Hostile territory

Mapping and explaining stigmatization in news media in twelve western countries

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Hostile Territory:
Mapping and Explaining Stigmatization in News Media in 12 Western Countries

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Abstract

When politicians are believed to have violated democratic norms they risk being stigmatized in news media, e.g., as authoritarian, sexist or racist. Although it is plausible that its use differs in accordance with the prevailing journalistic practices within particular media landscapes, a cross-national investigation is lacking. The present study takes advantage of the extensive attention for United States president Donald Trump to map and explain stigmatization in twelve Western countries (2016-2018; N= 30,756). We find that stigmatization is most common in countries with low levels of journalistic professionalism. Ties between parties and press do not matter: stigmatization is not less common in right- than in left-leaning newspapers, even in countries where they are strongly aligned with political parties. Stigmatization is also more prevalent in former authoritarian countries, but this does not mitigate the impact of newspapers’ political leaning. Combined, our paper shows how countries’ history affects contemporary journalistic practices.

Keywords: stigmatization in news media; political communication; media systems; authoritarian legacies; Trump

Introduction

In January 2019, Italian senator Roberto Calderoli (Lega) compared Italy’s first black minister to an orangutan. In 2018, Austrian MP Efgani Dönmez (ÖVP) posted a message on the social media platform Twitter in which he implied that a female colleague had earned her position "on her knees". Similar incidents have even taken place in the British Labour Party and the American Democratic Party, parties that pride themselves for defending values of social justice, equality and anti-racism. Whether justified or not, in all of these cases the politician in question was stigmatized in
news media as racist, sexist or undemocratic. By producing stigmatizing content, news media imply that an actor’s behavior is beyond the pale of what is acceptable. As a result, stigmatization may inflict severe reputational damage (Link & Phelan, 2001), contribute to the delegitimization of political actors (Van Spanje & Azrout, 2018), provoke institutional punishments (Sberna & Vannucci, 2013), or bolster the anti-establishment image of politicians. With this in mind, it is clear that the prevalence of stigmatization in news content within a country may influence electoral competition.

In spite of its importance, we know surprisingly little about the degree to which news media in different countries produce stigmatizing content. Does stigmatization vary between countries? And if so, what explains these differences? In this study, we take advantage of the extensive attention for United States president Donald Trump to (1) map the prevalence of stigmatization in twelve Western countries and (2) explain cross-national differences in function of two historic characteristics of media landscapes. Inspired by Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) seminal work Mediating the Message, we contend that countries’ media and political history influences the willingness of media practitioners to produce and publish stigmatizing content. A first explanation draws on Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) conceptualization of media systems and holds that stigmatization is lowest in countries where neutrality of coverage is not a prevailing journalistic standard. A second explanation draws on the literature on authoritarian legacies, which states the authoritarian past creates a frame of interpretation (Art, 2005; Bobbio, 1996; Dinas & Northmore-Ball, 2017) that causes particular politicians or behavior to be more readily identified as undemocratic and should therefore be more easily stigmatized as such.

Given its comparative angle, our study plays well to some widely debated topics in the fields of journalism and political science. For instance, our study theoretically and empirically contributes to the question how contextual factors influence journalistic practices. The frameworks developed by Shoemaker and Reese (1996) and Hallin and Mancini (2004) constitute a cornerstone in the field of comparative political communication, but are often criticized for their inability to empirically validate their work (Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014; Norris, 1994, 2009). By systematically analyzing media output, our study takes an important step toward the empirical validation of theoretical expectations about how contextual characteristics
influence media output. From a political science perspective, our study sheds a new light on why news media respond the way they do when politicians (allegedly) violate fundamental democratic norms. That is, even though Trump’s ability to spark controversy and attract media attention is exceptional, his behavior is indicative of that of numerous politicians in other countries pushing the envelope of democratically acceptable behavior. As such, this study furthers our understanding with respect to the differential media or “discursive” opportunity structures shaping electoral competition (Golder, 2016; Koopmans & Statham, 1999).

In spite of the overwhelming availability of comparative frameworks, to wit, no study has assessed cross-national differences in stigmatization. The two studies that have, analyzed how stigmatizing news content of Dutch MP Geert Wilders impacted his electoral appeal (PVV; van Heerden & van der Brug, 2017; Van Spanje & Azrout, 2018). In addition, only a limited number of studies has investigated to what degree country characteristics influence journalistic practices. Of the studies that have, some focused on cross-national differences in journalists’ role conceptions (see, e.g., Donsbach & Patterson, 2004; Köcher, 1986). Other studies showed that these conceptions subsequently affect the production of news content (Tandoc, Edson, Hellmueller, & Vos, 2013; Van Dalen, De Vreese, & Albæk, 2012). Notwithstanding the important advancements these studies have made, they lack the systematic approach necessary to explain cross-national differences in function of deeply rooted journalistic practices, grounded in countries’ historic background.

Therefore, this study adds to the existing literature in two ways. Theoretically, we advance a new thesis to understand cross-national variability in political communication, which takes into account the historic reputation of the ideology the politician represents. This adds a theoretical novelty to comparative scholarship on media coverage, where countries’ media system has long dominated cross-national explanations for coverage. Methodologically, we resolve a recurring problem of comparative studies in the field of political communication, namely that of cross-national comparability. This can be achieved by collecting coverage on the same topic in all countries, as to hold the characteristics of the object of coverage constant. Systematic comparisons are therefore scarce, since only a few events receive enough attention in international media to be analytically interesting. For the purpose of this study, we took advantage
of the extensive attention for Donald Trump, to conduct a systematic automated – and manually validated – content analysis of traditional news coverage in twelve Western countries between 2016 and 2018 (N= 30,756). Combined, our study sheds a new light on the different opportunity structures in which norm-violating politicians are operating today.

Theory

Stigmatization in News Media

Scholarship has long acknowledged the importance of abidance to democratic norms. This normative framework consists of a broad variety of written and unwritten rules that may vary between cultures. However, it is commonly agreed that two norms prevail in all established democracies. This idea builds on the works of Karl Popper, Robert Dahl and others in its insistence that a democracy needs (1) public abidance to democratic institutions and (2) a widespread belief in the fundamental equality of its citizens. ¹ Although most politicians subscribe to these norms, they are not fully uncontested. It is not uncommon that politicians behave in a way that can be interpreted as undemocratic, for instance by disrespecting the rule of law, or by making remarks that may be deemed racist or sexist. Such behaviors transcend the division between extreme and mainstream parties, and left- and right-wing parties. Any party and any politician may at some point in time face accusations of sexism, racism or disrespect toward democratic institutions.

