Using Media Consumption To Explain Political Identification and
Behaviour and Perceptions of the News Media

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A THESIS:

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract:

Using secondary data from Pew's Early January 2004 Political Communications Study this thesis explains political identification, the range of media sources that a person uses, perceptions of political party bias and political participation using information about media use and perceptions of the media. The survey, which was conducted during the winter of 2003/2004, includes responses from 1506 individuals. Analytic techniques include means breakdowns, crosstabulations, correlations and multiple regression. Many associations are identified; however, in general, the media related variables were weakly related to dependent variables. The thesis speculates that the weak relationships can be attributed to a homogeneous range of available media content. Connections between the recent growth in the number of media sources and diversity in media content are discussed.

The analysis finds that listening to talk radio, religious radio and watching the Fox News Channel were weakly associated with conservatism while use of non-profit media, including use of National Public Radio (NPR), the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) were weakly associated with liberalism. The thesis questions if the use of "sound bites" used on talk radio programs and some 24-hour television news channels is related to the conservatism of these audiences. A positive relationship between the amount of bias that a person sees in the news media and the range of news sources that a person uses was found. Sources include Internet, television and print media. The implications of these findings in the context of the agenda-setting framework and a homogenous media are discussed.

Use of the Fox News Channel and talk radio were associated with perceptions of a Democratic Party bias in the news media. Ideas from Bourdieu and Passeron are used to understand how communication styles are related to the perception of talk radio as an alternative

to the "liberal media". The implications of the prevalence of the perception of a "liberal media" are discussed and related to theoretical work from Gramsci and Abercrombie. Media that attempt to add diversity through new operational models are described. Associations between political participation and several types of media use were found. The finding that use of comedy television is related to some indicators of political participation is seen as demonstrating the difficulty in distinguishing information from entertainment-oriented programming. The analysis questions assumptions about the relationships between media use, electoral cynicism and political participation. The thesis argues that better tools from examining media use in general and in the Canadian context are needed.

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1.1   Thesis Introduction and Outline:

This research aims to understand the link between media use and political views and behaviours. The project seeks to identify associations, not causal relationships. By examining patterns in media use we gain a better sense of the concerns that people have about the media and the measures that they use to address these perceived deficiencies.

Very few people have decisive power over media content or the range of media options available. As North Americans, we have the ability to choose from the content that is available to us. We have some ability to choose how much and which media we want to use. The link between media consumption and political views is complex. Feelings about political issues can stem from the information that persons accesses from the media. However, political views can also influence media selection. While this knowledge can come from sources other than the media, attention to media use is a way of examining decisions that are tied to a person's place in democracy. Because individuals have limited power, it is important to examine areas where individuals can make decisions. Media use patterns help to reveal the concerns that people have about the media and the measures that they use to address these perceived deficiencies. The identification of sources associated with audiences with perceptions of high bias in the media suggests how people attempt to overcome the biases that they see. The present analysis seeks to identify such associations in attempt to trigger future research that will explore the causality of such relationships.

There has been major growth in the range of media options made available in recent years. Media choices are becoming increasingly niche oriented; giving media consumers the sense that they have countless unique media sources to choose from. Attention to the strength of

the relationships between media use and the political variables examined in the present analysis will offer a sense of how patterned media habits are. Stronger relationships between media use variables and political variables would suggest that media content is distinct enough to draw clearly defined audiences. In contrast, weak relationships would suggest that despite the exponential growth in media options; content is homogeneous. By considering the powerfulness of media use variables in the present analysis, this thesis will help to evaluate the level of media diversity.

The data analysis portions of the project use the Early January 2004 Political Communications Study conducted by The Pew Research Center for the People and The Press. A range of literature including theoretical work by Abercrombie informs the analysis and Gramsci as well as media policy oriented materials from Herman and Chomsky and McChesney. These works, as well as a wide variety of empirical works are discussed in this chapter. Much of the empirically focused research uses quantitative methodology to find associations that media use habits have with political and demographic variables. Studies using the agenda-setting framework are described. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the methodological approach and limitations of the project and outlines the hypotheses tested in subsequent chapters. Chapters 3 to 6 describe the findings from data analysis. In all cases, bivariate and multivariate findings are described. Techniques include means breakdowns, correlations, crosstabulations and multiple regression. Chapter 3 presents associations between media use and political identification as measured through political ideology, voting behaviour and partisanship. Chapter 4 analyzes the range of television broadcasters, media and media sources that a person uses by identifying relationships that these variables have with demographic variables and perceptions of the news media. The analysis in Chapter 5 treats political party bias as a dependent variable. The chapter

identifies relationships between media use and perceptions of political party bias in the news media. In Chapter 6, associations between media use and political participation are identified. In the final chapter, findings are summarized and implications are discussed. The chapter relates the findings to the expanding range of media options.

1.2   Literature Review Outline:

This discussion of existing work on topics related to the present analysis will draw on theoretical and empirical materials. The literature review will begin with an exploration of ideas raised by Adorno, Mills, Abercrombie and Gramsci. These thinkers offer observations about power and how the media fits into social structure. Work from media critics Chomsky, Herman and McChesney will then be presented to examine how media content is related to these themes. These works are discussed also discussed in Chapter 7 in order to help identify implications of the findings presented in Chapters 3 through 6.

The remaining sections of the chapter focus on mostly quantitative empirical work. To begin, a number of studies by Holbert and his colleagues will be discussed to reveal demographic patterns related to television exposure. Next, attention will be paid to research on political knowledge as well as each of the dependent variables that will be explored in subsequent chapters: political participation and identification and perceptions of the news media. These sections will discuss work that deals with these issues in general as well as how they are related to media use. The discussion of work on civic participation will highlight Putnam's contributions to the area and discuss studies and criticisms sparked by his observations. Because of the wealth of work on political talk radio, a section focusing specifically on the medium will address talk radio exposure and associations between talk radio listening and political

identification and participation. The last section dealing with empirical findings will introduce

the agenda-setting framework and discuss the contributions of the area to our understanding of

role of the mass media. The final section of the chapter will place the present thesis in the

context of existing work by explaining how the thesis will address gaps in the substantive area.

1.3   Discussion of Theoretical Work:

Adorno's work is useful because it questions the way that people see their leisure time.

Adorno (1998) saw popular music as a paradox because it is does not always appear highly

standardized despite standardization being central to its structure. Adorno observes that popular

music seeks to stimulate the listener's attention by relying on familiarity. He writes that:

> Popular music must simultaneously meet two demands. One is for stimuli that
> provoke the listener's attention. The other is for the material to fall within the
> category of what the musically untrained listener would call 'natural' music: that
> is, the sum total of all the conventions and material formulas in music to which he
> is accustomed and which he regards as the inherent simple language of music
> itself, no matter how late the development might be which produced this natural
> language [sic.] (Adorno 1998: 202).

Adorno links the idea of popular music *seeming* natural to its listeners with his discussion of

leisure time and work. He sees the desire for workers to be distracted as being "bound to the

present mode of production, to the rationalized and mechanized process of labour" (1998: 205).

Adorno sees labour as being associated with anxiety because of fears of unemployment. This

concern, according to Adorno, causes people to seek relaxation, specifically, a form of relaxation

that requires minimal concentration. Workers are in an irresolvable situation because they want

"relief from boredom *and* effort simultaneously" (1998: 205, emphasis added). Adorno sees

popular music as reproducing workers' working capacity through its standardized nature (1998:

205). In other words, both work and popular music are based on repetition. He explains that,

"To escape boredom and avoid effort are incompatible-hence the reproduction of the very attitude from which escape is sought" (1998: 206).

Media consumption, in general, is seen as a leisure activity. Putnam's (2000: 241) work, as discussed below, demonstrates that Americans spend a large proportion of their "leisure" time watching television yet they do not find the activity much more enjoyable than doing household chores. Television and radio, including news content are activities that are done during a person's "spare time". Adorno's argument about the structure of popular music raises the possibility that news users are also seeking an activity that attempts to reconcile their desire for effortless stimulation. This suggests that the producers of news content must negotiate between competing goals. They make decisions about the balance between entertainment and informative aspects of their programs. Applying Adorno's ideas to television news suggests that news content producers have some incentive to air content that stimulates the viewer in ways without demanding much intellectual work. Recent programming trends demonstrate that "news" is a flexible category.

Tabloid news is an example of a style that reflects this aspect of news. Knight (1989: 94) describes some of the techniques that characterize tabloid news programs. He explains that tabloid, denoted by topic, accent, emphasis and style, is used in varying degrees. In tabloid television, "the goal is to tell the story as much as possible through actuality pictures and sound. The disembodied voice-over, which splits the visuals from the audio source, is played down as artificial and staged. In this respect, tabloid capitalizes on the perceptual effect of rawness, immediacy, and liveness, of the direct, unmediated presence, that video has over film" (Knight 1989: 101). Turning footage into a series of clips that are only seconds long helps to create a sense of "hyperactivity" (Knight 1989: 103). These measures represent

attempts by programmers to entice viewers with program design. These techniques appeal to

viewers' desire to be stimulated by pace and rhetoric, not their want for depth, detail or

complex arguments. This approach is consistent with Adorno's observations about people's

attempts to escape boredom without strain. The paradox about the amount of time that

Americans spend in front of their televisions and their lack of satisfaction with this time

suggests that Adorno's observations about the irreconcilable goals that popular music listeners

also have application with television news audiences. Putnam's observations about the link

between television and civic engagement are addressed in detail below.

Abercrombie (1990: 201) is critical of Adorno's ideas about popular music. He argues

that:

> This kind of account of the relationship of popular culture to ideology, reproduced
> in several theoretical schemes (e.g. Fargier, 1980), incorporates rather crude,
> unidimensional views of the producers, the audience and the text itself. The
> production system is seen as coherently and smoothly generating the text, which
> is itself relatively homogeneous and invariant. Most important of all, the
> audience is presented as relatively uncreative in its responses to an ideological
> text.

Instead, Abercrombie (1990: 201) describes the advantages that Gramsci's ideas have over

Adorno's observations. He explains that Gramsci sees hegemony as process involving

"struggle" and "negotiation" (Abercrombie 1990: 201). In his work with Hill and Turner,

Abercrombie proposes the "dominant ideology thesis" which is summarized as the argument

that:

> In all societies based on class divisions there is a dominant class which enjoys
> control of both the means of material production and the means of mental
> production. Through its control of ideological production, the dominant class is
> able to supervise the construction of a set of coherent beliefs. These dominant
> beliefs of the dominant class are more powerful, dense and coherent than those of
> subordinate classes. The dominant ideology penetrates and infects the
> consciousness of the working class, because the working class comes to see and to
> experience reality through the conceptual categories of the dominant class. The

> dominant ideology functions to incorporate the working class within a system
> which is, in fact, operating against the material interests of labour. This
> incorporation in turn explains the coherence and integration of capitalist society.
> (Abercrombie, et al. 1980: 1-2).

The use of the word "supervise" in the above excerpt is instructive. The concept of supervision involves leadership and management without assuming complete control. Abercrombie, et al. (1980: 151) sees the mass media, along with education, as a way to "transmit dominant values on a universal scale". The authors argue that, in the later stages of capitalism, dominant ideology is difficult to specify. They question the assumption that sees the mass media as spreading a coherent set of values held by the dominant class (Abercrombie, et al. 1980: 130).

In his book focusing on television, Abercrombie (1996: 3) describes television as an activity that the British population can share without being divided by gender, ethnicity or class. He explains that television is a "shared experience" that often results in interpersonal dialogue about television programming (Abercrombie 1996: 3). This prevalence raises the importance of understanding the mass media. Abercrombie, et al. (1980: 151) see the question of the extent of the media's influence as being important but relying on inconclusive information for answers. The authors speculate that an individual's beliefs are more likely to be influenced by the mass media in situations where they have no other tool to base their views (Abercrombie, et al. 1980 152).

Abercrombie's work differs from Adorno's ideas about popular music in that it sees the connection between dominant and subordinate as less direct and explicit. Gramsci's ideas also represent a view where dominant groups do not have open-ended power over others. Gramsci's conception of hegemony sees one class striving for consent from another class. This is in contrast with using force (Femia 1981: 24). For instance, Gransci sees trade unions as an

example of such consent. According to Gramsci, trade unions accept and work within the "categories of bourgeoisie democracy" thereby accepting capitalism and positioning workers as wage earners rather than producers (Femia 1981: 35, 259). Gramsci and Abercrombie describe possible behavioural scenarios from non-dominant groups. Adorno's observations characterize the masses as having more prescribed responses.

Mills' work also deals with power. He refers to the powerful class as the power elite and describes how the mass media relates to the maintenance of power relations. Mills (1959) defines the power elite as those "men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they occupy such pivotal positions…" (1959: 3-4). Mills' definition emphasizes power rather than income or wealth. He sees the economy, the political and the military as the institutions with the greatest power in modern America (1959: 6). The power elite are the people with the greatest power in each of these institutions. While Mills' work discusses mass society and the media, it does not specifically identify the media as one of the "big three" institutions. However, he is critical of the media because he sees it as doing little to promote public debate. By not fostering a critical forum for the American population, the media are presented as a force that protects existing power relations.

Mills points out that the "big three" institutions are not three separate institutions. He sees them as unified and as shifting leadership roles depending on "the 'tasks of the period' as they, the elite define them" (1959: 277). During the time of writing *The Power Elite*, Mills (1959: 276-7) saw the military as central:

> In so far as the structural clue to the power elite today lies in the economic order,
> that clue is in fact that the economy is at once a permanent-war economy and a

private-corporation economy. American capitalism is now in considerable part a military capitalism, and the most important relation of the big corporation to the state rests on the coincidence of interests between military and corporation needs, as defined by warlords and corporate rich. Within the elite as a whole, this coincidence of interest between the high military and the corporate chieftains strengthens both of them and further subordinates the role of the merely political men. Not politicians, but corporate executives, sit with the military and plan the organization of war effort.

Mills makes the distinction between a "public" and a "mass" society. The concepts are presented as characteristics that describe a spectrum. A public is a situation where the number of people who express opinion is equal to the number of people who hear them. A public facilitates forums for debate so that debate is always possible. The mass society differs from the public by allowing institutions to have immense influence, leaving the population without agency. Unlike in a public, those in a mass society struggle to make their voices heard. Instead, the population is at the discretion of those who manage the forums for dialogue. Mills identifies Nazi Germany and Communist Russia as extreme examples of mass societies because of their totalitarianism (1959: 303-4). Because the mass media is linked to the concept of the mass society and elite culture, they have a role in protecting the structure that allows the elite institutions to dominate. Mills (1959: 311) explains that:

> No one really knows all the functions of the mass media, for in their entirety these functions are probably so pervasive and so subtle that they cannot be caught by the means of social research now available. But we do now have reason to believe that these media have helped less to enlarge and animate the discussions of primary publics than to transform them into a set of media markets in mass-like society.

Mills (1959: 311) is most critical of the "psychological illiteracy that is facilitated by the media". This term refers to a number of different implications that result from exposure to the mass media. For instance, Mills observes that the media makes events seem legitimate. The media

are said to guide experiences to the extent that personal experiences are thought of in terms or stereotypes perpetuated by the media (1959: 312). He also explains that most people do not compare media content. This is because people are drawn to media that confirms their existing beliefs and because there is a narrow range of content to choose from. "The media display an apparent variety and competition, but on closer view they seem to compete more in terms of variations on a few standardized themes than of clashing issues" (1959: 313). Mills sees the media as dictating people's identities and prescribing their goals for them (1959: 314). He explains that, "the gaps between the identity and aspiration lead to technique and/or to escape. This is probably the basic psychological formula of the mass media today" (1959: 314). Mills sees the media as distracting people from important issues by feeding them with "artificial frenzies that are resolved within the program framework, usually by violent action or by what is called humor" (1959: 315).

Manipulation, unlike authority, conceals the goals that surround it. In contrast, authority, according to Mills, is explicit in the sense that those who are influenced by it are aware that it exists (1959: 316). He argues that manipulation is not a problem in classic democratic societies because the "formal authority resides in the public itself" (1959: 317). Manipulation is problematic when those with power do not have authority. In these situations, the powerful do not want others to know about their power. Implicit in Mills' argument is the idea that these elites are not powerful to the extent that they have no stake in the public's opinion. He explains that, "Authority *formally* resides 'in the people,' but the power of initiation is in fact held by small circles of men. That is why the standard strategy of manipulation is to make it appear that the people, or at least a large group of them, 'really made the decision'" (1959: 317, emphasis in original).

1.4   Discussion of Work By Media Critics:

Herman and Chomsky (1998) and McChesney (2004) describe how the range of content in current media facilitates the interests of the most powerful and demonstrate that media content can be used for purposes captured by Mill's concept of manipulation.

Herman and Chomsky's (1998) model proposes that five "filters" restrict the potential of the private media. First, according to Herman and Chomsky (1998), the financial barriers associated with entry into industries such as television and print restrict the range of voices that can exercise ownership control. This reduces the range of potential media owners and explains why organizations in the media are foremost profit motivated and are governed by a homogenous group with distinct political goals. Second, the media's dependence on revenue from advertising discourages content which conflict with client interests. It also encourages companies to target their content at audiences with more disposable income. Those that design media content have less value for those with less money (Herman and Chomsky 1998: 16). These practises affect the content of the media. Herman and Chomsky (1998: 17) observe that public affairs oriented content is less encouraged because it is seen as spoiling the consumer mood. Third, because the companies in the media aim to keep their costs low, they prefer to use sources that already have credibility with their audience because of their status and prestige. Herman and Chomsky's (1998: 19) examples of such sources include representatives from The White House or the police department. This restricts the range of commentary to those who already are relatively powerful. According to Herman and Chomsky (1998: 24), conservative agenda think tanks are said to fund experts (also referred to as "talking heads") that push the agendas of the elite. He contrasts these measures with the costly and provocative genre of investigative journalism, which has the

potential to bring attention to other voices. Fourth, Herman and Chomsky explain that those who

produce media strive to reduce "flack." Flack are "negative responses to a media statement or

program" (Herman and Chomsky 1998 26). They provide examples of ways that those with

power put pressure on the media in an attempt to avoid the production of media content that may

be counter to their goals. Finally, the authors explain that the idea of communism is presented as

an "ultimate evil" in the media (1998: 29). As a result, social democrats are seen as too soft on

communism and American patriotism is seen as a legitimate news practise. Issues are framed in

the context of a narrow dichotomy that labels things as either "communist" or "anti-communist."

This approach promotes free-market based ideas. More recent news coverage suggests that the

new "ultimate evils" have emerged since Herman and Chomsky first published *Manufacturing

Consent*. Enemies for the "war on terror" include those who question United States foreign

policy or "homeland security" measures.

McChesney's (2004) work closely resembles Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model

by indirectly addressing the five "filters" that Herman and Chomsky identify as restricting

American media content. However, McChesney's (2004) work is much more than a

regurgitation of the model. Because of its emphasis on policy, McChesney (2004) focuses on

recent industry trends.

McChesney's (2004) policy recommendations are consistent with the view that market

forces limit the mass media. He suggests an alternative to the current structure of the media. He

writes:

> The logic of my argument is that a democratic media system-or a democratic
> solution to the problem of the media, as I put it-would necessitate a large, well
> funded, structurally pluralistic, and diverse nonprofit and non-commercial media
> sector, as well as a more competitive and decentralized commercial sector.
> Where economics preclude competitive commercial markets, there must be

> transparent regulation in the public interest. The reforms I envision should be content neutral and viewpoint neutral (2004: 11).

These recommendations are based on McChesney's (2004) observations about the weaknesses of private media ownership.

McChesney (2004) enhances Herman and Chomsky's (2002) work by offering detail and elaboration on the weaknesses of private profit oriented media. He observes that the private media are committed to promoting an ethic of consumption and argues that we are living in an age of "hyper-commercialism." McChesney points to the increase in product placement in current media. He notes that, "Coca-Cola paid $25 million to AOL Time Warner so that, among other things, characters in the WB Network's *Young American* series would 'down Cokes in each episode'" (McChesney 2004: 149). He points out that part of the attraction of reality television to broadcasters is its conduciveness for product placements (McChesney 2004: 149). Product placement is especially attractive to advertisers because of concerns that audiences have become trained to avoid commercials. Product placements allow advertising messages to reach even the viewers who refuse to stay tuned during commercial breaks. It also further blurs programming with advertising making it more difficult viewers, particularly children, to identify advertising content.

