

## LIKES AND DISLIKES: NEGATIVITY BIAS IN POLITICAL TV SERIES

Ioana Alexandra Manoliu  
Université de Montréal

**Abstract:** *In this article, I analyze people's comments about what they like most and least about two of the most popular political TV series in order to determine in which ways the content of the series (positive or negative) influence their answers. Results prove the existence of a negative bias in the case of series' opposite content as there is a clear difference between people's answers. The negative information triggered more reactions, people remembered more scenes, more details, analyzed more profoundly the double meanings and metaphors. On the other hand, people exposed to the positive series gave more general answers and remembered fewer details about characters and events.*

*Keywords: negativity bias, political TV series, positive/negative content.*

**Résumé :** *Dans cet article, j'analyse les commentaires des participants à une expérience sur le visionnement de deux séries politiques télévisées, afin de déterminer dans quelle mesure le contenu de la série (positif ou négatif) a une influence sur leurs réponses. Les résultats démontrent une différence claire entre les réponses des participants. L'information négative a provoqué plus de réactions : les participants se souvenaient davantage des scènes, avec plus de détails, et ont décortiqué le double message ainsi que les métaphores. En contraste, les gens ayant visionné la série positive ont évoqué des généralités, avec moins de détails sur les personnages et les événements.*

*Mots-clés : biais de négativité, séries politiques télévisées, contenu positif/négatif.*

## Introduction

In this article, I analyze people's comments about what they like most and least about two of the most popular political TV series, to determine in which ways the content of the series influences their answers. The common belief is that people are more influenced by the negative information than the positive one around them. Research has also proven the existence of media effects upon people's opinions and how negative portrayals of political events will make people more cynical towards politics (Capella & Jamieson, 1997). The majority of the popular political TV series (e.g. *House of Cards*, *Scandal*, *Madam Secretary*, *VEEP*, *Homeland*) are focusing on negativity by "pointing out people's problems" and "highlighting like the worst in people" (Hall, 2006, p. 198). The fictional characters of these series might induce people into believing that all the information provided (negative or positive) should be treated in the same manner, as pure fiction, with no connection to reality and therefore disregard it, without paying too much attention to it. But the other option is that people may be influenced by what they see and perceive the negative and positive aspects very differently. If that is the case, it is important to see if people are more influenced about the negative information they are exposed to in political TV series, or are they equally aware and affected by positive information.

Inspired by a research conducted by van Zoonen (2007), I explore, through a qualitative analysis, the patterns and differences in answers provided by participants in an experiment including two of the most popular political TV series, *House of Cards* and *The West Wing*. I conclude with a discussion section where I will offer potential explanations for the results found.

## Literature Review

The literature on cognition and opinion formation emphasizes on the concept of a negative bias, which argues that in general, things with a more negative connotation will have a higher impact on people. The positive things/information do not seem to have the same strong effect. In general, people focus more on the negative aspects and characteristics when they make

an impression about a person as positive traits are easier to disregard (Berry *et al.*, 1997; Fiske 1980). Negative information requires a more complex type of processing. This is why people tend to think and analyze more the negative events than the positive ones when they encounter them. Because processing takes longer in the case of negative information and because of the emotions involved, negative events tend also to be remembered more, and in great detail than the positive ones. “Bad impressions and bad stereotypes are quicker to form and more resistant to disconfirmation than good ones” (Baumeister *et al.*, 2001, p. 323).

In political science, voting behaviour in particular presents a good evidence for the negativity bias. When having to choose whom to vote for, people are more impacted by the negative information they receive about the candidate, than by the positive one. Jill Klein (1991) explores the negativity effect by looking at people’s impressions about presidential candidates, using the National Election Survey Study from 1984 and 1988. She finds out that in the case of candidates’ evaluations, weaknesses counted more than strengths and even affected people’s decision to vote. It seems that no matter how many efforts are politicians willing to make in order to create a positive image for themselves, in the end, people pay more attention to negative details. Stuart Soroka (2014) argues that people have the tendency to focus more on the negative than the positive: they punish politicians for negative actions, but they do not reward them as much for positive actions.

