan that worried about how far the West would go to prevent unilateral actions being taken against Berlin.

Whatever his specific goals were, Khrushchev remained relatively quiet early on in the crisis, waiting on the result of a visit by Mikoyan to the United States in early 1959. The visit by a senior Soviet official, a rare occurrence at the time, was understood by Acting Secretary Herter as being primarily fact-finding in nature, and not an opportunity for any substantive policy decisions to be made (Memorandum to President, Jan. 2 1959 *DNSA*). In the press, it was claimed that Mr. Mikoyan "was acting as Mr. Khrushchev's eyes and ears" (Salisbury 1959, 1 *NYT*). Following the visit, this position was reinforced by a State Department report, remarking that "Mikoyan introduced several modifications, but no basic change in the Soviet position on Berlin." Perhaps most tellingly, it was noted:

There is another possible explanation of the Mikoyan trip, namely, that it is related to possible difference within the Kremlin leadership on foreign policy issues. According to this hypothesis, Mikoyan came to the US (1) to resolve differences within the Kremlin on the proper course of intention (with Mikoyan favoring a go-slow approach), or (2) to build a case for a renewed, concentrated drive for an East-West détente, in opposition to those in the Kremlin favoring a generally harder line. The proceedings of the Party Congress do not bear out the latter point (which, of course, is contrary to the general line of analysis presented

above) but there is some inconclusive evidence tending to support the first point (DSNA, Jan. 1959).

It was generally agreed that if internal Soviet schisms over the Berlin question did exist, they were not major enough to warrant extensive consideration; the theme of Soviet divisions was rarely mentioned throughout the crisis, and there was a general deference to Khrushchev's statements over those of other Soviet officials. Reading a report by Ambassador Thompson of a luncheon he had attended to discuss Berlin policy with top Soviet officials including Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Frol R. Kozlov, and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, it would be easy to assume no one had been there save for the Premier (DNSA, June 26 1959).

This view was held by other Western powers as well. At a tea party attended by Vice President Nixon and several U.S. Congressmen, it was reported that British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan claimed:

Of all the Soviet officials, the West can do business only with Premier Khrushchev. The attitude of a Soviet Foreign minister, cooperative or obstructive, is no chart at all to Khrushchev's attitude. Khrushchev alone can speak the ultimate word on act and policy. He will not relay it through a foreign minister, and he is determined to meet with President Eisenhower in person as an equal for such momentous purpose. (Krock 1959, 30 *NYT*).

In the analysis of Khrushchev's public statements on the crisis, there was a consistent tendency to view his rhetoric as significant and holding important policy implications, as opposed to being mere politicking or propagandizing (Thompson, July 30 1959 *DNSA*). Khrushchev himself helped to promote this view in his insistence on a summit of heads

of state—Eisenhower privately complained that the Premier held the view that “Foreign Ministers [were] only errand boys and incapable of substantive agreement” (Dillon, June 14 1959 *DNSA*).

The press, unsurprisingly, took this image of Khrushchev a step further. A series of articles appearing in the *New York Times* titled “Khrushchev’s Russia” argued, in a generally accepted vein at the time, that the Premier had consolidated political power to the point of being the undisputed leader of the USSR: “He alone has the power to make Soviet decisions. He also can commit his country to a course of peace or a path that leads to disaster” (Salisbury 1959, 1 *NYT*). This belief that Khrushchev was the only voice of import also led to a tendency to over-interpret his words; when the Premier spoke, the American media generally listened.

After a pair of speeches given by the Premier to the 21<sup>st</sup> Party Congress, the press noted that he had failed to mention his six-month ultimatum deadline, positing that this meant a change in policy. Once the headlines had ran “Western diplomats who [had] had talks with Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev warned...against reading a change of policy into his failure to mention...his original six-month deadline on Berlin” (*NYT* Feb. 9 1959, 3). This type of over-interpretation by the media was a relatively common occurrence at the time. In a short *New York Times* editorial piece appearing December 13 1958, the author linked together Soviet demands for a summit meeting, Khrushchev’s recent statements on Soviet nuclear capabilities, and the content of Soviet news coverage, arguing that it was all part of a unified strategy, “obviously designed to influence the Western answer to [the Berlin] ultimatum, and, if possible, to sow dissention among the Allies.” The article continued on to state that “the free world must prepare itself to take these threats more

seriously than heretofore,” in the case that the Soviets become “prisoners of their own propaganda, which could close their avenues of retreat” (*NYT* Dec. 13 1958).

