Behind the Headlines, It's a Different Story?
Variations in the Supply of Mass-Mediated Political Information

Abstract: This paper examines how news headlines about politics represent the stories they lead. Four hypotheses are developed to test the proposition that headlines distort the political information supply they are selected from. Using a unique dataset from the 2006 Canadian federal election campaign, the paper compares the supply essential political information (cognitive heuristics) in headlines and stories. All election headlines and stories published by seven major Canadian dailies and five Internet news websites are included in the analysis. Results fit with previous work on this topic, demonstrating that mass media headlines convey predictably different cues about politics than the stories they introduce (Andrew 2007). This study, however, also finds consistent differences between the content of online election headlines and those printed by large-circulation newspapers. In short, this paper offers further evidence that people who rely on media-generated shortcuts such as headlines are exposed to a fundamentally different stream of information about politics than those who pay closer attention.

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Introduction

Headlines have been a part of news presentation for almost four centuries (Mahin 1925; Mårdh 1980). The most important aspects of the story are told first, in the headline; the less important details come at the end, in the story. This style is known in journalism as the inverted pyramid (IP) structure of news (Mindich 1998). News from the headlines is supposed to be a version of current affairs in a nutshell, a microcosm of daily events (Bell 1991). But headlines also evolved with the intention of audience-making (Schudson 1978). IP presentation has been used by journalists since news was designed to attract both the "eye and pocket-change of readers" (Sotiron 1997: 16). Headlines are both summary and market-driven mechanisms. But despite this dual imperative, and the long-standing prominence of these media-generated shortcuts, empirical political science knows virtually nothing about the relationship between news headlines and the political information they lead.

The presence of headlines in modern news production and discourse shows little sign of deteriorating. In terms of production, cable news networks like CNN have institutionalized the so-called "crawl," or news "ticker," which presents the breaking headlines continuously across the bottom of the television screen. Even the word headline is ubiquitous in everyday news discourse, and it has become practically synonymous with the news itself. Anchors routinely begin with phrases like "here are today's headlines" or "first, let's turn to the headlines" as a technique for cueing viewers' (or listeners') attention. People who talk about news do the same thing. The phrase "making news" seems to be perfectly compatible, and interchangeable, with the phrase "making headlines." But is it? Does the information supplied by headlines really reflect the more complete mass-mediated picture of public affairs?

The purpose of this paper is to assess the validity of headlines as proxies for the stories about politics they lead. Are they microcosms of a bigger picture? Or are they incongruent with the more comprehensive news supply they are supposed to represent? Content analysis of news media's political reportage is used to consider these questions. The case is the 2006 Canadian federal election campaign. All headlines and corresponding full-text stories published during that campaign by seven major Canadian daily newspapers (N=3766) and five prominent Internet news sites (N=1229) have been separately content analysed for this study. Headlines and stories have been assessed for the presence of essential political information. That is, cues related specifically to political decision making. In doing so, this paper offers one of the only supply side studies of

cognitive heuristics, the information shortcuts that matter most for how citizens process politics in advanced, industrial democracies (Lau and Redlawsk 2001).

The general expectation, set out in the first part of this paper, is that headlines offer citizens a substantively different view of politics than the more in-depth news environment they are selected from. This proposition is tested using four hypotheses derived from political communication research on the properties of news discourse. Results show that headlines did report certain aspects of this campaign in quite a different way than stories. Party leaders received considerably more prominent coverage in headlines. Cues about the parties were much more abundant for people paying close attention. Newspaper headlines were also much less neutral in tone than the stories. They were clearly more negative about the incumbent Liberal party and their leader. The Conservative party, by contrast, received considerably better treatment in the large print. This election was more party-oriented, and probably appeared much closer, to those reading stories than to those skimming headlines.

Online headlines also covered the election differently than their stories. But the relationship between headlines and stories on the Web was unlike newspapers. Policy figured more prominently than the horserace in Internet headlines compared to stories. Most notably, the stories were significantly less neutral in tone than the headlines on the Internet. Unlike newspapers, online opinion usually came after the headlines. These findings were relatively consistent across media organizations included in the study. Although results for CBC news online, *Toronto Star,* and *Vancouver Sun* do suggest that market-driven forces may affect the relationship between headlines and stories. The analysis section discusses all of these results in greater detail, and the paper concludes with comments on the potential for future research in this area.

Headlines and Stories about Politics

There has been virtually no empirical research in political science on the relationship between headlines and stories about politics. This is considerable oversight. It is obvious that headlines are important for news consumers, and it makes sense to empirically monitor the validity of these media shortcuts. There have been many significant content analyses of political information, of course. But almost all studies of news content have focused on headlines, or full-text stories, as a

unit of analysis.[1]   It is, therefore, unclear how studies of news in headlines relate to studies which have focused on stories. Headlines are not necessarily reasonable proxies of the stories they lead, just as stories are not necessarily reasonable proxies the headlines above them. It is not hard to think of reasons why headlines might amplify and distort patterns of news related in stories about politics. It cannot, in short, be assumed that what is supplied in news headlines reflects the patterns of information found in stories.

Few political scientists have acknowledged this lacuna in the literature. But limited empirical work on this subject suggests it is an area worth paying more attention to. For example, Althaus and colleagues (2001; 2002) found evidence that media proxies, including headlines, systematically misrepresented various aspects of Persian Gulf War reporting and the 1986 United Sates-Libya crisis. In both cases, news headlines tended to underrepresent policy comments by members of the U.S. administration, and overrepresent the proportion of foreign officials making statements about these events. Headlines about these events also emphasized conflict more than the stories they led. Specifically, the proportion of pro-force statements was greater in headlines than full-text stories, whereas pro-sanction statements in stories tended to be downplayed in headlines.

In terms of election news, only a couple of studies have tracked coverage in both headlines and stories (Kahn and Kenney 2002; Kenney and Simpson 1993). The most comprehensive analysis to date was conducted by Andrew (2007) who followed headlines and stories printed in five major daily newspapers during the 2004 Canadian federal election. His study found significant difference in terms of news emphasis, party and leader news tone, and issue salience in headlines compared to stories. The integrity of the so-called "wall of separation" between hard news and opinion about politics was also questioned by this analysis. The daily news sections during this campaign were relatively opinion-free, but the headlines that framed these stories were much more likely to convey opinion about a party or party leader's viability. In short, people skimming the news printed during this election likely received a greater proportion and mix of media signals than those paying close attention.

Most empirical research on headlines and stories has so far been conducted outside the traditional realm of political science (e.g. Caulfield and Bubela 2004; Fenichel and Dan 1980; Flynn et al. 1998; Freimuth et al. 1984; Marquez 1980; Smith and Fowler 1982). This work

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[1] Some empirical research has also focused on sentences and paragraphs. Headlines and stories have been the most popular units of analysis, however.

ranges in scope from studies of biomedical news discourse and cancer reporting to investigations of how headlines and stories reported an FBI raid of a nuclear weapons plant in Colorado and Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island nuclear accident in 1979. Although the data and precise methods of inquiry have varied considerably in these studies, there is clearly some evidence in this literature that headlines can convey significantly different messages than the stories they lead. That is not to say this literature has concluded that headlines grossly misrepresent the stories. It has not. Headlines do a fairly good job of reflecting certain aspects of the stories they lead, perhaps even the most important part. The point is, however, that these studies typically identify systematic patterns in the aspects of news stories that headlines tends to amplify. Political scientists have yet to sufficiently consider the prospect of patterns in the way headlines about politics proxy more comprehensive information.

Political Information: Volume, Competition, and Learning

The absence of headlines-stories research is a significant gap in the political information literature. It seems essential, not least of all to the study of public opinion and political attitudes, to assess the validity of news proxies such as headlines. A major reason for doing so relates to the IP-structure of news discourse. People expect journalists to organize news with headlines, and headlines are supposed to be shortcuts for more comprehensive information about public affairs. This is obviously a difficult task in practice, given space limitations imposed on headline writers or producers. They have to be short; headlines must fit the "news hole" that is available for them. They cannot possibly sum up everything. What makes the task even more heroic is that headlines are also supposed to play up the information they lead. They serve a dual purpose, then. Headlines summarize what lies ahead, and they are also supposed to attract people's attention to what comes next. Given these dual imperatives, it is possible that media-generated shortcuts not only reduce – but perhaps even change in systematic and predictable ways – the information being conveyed in a more complete environment.

