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INDEXING AND ECONOMIC NEWS:
COVERAGE OF THE 2009 ECONOMIC STIMULUS DEBATE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Mass Communication

in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by
Portia Levasseur
B.A., University of Rochester, 2005
December 2011

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Rob.

Your love gave me the courage to pursue this degree,

and your support enabled me to complete it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my loving father, who has always inspired intellectual curiosity and encouraged academic excellence. I also wish to thank my brother, Tristan, and his wife, Tara. Their scholarship has been a model for me and their advice and support have been invaluable.

I owe many thanks to my committee for their interest in this project, for their patience, support, encouragement, and guidance. Thank you to Dr. Scholl for helping me to formulate my questions at an early phase and to sort through the answers. Dr. Lawrence's work and teaching ignited my curiosity; I am grateful for her guidance and mentorship as my Committee Chair.

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ABSTRACT

Indexing theory predicts that, in certain issue areas, media coverage will index levels of elite debate. Elite controversy, the theory predicts, will embolden the press to include a broader variety of sources and coverage should reflect a more open public debate. This has important implications for public opinion. Proponents of the theory expect that it will operate in a variety of issue areas of news coverage, but support for the theory exists largely in the realm of foreign affairs coverage. This study examines television coverage of the 2009 economic stimulus package to evaluate levels of indexing for a domestic, macroeconomic issue.

Results show support for indexing theory. Administration sources dominated in the news, but in circumstances of elite debate among government officials, coverage of this economic issue appeared to include a meaningful proportion of non-governmental voices. Examination of the kinds of non-governmental sources journalists used to construct this debate, however, suggests that these results probably overestimate amount of new information about the issue that was made available to the public through television news coverage.

INTRODUCTION

Research in political communication reflects an ongoing debate about the nature of press-state relations. Indexing theory offers one way to synthesize diverse perspectives about how government officials interact with media professionals to create news. This theory states that mass media outlets tend to "index" coverage to levels of conflict among elite government officials. Simply put, indexing theory suggests that government impacts not only what is reported in the news, but *how* it is reported. Hence, for certain issues, the range of voices and opinions reported in media coverage reflect similar ranges within governmental debate (Bennett 1990). Since its introduction, scholars have built upon and expanded the indexing model (Entman, 2004; Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007), but much research focuses on coverage of foreign affairs. Because indexing was originally also expected to operate for other issue areas (Bennett 1990), this study builds on existing research by examining indexing levels in coverage of a domestic, economic issue—a topic for which indexing theory has not typically been applied. Examining coverage of the 2009 economic stimulus package, this study aims to determine how journalists constructed the debate using sources. The period before the plan became law was a crucial time for open public deliberation as an exercise of a healthy democracy; thus, the period offers a clear test of indexing theory in a new forum.

Since the economic crisis of 2008, news coverage devoted to the economy has increased. Indeed, in 2009, except for coverage of the United States presidential election, the economy was the most-reported subject across all news media (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009). Increased coverage of the economy augments news media's ability to influence viewers on this topic. Media coverage influences both how many citizens learn about the state of the economy and how they understand economic problems, causes, and various policy solutions.

Macroeconomic issues also exhibit special characteristics that make them similar to foreign affairs issues in important ways, suggesting that this economic issue may theoretically inform the indexing model in new ways.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indexing theory states that mass media outlets tend to "index" coverage to levels of conflict among elite government officials. When officials disagree, open public debate ensues in the news. Official consensus, however, stifles public debate. Essentially this model expects that, in certain issue areas, the press will index levels of official debate in media coverage. The central question then, is: "How *independently* do the media frame issues and events, versus simply passing along to the public the frames originated by powerful political actors?" (Lawrence, 2010).

Indexing is a dynamic theory that both accounts for circumstances in which press independence is limited and suggests when and how press independence should be enabled or encouraged. Journalists, the theory predicts, will be more critical of government officials' preferred news frames in certain circumstances, and less critical in others. Bennett et al. (2007) probe this dynamic. In their discussion and analysis of media coverage of several controversial issues including the United States conflict with Iraq and the Hurricane Katrina crisis, they explain that whether a story is "carried" by media depends less on the content's truth or importance, and more on whether content is "driven by dominant officials within institutional decision-making arenas" (p. 29). Furthermore, officials having greater perceived power to affect outcomes and greater ability to regularly forward their own news agenda are generally privileged; these kinds of actors are better able to ensure their preferred frames make it into in news coverage. Bennett et al. (2007) trace these patterns in news coverage to explain why many dubious government claims have gone unchallenged in the news media.

Certain conditions, however, favor greater independence of news judgment. Specifically, this requires some kind of shock to the government consensus: "a catastrophic event or policy

failure, a scandal, an electoral realignment, or a building political opposition that changes the power balance within institutional decision-making circles" (Bennett et al. 2007, p. 60). Other factors that enable press independence include outsider sources offering an effectively packaged counterspin, leaks, and investigative reporting. Additionally, enabled by new technologies, journalists today are able to give news to the public earlier, which can sometimes allow more independent reporting before officials have a chance to spin or frame an event (Bennett et al., 2007). Entman (2004) also accounts for the dynamics within indexing theory. Government officials and media professionals, he argues, interact in a hierarchical cascading scheme to frame news; a model best understood as complementary to Bennett's original indexing model (Aday, 2007; Bennett, 1990). Entman includes a limited feedback mechanism accounting for circumstances when press and non-administration government officials are able to introduce their own competing frames into the news.[1]

Indexing research also engages a normative debate (Bennett, 1990). Indexing can be seen as troubling for democracy since it limits the open marketplace of ideas and challenges the traditional "watchdog" role of the American press. Media's tendency to rely on government viewpoints does not always have bad implications for democracy (Bennett, 1990; Bennett et al., 2007). Government sources are an important and reliable source of information for media professionals. Often, they offer the most credible and well-informed perspectives on a given topic. In these cases, media coverage that prominently or exclusively features viewpoints of elite government officials can be appropriate, or at worst benign. Conversely, exclusive reliance on viewpoints expressed by government officials may limit the range of public debate by

[1] It is important to acknowledge that Entman treats *events* as an independent starting place in this model (see Lawrence, 2006). The present study's focus on an economic policy issue may differ from the foreign policy events Entman discusses. But his conception of the cascade of information through media channels may be interpreted as relevant for both kinds of news triggers.

marginalizing other relevant viewpoints. The major problem indexing can pose for a representative democracy is that it also constricts public opinion to fit the parameters of official debate (Bennett, 1990).

These normative elements highlight the importance of defining both what level of press independence is necessary to sustain open public deliberation and how much public deliberation is adequate for a democracy to function. To answer these questions, we must understand media framing. Very little media content is presented as "just the facts"; most mainstream media coverage presents the news using a frame, or "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration," (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem, 1991). Frames help citizens simplify, organize, weigh, and summarize information (Bennett et al., 2007). Research also indicates that most viewers lack the capacity to be completely informed (Graber, 2003) and also often lack interest in political news (Patterson, 2000). Given this kind of framed coverage and selectively attentive audience, it is reasonable to expect that the American public requires a fully formed counterframe if they are to accurately understand and evaluate the merits and shortcomings of policy decisions (see Entman, 2007, p. 17). We also know that political elite generate most of the public's knowledge about politics (Zaller, 1992, p. 6), and that media tend to cover elite actors when reporting about issues where the public has little direct knowledge, such as politics, foreign affairs, or macroeconomics (Zaller, 1992; Bennett, 1990; Entman, 2004). If this is the case, then it is essential for the media to offer cross-cutting information about these issues if the public is to form meaningful opinions (Mutz, 2006).

Press independence can be conceptualized in a number of ways. For the purposes of this study, press independence will be measured by the amount of named non-governmental sources

cited in coverage of the debate. Sourcing is particularly important because it allows the audience to understand where information originated and to distinguish facts from individuals' opinions (Tuggle et al., 2006). It is also critical to this study because it determines which voices and opinions will be heard and whose news frames make it into coverage. Although the inclusion of a variety of sources does not guarantee open democratic deliberation, sources are important contributors to the framing process (Durham, 2007; Pan & Kosicki, 2001). Examining the number and kind of sources included in coverage is a good initial indicator for the level of press independence. In television news in particular, the amount of air time given to a source is also an important indicator of their prominence within a broadcast segment. This study attempts to acknowledge this by measuring the appearance of a source as well as the number of words attributed to that source. Although word count is not an exact measure for the temporal duration of a source's air time, it is a good proxy. A person interviewed at length, for example will have a significantly higher word count that a source who is only given a short sound bite within a news segment.

Indexing is a dynamic process including both journalists' sourcing habits and how stories are framed. For this reason we must acknowledge the kinds of information missed by this measure of press independence. It does not, for example, account for the content of the views that sources provide to reporters (how information is framed), nor for alternative indicators of press independence, such as investigative journalism (frames constructed by the journalists themselves). Measures of press independence might also include how news programming is financed, though that is also outside the scope of this project. Nevertheless, the present measuring does allow us to observe how journalists constructed the debate using sources. "The

sources cited in stories," that is to say, "provide insight into the angles and perspectives journalists highlighted" (Pew Research Center, 2009).

