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Edward Snowden and the Privacy vs. National Security Debate

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Edward Snowden and the Privacy vs. National Security Debate

Introduction

If Edward Snowden was asked in February 2013 who would star in a blockbuster film about his lived experiences, he probably would have laughed. He might have daydreamed of being played by Joseph Gordon Levitt, but as an NSA contractor blockbuster films were not a part of his day job. In May 2013 the United Kingdom's *Guardian* newspaper began producing articles based on leaks originating directly from the NSA through an anonymous figure. Three months later, the anonymous whistleblower was identified as Edward Snowden, a former employee of the NSA. Today Edward Snowden lives in Russia and will likely never return to the United States due to harsh treatment of past whistleblowers. Some of the coverage of Edward Snowden has been hyper-personalized—perhaps heightened by the documentary *Citizenfour* that focused on the gradual release of Snowden's cache of NSA documents, his ultimate escape to Russia and his shaving habits.[1] However, these documents also raised questions about privacy, personal liberty, and national security. The revelation that the NSA indiscriminately spied on swaths of American citizens radically differed from the image portrayed by the US government of concentrated surveillance only on suspected terrorists. Snowden taps directly into this debate when he explains, "I can't in good conscience allow the US government to destroy privacy, internet freedom and basic liberties for people around the world with this massive surveillance machine they're secretly building."[2] Yet post–Edward Snowden, surveillance remains a

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[1] Laura Poitras, Edward J. Snowden, Glenn Greenwald, *Citizenfour*, (Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2015).

[2] Glenn Greenwald, "Edward Snowden: the whistleblower behind the NSA surveillance revelations," *The Guardian*, 11 June 2013, https://www.theguardian.com.

cornerstone of United States foreign and domestic policy.

This conversation is not a new one. With Daniel Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers, Ralph Nader created the concept "whistleblower," as a means of distancing these individuals from the previously used terms, "snitch" and "informant."[3] There have been many notable players following Ellsberg, including WikiLeaks and Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange, and most recently the Panama Papers. These cases highlight the necessity of whistleblowers, but also serve as cautionary tales due to the personal risk involved. Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning was served a 35-year sentence in prison for the footage she released until President Obama commuted her sentence.[4] Julian Assange, the man behind WikiLeaks, remains in Ecuador's London Embassy due to an extradition order from Sweden on sexual assault charges, charges he alleges to be a means of discrediting him. Many members of the hacking, occasionally social justice inclined group, Anonymous were dealt jail sentences for their computer hacking.

Meanwhile, the United States government attempted to prevent media sources from releasing information obtained from whistleblowers. President Obama's response to Snowden does not leave room for leniency. According to *Politico*,

> Obama complained Snowden's leaks revealed 'methods to our adversaries could impact our operations in ways that we may not fully understand for years to come.'… and observed that some countries are feigning outrage over the U.S. surveillance since they 'are constantly probing our government and private sector networks, and accelerating programs to listen to our conversations, intercept our emails, or compromise our systems.'[5]

Despite these obstacles, Snowden's fate may evolve as public opinion changes. A petition signed by over 167,000 people warranted an official White House response about potentially pardoning

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[3] Ben Zimmer, "The Epithet Nader Made Respectable," *Wall Street Journal*, 12 July 2013, https://www.wsj.com.

[4] Charlie Savage, "Chelsea Manning to be Released Early as Obama Commutes Sentence," *New York Times*, 17 January 2017, http://www.newyorktimes.com.

[5] John Gerstei, "Obama hits Snowden over NSA leaks," *Politico*, 17 January 2014, https://www.politico.com. Ellipses added by author.

Snowden. Consistent with previous statements the White House asserted that Snowden should return to the United States to be judged by "a jury of his peers."[6]

The shockwaves emanating from Edward Snowden's actions necessitate the research question, how do whistleblowers, specifically Edward Snowden, influence the national security vs. privacy debate in terms of media coverage (or lack thereof)? The Snowden case sits within large literatures about whistleblowers, theories of power, and mass media. Researching the patterns of the news coverage about Snowden leads to findings about framing, indexing, and agenda setting best understood using journalistic norms.

Literature Review

Edward Snowden in a Historical Context

As previously stated, Daniel Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers (originally referred to as the "History of U.S. Decision-Making Process on Vietnam Policy") in 1971 to the *New York Times,* gave rise to the term whistleblower. Before scrutinizing Snowden's own actions as a whistleblower, understanding the historical context he operated in is essential because it clarifies the precedent set in terms of media coverage for previous whistleblowers. Considering past treatment of whistleblowers and the culture of fear propagated from 2001 to the present, through the War on Terror, helps explain the explosive nature of Snowden's NSA leaks and the intense pushback. Daniel Ellsberg explained in an article he penned for the *New York Times* regarding President Bush's decision to involve the American people in the Iraq War:

> The American people are reluctant to believe that their president has made errors of judgment that have cost American lives. To convince them otherwise, there is no substitute for hard evidence: documents, photographs, transcripts. Often the only way for the public to get such evidence is if a **dedicated public servant decides to release it without**

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[6] Maya Rhoden, "White House Responds to Petition Urging Obama to Pardon Edward," *Time Magazine,* 28 July 201, https://www.time.com.

permission.[7]

Similar to the pressure media outlets experienced to ignore material from Snowden's NSA leaks

or WikiLeaks, media outlets experienced intense pressure to shelve the documents Ellsberg

handed over. Bruce Altschuler suggests the Pentagon Papers shaped the treatment of

whistleblowers and "like the Manning verdict, the decision represented a shift in the

understanding of the First Amendment," with the introduction of Prior Restraint.[8] Prior Restraint

is understood as the judicial suppression of material that would otherwise be published or

broadcast, on the grounds of being libelous or harmful. Previously, Prior Restraint was rare due

to the strict protection of the First Amendment. While the Court ruled in favor of the Pentagon

Papers, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* did not post the most sensitive information.

The 'harm' of the Pentagon Papers was dubious at best, yet Altschuler quotes *The Post*, that

noted "a deep seated—if not reflex—commitment by many high Government officials to

maintaining continued secrecy."[9] This reflex towards secrecy remains pervasive in American

political structures today. Moving forward, the indecisive precedent set by the Supreme Court

decision left Prior Restraint open for interpretation and manipulation by the US Government. On

the other hand, Altschuler admits the digital age freed restrictions on the media and

whistleblowers that have allowed them to circumvent the governmental backlash witnessed

following the Pentagon Papers.

State suppression immediately followed Snowden's NSA leaks. Just prior to the NSA leaks,

many harsh laws inspired by 9/11 were still on the books. Political scientists Douglas McLeod

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[7] Daniel Ellsberg, "Truths Worth Telling," *New York Times*, 28 September 2014, https://www.nytimes.com. Emphasis added by author.

[8] Bruce E. Altschuler, "Is the Pentagon Papers Case Still Relevant in the Age of Wikileaks?" *Political Science Quarterly* 130, no. 3 (September 2015): 401, doi: 10.1002/polq.12359.

[9] Altschuler, "Is the Pentagon Papers Case Still Relevant?" 408-409.

and Dhavan Shah assert,

> a common pattern in which an external conflict provides an impetus for weakening civil liberties in the interest of national security, followed by a resurgence of civil liberties as the conflict subsides… in the case of the Patriot Act… the initial response was so strong and resurgence has taken so long and been relatively weak.[10]

However, McLeod and Shah note the tension between national security and civil liberties began far before 9/11, citing examples from the late 1700's to today. Following the Patriot Act, longitudinal public opinions polls illustrated a decline in support for the invasion of privacy in the name of national security. After Snowden, Hasian, Lawson, and McFarlane explain the state redefined the term 'whistleblower,' in order to pass harsh laws preventing future whistleblowers from coming forward. Furthermore, Lockean political scientist William Scheuerman explains that, in enforcing the Espionage Act, President Obama has been more aggressive than his predecessors—highlighting a shift towards using more surveillance within the United States government, violating the balance of the social contract.[11] Altschuler also explores this trend, explaining, "Prior to the Obama administration, a total of three indictments had been brought under the 1917 Espionage Act against alleged leakers, including Ellsberg. In contrast, when Snowden was charged, it was the administration's seventh such prosecution."[12] Scheuerman analyzes this trend, explaining expanded surveillance is glossed over by the media, unless a whistleblower intervenes, because of the strong patriotic sentiments and culture of fear limiting criticism following 9/11.

