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Exploring UK media's influences on public perceptions of LGBTQIA+ representations at pride festivals

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ABSTRACT

Pride and festivals have contributed significantly to social change by increased visibility and campaigning for gay rights, highlighting the importance of the events industry in enhancing the LGBTQIA+ movement's representation. This has not been reflected in research with a lack of convergence between queer, social-cognitive behaviour and communication theories. This study addresses this gap by investigating the UK news media's representations of Pride and their impact on public perceptions of the LGBTQIA+ community. 'Sentiwordnet' opinion mining software was used to analyse media representations of pride in eight UK newspapers. Selected images and headlines were then embedded into a survey to understand image perception, headline correlation and exposure to different media types. The study found limited influence of traditional news media on participants' perceptions of pride, despite some negative framing. Fifth estate journalism emerges as positive and influential, revealing a shift in media representation influences. The paper proposes a revised framework incorporating the Fifth estate when measuring public perceptions of LGBTQIA+.

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Media portrayal; public perception; pride festivals; LGBTQIA+; media agenda setting; Fifth estate

Introduction

'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ[IA +]) Pride Month is currently celebrated [...] to honour the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan ... a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States' (United States Census, 2020, p. 1). Globally, since the riots, significant progress has been made in the fight for gay rights despite homosexuality remaining illegal or punishable by death in many countries. (McCarthy, 2020). Representation at pride festivals (PF) has expanded worldwide, highlighting the events industry's role in advancing the LGBTQIA+ community cause (Duguay, 2016).

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This community cause manifests itself in the Pride Movement, embodied by Interpride (2020), a global network that unites organisations to promote empowerment and education to reduce discrimination. PF's robust communication strategy has gained the worldwide attention of approximately 57 million supporters (Interpride, 2020). Interpride (2017, p. 10) states: 'With ... millions of people visiting PF, we are a movement that can make a difference. What is visible cannot be ignored and has to be dealt with.'

Understanding how representation of the LGBTQIA+ community and pride has evolved is important when setting the scene for the research project. Public representation has not always been positive or welcoming. Historically, media viewed the gay community solely as an economic entity, avoiding this group for fear of alienating heterosexual consumers in advertising (Pritchard et al., 1998; Ricker and Wieck, 2003, cited in Tuten, 2005; Um, 2012). As the movement progressed, positive changes in attitudes were identified from 1990 (Markwell & Waitt, 2009). This was supported by the heightened visibility of PF, creating a crossroads in changing narratives and creating an alternative future. The shift was characterised by coded representation appeals, 'gay vague' and 'gay window ads' (Badgett, 2003; Campbell, 2015). Due to the often stereotypical nature of the representation, it was still received with hate (Elliott, 1994; Padva, 2008).

More recent milestones of legalisation of gay marriage in many countries and a growing social media movement accompany the growth of the global PF movement (Hull, 2017; Interpride, 2017). Acceptance of PF's progress over time is evidenced further through increased visibility in media representation.

This research sets out to critically examine the media influence (MI) on public perceptions. It explores PF's representation in various newspapers to understand the effects of media portrayal and the influence MI has from other perspectives, such as the Fifth Estate (5thE), on public perceptions of the event. The research asks 'to what extent does traditional media agenda setting have an influence on public perceptions of the Pride Festival'. Secondly 'has the influence of the 5thE media impacted on public perceptions of Pride Festivals?'

Key theories were considered within the existing literature, building a foundation for the project. Primary data were gathered from UK newspaper content and a survey conducted to understand the impact of MI on participants' perceptions. The purpose of the research is to fill the gap within the literature of PF and media. Creating an academic foundation for this topic is important in acknowledging the LGBTQIA+ community in events research.

Literature review

Key theories addressed here are Queer Theory (QT), Social-Cognitive Theory (SCT), Media Agender Setting (MAS), 5thE, Framing Research and Collective Representation.

Queer theory

The deconstructing of lesbian and gay identities came to the forefront when a body of critical thought, labelled QT, challenged hierarchies in society (Kirsch, 2000). Turner (2000) posits that QT is difficult to summarise, citing theorists that have contributed to the QT narrative (Butler, 1990; De Lauretis, 1991; Foucault, 1978; Kosofsky, 1990).

Turner highlights Foucault as the founder of QT as he aims to deconstruct norms about gender and sexual identity. He adds that Foucault identifies overlaps between post-structuralism and QT. Dean (2003) counters that QT began with Freud and Strachey (1915), who see it as all that remains foreign to the heteronormative.

