

What Kind Of A Dog Is That?

Examining The Relationship Between Public Assessments Of Media And Of Other Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This paper draws on two historical surveys sets from Gallup to examine the relationship between public assessments of the media and assessments of government. Overall, the data provide little support for the idea that the media are evaluated as oppositional institutions in society, as the watchdog or even attack dog metaphors would suggest should be the case. Rather, the data suggest that, at least in the eyes of the public, the media are part of the overall governmental and institutional fabric of society. The public seems to evaluate the media as part of that overall structure, much as they would if they were evaluating the lapdog pets of the powerful forces in society.

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Media advocates, critics and scholars have used a variety of canine metaphors to describe the relationship between the media and other institutions in society. Advocates argue that the media serve as watchdogs, protecting the public from abuses by government, corporate and other institutions in society. Critics argue that the media more often are either 1) lap dogs, licking the hands of those in society with power, 2) guard dogs, barking to protect some institutions but not others, or 3) attack dogs, used by their political or industrial owners to launch campaigns against rivals.

One way to adjudicate among at least some of these rival hypotheses about the role of the media is to ask the general public. Citizens can assess how different institutions in society perform. If they lump all institutions together, including the media, that would suggest the media are less independent than the watchdog metaphor in particular would suggest.

A best test of the public's view of the independence of the media would come from an analysis of data from a country in which the media are celebrated as watchdogs. In such a country, public assessments of the media should not parallel those of assessments of other institutions in society. In fact, a balance argument states that, if the media are playing a critical role, they should gain in support in periods when the institutions they criticize are evaluated poorly. Conversely, the media should lose support when they critically evaluate popular institutions. This assumes that the media are equally vigilant in covering popular and unpopular institutions, which, of course, may not be the case.

This paper draws on two separate sets of surveys conducted by Gallup across the years that include questions on the media and on other institutions in society in the United States.. The

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data show less support for the watchdog role of the media than media advocates would prefer.

Dog Metaphors

Gleason (1990) argues that a watchdog concept of the media appears in free-press case law from the 19th Century as well as in the literature of journalism. A watchdog role has been used by press advocates in making claims of special constitutional protections for the media, he found. In this view, the media are representatives of the people, surveying the environment and barking when anything goes awry. Of particular concern to the watchdog are the operations of government, which is supposed to serve the people as well. This watchdog role puts the media in opposition to government in particular and institutions of society more generally.

Donohue, Tichenor and Olien (1995) articulated a different perspective, arguing that the media are guard dogs, rather than watchdogs. In this metaphor, the media perform as a sentry not for the community as a whole, but rather for powerful groups in society. These groups have sufficient influence and resources to create their own security system, of which the media are a part.

Others have argued that the media are really lap dogs (Spiess, 2011; Bednar, 2012). Donohue and his colleagues, in fact, used this metaphor as well to differentiate it from the guard dog metaphor. If the media are lap dogs, they write, they would be totally submissive to authority, have a total lack of independence, and frame issues to serve the interests of the powerful in society. Guard dogs, in contrast, would sometimes report on conflict between competing powers in society.

Clayman, Heritage, Elliott and McDonald (2007) have expanded on the canine

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metaphors. They say that the watchdog, guard dog and lap dog roles are inadequate. They note that another role, called the attack dog by Tannen (1998) and the junkyard dog by Sabato (1991), should be included in the inventory. In this view, the media are indiscriminately critical and cynical in their dealings with power figures and forces in society.

Empirically, the existing research does not clearly determine which of the metaphors is more reflective of actual media relationships with government or other powerful forces in society or the circumstances under which one metaphor is more accurate than another.

Confidence in the Institutions

The media are political institutions in society, and public support for political institutions has been a central concern in the political science literature across time. Listhaug and Wiberg (1995) took the position that confidence in institutions is a middle-range indicator of support for or acceptance of the legitimacy of the political system. They differentiate between confidence in government institutions and confidence in private institutions. Examples of the former are the armed forces, the educational system, the legal system, the police, parliament and the civil service. Examples of non-governmental institutions are the church, trade unions, major companies and the press. Using survey data from the European Value Systems Study Group, which included measures of each of these institutions, they found empirical support via factor analysis for this distinction. Norris (1999) saw confidence in institutions as one of the dimensions of a broader concept of political support. Norris and Inglehart (2010) describe confidence in political institutions as an indicator of regime support.