When politicians violate these democratic norms, or are believed to have done so, they risk being punished by news media, most notably in the form of stigmatization. Stigmatization is a concept borrowed from social psychology in which it refers to ascribing a person "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (Goffman, 1963), "a characteristic that is contrary to a norm of a social unit" or a "mark that links him or her to undesirable characteristics" (Link & Phelan, 1999). In political science, Van Spanje and Azrout (2018) argue that stigmatization can be viewed as the association of parties with political currents that are beyond the pale in the context in which they operate. Stigmatization

¹ Robert Dahl coins the idea of "equal consideration of interests", which is an interpretation of a more abstract principle of equality between citizens.
is arguably a common phenomenon, since we know that news media tend to defend prevailing societal norms and because politicians are held to higher moral standards than ordinary citizens (Hatier, 2012). Stigmatization may vary in extend and intensity, but import is that news media emphasize that politicians’ behavior or rhetoric goes against core democratic values. This can be achieved, e.g., by (1) implying a politician is antidemocratic, (2) drawing comparisons with historic or contemporary examples of authoritarianism (tainted by association) (3) implying he or she denies the fundamental equality between people or (4) by scolding him or her for being populist (see Reinemann, Aalberg, Esser, Strömbäck, & de Vreese, n.d.). By doing so, news media mark an actor unclean for participation in democracy (Downs, 2012).

Explaining Stigmatization: The Hierarchy of Influences Model

Whether or not democratic norms have been broken may be subject to controversy. Even when a particular norm is clearly violated, news media still have a considerable discretion when it comes to reporting undemocratic behavior. That is, it is one thing to describe the hard facts, but it is another to call a politician out for being undemocratic, sexist or racist. In their seminal work Mediating the Message Shoemaker and Reese (1996) ask why news media respond the way they do in a particular context. In this work, these scholars advocate "The Hierarchy of Influences Model". The objective of this model is to explain media content in function of five factors: the characteristics of individual media practitioners, media routines, organizational characteristics, extra media influences and contextual influences.

Cross-national explanations for media coverage are situated at the highest level of analysis, i.e. contextual influences. In Mediating the Message, Reese and Shoemaker argue that cross-national differences in coverage can be attributed to the prevailing ideological paradigm. This paradigm encapsulates a societal agreement on what is deemed acceptable and what is not. Following the logic of this model, stigmatizing news content is produced when media practitioners operate in a context where it is acceptable to do so. In the following sections, we argue that whether or not this is the case depends on two historic contextual factors, namely countries’ media and political history. We contend that these factors influence how news media deal with internal and external pressures to produce stigmatizing content.
Media History

The prevailing explanation for cross-national variability in coverage is discussed in Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) book *Comparing Media Systems*. These scholars contend that journalistic practices are an outcome of historic interplay between society, politics and news media. One such outcome is the prevalence of the journalistic standard of neutrality. Among other things, this standard prescribes that media practitioners should refrain from using stigmatizing terms. In this section, we argue that whether or not this standard prevails depends on (1) the degree of journalistic professionalism and (2) the strength of the ties between parties and press within a particular country.

The degree to which this ideal prevails arguably first and foremost depends on the development of journalistic professionalism, with the accompanying expectations about the expertise and skill of a professional. In most countries located in Western Europe and Northern America, press catered to a broad and diverse public. These favorable market conditions encouraged the rise of a neutral style of journalism for two reasons (Schiller, 1981; Schudson, 1981; Wilke, 1987, 2013). First, the financial security allowed media organizations to retain independence from parties. Second, the abundance of financial incentives caused journalism to take on the characteristics of a profession, with its own educational, organizational and normative framework, all promoting the standard of neutrality (Wilke, 2013). Combined, these two historic conditions resulted in the institutionalization of a normative framework emphasizing the distinction between news and opinion (McQuail, 1994).

By contrast, in Southern European countries press catered to a small and elite public. There were no market conditions to encourage the rise of a professional, neutral style of journalism. News organizations in these countries were sustained by political parties and served to stimulate partisan competition (Gunther, Montero, & Wert, 2000). Due to the absence of financial incentives, journalism strongly relied on the contributions of skilled writers and politicians, practiced in the art of rhetoric. As a result, the style of journalism remained fairly similar to that practiced in literary arts, with – as Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.98) argue – ”a substantial emphasis to commentary [...] and representation of] distinct political tendencies”. The outcome of these historic conditions was that strongly opinionated and eloquent pieces were standard practice.

Tied back to the Hierarchy of Influences Model, it is not difficult to theorize how
journalistic professionalism translates to a lower degree of stigmatization in news coverage. First, professionalism greatly reduces the ‘extra media’ influence politics has on press. This makes news organizations less sensitive to political pressures to stigmatize ideological opponents than in other countries. On an organizational level, professionalism translates to the implementation of a code of ethics, which often includes a dedication to accuracy and objectivity (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p.93). This serves as an encouragement to refrain from using stigmatizing terms. These values are also embedded in the media routines, meaning that stigmatizing terms are likely to be removed by an editor. Finally, professionalism contributes to individual journalists’ adherence to the standard of neutrality. This is not only because the code of ethics requires them to do so, but also because they conceive themselves as detached observers (Cohen, 1963; Donsbach, 2008; Kepplinger & Köcher, 1990).

While there is no empirical research demonstrating a direct link with stigmatization in coverage per se, several studies have shown that journalistic professionalism influences the role conceptions of media practitioners as well as their dedication to providing neutral coverage. Drawing on a survey conducted among journalists in Britain, a country with high levels of professionalism, Köcher (1986) demonstrates that 90% of the journalists agreed that their job is to provide neutral coverage. The same survey conducted in Germany, a country with lower levels of professionalism, showed that only 81% of the journalists agreed with this statement. Likewise, a study conducted by Donsbach and Patterson (2004) reveals that journalists in the United States, a country with high levels of professionalism are less willing to advocate opinions than their counterparts in countries with lower levels of professionalism, i.e. Germany and Italy.

