

Propositional Journalism and Navigational Leadership in Tasmania

Bill Dodd – University of Tasmania

Bill.Dodd@utas.edu.au

The future is a world that communication serves to anticipate and construct in the present; a world populated by propositions and developments which, before materialising, are often mediated by journalists' everyday decisions concerning newsworthiness, source selection and framing. This category of reporting, which I term 'propositional journalism', plays a vital role in democratic societies by providing the public with a range of options and alternatives to consider. It is also an important source of public optimism—counteracting pervasive disaster, crime and corruption reporting. However, it is a category of reporting that has been subjected to criticism. According to David Beers (2006, p. 121), the news media's reporting of the future is limited by the visions and propositions of, 'corporate-funded think tanks, public relations experts paid by corporations, advertising experts selling us the shape of the new, and government officials beholden to corporate lobbyists.

In response to this critique, and a lack of research on proposition-centred reporting in the academic literature, this paper presents the findings from a case study analysis of propositional journalism in Tasmania where, perhaps more than anywhere else, propositions (dams and pulp mills especially) have fixated political discourse and provoked bitter controversy. The study sought to identify whose voices were most prominent in pitching and commenting on propositions and how this type of reporting was framed. Over a six month sample comprising 1,172 proposition-centred articles from the three major, local news outlets—The Mercury (Hobart), The Examiner (Launceston) and ABC Tasmania (state-wide)—the research found that politician and business sources together represented more than two-thirds of all sources. This paper argues that their prominence was legitimised by the metaphorical framing of news articles. The most common framing devices appeared to celebrate leadership qualities which were identified as proficiency in navigation, construction, gambling, nurturance and marketing. These metaphorical virtues tended to legitimise the dominant political and business sources and served to construct alternative sources and propositions as unreliable and illegitimate.

Introduction

The Australian island-state of Tasmania, like many communities that have historically relied upon primary industry and manufacturing, is facing challenges and negotiating fiercely contested visions of the state's future, often through the local Tasmanian news media. In this type of discourse, which I term 'propositional', news media have an important but relatively unexamined role in mediating propositions for change. Audiences often expect journalists to forewarn their communities of impending disasters and risks (Beck, 1992, 2009; Caygill, 2000; Smith, 2005) and alert them to opportunities, solutions and best practice alternatives (Beers, 2006; Bornstein and Davis, 2010; Huffington, 2015). However, there are doubts about the suitability of news texts to reliably report information about the future and source that information from a diversity of sources. Beers suggested that, in 'future-focused journalism', corporate interests tend to monopolise the range of propositions and proponents and discredit alternative ideas:

Going back to Habermas' ideal, democracy is best served by a public sphere where competing visions of the future can be expressed and subjected to debate without skewing or censorship to fit the agendas of capitalist media owners or government officialdom. [However] The ones given space to frame our collective future tend to be denizens of corporate-funded think tanks, public relations experts paid by corporations advertising experts selling us the shape of the new, and government officials beholden to corporate lobbyists. (2006, p. 121)

Without a diversity of propositions and ideas, there can only ever be a simulacrum of democratic deliberation bracketed by the limited range of ideas under consideration. In response to this critique, this paper examines a 2014 sample of Tasmanian propositional journalism (where development politics has been highly controversial) to determine which voices were most prominent and how such articles were framed. Ultimately, it will be argued that the relative dominance of a specific demographic, namely male politicians and entrepreneurs, was reflected in the metaphorical language used to evaluate and describe the act of proposing an idea for the future. In particular, this paper will highlight the importance of navigational metaphors to the evaluation of leadership quality in news texts and editorials, and how such evaluations may exclude alternative sources and legitimise the symbolic power of influential proponents.

Tasmania and Development Conflict

Controversial propositions have been a feature of Tasmanian political discourse since the controversial flooding of Lake Pedder in 1972 which precipitated the formation of the world's first environmental political party (Beresford, 2015, p. 19). The subsequent dam proposal for the Franklin River was famously prevented as a result of local and national protests (Doyle, 2005, p. 100) as was the proposed Wesley Vale pulp mill in 1989 (Beresford, 2015, p. 64). However, most recently, debate has centred on the woodchip export company, Gunns Limited, and their apparent co-optation of the Tasmanian political establishment in attempting to establish a pulp mill in the Tamar Valley. This latest episode in the ongoing development/conservation conflict and the accompanying debate over propositional legitimacy and democratic deliberation provides the most relevant context for this research of propositional journalism in 2014.

Since the 1980s, Gunns Limited had been the preeminent Tasmanian timber and woodchip company accounting for nearly 85 percent of all forestry operations (Krien, 2012, p. 158). After merging with several competitors in 2001, the company possessed an enormous portfolio of businesses and properties including, "almost 170,000 hectares of private land, of which 100,000 hectares were under hardwood plantation" (Beresford, 2015, p. 64). By 2004, further expansion of the company involved construction of a controversial pulp mill to add value to the company's forestry products and stabilise fluctuations in demand for their woodchip products. However, in making its case for a pulp mill, Gunns had been ruthless in its condemnation of critics and activists. Just days before it announced a feasibility study into the controversial Tamar Valley Pulp Mill, 20 prominent critics of the company were targeted with a defamation suit worth \$6.3 million (Beresford, 2015, p. 207). These legal challenges, often termed 'SLAPP suits' (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation), were widely seen as a strategy to silence opponents of the new development and, according to Krien, "intimidate its defendants and other potential critics in the wider community" (2012, p. 172).