Limited consensus makes defining QT challenging: Seidman argues that QT signifies a transformation of theory from 'how and why the experiences of non-heterosexual people are studied to a cultural or epistemological centering' (Seidman, 1995, p. 130). Halperin offers a broader perspective:

Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant [...] Queer then, demarcates not a positivity, but a positioning vis-à-vis the normative – a positioning that is not restricted to lesbians and gay men. (Halperin, 1997, p. 62)

Dilley (1999) adds that the social transformation of queer from an adjective to a noun, then to a verb, creates empowerment towards QT to study sexuality, power and gender academically. QT subscribes to the 'queering of culture, ranging from the reinterpretation of characters in novels and cinema, to the deconstruction of historical analysis' (Kirsch, 2000, p. 33). Cover (2002) emphasises QT's importance and media's critical role in offering positive lesbian and gay representation. When undertaking media analysis into sexuality, QT and Communication Theory (CT) need to be combined, still a limited practice. Cover contends communication theorists are still fixed on heteronormative representation. Halperin (2003, p. 343) argues QT wants to make us 'think what has not yet been thought'. He highlights DeLauretis' work in 1990, purposefully using the scurrilous term QT as the title to deliberately disrupt complacency in lesbian and gay academic studies. Manning et al. (2020) agree, deeming gender and sexualities underexplored within the communication field despite benefitting from theory increasingly cited outside the discipline. The limitation reveals the need for further research.

Social-cognitive theory

Human behaviour is fundamentally learned and impacted by the breadth of social networks, education and literacy (Morgan et al., 2017). Social-cognitive theory (SCT) helps understand how individuals learn behaviours from a range of contexts, including media, therefore helpful in studying the effect of media consumption on audiences. However, Morgan et al. (2017) find no single most effective intervention by media sources on cognitive and social change. They assert that multimedia campaigns are critical in addressing messages to selected populations. McInroy and Craig (2017) add that MI impacts younger individuals' social cognition significantly. While gay communities continue to be underrepresented, positive reactions to gay-friendly media content from non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts increase. This is deemed significant within the movement, impacting directly younger audiences (McInroy & Craig, 2017).

Media agenda setting theory

Media agenda setting (MAS) research seeks to explain how social change occurs in modern society, originating from Lippmann (1922), who discusses media's ability to construct a social reality in the public's mind with agenda-setting. Despite advances in research since Lippman, there is limited research of the media's role between external

reality and our social reality (Takeshita, 1997). Shimizu (1951) proffers that modern society depends on the media and is adaptive to the environment they portray, Cohen (1963) states that media are effective at directing readers' reflections, while McCombs and Shaw's (1972) find issues voters deem most important correlate with news coverage. McCombs's (2004) offers more systematic approaches to examining news content, providing effective methods of identifying whether *MAS* affects public perception. Following McCombs's methodology, this type of research has increased, with 400 studies investigating modern media and public opinion in politics (Burke & Bernstein, 2014). Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga (2017) find significant implications in Lippmann's theory, concluding that journalism is key to the proper functioning of modern democratic societies. Such theories demonstrate the impact that media has on reality, revealing the key role of the media in influencing public perceptions (Vu et al., 2019).

Figure 1 displays the agenda-setting theory framework, acknowledging the workings of the theory of planned behaviour being the component of reasoned actions. The media's depiction of a particular issue within society can create a 'reality' from which public perception can be framed. Consequently, the representation of the media issue can form the public's 'perception of reality' (Alonzo et al., 2014).

This study aims to understand the effect media reality has on public reality, using the model Figure 1 as a preliminary model, testing McCombs and Shaw's (1972) impact on reality, Cohen's (1963) epigram of media effects on readers and Lippman's (1922) 'pseudo-environment'.

Fifth Estate (5thE)

Citizen Journalism (5thE) is an emergent, non-physical institution built on: 'networked individuals' with the ability to access and share information from various alternative sources, thereby opening 'new ways of increasing the accountability of politicians, press, experts and other loci of power' (Dutton, 2009, p. 2).

A body of literature is emerging that focusses on profound differences in content produced online and its impact on audiences' perceptions (Carpenter, 2010; Carr et al., 2014; Newman et al., 2012). Metzgar et al. (2011) and Sormanen and Dutton (2015) explain

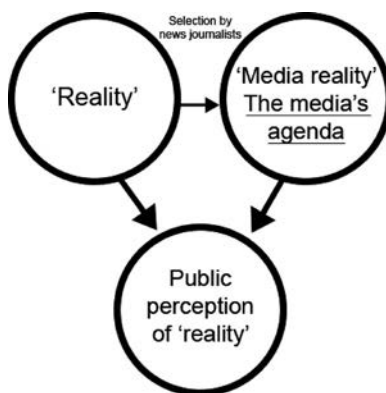


Figure 1. Preliminary theoretical model (Alonzo et al., 2014, p. 17).

how the internet and the 5thE have reconfigured information access and supported individuals by enhancing the power of communication, therefore creating societal change. They recognise the validity of the 5thE as the shift of societal and political power is challenged.

Cabosky (2014) analyses CT of agenda-setting and framing using LGBTQIA+. Findings emphasise framing issues of violence and vulnerability against LGBTQIA+ individuals. Identified social media petitions, created by LGBTQIA+ online activists, demonstrate a movement away from 'two-way symmetrical or asymmetrical approaches and toward fluid and dynamic models, allowing individual LGBT stakeholders greater power within the LGBT rights movement' (Cabosky, 2014, p. 60).