But, even beyond those basic reasons, there are three factors specific to the modern media environment in liberal capitalist democracies that further justify exploring the validity of news headlines. First of all, consider the impact of variation in the *volume* of political information. A hyper-mediated, or "post-broadcast," modern society is one where information about politics is more abundant than ever (Bimber 2003; Prior 2007). Cable television and the Internet have been most responsible for dramatic increases in the circulation of political information. Twenty-four

hour cable networks like CNN and FOX facilitated a twenty-four hour news cycle. The Internet has clearly accelerated that cycle. Breaking stories are updated in real-time, often as journalists actually perceive them unfolding. Search engines can connect people immediately with news that is weeks, months, and years old. The Web is the world's largest and most accessible news database.

More information suggests that headlines are more sought out than ever before. People search for media-supplied cues to process news, and the importance of cues such as headlines should increase as the supply of news increases (van Dijk 1985). Scanning the headlines is a key "trans-situational" strategy people use not just for dealing with political information, but also for dealing with the blizzard of mass-mediated information people encounter in day-to-day life (Kosicki and McLeod 1990). Research has shown that headlines are important because they activate scripts or schema of past knowledge that people use to understand the story that follows (Duin, Roen and Graves 1988; Geer and Kahn 1993; Pfau 1995; Tannenbaum 1953; Wegner et al. 1981). But they are also essential for sorting through news, helping people decide what to pay attention to, and what not to pay attention to. Put another way, headlines both *frame* the interpretation of news that follow them, and they sometimes *replace*, or stand-in for, the news they lead (Condit et al. 2001). Information abundance leads people to more frequently replace full-story attention with headline skimming. If headline skimming is a consequence of an increasing news supply then it seems especially vital to monitor the validity of these media shortcuts.

The Internet, in particular, encourages people to rely on media shortcuts like headlines more than ever before. Search engines use them to, as Graber (1988) put it, "tame the tide" of information on every imaginable subject of interest to a Web browser. Consider, also, the increasing prominence of news headlines marked by the icon known as "really simple syndication" (RSS 🟧) Internet format. This format allows people to syndicate the content of major newspapers, television networks, and radio networks directly to their IPod, PDA, personal websites, or personalized web browser. But RSS requires people to actively choose more information than is available in headlines. In this way, RSS appears to be more hierarchical than a newspaper, television, or radio broadcast because people only get "easy" access to the editor's menu of the daily news. Although empirical research on issues related to personalized news content of this sort is still very much in the early stages (for example, Eveland Jr. and Dunwoody

2001; Otterbacher, Radev and Kareem 2006; Tewksbury and Althaus 2000), one consequence of RSS-like technology is clear. News about politics is increasingly supplied in shortcut format. It is worth paying attention to the kind of news conveyed by these shortcuts.

A second, related justification, for monitoring the validity of headlines is increasing *competition* among media outlets to differentiate and sell their product. Headlines, of course, have always been used to advertise the stories that they lead, and there is vast literature on this function in journalism studies (Emig 1928; Everett and Everett 1988; Leigh 1994; Myers and Haug 1967; Steigleman 1949; Wesson 1989; Winship and Allport 1943). But the increasing volume of political news suggests that the audience-making function of headlines is heightened. As more options for news become available and accessible, journalists must compete more to differentiate their accounts of politics. If, in fact, the sheer number of newsworthy events has remained relatively constant, the pressure on journalists to produce new and fresh perspectives on an event to fill columns, Webspace and twenty-four hour broadcasts is greater than ever. Hence, competition to differentiate news about politics raises the possibility that the congruency between headlines and the stories has diminished in recent decades.

Anyone who has walked by a news stand on the streets of a major European city can attest to the role headlines play a competitive news environment. Patrons are normally greeted with a blown-up advertisement featuring the main headlines in the daily newspapers. This marketing strategy is obviously designed to attract attention and sell the rest of the story to people walking by. But the rest of the story can be (and often is) by-passed. Headlines are stand-alone units of political information that people who do not actually purchase those newspapers can still easily consume. They are news summaries for all pedestrians who, for whatever reasons, do not choose to invest more time learning the background information printed in the rest of the stories. In a market-driven news environment, it seems essential to consider the degree to which the content of these omnipresent attraction-mechanisms reflects the information they sell.

A third reason for this study concerns *inadvertent political learning* (Downs 1957; Popkin 1991) in increasingly efficient media environments. An efficient media environment is defined by the symmetry between media preferences and the availability of content (Prior 2007). Our media environment becomes more efficient as it becomes easier to locate what we would ideally watch, read, or listen to. Efficiency, then, decreases the odds that people who are not usually interested in news about politics receive political information as an unintended consequence of

less-than-ideal program choice. It becomes less likely that people learn politics inadvertently, for example, by watching a newscast because there is nothing else on television.

But inadvertent exposure to news headlines, rather than a half-hour newscast, may be the consequence of an efficient media environment. This is a possibility that Prior's research does not address. Yet, it stands to reason that greater media choice encourages more channel flipping, Internet surfing, and dial changing. Gratifying a specific preference in a high choice media environment likely involves some exposure to all forms of available content, including the news. But, practically speaking, such exposure to political information is probably only a few headlines from time to time. A high choice media environment also increases competition for viewer's (or readers') attention. This is both intra- and inter-media competition. News media compete with news media in the same way that entertainment programs compete with other entertainment programs for audience attention. But there is also crossover competition in which news media compete for attention during entertainment programs and vice versa. This happens when nightly news broadcasts advertise their featured stories during commercial breaks on television sitcoms. It is also occurring when the entertainment websites embed news feeds from major news organizations in their content, and when people share, post, and tag links of news stories published on the Web.

In effect, then, the entertainment-oriented citizen living in a high choice media environment gets exposed to a smorgasbord of content across genres. But when it comes to news about politics, that smorgasbord is probably best characterized as headlines. By contrast, the news-oriented citizen in an efficient media environment is likely exposed to a much more comprehensive information flow about politics. News junkies learn about politics from stories. Entertainment seekers learn from headlines. Consumption heterogeneity is nothing new, of course. Some people will always be more interested in public affairs than others. The point is that common ground between the interested and less-interested may be disappearing in increasingly efficient media environments. If it is, political scientists have more reason than ever to be concerned about the relationship between headlines and stories.

Essential Political Information

But, then, an obvious question arises: what exactly do we look for? If it is worth comparing headlines and stories we need to think carefully about what kind of politically relevant

information is supplied by news media in the first place. A meaningful audit of the news supply has to begin with criteria for evaluation. One approach for doing so is from the perspective of citizens, or from the demand side of political information. Research on cognitive heuristics in political science is potentially useful in this regard (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). In about 30 years, this literature has developed a relatively clear understanding of the kind of information that matters most for attitudes and decisions about politics. It has demonstrated that certain types of information heuristics loom larger in the average decision making calculus about politics than others. Such information is, in that sense, essential for modern political analysis.

Demand Side

Cues about a candidate's social background and party attachment are perhaps the two "simplest" information cues that citizens have in their decision making repertoire. Both survey-based and experiment-based data have demonstrated the importance of social background cues in political decision making (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). Using large-N survey data, Cutler (2002), for example, has shown that voters in Canada tend to favour party leaders who are of the same sex, speak the same first language, and come from the same region of the country as they do. A more recent experiment by Bailenson et al. (2006) used a software application to blend the facial structures of a participant with those of a relatively unknown political candidate. Their results suggest that a mild facial likeness has a significant positive effect on how people evaluate political candidate under conditions of low information. This is illustrative of how a *candidate* stereotypes can be shortcut for political judgment.[2]

    Party labels are, of course, another essential piece of information for citizens of advanced industrial democracies. Partisanship has been clearly associated with various forms of political participation and political choice (Bartels 1992; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Miller and Shanks 1996) across a range of democracies (Niemi and Miller 2002). *Endorsements* supplied by mass media[3] and interest groups are a third type of information heuristic (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Lupia 1994; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991). This subset of information

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[2] In parliamentary systems of government, *party leader* affect tends to figure prominently in decision making, and thus can also be conceptualized as a heuristic cue (Blais et al. 2005; Blais et al. 2003; Gidengil et al. 2002; Jenkins 2002; Johnston et al. 1992; Mendelsohn 1994).

