Breaking Boundaries
UNIVERSITY of DELAWARE | CENTER FOR POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Political Satire and Occupy Wall Street:
How Comics Co-opted Strategies of the Protest Paradigm to Legitimize a Movement

DANNAGAL G. YOUNG
University of Delaware

*See the companion work to this article
"The Rhetoric of Political Comedy: A Tragedy?"
by Roderick P. Hart in this Special Section*

In the fall of 2011, during the height of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests in Zuccotti Park and around the world, satirists like Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert spent a significant amount of time covering the movement. And while many of the delegitimizing framing devices of the "protest paradigm" (Gitlin, 1980) were notably present in these comedic segments and discussions, their underlying meaning was anything but delegitimizing of Occupy Wall Street. Content analysis reveals that *The Daily Show* (*TDS*) and *The Colbert Report* (*CR*) were both overwhelmingly positive in their coverage of OWS but that the programs incorporated legitimizing and delegitimizing protest framing devices quite differently—*TDS* using literal criticism and rhetorical exaggeration to warn the rogue protesters of the dangers of acting inappropriately and *CR* using irony to generate sympathy for the cause and its participants. Survey results indicate that exposure to political satire was associated with favorable perceptions of OWS and its participants, a trend that also appeared as a function of network news viewing.

Occupy Wall Street

When Canadian activist Kalle Lasn's magazine, *Adbusters*, published a full-page poster in July 2011 advocating the September 17, 2011, occupation of Wall Street, it is unlikely that he or Adbusters Media Foundation were fully aware of the political and media phenomenon that would result. Occupy Wall Street, the social movement made most famous by its encampment at Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan during the fall of 2011, spread across the nation and inspired similar protests around the globe in the weeks and months that followed (van Gelder, 2011).

Dannagal G. Young: dgyoung@udel.edu

In the wake of the global economic downturn, the U.S. subprime lending crisis, and the subsequent bank bailout, the movement sought to draw attention to the problems of corporate corruption of government and increasing economic inequality between the haves and have-nots (van Gelder, 2011). The occupiers' slogan, "We are the 99%," highlighted the observation that Americans with incomes in the top 1% were not only in possession of over 20% of total pretax income in the United States (Piketty & Saez, 2003) but had continued to experience income growth throughout the economic downturn ("CBO: Top 1%," 2011). The resulting encampment at Zuccotti Park quickly grew as the protests gained support from college students struggling to repay college loans, young people struggling to find work, and even from organized labor. The October 5 march from the steps of the state courthouse in Foley Square to Zuccotti Park included a diverse assemblage of participants, including thousands of members of the AFL-CIO and other local labor unions (Greenhouse & Buckley, 2011). Within weeks, dozens of similar protests occurred around the country—from Chicago to Washington, DC, from Tucson, Arizona, to Minneapolis (Grossman, 2011)—and around the world—from Rome to Zurich and from Tokyo to Sydney. As the movement grew, protesters in various cities clashed with police, and local authorities contended with the physical logistics of the prolonged encampments. All the while, mass media came to play an increasingly important role in constructing and framing the Occupy movement and what it would come to mean to policy makers and to the American public.

While print, network, and cable news outlets covered the Occupy Wall Street movement, so, too, did alternative sources of political information, including the political satire programs *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, both on Comedy Central. Due to the implicit nature of satire and irony as well as the challenging perspectives of Stewart and Colbert, it seems likely that the way these programs covered OWS may have added a unique dimension to the information environment. The goal of this article is to explore how framing devices that are traditionally employed in news coverage of social protest were adopted, challenged, or altered by *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* in their coverage of OWS. In addition, to understand the potential impact of such framing devices, this project also includes an analysis of public opinion about Occupy Wall Street among viewers of political satire and network news programming.

Protest Paradigm and Framing Theory

Due to a complex set of structural and economic factors, the construction of mainstream news stories tends to support the status quo (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1948; MacGregor, 1997). These factors result in news coverage that supports the existing social order, constrains the range of opinions that are represented (Bennett, 2011), and privileges episodic constructions (focused on details of specific events in time) over thematic ones (exploring the context surrounding an event or issue) (Iyengar, 1991). As a result, coverage of social protest in mainstream news tends to emphasize arrests, violence, and drama while deemphasizing (or ignoring) contextual or thematic dimensions such as *why* the movement is occurring or *what* the protesters are seeking through this means of activism (McLeod & Hertog, 1992). While the "deviance" of a protest movement's goals (from those advocating minor reform to those advocate large-scale change) contributes to the nature of that protest's news coverage (Boyle, McCluskey, Devanathan, Stein, & McLeod, 2004), research indicates that a protest's strategies and tactics—more than its underlying objectives—are what drive the nature of the coverage that the movement receives (Boyle, McLeod, & Armstrong, 2012). The importance of this "protest paradigm" (Gitlin, 1980) rests largely in its potential effects on public opinion, a media effect that traditionally has been conceptualized through framing theory.

According to Entman (1993), to frame is to "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). In the reporting of social protest, for instance, news stories can marginalize protest movements by adopting certain journalistic strategies that result in a "high status quo support" news frame (McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Detenber, 1999). Through a focus on official sources and protest violence and by ignoring the perspectives of the protesters themselves, this high status quo support frame causes audiences to become more critical of the protesters, less critical of police, and less supportive of protesters' expressive rights (Detenber, Gotlieb, McLeod, & Malinkina, 2007). Such coverage also has been shown to persuade viewers and readers that the movement in question is less newsworthy and that public opinion is less supportive of the movement (Detenber et al., 2007; McLeod & Detenber, 1999).

Experimental and survey research has demonstrated that news media possess significant power over whether a social movement becomes legitimized in the eyes of the public. However, our postmodern digital media environment complicates these top-down models of media effects. A study of coverage of the 2011 Egyptian protests across traditional news, Twitter, and a citizen media blog suggests that journalistic practices varied significantly across media (Harlow & Johnson, 2011). Harlow and Johnson's analysis revealed traditional news (*The New York Times*) to be the most likely of the three to adhere to the traditional protest paradigm. Survey research has provided evidence that citizens who consume information from alternative media are more likely to engage in alternative forms of protest (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2009). Such findings are consistent with a model in which digital and social media—lacking in the economic and structural constraints discussed earlier—will be the least likely to engage in the episodically framed protest paradigm narratives that marginalize social movements in the eyes of the audience.

Such observations highlight an evolving media landscape in which alternative formats and genres can challenge dominant news narratives, complicating mass media–centered effects processes, including agenda setting, priming, and framing. A growing body of literature has explored these traditionally news-centered media phenomena (agenda setting, priming, and framing) in the context of political entertainment (from late-night comedy to political movies and dramas). The success of these empirical and theoretical extensions of media effects theories illustrates how the soundness of their cognitive foundations has allowed them to be applied across platform, format, and genre.