English (2007), Becker and Vlad (2009), and Becker, Vlad and English (2010) have

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examined the relationship between confidence in the media and press freedom using data from the Gallup World Poll. At the zero-order, the researchers found that there is no relationship between the two concepts. Based on analyses of surveys conducted in approximately 100 countries in 2007, 2008 and 2009, however, the researchers found that public beliefs about the openness of the society mask a real relationship between confidence in the media and press freedom. In each of the three years, confidence in the media relative to confidence in other institutions in society was found to be negatively associated with press freedom when the society is open. When the society is closed, however, confidence in the media relative to confidence in other institutions is positively related to press freedom.

Perception of a Media Bias

Scholars have examined the media in their own right. Research on media credibility, for example, has a long tradition in the field of mass communication (American Society of News Editors, 1985; Eveland and Shah, 2003; Gunther, 1992). Interest in the topic was revitalized by the innovative work of Vallone, Ross and Lepper (1985). These researchers showed six segments of nationally televised news programs about the 1982 Beirut massacre to 144 Sanford students six weeks after the event took place. They found that both Pro-Arab and Pro-Israeli partisans rated the programs and those who produced them as biased toward the other side. The researchers termed this a hostile media phenomenon, arguing that the students evaluated the media reports based on their own views, rather than the content itself. They also found that those respondents with greater knowledge were more likely to report the media reports to be biased.

Gunther (1992) argued that media professionals had overstated the case when they said

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that the integrity of reporters is the factor that almost entirely determines media credibility. To test this, he reanalyzed survey data gathered by the American Society of News Editors during December 1984 and January 1985 that asked respondents to rate the credibility of news coverage of many social groups and institutions. Gunther found evidence that audience involvement in an issue, situation, or group predicted more variance in respondents' credibility judgments of media than media attributes or demographic variables.

Watts, Domke, Shah and Fan (1999) used computer-assisted content analysis procedures to examine the balance in coverage of presidential candidates during the 1988, 1992 and 1996 elections. They then linked these findings to public perception of media bias and press coverage of the topic of media balance. The content analyses showed remarkable balance in candidate media coverage in the 1988 and 1996 campaigns and a slight bias favoring the Democratic candidate in 1992. The authors argued that the rising public perception that news media content had a liberal bias is largely due to criticisms driven by conservative elites and reported in news coverage.

Using national data from a panel of respondents, Eveland and Shah (2003) examined the role of interpersonal contexts in perceptions of media bias. They found that the individuals' perceptions of media bias were at least partly shaped through their interactions with like-minded others, and that the phenomenon is amplified among Republicans.

Gunther and Schmitt (2004) found that the media are singled out for hostile assessments and that those negative effects disappeared if the same content was labeled as coming from non-media sources. Participants in the field experiment were selected from one pro-genetically

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modified foods group and from one anti-GMF group. Each participant was assigned to a packet that contained a story about biotechnology and GMF. The content was randomly labeled as a newspaper article or a student essay. The participants systematically perceived the information attributed to the newspaper as hostile and persuasive in an unfavorable direction, while they found the so-called student essay as favorable to their own point of view.

Schmitt, Gunther and Liebhart (2004) did additional analyses of these same data to identify mechanisms that explain the hostile media effect. Out of the three processes of data selection and interpretation tested in the analysis (selective recall, selective categorization and different standards), only selective categorization appeared to be an explanation for the hostile media effect.

Gunther and Liebhart (2006) further refined the analysis of this phenomenon by testing the influence of the source (journalist vs. student) and reach (media organization vs. classroom composition). They found that a message associated with a large audience, such as a newspaper article, is more likely to generate a contrast bias, while a message in a low-reach context seemed to lead to an assimilation bias.

To assess how the level of involvement or partisanship, in addition to perceived reach of the message and characteristics of the source, impacted the perception of media bias, Gunther, Miller and Liebhart (2009) selected a group of members of Native American tribes and one of people highly sympathetic to Native American interests. Their common characteristic was that they opposed the genetic modification of wild rice. The participants were exposed to neutral information compiled from various news stories on the GM rice topic. The information was

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attributed randomly to sources that would be seen as allied to Native American interests generally or not. The findings support the argument that audience members process media information in a qualitatively different way than other messages and that members of partisan groups are very sensitive to the mass communication environment.

Expectations

Our expectations are based on a simple balance model (Heider, 1958; Newcomb, 1968; Fuller, 1974; Woodside & Chebat, 2001; Hummon & Doreian, 2003). If the media really do play a watchdog role, then they should suffer negative consequences when they are critical of a popular institution and should gain in assessment when they criticize a negatively assessed institution. The assumption behind this expectation is that the media, in a watchdog role, would behave the same, that is, critically assess institutions, regardless of what the public thinks of those institutions.