Altschuler explains this suppression bled into the way the mass media treats whistleblowers,

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[10] Douglas McLeod and Dhavan Shah, "Framing Surveillance and the War on Terror," in *News Frames and National Security* ed. by Robert Entman and Lance Bennett, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 39. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x.. Ellipses added by author.

[11] William E. Scheuerman, "Taking Snowden Seriously: Civil Disobedience for an Age of Total Surveillance," In *The Snowden Reader*, ed. by David P. Fidler, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015): 81.

[12] Altschuler, "Is the Pentagon Papers Case Still Relevant?" 419.

noting,

> When the *New York Times* learned of the Bush administration's warrantless interception of e-mails, rather than publishing this information before the 2004 election, it initiated discussions with the government… After reviewing Snowden's material about the secret budget for the U.S. intelligence agencies, the *Washington Post* concluded 'The Post is publishing only summary tables and charts online.'[13]

Edward Wasserman criticizes this media hesitancy, asserting in order to capitalize on the digital age—when theoretically more information should be available to the media— it is essential whistleblowers—"believe [their information will] be heard and welcomed, and [that] they can step forward with it without fear of punishment."[14] Ellsberg appeals to potential whistleblowers directly, recognizing the inevitable risks, noting, "Technology may make it easier to tell your story, but the decision to do so will be no less difficult. The personal risks of making disclosures embarrassing to your superiors are real. If you are identified as the source, your career will be over; friendships will be lost; you may even be prosecuted."[15] Because of this need for confidential sources to get at the heart of the information age, the media must adopt a role that creates "an environment in which sources can speak."[16]

Hasian, Lawson, and McFarlane consider Snowden's framing attempts to the press, as an "average, yet concerned American patriot."[17] The term framing will later be explored in greater detail, but can be understood as the "selection" of news stories and the "salience" with which they are presented.[18] The documentary, *Citizenfour,* focused on Snowden's most mundane daily

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[13] Altschuler, "Is the Pentagon Papers Case Still Relevant?" 423. Ellipses added by author.

[14] Edward Wasserman, "Protecting News in the Era of Disruptive Sources," in *After Snowden: Privacy, Secrecy, and Security in the Information Age* eds. by Ronald Goldfarb, (New York: St. Martins Press, 2015), 119.

[15] Ellsberg, "Truths Worth Telling."

[16] Wasserman, "Protecting News in the Era of Disruptive Sources," 119.

[17] Marouf Hasian, Sean Lawson, and Megan McFarlane, "Edward Snowden, Agent Provocateur, and Overreactions of the NSA," in *The Rhetorical Invention of America's National Security State*, eds. Marouf Hasian, Sean Lawson and Megan McFarlane, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 185.

[18] Robert A. Entman, "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 52.

activities, from combing his hair to hanging out in bed. The documentary also highlights

Snowden's careful selection of which documents to release and his conscientious decision to

withhold documents which may cause harm.[19] In addition, Hasian, Lawson, and McFarlane

analyze *Frontline*'s coverage of Edward Snowden in its special, "The United States of Secrets,"

determining Snowden's framing attempts are clear, but unsuccessful. This is in part due to

Charlotte Ryan and William Gamson's suggestion, "Activists cannot build political power

simply by framing their message in ways that resonate with broader cultural values. To succeed,

framing strategies must be integrated with broader movement building efforts."[20]

This creates a discrepancy between the frames Snowden and his team sought to control and

the way the NSA leaks were ultimately framed by the media. The media had to balance

Snowden's perspective and the US government perspective, in conjunction with the media's own

journalistic norms. Following Snowden's release of NSA document the journalist who acted as a

direct pipeline to Snowden, Glenn Greenwald, published, *No Place to Hide,* as an attempt to

silence critics and provide insight into Snowden's decision and the material he released.

Greenwald sums up counter frames used against Snowden with,

> The many pro-surveillance advocates I have debated since Snowden blew the whistle have
> been quick to echo [Google CEO] Eric Schmidt's view that privacy is for people who have
> something to hide. But none of them would willingly give me the passwords to their email
> accounts, or allow video cameras in their homes.[21]

Despite the Snowden media hailstorm, this book was limited in its success. Hasian, Lawson, and

McFarlane explain many of the reviews of the book from various media sources reflected

Greenwald's scathing portrayal of the media. Critics commented the book had a very legalistic

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[19] Laura Poitras, Edward J. Snowden, Glenn Greenwald, *Citizenfour* (Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2015).

[20] Charlotte Ryan and William A. Gamson, "The Art of Reframing Political Debates," *Contexts* 5, no. 1 (2009): 1. doi: doi: 10.1525/ctx.2006.5.1.13.

[21] Glenn Greenwald, No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, The NSA, and the US Surveillance State, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014) 171.

feel, making Greenwald appear overly defensive. This failed to connect with Snowden's

'Average American' frame or the public and media penchant for authenticity explored by Sarah

Sobieraj. She explains,

> Activist strain themselves to be media friendly, bending over backwards to be quotable, and credible, yet, ironically these studied attempts to conform to the norms of *routine* political reporting make them less appealing to journalists. While journalists may attend eagerly elected officials' press conferences and official statements, they demand *authenticity* and spontaneity from activists.[22]

Power Exercised through Surveillance

Snowden's NSA document leaks illustrated the depth and breadth of NSA surveillance on

ordinary Americans. This shocking realization called into question the methods and purpose of

surveillance. Understanding surveillance theory and how surveillance functions as a tool of

power by the US government is crucial.

The USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools

Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001) expanded surveillance procedures

within the United States. In "Title II—Enhanced Surveillance Procedures," the document

outlined the "authority to intercept wire, oral, and electronic communications relating to

terrorism," "…computer fraud and abuse offenses," and the "emergency disclosure of electronic

communications to protect life and limb."[23] The USA PATRIOT Act also included provisions to

collect metadata on large swaths of American citizens and tech companies (like Google), by

specifying the "Voluntary disclosure of customer communications or records" and, if necessary,

the forcible seizure of these records.[24] As the name suggests, these steps towards increased

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[22] Sahah Sobieraj, "Reporting Conventions: Journalists, Activists, and the Thorny Struggle for Political Visibility," *Social Problems* 43, no.1 (1996): 506. doi: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.pacificu.edu:2048/10.1525/sp.2010.57.4.505 505-528.

[23] USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, Pub L. No. 107-56, 115 Stat. 172 (2002), Section 201, 202, 212. Ellipses added by author.

[24] USA PATRIOT Act, Sections 212 and 215.

surveillance were made to 'obstruct terrorism.' Following the devastation of 9/11 such actions

were deemed a necessary precaution and proactive step at preventing a future terrorist attack on

US soil.