In his original formulation of indexing theory, Bennett (1990) explains that indexing should have limited applicability. "Among the issues in which indexing might be expected to operate most consistently are military decisions, foreign affairs, trade, and macroeconomic policy—areas of great importance not only to corporate and economic interests but to the advancement of state power as well" (p. 122). Indexing literature focuses largely on foreign affairs but has been tested only to a limited extent for other issue areas (see for example, Jerit, 2006).

Rather than specify which issues are more likely to exhibit indexing than others, it is useful to consider the characteristics of these issue areas that make them more likely to do so. For example, it is generally more *difficult for the public and journalists to gain information about these topics from a non-governmental source*. Foreign affairs information typically comes from State Department personnel and other elected or appointed governmental officials, or alternatively from investigative journalists themselves. Military decisions are similarly restricted to government channels. Another characteristic of these issue areas is that *citizens have less opportunity to weigh in on the debate*. If citizens have a low sense of personal efficacy about an issue, for example, they may be less interested to even try to understand policy alternatives and engage in debate. For this reason, citizens may tend to have less interest in news about these topics. It follows that government officials have less incentive to fully explain policy alternatives to citizens with little motivation to understand. These similarities suggest that indexing may operate in news coverage of economic issues as well.

These issue areas, however, also have important institutional differences that cannot be overlooked. Specifically, the president has greater ability to set the parameters of military or trade policy than for domestic, economic policy, where Congress plays a more direct role. Executive powers imbue him with greater influence in those realms than for the economic issue presently examined. The fact that executive power is relatively more limited for a domestic, economic issue might actually encourage greater press independence, since this institutional factor may in fact operate against the administration's advantage in securing a favorable media frame for a given issue. For this reason, we should still expect to see the kind of opening of debate that indexing theory predicts for coverage of an economic issue.

Economic News

In light of recent economic conditions, interest and import of economic news for Americans has increased, but it also has special significance for public opinion. Since the economic crisis of 2008, news coverage devoted to the economy has increased. Indeed, in 2009, except for coverage of the United States presidential election, the economy was the most-reported subject across all news media. This coincided with increased audience demand for economic news, with 70% of Americans reporting that they follow economic news "very closely" (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009). Increased coverage of the economy augments the ability of news media to impact and influence viewers on this topic. Levy (2007), for example, argues that framing of economic issues by the media has the capacity not only to inform readers, but also to mitigate public anxiety and discourage government officials from pursuing problematic policies. As Palmer and Tanner (2010) point out, this also provides

corporations an incentive to secure favorable media frames for stories about their businesses or the economy more generally.

Economic news coverage also plays a special role in public opinion. Kinder and Kiewiet (1979), for example, found that individuals' collective economic judgments influenced voting behavior (See also Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981). Economic news coverage can also help shape citizens' evaluations of presidential job performance because it provides citizens with specific sociotropic criteria for this task (Shah et al., 2002). As Shah et al. suggest, "The mass media have become the main source of information on national economic performance available to a broad cross section of America" (p. 342). Taken as a whole, these findings disclose media's potential not only to shape how we understand national economic conditions, but in doing so, to influence how we evaluate leaders. In this way, media coverage of economic conditions has political consequences.

Economic news coverage may also privilege other kinds of actors. In addition to government officials, in this forum, media also tend to rely on private sector experts, such as bankers or market and finance analysts (Parsons, 1989). Davies (2000), for example, argues that advertizing and news source advantages combined with public relations allow the corporate sector to hijack business and financial news. As a result, he explains, coverage will "follow corporate agendas and ignore non-corporate interests" (p. 286). Indeed, in a study of the 2001-2003 World Economic Forum, Bennett et al. (2004) found that "the journalistic process systematically managed the debate over globalization in terms that favored elites over citizen-activists," (p. 452) a process managed by WEF officials, but in which journalists also complied. In these ways, corporate actors demonstrate their special status for economic news.

Indexing theory deals specifically with press-state relations and these are closely connected to the economy (Parsons, 1989). Literature about indexing also acknowledges the importance of other (non-governmental) powerful actors. "Indexing and other models of press-state relations," Bennett et al. explain, "are about the *public* component or a larger corpus of *private* disagreements among officials, former officials, and others in a position to speak authoritatively to the pressing issues of the day" (2007, p. 135). Corporate actors certainly number among those speaking authoritatively on economic issues, since business representatives (i.e., identified as speaking on behalf of a company or corporation) were the most commonly featured source type in economic news stories between February 1 and August 31, 2009, appearing in nearly 40% of economic news stories. The next most common source type was the president himself (or other administration officials), who appeared in 28% of economic news stories (Pew Research Center, 2009).

Given that corporate actors are in a position to speak authoritatively about economic issues and are also stakeholders in economic news, it seems appropriate to explore their role in news creation. Indexing literature directly addresses the press' relationship with and reliance on administration and other government officials for information, but it is equally important to acknowledge other types of powerful actors, such as corporate actors, who also benefit from an increased access to media channels. Cook (2005) has argued that the press may be thought of as a political institution, in part, because it performs governmental tasks. His arguments might equally apply to the press' role in the corporate world, since here too, we see the press providing information for elite corporate actors to make decisions and operating as a forum for debate among those actors. This is not to suggest that the media can or should be thought of as an economic institution, since Cook's argument about the press-state relations includes important

supporting arguments that cannot be applied to the economic sphere (namely the historical relationship of press and government). Nevertheless, we can surmise that economic news may also be thought of as a "coproduction" between powerful actors in the economic sphere and news media professionals.

The current economic climate has had broad impact on Americans in the past few years, increasing the media's responsibility to effectively communicate economic issues to the public. Media coverage reflects not only how many citizens learn about the state of the economy, but how they understand economic problems, causes, and various policy solutions. This study examines media coverage of the 2009 economic stimulus package during the period when it was under debate in Congress. The period before the plan became law would be the crucial time for open public deliberation as an exercise of healthy democracy. In addition, due to the divisive nature of the congressional debate about this legislation, indexing theory predicts that coverage will reflect open public debate, giving us a clear test of the theory in a new forum.

It is important to acknowledge that, although the issue selected is important to this study because it concerns an economic issue, coverage is likely to focus on the specific policy debate rather than news about the economy in general. This is true in general, since television news is routinely reported in the form of specific events or particular cases. Iyengar (1991) calls this "episodic*"* framing, distinguishing it from "thematic*"* framing. Episodic frames illustrate issues by depicting specific, concrete events; while thematic frames offer general evidence instead. Furthermore, episodic frames tend to be the norm in television news; some even argue that television is an inherently episodic medium (Postman, 1985). Scholars also recognize journalism as an event-centered discourse (Schudson, 2005; Patterson, 2003). Patterson (2003), for example, urges acceptance of this quality, and argues that news standards should include evaluations for

event-centered reporting. With respect to this study, even episodic, event-centered coverage of the stimulus package remains relevant because the underlying issue area of news coverage is still economic. Indeed, other indexing studies concerning foreign affairs issues similarly focus on news coverage of connected foreign affairs policy debates. In their study of the creation and passage of the PATRIOT Act, for example, Domke, et al., (2006) examined news coverage of the Act, which would have similarly focused on the policy debate rather than related foreign affairs issues.

Context of the Stimulus Debate

Signs of the recent American economic recession appeared in early 2008, but the financial crisis did not fully unfold until September 2008. In response to this severe economic downturn, improvement of the weakening American economy became a top agenda item both politically and in the mainstream news media (Palmer and Tanner, 2010). President Bush's 2008 stimulus package did little to mitigate negative economic trends and the economy became a central feature of political debates around the country and a major focus of 2008 presidential campaigns. In this climate of economic crisis, a new economic stimulus package became the first item on Obama's legislative agenda. Despite a controversial congressional climate, President Obama and a Democratic majority Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) within the first weeks of his presidency. The bill represents the greatest amount of one-time government spending in the face of a recession since World War II.

What is striking about the passage of this legislation is not only the magnitude of government spending (the bill allocates $787 billion toward economic stimulus). Given the degree of political controversy over how to best address the recession, the speed with which the

legislation was enacted is equally arresting. Introduced into the House of Representatives on January 26, 2009 (just six days after Obama took office), the bill took only 2 days to pass (244-188) on January 28. Likewise, the Senate passed the bill (60-38) on February 10. Two days later, a congressional committee worked with administration officials to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, which was subsequently agreed to by both houses on February 13. It is important to note that the bill passed almost exclusively along partisan lines despite the president's attempts to garner Republican support. President Obama signed the bill into law on February 17, 2009.

Controversy about the stimulus bill began in the House of Representatives even before the legislation was introduced. President Obama had publicly stated his goal to achieve a bipartisan bill, so House Republicans took early opportunities to voice their opposition (e.g., Foxx, 2009, p. H4446; Poe, 2009, P. H4446). Republicans also presented an alternative package, and the legislative debate ensued from January 26-28, 2009. Debate did not subside, however, upon the passage of the bill on January 28. A version of the bill was still under consideration in the Senate, and House Republicans continued to speak out against the House version, its party-line passage, and to call for Senate action. Even as the House debated other legislation, controversy about the stimulus package continued to pervade debate. "It's unusual because, to be honest," explained Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) on February 9, "most of everything we are talking about in this Nation and in Congress is the stimulus bill. Everything is about the stimulus bill. And it's appropriately so" (2009, p. H1073). Debate about the bill persisted until February 13, when a congressional committee approved a final version of the bill.

