



Selling War, Selling Hope: Presidential Rhetoric, the News Media, and U.S. Foreign Policy since 9/11

Anthony R. DiMaggio

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Details how presidents utilize mass media to justify foreign policy objectives in the aftermath of 9/11.

Modern presidents have considerable power in selling U.S. foreign policy objectives to the public. In *Selling War, Selling Hope*, Anthony R. DiMaggio documents how presidents often make use of the media to create a positive informational environment that, at least in the short term, successfully builds public support for policy proposals. Using timely case studies with a focus on the Arab Spring and the U.S. “War on Terror” in the Middle East and surrounding regions, DiMaggio explains how official spin is employed to construct narratives that are sympathetic to U.S. officialdom. The mass media, rather than exhibiting independence when it comes to reporting foreign policy issues, is regularly utilized as a political tool for selling official proposals. The marginalization of alternative, critical viewpoints poses a significant obstacle to informed public deliberations on foreign policy issues. In the long run, however, the packaging of official narrative and its delivery by the media begins to unravel as citizens are able to make use of alternative sources of information and assert their independence from official viewpoints.

“*Selling War, Selling Hope* is an innovative project that pushes the fields of political science, political communication, public opinion, and presidential rhetoric into new and exciting directions. This book is essential reading.” — Mark Major, author of *The Unilateral Presidency and the News Media: The Politics of Framing Executive Power*

“This eye-opening exposition offers a radical new conclusion to the debate over why Americans oppose wars: Americans oppose particular wars for moral reasons. By capturing the wide range of presidential rhetoric from fear to hope, DiMaggio documents the depths plumbed by political and other elites to manipulate the American public to support the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In order to counteract American citizens’ moral opposition to war, political elites manipulate citizens’ fears into support for war by giving them hope, but the policies they choose, more often than not, lead to more war and reason for fear which creates a vicious cycle: fear—hope—war. The challenge we face is to break through the noise and the manipulation of political, economic, and military elites. DiMaggio offers us a way to see clearly.” — Amentahru Wahlrab, University of Texas at Tyler

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