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Chances and Effects of Authenticity

Candidates of the German Federal Election in TV News

Wolfgang Donsbach and Olaf Jandura

Is “sound bite democracy” only a U.S. phenomenon? And how do different forms of a candidate’s appearance in television news affect his or her perception by the viewer? These are the major research questions we pursued using a large-scale content analysis of German television news coverage of the 1998 general election. The results show that German candidates still have a substantial opportunity on television news to speak to the people in their own words. The results also indicate that the degree of authenticity has a strong effect on the perception of the candidate by the television viewer. Pictures convey a better impression than just verbal news about the candidate, and original sound bites with pictures leave a better impression than pictures with just the voice-over. Results are discussed in light of the different media cultures in the United States and Germany and of the shifting balance of power between politicians and journalists.

Introduction: Channels to the Voter

According to the German Constitutional Court, the press is “a constant connecting organ and controlling body between the people and its elected representatives in parliament and government” (BVerfGE 20:174f). Among other things, they inform the governed about what politicians do or intend to do. Patterson (1995) describes this function as the press’s “common carrier” role. Patterson holds that it is important for a democracy that a considerable part of political news media content be based on the words of political figures because this is the only way the people can get to know what they really have to say (p. 330f).

From the politicians’ point of view, this transmitter function of the media becomes more and more central. Even in political systems with a strong party

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component, as is the case in Germany and many other European countries, where the main political office (chancellor or prime minister) is not elected directly by the people but through party votes, the public appearances of political leaders have become more and more crucial. This process is accelerated by the declining number of voters with a stable party affiliation due to changes in the social structure and in the general role of political parties. These developments have made the personalities of the leading candidates almost as important as in presidential election systems where the images and personal abilities of candidates traditionally have had a much stronger influence on voting decisions (Keeter 1987; Kepplinger et al. 1994; Patterson 1989; Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Weaver et al. 1981). Therefore, the need for extensive and authentic representation of candidates in the news media, particularly on television, has increased (Holtz-Bacha 1996; Radunski 1996).

For communicating with the electorate, every campaign uses two communication channels, which McNair (1995) describes as “paid media” and “free media.” Paid media are all communication activities of parties and candidates that are financed by them. This includes election posters, leaflets, and televised campaign commercials. Free media, on the other hand, includes coverage in the print media, radio, and television for which the parties do not have to provide any financial equivalent. Another possibility to address voters directly and without media expenditures is, of course, individual contact during the election campaign. However, the range of these campaign activities is limited as compared to media exposure and, therefore, often only used as a platform to attain news coverage. The advantages of addressing voters in a direct and genuine way through the news media are obvious. In contrast to campaign ads, news coverage enjoys more credibility because it is regarded as originating with a third and independent source (the news media) and not perceived as advertisement with an inherently manipulative aspect (Holtz-Bacha 1994; Pfetsch and Schmitt-Beck 1994).

“Getting free media” has therefore become one of the fundamental aims in the organization of a campaign. David Gergen, former media adviser to several U.S. presidents, characterizes the efforts to gain free media coverage as follows: “A campaign is like day-to-day war: You’re always thinking, every minute, how to get your guy’s agenda on the evening news” (quoted in Stegner 1992:57). Free media coverage is, first of all, any media coverage in which a political figure or party is the focus of the news and editorials. However, in most cases this coverage of political figures—their activities and their evaluation by others—is largely in the journalists’ hands. Content analyses have shown that their representations have become more negative in recent decades. Although there is contradictory evidence as to whether most of the coverage of U.S. presidential candidates is negative (Patterson 1993; Robinson 1976) or positive (Domke et al. 1997), the negative trend has likely contributed to rising public dissatisfaction with political leaders (for evidence on Germany, see Kepplinger 1998).