Klein (1998) adds the 1992 survey of the National Election Survey to her previous studies. Respondents indicated how well (on a 4-point scale) they agree that each of 12 traits (e.g. decent, hard-working, moral, intelligent, etc.) fitted the mentioned candidates (1984, Mondale versus Reagan; 1988, Bush versus Dukakis; 1992, Clinton versus Bush). Their evaluation of the candidates was measured with a thermometer score (0-100). Her results show again that people do count more on their negative evaluations when thinking of candidates.

Klein’s studies are inspired and influenced by Lau’s researches on the same subject. Lau is one of the first who assesses the rarity of empirical studies in politics about the negativity bias. Focusing on presidential and congressional

elections between 1968 and 1980, he designs a series of experiments which prove “the evidence for two types of negativity effects in electoral behaviour: negativity in formation of impressions [...] and negativity as a consequence of impressions” (Lau, 1982, p. 353).

Lau (1985) uses the CPS National Election Studies from 1968, 1972, 1974, 1978 and 1980 to analyze how negativity affects people’s evaluations of candidates. Respondents were surveyed in two waves (before and after the election) to find out what are their main reasons to vote or not to vote for the two candidates. He constructed a list of 5 positive and 5 negative reasons that he used to measure positive and negative information. Results show that dislikes were better predictors of candidates’ evaluations. Also, people more concerned with the outcome of the election were more negative.

In their study about automatic vigilance, Pratto & John (1991) also talk about the negativity bias and describe it as an “asymmetry in people’s evaluations [...] They assign relatively more value, importance and weight to events that have negative, rather than positive implications for them” (p. 380). Their three experiments showed how negative traits (“undesirable”) were attracting people’s attention more than positive traits.

Media are often seen as one of the principal culprits in spreading negative information. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) prove how the existence of negativity in the news, the language employed (war and sports terms, competition metaphors) when describing the political climate will make people react in a negative way and become more cynical towards politics.

Mutz & Nir (2010) discover that different fictional content (positive or negative) of crime programs leads to different effects on people’s attitudes towards policies. Their suspicion is that the impact of these series “has a great deal to do with the direction of the preponderance of messages in fictional television” (p. 211).

Van Zoonen (2007) analyzes comments about political movies and series gathered from Internet Movie Database in order to establish people’s reactions. She wants to see how people make sense of the information from these movies and series and use it to “perform a political self.” Her content analysis classified

people's comments into four main categories: description, reflection, judgmental and fantasizing. She also found many "allusions to realism" (especially for the description comments).

Inspired by her study, I will perform a similar content analysis on people's answers to two specific questions. My goal is not to organize them in a list of categories, but to see what people liked and disliked about most of the political TV series and if the negative information has more of an impact than the positive one.

*RQ1: Are there any differences between the answers of the two groups?*

My hypothesis is that there should be noticeable differences between those having watched the *House of Cards* episode and those having watched *The West Wing* one, as their content and image created around politics are clearly opposite. According to the negativity bias there should be a difference between the answers provided by the two groups. The negativity in the *House of Cards* episode should enable participants to remember more details about the events and characters, while the positivity in *The West Wing* episode should not attract their attention as much, so they will provide more general answers.

*RQ2: Are there any allusions to realism in the answers provided by the participants in the experiment?*

The actions and characters of these series should enable the participants to reflect upon their degree of realism. Independent of whether they consider the episodes they have been exposed to as close to reality or very far from it, the simple fact people are making this type of reflection means the series are triggering something in their mind, facilitating comparisons between fictional politics and political reality.