Building on this literature, it is plausible that stigmatization varies alongside the prevalence of professional journalistic standards. We therefore expect that:

**Hypothesis 1a:** Stigmatization is more prevalent in countries with low degrees of journalistic professionalism than in countries with high degrees of journalistic professionalism.

Media systems also differ with respect to the ties between parties and press. Coined by Seymour-Ure (1974) to describe the close alignment between parties and press in Great Britain, party-press parallelism refers to the alignment between news organizations and particular parties. This idea was later adopted by Hallin and Mancini (2004),
who use the concept "political parallelism" to describe general bonds between press and parties or ideologies. Parallelism, they argue, is strongest when news organizations cater to the needs of one specific party. This is for instance the case in most Southern European countries. Inversely, parallelism is weakest when news media operate independently from political pressures. This is the case in, e.g., Canada and Ireland.

When stigmatization is concerned, parallelism is an important factor to consider, because it greatly determines how news media handle their political loyalties. This idea is captured by the notions of internal and external pluralism. Internal pluralism denotes a situation in which newspapers are dedicated to providing balanced access to different ideological voices. Internal pluralism is high, when parallelism is weak. When parallelism is strong, newspapers only represent a limited set of ideas, often favoring the ideology and party they are aligned with. Pluralism in such a context may be achieved "externally" or at a system level, with different newspapers representing different ideologies.

Political parallelism is present in all levels represented in the Hierarchy of Influences Model. Like professionalism, parallelism is strongly linked to the extra-media influence of political parties. This also translates to an organizational level, where poorly paid jobs in journalism serve as a springboard to a career in politics (Ortiz, 1995). In effect, it is often in the journalists' personal interest to provide coverage that appeals to the party. It is at the level of media routines that ideological orientations start shaping news content. If parallelism is high, stigmatizing content of right-wing politicians is unlikely to be edited out in left-leaning newspapers. Likewise stigmatizing content of left-wing politicians is unlikely to be edited out in right-leaning newspapers. Finally, parallelism also affects role conceptions of the journalist as a political advocate. Journalists are therefore more likely to treat opposing views as illegitimate (Hallin, 1986). Democratic norm-violating behavior of right-wing politicians is therefore more likely to be met with stigmatization in left-leaning newspapers, while this is less so for right-leaning newspapers.

Although scholarship agrees that countries' media system affects role conceptions of individual journalists (e.g., Donsbach & Patterson, 2004; Van Dalen et al., 2012), whether or not these conceptions subsequently affect the content they produce has remained a matter of debate. On the one hand, Van Dalen (2008) and Van Dalen et al.
(2012) demonstrate that when journalists perceive themselves as partisan, content tends to be filled with political slant, while this is less so among journalists who perceive themselves as impartial. On the other hand, Tandoc et al. (2013) find no clearly defined relation between role conceptions and content.

In spite of the inconclusive empirical evidence, the large body of theoretical literature on political parallelism leads to the expectation that in countries with high levels of political parallelism, left-leaning newspapers are more likely to stigmatize right-wing politicians and right-leaning newspapers more likely to stigmatize left-leaning politicians. Conversely, in countries with low degrees of parallelism, the political orientation of newspapers should not matter that much. We therefore expect that:

**Hypothesis 1b:** Compared to countries with low levels of parallelism, in countries with high levels of parallelism left-right-leaning newspapers are more likely to stigmatize right-left-wing politicians.

**Political History**

Whether or not media practitioners deem stigmatization appropriate is arguably not solely influenced by the prevalence of the journalistic standard of neutrality. Even when this standard is widespread in a particular media landscape, it may still be used when politicians clearly display unacceptable behavior. In other words, the standard of neutrality does not apply when politicians fall outside the ‘realm of legitimate controversy’ (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 218). Against this background, it is important to consider a contextual factor that determines the scope of this realm, namely countries’ authoritarian past. Scholarship on authoritarian legacies argues that the authoritarian past creates a frame of interpretation (Art, 2005; Bobbio, 1996) based on which citizens may judge the legitimacy of a political actor or behavior. One implication is that the behavior of right-wing politicians is more easily associated with authoritarianism in former right-authoritarian countries. Inversely, the behavior of left-wing politicians is more easily viewed as undemocratic in former left-authoritarian countries.

The argument that countries’ authoritarian past influences media coverage is grounded in two strands of literature. First, some studies discussed in the previous section (Gunther et al., 2000; D. C. Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Van Dalen et al., 2012) hint that some relation exists between democratization and the prevailing journalistic
reporting style within a country. For instance, Gunther et al. (2000) contend that the late democratization of Spain encouraged the role conception of journalists as advocates of democratic values. This also involved the deliberate discrediting of political actors who were associated with the prior regime or were disloyal to core democratic values. Moving beyond the Spanish case, studies situated in the field of political science provide a more generalizable argument. These studies (de Leeuw, Rekker, Azrout, & Van Spanje, 2018; Dinas, 2017; Dinas & Northmore-Ball, 2017) argue that it is not the late democratization per se, but prior experiences with authoritarianism that causes the left or the right to acquire an antidemocratic reputation. Because the label right-wing is associated with the authoritarian past, democratic norm-violating behavior of right-wing politicians may therefore be more easily deemed as undemocratic in former right-authoritarian countries. The same holds true for left-wing politicians in former left-authoritarian countries.