If, on the other hand, the media are really lapdogs, that is, part of the same general institutional set, then the media should gain and lose as the institutions in whose laps they sit gain or lose in terms of public opinion.

Methodology

The data used here to test these two different views of the media come from two survey series fielded by Gallup: the Governance Survey and Confidence in Institutions Survey.

Governance Survey

In 1972, Gallup first asked a series of questions that now are repeated, on an annual basis, about governance. As part of these surveys, respondents are asked how much trust and

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confidence they have in the executive branch of the federal government, in the judicial branch and in the legislative branch. They are asked the same question about state government and the local government. In addition, they are asked how much trust and confidence they have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, television and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly.

These questions were included again in national sample surveys in 1974 and 1976, and then each year starting in 1997. Field dates varied over the years, with the 1972 survey conducted in May. Since 2001 these questions have been included in surveys fielded in September and specifically identified as part of the Governance Survey.

In 1972, the survey in which the governance questions were asked was conducted in-person, using a national probability area sample of persons 18 years old or older. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in 1974 and again in 1976. In 1997, the surveys were conducted by telephone with a random-digit-dialing sample. Beginning in 1999, the surveys were conducted by telephone with samples that included both cell and landline numbers.

The sample sizes and survey questions are shown in the appendix.

Confidence in Institutions Survey

In 1973, Gallup began asking a series of questions about confidence in institutions in the U.S. That year, respondents were told: "I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you tell me how much respect and confidence you, yourself, have in each one--a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?" The word "respect" was dropped in 1975, when the question was next included on a Gallup survey. The question has remained the same since. The

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list of institutions about which the respondent was asked has varied quite widely over the years, but it has contained a core set of institutions. Included in that core are: the church or organized religion, the military, U.S. Supreme Court, banks, public schools, newspapers, Congress, television news, organized labor, the presidency, and the police. The items have been randomized in some surveys, but not in all.

These questions were included in surveys in 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, and 1981. They were asked every year from 1983 to 1991, when they were included in two separate surveys. The questions were not asked in 1992, but they have been asked every year since 1994. Field dates varied over the years, with summer months most common. Since 1996, the questions have been included on surveys in May, June or July.

In 1973, the survey was conducted in-person, using a national probability area survey, of persons 18 years old or older. Interviews were conducted face-to-face through 1988. In 1989, the surveys were conducted by telephone with a random-digit-dialing sample. Beginning in 1999, the samples included both cell and landline numbers.

Findings

Figure 1 shows the overall pattern of responses to the six institutions evaluated in the Governance Survey over the years it has been fielded. The media get low evaluations relative to the other institutions and seems, on first glance, most closely aligned with evaluation of the legislative branch of the federal government. Congress has been evaluated more lowly than the media in recent years.

Figure 2 shows the trend for evaluation of the executive branch of the federal government

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and evaluation of the media. Overall, there is a weak, positive relationship between evaluation of what are seen as competing institutions in the watchdog metaphor. At two time periods—during the Nixon scandal of 1974 and in 2012, the media and the executive branch moved in opposite directions. In the 1974 example, the media were evaluated more highly as the Nixon presidency was evaluated more lowly. And in 2012, as the Obama executive office increased in evaluation, the media's evaluation declined. But there are counter examples of no movement in media evaluation following changes in evaluation of the executive. In 2012, for example, the George W. Bush presidency showed high evaluations following the 9-11 terrorist attack of a year earlier, but the media evaluation remained unchanged.

Figure 3 shows the relationship between evaluation of the federal judicial branch and evaluation of the media. The decline in evaluation of the media is very weakly related to a lesser decline in evaluation of the judicial branch. In fact, judicial evaluations have some up-and-down variability, while the media decline is nearly linear.

Figure 4 shows the relatively strong, positive relationship across the time of the Governance Survey between confidence in the federal legislative branch—Congress—and the media. Both institutions showed dramatic declines over time in public assessment. The data make a strong case that the media are not seen—at least in terms of Congress—as an independent institution serving as a check on how the legislative branch operates.

The questions on trust and confidence in state and local government have been asked fewer times than have the questions on trust and confidence in the federal branches of government, and Figure 5, for state government, shows the gaps in the lines that result. The data

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that are present show a modest, positive relationship between media assessment and assessments of the state government, rather like trust and confidence in the federal executive branch. No distinction for branch of the state government is made in the question.

At the local level, in contrast, there is a weak, negative relationship between confidence in the media and confidence in government. Figure 6 makes the strongest case for the watchdog theory, as media confidence is in decline at the same time that trust and confidence in local government is increasing. There is some evidence that the up and down movement of the evaluations of the local government are mirrored in the up and down movement of assessment in the media.