Therefore, politicians have an interest in presenting their own point of view on issues and their intentions and activities as unfiltered as possible. This can happen in two ways: through the accounts supplied by the journalist and through literal reproductions using sound bites on television and quotations in print media. The more fully a candidate speaks in the media, the more “authentic” the coverage about an election campaign is likely to be (Patterson 1993:74ff). However, even sound bites and quotations do not necessarily imply authenticity. At least for Germany, research has shown that the subjective views of the journalists and the editorial line of the news medium frequently lead to a very specific choice of sound bites and quotations.

Therefore, the rule is: the longer and the less edited a verbal statement the better, at least from the candidates’ perspective. In an experimental study, it has been shown that politicians make the best impression on their audience when they are seen and heard in an unfiltered way, be it by a live audience or by viewers of an unedited television report. In contrast, edited television reports, particularly those with negative visual commentaries, are more likely to result in negative perceptions (Donsbach et al. 1993).

With this study, we contribute further empirical evidence on the opportunities political leaders have of speaking directly to the people via television and the effect of these television appearances on viewers’ candidate perceptions.

Degree of Authenticity: State of Research

Sound Bite Democracy in the United States

Empirical research has shown large changes in the possibilities of political figures to present themselves publicly via the news media. Patterson (1993) has employed several indicators of this process. For example, using the *New York Times*, he coded whether the presidential candidate or the journalist who wrote the report “set the tone” of the coverage. While politicians set the tone in about 60 percent of the articles during the 1960 election campaign, this proportion had decreased to less than 20 percent by the 1992 campaign (p. 114). Using the term *authenticity*, Patterson also noted that other studies had found that the length of sound bites in television news had decreased steadily and substantially. While candidates’ statements in the network news lasted 42 seconds on average during the 1968 presidential campaign, they dropped to 9.3 seconds in 1988 and to only 8 seconds in 1996 (Adatto 1990; Lichter and Noyes 1995; Lichter and Smith 1996). Increasingly, candidates could be seen on television but not heard. In 1968, 37 percent of the time that candidates’ images appeared on television newscasts, their voices were not heard. Twenty years later, candidates were silent 84 percent of the time (Adatto 1990:4)

The trend toward more heavily mediated reporting is not confined to the television medium. The average length of quoted statements in the printed press has

been cut in half within thirty years (Patterson 1993:74 ff; Stempel and Windhouser 1991).

It can be concluded that political officials and candidates have increasingly found it difficult to speak to the public in their own words and at length. Through the help of professional coaches and advisors, many politicians have already adapted to the situation: "Paul, you got to tell your candidate to stop pausing between sentences. He's taking twenty-two seconds to complete a thought," ABC's moderator Sam Donaldson barked at a Dukakis advisor (Paul Brontas) during the 1988 election campaign (Taylor 1990:6). Dukakis's twenty-two seconds were more than twice as long as the average sound bite in 1988 and three times longer than today's average. Candidates have to provide brief, catchy sound bites if they want to be heard, an example of the fact that politicians have had to adjust to the dictates of the media, the so-called media-logic (Mazzoleni 1987).

"Americanization" of German Political Media Coverage

Studies in Germany have also examined the representation of politicians in the news media. The topic has gained importance since the 1980s as part of a debate about a possible Americanization of German politics and campaigns and about the so-called chancellor's bonus, that is, the different frequency of representations of candidates from the government and the opposition in either words or pictures (Schönbach and Semetko 1995). Buss and his coauthors (1984) have shown evidence that during the last four weeks before the parliamentary election in 1980 in which Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl competed as candidates for the chancellorship, the incumbent of the then-governing social-liberal coalition was much more frequently seen on television than his challenger Kohl.

Schrott and Meffert (1994) confirmed these findings for the 1990 parliamentary election in which Chancellor Kohl faced his opponent Oskar Lafontaine (SPD). Christian-liberal politicians appeared in about half of the reports containing statements by the political figures, whereas SPD politicians appeared in 36 and 38 percent depending on the broadcasting station. Schneider et al. (1999) also showed with their analyses of all parliamentary election campaigns of the 1990s that the chancellor always enjoyed heavier coverage than his competitors. The "incumbent bonus" was particularly evident in the 1990 campaign. About three times as many reports were published about the incumbent Kohl than about his challenger Lafontaine (Schönbach and Semetko 1995). The bonus was not as great in the 1994 election but occurred nonetheless. Only Gerhard Schröder in 1998 managed to receive nearly the same amount of television news coverage as the incumbent Kohl (Schneider et al. 1999:263 f; Schönbach and Semetko 2000).

