EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF PUBLIC JOURNALISM ON CIVIL SOCIETY FROM 1994 TO 2002: ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS, PROJECT FEATURES, STORY FRAMES, AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

By Sandra L. Nichols, Lewis A. Friedland, Hernando Rojas, Jaeho Cho, and Dhavan V. Shah

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After more than a decade of public journalism efforts, empirical knowledge of whether these efforts have met the movement's goals remains largely based on in-depth case studies. To address this shortcoming, this study analyzes 651 cases of public journalism conducted between 1994 to 2002. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis is used to consider the predictive power of organizational factors, project features, story frames, and efforts to engage citizens and assess public opinion on three civil society outcomes: improvements in citizenship, political processes, and volunteerism. Specific effects on civil society are discussed, study limitations are addressed, and insights for future research and practice are offered.

Public journalism began as a series of experiments in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and soon developed into what Schudson has called "the most impressive critique of journalistic practice inside journalism in a generation" and "the best organized social movement inside journalism in the history of the American press."[1] Also known as civic journalism, the movement arose in response to a perceived crisis in the role of the press in constituting a public sphere in which citizens could understand and engage productively with the issues of the day. During the first decade, the movement generated an array of innovative practices in newsrooms and communities, as well as an extensive network of journalism practitioners and educators committed to reshaping professional and institutional norms.

Sandra L. Nichols is an assistant professor, Mass Communication and Communication Studies, Towson University; Lewis A. Friedland is professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Hernando Rojas is assistant professor, Life Sciences Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Jaeho Cho is assistant professor, Department of Communication, University of California, Davis; and Dhavan V. Shah is professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The primary philosophical emphasis of public journalism, as manifest in the writings of its leading theorists and practitioners,[2] is on the relationship between the practice of journalism and the democratic work of citizens in a self-governing republic, and suggests journalists are ideally suited to help constitute vital "publics" to deliberate complex issues and engage in collective problem-solving activities. Public journalism, thus, has set out to help members of the public come to see themselves as citizens, and hold them accountable for grappling with the full complexity of issues and become participants in civil society rather than mere spectators of it.

Still, after more than a decade of practice of public journalism, empirical knowledge of whether and how public journalism has met these goals remains largely based on in-depth case studies. Early literature focused on cases generally acknowledged as the seed-beds of the public journalism movement.[3] Subsequent comparative research examined other best cases, focusing on changes in newsroom reporting and editing practices, community recognition of public journalism efforts, and shifts in community problem-solving and public deliberation.[4] While researchers found positive evidence in each area, elements were not disaggregated and case studies were often idiosyncratic, making it difficult to measure impact or establish clear relationships among elements.

In their critical review of forty-seven evaluative studies of public journalism, Massey and Haas found that public journalism practices have had limited effects on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of news audiences.[5] They criticize existing research for focusing on "a handful of showcase public-journalism news organizations and projects."[6] In doing so, they highlight the methodological shortcomings of many of the efforts to assess public journalism, and recommend that future research capture a wider array of experiments and trace the effects of these efforts on community life.

With prior research lacking a broad, systematic assessment of public journalism efforts, we set out to provide a holistic analysis of the movement, shedding light on participating organizations, practices, and effects. An inventory of the archives of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism (Pew Center) found 651 public journalism projects conducted from 1994 to 2002.[7] Our research analyzes the inventory using hierarchical regression analysis to trace the effects of organizational factors, project features, story frames, and efforts to involve community members and assess public opinion on three civil society goals: (1) improving citizens' civic competencies, (2) influencing policymaking processes, and (3) increasing civic volunteerism.

Literature Review

The literature on public journalism is extensive, but extracting clear empirical propositions is challenging. First, much of the best literature is normative, advocating a role of the press in improving public life, and tends to draw case-based observations about changes public journalism creates in news organizations. Second, the large body of case literature is very uneven, ranging from anecdotal and polemic to qualitative and comparative case observation. While it is difficult to untangle the effects of

public journalism on civil society given these inconsistencies, there are important insights to be gained from the extant research.

Public journalism research has primarily concentrated on several flagship public journalism newsrooms and projects.[8] Additionally, there are numerous case studies of other cities and regions.[9] These cases, however, have not been analyzed using a systematic empirical-quantitative framework. Here, we consider the scholarship in three domains of public journalism: (1) organization of newsrooms and their effects on individual journalists' values, norms, and behavior; (2) links between public journalism efforts and changes in news content, framing, and sourcing; and (3) public journalism's impact on electoral knowledge and behavior, and on citizen participation in public life.

Media Organizations and News Values. There are two broad types of newsroom studies: (1) of news organizations; and (2) of journalists' beliefs and attitudes. While there are no inherent methodological contradictions between them, each tends to have its own understandings of how public journalism is established in newsrooms.

Organizational studies see the adoption of public journalism from the top down, with publisher and editor orientations as the important predictors of public journalism practice.[10] An investment by news organizations in public journalism shapes reporting routines and story content, and accounts for the adoption of the practice over longer periods of time. This approach posits institutionalization as a property of the organization, with organizational decisions molding the actions and routines, if not beliefs, of individuals within them. Evidence suggests that newsrooms institutionalizing public journalism (i.e., commitments to partnerships with other community organizations and lengthy projects) produce stronger public effects.[11]

A second approach looks at the effect of values of journalists on attitudes and behavior. Here, the adoption of public journalism values is a prerequisite for genuine individual transformation that leads to newsroom change. Proponents of this approach[12] hold that positive attitudes toward public journalism should precede behavioral change.[13] This values approach, then, sees change in beliefs and attitudes as generating new public reporting behavior that underlies the transformation of news organizations.

From their review of public journalism studies, Massey and Haas found that journalists are most comfortable with the more "traditional" shadings of public journalism, though some support for more "activist" roles exists.[14] These mixed results indicate traditional and public journalism beliefs seem to coexist in many newsrooms and within individual journalists, suggesting an "occupational pragmatism."[15]

Not surprisingly, "mixed-change" characterizes virtually every case of public journalism, positing a kind of "tipping point" within newsrooms and individuals. If newsrooms have not tipped, public journalism practice should be weak. As this suggests, both the organizational approach and the news values approach ultimately focus on the degree to which newsrooms have adopted and integrated public journalism practices into the newsroom culture, regardless of whe-

ther the spur of this transformation is from the top down or the bottom up.