In addition to this aggressive legal strategy, Gunns' CEO, John Gay, had controversially leveraged great influence with Tasmanian politicians. Notably, this included the then Labor Premier, Paul Lennon, but also former Liberal Premier, Robin Gray (a former company board member; Denholm, 2013). Forestry had long been a cooperative effort between government and business with the state-owned Forestry Tasmania legally required to supply the forestry industry with no less than 300,000 cubic metres of resource each year. However, a report to the Tasmanian Government claimed the volume was inherently unsustainable (West, 2012, p. 2). However, the close association between Gunns Limited and government became newly controversial when, in 2007, Gay was able to secure an exception from the standard approvals process with the introduction of the 'Pulp Mill Assessment Bill', to 'fast track' approval of the project (Beresford, 2015, p. 275-276). According to the Tasmanian correspondent for *The Australian* newspaper, Matthew Denholm, this special treatment and avoidance of environmental oversight, "further undermined mainstream public support for the project", with the charge of corruption and cronyism undermining the company's efforts to secure financial investment and public support for the project (2013, no page).

Ultimately, in September 2012, Gunns Limited declared bankruptcy and went into voluntary administration, undone by a sophisticated environmental campaign that targeted financial investors and consumers of forestry products in the global market (Lester, 2014, p. 170). While recriminations concerning this episode and the subsequent recession are ongoing (Schultz and Cica, 2013; Van Tigglen, 2014), this victory could be interpreted as marking a power rebalance in Tasmania and highlighting the importance of 'social license' for advancing propositions (Lester, 2016). However, using this research's chosen focus on propositionality as a key locus of power and agency, such victories represent only a limited form of obstructionist power. The extent to which actors in the conservation movement were also empowered to legitimately advance alternative propositions in public discourse, rather than merely object to other's propositions, was not confirmed in this victory. Rather, such victories were often described in passive terms and in opposition to constructive propositionality. West argued that, "in Tasmania, we've arrived at a situation in which if any interest group regards itself as disadvantaged by a development proposal—whether materially or in terms of its values—there is insufficient weight on the pro-development side to push through resistance to change" (2013, p. 56). This common critique of conservation groups as merely anti-development does not consider whether alternative voices are denied a more proactive position is propositional discourse beyond obstructionism. While fierce conflict over a given proposition gives the perception of a democratic two-sided contest, asymmetries in whose propositions become the object of discursive struggle, can reveal more structural asymmetries and exclusions in public discourse concerning who can legitimately propose change and have their idea taken seriously in news media.

In a provocative passage which captures a key motivation for examining propositional journalism in Tasmania, Boyce (1996) highlighted the continuing denigration and suppression of alternative ideas and innovations in Tasmanian political discourse. Boyce states, "we have allowed our history to be defined by the actions of this small group of very powerful men whose direct experience of living here was buffered by capital and privilege" (1996, p. 40). This elite circle promoted the idea that, "there is no other way than the present 'practical path' of 'growth' and 'development'", and accordingly, "by defining what is 'normal' and 'realistic'", continue to, "misrepresent alternative economic and social structures... as the impractical, untested dreamland of a crazy few" (Boyce, 1996, pp. 57-58).

The Gunns period was characterised by a concentration of power and a myopic focus on the proposed pulp mill, however, in the wake of its bankruptcy some have pointed to a decentralization in leadership and power in propositional debates. In particular, the idea of ‘New Tasmania’ (Stratford, 2006) purported to represent a period of democratic, economic and political renewal. Local and interstate media outlets have since covered ideas from a range of notable individuals. Gambler and gallery owner, David Walsh, has successfully placed his constantly evolving project, The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), at the forefront of efforts to revitalise the state’s economy (Franklin, 2014). In Tasmania’s north-west, an area badly affected by the forestry downturn, bold urban renewal programs were suggested; notably, the rebuilding of Devonport into a ‘Living City’ according to the ‘Living City Master Plan’. But in perhaps the most symbolic development, the Triabunna woodchip mill, formerly a monument to Tasmania’s woodchip export industry, was purchased by environmental philanthropists and dismantled with the intention of replacing it with a tourism and arts precinct (Van Tigglen, 2014). This renegotiation of Tasmania’s future was also evident in *The Griffith Review’s* recent edition, ‘Tasmania: The Tipping Point’ (Schultz and Cica, 2013); a collection of critical reflections on Tasmania’s uncertain future, and the journal’s subsequent collaboration with The University of Tasmania (*The Conversation*, 2013). In this context, this research’s sample period represents an important moment of transition and optimism with a proliferation of new ideas for the future arising and forming stories in local news media.