However, the Patriot Act was scaled back over the next decade, following criticism of the

extensive privileges granted in the bill, in favor of the Freedom of Information Act that was

enacted in 1967. A reformed version was signed into law by President Obama in June 2016.[25]

Ultimately, this bill was designed to increase transparency by guaranteeing the public is aware of

the information the US government collects and ensuring only personal information necessary to

administer US programs is collected.[26] Prior to the enormous pushback against collection of

meta-data provided in the USA PATRIOT Act, President Obama offered a defense of surveillance

in a speech given on January 17, 2014:

> Throughout American history, intelligence has helped secure our country and our
> freedoms…. The horror of September 11th brought all these issues to the fore. Across the
> political spectrum, Americans recognized that we had to adapt to a world in which a bomb
> could be built in a basement… We were shaken by the signs we had missed leading up to
> the attacks—how the hijackers had made phone calls to known extremists and traveled to
> suspicious places. So we demanded that our intelligence community improve its
> capabilities...
>
> …Today, new capabilities allow intelligence agencies to track who a terrorist is in contact
> with, and follow the trail of his travel or his funding. New laws allow information to be
> collected and shared more quickly and effectively between federal agencies, and state and
> local law enforcement…And taken together, these efforts have prevented multiple attacks
> and saved innocent lives…
>
> This brings me to the program that has generated the most controversy these past few
> months—the bulk collection of telephone records under Section 215. Let me repeat what I
> said when this story first broke: This program does not involve the content of phone calls,
> or the names of people making calls. Instead, it provides a record of phone numbers and the
> times and lengths of calls— metadata that can be queried if and when we have a reasonable
> suspicion that a particular number is linked to a terrorist organization.

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[25] Josh Gerstein, "Obama Signs FOIA Reform Bill," *Politico*, 30 June 2016, https://www.politico.com.

[26] U.S. Department of State, "Freedom of Information Act: Privacy Impacts Assessment," last modified 11
January 2016, https://foia.state.gov/Learn/PIA.aspx.

> The program grew out of a desire to address a gap identified after 9/11. One of the 9/11 hijackers—Khalid al-Mihdhar—made a phone call from San Diego to a known al Qaeda safe-house in Yemen. NSA saw that call, but it could not see that the call was coming from an individual already in the United States. The telephone metadata program under Section 215 was designed to map the communications of terrorists so we can see who they may be in contact with as quickly as possible.[27]

While President Obama overlaid a series of changes he planned to enact with regards to surveillance in the United States and abroad, his speech also served as a powerful defense of the necessity of surveillance to protect United States citizens.

Michel Foucault and David Lyons scrutinize surveillance as an internalized process, but when this process is forced into the light it creates discomfort and the potential for radical change. Arguably, Edward Snowden's NSA file leaks helped influence the shift from the PATRIOT Act to the Freedom of Information Act. However, both Foucault and Lyons acknowledge systems of surveillance also exist because of their ability to adapt and methods that serve to encourage complacency.

In "Panopticism" Michel Foucault seeks to address on a theoretical and historical level how surveillance influences the exercise of power and the relationship between state and citizen. Unlike other scholars who believe power should be measurable, Foucault explains the major effect of the Panopticon induces "in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility, assuring the automatic implementation of power,"[28] making this form of power difficult to measure or operationalize. Foucault asserts, "[about power] it tends to be noncorporal; and the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound, and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance."[29]

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[27] President Barack Obama, "Obama's Speech on N.S.A. Phone Surveillance," *New York Times*, 17 January 2014, https://www.nytimes.com. Ellipses in original.

[28] Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," in *Ways of Reading*, eds. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, 6th ed., (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2002), 230.

[29] Foucault, "Panopticism," 234.

This embedding of power into societal norms allows elites to maintain control without disturbing the peace and avoiding costly conflict.

Foucault noticed people internalized power through conforming and 'normalizing' certain practices and behaviors. Societal policing creates the effect of the perpetual surveillance of the Panopticon. This echoes Tom Devine and Tarek Maassarani's sentiments in *The Corporate Whistleblower's Survival Guide* when they suggest, "Corporate hierarchies employ intimidation and fear to convince their workers that the power of the organization is stronger than the power of the individual—even individuals who have truth on their side. Often, making an example out of one troublemaker is sufficient to keep the majority silent."[30] Where power is visible, conflict ensues; this is the power of the whistleblower. While other scholars, like Steven Lukes, are inclined to agree with Foucault, they also criticize his work for being 'structurally deterministic;' in other words, discounting individual agency.[31]

Nevertheless, societal norms are created by and can be changed by humans. In *Disruptive Power*, Taylor Owens explains the digital age provides a mechanism for change because "Digital technology overwhelms challenges of coordination, communication, size, complexity, and velocity that previously limited network behavior."[32] When technology enables groups like WikiLeaks or Anonymous, it retains the potential to serve state interests. David Lyons asserts in the current status quo, "Surveillance connects directly with everyday practices of ordinary internet and cellphone users,"[33]encouraging complacency. In his book *Electronic Eye: The Rise*

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[30] Tom Devine, Tarek F. Maassarani, and Jeffrey Wigand, *The Corporate Whistleblower's Survival Guide*. (Oakland, US: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011), 30.

[31] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[32] Taylor Owens, *Disruptive Power: The Crisis of the State in the Digital Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 30.

[33] David Lyons, "Framing Futures," in *Surveillance After Snowden*, eds. David Lyons (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 182.

of Surveillance Society he points out,

> No one is spying on us… although for many people that is what it feels like if and when they find out just how detailed a picture of us is available. 'They' know things about us, but we often don't know what they know, why they know, or with whom else they might share their knowledge.[34]

This complacency is capitalized on by large corporations and governmental organizations, like the NSA. In order to push back against this complacency, he urges we "Speak truth to power," "Raise Awareness of vulnerability," and "Leverage law and policy."[35] The 'awareness' that Lyons points to can speak to the whistleblower, exposing critical documents (like Snowden or Manning), but this awareness can also be developed through the political process by electing politicians who have been outspoken against surveillance. Once the vulnerability is exposed, this outrage must be followed by tangible action. For instance, pushback against the PATRIOT Act forced political elites to repeal some of the more invasive surveillance tactics. For Lyons, this step does not go far enough, as it allows American citizens to fall back into the cycle of complacency that he expressly criticizes.

Mass Media Concepts

Understanding the public conversation surrounding the privacy vs. security debate is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, elites make most decisions behind closed doors, but on the other hand, the public does not always have all the information or they may come to conclusions difficult to study. Looking at mass media concepts offers an intermediary step in between these two groups, highlighting how this debate is packaged for consumers as opposed to how key stakeholders want this information to be packaged.

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[34] David Lyons, *Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 4. Ellipses added by author.

[35] David Lyons, *Electronic Eye*, 139–140.

Framing

Framing is a crucial element of this research in explaining the decisions media actors made to display Edward Snowden and NSA surveillance to the public. Before applying this concept to Snowden and the NSA a thorough understanding of what framing is, how it functions, and its larger implications theoretically grounds the research. The first distinction that must be made is between activist framing and media framing.

Jules Boykoff and Eulalie Laschever crystalize this distinction, explaining, "Social movement scholars often use the term to mean 'the conscious, strategic efforts of movement groups to fashion meaningful accounts of themselves and the issues at hand in order to motivate and legitimate their efforts'"; the differing frames between activist and elite frames, lead to "framing contests."[36] This harkens back to Snowden's 'Average American' framing attempts. However, Ryan and Gamson explain in order for a social movement to successfully counter-frame the dominant narrative (ex. National Security) the dissident group must consider the mindset of their opposition, in effect thinking like the adversary.[37] Snowden accomplishes this to a certain extent through his emphasis on strategic information release, as opposed to a classic WikiLeaks document dump.

On the other end of the spectrum, Robert A. Entman proposes one of the most common definitions of media framing. He explains "framing essentially involved selection and salience," where to 'select' is to pick and choose from our perceived reality what receives coverage and 'salience' is the process of "communicating a text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for

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[36] Jules Boykoff and Eulalie Laschever, "The Tea Party Movement, Framing, and the US Media," *Social Movement Theory* 10, no. 4 (November 2011): 345, doi: 10.1080.14742837.

[37] Charlotte Ryan and William A. Gamson, "The Art of Reframing Political Debates," *Contexts* 5, no. 1 (2009): 15.

the item described."[38] The term salience itself means "making pieces of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences."[39] This can be achieved a variety of ways, such as, "Placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols."[40] These strategies increase the salience of a text and offer two ways of operationalizing framing.