News Coverage and Content. Research on changes in reporting spurred by public journalism is sparse, with little attention to whether certain topics or frames of reporting are particularly suited to public journalism. Although public journalism often implicitly focuses on community, efforts have addressed a plethora of issues confronting localities, including crime, diversity, education, environment, health, poverty, and, of course, elections and government. Public journalists have utilized a range of issue frames to structure their reporting, from established conflict and human-interest frames to more novel problem-solving and historical frames. However, little is known about the potency of these framing devices for civil society outcomes or whether certain topics lend themselves to successful public journalism as defined by increases in civic competence and volunteerism.

Instead, most coverage studies focus on the type of content and sources used in public journalism stories, with inconsistent evidence. Some indicate little difference in content,[16] while others have found that public journalism efforts have a greater focus on local concerns and help citizens engage in civic activities.[17] There is also inconsistent evidence on sourcing.[18] Thus, it remains unclear whether certain public journalism tools, such as encouraging citizen involvement or giving citizen voices greater prominence, improves civil society outcomes.

Effects of Public Journalism. The evidence for public journalism effects on civic and public life is partial and incomplete. Studies divide broadly into those investigating the effect of public journalism on electoral outcomes and those addressing civic and public problem solving. First, there is evidence supporting a positive relationship between citizen-focused journalism and knowledge, trust, and civic participation in elections.[19] There is, however, some evidence to the contrary.[20] Thus, on the whole, studies support a moderate effect of civic electoral coverage in the areas of voter awareness of issues and traditional forms of political participation.

Although untangling political cause and effect is difficult, there is a case for public journalism efforts and broader public engagement. Studies have found an increase in political participation.[21] There is also some evidence that public journalism increases public deliberation and civic problem solving.[22] Moreover, Friedland's study of the "We the People" project in Madison, Wisconsin, found project longevity to have substantial cumulative impact on opinion leaders, media cooperation, and institutional effectiveness, with mixed effects on citizen engagement.[23] If there is episodic coverage with little follow-up, however, a project's cumulative problem-solving effects were attenuated. In sum, the case-based evidence shows effects of increased civic and public problem solving in limited areas.

Research Questions

Past theorizing and case studies concerning the practices and effects of public journalism do not present a clear picture of the consequences of this shift in coverage for civil society. Scholars have focused on

different levels of analysis—organization, newsroom, story, and citizens—and attended to a wide range of outcome variables. Results have not been consistent, though this inconsistency may be a function of community and organizational factors that are not the focus of a particular case study.

After a decade of broad practice, it is unclear which organizational factors beyond length of adoption and integration of public journalism contribute to the success of public journalism efforts. Likewise, beyond attention to certain patterns of sourcing and shifts in content, it is not known whether the success of public journalism efforts is connected with attention to certain topics—such as poverty or crime—and particular frames of reference — such as human interest or problem-solving. On a more basic level, evidence is lacking on whether particular ways of giving voice to the perspectives of citizens improve civil society in the ways that theorists of public journalism attest.

Accordingly, we examine here the effects of a wide range of potentially explanatory variables on assessments of the outcomes of a wide cross-section of public journalism efforts between 1994 and 2002. This study attempts to answer how the influence of organizational factors, project features, story frames, and efforts to involve community members and assess public opinion uniquely contribute to three broad goals of public journalism: (1) improving civic skills among citizens; (2) influencing the policymaking process; and (3) increasing levels of civic volunteerism. Accordingly, we offer the following research questions to guide our analysis:

> **RQ1**: What features of news organizations involved in public journalism projects appear to influence whether sponsored efforts increase civic skills of citizens, public input on policymaking, and levels of civic volunteerism?

> **RQ2**: What features of public journalism projects appear to influence whether sponsored efforts increase civic skills of citizens, public input on policymaking, and levels of civic volunteerism?

> **RQ3**: What types of story frames used by journalists involved in public journalism projects appear to influence whether sponsored efforts increase civic skills of citizens, public input on policymaking, and levels of civic volunteerism?

> **RQ4**: What types of efforts to involve community members and assess public opinion appear to influence whether sponsored efforts increase civic skills of citizens, public input on policymaking, and levels of civic volunteerism?

Methods

Data. This study is based on data collected at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from the archives of the Pew Center for Civic

Journalism. During its ten years of operation as the principle incubator for the movement, between 1993 and 2003, the Pew Center collected examples of public journalism projects submitted by U.S. newsrooms seeking funding, competing for awards, and/or seeking informal recognition and advice.

Between January 2000 and May 2001, this archive was systematically examined for all evidence of public journalism experiments,[24] with the archive structured into a set of cases organized by discrete projects and publication dates.[25] A qualitative coding scheme was developed to capture a descriptive account of project attributes, including, but not limited to: the news organization (circulation, population served, partnerships); the project (topic, publication dates, presentation format); the news frames, sources, and civic linkages used in news construction; and the civic practices, polls, and public deliberative events used to give citizens a voice. In addition, outcomes such as improved civic and deliberative skills, increased public funding and volunteerism, and improved public policy processes were gauged from these reports. A quantitative coding guide was developed so that statistical tools could be used to more systematically analyze these data. The final inventory of the archive contained a total of 651 cases of public journalism completed between 1994 and 2002.[26]

Although the study sample is limited to public journalism projects in the Pew Center's archive and undercounts the full range of public journalism work conducted by U.S. newsrooms during this period, it captures public journalism as practiced by the most dedicated of self-identified public journalism practitioners. Thus, the sample, while biased in favor of best practices, provides a solid foundation upon which to assess a broad range of public journalism practices and evaluate the movement's reach and impact on community life.

Measures. Items coded from the public journalism projects were used to operationalize six general clusters of variables: (1) outcomes of the public journalism project, (2) features of the news organization, (3) features of the project, (4) features of the stories, particularly story frames, (5) citizen involvement, and (6) public assessment. In the analyses reported in this paper, the outcomes of public journalism were used as dependent variables predicted by the other five sets of variables.[27]

Outcomes of Public Journalism. Initially, six outcomes of public journalism projects were identified: improved citizenship skills, enhanced public deliberative processes, increased private funding and donations, expanded volunteer efforts, and greater public policy and civic organization responsiveness. These items were dummy coded with "present" coded as 1, "absent" as 0. The six items were then examined through exploratory factor analysis and three factors emerged. First, *improved civic competence* is an additive index consisting of two measures of public journalism outcomes: improved citizenship skills and improved public deliberative processes (inter-item correlation = .33).[28] Second, *improved political process* was constructed by adding two items: changes in public policy and the formation of new civic organizations (inter-item correlation=.33).[29] Finally, *heightened volunteerism* is a two-item additive index consisting of

measures of raised private funds and donations, and increased level of volunteer efforts (inter-item correlation=.34).[30]

