Attribute salience (Public Diplomacy) (see also issue attributes)

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KEYWORDS
public diplomacy, attribute salience, agenda-setting, foreign publics, governmental communication, international news broadcasting

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
The variable “attribute salience” is described as the characteristics of a given issue that is portrayed in media coverage or other communication channels. It is generally measured in addition to issue salience and issue valence in order to analyze media portrayals of events, actors, or public discourses. Attribute salience is often measured in order to explore how particular issues are presented (instead of which in general), thereby contributing to second-level agenda-setting effects (McCombs et al., 1997).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
Attribute salience is analyzed across different subfields of communication and media research, including the field of public diplomacy. In public diplomacy research, scholars measure attribute salience in the context of political communication or the representation of countries in the news media as well as on social media. Researchers embed the concept of attribute salience or issue attributes mainly in agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), analyzing it as an independent variable to derive with implications of news media coverage on audiences’ evaluations of certain issues.

REFERENCES/COMBINATION WITH OTHER METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
When it comes to analyses on attribute salience in the context of issues and its link to public perceptions, a mixed-method study design incorporating content analysis in combination with surveys is used to validate attribute salience.

EXAMPLE STUDY
Zhang et al. (2018)

INFORMATION ON ZHANG ET AL., 2018
Authors: Zhang et al.
Research question/research interest: Effects of agenda-building of Chinese state-sponsored media on news media coverage in Taiwan and Singapore during Hong Kong Protest
Object of analysis: Newspaper (several English newspapers and newswires published in China, Singapore, and Taiwan; not explicated)
Time frame of analysis: 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT VARIABLE
Level of analysis: Article
Values:
(1) Substantive issue attributes (frame):
(a) Conflict
(b) Cooperation
(c) Problem definition
(d) Proposed solution to the problem
(e) Responsibility attribution
(f) Human interest
(g) Consequences and outcomes
(h) Morality and motivation to take actions

(2) Affective issue attributes (tone):
(a) Negative
(b) Neutral or mixed
(c) Positive
(d) N/A.

Scales: Nominal
Reliability: Cohen's kappa = 0.76

REFERENCES
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