The Governance Survey lumps together all of the media, while the Confidence In Institutions survey asks different questions for newspapers and television news. The longest trend line comes from the questions on confidence in newspapers and confidence in Congress series, and the data are very similar to those for similar questions in the Governance Survey. Figure 7 shows that the two institutions are evaluated similarly across time, with both showing marked declines in confidence scores.

In Figure 8, this same relationship is shown for a more restricted number of years, namely from 1991 to the present. During this period, television news as well as newspapers were included on the list of evaluated institutions. Newspapers and Congress are evaluated similarly across time, consistent with what is shown in Figure 7. For TV news, the relationship is similar but a little weaker. Newspapers and the president are evaluated mostly similarly. The relationship for TV news and the President is somewhat weaker.

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Figure 9 focuses exclusively on the newspaper, TV news and presidential evaluations in the 1993 to 2013 period, when the measures were included in each year of the Confidence In Institutions Survey. There is no support in this more restricted datafile for the watchdog theory. Newspapers and the presidency are similarly evaluated across the 21 data points. For TV news, the relationship is a bit weaker, with TV news showing more variability across time.

Table 1 presents regression analyses for the Governance Survey data for 2001 through 2012, first by year and then merged across years. The year 2006 is missing because no media measure was included in the survey that year. In the final column for the merged file, survey year has been entered as a control. (The data for 2002 are not in the final column because two of the predictor variables were not measured.) A series of variables available across the 11 years were used as controls, including respondent age, gender, education, ideology, church attendance, party and race. Dummy variables were used for the latter two variables. After control, only years 2003 and 2004 were significant in the final regression equation. Details of the measures are in the appendix.

The key predictor variables are trust in the federal executive, judicial and legislative branches of government and trust in state and local government. Trust in the executive branch of government predicts negatively to trust and confidence in the media during the 2001-2008 period, when George W. Bush was in office. In four of the seven years, this relationship produces a statistically significant standardized beta. In the four years of the Barack Obama administration for which data are available, the relationship is positive, and, in each case, statistically significant. In other words, the media are evaluated slightly negatively by people who evaluate

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the Bush presidency positively, and the media are evaluated positively by people who evaluate the Obama presidency positively. Overall, in the merged file, there is no relationship between evaluation of the executive branch and evaluation of the media.

Trust in the federal judicial branch is slightly correlated with trust and confidence in the media, though the relationship is really quite minimal (and not statistically significant) in two of the 11 years for which data are available. In contrast, trust and confidence in the legislative branch is related positively to trust and confidence in the media across all of the years and overall. With the controls in place, trust and confidence in state and local government is only very weakly correlated with trust and confidence in the media.

Conclusions

Overall, the data provide little support for the idea that the media are evaluated as oppositional institutions in society, as the watchdog or even attack dog metaphors would suggest should be the case. Rather, the data suggest that, at least in the eyes of the public, the media are part of the overall governmental and institutional fabric of society. The public seems to evaluate the media as part of that overall structure, much as they would if they were evaluating the lapdog pets of the powerful forces in society.

If the watchdog metaphor were correct, and the media were consistently critical of popular members of the federal executive branch represented by the presidency, the executive branch and the media should have rates that would be mirror opposites of each other. That is the case on a couple of instances over time, but it is not the dominant picture. The media and the executive branch rise and fall together more often than not across time. The overall relationship

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is a modestly positive one.

The relationship between public assessments of the judicial branch of government and public assessments of the media is weaker but positive as well. And the relationship between public trust and confidence in the legislative branch and in the media is quite strong across time. The data are more limited where assessments of state government are concerned, but here the relationship is positive as well. Only in the case of local government is there some evidence across time that the public places trust and confidence in government in a way that reflects the reverse of its assessment of the media.

These findings come from the Governance Survey, in which trust and confidence in the media is measured through a single question. But they are replicated by data from the Confidence in Institutions surveys, where separate questions are asked for newspapers and for television news.

The findings from the trend lines across time also are consistent with those for individual-level analysis for 11 years of the Governance Survey viewed individually and collectively, with one exception. The individual-level analysis shows a different relationship between assessments of the media during the presidency of Georgia W. Bush and during the presidency of Barack Obama.

This contrast between the findings during the Bush and Obama administrations is particularly informative. Not only is this counter to the expectations of the watchdog metaphor of the media, but it also suggests that one of the key expectations of that metaphor—that the media are consistently critical across time—is false. In fact, the research of Clayman and his colleagues

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(Clayman, et al. 2007) anticipates this. They found that the presidential job approval is not a significant independent predictor of journalistic aggressiveness in news conferences, but they did find evidence that second terms produce more critical questions than first, and that economic indicators also predict the nature of questioning, with journalists being more critical when the economy is performing poorly. All of these suggest that the watchdog is not really representing its master in a consistent way across time. In a general sense, this is more consistent with the guard dog metaphor than the watchdog metaphor.