McChesney is very critical of current journalism. He calls election coverage "journalism's litmus test" because of its importance to the democratic process (McChesney 2004: 123). He explains that current election "press coverage strongly emphasizes the 'spin' politicians deploy, endless analyses of polls, and predictions of winners rather than issues. This inexpensive journalism is easy to fashion into both serious and entertaining reports" (McChesney 2004: 123). He notes that, "journalism simply devotes far fewer resources to campaigns and

elections than it has historically" (McChesney 2004: 126). He continues by describing that, "It is

in this context that paid TV political advertising has become the lingua franca of the electoral

culture, and a massive industry in its own right…Adjusting for inflation, the amount spent on TV

political spots increased 600 percent from 1972 to 2000" (McChesney 2004: 127). McChesney

(2004: 128) identifies the implications that this trend has on democracy:

> The juggernaut of TV political advertising has significantly molded U.S. electoral
> politics. For starters, political advertising has replaced coverage as the main
> vehicle by which candidates are exposed to citizenry. In 2002, for example, a
> viewer was four times more likely to see a political ad during a TV newscast than
> to see an election-related story.

McChesney explains that the emphasis on TV advertising in American elections ensures that

those running for office are multimillionaires (McChesney 2004: 131). "The average cost of a

successful campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives increased from $87, 000 in 1976 to

$840,000 in 2000, a dramatic increase even after accounting for inflation" (McChesney 2004:

130). McChesney explains that in 2000, the better-funded candidate won the House race 95

percent of the time (McChesney 2004: 130). These observations illustrate how the media's

attempts to maximize revenues results in a system that protects existing power relations while

encouraging voters to believe that they chose their political leaders.

McChesney (2004) points out that in economic theory, competitive markets are markets

where customers have control over the range of products. Because of the restrictions on private

media, our current system does not produce as much "outstanding content" as it could

(McChesney 2004: 199). He refutes the idea that private ownership is superior to public media

ownership because it strives to meet audience tastes by understanding market forces. Instead, he

argues that the private sector produces a narrow range of content that is limited by the issues

discussed above and presents these choices as exhaustive. He argues that, "People are exposed

to the media fare that the giants can profit from, they develop a taste for it, they consume it, and then the media giants claim they must make more of it to satisfy demand. What is demanded depends to a very large extent on what is produced rather than the other way around, what John Kenneth Galbraith (1958) called the 'dependence effect'" (McChesney 2004: 200-1). McChesney (2004) is very critical of media regulation in the United States.

The ideas discussed above describe power relations in capitalistic societies. They emphasize ways that those with power maintain their status. The hypotheses tested in this thesis focus on individual level behaviour to reveal how media users navigate their media use. Understanding patterns that relate media use habits to political variables helps to reveal how people manage their place in the context of power relations. Subsequent sections of this chapter will deal with political behaviour, identification and views as well as media use and content. The work described below focuses on individual level behaviours to further our understanding of these issues.

1.5   Predicting Media Exposure:

Research shows that media use habits can be predicted through demographic variables. Holbert and his colleagues have played a major role in demonstrating that television use patterns can be predicted through demographic and other background variables.

Many relationships were explored in the study (Holbert, et al. 2004: 351) on the connection between media use and attitudes on law and order issues. Their analysis examined predictors of television news, police reality programs and crime drama viewing. It was found that age has some explanatory power for use of all three program categories. Unlike police reality programming, the other two categories have positive relationships with age. Being male

was found to be associated with watching police reality programs. Gender was not significantly related to television news or crime drama viewing. Income and education were negatively associated with police reality viewing and were not significantly related to the other types of television. Caucasians watched less of all three types of viewing. Religiosity was positively associated with watching television news but was not related to the other types of programming. Liberalism was an inconsistent predictor of crime drama viewing.

Holbert, et al. used information about media use to predict concerns about the environment (Holbert, et al. 2003a) and feminist issues (Holbert, et al. 2003b). Their analyses include examinations of associations with various types of entertainment and factual-based television. While the environmental study examined various types of entertainment and factual-based television, the feminist study focused only on the associations of entertainment programming. The former analysis uses data from the 1999 and 2000 advertising firm DDB's Life Style Study while the feminist study draws on the 1997, 1998 and 1999 editions of the same survey. The authors distinguish between traditional and progressive dramas. While the environmental issues study lacks a detailed discussion of the differences between the dramatic programming categories, the feminist issues study explains that progressive dramas include female characters in positions of authority while traditional dramas limit female characters to domestic roles (Holbert, et al. 2003b: 48-9). Examples of progressive dramas named by the authors include *NYPD Blue, ER, Law & Order.* In contrast, *Chicago Hope. Touched By An Angel, Promised Land* and *Walker: Texas Ranger* were considered traditional dramas (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 184).

In the case of dramatic entertainment programming, age did not emerge as a consistent predictor of progressive drama viewing but was found to have a significant positive relationship

with the viewing of traditional drama (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 187; 2003b: 54). A negative relationship between age and the viewing of situation comedies was found in both studies (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 187; 2003b: 54). Age was found to be positively associated with the viewing of public affairs and nature documentaries (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 186). Being female was associated with watching both types of drama (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 187 and Holbert, et al. 2003b: 54) as well as nature documentaries (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 186). Gender was a predictor of public affairs viewing in 1999 but not in 2000, as being female was positively associated with public affairs viewing in 1999 (Holbert, et al. 2003: 186). Neither education nor income was consistently related to watching either of the factual-based programming categories (public affairs or nature documentaries), situation comedies or progressive dramas (Holbert, et al. 2003a 186-7). However, income was associated with situation comedy viewing in the case of the feminist issues study (Holbert, et al. 2003b: 54). These socio-economic measures were negatively associated with watching traditional dramas in both studies (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 187; 2003b: 54). Liberalism is positively related to situation comedy viewing and negatively associated with traditional dramas (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 186-7; 2003b: 54). Liberalism was not a consistent predictor of progressive drama viewing in the environmental study but was found to be positively associated with the category in the feminist issues study (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 187; 2003b: 54).

These differences can be attributed to a number of issues. Because the variables described above are generally weak predictors of media use, their predictive power may not persist from year to year. Age is a relatively powerful predictor of media use, particularly for news and public affairs programs with standardized beta weights ranging from 0.36 to 0.40 for such categories. Similarly, Young (2004) found age to be negatively associated with late night

comedy exposure. Most other variables, in the context of Holbert's work, had standardized beta weights between –0.1 and 0.1. An exception was education in the context of the police reality television model where standardized beta weights of –0.19 and –0.17 were found for the years 1999 and 2000 respectively (Holbert, et al. 2004: 351). While the variables included in Holbert's models differ from study to study, most variables were used in all models and variables unique to particular studies are associated with weak effects. When comparing the relative powerfulness of models, Holbert and his colleagues were best able to predict the viewing of news and public affairs programming. The R squared values associated with these models range from 13.8% for public affairs television viewing in 1999 (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 186) to 15.9% for television news viewing in 2000 (Holbert, et al. 2004: 351). In contrast, the R squared values for models predicting the viewing of nature documentaries and crime dramas do not exceed 1.9% (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 186; 2004:351). The models better predict situation comedy and traditional drama viewing with R squared values peaking at 7.1% and 13.6% respectively (Holbert, et al. 2003a: 187; 2003b: 54).

The above discussion focuses on television exposure. Attention to exposure of other mediums tends to be less explicit. Associations related to the newspaper audience will be addressed through a discussion of media preference in the section pertaining to feelings about media credibility below. The section focusing on talk radio will address the heterogeneous composition of the talk radio audience.

1.6   Discussion of Work on Political Variables:

1.6.1   Political Knowledge:

There is a body of research examining the link between media use and political knowledge. Researchers have identified a number of background variables related to political knowledge. Education and income are positively related to political knowledge (Evelend Jr. and Scheufele 2000; Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001). Being male, older, "right-wing" and interested in politics were weakly and positively related to political knowledge (Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001). Moy, et al. (2004: 540) found length of residence to be positively related political knowledge.

Moy, et al. (2004) and McLeod, et al. (1996) found that the use of local media was positively related to political knowledge. Work from Moy, et al. (2004: 539) finds that local newspaper and television were equally related to political knowledge. McLeod and his colleagues (1996: 197) found that local hard television and newspaper use were positively related to community knowledge with newspaper use associated with a slightly higher standardized beta coefficient. Local media explains 15.33% of the variance in political knowledge after background variables including "race", ideology and length of residence were entered into the model developed by Moy and her colleagues (2004: 540).

Eveland Jr. and Scheufele (2000) also examined the relationship between television and newspaper use and political knowledge. However, the indicators that they employed do not isolate local and national coverage. The authors found television news, using an index that combines exposure and attention, to be unrelated to forms of political knowledge (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000). A slight positive relationship was found between television news use and knowledge about candidate positions during the 1996 United States Presidential campaign.

Relationships between television news use and other forms of political knowledge were not

significant (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000: 224). Newspaper use, as measured by a similar

index, was positively related to knowledge about candidate and party stances and overall

political knowledge (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000: 224). Television use was found to interact

with education in predicting political knowledge such that the relationship between education

and knowledge was weaker for heavy television news viewers (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000:

223). Heavy and low newspaper users had similar correlations between education and political

knowledge (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000: 224). Medium newspaper users had the highest

correlation between the variables (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000: 224).

Holtz-Bacha and Norris (2001) compared the political knowledge of public and private

television viewers in European Union (EU) countries. Denmark and Ireland were the countries

with the greatest proportion of the population preferring public television to commercial

television. The vast majority of the population in these countries prefer public television.   The

opposite pattern characterizes Greece and Portugal, the countries at the other end of the spectrum

(Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001: 131). Those who prefer to tune to either news or entertainment

programming on public television scored higher on the political knowledge scale in comparison

with those who preferred commercial television for either news or entertainment (Holtz-Bacha

and Norris 2001: 135). The authors used the same multivariate regression model to predict

political knowledge for the population of each nation separately. Considering the EU as a whole,

preference for public television was associated with a standardized beta weight of 0.09. The

standardized beta weight associated with preference for public television was statistically

significant and positive in ten of the fourteen countries. Three of these countries (Netherlands,

Belgium and Finland) were associated with beta coefficients of 0.17 or higher. Of the countries

with significant beta coefficients, Italy had the lowest at 0.06 (Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001: 134). No country had a coefficient that was negative and significant. Northern Ireland was the only country with a negative standardized beta weight (Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2001: 134). The relationships between public media use and political identification, perceptions of political party bias and political participation are examined in the present analysis.

Kull, et al. (2003-4) also offer an analysis that is useful in understanding the relationship between public television viewing and political knowledge using an American sample. The authors approach the issue of political knowledge by comparing the level of misperception associated with various television news source audiences. They tested the accuracy of their sample's perceptions about key issues surrounding America's policy with Iraq. Specifically, they asked respondents what their perceptions were about: 1.) Whether or not "weapons of mass destruction" had been found in Iraq; 2.) The relationship between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda; and 3.) How the international community feels about the United States "having gone to war with Iraq". Kull, et al. (2003-4: 575) found that 60% of the sample held one or more misperception. The authors (Kull, et al. 2003-4: 589) found that The Fox News Channel (FNC) audience had the greatest percentage of viewers with one or more misperceptions and was twice as likely to believe that close links between Hussein and al-Qaeda had been found. In contrast, Kull, et al. (2003-4: 582) found that the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) had the smallest percentage of viewers with one or more misperceptions. However, the authors only briefly discuss their use of binary logistic regression. Kull, et al. (2003-4: 580) describe that their analysis shows that the presence of one or more misperceptions was the most powerful predictor of support for the war even when demographic variables, ideology, political participation and media consumption variables were included in the analysis. This analysis would be stronger if it shifted its emphasis

from percentage data to multiple regression/correlation (MRC) techniques. While the authors used regression analysis to offer context to the role played by a person's primary news source, this discussion lacks detail. The analysis would be strengthened if it quantified the relative impact played by primary news source in order to give a stronger sense of the relative powerfulness of the broadcast source as Holtz-Batcha and Norris (2001) did. The present analysis offers analysis of the FNC audience using MRC. The relationship between Fox News use and political identification, perceptions of political party bias and political participation are examined in Chapters 3, 5 and 6 respectively.

1.6.2   Political and Civic Participation:

A number of background variables have been identified as being associated with political participation. Milbrath and Goel (1977) observe that those who are closer to the "centre" of a society are more likely to be involved in politics. The authors explain that this concept is vague. But, the idea is that those who are closer to power and social networks are more likely to have high levels of political participation. In contrast, those who are more isolated and less connected to decision-making are expected to participate less in politics.

Milbrath and Goel's perspective is supported by recent research. For instance, education and income are positively associated with political participation (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000; Moy, et al. 2004; Milbrath and Goel 1977). Shah, et al. (2001b: 485) found education to be positively related to civic participation (involvement with community activities) and income to be weakly and positively associated with civic participation when only demographic and social situation variables were included in the model. Income was not significant after social orientation and media use variables were introduced to the model. These findings support

Milbrath and Goel's observation that those closer to decision-making will participate more. Similarly, age is positively associated with political participation (Shah, et al. 2001b; Moy, et al. 2004; Milbrath and Goel 1977). Shah, et al. (2001b: 493) observe that younger people have lower levels of interpersonal trust and political participation. These authors also found that interpersonal trust and political participation are more closely related for younger people (Shah, et al. 2001: 492). Church attendance is positively associated with political participation (Mastin 2000; Shah, et al. 2001). Some studies have not found gender to relate to political participation in a statistically significant way (Moy, et al. 2004; Mastin 2000; Eveland Jr.; Scheufele 2000). However, Milbrath and Goel (1977: 116-7) cite a body of work suggesting that males are more likely to be involved with politics.

Blacks are less politically active (Milbrath and Goel 1977). However, Milbrath and Goel (1977: 120) observe that those Blacks who participate in politics are as likely as Whites to participate in politics at higher levels of office and that Blacks are not less likely than Whites of the same class position to participate.

Shah, et al. (2001b) tested the relationship between a number of social orientation variables and civic participation. Sociability and institutional trust were found to be weakly and positively related to civic participation in a statistically significant way while life satisfaction and residential stability did not have significant relationships with civic participation after media use variables were entered into the model (Shah, et al. 2001b: 485).

Uhlaner (1982) used data from the 1974 Canadian National Election Study to determine if people participate consistently across levels of government. Respondents were asked about their political involvement at the local, provincial and federal levels. The activities addressed by the survey include voting, discussing politics and attending rallies. Uhlaner (1982: 304) found

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that people participated in the same activities across government levels. For instance, those who put up campaign signs during provincial elections were likely to do the same for federal elections. However, involvement in a political activity at one level was not associated with other activities at that same level. For instance, a person who puts a campaign sticker on his or her car during a federal election campaign is not more likely than a random respondent to participate in other forms of political participation at the federal level. Uhlaner (1982: 307) found a closer association between participating in a specific activity at both the federal and provincial levels for independents and those who identified strongly with the same party at both levels of government. Those who identified with a party at only one level of government had weaker associations.

Chui, et al. (1991) used data from the 1984 Canadian Election Study to understand the power of information about immigrant background in predicting political participation. The authors controlled for the respondent's gender, age and province of residence, educational level and occupational status as well as the education levels of the respondent's parents because these variables have been shown to have relationships with immigrant background and political participation. Chui, et al. (1991: 387) did not find political activity to increase linearly with the number of generations in the country. It was found that political involvement peaked among those in the second-generation category. The authors found that respondents with origins in Southern Europe and Asia were less likely to vote and get involved with the election. Those who spoke English at home were more politically involved than those who spoke other languages (including French) in their homes (1991: 389). Chui, et al. (1991: 391) did not find major differences in political participation between foreign and native-born respondents before the use of control variables.

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Work from Brunsting and Postmes (2002) examines issues related to online collective action. They describe how the Internet is paradoxical in that it can be used as a forum that facilitates collective action despite its isolating qualities. The authors web-surveyed members of Milieudefensie, the Dutch division of Friends of the Earth International. The group uses lobbying and negotiation to create environmental change. The group also organizes sit-ins and demonstrations on occasion (Brunsting and Postmes, 2002: 536). The organization is composed of three general subcategories: the hardcore activist groups, pressure groups and sympathizers. The authors' analysis makes use of these categories and a control group consisting of people who registered with Milieudefensie for reasons other than supporting it. It was found that the hardcore activist group and the pressure group identified more strongly with the environmental movement (Brunsting and Postmes 2002: 539). Brunsting and Postmes (2002: 542) found the hardcore activist group, in comparison with the pressure group, had a more positive expectation of the amount of participation that other members would offer to aims of the organization. The hardcore group saw offline and online activism as more effective than the other groups. However, this was only significant with the pressure and control group for offline actions and the pressure group for online actions (Brunsting and Postmes, 2002: 541). The authors explain that both activists and non-activists see the Internet as a way to facilitate collective action. People who engaged in online activities intended to get involved with activism again in the future (Brunsting and Postmes, 2002: 547). Tolbert and McNeal (2003) also examined the link between political participation and Internet use. They found through multivariate analysis that those with Internet access were more likely to vote in the 1996 and 2000 United States Presidential elections.

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Researchers have tested the relationships between use of offline media and political participation. Earlier work suggests that television news viewing is not related to political participation (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000; Shah, et al. 2001b; Scheufele 2002). In contrast, numerous studies suggest that newspaper reading is related to political participation (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000; Shah, et al. 2001b; Scheufele 2002). However, when examining local news specifically, McLeod, et al. (1996) found that hard and soft television and newspaper news use are positively related to local participation and political interest. Eveland Jr. and Scheuffele (2000: 227) found political participation to be higher among more educated newspaper readers. Shah, et al. (2001b: 485) found print magazine reading, television social drama viewing and using the Internet for information exchange purposes to be weakly and positively related to civic participation. Watching situation comedies and reality programs were found to have weak negative relationships with civic participation (Shah, et al. 2001b: 485). Models predicting political participation that include media use variables are presented in Chapter 6. The analysis expects that more information-based sources will draw audiences that are associated with higher levels of political participation whereas more entertainment-oriented content is anticipated to draw less active audiences. These expectations are described in more detail in Chapter 2 and are tested in the analysis in Chapter 6.

Scheufele (2002) adds nuance to the area of political participation by examining the role that interpersonal discussion has on political activity levels. Her work finds that those who watch hard television news and discuss politics with others frequently have higher levels of political participation and political knowledge than those who tended not to discuss politics with others. The same pattern was found for the political participation among newspaper hard news use. However, television viewers who discussed politics with others were not more

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knowledgeable than viewers who did not (Scheufele 2002: 56). As explained above, Scheufele (2002) did not find television news to be associated with political participation without the interaction effect. In contrast, newspaper reading is associated with political participation with and without the interaction effect. Scheufele's findings suggest that there may be differences between what draws people to newspapers over television as well as the way that information is presented in each medium.

Mastin (2000) observes that the Black community in the United States has a unique relationship with local news. Her Black sample did not seem to use local news in ways that were consistent with expectations suggested by work on the link between local news consumption and civic participation. Mastin notes that her findings do match work from other scholars that studies Americans in general and finds local news significant in predicting civic participation. Mastin (2000: 124) speculates that Black Americans use the national media "to gain an overall environmental worldview" and interpersonal networks such as church and neighbourhood organizations to learn about local issues. The relationship that Blacks have with local news use is explored in Chapter 6.

Putnam (2000) has identified a decline in civic participation in the United States. Putnam's (1995) work sees civic participation as a component of the broader concept of "social capital" which captures "citizen engagement in community affairs". Social capital can include involvement with organizations, interpersonal trust and socializing with other people. While social capital is related to political participation, Putnam (1995: 665) explains that the concepts are not interchangeable. Political participation refers to connections that individuals have with institutions whereas social capital refers to relationships between people (Putnam 1995: 665).

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Putnam uses the concept of "civic participation" to describe people's connections with their communities in general. This includes political participation.

Putnam (2000: 35) observes that the American population is increasingly educated, yet civic knowledge has not been increasing. Election campaign following has been stable since the 1970s while volunteering for political parties has declined over the past thirty years (Putnam 2000: 37). Putnam (2000: 40) observes that Americans are shifting away from volunteering their labour to making financial donations to political parties. Other examples that demonstrate a drop in civic participation include decreases in attendance at public meetings and rallies (Putnam 2000: 40). While Putman (2000: 46) explains that, "The last several decades have witnessed a serious deterioration of community involvement among Americans from all walks of life", he points out that in "absolute terms", the declines among the more educated have had the greatest impact. This is attributed the higher rates of participation associated with the more educated.