Features of the News Organization. For news organizations' *publication schedule,* daily publication was coded as 1 and all other scheduling formats as zero.[31] *Level of circulation* was measured using a six-point scale with 1 representing circulations under 50,000 and 6 representing circulations over 5 million.[32] *Type of population served* was measured on a four-point scale with 1 for smaller populations and 4 a national audience.[33] *Level of involvement* in public journalism represents the length of time in years the news organization experimented with these practices.[34] *Partnerships* was coded for evidence of other media or civic organizations involved in the project with "none" coded as 0, "either media or civic" as 1, and "both civic and media" as 2.[35]

Features of the Project. Eleven specific categories were identified to code each project according to the primary topic covered, including community, crime, diversity, economy, education, environment, health, poverty, youth, election, and government.[36] These items were dummy coded with "present" coded as 1, "absent" as 0. *Project branding* was constructed with three items, each used to develop a unique project identification, including evidence of a formal presentation format, clearly stated aim of the projects, and guide for reader comprehensiveness (KR-20=.85).[37] Each item was dummy-coded with 1 being "present," 0 being "absent." *Mobilizing information* consisted of two items: empowerment information (to help citizens engage in civic activities) and civic linkages (contact information for public officials and civic leaders). Each item was dummy-coded with "present" coded as 1, "absent" as 0 (inter-item correlation =.73).[38]

Story Frames. Each project was coded according to six frames used in journalistic reporting: investigative frame, conflict frame, issue-oriented frame, problem-solving frame, human-interest frame, and historical frame.[39] These items were dummy-coded with 1 representing a frame being "present," 0 for "absent."[40]

Citizen Involvement. To measure a project's effort to include citizens' input, each case was coded for evidence of (a) inviting citizens to provide feedback, and (b) giving them a voice in the publication of their community's conversation. These two variables were dummy-coded with 1 for "present," 0 for "absent."[41] Each project was also coded for evidence of the news organization's effort to assess the climate of opinion on the project and/or issue including (a) survey and (b) focus group research. Surveys could be the organization's own scientific or informal surveys, or surveys provided by other sources. Each was dummy-coded with 1 for "present," 0 for "absent."[42]

Results

In order to examine the relationships between public journalism efforts and their purported impact on civic competence, the political process, and volunteerism, we performed hierarchical multiple regression analyses in which organizational factors, project features, story frames, and efforts to involve community members and assess public opinion served as independent variables predicting the three criterion

variables. Tables are organized in a manner that highlights the order in which the different blocks of independent variables were entered into the regression and indicates the incremental variance in the criterion variable explained by each successive block. We consider how each additional block affects the standardized betas of the variables being considered simultaneously, and focus on the final standardized coefficients for the full model.

Improved Civic Competence. As shown in Table 1, the regression model predicting improved civic competence performed quite well, as it accounted for a total of 52.9% of variance.[43] The features of the news organization were substantial predictors (20.4% of variance), with news organizations that served small or medium communities and that part-nered either with civic organizations or other media the most successful. Improved citizenship was also anchored in the actual features of the public journalism project (16.4% of incremental variance). The focus on certain social problems such as poverty seems well suited for the purpose of improving citizenship. On the other hand a focus on negative or individualized concerns such as crime and health counter this objective.

The news frames utilized in public journalism stories accounted for 10.3% of the variance in the model. Among the frames, it seems clear that the problem-solving frame was most closely linked with reported improvement in citizenship. Conversely, the human-interest frame appeared to produce the opposite effects, reducing the perception of an increase in civic skills among the audience exposed to public journalism efforts.

Above and beyond characteristics of the news organization, features of the project, and selection of story frames, enhanced citizenship seemed to be contingent on involving citizens in the process of public journalism. In our model this block accounted for 4.6% of the final variance, with inviting audience/reader feedback and giving citizens an actual voice serving as key contributors. In addition, administering surveys in the community was also positively related to improving citizenship in the community.

In the final model, public journalism's reported ability to improve citizenship was linked (a) to news organizations that serve smaller communities and partner with other community organizations, (b) to projects that focus on topics such as poverty as opposed to crime or health, (c) to reporting that adopted problem-solving story frames over human interest story frames, and (d) to project elements that involved citizens through feedback, sourcing, and surveys. These findings support many of the conclusions drawn from case study analysis, while clarifying how these different factors intersect to shape citizenship.

Improved Political Process. The regression model used to gauge political process improvements—as shown in Table 2—accounted for 22.6% of the variance.[44] In this model, the features of the news organization were not as critical as in the previous model, accounting for only 4.2% of the total variance explained. In the final model, only a single organizational factor—partnerships with other community or media organizations—was a significant predictor of improvements in the political

TABLE 1
Predicting Improved Citizenship

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5
Block 1 – Organizational Factors					
Publication Schedule	.145**	.084	.040	.037	.033
Circulation Level	.037	.005	.039	.033	.032
Population Type	-.205**	-.151*	-.133*	-.122*	-.123*
Involvement with CJ	.088	.043	.041	.055	.056
Partnership	.329***	.214***	.138***	.124***	.100**
Incremental R^2 (%)					**20.4%***
Block 2 – Project Features					
Community Topic		.019	-.029	-.040	-.044
Crime Topic		-.093*	-.079*	-.082*	-.079*
Diversity Topic		.011	-.019	-.053	-.058
Economy Topic		-.041	-.058	-.067	-.068
Education Topic		.010	-.005	-.017	-.027
Environment Topic		-.043	-.039	-.042	-.036
Health Topic		-.181***	-.145***	-.124***	-.117**
Poverty Topic		.266***	.181***	.158***	.148***
Youth Topic		-.026	-.040	-.050	-.044
Election Topic		-.010	-.004	.003	.001
Government Topic		-.058	-.051	-.054	-.054
Project Branding		.121**	.054	-.036	-.045
Mobilizing Information		.164***	.052	-.040	-.056
Incremental R^2 (%)					**16.4%***
Block 3 – Story Frames					
Investigative Frame			-.057	-.029	-.025
Conflict Frame			.011	.010	.014
Explanatory Frame			.023	.010	.009
Problem-solving Frame			.359***	.269***	.259***
Human-interest Frame			-.083*	-.121**	-.108**
Historical Frame			-.021	-.003	-.002
Incremental R^2 (%)					**10.3%***
Block 4 – Community Involvement					
Invite Feedback				.163***	.146***
Citizen Voice				.213***	.210***
Incremental R^2 (%)					**4.6%***
Block 5 – Public Assessment					
Surveys Implemented					.108**
Focus Groups Present					.043
Incremental R^2 (%)					**1.2%***
Total R^2 (%)					**52.9%**