Following the logic of the Hierarchy of Influences Model, the prominence of these ‘frames of interpretation’ may also influence media content. First, it is plausible that the authoritarian past helps shape an important extra-media source of influence, namely the public opinion climate. That is, previous experiences with right-authoritarianism create a negative public opinion climate for right-wing politicians. Inversely, in former left-authoritarian countries this public opinion climate is biased against left-wing politicians. Since news media strive to provide coverage that resonates with the broader public (Snow & Benford, 1988), this serves as an an additional extra-media pressure to stigmatize politicians whose ideology reminds the public of the authoritarian past. Second, these historic associations also influence the organizational understanding of the ‘realm of legitimate controversy’. In former left(right)-authoritarian countries, statements and behaviors of left(right)-wing politicians are more readily marked as illegitimate, resulting in an inapplicability of the standard of neutrality. This idea is subsequently embedded in media routines, where the journalist’s function as “watchdog of democracy” is heightened. Finally, a history of right-authoritarianism may also foster journalists’ inclination to stigmatize right-wing politicians and a history of left-authoritarianism the stigmatization of left-wing politicians. This is because journalists perceive their role as defenders of democracy and have been socialized in an environment that views the "left" or the "right" as a threat to democracy.
Several noteworthy contributions may help corroborate this argument. First, a few studies demonstrate that previous experiences with authoritarianism causes the label ‘right-wing’ or ‘left-wing’ to acquire an antidemocratic reputation. For instance, Dinas and Northmore-Ball (2017) find that compared to other countries, citizens in former right-authoritarian countries are less willing to identify as ‘right-leaning’. They also find that citizens in former left-authoritarian countries are less willing to identify as ‘left-leaning’. In addition, de Leeuw et al. (2018) show that when citizens do identify with the ideology of the authoritarian predecessor, this is because they are less supportive of democratic government. Within the field of political communication, once again the study of Köcher (1986) provides a useful handle. She finds that journalists in Germany, a former right-authoritarian country, are almost twice more likely to agree that it is their task to oppose an antidemocratic parties than their British counterparts.

Combined there are strong theoretical reasons and some empirical evidence to believe that stigmatization is strongest in countries with prior experiences with right-authoritarianism, or that:

**Hypothesis 2a:** Stigmatization of right[leat]-wing politicians is more prevalent in countries with prior experiences of right[leat]-authoritarianism than in countries without such a legacy.

If journalists indeed abandon the standard of neutrality when politicians are situated outside "the realm of legitimate controversy", then the authoritarian past may also influence how left-leaning newspapers respond to ‘illegitimate controversy’, compared to their right-wing counterparts. Continuing the argument discussed above, it is plausible that once a particular politician is associated with the authoritarian past, the political leaning of (mainstream) newspapers matter less. This is because both left-leaning and right-leaning papers are equally likely to discredit the authoritarian past. In countries without such a legacy, by contrast, the ideological alignment of newspapers will prevail, with left-leaning papers being more likely to stigmatize right-wing politicians than right-leaning papers and right-leaning papers being more likely to stigmatize left-leaning politicians. Combined we expect that:

**Hypothesis 2b:** The difference in stigmatization between left-leaning and right-leaning newspapers is less pronounced in countries with a history of left- or
right-authoritarianism than in countries with a democratic legacy.

Table 1: Overview Theoretical Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Influence</th>
<th>Hierarchy of Influences</th>
<th>Countries’ Media History</th>
<th>Countries’ Political History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Contextual</td>
<td>Ideological Paradigm</td>
<td>Professionalism,</td>
<td>Experiences with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Political Parallelism,</td>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pluralism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Extramedia</td>
<td>Government, Advertisers,</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest Groups, Audiences, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Organizational</td>
<td>Roles, Structure, Goals, etc.</td>
<td>Code of Ethics,</td>
<td>Consensus with respect to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Springboard to Politics</td>
<td>Political Deviance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Media Routines</td>
<td>Role Routines, News Values, Gate-keeping, etc.</td>
<td>Processing Cycle</td>
<td>Watchdog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Individual</td>
<td>Professional Background, Attitudes and Beliefs, Role Conceptions, etc.</td>
<td>Professional Background, Role Conceptions</td>
<td>Role Conceptions, Attitudes and Beliefs, Socialization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Based on Shoemaker & Reese (1996) "Hierarchy of Influences Model" as discussed in their book Mediating the Message. The last two columns depict the adjustments to their theory made by the authors of this study.

Methods

Data

The purpose of this study is to explain cross-national variation in stigmatizing news content in function of two historic explanatory frameworks. To this end, we need data that can be compared across various countries. This can be achieved by collecting coverage on the same topic in all countries, as to hold the characteristics of the object of coverage constant. For the purpose of this study, we took advantage of the international interest in United States president Donald Trump. This interested resulted in a substantive amount of attention in news media, permitting the analysis of cross-national
differences. In particular, we retrieved all news articles with Donald Trump as the primary topic between 2013 and 2018 in twelve Western countries.  

In the selection of countries and newspapers, we were constrained by the online availability of news sources in the news databases Nexis Uni and Go Press Academic. In addition to these pragmatic considerations, three theoretical criteria guided the data collection. First, we ensured that our country selection facilitated considerable variation in media systems as well as political history. Second, within each country we only collected national newspapers. The sole exception to this rule are federal countries, where we did include regional newspapers. Third, to further enhance the cross-national comparability, we also opted to exclude tabloids, since these are virtually inexistent in Southern European countries. 

The monthly number of articles for each country is visualized in Figure 1. Since in most countries Trump only started gaining attention from 2016 onwards, we only focus on articles published after January 1st 2016. This selection ensured that we study the same time frame in each country. This resulted in the collection of 30,756 articles in 35 newspapers in twelve Western countries (see Annex A).

**Dependent Variable: Stigmatization**

To determine whether content was stigmatizing or not, we conducted an automated – and manually validated – content analysis. The automated content analysis was based on a tailored dictionary of stigmatizing terms. Terms were considered to be stigmatizing when (1) they imply that an actor or its behavior is undemocratic, (2) compare or associate an actor with historic examples of authoritarianism and their legacy, (3) describe an actor as countering the fundamental equality between citizens

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2 We retrieved all articles mentioning Trump in the headline or the United States in the title and Trump in the text body.

3 i. The possible inclusion of tabloids is not feasible because this would mean that our cross-national comparison is off, in the sense that we would be comparing quality and tabloid newspapers in Northern Europe to only quality newspapers in Southern Europe.

   ii. Furthermore, the inclusion has no substantive value. That is, our explanatory frameworks are based on values of professionalism and ties with political parties, two characteristics that tabloids by nature do not have.

   iii. Assuming stigmatization is higher in tabloid newspapers, which have the tendency of producing more sensationalist coverage, our estimations of the relative proportion of stigmatizing news content in Western European countries should be viewed as conservative (Figure 2).

4 The original dictionary was written in English and translated by native speakers to six other languages (see Annex B)
(such as sexism and racism), (4) mark an actor as populist or (5) associate an actor with contemporary examples of authoritarianism. Stigmatization was considered present when the name of Trump co-occurred with one of the words in the dictionary within the same paragraph.