Putnam's work explores a range of explanations for these trends. He examined the issue of time pressure. Putnam (2000: 191) observes that higher time pressure is not associated with reduced civic involvement even when controlling for education and income. He describes that those with the busiest schedules are more likely than others to be involved with community projects, attend church and club meetings, follow politics, spend time visiting friends and entertain at home. Putnam (2000: 213) explains that time spent commuting is negatively associated with community involvement. Further, those who reside in communities with higher rates of commuting are less involved in their communities even if they do not commute (Putnam 2000: 213). This suggests that suburban culture in general discourages civic involvement. This finding informs the control variables used in the models predicting the range of media sources used in Chapter 4.

Putnam also examines the link between trends in media use and patterns in civic involvement. In contrast with aspects of the studies described above, Putnam (2000: 220) observes that television news viewing is associated with civic engagement and political knowledge. This is in contrast with newspaper reading, which is associated with high social capital (Putnam 1995: 678). Putnam (2000: 220) explains that those who rely on television for their news are less involved than those who use newspapers but participate more than most Americans. Those who primarily used the Internet as their information source demonstrated low levels of civic involvement (Putnam 2000: 221).

Putnam's observations about the links between television use and financial anxiety help to offer a context for the role that television fills in American culture. He explains that financial anxiety is associated with reduced socializing with friends and other forms of community involvement such as church attendance, volunteering and interest in politics. Putnam (2000: 193) points out that even activities that do not require any or little spending are reduced when financial stress increases. According to Putnam (2000: 193), television use is the only leisure activity positively associated with financial anxiety. Further, Putnam explains that social participation is positively associated with most other types of media use when controlling for demographics. In contrast, television is "the only leisure activity that seems to inhibit participation in other leisure activities" (Putnam 2000: 237). Putnam names religious participation, social visiting, shopping, parties, sports and participation in organizations as examples of activities that that are reduced when time spent watching television increases (2000: 237). Sleeping, resting, eating, housework, radio listening and hobbies were the only activities associated with heavy television viewing (Putnam 2000: 237).

These findings may suggest that those who spend a lot of time watching find television highly entertaining. However, Putnam explains that the situation is generally the opposite. He writes that, "for the average viewer television is about as enjoyable as housework and cooking, ranking well below all other leisure activities and indeed below work itself. TV's dominance in our lives reflects not its sublime pleasures, but its minimal costs" (Putnam 2000: 241). From this perspective, it is not surprising that younger people who are heavy television users are more likely to have low levels of civic knowledge, feel cynical, have lower levels of academic achievement, participate less in politics and earn less money when they are older (Putnam 2000: 237). Further, malaise, measured by frequency of headaches, stomachaches and insomnia, is positively related to dependence on television for entertainment. Moreover, television use is among the top predictors of malaise (Putnam 2000: 240). Putnam describes work by Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) that suggests that viewers feel passive and less alert when watching television. These researchers also found television use to be more prevalent among those who feel lonely, have more free time and "emotional difficulties" (Putnam 2000: 239). While cross-tabular data does not demonstrate causality, these characteristics do not encourage civic engagement.

Putnam claims that television provides "a kind of pseudopersonal connection to others. Anyone who has encountered a television personality face-to-face knows the powerful feeling that you already know this person" (2000: 242). He describes Hart's (1994) argument that television promotes, "'remote-control politics,' in which we as viewers *feel* engaged with our community without the effort of actually *being* engaged. Like junk food, TV, especially TV entertainment, satisfies cravings without real nourishment" (Putnam 2000: 242). This perspective suggests that people substitute interpersonal relationships with on-screen

relationships. Putnam hypothesizes that this façade offers Americans a false sense of satisfaction reducing their incentive to form and foster relationships with people who they can interact with.

According to Putnam, by highlighting "every social and personal problem imaginable television also makes us less likely to do anything about" these problems (2000: 242). He describes work that suggests that by saturating viewers with problems; viewers do not find other peoples' problems as urgent as their own and are more likely to see individual rather than collective weaknesses (2000: 242). This research has prompted Putnam to speculate about the psychological issues associated with television that discourage civic engagement.

Putnam (2000: 228) explains that each additional hour of television watched per day is associated with a ten percent less civic activism. He notes that between 1965 and 1995, Americans on average saw a six-hour per week increase in their leisure time and that most of this time was spent watching television (2000: 222-3). Putnam points to time use data that suggests that, in 1995, American's spent about forty percent of their free time in front of the television (2000: 222). He explains that television reduces both individual and collective forms of civic engagement. However, it impacts the latter with far greater magnitude even after controlling for demographic variables (2000: 229). Putnam argues that, "just as television privatizes our leisure time, it also privatizes our civic activity, dampening our interactions with one another even more than it dampens individual political activities" (2000: 229). He points to the increase in the number of television sets per household as a sign of more privatized viewing (2000: 223). Putman reinforces his argument that Americans are becoming increasingly private by citing data from the DDB Needham Life Style Surveys which points to a major increase in the number of Americans reporting their preference for "spending a quiet night at home" (2000: 223).

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The above observations about the link between television and civic participation suggest that television explains some of the decrease in civic engagement in the United States. Putnam describes a few reasons why this pattern will not reverse in the short term. These reasons are based on generational differences. First, he observes that younger Americans are less selective of television content than others (2000: 226). Second, Putman observes that younger people are more habitual users of television and that this type of viewing is associated with lower levels of civic involvement (2000: 235). For instance, younger people are more likely to use television in the background while they are doing other things (2000: 226). Finally, he notes that the more an age cohort was exposed to television during their formative years, the lower its relative level of civic engagement during adulthood (2000: 272).

Putnam's work has prompted studies examining the associations between interpersonal trust and media use. As described above, Putnam sees interpersonal trust as a key aspect of civic life. He explains that there is large body of literature suggesting that those who watch higher amounts of television are more sceptical of others (1995: 679). This observation fits with the above discussion of Putnam's observations about how television encourages people to see individual instead of social problems.

Consistent with Putnam's work, Shah, et al. (2001b: 483) found newspaper reading to be positively associated with interpersonal trust. These authors also tested the relationships between tuning to a number of television genres and interpersonal trust. Situation comedy watching was positively related to interpersonal trust. This was the only programming category that had a significant relationship with interpersonal trust. This relationship was positive. (Shah, et al. 2001b: 483). While the authors describe these finding as consistent with earlier research, Putnam sees television in general as discouraging interpersonal trust. Consumption of hard

news, social dramas and reality programs did not yield significant coefficients (Shah, et al. 2001b: 483).

Lee, et al. (2003: 432) interpret their findings to demonstrate that the effects of television on interpersonal trust should be considered on a content-by-content basis. The researchers found that watching *Friends* was associated with higher levels of interpersonal trust while sports and *Hard Copy* have an inverse relationship with interpersonal trust (Lee, et al. 2003: 432). Lee, et al. (2003)'s findings on the link between newspaper consumption and interpersonal trust echoed Shah, et al.'s (2001b) finding described above. Listening to conservative and liberal political talk radio was marginally positively associated with trust after control variables were included in the analysis (Lee, et al. 2003: 427).

Education and age are useful predictors of interpersonal trust. Lee, et al. (2003: 430) found education to be positively related to a number of trust indicators. Shah, et al. (2001b) found education to be weakly related to trust through most of the blocks of their hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Education was positively related to interpersonal trust when demographics, social situation, social orientation, print media and broadcast media variables were included in the model. However, education was not statistically significant after Internet variables were included in the model (Shah, et al. 2001b: 483). Putnam (1995: 667) found that education has powerful effects on trust and associational membership. Lee, et al. (2001: 430) speculate if education is related to parenting styles. The authors cite Bernstein (1974) who explains that less educated parents may warn their children with less specific warnings than more educated parents and this may encourage blanked mistrust. Since parental education is a strong predictor of children's education, this may explain why lower levels of education are associated with lower levels of interpersonal trust (Lee, et al. 2003: 730).

Lee, et al. (2003) and Shah, et al. (2001b) address Putnam's work by testing the empirical grounding of his arguments. Norris (2002) is concerned by the approach employed by these researchers. She is critical of approaches that seek "evidence for a societal-level phenomena through individual-level survey data". Norris (2002: 4) explains that social capital norms are contextually unique and argues for cross-national work that deals with differences in political and economic contexts.

Norris questions Putnam's reasoning using data from the World Values Surveys from 1995 to 1997. She points out that countries with high social capital are the same countries with more accessible mass media. Per capita newspaper circulation, the percentage of the country's population with televisions and the percentage of the population on-line were found to have statistically significant positive relationships with social trust and social capital (Norris 2002: 4). Norris (2002: 7) explains that Putnam saw television as having the opposite relationship with social capital. Norris (2002: 5) found a positive relationship between the percentage of the population on-line and associational membership. Of the named independent variables, this was the only one that showed a significant relationship with associational membership. In short, Norris (2002) finds the opposite of Putnam's observations when using aggregate societal level data to examine the link between television penetration and social trust, social capital and associational membership. Norris (2002: 479) points out that television sources differ from one another and suggests that distinctions in the type of television that people use is important when examining civic engagement.

Milner (2002) employs cross-national data as encouraged by Norris (2002). Like Putnam, Milner (2002) is critical of the implications of television on civic life. He approaches the issue by comparing patterns associated with television and newspapers. Milner (2002: 92)

observes that people retain more information from print than they do from television. Further, he cites work from Norris (1996: 478) that finds that time spent watching television is negatively associated with political knowledge (Milner 2002: 94). Milner (2002) has introduced the concept of the "television dependency scale" to compare the media use characteristics of different countries. The index is based "equally on the countries' relative ratings on commercial television consumption and newspaper reading" (Milner 2002: 99). The average weekly time spent watching television for the country as well as per capita spending on television advertising were incorporated into the scale (Milner 2002: 101). The United States, Italy and Canada (in order of decreasing dependency) were found to be most dependent on television while the Scandinavian countries dominated the low end of the scale (Milner 2002: 101). Milner (2002: 101) observes that countries tend to be high in either television *or* their newspaper consumption, but not both. Milner (2002: 101) found a strong inverse relationship between a country's level of television dependence and their scores on the International Adult Literacy Survey and as well as their knowledge of the United Nations. Countries with high television dependency had lower levels of participation in local elections (Milner 2002: 103).

Milner's discussion of media policy is helpful when considering how these issues are related. Milner (2002: 111) explains that Scandinavian newspapers, generally speaking, identify with political parties and that newspaper subsidies were started to promote a diversity of news content and to allow political parties to communicate their views. Milner argues that television is a more problematic medium than newspapers for communicating partisan information because of television's "greater potential for distortion" and the financial barriers that facilitate unequal access. Scandinavian countries, according to Milner (2002: 111), have made the biggest attempts to promote equal access to television. Sweden and Norway have almost eliminated

political party advertising on television. "The exception is the United States, where money-and only money-gets a party or candidate TV time" (Milner 2002: 111). Milner (2002: 113) describes the United States as the least competitive democracy as demonstrated by its high re-election rate in the House of Representatives. Milner cites data from the Center for Responsive Politics that explains that United States Presidential candidates raised $350 million for the 2000 race. Milner observes that total spending by candidates for national office was about $3 billion. He explains that, "In the United States, the dependence on private funding, the importance of television advertising, and the incentives for exaggeration and negative campaigning built into winner-take-all electoral institutions go hand in hand" (Milner 2002: 113). From this perspective, American media policies favour those with power while Scandinavian media polices attempt to foster debate by providing media access to those with less capital. Sweden's policy of free library delivery to shut-ins, hospitals and homes for the elderly is consistent with this inclusive approach (Milner 2002: 109).

Instead of relying on television, Nordic politics rely on the distribution of printed information. In Sweden, parties communicate information to electors using "wooden huts reminiscent of the summer cottage" (Milner 2002: 112). Arguably, the subsidy system for supporting political parties in Sweden also encourages debate in Nordic countries (Milner 2002: 112). However, Milner (2002: 112) refutes that the subsidy system is flawed because the subsidy monies end up with party bureaucrats by arguing that this weakness is a worthwhile cost to encouraging electors to get their information directly from the candidates instead of from the mass media. Milner (2002: 112) observes that such measures encourage party identification and that high levels of party identification are associated with civic literacy. He describes findings from Jenssen and Listhaug (1999) that suggest that voters with stronger party identification who

agreed with their party's position on European Union membership demonstrated the strongest factual and conceptual knowledge of the European Union (Milner 2002: 112). Milner (2002: 112) describes how the countries that Krouwel (1999) identified as having relatively "open systems" have high levels of voter turnout and organizational participation.

1.6.3   Media Credibility:

The issue of media credibility is much debated in academic and popular circles. Much scholarly empirical work approaches the subject by examining media content. For instance, bell hooks (2004) is critical of representations of Blackness and gender in the media. Much of Noam Chomsky's work examines news reports of human rights violations. However, work that uses audience as a unit of analysis is limited. There are a number of studies that use cross-tabular data in the attempt to identify associations between an individual's political attitudes on specific issues and their media use habits (for example, Sotirovic 2001; Chory-Assad and Tamborini 2003; Kull 2003-4; Holbert, et al. 2003a; 2003b; Holbert, et al. 2004; Kim and Ward 2004; Young 2004; Smith 2000; Hofstetter and Moore 1979; Hofstetter and Strand 1983). While such an approach can be used to support arguments about the link between media content and public opinion, they do not demonstrate causality and they do not explicitly address feelings about media credibility. Few studies use individual perceptions of the media as dependent or independent variables. We know little about how those who trust the media differ in their media use from those who claim not to trust the media. For instance, it would worthwhile to know if those who perceive high levels of bias in the media make attempts to balance their consumption by making use of a greater range of sources or mediums. The relationship between the amount

of bias in the news media that is perceived and the range of media sources used is examined in Chapter 4 of the present analysis.

Tsafti and Capella (2003) suggest perceptions of the news media are related to sources that users choose. Their work finds that those who are more sceptical of the media are drawn to "non-mainstream" sources. The authors considered political talk radio and the World Wide Web to be non-mainstream. While media sceptics did not differ from non-sceptics in their overall amount of news exposure, their "media diets contain on average significantly larger shares of nonmainstream sources" (Tsafti and Capella 2003: 518). Exposure to sources categorized as mainstream including national television news, daily newspapers were negatively associated with media scepticism.

Reports from The Pew Research Center suggest that some broadcasters and television programs have audiences with feelings about the credibility of the news media that do not represent the American population as a whole (Pew 2004a; 2005b). For instance, there are differences between the most trusted news sources among Republicans, Democrats and Independents (Pew 2005b: 43; 2004a). To illustrate, the Fox News Channel was the most trusted source among Republicans but was not in the list of the five most trusted sources among Democrats or Independents (Pew: 2005: 43). Further, Pew (2004: 13) notes that the audience for The Fox News Channel is becoming increasingly conservative. Other research on the Fox News Channel is described below. Pew (2005: 43) also found Democrats to be more trusting of National Public Radio (NPR) than Republicans or Independents. Forty-five percent of Democrats see the Cable News Network (CNN) as all or mostly believable in contrast with only 26 percent of Republicans and 28 percent of Independents (Pew 2005b: 43). These findings suggest that political identification is related to the level of trust that individuals associate with

different news sources. However, Pew's analysis does not use MRC techniques. Chapter 5 of the present analysis identifies relationships between media use and perceptions of political party bias in the news media using MRC.

There has been little research that predicts a person's level of trust in the news media. A study by Westley and Severin (1964) finds those with high socio-economic status to be more likely to give higher credibility to newspapers versus television. "Blue collar" respondents saw television to be more credible than "white collar" respondents (1964: 327). Education is positively related to newspaper credibility and negatively to television credibility (1964: 327). Those who identify as "middle class" prefer newspapers while those who identify as "working class" saw television as more credible (1964: 328). Men were more likely to give greater trust to newspapers than to television. The opposite was found for women (1964: 330). Television was trusted more than newspapers in each age category (1964: 330). Rural and small town residences are associated with preference for television over newspapers (1964: 330). The authors did not find a relationship between partisanship and medium credibility rankings. Unlike Democrats and Republicans, Independents assign higher credibility to newspapers (1964: 330). Voters were more likely to rank newspapers ahead of television (1964: 330). Low associational membership was associated with higher ranking for television (1964: 332). These findings represent some of the early work done on predicting feelings about media credibility. They must be generalized with caution, as they do not make use of MRC and because the media landscape has changed dramatically since the early 1960s.

More recent work by Jones (2004) offers a multivariate analysis that finds media trust to be negatively related to conservatism, talk radio listening and political Internet use and positively related to government trust. Conservative talk radio listeners demonstrated especially low levels

of trust in the media. Further, Bennett (2002: 13) finds that talk radio listeners in general are more likely to have lower levels of trust in the media. However, Jones' (2004) model does not include demographic control variables. Jones's finding that trust in the media and government are positively related is consistent with work from Lipset and Schneider (1983: 98) that demonstrates that confidence in one institution is positively related to confidence in other institutions. Using data from 1973-7, Lipset and Schneider (1983: 123) found that, at the bivariate level, confidence in "the people running television" and "the people running the press" are negatively associated with education, age, Republicanism and Conservatism. Confidence in television is associated with being Black while confidence in the press in general is associated with being white. Robinson and Kohut (1988: 181) found that network television news believability is negatively associated with age, being male, education, Republicanism, military service and knowledge about the press. These associations are modest and should be interpreted keeping in mind that network news believability is more demographically patterned (Robinson and Kohut 1988: 181). The authors clarify that "there is no believability crisis for the press" and that feelings about the believability of the press do not vary greatly from one social or political group to another Robinson and Kohut (1988: 188).

Gunther (1988) found a curvilinear relationship between trust in the media and extremeness of attitude on specific issues. Media trust ratings increased as attitude extremeness shifted from low to moderate and decreased as attitude extremeness increased from moderate to high (Gunther 1988: 283). Gunther's work (1988: 284) examining the link between ideology and media trust reveals that political neutrals are most trusting of the newspapers compared with partisans who have lower trust in newspapers. No such pattern was found for trust in television (Gunther 1988: 284).

Domke, et al. (1999) and Watts, et al. (1999) offer analyses that scrutinize claims of a liberal bias in the media in the United States. Domke, et al. (1999: 45) found that 95% of claims by political elites of media bias during the 1988, 1992 and 1996 elections argued that the press showed a liberal bias. When examining the media's discussion of its ability to cover the news (self-coverage), 79%, 72% and 91% of such claims identified a liberal bias in the years 1988, 1992 and 1996 respectively (Watts, et al. 1999: 159). Watts, et al. (1999) used content analysis of news coverage to examine the accuracy of these claims. The Republican and Democratic candidates were found to have roughly equal amounts of favourable coverage in 1988 and 1996. The sample of news used to represent coverage of the 1992 campaign showed a slight favouring of the Democrat candidate. Specifically, of the paragraphs examined, 54% were categorized as being more favourable to the Democrats (Watts, et al. 1999: 157). While this analysis of news content does not measure bias related to the media's agenda, it signals that the extent of criticisms of the "liberal media" are not proportionate to the balance of candidate coverage in newspapers. The balance of positive and negative news content about each of the Presidential candidates was not related to public opinion polls about media bias (Watts, et al. 1999: 166). However, using time series data, Domke, et al. (1999: 54) found a positive relationship between the election poll support for the Republican presidential candidate and claims of liberal media bias in 1988. The opposite pattern was found for 1992 and 1996. Watts, et al. (1999: 167) question if "citizens have begun to view elites as 'surrogates' for the public in keeping watch over the media, which would be an ironic reversal of the democratic ideal of citizens relying on news media to monitor elites."

There has been research comparing the credibility attributed to newspapers and television. Claussen (2004) describes findings from the 1982 and 1985 Newspaper Readership

Projects that suggest that Americans rely more extensively on television than newspapers to get their news. The data also suggests that television is seen as a more credible medium than newspapers for local, state, national and international news (Claussen 2004: 214). Television news anchors and reporters were seen as more "honest and ethical" in comparison with newspaper news teams (Claussen 2004: 214). Claussen's (2004) discussion of findings from the mid-1990s reflects the lack of clarity on the issue. Specifically, he describes a 1997 study for the Newspaper Association of America that shows newspapers scoring higher on believability (Claussen 2004: 214). Robinson and Kohut (1988: 187) found that television is seen as being better at getting "the facts straight" despite that local television is seen as being less factually oriented in its content. The authors found that television's credibility is reduced when respondents are asked about the credibility of specific news organizations despite that the "big three" networks scored roughly the same on believability (Robinson and Kohut 1988: 188). However, many television personalities, particularly news anchors rank high on believability measures in comparison with programs, publications and mediums which tended to rank lower (Robinson and Kohut 1988: 188). These observations are consistent with Claussen's (2004) discussion of the role of personal exposure in explaining why television is comparatively more credible than newspapers. Claussen (2004: 215) cites work from Newhagen and Nass (1989) that argues that impersonal messages are perceived as less sincere, responsible, accurate and impartial than personal messages. "Viewers can see and hear television news figures but not newspaper reporters or editors" (Claussen 2004: 215).

