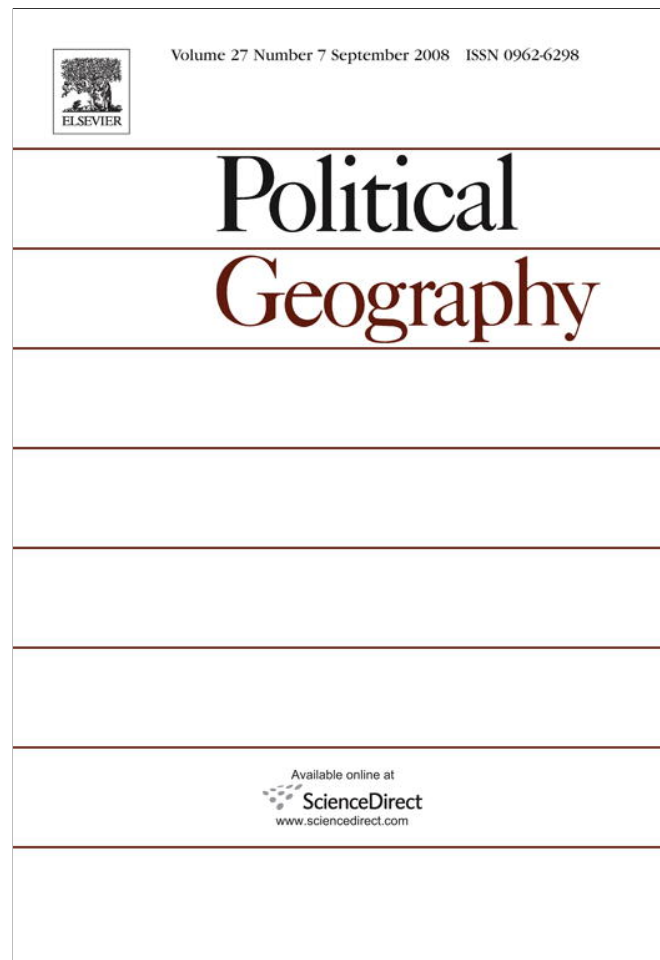


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'coherent' yet shows signs of 'boldness' (p. 138, italics in original). This is certainly not revolution: he admonishes would-be reformers 'don't dream up ideas that would not have a chance to work in the real world' (p. 138). Signposts to a series of areas (e.g. UNEP, legally binding agreements, a post-Kyoto climate regime) are noted to stress the complex elements that are already helping to underpin the New Diplomacy in international law.

In the end, I have mixed feelings about this book. I am certainly impressed by the sheer skill, patience and ingenuity that Kjellen and other international negotiators have (literally) brought to the table in the quest to build the New Diplomacy. It is a wonderful exposition about the 'art of the possible' – however limited the outcomes here may so far have been (see Middleton & O'Keefe, 2003). Much of the success that has occurred since 1972 in building global environmental governance is clearly owed to key individuals such as Kjellen.

Yet I ultimately have strong misgivings about how useful it is to put so much store in the ability of 'a well-functioning global multilateral system' (p. 168) to deliver the goods – even if the new paradigm were to triumph as Kjellen hopes. Too much of the responsibility for today's environmental problems lies beyond the reach of even the most powerful nations in these neo-liberal times for an appeal to new forms of state-centred thinking to suffice. True, Kjellen acknowledges that the New Diplomacy will fail without the enabling conditions of a well-informed public and other stakeholder support (notably business). Yet perhaps he is somewhat blinded to the extent to which contemporary global social and economic changes have diminished the impact such state-linked thinking can ever potentially make to the resolution of the problems that humanity faces. Ironically, it may be that the main contribution of this important book is that it reveals the ultimate limits to expert diplomacy (New or old) – and by extension, rather a need for the general public to become 'citizen experts' in efforts to adapt to the new challenges of global change on a daily basis and in a myriad of ways that no multi-lateral committee of technical experts and negotiators could ever hope to match.

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Atlantic Reverberations: French Representations of an American Presidential Election, Paul C. Adams. Ashgate Press, Aldershot, UK (2007). 240 pp., illustrations, index. US\$ 89.95/£55.00. Hardcover, ISBN-13: 978-0-7546-7023-0/ISBN-10: 0-7546-7023-6.

In this monograph Paul Adams analyses French media representations of the election of the most powerful people's representative in the world: the President of the United States. It is an

extension of his previous work on foreign perceptions of the United States. The book is innovative in several ways. First it discusses the media representations of an election in a foreign country. This is an unusual topic for a study of popular geopolitics. Second it contrasts representations in different types of media, and relates them to the characteristics of each type of media. Third, by paying much attention to the Internet, it can address the interactive encounters between citizens on both sides of the Atlantic and the formation of a transnational communicative setting.

The book consists of eight chapters: two to introduce the geopolitics of media representations, two to present the relations between France and the US, three to report the findings for three different types of media and a concluding chapter on transatlantic relations.

In his first chapter, Adams explains “Atlantic reverberations” as his “term for the way the geopolitical discourse echoes across the Atlantic” (p. 1). He introduces the rift between the French and the Americans – at the time of his study relations were more tense than now, certainly since the election of Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007. The author discusses issues of globalisation, public opinion and citizenship. He also explains the “affordances” of different types of media arguing, after Gunther Kress, that different types of media shape different types of commitments “that afford different meaning making opportunities” (p. 10). As a result, coverage in the newspapers should differ from coverage on television and the Internet. In the second chapter, Adams introduces the geopolitical triad of perceptions (visions, ways of knowing), conceptions (values, beliefs) and representations (motifs, discourses) to study flows of international communication.