## **Methodology**

I use data gathered from an experiment that took place at the University of Montreal between March 18 and April 8, 2016. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three groups: the first group watched a negative political series, *House of Cards*, as treatment (N=61); the second group had a positive

treatment, watching *The West Wing* (N=58); participants in the third group saw a comedy series, *The Big Bang Theory*, as control (N=61). Each group watched the first episode of the series, presenting the events and characters. The length of the episodes was different: *The Big Bang Theory*, 23 minutes; *The West Wing*, 42 minutes; *House of Cards*, 53 minutes. In order not to lose the personality of the series, participants watched the original, English episodes, but with French subtitles. They received two sets of questionnaires. The first that had to be filled in before while the other was filled after watching the episode they were assigned to (asking them how much they enjoyed the episode, how much realism they attribute to the characters and events, open-ended questions about their most liked and disliked scene). Participants watched the episodes in small groups, in a projection room, which reenacted a cinema room.

Participants in the first treatment group watched the inaugural episode of *House of Cards*. The action revolves around the main character, Frank Underwood, a Democratic Congressman who was promised the position of Secretary of State. In this episode Underwood discovers that the president is not keeping his promise and gives the position to someone else. He plans a detailed vengeance against all those who have misled him and took him for a fool. In his devious plans, he is accompanied by his wife, Claire. The episode also introduces Zoe Barnes, a reporter who becomes Underwood's ally and receives secret information for a story that will destroy his opponents. The episode presents quite a few examples of negative scenes: the conversation between Underwood and his wife in which they make plans for revenge, scenes where he explains directly to the audience how he is going to use people in his selfish plans, segments where he deals with the reporter.

The second group watched the first episode of *The West Wing*, which exposes the fast-paced and unexpected schedule of the staff at the White House. The viewer falls in the middle of a scandal caused by the chief of staff, Josh Lyman, who got into a heated dispute on TV with the head of a religious group, a dispute that may lead to his resignation. Everyone talks about the figure of the President, who appears only in the end of the episode to put an end to the dispute. President Josiah Bartlet's first words in the series are (rich in metaphorical meaning): "I am the Lord, your God, you shall worship no other God before me". He ends the conflict in a quick and efficient manner, sending

away the religious representatives even if he needs their support. Positive scenes are frequent: the President does not fire his chief of staff because he cares about him, he resists the claims of the religious group even if he would gain considerably from their support, the staff at the White House work as a functional team, the President has a very idealistic speech on honesty and liberty.

Participants were mostly university students, representing a wide variety of departments. Sixty percent were women and forty percent were men, and they were all francophone students (French as main language). The recruitment was made via university student associations, departments, and social networking sites. Posters and flyers were spread all around the campus. The recruitment message talked about an innovative political science experiment involving popular TV series (without giving the names of the series), receiving a financial compensation. Participants first contacted the researcher via e-mail, expressing their interest for the experiment. The selection criterion was to not have already seen the three series. They received details about the timetable of the experiment and were randomly assigned to one of the three groups.

For the present analysis I focus on two open-ended questions asked in the post-questionnaire, analyzing the answers given by participants in the treatment groups, those watching either *House of Cards* or *The West Wing* episode. Participants were asked to indicate which was the scene they most liked and which least liked. With the help of these questions I hope to establish patterns of answers, in order to see if exposure to a negative content will impact participants more and thus generate more detailed answers. The comparison between likes and dislikes, but also among the two groups (who watched negative versus positive content) should reveal differences of perceptions and attention to details.

## Results

### House of Cards: The negative scenario

In order of importance, people mostly named the scene at the museum as their favourite (11 comments). The scene represents the meeting between Frank Underwood and the journalist Zoe Barnes establishing the terms of their agreement. It is not a coincidence that the meeting occurs in front of a painting, a boat with two people in it (Frank mentions in case of sinking people finding out about their deal, he will save himself and let Zoe sink with the boat). What is interesting is that some of the participants seem to really have seized the latent meaning and the metaphor:

“The scene I most liked is the one at the museum, when Frank meets the journalist to give her the documents, I love it because it marks a turning point in the story and it is illustrated in the painting.”