While arguably there were many figures from the Soviet bloc weighing in on the crisis, Khrushchev was taken far more seriously than the others. East German leader Walter Ulbricht was considered by many in the West to be Khrushchev’s puppet (*NYT* Mar. 13 1959, 28), and Foreign Minister Gromyko was usually thought to be merely acting according to marching orders. In such a situation, Khrushchev’s words inherently had a greater ability to set the agenda than a leader who might not have been considered relevant, or who was buffeted by domestic struggles. The fact that “Soviet Union,” “Communist states,” and “Khrushchev” could be used interchangeably speaks to the power the Premier held, and the attention he commanded during the crisis.

### **Methods and Data Collection:**

In order to determine whether Khrushchev’s public rhetoric had a measurable effect on the perceived issue salience of the Berlin crisis in the American media, a baseline of salience was constructed using media content analysis of *New York Times* (*NYT*) articles. Next, all Khrushchev’s statements appearing in the *NYT* concerning the crisis were catalogued and coded as status-quo-changing or non-status-quo-changing. Finally, statistical analyses of this time series data were performed.

#### *Patterns of media attention during the crisis*

Issue salience here is defined as the degree to which the press reported on the crisis. Numerous studies (Wanta & Hu 1993; Semetko et al. 1992; Soroka 2003; McCombs & Shaw 1972; Cohen 1963) have found that there is a strong level of

correlation between what the public and the media consider salient. In the absence of comprehensive polling data during my period of study, press coverage remains the best metric to determine how conscious the American public was of the Berlin crisis. It seems reasonable to assume that the most politically active segments of the public tended to have more exposure to the news and current events, making it even more likely that press coverage of the crisis would create inherent political pressure for President Eisenhower. While some research suggests that the agenda setting power of the media is limited in certain cases (Dearing & Rogers 1996), the literature has frequently affirmed strong media agenda setting on matters of foreign policy (Walgrave & Van Aelst 2006).

Press coverage of the crisis is defined as the number of mentions of the crisis in *NYT* articles published during the study period. The *New York Times* has been used in a number of media content studies to determine media agendas and frames (Soroka 2003; Walker 1977; McCombs & Shaw 1972) and is often considered to be a form of “elite media” most likely to be read by those in power (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon 2005). As Dearing & Rogers (1996) note: “The *New York Times* is generally regarded as the most respected U.S. news medium. When the *Times* indicates that an issue is newsworthy, other U.S. news organizations take note.” While coverage of foreign affairs tends to be greater in the *NYT* than in other newspapers (Soroka 2003), and focuses more on traditional security issues (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon 2005), it remains an often-referenced news source in agenda setting research.

Instead of looking at front-page news (McCombs & Shaw 1972) or editorial articles (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon 2005), I catalogued all mentions of the Berlin crisis using key words, and then read each article to verify that it was relevant to the crisis

situation.<sup>6</sup> Not all articles were primarily about the crisis, but using the all-mentions metric gives a good measure of how active the crisis was in the press' (and thus the public's) consciousness. During the process of data collection, I noticed that these more offhand mentions of the crisis increased substantially after a major, status-quo-changing event. This suggests that there is a certain residual attention that other metrics do not capture well.