Note: Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 2

TABLE 2
Predicting Improved Political Process

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5
Block 1 – Organizational Factors					
Publication Schedule	.106*	.058	.037	.035	.035
Circulation Level	-.114	-.096	-.080	-.077	-.073
Population Type	.001	-.012	-.019	-.022	-.024
Involvement with CJ	.005	.010	.015	.016	.017
Partnership	.120**	.085	.084	.081	.096*
Incremental R^2 (%)					**4.2%** **
Block 2 – Project Features					
Community Topic		.106	.122*	.123*	.124*
Crime Topic		.038	.023	.019	.018
Diversity Topic		-.079	-.048	-.057	-.053
Economy Topic		.092	.055	.053	.056
Education Topic		.193***	.176***	.175***	.181***
Environment Topic		.119*	.082	.081	.080
Health Topic		.060	.041	.044	.042
Poverty Topic		-.093	-.122*	-.125*	-.120*
Youth Topic		.071	.037	.037	.035
Election Topic		.012	.031	.034	.036
Government Topic		.095	.035	.038	.039
Project Branding		.013	-.009	-.023	-.021
Mobilizing Information		.119*	.106	.096	.105
Incremental R^2 (%)					**10.8*** **
Block 3 – Story Frames					
Investigative Frame			.209***	.216***	.215***
Conflict Frame			.035	.033	.031
Explanatory Frame			.044	.041	.041
Problem-solving Frame			.126*	.115*	.119*
Human-interest Frame			-.070	-.078	-.083
Historical Frame			-.124**	-.120**	-.120**
Incremental R^2 (%)					**7.1%*** **
Block 4 – Community Involvement					
Invite Feedback				-.005	.005
Citizen Voice				.055	.057
Incremental R^2 (%)					**0.2%**
Block 5 – Public Assessment					
Surveys implemented					-.066
Focus groups present					.003
Incremental R^2 (%)					**0.3%**
Total R^2 (%)					**22.6%**

Note: Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

process. The features of the project were substantial predictors of an improved political process, with 10.8% of the variance explained by this block. Among this group, community and education topics are positively related with the dependent variable, while concentrating on the poverty topic is negatively related. This suggests limited responsiveness in terms of process responsiveness when projects address the needs of the underprivileged.

The framing of news also explained variation in improving the political process, with the investigative frame as the strongest predictor, followed by a problem-solving frame. Conflict, explanatory, and human-interest frames appear to be irrelevant for this purpose, while the use of a historical frame is negatively related. This seems to indicate that attention to long-standing community issues is less effective at spurring political responsiveness than focused attention on current problems or scandals.

Engaging citizens with the project or seeking their opinion does not seem to be particularly consequential for improvements to the political process. These two blocks only account for .5% of the incremental variance and yield no significant predictors. In the final model, then, partnerships, reporting on community and education (as opposed to poverty), and investigative and problem-solving (but not historical) story frames appear to spur responsiveness in terms of improvements to the political process.

Improved Volunteerism. The model predicting levels of volunteerism in the community explained 22.7% of the variance, as shown in Table 3.[45] As was the case for improving the political process, organizational features do not play as large a role as they do in improving citizenship, explaining only 3.1% of the variance in reports of improved volunteerism, whereas project features explained a sizable amount (13.5%) of incremental variance. Again, establishing a partnership with another news or civic organization is positively related to increased volunteerism, making this a consistent predictor across all three models. Project topics such as community, crime, and education are linked with reports of increased volunteerism.

In terms of news framing, concentrating on human-interest seems to increase civic volunteerism, whereas historical frames have the opposite effect, consistent with the negative association in the model explaining political process improvement. This block explains 5.0% of the incremental variance.

Finally it seems that citizens' engagement with the project and seeking citizens' opinions are not necessary to improve volunteerism. The model shows a small incremental contribution of these two blocks (incremental variance explained 1.1%) with only the use of surveys actually being negatively related to volunteerism. In sum, partnerships; reporting on community, crime, and education; and human-interest (but not historical) story frames appear to spur reported increases in volunteerism.

Discussion

This study is the first to explore a broad range of public journalism projects, incorporating a near census of the field of efforts between

TABLE 3
Predicting Improved Volunteerism

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5
Block 1 – Organizational Factors					
Publication Schedule	-.003	-.013	-.006	-.006	-.005
Circulation Level	.159*	.154*	.125	.124	.133
Population Type	-.112	-.100	-.102	-.101	-.105
Involvement with CJ	.088	.059	.057	.058	.059
Partnership	.090	.063	.084	.083	.108*
Incremental R^2 (%)					**3.1%***
Block 2 – Project Features					
Community Topic		.296***	.339***	.338***	.339***
Crime Topic		.198***	.205***	.205***	.204***
Diversity Topic		-.022	.022	.019	.027
Economy Topic		-.037	.030	.029	.035
Education Topic		.121*	.164***	.163***	.172***
Environment Topic		-.019	.032	.032	.030
Health Topic		.037	.035	.037	.032
Poverty Topic		-.017	.017	.015	.023
Youth Topic		-.020	-.002	-.003	-.006
Election Topic		.049	.055	.056	.059
Government topic		-.006	.024	.024	.027
Project Branding		-.002	.052	.044	.047
Mobilizing Information		.051	.052	.044	.060
Incremental R^2 (%)					**13.5%***
Block 3 – Story Frames					
Investigative Frame			-.017	-.014	-.015
Conflict Frame			.021	.021	.017
Explanatory Frame			.008	.006	.007
Problem-solving Frame			-.030	-.038	-.031
Human-interest Frame			.164***	.162***	.154**
Historical Frame			-.159***	-.157***	-.157***
Incremental R^2 (%)					**5.0%***
Block 4 – Community Involvement					
Invite Feedback				-.017	.036
Citizen Voice				.016	.020
Incremental R^2 (%)					**0.1%**
Block 5 – Public Assessment					
Surveys Implemented					-.124*
Focus Groups Present					.019
Incremental R^2 (%)					**1.0%**
Total R^2 (%)					**22.7%**

Note: Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

1994 and 2002 and tracing the reported effects on civil society. Further, it incorporates multiple levels of specificity, examining the effects of organizational features, particular projects, story frames, and citizen involvement in civic and public life. Our findings, thus, provide the first holistic assessment of the impact of public journalism on U.S. civil society and critical insights for future research and practice. Before we discuss these implications, we first offer an interpretation of these findings and discuss some of their limitations.