The analysis departed from a "catch-all" logic, with the purpose of catching all articles containing some form of stigmatization. This greatly reduces the risk of articles being coded as negative, while they are in fact positive. The downside of this catch-all logic is that it increases the chances of articles being coded as positive, while they are negative (false positives). To reduce this risk we recruited seven native speakers, all research master students. The coders were presented with 16,991 text fragments of three sentences on average (snippets) of all positively coded paragraphs. To ensure a uniform interpretation across languages, stigmatizing terms and the name of Trump were capitalized. Coders were then asked whether the term was linked to Trump by means of an adjective, a comparison or a general association. If this was not the case, these so-called ‘false positives’ were recoded as negative. Subsequently, we asked two coders to conduct a manual content analysis of 100 news articles. We then compared the coding of the validated content analysis with that of the coders, which revealed that on average 91% of the manual coding corresponded to that of the validated automated
coding. Ultimately, these endeavors resulted in a dependent variable in which a value of ‘1’ denotes that stigmatization is present and ‘0’ that it is absent.

### Table 2: Country Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Parallelism</th>
<th>Auth. Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Independent variables

We use the work of Hallin and Mancini to classify countries in accordance with two characteristics of the media system, namely journalistic professionalism and political parallelism. We then distinguish between countries with (1) low, (2) medium and (3) high levels of journalistic professionalism. The same classification was used with respect to political parallelism. To investigate the influence of countries’ political history, we use the typology outlined in de Leeuw et al. (2018), which distinguishes between countries with and without prior experiences with right- or left-authoritarianism. All country-level data is summarized in Table 2. On the level of the news outlet, we are only interested in the political leaning of the outlet. For this reason, newspapers were classified into three categories: (1) left-leaning, (2) centrist and (3) right-leaning. Finally, we control for the length of the article, because stigmatization is more likely to occur in longer paragraphs and because there may be substantial differences between newspapers and countries in terms of the length of paragraphs.
Analysis Strategy: Bayesian Multilevel Logistic Regression

One of the prime methodological challenges in this study is the focus on cross-national differences, with a relatively limited number of countries (N= 12) spread across two or three groups. The problem with standard frequentist multilevel analysis techniques is that when the number of countries is low, the estimation of variance components (including our core focus, which is the intercept variance), point estimates and confidence intervals are severely biased. Prior research has revealed that this bias can range up to 20 per cent (Stegmueller, 2013). In such cases, various studies have recommended the use of Bayesian analysis techniques (Baldwin & Fellingham, 2013; Stegmueller, 2013). These studies show that Bayesian models produce unbiased estimates with as little as three clusters.  

Hypothesis testing in Bayesian analysis departs from a relatively intuitive logic and is simply a way of expressing the probability that a hypothesis is true, given the data. To allow for a substantive discussion of the result, we report both the mean of the posterior distribution and the 95% confidence or ‘credible’ interval. This allows us to assess how credible our hypotheses are given the data and how substantial the findings are. In this study, we employ multilevel analyses techniques with articles nested within newspapers and countries. This technique takes into account the 16.61% variance explained due to the similarities of observations within countries, by estimating a separate (random) intercept for each country.  

In the models investigating the differences between countries in function of their levels of professionalism and political history, effects were constrained to be invariant across countries, or ‘fixed’. The models evaluating the interaction between political parallelism or political history on the one hand, and newspapers’ ideological leaning on the other, also included a random effect for newspapers’ ideology. This means that the effect of newspapers’ ideology was allowed to vary across countries. The cross-level interaction, then, evaluates whether

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5 In the most rudimentary terms, Bayesian models produce estimates by creating a continuum of possible parameters and calculating the credibility of each estimate given the data. For each new estimation or ‘iteration’ it updates the probability of a certain outcome in light of the empirical evidence for the event. In addition, estimations that fit the data well are more likely to be retained than estimations that fit poorly. These estimations are then combined in a so-called posterior distribution, which is the distribution \( \hat{\beta} \sim N(\beta^T X, \sigma^2) \) of all estimated values of an unknown parameter \( \beta \), with a measure of variance \( \sigma^2 \).

6 16.61% is the Intra Class Correlation calculated on the basis of the variance components of a random-intercept only model.
the effect of ideological leaning varies across different groups of countries.

Results

Mapping Cross-National Differences in Stigmatization

When politicians violate democratic norms, or are believed to have done so, they risk being stigmatized in news media. In this section, we evaluate whether and to what degree stigmatization varies between countries. To answer this question, we calculated the amount of stigmatizing coverage as a percentage of the total coverage of Trump within a country, which is visualized in Figure 2. Darker colors denote a higher prevalence and lighter colors a lower prevalence. We do not have data for the uncolored countries.

![Figure 2: Mapping Stigmatization in News Media](image)

Based on this Figure, two conclusions can be drawn. First, stigmatizing news content appears to be relatively prevalent, ranging between 22.44% of total coverage in Ireland to 48.44% in France. In other words, Trump’s ability to spark controversy is clearly not confined to the American context. Second, this Figure reveals substantial differences between countries. These differences seem to follow a geographic divide, with stigmatization being more prevalent in Southern European countries than in

7 All results presented here are solely based on the automated content analysis. The data still needs to be validated and conclusions are therefore preliminary.
their Northern European counterparts. However, this distinction does not capture all variation between countries. For instance, 25.57% of Dutch news coverage stigmatizes Trump, while in Germany this equals 34.87%. Since both of these countries have democratic corporatist media systems, it is clear that this distinction does not suffice to explain the full extend of cross-national variation.

Explaining Cross-National Differences in Stigmatization

Stigmatization varies substantially between countries. In this section, we evaluate whether stigmatization varies in accordance with countries’ media and political history.

Media History

The first explanation for cross-national differences drew on the notion of ‘media systems’. We argued that in countries where journalism developed high levels of professionalism, stigmatization would be less prevalent than in countries with low levels of professionalism (H1a). To investigate the validity of this hypothesis, we estimated a multilevel model with the level of professionalism as the key predictor (Table 3, Model 1a). The intercept of this model denotes the prevalence of stigmatization in countries with low levels of professionalism. The main effect, then, evaluates whether this prevalence is lower or higher in countries with medium or high levels of professionalism.