In the Senate, debate of the ARRA began on February 3, 2009, although the stimulus package was discussed before that time in anticipation of the debate (e.g., Inhofe, 2009, p. S822;

McConnell, p. S1008). Once formal consideration of the bill was underway, many more senators entered the debate on both sides, although a predominance of Republicans spoke out against the Democratic bill presented and its counterpart passed by the House. Debate persisted even after a Senate version of the bill passed on February 10, as a congressional committee worked to reconcile the two bills. In summary, substantial debate in *both* congressional houses persisted from January 21 through February 13 (the last opportunity in the congressional forum for members to voice opposition to the legislation before it was submitted to the president[2]).

This study examines sourcing habits in mainstream mass media coverage of the bill to ascertain whether coverage of the stimulus package shows evidence of indexing. Indexing theory expects that, given these circumstances of government debate, the press will be emboldened to include a broader variety of sources, and coverage should include diverse viewpoints. Although the stimulus package was strongly advocated by President Obama's administration, because high levels of government controversy did exist about this legislation, indexing theory leads us to expect a wide range of viewpoints in coverage. Relying on press coverage of the debate over the stimulus package, the present study examines the levels of actual press independence occurring in circumstances of government debate.

[2] Congress was not in session for President's Day weekend (February 14-16, 2009).

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Indexing literature largely focuses on foreign policy issues, but suggests that indexing also occurs in other issue areas. News coverage of macroeconomic issues is similar to coverage of foreign policy issues because it involves information which is difficult for the public and journalists to acquire in an unmediated way, and because citizens tend to have less opportunity to weigh in on the debate. Because of these similarities, we can expect to see indexing operate in coverage of macroeconomic issues. The stimulus package debate involved relatively high levels of government controversy, which indexing theory predicts will embolden the press to open coverage to include diverse viewpoints. For the purposes of this study, press independence is measured as the number of non-government sources included in news coverage. Because controversy among government officials persisted throughout the time period examined, the researcher anticipates that:

H1: Non-governmental viewpoints will be present in news coverage in the beginning, middle and end of the time period examined.

The beginning, middle, and end of the time period represent thirds of the period studied, and are intended to show whether media did represent diverse viewpoints throughout the period, while taking into account the fact that media may not have included non-governmental viewpoints on each specific day. Variance in news coverage day-to-day prohibits any expectation of a continuous presence, but non-governmental sources should not be absent from any of these three time periods. Literature does not as yet specify *how much* opening of debate we can expect to see. For the purposes of this study, even a limited presence of non-governmental viewpoints in each period may be interpreted as preliminary support for indexing theory, since that would show that non-governmental voices were not excluded from the debate.

In addition, because the governmental debate about this issue heightened over time, the researcher also expects that:

H2: Non-governmental viewpoints expressed in coverage will increase over time.

In other words, the percentage of non-governmental sources cited within segments should increase from beginning to middle to end of the time period, although this increase may be gradual and may not be uniform. Because official controversy persisted throughout the time period, however, we should still expect at least some non-governmental sources to be included even at the beginning of the period.

Because indexing predicts that government conflicts embolden the press to include non-governmental voices in open public deliberation of a given issue, this study examines *how much* press independence actually occurs when there is rigorous debate among government officials. That is, given circumstances in which we *do not* expect the press to rely exclusively on government sources, and inclusion of some government sources to be balanced by inclusion of other kinds of sources, to what extent do journalists go beyond the parameters of government debate to seek non-governmental voices and perspectives?

RQ1: How prevalent are non-governmental sources in coverage of the debate relative to governmental sources?

In other words, among all broadcast segments, what percentage of total named sources per segment is non-governmental? The prominence of each source type in *number of words* serves as a second indicator of how prominently a type of source figured into coverage. Thus, this research question also asks, what is the percentage of source words attributed to non-governmental sources in each segment? How do both measurements compare to the percentage of total government sources and word counts in each segment?

Because journalists also tend to privilege corporate actors in coverage of economic issues, the following additional research question compares the total number of corporate sources to other kinds of sources:

RQ2: How prevalent are corporate sources in coverage of the debate relative to other kinds of sources?

That is, among all broadcast segments, what percentage of total named sources is corporate? This study will compare numbers of corporate sources to government sources and to other non-government sources to ascertain how journalists constructed the debate using these different kinds of sources. Again, as a supplemental indicator, this question also asks, what percentage of source words is attributed to corporate sources per segment, and how does this compare to other kinds of sources?

METHOD

This study examines news coverage of the ARRA on the three leading network's evening news shows: NBC *Nightly News*, ABC *World News*, and CBS *Evening News*. Although in recent years, audiences for these network programs have declined, they still retain nearly 22 million viewers on average for the past season, commanding the largest television news audiences in the United States (Broadcasting and Cable, 2010). This is several times more than the number of primetime viewers who watched the three major cable news channels (CNN, Fox, MSNBC) (Pew Research Center, 2009). The analysis will also include morning news programs for each of these networks (from 7-9 A.M.) that mention the legislation, since the Pew Research Center/PEJ also reported that the stimulus package received more attention on morning news than evening news (2009, p. 26). Average morning news viewership in 2009 for these networks was 12.8 million (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Data was collected using a LexisNexis search for key word "stimulus." The search was limited to the time period from Obama's first day in office (January 20, 2009) until the bill was signed into law on February 17, 2009. A census of news segments from this time period was conducted, excluding all segments that make no mention the ARRA legislation. The study also excludes "teases" for other stories, duplicates of the same story, and transcripts from primetime or late-night broadcasts, such as *Nightline, Dateline,* or *60 Minutes.* News stories were coded using the full text from transcripts of the broadcast segments that specifically mention the ARRA legislation, with the specific segment as the unit of analysis. Each segment included any introductory text about the story topic provided and ended when the news person moved on to another story topic.

For the purposes of this study, press independence was measured by the number of non-governmental sources cited for information about the debate, although they did not necessarily need to be directly quoted. Specifically, coding recorded the attribution of information to a named source, counting the total number of named sources who express a viewpoint (or to whom a viewpoint is attributed) in each broadcast segment. Coding also recorded the number of words attributed to each source (quotes and paraphrases*)*, including statements by agencies, organizations, or corporate spokespeople named in each segment. Words were only counted when the source was actually *given voice* (through direct speech or paraphrase) to express a viewpoint (See Appendix B for further discussion). Coders excluded named persons or entities who were merely mentioned in a descriptive way.

Sources types coded included: administration; congressional majority; congressional minority; congressional independent; former governmental; local governmental; governmental candidates; government agencie; corporate; political; organizational; laypersons; journalists; experts (academics, researchers, economists and analysts); and other non-governmental. It should be noted that the organizational category included a broad range of sources, including economic, professional, charitable, research and public policy organizations. For example, this category included the Federal Budget Office and the Federal Open Market Committee to but also the American Red Cross and groups like the CATO Institute and Citizens against Government Waste (See Appendix C for complete list). The journalist category was added after a preliminary examination of the data to account for instances where the reporter (usually anchor) interviewed a different journalist within the segment (see Appendix B for descriptions of these and other categories).

An additional coder reviewed 10% of the sample to calculate intercoder reliability (IRC). Coders achieved 96.6 percent agreement for the source names listed. For source word count, Krippendorf's α was .910. For source type, coders achieved a Scott's π of 0.956.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A census of the data included 250 separate segments containing the word "stimulus" (from 248 transcripts). NBC produced the largest portion of the segments (42%), followed by CBS (32%), with ABC producing the fewest segments (26%). 37.6% of segments aired on weekdays, with the remaining 62.4% airing during weekend programming, and the sample included fewer morning segments (34.6%) than evening (62.4%).

A total of 683 named sources were cited in the sample, ranging from 0 - 11 per segment, with an average of 2.39 sources appearing in each segment. Overall, 25% of sources were non-governmental and 75% were governmental sources, with 62% of all source words attributed to governmental sources and 38% attributed to non-governmental sources (Figure 1). One-sample t-tests showed that these results were significant.