Most of these studies measured only the frequency of candidates' appearances in the news. However, Schneider et al. (1999) found that the length of statements broadcast by Chancellor Kohl had receded gradually. From an average length of

thirty seconds in 1990, they fell to twenty-three seconds in the news coverage of the 1994 election to nineteen seconds in 1998. On the other hand, the length of statements by the candidates of the opposition increased over the years. Lafontaine averaged seventeen seconds in 1990 compared with Scharping's nineteen seconds in 1994 and Schröder's thirty seconds in 1998.

A longitudinal study by Wilke and Reinemann (2000) found that the quotes of candidates in the printed press also decreased in length. The authors analyzed the news coverage of four national newspapers for the four weeks before election day in campaigns between 1949 and 1998. They found that the percentage of news reports containing quotes (defined as "either literal reproduction of candidates' statements or indirect speech," p. 169) was generally low, varying between 5 and 20 percent of the coverage. Although this proportion has remained relatively stable over the decades, the length of these quotations has declined steadily since the parliamentary election in 1983. Applying this indicator, one can speak of a process of "de-authentization" of political coverage in the German press.

Research Questions

In the present article, we will examine the use and effect of sound bites in newscasts and news magazine shows on national television leading up to the parliamentary election in 1998. We mainly pursued three objectives. First, we wanted to measure and then compare with U.S. data the amount of time the leading candidates in the German Bundestag election received on television news to speak directly to the people.

Second, we will investigate how much the so-called incumbent bonus was affected by the different forms of candidate appearances in television news. Here, the year 1998 was of particular interest because, for the first time in German politics, the Social Democrats ran a professional election campaign widely inspired by U.S. campaigns and by the British Labour Party under Tony Blair. The fundamental aim of the *Kampa* (the name of the SPD campaign headquarters) was to present its candidate visually in the best possible way. The campaign, therefore, focused mainly on television and consciously downplayed other campaign events except on occasions when important TV media were sure to be present (Von Weibel 1999). In other articles based on our study, we demonstrated that in many respects, the *Kampa* ran a more successful campaign than did the Christian Democratic Union. Highlighting the issues of the economy and unemployment, the *Kampa* managed to arrange, from its perspective, a favorable agenda. With the help of the media, it was able to convey the impression that economic problems could be solved without restrictions in the Social Security system. In addition, it established the frames that were necessary for the acceptance of this political message (Donsbach 1999a, 1999b; Kepplinger 1999). But could the success of the *Kampa* strategy also be measured in the display of their

leading candidate on television? In this article, we will examine several measures of the amount of coverage the two major candidates received in the 1998 election.

Third, we will analyze the impact of authenticity in television news on the perception of the candidate. As Dahlem (2001:307) notes, level of coverage and the impact of that coverage are not synonymous. Accordingly, we sought to measure the quality of coverage from the candidates' perspective. In our analysis, we use coders' impressions of the impact of candidate appearance in the news as a surrogate for the average viewer's impressions.

Method

This article is based on a larger study of the 1998 general elections in Germany. The project was conducted jointly by researchers of universities in Mainz and Dresden and the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (see Noelle-Neumann et al. 1999). In the period from March until September 1998, we coded all campaign-relevant reports on five news programs, and three news magazines carried on the major public and commercial channels were analyzed.¹ We used an exhaustive sample; that is, each and every news report on these telecasts during this period was analyzed.

The unit of analysis was each individual report regardless of the format in which it was presented. Moderating by the anchorperson before and after a report was defined as a separate unit. A report on the same topic presented in a different style was also treated as a new unit. On this basis, we ended up with 6,828 reports in the period starting March 2, the day when Schröder became the candidate for the SPD, until September 26, the day before the election.