Media representation theories and framing of the LGBTQIA+

Durkheim's (1974) 'collective representation' concept refers to society's common ways of processing social realities. Moscovici (1988) argues the concept is too static and does not capture the current social-cognitive age, offering 'social representation' as a more appropriate term. Fürsich (2010) adds that cultural media scholars are especially interested in representation as meanings carried through images produce problematic representation with severe consequences for political decision-making and inequalities of minorities.

Chong and Druckman (2007) found the way media frames stories has a greater impact on less knowledgeable individuals, with informed individuals engaging in a systematic process of researching information. However, when applying their study, Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, p. 14) found mixed results, arguing the psychological level between agenda-setting and the influencer of framing and priming is the difference between 'whether we think about an issue and how we think about it'. Cacciatore et al. (2016) consider framing as the result of contextualised information. They cite Kahneman, who focuses on the issue rather than the subject and describe perception as 'reference dependent' (Kahneman, 2003; cited in Cacciatore et al., 2016). Furthermore, Chen's (2018) study warns of the potential impact of political biases when representing LGBTQIA+ on individual perceptions.

Pride representation in the media

Pride festivals (PF) can be understood in terms of Durkheim's (1974) notion of the 'ritual', whereby participants create bonds of solidarity and produce 'meaning' or 'purpose' for collective action. PF is increasingly recognised as important identity-building moments in gay and lesbian identity politics.

Interpride acknowledges the importance of media representation within pride by stating its core purpose 'is to make homosexuality visible in all its diversity, as what is visible needs to be dealt with and cannot be ignored. Creation of visibility is crucial for Pride, differing in both local and international broadcasting' (Interpride, 2017, p. 39). Knopp's (1998) and later Johnston (2007) highlight Scottish media's long-term resistance to representing pride and denounce the negative media representation of PF as shaping a conservative nation. Kristic et al. (2020) highlight negative media coverage of Belgrade Pride, portraying the events focused on extreme vandalism to the city, violence caused by the gay community and capturing police as heroes. Not all media

coverage of pride uses negative framing. Tamásy (2019) contrasts Hungary's and Ireland's coverage to show how media can shape perceptions of pride through sensitisation and acceptance. Sensitisation does not always try to legitimise the existence of the LGBTQIA+ rights and PF; however, media coverage with an actively positive gay focus legitimises PF and acceptance can, in turn, shift media portrayals.

Understanding previous research on PF informs this project's approach and provides a broader context. This research acknowledges the political critique of the normalisation of the social process embedded in QT. Creating a paradigm for the research by pulling QT and CT closer together is necessary, as despite 400 studies into media's role on social reality, no studies have been undertaken that consider QT and CT together. Closing the gap is important to discover the impact between exposure created by social reality and perception in a media context. To address framing representation of PF impact on social realities, the research draws on MAS theory to understand individuals' perceptions of media reality. Additionally, it considers the 5thE, a rising influence outside traditional media (Carpenter, 2010).

Methodology

Using a mixed-methods approach, qualitative internet-based secondary research was initially used to critically examine the MI of PF representation on public perceptions, which then informed the development of a quantitative survey. The research design identified external influences from headlines, images and content to help understand individuals' perceptions. A case study was used as a highly recognised method in social science for its close examination of specific complex issues (Zainal, 2007). This allows information expansion, creating understanding and leading to the development of causal inferences (Yin, 1981).

Qualitative methods benefit social science research and help researchers investigate social and cultural phenomena (Tavallaei & Talib, 2010). The main benefit here is to inform the quantitative data. Internet-based research analyses existing data, in this case, online newspaper content, and provides new evidence that aids in answering a particular question (Hewson, 2003). To ensure representation of current public perceptions and opinions, the content analysis collected five articles each from eight newspapers (see Figure 2), which cover the two main political biases (left-wing and right-wing); All eight newspapers covered the pride festival within the UK between 2016 and 2020.

West's (2004) 'cross-validation model', consisting of five criteria for media credibility, has been adapted here to analyse newspaper representations of pride and public perceptions thereof as follows:

- Fair – analysis of information surrounding pride and the history information
- Story – is it supportive of Pride/LGBTQIA+ OR critical of Pride/LGBTQIA+
- Accurate reporting – Triangulation of a word association test
- Unbiased – Sentiwordnet positive/negative representation, keywords in context
- Trust – Triangulation cross-analysis between the respondent perceptions and media reporting (Adapted from West, 2004; p. 161)