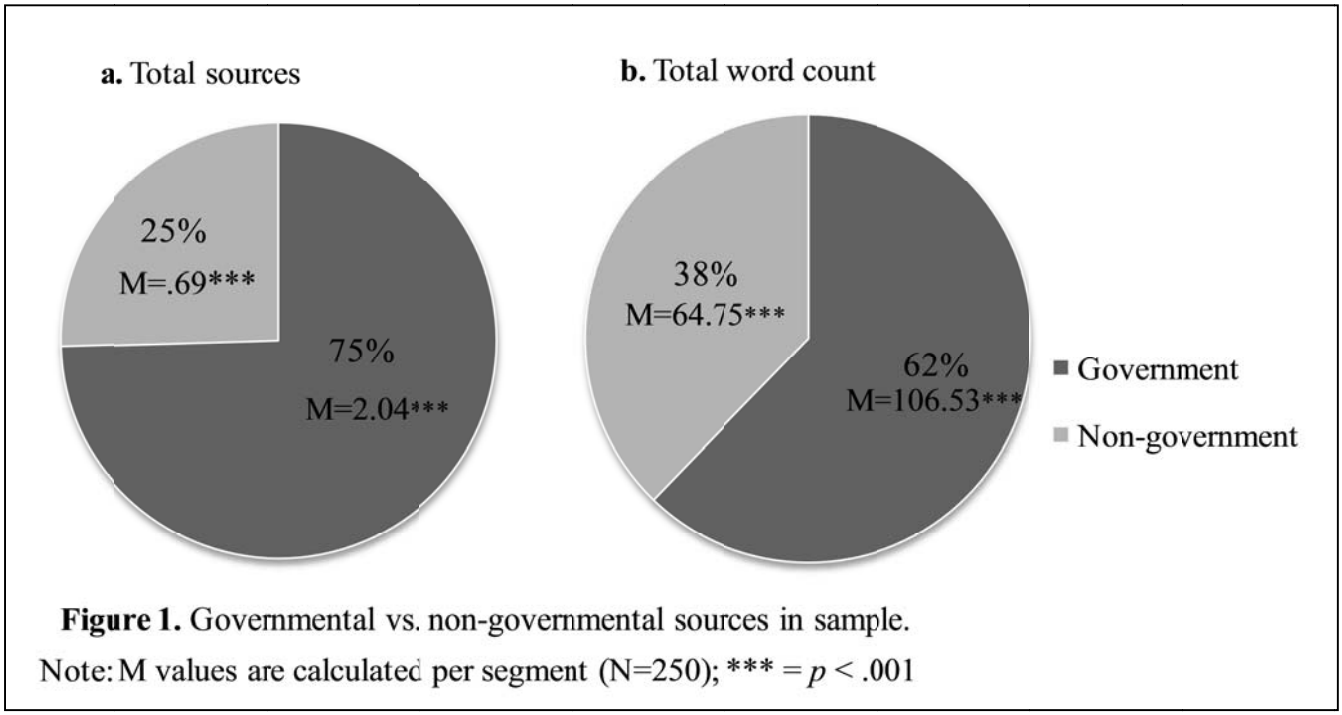

Figure 1. Governmental vs. non-governmental sources in sample.
Note: M values are calculated per segment (N=250); *** = $p < .001$

Distribution of sources and word counts among all source types is shown in Figure 2. The administration led in both categories, with a total of 222 administration sources cited (32.5%) and 14,986 (38.6%) words attributed to those sources. Congressional minority members were the second most common source type with 171 (25%) total sources cited followed by congressional majority members, with 89 (13%) sources cited. Word counts for both congressional groups, however, were comparable, with 2,851(7.3%) words attributed to congressional minority and 2,786 (7.1%) attributed to majority members.

For non-governmental sources types, laypersons were the most commonly cited (46 or 6.7%), followed by journalists (36 or 5.3%), corporate sources (25 or 3.6%), organizational sources (22 or 3.2%) and experts (academics/researchers/economists/analysts) (22 or 3.2%). Journalists, however, were attributed the most words (5,647 words or 14.5%) followed by laypersons (2,989 words or 7.6%) and experts (1980 words or 5.1%). The category of *other* non-governmental sources included non-expert professionals without corporate, political or

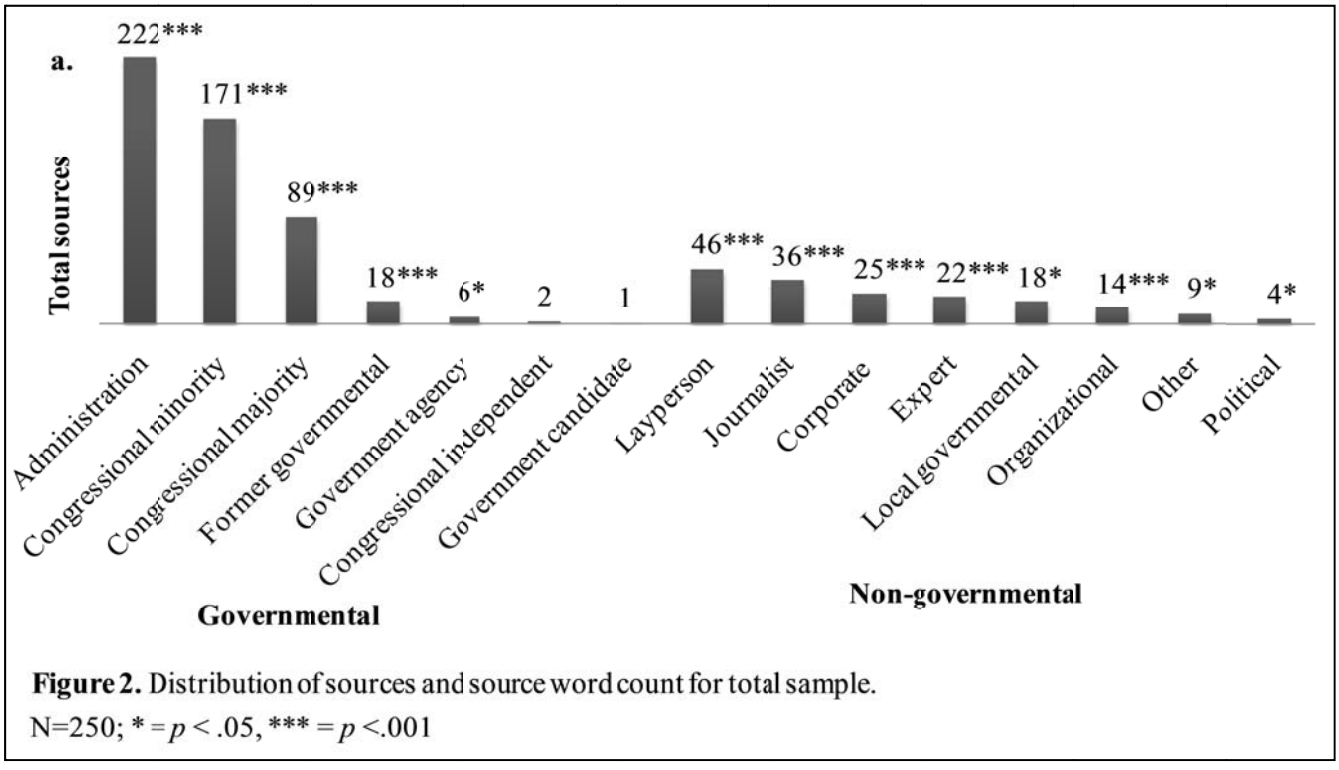

Figure 2. Distribution of sources and source word count for total sample.
N=250; * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$

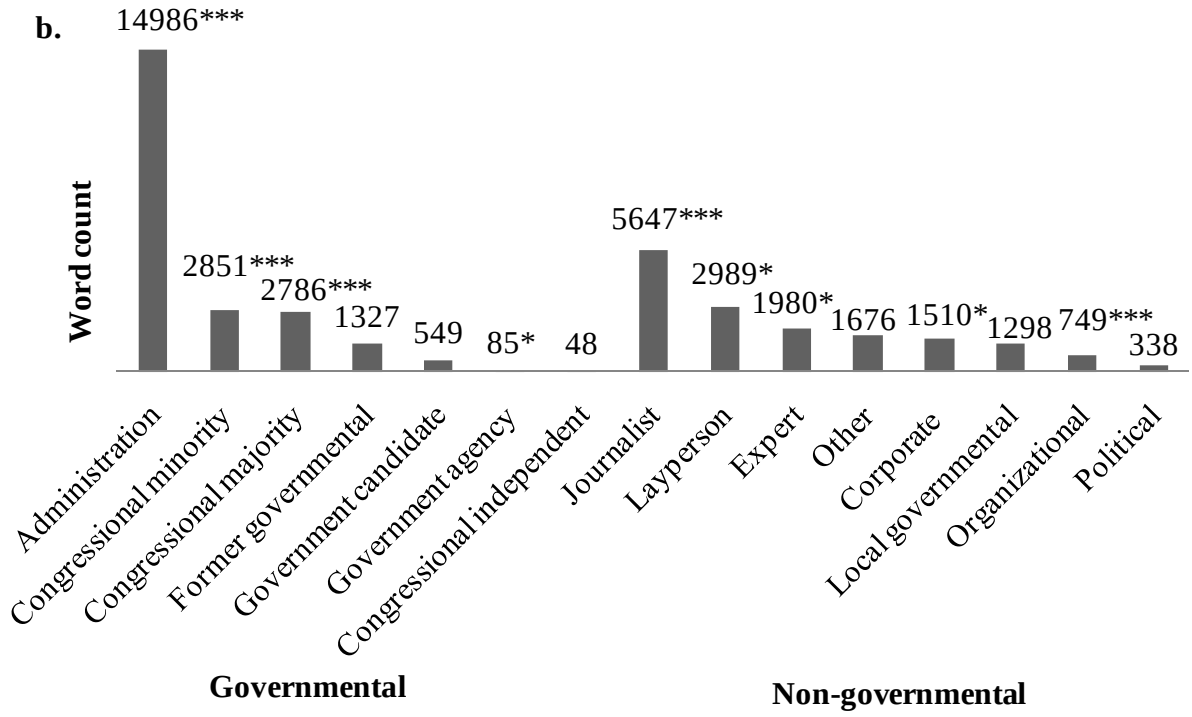

Figure 2. Continued.
N=250; * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$

organizational affiliation, such as authors, law enforcement officers, and attorneys. This group made up only 4 percent of total sources (9), and was attributed 1,676 words (4.3%). No union members were cited in the sample. Again, one-sample t-tests reported in Figure 2 show which of these results were significantly different from zero. Note that source types for Figure 2 parts a and b are ordered *differently* (organized into governmental and non-governmental and listed in descending order of prominence).