“I really loved the scene where Frank and Zoe meet in secret at the museum. It shows the narrow links between the press and politics, which are not very ethical. This scene is the beginning of a big debate on the bill of education. The analogy with the painting is very well chosen.”

Second place in people’s preferences stands the final scene (9-10 comments), where Underwood eats ribs in a very ordinary restaurant while an article putting in a bad light his political enemies (published by Zoe Barnes with secret information provided by him) appears in the newspaper. Some think the scene is a good reflection of Underwood’s personality:

“The last one with the publication of the article on the bill in the Washington Herald. This puts in order all the precedent scenes, but primarily we can see the personality of the main character.”

People enjoy the negativity of the scene, the fact that the main character takes his revenge:

“The scene where Zoe Barnes’ article is published online because she finally has a chance to work in the field she wanted and because Frank managed to fool/trick the man who made a first proposal for the law.”



“The scene at the end, at Freddy’s. We saw the character of Frank for what it is. This scene made me want to watch the next episode.”

The scene is also full in meanings; again, a metaphor is used to depict the character when he orders a second portion of ribs because he feels hungry (a hunger for power, for revenge).

“The ending scene where he says he’s hungry as a wolf; there is a double message here, which is kind of funny. I like that the character address himself directly to the camera.”

The third scene in viewers’ preferences is the one with the discussion between Frank and Claire Underwood (8 comments). The scene shows the dialogue of the couple immediately after he finds out he was “tricked” and not given the position of Secretary. Participants like the relationship of the couple, the way they plot together:

“The scene I liked the most is the one where the Underwood couple plot together, because their relationship is described by the writer and I believe it is realistic.”

Fourth place in people’s preferences is the first meeting between Zoe Barnes and Frank Underwood (6 comments), the scene when the journalist arrives at his house to propose him a mutual understanding: he provides her with information, she is going to protect his identity and publish article favourable to him.

The scene made people reflect on the link between politics and journalism and how politicians and journalists are mutually helping each other:

“I really liked the first meeting between the young journalist and Frank because we realize just to what extent the journalistic universe is linked to the political universe.”

“I have liked the scene where the journalist comes to speak with Frank, because the relationship between the press and politicians has always been a mystery to me.”

Some are having a hard time believing the scene and start reflecting upon the realism behind it:

“The scene where Zoe Barnes goes to the congressman to propose an agreement, because it is the most surrealist scene of the entire episode, I cannot imagine that in politics it can be done.”

Turning at the scenes people dislike, they mention scenes with another type of negativity, not political, but more personal, where more sensitive issues are tackled, like the first scene where he killed the dog, because “I did not understand the link with the series” or “feeling sorry for the dog”. Also the scene where Claire asks her secretary to fire half of the staff seems to trigger some reactions and make people put it in the dislike category, because they cannot see the meaning of the scene:

“I did not get the catch.”

“the one with firing in the association. I did not see the actual interest, just a situation. Nothing is linked to the scene after.”

One of the most controversial scenes that people declared they did not like was the meeting between Zoe Barnes and Frank Underwood. First of all, people judge the realism of the scene:

“When the journalist came to his place and tried to pick him up (I do not think it is realistic, politician houses are always protected and I do not think a journalist can do that)”.

Some are disturbed by the negativity of the scene and of the relationship:

“The scene with the collaboration between Frank Underwood and Zoe Barnes, because it shows co-operation between the media and politics. This disturbs the independence and neutrality principles of the media and contributes to showing a corrupt image of the medias and of the information sent to the public.”

“I did not like the scene where the journalist enters the couple’s house. The opportunistic side of the journalist is disturbing. The fact that a politician can be corrupted is understandable, but is less easier to imagine seeing journalists act the same way.”