Propositional Journalism

Propositional journalism is, for the most part, located at the intersection of journalism and political speech or, more broadly, ‘governmental speech’ (Hage, 2012, p. 46) where propositions for change are reported to the public through news. Journalism has a normative responsibility—whether as the Fourth Estate (Schultz, 1998), as informing the public sphere (Habermas, 1991), or in promoting liberalism’s ‘free market of ideas’ (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956, pp. 43–71)—to report and scrutinise the pronouncements of politicians. This inevitably brings news texts into contact with political discourse which, it has been argued, tends to be oriented towards the future. In Aristotle’s typology of rhetoric, political speech, “is concerned with the future: it is about things to be done hereafter that he advises for or against” (1992, p. 15). Similarly, for sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1991), the symbolic power of politicians is precisely the power to make the future come about through speech. “In politics”, wrote Bourdieu, “‘to say is to do’, that is, it is to get people to believe that you can do what you say” (1991, p. 190). Thus, in his view, the future itself could merely be termed “political truth” (1991, p. 191).

Propositionally is a central part of political speech and the future is often made present in news by incorporating and scrutinising political pronouncements. Accordingly, research concerning the mediation of the future has examined political rhetoric and how political discourse can shape public perceptions of possibility and futurity, often using paradigmatic examples such as President George Bush’s speech justifying the war in Iraq (Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2008; Dunmire, 2005), or in the predictions and promises made during election campaigns (Jaworski and Fitzgerald, 2008). However, the authority to make politician-like pronouncements regarding the future and have them considered and broadcast through the news is not monopolised by elected politicians. Planners, economists, scientists, sociologists, ecologists are all free to formulate and propose ideas for change and often appear to do so in news texts. Sources that propose change can

be considered as possessing a general type of political power which Hage terms ‘governmental power’:

While the holding of state power can be an efficient mode of ‘governmental’ power, the latter can merely be the feeling that one is legitimately entitled in the course of everyday life to make a governmental / managerial statement about the nation — to have a view about its foreign policy, for example, or to have a governmental / managerial attitude towards others; especially those who are perceived to be lesser national or non-nationals, to have a view about who they can be and where they can go. (2012, p. 46)

The field of governmental power, for Hage, is intended to explain who and how individuals accumulate national ‘belonging’ such that they feel legitimately entitled to comment on the future of their locality. My appropriation of the term, while possibly incorporating the accumulation of national capital, is primarily oriented towards news access and source legitimacy in propositional journalism. In particular, this study asks what types of symbolic capital (Benson, 2013; Bourdieu, 1991; Thompson, 2013) news sources require in order to make credible statements about the future and how that legitimacy is conferred on them and their idea through news framing in the media. Being ‘legitimately entitled’ to make a recommendation for the direction of the nation is unequally distributed and reliant on either the quantity of cultural or economic capital one possesses, or both (Bourdieu, 2011). For instance, a private investor with a proposal that involves investing large economic capital into Tasmania is immediately taken seriously within the governmental field. Alternatively, various types of cultural capital relating to one’s leadership qualities are also relevant legitimising symbols in the field. How these leaders and their ideas should be evaluated is implied in the news framing of propositional journalism and, in particular, in the use of common metaphorical devices.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this investigation were:

1. Which type of voices were most prominent in Tasmanian propositional journalism and which professions were most represented?
2. How was the act of proposing framed in the news reports? And how did these frames allude to ideal leadership qualities, conceived as symbolic capital.
3. How did these news frames correspond with the relative source prevalence across the sample?

Methodology

Data Collection

During this inquiry, 1,172 articles were collected from three Tasmanian news outlets—*The Mercury*, *The Examiner* and ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) *Tasmania*—over a six-month sample in 2014. These news outlets were chosen because they represented a diversity of ownership models, regional locations and broadcast mediums: *The Mercury*, based in the state capital of Hobart, is the largest selling daily newspaper in Tasmania with a yearly readership of 78,000 in 2016 (Roy Morgan Research, 2017); *The Examiner* newspaper services the city of Launceston and the north of

Tasmania with a much smaller readership; and *ABC Tasmania*, with a 25% prime-time share, is more popular in Tasmania than anywhere else in Australia (Spiegelman, 2015), and provides local and national content through nightly news bulletins on television and also through its [online platform](#).

The articles were collected over three, two-month sample periods in 2014: April–May, August–September and November–December. The division of the sample period was designed to capture a greater variety of propositions and proponents over the year. The last sample period, November–December, was chosen to collect summary articles and editorials which typically surmise the state’s progress that year and hopes for the coming year.

The newspaper articles were found using the online database of news text, NewsBank, while the *ABC Tasmania* articles were sourced using the ‘Google advance’ tool for searching within a nominated URL (Universal Resource Locator), which enabled searching the ABC’s [online database](#) for relevant articles. By scanning through a collection of propositional articles, a number of key words were observed which allowed more efficient identification of propositional journalism. These search terms were: “future” OR “opportunity” OR “proposal” OR “idea” OR “bid” OR “plan” OR “push” OR “vision” AND “Tasmania” OR “Burnie” OR “Hobart” OR “Launceston”. Including the place name ‘Tasmania’ and the three largest cities, ‘Hobart’, ‘Launceston’ and ‘Burnie’, in the search terms excluded articles which did not relate to Tasmania. However, the sample produced through this initial search tended to also produce non-propositional articles which required individual sorting. For the purpose of sorting, a ‘propositional article’ was defined as an editorial, opinion piece or straight news item that was centrally concerned with a potentiality that was advocated for by any given source.