To evaluate the hypotheses, Figure 3 compares total sources and total source word counts over time (separated into three equal periods). Results support H1 since non-governmental sources were present in all three periods. The numbers of total non-governmental sources and total non-governmental source words per segment were significantly different from zero in each

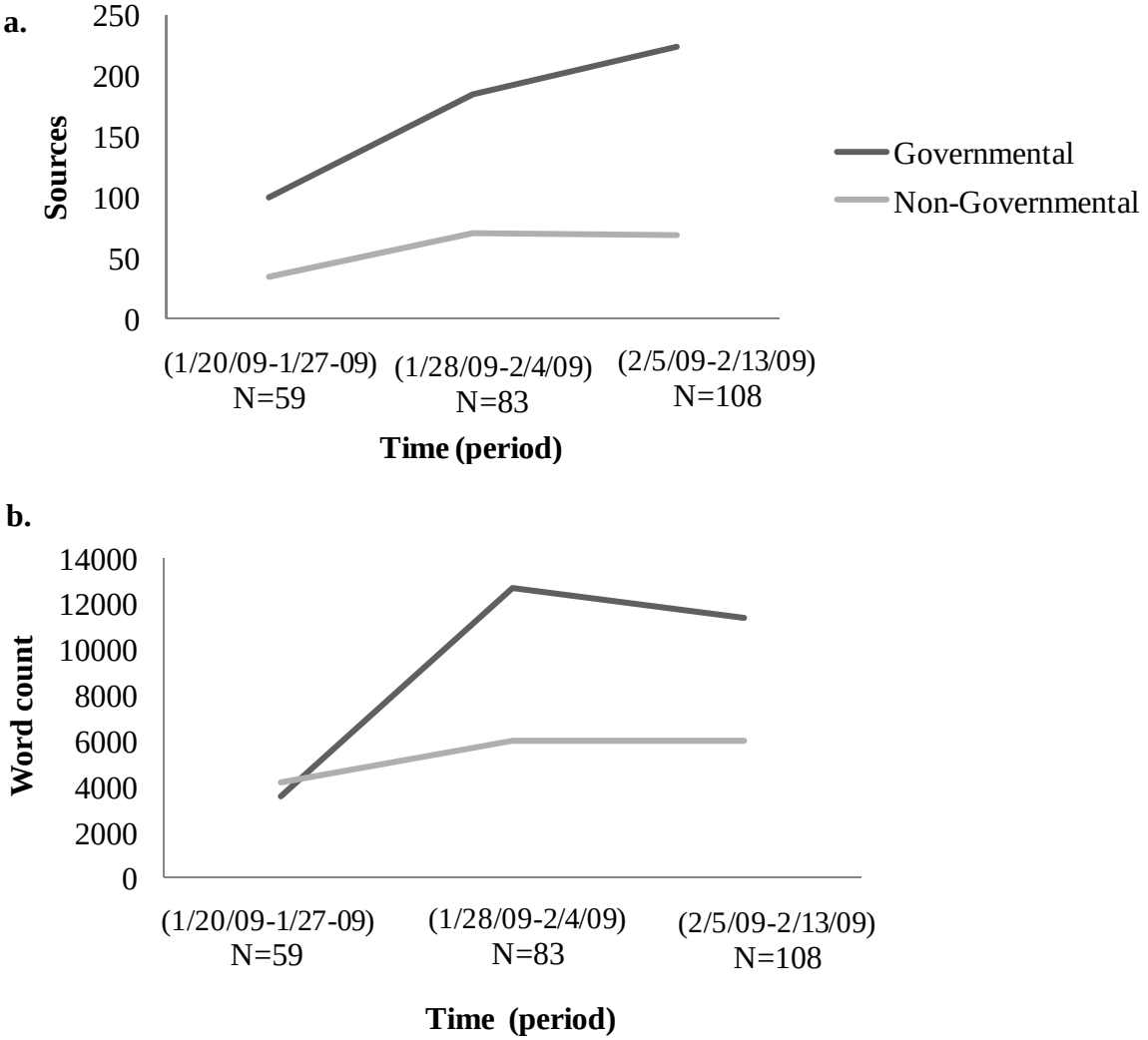

Figure 3. Total sources (a) and total source word count (b) over time.

period (Table 1). Table 1 illustrates that the number of non-governmental sources was larger for the second period (M=.84, t(82)=6.08, *p*=.000) than the first (M=.59, t(58)=4.33, *p*=.000), but slightly declined again during period three (M=.64, t(107), *p*=.000). The same is true for the number of non-governmental source words per segment, which was slightly higher in period two (M=72.43, t(82)=3.81, *p* =.000) than in period one (M=70.80. t(58)=3.15, *p* = .003), but declined in period three (M=55.54, t(107)=4.01, *p* =.000).

Table 1. Non-governmental sources and words per segment for each period.							
	Period	**M**	**SD**	***t***		**df**	**N**
Sources	**1**	0.59322	1.0542	4.33	***	58	59
	2	0.84337	1.26377	6.08	***	82	83
	3	0.63889	1.11455	5.957	***	107	108
Word Count	**1**	70.79661	172.54542	3.152	*	58	59
	2	72.43373	173.21544	3.81	***	82	83
	3	55.537	143.99828	4.008	***	107	108
*= p < .05, *** = p < .001							
Note: The above results are from a one sample t-test (point comparison to zero).							

Data also partially support H2. Table 2 shows that the *difference* between governmental and non-governmental sources cited slightly increased from the beginning (M=1.10, t(58)=3.74, p = .000) to middle (M=1.39, t(82)=5.01, p = .000) time periods, and from middle to end (M=1.43, t(107)=6.16, p = .000).[3] Note that the total number of segments (N) for each period also steadily increased over time such that, although the numbers of non-governmental sources for periods two and three appear comparable, the percentage of total sources in the third period that are non-governmental is actually smaller in the last period (Figure 4). This means that the difference between total governmental and non-governmental sources cited per segment continued to grow, but contrary to H2, the *percentage* of non-governmental sources declined for the last period. Differences in governmental and non-governmental word counts followed a

Table 2. Paired sample t-tests showing the *difference* between governmental and non-governmental sources and words per segment for each period.							
	Period	**M**	**SD**	***t***		**df**	**N**
Sources	**1**	1.10169	2.26438	3.737	***	58	59
	2	1.38554	2.52225	5.005	***	82	83
	3	1.43519	2.41883	6.164	***	107	108
Word Count	**1**	-9.59322	208.43689	-0.354		58	59
	2	68.3012	284.51267	2.187	*	82	83
	3	49.46	221.19571	2.324	*	107	108
*= p < .05, *** = p <.001							

[3] These results are from a paired samples t-test comparing governmental to non-governmental, unlike Table 1, which compares non-governmental sources and words to zero.