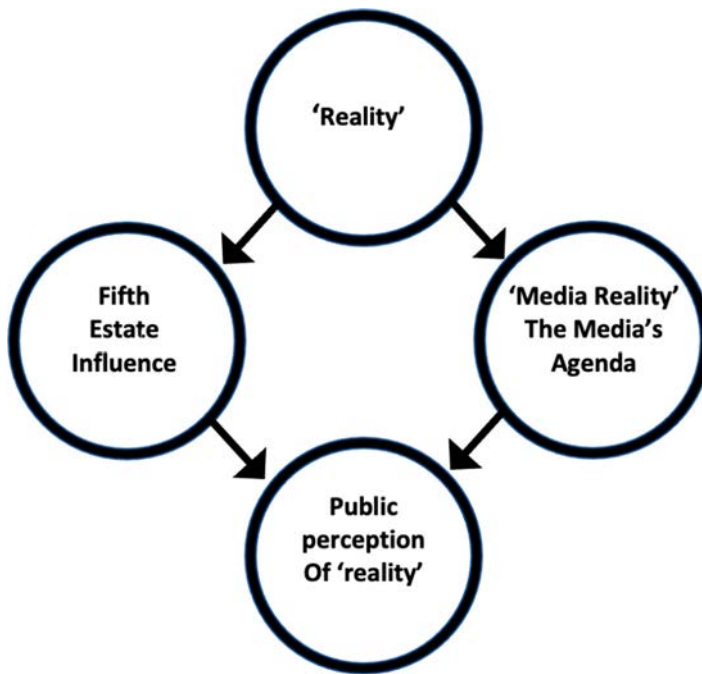


Figure 2. Adapted preliminary theoretical model.

A content analysis was used to analyse the data. Firstly, manual coding was used by identifying thematic trends between newspapers' representation. The keyword in context followed the key categories used to assess representation in selected newspapers (see Table 1). The analysis of headlines, content and images was conducted to determine the media representation's stance and the extent of the political agendas' role in framing the stories through representation.

Next, the 'Sentiwordnet' application used automatic coding to extract positive and negative connotations from the headlines and context. The application of the opinion mining feature extracts positive and negative connotations based not on the linguistics of the newspaper topic but rather the *opinion* expressed within the text (Esuli & Sebastiani, 2006). To assess the representation in the newspaper, the mining feature uses three numerical scores for each word based on the different classification behaviours when deeming words positive or negative.

A similar newspaper study to analyse political leaders' media representation found computerised data measurement to be a more valid and reliable method (Aaldering & Vliegthart, 2016). Accuracy is ensured using a 'keywords in context approach' and systematic testing in Sentiwordnet.

A comparison of headlines and newspaper readership was done to appraise the MAS influence on surveyed individuals. This provided an understanding of the impact of representation on readers' perceptions and helped identify potential trends in newspapers' MAS.

To complement this approach, an online survey was developed to collect data on perceptions. The data produced by the Sentiwordnet analysis were used to inform the

Table 1. Content analysis – newspapers and criteria.

Political leaning	Mainstream UK newspapers	Content analysis – criteria
Left-wing	The Guardian	Supportive of pride Critical of pride History information
	The Independent	
	The Times	
	The Telegraph	Information based about the Pride Festival
	The Sun	Support of LGBTQIA+
	The Daily Express	
	The Daily Mail	Critical of LGBTQIA+
Right-wing		

survey. The statistical approach uses online software to create objective measurement, allowing independence of data collection from the researcher (Jennings, 2010). A structured approach used a large range of variables and a representative sample of respondents (Hox & Boeijs, 2005). Survey design has many benefits to a sensitive subject by presenting an adaptable format (Kays et al., 2013) whereby respondents feel reduced exposure and happier to reveal private information (Kays et al., 2013), allowing participants to feel content that survey design is ethically sound. For the numerical, objective, and measurable context of the study this survey was designed according to a paradigm being; ‘the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community’ (Kuhn, 1970, p. 175).

The survey included 29 questions to source key demographic data and assess how participants view MI. Three keyword questions were used to create an insight into a world map through descriptive statistical methods to measure perceptions. A framing test of images and headlines was implemented to compare perception to the framing of MAS, allowing a cognitive behavioural analysis in assessing MI. Figure 3 displays an example of an image used within the survey.

The survey was piloted on seven individuals from a variety of demographics with no previous knowledge of the study to gain feedback and help maintain credibility (McLoughlin & Hanrahan, 2019, 2021).

Akin to Kays et al. (2013), due to the nature of the study, the online application of the survey allowed a more honest response from participants. It was administered through social media channels. (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn), which facilitated greater distribution and increased participation (Plonsky & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2014). The survey was distributed over two months from January 2021. A snowball distribution took place with participants sharing the survey with friends; due to the sensitive research topic, when shared, the participant is more likely to be responsive to the social relationship (Dusek et al., 2015). This resulted in 184 responses (see Table 2). Using descriptive statistics to identify the values of the data collected, all numerical data were analysed through Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel. This allowed the authors to determine individual’s perceptions when it comes to the representation of PF through public media.



Figure 3. Framing poster.

Reliability is a major concern for psychology research when measuring attitudes or behaviours (Drost, 2011). To ensure this is achieved, data collection was designed and undertaken following robust standards, thus ensuring the research was unbiased and providing a repeatable and consistent measurement of participants' answers and reliable results (Bollen, 1989).

Table 2. Demographic breakdown of sample.

Demographic breakdown of sample		
Sample size (N = 184) % share N		
Gender		
Female	74.46%	N = 137
Male	23.37%	N = 43
Non-binary	1.63%	N = 3
Other	0.54%	N = 1
Age		
18–24	70.11%	N = 129
25–34	16.85%	N = 31
35–44	5.98%	N = 11
45–54	5.43%	N = 10
55–66	1.09%	N = 2
67–77	0.54%	N = 1
77+	0%	N = 0
Sexual Orientation (multiple choice)		
Heterosexual (straight)	60.20%	N = 118
Lesbian	10.71%	N = 21
Gay	4.59%	N = 9
Bisexual	15.31%	N = 30
A-Sexual	2.55%	N = 5
Pansexual	2.04%	N = 4
Other	1.02%	N = 2
Prefer not to say	0.51%	N = 1
I don't label myself	3.06%	N = 6

The systematic triangulation of existing theory with the mixed-method primary research results in valid and trustworthy findings (Noble & Heale, 2019).