McLeod and Shah utilize Entman's definition of framing to study the War on Terror through a case study approach of "salient historical events" to determine the longevity of the security debate and patterns in the flow of this debate. In addition, they compare public policy decisions alongside public opinion polls to consider government action and the public's reaction following the War on Terror. Their approach utilizes "content analysis and descriptive evidence,"[41] allowing them to conduct a series of media related experiments to gauge the public's reaction to the security debate following the War on Terror. This also relates to Entman's concept, "cultural congruence," which Boykoff and Laschever explain as a way of considering a frames success: "The more congruent the frame is with schemas that dominate political culture, the more success it will enjoy."[42] Another way of phrasing this would be:

> Media reflect and reproduce the political culture and ultimately act as the arbiter of…
> 'discursive opportunity structure' or the set of variables 'determining which ideas are
> considered 'sensible', which constructions of reality are seen as 'realistic', and which
> claims are held as 'legitimate' within a certain polity.[43]

Understanding "cultural congruence" offers analysis for the frames used following 9/11 in the media coverage and ways to interpret why certain frames were utilized more than others following Snowden's actions.

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[38] Entman, "Framing," 52.

[39] Entman, "Framing," 53.

[40] Entman, "Framing," 53.

[41] McLeod and Shah, "Framing Surveillance and the War on Terror," 39–40.

[42] Boykoff and Laschever, "Media Framing and the Tea Party Movement," 346.

[43] Boykoff and Laschever, "Media Framing and the Tea Party Movement," 346. Ellipses added by author.

After Snowden's release of NSA Documents, the government immediately counteracted with

"justification" of their actions and "vilification" of Snowden, highlighting a framing battle

between the two entities.[44] The mainstream media in times of crisis, particularly post 9/11, look

to government officials, who then foster a "culture of fear," leading to heavily one sided

coverage.[45] This is illustrated in their framing analysis of news articles following 9/11 that

showed media reliance on the "societal frame," as opposed to the "individual frame," to promote

unity and discourage dissent.[46]

D'Angelo's Conception of Framing and Journalistic Norms

Paul D'Angelo criticizes Entman's definition for being over simplistic, explaining, "There is

not, nor should there be, a single 'mended' paradigm of framing research."[47] This over

simplification neglects that "researchers must identify journalistic intentions, news values,

discursive structures, and content formats that integrate the words and images of a news story

into a frame."[48] This "framing device" is reminiscent of the concept, journalistic norm. W. Lance

Bennett defines journalist norms as,

> anchored… by three not-always-compatible normative orders: norms about the journalism
> profession (e.g. objectivity, fairness); norms about the proper role of the press in politics…
> and the normative constraints of the business side of news organizations (reporting stories
> efficiently and profitably).[49]

Journalistic norms are key to interpreting media frames. The 'proper role of the press in politics'

considers the media's responsibility as a source of information, harkening back to the Cronkite

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[44] McLeod and Shah, "Framing Surveillance and the War on Terror," 52.

[45] McLeod and Shah, "Framing Surveillance and the War on Terror," 64.

[46] McLeod and Shah, "Framing Surveillance and the War on Terror," 69.

[47] Paul D'Angelo, "News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program: A Response to Entman," *Journal of Communication* 52, no. 4 (December 2002): 870, doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02578.x.

[48] Paul D'Angelo, "News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program," 881.

[49] W. Lance Bennett, "An Introduction to Journalistic Norms and Representations of Politics," *Political Communication* 13 (1996): 375. Ellipses added by author.

era of media. Another way of looking at these journalistic norms considers their bias, as Jules Boykoff and Maxwell Boykoff suggest in their paper, "Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of mass media coverage."[50] They explore "first order norms" such as "personalization" and "novelty." Boykoff and Boykoff consider these norms' influence on media coverage, indicating reporters use a more individualistic lens and fall into the "issue-of-the-month syndrome."[51] The second order norm, "authority-order bias,"[52] considers the media tendency to rely on elite sources (similar to indexing). Considering these norms in relation to coverage of Edward Snowden helps explain the intense focus on his personal life as well as reliance on quotes from the NSA and President Obama even after Snowden's leaks damaged the credibility of elite political actors.

Entman's conceptualization of framing was used to guide this research because "selection" of key points of coverage during the Snowden controversy was critical to news coverage. The "saliency," or lack thereof, of less event driven coverage was also crucial to a thorough analysis of the compiled articles. Boykoff and Boykoff's understanding of journalistic norms as a kind of media bias was also crucial to interpreting the results of the framing analysis.

Framing Effects

It is important to note frames typically have a "common effect on large portions of the receiving audience, though it is not likely to have a universal effect on all."[53] Thus, when studying frames there may be a correlation between the media frame and the audience response,

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[50] Maxwell T. Boykoff and Jules M. Boykoff, "Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of US mass-media coverage," *Geoforum* 38, no. 6 (2007): 1190–1204. http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.pacificu.edu:2048/10.1016/j.geoforum.2007.01.008.

[51] Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," 1192.

[52] Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," 1193.

[53] Entman, "Framing," 54.

but causation is far more difficult to show. D'Angelo elaborates on the notion of "framing

effects," explaining:

> The framing effects flow… indicates that what frames affect… is mediated by intervening processes. These range from official discourses of government figures, political candidates, and social movements, to audience frames that generate opinions of ordinary people in mundane conversations, to the prior knowledge underlying individuals' decision making and interpretations. **Framing effects, then, are not one-way.** For example, movement activists must develop discourses and techniques suited to obtaining coverage from mainstream news organizations that are not entirely eager to provide them with coverage that meets their goals… Movement mobilization is shaped by news coverage, but the discourses of the movement also interact with news frames to mitigate the effects of news frames and to become the reality of that group. This is also the case with other types of framing effects, in which cognitive schemata, …political socialization,… and the other outcomes are shaped by news frames, yet also mitigate their power.[54]

This "Multiparadigmatic" conception of framing illustrates frames as cyclical rather than linear,

which makes causation difficult to pinpoint. Causation is also difficult to pinpoint on a

psychological level. Whether the audience is impacted by the media frame or by other influences

is difficult to determine. Thomas E. Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson and Zoe M. Oxley consider the

"psychological responses to news frames," noting "…different pieces of information… carry

different weights, reflecting their relative effect on the summary attitude… These weights

correspond to the perceived importance, relevance, reliability, or perceptual salience of the

information."[55] Because causation is difficult to determine when considering media effects, this

line of thought will speak to future research opportunities for a Snowden media analysis.

Indexing

Shanto Iyengar and Jennifer McGrady define indexing as,

the process of adjusting coverage of an issue according to the level of disagreement and debate about that issue among policy elites… due in large part to the journalistic norms of

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[54] D'Angelo, "News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program," 882. Emphasis and ellipses added by author.

[55] Thomas E. Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson and Zoe Oxley, "Media Framing of Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (September 1997): 567, doi: 10.2307/2952075. Ellipses added by author.

using official sources and of seeking objectivity by reporting different sides of the debate…
If there is consensus among officials… there is no reportable conflict, and coverage, when
it happens, tends to be deferential.[56]

To examine this concept they consider media coverage changes during times of war or conflict,

determining when the focus is on American military strength or when the country is in a position

of vulnerability (for example, after a terrorist attack), media are less likely to question elites for

fear of appearing unpatriotic and because there are fewer dissenting opinions to use as sources.

Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston elaborate on this concept explaining, "If serious political

debate breaks out, particularly with policy-making implications, counter-frames may expand."[57]

They continue, "dramatic and troubling events can provide legitimizing pegs to support

relatively independent and critical news narratives, even allowing the news media to set the

agenda more proactively than usual," by indexing a wider range of opinions or using a wider

variety of frames.[58] However, in their own findings surrounding the Abu Ghraib scandal this

wider index faded as "the administration aggressively took over the framing virtually

unchallenged by other top level officials."[59] This understanding of indexing is crucial to applying

it to articles covering Edward Snowden. Similar to Abu Ghraib, the NSA leaks were a significant

embarrassment to the US government. The Abu Ghraib indexing study revealed a precedent

within media coverage. This precedent has lingered as a media norm over time, but may be

becoming more inclusive.