Priming and Framing in Political Entertainment

Until the past decade, the concepts of media priming and media framing were used exclusively in the domain of traditional news (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Scheufele, 1999; 2000). Once political communication scholars began to acknowledge that genre-specific (e.g., news vs. entertainment) epistemological approaches to the study of political information were unwarranted, researchers began applying such theories to nontraditional forms of political information (see Williams & Delli Carpini, 2002). Such studies have demonstrated that issues, events, and personality traits that are emphasized in entertainment content become primed in the minds of the audience, and then are increasingly likely to be used in subsequent political judgments (Brewer & Ley, 2010; Holbert et al., 2005; Holbrook & Hill, 2005; Moy, Xenos, & Hess, 2003; Tsfati, Tukachinsky, & Peri, 2009; Young, 2006, 2012). The success of these endeavors has confirmed that, assuming the theoretical underpinnings of the proposed mechanisms are sound, applying concepts such as priming, framing, and agenda setting across content and genre—beyond just news—is an acceptable and useful practice. Given the increasing proportion of the population reportedly looking to political entertainment as a viable source of political information and meaning construction (Kohut, 2012), an exploration of framing and priming outside a strict news genre seems increasingly necessary.

Political Satire Meets the Protest Paradigm

Although researchers have applied political communication theories to content other than news, scholars have yet to explore how the framing devices of the protest paradigm are operationalized in political entertainment and what impact those devices may have. Political satire offers a fascinating venue to explore the framing of social protest due to satire's cognitive complexity (Young, 2008a), reliance on traditional news for footage and fodder, and its thoroughly ironic lens (especially Colbert's) through which reality is turned upside down (LaMarre, Landreville, & Beam, 2009). Colbert, for instance, playing a right-wing pundit, immune to the inconvenient realities presented by facts or evidence, offers an ironic parodic critique of not only conservative political philosophy but conservative media norms as well. As succinctly explained by Day (2011), "Colbert . . . is so obviously ill-informed, bellicose, and over-the top that we understand that Colbert the comedian holds exactly the opposite beliefs to those of his alter-ego" (p. 93). Untangling the implicit meaning of Colbert, however, poses quite an empirical challenge. For instance, "When ostensibly celebrating a particular situation, [Colbert] often rattles off a litany of damning statistics that make a tight case for the other side" (Day, 2011, p. 93).

Colbert is not alone in challenging political philosophies and media norms. Scholars have posited that the nature of the satire offered by Jon Stewart fundamentally challenges not only the individuals in positions of power but also the very norms that govern the functioning of institutions, and the media in particular (Baym, 2005; Young, 2008a). By rejecting news norms (like objectivity), argues Baym (2010), *The Daily Show* offers an alternative form of political journalism, one whose "greater purpose . . . may be to mock the very genre of postmodern television news" (p. 113). Inherent in both of these programs, then, is a critique of postmodern journalistic conventions and, *ostensibly*, a unique perspective on traditional journalistic approaches to the framing of social protest.

In the context of coverage of Occupy Wall Street, if the dominant frame put forth by traditional journalists is parodied, critiqued, or directly challenged by the satirical framing devices of comics such as Stewart and Colbert, how might that change the "problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendations" (Entman, 1993, p. 52) promoted by those frames? For instance, if a satirist is using the tool of irony to expose how he or she believes the protests should be covered by the press or how the protesters *ought to be* handled by police, the very ingredients of a delegitimizing or high status quo support frame could be used as satirical weapons to help view the press or police through a *critical* lens (see Gray, Jones, & Thompson, 2009, Young, 2008a). Such semantic reversals, which are the heart of irony and satire (Griffin, 1994), complicate empirical analyses of satirical political commentary, but they may provide a useful opportunity to examine the very mechanism through which satire and irony co-opt dominant rhetorical strategies while undermining their meaning in the process.

Research Questions

Framing has received a complicated treatment in communication literature (see Scheufele, 1999, 2000), being studied as both a content-level feature (frames in news media coverage) and as a media effect (looking at attitudes and behaviors as dependent variables affected by content-level frames). This project explores both the nature of frames in the content of media messages as well as the corresponding perceptions of media audiences. Hence, using Scheufele's (1999) typology as a framework, this project explores (a) media frames as the assumed independent variable through a content analysis (RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 below) and (b) individual social protest frames (perceptions of social protest among media consumers) as a dependent variable through a national telephone survey (RQ4 below).

The first step in this process involves the systematic analysis of protest framing devices in coverage of Occupy Wall Street by *The Daily Show* (*TDS*) and *The Colbert Report* (*CR*) as well as an accompanying analysis of mainstream news coverage (operationalized here by *NBC Nightly News*, consistently the highest-rated network news broadcast over the past several years) (Carter & Stelter, 2012). The framing devices explored in RQ1 and RQ2 are based on literature on social protest framing devices (McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Detenber, 1999):

RQ1:   *To what extent did* TDS/CR *and NBC coverage of OWS include delegitimizing protest framing*
        devices, such as:
        1.   mentions of protester violence
        2.   mentions of arrests
        3.   polarizing depictions of protest participants
        4.   explicitly delegitimizing statements of journalists
        5.   depictions of shrinking/small public support
        6.   negative portrayals of OWS's logistical organization
        7.   negative portrayals of OWS's cohesive message

RQ2:   *To what extent did* TDS/CR *and NBC coverage of OWS include legitimizing protest framing*
        devices, such as:
        1.   thematic news coverage
        2.   mentions of police violence
        3.   diverse depictions of protest participants
        4.   legitimizing statements of journalists
        5.   depictions of growing support
        6.   positive portrayals of OWS's logistical organization
        7.   positive portrayals of OWS's cohesive message

        Because satire capitalizes on its unique ability to co-opt rhetorical devices and use them to
convey the opposite meaning through ironic reversals, perhaps exploring the framing devices alone is not
enough. What Stephen Colbert says is not what he means, and what he means is not what he says (see
LaMarre et al., 2009). Hence, when looking at satire and irony, such as *TDS* and *CR*, it becomes important
to capture a subjective sense of the segment's *overall* valence toward OWS, because the specific framing
devices are likely to operate quite differently in satire than they do in a traditional news context. In fact, if
Stewart and Colbert employ pointed irony to challenge media framing of OWS, they might include
delegitimizing story elements to ultimately *legitimize* the protests.

RQ3:   *How does* overall *story valence toward OWS vary across coverage by* TDS, CR*, and NBC?*

        And finally, to assess framing as a media effects process:

RQ4:   *How do perceptions of OWS vary as a function of exposure to political satire programming (such*
        as The Daily Show *and* The Colbert Report*) and as a function of exposure to more traditional*
        news (operationalized as national network news)?