The inconsistency between the 1997 Newspaper of America Association study described above with the other works may be related to changes in media that have taken place between the 1980s and 1997. This time period saw an exponential rise in Internet access and content and

increased amounts of infotainment on television. These changes alter the reference points that media consumers use to make their judgments. A study by Kiousis (2001) partly supports the argument that this discrepancy in findings can be attributed to temporal factors. His analysis, which used a random sample of Austin, Texas residents contacted in 1998 found that newspapers were seen as more credible than television and online news (Kiousis 2001: 393). However, findings from Moy, et al. (2004) cloud the issue. They found that attention to television was positively associated with favourable evaluations about the local news media as a whole. No significant relationship was found for the relationship between attention to newspapers and most indicators of perceived local media credibility (Moy, et al. 2004: 539). It is important to consider that the survey items used by Moy, et al. (2004) did not ask respondents to compare the credibility of media. According to Kiousis (2001: 394) all mediums scored credibility means in the "moderate" range. His study also found that perceptions of news credibility were positively correlated across newspaper, online and television news (Kiousis 2001: 394). Newspaper exposure was associated with positive feelings about the credibility of newspapers. The same association was found with online news. However, supporting Putnam's observations that see television as a time filler, television credibility was not associated with either local or network television news exposure (Kiousis 2001: 394). Perceptions of high credibility in television news were negatively associated with interpersonal discussion about news after the inclusion of demographic control variables. In contrast, the credibility of online news is positively associated with interpersonal discussion about news. No significant relationship was found for newspaper credibility (Kiousis 2001: 395). However, paying attention to newspapers as well as paying attention to television is associated with feeling that newspaper organizations play an important role in democracy (Moy, et al. 2004: 539). Further, favourable evaluations of the news media

are positively associated with political participation, but do not have a significant relationship with political knowledge (Moy, et al. 2004: 540-1). The former supports Putnam's (2000) argument that more trusting worldviews are associated with higher levels of participation in civic life.

1.6.3.1 Media Credibility and The Fox News Channel:

As described above, watching the Fox News Channel is associated with support for the Bush administration's policy with Iraq (Kull et al. 2003-4) and credibility among Republicans (Pew: 2005: 43). The broadcaster's ratings success and its approach to media credibility have received much attention from the popular and industry presses in the United States and Canada (For example, Franken 2003; Gitlin 2003; Meroney 1997; The Economist 2002; Auletta 2003; Unger 2001; Gillis 2004; Durbin 2004; Anderson 2003 and Stephen 2002). The broadcaster began airing in October of 1996 and currently leads the cable news audience ratings (Morris 2005; Auletta 2003; New Statesman 2002; The Economist 2002; Anderson 2003; Durbin 2004 and Franken 2003). Production techniques including graphics and sound effects have helped the broadcaster to create a signature fast paced style.

While the broadcaster uses the slogans, "We Report. You Decide." And "Fair and Balanced.", it has been called "rude and rabidly pro-Bush" (Gillis 2004: 23). In his book *Lies (And the Lying Liars Who Tell Them): A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right,* Franken (2003), former *Saturday Night* Live cast member and radio host, mocks Fox's self-declared objectivity. He dismisses the reasoning that Fox News is "fair and balanced, but only looks right wing because the rest of the media is so far to the left". He explains that, "This argument would be a plausible argument…*if* the rest of the media actually had a liberal bias. Or *if* Fox wasn't so

obviously slanted to the right." (2003: 62). His book includes a chapter entitled, "Bill O'Reilly: Lying, Splotchy Bully" that is dedicated to criticizing the channel's prime time issue oriented program host.

Applications to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) from cable television providers seeking approval to air sell Fox News to cable subscribers sparked some debate. However, in *Maclean's*, Gillis (2004: 24) explains that:

> Considering Fox's political baggage-and the protectionist streak that runs through Canadian cultural debate-this has all transpired with amazingly little fuss. After eight years on the air, Fox has established itself as the greatest threat to American liberalism since Newt Gingrich, provoking a tide of hostile books, magazine articles, newspaper columns and even a documentary film south of the border….But when the CRTC invited comment on bringing the channel to Canada, fully 85 per cent of the 600 responses voiced support. A few domestic broadcasters objected for competitive reasons, and a handful of critics on both sides of the border wrote in complaining that Fox is biased. But on the whole, Canadians seem unafraid to add a nakedly partisan presence to the dial.

While FNC is an American service, the CRTC's decision to approve the distribution of the Fox News Channel in Canada demonstrates that the broadcaster has implications on the media and political landscape in Canada.

Discussion of the Fox News Channel represents an intersection between popular media and academic work. For example, the study by Kull et al. (2003-4) has been discussed in the popular media. Franken has described it in a range of contexts including his Air America radio program. By measuring both misperceptions about Iraq related issues as well as support for the war; the Kull et al. (2003-4) study suggests a causal relationship between watching Fox News and opinion: effective material for popular talk show programs. However, as with the present analysis, relationships based on cross-sectional data are insufficient in confirming causal relationships.

There has been subsequent scholarly work that addresses the Fox News Channel. Using

data obtained in 2004, Morris (2005: 65) found that Democrats were more likely to watch CNN

and network news and that Republicans were "much more likely" to watch Fox News and that

party identification is more powerful in predicting exposure to Fox News in comparison with

CNN or network television news. The Fox News audience "is slightly more Republican than the

CNN audience is Democratic" and time series data suggests that "both audiences are moving

away from the middle" (Morris 2005: 73). As no significant relationship between party

identification and exposure to news sources was found in 1998, Morris (2005: 65) suggests that

audiences are becoming increasingly polarized. Morris (2005: 68) finds that Fox News viewers

are more cynical about the mainstream media than CNN and network news viewers. No

association between newspaper reading and watching Fox News was found for 2004. Regular

newspaper readers were more likely to use CNN or network news. Morris (2005: 68) argues that

is evidence that Fox News viewers are especially sceptical of the mainstream media. The Fox

News audience, unlike the CNN and network television news audiences were much more likely

to prefer news that "shares their point of view" (Morris 2005: 68). Consistent with work from

Kull et al. (2003-4), Morris (2005) finds Fox News viewers to be less informed than CNN and

network news viewers. The audience was also more likely to underestimate than to overestimate

the number of American casualties in Iraq (Morris 2005: 72). The observation that preference

for in-depth interviews is associated with watching CNN or network news but not Fox News is

not surprising in the context of this finding. Morris (2005: 70) explains that differences in the

amount of attention that CNN compared to FNC viewers paid to various news stories raises the

possibility that Fox News provides greater coverage of soft news in comparison with CNN.

Morris (2005) concludes that his findings demonstrate that Fox News audience members have

"less familiarity with issues and events in the news that may be critical of their point of view" as FNC gave less attention to stories that Morris identified as negative to the image of the Bush administration. The analysis (Morris 2005: 66) also found that CNN viewers were more active voters than the Fox News viewers.

Aday et al. (2005) offer further evidence that the content on the Fox News Channel stands out in comparison with other broadcasters. They (2005: 10) claim that the Fox News Channel argued "that journalists do not need to be objective in wartime". For example, Fox News encouraged reporters to use the first person plural when describing coalition forces and the United Sates (Aday et al 2005: 18).   Their analysis finds that most of the stories that aired on the "big three" United States television networks, CNN and Al Jazeera, an Arab satellite service, during the month long sample period during the spring of 2003 were neutral at the story level. The Fox News Channel included a greater proportion of stories that identified as supportive of the war. The researchers found that all of the American networks mostly ignored the antiwar sentiment; in contrast, Al Jazeera provided more coverage of protests and diplomacy (2005: 17). FNC and the *Lou Doubs Show* on CNN ran almost no stories or images of American or civilian casualties (Aday et al. 2005: 17).

The above research demonstrates that Fox News is distinct because of its content and audience.   While the present analysis does not analyze the broadcaster's programming, it will examine which groups are drawn to the service that is positioned as an alternative to the otherwise liberal media.

1.6.4   Political Identification:

Media scholars make use of the concept of political identification in their work. However, partisanship and ideology are generally used as control variables.   There is a shortage of work that attempts to predict political identification using media use habits. However, Chapter 3 of the present analysis employs political identification as a dependent variable. The large body of work on talk radio represents an area where media scholars have used political identification for purposes other than control. Briefly, this work finds that political talk radio listening is associated with Republicanism (Bolce 1996; Bennett 2002; Barker 1999 and Holbert 2004) and conservatism (Bennett 2002; Bolce 1996). The political identification of talk radio listeners will be discussed in further detail below and is explored in Chapter 3. This section will focus on work that deals with political identification in contexts outside of the media. The first part of the section focuses on the United States while the latter deals with research on political identification in Canada.

There has been research into the gender gap in partisan support in the United States. Males are more likely to support the Republican Party than females (Kaufmann 2004; Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004). Kaufmann (2004) observes that those who are religious comprise a greater proportion of those supporting the Republican Party and that women are more religious than men yet women are more likely to support the Democratic Party. This paradox is the focus of Kaufmann's work that examines the relationships between religion, partisanship and gender. However, Kaufmann finds that those who are more religious are more politically conservative and that the gender gap in political opinion characterizes even those who are relatively more religious (Kaufmann 2004: 500). "In spite of the greater allure of the Republicans for religious whites, the gender gap in party identification among the highly committed is nearly identical to

that of the low commitment group and is approximately twice that of the seculars. It seems that

the paradox of religious yet liberal women cannot be explained by variance in the gender gap

across different levels of religious commitment" (sic.) (Kaufmann 2004: 500). Kaufmann (2004:

503) finds that religious commitment is more strongly related to social issues in comparison with

other types of political issues for both males and females. For instance, religious commitment

has less explanatory power in predicting support for social welfare or with defence issues

(Kaufmann (2004: 503). This pattern was found for males and females (Kaufmann (2004: 503).

While Kaufmann (2004) continues to see the gender religion paradox as unresolved, her finding

that religious values influence cultural attitudes and that these attitudes are related to party

preference suggests that gender differences on non-religious issues maintain the gender gap in

Republican support.

Box-Steffensmeier, et al. (2004) approach the gender-gap issue by exploring trends over

time. Their analysis reveals that the gap is a dynamic phenomenon. The authors describe that

men and women had close levels of Republican and Democratic support in the late 1970s. The

gender gap has widened since the early 1980s (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 515). Box-

Steffensmeier, et al. (2004: 517) observe that males were associated with much of the decline in

Democratic support in the late 1970s. In the late 1970s, women were about 5% more Republican

than men but were 5 to 10% more Democratic than men between the late 1980s and 2000 (Box-

Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 517). The authors explain that males and females are becoming

increasingly Republican; however, this is happening at a faster rate among men (Box-

Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 517). Box-Steffensmeier, et al. (2004) used a range of variables,

including economic indicators to describe trends in the gender gap over time. Their analysis

finds that the partisan gender gap increases with the proportion of adults who identify as

conservative, economic deterioration and the proportion of women who are single (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 525). It was found that the gender gap increases about two and a half years after the political environment becomes more conservative (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 525). The authors observe opposing socio-economic trends that relate to the partisan gender gap. They describe that increases in the proportion of women with high levels of education and higher paying jobs reduce the differences in the positions of men and women (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 521). This increased presence of women in the "economically privileged class" encourages women to consider political views that may be different from men (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 521). However, it also results in more "shared experiences of men and women, potentially leading to shared or converging preferences. It is thus not clear that autonomy must produce distinct preferences" (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 521). However, the authors speculate if Democratic support among single women is due to their greater likelihood of relying on the social programs perceived as being better supported by a Democratic government (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 526). This suggests that "economic vulnerability" best explains how these social changes impact the gender gap (Box-Steffensmeier, et al. 2004: 526-7):

> Where women are most likely to be independent from men-holding better and, on average, high-paying jobs-they find themselves more like men but also freer to develop their own perspectives, which may be similar to or different from those of men. At the same time, as women heading households are more likely to be economically vulnerable, they are likely to hold both different preferences than men and also more liberal preferences, leading them to support the Democratic party at higher rates than men and producing a larger gender gap.

This interpretation suggests that there is a connection between macroeconomic conditions, the number of women who are single and the gender gap in political partisanship in the United States.

Nadeau, et al. (2004) also approach the dynamic quality of partisanship in the United States by focusing on the issues of region and class. The authors explain that class-based partisanship among Whites in the Southern United States has increased over the years (2004: 53). In the 1950s, income differences had little predictive power for the party preference of Whites. Those with lower incomes were more likely to support the Democratic Party. However, among Whites native to the South, the opposite pattern applied as 90% of those in the top third of family incomes supported the Democrats in comparison with 79% of the bottom third (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 54). By the 1960s, the pattern reversed among Southern natives (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 55). In the 1970s the difference in party support for the Democratic Party between income groups widened among all Whites (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 54). The income gap continued into the 1990s with the largest gap characterizing the South, especially among those native to the area (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 55). For this group in the 1990s, those Whites with the bottom third of family incomes were 29% more likely to prefer the Democratic Party than those in the top third (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 55). Those with lower incomes outside of the South also became increasingly Democratic. However, as a whole, the South became increasingly Republican over the years (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 55). Multivariate analysis suggests that the gap in partisanship by income and education groups only began to characterize those outside of the South more recently than is suggested by percentage data alone (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 56).   The author's logistic regression analysis suggests that education polarized Whites in the United States more than income in 1950s and 1960s; however, income was more important in the 1980s and 1990s (Nadeau, et al. 2004: 61). The authors do not identify a specific explanation for these trends. However, they raise the possibility that these changes signal a weakened influence of "race" on partisanship and political discourse in general in the Southern United States (Nadeau, et al. 2004:

61). Nadeau, et al. (2004: 62) cite Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) and observe that the 1980s

saw greater clarity between the ideological differences between parties facilitating "greater

consistency between issue positions and partisanship". This change resulted in the wealthier and

better educated shifting their partisanship.

Kelly and Kelly (2005) also approach the link between cultural identification and party

preference. Their analysis focuses on religious identification in the Latino community in the

United States. The authors clarify that Latinos are not overwhelmingly Catholic (2005: 89).

They point out that 56% of Latino Americans are Roman Catholic and that this number has been

declining over time (Kelly and Kelly 2005: 89). Catholic Latinos show preference for the

Democratic Party while evangelicals show the most support for the Republican Party (Kelly and

Kelly 2005: 89). These findings along with patterns relating religious identification to voting

participation are advantageous to the Republican Party. Kelly and Kelly (2005: 93) find that

evangelicals participate in elections at almost the same rate as Catholics and that Protestants,

who prefer the Republican Party, participate more than Catholics. Further, there are high

concentrations of Latinos in electorally important states such as Florida, California, Texas, New

York and Illinois (Kelly and Kelly 2005: 93). Kelly and Kelly (2005) argue that while as a

whole, Latino Americans favour the Democrats; changes in the religious composition of the

group should prompt further work on the political behaviour of the Latino population in the

United States.

Examining the link between class and support for the New Democratic Party (NDP) is a

useful test for the class vote in Canada as the NDP is perceived as being more class-oriented than

the Liberal or Progressive Conservative parties. Exploring the rationales that voters use to make

their choices also offers heuristic value in understanding political behaviour. Lambert, et al.

(1998) examine how reasons that can be captured by the "left/right wing" political scale relate to political identification. The authors found that 14.6% and 9.4% of primary reasons for party preference at the federal and provincial levels respectively could be placed on the "left/right" scale. Among the secondary reasons, these proportions are 5.3% and 3.0% (1998: 393). Reasons that were not seen as relevant to the scale included explanations based on strategic voting, the leadership qualities of the political options and family voting behaviour. "Left-wing" reasons were much more likely to be used than "right-wing" ones. They were about twice as common as "right wing" reasons in the federal context and three times more common in the provincial context (Lambert, et al. 1998: 393). The NDP had the largest percentage of its supporters providing leftist reasons at 41% of federal and 34% of provincial identifiers (Lambert, et al. 1990: 394). All other parties had less than 7% of identifiers citing leftist reasons for their support. Fifteen percent of federal Conservatives used "right-wing" reasons to explain their support. No federal party exceeded this (Lambert, et al. 1998: 395). The authors see these findings as evidence that left-wing ideology is "more fully developed as counter-ideology" than right-wing ideology and predict that if a clearly defined right-wing party emerged as a "politically plausible alternative" to the centrist or centre-right ideology that dominates Canada emerged, supporters of that party would be more likely than others to explain their preference in right-wing terms (Lambert, et al. 1990: 402). These observations reflect an expectation that ideological clarity in party discourse is related to use of reasons that can be placed on the left/right spectrum.

1.7   Work Focusing on Talk Radio:

The rise of political talk radio has prompted a large body of work on the link between talk radio tuning and various political variables. A section has been dedicated to the area of talk

radio because of the integrated way that scholars have approached the area. Discussions of talk

radio exposure, political identification and behaviour are often intertwined to help to emphasize

the implications of findings. The present analysis examines the relationship that talk radio has

with political identification, perceptions of political party bias and poltical participation.

Talk radio programming is often associated with "loudmouth" conservatism captured by

icons such as Rush Limbaugh and Bill O-Reilly. A number of scholars associate the genre with

conservative content (for example, Jones 2004; Barker and Knight 2000; Barker 1999; Barker

1998a; Holbert 2004; Bolce, et al. 1996; Mayer 2004). Bolce, et al. (1996: 457) emphatically

describes various perceptions of the industry:

> Detractors call them right wing nuts, apostles of hate, fomenters of violence. Fans
> hear them as inspirational, voices of reason, enlighteners of the public. Similarly,
> their audience is portrayed as maladjusted, intolerant, and dangerous-or as
> guardians of the republic, socially conscious, and public spirited. Talk radio, its
> hosts and listeners: Is it a "bedlam of conservative yakkers?" A forum for
> seditionists? An electronic version of New England town meetings? Is it all of the
> above, some, or none?

While Bolce, et al.'s rhetoric recognizes a debate on the image of talk radio; it suggests

that the genre is more niche than it is mass. However, predicting if a person is a talk radio

listener is difficult (Bolce, et al. 1996; Bennett 2002; Hofstetter 1994). Some research suggests

that education, income and household size are not significantly related to talk radio listening

(Hofstetter 1994: 474; Bennett 2002: 16). Hofstetter, et al found that health, household size,

"race" and gender were not significantly related to talk radio listening (1994: 474). Some

evidence suggests that being male is related to political talk radio exposure (Holbert 2004; Bolce,

et al. 1996). Bolce, et al. (1996: 464) describes that being White is associated with talk radio

listening. While Hofstetter found age to have a weak positive relationship with talk radio

listening, he argues that "exposure to political talk radio is a general phenomenon not linked to

specific socially defined groups" (1994: 474). Similarly, Bolce, et al. argues that talk radio listeners who vote in elections are not captured by traditional "analytic categories" based on categories such as ethnicity, occupation, region, class, religion and associational membership. He explains that, "The most salient and theoretically meaningful characteristic of talk voters appears to be the medium and the type of programming they listen to. What binds these folks together is that they are "talk networked" (1996: 464). However, Bennett (2002) found differences in the predictive power of some variables when comparing United States federal election years 1996 and 2000 with 1998, a non-election year. "Race" was significant in the election years but not in 1998 (Bennett 2002: 16). Republicans were more likely to listen to political talk radio during the election years. Party affiliation was not a predictor in 1998. Conservatism was associated with listening in 1998 and 2000. Ideology was not significant in 1996 (Bennett 2002: 16).

Those who listen to political talk radio are more likely than a random American to support the Republican Party (Bolce, et al. 1996; Bennett 2002; Barker 1999; Holbert 2004). Political talk radio listeners are also more likely to identify ideologically as conservatives (Bennett 2002; Bolce, et al. 1996). Bolce, et al. (1996: 465) explain that male and female non-listeners were less likely to vote Republican than talk radio listeners. Because this analysis relies on percentage data without the use of control variables, it is not clear if this variation is related to other variables. While Bolce, et al. (1996: 465) observe that, generally speaking, "race" and gender are the only demographic and socio-economic variables that are useful in differentiating the voting behaviour between listeners and non-listeners using percentage data, this is not sufficient evidence to claim that talk radio listening, on its own, explains voting differences.

Approximately 20 percent of both Blacks and Whites were found to listen to talk radio. However, in contrast with White Americans, talk radio listening does not seem to be related to the political identification of Blacks. Specifically, White talk radio listeners were found to be more Republican than Whites that did not listen to talk radio. However, Blacks, regardless of if they were talk radio listeners were at least eight times more likely to vote for Democratic candidates than the Republican candidates in House and Senate races (Bolce, et al. 1996: 465).