Agenda Setting

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[56] Shanto Iyengar and Jennifer A. McGrady, *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide* (New York: WW Norton, 2007), 87. Ellipses added by author.

[57] W. Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence and Steven Livingston, "None Dare Call it Torture: Indexing and the Limits of Press Independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal," *Journal of Communication* 56 (2006): 470. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00296.x.

[58] Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, "None Dare Call it Torture," 468.

[59] Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, "None Dare Call it Torture," 480.

Agenda setting encompasses the media's power to decide what makes the news, constituting an 'agenda,' fed to the public. John Kingdon explains there are three crucial streams for allowing an issue to either be put on or moved off the agenda. Problems are placed onto the agenda through "indicators, focusing events, and feedback."[60] If a problem is seen as important, he argues it is more likely to make the agenda. Participants have an impact on agenda setting, but it is only when these streams begin to work in tandem through "coupling" or "windows," defined as "opportunities for pushing pet proposals or conceptions of problems," that issues make it onto the agenda.[61]

Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston also explored agenda setting when considering the Abu Ghraib scandal and discovered the power elites have in setting the agenda.[62] They determined that despite the potential embarrassment the Abu Ghraib scandal posed for the US government, mass media sources continued to quote elite sources who had been proven to be unreliable. Like the Abu Ghraib scandal, Snowden's documents had the potential to severely damage the US government's credibility and yet media coverage highlights the continued use of high level, official sources.

Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw considered not just the amount of coverage during an election cycle, but also the content of the coverage and the impact on the larger conversation. A cornerstone of their findings was,

> The over-all major emphasis of the selected mass media on different topics and candidates during the campaign … indicates that a considerable amount of campaign news was *not* devoted to the discussion of the major political issues but rather to *analysis of the campaign itself*.[63]

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[60] John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Longman, 2003), 18–20, 196–208.

[61] John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 18–20, 196–208.

[62] Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, "None Dare Call it Torture," 480.

[63] Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald E. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media," *Public*

This movement away from substantive, issue driven coverage during the election cycle

highlights the power of mass media to shape the agenda of elections. Considering this 'analysis

of the campaign itself' as it relates to Snowden offers room to determine if this media tendency

exists outside of election coverage.

Methodology

To answer the research question, one case study considering media coverage of Edward

Snowden in the United States is applicable. The case study approach, described by Robert Yin as

a within case comparative analysis, offers precedent to conduct a case study with respect to time

in the United States.[64] To determine how the mass media covered (or did not cover) the events

that transpired following Edward Snowden, an in depth look at the shifts in the national security

vs. privacy debate from May 2013 through April 2014 is appropriate.

The data sources are comprised of hard news sources only, due to the limiting scope of

transcripts from television media sources. Elements of framing from televised news sources are

conducted visually, making it more difficult and time consuming to study. The newspapers

included in the dataset are *USA Today*, *New York Times* (only available through December 31,

2013 on *ProQuest*), *Wall Street Journal* (online version), *Los Angeles Times, New York Post,

Chicago Tribune* and *Washington Post*. These newspapers were reported to have the highest

circulation in 2012 based on their print and online circulation numbers combined or their online

circulation numbers.[65] This was just prior to when the highest concentration of articles written

about Edward Snowden were produced. From May 1, 2013 to April 30, 2014 the search terms

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Opinion Quarterly 36, no. 2 (1972): 179. http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.pacificu.edu:2048/stable/2747787. Ellipses added by author, italics added by author.

[64] Robert Yin, "Applications of Case Study Research," *Applied Social Research Methods* 34 (1993): 19.

[65] Rick Edmonds, Emily Guskin, Amy Mitchell and Mark Jurkowitz, "The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism: The State of the News Media 2013, An Annual Report on American Journalism," *Pew Research Center*, 7 May 2013, www.stateofthemedia.org.

"Snowden" and "NSA Leaks" were entered in the *ProQuest* database to compile a total of 1,000 articles from May 2013 to April 2014. The article needed to use one of these phrases in the title to be included the dataset. The articles following April 2014 were not coded for frames because the critical juncture surrounding Edward Snowden had reached its end.

Figure 2: Snowden Articles Collected
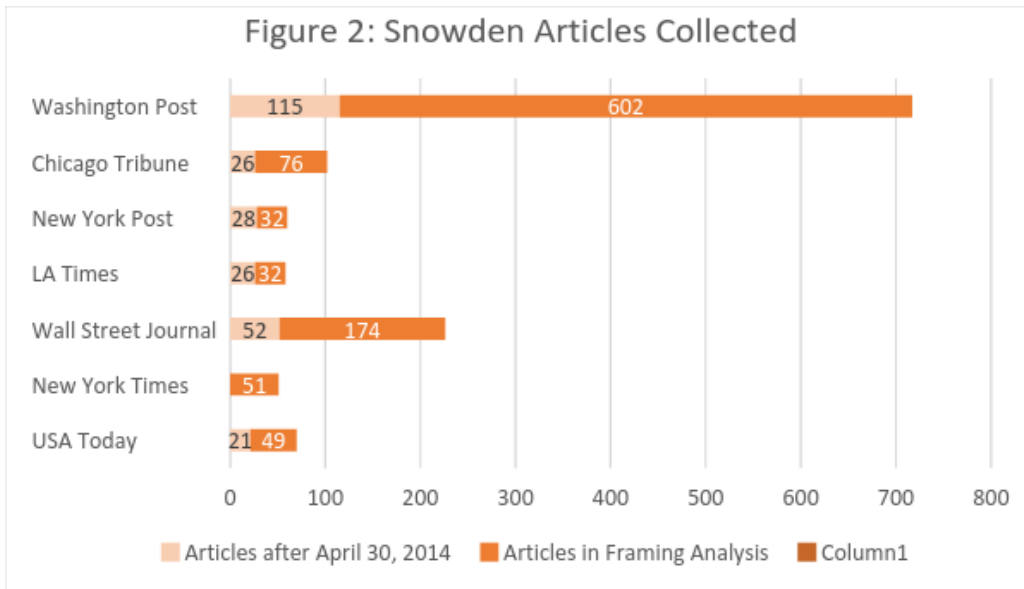
The articles in Figure 1 are all included in the agenda setting analysis component of the research (both shades of the bar). To determine where Snowden falls on the national agenda a count of the number of articles written each month from May 2013 through September 2016 offers insight.

Because all four of these time periods are relatively close together every fifth article was coded as *ProQuest* lists them in chronological order. First, a preliminary study, where each article was coded up to two frames in twenty articles, was utilized to discover early trends. From this preliminary study, the most prevalent frames were extrapolated to focus on in future articles. This created an overly narrow focus of frames, following the preliminary study, so the final 150 articles were coded twice to catch subsequent frames. This approach also took into account D'Angelo's critique of the limiting nature of Entman's model. Up to two frames were included

in each article in order to capture the results of influential secondary frames. If an article exhibited a third or fourth frame it was not included because each sequential frame after this point has a diluted impact and it would have skewed the data recovered.

The prominent frames most commonly coded for included the Concerned Citizen frame, National Security Threat frame, Privacy Violated frame, 'Is he really a whistleblower?' frame, 'Who is Edward Snowden?' frame, Extradition Plans frame, the NSA Security Breach frame, the International Impact frame, and the NSA Leaks Content frame. These nine frames encompassed the bulk of coverage surrounding Edward Snowden and the NSA. The 'other' category included the frames Privacy Violated, another frame that dwelled on Edward Snowden as a "Law Breaker," and State Suppression. All of these frames surfaced in the dataset less than 4% of the time, eliminating the need for their own category.