Study 1: Content Analysis: OWS Framing Devices in News Versus Satire

Method

This project includes a detailed content analysis of stories and segments that aired between September 10, 2011 (one week before the proposed encampment at Zuccotti Park), and January 31, 2012, that mentioned "Occupy Wall Street" from *The Daily Show* (*N* = 25) and *The Colbert Report* (*N* = 20) (accessed through Comedy Central's online archive, including satirical and interview segments but excluding "Weekly Recaps") and from *NBC Nightly News* transcripts (accessed through LexisNexis) (*N* = 58). Stories were coded for date, program, network, and overall valence toward the OWS protests. Finally, each story was coded for the presence or absence of individual framing devices typically examined in the protest paradigm literature, including mentions of arrests, violence, and portrayals of public support (McLeod & Detenber, 1999).

To estimate the reliability of the coding scheme, a reliability analysis was completed on a random subsample that included 25 stories; 14 from *NBC Nightly News*, 5 from *TDS*, and 6 from *CR*. Stories were coded separately by the author and a trained undergraduate research assistant. Krippendorff's alphas were calculated using the macro created by Andrew Hayes (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). Once reliability estimates were obtained, three of the coding constructs were pulled from the analysis due to their low intercoder reliability scores (α < 0.6: journalist's explicit legitimization of OWS, episodically framed coverage, stories that related OWS to terrorism). The constructs that remain in the analysis include the following (descriptives and Krippendorff's alpha estimates are included below):

Overall Impression of Story Valence Toward OWS (Ranges from –3 to 3).

Stories were first coded for the coder's overall impression of the story's valence toward OWS. This code capture's the story's global perspective toward the movement as perceived by the coder immediately after a first read-through. Stories can be coded with whole numbers ranging from –3 (very delegitimizing) to 3 (very legitimizing), where zero indicates a story with a mixed/ambiguous/neutral overall valence toward the movement (α = 0.93).

After each story was coded for an impression of overall valence, the coder systematically evaluated the content of each story for the presence or absence of certain story features or elements, those that support a legitimizing story frame and those that support a delegitimizing story frame.

Legitimizing Story Elements

Growing or Sizeable Public Support for Protests (0,1) includes any story that mentions that the protest has a sizeable number of people or if it indicates that OWS is growing (α = 0.92).

Good Organization/Logistics (0,1) is applied to stories that suggest that OWS has good logistical organization. Being well organized can include various factors such as infrastructure and savvy

use of new media to organize, or it can be a general statement that indicates that the movement is well organized (α = 1.0).

Clear/Identifiable Message (0,1) applies to stories that suggest that OWS has an identifiable message, goals, or policy proposals. This can refer to the goals of the movement as a whole, or it can include an individual protester's demands or proposals (α = 0.84).

Diversity of Protesters (0,1) applies to stories that mention the diversity of the protesters involved in OWS or the appeal of the movement to various kinds of people (α = 1.0).

Thematic (0,1) captures those stories that are framed in a thematic way or that provide background to the protest movement. These are stories that explore the questions of why people are protesting and what conditions or factors led them to take this action (α = 0.76).

Violence by Police Against Protesters (0,1) captures any mention of harassment, aggression, or violence by the police against individual members or entire groups of OWS protesters (α = 1.0).

Delegitimizing Story Elements

Journalist Delegitimization (0,1) includes those stories in which the journalist explicitly criticizes the Occupy Wall Street movement in his or her commentary (α = 0.76).

Shrinking or Little Public Support for Protests (0,1) includes stories that discuss reductions in the number of cities or dwindling numbers of individuals and stories that emphasize the "small group" of people protesting (α = 1.0).

Disorganization of Protest Logistics (0,1) captures those stories that suggest the protests are having difficulty organizing their participants, grounds, or other physical aspects of the movement. With a large number of people, issues such as where to march, where to camp, and the protests' impact on public safety or public health showed up in news coverage. This code captures that theme (α = 0.82).

Unclear or Unidentifiable Message, Focus, Goals, Demands, or Proposals (0,1) captures those stories that make any mention of the lack of clarity of the protesters' main message, goals, demands, or policy proposals (α = 0.89).

Polarization of Protesters (0,1) captures stories that suggest OWS protesters are marginal groups on the fringe, extremists, or radicals, unlike (and potentially off-putting to) the majority of the U.S. population (α = 0.66).

Violence of Protesters (0,1) captures stories that mention violence that occurs by and as a result of these protesters (α = 1.0).

Arrests (0,1) accounts for any story in which an arrest is mentioned (α = 0.73).

Analysis

First, according to the subjective overall valence code, OWS coverage in both *TDS* and *CR* was more positive than on NBC (1.13 and 1.3, respectively, on the −3-to-3 scale, compared to 0.79 in NBC coverage). *TDS* coverage highlighted growing public support (32%, *N* = 8), engaged in thematic coverage of the context and background of the protests (44%, *N* = 11), and portrayed the movement as having a clear message (20%, *N* = 5). Colbert, on the other hand, was less likely than NBC or *TDS* to describe OWS's support as large or growing (20%, *N* = 4), but did engage in thematic protest coverage (40%, *N* = 8) and was the most likely of the outlets to discuss police violence (40%, *N* = 8). Looking at the inclusion of legitimizing story elements across outlets, it becomes clear that NBC's coverage of the protests did not abide by the norms of the protest paradigm. In particular, we see 31% (*N* = 18) of stories alluding to large or growing support, and about one out of every six stories mentioning OWS's strong organizational logistics and the rich diversity of the protest participants. About a third of NBC's OWS stories highlighted police violence against protesters. Finally—and perhaps most striking—almost half (48%, *N* = 28) of NBC's coverage was thematic, detailing the conditions that led to the movement, the economic context surrounding it, and the broader implications for society at large.
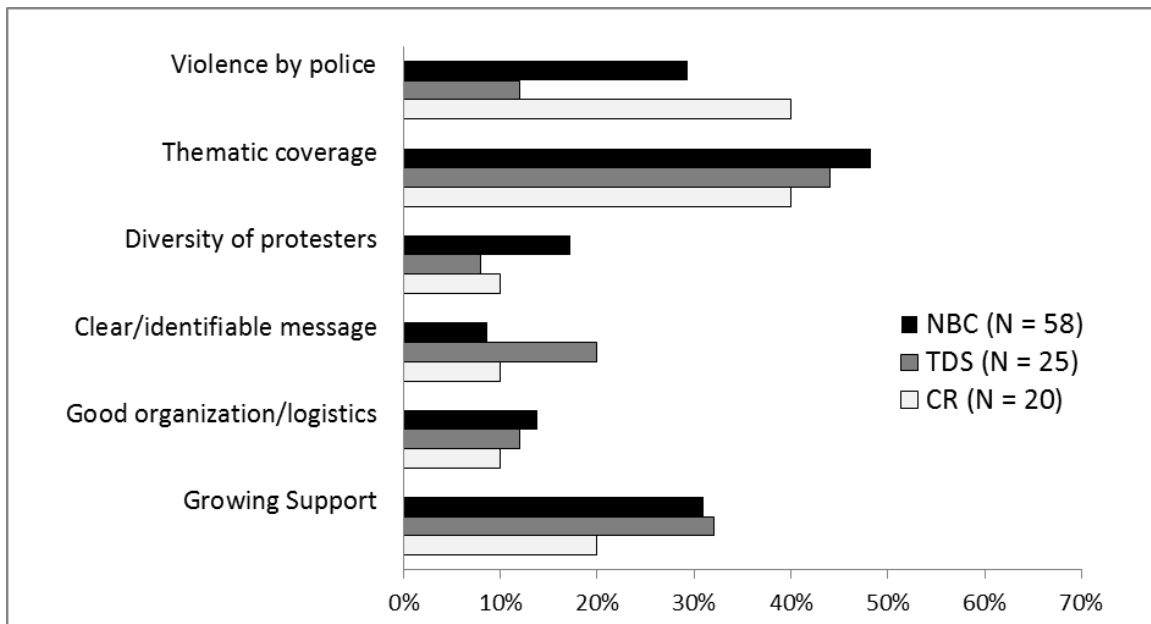

