

Coding Procedures for *Washington Post* Opinion Articles (Chapter 4)

Guidelines for finding articles on the news media in *The Washington Post*:

- 1) Search Lexis-Nexis Academic
- 2) Go to the “News” section.
- 3) Select “General News.”
- 4) Select “Major Papers.”
- 5) Click on “Source List” and select *The Washington Post*.
- 6) For the three search terms, use “Opinion” and “Media” or “Press”. It is important that you use the proper connecting words: “and” then “or”. Search for “Opinion” in “Headlines, Lead Paragraphs, Terms”, “Media” in “full text”, and “Press” in “Headlines, Lead Paragraphs, Terms”.

Criteria for inclusion of articles:

- Only in editorial/op-ed section.
- Must be signed opinion column, not editorial.
- Not by ombudsman.
- Refers to American (not foreign) media.
- Must refer to news coverage rather than movies, entertainment TV, sports coverage, nonnews internet, e-mail, cell phones, etc.
- Not local Washington city coverage, must be reference to U.S. national media.
- Reference to current, not historical, media.
- Not letters to the editor.
- Exclude if “media” refers to paid advertising.
- Not fine art media.
- Not “press releases.”
- Not “media consultants” or “media analyst” or “media advisor” or “media campaign”
- Includes references to the “media age,” “media politics,” “mass media,” etc.
- Doesn’t include articles about the advertising business
- Includes columns on press freedom, first amendment issues
- Not “media markets”

Coding Categories

Category 1, Type of Media / Press Mention:

1 = referred to in one sentence

2 = the media / press are one of the important issues discussed in the article

Category 2, Tone of Discussion of Media / Press:

1= depicts the media /press positively

2= depicts the media /press negatively

3= mention and/or discussion does not discernibly depict the media /press in either a positive or negative light.

Coding Guidance:

- Criticizing media criticism is considered positive
- Criticism of sensationalism is negative
- Noting bias against what you believe to be reality is negative
- Depictions of the press in a watchdog role achieving good results is positive
- “media elite” and other such phrases are generally negative
- Descriptions of negative public attitudes toward the media is negative
- Saying that the media advocates a positions that you think is wrong is negative