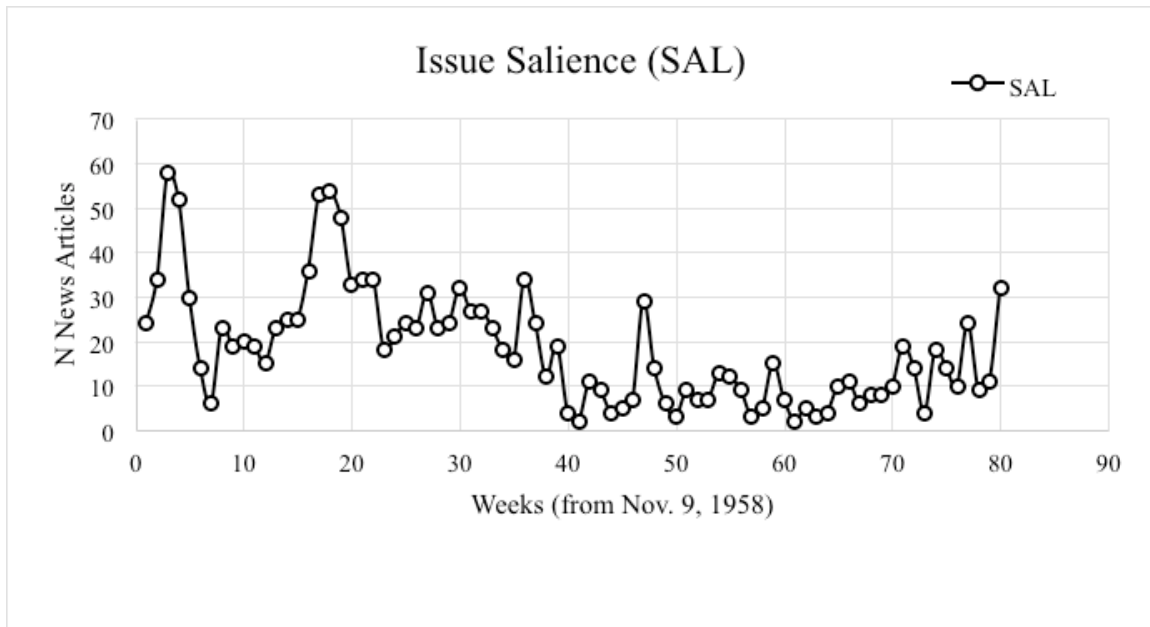
The data on issue salience (SAL) was used to construct a time-series graphic (Figure I) broken up into one-week segments, which, as noted by Edwards and Wood (1999), gives a reasonably detailed picture of events. The collection period spans from the week of November 10, 1958 when Khrushchev began the crisis, until the week of May 20, 1960, when Khrushchev cut off all negotiations with the Eisenhower Administration in the midst of the U-2 Incident. After this date, all further talks on Berlin were postponed until the American presidential elections later that year, when Khrushchev hoped the next U.S. executive would be more amenable to negotiating on his terms. Examining only this period allowed me to focus on the Khrushchev-Eisenhower dynamic, as the crisis began to take on different characteristics under John F. Kennedy's Administration.

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<sup>6</sup> Also included in this collection were mentions of the refugee flow of East Germans to the West via Berlin in early 1960. The media often linked this issue with the larger geopolitical crisis, and the situation helped to perpetuate a public consciousness of the city. This refugee flow was a significant source of tension, and arguably one of the main reasons East German leader Walter Ulbricht exerted pressure on the Soviets to press the Berlin issue (Harrison, 1993).



**Figure I:**



This time series provides a map of the crisis from the perspective of the *NYT*. A total of 1,478 articles were coded with an average of 18.5 mentions per week, the lowest being 2 articles occurring the weeks of Aug. 18, 1959 and January 1, 1960, and the highest being 58 the week of November 23, 1958. A table of all values can be found in Appendix I. Most of the spikes in press coverage occurred, predictably, in conjunction with major status-quo-changing events, such as Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum. The large peak in early spring 1958 (around Week 19) corresponds to a combination of events, including Khrushchev's high-profile meetings with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, his visit to East Berlin, and his blunt rejection of a proposed foreign minister's conference.