Altogether, forty-nine students coded the taped broadcast material using an extensive codebook developed by the research team. After intensive training, the material was randomly rotated and distributed to the coders. Among other variables, news reports were coded for whether candidates were mentioned throughout the report, whether they were represented visually, and whether they were able to articulate themselves in their own words. In cases in which a sound bite was used, its length and type (speech, interview, or statement) was recorded. After watching and coding each report, the coder noted the impression the respective candidate would have on an average viewer (valence) using a five-point scale running from *very positive* to *very negative*. Coders were instructed that these impressions could be the consequence of explicit value judgments from journalists, the result of neutral description of negative or positive facts, or the appearance of the candidate himself. Using the simple Holsti formula, the intercoder reliability for this coding process was between .74 and .79 (tested at several times throughout the whole period of research).

If a candidate was represented visually in still or motion pictures, coders registered how he would be perceived by an average viewer according to nine different characteristics (e.g., confident, trustworthy, likeable). In this case, we applied a five-point scale with the endpoints *applies* and *does not apply*. On each scale as presented in this article, a larger numerical value always indicates a more positive impression.

We did not calculate a reliability coefficient for this measure. We assumed that the coding of a personal appearance of a candidate on a still or moving picture could be strongly influenced by the personal predispositions of our coders and that this possibility had to be accounted for. It would have been theoretically possible that the great majority of our students favored one candidate, which might have led to similar perceptions with correspondingly high reliability coefficients despite bias in the coding. At a point during the project, our coders received a questionnaire that—among other variables—measured their candidate preferences. Although a majority favored the liberal challenger, there was not a strong imbalance in the students' political preferences. To our surprise, correlations between a student's candidate preference and his or her coding of the scales were relatively low (correlation coefficients ranged from $-.18$ to $.22$) and revealed no consistent pattern (for details, see Maurer and Jandura 2001). We rotated the assignment of the coders to the different news media and concluded that our results are reasonably reliable indicators of the objective impression the candidate would have made on an average television viewer.

Results

Appearances and Length of Sound Bites

Chancellor Helmut Kohl appeared in a total of 1,558 TV reports and incumbent Gerhard Schröder in 1,397 for a total of 2,955 reports. This number, however, includes appearances without any picture or sound bite. In our analysis, we concentrate on the 1,249 reports (42 percent of all reports) with moving pictures. These were generally in news films and occasionally also in interviews with the candidates. Of these 1,249, a total of 818 (almost exactly two-thirds) contained a sound bite of one of the candidates. Thus, based on the total number of news reports where at least one of the candidates was mentioned, the candidates were able to speak to the audience in 28 percent of the cases. Figure 1 gives an overview of this distribution.

During the campaign, Helmut Kohl appeared in 754 reports with moving pictures and Gerhard Schröder in 495. Of these cases, Kohl was able to speak in his own words in about 6 in 10 of the cases (61 percent) and Schröder in 7 in 10 (72 percent), indicating, in relative terms, an advantage for the challenger. Nevertheless, when comparing the frequency with which the candidates appeared in

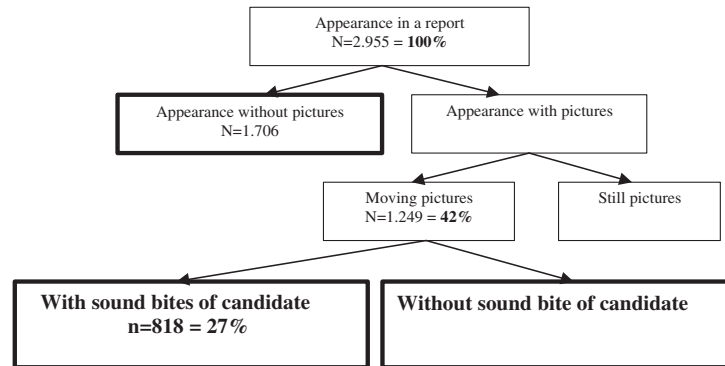


Figure 1
Basis for Further Analysis

both pictures and words, an incumbent advantage is evident. However, for reports covering only the campaign itself (and not general politics), the incumbent bonus was relatively small (a total of 26 sound bites).²

In regard to the length of the candidates' verbal statements, we found, as expected, variation between formats. Candidates' sound bites were nearly twice as long in news magazines as in newscasts. The average sound bite was about twenty seconds in newscasts and thirty-six seconds in news magazines. Comparing only newscast sound bites, the length in German newscasts is about three times that of U.S. newscasts (Figure 2).