The analysis provides convincing support for Hypothesis 1a. The negative value of the point estimates for professionalism suggests that, on average, stigmatization is 24.55 percentage points lower in countries with medium levels of professionalism than in countries with low levels and 35.35 percentage points lower in countries with high levels of professionalism. To formally test how credible our expectations are, we conducted a hypothesis test based on the posterior distribution. The results are visualized in Figure 3a. The credibility of – and therefore empirical support for – our hypothesis is the share of the distribution for medium and high levels of professionalism that is lower than zero. These tests reveal that, compared to countries with low levels of professionalism, there is 100 per cent chance that stigmatization is lower in countries with high levels of journalistic professionalism while this is 99 per cent for countries with medium levels of professionalism.
Figure 3: Posterior Distribution of the Effects of Media History

(a) Journalistic Professionalism

(b) Political Parallelism

Notes: The dependent variable is the probability of stigmatization. Figures depict the result of Model 1a (left) and Model 1b (right) displayed in Table 3. The grey area surrounding the y-axis depicts the area of negligible change, as suggested by Kruschke (2018).

Of course, a substantial variability in the use of stigmatization hides behind these data. For instance, some articles accuse Trump of being a dictator, others entail comparisons with notorious populist leaders. The variability in possible forms of stigmatization provides a perfect opportunity to investigate whether these patterns are systematic and hold regardless of the type of stigmatization employed. Figure 4 disaggregates the findings in accordance with the type of stigma. This Figure shows that stigmatization is systematically lower in countries with high or medium levels of journalistic professionalism, regardless of whether it concerns antidemocratic, historic, illiberal or populist stigmatization. The sole exception to this rule is contemporary stigmatization, where stigmatization is lowest in countries with medium levels of professionalism. Combined the data provide convincing and mostly systematic evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1a.

A second expectation derived from the literature on media systems, is that the political leaning of newspapers would matter more in countries where newspapers are more strongly tied to political parties or ideologies than elsewhere. If this is the case, we should find that right-leaning newspapers are less likely to stigmatize Trump and that this is even more so in countries with high levels of party-press parallelism (Hypothesis 1b). To test this, we estimated a model with an interaction between newspapers’ ideological leaning and countries’ degree of political parallelism (Model
Figure 4: Stigmatization According to Journalistic Professionalism

Notes: The vertical whiskers indicate a 100% credible interval around the predicted percentage.

1b, Table 3). We removed centrist newspapers from the sample, because this would result in empty cells when computing this interaction. In this model, we allowed the effect of newspapers’ political leaning to vary between countries. The main effect of political leaning, then, evaluates whether right-leaning newspapers are more or less likely to stigmatize Trump in countries with low levels of parallelism. The interaction term evaluates whether the difference between left- and right-leaning newspapers is more or less pronounced in countries with medium or high levels of parallelism. The analysis provides no evidence for this hypothesis. The hypothesis test visualized in Figure 4 suggests that the probability that newspapers’ political leaning matters more in countries with medium levels of parallelism than in countries with low levels is only 39 per cent. For countries with high levels, this is 66 per cent. We therefore remain undecided when it comes to Hypothesis 1b.

Political History

A second explanation for cross-national differences in stigmatization departed from the idea that the behavior and statements of politicians are more easily interpreted as undemocratic if their ideological orientation has a historic reputation of authoritarianism. Since Trump is a right-wing politician, we expected that stigmatization is higher in countries with historic experiences of right-authoritarianism (Hypothesis 2a). To investigate this hypothesis, we estimated an analysis with a dummy variable indicating how much stigmatization differs in countries with a prior experience of
authoritarianism, compared to countries without such experience (Table 3, Model 2a).

At first glance, the positive value of the parameter estimate indicates that stigmatization is on average 12.81 percentage points more prevalent in former authoritarian countries than elsewhere. Nevertheless, the negative value of the lower bound of the 95 per cent credible interval implies that the credibility of our hypothesis is below 97.5%. To be sure, we conduct a hypothesis test which calculates the probability of the value for countries’ political history being higher than zero (see Figure 5a). This test reveals that the credibility of our hypothesis given the data is 91 per cent. In other words, the data provide considerable support for Hypothesis 2a.

Figure 5: Posterior Distribution of the Effects of Political History

(a) Authoritarian Legacy
(b) Political History: Political Leaning

Notes: The dependent variable is the probability of stigmatization. Figures depict the result of Model 2a (left) and Model 2b (right) displayed in Table 3. The grey area surrounding the y-axis depicts the area of negligible change, as suggested by Kruschke (2018).

To ensure that the observed patterns are systematic, we once again disaggregated the data according to the type of stigma employed in the article. The result of this process is visualized in Figure 6. This Figure reveals that the difference between former authoritarian countries and countries without such a legacy is smallest when it comes to historic stigmatization and biggest for illiberal stigmatization. It also shows that stigmatization is systematically higher in former authoritarian countries, irrespective of the type of stigma.