Although we find organizational features such as publication schedule, circulation level, and population type are associated with certain civil society goals of public journalism, most of these effects appear to be mediated through the structure of public journalism projects and journalistic framing. One organizational feature is consistently found to shape the general success of these efforts: partnerships with other organizations. In our final models, partnerships predicted improved citizenship, political processes, and volunteerism, indicating the centrality of organizations' connections for efforts to renew civil society. This seems most true of efforts to improve citizenship, where institutional connections may provide the basis for civic recruitment and broader project scope.

Additionally, a project's focus also appears to be linked to certain civil society outcomes. A focus on education, community, crime, and poverty were found to relate to the achievement (or failure) of civil society goals. The potency of a particular issue varied across these goals. For example, focusing on community and education was related to positive effects on the political process and civic volunteerism, with projects focusing on crime also linked to volunteerism. The positive association of the these topics on political process and volunteerism outcomes suggests that projects directed at issues affecting larger cross-sections of the population are particularly effective at improving processes and spurring action. Notably, a negative relationship was detected between a focus on crime and health topics—individualized issues typically directed at those with higher socio-economic status—and the improvement of civic skills, whereas a focus on poverty was found to have a positive effect on the development of civic competencies, as might be expected. However, a focus on poverty was negatively related to improvements in the political process, suggesting a lack of elite responsiveness to issues affecting the underprivileged. Future research must work to disentangle these effects and identify the types of issues that produce desirable community outcomes.

Particularly notable are the results regarding the emphasis on certain story frames. Our findings suggest that problem-solving frames have the most pronounced effects on efforts to improve citizenship and the political process, and investigative news frames were also positively correlated with improvements in the political process. In sharp contrast, however, human-interest and historical news frames appeared to generally reduce the success of public journalism efforts at achieving civil society goals, particularly in relation to citizenship. Our results for human-interest frames show a reduction in the development of civic

skills, yet an increase in civic volunteerism, which is surprising given past research on episodic framing and the reduction of a sense of shared responsibility.[46] For historical news frames, we observed negative effects on both political process and volunteerism outcomes, suggesting that projects revolving around long-standing issues are less effective at spurring political or public responses.

This pattern of results points to the importance of journalistic choices in framing news stories around certain themes and organizing devices. Investigative and problem-solving frames would appear to spur involvement and action, whereas historical frames, and to a lesser extent human-interest frames, appear to reduce responsiveness to community problems. While not invalidating frames that spur long-term reflection on deep-seated problems, these results do question how stories are organized and presented. Further, it may be that the cross-sectional nature of these case assessments does not allow an observation of the effects of certain story frames over time.

Finally, efforts to involve citizens in public journalism—i.e., inviting feedback from citizens, giving them a voice in coverage and their communities, and surveying their attitudes and behaviors—were linked to the improvement of civic competencies. In total, these results suggest that journalists who understand the perspectives of citizens are more able to construct projects that improve citizens' civic and deliberative skills. It may also be that asking citizens for their perspective and giving them public forums is fundamentally mobilizing, something we might call a type of "civic Hawthorne effect."

This study, while comprehensive, is not without limitations. Most notably, the cases that function as our units of analysis rely on some self-assessment of effects by the editors and journalists involved in the projects. This may create some biases. However, these would seem to be equivalent across all news organizations in the study, thereby rendering differences observed meaningful. Moreover, every effort was made to validate the outcome variables, which were often self-assessed against real world indicators of change.[47] The reliability of these self-assessments was found to be well above the threshold for acceptability, further suggesting the validity of the data.

The implications of this study, even with these limitations, are broad-reaching. They can be used to inform the next generation of public journalism efforts and structure research efforts. Future research should consider the longitudinal effects of public journalism projects on civil society. Using small-N comparative historical methods, researchers might more closely explore the precise configurations of organization, project, and story frame that lead to the most effect on civic and public outcomes. Finally, there are broad theoretical implications of our study. If historical frames are demobilizing, for example, what alternative frames could address long-term, deep-seated community problems addressed by journalists interested in democracy? If problem-solving and investigative frames are mobilizing, what are the specific features of these types of projects that encourage changes in civil society? If certain topics seem to lend themselves to successful public journalism outcomes, how might cover-

age of other issues be constructed to spur responsiveness on the part of the public and policymakers? Clearly, there is much that remains to be learned about the effects of public journalism projects on civil society. Nonetheless, if the findings presented here are any indication, the effects of the projects are considerable and broad reaching, and certainly provide empirical support for the normative project of public journalism.

Appendix and Notes follow.

APPENDIX

The following represents an edited account of the Coding Guide, used to analyze data contained in the Pew Center archives, for purposes of operationalizing the variables used in this study.

Block 1 - Features of the News Organization

Publication Schedule: Use frequency with which project was published. (Daily consecutive series; Other)

Circulation Level: Use circulation figure for each project's primary news organization, using the Bowker Newspaper Directory, or as given by news organization in application material. (<50,000; 50,000 - 200,000; 200,000 - 500,000; 500,000 - 1 million; 1 million – 5 million; >5 million)

Population Type: Use population served data from the Bowker Newspaper Directory (if available), or designated market or city zone/target market data from Editor & Publisher directory. (Small/medium size population; Major metropolitan population; Regional; National)

Involvement in Public Journalism: Use length of time news organization has been involved in public journalism. (Low – 1-2 years; Medium – 3-4 years; High – 5 plus years)

Partnerships: Use type of organization involved in partnership with primary news organization. (None present; Media or civic; Both)

Block 2 - Features of the Project

Topics: Evaluate each project according to topic covered, evidenced by primary subject matter (theme) of project.

Community: Quality of community or civic life (e.g., explores efforts to identify common problems/solutions, reclaim neighborhoods from grip of crime/poverty, re-engage citizens in public life, promote community conversations, improve civic leadership).

Crime and safety. Impact of crime on community life (e.g., examines adult violence and crime, gun control, community policing programs; investigates housing safety, fire hazards).

Diversity. Race and ethnic relations and issues of inequality (e.g., examines immigration issues, community diversity, ways to value different cultures).

Economic. Economic conditions of community (e.g., examines area's economy and employment, development and transportation issues, local industry/labor relations).

Education. Quality of educational system (e.g., examines school funding and overcrowding, academic performance, educational policies/curricula development).

Environment. Quality of environment (e.g., examines public health policies and pollution-related health issues, efforts to clean up community).

Health. Health care issues (e.g., examines specific diseases and addictions; investigates medical and insurance providers).