When the sound bites of each candidate are added together, the incumbent bonus virtually disappears. In the eight programs during the seven-month period, Kohl had 178 sound-bite minutes in total, and Schröder had 171 minutes. Schröder fared better than Kohl at the beginning of the campaign (March, April) and in the closing phase. Schröder was heard less frequently, but he was allowed to speak longer, particularly during the key phases of the election campaign and in reports that dealt with the election campaign itself (Figure 3).

Type of Sound Bite

In the content analysis, we also coded whether a sound bite was part of a public speech, an interview, a statement, or other. We expected that the incumbent's sound bites would come more frequently from speeches, given his official governing activities. This assumption was confirmed by our data. A total of 61 percent of Kohl's sound bites were from speeches, and only about one-quarter (26 percent) were from interviews. In Schröder's case, we found the reverse: 51 percent of his appearances in broadcast news were from interviews, and only 38 percent were from speeches. This pattern applies to the whole range of political issues, with only one exception: the most crucial issue of the 1998 election

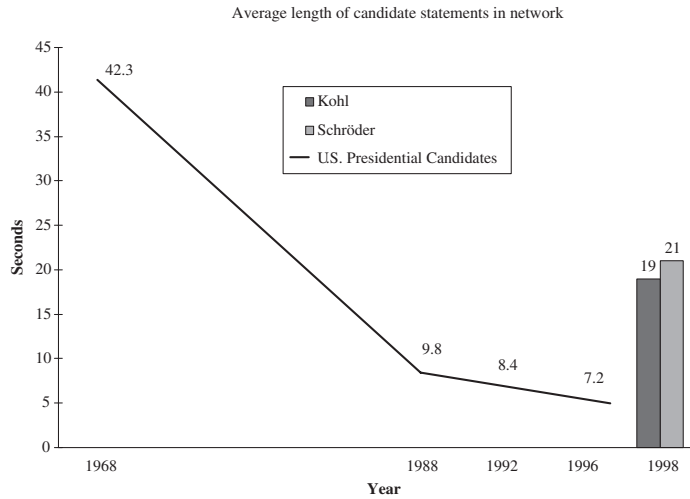


Figure 2
 Sound Bites in Presidential Elections
 Source: 1968 and 1988: Adatto (1990); 1992: Lichter and Noyes (1995); 1996 (primaries): Lichter and Smith (1996).