People also do not like the scene where Frank is deceived and announced he is not going to be the next Secretary of State. The negativity of the event and of the people who are not keeping their promises makes the scene remarked:

“The scene where he is announced he is not going to be state secretary, despite the fact that the president and his team promised him the job. I did not like it, because we can see how sometimes people are ready to lie to have in the end what gives them more advantages, despite the feelings of other people involved.”

“When Frank Underwood is not chosen in the end as secretary. Defines well the treason climate in the political world.”

### **The West Wing: The positive scenario**

Moving on to *The West Wing*, the likes and dislikes seem to have less variation than in the case of *House of Cards*. It is the main scenes that attracted the viewers’ attention and were then remembered.

The majority of respondents (28 comments) like one of the final scenes, where the President appears for the first time. People like to finally know is the one whom everyone else talked about during the episode: “The final scene with the President, because all along the episode they talk about him, his will, his aspirations and it is just at the end that we know the truth.”

“The arrival of the president, who with his power ends the debate with the Christians. We see the role and influence of the president on the final decisions.”

Contrary to *House of Cards*, people like the general positive aspect of the scene, the way in which the President deals with the situation in a proper, correct manner:

“The scene that I loved the most is when the president arrives at the end. He proves a form of spectacular authority. He has re-established directly the order into the chaos. It was a nice figure of authority, that we do not see frequently in our politicians, nowadays.”

On the second place (15 comments), the scene they liked most was a humorous one, with the presentation of the White House by Sam Seaborn (deputy communications director). It is easy to understand why the scene stands out and catches the viewer's attention, since it is one of the few funny moments of the episode.

"When the vice-director of communication tells about his bad day to Leo's daughter. He is being honest without wanting it and the scene with the kids is humorous."

"I liked the scene where Sam has tried to give a presentation to the kids, it was very funny and more important, in harmony with the style of the series: a pretentious 'soap opera'."

Even if the majority of those who liked the scene named it for its humorous aspect, there are also some who mentioned liking it because of its signs of negativity: incompetence of politicians and talking about things they do not know:

"The scene with the presentation of the White House. It proves how a politician knows what he is talking only for his domain and has a hard time communicating it to those not involved."

"The scene where Sam has to present the White House to a student class, but he only thinks of making a good impression. This reminded me to what point in politics the diplomatic aspect of actions and the shape of the speech could have more impact than the ideas."

Apparently, negativity attracts people's attention, even in a predominant positive series, people are searching for negative aspects instead of just accepting the information presented in a positive manner in the scene.

What do people report as scenes they do not like and why?

At the top of their dislikes is the final scene, where the president makes his appearance (11 comments). It is exactly the same scene, which was declared by others as their favourite. Therefore, while the majority of people liked the positivity and honesty of this last scene, there are also some who did not like it.

“The scene I liked the least is the one where the president appears ‘heroically’ to save the situation with charisma and a good sense of justice. It is really a stereotype and put into action in a vulgar way, especially when it starts a music proper for the village satire of *The Truman Show*. It is of a quasi-insulting naivety and I wonder if in fact it is not an ironical series, subtly satirical.”

“The arrival of the President – very cliché.”

Second place in the disliked scenes is the opening sequence, the one with the White House staff presentation at a very fast pace (8 comments). The main reason they do not like it is the fact they find it very confusing:

“The first scene in the offices where the employees talk, we do not really understand what is happening, who does what. Everything is a bit chaotic and disorganized and it is confusing.”

“The start of the series, I find it very confusing, I have a hard time to know who is who and the role of the characters.”

In a much smaller proportion, others disliked scenes were the ones where the call-girl Sam Seaborn gets involved with (either for the cliché of it or for not seeing the link with the rest of the series) and when another female character was stopped by the police for speeding; people do not see the importance behind these scenes or the link with the storyline.

### **Allusions to realism**

In what concerns the second research question, the two series made people think at the realism of what they have seen. Realism allusions are equal for both series (6 comments each).

