

Reading the News on Trump



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There has been a lot of analysis about the role of the news and social media over the past year



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Has Election 2016 been a turning point for the influence of the news media?

"The stark contrast between editorial dynamics and electoral preferences might lead to two trends directly affecting the news media in the short-term future."



**The
Economist**

NOVEMBER 4TH - 20TH 2017

Where next for Catalonia?

Mueller's misunderstood mission

Trafficking brides to China

Luther at 500: an essay

Social media's threat to democracy



Most of these analyses have shared:

1. A focus on **what** news has been produced / circulated
2. A reliance on **quantitative** data
3. Assumption of **powerful** media and **passive** readers



This Presentation

- Focus on **how** news is read
- Drawing upon **qualitative** data
 - 72 in-depth interviews in greater Chicago, Miami and Philadelphia, 1-10/2017
 - Sample not representative, but diverse
- Four key reading mechanisms:
 - Strategic curation
 - Mindful processing
 - Emotional interpretation
 - Subjective attachment

Strategic Curation

- “I follow the *Marine Corps Times*... because that is where you have a large group of Marine veterans or allies... I’m more aware of what’s out there on a national level just because I was exposed to those people. Growing up [in the Chicago area] we’re in our own bubble but then those four years of active duty opened my mind.”
- “[My] choice is determined more by the things that the people whose opinion I respect [post]... The less frequently they post the more likely I am to click on the things they do post.”
- “We’re getting married and... most of his friends are more liberal and I happen to be friends with a lot of them too... I have fewer friends on Facebook that are of the same political leaning as me. So, I think that’s a big reason why I find myself filtering [more].”

Mindful Processing

- “It is the first time that there is a candidate that is more complex and that people see as controversial... They don’t like how he talks or deals with issues... [But] I see beyond whether I like how he talks or what he says... And I don’t feel personally attacked. As opposed to people who say “as a woman I feel offended,” I don’t! Or as a minority, either!”
- “Are they writing things that are clearly opinionated or are they trying to be factual? What is like the tone of the voice of the writing? And is it trying to be sensationalist? Is it trying to be, you know, factual? Is it trying to present opinions or sway opinions, clearly? That all kind of goes into the reliability.”
- “What was happening with Trump [and] deportations... [people] posted things on Facebook that I’d say... “I don’t know if it’s that certain,” so I searched on other sources to see if it was true.”

Emotional Interpretation

- “I'm feeling really sad, but also very angry. There are a lot of personal stories of people who have been separated from their families [and] who've gone through these lengthy processes to be here already... I'm frustrated right now.”
- “[Comey story] is really entertaining. It borders on just sort of ludicrous that the Democrats could have first hated him for trying to... draw the focus on to Clinton and the email... to the pendulum swinging... once he began to look for links between the Trump administration and what went on with Russia ... You have to find the humor in the news these days! [Laughs].”
- “[My dad] listens to conservative talk radio 24/7 and he watches... the Hannitys and the Judge Janine Pirros and the Lou Dobbs... I really think he's turning into such a bitter, miserable, grumpy old guy that just sits in a corner and just hates everything.”

Subjective Attachment

- “I cannot help but express it, [but] every morning I want to find out what stupid thing [the President] has said or done today! [This] has accelerated and accelerated and accelerated.”
- “[I have] become something of a news junkie on the latest stuff out of Washington... We’re surprised every day and it’s almost like what’s the latest bomb shell... We've never had a political situation like that.”
- “Even though there was constant news... I didn't feel like I had to listen to it all the time... Now you feel like every day there's a new decision... that you need to know about. (...) [*Manchester by the Sea*] was such a relief to watch something about human emotion and human struggles on a human level that wasn't about strategy and it wasn't about hatred or at least hatred on a political level.”