The Concerned Citizen frame was coded when the article described Snowden as "average" or "just trying to do the right thing." This frame is notable when considering the research of Hasian, Lawson, and McFarlane who studied Snowden's activist framing attempts as an "average, yet concerned American patriot."[66] Ultimately, they determined these framing attempts were unsuccessful due to Snowden's tendency to frame himself as a concerned patriot without fulfilling the public's expectations of authenticity. This frame was closely tied with highlighting Snowden's actions in a positive light.

The National Security Threat frame was used when articles suggested the US would be in danger as a result of the NSA leaks or referenced foreign powers gleaning dangerous insight. This frame relied on elite sources within the government to strengthen and legitimize the frame. This frame is in direct contrast with the Privacy Violated frame which encompassed less than 4%

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[66] Hasian, Lawson and McFarlane, "Edward Snowden, Agent Provocateur, and Overreactions of the NSA," 182.

of the total frames used. The Privacy Violated frame suggested the government overstepped its bounds, focused on mass surveillance, and expressed outrage over the collection of meta-data on the American people.

The 'Is he really a whistleblower?' and 'Who is Edward Snowden?' frames are similar in that they both focused on Edward Snowden as opposed to the larger political implications of his leaks. The 'Is he really a whistleblower?' frame measured Snowden's actions against other whistleblowers, such as Thomas Drake, Chelsea Manning (referred to as Bradley in the articles), and Daniel Ellsberg. Articles including this frame dwelled on the key difference between Snowden and other whistleblowers: his decision to flee the United States. However, the "Is he really a whistleblower?" frame offered Snowden more ground because sources used were generally favorable towards him. On the other hand, the 'Who is Edward Snowden?' frame dug deeper into his personal life, focusing on blog posts written by his girlfriend, descriptions by those who knew him, and his online presence and absence. This frame was pervasive, despite Snowden's determination to focus the media conversation on the documents themselves and not his personal life. Both of these frames were occasionally paired with the far less common, "Law Breaker" frame, that dwelled on Snowden's crimes and in some instances suggested he was a traitor.

The Extradition Plans frame, and the NSA Security Breach frame, and the International Impact frame were not focused on the leaks themselves, but rather the aftermath. The Extradition Plans frame discussed attempts by the United States to extradite Snowden first from Hong Kong and then from the Moscow airport. The NSA Security Breach frame focused on changes in security policy at the NSA and attempted to determine why Snowden had such high level access. The International Impact frame focused on relations between the United States and other countries

following the NSA document leaks.

Articles that discussed the content of the material Snowden released, coded as NSA Leaks Content, such as the PRISM program, were noted when an in depth consideration of the leaks themselves was highlighted in an article. This frame was occasionally paired with the "State Suppression" frame, which made up less than 3% of the results.

After the framing analysis was completed, it is also important to consider who speaks and whose voices are heard in this debate. Completing an indexing analysis provided insight into who the key players are in the national security vs. privacy debate. The articles coded for frames were also enter in the indexing analysis. If a name is mentioned as a source (i.e. "President Obama disagrees with Snowden") the name was placed in one category. If an article includes a direct quotation from a source, this was placed in a separate category because direct quotations highlight a higher level of influence of that particular source. Ultimately, only sources that received a direct quotation were included in the results because this provided an objective means of ascertaining if someone was truly sourced or not.

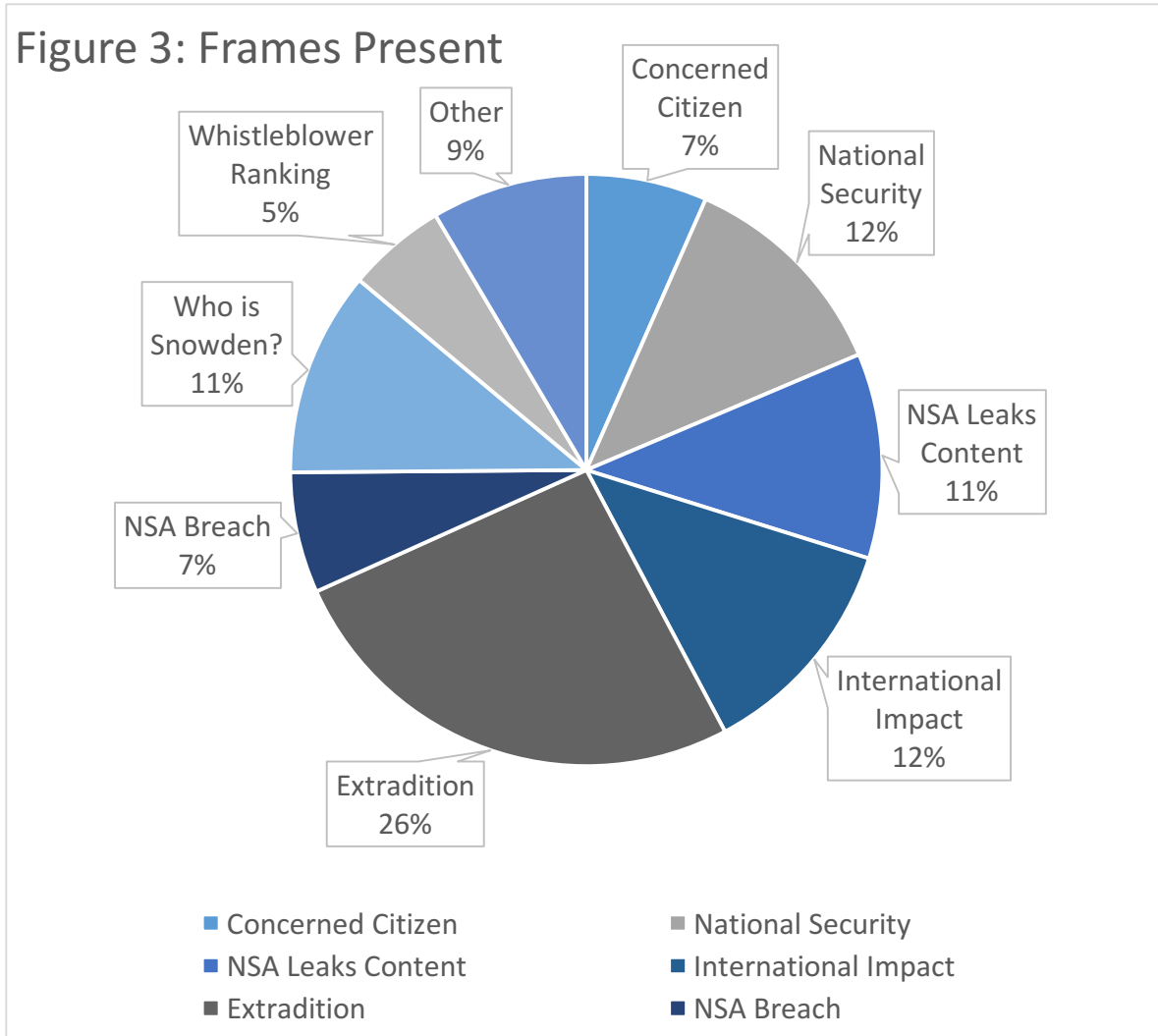**Findings:**

Framing Results

Figure 3: Frames Present

Figure 3 illustrates the split between the varying frames was relatively even, with the Extradition Plan frame in the lead, making up 26% of the frames used and the NSA Breach, Concerned Citizen, and Whistleblower Ranking frames, making up less than 10% of the frames each.

