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It is indeed difficult to synthesize or compare such a vast array of information and national cases, particularly in the context of this short review; nevertheless the book leads to many interesting observations that could have been given more weight. To start, the focus on media sharing the same language is relevant, as the chapters, particularly the ones on the US, show how basic language is to media production and use. At the same time, despite the shared language (which potentially could lead to systematic media collaborations and exchanges), the media industry is still mostly organized along national lines. Within a context of globalization and digital convergence, the basic grid of media organization is still organized around individual nations. This is further confirmed by the vast differences between Spanish language countries, even within the shared context of Latin America. This diversity is strongly related to their diverging historical, political, economic, and cultural contexts, in which similar issues often play a role, such as general economic and demographic strength and growth; democracy, political freedom, state control, and censorship; and ethnic, class, and regional diversities and tensions. The different histories and current states of affairs in these matters explains the vast differences between the countries studied, which, in turn, are all faced by similar opportunities and threats such as globalization, ownership concentration, increasing commercialism, audience fragmentation, or the rise of the Internet. These changes and similarities may not have provided a structuring or guiding principle for the book, but they may do so for future research, which this collection will definitely facilitate. Comparative research is definitely another fruitful avenue for the future, as is research transgressing or questioning the country-by-country and medium-by-medium approach, instead focusing on transnational and global Spanish language media.

Reference

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Schafraad, P. (2009). *Controversial outsiders. A cross-national study of media attention to the far-right 1986–2004*. Enschede: Nijmegen, (200 pp.), ISBN: 978-90-9024679-6.

The role of the media is one of the understudied topics in the study of radical right-wing voting behavior. In their overview articles, both

Kitschelt (2007) and Van der Burg and Fennema (2007) state that the influence of the media needs to be addressed. In his dissertation, Pytrik Schafraad focuses precisely on this gap.

The book begins with an introduction of the research question and the main expectations. According to this chapter, the principle question is: 'How did Dutch, German and Flemish newspapers pay attention to the far-right between 1986 and 2004?' In this chapter it is also clarified that the study goes beyond the simple volume attention studies that have been conducted in the past. Schafraad counts and analyzes formal attention (visibility and prominence in newspapers), substantial attention (representation, roles of far-right actors, stigmatizing associations, far-right standpoints), and support attention (non far-right actors, debate). The hypotheses formulated refer to differences between quality and popular newspapers and to the differences in left-wing and right-wing oriented newspapers in their portrayals of the far-right.

The second chapter describes the data and methods. In each of the three studies (on the Dutch, German, and Flemish cases) Schafraad and colleagues sampled from the national newspapers two months before and one month after national and European parliamentary elections. The development of the content analysis instrument, the coder trainer, and intercoder reliability are described in detail.

The core of this book consists of three chapters in which trend studies are presented on the portrayal of the far-right in three different regions. First, the Dutch case is studied, following dailies' representations from the late 1980s through the 90s, when the Centre Democrats were not able to force a breakthrough, to the beginning of the 21st century, when Pim Fortuyn managed to attract a large share of the electorate by addressing the migration and integration issues. Unfortunately, the study stops in 2004 and does not address the interesting rise of Geert Wilders' party. Schafraad concludes that, in general, the Dutch press did not practice a minimal attention policy and portrayed the far-right negatively as a controversial outsider – the wording he used for the title of his book.

The second substantial chapter is on the German case, where three far-right parties competed for votes: The Republikaner, NPD, and DVU. Here the focus lies on how the press 'deals with the devil from the past,' as Schafraad aptly titled the chapter. The German press did not ignore the parties, but took an exclusionary stance toward the far-right. Again, the picture of the controversial outsider emerges.

In the third chapter, Schafraad studies the Flemish press, which portrayed the rise of the Vlaams Blok and the political 'cordon sanitaire' to keep the party away from government responsibilities. An interesting finding in the Flemish press was that although volume attention grew

with the rise of the Vlaams Blok, formal and substantial attention did not increase; instead, the media more frequently reported reactions from non far-right actors.

In chapter 6, Schafraad summarizes his findings and draws general conclusions from the patterns in the Netherlands, Germany, and Flanders. Before doing so, however, he links the trends in media attention to support for the parties in the respective cases. With the graphs and correlations provided, the conclusion is drawn that – except for the changes in volume attention – hardly any of the trends in media portrayal are related to successes of the far-right. It is however precisely this issue of the consequences of the media portrayal that should have been given more weight in the dissertation. In the introduction, the author explicitly and repeatedly claims that the lack of research on this phenomenon provides the starting point of the study: On the first page of the study, previous research is criticized because of its meager attention to the relation between media attention and far-right-wing success. On page 14 this claim is repeated, and the problem of previous research not systematically investigating the relation is mentioned once again on page 24. Surprisingly, the way in which far-right media attention and portrayal is associated with successes for the far-right is rather crude. The measurements are on a yearly basis and therefore do not provide a detailed picture of what happens in the media when support for the far-right suddenly goes up or down. Moreover, by relating far-right success to the sum of media attention before *and* after the elections in a certain year, the author ignores one of the central issues in studying the media and their effects: the issue of causality.

Another unaddressed issue is the extent to which the refinement in measuring media attention turned out to be relevant. Overall, only volume attention seems to be related to far-right success. Despite the praise for the extension of the model studying different aspects of media attention and portrayal and the detailed information it provides, we are only able to conclude that measuring volume attention alone is not so bad after all.

Schafraad refutes two mechanisms he expected to hold when relating media attention to far-right success: the process of normalization when the far-right becomes more successful and that increased popularity of the far-right is related to downplaying far-right media attention. Empirical evidence was found for neither of the relations. Instead, the media image of the far-right remained that of a controversial outsider. An explanation for these findings is found in theories of cultural consonance, in which the far-right is presented in terms of historical explanations as well as in terms of the extent to which the far-right is supported culturally. For the far-right case, this implies a negative connotation because

of its association with Nazi Germany. Although the author presents an interesting discussion, it is hard to apply the same logic when the far-right strongly increases its share of votes.

This book is a study of how the written media portray the far-right. As such, it can be viewed as successful. Attention to the role of voters and the far-right-wing parties themselves is rather limited and it would have been better if the author had refrained from making any sort of claim with regard to these relationships. For a detailed insight in the media portrayal of the far-right in the Netherlands, Germany, and Flanders, chapters three to five are recommended.

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