[3] In terms of mass media endorsements, political scientists have long aspired to link a newspaper's editorial position with political behaviour. The results of this effort have been modest (see, for example, Coombs 1981; Dalton et al. 1998; Gosnell 1937; Markham 1961). The recent literature in this area has preferred, however, a measure of media's 'net tone' of political coverage (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 2002). This method is useful insofar as it accounts for the potential influence of hard news and the opinion section of newspapers on a person's political behaviour.

typically attains shortcut status when the endorser is perceived as likeable and knowledgeable (Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly 1989).

Viability signals are a fourth information shortcut in the repertoire of many political decision makers (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Blais, Gidengil and Nevitte 2006; Brady and Johnston 1987; Brady, Johnston and Sides 2006). This cue is based on perceptions of how well candidates and parties are expected to do. Hence, it pertains to expectations of electoral success or failure. A fifth, and rather obvious essential political heuristic, is information about *ideology* (Hamill, Lodge and Blake 1985; Riggle et al. 1992; Sniderman et al. 1986). Decision making that relies on an ideology heuristic usually hinges on the degree to which a party's or candidate's stand on a policy area matches one's own position.[4] The importance of this kind of cue makes sense. If we assume that citizens aim to match their values and beliefs with those offered by political parties and local candidates then it not hard to see how a meaningful piece of information about ideology can dominate a political evaluation.

These essential pieces of political information are all derived from the body of empirical evidence showing that citizens weigh certain information about everyday politics more heavily than other information in their decision making calculus.[5] Some information is simply more task-relevant for the typical political decision making calculus. This makes a great deal of common sense. The heuristics literature has, for the most part of its existence, engaged in analysis of low information rationality (Popkin 1991; Sniderman et al. 1991). That is, the extent to which a few simple cues about politics can stand in for a more comprehensive knowledge.

In this paper the heuristics literature serves a much different purpose, however. It provides a guide for assessing mass media's coverage of politics. Headlines are also conceptualized as the media equivalent of cognitive heuristics. The proposed study, then, addresses a key question in political science from a different level of analysis. I ask, as do those working on the demand side, how well proxies can stand in for more complete information. The difference is that this project compares information streams – high and low – offered to citizens by mass media rather than

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[4] Sniderman and collegues (1986), however, proposed the "desert heuristic" as a variation of a straightforward issue-to-isssue ideology shortcut. This type of shortcut is based on whether a group or individual is perceived as deserving or not of policy assistance. This kind of reasoning, they argue, is a more accurate depiction of how ideology influences the political decision making process of the least informed and the less educated.

[5] It is important to stress that the heuristic signals presented above may not be equally attractive for political decision makers. A number of factors, not the least of which are motivation, general knowledge, and affect, influence which of these signals is most likely to impact a decision at a given time. The point here is simply that these cues do significantly impact political evaluation. When asked to make a decision about politics, this is the kind of information people rely on.

decisions made by individuals after information has been received. Political information is the dependent variable and mass-mediated news streams are the key independent variables.

Supply Side Hypotheses

Research on how people consume the news has shown that attention and assimilation of information is disproportionate. When it is time to evaluate politics, such as during election campaigns, certain types of news reports matter more than others for decision making. The same logic applies to the way news media covers political affairs. Information about politics is also disproportionate in terms of newsworthiness. Political communication research has identified systematic patterns in news coverage of politics (see review by Girish, Just and Crigler 2004). This body of research is well-suited for studying the supply of essential political information. Not surprisingly, many of the prominent features of news discourse correspond well with the prominent decision making shortcuts.

[Figure 1 about here]

Figure 1 illustrates these relationships. The personalization bias of news, for example, is instructive for developing hypotheses about the distribution of candidate and party cues in headlines and stories. Similarly, research on news tone corresponds with the endorsement cues people use to evaluate political parities and candidates. In the same way, literature on the horserace bias of news can guide expectations about the distribution of viability signals compared with ideology signals in headlines and stories. In brief, political communication research points not just to a way of measuring the quantity of shortcuts in media, but also to hypotheses and expectations about the way decision making shortcuts are structured in the mass-mediated news supply that citizens receive.

The general expectation for the study is that headline-news presents politics in a substantively different manner than the more in-depth news environment they are selected from. Put differently, it is expected that the *supply of mass-mediated news signals varies from headlines to stories in systematic ways*. A set of four specific hypotheses will be used to test this proposition. Each of these hypotheses is derived from research on the properties of news discourse. First of

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all, there is a growing consensus that news about politics in advanced industrial democracies is increasingly *personalized*.[6]

> *H1:* *Candidate* signals should be most prominent in headlines, whereas *party* signals should be most prominent in the comprehensive news environment about politics.

Candidates are in the public eye more than ever. This, it is said, is partly due to the nature of modern election campaigns. Candidates are the main attraction of "event-driven" elections that sequence from one campaign stop to another (Aldrich 1992). The dominance of television news is also related to personalized politics because TV relies on a visual narrative in which candidates play the leading role (Meyrowitz 1985; Schudson 1982; Weaver 1975). But perhaps above all else, candidate-centered politics has been linked to a broad and ongoing decline in partisanship (Dalton and Wattenberg 2001). As such, candidates are thought to have assumed more importance in political information supply at the expense of parties. It is, thus, expected that they will figure most prominently in headlines.

Secondly, there is near unanimous consensus in the political communication literature that news media's attention is drawn by political strategy and especially the so-called *horserace* between candidates and parties. Horserace coverage refers specifically to news about how well a party or candidate is doing. This usually involves data from the latest set of public opinion polls. It is conventional wisdom that issues-oriented coverage of public policy tends to be marginalized by coverage of the horserace, particularly during election campaigns (Hofstetter 1976; Patterson 1994; Sigelman and Bullock 1991; Stovall and Solomon 1984; Wilson 1980). This phenomenon, also known as the "game frame" bias, is perhaps the most robust generalization that is specific to political information in advanced industrial democracies. This leads to the second hypothesis.

> *H2*: *Viability* signals should be a most prominent in headlines, whereas *ideology* signals should be most prominent in the comprehensive news environment about politics.

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[6] There can be little doubt this is the dominant perspective, but for an alternative view see Wilke and Reinemann (2007; 2001). Their work on German mass media suggests that this personalization thesis may not apply equally across advanced democracies.

Third, news that is specifically about politics tends to be the most analytic and *interpretive*. Content analyses of news media typically detect a normative tone underlying significant portions of political news content.[7] Much of the tone of the news supply about politics is negative (Farnsworth and Lichter 2006; Graber 1976; Jamieson 1992; Patterson 1994). Such a negativity bias implies that stories about candidates and parties typically focus on perceived problems, rather than positive aspects of public affairs. In terms of elections, campaigns that are going poorly tend to attract more media scrutiny than campaigns going well. Good news usually takes a back seat to bad news about politicians and parties, and headlines are expected to reflect this news bias.

> *H3*: Headlines should amplify *positive* and (especially) *negative*
> *endorsement signals* that parties and candidates receive in the more
> comprehensive news environment.

Fourth, as has already been discussed, news about politics is increasingly *abundant*. The volume and distribution of information about politics is high, and the cost associated with acquiring at least some political information as quite low for most people (Bimber 2003; Howard 2006; Prior 2007). Modern news media compete in an increasingly efficient media environment for citizen attention. Efficient media markets increase the *competitive* pressure on those who supply news. Headlines are a mechanism that media organizations use to differentiate themselves from each other, and they are essential for attracting new customers.

> *H4*: The extent to which headlines are market-driven will increase the
> hypothesized differences between headlines and the comprehensive
> news environment.

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[7] This is, of course, a fairly obvious characteristic of political information. The surveillance function of media, the so-called "Fourth Estate" of government, has long been acknowledged in mass communication theory (Barnhurst 1994; Barnhurst and Mutz 1997; Lichter 2001; Steele and Barnhurst 1996; Wilke and Reinemann 2001). What is interesting is that an emerging body of cross-national research suggests that the proportion of news devoted to interpretation of politics is growing . In other words, longitudinal content analyses of news media are noticing that the 'tone' of political information is increasingly less neutral in character.