Metaphor Analysis

This research employed a ‘metaphor analysis’ methodology (Hellsten, Porter and Nerlich, 2014) to locate and organise key ‘framing devices’ (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989) into coherent news frames. As opposed to approaches to frame analysis that primarily examine selection and salience in news texts (Entman, 1993), this approach considers word choice, figurative language, idioms, catchphrases and especially metaphors to be the most pertinent features for identifying news frames. Metaphors are considered important devices for evaluative frames of ‘political morality’ regarding what should be done and reasoning about moral political leadership (Lakoff, 1996; Lakoff and Johnson, 2008). Secondly, metaphors may allude to symbolic capital (markers of social status) which are relevant to specific fields of power such as the governmental field or, in Bourdieu’s (1998) analysis, the field of education and the ‘state nobility’. Bourdieu and Lakoff’s focus on metaphor as a means of making evaluative judgments is adopted in this research to gain an appreciation for how propositions are evaluated and how those evaluations are present in the way metaphors were deployed in propositional journalism. Following this approach, all instances of metaphorical language were collected and grouped into conceptually related categories to determine the most prevalent evaluative metaphors used to describe the act of proposing.

Source Analysis

The research also sought to determine the most prominent news sources in the sample. A news source was defined as anyone quoted directly in stories. Typically, a news article’s most important source, or ‘primary definer’ (Hall et al, 2013, p. 57), is quoted early in the text; often in the lead or,

less commonly, in attributive headlines (Saxena, 2006). Accordingly, rather than including all quoted text from the articles, only the first three quoted sources were quantified and formed an overall tally of the most important and prevalent sources. This list was further narrowed to include only the top 20 most quoted sources from each news outlet.

In the extended research project, this text analysis was complimented with semi-structured interviews with Tasmanian journalists and editors as well as observation of daily news meetings. Editors of newspapers were especially valuable because editorials, more than other kinds of news, tended to employ a moral language of leadership quality and virtue which were relevant considering the research questions. As such, editorials provided good case studies for illustrating how metaphors were deployed in evaluations of leadership quality and legitimacy in the governmental field.

Propositions and Sources

The sample period produced both a great diversity of propositions and proponents, but also a great discrepancy in the relative attention they received. Across the 1,172 articles in the sample, there were 227 propositions which were advanced and commented upon by 945 news sources. Propositions ranged from local initiatives which received only a passing mention in news reports, to geopolitical realignments and opportunities which dominated news coverage for weeks at a time. The most discussed proposition in the sample was the prospect of stronger economic ties with China which was precipitated by the high-profile visit of The Premier of China, Xi Jinping, to Tasmania. *The Mercury* celebrated the arrival with a special issue featuring a wrap-around front page in the Chinese national colours of red and yellow. Across all outlets, anticipation of the historic visit and its significance filled 71 articles, including numerous editorials and op-eds.

The relative prevalence of sources through the sample was similarly divergent. While many sources were quoted only once throughout the sample, The Tasmanian Premier, Will Hodgman, was quoted 99 times, more than any other source. A list of the key sources in the sample is provided in Table 1 which ranks the 20 most cited sources from each news outlet. This list of powerful sources reveals several commonalities and asymmetries. In terms of professions, politicians (marked blue) were the most quoted comprising 61% of the 20 most quoted sources. One source, Robert Dobrynski (marked green) was categorised as a public servant. Entrepreneurs and industry representatives (marked yellow and red) were the second most quoted type of source making up 26% of the top 20 most quoted sources. The list was also notable for being almost exclusively masculine with the 20 most quoted men being cited in 632 articles while the women in the top 20 list were only cited in 74 articles. This would suggest that the most prevalent sources in propositional journalism were around 90% more likely to be men than women. While the sources in Table 1 were all recognisable, leaders within the Tasmanian community, the limited gender and professional makeup of this group raised questions about how leadership was defined and evaluated in the sample. Considering these discrepancies in source prevalence, it can be concluded that masculinity, political acumen and entrepreneurialism were legitimising values for entry into the governmental field.