For *House of Cards*, most of the mentions of realism are about scenes people disliked. They do not seem to think that in reality a politician and a journalist could have that kind of relationship:

“I least liked the scenes with the journalist Zoe Barnes because I find it less realistic the fact that Franck trusts her.”

Someone mentions how unlikely it is for a journalist to have access and meet a politician in the privacy of his home:

“When the journalist came to his house and tried to hit on him (I find it very unrealistic, politicians’ houses are always protected and I do not think a journalist can do that).”

On the other hand, even if people see it as not very realistic, they do like the scene where Underwood and Barnes agree to mutually help each other:

“The scene where Zoe Barnes goes to the congressman to propose him an ‘agreement’ because it is the scene the most surrealist of the episode, we cannot imagine that a politician could do that.”

If the majority of the realism allusions are about things people do not find likely to happen in reality, there is also one that talks about how real is the relationship between the Underwood couple.

“The scene I most liked is the one where the Underwood couple conspire at their place because their relationship is researched by the writer and I think it is rather realist.”

In the case of *The West Wing*, some of the people find it realistic the image of the President in the last minutes of the episode.

“The final plan looks to me the most realistic as to the daily life of the President.”

“The scene where the president arrives in the room and tells the story of his granddaughter. It is a comeback to the concrete reality of the events, of the effect of politics upon ordinary people, we go outside of the office into the street, in some way.”

At the same time, there are people who point out to the same scene as lacking realism, because they think the clear intention of the scene is to provide a good image of the President:

“The scene at the end when the president returns and gives vacations to his team. This does not look very realistic. We can say it is more of a traditional happy-ending.”

“This would be the last scene. The purpose is very clear behind the scene. The scene presents the good and excellent president. We can feel the patriotic sentiment behind the text of the actors. As so, it lacks the realism behind the character.”

Another scene remarked by viewers as not very realistic is the humorous one with the White House presentation made by Sam Searborn:

“The scene with the CM1 class. I find it a bit useless in the sense that it was not realistic. [...]”

“The scene where he starts to describe the White House. This was not very realistic from a “real” employee of the White House.”

What is particular in the case of *The West Wing* is that besides allusions to realism (or lack of it) people have also mentioned in their comments the use of stereotypes and clichés (8 comments).

“The scene I liked least is the one with the heroic appearance of the president, to the rescue of the situation with a certain charisma and a sense of justice. It is very stereotyped...It is almost insulting naivete and I wonder if it is not an ironic series, subtly satirical.”

“Taken all together, the majority of the scenes were very American ‘clichés’. It is for that that I did not like the episode very much.”

## Discussion

Although inspired by van Zoonen’s study (2007) and her qualitative methodological design, my intention was not to create categories or typologies using respondents’ answers. Mostly, following assumptions driven from the negativity bias theory and media effects, I tried to verify if indeed negative content will have a higher influence upon people’s opinions than a positive content. The difference should be noticed in the “quality” of participants’ answers. People exposed to the negative content in *House of Cards* should give more complex answers, remember more details about the program they have watched, the name of the characters, the list of events. People exposed to the

positive content in *The West Wing* will have the overall tendency to give more general answers, remember fewer details and analyze less the events.

The initial expectation was proven right. There is a significant difference between the “quality” of the answers from the two groups. People exposed to *House of Cards* liked and disliked a great variety of scenes, more events and plots draw their attention than those exposed to *The West Wing* episode. They had the general tendency to give reasons, complex answers motivating what they liked and disliked, not just mentioning the scene. They seem to have undertaken an in-depth processing of the program, since they have “spotted” the metaphors or analogies. Respondents also seem to remember names of secondary characters who appear only sporadically like Linda Vasquez, Peter Russo or Donald Blythe.