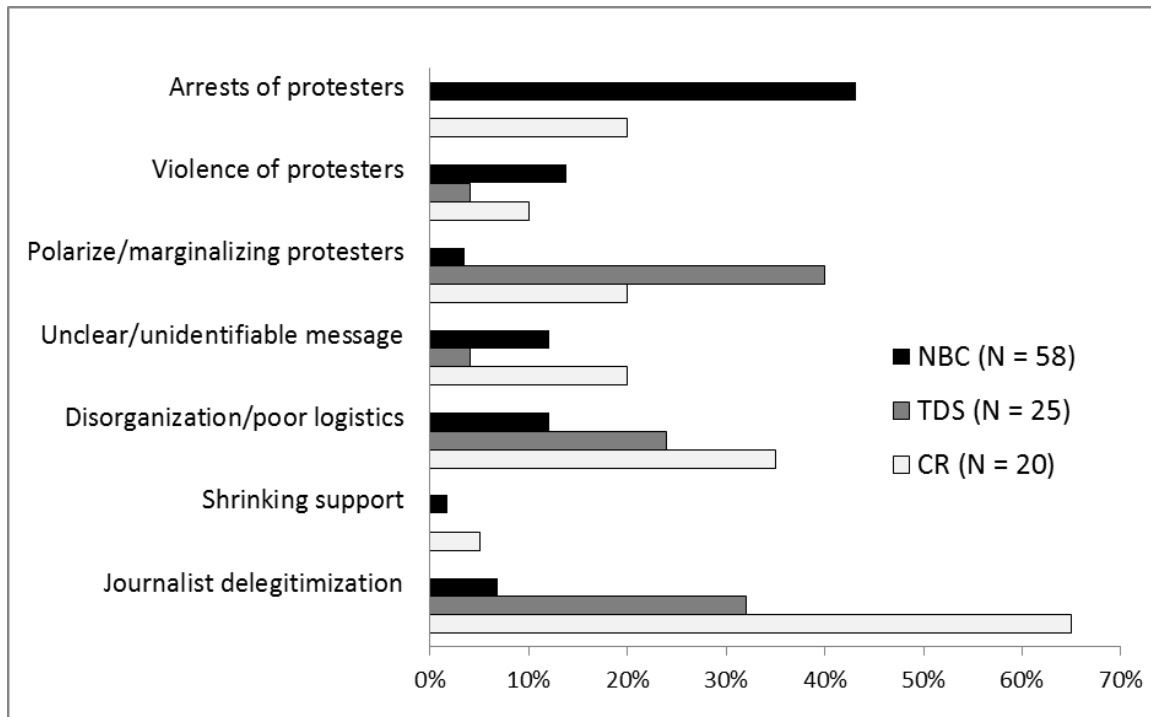***Figure 1. Legitimizing story elements by source.***

Figure 2. Delegitimizing story elements by source.

Perhaps the starkest contrast between Stewart's and Colbert's approaches to Occupy Wall Street can be found in their integration of delegitimizing protest elements (Figure 2). First, *CR* was twice as likely as *TDS* to engage in explicit delegitimization of the movement (65%, *N* = 13; and 32%, *N* = 8, respectively, compared to only 7%, *N* = 4, for NBC coverage). Colbert was also the most likely source to frame the movement as logistically disorganized (35%, *N* = 7) and to describe OWS's message as unclear or muddled (20%, *N* = 4). Interestingly, though, it was Stewart, not Colbert, who was the most likely to highlight fringe members of the movement (40%, *N* = 10, compared to 20%, *N* = 4, of Colbert's coverage).

In its inclusion of delegitimizing story elements, NBC seems quite sympathetic toward the OWS movement (Figure 2). Fewer than 15% of stories mentioned shrinking public support, the disorganization of the protests, their lack of a clear message, the fringe elements of the protesters, or the violence of protesters. And only 7% (*N* = 4) of NBC's stories included any explicit criticism of the protest by the journalist or reporter.

How is it that *TDS* and *CR* have similar overall portrayals of OWS (measured in terms of valence) when the prevalence of individual framing elements is so different across the two shows? To understand these seemingly counterintuitive findings, a brief post hoc textual analysis of *TDS* and *CR* was completed to understand just how these framing elements were used in their coverage of OWS.

Untangling Colbert's Ironic—and Stewart's Literal—Indictments of OWS

Despite its positive take on the movement and its participants (based on the overall valence construct), Stephen Colbert's coverage of Occupy Wall Street employed a striking number of delegitimizing story elements, with 13 of his 20 segments explicitly criticizing the movement (albeit ironically), seven of his stories focusing on the disorganization and poor logistics of the protesters, and four mentioning arrests. Yet it seems that these delegitimizing elements were used as a mechanism to enrich his character's *ironic* opposition to the protesters and their underlying message.