<i>ABC Tasmania</i>		<i>The Mercury</i>		<i>The Examiner</i>	
Name	Quotes	Name	Quotes	Name	Quotes
Will Hodgman	44	Will Hodgman	35	Will Hodgman	20
Paul Harriss	22	Luke Martin	32	Andrew Nikolic	12
Bryan Green	18	Matthew Groom	29	Matthew Groom	12
Peter Gutwein	18	Michael Ferguson	22	Albert van Zetten	11
Michael Ferguson	17	Jan Davis	18	Jeremy Rockliff	11
Matthew Groom	15	Bryan Green	17	Luke Martin	11
Damon Thomas	13	Paul Harriss	15	Jan Davis	10
Jeremy Rockliff	13	Adrian Bold	14	Bryan Green	9
Christine Milne	11	Peter Gutwein	13	Michael Ferguson	9
Luke Martin	10	Jeremy Rockliff	12	Robert Dobrynski	9
Andrew Wilkie	9	Damon Thomas	11	Rene Hidding	7
Kim Booth	9	Dean Coleman	11	Peter Rathjen	6
Richard Colbeck	9	Jeff Briscoe	9	Maree Tetlow	5
Eric Abetz	8	Michael Bailey	9	Peter Gutwein	5
Cassy O'Connor	7	Tony Abbott	9	Vanessa Cahoon	5
Jan Davis	7	Andrew Wilkie	8	Eric Hutchinson	4
Graeme Wood	6	Nick McKim	8	Gillon McLauchlan	4
Nick McKim	6	Kim Booth	7	Robin McKendrick	4
Rene Hidding	6	Liz Jack	7	Brett Whitely	3
Adrian Bold	5	Mark Ryan	7	Christopher Pyne	3

Table 1. Top 20 sources in 2014 sample.

Navigational Metaphors and the Evaluation of Leadership

Leadership values and virtues were present in the metaphorical framing of many articles and arguably served to legitimise the prevailing political and business sources. The most common metaphorical expressions in the sample related to navigation and likened good navigation to good

leadership. This metaphor was essentially spatial and conceived the past, present and future as positions in space and individual agency as movement and direction. According to this metaphor, the leader is responsible for setting the direction and charting a course between the past (behind) and the future (ahead).

Reasoning about leadership in terms of navigation employed culturally salient navigational figures in order to reason about leadership quality. Language relating to ‘maps’, ‘journeys’, ‘pathways’, ‘steps in the right direction’, ‘charting a course’, a ‘firm hand on the tiller’, ‘launch’, ‘drive’, ‘turnaround’ and ‘landmark’ all formed part of a semantic network relating to navigation. The application of this language to the question of leadership formed a ‘complex metaphor’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, pp. 60–73) that was comprised of simple metaphorical components. Translated into similes, this frame implied that a leader is like a navigator, citizens/customers are like passengers, a plan is like a map, progress is like movement, goals are like stops along the way, challenges are like obstacles to movement and achieving the ultimate goal is like reaching the final destination. Overall, there were 1,946 navigational metaphors recorded from the sample making this the most prevalent metaphor for reasoning about propositions and proponents.

Navigational Virtues

Besides the strictly spatial aspects of the metaphor, many necessary virtues relating to navigation valorised a certain style of navigational leadership in the context of post-recession Tasmania. This could be seen in relation to the proposed rebuilding or renovation of the Royal Hobart Hospital where, in the words of one editorial, “The State Government has provided a largely *steady hand* since taking office in March”, however, “it has not all been *smooth sailing*” (Editorial, 2014a, no page, emphasis added). This nautical version of the metaphor inferred that a steady hand makes for smooth sailing. Similarly, a passage from an editorial titled provided a hyperbolic description of the strength of hand required to lead Tasmania:

Mr Ferguson has been one of the Government’s strongest performers since taking power. Calm and collected, he has *taken the proverbial bull by the horns* and *set the health system on a course* of meaningful restructure and reform. (Editorial, 2014b, no page, emphasis added)

In this passage, Tasmania was likened to an unruly bull that required the strongest and most courageous of leaders to take it by the horns or, as another editorial put it, “firmly grasp the reins and lead the way” (Editorial, 2014c, no page). The value placed on the firmness of grip is perhaps unsurprising considering the stark gender imbalance shown in the source analysis. The famously strong grip of male politicians and entrepreneurs likely owes some of its cultural significance to the ubiquity of the navigational metaphor for evaluating leadership.

The physicality of navigational leadership in the sample was also implied in the association of leadership with competence in the fields of sport and war. For instance, one editorial likened the Liberal Premier of Tasmania to a wartime general:

...in recent days Mr Hodgman has raised his head above the trenches to lead the state’s charge against the Federal Government’s \$80 billion cuts to health and education. It is a battle well worth fighting... It is good to see Mr Hodgman showing some ticker and fighting for Tasmania’s fair share of resources. (Editorial, 2014d, no page)

Rather than simply moving, a military leader moves with a type of courage that, in the sample, was often denoted by the word 'bold'. Such ubiquitous formulations as 'bold plan', 'bold vision' or 'bold move' tended to celebrate courage, decisiveness and timeliness as seen, for example, in this richly metaphorical lead from *The Mercury*: "INVESTORS are ready to pounce to be part of Devonport's \$250 million revival now a master plan to steer the bold vision has been unveiled, Mayor Steve Martin says" (Kempton, 2014, p. 15).

While editorials often evaluated political leadership using a navigational metaphor, similar metaphors extended throughout the straight news reporting to describe political and entrepreneurial leaders. This was evident in the frequent use of the word 'push' which was used metaphorically to refer to propositions 158 times in the sample; 81% of the time by journalists themselves rather than news sources or editors. A headline in *The Examiner*, for instance, reported a, "Business push for rise in GST" (Burgess, 2014). The physicality of pushing rather than simply pointing the way or referring to a map again equated navigational virtue with strength. Success or failure of leadership was, therefore, a reflection of the strength and determination of the proponent to push their proposal in a given direction.