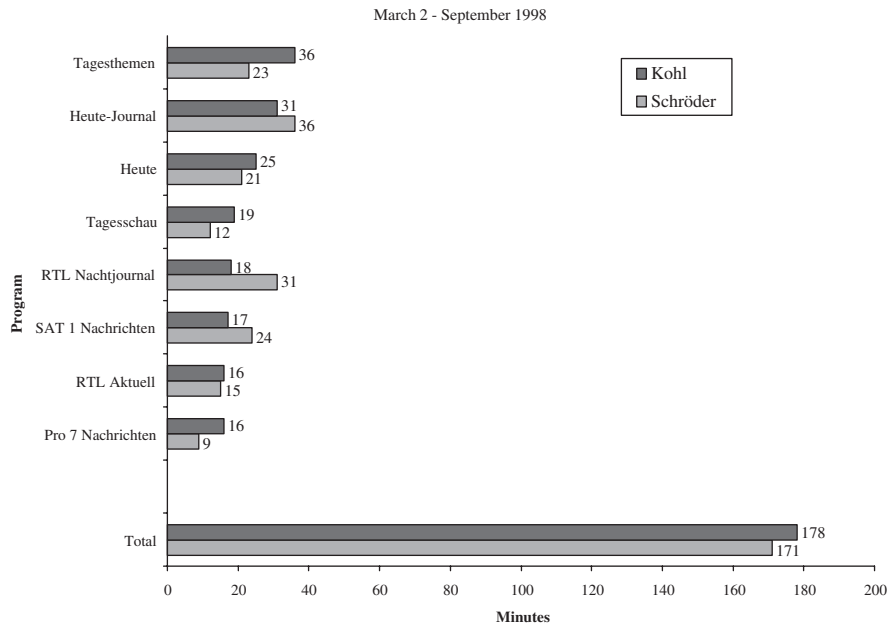


Figure 3
 Total Length of Sound Bites for Incumbent and Challenger

Table 1
Type of sound bite by topic (in percentages)

	Kohl		Schröder	
	Speeches	Interview	Speeches	Interview
Election campaign	58	29	38	51
Unemployment	80	12	64	30
Economic situation	72	22	50	50
Euro	73	15	29	59
Political issue	67	21	37	53

campaign, that is, unemployment. Here, Schröder's speeches were the basis for most of his sound bites (Table 1).

This pattern suggests that Schröder and his campaign managers, due to active media strategies that included prearranged interviews and efforts to raise the visibility of the unemployment issue, were able to overcome the normal bonus of the incumbent and his official activities (giving speeches at, for example, international conferences or official receptions).

Impression of Sound Bites on the Viewer

For all news reports, with or without picture or sound bite, we measured the coder's judgment of the voter's likely impression of the candidate's appearance. This impression was coded with a verbal scale with the responses *clearly positive*, *rather positive*, *ambivalent*, *rather negative*, and *clearly negative*. We then compared these data across three types of situations: (1) where candidates were only the object of verbal statements by others (in most cases, the journalist or other politicians), (2) where candidates were seen but not heard, and (3) where candidates were both seen and heard with their own words.

The overall impression of the candidates differed considerably across the three versions. In the case of both candidates, stories without pictures imparted the most negative impression, whereas pictures that included original sound bites created the best impression. Although a coder-based assessment cannot replace a true effects study, the results suggest that candidates have a more positive effect on the viewer when they have greater input into the story. The candidates each fared better when he was seen as compared to just mentioned and if he was heard in his own words rather than just seen. The advantage of authenticity can also be seen in the fact that both candidates made a better impression when shown during speeches rather than in interviews; in a speech, candidates are more in control of content than they are in an interview with a journalist (Figure 4). Schröder profited more from authentic performances than did Kohl. In his case, the difference between reports with pictures and sound bites and those in

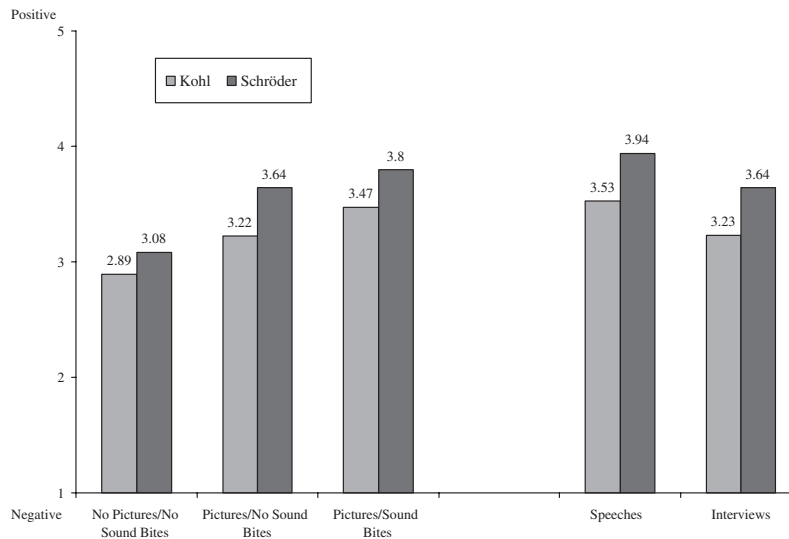


Figure 4
Impressions of the Candidates

which he only was the object of coverage was 0.72 points, whereas for Kohl this difference was 0.58 points.