The historical data from these two Gallup surveys are far from definitive. They do provide evidence—consistent with other scholarship on public assessment of the media—that how the public evaluates the media is complex. And those assessments are predicted more by public assessments of other institutions in society than by the behavior of the media in isolation.

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Figure 1. Trust and Confidence in Media and Government

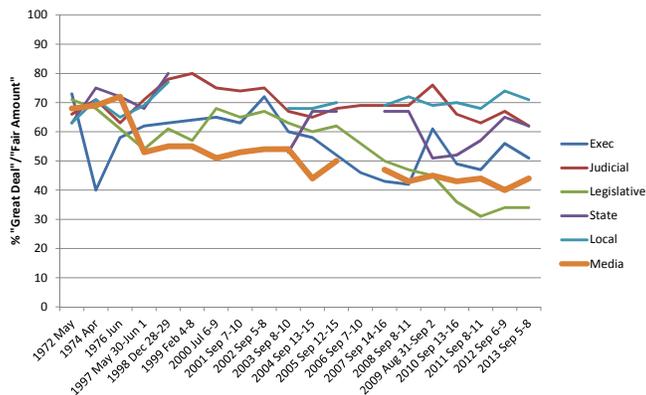
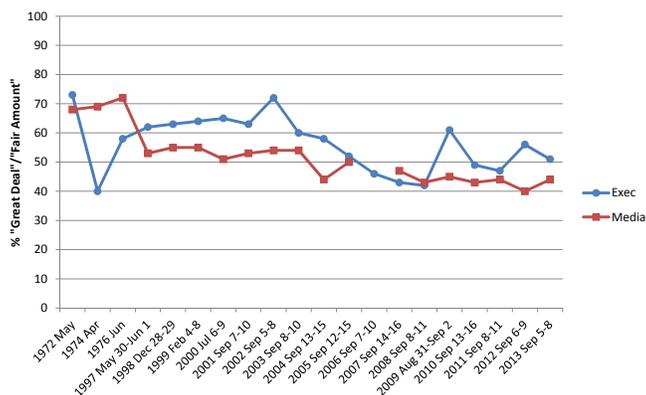
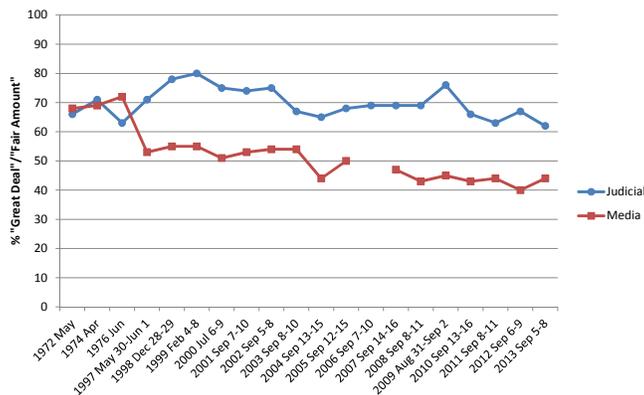