Finally, we expected that past experiences with authoritarianism would decrease the tendency of newspapers to favor politicians of a similar ideological affiliation. This
is because both sides wish to disassociate themselves from anything that could be interpreted as authoritarian. In other words, we expected that stigmatization would be lower in right-leaning news, especially in former authoritarian countries (Hypothesis 2b). To test this, we estimated a model with an interaction term between countries’ past experiences with authoritarianism and the political leaning of the newspaper (Table 3, Model 2b). In this model, the main effect of ideology denotes the difference in stigmatization between left-leaning and right-leaning newspapers in countries without an authoritarian legacy. The interaction term, then, shows how much this pattern differs in former authoritarian countries. The negative value of the main effect suggests that in countries without a legacy of authoritarianism, right-leaning newspapers are slightly less likely to stigmatize Trump than their left-leaning counterparts. However, the credibility of this assertion is questionable with only 67 per cent support for this assertion. Countering our expectations, the positive value of the interaction term indicates that right-leaning newspapers in former authoritarian countries are on average more likely to stigmatize Trump than elsewhere. A hypothesis test (visualized in Figure 5b) reveals that the probability of our expectation being true given the data is equal to 35 per cent. We therefore remain undecided with respect to this hypothesis.
Table 3: Explaining Stigmatization Using Media and Political History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M1a: Media History</th>
<th>M1b: Media History</th>
<th>M2a: Political History</th>
<th>M2b: Political History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \hat{\beta} ) (SD)</td>
<td>CI 95%</td>
<td>( \hat{\beta} ) (SD)</td>
<td>CI 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media History</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism: Medium</td>
<td>-0.606(0.173)</td>
<td>[-0.944, -0.251]</td>
<td>-0.330(0.227)</td>
<td>[-0.029, 0.697]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>-1.023(0.203)</td>
<td>[-1.415, -0.629]</td>
<td>0.722(0.243)</td>
<td>[0.338, 1.115]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallelism: Medium</td>
<td>0.330(0.227)</td>
<td>[-0.029, 0.697]</td>
<td>-0.029(0.364)</td>
<td>[-0.600, 0.573]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.722(0.243)</td>
<td>[0.338, 1.115]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par. ( \times ) Ideology: Medium</td>
<td>0.016(0.367)</td>
<td>[-0.571, 0.611]</td>
<td>-0.029(0.364)</td>
<td>[-0.600, 0.573]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>-0.029(0.364)</td>
<td>[-0.600, 0.573]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political History</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian Past: Yes</td>
<td>0.373(0.289)</td>
<td>[-0.204, 0.954]</td>
<td>0.352(0.275)</td>
<td>[-0.215, 0.880]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auth. ( \times ) Ideology: Right</td>
<td>0.063(0.172)</td>
<td>[-0.267, 0.420]</td>
<td>0.063(0.172)</td>
<td>[-0.267, 0.420]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology: Center</td>
<td>-0.092(0.044)</td>
<td>[-0.178, -0.007]</td>
<td>-0.050(0.029)</td>
<td>[-0.107, 0.011]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td>-0.050(0.030)</td>
<td>[-0.108, 0.006]</td>
<td>-0.025(0.292)</td>
<td>[-0.488, 0.440]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>0.001(0.000)</td>
<td>[0.001, 0.001]</td>
<td>0.001(0.000)</td>
<td>[0.001, 0.001]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-0.851(0.150)</td>
<td>[-1.156, -0.567]</td>
<td>-1.043(0.189)</td>
<td>[-2.45, 1.34]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.043(0.091)</td>
<td>-1.535(0.174)</td>
<td>[-1.890, -1.194]</td>
<td>-1.562(0.151)</td>
<td>[-1.864, -1.259]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Articles</strong></td>
<td>30,756</td>
<td>25,669</td>
<td>30,756</td>
<td>25,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intra Class Correlation</strong></td>
<td>6.61%</td>
<td>16.48%</td>
<td>12.34%</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOO-CV</td>
<td>36199.7</td>
<td>31883.3</td>
<td>36199.7</td>
<td>30446.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The dependent variable of these analyses is stigmatization. Entries are the result of multilevel Bayesian logistic regression analyses, with a Hamiltonian Monte Carlo Sampling Algorithm. Models are based on 2 chains with 3000 Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) iterations, using two cores and non-informative priors (seed = 123). Convergence was confirmed based on the Gelman Rubric Diagnostic, with all parameters displaying a value approximately equal to 1 at the final iteration. Models were estimated using the Bayesian Regression Analysis using Stan (rstan) package, available for R 3.5.3.
Discussion

Stigmatization is a common way for news media to punish politicians when they violate democratic norms, or are believed to have done so. In spite of its potentially dire impact on electoral competition, we know little about the degree to which news media in different countries produce stigmatizing content. In the present study, we took advantage of the international and extensive attention for United States president Donald Trump to demonstrate that stigmatization (1) varies between countries and (2) depends on countries’ media and political history.

Our study reveals that there is a clear geographic divide in the prevalence of stigmatizing news content. Stigmatization is substantially less common in countries in Northern Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries than in Southern Europe. Moving beyond this descriptive account, our analyses demonstrate that these differences can be attributed to countries’ media and political history. We show that stigmatization is most prevalent in countries with low levels of journalistic professionalism, where the standard of neutrality is not rooted in journalistic practices. We find no evidence that the strength of the ties between parties and press matter: left-leaning newspapers are not more likely to stigmatize Trump, even in countries where they are strongly aligned with left-wing parties or ideologies. The analyses also show that countries’ historic experience with authoritarianism influences stigmatization in news media: stigmatization is more common in former authoritarian countries than elsewhere. We find no evidence that this common inclination to discredit the authoritarian past reduces the contrast between left- and right-leaning newspapers. Instead, antidemocratic and historic stigmatization appear to be even more prevalent in right-leaning newspapers in former authoritarian countries than elsewhere.

Although not all our expectations were confirmed, our study plays well to recurring debates in the fields of journalism studies and political science. Within the field of journalism studies, several studies have asked whether and to what degree state-centric explanatory frameworks have retained their relevance in today’s context of globalization. These studies argue that state-centric conceptualizations, such as countries’ media and political history, are inappropriate in an age of global communication (Beck & Sznайдer, 2006; Steger, 2017). The findings of this study suggest otherwise. In spite of today’s context of globalization, our study clearly demonstrates that the remnants
of countries’ media and political history are still visible in contemporary media landscapes. This is in keeping with another strand of research, which argues that traditional classifications of media systems have retained their relevance (Flew & Waisbord, 2015) and that the prevailing cultural paradigm within a country affects news coverage (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). A second contribution to this field of research is that it answers the call to move beyond the exploratory nature of the framework of Hallin and Mancini and empirically validate their conceptualization (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Norris, 1994, 2009). The systematic approach of this study meets this criticism. Our focus on the same topic and the same measurement in each country, has enabled us to test one of the core arguments of Hallin and Mancini, namely that countries’ media history affects journalistic output. As such, our study has taken an important step toward the validation of a conceptualization that has been a landmark in the field of comparative political communication for over two decades.