Ethics

This project underwent stringent university ethical approval that requires voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and research bias prevention (Driscoll, 2011). The study adhered rigorously to the ethical requirements, particularly when designing and disseminating the survey, due to the potentially sensitive nature of the topic and the history of psychological studies taking advantage of participants (Driscoll, 2011). Therefore, the survey contained links to helplines, should questions be upsetting, as ethical implications are considered unique to the LGBTQIA+ population (McInroy, 2016).

Findings and discussion

The section starts with an analysis of MAS in regard to (1) the representation of Pride within UK mainstream newspapers. This is followed by investigating the role of (2) MAS on public perceptions of PF, findings relating to (3) the impact PF can have on social change and (4) participants' word perceptions in relation to PF.

The representation of Pride within UK mainstream newspapers

Stammers and Interpride (2017) demonstrate that PF can play a fundamental role in the reshaping of social norms. However, it appears negative representations of PF are displayed in the UK media. This can be seen in Table 3, which shows the keyword analysis from the Daily Mail focusing on cases of negative representation of violence, homophobia, and pride cancellations.

Such critical representations by the Daily Mail in the UK media seen in Table 3 share similarities with studies examining pride from outside the UK. For example, in spite of the limited LGBT coverage in the media of the Belgrade Pride, Krstić et al. (2020) identified depictions of violence with the police being painted as heroes. Tamáßy (2019) found that the gay community's modern-day challenges were not acknowledged, and where such positive representations exist, they tended to focus on companies and politicians.

On the other hand, Ireland demonstrated a positive framing of the Pride generation (Tamáßy, 2019), reflecting the Guardian's depiction of pride (Table 4). Here the focus is on historical aspects that support present events in representing recognition and actions for better equality and inclusion in society for all. The Guardian goes further by calling out companies and capitalism, which contrasts to Tamassey's (2019) findings from Hungary.

MAS on public perceptions of pride festivals

This research builds on Chen's (2018) study of the potential impact of political biases when representing LGBTQIA+ on individual perceptions. The Sentitwordnet analysis helps expand further on the positive and negative representation of PF in eight UK newspapers (Table 5) and understand MI from multiple sources.

Table 3. The Daily Mail keyword analysis.

Supportive of Pride	'The train was wrapped in the Pride flag including the new colours of black, brown, light blue, pink and white, with Avanti aiming to "bring people of colour, transgender people and those living with or who have been lost to HIV/Aids to the forefront"'	'The Walthamstow arm of the Metropolitan Police said officers are investigating and branded the abuse hate crime'	'Free rail travel was also offered to volunteers taking part in the major Gay Pride event'
Critical of Pride	'Gay people have slammed a new Pride train launched by Avanti West Coast for being 'mortifying' and 'attention-seeking' after it made its first journey yesterday'	'This is the shocking moment a Muslim woman spits homophobic abuse at a reveller on a Pride march in east London. The niqab-wearing woman was filmed screaming 'shame on you' to a woman dropped in the LGBT rainbow flag during the rally on Hoe Street, Walthamstow, yesterday'	'Plans for virtual Gay Pride parade to raise money for charity have been abandoned following criticism od one of its organisers for backing Brexit ... Following her message, a wave of scheduled acts and speakers cancelled'

The newspapers in Table 5 run from mostly left of centre leaning at the top, to what is generally considered right of centre orientated at the bottom. Cohen et al. (2008, p. 332) argue that 'people act upon their perceptions of media influence, regardless of whether or not these perceptions are accurate'. While this may be true, it is clear from the 'Sentiwordnet' analysis that there is a degree of fluctuation in representation. Hence, it can be argued that any positive and/or negative representations of PF represented in the mainstream UK newspapers are not correlated to prospective groups of political party views. Therefore, to investigate the role of MAS, the next stage of the project involved investigating the role MAS representation plays on public perceptions of PF. Using headlines to assess the MI of agenda-setting, survey participants were asked their feelings

Table 4. The Guardian keyword analysis.