Methodology

The hypotheses are examined using headlines and stories published by newspapers and Internet news websites during the 2006 election campaign period in Canada. The choice of an election campaign is crucial. First, it is a period when the supply of media signals about political decision making is likely to be at a maximum pitch. Elections capture mass media's attention in a way that non-election periods do not. Second, campaigns are supposed to prepare citizens prepare for a political decision. It is during this symbolic moment of democracy that people are most likely motivated to judge, or evaluate, the political stimulus they encounter.

The fixed period of this campaign – a 55-day campaign in total – has facilitated precise data collection. The content analysis examines a comprehensive database of newspaper and Internet news published during the official campaign period between November 29, 2005 and election day on January 23, 2006. For newspapers, material has been gathered from seven major English and French language dailies: *Calgary Herald, Globe and Mail, La Presse, Le Devoir, National Post, Toronto Star,* and *Vancouver Sun.* The sample includes all published articles (N=3,766) about the election in these newspapers: 2,441 news stories and 1,325 editorial and opinion items. Internet coverage includes all articles published on five major news websites in Canada: *canada.com*, *cbc.ca*, *globeandmail.ca*, *halifaxchronicleherald.ca*, and *torontostar.ca* during the campaign. This sample includes 1229 articles in total.

All newspaper articles were gathered and content analysed for the Canadian Election News Study (CENS) by a team of undergraduate and graduate students for a separate election study conducted by the Media Observatory at the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (MISC). Newspaper and Internet headlines were also gathered during the campaign, and have been contented analysed by a team of research assistants. The content analysis phase began with a conceptual and operational distinction between headlines and the full-text articles. Practically speaking, this creates two separate databases (or, units of analysis) of political information: headlines and full stories. For each unit of analysis coders have taken note of essential political information: party mentions, leader mentions, endorsement signals, and issue mentions.

Coders were introduced to the study during formal training sessions that included a series of practice coding exercises and a guide for the online data entry system. During the campaign itself, coders were responsible for a different newspaper each week in order to test for any coder effects or bias. Stories were also randomly selected for double-coding throughout the campaign

to check intercoder reliability – the consistency with which different coders come up with identical codes. All measures included in this analysis achieved an appropriate level of reliability. Detailed methodological information is available at the Media Observatory website (http://media-observatory.mcgill.ca).

The intercoder reliability procedure for the separate content analysis of headlines is consistent with the method for full-text stories. In the case of headlines, the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient for all measures was .70 on Scott's Pi and Cohen's Kappa index. Most of these indicators are above .90 on those scales. Training included both formal and informal pilot tests, and then a final reliability assessment during the coding of the full sample. The size of the formal reliability sample for each dataset was about 10 percent of the full sample. Any disagreement discovered in the process of assessing reliability are to be resolved using the author codes as tie-breaker.

Results

How well did these campaign headlines reflect the stories they introduced? The first hypothesis (*H1*) predicts that candidate signals will be most prominent in headlines. In the Canadian parliamentary system, the presence of party leaders compared to parties has dominanted commentary by Canadian political scientists on the personalization of politics topic (Fletcher 1981, 1991; Miesel and Mendelsohn 2001; Taras 1990). This analysis follows that tradition, to the extent that it also examines how mass media framed the 2006 campaign specifically in terms of leaders and parties. The purpose of this analysis is not to assess the magnitude of leader-oriented coverage, however. The goal, rather, is to see how well headlines represented the pattern the coverage in stories.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 presents a comparison of party and leader coverage in the headlines and stories of Canadian newspapers. The full sample (N=3766) includes all election items published in seven major dailies during the 55-day campaign. The table also show how the front page and the opinion-editorial section of these newspaper framed election coverage in terms of leaders and parties. Results in the full show a clear pattern: parties were more likely to be mentioned in stories than their respective leaders. For example, the incumbent Liberal party was mentioned specifically in about 80 percent of articles about the campaign. The Liberal leader Paul Martin

was mentioned in 55 percent of articles. A similar pattern is evident for each of the other four main parties. Cues about leaders were, on average, 18 percentage points less likely than cues about political parties in stories.

[Table 2 about here]

The pattern of party-oriented coverage in stories was consistent on the front page and in the op-ed sections of newspapers. Without exception, all four parties were more likely to be mentioned than their leaders in page one stories, columns, and election editorials. There was some variation – for example, NDP and Bloc Québécois coverage on page one was even more party-oriented than leader-oriented in the stories – but the overall pattern is strikingly consistent. Internet news stories followed the same pattern. Parties were clearly more likely than their leaders to be mentioned in Web stories. Table 2 presents Internet results in the same manner as newspapers. The full sample (N=1229) includes all items published by the five news websites during the campaign. The table also breaks down Internet coverage by daily lead articles and by articles less prominently featured.[8] Results for the Interent stories are clearly comparable with newspapers. People who paid close attention to this campaign online were more likely to encounter party cues than leader cues.

People who skimmed headlines, however, encountered leader cues about as often the party cues. For instance, in newspapers Conservative leader Harper was mentioned in 15 percent of headlines, whereas the Conservative party was mentioned in 16 percent. In front page headlines Harper figured even more prominently than his party. 30 percent of page one headlines mentioned Harper specifically, 26 percent mentioned the Conservative party. Similar patterns are also evident in Internet headlines, leads, and back-items. Both Martin and the Liberal party, for example, figured in about 20 percent of Web headlines about the election. In short, the proportion of party cues relative to leader cues is substantially lower in the both newspaper and Interent news headlines compared to stories. The evidence corroborates the first hypothesis. Leaders coverage was most prominent in headlines.

[Figure 2 about here]

The second hypothesis (*H2*) predicts that viability cues will be most prominent in headlines, whereas ideology cues would be more prominent in stories. The viability cue has been

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[8] Internet news articles were gathered twice daily during the campaign. Lead articles were coded as such if they were immediately apparent on news page. Practically speaking, these items had bigger headlines, visible side-photos, and were apparent to readers without scrolling the page for more information.

operationalized as a horse-race frame, and the ideology cue is measured by issue-oriented coverage. In other words, stories or headlines about who's ahead and behind are viability cues. Stories or headlines framed in terms of election issues are considered ideology cues for prospective voters. Figure 2 presents the "news emphasis" for stories and headlines in newspapers and on the Internet. For newspapers, there is no statistical difference between election emphasis for headlines and stories. About half of the stories published were mainly about viability. The other half were mostly about issues. Headlines convey almost an identical proportion of viability and ideology cues.[9] There is, then, no evidence in Canadian dailies for the hypothesis that viability information would be more prominent in headlines or that ideology information would be less prominent in headlines.

There is modest evidence for news emphasis dissimilarity on the Internet. But the difference between headlines and stories is significant in the opposite direction (Tau-b = -.03, p = .08) to what is predicted by the hypothesis. Ideology is more prominent in headlines relative to viability. In other words, more election stories about the horserace were framed by issue-oriented headlines than vice versa. This is a peculiar finding, but it is not without precedence. A similar study of the 2004 Canadian election campaign also found, contrary to expectation, that issues played a more prominent role that election through the headlines (Andrew 2007). On the whole, then, these data are clearly inconsistent with the second hypothesis. People who followed this campaign in newspaper and Internet headlines received just as much – perhaps even more – cues related to election issues, as they did cues about the race between parties and leaders.

The third hypothesis (*H3*) is that election headlines will amplify the endorsement signals conveyed by stories. The baseline expectation is for less neutrality in headlines compared to stories. It is also anticipated to that headlines will amplify the positive, and especially negative, "net tone" scores that parties and leaders receive in stories. Net tone is measured as the percentage of positive mentions minus the percentage of negative mentions, and thus indicating the relative weight of positive over negative coverage. In brief, this hypothesis is strongly supported by the data from newspapers only. Headlines in Canadian dailies were less neutral and

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[9] A total of 662 headlines could not be classified as either horse-race oriented or issues-oriented by the coders. For example, the "Does a dark bird croak 'nevermore' in Liberal ears?" headline in the December 31, 2005 edition of the Globe and Mail has been coded as 'don't know' on the emphasis measure – as it is not clearly about the horserace or a policy domain. Hence, about one of every five headlines that led a full-text story about this election campaign is ambiguous – providing neither viability nor policy information. Readers who encountered those headlines had to continue reading the full-text article in order to get any meaningful information about this election. Importantly, there is not a significant difference in the news emphasis of stories led by ambiguous headlines.

tended to amplify the tone of coverage that parties and leaders were receiving in stories. There is no evidence for this hypothesis in Internet news coverage.