Elsewhere, a sporting conception of navigation was preferred which also highlighted the virtues of courage and strength. This could be seen in the editorial headlines, "Hodgman on the ball" (Editorial, 2014d), "Keep eyes on the ball" (Editorial, 2014e) and "It's time to play ball" (Editorial, 2014a). This metaphor repurposed idioms from popular ball sports like Australian Rules Football and Rugby League where the aim is generally, as a team, to navigate a way from one end of the ground to the other using a combination of skill, strength and wits. By applying these ideas to the evaluation of leadership, this frame implied that leaders should be quick to grasp opportunities as though they were balls. Accordingly, "The Government needs to make sure 2015 is a time when it grasps the opportunities and forges ahead with projects that have been delayed too long" (Editorial, 2014f), and where a missed opportunity, on the other hand, was often characterised as having "dropped the ball" (Editorial, 2014g).

Overall, the virtues of boldness, determination, courage, ruthlessness, decisiveness and discipline were celebrated in editorials' frequent use of sporting, military and navigational metaphors. While these traits are not intrinsically masculine and women are increasingly earning recognition in these traditionally masculine fields, they nonetheless correspond with recognisable stereotypes of male leadership. Such stereotypes have been found to effect the relative evaluations of women and male leaders. For instance, in a large meta-analysis of leadership evaluation surveys, Eagly, Makhijani and Klonsky found that "women are negatively evaluated when they exhibit masculine leadership styles" (1992, p. 16). The "gender-role congruency hypothesis" (1992, p. 16) which was confirmed in the study suggests that the prevalence of hyper masculine metaphors to evaluate leadership would be a likely explanation for the relative invisibility of female sources in the sample.

Navigational Distractions

One consequence of editors' use of a navigation metaphor was the frequent warning, found in editorials over the sample, that leaders should not be seduced by dreams and delusions which might lead the state down the wrong path. The request for governments to be more realistic in their goals and promises often took the form of an anti-utopian discourse. This played upon the contrast between clear vision as indispensable for navigation, as opposed to delusions, dreams, short-

sightedness or blindness, which are clearly flaws in any navigator. An editorial in *The Mercury* titled, “Dream the achievable” (Editorial, 2014h), listed a range of failed projects in Tasmania that had promised a way out of Tasmania’s economic mire but had proven unrealistic. Their mirage-like quality, the editorial suggested, was a product of public relations pyrotechnics, so visually appealing that they distracted the state’s leaders, taking them off-course. These included: “grand designs”, “big projects announced in a blaze of publicity that often failed to materialise”, or “big-ticket developments”, “proudly spruiked as a saviour”. In the editorials, such projects were ultimately unsubstantial, delusional or absurd – “bread and circuses built on hot air” (Editorial, 2014e), or “like a movie without a script” (Editorial, 2014h). Elsewhere, *The Mercury* described a controversial cable car proposal for Mount Wellington as, “a mirage – a wonderful vision that disappears the closer you look” (Editorial, 2014i). Leaders should guard against these tempting visions. To avoid these sirens of the governmental field, leaders should proceed methodically and step-by-step which, as this editorial suggested, could ultimately bring the state to a grand utopian future:

The new Liberal Government would do well to instead concentrate on creating a development climate for projects that are achievable and sustainable. A number of successful, smaller developments can easily add up to create a vibrant economy, jobs, and a future for coming generations—a big dream come true. (Editorial, 2014h, no page)

The preference for small steps over dreams can be considered as ideologically opposed to government largess and intervention in the free market, perhaps recalling Friedrich Hayek’s (1976) famous navigational critique of government intervention in ‘The Road to Serfdom’. This position is consistent with free market approaches according to which small projects emerge organically and without government investment. Overall, “It is only a matter of joining the dots to understand where Tasmania is headed” (Editorial, 2014j), rather than concocting a utopian future. This valorisation of small business and decentralised leadership partly explains *The Mercury*’s source list which was more evenly spread between politicians and business leaders.

Part of the distraction of dreams and delusions within this metaphor was a dangerous proclivity for drunkenness which was constructed in opposition to sober rational judgment. In *The Mercury* good leadership often required, “sober heads and a calm approach” (2014e), and encouraged leaders to proceed with, “a due sense of prudence and sobriety” (Editorial, 2014k), or, “a calm sense of urgency and a clear head” (Editorial, 2014l). Often these emotions expressed themselves in, what editors saw as, hasty and thoughtless decision making on the part of the public and public stakeholders. “Too often projects and ideas are met with a sudden and often harsh ‘no’, which is based on emotion and historical differences” (Editorial, 2014m). This critique of poor leadership played upon the deafness and insensitivity of the drunk who does not respond to the needs of others. On controversial issues, editorials called for open and calm discussion. This sober community engagement is overlooked when leaders act with, “malice, or with a fool’s haste” (Editorial, 2014n).