#### *Mapping Khrushchev's rhetoric*

In order to determine what influence Khrushchev's rhetoric had on press coverage during the crisis, all statements made by the Premier that appeared in the *NYT* were

collected and coded as either status-quo-changing (SQC) or non-status-quo-changing (NSQC). “Statement” is defined as any public or private utterance, written or spoken, that mentioned the Berlin crisis explicitly, or the issues surrounding it (e.g. public speeches, letters to heads of state, communiqués, etc.).

SQC is defined as any statement that could be considered a development in the diplomatic situation, such as new proposals or threats that diverged from the prior crisis situation. The NSQC set includes all other statements. It is important to note that NSQC statements do not necessarily need to be mild or off-hand—aggressive statements and threats were included, as long as these threats were not new ones. There were several instances where a statement that might have been coded as NSQC was instead listed as SQC, if it represented a major shift in tone from other statements around the same time period.

While the coding of these statements was usually straightforward, there were several instances where the Premier’s meaning might have not been to change the status quo, but it was framed as such in the *NYT*. In these cases, the coding followed the general consensus of the news coverage, as perceived reality is much more germane for the purposes of this study. One of the clearest examples of this schism between interpretation and intent can be seen during a private reception at the Albanian embassy in Moscow, November 29, 1958. It was reported that Khrushchev had made several statements concerning Berlin, yet the exact details of his talk were uncorroborated. The following day, the *NYT* ran a front-page headline reading “Khrushchev Hints Talk Might Delay Action on Berlin.” The article gave two accounts of the event, one in which Khrushchev “indicated the Soviet Union would not act unilaterally to alter Berlin’s status

if the West agreed to start negotiations within six months,” and the other which “had [Khrushchev] repeating the essence of the original announcement.” (Frankel 1958, 1 *NYT*). The headline and structure of the piece very clearly favored the first interpretation, although it seems clear that the Premier was not trying publicly to change his bargaining stance at this time.

Khrushchev’s statements were used to construct a time-series spanning the same period as the issue salience data, broken into one-week segments. Weeks where no statements were made (or at least not covered by the *NYT*) are included in the table in Appendix I. A total of 82 statements were recorded over this period, 13 of which were coded as SQC, the other 69 being NSQC. This averages to roughly one statement per week.

## **Findings and Discussion:**

### *Granger F-Test*

Using the data collected for media issue salience (SAL), and SQC and NSQC statements, I initially ran a Granger (1969) Test of probable causality, to determine whether or not SQC and NSQC statements could be used to predict SAL variations. A multivariate version of this test, VAR, has been used successfully in multiple agenda setting studies (Edwards & Wood 1999; Peake, 2001), and is a useful tool within econometrics. Significant Granger causality was not found for either SQC or NSQC statements (Table I), so the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) of no influence could not be rejected. This does not provide a definitive answer to the research question, however.

The bivariate nature of this test fails to take into account other factors known to influence the media agenda, such as domestic elite discourse (Dearing & Rogers 1996; J. Cohen 1997) and “real-world events” (Behr & Iyengar 1985). I hypothesized that President Eisenhower’s lack of aggressive, SQC rhetoric would mitigate these effects, but it is possible that in the absence of a strong American voice, the *NYT* received its cues for issue salience from the rhetoric of other allied leaders, such as West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt. Furthermore, as Khrushchev’s SQC rhetoric represented some of the most impactful events of the crisis, such as his six-month ultimatum deadline, I believed that other international events would have minimal effect. While it is still possible that NQCS rhetoric has predictive power over SAL levels, it appears that media attention was too multifaceted in this case—the aforementioned variables should be considered in future VAR analyses.