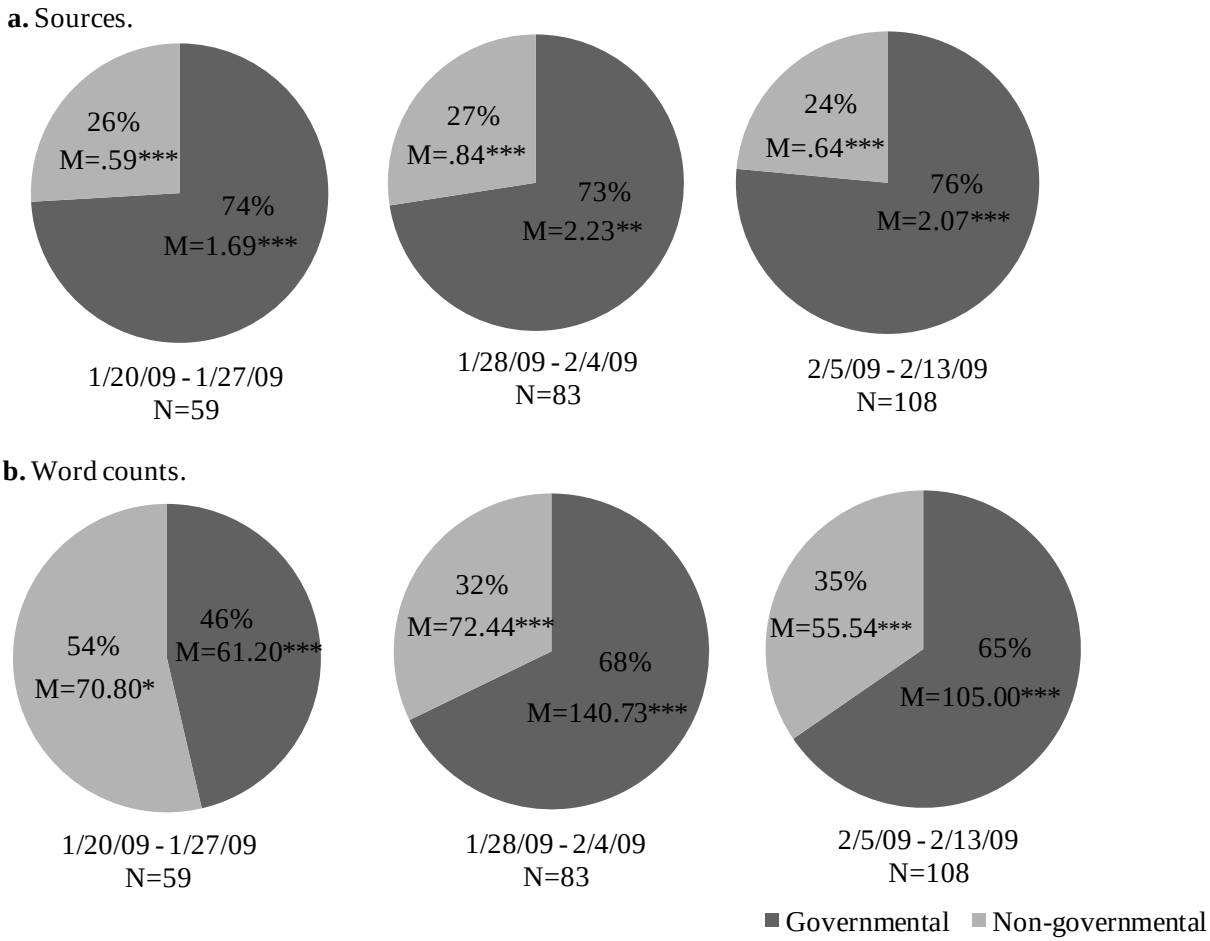

Figure 4. Percentages of governmental vs. non-governmental sources and words over time.
* $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

slightly different pattern. In the first period, governmental sources were attributed 9.59 *fewer* words per segment than non-governmental sources (t(58)=-0.35, $p = .725$), despite the fact that more government sources were cited in this period. Those results, however, were not significant. In period two, the difference made a dramatic and significant increase, with 68.30 more words attributed to governmental source than non-governmental (t(81)=2.187, $p = .032$). This difference then significantly declined for period three, with only 49.46 more words attributed to governmental than non-governmental sources (t(107)=2.32, $p = .022$).[4]

[4] Results reported in Figure 4 are from a one sample t-test (point comparison to zero), showing that reported results are significantly different from zero.

Table 3. Corporate sources compared to other source types.				
	Sources			
	M	**SD**	***t***	***p***
Administration	0.79	0.96	-12.914	***
Congressional minority	0.58	1.10	-8.374	***
Congressional majority	0.26	0.87	-4.638	***
Layperson	0.08	0.70	-1.888	
Journalist	0.04	0.62	-1.117	
Organizational	-0.01	0.51	0.371	
Former governmental	-0.03	0.51	0.868	
Expert	-0.03	0.43	1.021	
Local governmental	-0.04	0.50	1.388	
Other non-governmental	-0.06	0.45	2.236	
Governmental agency	-0.08	0.45	2.694	*
Political	-0.08	0.44	3.049	*
Congressional independent	-0.09	0.42	3.426	*
Governmental candidate	-0.10	0.42	3.623	***
N=250 df = 249 * $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$				

To answer RQ1, I compared numbers of governmental sources and word counts per segment with non-governmental sources. Results show significant differences. The number of government sources per segment was significantly higher than the number of non-governmental (M=1.34, t(249) = 8.78, *p*=.000). Results also show that government sources were attributed significantly more words per segment (M=41.78) than non-governmental sources (t(249)=2.73, *p*=.007).

RQ2 compares numbers of corporate sources and word counts to all other source types at the segment level (Tables 3 and 4). Administration sources (M=-.79, t(249)=-12.914, *p*=.000), congressional majority sources (M=-.26, t(249)=-4.638, *p*=.000) and congressional minority sources (M=-.58, t(249)=-8.374, *p*=.000), were all more numerous than corporate sources cited per segment. Congressional independents (M=.09, t(249)=3.426, *p*=.001) and governmental candidates (M=.10, t(249)=3.623, *p*=.000), however, were cited less often than corporate

Table 4. Corporate word counts per segment compared to other source types.

	Words			
	M	**SD**	***t***	
Administration	53.9	138.93	-6.14	***
Congressional minority	27.3	72.81	-5.93	***
Journalist	16.55	102.47	-2.55	
Layperson	5.196	69.58	-1.34	
Congressional majority	5.104	54.69	-1.48	
Expert	1.88	58.47	-0.51	
Other non-governmental	0.664	78.71	-0.13	
Former governmental	-0.73	57.80	0.20	
Local governmental	-0.85	55.78	0.24	
Organizational	-3.04	35.01	1.38	
Governmental candidate	-3.84	48.04	1.27	
Political	-4.69	37.44	1.98	
Governmental agency	-5.7	32.95	2.74	*
Congressional independent	-5.85	32.93	2.81	*

N=250 df = 249 * $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

sources. Numbers of both political sources (M=.016, t(249)=2.0, *p*= .045) and government agency sources (M=.024, t(249)=.154, *p*=.014) were significant but negligible. Corporate word counts per segment were also lower than word counts for both administration (M=-53.904, t(249)=-6.14, *p*=.000) and congressional minority (M=-27.304, t(249)=-5.93, *p*=.000) word counts. Results for the difference between mean word counts for corporate and congressional majority sources per segment were not significant (M=-5.104, t(249)=-1.48, *p*=.141), but corporate word counts per segment were slightly higher than congressional independent word counts (M=5.848, t(249)=2.81, *p*=.005) per segment.

Discussion

As indexing literature expects, the administration dominated coverage both in the number of sources included and in the amount of time (as measured in source words) given to those

sources. At the same time, news norms also came into play. Results show a careful balance of the amount of time given to congressional minority and majority sources. More congressional minority members were cited, which makes sense in light of the Democratic President's majority affiliation, but word counts attributed to congressional majority and minority speakers were relatively evenly distributed. Gans (1979) explains that this kind of *political balance* is a news norm followed by journalists to avoid accusations of bias that might undermine credibility (p. 175).

This study contributes to indexing literature by offering a specific value representing *how much* we can expect debate to open up in circumstances of government controversy. RQ1 was aimed specifically at this question, and results showed that, amid government controversy about this economic issue, non-governmental sources made up 25% of all sources included in television news coverage, with a slightly larger percentage (38%) of time given to those sources. Percentages of non-governmental sources and source word counts included in coverage were significant throughout the time period examined. Given the political nature of the policy debate, these numbers seem impressive. It is the non-governmental sources in the news who represent opportunities for journalists to expand coverage beyond the parameters of official government debate in ways that contribute to deliberative democracy.

Laypersons and journalists, however, made up the largest portions of this non-governmental group. The number of laypersons included in coverage reflects another news norm, whereby journalists seek to personalize stories in an episodic way. This practice is intended to make news coverage relatable and engaging for audiences, (Gans, 1979; Iyengar, 1991). But these sources share the same limited access to information as the general audience, and therefore their ability to offer viewers new information about the issue is somewhat limited.

For this reason, laypersons in the news might not be expected to offer cross-cutting information. In a segment about unemployment, for example, ABC's Eric Horing interviewed several Elkhart, IN residents about their personal experiences of job loss. Commentary from these residents made up a large portion of the segment, but focused on personal experience rather than information about the economy. Similarly, in a CBS segment about rising child care costs, layperson commentary is limited to personal experiences and observations. In this segment, it was the journalists themselves who offered general information about economic conditions related to this topic, including provisions within the proposed stimulus bill intended to mitigate the problem. These instances demonstrate how layperson sources generally contributed to segments in the sample; which did not to include offering new information about the stimulus package.

The large proportion of journalists among non-governmental sources, on the other hand, is particularly surprising, since this source type only accounted for instances when a lead reporter or anchor interviewed a *different* journalist within a segment. An audience might expect to see this, for example, in foreign affairs coverage when a television news anchor "checks in" with a reporter on the ground. But this practice emerged in economic news as well when anchors "checked in" with reporters from a partner network or who offered specialized commentary about the economy. Even more surprising is the amount of time journalists spent talking to other journalists. The number of journalists cited did not stand out dramatically among non-governmental sources, however, journalists were allowed to speak longer than all other source types except for the administration. Journalists were attributed 22.6 words on average per segment ($t(249)=3.604$, $p=.000$), (see Figure 2b). This is particularly interesting because it suggests that, apart from their inclusion of outside sources, journalists spend a good deal of time

talking among themselves. Recall that this measure *does not* include the time that anchors spend talking to each other, but only instances when they invite another journalist to comment. This finding suggests that journalists operate as the *de facto* experts in television news coverage, and merits consideration in future research.

Corporate sources also figured prominently and significantly among non-governmental source types. Contrary to expectations, however, this group did not appear to command more power or access to the news than other non-governmental sources in the way that government officials did. Corporate sources were significantly greater than various other types of non-governmental sources, but these differences were not large enough to suggest any special privilege for corporate actors despite their high stakes in economic news and their potential for special access to journalists. In general, results appear to suggest that journalists' inclusion of corporate sources is balanced with inclusion of other non-governmental source types, but this is not necessarily the case.