Supportive of Pride	'London's celebration of the LGBTQ+ Pride this weekend is one of thousands of Pride events taking place over the summer months in nearly every country on Earth'	'in less than five decades what began in a handful of western cities has become an unprecedented global phenomenon. Today the LGBT + movement is one of the most unifying, ubiquitous and universal movement there has ever been'	'This joyful, exuberant atmosphere is infectious. Everyone likes a party, and everyone wants to join in. The uplifting nature of Pride with its flamboyance and theatricality comes out of gay culture. But for some of us it is also a cunning ruse to disarm and subvert homophobia in ways that po faced, angry demonstrations can never hope to achieve'
Critical of Pride	'BBC journalists have been told that new rules on impartiality means they may no longer be able to go on LGBT marches, even in a personal capacity, in case their presence is taken as a sign of political bias'	'Our community organisations have become increasingly corporatized and exploited, with UK Pride parades often dominated by big business sponsors and floats, vote-seeking politicians and state agents such as the police, who brag about their LGBT+ inclusiveness, but have not apologised or compensated us for their decades of oppression'	'Pride is now capitalism with a pink hue. It has become monetised: we pay to march; the city authorities extort vast charges from the Pride organisers and we are encouraged to buy rainbow-branded merchandise to express our sexual and gender identity. Much of LGBT+ is part of the neo-liberal establishment.'

Table 5. Positive/negative representations of PF in newspapers.

Mainstream UK newspaper	Positive words
The Guardian	20.71%
The Mirror	13.25%
The Independent	23.13%
The Times	6.65%
The Telegraph	23.13%
The Sun	7.21%
The Daily Express	10.75%
The Daily Mail	9.51%
Mainstream UK Newspaper	Negative words
The Guardian	25.16%
The Mirror	14.72%
The Independent	20.65%
The Times	8.15%
The Telegraph	9.75%
The Sun	5.70%
The Daily Express	4.11%
The Daily Mail	11.95%

towards seven different headlines, from various UK newspapers. Data were broken down into newspaper readers to identify if there was a correlation between the political standpoint of the newspaper and views of participants, using McCombs (2004) systematic analysis to measure news content against public agenda. McCombs and Shaw (1972) discovered that news MI voters on key issues, therefore playing an important role in MAS.

Table 6 shows that MAS relates to public agenda perception as reader groups somewhat correlate to their chosen newspapers, determining that 43% of overall respondents were found to have agreed with the headline that ‘Pride has sold its soul to rainbow-branded capitalism’, whereas 61% of readers of ‘The Daily Mail’ disagreed.

However, this finding stands alone in comparison to the other six headlines displayed in Table 6, which overall shows a lack of correlation between prospective news reader groups and their opinions. Therefore, this seems to contradict MAS theories as individuals’ perceptions do not differ depending on where they collect the news.

The lack of correlation between MAS and public perception is not limited to headlines, as highlighted in a framing test conducted on a local PF poster (see Figure 3). The framing test used MAS representation from a negative article surrounding a poster that was cancelled for its content (*Headline: ‘homophobia is gay’ pride in London poster causes online backlash*). The test used the poster without its content to ascertain whether participants would have similar responses as the framing within the newspaper agenda; respondents were asked how the poster made them feel.

Participants’ perceptions of the poster were contrary to the newspaper’s intent. The majority of respondents described the poster as cheerful, intriguing, happy and amusing. Responses from the public agreed with authors that stated PF as potential spaces of self-expression that arouses different emotions and feelings (Markwell & Waitt, 2009). Therefore, the difference between the public agenda and MAS representation tends to agree with Cacciatore et al. (2016), who argued that framing is a result of information contextualised and the description of the problem being displayed rather than the unity of any opinions.

Table 6. Participants perceptions of newspaper headlines.

		The Guardian	The Mirror	The Independent	The Times	The Telegraph	The Sun	The Daily Express	The Daily Mail
"Pride has changed the world for LGBT+ people. Long may it continue"	Strongly agree	27%	50%	21%	29%	30%	29%	0%	39%
	Agree	32%	19%	36%	41%	30%	14%	43%	43%
	Somewhat agree	29%	25%	28%	15%	26%	43%	14%	0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	5%	6%	4%	6%	4%	14%	43%	13%
	Somewhat disagree	5%	0%	11%	9%	9%	0%	0%	4%
	Disagree	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
"It's time gay people stepped aside ... hetero whiners have rights too"	Strongly agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Somewhat agree	2%	6%	0%	3%	0%	14%	14%	0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	3%	6%	6%	12%	4%	0%	29%	9%
	Somewhat disagree	11%	6%	9%	12%	17%	14%	14%	13%
	Disagree	24%	13%	21%	21%	26%	43%	14%	22%
	Strongly disagree	60%	69%	64%	53%	52%	29%	29%	57%
"Pride has sold its soul to rainbow-branded capitalism"	Strongly agree	10%	0%	4%	9%	13%	0%	0%	4%
	Agree	10%	6%	11%	3%	9%	29%	0%	0%
	Somewhat agree	32%	31%	36%	26%	39%	14%	29%	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	18%	19%	13%	18%	9%	14%	14%	13%
	Somewhat disagree	11%	6%	15%	18%	13%	0%	14%	22%
	Disagree	13%	19%	13%	9%	4%	29%	14%	26%
	Strongly disagree	6%	19%	9%	18%	13%	14%	29%	13%
"Pride isn't a party, it's a time for queer people to fight again for their rights"	Strongly agree	16%	20%	23%	12%	13%	0%	0%	9%
	Agree	19%	13%	17%	18%	9%	14%	14%	13%
	Somewhat agree	27%	13%	28%	29%	30%	43%	29%	43%
	Neither agree nor disagree	16%	13%	17%	26%	26%	14%	29%	13%
	Somewhat disagree	15%	13%	13%	15%	17%	0%	14%	13%
	Disagree	5%	13%	2%	0%	4%	14%	14%	9%
	Strongly disagree	2%	13%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
"Sorry, LGBT community. God wants the rainbow back"	Strongly agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Somewhat agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

(Continued)

Table 6. Continued.