Metaphorically, sobriety and intoxication are commonly used to reflect on emotional states of mind; often with the implication that strong emotion is inimical with sound rational judgment. As Lakoff and Johnson observed in a critique of Kantian ethics, “The vices of drunkenness and gluttony make us unfit for rational deliberation and thereby diminish, or even discard temporarily, our autonomy as rational beings” (1999, p. 434). For Lakoff (1996), Kant’s philosophy of morality is an archetype of the ‘strict father’ morality that he identifies elsewhere as central to conservative

thought. According to this worldview, drunkenness is especially dangerous because the highest moral good is ‘moral strength’ and ‘strength of will’ which are weakened under the effects of intoxication leading to moral failure. In the metaphorical construction of leadership as navigation, strength and determination are similarly prized and heady emotions are considered dangerous distractions. In the context of post-recession Tasmania, where budget deficits and government spending were salient propositions, the virtue of sobriety was also an injunction towards government prudence and a valorisation of business-minded leaders.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a case study of Tasmanian propositional journalism and an analysis of metaphor and evaluative schema which, it has been argued, corresponded with patterns of news access across a six-month survey of three prominent news outlets. The most frequently used metaphorical devices in the sample reflected a coherent schema for evaluating leadership in the context of post-recession Tasmania, which served to legitimise the reliance on entrepreneurial and political sources.

This paper was motivated by a desire to add nuance and detail to David Beers’ critique of the reporting of propositions. While there was certainly value and impact in David Beers’ critique of the monopolisation of corporate interests over the range of propositions and proponents, he did not provide an explanation for why news access in this type of reporting was especially restricted beyond the fact that the news outlets were owned by corporations (Beers, 2006). Positing corporate ownership as solely determining news content and practice, according to Bourdieu, “condemns without shedding light anywhere, and ultimately explains nothing” (1999, p. 39). The source analysis of Tasmanian outlets largely confirmed that reporting of the future was led by a restricted range of professions and genders: primarily male politician and business representatives.

This research sought to specify who the leading sources were in Tasmanian propositional journalism and work towards an explanation for this restricted governmental field. As opposed to ideological and hegemonic explanations, I have sought to couch these cultural and political structures in more recognisable and commonly utilised language which, I have argued, is the language of morality and metaphor. This approach provides a common language between academics, journalists and their sources. It is intended to promote a reflexive consideration of the cultural structures that place leadership value on such a limited range of actors. This research, by organizing metaphorical language into coherent conceptual frames, found that a navigational construction of leadership was especially prevalent in the sample which arguably served to valorise masculine political and business sources.

The valuation of these dominant news sources and the naturalisation of their legitimacy in articulating plans and visions for the future, was supported by a navigational understanding of leadership quality. The courage, ruthlessness and determination required of navigators was illustrated using traditionally masculine activities such as captaining a ship, taming wild animals, playing ball sports and conducting war. Simultaneously, however, by warning against navigational distractions such as drunken anger and violence, or ideological dreams and mirages, editors sought to curb excessive masculinity in leaders. Accordingly, this paper found that good leadership required a “conciliation of opposites” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 17). Good leadership was ultimately constructed as moderation and control, albeit within a strongly gendered ideal. Understanding of the relationship between news access and metaphor in Tasmanian propositional journalism could

be improved with further comparative research. Tasmania in 2014 represented a newly masculine political environment with pro-business Liberal governments elected at a national and state level, both replacing female leaders. It would be of interest, therefore, to examine whether changing leadership genders and attitudes towards business interests would correspond with a different construction of valuable leadership.

Acknowledgements

The research used in this paper forms part of a larger doctoral thesis supervised by Professor Libby Lester and Dr Katrina Clifford of The University of Tasmania whose support and advice I am thankful for.

References

- Andrews, A. (2012, August 28). Tasmania in recession: Eslake. *The Examiner*. Retrieved from <http://www.examiner.com.au/story/265776/tasmania-in-recession-eslake/>
- Aristotle. (2004). *Rhetoric* (R. Roberts, Trans.). Mineola, New York: Dover Publications.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. London, UK: Sage
- Beck, U. (2009). *World at risk*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Beers, D. (2006). The public sphere and online, independent journalism. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 29(1) 109-130.
- Bennett, W. L., Lawrence, R. G., and Livingston, S. (2008). *When the press fails: Political power and the news media from Iraq to Katrina*. Berkeley: University of Chicago Press.
- Benson, R. (2013). *Shaping immigration news: A French-American comparison*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Beresford, Q. (2015). *The rise and fall of Gunns Ltd*. Kensington, Australia: NewSouth Publishing.
- Bornstein, D., and Davis, S. (2010). *Social entrepreneurship: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *The state nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999). *On television*. New York City, NY: The New Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Masculine domination*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital. In I. Szeman & T. Kaposy (Eds.), *Cultural theory: An anthology* (pp. 81-93). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Boyce, J. (1996 Autumn). Journeying Home. *Island*, 66, 38-63.
- Burgess, G. (2014, April 4). Business push for rise in GST. *The Examiner*, p. 5
- Caygill, H. (2000). Liturgies of fear: Biotechnology and culture. In B. Adam, U. Beck & J. Van Loon (Eds.), *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*. London, UK: SAGE, 155-164.
- Denholm, M. (2013, May 4). One almighty crash. *The Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekendaustrianmagazine/onealmighty-crash/news-story/54cf7eb9edd6a7883943c1d584508999>
- Doyle, R. J. (2005). *America and Australia: Writings and Observations from the 'Empire' and 'Van Diemen's Land'*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

