Disclosure of own interest (Media policy/ Meta journalism)

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KEYWORDS
self-coverage, transparency, journalism standards

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
The variable “disclosure of own interests” records whether media, when reporting on media-economic (e.g. takeovers, mergers) or media policy issues affecting their own company or the publishing company to which they are affiliated, create transparency with regard to ownership or potentially affected own interests (Müller & Donsbach, 2006). Media companies could strategically use their privileged access to the public to propagate a certain view of a topic and thus pursue their own interests. So far studies do not reveal a uniform picture that indicates the pursuit of self-interests through reduced transparency (Beck, 2001; Kemner, Scherer, & Weinacht, 2008; Müller & Donsbach, 2006).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
The variable serves as an indicator of compliance with journalistic standards. By creating transparency with regard to their relationship to the reported subject, media companies provide recipients with the opportunity to identify potential conflicts of interests.

EXAMPLE STUDIES
Beck (2001); Müller & Donsbach (2006); Pedrazzi (2020)

INFORMATION ON BECK, 2001
Research interest: In the context of a merger in the media sector, Beck (2001) examines the influence of publishers’ economic interests on media self-coverage and communication strategies that are used to address self-reference.
Object of analysis: Purposive sample of articles about the merger of AOL and Time Warner in eight German and two US national daily and weekly newspapers either involved or not involved in the merger (Beck, 2001).
Time frame of analysis: January 1, 2000 to February 28, 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT VARIABLE
Level of analysis: article
Coding logic/instructions: It is coded whether the article includes an explicit reference that the media company publishing the article belongs to a publisher involved in the transaction. In addition to information on ownership, Beck (2001, p. 413) mentions other aspects that can be subject to disclosure: These include the name and function of the author, if e.g. owners publish contributions; a reference to the dependency of an author (e.g. as an employee of a company); or the labeling as a non-editorial contribution (e.g. „in own cause“).
Codebook not available

INFORMATION ON MÜLLER & DONSBACH, 2006
Research interest: In the context of a takeover in the media sector, Müller and Donsbach (2006) examine the influence of publishers’ economic interests on media self-coverage and communication strategies that are used to address self-reference.
Object of analysis: All articles dealing with the takeover of the Berliner Verlag by the Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck that were published in thirteen German regional and national daily newspapers with different ownership.
Time frame of analysis: June 26, 2002 to Novem-
ber 15, 2003 (Müller & Donsbach, 2006)

INFORMATION ABOUT VARIABLE
Level of analysis: article
Coding logic/instructions: It is coded whether the article includes an explicit reference that the media company publishing the article belongs to a publisher involved in the transaction (Müller & Donsbach, 2006).
Values: see Table 1

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Müller &amp; Donsbach, 2006 (Binary level)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No disclosure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
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</table>

Intercoder reliability: Intercoder reliability coefficient of .79 across content categories at article level (6 coders), not specified for individual category
Codebook not available

INFORMATION ON PEDRAZZI (2020)
Object of analysis: Representative samples of articles covering each the revision of the RTVA and the No-Billag initiative in twelve regional and national Swiss German print and online publications with different ownership.
Time frame of analysis: January 1, 2010 to March 4, 2018 (Pedrazzi, 2020)

INFORMATION ABOUT VARIABLE
Level of analysis: article
Coding logic/instructions: It is coded whether and to what extent the author of a contribution is transparent with regard to the content and outcome of the vote are explicitly disclosed.
Values: see Table 2

REFERENCES
Table 2.

**Pedrazzi, 2020** (Ordinal level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No disclosure</th>
<th>Own interests are not explicitly revealed.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low disclosure</td>
<td>Transparency with regard to involvement of a company, including company affiliation and/or name and function of the author (i.e. in case of owners publishing a contribution) and/or labeling of a contribution as non-editorial (i.e. „in own cause“), however without details addressing potential consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High disclosure</td>
<td>Transparency with regard to self-interests of a company, including details of direct potential consequences for the own organization (e.g. financial, market position, regulative, influential, etc.) or indirectly as a competitor of organizations that are being covered</td>
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