Poverty. Conditions of poverty (e.g., investigates public housing, access to heath care and education; examines social services, homelessness, government assistance).

Youth. Issues specific to young people, often from their perspective (e.g., examines juvenile crime, gang violence, foster care and adoption, school violence, teen sex and pregnancy, sex education, alcohol and drug abuse).

Elections. Local and national elections from a citizen-driven perspective (e.g., polling citizens for relevant issues; providing in-depth coverage of issues/candidates; facilitating public discussion between citizens and candidates; improving community's electoral processes).

Government. Governmental policy and agencies (e.g., investigates government/mil-

itary spending, prison conditions/spending; examines capital punishment, racial profiling).

Project Branding: Evaluate each project according to degree to which it developed an identity as a special project.

Project Presentation: Evidence news organization used structured format for project presentation, separating it from the rest of news. (Absent; Present)

Stated Aim: Evidence news organization clearly stated aim of project for reader. (Absent; Present)

Project Guide: Evidence news organization helped readers understand evolution of project through use of a project guide and/or schedule of upcoming stories. (Absent; Present)

Mobilizing Information: Evaluate each project according to ways it attempted to facilitate citizen engagement.

Empowerment Information: Evidence news organization gave readers information to help them understand the issues: self-help, how-to-get involved, community resources, reading lists. (Absent; Present).

Civic Linkages: Evidence news organization gave readers contact information for civic leaders, public officials, experts and civic organizations. (Absent; Present)

Block 3 - Features of Stories

Frames: Evaluate each project for frames, an organizing theme around which the story is told to help the reader make sense of it.

Investigative: Tells story using in-depth inquiry into an issue and its results, usually involving a systematic search for information previously held from public view.

Conflict: Presents story from two or more points of view, emphasizing the oppositional positions of each.

Explanatory: Tells story in ways to increase readers' relationship to and understanding of the issues.

Problem-solving: Engages reader in process of identifying potential solutions to problems and issues being explored and, perhaps, participating in the implementation of solutions.

Human-interest: Presents human face of community problems, increasing issue relevance through perspective of those individuals with personal experience with the issue.

Historical: Presents issue in terms of its historical significance, often developing portraits of historical figures, places and events, and timeline graphics to demonstrate evolutionary trends.

Block 4 - Citizen Engagement

Feedback: Evidence primary news organization invited any type of citizen feedback on issues and/or project through newspaper publication. (Absent; Present)

Citizen Voice: Evidence news organization gave citizens a voice. (Absent; Present – but limited use of citizens voices; Present – gave citizens a strong voice in story; Other)

Block 5 - Citizen Opinion

Surveys: Evidence news organization conducted any type of survey (or used existing survey) for public opinion purposes. (Absent; Present)

Focus Groups: Evidence project used focus groups to identify issues relevant to community life. (Absent; Present)

NOTES

1. Michael Schudson, "What Public Journalism Knows About Journalism, But Doesn't Know About 'Public'," in *The Idea of Public Journalism*, ed. Theodore Glasser (New York: Guilford, 1999), 118-33. The terms "public journalism" and "civic journalism" evolved from work supported, respectively, by the Kettering Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts. While most practitioners and critics use them interchangeably, as do we ourselves, the terms do have somewhat different resonances. The Kettering Foundation's term is more explicitly grounded in the theoretical traditions of Dewey and Habermas. Other terms have also emerged, such as "solutions-based" journalism.

2. Davis Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not Enough* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998); Jay Rosen, *What Are Journalists For?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Carmen Sirianni and Lewis A. Friedland, *Civic Innovation in America: Community Empowerment, Public Policy, and the Movement for Civic Renewal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

3. John Bare, "Case Study—Wichita and Charlotte: The Leap of a Passive Press to Activism," *Media Studies Journal* 6 (fall 1992): 149-60; Lewis A. Friedland, Jay Rosen, and Lisa Austin, *Civic Journalism: A New Approach to Citizenship* (American Civic Forum, 1994); Michael Hoyt, "The Wichita Experiment: What Happens When a Newspaper Tried to Connect Readership and Citizenship?" *Columbia Journalism Review* (July / August 1992): 42-47; Edward D. Miller, *The Charlotte Project: Helping Citizens Take Back Democracy*, no. 4 (St. Petersburg, FL: The Poytner Institute for Media Studies, 1994).

4. Frank Denton and Esther Thorson, *Civic Journalism: Does It Work?* (Washington DC: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1998); Lewis A. Friedland, M. Sotirovic, and Katie Daily, "Public Journalism and Social Capital: The Case of Madison, Wisconsin" in *Assessing Public Journalism*, ed. Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip Meyer, and Esther Thorson (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998); Jan Schaffer and Edward D. Miller, *Six Case Studies* (Washington DC: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1995); Jay Rosen, *Getting the Connections Right: Public Journalism and the Troubles in the Press* (NY: Twentieth Century Fund, 1995); Esther Thorson, Lewis A. Friedland, and Steven H. Chaffee, *Evaluation of Civic Journalism Projects* (Philadelphia: Pew Charitable Trusts, 1996).

5. Brian L. Massey and Tanni Haas, "Does Making Journalism More Public Make a Difference? A Critical Review of Evaluative Research on Public Journalism," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 79 (autumn 2002): 559-86.

6. Massey and Haas, "Does Making Journalism More Public Make a Difference?," 576.

7. The initial account of the descriptive findings was presented as a report to the Pew Center. Lewis A. Friedland and Sandra L. Nichols, *Measuring Civic Journalism's Progress: A Report Across a Decade of Activity* (Washington DC: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 2002).