- Dunmire, P. L. (2005). Preempting the future: Rhetoric and ideology of the future in political discourse. *Discourse and Society*, 16(4), 481-513.
- Editorial: It's time to play ball [Editorial]. (2014a, August 4). *The Mercury*, p. 12.
- Editorial: Devil in detail of RHH plan [Editorial]. (2014b, December 8) *The Mercury*, p. 12
- Editorial: Prosperity a state of mind [Editorial]. (2014c, April 30) *The Mercury*, p. 18
- Editorial: Hodgman on the ball [Editorial]. (2014d, May 20) *The Mercury*, p. 10
- Editorial: Keep eyes on the ball [Editorial]. (2014e, April 17) *The Mercury*, p. 22
- Editorial: Our chance to shine [Editorial]. (2014f, December 29) *The Mercury*, p. 14
- Editorial: Connected to the world [Editorial]. (2014g, August 15) *The Mercury*, p. 20
- Editorial: Dream the achievable [Editorial]. (2014h, May 26) *The Mercury*, p. 12
- Editorial: She's comin round the mountain [Editorial]. (2014i, April 16) *The Mercury*, p. 20
- Editorial: Joining up the dots [Editorial]. (2014j, November 22) *The Mercury*, p. 32
- Editorial: In search of the wild [Editorial]. (2014k, November 12) *The Mercury*, p. 16
- Editorial: Rolling up the sleeves [Editorial]. (2014l, May 30) *The Mercury*, p. 24
- Editorial: Embrace our diversity [Editorial]. (2014m, September 15) *The Mercury*, p. 12
- Editorial: Tasmania ready to go [Editorial]. (2014n, November 18) *The Mercury*, p. 14
- Eagly, A., Makhijani, M. G., and Klonsky, B. (1992). Gender and the evaluation of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 111(1), 3-22.
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *The Journal of Communication*, 43.
- Franklin, A. (2014). *The Making of MONA*. Melbourne, VIC: Viking.
- Gamson, W. A., and Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of sociology*, 1-37.
- Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.
- Hage, G. (2012). *White nation: Fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., and Roberts, B. (2013). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hayek, F. A. (1976). *The Road to Serfdom*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Hellsten, I., Porter, A. J., and Nerlich, B. (2014). Imagining the Future at the Global and National Scale: A Comparative Study of British and Dutch Press Coverage of Rio 1992 and Rio 2012. *Environmental Communication*, pp. 1-21.
- Huffington, A. (2015). What's Working: All the News That's Fit to Print. Retrieved 14 November, 2017 from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/whats-working-all-the-news_b_6603924.html
- Jaworski, A., and Fitzgerald, R. (2008). 'This poll has not happened yet': temporal play in election predictions. *Discourse and Communication*, 2(1), 5-27.
- Kerr, R. (2008). Discourse and leadership: Using the paradigm of the permanent state of emergency. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 5(3), 201-216
- Kempton, H. (2014, August 8). Plan to breathe new life into port. *The Mercury*, p. 15
- Krien, A. (2012). *Into the Woods: The Battle for Tasmania's Forests*. Carlton, VIC: Black Inc.
- Lakoff, G. (1996). *Moral politics: What conservatives know that liberals don't*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Lakoff, G., and Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*. New York, NY: Basic books.
- Lakoff, G., and Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago press.
- Lester, L. (2014). Transnational publics and environmental conflict in the Asian century. *Media International Australia*, 150(1), 167-178.
- Lester, L. (2016). Media and social licence: on being publicly useful in the Tasmanian forests conflict. *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*, 89(5), 542-551.
- Roy Roy Morgan Research Research (2017). *Australian Newspaper Readership, 12 Months to December 2016*. Retrieved from <http://www.roymorgan.com/industries/media/readership/readership-archive>
- Saxena, S. (2006). *Headline writing*. London, UK: Sage.
- Schultz, J. (1998). *Reviving the fourth estate: Democracy, accountability and the media*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Schultz, J., and Cica, N. (2013). *Griffith REVIEW 39: Tasmania-The Tipping Point?* (Vol. 39). Melbourne, VIC: Text Publishing.
- Siebert, F. S., Peterson, T., and Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press: The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. Champagne, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Smith, J. (2005). Dangerous news: Media decision making about climate change risk. *Risk analysis*, 25(6), 1471-1482.
- Spiegelman, J. (2015). *All about audiences: annual report 2015*. Retrieved from Australia: http://about.ABC.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2014-15_Annual_Report.pdf
- Stratford, E. (2006). Isolation as disability and resource: considering sub-national island status in the constitution of the 'New Tasmania'. *The Round Table*, 95(386), 575-588.
- Thompson, J. B. (2013). *Media and modernity: A social theory of the media*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.