From a political science perspective, the findings regarding the impact of countries’ authoritarian past on stigmatization in news media show several interesting parallels with arguments made in the literature on authoritarian legacies. Our study demonstrates that the legacy framework, which is borrowed from political science, also works well in explaining journalistic practices. In addition, the finding that right-leaning newspapers are more likely to stigmatize in former authoritarian countries mirrors arguments made in studies on political elites in former authoritarian countries. David Art (2006), for instance, argues that right-wing parties in post-war Germany have two ways of dealing with the authoritarian past, namely forgetting and discrediting it. Our finding that right-leaning newspapers are more likely to stigmatize Trump may therefore stem from a deliberate attempt of right-leaning newspapers to disassociate themselves from Trump. Second, our study meets the growing demand to understand cross-national differences in the discursive opportunity structure in which political parties and politicians operate (de Jonge, 2018; Golder, 2016). Our findings suggest that politicians who have or acquire a reputation of being sexist, racist or undemocratic are more likely to be targeted with repeated stigmatization in countries with low levels of journalistic professionalism and in former authoritarian countries. These observations satisfy the recurring argument in studies about the relation between news media and far-right parties challenging the rule of law, namely that some media landscapes are
more accommodative of these parties than others (de Jonge, 2018; Ellinas, 2010).

This necessarily brings us to the several limitations of this study. First, our study has been unable to address the obvious ambiguity regarding the impact of stigmatization on countries’ discursive opportunity structure. That is, it is unclear whether stigmatization fosters or hinders the electoral appeal of controversial politicians. On the one hand, many voters are unwilling to vote for parties and politicians accused of racism, sexism or authoritarianism. On the other hand, stigmatization may also contribute to the anti-establishment image of a politician. For as long as these politicians are able to convince their electorate of how unfairly they are treated by news media, stigmatization may very well increase the electoral appeal. A second shortcoming is that our focus on coverage of Donald Trump has prevented us from distinguishing between stigmatization as a punishment for undemocratic behavior and stigmatization as a strategy to marginalize anti-establishment politicians. Although Trump’s controversial behavior is in many respect indicative of mainstream politicians who have been accused of racism, sexism or democratic dissidence, he is notorious for attacking news media as to provoke a response. It is plausible that our findings may therefore only be generalized to politicians with a hostile relationship with news media. Further research is needed to study how news media respond when mainstream politicians violate democratic norms. Key examples of such cases include the British Labour party, which is undertaking several pro-active steps to undermine allegations of latent and pervasive antisemitism, and the American Democratic party, that has ejected several politicians following accusations of racism and sexism. Studying news media’s responses to such events may not only further our knowledge on journalists’ role as a "watchdog of democracy", it may also provide new insights in how deviant behavior of individual politicians reflects on their party as a whole. Such questions are especially important in times where the legitimacy of entire parties may be challenged by incidents surrounding sexist or racist behavior of an individual politician. Third, the nature of our data did not allow us to assess which mechanisms account for the effect of country characteristics on media output. That is, the Hierarchy of Influences Model dictates that context characteristics influence media output through extra-media, organizational and media routine influences. Whether and how each of these factors have influenced the final decision to publish stigmatizing content therefore remains
unknown. Such questions are best approached with in-depth qualitative interviews, focused on the intentions of media- and extra-media actors. A final limitation is its confinement to media coverage in Western countries. This means that our findings cannot be generalized to Eastern Europe. This is an important shortcoming, given the various challenges the overwhelming success of anti-establishment parties have raised for liberal democracy. A possible avenue for future research is therefore to assess how news media in these countries hinder or facilitate undemocratic behavior of politicians in a period of time that they first started gaining electoral ground.

In spite of these shortcomings, our study sheds a new light on how historic contextual factors influence contemporary journalistic practices. In addition, our findings suggest that countries’ media and political history still play an important role in shaping the political opportunities of politicians who are pushing the envelope of democratically acceptable behavior. As such, our study constitutes an important stepping stone to further our understanding of the discursive opportunity structure in which parties operate, in times that the boundaries of democratic tolerance are often contested by fundamentally undemocratic behavior of democratically elected officials.

References


Ellinas, A. A. (2010). *The media and the far right in Western Europe: Playing the nationalist card*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.


## Appendix

### A Newspaper Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Leaning</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Die Presse</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Standard</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Morgen</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Standaard</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Post</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>1,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Globe and Mail</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>1,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto Star</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>2,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politiken</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>1,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Figaro</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Humanité</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Monde</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Parisien</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libération</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Tageszeitung</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Left</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Welt</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Frankfurter Rundschau</td>
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<td>Irish Examiner</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Independent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Irish Times</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corriere della Sera</td>
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<td>1,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Stampa</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>734</td>
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<td>Telegraaf</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Tages Anzeiger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Telegraph</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>171</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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B Dictionary

This list only contains the English dictionary. All translations were generated and carefully reviewed by native speakers, before conducting the automated content analysis.

(1) Antidemocratic Stigmatization

- absolutis [m/tic]
- antidemocratic
- autarchy
- authoritarian
- autocra [cy/tic]
- decline of democracy
- democratic decline
- democratic deconsolidation
- democratic dismantling
- democratic regression
- democratic threat
- despot [ic/ism]
- dictator [ial/ship]
- dismanteling of democracy
- extrem [e/ist]
- extreme right
- fascis [m/t/tic]
- far-right
- fundamentalist
- neofascis [m/t/tic]
- oppressive
- totalistic
- totalitarian [ism]
- tyrann [ical/y]
- undemocratic

(2) Historic Stigmatization

- auschwitz
- carmona
- castro
- concentration camp
- cromwell
- historical revisionis [m/t]
- history revisionism
- hitler
- holocaust
- mussolini
- [neo] national socialis [m/t]
- [neo] nazi [sm]
- pétain
- primo de rivera
- re-writing history
- salazar
- dollfuss
- franco

(3) Illiberal Stigmatization

- aggression
- animosity
- anti-constitutional
- anti-foreign [er/ism]
- anti-islam
- anti-jewish
- anti-muslim
- apartheid
- chauvinist
constitution hostility
criminal
bigotry
antisemitic
discrimination
enmity
felonious
illegal
illegitimate
illicit
intolerance
islamophobia
hostility towards
hate
hatred
homophobia
not legal
outlawed
prejudiced
prohibited
prosecutable
unauthorized
unconstitutional
unlawful
racial
segregate
segregationism
sexist
skinhead
supremacist
social darwinism
xenophobia

(4) **Populist Stigmatization**
alternative für deutschland
dansk folkeparti
freiheitliche partei österreichs
front national
rassemblement national
lega [nord]
movimento cinque stelle
partij voor de vrijheid
populist

(5) **Contemporary Stigmatization**
chavez
erdogan
kukluxklan
maduro
orban
pegida
putin
kim jong un