One factor that may affect corporate presence in news coverage is the nature of this specific policy debate. The 2009 economic stimulus package was strongly advocated by the President and Democratic majority in Congress. The Republican minority generally opposed the legislation, and its stance in the debate also tended to represent the position of corporate actors. The Republican alternative stimulus plan, for example, included provisions that would reduce payroll tax on employees by half and the corporate tax rate by 10% (Brodie, 2009), both measures that would directly benefit the corporate sector. It might be the case, then, that congressional minority sources forwarded the corporate agenda in the news in ways that allowed corporate actors themselves to employ a more limited communication strategy. Since this study

looked specifically at sources and did not examine actual news content or how that content was framed, data do not account for this possibility.

Another factor that might offset the corporate presence in news is the broad range among organizational sources in this study, including some sources that might be influenced (either overtly or covertly) by a corporate agenda. For example, elite corporate actors might be able influence organizations through industry dealings and affiliations or alternatively, corporate interests might be represented by those organizations regardless of influence. The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), for example, supported supplemental measures to the stimulus package (specifically the Troubled Asset Release Program – TARP) that focused on stabilizing the banking system. (Federal Open Market Committee, 2009; Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2009) "Our lending to financial institutions," Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke told CBS, "together with actions taken by other agencies has helped to relax the severe liquidity strains experienced by many firms." (Dow, 2009) This kind of commentary in news coverage brought to light corporate needs and interests that were not addressed in the stimulus package, without any direct speech from corporate actors.

In his discussion of information and influence campaigns (IIC), Manheim (2011) reviews the strategies, actors, and motivations for longitudinal communications campaigns designed to influence or inform various kinds of actors. He outlines at least two possibilities that could account for corporate participation in this kind of campaign, without their actually having to target the general public through the news media. One possibility is a bidirectional campaign, in which two separate actors (the *protagonists*) seek to influence a third actor (the *target*). For our purposes corporate and congressional minority actors might be two protagonists, who both aimed to influence Congress about the stimulus debate. One way for these actors to influence the

debate is to encourage public pressure on Congress by making their stance on the issues visible in the news. In this case, the power dynamic between the two different protagonists was asymmetrical; since congressional minority members participate in the legislative vote they have a distinct advantage. But in these circumstances congressional minority members and corporate actors also shared interests. As such, corporate actors may have relied on congressional minority campaign efforts to convey their messages.

Manheim also accounts for a second possible interpretation of corporate strategy for communication about the stimulus package. In this scenario, corporate actors are stakeholders in the congressional minority campaign to influence Congress about the stimulus debate. Manheim outlines different types of stakeholders with varying access, power, and motivations. Corporate actors in this case, might be considered *discretionary stakeholders*, since they enjoyed the advantages of having an accepted voice and likely access to the debate, but were not necessarily motivated to use them. Again, the fact that the corporate and congressional minority agendas coincided for this debate, makes this interpretation plausible.

Expert sources (academics, researchers, economists, and analysts) included in news coverage represent one kind of non-governmental speaker that might be expected to help audiences make sense of the economic issue at hand by offering information unattached to any government, political or corporate affiliation. Because of their special knowledge about the issue, experts are often able to offer new and potentially cross-cutting information to viewers. This group made up a small but significant portion of total non-governmental sources included in coverage. With only about .07 sources and 7.9 words per segment, however, it is difficult to imagine how this expert information could compete with a cacophony of Administration sound bites, congressional he-said-she-said, and the journalists' own commentary. Additionally, it is

important to note that not all non-governmental sources represent new perspectives or even non-governmental perspectives. For example, economists interviewed or cited about the stimulus package could be nonpartisan and unaffiliated with government officials, but they could also be partisan representatives sought out to offer "expert" commentary that supports one side of the official debate. The present study does not account for these nuances, but expert sources identified by their corporate affiliation were always coded as corporate (See Appendix B). That is, government affiliation trumped corporate and corporate trumped expert. In this way the study attempted to weed out experts affiliated (at least overtly) with government or corporations.

Indexing theory expects the press to "index" levels of official government debate. Because congressional controversy about the stimulus package intensified over time, this study expected the percentage of non-governmental sources to increase over time. Results partially supported this hypothesis. As the debate in congress intensified, the percentage of non-governmental sources included in coverage did increase, but only to a point. Instead, as the number of total segments increased over time, the percentage of non-governmental sources actually decreased slightly at the end of the time period. This dynamic may be due to high levels of uncertainty in the expert community about economic conditions. According to indexing theory, the lack of official government consensus about this policy debate motivated journalists to seek other viewpoints. But in this case, non-governmental sources were both uncertain and divided about the stimulus plan. "The ground is shifting so quickly under our feet," CNBC's David Faber commented in one segment. "You know, people can read the textbooks in the '30s all they want, but ultimately these are very different times and they're changing very quickly," (Faber, 2009). In such circumstances, journalists may have exhausted ideas for alternative news sources in their struggled to define the policy debate and reverted back to their reliance on

official government sources over time. This might explain why, journalists' inclusion of non-governmental sources began to taper despite persistent congressional controversy.

Collectively, the results of this study suggest that a strict governmental vs. non-governmental dichotomy may be less useful for an economic context than for a foreign policy issue. These two types of news content share certain basic criteria, outlined above, but differ in important ways. In particular, important differences exist among the kinds of non-governmental people and groups relevant to news coverage. We might expect to see higher numbers of layperson sources, for example, in coverage of an economic issue than for a foreign policy issue. Lay sources in this study expressed personal experiences with relation to the economy (e.g., unemployment, job hunting, and managing personal finances), something they might not be able to do in a foreign affairs context. On the other hand, coverage of a foreign policy debate might also be less likely to include corporate sources. In the same way, we might expect foreign policy debates to seek commentary from military sources, but the same sources would be unlikely to weigh in on a domestic economic policy debate. Each kind of non-governmental source included in news coverage has different implications for public opinion. Ultimately results do support indexing theory since journalists did expand the access to the news forum beyond the parameters of official government debate. But this discussion suggests that levels of press independence in news coverage of the 2009 stimulus package were likely to be limited in terms of new information these non-governmental sources could contribute to the debate.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, results support the indexing model for press-state relations in an economic news context. The Administration did have a distinct advantage both in the number of sources included in coverage of the 2009 economic stimulus debate, and in the amount of time (as measured in source words) given to those sources. As the theory predicts, there was also extensive coverage of the government debate; congressional minority and majority sources were the second and third (respectively) most prominent groups cited in the debate. Unlike the administration, time given to competing congressional sources appeared to be carefully balanced.

Coverage of this economic issue, during circumstances of government debate, appeared to include a meaningful proportion of non-governmental voices. Percentages of non-governmental sources and source word counts included in coverage were significantly different from zero throughout the debate. Results also show that, as the debate in Congress intensified, the percentage of non-governmental sources included in coverage increased, but only to a point. Instead, the number of total segments increased over time, and the percentage of non-governmental sources decreased at the end of the period examined. These findings may reflect journalists' reactions to the combination of official controversy and uncertain economic circumstances. Government controversy did appear to motivate journalists to include more non-governmental sources, but these sources were both uncertain and divided about the debate, which may have caused journalists to revert to their reliance of official government sources as they struggled to define the policy debate.

Examination of the kinds of non-governmental sources journalists used to construct this debate suggests that the percentages of total non-governmental sources and words included in coverage probably overestimate the amount of new information about this issue that was made

available to the public through television news coverage. Large percentages of layperson and journalist sources inflate the total percentage of non-governmental voices and are not necessarily indicators of strong democratic debate. In addition, the number of corporate sources included might actually under represent the amount of corporate influence in coverage. The research also suggests that a strict governmental vs. non-governmental dichotomy is less appropriate for an economic context than it has proven to be for foreign policy.

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APPENDIX A: CODING SHEET

1. **Network/Program: _____**

1 = NBC *Nightly News*
2 = ABC *World News*
3 = CBS *Evening News*
4 = NBC *Today Show*
5 = NBC *Saturday Today or Sunday Today*
6 = ABC *Good Morning America*
7 = ABC *World News Saturday or Sunday*
8 = CBS *The Early Show*
9 = CBS *Saturday Early Show or News Sunday Morning*

2. **Date aired: (Month:0/Day:00/Year2009) ____/____/**2009

3. **Time aired: ___:____** and AM or PM

4. **Segment headline:** (if reported)_____

5. **Total word count: _____**

6. **List named sources:**

Source 1: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 2: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 3: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 4: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 5: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 6: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 7: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 8: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 9: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 10: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____
Source 11: _____ type:_____ Words: _____ Valence: _____

Source type(s):

1 = Administration
2 = Congressional majority
3 = Congressional minority
4 = Congressional independent
5 = Government agency
6 = Former governmental
7 = Local governmental
8 = Governmental candidate
9 = Corporate
10 = Political
11 = Organizational
12 = Laypeople
13 = Journalists
14 = Academics, researchers, or economists
15 = Analysts
16 = Union members
17 = Other non-governmental

APPENDIX B: CODING INSTRUCTIONS

Unit of analysis – is the complete segment from the news program that contains the word "stimulus." The segment does not need to be exclusively about the stimulus package to qualify, but at least must refer to the stimulus bill (also known as the Stimulus package, H.R. 1, or the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act at least once within the segment). The segment begins when journalists begin discussion of the topic that contains the word "stimulus." For example, if a transcript contains multiple segments on different topics, the unit begins when journalists start to discuss the specific topic that contains this search term (excluding any teasers/headline list at the opening of the news program). The unit concludes when the news person moves on to a new story topic.