In a second step, we tested how the news reports affected the perception of individual traits. If the candidate was shown with still or motion pictures, we coded how he would appear to the average viewer according to nine trait dimensions applying a five-point scale for each. We then compared the appearances with sound bites to those without sound bites on each of the nine personality traits and on the grand mean for these scales.

Candidates made a better impression when they were not only seen but also heard with their own verbal statements. The sound bite, though, seems to have an influence only on specific traits, which were the same for both candidates despite their personality differences: trustworthiness, energy, and self-assertion. For Schröder only, a fourth trait, seriousness, was also affected (Table 2). These findings support the argument that politicians in general win on the dimension of “strength” if they are allowed to speak to the voters in their own words. Schröder benefited slightly more in this regard than did Kohl (grand mean 0.26 compared to 0.22 for Kohl).

Finally, we tested whether the length of a sound bite had an impact on the perception of the candidate. Again, we first analyzed this effect for the overall perception and then for each individual trait. The assumption that the longer the sound bite the better the perception of the candidate applies only to Schröder. For him, the Pearson correlation coefficient between length of sound bite and general impression is .22, whereas for Kohl there was no correlation ($r = .02$).

Table 2
Perception of candidates' personality traits

Trait	Kohl		Schröder	
	Without Sound Bite	With Sound Bite	Without Sound Bite	With Sound Bite
Confident	4.37	4.46	4.56	4.60
Trustworthy	3.44	3.74	3.79	4.00
Likable	3.54	3.54	4.03	4.03
Disciplined	4.47	4.33	4.53	4.57
Energetic	2.25	3.25	2.57	3.44
Serious	4.09	4.18	3.81	4.02
Assertive	2.39	3.36	2.50	3.58
Not angry	4.30	4.15	4.61	4.58
Cool	3.81	3.67	4.06	3.99
Grand mean	3.63	3.85	3.83	4.09

Note: Bold face type indicates differences greater than 0.15 points.

With respect to individual traits, Kohl appeared more forceful the longer he was able to speak in the news, but simultaneously he seemed less disciplined. With Schröder, the length of his sound bites only affected the perception of one personality trait: he was perceived to be more serious in the lengthier than in the shorter segments (Table 3).

Summary and Conclusions

We have investigated the opportunities given to candidates to address the electorate by the most important German television stations during the election campaign of 1998 and the effects of these presentations on the viewer. The results can be summarized as follows.

First, candidates in German elections are offered a better stage on television than is enjoyed by their American counterparts. They are quoted more frequently and at greater length. Second, although Kohl appeared in a greater number of news reports with verbal statements than his challenger, this incumbent bonus was tied almost entirely to noncampaign news coverage. Schröder had as much television speaking time in election reporting as Kohl, spoke in longer sound bites, and was highlighted in the context of the critical issues of the campaign. Third, we found that the more authentic a candidate's appearance on television, the greater the likelihood that he will make a positive impression with viewers. Reports with pictures make a more favorable impression than those that only talk about the respective candidate, and reports using sound bites make a more favorable impression than those in which the candidate is pictured but cannot be heard. Finally, in the 1998 campaign, Schröder profited more from authentic presentations than did Kohl. Pictures and sound bites had a more

Table 3
Length of sound bites and perception of candidates

Trait	Pearson Correlation Coefficients ^a	
	Kohl	Schröder
Confident	.01	.04
Trustworthy	.01	.05
Likable	-.03	.03
Disciplined	-.11	-.01
Energetic	.12	-.04
Serious	-.01	.13
Assertive	.00	-.03
Not angry	.06	.04
Cool	.07	.06
Grand mean	.05	.05

a. Positive coefficients indicate that longer sound bites had a positive effect. Bold face type indicates differences greater than 0.15 points.

substantial impact on perceptions of his personality. This finding supports the notion that Schröder is a prototypical “media chancellor” who is adept at exploiting the potentials of the television medium via campaign strategies as well as his personal performance in mediated situations.