It should be noted that there was a clear difference between headlines and stories with respect to information density. Newspaper headlines, for instance, conveyed 794 explicit endorsements about parties and party leaders contesting this election. Put another way, a total of 3766 headlines generated about 800 clearly positive or negative cues for voters. The average number of party and leader endorsements in the headlines was therefore .21 (794 in 3766 headlines). By contrast, the average number of party and leader endorsements in the stories was .45 (1659 in 3766). Hence, the stories supplied about twice as many endorsement cues about parties and leaders than the headlines (1659 compared to 794). Internet headlines also supplied fewer cues overall than Internet stories.

[Table 3 and 4 about here]

Given the obvious length advantage of stories, it is not at all surprising that more evaluations of parties and leaders can be found in them. The pattern changes, however, if we control for the number of party and leader mentions in the news item. Table 3 and 4 does so, presenting a summary of endorsement signals for parties and leaders in newspapers and on the Internet. The tables report the percentage of party and leader mentions that were coded as either positive or negative. That is, the frequency with which a leader or party mention elicited good or bad press coverage. As shown in Table 3, newspaper headlines were significantly ($p < .01$) more likely to supply an endorsement for a mentioned parties or leader. Of the four main parties and their leaders, only Bloc leader Duceppe received roughly the same proportion of evaluations in headlines compared with stories.

But consider the evidence presented for the other leaders and each of the four parties. About 42 percent of headlines mentioning the Liberal party were coded as either positive or negative press for the Liberals. By contrast, less than two of ten Liberal party mentions in stories were coded as such. Similarly, a headline mentioning Liberal leader Martin was about twice as likely to be coded positive or negative as a mention of Martin in the full-text article. Table 3 also suggests that the amount of coverage a party and leader gets in the stories is positively related to the proportion of endorsement signals they receive in the headlines. Put another way, the parties and leaders receiving the most press were most likely to be evaluated in the headlines.

Newspaper results clearly support the expectation that headlines amplify endorsement cues. Voters skimming newspaper headlines clearly received a greater proportion of party and leader cues than those paying close attention. But as Table 4 illustrates, this was not likely the case for skimmers of online election news. Only the Conservatives and the NDP received a greater proportion of endorsements for each mention in headlines. For the rest of the parties and leaders there is no evidence of less neutrality in Web headlines. In fact, the opposite occurred for coverage of Martin and Harper. Both leaders were more likely to receive neutral coverage when mentioned in headlines than in stories. Hence, evaluation of the two main leaders was likely more evident for those paying close attention to election news online.

[Figure 3 and 4 about here]

So far the evidence is mixed for hypothesis three. Newspaper headlines about the election were more sensational than the stories they led, Internet headlines were not. What about the direction of endorsements, did the headlines amplify the positive or negative coverage parties and leaders received in stories? To consider this aspect, Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the consistency of media tone in newspapers and the Internet.[10] The difference between newspaper headlines and stories is quite striking. Net tone for the Liberals (-13.3 to -25.8) and their leader Martin (-11.5 to -22.0) was about twice as negative in headlines compared with articles. In other words, bad news was about 12 points more likely in headlines about the Liberals and their leader. People skimming newspaper headlines may have perceived this campaign was going worse for the Liberals than those pay closer attention.

The Conservatives, by contrast, may have benefited by voters skimming newspapers, at least in terms of how well their campaign was perceived to be going. The Conservative party measure of net tone in the headlines (11.7) was 11.2 percentage points higher than in the articles (0.6). Although the net tone of stories and headlines about Harper was approximately the same, the gap between Harper and Martin was in election headlines was much larger than in stories. The consistency of endorsements between headlines and stories online, as shown in Figure 4, is more congruent. The only significant difference in terms of Web tone is for coverage of Harper. Internet stories about the Conservative leader were 7.6 points more likely than headlines about Harper to be good news rather than bad news.

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[10] This analysis of media tone is limited to the two main parties and leaders figuring most prominently in the sample. Results for the Bloc, NDP, Layton, and Duceppe are consistent with results reported for the two main parties and leaders.

Hence, support for the third hypothesis in terms of the direction of media tone is also mixed. Newspaper headlines for the Liberals and Martin did amplify the negative press that party and their leader received in newspaper stories. The Conservatives received relatively neutral coverage in newspaper stories, but that coverage was framed by more positive headlines. The headlines and stories on the Web were generally consistent in the tone they conveyed about the main parties. If anything, the headlines moderated the endorsement messages conveyed in the stories. The election was probably perceived as going better for Harper to those following closely on the Internet.

The fourth hypothesis (*H4*) predicts that discontinuity between headlines and stories is a function of competitive market pressure. In other words, it is expected that audience-making pressure intensifies the differences between headlines and stories. Hence, media organizations in a highly competitive market are most likely to print headlines out of sync with the stories they lead. What, then, can be surmised about competition in the Canadian news market? First of all, it is possible that audience-making is of greater concern for newspaper editors than it is for online news editors. Research has shown that computer-oriented news presentation promotes the personalization of consumption (Tewksbury and Althaus 2000). People who enter a news section of a website are presumably highly interested public affairs to begin with. They probably often read beyond headlines that are dull, boring, and neutral. Newspapers are driven in part by street sales, and it stands to reason that editors are more prone to using sensationalized (non-neutral) headlines to pitch the stories they lead.

[Figure 5 about here]

Figure 4 presents a direct comparison of newspaper and Internet news objectivity. That is, the degree to which these mediums relied on non-neutral headlines and stories to present information about the main parties and leaders. For newspapers, a distinction between news and the op-ed section is critical. Opinion and editorial pieces are supposed to convey opinion. Headlines should introduce that opinion. News, on the other hand, is supposed to be relatively neutral. This is the traditional wall of separation between opinion and news content that has begun to receive more empirical attention in recent years (Dalton et al. 1998; Kahn and Kenney 2002). As illustrated by Figure 5, news section headlines that mentioned parties or leaders were significantly less neutral than the stories they led. This fits with previous evidence suggesting

that the wall between neutral news and opinion is less opaque through the lens of headlines (Andrew 2007).

Internet news, by comparison, was more likely to publish good and bad news in the body of stories rather than in headlines. Online headlines were much more subdued then the articles they led. Endorsement cues about parties and leaders were mainly available to Web readers who clicked past the headline for more information. Generally speaking, a person skimming newspaper headlines was more likely to pick up positive or negative coverage of parties and leaders than a person paying closer attention. This was not the case for scanners of online news. Online skimmers got more neutrality than those reading closely. There is, then, some evidence to support hypothesis four.

Of course, competitive pressure is not necessarily uniform across newspapers and Internet news sites. Some news markets are clearly more competitive than other. For example, Toronto area residents have access to several paid dailies and to various free commuter papers. Canadian news media also features a large publicly funded news agency that is ostensibly more immune to market pressures than other profit-driven organizations. To explore the possibility that the headlines-stories relationship varied by newspapers and websites, Figures 6 and 6 breakdown objectivity by media outlet.

[Figure 6 and 7 about here]

Figure 6, first of all, compares the neutrality of headlines and stories for each of the seven newspapers figuring in this analysis. Results confirm that the tendency of headlines to convey explicit endorsement cues is not isolated to one paper. Headlines at all seven papers were less neutral than stories. These differences are statistically significant for five of the seven papers considered. It is also clear, nonetheless, that the gap between headlines and stories is more pronounced for certain newspapers. *Toronto Star* headlines were exactly 14 points more likely than the stories to convey explicit endorsement cues about the major parties and leaders. Similarly, *Vancouver Sun* headlines were almost 16 percentage points more likely than stories to do so. As such, headline skimmers in Toronto and Vancouver were probably exposed to much less neutrality than those paying closer attention in those cities.