- Teasers for stories later in the broadcast, and lists of headlines (about material *to come*) should be omitted. Opening headlines for a news program do not constitute a segment, and should not be included when coding a segment that appears later in the broadcast.
- Although different kinds of economic stories are often grouped together in the news, they sometimes constitute separate segments. For example, if (within a single transcript) a news program shifts from discussion of the stimulus bill to a separate but related segment on the bank bailout (TARP) or the Asian markets, these should be coded as separate segments (number transcripts for example as 1 a and 1b in order of appearance). Again, a segment should only be coded if it contains the word "stimulus," so not all economic news stories necessarily qualify.
- If the word "stimulus" appears only in a transitional statement by a journalist and does not appear at all within the subsequent or preceding segment, that segment should be excluded from analysis. The word "stimulus" must be included *within* the segment for it to qualify.
- If the word "stimulus" appears within the segment, but is used in a peripheral way, and the segment is *neither* about the bill itself *nor* related to the economy (TARP, Markets, unemployment, etc.), the segment should be omitted.

1. **Program Name/Network Name:** Report the network and title of the program from which the transcript is taken.

1 = NBC *Nightly News*	**6** = ABC *Good Morning America*
2 = ABC *World News*	**7 =** ABC *World News Saturday or Sunday*
3 = CBS *Evening News*	**8** = CBS *The Early Show*
4 = NBC *Today Show*	**9** = CBS *Saturday or Sunday Early Show*
5 = NBC *Saturday Today or Sunday Today*	

2. **Date aired:** Report the date that the segment originally aired (must be between January 20, 2009 and February 13, 2009.
   Example: Month: January; Day: 20; Year: 2009 - **Format:** 1/20/2009

3. **Time aired:** Report the time of day that the segment originally aired including AM or PM.
   Example: 7:00 PM EST - **Format:** 7:00 PM

4. **Segment Headline:** Did the news present this segment with a specific headline? If so, report the complete text for the headline of the segment here.

5. **Total Word Count:** Enter the total number of words in the transcript (as listed after "LENGTH :").

6. **Named Sources:**
   a. Report any named person (including agencies, organizations, or corporate spokespeople) who is credited for expressing a viewpoint within the segment. A named source may speak directly, may be quoted, or just paraphrased, but should only be included if the source expressed a viewpoint or is cited as a source for information related to the segment topic. Mere mentions of a person's name in a peripheral or descriptive way do not count. A source *must* be named in connection with its expression of a viewpoint in order to be counted.
   - When a named source cites a different named source, both sources should be coded separately, with the person/entity quoting someone else listed first.
   - A source should still be counted if they are credited with an opinion, but not allowed to speak in the transcript and are not paraphrased in a direct way. For example, "White House officials hope that the bill will pass," or "The Senator praised the bill," *should* be counted.
   - *Individuals* who are cited as sources (i.e., individual people vs. organizations or groups of government officials) must have an identifiable first *and* last name to be counted. Sources identified by only an email address (such as comments from Twitter) should be excluded.

   b. **Source (type):** Sources cited or quoted in each story will be coded as one of the following: *administration* (1), *congressional majority* (2), *congressional minority* (3), *congressional independent* (4), *government agencies* (5), *former governmental* (6), *local governmental* (7), *governmental candidates* (8), *corporate* (9), *political* (10), *organizational* (11), *laypeople* (12), *journalists* (13), *academics, researchers, or economists* (14), *analysts* (15), *union members* (16) or *other non-governmental* (17).

   Please use the numbers below to indicate source type. For all sources, if any information is used to identify the source as a part of any of these <u>governmental</u> source types, this affiliation should supersede any additional non-governmental affiliation provided by the journalist/transcript.

(1) Administration – Code as administration any official that is a member of the current Obama administration or if the "administration" or "white house" is mentioned in general (or similar general reference to the executive branch as a source. Essentially this should include any Obama administration official who was employed during the dates of the study.

(2) Congressional majority – Code sources in this category if they are a Democratic member of Congress. This category should also apply to opinions credited generally to Democrats in Congress, "Democratic sources say…" for example.

(3) *Congressional minority* – Code sources in this category if they are a Republican member of Congress. This category should also apply to opinions credited generally to the Republicans in Congress, "Republican sources say…" for example.

(4) *Congressional independent* – Code sources in this category if they are an Independent member of Congress. This category should also apply to opinions credited generally to Independents in Congress, "Independents in Congress say…" for example.

(5) *Government agencies* – Code if a national government agency or person speaking on behalf of a national government agency (such as the Congressional Budget Office or the Bureau of Labor Statistics) is named within a segment as the source for information that is either quoted or paraphrased.

(6) *Former governmental* – Code as *former governmental* if the source is a person in a position of power to have greater access to government information than an average citizen, but does not qualify as administration, congressional majority, congressional minority or congressional independent. This would include, for example, former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

(7) *Local governmental* – Use this code if source is identified as any kind of local government officials (governors, mayors, local lawmakers, etc.)

(8) *Governmental candidates* – This should also include any candidates running for state, local, or federal office, who are not currently holding any other governmental office. For example, a Senator running for reelection should still be coded as *Congressional Majority*, *Minority* or *Independent* depending on his or her party affiliation.

(9) *Corporate* – Code if the source is an executive of a business, or if the person is identified as speaking on behalf of a company, by his affiliation with a company, or as a company employee. In addition to the source's name, also list the associated corporation and/or identifying business title provided in the transcript.

(10) *Political* – Code if the source is identified as a political party-related group, a person speaking on behalf of such a group, or identified as a member of such a group. In addition to the source's name, also list the associated political organization and/or identifying title provided in the transcript. This includes, for example, the Democratic or Republican National Committees.

(11) *Organizational* – Code if the source is identified by their affiliation with some organized group, such as interest groups, lobbyists, trade organizations, non-profit or grass roots organizations, etc. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Hoover Institution should also be included as organizational groups. In addition to the source's name, also list the associated organization and/or identifying title provided in the transcript.

(12) *Laypeople* – Code if the source named appears only to be a member of the public, and is not given any kind of credential or identified as speaking on behalf of any other agency,

company, or organization. For example, a small businesses (the owner of a small store or restaurant), should be coded in this category.

(13) Journalists – Any person identified as an anchor or reporter at the top of the transcript should not be coded as a source. If a reporter or a publication (e.g., *The Washington Post*) is cited within the transcript, however, as a source for expressing a viewpoint, then this reporter/publication should be coded as a *Journalist*. For example, a visiting journalist from a partner network, who is asked to comment on a story or topic, should be counted in this category, but *only* if they are not identified as a reporter for the segment.

(14) Academics, researchers or economists – Code if the source is identified as an academic (professor, faculty, or researcher) at an institution of higher education (university or college) or an economist. Economists that are speaking on behalf of a corporation, or identified as working for a corporation, however, should be coded as corporate.

(15) Analysts – Code if the source is identified within the transcript as an analyst of any kind, but not as a reporter, journalist, or academic.

(16) Union members – Code if the source is identified as a member of a labor union, or speaking on behalf of a labor union. This category should supersede the *corporate* category.

(17) Other non-governmental – Code if source does not fit into any of the above categories, for example, a person identified only as an author, law enforcement officer, or other specific profession. This category should include foreign sources, and any foreign governmental sources.

c. Word count. After reading the entire transcript, the coder should highlight all instances where this particular source was given a voice, and report the total word count attributed to this source.

- A source is "given voice" if they are **a.** quoted directly, or if they are **b.** paraphrased in such a way that their speech is reported. For example, a paraphrase that gives voice might be, "The CEO says that *the bill is in his interest*," or "President Obama told Republicans today that *he wants bipartisan support*."
- When quoted directly, the word count should include all words within quotations. When given voice through a paraphrase, only the words attributed to the source should be counted, and not their introduction (shown above in italics).
- If a source is credited with an opinion, but not actually given voice, (e.g., "Nancy Pelosi praised the bill," "Senator McCain hopes he can garner Republican support," or "Obama urged Republicans to support the legislation,") then the word count for this citation is zero. Therefore, a source may be cited and still have a zero word count.

d. Valence. After reading the entire transcript, on the whole would you characterize each source as (*1) supportive, (2) unsupportive, (3) neutral/ambivalent,* or *(4) N/A* (sources comments did not apply to the bill). Note: only code with 4 (N/A) if the source did not mention or discuss the stimulus package in any way.

APPENDIX C. SOURCES' ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Economic

- Federal Budget Office
- Federal Reserve
  - Federal Open Market Committee
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget

Other Research and Public Policy

- Brookings Institution
  - Tax Policy Center
- CATO Institute
- Citizens against Government Waste
- Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
- Common Cause
- Consumers Union
- Democracy 21

Lobbyist/Advocacy

- Family Research Council
- National Employment Law Project

Professional

- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Police Executive Research Forum

Charity

- American Red Cross

VITA

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Mrs. Levasseur is the Director of Development for the Louisiana State University Press with the LSU Foundation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Her professional experience also includes editorial work for various science, technology, and medicine (STM) publishers. She has published articles in *The Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, New York), University of Rochester's *Currents* (Rochester, New York) and *Beyond Race Magazine* (New York, New York), and presented research at the 2010 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference in Denver, Colorado.