		The Guardian	The Mirror	The Independent	The Times	The Telegraph	The Sun	The Daily Express	The Daily Mail
"Police are a force of terror": the LGBT activists who want cops out of Pride '	Neither agree nor disagree	3%	6%	2%	3%	4%	0%	14%	4%
	Somewhat disagree	3%	0%	6%	6%	4%	0%	14%	4%
	Disagree	13%	6%	13%	18%	4%	43%	43%	22%
	Strongly disagree	81%	88%	79%	74%	87%	57%	29%	70%
	Strongly agree	6%	0%	6%	3%	9%	0%	0%	0%
	Agree	6%	13%	13%	6%	9%	0%	0%	4%
	Somewhat agree	16%	0%	17%	12%	22%	0%	0%	4%
	Neither agree nor disagree	29%	25%	30%	32%	22%	29%	43%	35%
"Pride is at a crossroads": readers on marching for LGBT equality"	Somewhat disagree	18%	31%	11%	21%	13%	29%	43%	35%
	Disagree	15%	19%	17%	18%	22%	29%	0%	13%
	Strongly disagree	10%	13%	6%	9%	4%	14%	14%	9%
	Strongly agree	3%	0%	4%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%
	Agree	8%	6%	15%	9%	9%	0%	0%	9%
	Somewhat agree	27%	25%	23%	26%	13%	14%	43%	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	45%	50%	47%	47%	61%	57%	43%	48%
	Somewhat disagree	11%	19%	6%	9%	9%	29%	14%	13%
	Disagree	3%	0%	2%	6%	4%	0%	0%	4%
	Strongly disagree	2%	0%	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%

Table 7. Participant and newspaper perceptions of Pride Festival based on Keyword groupings from Sentiword App.

Keyword category (Sentiwordnet App)	Participants' distribution	Newspapers' distribution
<i>Positive words</i>	226	1593
<i>Real_Good</i>	225	1594
<i>To_Assess</i>	26	1240
<i>Negative words</i>	23	442
<i>Real_Bad</i>	23	355
<i>Negative when negated</i>	5	353
<i>Not_Good</i>	3	53
<i>Exceptions</i>	3	44
<i>Negations</i>	3	–
<i>Generally negative/No_Bad</i>	1	10
<i>Double negation</i>	1	5

Word perceptions in relation to PF

Sharpe (2008) and Pielichaty (2015) contest that festivals demonstrate unique characteristics such as gathering, socialisation, celebration, eating drinking and costume. However, due to the nature of this study, it sought to understand what keywords people would use to describe what PF mean to them.

Despite negative representation within newspapers as displayed in Table 5, Tables 7 and 8 reveal significant positive participant perceptions towards PF, illuminating that negative representations in the news do not significantly impact readers' perceptions. Therefore, it can be argued this result may undermine the previous notions that journalism and the news media play key roles in the functioning of modern democratic societies. (McInroy & Craig, 2017). Instead, the results point to an increase in positive reactions to the LGBTQIA+ community despite negative representation in mainstream media.

Table 8 also supports Dilly's (1999) viewpoint that the social transformation of queer from an adjective to a noun creates empowerment. Such evidence can be seen in the words used from participants' perception in describing PF. For example, participants were found to be using abstract nouns of emotion to describe PF, contrary to the newspaper using adjective representation. This helps to reinforce Kirsch's (2000) theory of the queering of culture, further demonstrating the role that PF play in shaping social change by reporting and encouraging positive representation on fifth estate journalism.

Exposure and 5thE

As the original protest marches transitioned into parades, Duguay (2016) discussed the meaning of contemporary PF in the context of the importance of social media. Findings from this study tend to share many similarities with Duguay's (2016) views that social media seems to hold the highest visibility and representation among participants. To build on previous statements of media exposure, media ubiquity and its impact on participants, Table 9 contributes to understanding how often participants see PF reported in mainstream UK Newspapers in comparison with social media determining the MI.

While the possibilities offered by the internet when it comes to (re)creating sharing spaces for public dialogue has been noted by Allen, the results here reflect social media's presence with the knowledge transfer between PF representation and individual perceptions.

Table 8. Participants' and newspapers' most frequently used words.