In a two-day series of segments airing October 31 and November 1, Colbert invited two OWS protesters to his "penthouse suite" overlooking Zuccotti Park to discuss the viability of his plan to *buy* the protest movement with money from his super PAC. As they explain why such a purchase would be antithetical to the cause and would never be approved by the OWS general assembly, the two young protesters engage in a thorough articulation of the ideas behind the movement, yet they are repeatedly criticized or undermined by the ironically challenging (and utterly obtuse) host. Similarly, in the month of November, as several encampments across the country were being cleared out by local law enforcement, Colbert ironically supported the police's use of force, all the while fostering a sympathetic view of the protesters and their cause. For example, in a November 16 segment about police pepper-spraying an elderly OWS protester, Colbert discussed the use of pepper spray more broadly, but in a way that offered context to the OWS debate, all through Colbert's ironic lens:

> Some have criticized pepper spraying a pregnant woman, but don't forget the cops were spraying for two! And I don't see why they didn't cuff that tiny protester occupying her womb. Just another lazy do-nothing mooching off the system: free room, free board, and free Mozart for the next nine months. Get a job! I say you got time to gestate, you got time to collate.

(To view the entire November 16, 2011 Colbert segment discussed above, please see http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/402493/november-16-2011/elderly-occupier-pepper-sprayed.)

Stewart, on the other hand, was far less likely to employ the ironic inversions embraced by Colbert. Instead, Stewart's descriptions of the movement were literal and exaggerated versions of his actual perspective on the issue. Stewart's support for the fundamental message of OWS is illustrated in his frequent mention of the movement's clear message and in his emphasis on the movement's growing support. When he *was* delegitimizing the protests, it was coupled with criticism of its poor organization or with a focus on the fringe elements of the movement that ran the risk of undermining the cause. Stewart addressed the protesters as though he was the wise older brother warning the younger impetuous sibling about the dangers of running with the wrong crowd.

In a segment from October 17, Stewart spoke directly to members of the protest.

Of course it hasn't been all good news for the movement. For all their popularity, for all the participants with thoughtful critiques of our power structure, there's also this: [Shows picture of young man with his pants down, about to defecate on a police car] . . . A guy taking a shit on a police car. You know what? Guy taking a shit on the police car? Meet me at camera three. [Wagging finger and pointing directly into the camera] NO! NO . . . BAD! [rolls up paper into a tube as if to hit someone] NO. NAUGHTY! NAUGHTY! [Turns back to main camera] Because here's the problem: Unfortunately, protests are often as much about optics as they are about substance, and you do not want THIS to be your Tiananmen Square [shows altered image of man pulling down pants in Tiananmen Square to defecate on a tank]. See, you have tapped into a real injustice that people feel about the global financial markets. Nothing can derail your movement faster than someone who is unable . . . to derail their movements.

(To view the October 17, 2011 *TDS* segment in its entirety, please see http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-october-17-2011/_merican-occupy.)

At times, Stewart's coverage of OWS returned to his favorite old foe, Fox News, as he presented video montages of pundits and politicos railing against the ills of OWS. These segments provided Stewart the opportunity to highlight hypocrisy in their criticism of protests by juxtaposing these critiques from the conservative commentators with their own strong support of the Tea Party protests just months before.

Ultimately, Stewart is on the side of the protesters. He doesn't always like the theatrics, but he supports their cause and message. And he makes this very clear to viewers of *The Daily Show*.

Study 2: Assessing Audience Perceptions Through Survey Research

Method

A national survey was completed to explore how perceptions of social protest were associated with consumption of political satire (and news). A telephone survey was administered by Princeton Survey Research Associates between January 18 and 25, 2012 (*N* = 901: 541 landline, 360 cell phone, which included 170 cell phone–only respondents), about 2 months after the evacuation of Zuccotti Park by New York City police. The response rate (calculated as the product of the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made × the proportion of people who initially cooperated × the proportion of people who completed the survey) was 12% for both the landline and the cell phone sample.

Measures

Viewing of *The Daily Show/The Colbert Report/Network News*. Respondents were asked, in randomized order: "How often do you watch [national network evening news programs/*The Daily Show*

with Jon Stewart/The Colbert Report with Stephen Colbert]: regularly (4), sometimes (3), hardly ever (2), or never (1)?" (Network news *M* = 2.96, *SD* = 1.09; *The Daily Show M* = 1.74, *SD* = 0.99; *The Colbert Report M* = 1.72, *SD* = 0.95.) Because *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* exposure measures were significantly correlated (*r* = .67, p < .001) and would introduce multicolinearity into the regression models, a combined *TDS/CR exposure* measure was created by adding the two exposure measures (*M* = 3.45, *SD* = 1.77). This hybrid measure is used in the multivariate models.

Heard About OWS. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked how much they "had heard or read over the past few months about the protests and rallies held in New York City and other cities, called Occupy Wall Street (a lot, some, not much, or none at all)." Only the 748 respondents (out of the total 901 survey respondents, or 83%) who reported having heard anything about the protests were issued the follow-up items about perceptions and knowledge.

Perception of OWS Protests. Respondents were issued six batteries (a total of 26 questions) based on McLeod and Detenber's (1999) analysis of perceptions of social protest. Questions were formatted as follows: "Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Occupy Wall Street movement." Options were *strongly agree* (4), *somewhat agree* (3), *somewhat disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1). *Refused* and *don't know* were coded as missing. The batteries included: identification with the protesters (three items, *M* = 2.47, *SD* = 0.95, Cronbach's α = .86), newsworthiness of protests (four items, *M* = 3.10, *SD* = 0.69, Cronbach's α = .75), support for protesters' expressive rights (three items, *M* = 3.56, *SD* = 0.59, Cronbach's α = .67), criticism of police (five items, *M* = 2.37, *SD* = 0.91, Cronbach's α = .91), effectiveness of the protest (five items, *M* = 2.63, *SD* = 0.92, Cronbach's α = .89), and criticism of protesters (six items, *M* = 2.25, *SD* = 0.87, Cronbach's α = .91) (see the Appendix for complete question wording). Items within each battery were issued in random order.

Perception of Public Support for OWS. Respondents were asked, "What percentage of the American public do you think agrees with most of the protesters' views?" options were: *less than one-quarter* (1), *between one-quarter and half* (2), *between half and three-quarters* (3), *more than three-quarters* (4). (*M* = 2.24, *SD* = 0.95.)

Control Variables. Included in the multivariate analysis were: *Political Interest:* "Generally speaking, how interested are you in what is going on with politics and public affairs—very interested (4), somewhat interested (3), not too interested (2), or not at all interested? (1)" (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = 0.88). *Party ID:* "In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or something else/independent?" Dummy variables for Democrat and Republican were included in the model with something else/independent as the reference group (Dem: *M* = 0.31, *SD* = 0.31; Rep: *M* = 0.25, *SD* = 0.43). *Political Ideology*: "In general would you describe your political views as: Very conservative (1), somewhat conservative (2), moderate (3), somewhat liberal (4), or very liberal? (5)" (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = 1.15). *Age:* "What is your age?" (*M* = 51.81, *SD* = 19.14). *Income:* "Last year—that is, in 2011— approximately what was your total family income before taxes?" (*M* = 58.11, *SD* = 44.88). *Education*: "What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?" (*M* = 14.32, *SD* = 2.61). *Race*: Dummy

variable for whites with others as the reference category (M = 0.80, SD = 0.40). *Gender:* Dummy variable for males (M = 0.48, SD = 0.50).