Figure 7, secondly, compares the neutrality of headlines and stories published by the five news websites. Results show significant differences between headlines and stories across all five outlets. Notice the striking difference between newspapers and online news. The headlines for

all websites were significantly less likely than stories to convey good or bad news about parties and leaders. Web headlines were much more neutral than the stories they introduced. The CBC is no different from the other websites in this regard. CBC news was unique in one respect, however. Their headlines were more neutral than all other organizations. The stories they led were not. Voters reading CBC news stories online were exposed to about as much opinion as those reading the *National Post* and the *Calgary Herald*. In sum though, the evidence for hypothesis four is modestly supportive. Market-driven journalism seems to affect the relationship between news headlines and stories about politics.

Conclusion

It is cliché for political communications specialists to claim that media are a key ingredient of modern democracy. But it is hard to blame them for it. Mass media interpret politics, offer surveillance of governments, and socialize people to fit into their cultural milieu (Lasswell 1948). Media also supply practically all of the information that citizens use to hold their government to account. Lippmann (1922) imagined this supply in the form of a "pseudo environment" that informs all spheres of political behaviour. It influences political actions: decisions to run for office, to volunteer on a campaign, to sign petitions, and to join protests or boycotts (Barnes and Kaase 1979). It influences political and policy preferences: what people think, and what they talk about when the subject of politics comes up (Zaller 1992). It also influences political agendas: what governments pay attention to, and what issues governments prioritize (Jones and Baumgartner 2005).

This paper has attempted to sketch a different way of thinking about how the mass-mediated news supply can affect not just voting intentions, but also day-to-day political conversations, preferences, and attitudes. Thus far empirical studies have tended to view news content through the lens of a media outlet's bias, or as a function of media's form of communication. This paper takes a different approach by proposing that the prominence assigned to media signals, rather than their source or their form, is the best way to conceptualize the flow of political information in modern, hyper-mediated society. A considerable body of knowledge has built up about the way media tends to cover politics. But very little is known about the relationship between news flows that people are primed to pay attention, and news flows that make up a more complete picture of politics.

Headlines are a defining feature of modern mass media; a feature that different forms and outlets of news media clearly share in common. They are especially dominant in market-oriented media systems, in which news is viewed mainly as a commodity with the goal of profit maximization (Hallin and Mancini 2004; McManus 1994). It matters little what form of media or news source one prefers. Headlines mediate the political news experience for virtually every citizen in liberal capitalist democracies. If democracy does indeed work best with equitably and broadly informed citizens then it seems essential to carefully monitor the way politics is portrayed by this media-generated shortcuts in the increasingly competitive market for the public's attention.

The heuristics literature in political science provides a useful guide for doing just that. This body of research has demonstrated that certain types of cues matter more than others for the prototypical decision making calculus. It makes sense, then, to monitor headlines and stories for the presence of these essential political information cues. The hypotheses assessed in this analysis were derived from political communication research on news discourse. It was expected that candidate (leader), viability, and endorsement cues would all be more prominent in headlines than in stories. The extent to which headlines are market-driven was also anticipated to affect their relationship with the stories they introduce.

How well did mass media's most important shortcut stand in for more complete information? That depends. In certain respects, it is clear that this election looked quite different through the prism of headlines compared to lens of the full story. Voters skimming newspaper and Internet headlines received a much larger share of party leader coverage than those reading closely. All four of the main party leaders received about as much coverage as their parties did in the headlines. The stories were considerably less leader-oriented than the headlines in that respect. Newspaper headlines, in particular, also tended to amplify the endorsement cues that parties and leaders received in the stories. For the incumbent Liberal party and their leader Martin the headlines were much worse than stories. The opposite was true for the Conservative party. This was a much closer election in the small print than it was in the larger print.

These findings were relatively consistent across newspapers included in the study. A voter scanning the headlines in Vancouver got almost exactly the same type and proportion of cues as headline scanners in Calgary and Toronto. The difference between headlines and stories was most pronounced in the news section of Canadian dailies. Headlines in that section were about
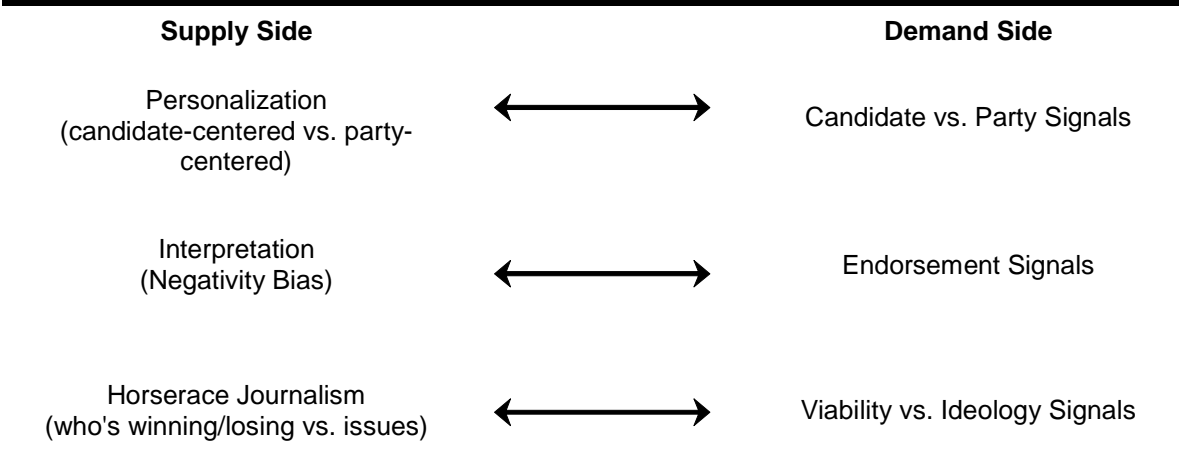
twice as likely as the stories they led to convey explicit good or bad news about one of the main parties or leaders. The wall of separation between news and the op-ed section is much less obvious to a headline-skimmer than someone paying close attention.

The election also looked quite different through the frame of Internet headlines compared with their stories. Online stories were more likely than headlines to convey good and bad news about the election participants. In other words, Internet headlines were considerably more neutral than the stories. This finding was somewhat unexpected. A possible explanation is that audience-making is less critical for online news editors than it is for newspaper editors, still reliant in part on catching the eye and small change of pedestrians. This study also found that Canada's publicly funded news agency's headlines were the most neutral of all. But the news stories they led were about as likely to express opinion as stories in the major Canadian dailies. It tempting to claim that CBC's online election coverage was a wolf in sheep's clothing. The stories scrutinized in the same way as Canadian dailies. The headlines, however, were much gentler (and kinder) to main the parties and leaders.

The differences between headlines and stories online compared with newspapers raises questions about other information mediums. It is common knowledge that large portions of the voting public learn about politics from television and radio. In their own way, these medium also supply viewers and listeners with shortcuts – similar in style to the headlines printed in newspapers and posted online. Future research in that area will be necessary to determine the extent to which broadcast headlines represent the stories they introduce. In conclusion, this paper has offered one of the only supply side studies of cognitive heuristics. It has attempted to rejuvenate a central question in that literature, but from a different level of analysis. How does a low information media environment compare with a high information one? More questions like this one will be useful as social science begins to understand the consequences of an information society led by media-generated shortcuts such as headlines.