Word (Sentiwordnet App)	Participants' distribution	Word (Sentiwordnet App)	Newspapers' distribution
<i>Celebration</i>	37	<i>Pride</i>	388
<i>Acceptance</i>	30	<i>LGBT</i>	194
<i>Love</i>	26	<i>People</i>	193
<i>Equality</i>	19	<i>London</i>	128
<i>Fun</i>	18	<i>Parade</i>	108
<i>Freedom</i>	17	<i>Gay</i>	108
<i>Happiness</i>	17	<i>Year</i>	108
<i>Community</i>	13	<i>Community</i>	108
<i>Happy</i>	10		–
<i>Pride</i>	1		–

While Newman et al. (2012) found that 5thE journalism changed the patterns of news produced and used, it is clear from Table 9 that this has emerged as the prominent source of information around PF, potentially due to what Metzgar et al. (2011) highlight as the role citizen-generated content has on specific topics that tend to be overlooked by the mainstream media. Likewise, results also lean on Carpenter's (2010) research around content diversity in online citizen journalism. Findings also point to the role social media has in pushing communication from two-way symmetrical approaches towards more fluid and dynamic models. Thus, supporting what Cabosky (2014) argues is the facilitation of greater power for individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Conclusions

Research question 1: To what extent does traditional media agenda setting have an influence on public perceptions of the Pride Festival?

In answering the research question set out, firstly, the results displayed a mixed representation of PF from UK newspapers, lacking correlation between the MAS and public agenda, finding a significantly more positive perception of participants towards PF compared to reporting within newspapers and the framing analysis finding a difference in reaction to the poster image being positive to MAS negative representation in the article. Therefore, findings directly disagree with McCombs & Shaw, Cohen's epigram and Lipman's pseudo environment of MAS influence. The MAS to public agenda difference was not stand-alone in the data and acknowledged in participants' opinions stating they would not take MAS at face value and would research news/information from a wider range of

Table 9. How often participants see the PF reported in the media.

		Always	Never
How impactful are the following media sources towards you?	A great deal of impact (newspapers)	0.0%	0.0%
	A lot of impact (newspapers)	10.0%	0.0%
	A moderate amount of impact (newspapers)	30.0%	0.0%
	Very little impact (newspapers)	30.0%	60.0%
	No Impact (newspapers)	30.0%	40.0%
	A great deal of impact (social media)	40.0%	60.0%
	A lot of impact (social media)	50.0%	20.0%
	A moderate amount of impact (social media)	0.0%	20.0%
	Very little impact (social media)	0.0%	0.0%
	No impact (social media)	10.0%	0.0%

sources, including 5thE, to make decisions and build opinions. Therefore, this reveals a modern-day movement away from MAS of reality as displayed in the results of visibility, with 0% of respondents saying they see PF reporting having a great deal of impact.

Research Question 2: Has the influence of the 5th Estate media impacted public perceptions of Pride Festival?

The data, consequently, find new MI within the results being the 5thE, acknowledging a greater level of PF visibility over newspapers. Proving greatly impactful with 40% saying they always see the PF on social media having a great deal of impact and 50% saying they always see the PF and it has a lot of impact. Therefore, 5th E is a more favourable source of PF information and exposure, creating a change to the two-way dynamic system of media processing, changing the impact that the MAS has on reality and public perceptions. Consequently, there is a need to integrate 5thE within the preliminary model due to the two-way dynamic changing and to heighten MI (Figure 2).

Concluding the lack of influence MAS is now having on the public agenda, the research directly overlaps with the new rise and impact of 5thE MI. The results discovered the continuing prominence of media framing and the importance of contextualising information that does not stand alone to MAS framing but has the potential to impact and influence the 5thE.

Recommendation for future research

- Increasing literature around 5thE impact on individual's perception towards the LGBTQIA+ population. Therefore, increasing the recognition and including 5thE as valid and important news media when researching MAS and MI.
- To explore whether MAS has a different level of impact across generations due to the rise and impact of 5thE; therefore, understanding why literature is now stating that LGBTQIA+ representation, directed towards younger audiences, tends to be more open-minded (McInroy & Craig, 2017).
- For academics to continue to join QT and CT, as the movement and acceptance increase, to understand any correlation between the representation increases with an impact on society.

Recommendation to industry

- PF/event managers should acknowledge the impact of 5thE, the impact it holds on individual's perception ensuring advantageous use when establishing communication strategies. Creating visibility to participants, who stated pride on social media would have had a high impact, if seen, consequently, creating a positive impact on the public agenda and enhancing the movement.
- Need for PF to keep developing key positive messaging on 5thE to help shape MAS and MI and keep changing public opinion towards LGBTQIA+ communities for the better.
- As demonstrated, the pride movement holds significant importance in marketing to the public; the researcher recommends the events industry take into consideration the impact marketing images could have on the public agenda.

Limitations of the research

An understanding of the limitations of research within this project is important to allow the research validity, reliability, and create the context for a credible research project. Limitations were as follows:

- Literature around UK Pride within media was limited, causing difficulty in creating a foundation from past studies/models. Therefore, the research required a greater understanding of CT, also extending to the representation of pride worldwide.
- The word limit resulted in findings of interest to the researcher not being detailed i.e. analysis of primary data generated by Wordstatnet and the survey.
- The quantitative data were limited due to the age demographic. A larger survey, to include a wider age range, would have benefited the study by allowing it to analyse the variability of age in results and create comparisons.

The restriction of qualitative data created restrictions within the image framing section due to the method's design, limiting the data collected. A focus group would have allowed an in-depth analysis of participants' opinions, allowing the expansion of comment themes on mass media.

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