Analysis

Past research has highlighted numerous sociodemographic and political constructs that are associated with exposure to *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report.* These include being younger, male, liberal, a Democrat, and politically interested as well as consuming news from cable, online news, and National Public Radio sources (Young & Tisinger, 2006). Due to the many confounding factors that might mask or conflate relationships between *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, and network news viewing and perceptions of Occupy Wall Street, ordinary least squares regression was used to simultaneously control for relevant political, sociodemographic, and media use variables (see Table 1 for results). As discussed in the "Measures" section, due to the significant correlation between exposure to *TDS* and *CR*, these viewing measures were combined when introduced in the models.

As illustrated in Table 1, even with extensive controls in the models, *TDS/CR* viewing is associated with a significant reduction in criticism of the protesters (p < .01), stronger identification with the protesters (p < .001), stronger criticism of the police (p < .001), and increased perceptions of the effectiveness (p < .001) and newsworthiness (p <. 01) of the protests. However, neither *TDS/CR* exposure nor network news viewing was significantly associated with the broader constructs of interest (support for expressive rights and perception of public opinion—where the relationship was at p < .1).[1] Contrary to past research on the protest paradigm, results indicate that at higher levels of exposure to network evening news, public perceptions of Occupy Wall Street generally became *more*—not less— favorable toward the movement. Increased exposure to network evening news broadcasts was associated with significantly less criticism of the protesters (p < .01), stronger identification with the protesters (p < .01), stronger criticism of the police (p < .001), and increased perceptions of the effectiveness of the protests (p < .05).

---

[1] Models were also run with *TDS* and *CR* included separately. The strength, direction, and significance of *TDS* and *CR* in predicting these DVs when included separately were the same as when the combined measure was used. This was true for all seven models.

Table 1. Ordinary Least Squares Regressions Predicting Perceptions of Occupy Wall Street.

	Criticism of police	Criticism of protesters	Protest effective	Identification with protesters	Expressive rights	Protest newsworthy	Perceived public supp
	B	*B*	*B*	*B*	*B*	*B*	*B*
	(SD)	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*
Constant	2.03***	3.36***	1.88***	1.53**	2.86***	2.57***	2.02***
	(0.26)	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.30)
MSNBC	.07*	−.09**	.09*	.08*	0	.07**	.07#
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)
CNN	0.01	0.02	0.01	−0.03	−0.01	−0.02	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
NPR	.04#	−.06*	0.03	0.04	.05*	.05*	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Online	−.04*	.03#	−.05#	0.01	.05*	0	−0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Interest	0.05	−.08#	0.05	.08#	.08**	.13***	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Democrat	.17*	−.25***	.37***	.33***	0.05	.25***	.27**
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Republican	−.18*	.36***	−.26**	−.43***	−.16**	−.24***	−.31**
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.10)
Ideology	.17***	−.17***	.16***	.19***	.08***	.10***	.08*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Education	−.02#	−0.02	0	0	.02#	−0.01	−0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	0	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Age	−.01***	.01***	−.01**	−.01**	−.01***	−.01***	−.01*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Income	−.00**	.00*	−.00***	−.00***	.00	−.00**	.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Network	.09**	−.07*	.07*	.08*	0.01	0.03	0.06
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)
TDS/CR	.08***	−.05**	.07***	.07***	0.02	.05**	.04#
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
R^2	0.33	0.38	0.37	0.4	0.18	0.24	0.19
N	575	608	611	598	620	619	598

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. # $p < .1$.

Discussion

This project examines how protest paradigm framing devices were employed (and altered) by political satirists in their coverage of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The content of *TDS* and *CR* (Study 1), while positive toward OWS when measured with a subjective overall valence code, tended not to incorporate traditional framing devices in the manner one would expect. For instance, although *TDS* and *CR* were predominantly positive toward the movement overall, both Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert engaged in extensive *explicit* criticism of the protests and their participants. Both *TDS* and *CR* criticized the movement's lack of logistical organization and highlighted their more fringe participants (especially Stewart), while Colbert criticized the movement for having a muddled message. The survey results (Study 2) are consistent with the notion that political satire might play an important role in the political information landscape, as viewers of *TDS* and *CR* were significantly more positive in their perceptions of OWS. Specifically, these viewers held more critical views of police, less critical views of protesters, stronger identification with protesters, and more positive beliefs about the effectiveness and newsworthiness of OWS. While these relationships are correlational in nature, and possibly illustrative of selection effects rather than media effects, the inclusion of extensive controls combined with the strong and significant relationships at least leave open the possibility of causal impact.

While the content of *TDS* and *CR* was found to be positive toward OWS *overall*, the nature of these programs' satirical rhetoric was quite different. As detailed in the brief post hoc exploration, Stewart's commentary was most often literal and somewhat didactic in tone, supportive of the protesters' message but critical of their tactics. Yet Colbert's coverage was quintessentially ironic: critical of—and even contemptuous toward—the protesters and everything they stood for. As research has demonstrated (Lamarre et al., 2009), Colbert's content is not processed the same by all who watch it. It seems that both conservatives and liberals can find Colbert funny. Liberals laugh because they see his show as an ironic condemnation of conservative punditry and philosophy, while conservatives think Colbert is a conservative who is presenting an exaggerated version of his actual point of view. Since the overall valence code presumed Colbert's ironic perspective, that measure might not have accurately captured the competing readings in which different viewers might have engaged. Unfortunately, because including exposure to *TDS* and *CR* separately in the same regression model would have violated the criteria of multicolinearity, we only know that, together, exposure to *TDS* and *CR* was associated with more positive perceptions of OWS. Future research will need to find a way to untangle the effects of *TDS* and *CR*—both conceptually and statistically.

Several avenues for future research have emerged from this analysis. First is the question of how Stewart's and Colbert's framing of Occupy Wall Street might compare with coverage of other movements, such as the conservative Tea Party movement. The unique circumstances surrounding OWS may have affected the way it was treated both by news outlets and by satirists. Second, according to the protest paradigm literature (Gitlin, 1980), *NBC Nightly News* coverage of OWS should not have been as positive toward and legitimizing of the movement as it appears to have been. This could be a result of the unique nature of the Occupy Wall Street movement as a largely peaceful grassroots progressive movement that appealed to diverse groups, across multiple cities, hence complicating the use of traditional protest framing devices in the news. Of course, the positivity of NBC news coverage could be unique to that one

network or this one movement and might not illustrate a broader trend. Without a content analysis of ABC and CBS to accompany it (or a content analysis of other social movements), we cannot say with certainty that these legitimizing framing devices were found across all network news content. A broader analysis of other news sources and other social protests would help address these issues.