Chapter 3 sets the stage with an account of US–French relations at the time of the 2004 presidential elections. It is about French bashing in the US (following the French obstruction to the US War on Iraq in 2002–2003), the preference for the Democratic candidate John Kerry among foreign public opinions, and the French preferences for a global role for the European Union and its relation to the US. Chapter 4 covers the scholarly debate as the long-term contributions of intellectuals shape the representations of the 2004 elections in the media. Adams contrasts historical contributions (De Tocqueville, Briand, Demangeon...) with contemporary critiques (de Jouvenel, Védérine, de Villepin, Todd...). He underlines how France and Europe are defined in relation to the *hyperpuissance* of the US and assesses the emergence of the motif of *counterbalance* as the need to develop Europe puissance to counter American hegemony.

The three chapters on media coverage begin with a discussion of the affordances of each medium and are structured around the dominant discursive motifs. The motifs are described and illustrated with summaries, quotes, cartoons or illustrations. Quotes are translated, the French originals are not provided. For cartoons, translation is provided in the caption of the figure. Certain expressions and titles of books, television items and forum threads, are mentioned in French too.

Chapter 5 deals with newspaper reporting, based on an analysis of three national newspapers *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*. Two themes or discursive motifs dominated the newspaper coverage, Adams names them Divided America and Nation in shock. He distinguishes four additional motifs: Fundamentalist society, Collapsing economy, The candidates, The US as useful threat. The chapter is concluded with a comparison of the newspapers regarding style, topical accents, visuals, and the deepness and explicitness of their bias towards Kerry.

Chapter 6 deals with television based on an analysis of the broadcast of two national channels – the main commercial channel TF1 and the main public channel A2 – between July and November 2004. Unlike the previous chapter, this analysis features also quantitative analysis of the broadcast time devoted to US elections and related items. Adams distils six

major motifs: Divided America (as with the newspapers), Tough campaign, Global impact, Clumsy voting apparatus, The candidates, and American culture. Adams also finds some difference between public and commercial television, the first taking a more political stance than the second.

Chapter 7 deals with the Internet. After an assessment of the affordances of the Internet, Adams discusses specific practical problems regarding to language uses (abbreviations etc.), anonymity, the structure of web forums, and the difficult selection of forums and threads to be analysed. Two discussion forums were chosen: one hosted by newspaper *Le Monde*, the second by *Wanadoo*, a major Internet provider in France. Adams selected four longer threads of postings dedicated to the elections, two on each forum. It is somewhat odd that two of them started on November 3 and 4, that is: after the election took place. Adams provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of these threads. He also researches a different usage of Internet with a study of a blog maintained by a foreign correspondent of *Libération*. The two dominant motifs on the Internet are contradictory: Hyperpuissance or Tottering giant (although the latter might be an artefact of the selection of a thread entitled “When China supplants the USA”). Adams ends the chapter with some discussion of the specific flaws of Internet as a medium of democratic discourse, compared to newspapers and televisions, and its usefulness as complement to these other media.

In the concluding chapter, Adams reviews the tensions between the various groups of motifs. He discusses the further evolution of the French American encounter and the further development of democracy in a globalizing world, assessing the diversity of interpretations and experiences as a resource in international communication networks.

All in all, Adams wrote a compelling analysis of the geopolitical impact of globalizing communication. For the non-French Europeans, it is at time a bit worrisome that the Europeans are seen exclusively through the French gaze, but it is an easy critique. In view of the difficulties involved in discourse analysis in foreign languages and communicative settings, it is unfair to expect a comparative account of media coverage in several EU countries. Besides, none except the British (but in a very different way) are engaged as much with the Americans as to speak of “Atlantic reverberations”.

As shown in the chapter on Internet, online exchanges between citizens on both sides of the Atlantic are constrained by language. It is at times reflected in the book, as a few French words are misspelled (generally diacritic signs are not properly printed, twice adjectives are not properly gendered). It might undermine the confidence of readers familiar with French, which is unfortunate, because the author demonstrates an excellent knowledge of French and French society, when it comes to the analysis of the content of news items and its contextualization.

With an original and subtle analysis of the intersection of globalisation, geopolitics and media, Adams' book is a great contribution to both political and media geography.

It should be required reading for educated Americans curious to know how the rest of the world think of the US, as it offers a thorough analysis of how French and Americans stereotype each other. It is excellent reading for French geographers too, as it is insightful to read an American's reading of the French readings of America. For those who are neither American nor French, it is challenging to compare French media coverage with that in one's own country.

The book is an attractive and challenging account of the liquid qualities of national and transnational communicative settings. As such, it is recommended readings to those interested in (geo)politics and/or the media in a globalizing world. It is regrettable that its prohibitive price — a usual feature for Ashgate Press hard covers — will probably hamper its circulation. Let's also hope that the author will pursue his research agenda and come up soon with

a comparison of the 2004 and the 2008 elections, which could help us assess whether the “Atlantic reverberations” were exceptionally intense during the 2004 campaign.

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