<b>Table I. Granger Tests for SQC and NSQC Influence on Issue Salience</b>				
	NSQC		SQC	
Lags	F-stat	p-value	F-stat	p-value
1	0.0239	(0.8775)	1.4192	(0.8775)
2	0.3205	(0.7568)	0.2408	(0.7568)
3	0.6122	(0.6093)	1.6868	(0.6093)
4	0.5921	(0.6695)	2.1386	(0.6695)
5	1.6005	(0.1729)	1.3243	(0.1729)

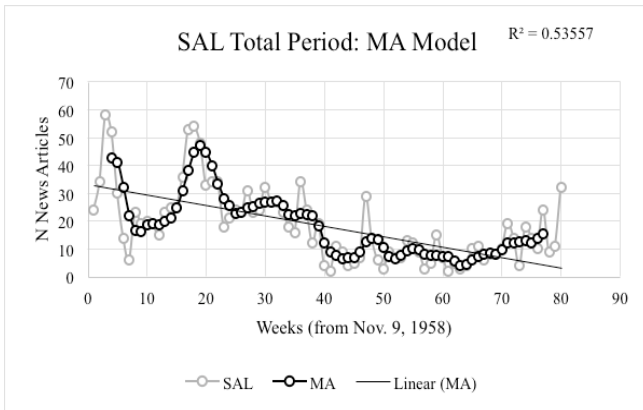
### *MA Models*

Next, I constructed a MA (Moving Average) Model of the SAL data to determine if it had a general trend (Figure II). Expectedly, there was an overall downward slope in press attention as the crisis progressed, in the face of issue fatigue and the absence of

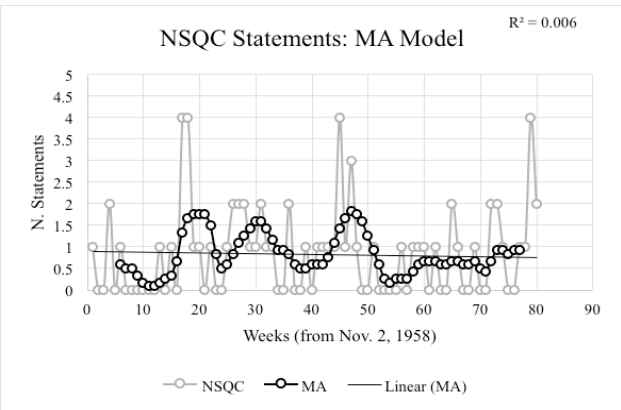
major developments. The same was done with Khrushchev's NSQC statements, which had a very slight downward slope, but not enough to be considered significant (Figure III). To run a cross correlation, the data was divided into two periods (P.1 and P.2) at the Week 34 mark (June 28, 1959). This was done for both statistical and historical reasons. Dividing the data into two sets yielded stationary results to control for spurious relationships due to general trends in the data (Figures IV & V).

Within the crisis itself, this period in late June marked a significant shift. Shortly before this date on June 19, 1959, Khrushchev proposed a new, six-month deadline for negotiations on Berlin following a failure of Soviet proposals at a foreign minister's summit conference in Geneva. After this period, it was remarked in the *NYT* that Khrushchev's rhetoric and demeanor were much more subdued in the lead up to his visit to the United States (Rosenthal 1959, 2 *NYT*). Richter (1994, 119) argues that it is possible that Khrushchev "allowed" the conference of foreign ministers to fail in order to expedite a summit with the other heads of state, where he would be able to negotiate personally with the Western powers. This period of time signaled the end of the first major round of negotiations, and the beginning of a movement toward the next that would directly involve the heads of state rather than proxies.