Next, since these survey data point to correlative evidence but fail to isolate causality, experimental research will be needed to understand how these framing devices in political satire might (or might not) be responsible for the exceptionally positive perceptions of OWS found among viewers of the shows. Scholars will need to consider the mechanisms through which satire and irony might have engendered positive assessments of OWS. For example, due to their role as political outsiders, the credibility ascribed to Stewart and Colbert might enhance their framing effects. Or perhaps the persuasiveness of Colbert and Stewart is a cognitive outcome resulting from the reduced message scrutiny through humor (Nabi, Moyer-Guse, & Byrne, 2007; Young, 2008b). It is even possible that, because *TDS* and *CR* tend to have rather lengthy segments (sometimes 5 to 10 minutes long), the impact of the various framing devices and underlying arguments may be augmented by the length of time spent on any given story. Such mechanisms ought to be parsed out and systematically tested.

Additionally, the significant positive association between exposure to network news and perceptions of OWS (identified in Study 2) suggests that we may be capturing a unique moment in the history of social protest *or* in the history of social protest *coverage*. If it is not the nature of the Occupy movement that was unique but rather the nature of the *coverage* of the movement, this is certainly a proposition to which media scholars ought to dedicate significant time and attention. For instance, with the increased fragmentation of our media environment and the proliferation of ideologically driven media outlets such as FOX and MSNBC, perhaps the role of the network news broadcast is radically different from what it was during the big-network era. If so, this would change the kind of global perspective a news network might have in its coverage of social protest, and it might result in evolving framing devices and tactics. The next step in understanding how network news coverage of OWS situated itself in this diverse media landscape involves analyzing the content and impact of the other main networks (ABC and CBS) as well as the content and influence of cable news outlets in their coverage of OWS.

Finally, in assessing the broader meaning of the satire of Stewart and Colbert in their coverage of social protest, one central question remains unanswered. Stewart is positive toward the mission of OWS yet critical of its tactics. Colbert is consistent in his ironic condemnation of the OWS mission *and* tactics. So how might these comics affect a viewer's perception of his or her own involvement in social protest movements? While the results here suggest high identification with the protesters among *TDS* and *CR* viewers, along with high perceptions of OWS effectiveness and newsworthiness, the question of how such satire and irony might shape one's personal willingness to participate in such a movement remains in question. Scholars critical of Stewart (see Hart, this issue; Hart & Hartelius, 2007) suggest that his brand of humor fosters political cynicism, which, devoid of a genuine underlying political desire, results in apathy and alienation from the political world. Yet many scholars (see Baym, 2010; Gray et al., 2009; Jones, 2010) argue the opposite, positing that these satirical critiques provide viewers with an alternative to the highly contrived, manipulated (and cynical) postmodern political world. Although empirical evidence suggests that viewers of these programs are far from politically apathetic (Young & Esralew, 2011; Young

& Tisinger, 2006), future research ought to assess how exposure to such programs shapes a viewer's willingness to engage outwardly in a social protest movement such as Occupy Wall Street.

Several additional limitations must be acknowledged in both studies reported here. First, the survey, while national and representative (with the innovative methodology used to capture cell phone–only respondents), was completed in late January 2012, 4 months after the initial occupation of Zuccotti Park. While OWS was still in the news at that time, there may have been a reduction in the salience of OWS in people's minds or a change in perceptions of the movement over time. Since the content analysis was completed on stories and segments dating back to September 2011, drawing the link between the content and the survey data must be done somewhat conservatively to acknowledge the time gap. Next, comparing the content of *NBC Nightly News* to that of *TDS* and *CR* is somewhat problematic since NBC content was coded using text-based transcripts while *TDS* and *CR* were coded using video segments. Effort was made to rely on the audio of *TDS* and *CR* and only consult visuals when necessary. However, clearly this introduces a systematic confound as we draw conclusions about the differences in the content of satire versus news. As acknowledged above, without an accompanying content analysis of additional networks, we can only state with certainty that NBC coverage of OWS was exceptionally positive. Any broader statements about the nature of network news coverage as a whole (based only on NBC content) would be premature.

Without the addition of a highly subjective overall valence code (RQ3) as well as the brief textual analysis offered following Study 1, this project would likely have raised more questions than it answered. While the framing of social protest has been successfully captured using quantitative methods in the past (McLeod & Hertog, 1992), those studies benefited from a body of content in which what is said is what is *actually* meant. In the context of ironic inversions, coding schemes will need to include overall meaning codes—based on the comic's intended meaning (to the extent it can be ascertained) and on the audience's most likely perception of that meaning. Content analyses will need to be accompanied by detailed explorations of unique exemplars to get a rich understanding of what the empirical findings really mean. Exploring the novel ways in which the overall meaning of satirical texts is related to the implementation of specific rhetorical and framing devices within those texts will shed light on the complicated mechanism through which satire affects—and is understood by—its audiences.

References

Baym, G. (2005). *The Daily Show*: Discursive integration and the reinvention of political journalism. *Political Communication, 22*, 259–276.

Baym, G. (2010). *From Cronkite to Colbert: The evolution of broadcast news.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Bennett, W. L. (2011). *News: The politics of illusion* (9th ed.). New York: Pearson Publishers.

Boyle M. P., McCluskey, M. R., Devanathan, N., Stein, S. E., & McLeod, D. M. (2004). The influence of level of deviance and protest type on coverage of social protest in Wisconsin from 1960 to 1999. *Mass Communication and Society, 7*, 43–60.

Boyle, M. P., McLeod, D. M., & Armstrong, C. A. (2012). Factors affecting journalistic adherence to the protest paradigm: The influence of protest goals and tactics. *International Journal of Press/Politics, 17,* 127–144.

Boyle, M. P., & Schmierbach, M. (2009). What makes a protester? The role of mainstream and alternative media in predicting mainstream and protest participation. *Communication Quarterly, 57,* 1–17.

Brewer, P. R., & Ley, B. L. (2010). Media use and public perceptions of DNA evidence. *Science Communication, 32,* 93–117.

Carter, B., & Stelter, B. (2012, June 22). *NBC News* faces shift in television dominance. *The New York Times*, p. B1.

CBO: Top 1% getting exponentially richer. (2011, October 25). *CBS News*. Retrieved from http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-250_162-20125589/cbo-top-1-getting-exponentially-richer

Day, A. (2011) *Satire and dissent: Interventions in contemporary political debate.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Detenber, B. H., Gotlieb, M. R., McLeod, D. M., & Malinkina, O. (2007). Frame intensity effects of television news stories about a high-visibility protest issue. *Communication & Society, 10*, 439–460.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*, 51–58. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gray, J., Jones, J. P., & Thompson, E. (2009). *Satire TV: Politics and comedy in the post-network era*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Greenhouse, S., & Buckley, C. (2001, October 5). Seeking energy, unions join protest against Wall Street. *The New York Times*, p. A1.