Figure 1: Bridging Supply- and Demand-Side Theories of Political Information

Supply Side		Demand Side
Personalization (candidate-centered vs. party-centered)	⟷	Candidate vs. Party Signals
Interpretation (Negativity Bias)	⟷	Endorsement Signals
Horserace Journalism (who's winning/losing vs. issues)	⟷	Viability vs. Ideology Signals

Table 1: Newspaper Coverage of Parties and Leaders, 2006 Canadian Federal Election

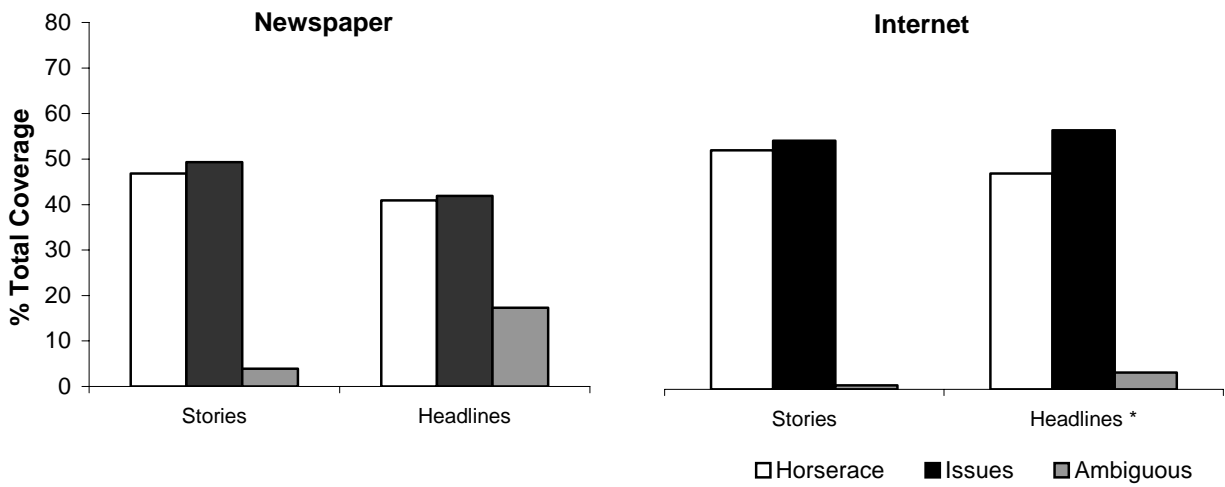|	Full Sample		Front Page		Op-Ed Section	
	Stories	Headlines	Stories	Headlines	Stories	Headlines
% Party Coverage						
Liberal party	80.8	14.6	90.1	26.1	81.1	9.6
Conservative party	72.8	16	83.8	25.9	72.1	9.6
New Democratic party	39.0	4.7	43.8	5.2	33.1	2.0
Bloc Québécois	22.6	3.6	29.4	2.7	20	1.7
% Leader Coverage						
Paul Martin	55.3	13.1	73.9	23.6	59.6	9.2
Stephen Harper	54.9	15.1	70.7	30.4	61.1	12.4
Jack Layton	20.1	5.1	21.9	2.0	18.6	1.7
Gilles Duceppe	13.3	3.1	16.2	3.2	12.4	0.8
N	3766		402		1325	

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper database. Cells represent the percentage of headlines or stories mentioning a party or party leader.

Table 2: Internet Coverage of Parties and Leaders, 2006 Canadian Federal Election

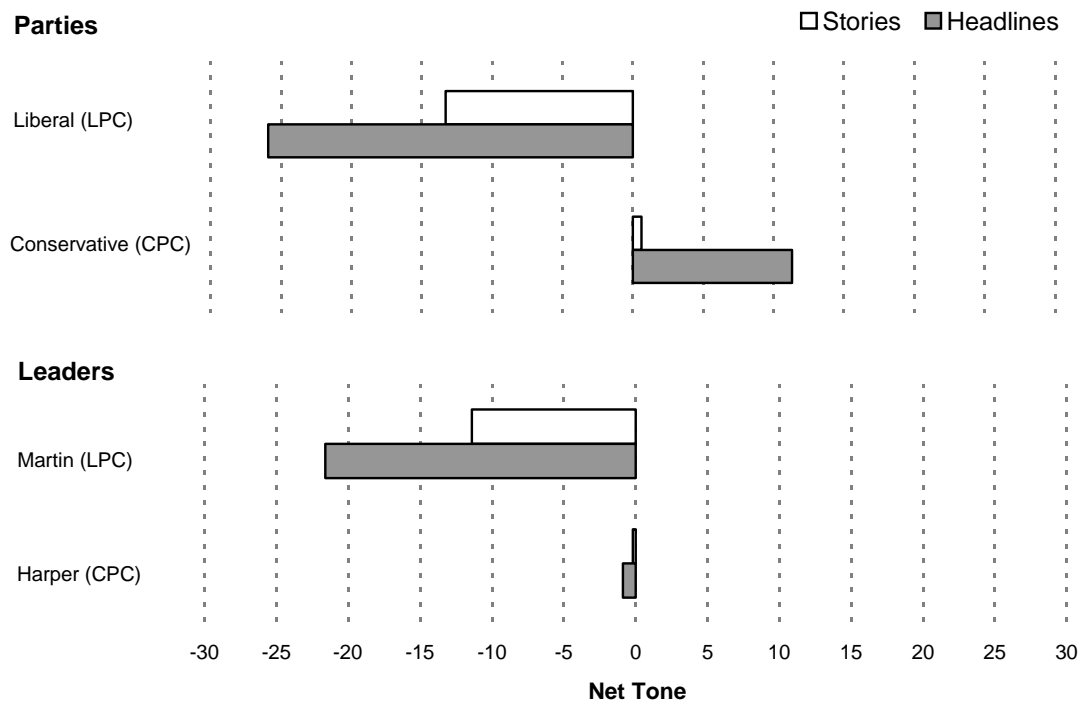|	Full Sample		Internet Leads		Internet Back-Items	
	Stories	Headlines	Stories	Headlines	Stories	Headlines
% Party Coverage						
Liberal party	80.0	20.5	84.0	22.7	78.8	19.9
Conservative party	78.1	20.5	85.8	25.2	75.7	19.1
New Democratic party	46.3	6.1	49.6	5.7	42.1	6.2
Bloc Québécois	16.8	2.4	16.3	1.4	16.9	2.7
% Leader Coverage						
Paul Martin	61.9	20.6	69.9	25.9	60.0	19
Stephen Harper	63.0	22.5	77.3	31.6	58.8	19.9
Jack Layton	31.2	8.3	34.4	5.3	30.2	9.2
Gilles Duceppe	9.0	2.2	7.1	0.3	9.5	2.7
N	1229		282		947	

Source: 2006 CENS Internet database. Cells represent the percentage of headlines or stories mentioning a party or party leader.

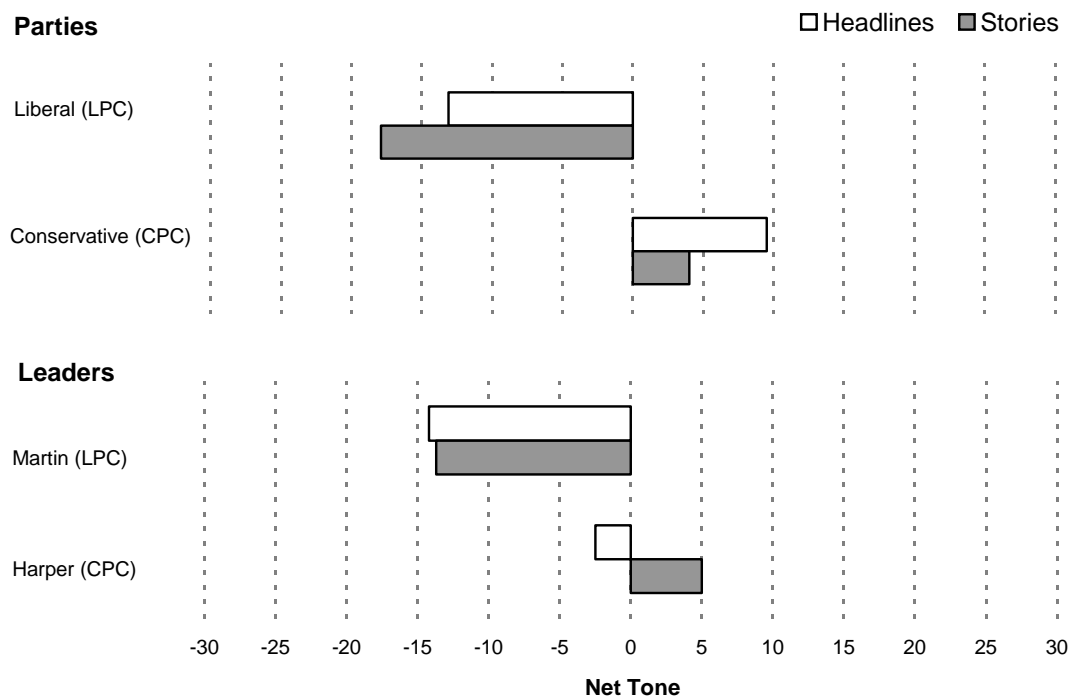**Figure 2: Print Media News Emphasis, 2006 Canadian Federal Election**

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database. * The difference between issues and horserace is weakly significant (Tau-b = -.03, p = .08) for headlines on the Internet.