Figure 2. Trust and Confidence in Media and Federal Executive Branch



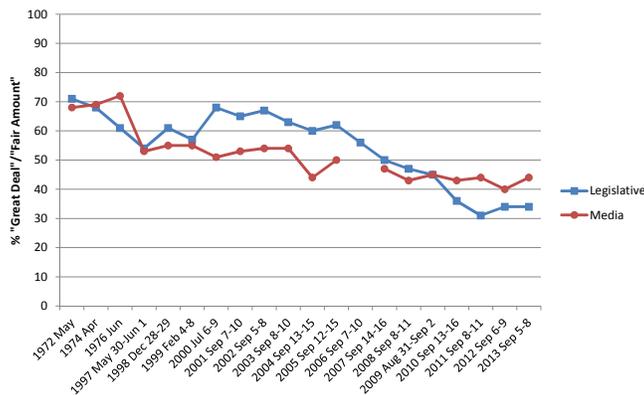
rho = .47; n = 19

Figure 3. Trust and Confidence in Media and Federal Judicial Branch



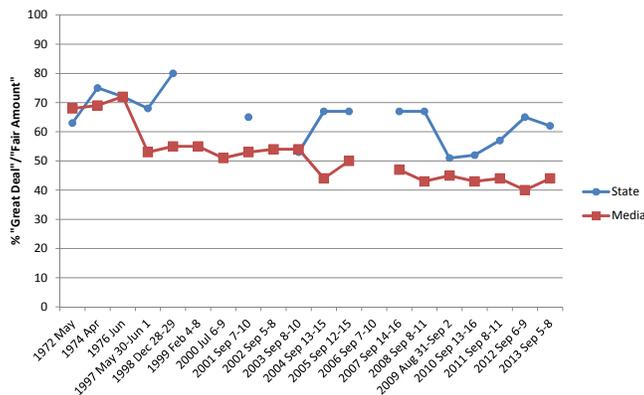
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Figure 4. Trust and Confidence in Media and Federal Legislative Branch



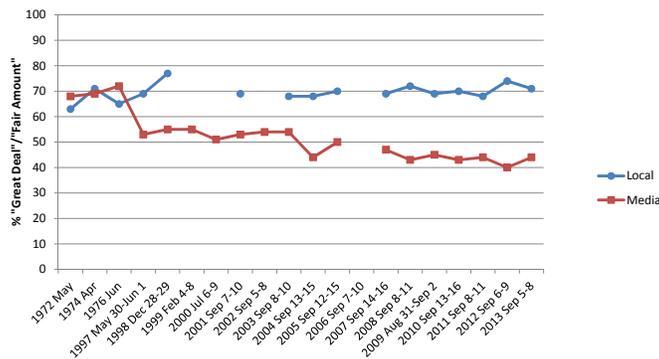
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Figure 5. Trust and Confidence in Media and State Government



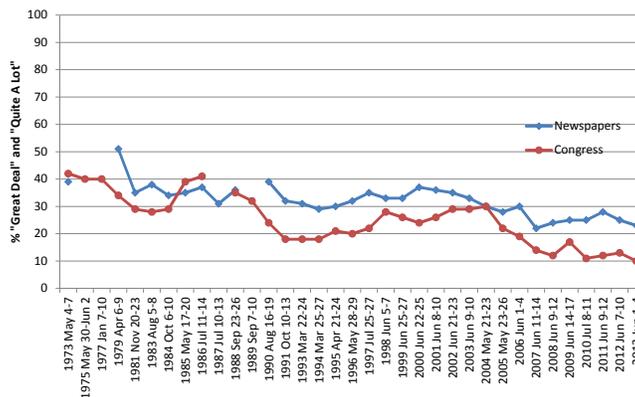
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Figure 6. Trust and Confidence in Media and Local Government



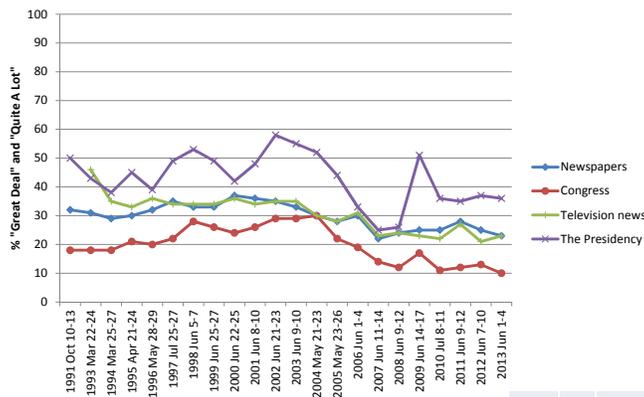
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Figure 7. Confidence in Newspapers and Congress (1973-2013)



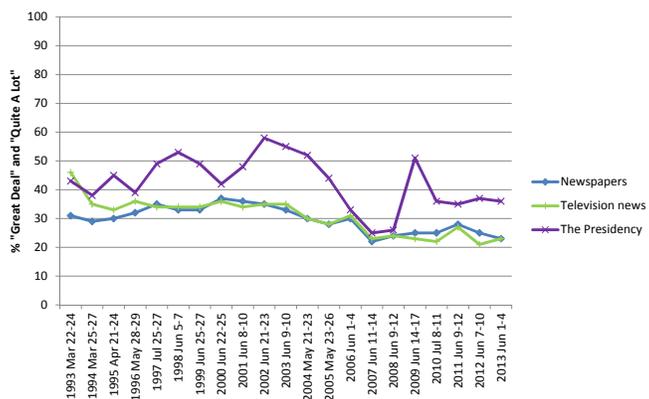
rho = .81; n = 21

Figure 8. Confidence in Newspapers, Television News, Congress, The Presidency (1991-2013)