People who watched *The West Wing* gave more general answers to the questions. They were less motivated by their choice of liked and disliked scenes and paid less attention to the characters’ names (they generally described the scene, referring to the character as “I do not remember his name”). Their choices of scenes were also more consensual and with not much variation in comparison to the case of *House of Cards*.

It seems that the negativity bias is present also in the way people watch and react to political TV series. The negative content of the series attracts more of their attention, enabling them to recall more information about fictional events and characters while the positive content will only stay in their mind as a general overview. This also extends the debate about negativity bias and its effects. We should be concerned not only about the negativity in the news which are implying real information. Negativity in fictional cases (political TV series, comedy talk shows) should also be in the attention of scholars. Even if people are aware of the fictional content of what they see (or hear), this does not lower their “affinity” for the negative bits of information. Negative traits of personality of fictional characters and negative events and actions in the *House of Cards* episode were retained and thoroughly analyzed by the participants. In the long run, this might affect and even alter their perception about political reality. They may associate the negative characters and their actions to real political actors. As it appears, watching a political series more focused on the



positive side of the fictional political spectrum will not count as an antidote for this negativity. People have the tendency to easily disregard the positive information and characters they encounter.

Finally, regarding the “allusions to realism,” both political TV series made people react and reflect to the reality of fictional politics. What is interesting is that for the positive series, *The West Wing*, people did not stop at making remarks about the reality of the characters and events, but they also have “classified” some of those examples as stereotypes of honesty and correctitude, showing again a difference between how the two series were perceived. The major limit of the study is that it presents the results of an experiment which meant to expose the participants to only one episode of the series. It measured their immediate reactions and impressions in terms of likes and dislikes. They may have not had enough time (or exposure) to think of the negative or positive information they received. At the same time, this limit could also be a strong argument in favour of the results found, confirming the existence of a negativity bias in fictional political TV series. Only 40-50 minutes of exposure to the first episode managed to make them reflect upon the reality of the events and characters and for some even made them spot and analyze the hidden meaning behind some of the scenes. This triggers another question, related to the duration of exposure and longevity of the effects. There might be interesting effects to discover with people watching the entire series (multiple seasons), as their exposure to negativity/positivity will increase. After watching more episodes/all the seasons of the series, what will people remember? Will they be able to keep the same degree of specificity for the negative details or will they start to create a broader picture, a general negative perspective?

## References

- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C. & Vohs, K.D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), p. 323-370.
- Berry, D. S., Hiller, W. S., Mueller, J. S. & Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Linguistic bases of social perception. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(5), p. 526-537.

- Cappella, J. N & Jamieson, K. H. (1997). *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fiske, S. T. (1980). Attention and weight in person perception: The impact of negative and extreme behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38(6), p. 889-906.
- Hall, A. (2006). Viewers' perception of reality programs. *Communication Quarterly*, 54(2), p. 191-211.
- Klein, J. G. (1991). Negativity Effects in Impression Formation: A test in the political arena. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17(4), p. 412-418.
- Klein, J. G. (1998). Negativity in intradimensional judgments of presidential candidates. *NA-Advances in Consumer Research*, 25, p. 574-577. Retrieved from <http://acrwebsite.org/volumes/8213/volumes/v25/NA-25>
- Lau, R. R. (1982). Negativity in Political Perception. *Political Behavior*, 4(4), p. 353-377.
- Lau, R. R. (1985). Two explanations for negativity effects in political behaviour. *American Journal of Political Science*, 29(1), p. 119-138.
- Mutz, D. C. & Nir, L. (2010). Not necessarily the news: does fictional television influence real-world policy preferences?. *Mass Communication and Society*, 13(2), p. 196-217.
- Pratto, F. & John, O. P. (1991). Automatic vigilance: The attention-grabbing power of negative social information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(3), p. 380-391.
- Soroka, S. (2014). *Negativity in Democratic Politics. Causes and consequences*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- van Zoonen, L. (2007). Audience reactions to Hollywood politics. *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(4), p. 531-547.