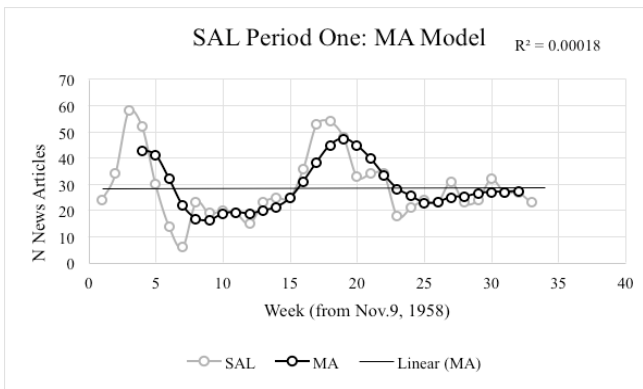
**Figure II.**



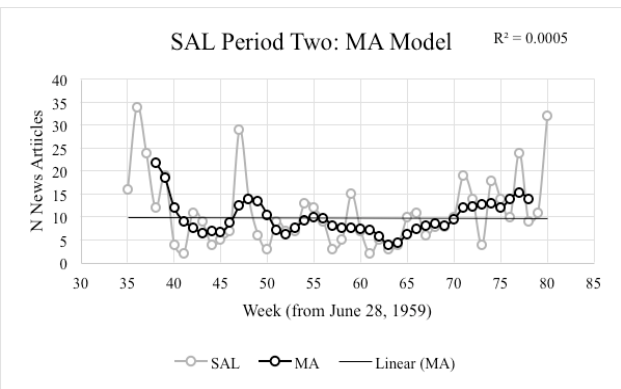
**Figure III.**



**Figure IV.**



**Figure V.**



During the first period (P.1), there was a moderate (0.490) and significant correlation between NSQC statements and SAL at lag 0, and a weaker (0.424), but still significant correlation for lag 1.\* As the data is broken up by week, the lag 1 result is likely due to statements that were made near the end of one week, and covered at the beginning of the next. The correlation between SQC statements and SAL was strong and significant at lag 0 (0.64) and at lag1 (0.593), and was moderate and significant at lag 2

\* Significance is defined at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Lag, in this case, means the shifting of one data set against the other to test for correlations between non-synchronous events. For example, NSQC data from week one is tested for its correlation to SAL from week two.

(0.411). During the second period (P.2.), there was no significant correlation between NSQC statements and SAL, save for a spurious weak relationship (0.309) at lag -9.

### *Discussion*

The difference in results between the first and second half of the crisis was not expected, and points to several interesting possibilities. With an average of 28.5 articles appearing weekly on the crisis during P.1, the crisis in this first phase was undoubtedly more volatile and salient than in P.2, with an average of only 11 articles. Khrushchev's SQC rhetoric was also much more prevalent during P.1, with an average of 0.26 statements per week as opposed to 0.08 during P.2. It is also important to note that his SQC statements were not homogenous throughout the entire study period. While these statements were defined as any that actively altered the bargaining situation and could be considered a new development, some had a much greater impact on the situation than others. For example, the Berlin ultimatum near the beginning of the crisis was received as a highly escalatory act that represented a definitive break from past policy and a lapse into unilateralism, whereas other statements, such as Khrushchev's agreement to a foreign minister's conference, was an important development, but was not escalatory and followed as a natural part of the lifecycle of the crisis. In general, the most acutely SQC statements occurred during P.1, and while the Premier continued to make hostile threats in P.2, they were nearly always repetitions of prior ones. After half a year, the opposing sides had fallen comfortably into their entrenched arguments, and little progress was being made—when Berlin was no longer being immediately threatened, most laypeople probably lost interest in the convoluted diplomatic proceedings.

There are three main explanations as to why the association between NSQC statements was strong and significant in P.1 and not in P.2: first that Khrushchev's NSQC rhetoric was assigned greater importance by the press during periods of high tension, exacerbating the conflict when his words were hostile or not completely clear, second that Khrushchev's NSQC statements tended to be grouped with his SQC ones, or third that the *NYT* only reported on Khrushchev's NSQC statements during periods that were already tense. This last hypothesis is unlikely; the number of Khrushchev's NSQC statements that made it to press decreased only slightly over the total period of the crisis (Figure III), unlike the overall salience of the crisis, which experienced significant decreases after P.1 (Figure II). Additionally, the finding that media attention correlated with NSQC statements at several lags (but not in the reverse) is highly suggestive that the relationship did not work as a function of selection bias.

Likely, the answer is a combination of hypotheses 1 and 2. While there were instances, such as Prime Minister Macmillan's visit to Moscow, where Khrushchev made a series of SQC and NSQC statements in quick succession, this was not often the case. Historical evidence, particularly the ways in which the media framed Khrushchev and his speeches, points to the fact that the Premier's words were often misinterpreted, and this speculation increased dramatically during already tense periods. As was discussed earlier in this study a high amount of importance and meaning was assigned to the Premier's words. There were many instances of near egregious over interpretation of the Premier's words—nearly all of these instances occurred early on during the crisis.