		Newspapers	Congress	TVNews
Congress	rho	0.79		
	n	22	22	
TVNews	rho	0.81	0.61	
	n	21	21	21
President	rho	0.64	0.77	0.45
	n	22	22	21

Figure 9. Confidence in Newspapers, Television News, The Presidency (1993-2013)



		Newspapers	TVNews
TVNews	rho	0.81	
	n	21	
President	rho	0.65	0.45
	n	21	21

Table 1. Predictors of Trust and Confidence In The Mass Media (Governance Survey)

Year	2001 (n=1,004)	2002 (n=1,004)	2003 (n=1,025)	2004 (n=1,022)	2005 (n=921)	2007 (n=1,010)	2008 (n=1,007)	2009 (n=1,026)	2010 (n=1,019)	2011 (n=1,017)	2012 (n=1,017)	All* (n=11,072)
Age	-0.02	0.08	0.01	-0.01	-0.09	0.07	0.11	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.05
Gender	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.05
Education	-0.09	-0.10	-0.18	-0.13	-0.18	-0.11	-0.10	-0.13	-0.15	-0.13	-0.09	-0.12
Ideology	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.13	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.07	0.04	0.08	0.10
Church Attendance	-0.03	-0.03	0.03	0.03	-0.01	-0.04	0.00	-0.06	-0.03	0.00	0.00	-0.03
Republican	-0.10	-0.05	-0.04	-0.11	-0.06	-0.04	-0.09	-0.03	-0.02	0.03	-0.03	-0.09
Democrat	0.09	0.02	0.10	0.09	0.14	0.16	0.10	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.12
White	-0.04	0.00	-0.05	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.09	-0.09	0.00	-0.16	-0.02	-0.04
Black	0.01	0.05	-0.01	-0.03	0.05	0.07	0.01	-0.06	0.05	-0.10	-0.03	0.02
Trust - Federal Executive	-0.05	-0.05	-0.12	-0.20	-0.12	-0.12	-0.08	0.12	0.13	0.26	0.32	0.02
Trust - Federal Judicial	0.11	0.12	0.13	0.14	0.20	0.10	0.11	0.02	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.10
Trust - Federal Legislative	0.15	0.25	0.20	0.16	0.08	0.23	0.26	0.27	0.24	0.12	0.10	0.20
Trust – State Government	0.10	NA	0.03	0.13	0.06	0.06	0.00	-0.02	-0.03	0.05	0.03	0.03
Trust – Local Government	0.05	NA	0.08	0.02	0.09	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.05

Note: Entries are standardized beta. Bold means it is significant at least $p < .05$. Exact questions are coding are explained in the Appendix.

* Year surveyed is controlled.

Appendix

Questions from Governance Survey

1. As you know, our federal government is made up of three branches: an Executive branch, headed by the President; a Judicial branch, headed by the U.S. Supreme Court; and a Legislative branch, made up of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. First, let me ask you how much trust and confidence you have at this time in [Read AC] -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?
 - A. The Executive branch headed by the President
 - B. The Judicial branch, headed by the U.S. Supreme Court
 - C. The Legislative branch, consisting of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives
2. How much trust and confidence do you have in the government of the state where you live when it comes to handling state problems -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?
3. And how much trust and confidence do you have in the local governments in the area where you live when it comes to handling local problems -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?
4. In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, T.V. and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

Questions from Confidence in Institutions Survey

1. Now I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one -- a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little? First, ... Next.

Below is the full list of institutions included in at least one survey over the years.

- A. The Church or organized religion
- B. The military
- C. The U.S. Supreme Court
- D. Banks
- E. The public schools
- F. Newspapers
- G. Congress

- H. Television news
- I. Organized labor
- J. The Presidency
- K. The Police
- L. The medical system
- M. The criminal justice system
- N. Big business
- O. Small business
- P. Health Maintenance Organizations, HMOs
- Q. The electric power utilities
- R. Faith-based charitable organizations
- S. Wall Street
- T. News on the Internet
- U. The computer industry
- V. Business and industry
- W. Television
- X. The United States
- Y. Saving & Loan and Savings Banks
- Z. The future of the United States
- AA. The American economic system, free enterprise
- BB. The American system of government
- CC. Your state government
- DD. Your local or community government
- EE. Science
- FF. Business
- GG. Large companies
- HH. Small companies
- II. The company you work for

Questions from Governance Survey Used in Regression (Table 1)

1. Please tell me your age
2. Gender
1= Male, 2= Female
3. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? (recoded)
1= Less than high school
2= High school graduate
3= Some college
4= College graduate

