Distance (Media policy/_meta journalism)

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KEYWORDS
self-coverage, competition, news bias

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
The variable “distance” reflects the competitive relationships that exist between media organizations and outlets in terms of journalistic, economic and media policy interests, which can lead to reporting differences in media self-coverage (Pointner, 2010). This is due to the special situation that in the case of media self-coverage, both the reporting unit and the covered subject originate from the media sector. Several studies have shown that media organizations strategically use self-coverage to pursue their own interests, to legitimize their actions or to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Beck, 2001; Gilens & Hertzman, 2000; Hackett & Uzelman, 2003; Kemmer, Scherer, & Weinacht, 2008; Lichtenstein, 2011; Löblich, 2011; Maier & Dogruel, 2016; Müller & Donsbach, 2006; Pointner, 2010; Snider & Page, 1997; Uzelman, Hackett, & Stewart, 2005; Weiß, 1986).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
The variable serves as an indicator of potential conflicts of roles, interests and objectives at organizational level, which can lead to unbalanced or biased reporting.

EXAMPLE STUDY
Pointner (2010)

INFORMATION ON POINTNER, 2010
Research interest: The study examines whether and how economic interests of media companies are reflected in the reporting on media companies.

Object of analysis: A sample (one artificial day per month, all articles covering media companies) was drawn from four national German daily newspapers.

Time frame of analysis: January 1, 1992 to December 31, 2006

INFORMATION ABOUT VARIABLE
Level of analysis: article
Coding logic: The relationship between the reporting unit and the covered subject is recorded on two levels. First, a distinction is made with regard to the media sector, i.e. whether the reporting concerns a subject originating from the same sector (intramedial, e.g. print observes print) or from a different sector (intermedial, e.g. print observes broadcasting). Within the intramedial level, a further distinction is made with regard to the organizational affiliation: Codes indicate whether the reporting relates to the own company (direct self-observation), affiliated companies of the own company (indirect self-observation), one or more direct competitors operating within the same media sector in the same media submarket (direct competitor observation), affiliated companies of competitors (indirect competitor observation) or media companies of other genres within the own media sector (general observation) (Pointner, 2010).

For the implementation, it is recommended to first code the outlet in which a contribution appears, as well as separately code the outlet and the media sector that is the main subject of the coverage. Based on this, the assignment can be made with the help of an affiliation list of the outlets and affiliated companies of the publishing houses, media companies or media sectors in-
vestigated. However, it should be mentioned that in connection with the horizontal diversification of media companies into other media sectors and increasing convergence, the differentiation into intramedial and intermedial as well as direct and indirect is becoming increasingly difficult.

**Values:** see Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intramedial direct self-observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>intramedial indirect self-observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>intramedial direct competitor observation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>intramedial indirect competitor observation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>intramedial general observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intermedial</td>
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</table>

**Intercoder reliability:** Holsti’s coefficient of .94 across categories (6 coders), not specified for individual category

**Codebook** not available

**REFERENCES**