8. For *Wichita Eagle* projects, see Bare, "Wichita and Charlotte: The Leap of a Passive Press to Activism"; John Bare, "A New Strategy" in *Assessing Public Journalism*, ed. Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip Meyer, and Esther Thorson (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998); Carol Reese Dykers, "Defining Public Journalism by Analyzing the News Discourses of One Public Journalist" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the AEJMC, Anaheim, CA, August 1996); Lewis A. Friedland, *Public Journalism: Past and Future* (Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2003); Sally J. McMillan, M. Guppy, W. Kunz, and R. Reis, "Public Journalism: What Difference Does It Make to Editorial Content?" in *Assessing Public Journalism*, ed. Lambeth, Meyer, and Thorson; Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life*; Christina Newby, "Issues and Agendas: The Case of Wichita, Kansas, Revisited" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the AEJMC, Chicago, August 1997); Sirianni and Friedland, *Civic Innovation in America*. For *Charlotte Observer* projects, see Bare, "Wichita and Charlotte: The Leap of a Passive Press to Activism"; Lois A. Boynton, "She Said, He Said and Who Wanted to Know? The Role of Gender in Source Selection at a Public Journalism Newspaper" (paper presented at the Southeast Colloquium of the AEJMC, New Orleans, March 1998); Friedland, *Public Journalism: Past and Future*; Miller, *The Charlotte Project: Helping Citizens Take Back Democracy*; Shaffer and Miller, *Six Case Studies*; Sirianni and Friedland, *Civic Innovation in America*. For the "We the People" project in Madison, WI, see: Frank Denton and Esther Thorson, "Effects of a Multimedia Public Journalism Project On Political Knowledge and Attributes" in *Assessing Public Journalism*, ed. Lambeth, Meyer, and Thorson; Friedland, Sotirovic, and Daily, "Public Journalism and Social Capital"; Esther Thorson, Lewis A. Friedland, and Peggy Anderson, *Civic Lessons: Report on Four Civic Journalism Projects* (Washington, DC: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1997).

9. For projects in Akron, Ohio, see Tanni Haas, "Public Journalism Project Falls Short of Stated Goals," *Newspaper Research Journal* 22 (summer 2001): 58-70. For projects in Anniston, Alabama, see Kathleen B. Campbell, "More Than a Metaphor: The Challenge of Civic Mapping" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2002). For projects in Binghamton, New York, see Thorson, Friedland, and Chaffee, *Evaluation of Civic Journalism Projects*. For projects in Boston, Massachusetts, see Schaffer and Miller, *Six Case Studies*. For projects in Dayton, Ohio, see Arthur Charity, *Doing Public Journalism* (NY: Guilford Press, 1995). For projects in Florida, see Brian L. Massey, "Civic Journalism and Non-Elite Sourcing: Making Routine Newswork of Community Connectedness," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 75 (summer1998): 394-407. For projects in New Jersey, see David Blomquist and Cliff Zukin, "Does Public Journalism Work?: The 'Campaign Central' Experience" (Washington, DC: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1997). For projects in Norfolk, Virginia, see Joyce Hoffman, "Public Journalism: A Case Study of the Virginian-Pilot" (paper presented at "Public Journalism: A Critical Forum," University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, October 1998); Sirianni and Friedland, *Civic*

Innovation in America. For projects in Rochester, New York, see James R. Bowers, Blair Claflin, and Gary Walker, "A Case Study from Rochester, New York: The Impact of Civic Journalism Projects on Voting Behavior in Statewide Referendums" (paper presented at the New England Political Science Association, Worchester, MA, May 1998). For projects in Rochester, New York, see Bowers, Claflin, and Walker, "A Case Study from Rochester, New York." For projects in San Francisco, California, see Thorson, Friedland, and Chaffee, *Evaluation of Civic Journalism Projects.* For projects in Spokane, Washington, see Campbell, "More Than a Metaphor." For projects in Tampa, Florida, see Campbell, "More Than a Metaphor."

10. Friedland, *Public Journalism: Past and Future.*

11. David Loomis and Philip Meyer, "Opinion without Polls: Finding a Link Between Corporate Culture and Public Journalism," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 12 (autumn 2000): 276-84.

12. Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life*; Rosen, *What Are Journalists For?*

13. A view held by Massey and Haas, "Does Making Journalism More Public Make a Difference?" See also Steven H. Chaffee and Michael McDevitt, "On Evaluating Public Journalism," in *The Idea of Public Journalism*, ed. Theodore Glasser (New York: Guilford, 1999).

14. Massey and Haas, "Does Making Journalism More Public Make a Difference?"

15. Massey and Haas, "Does Making Journalism More Public Make a Difference?," 564-65. See also Friedland, *Public Journalism: Past and Future,* for evidence that a genuine change at the level of individual journalists is necessary for public journalism, which in turn is necessary for civic and public effects.

16. For example, Blazier and Lemert found very few changes in content of the *Seattle Times* deliberative electoral coverage. Thomas F. Blazier and James B. Lemert, "Public Journalism and Changes in Content of the Seattle Times," *Newspaper Research Journal* 21 (summer 2000): 69-80.

17. For example, Loomis found citizen-based-journalism newspapers produced more staff-written copy than conventional papers. David Loomis, "Is Public Journalism Cheap Journalism?: Putting Public Journalists' Money Where Their Mouths Are" (paper presented at "Public Journalism: A Critical Forum," University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, October 1998). However, Coleman found public journalism newspapers provided mobilizing information (civic and media contacts) and possible solutions more often than traditional papers. Renita Coleman, "The Visual Communication of Public Journalism: A Content and Textual Analysis" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the AEJMC, Baltimore, MD, August 1998).

18. Massey found civic journalism projects have increased citizen voices to numerical parity with elite sources. Massey, "Civic Journalism and Non-Elite Sourcing." However, Haas found that elevation of citizen sources was simply used as background for framing the issue around the perspectives offered by local political elites. Haas, "Public Journalism Project Falls Short of Stated Goals."

19. Meyer and Potter's study of the 1996 elections, using an index for measuring "citizen-based journalism," found that in counties where newspapers ranked high on the index, citizens had significantly more knowledge about the election and higher trust in the media. Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter, *Making a Difference: Covering Campaign '96* (St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1997); Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter, "Hidden Value: Polls and Public Journalism" in *Election Polls, the News Media, and Democracy*, ed. Michael. W. Traugott and Paul Lavrakas (New York: Chatham House, 2000). Similarly, research on a Rochester, New York, multi-media partnership found that residents of the region participated in the state referendum at rates 11% higher than other upstate regions and 46% higher than New York. Bowers, Claflin, and Walker, "A Case Study from Rochester, New York." Another study found that public journalism electoral projects increased voter awareness, knowledge, and self-reported deliberation in San Francisco; Binghamton; Charlotte; and Madison, Wisconsin. Thorson, Friedland, and Anderson, *Civic Lessons*.

20. A study of civic coverage of national elections in central New Jersey found few or no effects. Blomquist and Zukin, "Does Public Journalism Work?"

21. Denton and Thorson found that "We the People," a multi-media project conducted in Madison, WI, had widespread public awareness and prompted more interest in political participation. Denton and Thorson, "Effects of a Multimedia Public Journalism Project." Riede found that the 1992 *Wichita Eagle* "People Project," one of the earliest projects to develop a community-based approach, reduced conflict-laden coverage and adversarial tone. Paul Reide, "Public Journalism and Constraints on News Content: A Case Study of the People Project" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the AEJMC, Anaheim, CA, August 1996).

