

Stability and change in news selection:

News factors in German TV news

1992-2007

Results from a content analysis

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Agenda

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2. Research questions
3. Methodology
4. Results
 - Development of topic structure
 - Most important news factors
 - Dimensions of news factors
 - Impact of news factors on news value
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Theoretical background

Theory of news values (Galtung/Ruge 1965)

- **News factors** = attributes of events, relevant for the publication decision of journalists;
e.g. countries involved, persons, surprise.
- The specific combination of news factors of an event determines the formal **news value of an report**.
- News value is measured by the attendance journalists give to a report (e.g. length and placing).

Research questions

1. Change of topics in news reports since 1992?
2. Criteria of journalistic selectivity?
3. Impact of news factors on news values?

Content analysis of main TV newscasts on the basis of the concept of news factors

Sampling Period	Examined TV Stations
01/ - 07/06/1992	ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, RTL, Pro7
11/ - 17/12/1995	ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, RTL, Pro7, RTL 2, VOX
04/ - 10/05/1998	ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, RTL, Pro7, RTL 2, VOX
05/ - 11/11/2001	ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, RTL, Pro7, RTL 2, VOX, Kabel 1
18/ - 24/10/2004	ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, RTL, Pro7, RTL 2, VOX, Kabel 1
15/ - 21/10/2007	ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, RTL, Pro7, RTL 2, VOX, Kabel 1

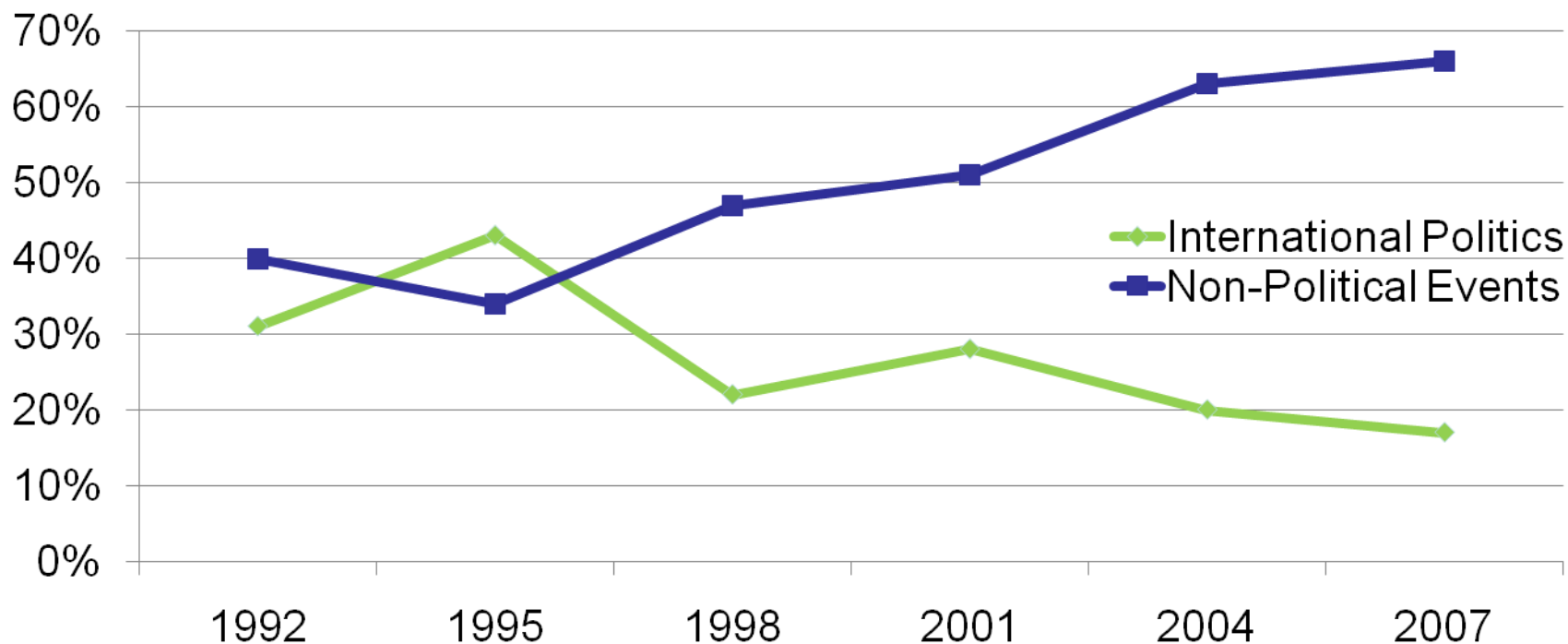
Analyzed news items: N = 3,592



Included news factors

Status of the Event	Influence	Controversy
Nation	Prominence	Aggression
Geographic Proximity	Personalisation	Demonstration
Political Proximity		
Economic Proximity	Concreteness of	Depiction of Emotions
Cultural Proximity	Action	Sexuality/ Eroticism
German Participation	Range	Visualization
Status of Location	Surprise	
Establishment of Topics	Usefulness/ Success	
	Damage/ Failure	

Development of topic structure



n = 3.592 news items

Relevant News Factors 2007

Public TV:

- Influence
- Prominence
- Concreteness of Action
- Damage/Failure
- Range
- Visualization
- Usefulness/Success

Private TV:

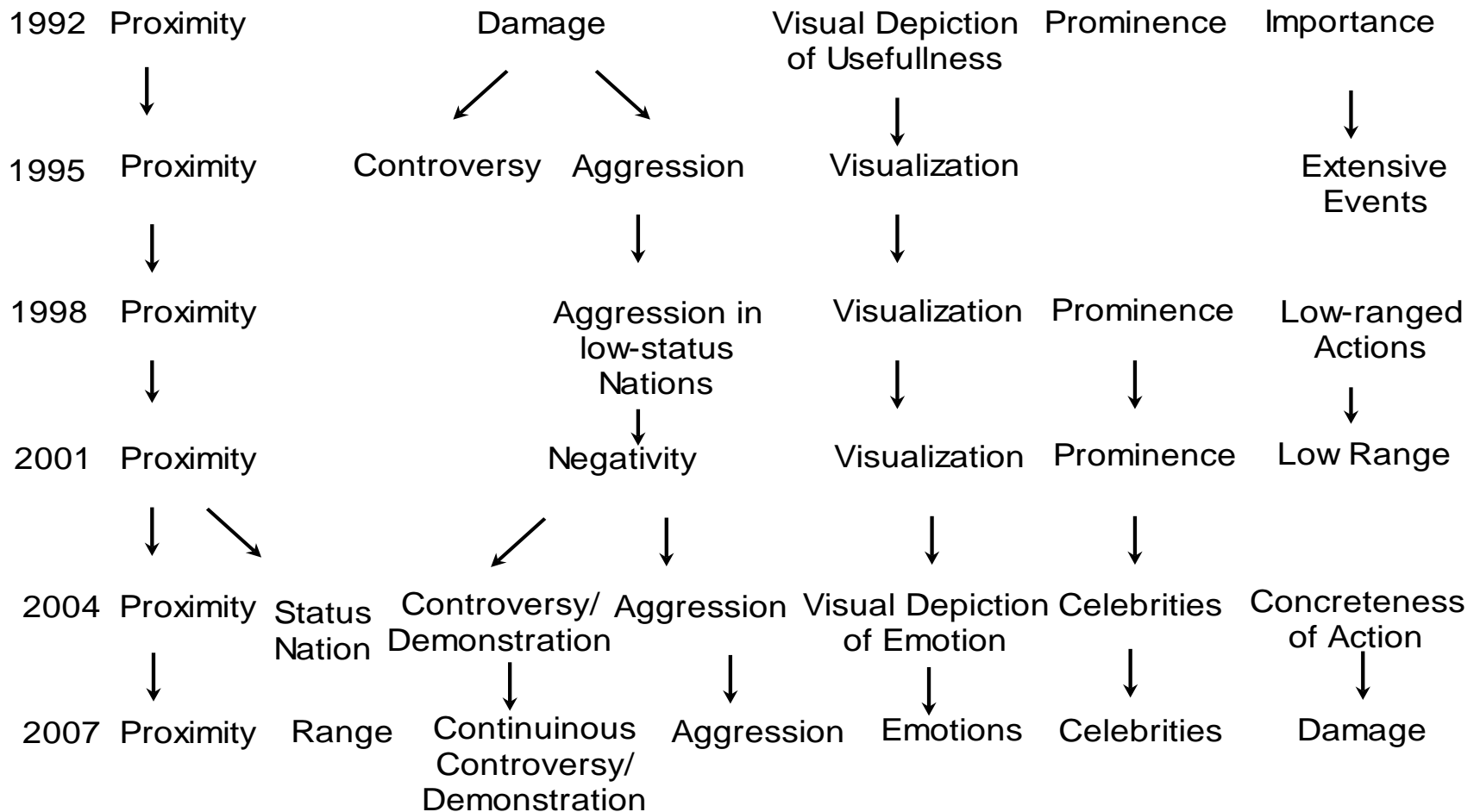
- Influence
- Prominence
- Concreteness of Action
- Damage/Failure
- Range
- Visualization
- Usefulness/Success
- Controversy
- Status of Location
- Political Proximity

Dimensions of news factors and their development

- News factors can be bundled to higher-order dimensions of journalistic selectivity (factor analysis).
- Most of the extracted factors are quite stable over the entire survey period.



Example: Public TV, non-political events





Longitudinal stable factor structures (1992-2007)

	International Politics		Non-political Events	
	Public	Private	Public	Private
Conflict/ Negativity/ Controversy	X	X	X	X
Aggression	X	X	X	X
Proximity	X	X	X	X
Prominence	X	X	X	X
Visualization	X	X		X
Status of the Event Nation				X

Impact of news factors on news value

Index “Attention for Report“ containing:

- Placement of news items
- Length of news item
- Announcement of topic before beginning of newscast
- Index 0 “lowest attention“
 1 “highest attention“

Regression analysis: New factors and news value

Adjusted R ²	International politics		Non-political events	
	<i>public</i>	<i>private</i>	<i>public</i>	<i>private</i>
2001	0,55	0,47	0,19	0,07
2004	0,26	0,35	0,55	0,37
2007	0,20	0,24	0,46	0,27
N	157	236	193	883

Conclusion

- Relevance of international political events for German TV news has been decreasing since 1992 (-14%), while non-political topics receive more attention (+26%).
- Most of the higher-order dimensions of news selection are fairly stable over the period of observation, including prominence, negativity and visualization. There are only small differences between public and private TV stations.
- The extracted factors can explain the variance of the journalistic attention quite good.

Thank you for your attention!

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