Figure 3: Consistency of Media Tone, Newspapers Only

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database. All mean differences in newspaper tone between headlines and stories are significant (p < .01) except Harper (CPC).

Figure 4: Consistency of Media Tone, Internet Only

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database. Difference between headlines and stories is significant (p < .05) for Harper (CPC).

Table 3: Party and Leader Endorsements for the 2006 Canadian Election, Newspapers

	Headlines		Stories		Difference
	% Endorsement	# Mention	% Endorsement	# Mention	
Parties					
Liberal party	41.2	*548*	16.0	*3043*	25.2 ***
Conservative party	31.6	*602*	10.0	*2740*	21.6 ***
New Democratic party	20.0	*176*	4.9	*1470*	15.1 ***
Bloc Québécois	20.6	*136*	6.0	*852*	14.6 ***
Leaders					
Paul Martin	30.6	*494*	17.4	*2082*	13.2 ***
Stephen Harper	24.1	*568*	14.3	*2068*	9.8 ***
Jack Layton	14.0	*193*	9.0	*757*	5.0 **
Gilles Duceppe	12.0	*117*	11.8	*499*	0.2

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database. Cells contain the percentage of non-neutral coverage - positive and negative - for each party and leader as a proportion of their total campaign coverage in newspapers (N=3766).

*** two-tailed p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

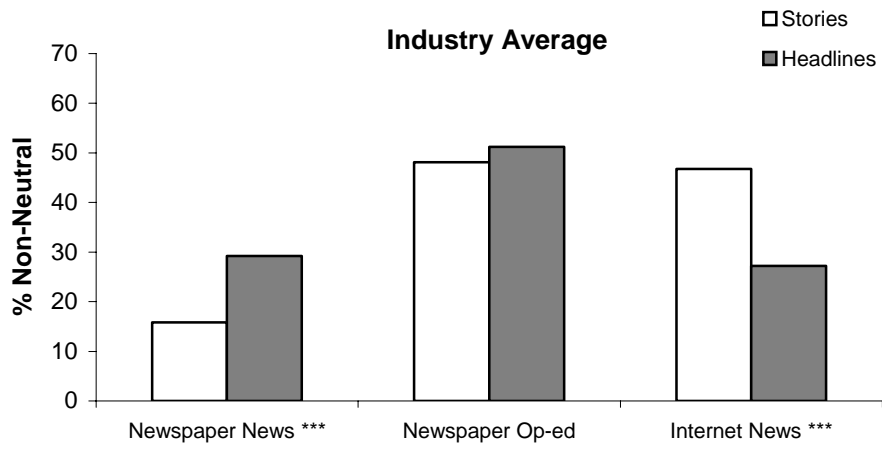**Table 4: Party and Leader Endorsements for the 2006 Canadian Election, Internet**

	Headlines		Stories		Difference
	% Endorsement	# Mention	% Endorsement	# Mention	
Parties					
Liberal party	31.4	*252*	29.5	*983*	1.9
Conservative party	29.4	*252*	24.0	*959*	5.4 *
New Democratic party	21.3	*75*	11.6	*569*	9.7 **
Bloc Québécois	16.7	*30*	13.6	*206*	3.1
Leaders					
Paul Martin	22.1	*253*	28.1	*761*	-6.0 *
Stephen Harper	17.7	*277*	23.9	*775*	-6.2 **
Jack Layton	8.8	*102*	7.6	*383*	1.3
Gilles Duceppe	22.2	*27*	17.3	*110*	4.9

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database. Cells contain the percentage of non-neutral coverage - positive and negative - for each party and leader as a proportion of their total campaign coverage on the Internet (N=1229).
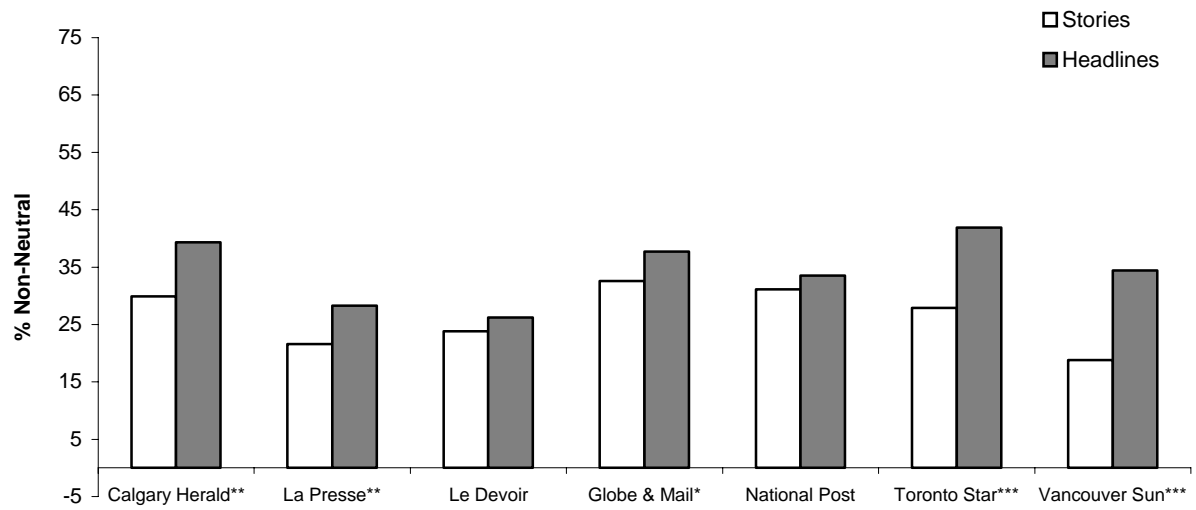
*** two-tailed p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

Figure 5: Print Media Objectivity, 2006 Canadian Election

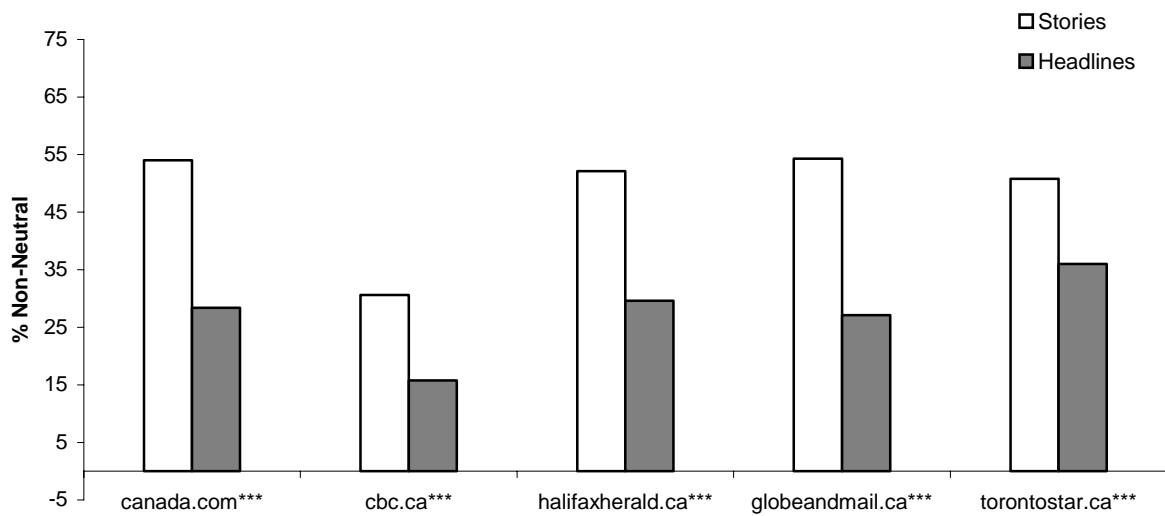Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database. *** two-tailed p < .001

Figure 6: Newspaper Objectivity by Media Outlet, 2006 Canadian Election

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database.
*** two-tailed p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

Figure 7: Internet Objectivity by Website, 2006 Canadian Election

Source: 2006 CENS newspaper and Internet database.
*** two-tailed p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

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