It can be said in conclusion that German television stations provide more opportunities for candidates to address the voters than do their American counterparts. They broadcast pictures and literal statements at a higher rate, and their sound bites are longer. Different television formats and styles as well as a different role understanding might account for these differences. Due to long-standing competition between commercial stations in the United States, a constant activation of the viewers’ attention has become the norm. Frequent editing cuts in stories are part of this attention-getting strategy (Reeves and Thorson 1986). In Germany, the lengthy dominance of public broadcasting (until the mid-1980s) has contributed to a less competitive environment and less frenetic formats.

At the same time, television stations in Germany might also be more committed to the idea of giving politicians an opportunity to speak to the public, particularly during election campaigns. This role perception would be particularly expected of TV stations that under public law have been regarded as institutions with quasi-official duties. Therefore, on average the public stations gave candidates more frequent and longer opportunities to present themselves. However, commercial pressures have increased in Germany, so it can be expected that private stations in particular (and perhaps public stations by emulation, as the “convergence hypothesis” would predict) will free themselves from this perceived duty.

Our results contradict earlier findings about the incumbent bonus. The slight advantage in appearances that Kohl had was balanced by the greater length of

Schröder's sound bites and the more strategically opportune timing of Schröder's appearances. The fact that Schröder was able to be heard about topics that formed the strategic core of his campaign—economy and unemployment—probably contributed to his victorious campaign. Schröder's relatively good coverage can be interpreted as an indicator of the success of the Kampa's media strategy and perhaps also of a siding of the journalists with Schröder and the Social Democrats. Other results from our study (Noelle-Neumann et al. 1999) show that most news media outlets and most journalists wanted Schröder to win the 1998 election.

We do not know whether the "Schröder bonus" in 1998 influenced the outcome of the election. However, our results show that the authenticity with which politicians can address the electorate has a positive influence on viewers' perceptions. The more a politician—this should apply to other public actors as well—manages to be heard and seen in the news, the more positively he or she is perceived by the audience. Other studies have shown that this also applies to the frequency of presentations in the printed press (Kurzawa 2001).

It is always the news programs' decision as to which pictures and speech or interview clips they broadcast. We cannot determine from our study whether the better impression left by the pictures and sound bites of Schröder was produced by his better performance or whether journalists chose the more favorable visual and verbal clips while using less favorable ones for Kohl. It is known, however, that even the selection of pictures is influenced by the subjective views of the journalists (Kepplinger 1980; Patterson and Donsbach 1996) and that the visual presentation as well as the length and authenticity of direct speech have a significant impact on perceptions of politicians (Donsbach et al. 1993; Holicki 1993; Kepplinger and Donsbach 1983; Rosenberg and McCafferty 1987).

From this perspective, candidates and their campaign managers must strive to produce good-quality pictures and statements. They must also strive to limit journalists' opportunities to select unfavorable clips. This goal can, for instance, be achieved by well-prepared and controlled verbal and nonverbal public performances, particularly in their important political appearances and when addressing topics with a high news value. However, the pictures that viewers see and the words they hear are the product of decisions made by reporters, editors, and technical personnel. It is this consideration that renders important the question of the balance of power between journalists and politicians. Many observers claim that journalists have gained power because of an increased tendency to base their selections on news values rather than on the political values that underlie politicians' words and actions. True authenticity requires that the balance of power not tilt too far toward the politicians or toward the journalists. Politicians must be given a reasonable opportunity in the news to say what they think and want, and yet they cannot have so much control that the news allows them total image management.

Notes

1. Tagesschau, Tagesthemen, heute, heute-journal (public), RTL Aktuell, RTL Nachtjournal, SAT 1 18:30, PRO 7 Nachrichten (commercial).
2. A report was defined as covering the election campaign when it dealt with the candidates, the parties, and their relationships to each other or with the procedure of the election itself.

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