4. How would you describe your political views?
1= very conservative
2= conservative
3=moderate
4=liberal
5=very liberal
5. How often do you attend church or synagogue -- At least once a week (=5), almost every week (=4), about once a month (=3), seldom (=2), or never (=1)?
6. In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent? (recoded)

Republican (1= yes, 0= no)
Democrat (1= yes, 0= no)
7. Next, I am going to read you a list of racial groups. As I read each one, please tell me whether you are -- or are not -- a member of that racial group. You may consider yourself to be a member of more than one racial group. (recoded)

White (1= yes, 0= no)
Black (1= yes, 0= no)
8. As you know, our federal government is made up of three branches: an Executive branch, headed by the President; a Judicial branch, headed by the U.S. Supreme Court; and a Legislative branch, made up of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. First, let me ask you how much trust and confidence you have at this time in [Read AC] -- a great deal (=4), a fair amount (=3), not very much (=2), or none at all (=1)?
 - A. The Executive branch headed by the President
 - B. The Judicial branch, headed by the U.S. Supreme Court
 - C. The Legislative branch, consisting of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives
9. How much trust and confidence do you have in the government of the state where you live when it comes to handling state problems -- a great deal (=4), a fair amount (=3), not very much (=2), or none at all (=1)?
10. And how much trust and confidence do you have in the local governments in the area where you live when it comes to handling local problems -- a great deal (=4), a fair amount (=3), not very much (=2), or none at all (=1)?
11. In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, T.V. and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly -- a great deal (=4), a fair amount (=3), not very much (=2), or none at all (=1)?

Questions from Confidence in Institutions Survey

1. Now I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one -- a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little? First, ... Next.

Below is the full list of institutions included in at least one survey over the years.

- A. The Church or organized religion
- B. The military
- C. The U.S. Supreme Court
- D. Banks
- E. The public schools
- F. Newspapers
- G. Congress
- H. Television news
- I. Organized labor
- J. The Presidency
- K. The Police
- L. The medical system
- M. The criminal justice system
- N. Big business
- O. Small business
- P. Health Maintenance Organizations, HMOs
- Q. The electric power utilities
- R. Faith-based charitable organizations
- S. Wall Street
- T. News on the Internet
- U. The computer industry
- V. Business and industry
- W. Television
- X. The United States
- Y. Saving & Loan and Savings Banks
- Z. The future of the United States
- AA. The American economic system, free enterprise
- BB. The American system of government
- CC. Your state government
- DD. Your local or community government
- EE. Science
- FF. Business
- GG. Large companies
- HH. Small companies
- II. The company you work for

Appendix Table 1. Governance Surveys

Year	N	Sample Type	Mode
1972	1,806	Area	In-person
1974	1,071	Area	In-person
1997	935	Landline	Telephone
1998	1,055	Landline	Telephone
1999	1,022	Landline	Telephone
2000	1,001	Landline	Telephone
2001	1,004	Landline	Telephone
2002	1,004	Landline	Telephone
2003	1,025	Landline	Telephone
2004	1,022	Landline	Telephone
2005	921	Landline	Telephone
2006	1,002	Landline	Telephone
2007	1,010	Landline	Telephone
2008	1,007	Landline	Telephone
2009	1,026	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2010	1,019	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2011	1,017	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2012	1,017	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2013	1,510	Landline & Cell	Telephone

Appendix Table 2. Confidence In Institutions Surveys

Year	N	Sample Type	Mode
1973	1,531	Area	In-person
1975	1,626	Area	In-person
1977	1,500	Area	In-person
1979	1,509	Area	In-person
1981	1,508	Area	In-person
1983	1,497	Area	In-person
1984	750	Area	In-person
1985	1,528	Area	In-person
1986	1,539	Area	In-person
1987	1,607	Area	In-person
1988	1,030	Area	In-person
1989	1,238	Landline	Telephone
1990	1,241	Landline	Telephone
1991	1,000	Landline	Telephone
1993	1,003	Landline	Telephone
1994	1,036	Landline	Telephone
1995	1,008	Landline	Telephone
1996	1,019	Landline	Telephone
1997	1,004	Landline	Telephone
1998	1,003	Landline	Telephone
1999	1,016	Landline	Telephone
2000	1,021	Landline	Telephone
2001	1,011	Landline	Telephone
2002	1,020	Landline	Telephone
2003	1,029	Landline	Telephone
2004	1,002	Landline	Telephone
2005	1,004	Landline	Telephone
2006	1,002	Landline	Telephone
2007	1,007	Landline	Telephone
2008	822	Landline	Telephone
2009	1,011	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2010	1,020	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2011	1,020	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2012	1,004	Landline & Cell	Telephone
2013	1,529	Landline & Cell	Telephone