Hofstetter (1998: 281) found that exposure to Rush Limbaugh explained some variation in partisanship and ideological identification with statistical significance. This was not the case for the audience of a major conservative radio host in San Diego or for National Public Radio's John Hockenberry's audience in the San Diego area (Hofstetter 1998: 283). Hofstetter (1998: 284) speculates if, "conservative, but not NPR, political talk show hosts contribute to priming, or sensitizing, listeners in relation to partisan and ideological tendencies in program content…Simple exposure to ideological hosts may stimulate ideological and partisan resonance among listeners, but have little impact on mobilizing participation".

Despite that political talk radio listeners are not easily defined using demography and other conventional background variables, talk radio tuning is a useful predictor of important political behaviours. Evidence suggests that talk radio has a positive relationship with various forms of political participation (Hofstetter, et al. 1993; Hofstetter 1998; Bolce, et al. 1996). Barker's (1998b: 269) work suggests that this relationship also applies to conservative and moderate listeners of Rush Limbaugh's program.

Higher levels of political participation and the current affairs emphasis of political talk radio suggest that listeners would have higher levels of political interest. Research supports the expectation that political interest is associated with exposure to talk radio (Holbert 2004; Bennett

2002; Hofstetter, et al. 1994). While political talk radio listeners seem to take greater interest in

politics and demonstrate this interest by following current issues on the radio, they are not more

knowledgeable about public affairs. Bennett (2001: 80) did not find exposure to political talk

radio to significantly predict a person's political knowledge as measured by the Knowledge of

Public Affairs Scale for the 1996 and 1998 National Election Studies through his multivariate

analysis. The same pattern was found for national and local television news viewing.

Newspaper reading was inconsistently positively associated with political knowledge (Bennett

2001: 79). Using a bivariate analysis, talk radio listeners appear to be better informed than non-

listeners. However, this relationship does not persist when other predictors of political

information are included in the analysis (Bennett 2001: 82). Bennett wonders if this is because

talk radio listeners do not tune into political talk radio to learn the type of political knowledge

tested by the National Election Studies.

Work from Bolce, et al. examines the impact of the "talk radio vote" in the 1994 United

States Presidential election. The authors argue that talk radio listeners are "an emerging political

category worthy of empirical analyses comparable to the treatment political scientists have

accorded other categories of the electorate" (1996: 462). Bolce, et al. (1996: 461) explain that:

> Talk radio is thought to have wielded considerable political clout in the 1994
> election, its influence pervading national, state, and local politics. Indeed the
> 1994 election has been called the "first talk-radio election." Talk radio listeners
> made up 21 percent of House voters nationally; similar percentages held for all
> the individual states and in all regions surveyed by [Voter News Service]. In
> 1994, talk voters cast 64 percent of their votes for Republicans in House races and
> six in ten voted for Republican Senate candidates. These talk voters differed
> significantly from nonlistening voters, who cast 51 percent of their ballots for
> Democratic House and Senate candidates.

Barker (1998a; 1998b; 1999; Barker and Knight 2000) has a done extensive work on the Rush

Limbaugh audience. He found that listening to Limbaugh is associated with support for the

Republican Party (1999). While crosstabular data does not demonstrate causal relationships,

Barker's (2000) study on the political attitudes of the Rush Limbaugh audience offers

compelling evidence that Limbaugh influences public opinion.   Barker and Knight (2000: 167-

8) summarize their findings:

> These analyses have revealed an unmistakable pattern: when Limbaugh levels
> criticism toward particular ideas, groups, or individuals on at least half of his
> broadcasts, regular listeners show a marked tendency to buy the Limbaugh
> message-displaying hostility toward those items beyond what can be accounted
> for by ideology, party identification, exposure to other conservative messages,
> affect for Limbaugh, or a host of other factors. Moreover, regular listening not
> only correlates with attitudes that reflect Limbaugh's message; listening also
> relates to opinion change toward greater conservatism and antipathy toward
> Limbaugh's favourite targets.

Barker's emphasis on Rush Limbaugh is fitting when one considers that, "When 20 million

Americans (the approximate size of the Limbaugh audience), largely homogeneous in belief

structure, participate at a much higher than the electorate at large and spread their gospel to

millions of others…the Republican Party and the conservative ideology that it represents reap the

benefits" (1998b: 269).

1.8   Agenda-Setting Framework:

This thesis does not assume that media content or usage directly cause outcomes related

to any of the political variables discussed above. Nor does it see political variables as

determining media selection. Instead, the thesis aims to reveal associational relationships and

sees the connection between media use and the discussed political variables as being related in

complex ways. A discussion of these processes is beyond the scope of this thesis. However,

agenda-setting helps to demonstrate such complexity by describing how the media can influence

what people think about even if it does not determine beliefs.

Chapter 1: Introduction & Review of Literature

The agenda-setting framework is useful when considering causal issues in the field of mass communications. Rogers, et al. (1997: 226) explain that before the introduction of the agenda-setting approach, mass communications scholars were mostly preoccupied with the examination of direct effects of the media on audience attitudes and behaviours. The agenda-setting framework had momentum because it was introduced in the 1970s when researchers were frustrated with the explanatory power of models that used public attitudes and opinions as dependent variables (Rogers, et al. 1997: 227).

The agenda-setting framework recognizes that news consumers have limited power. It reveals a perspective that sees media users as having limited input into the content that they can choose from. However, it recognizes that they have some agency in their evaluations of this content despite the power held by the media. Agenda-setting work emphasizes the distinction between telling audiences "what to think" with "what to think about" and consequently *how* to think.

Agenda-setting research aims to understand the relationship between the exposure that an issue is given by the media and the level of importance that an audience associates with the issue. The approach seeks to determine the "degree to which the media agenda, measured as the number of news stories about each of the five issues salient at a point in time, influenced the public agenda, measured as the degree to which the members of a population rated each of the five issues in salience" (Rogers, et al. 1997: 228).

Researchers are drawn to the agenda-setting approach because it offers high levels of explanatory power. McCombs (No date: 3) explains that most comparisons between how the media ranks issues and how the public ranks these issues yield correlations of at least +0.50. For instance, McCombs (1997: 435) describes a study (McCombs and Shaw 1972) on the 1968

United States presidential election that found a rank order correlation of +0.97 between the election issues considered most important by voters and the coverage of those issues by the news media consumed by those voters. Similarly, McCombs (1997) also describes Eaton's (1989) work that examines the salience of eleven different issues including crime, fear of war, unemployment, poverty and inflation over three and half years. This work finds that the changes in salience of ten of these issues on the public agenda were positively associated with the pattern of news coverage during the period. "Morality in society" was the only issue with a negative correlation (McCombs 1997: 443).

McCombs (No date: 8) writes that, "Influencing the focus of public attention is a powerful role, but, arguably, influencing the agenda of attributes for an issue or political figure is the epitome of political power". He explains that an agenda is made up of objects, the "things on which the attention of the media and the public are focused" (McCombs, No date: 5). However, each object is described using its traits and characteristics: attributes (McCombs, No date: 5). Like objects, the amount of attention paid to different attributes varies. The media's ability to emphasize or de-emphasize attributes gives the media much influence. For example, McCombs (No Date: 6) describes how Becker and McCombs (1978) compared descriptions made by members of New York's Democrat party of the candidates running for their party's presidential nomination in 1976 with depictions of these candidates in *Newsweek*. It was found that the correlation between the attributes on the news agenda and the voter agenda increased from +0.64 in mid-February to +0.83 in late March. In sum, the media's decisions about the most important aspects of the primaries were forefront throughout the decision-making period and took on increased relevance as Democrats became more immersed in the primaries.

While these findings suggest that the media have an ability to influence public opinion, McCombs (No date: 8) points out that the submissiveness of the public can be overestimated. He demonstrates this through his discussion of the inescapable coverage of the Clinton-Lewinsky "scandal". He explains that despite the high profile style coverage of the issue; the American public did not use the scandal as key criteria in their assessments of Bill Clinton. McCombs suggests that individuals play a key role in assessing what they find relevant. He explains that those who find a topic relevant but have high uncertainty about that topic are more likely to pay attention to the news and be more influenced by the media agenda (McCombs No date: 10).

The term "priming" refers to the "ability of the media agenda to affect the criteria by which individuals judge issues" (Iyengar 1991 cited in Rogers, et al. 1997: 235). McCombs (no date) describes findings from Iyengar and Kinder (1987) that suggest that audiences have problems separating the media agenda from newsmakers' agendas. These authors found that subjects who were exposed to extensive news coverage on one or more of five issues were more likely to assess the President on an overall basis using their assessment of how the President dealt with the issue or issues that was emphasized in the coverage that were exposed to. This occurred even if the news story did not describe a high degree of presidential responsibility for the issue (McCombs, No date: 13).

Work by Lewis, et al. (1991) using American public opinion of the Gulf War reveals the significance that agenda setting has on public perception. The authors explain that:

> Critics of the war policy say that it is hypocritical for the US to react so violently to one occupation in the Middle East, while ignoring- or supporting- others in the region. In terms of public support for the war, the point is critical, since a majority of our respondents (53%) stated that the US should intervene with military force to restore the sovereignty of any illegally occupied country (compared with only 18% who supported intervention to protect oil interests). What this suggests is that (unless they are advocating a whole series of military interventions) most people are unaware of other occupations in the Middle East-

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> or anywhere else. This is important, because such an awareness would undercut
> the moral cornerstone of the current war policy (Lewis, et al. 1991:3).

The above argument is supported by findings that 31% of the Denver sample knew about Israel's

occupations in the Middle East. A mere 3% were aware of Syria's occupation of Lebanon

(Lewis, et al. 1991: 3). However, it was found that most of the sample knew that "the Patriot"

was used to shoot down the Iraqi Scuds and that Hussein used chemical weapons against Iran

and members of the Iraqi population. Lewis, et al. (1991: 5) argue that audiences are

"selectively misinformed" and that neither the "known" or "unknown facts" are "neutral".

The authors found the amount of television viewing to be significant in predicting a

person's knowledge of relevant issues. For instance, those who watched less television were

more likely to know that the United States had supported Iraq in its war with Iran (Lewis, et al.:

6). Lewis, et al.'s (1991: 7) finding that knowledge is strongly associated with opposition to the

war suggests that the media agenda can have policy implications.

McCombs (1997: 433) explains that agenda setting is about the "transmission of

salience" and that we need to focus our attention on "consensus building" to transcend times

characterized by clashing individual differences. He argues that the news media help the

population to reach consensus but that they do not necessarily determine what the consensus will

be (McCombs 1997: 437). McCombs (1997: 438) outlines a continuum of "professional

behaviour" ranging from "active" to "passive" that describes the news media's role in agenda

setting. This continuum includes four benchmark positions.

At the most passive extreme is "Professional Detachment" where journalists act as

"windows on the world." In this situation, agenda setting is an "inadvertent by-product of

reporting the news" (McCombs 1997: 438). In "Targeted Involvement", the news media make

deliberate attempts to draw attention to certain issues by putting news stories on the agenda

through investigative reporting and editorial campaigns to help the public interest. McCombs (1997: 438) explains that these stories are usually narrow in focus and deal with specific events. The third benchmark, "Boosterism" is seen by McCombs (1997: 438) as being an inevitable aspect of local news. This benchmark is characterized by applauding positive news developments. It is difficult to distinguish between "blatant publicity and boosterism and newsworthy community interest" (McCombs 1997: 438). The least passive benchmark is "Proactive Agenda Setting." In this situation, the news media bring issues to attention to promote public interest. McCombs argues that this style of news can be used to strengthen the bonds between citizens and government. The goal is to "build community through communication" (McCombs 1997: 439). He explains that the community agendas can be set from the top-down. In this situation, journalists deliberately make topics salient. With the bottom-up approach extensive public opinion polling is used to identify issues that concern the population (McCombs 1997: 439-40).

Using a case study approach of issues in Germany, Mathes and Pfetsch (1991) demonstrate that alternative media can bring issues into the media agenda. The authors argue that the alternative media has the power to bring issues to light through a "spill-over effect" Mathes and Pfetsch (1991: 51). In some of the case studies, Mathes and Pfetsch (1991: 51) observed issues that "spilled like a wave from alternative into established media." Mathes and Pfetsch (1991: 54) argue that issues are more likely to move onto the agenda of the mainstream press if "the issue threatens vital elements of society" and if "prominent and trustworthy 'witnesses' for the issue" are available.

More recent research has explored the nuances of agenda setting. Kiousis and McCombs (2004) found that media salience has strong positive relationships with attitude strength.

Kiousis and McCombs (2004: 49), found some evidence supporting the affinity model. This model sees media salience as leading to attitude strength thereby reinforcing public salience. Tsfati (2003: 171) found that, on an individual level, those who are sceptical of the media are less likely to see the issues at the top of the media agenda as most important. This finding persists after controls for demographics, political ideology, extremity, discussion, knowledge and involvement. Wanta and Hu (1994) use path analysis to demonstrate that those who perceive the media to be credible are more reliant on the media for information causing them to have greater exposure to the media. In consequence, this group is more "susceptible to agenda-setting effects" (Wanta and Hu 1994: 96). This model was significant for newspapers, television and these media in combination (Wanta and Hu 1994: 97). Wanta and Hu (1994: 97) also found that the perceptions of an affiliate news media's are related to agenda-setting effects. These feelings were measured by asking respondents if they feel that news organizations are concerned about their own personal interests, the public's welfare and community well being. "In other words, if individuals believe that the media are highly affiliated with society, will tend to believe that the issues covered [in the media] are in the best interests of society" (Wanta and Hu 1994: 97).

1.9   Contributions to Existing Work:

The present analysis will address a number of deficiencies in existing research. First, the analysis will use political identification as a dependent variable. Generally, media scholars have been using ideology and partisanship as control variables. While this thesis does not claim that media use patterns directly determine political identification, as discussed above, there is an absence of work that predicts political identification using media use. Second, there is a lack of work that studies the significance of the number of news sources that a person uses. This thesis

will examine the associations between the number of sources that a person uses and their feelings about the news media and socio-economic status. Third, the present analysis will expand on the link between political participation and media use. As described above, there has been research in this area. However, such work tends to focus on political talk radio and news use. This thesis will explore connections between political participation and the range of media sources that a person uses, broadcaster preference, a person's use of non-news media and non-profit-media. Fourth, there is a lack of work that makes use of source specific information. The present analysis will examine the associations that broadcaster preference has with the political participation and identification and perceptions of the news media. Fifth, the present analysis will add to research on perceptions of media bias by using MRC techniques and using the amount of party bias a dependent variable. Finally, this thesis will add another dimension to the area by controlling for place of residence. As described above, Putnam's work suggests that media use is related to commuting and commuting culture. A more detailed discussion of the aims of this analysis, including hypotheses testing, is described in Chapter 2.

2.0   Methodology:

2.1   Data Set:

Ideally, to provide a better understanding of our society the analysis would examine a Canadian population. However, no data set that surveyed media use as well as political behaviours and beliefs using a Canadian sample was found.

The data analysis aspects of this project use the results of survey the Early January 2004 Political Communications Study conducted by The Pew Research Center for the People and The Press. The centre conducted structured telephone interviews between 19 December 2003 and 4 January 2004. Pew's survey focuses on media use for learning about the 2004 U.S. Presidential election. In order to have findings that can be generalized, it will be assumed that respondents do not change their media choices prior to elections.

Respondents were found using random digit dialling within telephone exchanges in continental United States. Telephone exchanges were selected with probabilities proportionate to their size. The number of telephone numbers randomly sampled in each county is proportionate to that county's share of telephone numbers in the population. Ten or more attempts were made to complete an interview with each sampled telephone number. The population is all people 18 years of age and older in continental United States.

Pew employs an over-sampling technique to help meet its population parameters. Interviewers first asked to speak to the youngest male adult in the home. In situations where this was not possible, interviewers asked to speak to the oldest female adult in the home. The data set has a sample size of 1506 respondents.

The contact and cooperation rates for the Pew data set are 74 and 44 percent respectively. Ninety-three percent of those who were initially cooperating and eligible to participate in the

survey completed the survey (Pew 2005a). The overall response rate is 30 percent (the product of the contact, cooperation and completion rates). The unweighted sample is fairly close to population parameters with respect to gender, age and region. There is under-representation of those who did not complete high school and over-representation of those who graduated from college. The unweighted sample represents a disproportionately high number of non-Hispanic whites. The sample was weighted so that each form of the survey matches Census parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region. The weighted sample includes 3188 cases. The margin of error for the entire sample is plus or minus three percent. Each form specific sample is associated with a margin of error of plus or minus four percent (Pew 2005a).

The survey is limited by the use of forms. Because not all respondents were asked the same questions about their media use, the utility of the survey is constrained. Questions about use of religious radio, local television and morning television shows were asked to half of the sample. Questions about talk radio and magazine television use were asked to the other half of the sample. This has three major implications on the analysis. First, it reduces the sample size in aspects of the analysis. Second, it reduces the possibilities for crosstabular analysis. Third, form-specific variables cannot be included in models that include both the income and income missing variables. Because all cases that were not asked the form specific question were coded as missing, mean substitution is not appropriate in models that include form-specific variables. However, income and income missing can only be entered in the same model when missing cases are handled using mean substitution. This is problematic, as fourteen percent of the sample did not answer the income question. Further analysis suggests that these missing data on the income variable are not randomly distributed. The other independent variables include far fewer missing cases. The missing categories for religiosity, education, age and election interest include

0.7 percent or less of respondents. Only six respondents did not answer the education attainment question.

The constructions of the dependent variables are described in subsequent chapters. Education is measured by the respondent's highest level of attainment. Income is measured using an interval-proximate scale that is based on the midpoint of each income range divided by 1000. A value of 200 was used to represent the upper end category of more than $150, 000. The education categories and income ranges used by Pew are used in the table in Appendix 1. Religiosity is measured using an interval-proximate scale based on attendance at religious services. The other independent variables are described in the data analysis chapters.

The survey design as well as the focus of the hypothesis testing has resulted in reliance on very crude variables. Multiple regression assumes that errors are normally distributed and that the variance of errors is not a function of any of the independent variables. The errors from the mean value of the dependent variable for each value of the various independent variables are assumed to be normally distributed. However, most of the dependent variables are ordinal and include only a few categories. These variable scales are characterized by highly skewed distributions, with the bulk of cases clustered at the low end of most scales. The models described in subsequent chapters include a number of dummy coded independent variables. These conditions are not conducive to the assumptions that underlie multiple regression. Readers should interpret findings with consideration to these concerns. The residual statistics associated with each predictive model are discussed to outline the weaknesses of models.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.2   Research Hypotheses:

The present analysis aims to test a variety of relationships involving political identification,

the range of media sources that a person uses, perceptions of the media and political

participation:

- H1: Those who learn about the presidential campaign through political talk shows on cable
  television and the radio (religious and non-religious programs) will be more conservative and
  have higher levels of online and offline political participation in comparison with the United
  States as a whole. They will be more likely to perceive a Democratic bias in the news media.

Rationale: The literature review describes work on the link between political identification and

talk radio use. There is an overlap between the talk radio and cable news genres.   For example,

Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity both host programs on The Fox News Channel as well as talk

radio programs. Talk radio hosts are frequent guests on political talk shows on cable television.

CNN is the result of Ted Turner's idea to bring all-news radio onto the television screen (Auletta

2003). As earlier research has identified a link between conservatism and talk radio use, it

expected that would also characterize users of political talk shows on cable television. The

"loudmouth" and "tell it like it is" styles associated with conservative hosts and guests on talk

radio and cable television are expected to draw an audience that is frustrated with what they

perceive as a liberal media. It sees this programming as attracting viewers who are deliberately

seeking political content.

- H2: The Fox News Channel audience will be associated with conservatism. It will be more
  likely to perceive the news media as having a Democratic bias than the population as a whole
  and demonstrate higher levels of online and offline political participation.

Rationale: This hypothesis is based on the expectation that FNC is positioned as a news service

for those who are concerned about a "liberal bias" in the news media. As described in the

literature review, FNC is more trusted by Republicans than Democrats or Independents (Pew: 2005: 43). Media critics including Al Franken (2003) accuse the broadcaster of a conservative bias in its programming. It is expected that conservative viewers are drawn to the broadcaster because of this positioning. The expectation that viewing Fox News will be associated with higher levels of political activity stems from the expectation that Fox News will have a very politically defined audience. Such an audience is expected to be more emphatic about their views and will demonstrate these concerns through higher levels of political involvement.