Because two levels of frames were included, the "Balance norm" described by Boykoff and Boykoff as a tendency for the media to include both sides of the story, regardless of their

validity, to appear unbiased, is crystal clear.[67] Oftentimes, articles were frontloaded with a frame

suggesting Snowden acted in the public interest as a "Concerned Citizen" or concerns about

government snooping, but concluded with elite sources that counterbalanced those frames with

national security concerns or questioning Snowden's character. The differing frames between

Edward Snowden and his elite counterparts at the NSA, leads to a "framing contest."[68]

First order norms such as "personalization" and "novelty" are also crucial to the frames

utilized in the newspaper articles. The 'Who is Edward Snowden' frame made up over 10% of

the dataset, despite his protests and relatively private life prior to the NSA Leaks. The prevalence

of this frame limited discourse surrounding the contents of the leaks. This may be due to the

narrow window of time coverage was produced in and the limited story opportunities that left

Snowden and his extradition plans at the forefront of media discussion. The individualized frame

is more "culturally congruent," which Boykoff and Laschever explain as a way of considering a

frames success.[69] Because it is easier to familiarize the reader with an individual, rather than the

massive amounts of information Snowden released, it appears, based on the framing study, to

strike a chord with the reader and sells papers.

The Concerned Citizen frame only cropped up 7% of the time, despite Marouf, Lawson, and

McFarlane's research that noted Snowden's use of activist framing in personal statements,

interviews, and Glenn Greenwald's book, *No Place to Hide.* This may be because the media

picked up on the contrived appearance of Snowden's framing attempts failed to fulfill Sobieraj's

"Rules for Radicals (and Anyone Who Might be Mistaken for One)," which notes, "discussions

of authenticity refer to performance credibility or sincerity and its ability to come off as natural

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[67] Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," 1193.

[68] Boykoff and Laschever, "The Tea Party Movement, Framing, and the US Media," 345.

[69] Boykoff and Laschever, "Media Framing and the Tea Party Movement," 346.

and effortless to observers" is essential.[70] This performance of authenticity is a game Snowden

has failed to tap into, as multiple scholars have pointed out. The counterintuitive nature of

practicing an unrehearsed demeanor and defense hinders activist framing, causing them to be less

successful in framing battles. These expectations do not hold true for elites, who hold routinized

press conferences with prepared statements.

These frames also highlight a normalization of surveillance within the media that Foucault

and Lyons both theorize about. One frame that was less prevalent than expected dealt with

looking at the content of the leaks themselves. The Privacy Violated frame, in the 'Other'

category made up less than 4% of the dataset, despite the very premise of surveillance and the

implications of the meta-data collected by the NSA. The inability of these frames to gain traction

may be partially explained by the culture of fear following 9/11, explored earlier by McLeod and

Shah, who suggested, "the initial response was so strong and resurgence has been relatively

weak."[71] This created a political climate and a media climate that was less critical of the Iraq

War initially, and the Abu Ghraib scandal as explored by Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston.

The substantive articles were marginalized in the media coverage as they instead focused on

Edward Snowden, next steps, the international impact and how the leaks would impact the NSA

and national security. This correlates with McCombs' and Shaw's findings that coverage around

election cycles was less about the issues and more about the campaign process itself.[72] What they

determined to shape election coverage also functioned as a way to create a horse race politics

environment around whistleblower vs. elites, highlighted by frames centered on 'Extradition,'

'NSA Breach,' and international elite level disputes.

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[70] Sobieraj, "Reporting Conventions," 513.
[71] McLeod and Shah, "Framing Surveillance," 179.
[72] McCombs and Shaw, "Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," 179.

Agenda Setting Analysis:

Figure 4: Does Snowden Change the Media Agenda?
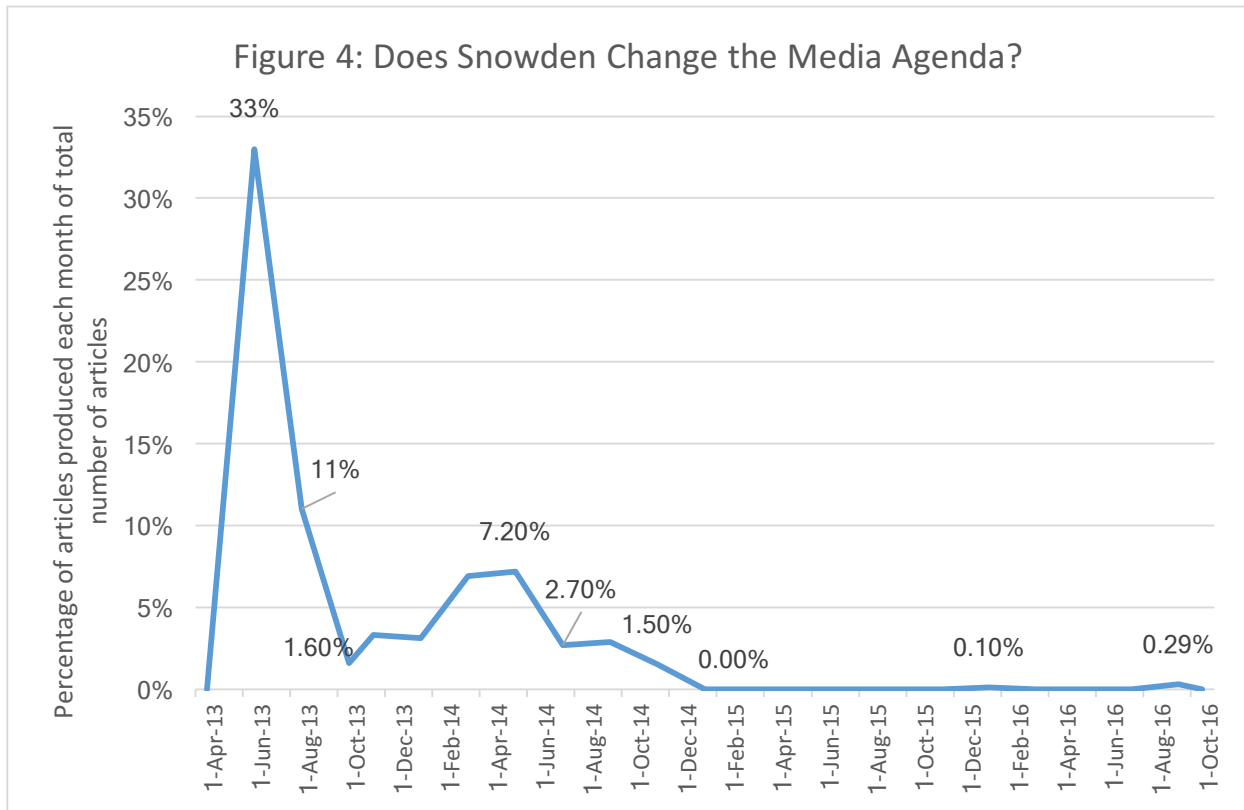
The agenda setting analysis of the dataset noted a predictable spike when Snowden's identity was revealed and a recent, smaller, spike in coverage due to the Oliver Stone film, *Snowden,* released in September 2016.

The spikes on Figure 4 can be explained by Robert McChesney's concept, "Critical Juncture." Critical junctures are "when the political climate changes sufficiently to call accepted politics into question or to demand new ones."[73] Critical junctures focus the attention on pivotal moments during Edward Snowden's NSA document release. One notable critical juncture is visible in Figure 4 in June 2013 when Edward Snowden's identity was revealed and he sought asylum in Russia.

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[73] Robert McChesney, The Problem of the Media: US Communication Politics in the Twenty-First Century (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 16.

More recently, the film *Snowden* functioned as another critical juncture that gave journalists a new spin on an old story. In the other two graphs illustrating coverage in 2014 and 2015, coverage gradually tapered off among the different news sources as Snowden became less relevant. Surprisingly, no articles were produced with the terms "Snowden" or "NSA Leaks" in the title prior to June. This highlights an unfortunate, but inevitable flaw in the research design as articles were produced about the content of the leaks prior to June 2013. This also highlights a preference amongst media sources for a personalized narrative. An anonymous whistleblower circumnavigated the "personalization" norm described by Boykoff and Boykoff.[74]

These critical junctures are closely related to the journalistic norms "novelty" and "dramatization."[75] Harkening back to the media study produced by Boykoff and Boykoff surrounding climate change, there is a tendency for media sources to fall into the "issue-of-the-month syndrome."[76] In the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations, once the media was given a face with the name, coverage skyrocketed among the top newspapers to 332 articles in June 2013, almost a third of the dataset, but as Snowden's story began to stagnate with Snowden indefinitely settled in Russia, coverage gradually fell. While not included in the results due to time constraints, even the differing amounts of coverage between September and October 2016 was staggering, as interest in the film rapidly dropped following its release.