The Bottom Line

- The perils of underestimating readers...
 - Agency and affect mediate between information and action
- ... and of overestimating algorithms
 - No easy technological causes or fixes
- Shifting the gaze outside-in
 - There is a lot of pain in society

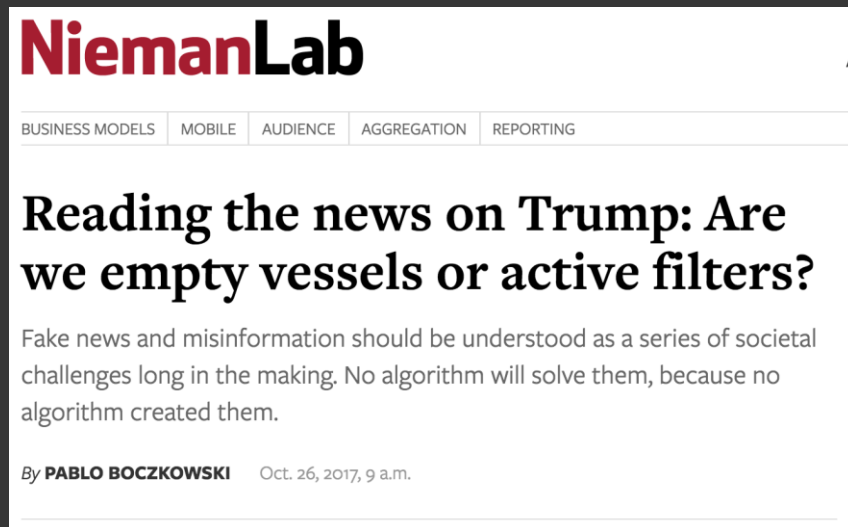


Reading the News, Rebuilding the Polity

- But there is reason for hope
 - The civic potential of a critical and sentient reading culture
- Switching gears in political discourse
 - From divisiveness to common ground
 - From differentiating to including
 - From short term electoral activity to long term governance

Further reading / Lectura adicional

English



<http://www.niemanlab.org/2017/10/reading-the-news-on-trump-are-we-empty-vessels-or-active-filters/>

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Español

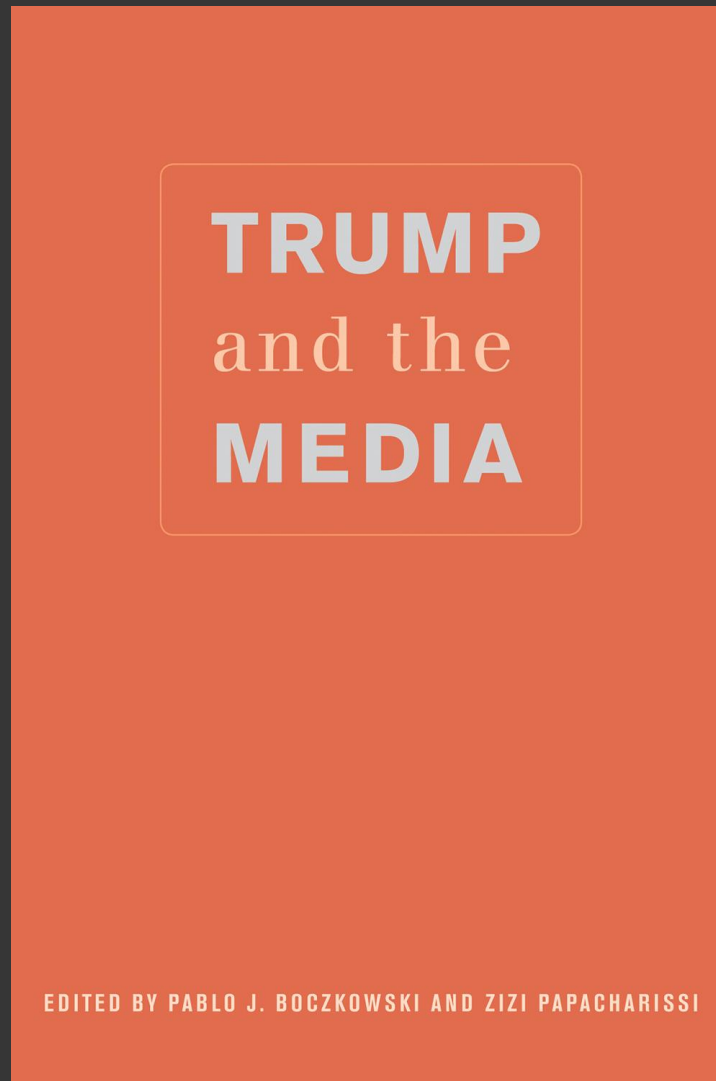


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And coming soon to a bookstore near you...



Thank you!
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