- H3: The audiences of services that are not mandated to generate profits, such as PBS, NPR and the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN), will be distinct. The use of non-profit media will be associated with:

  - H3 a: High socio-economic status;
  - H3 b: Liberalism;
  - H3 c: Perceptions of Republican biased news media and
  - H3 d: Higher levels of political participation.

Rationale: Work by Kull (2003-4) and Holtz-Bacha and Norris (2001) suggests that the non-profit media audience is unique. Because non-profit media do not have the same concerns about audience size as commercial broadcasters, they are better suited to offer content with less mass appeal. Such content is less sensational and more information and analysis based. Such programming is expected to draw an audience with higher socio-economic status. The operational model used by non-profit broadcasters, despite drawing on corporate donations, reflects concerns about market forces. This approach to revenue generation is expected to attract a more liberal audience. The positioning of non-profit media as an alternative to the "corporate media" is expected to draw an audience that associates the mainstream media with a conservative bias. Choosing non-profit media represents a deliberate and politically motivated approach to

information seeking. It is expected that the political concerns that draw audience members to

non-profit media will also encourage these media users to be more politically active.

- H4 a: Black Americans will be less likely to watch local television news and are more likely to perceive a bias in the news media.

Rationale: There has been much discussion about the representation of Black culture in the

media (for example, hooks 2004 and Torres 2003). Many argue that the style of crime news

stories encourage the perception that Blacks are more likely to be involved with criminal and

violent behaviours. For example, Dixon and Linz's (2000) analysis of local television news

content in Los Angeles and Orange Counties found that Blacks were more likely to be portrayed

as perpetrators than as victims of crime. The opposite was found for Whites. Further, in

comparison with criminal justice reports, Dixon and Linz (2000) found Blacks to be over-

represented as perpetrators of crime. Local news draws extensively on crime stories

(McChesney 2004: 86-7; Gilliam, Jr. and Iyengo 2000: 560). For these reasons, it is anticipated

that Blacks will be less likely to consume local news content.

- H4 b: Non-Black Americans will differ from Black Americans in that non-Blacks who watch local television news will have higher levels of political participation in elections, online and in other forums.

Rationale: Mastin (2000) suggests that the Black community in the United States has a unique

relationship with local news. Her Black sample did not seem to use local news in ways that were

consistent with expectations suggested by work on the link between local news consumption and

civic participation that does not distinguish between "races". Unlike the work she reviewed,

Mastin did not find local news to be a useful to predictor of civic participation among Blacks

(Mastin 2000: 123). Mastins' work encourages the examination of this sub hypothesis.

- H5: As perceived news bias increases, so too will the number and variety of media sources used by respondents.

Rationale: This hypothesis is based on the expectation that those who perceive a high level of

media bias will use multiple sources in order to reduce their reliance on a particular source. As

discussed in the literature review, there is little research on the range of sources that a person

uses. While Tsfati and Cappella's (2003) work does not focus on the total number of sources

that a person uses, their work suggests that media sceptics incorporate mainstream and non-

mainstream sources in their media diets. This hypothesis anticipates that attempts to use a

diversity of media sources will be evident in the total number of sources used.   Those who see

more bias in the media will use a greater total number of media sources.

- H6: Survey participants were asked if they prefer news that shares their political point of view or if they prefer sources that do not have a particular point of view. Those who indicated a preference for the latter will use a greater number of media and media sources.

Rationale: Those who are concerned about the objectivity of news coverage will make use of a

range of sources in order get a more "objective" sense of current events. This reflects an

assumption that news media consumers see the various media offerings as different from

another.

- H7 a: Using a greater number of hard news media sources (media that aims to inform its audience about current events) will be associated with higher socio-economic status.
- H7 b: Using a greater number of sources will be associated with higher levels of political participation in elections, online and other political forums.

Rationale: These hypotheses stem from the discussion of work by Milbrath and Goel (1977)

described in the literature review. The expectation is that those with greater resources will be

more concerned about politics because they will feel more connected to the decisions made by

political leaders. This concern with political affairs will encourage information seeking about

current affairs. This political interest as well as higher consumer spending power will facilitate

the use of more hard media sources. As well, subscription and technology costs reduce the

availability of some media to low-income groups.

- H8: Those who learn about the presidential campaign through entertainment-oriented programming will have lower levels of online and offline political participation.

Rationale: It is expected that viewers are not drawn to entertainment oriented programming

because of its educational benefits. Baum's (2005) analysis of appearances of major party

presidential candidates on entertainment oriented television talk shows (e-talk) finds that election

campaign coverage on these shows referred less to substantive elections issues than traditional

interviews and national news reports. Baum (2005) identifies e-talk as a forum for election

candidates to reach voters that are less engaged in politics. Viewers of these programs learn

about the election issues through osmosis instead of deliberately seeking it out. This passive

approach to politics is expected to be associated with low levels of political participation.

- H9: Viewers of Sunday morning network talk programs will be more politically active in elections and other political forums than the rest of the sample.

Rationale: Baum's (2005) work finds that traditional interview programs such as *Meet the Press*

and *This Week* include much more issue-oriented discussion with election candidates in

comparison with e-talk television. This content is expected to draw an audience that is

politically active. The discussions on these programs often require background knowledge of

current issues. These programs rely on their viewer's interest in the topics discussed. They are less produced and "shouting match" oriented than other media that deal with current issues.

- H10: Those who learn about the presidential campaign through television magazine programs such as *20/*20 and *60* Minutes will have lower levels of online and offline political participation.

Rationale: This hypothesis is based on reasoning similar to the above hypothesis pertaining to the link between viewing entertainment programs and political participation. The difference between tabloid and magazine television programs is blurry. The increased presence of celebrity shows may make magazine shows appear closer to the news genre. Magazine shows are often positioned as "hard-hitting", "proactive" and "investigative." However, these programs draw many of their viewers through sensationalism and celebrity and lifestyle stories. A report by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (1998: 4), found that 55 percent of stories on prime time magazine programs pertained to "people stories, lifestyle/behavior, news you can use and celebrity entertainment". Only eight percent of stories were found to deal with any of: education, economics, foreign affairs, the military, national security, politics or social welfare issues. Grabe and Zhou (2003: 334) describe techniques used by the producers of *60 Minutes* to enhance "the spectacle of dramatic storytelling". This type of programming is a more accessible way of gathering political information. Such programming is expected to draw a less politically active audience.

- H11: Hard news (media that aims to inform its audience about current events) consumption will be a stronger predictor of online and offline political participation for younger Americans in comparison with older Americans.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Rationale: It has been found that older people are more likely to seek news content (Holbert et al., 2003: 186; Vincent and Basil, 1997: 386; Shah et al. 2001b: 492). Walker and Bellamy (1991) found that sample of university students see television remote control devices as a tool for avoiding political content. Because advertisers covet those with high amounts of disposable income who have yet to form brand loyalties, there is a wealth of content aimed at younger audiences. Today's television audience has access to more celebrity news than any other. As a result, it is easy for today's young media consumers to avoid news content. Because of audience fragmentation, news audiences are more filtered than they have been in the past. It is expected that younger consumers of news will be especially concerned about politics and will demonstrate this interest with high levels of political participation.

2.3   Assumptions and Limitations:

The above discussion of the hypotheses implies that some media are more political than others. Topics that broadly relate to policy issues have been labelled as "political". It is reductive to see media content as being either political or not political. The present analysis is not grounded in a perspective that sees some media content as being detached from socio-political forces.

The hypotheses described above make distinctions between entertainment and non-entertainment oriented programs. This language does not suggest that producers of news and current affairs programming do not aim to entertain their audiences. For the purpose of the present analysis, the "entertainment" label refers to content that is considered entertaining in the normative sense: content that is not information or analysis oriented. For this analysis, late night talk, morning shows and comedy programs are considered entertainment oriented. Morning

television shows while often considered "news" programs by networks, are considered entertainment-oriented for the purpose of the present analysis. While these programs include multiple local and national newscasts per episode, the majority of the segments between newscasts are lifestyle, consumer and celebrity oriented. In some cases, the national newscaster is also involved these segments. Other segments involve guests describing their personal experiences and community involvement. While these programs include some segments that are based on news stories, overall, these programs emphasize non-news content. They appear to aim to make their viewer's morning routines more pleasant through familiar friendly hosts and lighter fare while including enough news content to make audience members feel sufficiently informed about the day's top stories.

The survey instrument allows for the identification of users of specific non-profit media sources. For the purpose of this analysis, NPR, PBS and C-SPAN are considered non-profit. The term "public media" is not used because C-SPAN is a "private, non-profit public service of the cable television industry" (C-SPAN, 2006). The company generates its revenue from license fees paid by the carriers that offer the service to their customers. While religious radio stations are not profit motivated; they are not included in the "non-profit" category for the purposes of this analysis. The term "talk radio" denotes respondents who claimed to use talk radio. NPR and religious radio use are measured using their own variables.

Some of the hypotheses refer to "liberalism" or "conservatism". Groups that are predicted to be associated with liberalism are also expected to be associated with voting for Al Gore in 2000 and with identifying with the term "Democrat". Groups that are predicted to be associated with conservatism are also expected to be associated with voting for George W. Bush in 2000 and with identifying with the term "Republican".

Chapter 2: Methodology

The rationales for some of the hypotheses described above refer to perceptions of a "liberal media". The survey instrument does not ask respondents if they perceive a liberal or conservative bias in the media. However, the survey allows for the measurement of perceived political party bias in the news media. There are conceptual differences between ideological and party bias. The terms "liberal bias" and "Democratic bias" should not be used interchangeably. The present analysis sees perceptions of party bias as way of accessing ideologically rooted concerns about the media.

Cross-sectional survey data cannot confirm causal relationships between variables, for that experimental designs would be needed. This project does not aim to make causal claims. Further, it is difficult to make such claims about the connection between media consumption and political behaviour and identification. This project does not aim to determine if a person's views and political activeness are tied to their media use or if they are a prerequisite to their media consumption. Media consumption likely has a complex relationship with the dependent variables examined in the present analysis. Generally, media related variables are entered as second blocks of the multivariate models presented. This allows for the isolation of the amount of variation explained by media variables. The entering of media variables after independent variables that relate to a person's ascribed status is an oversimplification of the role of media use. For example, it is reductive to assume that media habits stem from a person's income. Media messages can influence a person's material aspirations and achievement. Multiple regression analysis can mislead by implying detachment between variables.

Further, survey data do not lend themselves to understanding *how* people experience the media. Qualitative techniques are better suited to understanding the processes that characterize

how media users see and respond to specific media content and the context of the decisions that draw a person to one media source instead of another.

There are limitations to using sample survey data to make inferences and generalizations. Using the telephone to interview respondents subjects the data to several biases. For example, people who screen their telephone calls or spend more time away from their home phone or do not own a residential landline are less likely to be surveyed. It is not clear how respondents differ from those who could not be reached by Pew in terms of the variables examined in the present analysis. Because aspects of the present focus on sample subsets associated with few respondents, this analysis is particularly sensitive to sampling error.

This analysis is also limited by the dynamic nature of public opinion. Perceptions and views on political issues change over time. For example, according to data collected by during March of 2006, 33% approved of "the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as President" (Pew 2006). However, the data set used in the present analysis, which was collected during the winter of 2003-4, finds the President to have the approval of 58% the sample. Both surveys were administered by Pew using the same methodology. It is unclear how developments and coverage of events since the survey collection period have impacted the variables addressed in the analysis. However, it appears that the American public is less satisfied with the Republican Party than it was during the collection period of the survey used in this analysis suggesting that re-administering the survey in the spring of 2006 would find different distributions of cases in the political identification variables.

The present analysis does not aim to offer findings that are only applicable to the United States. All of the media sources in the analysis are either available to Canadians and/or have a counterpart in Canada. However, it is unclear how applicable the findings are to the Canadian

media context. The Canadian media landscape is unique because it includes an extensive range

of Canadian and American sources and the CRTC is mandated to ensure the availability of

content in both official languages. Canadian media users are forced to make decisions about

how actively they are going to seek coverage of Canadian news stories. This dynamic is less

applicable to the media habits of Americans as foreign media has much less prevalence in the

United States.   The applicability of the findings in the present analysis to the Canadian context is

also impacted by differences in the political systems.   These differences likely explain

differences in how Canadians and Americans identify with political parties and cleavages. The

parliamentary system has implications on political participation and voting behaviour that differ

from the United States. For example, strategic voting is less of a consideration to American

voters.

3.0   Political Identification:

The present analysis measures political identification through voting behaviour, party identification and ideology. Several media sources were expected to have relationships with political identification. The audiences for the Fox News Channel, political talk shows on cable television and the talk and religious radio audiences were predicted to be associated with conservatism, the Republican Party and support for Bush in the 2000 election while the non-profit media are expected to be associated with liberalism, the Democratic Party and voting for Gore in 2000.

3.1   Indicators:

Respondents were asked whom they voted for in the Presidential race in 2000 and if they identify as a Republican, Democrat or Independent.

The ideology scale is a self-placement scale with five categories. Respondents were asked, "In general, would you describe your political views as "very liberal" or "liberal" or "moderate" or "conservative" or "very conservative?" The "very liberal" respondents were coded as 1 and "very conservative" respondents were coded as 5.

Because the ideology question is a self-placement scale, it reveals how a person identifies ideologically. The ideological categories available to respondents are not clearly defined. For example, what is seen as a "moderate" view to one may be seen as "conservative" to another.

3.2 Voting Behaviour:

TABLE 3.1: ELECTION 2000 VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF VARIOUS MEDIA AUDIENCES

	Cable		Radio		Non-Profit			Total Sample
	FNC	Political Talk	Religious^	Talk^	C-SPAN	NPR	PBS	
N	622	1400	323	738	915	1104	1041	**3,188**
Gore	19.6%	34.4	24.8	28.5	35.3	33.7	36.4	**28.6**
Bush	45.3%	33.9	44.6	37.7	30.7	32.6	32.5	**33.6**
Nader	0.8%	1.3	0.3	2.6	1.6	3.3	2.4	**1.6**
All other*	34.2%	30.4	30.3	31.3	32.3	30.4	28.7	**36.2**
Total	**65.8%**	**69.6**	**69.7**	**68.7**	**67.7**	**69.6**	**71.3**	**63.8**

^ Form-specific variable (Total Sample N=1594)
*Did not vote or voted for a candidate other than Bush, Gore and Nader.

The voting behaviour of the various media audiences are presented Table 3.1. The Fox News audience is dummy coded to capture those who do and do not watch the broadcaster. In the cases of the other media, audiences were defined as those who "sometimes" or "regularly" learned about the 2004 election through that media source. The analysis focuses on those who voted for Bush and Gore. Ralph Nader is included in the above table to present a more complete picture of voting behaviour. The other respondents either did not vote or voted for one of the other candidates.

FNC viewers were more likely to vote for Bush in 2000 and less likely to have voted for Gore in comparison with the total sample providing evidence supporting Hypothesis 2. Of this audience, about 45 percent voted for Bush and about 20 percent voted for Gore. Fox News Channel viewers were the least supportive of Gore and the most supportive of Bush of all of the examined media with a relative concentration of Bush supporters that is slightly higher than that found among religious radio listeners. Forty-five percent of religious radio listeners voted for

Bush and 29 percent voted for Gore. Talk radio listeners were about as likely as the total sample to have voted for Gore and slightly more likely to vote for Bush in 2000.

Cable political talk show and non-profit media users were more likely to have voted for Gore but did not differ from the total sample in their likelihood of having voted for Bush in 2000. The latter is offers evidence supporting Hypothesis 3. Between about 34 and 36 percent of these audiences voted for Gore.

With the exception of the political talk show on cable television audience, all other audiences were more likely to vote for the expected candidate in 2000.

3.3   Party Identification:

TABLE 3.2: PARTY IDENTIFICATION OF VARIOUS MEDIA AUDIENCES

	Cable		Radio		Non-Profit			Total Sample
	FNC	Political Talk	Religious^	Talk^	C-SPAN	NPR	PBS	
N	622	1400	323	738	915	1104	1041	**3188**
Democrat	24.4%	37.6	37.7	32.8	41.7	36.5	39.3	**33.6**
Republican	43.1%	29.0	33.3	31.2	24.8	25.4	24.8	**29.1**

^ Form-specific variable (Total Sample N=1594)

The same criteria were used to define audiences to examine party identification in Table 3.2. Those not included in either category identify as independents or did not answer the party identification question. The Fox News Channel audience was more Republican and less Democratic than the total sample offering more evidence supporting Hypothesis 2. The non-profit media audiences were less Republican and more Democratic than the total sample. These findings are consistent with Hypotheses 2 and 3. The political cable talk show audience was more Democratic than the total sample, which contradicts Hypothesis 1. The religious radio

audience includes a slight over-representation of both Democrats and Republicans. The talk

radio audience is closely mirrors the total sample. The C-SPAN and FNC audiences were the

most unique as the former included 8.1 percent more Democrats and the latter included 14.0

percent more Republicans than the total sample.

A comparison between Tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicates that there were more respondents

who identify as Democrats than who voted for Gore in 2000. The opposite applies to

Republicans: more cases are associated with voting for Bush in 2000 than identifying as

Republicans. These findings are consistent with Citrin et al.'s (2003) analysis of Senate

elections. The authors found that, generally, non-voters are more Democratic than voters. Some

of the differences in voting participation by partisanship group are explained by differences in

the demographic composition of partisan groups. The authors simulated election results with

voter turnouts that included equal representation of income groups and Blacks at the ballot box

for various election years. These simulations increased helped the Democrats in comparison

with actual election results.

However, the present analysis suggests that media audiences differ in the extent that

partisan groups support their party's candidate on Election Day. Some of these differences are

related to the demographic composition of these audiences and changes in partisanship that

occurred between the 2000 election and the data collection period of the winter of 2004.

However, some media content may draw audiences that are more active in elections and loyal to

the political parties that they identify with. The Fox News Channel audience has the narrowest

gap between the percentage of the audience that identify as Republicans and the percentage that

voted for Bush in 2000 suggesting that the news service draws an audience that is more loyal to

the Republican Party. On the other hand, all audiences and the total sample included more

Democratic identifiers than people who voted for Gore in 2000. The audiences for NPR, PBS and political talk shows on cable had the narrowest gap between the percentage that identify as Democrats and the percentage that voted for Gore in 2000. This suggests that these audiences more actively demonstrate their support for the Democratic Party in elections. All audiences, as well as the total sample, include a greater proportion of people who voted for Bush in 2000 than identify as Republicans. This gap was widest for the religious radio audience. This may be a result of the emphasis on religious and "moral" issues in the 2000 election and the Republican campaign organizers' ability to encourage born again and religious Christians to vote. However, differences between partisanship and voting behaviour among religious radio listeners should be interpreted with caution due to the small N value associated with this audience.

3.4 Distribution of Cases on Political Ideology Scale:

About one in twenty respondents did not answer the ideology question. This is not surprising, as properly responding to the question requires that study participants understand the words "conservative", "moderate" and "liberal". Because the question asks respondents to provide an overall assessment of their political ideology those respondents who felt conflicted about their placement on the scale may have decided not to answer the question.

There were respondents associated with each category. Excluding those who did not answer the question, about twice as many respondents placed themselves in the conservative categories in comparison with either of the liberal categories. Almost twenty percent identified as either liberal or very liberal while about forty percent identified as conservative or very conservative. The moderate option is the modal category with 40.7 percent of valid cases. The extreme ends of the scale were associated with about five percent of respondents each.

Excluding missing cases, the total sample mean is 3.20. This score represents a location

on the scale associated with being slightly conservative. The sample's standard deviation score

of 0.93 demonstrates that there is high dispersion on the scale. The scale is characterized by a

platykurtic distribution, as most of the cases are associated with the liberal, moderate and

conservative categories.

3.5 Bivariate Analysis-Political Ideology:

TABLE 3.3: MEAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF VARIOUS GROUPS

Independent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Background			
Born Again	3.43	0.88	1000
Hispanic	3.36	0.96	307
Election 2000			
Gore Voters	2.90	0.91	879
Bush Voters	3.57	0.76	1027
Party Identification			
Democrats	2.97	0.94	1018
Republicans	3.67	0.75	899
Media			
FNC	3.38	0.83	612
Perceived Democratic Bias	3.59	0.84	681
Perceived Republican Bias	2.88	0.96	515
Total Sample	**3.20**	**0.93**	**3016**

This clustering of cases in the moderate and conservative categories is highlighted by a

comparison of the ideological identification of groups defined by voting behaviour. The gap

between Gore and Bush voters was narrow. Those who voted for Presidential Candidate Al Gore

in 2000 had a mean score of 2.90 on the ideology scale. This score is the most conservative of

possible scores within the liberal categories of the spectrum. The mean among those who voted

for President Bush in 2000 was in the moderate to conservative range at 3.57. Both groups scored close to the scale midpoint. Those who identify as Republicans scored slightly more conservative than those who voted for Bush in 2000. Those who identify as Democrats differed less from the total sample. The mean scores for Republicans and Democrats respectively were 3.67 and 2.97. All groups were associated with large standard deviation scores. Most other groups had standard deviation scores that were slightly less than one scale unit. Gore voters were associated with the smallest standard deviation of all groups examined.