These results suggest that while NSQC statements can contribute to salience during periods that are already highly salient, they have relatively little effect during other stages of crises.

### **Conclusion:**

The Berlin Crisis promised to be a fertile ground for hostile foreign elite influence on the American media for several reasons: President Eisenhower's avoidance of crisis escalation and the public eye, the media's view that Premier Khrushchev controlled all matters of Soviet foreign policy, and American memory of the Berlin Blockade a decade earlier. The results of this study suggest that there was a moderate influence of non-status-quo-changing statements made by the Premier on the salience of the Berlin crisis in the American media; however, this influence was contingent on an already-tense and volatile situation. Given the politically vulnerable position of Eisenhower, this might have created political consequences for him, but it is highly doubtful that they were intentionally manufactured by Khrushchev. Heads of state must attend the needs and desires of various audiences, and Khrushchev's rhetorical behavior likely was an attempt to balance the many interests of his allies, the Soviet leadership, and long-term goals. Given the unique situation of the Berlin crisis, these influences of non-status-quo-changing rhetoric are likely to be much weaker in most other cases. Further research on the influence of foreign rhetoric and propaganda is needed, but for the time being, hostile foreign influence appears to be limited and conditional. Crisis rhetoric is an extremely powerful tool, but ultimately it is a blunt instrument whose efficacy is subject to the

interpretations and value judgments of other actors—when foreign leaders are not producing new and interesting developments, they are largely ignored.

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## Appendix:

Date	N News Articles	NSQC Statements	SQC Statements
11/9/58	24	1	1
11/16/58	34	0	0
11/23/58	58	0	2
11/30/58	52	2	0
12/7/58	30	0	0
12/14/58	14	1	0
12/21/58	6	0	0
12/28/58	23	0	0
1/4/59	19	0	0
1/11/59	20	0	0
1/18/59	19	0	0
1/25/59	15	0	0
2/1/59	23	1	0
2/8/59	25	0	0
2/15/59	25	1	0
2/22/59	36	0	1

3/1/59	53	4	1
3/8/59	54	4	1
3/15/59	48	1	1
3/22/59	33	1	0
3/29/59	34	0	0
4/5/59	34	1	0
4/12/59	18	0	0
4/19/59	21	0	0
4/26/59	24	1	0
5/3/59	23	2	0
5/10/59	31	2	0
5/17/59	23	2	0
5/24/59	24	1	1
5/31/59	32	1	0
6/7/59	27	2	0
6/14/59	27	1	1
6/21/59	23	1	0
6/28/59	18	0	0
7/5/59	16	0	0
7/12/59	34	2	0
7/19/59	24	0	0
7/26/59	12	0	0
8/2/59	19	1	0
8/9/59	4	0	0
8/16/59	2	1	0
8/23/59	11	1	0
8/30/59	9	1	0
9/6/59	4	1	0
9/13/59	5	4	0
9/20/59	7	1	0
9/27/59	29	3	1
10/4/59	14	1	0
10/11/59	6	0	0
10/18/59	3	0	0
10/25/59	9	1	0
11/1/59	7	0	0
11/8/59	7	0	0
11/15/59	13	0	0
11/22/59	12	0	0
11/29/59	9	1	0
12/6/59	3	0	0
12/13/59	5	1	0

12/20/59	15	1	1
12/27/59	7	1	0
1/3/60	2	0	0
1/10/60	5	1	0
1/17/60	3	0	0
1/24/60	4	0	0
1/31/60	10	2	0
2/7/60	11	1	0
2/14/60	6	0	0
2/21/60	8	0	0
2/28/60	8	1	0
3/6/60	10	0	0
3/13/60	19	0	0
3/20/60	14	2	0
3/27/60	4	2	0
4/3/60	18	1	0
4/10/60	14	0	0
4/17/60	10	0	0
4/24/60	24	1	0
5/1/60	9	1	0
5/8/60	11	4	0
5/15/60	32	2	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>13</b>