While it would have been interesting to consider articles written about the NSA in the months leading up to Snowden's NSA leaks, those articles are virtually nonexistent. A search in *ProQuest* yielded just three articles written about the NSA prior to the uproar—they dealt with surrounding their invasive surveillance program. This clearly highlights Snowden's ability, as a

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[74] Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," 1192.

[75] Boykoff and Laschever, "Media Framing and the Tea Party Movement," 346.

[76] Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," 1192.

whistleblower, to put the NSA on the agenda. To gain a better understanding of the substance of this coverage a more in depth analysis of the compiled articles is crucial.

This lack of coverage of the NSA prior to Snowden and in the years following his actions highlights the self-surveillance Foucault warns against when he describes the Panopticon. Even as media sources utilized Snowden's material, the *Washington Post* won a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage, the vast majority of articles were produced within a small window before surveillance fell off the agenda and was re-normalized through a façade of transparency.[77] This recalls previous whistleblower experiences. Altschuler explains in Ellsberg's case, "Despite selling a million copies, the Times book failed to generate much additional debate about the Vietnam War."[78] In this way, it is important to understand that generating a large amount coverage about the Vietnam War or surveillance techniques used during the War on Terror does not in and of itself signal change within the establishment. Once the debate fades, the discomfort surveillance brings (as explored by Foucault) serves to speed up the process of pushing the NSA back off the agenda, necessitating another whistleblower to complete the cycle.

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[77] Paul Farhi, "Washington Post Wins Pulitzer Prize for NSA spying revelations; Guardian also Honored," *Washington Post*, 14 April 2014. https://washingtonpost.com.
[78] Altschuler, "Is the Pentagon Papers still Relevant?" 412.

Indexing

Figure 5:

Type of Source	Percentage Cited
Non-elected Elites	30.5%
International Sources	21.6%
Elected Elites	16.2%
Independent Consultants	11.2%
Edward Snowden	8%
Newspapers	4.2%
Fellow Whistleblowers	3.9%
Family/Friends	1.9%

Figure 4 can be broken down into three groups. The most commonly cited groups were political elites and international sources. Independent consultants and Edward Snowden were also frequently cited. Other newspapers, fellow whistleblowers, and family and friends were among the least cited.

The category non-elected political elites includes National Surveillance Agency representatives, representatives from the Department of Justice, federal judges, and representatives from other United States governmental agencies. The category "Elected Political Elites" includes United States elected officials such as senators, representatives, and past and current presidents. The International sources category includes leaders from around the world, concentrated on Hong Kong, Ecuador, and Russia—places that Snowden sought exile from or attempted to. The Independent Consultants category includes academics and lawyers who offered legal, historical, and expertise driven input. The "Newspapers," category was used when

Glen Greenwald was sourced or another newspapers direct findings were used.

   While the frames used to frame Edward Snowden and the NSA Leaks were relatively

balanced, the sources used in these articles tell a different story. Immediately, a 22% gap

between non-elected elites sources and Edward Snowden stands out. When elected and non-

elected elite sources are added together, they make up almost half of all of the sources directly

quoted.

   The second order norm described by Boykoff and Boykoff as, "authority-order bias,"

considers the media tendency to rely on elite sources and partially explains the imbalance of

sources in the articles, despite the damage the NSA and President Obama took to their

credibility.[79] Sources that came to Snowden's defense, such as fellow whistleblowers,

Greenwald, and friends and family members were rarely cited, and oftentimes concentrated in a

single article, as opposed to appearing routinely in multiple articles as elite opinions did.

Snowden himself was routinely mentioned in the articles, but only directly quoted in 8% of the

total sources, falling below elites, international sources, and experts. This bias also highlights an

imbalance of power even within media representation. This makes Lyons' suggestion, "Speak

truth to power" difficult and encourages the complacency he forewarned against. Snowden

attempts to fulfill his sense of obligation, but quickly becomes unable to control his own story,

despite working with media insiders.

   Another interesting element of Figure 4 was the frequency with which international sources

were quoted. In Bennett, Livingston, and Lawrence's indexing study of media coverage

following the Abu Ghraib scandal, a scandal with heavy international implications, they found

foreign sources infrequently cited because of the American centered sources used in the United

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[79] Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," 1193.

States. This media study breaks with their findings, suggesting a possible change in trends in media coverage. As our world becomes more interconnected and globalized with the domination of the internet and social media, perhaps news coverage has begun to move in that direction as well.

Conclusions

The results of this media study surrounding Edward Snowden and the NSA highlight the way journalistic norms permeate frames to create a false sense of balance, while sources disproportionately fall towards the elite perspective, even when whistleblowers damage the credibility of these political groups. International sources were frequently sourced, which contradicts previous media studies that have shown sources are typically centered on the United States.

Because of the hyper-personalized and event driven coverage, combined with the inability of more substantive frames to gain traction within media coverage, these newspapers did not serve to give people adequate information about the documents Snowden released. This limited the impact of media coverage on the national security vs. privacy debate. In fact, the "Privacy Violated" frame made up less than 4% of the frames utilized overall and the "National Security" frame made up 12% of the frames and was one of the most prevalent frames in the dataset. While articles appeared relatively balanced, with use of more specific and event driven frames, this discrepancy highlights the underlying media stance on this debate.

However, Snowden's actions as a whistleblower did have a dramatic impact in putting the NSA on the agenda, where before coverage was dormant or nonexistent. The spike of coverage following his actions as a whistleblower left the NSA scrambling and forced President Obama to address the leaks on multiple occasions. This impact was limited by the media shift in focus as

Snowden's information became commonplace and routinization of surveillance in the United States.

Avenues for future research include considering polls produced by Gallup and the Pew Research Center directly relating to these issues. Gallup published a poll on June 12, 2013 (at the height of Snowden/NSA coverage) that indicated people were more concerned about government surveillance.[80] The Pew Research Center conducted a poll January 15–19, 2014 asking if "Snowden's leaks about classified information about programs…" "Has served public interest" or "has harmed public interest?" They also ask, "Should the government pursue a criminal case against Snowden?"[81] In another poll they showed most millennials supported Snowden's leaks[82] and a poll in December 2013 that showed 55% of Americans believed that Snowden's leaks "harmed public interest."[83] Considering these polls alongside news coverage and current events could being to offer insight into the ever elusive media effects.

Another interesting avenue for future research might consider how the evolving nature of media has impacted international coverage by conducting a framing analysis and indexing study. The best time to conduct a media study like this would follow events where the United States plays a central role, like in the case of the Abu Ghraib scandal or Snowden NSA leaks. These international events centered on the United States guarantee there will be large amounts of coverage to pull from United States based coverage, while still justifying an international perspective.

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[80] Frank Newport, "Americans Disapprove of Government Surveillance Programs," *Gallup*, 12 June 2013, https://www.gallup.com.

[81] Seth Motel, "NSA coverage wins Pulitzer, but Americans remain divided on Snowden leaks," *Pew Research Center*, 15 April 2014, https://www.pewresearch.org.

[82] Drew Desilver, "Most young Americans say Snowden has served the public interest," *Pew Research Center*, 22 January 2014, https://www.pewresearch.org.

[83] Bruce Drake, "Snowden leaks seen as harming the public interest," *Pew Research Center*, 17 December 2013, http://www.pewresearch.org.

Ultimately, Edward Snowden proved the whistleblower can be a potent tool to stir the pot and bring new items onto the news agenda, but his lack of long-term impact highlights the cyclical nature of the news cycle and the American attention span. What was once revelatory has now become commonplace, necessitating an ever-present cycle of future whistleblowers to disturb the peace.

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