Few variables emerged at the bivariate level as powerful explainers of ideological identification. Variables that were found to offer predictive power had weak relationships with the ideology scale. The correlation between religiosity and ideology was 0.21. The mean score among those who identified as born-again was 3.43. These weak relationships are consistent with popular expectations about the "religious right". Roman Catholics and Protestants differed less from the total sample.

None of the ethnically defined groups examined in the analysis differed greatly from the total sample. Hispanics were slightly more conservative than the total sample, with a mean score of 3.36.

Few of the hypothesized relationships between media use and political ideology were supported at the bivariate level of analysis. Fox News Channel, cable talk show and political radio use were expected to be associated with conservatism while non-profit media use was expected to be associated with liberalism. Fox News users were slightly more conservative than the total sample. This variable was dummy coded to distinguish between users and non-users. To measure respondents use of the other media that were expected to be associated with ideology, interviewers asked study participants to indicate, "how often, if ever," they "learn

something about the presidential campaign or the candidates" from the media in question. The response categories for these survey items are: "regularly", "sometimes", "hardly ever" or "never". Generally, the correlations between these media and ideology were either non-significant or of trivial magnitude. However, a correlation of 0.15 was found between the ideology scale and learning from religious radio. At the bivariate level, there is little evidence supporting the hypotheses about media use and political ideology. There is only weak evidence that FNC and religious radio use are related to ideology.

However, for the purposes of the present analysis, asking respondents how often they "learn something" through a particular type of media is problematic. This language blurs exposure with perceived educational benefit. Ideally, the survey instrument would include an indicator of the amount of time an individual spends using the various media. Because exposure is a prerequisite to learning from a particular media source, such survey items have been treated as an indication of how much a respondent uses a particular type of media. However, the wording of these questions may have resulted in seemingly smaller and less loyal audiences for media that are perceived as having less educational value.

As one would expect, those who see a Democratic bias in the news media are more liberal than the total sample and those who see a Republican bias are more conservative. Those who see a Republican bias in the news media are more liberal than those who voted for Gore or those who identify with the Democratic Party.

3.6 Multivariate Analysis-Political Ideology:

The ideology models are impacted by Pew's usage of survey forms. Two of the survey items were expected to be related to ideology but were not asked to the entire sample. The

questions about religious radio and talk radio were asked to different halves of the sample. Separate models were built for each form because of the multicollinearity resulting from using form-specific items from both forms. This reduces the number of sample members that can be included in each model. Because half of the sample was treated as missing when form-specific items were used, pairwise deletion was used. Income was not significantly related to ideology in this context. However, because it is inappropriate to use mean substitution in this context, it is not known if income would have been significant had an income missing dummy variable also been entered into the model.

Watching FNC and listening to talk radio are identified in Chapter 5 as being related to perceptions of a Democratic bias in the news media. A variable describing the amount of Democratic bias that a respondent sees was entered in the final block of the Form 2 model to help isolate the relationship between political ideology and use of these media sources. This variable is an interaction term between the type of bias that a respondent sees and the amount of bias that a respondent sees. Respondents were asked how much "political bias" they see in news coverage. Response categories range from "not at all" to "a great deal". The former was coded as 0 and the latter as 3. These codes were then multiplied by 1 if the respondent indicated that they see a bias favouring the Democrats in coverage of the presidential race or 0 if respondents indicated they saw no bias or a bias favouring the Republican Party. The rationale for including this variable in the third block of this model is described below.

TABLE 3.4: REGRESSION RESULTS: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY USING FORM 1

Independent Variables	*b*	Beta	*t*	
Block 1				
Constant	2.558		30.489	**
Age	0.004	0.071	2.734	**
Male	0.246	0.133	5.309	**
Black	-0.187	-0.064	-2.520	*
Hispanic	0.225	0.073	2.786	**
Religiosity	0.004	0.165	5.906	**
Protestant	0.193	0.104	2.852	**
Roman Catholic	0.169	0.081	2.392	*
Born Again	0.185	0.094	3.119	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.082**		
Block 2				
Constant	2.640		29.985	**
Age	0.004	0.070	2.683	**
Male	0.266	0.143	5.764	**
Black	-0.184	-0.063	-2.469	*
Hispanic	0.229	0.074	2.867	**
Religiosity	0.004	0.146	5.063	**
Protestant	0.150	0.081	2.214	*
Roman Catholic	0.143	0.069	2.039	*
Born Again	0.138	0.070	2.315	*
FNC	0.197	0.084	3.432	**
C-SPAN	-0.048	-0.053	-2.040	*
NPR	-0.032	-0.039	-1.512	
PBS	-0.059	-0.069	-2.565	*
Religious Radio^	0.093	0.093	3.255	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.102**		
* p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=1567				
^Form-specific variable				

TABLE 3.5: REGRESSION RESULTS: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY USING FORM 2

Independent Variables	b	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	2.558		30.369	**
Age	0.004	0.071	2.724	**
Male	0.246	0.133	5.289	**
Black	-0.187	-0.064	-2.510	*
Hispanic	0.225	0.073	2.775	**
Religiosity	0.004	0.165	5.883	**
Protestant	0.193	0.104	2.840	**
Roman Catholic	0.169	0.081	2.382	*
Born Again	0.185	0.094	3.106	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.082**		
Block 2				
Constant	2.563		28.691	**
Age	0.004	0.077	2.963	**
Male	0.238	0.128	5.122	**
Black	-0.165	-0.056	-2.227	*
Hispanic	0.225	0.073	2.806	**
Religiosity	0.005	0.179	6.421	**
Protestant	0.153	0.082	2.253	*
Roman Catholic	0.129	0.062	1.839	
Born Again	0.169	0.086	2.869	**
FNC	0.177	0.076	3.066	**
C-SPAN	-0.060	-0.067	-2.534	*
PBS	-0.054	-0.063	-2.361	*
NPR	-0.052	-0.064	-2.380	*
Talk Radio	0.090	0.108	4.003	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.106**		

Table 3.5 cont'd:

Block 3			
Constant	2.550		29.027**
Age	0.004	0.078	3.047**
Male	0.213	0.115	4.646**
Black	-0.107	-0.037	-1.465
Hispanic	0.238	0.077	3.014**
Religiosity	0.004	0.166	6.056**
Protestant	0.147	0.079	2.208*
Roman Catholic	0.142	0.068	2.057*
Born Again	0.145	0.074	2.507*
FNC	0.095	0.041	1.644
C-SPAN	-0.055	-0.060	-2.325*
PBS	-0.059	-0.069	-2.626**
NPR	-0.050	-0.061	-2.316*
Talk Radio	0.063	0.075	2.798**
See Democratic Bias	0.165	0.184	7.259**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.136**	
* p<0.05, **p<0.01			
N=1581			

The lack of variation between categories makes predicting scores on the ideology scale challenging. However, the models in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 explain about one-tenth of the variation in ideology. Entering the media source variables into the models does not result in major increases in the amount of variance explained and most of the media variables are associated with low magnitude beta values. However, some of the media variables are relatively powerful predictors. In particular, the radio variables rank relatively high in their influence on predicted scores before controlling for Democratic Party bias. Listening to either talk or religious radio is associated with conservatism as expected by Hypothesis 1. Based on beta values, both variables rank third in their models in terms of their relative influence on predicted scores. In the second blocks, the variables both have b values of about 0.09. However, contrary to the expectations of

Hypothesis 1, no significant relationship between tuning to political talk programs on cable television and ideology was found.

The models offer some evidence supporting Hypothesis 3. As anticipated, watching public television programs and using C-SPAN were associated with liberalism in both versions of the model. However, learning about the election through public radio was only significant in the Form 2 version of the model. Reverse regression procedures suggest that the public radio variable is significantly related to all of the media variables included in the above models with the exception of the religious radio variable. The religious radio category was exemplified to respondents through the radio program *Focus on the Family*. This type of content is unique from that of C-SPAN, NPR, PBS and FNC because it gives less attention to timely events and more to discussions about "values" and "morals". In comparison with the other media sources, religious radio is more reflection than information based. These differences may explain why NPR is not significantly related to religious radio.

Being Hispanic is associated with b values of about 0.23. Gender is more influential on predicted scores. Consistent with other research, being male is associated with conservatism. The Protestant, Roman Catholic and born again variables were all significantly related to the scale in the form 1 model and the final block of the form 2 model. A comparison between the different versions of Block 2 provides further evidence that religion is related to ideology. In the context of the Form 1 model, religious radio is the third most influential variable in the model. In the model using only the Form 2 variables, identifying as a born again has greater relative influence on predicted scores. As demonstrated by Appendix 1, the religious radio audience is largely Protestant and includes a high proportion of born again identifiers. Because of the overlap between the religious radio audience and the group that identifies as born again, some of

the variation explained by the born again variable in the Form 2 model is explained by religious radio variable in Form 1 variable. Identifying as a born again increases scores by 0.169 in the second block of the Form 2 model. The dummy coded born again variable is associated with a b value of 0.138 in the Form 1 model.

In contrast, use of non-profit media is associated with liberalism and has less influence on predicted scores. In the Form 2 model, the non-profit media variables are associated with low ranking beta magnitude values between -0.060 and -0.069. Using C-SPAN has the least influence on scores of variables in the Form 1 model and is associated with a low magnitude beta value of -0.053.

Watching the Fox News Channel has more influence on scores than using non-profit media before the perceived Democratic bias variable is entered. In this context, the dummy coded variable can increase predicted scores by 0.197 in the context of the Form 1 variables and 0.177 Form 2 version of the model. Reverse regressions suggest the FNC tuning is positively related to talk radio listening and negatively to public radio use. The Fox News Channel has much in common with talk radio. The broadcaster's most notorious face, Bill O'Reilly also hosts a syndicated radio program. As discussed above, talk radio is seen as a forum for conservative views and Fox News is positioned as a "fair and balanced" service in an otherwise liberal media. The chapter discussing perceptions of political party bias demonstrates that both talk radio and Fox News use are associated with perceptions of a Democratic Party bias in the news media. This suggests that the link between ideology and use of these media are partly explained by perceptions of the media. Further, in both cases, partial correlations between these media and ideology were not significant when controlling for perceived Democratic bias.

The variable measuring the amount of perceived Democratic bias is entered after the media use variables to demonstrate the relationship between media use and ideology when controlling and as well as not controlling for perceived Democratic bias. A variable capturing perceived Republican bias was not included because none of the media variables were associated with perceived Republican bias at the multivariate level. The variable is only entered into the Form 2 version of the model because it includes both of the media variables that were related to perceptions of party bias in the media in Chapter 5.

Entering the amount of perceived Democratic bias variable reveals that the relationships that Fox News viewing and talk radio listening have with ideology are mediated by perceptions of the media. Fox News use is no longer significant in the third block of the Form 2 model. While talk radio listening has the third most influence on predicted scores in the second block of the model, it has the seventh most influential effect when the media perceived bias variable is entered into the model.

Entering this variable in the model results in other changes to the model. It becomes the highest magnitude variable and increases the amount variance explained by three percent. One would expect those who see a Democratic bias in the news would be more conservative. The variable is associated with a beta value 0.184. Seeing "a great deal" of Democratic bias increases predicted scores by 0.495. Being Black is not significant in this block of the model. Being Roman Catholic is significant in Block 3 but was not significant in Block 2. In contrast, entering in the variable does not impact age.

One of the weaknesses of the model is that there are few variables that reduce predicted scores. Only being Black or using non-profit media are associated with negative b and beta values. All of the religion variables as well as the Hispanic dummy coded variable increase

scores. The distribution of standardized residuals scores is broadly normal in both models.

Analysis of residual statistics reveals that both models are likely to over-predict scores. While

about one in five valid cases are associated with being "liberal" or "very liberal", in both models,

the lowest predicted score is about 2.4, which is in the liberal to moderate category. In both

cases, the highest predicted score is slightly above four. This is fairly close to the highest

observed score of five. Analysis of residual and standardized residual statistics provides further

evidence that both models over-predict scores.

4.0   Range of Media Sources:

Scales were constructed to analyze the range of sources that a person uses. The range of sources that a person uses is expected to have positive relationships with socio-economic status and the amount of bias that a person sees in the news media. Those who prefer "objective" news were anticipated to use more sources.

4.1   Indicators:

The range of media sources that a person uses was measured using three indicators: the number of television news services and mediums that a person uses as well as the information-seeking scale.

The information-seeking scale ranges from 0 to 39. All of the items are drawn from questions worded the same way as the non-profit media and radio questions described in the political ideology chapter. Respondents indicated how often they "learn something" about the election from that source. For each source, responses are coded from 0 to 3. "Regularly", "sometimes", "hardly ever" and "never" are coded 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Because thirteen sources are measured by the information-seeking scale the scale ranges from zero to thirty-nine. Only hard news sources were included in the scale. No form-specific survey items were included. The scale aims to measure deliberate information seeking. While using content that is not associated with labels such as "news" or "current affairs" may increase knowledge about the campaign, this scale attempts to measure information *seeking*. The sources measured by the scale include television (national newscasts, cable news, public television, political talk shows on cable television and Sunday morning network talk shows), print magazines, C-SPAN (the survey does not distinguish between television and radio), newspaper, public radio and Internet use.

Four Internet items were included: general Internet use, news pages from Internet service providers, news organization websites and "online news magazine and opinion sites". The latter was exemplified to subjects through the websites of Slate Magazine and National Review Online. The scale is associated with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.779.

The medium scale ranges from 0 to 3 and includes three mediums: television, Internet and newspaper use. Unfortunately, due to the use of survey forms, radio could not be included on the scale.

Those respondents who indicated that they used television to follow the election were also asked which television sources respondents get "most of" their "news about the presidential campaign from". Up to five of the eight options named by interviewers were recorded. This survey question is problematic because it allows respondents to offer several responses while encouraging them to focus on their preferred broadcasters. This list of possible television sources included the following: local news programming, network news from the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), National Broadcasting Company (NBC), CNN, MSNBC (a portmanteau of "NBC" and "Microsoft Network"), Fox News Channel and the Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC). Because the survey is national, it does not name specific local services. As a result, a respondent who uses multiple local television news services and no national services will be coded as one. This is a limitation of the survey design. If a respondent watches a local newscast on a station affiliated with a national network as well as a national network newscast, he or she will be coded as two regardless of if the local and national newscasts are on the same station.

4.2   Distribution of Cases on Indicators of Number of Media Sources Used:

FIGURE 4.1: BAR CHART DISTRIBUTION OF CASES ON INFORMATION-SEEKING
SCALE

Cases weighted by "weight"
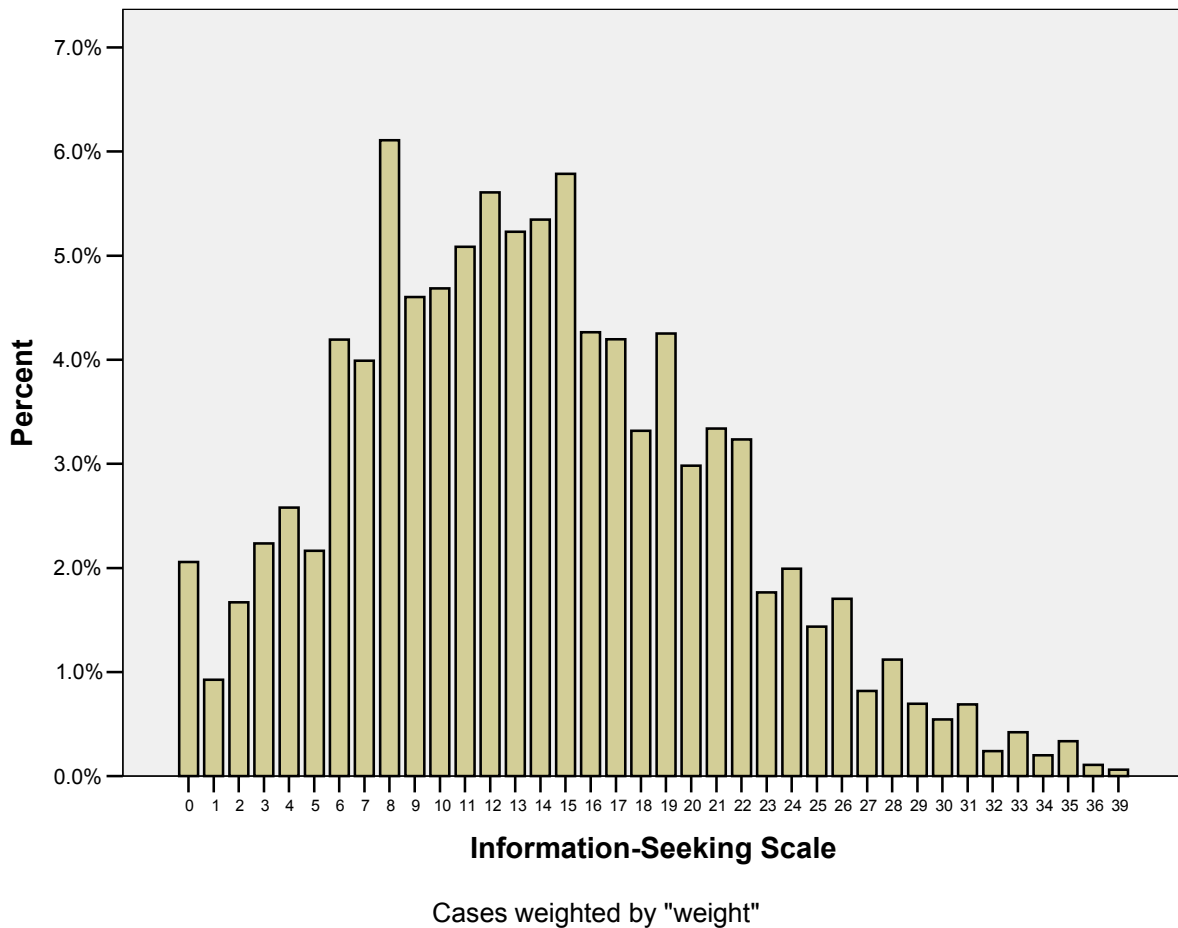
The information-seeking scale allows for the greatest variation among cases. All points

on the scale are associated with cases. Cases are not especially clustered at any point along the

information-seeking scale. Almost half of the sample scored between ten and nineteen on the

information-seeking scale. There were more cases at the low end of the scale as few respondents

scored above thirty. The sample's mean and median were 13.8 and 13 respectively. The modal

category is eight sources. The scale is associated with skew and kurtosis statistics of 0.403 and

–0.158 respectively. This indicates a somewhat bell shaped distribution with a slight positive skew.

The range of the medium scale is three. Almost half of cases were associated with using of two of the three examined mediums for their election research resulting in a platykurtic distribution and a slightly negative skew. The mean was 1.9 mediums and the median and mode were two mediums. About a quarter used only one medium. About one-fifth of cases were associated with using three mediums. The standard deviation of the scale is 0.813. Unfortunately the survey did not force respondents to describe their use of talk radio. The powerfulness of talk radio use variables in other contexts of the present analysis suggests that the inclusion of talk radio in the scale likely would have increased the variation of cases and added heuristic value to the analysis.

There was little variation in the number of television news services that a person uses. There is a high concentration of cases that only named one broadcasting service. Over half of the sample named only one television broadcaster. This distribution has a mean of 1.1 television broadcasters and observed range of five. The median and mode are one broadcaster. The second largest group which included about 24 percent of cases and did not use any of the offered networks or cable broadcasters for their election research or was not asked the survey item because they did not name television as a primary information source. About fifteen percent named two sources. The high concentration of cases resulted in a standard deviation of 0.968 and a peaked distribution with a positive skew.

4.3   Bivariate Analysis-All Indicators:

Most of the examined independent variables were not useful in predicting the number of

sources that an individual uses. No group differed greatly from the total sample in terms of the

number of mediums or television sources that it uses. All examined groups used between about

1.0 and 1.2 mediums and between about 1.8 and 2.1 television sources. There were some groups

that differed from the total sample in their mean score on the information-seeking scale.

However, in contrast with expectations, those who want "objective" news scored 14.07 on the

scale: only slightly higher than the total sample offering little support for Hypothesis 6.