22. Reide found that one of the earliest projects to develop a community-based approach (*Wichita Eagle*'s 1992 "People Project"), reduced conflict-laden coverage and adversarial tone and increased deliberation and civic problem solving. Reide, "Public Journalism and Constraints on News Content." Similarly, Friedland found significant long-term effects of the "People Project" on citizen activism and citywide neighborhood-based deliberation. Friedland, *Public Journalism: Past and Future*. There is also substantial evidence for increased civic problem solving in Charlotte, North Carolina, growing from the "Taking Back Our Neighborhoods" series, including increased public awareness of racial issues. Friedland, *Public Journalism: Past and Future*.

23. Friedland, Sotirovic, and Daily, "Public Journalism and Social Capital."

24. Although the projects in this sample might involve multiple partners, including broadcast media and/or civic organizations, they were led by either a print organization (642 cases) or an Internet news organization (9 cases). Those cases in the archive led by broadcast media were separated from our sample for future research.

25. The data for each case were provided by the news organization in

various combinations of transmittal letters, proposals for funding, applications for awards, and examples of the published projects.

26. Since the publication dates of some 2001 projects in the study extended into the following year, the final sample included projects published during 2002. Reductions in sample size will be noticed in the following analyses due to missing data for some variables included in statistical models.

27. Refer to the Appendix for variable coding and operationalization used in this study. For variables constructed from less than three items, alpha is not reported due to its sensitivity to small item counts. In its place, we report the inter-item correlation, which provides evidence of internal consistency among items used to construct a scale.

28. Frequency analysis of improved citizenship in the study sample: improved citizenship skills (present 40.1%, absent 59.9%); improved public deliberative processes (present 52.9%, absent 47.1%).

29. Frequency analysis of improved political process in the study sample: changed public policy (present 36.7%, absent 63.3%); formed new public or civic organizations (present 25.6%, absent 74.4%).

30. Frequency analysis of improved volunteerism in the study sample: raised private funds and donations (present 8.5%, absent 91.5%); increased level of volunteer efforts (present 17.2%, absent 82.8%).

31. Frequency analysis of publication schedule in the study sample: daily (79.4%); other (20.6%).

32. Frequency analysis of circulation level in the study sample: <50,000 (22.4%); 50-199,000 (40%); 200-499,000 (30.8%); 500-999,000 (2%); 1mil-5mil (3.9%); >5mil (1%).

33. Frequency analysis of type of population served in the study sample: small-medium (45.2%); major metropolitan (47.2%); regional (2%); national (5.7%).

34. Frequency analysis of level of involvement in the study sample: low (1-3 yrs, 35.8%); medium (3-4 yrs, 21.7%); high (5+ yrs, 42.5%).

35. Frequency analysis of partnerships in the study sample: none (64.2%); either civic or media (22.9%); both civic and media (12.8%).

36. Frequency analysis of project topic in the study sample: community (18.6%); crime (4.0%); diversity (12.9%); economy (6.0%); education (7.2%); environment (3.1%); health (5.4%); poverty (3.5%); youth (8.9%); election (9.5%); government (6.0%); other (14.9%).

37. Frequency analysis of project branding in the study sample: formal presentation (present 65.9%, absent 34.1%); stated aim (present 59.8%, absent 40.2%); reader guide (present 45.4%, absent 54.6%).

38. Frequency analysis of mobilizing information in the study sample: empowerment information (present 46.8%; absent 53.2%); civic linkages (present 37.5%; absent 62.5%).

39. Refer to the Appendix for variable coding and operationalization used in this study.

40. Frequency analysis of features of stories in the study sample: investigative (present 28.2%, absent 71.8%); conflict (present 2.5%, absent 97.5%); issue-oriented (present 95.8%, absent 4.2%); problem-solving (present 62.7%, absent 37.3); human-interest frame (present 20.5%, absent

79.5%); historical frame (present 14.1%, absent 85.9%).

41. Frequency analysis of citizens' input in the study sample: invite reader feedback (present 47.1%, absent 52.9%); give citizens voice (present 85.4%, absent 14.6%).

42. Frequency analysis of citizens' opinion in the study sample: survey (present 32.9%, absent 67.1%); focus group (present 9.6%, absent 90.4%).

43. Case evidence of improved civic competence was found, for instance, in "Facing the Future," a 1996 multimedia project by Binghamton's *Press & Sun-Bulletin* designed to involve citizens in identifying and implementing solutions to improve the area's depressed economy. As a result of this yearlong series, which employed a broad range of civic tools (public meetings, focus groups, youth task force), local public officials enacted a number of citizen recommendations, including upgrading a major highway, establishing a tourism board, and creating a job skills class. To engage youth in public life, Portland *Press Herald*'s "On the Verge" 2000 project engaged teens in roundtable discussions, trained them in journalistic techniques, and helped publish multimedia stories of their lives. As a result of the series, Portland politicians invited teens onto the city council, asking them to serve as advisers in efforts to improve the city's relationship with youth.

44. Improved political process can be illustrated, for example, by *Asbury Park Press*'s 1997 "What Ails Asbury" series, a hybrid of civic and investigative reporting to raise awareness of local corruption and uncover real estate fraud. The newspaper's investigation, called "House of Cards," prompted federal, state, and county law enforcement authorities to begin criminal probes of the corruption, eventually leading to the passage of a new consumer protection law. In Florida, Bradenton *Herald*'s "Decision Downtown" project worked, under pressure of an upcoming city council vote, to improve public policy through engaging citizens in the city's 1996 waterfront development process. Using a variety of civic tools, the newspaper informed citizens on the issues and helped organize a citizen group to address city officials at the public meeting, all of which led to a reversal of plans and changes in public policy.

45. Improved volunteerism is exemplified in, for instance, the *Orange County Register*'s "Motel Children," a 1998 special section project that told the story of children living in the area's aging residential motels from the perspective of the children themselves. As a result, the community not only saw an increase in public funds for low-income housing, but also a dramatic increase in volunteerism with local nonprofit agencies and donations for the children and their families. In 2000, the *Roanoke Times* ran a series, "Reclaiming Chapman Avenue," to chronicle a citizen group's yearlong efforts to fight crime and restore their neighborhood. With reporters following the group's activities to capture the drama of their daily efforts, the community became aware of criminal efforts to thwart progress and citizens began volunteering and raising money and supplies to help the neighborhood group.

46. Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames*

Political Issues (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

47. To verify claims by news organizations, published news reports of the projects served as empirical evidence of outcome variables whenever possible.