Griffin, D. (1994). *Satire: A critical reintroduction*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Grossman, A. (2011, October 17). Spreading protests yet to jell: Occupy Wall Street movement goes global but still hasn't forged common goal. *Wall Street Journal.* Retrieved from http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204479504576635050542416050.html

Harlow, S., & Johnson, T. (2011). Overthrowing the protest paradigm? How *The New York Times*, global voices and Twitter covered the Egyptian revolution. *International Journal of Communication, 5*, 1359–1374.

Hart, R. P., & Hartelius, E. J. (2007). The political sins of Jon Stewart. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 24*(3), 263–272.

Holbert, R. L., Tschida, D. A., Dixon, M., Cherry, K., Steuber, K., & Airne, D. (2005). *The West Wing* and depictions of the American presidency: Expanding the theoretical and empirical domains of framing in political communication. *Communication Quarterly*, *53*, 505–522.

Holbrook, R. A., & Hill, T. (2005). Agenda-setting and priming in prime time television: Crime dramas as political cues. *Political Communication, 22*, 277–295.

Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Jones, J. (2010). *Entertaining politics: Satiric television and political engagement*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kohut, A. (2012, February 7). Cable leads the pack as a campaign news source. Pew Center for the People and the Press. Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/2012%20Communicating%20Release.pdf

Hayes, A. F., & Krippendorff, K. (2007). Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data. *Communication Methods and Measures, 1*, 77-89.

LaMarre, H. L., Landreville, K. D., & Beam, M. A. (2009). The irony of satire. *International of Journal of Press/Politics, 14*, 212–231.

Lazarsfeld, P., & Merton, R. (1948). Mass communication, popular culture, and organized social action. In L. Bryson (Ed.), *The communication of ideas.* New York, NY: Institute for Social and Religious Studies.

MacGregor, B. (1997). *Live, direct, and biased? Making television news in the satellite age.* London: Arnold.

McLeod, D. M. (1995). Communicating deviance: The effects of television news coverage of social protest. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 39*, 4–19.

McLeod, D. M., & Detenber, B. H. (1999). Framing effects of television news coverage of social protest. *Journal of Communication, 49*, 3–23.

McLeod, D. M., & Hertog, J. K. (1992). The manufacture of public opinion for reporters: Informal cues for public perceptions of protest groups. *Discourse and Society, 3*, 259–275.

Moy, P., Xenos, M. A., & Hess, V. K. (2003). Priming effects of late-night comedy. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *18*, 198–210.

Nabi, R. L., Moyer-Guse, E., & Byrne, S. (2007). All joking aside: A serious investigation into the persuasive effect of funny social issue messages. *Communication Monographs, 74*, 29–54.

Piketty, T., & Saez, E. (2003). Income inequality in the United States, 1913–1998. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 118*, 1–38.

Scheufele, D. (2000). Agenda-setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass Communication and Society, 3*, 297–316.

Scheufele, D. (1999). Framing as a Theory of Media Effects. *Journal of Communication, 49,* 103–122.

Tsfati, Y., Tukachinsky, R. H., & Peri, Y. (2009). Exposure to news, political comedy and entertainment talk shows, concern about security and political mistrust. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 21,* 399–423.

van Gelder, S. (2011). *This changes everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Williams, B. A., & Delli Carpini. M. X. (2002, April 19). Heeeeeeeeeeeere's democracy! *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. B14–B15.

Young, D. G. (2006). Late-night comedy and the salience of the candidates' caricatured traits in the 2000 election. *Mass Communication and Society*, *9*, 339–366.

Young, D. G. (2008a). *The Daily Show* as new journalism. In J. S. Morris & J. C. Baumgartner (Eds.), *Laughing matters: Humor and American politics in the media age* (pp. 241–259). New York, NY: Routledge.

Young, D. G. (2008b). The privileged role of the late-night joke: Exploring humor's role in disrupting argument scrutiny. *Media Psychology, 11*, 119–142.

Young, D. G. (2012). A flip-flopper and a dumb guy walk into a bar: Political humor and priming in the
        2004 campaign. *HUMOR: The International Journal of Humor Research*, *25,* 215–231.

Young, D. G., & Esralew, S. (2011). Jon Stewart a heretic? Surely you jest: Political participation and
        discussion among viewers of late-night comedy programming. In A. Amarasinga (Ed.), *The
        Stewart/Colbert effect: Essays on the real impact of fake news* (pp. 99–116). Jefferson, NC:
        McFarland.

Young, D. G., & Tisinger, R. (2006). Dispelling late-night myths: News consumption among late-night
        comedy viewers and the predictors of exposure to various late-night shows. *International Journal
        of Press/Politics*, *11*, 113–134.

Appendix

Please tell me how strongly you *agree* or *disagree* with each of the following statements about the Occupy Wall Street protests: strongly agree (4), somewhat agree (3), somewhat disagree (2), strongly disagree (1), don't know/refused coded as missing.

Criticism of Protesters (Mean of 6 items)
1.   "The protesters were out of line."
2.   "The protesters were violent."
3.   "The protesters were troublemakers."
4.   "The protesters were disrespectful."
5.   "The protesters were annoying."
6.   "It is important to listen to these protesters." (Rev)

Perceptions of Protest Effectiveness (Mean of 5 items)
1.   "The protests were a waste of time." (Rev)
2.   "The protesters provided a useful service to democracy."
3.   "The protests were an effective way to influence public opinion."
4.   "The protesters offered new insights on social issues."
5.   "The protesters brought issues to my attention."

Identification with Protesters (Mean of 3 items)
1.   "I share some of the protesters' viewpoints."
2.   "The protesters' actions were justified."
3.   "I would consider getting involved with a group who supported causes similar to those of the protesters."

Support for Protesters' Expressive Rights (Mean of 3 items)
1.   "The protesters have a right to protest."
2.   "The protesters should not be allowed to protest in public places." (Rev)
3.   "The protesters have the right to be heard."

Criticism of Police (Mean of 5 items)
1.   "Police actions toward the protesters were justified." (Rev)
2.   "During the protests, the police were out of line."
3.   "During the protests, the police used excessive force."
4.   "During the protests, the police had a role in initiating conflicts."
5.   "During the protests, the police were violent."

Protest Newsworthiness (Mean of 4 items)
1.   "The media should provide these protesters with the means to be heard."
2.   "It is the media's obligation to cover these types of protests."
3.   "News stories about these protests aren't of interest to the public."
4.   "The public can learn a lot from stories about these protests."