TABLE 4.1: MEAN SCORES ON INFORMATION-SEEKING SCALE FOR VARIOUS GROUPS

Independent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Background			
Black	16.10	8.46	362
Income Missing	11.54	7.16	445
Use Computer	15.20	7.28	2235
Suburb	15.84	7.20	667
Union	15.67	8.39	281
Election 2000			
Gore Voters	16.12	7.47	912
Bush Voters	13.64	6.93	1071
Party Identification			
Republicans	13.04	6.68	927
Democrats	15.28	7.61	1070
Perceptions About News Media			
Perceived Democratic Bias	14.78	7.11	690
Perceived Republican Bias	16.22	6.94	533
Perceives No Bias	13.60	7.25	1229
Want Objective News	14.07	7.08	2148
Total Sample	**13.83**	**7.29**	**3188**

TABLE 4.2: CORRELATIONS: SOURCES USED AND VARIOUS
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Independent Variables	Information-Seeking Scale	Mediums	Television Sources
Age	-.075**	-.101**	.106**
Education	.259**	.235**	-0.017
Income (in $1000s)	.221**	.194**	-0.020
Election Interest	.427**	.287**	.080**
Political Ideology	-.067**	-0.036	0.015
General News Bias	.294**	.239**	.057**
Bias among those who see a Republican Bias	.080**	.063**	0.032
Bias among those who see a Democratic Bias	.171**	.129**	0.014

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 4.1, computer users made use of slightly more media than the total

sample. This dummy coded variable captures those who "use a computer" at their "workplace,

at school, at home or anywhere else on at least an occasional basis". This is not surprising as

computer access is a prerequisite to using the online scale items.

The scores of the examined groups were fairly heterogeneous. Standard deviation scores

range from 6.68 to 8.46. There was slightly less dispersion among Bush voters and Republicans

than among Gore voters and Democrats. Blacks and union members were the most

heterogeneous. Union members scored slightly higher than the total sample.

Gore voters, those who perceive a Republican bias in the news media and Democrats use

more sources than the total sample. In contrast, those who voted for Bush, perceive a

Republican bias in the news media or identify as Republicans differed less from the total sample.

Those with more "left" leaning political views scored higher on the information-seeking scale.

For example, those who voted for Gore in 2000 had a mean score that was 2.29 higher than the

total sample while Bush voters differed by less two tenths of a scale unit from the total sample.

This suggests that those who identify with the "left" are more likely to be active news media

users than those who are more "right wing". It is not clear at the bivariate level if this is because

these groups are more sceptical of news sources and make greater efforts to use multiple sources

to increase the breadth of the coverage that they expose themselves to. The relationship between

political identification variables and the information-seeking scale may be partly explained by

background variables. Education and income are associated with correlations of 0.26 and 0.22

respectively. These findings are consistent with the expectation that socio-economic status will

have a positive relationship with range of sources used outlined in Hypothesis 7a. However,

those who did not answer the income question had a mean score of 11.54. The high score among

computer users is further evidence that socio-economic status is positively associated with the

scale.

It is curious that despite that voting behaviour and party identification highlight

differences in the number of sources that an individual uses, political ideology was only weakly

related to the information-seeking scale as indicated in Table 4.2. Consistent with the other

political identification variables, the scale is associated with liberalism. This weak relationship

is likely an implication of the loosely defined categories on the political ideology scale.

The correlation between the information-seeking scale and the amount of bias that a

person sees is 0.294. This finding supports Hypothesis 5. The correlation between the amounts

of bias seen among those who see a Republican bias is stronger than those who see a bias that

favours the Democratic Party. These correlations are 0.17 and 0.08 respectively. The former is

the same variable as was used in the model predicting political ideology. The latter variable was

derived using the same process, however, it represents bias among those who see a Republican

bias. The correlation between the information-seeking scale and the amount of bias that a person

sees regardless of if they associate the bias with one of or neither of the major political parties is

0.29. This suggests that party bias weakens the relationship between the amount of bias seen and the number of sources used.

While the information-seeking scale and the number of mediums used variables have the same type of relationship with the higher order variables described above, in many contexts the number of television sources variable has the opposite relationship. Age is only positively related to the number of television sources used. Both of the socio-economic status variables are positively related to the number of mediums used and information-seeking scale but negatively related to the television variable. All three media use indicators were related the amount of bias seen in the media and election interest. However, these relationships were much weaker for the television variable. Election interest was measured by how respondents answered the question, "How much do you enjoy keeping up with political news about campaigns and elections?" No significant relationships between the television indicator and the perceived party bias variables were found, whereas, weak relationships were found between the perceived party bias variables and the other media use indicators.

These findings suggest that "channel surfing" is less motivated by political interest and support Putnam's (2000) characterization of television, as described in the literature review, as an activity that requires "minimal costs". This fits with Putnam's (2000) observations that see television as time filler. The correlations described above suggest that those who with higher political interest use multiple mediums including television.

The finding that those who reside in suburbs scored slightly above the total sample on the information-seeking scale is somewhat consistent with Putnam's (2000) observations. As described earlier, Putnam (2000: 213) describes that those who live in communities with more commuters spend more time watching television even if they do not commute themselves. The

suburb variable does not specifically address commuting. However, those who live in suburbs are more likely to have to spend time travelling to downtown cores or other communities for work. Those who reside in suburbs scored 15.84 on the information-seeking scale. This suggests that those in suburbs use more media. However, suburbanites did not use more television news sources than the total sample. It is possible that the higher amount of time spent in front of televisions among those living in suburbs is not explained by newscast watching. Those living in suburbs may be less likely to tune to supper-hour news programs because of the time that they spend commuting home after their workdays.

4.4   Multivariate Analysis-Information-Seeking and Mediums Scales:

Models were built to predict the scores on the information-seeking scale as well as the number of mediums. Mean substitution for missing cases was selected in order to allow income and income missing to be included in the models. As discussed in the methods chapter, with the exception of income, independent variables had few missing cases. Mean substitution is not resulting in a clustering of cases. For the reasons described above, both models control for suburban residence.

Attempts were made to develop a multiple regression model predicting the number of television broadcasters that a person uses. However, no model was able to explain more than four percent of variation associated with the dependent variable scale. Analysis of the residual statistics associated with these exploratory models suggested that they predicted scores with very little accuracy. For these reasons, no model predicting scores on this scale is presented. These are outcomes of the problematic question wording of the survey question.

Almost one-third of the variation in the information-seeking scale can be explained through eleven independent variables as presented in Table 4.3. Election interest is the most influential independent variable in the model predicting variation among cases on the information-seeking scale. The variable is associated with a beta value of 0.343 in the second block of the model. The variable is associated with a b value of 2.601 meaning that those who claim to get "a lot" of enjoyment out of "keeping up with the political news about campaigns and elections" had about 10.4 added to their predicted score.

The Black and Hispanic dummy variables are positively related to the dependent variable. However, being Hispanic is only significant when all independent variables are included in the analysis. Being Black is a more powerful predictor in comparison with being Hispanic. The former is associated with a beta value of 0.101 while being Hispanic is associated with a beta value of 0.038.

Education and income are relatively powerful in explaining variation on the information-seeking scale. As anticipated, income and education were both associated with higher scores on the scale. These findings are evidence that socio-economic status is positively related to the range of sources that a person uses supporting Hypothesis 7a. The income-missing variable is significantly and negatively associated with the scale.

Age and income missing are the only variables that reduce predicted scores. Age and gender were relatively less influential when predicting scores on the scale. Being male is associated with higher levels of information seeking. Being male increases predicted scores by 1.156. Age is negatively associated with the scale construct.

TABLE 4.3: REGRESSION RESULTS: INFORMATION-
SEEKING SCALE

Independent Variables	*b*	Beta	*t*	
Block 1				
Constant	2.960		5.606	**
Age	-0.033	-0.080	-4.984	**
Male	1.269	0.087	5.725	**
Black	2.201	0.096	6.212	**
Hispanic	0.470	0.019	1.252	
Education	0.598	0.135	8.224	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.020	0.116	7.247	**
Income Missing	-1.683	-0.080	-5.284	**
Suburb	1.130	0.063	4.069	**
Election Interest	2.833	0.373	24.254	**
Gore Voters	2.084	0.129	8.246	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.288**		
Block 2				
Constant	1.824		3.456	**
Age	-0.036	-0.087	-5.511	**
Male	1.156	0.079	5.308	**
Black	2.320	0.101	6.672	**
Hispanic	0.919	0.038	2.481	*
Education	0.443	0.100	6.100	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.019	0.111	7.024	**
Income Missing	-1.535	-0.073	-4.906	**
Suburb	1.090	0.061	3.999	**
Election Interest	2.601	0.343	22.332	**
Gore Voters	2.139	0.133	8.625	**
General News Bias	1.348	0.174	11.176	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.315**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=3188				

The amount of bias that a person sees in the news media is seen as being based on the

variables included in block 1. It has been entered in separate block to reflect this temporal

ordering of variables related to the information-seeking scale. As expected, the amount of bias

that a person sees in the news media is positively related to the range of sources that they use.

The variable has the second greatest impact on scores in the final block of the model. Entering this variable into the model increases the R-Square value by 2.7 percent. The amount of overall bias that a person sees is more powerful than indicators that measure the amount of bias seen by those who observe a bias favouring either the Democratic or Republican parties. This observation is explained by the higher variation in the overall bias scale in comparison with the filtered scales. In contrast with expected outcomes, preference for "objective" news was not significantly related to the information-seeking model in this context.

The idea that news may not be "objective" represents a more critical perspective raising questions about the relationship that education has with this relationship. For example, media literacy has become a part of school and university curriculum. The model above demonstrates that perceptions of a bias in the media are related to the number of sources used when controlling for education.

Entering the general news bias variable into the model results some changes in the ranking of beta magnitude. The most notable is the change in education. Education has the second most influence on scores in Block 1 and the sixth most influence in Block 2. This is more evidence that education has is related to perceptions of a bias in the news media.

Consistent with the bivariate analysis, having voted for Gore in 2000 is positively associated with the scale and is among the most influential independent variables in the model. This variable is associated with a beta value of 0.133. Having voted for Bush in the 2000 race was not significant in this context. This distinction may speak to discourse about the "liberal media". Those with more conservative beliefs may be less likely to use multiple sources because they see the entire news media as liberal. While there is some debate about a "conservative media", those who make these claims are generally seen as "fringe". Michael Moore and Al

Franken are among the popular culture figures that describe a conservative media. As discussed in the next chapter, the perception of a Democratic biased media is much less prevalent than the perception of a Republican biased media. Rhetoric criticizing the media for being too "left" tends to attack the media as an industry. In contrast, those attempting to escape from what they perceive as a "right wing media" may be less likely to generalize that the entire media is conservative. Using multiple sources seems to have no utility in mitigating media bias to those that perceive that all media represent the same bias.

Residuals associated with the model are broadly normally distributed.   Residual statistics suggest that the model somewhat under-predicts scores. The highest predicted score is 25.67 and the lowest predicted score is 2.22. The highest predicted score is well below the highest observed score of 39. About ten percent of cases are associated with scores outside of the predicted range.

The model predicting the number of mediums that an individual uses is divided into two blocks and is presented in Table 4.4. As with the model predicting scores on the information-seeking scale, the perceived general news bias is entered in the second block of this model. The amount of bias that a person sees in the news media is seen as being based on the demographic and voting behaviour variables included in block 1. It has been entered in separate block to reflect this temporal ordering of variables related to the number of mediums used. The first block explains 21.8 percent of the total variance associated with the dependent variable.

TABLE 4.4: REGRESSION RESULTS: NUMBER OF
MEDIUMS SCALE

Independent Variables	*b*	Beta	*t*	
Block 1				
Constant	0.729		14.781	**
Male	0.079	0.049	3.062	**
Black	0.154	0.060	3.752	**
Education	0.025	0.050	2.779	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.001	0.064	3.799	**
Income Missing	-0.228	-0.097	-6.143	**
Suburb	0.101	0.051	3.108	**
Election Interest	0.205	0.242	15.142	**
Gore Voters	0.145	0.081	4.968	**
Use Computer	0.481	0.271	15.599	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.218**		
Block 2				
Constant	0.652		12.919	**
Male	0.072	0.044	2.804	**
Black	0.163	0.064	3.992	**
Education	0.017	0.034	1.874	
Income (in $1000s)	0.001	0.063	3.715	**
Income Missing	-0.221	-0.094	-5.990	**
Suburb	0.099	0.050	3.068	**
Election Interest	0.188	0.222	13.726	**
Gore Voters	0.146	0.081	5.035	**
Use Computer	0.457	0.257	14.800	**
General News Bias	0.093	0.108	6.546	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.228**		
* p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=3188				

In both cases, income and education are positively associated with the range of sources used while not answering the income question has a negative relationship. As in the context of the information-seeking scale, education is positively related to the scale. These findings support offering evidence that supports Hypothesis 7a. Living in a suburb or being male slightly increases the number of mediums used.

Computer use is the strongest predictor in the model. The variable is included in the model despite its obvious connection to the dependent variable because many computer users do not use their computers for political research or have Internet access.

Voting for Gore in 2000 is among the most influential variables and is associated with a beta value of 0.081. This is further evidence that these political cleavages see the media differently. The association between talk radio and conservatism suggests that a scale that also includes information about respondent's use of talk radio would offer heuristic value.

In contrast with expected outcomes, preference for "objective" news is not significantly related to the number of mediums used. However, the amount of general news bias that a person perceives is the third most influential on predicted scores despite that entering it into the model only results in a one percent increase the amount of variance explained by the model. This supports Hypothesis 5. The variable is associated with a beta value of 0.108. The full model explains 22.8 percent of the variance in the number of mediums used. The finding that education is not significant in the final block of the model is further evidence that education is related to the amount of bias that a person sees in the news media. As expected, income and education are positively related to the number of mediums that a person uses. The income-missing variable is negatively related to the dependent variable and is associated with a b value of –0.221 in the final block of the model.

Consistent with the model predicting scores on the information-seeking scale, election interest is associated with using more mediums. As 91.4 percent of cases are associated with television use, it is not surprising that those with more interest in the election supplemented their viewing with newspaper reading and/or Internet use. As with the information-seeking scale, being male, Black or living in a suburb is associated with using more mediums.

The residual values associated with this model are broadly normally distributed. There is some evidence that the model slightly over-predicts scores. Predicted scores range from 0.751 to 2.775. Observed scores range from zero to three. The model offers little accuracy when predicting which individuals use none of the mediums.

5.0   Perceptions of Political Party Bias in the Media:

Analysis using a scale measuring perceptions about political party bias in the media was used to identify groups that see bias in the media. The non-profit media audiences were expected to see a Republican bias in the news media while the Fox News viewing audience, those who watch political talk shows on cable or listen to talk or religious radio were expected to see a Democratic bias in the news media.

5.1   Indicator:

The political party bias scale ranges from -3 to 3. The coding scheme is based on both the political party that a person sees as benefiting from overall coverage from the news media as well as the amount of political bias that a person sees. The amount of bias that a person sees was multiplied by one or negative one. Those who perceive a Democratic bias are associated with scores ranging from -1 to -3. Those who perceive a Republican bias are associated with scores ranging from +1 to +3. Those who answered "not too much" when asked how much political bias they see in the news media were scored as either -1 or +1. Those who answered "a fair amount" were scored as either -2 or +2. Finally, those who answered "a great deal" to the question will score -3 or +3.

This scale only measures perceptions of the level of political party bias in the media. For this reason, cases that saw a bias in the media but did not associate a bias with one of the political parties were treated as missing. The scale only includes respondents that saw no or some political party bias. Cases that answered "not at all" when asked how much political bias they see in the news media and also indicated that saw no party bias were coded as 0. Cases that

indicated that they saw a party bias but answered "not at all" when asked how much political

bias they see in the news media where also coded as 0. This rule only applied to 39 cases.

Only about nine percent of cases are associated with claiming to see no political bias in

the news media when asked the question that does not refer to the political parties. A later

survey question reveals that about half of respondents did not see a bias that favours either the

Democratic or Republican parties. Just less than one-third of those who answered the question

see a bias that promotes the interests of the Democrats while just over 20 percent see a bias that

favours the Republican Party. About 23 and 3 percent of the sample did not answer the bias type

and amount of bias questions respectively. As a result of the number of respondents who chose

not to answer these questions and the methodology described above, 1464 or about 46 percent of

cases were placed on the scale.

This scale assumes that there is a match between the amount of a bias that a person sees

and the party that they associate news media bias with. For example, a person indicating that

they see a "great deal" of bias when asked about the extent of "political bias" that they see who

also indicates that they see a "Democratic bias" in a subsequent question may not agree that they

see a "great deal of Democratic bias". However, most likely respondents connected the

questions about the amount and type of bias that they see as the questions were asked during the

same part of the interview.

5.2   Distribution of Cases on Perceived Party Bias Scale:

This distribution is trimodal. Of those respondents who placed at one of the seven points

on the political party bias scale, 45 percent saw some degree of Democratic Party bias and

slightly more than one-third see some degree of bias that favours the Republicans. The

remaining 20 percent did not see a bias that favours either the Democrats or Republicans. More cases fall into the category that sees a "great deal" of Democratic bias in the media than any other category. This category represents about one quarter of valid cases. The second largest category sees no political party bias. One in five cases are a part of this category. In the case of both types of bias, the number of cases increases as the amount of perceived bias increases. About ten percent of cases saw "not too much" of a bias. Within this group, about as many people saw a Democratic as saw a Republican bias. About fifteen percent saw a great deal of Republican bias. The scale has a standard deviation score of 2.19. The mean score of –0.30 falls between the points associated with seeing no bias and seeing a "not too much" of a bias that promotes the interests of the Democrats.

5.3   Bivariate Analysis-Perceived Party Bias Scale:

Political party bias means were calculated for a number of groups. The "See Democratic Bias" variable represents only those who scored below 0 on the dependent variable scale. The Republican bias counterpart variable represents those who scored above 0 on the dependent variable scale.

Audiences for talk radio, religious radio, those who watch political talk shows on cable television, C-SPAN, NPR and public television were based on the amount of learning that audiences perceived as being associated with the media. Those who stated that they "sometimes" or "regularly" learn about the election were included in the reference group for that media. The reference category for the Fox News variable includes those who named the Fox News Channel as one of their television news sources for the election. Few groups differed greatly from the total sample. Generally, only groups that saw more bias than the total sample or

those groups addressed by the hypotheses are included in the table below. Both males and

females are included in the table despite that neither group differed by more than 0.3 in

comparison with the total sample to highlight that there is a difference of 0.54 between the sexes.

The score among females is close to the neutral point on the scale while males are associated

with seeing some Democratic bias in the news media.

TABLE 5.1: MEAN PERCEIVED PARTY BIAS SCORES OF VARIOUS GROUPS

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Background			
Male	-0.57	2.23	715
Female	-0.03	2.13	749
Black	0.65	2.07	172
Roman Catholic	0.09	2.16	412
Born Again	-0.66	2.09	539
Union	0.15	2.29	145
Election 2000			
Gore Voters	1.22	1.90	434
Bush Voters	-1.58	1.76	563
Party Identification			
Republicans	-1.59	1.74	498
Democrats	0.81	1.96	497
Media			
Perception of Democratic Bias	-2.38	0.78	675
Perception of Republican Bias	2.22	0.82	528
*Religious Radio^	-0.48	2.34	174
**Talk Radio^	-0.62	2.33	364
Cable Political Talk	-0.18	2.35	687
C-SPAN^	-0.01	2.40	425
FNC	-1.15	2.29	333
NPR^	-0.23	2.35	517
PBS^	-0.22	2.43	484
Total Sample	**-0.30**	**2.19**	**1,464**
* Form 1 only (Total Sample N=740, Standard Deviation=2.15)			
**Form 2 only (Total Sample N=724, Standard Deviation=2.24)			
^Regularly/Sometimes learn something from			

As discussed in the literature review, being male is associated with Republicanism. This likely explains much of the difference between males and females on this scale. Those who identify as born-again saw slightly more Democratic bias than the total sample. This group is associated with a mean score of –0.66. Roman Catholics perceive little party bias. Respondents with ties to unions had a mean of 0.15 representing that group's perception of a news media with little party bias. The union members group was one of the few groups, apart from the political identification related variables that saw a Republican bias. However, union membership was not significant at the multivariate level. In contrast, Blacks had a mean score of 0.65.

Not surprisingly, groups defined by their political identification were the most homogeneous and scored furthest from the total sample mean. For example, Gore and Bush voters scored 1.22 and –1.58 respectively. Those who voted for Bush in 2000 saw slightly more bias than those who voted for Gore in the same election. Republicans differed more from the total sample mean in comparison with Democrats. Those who identify as Republicans scored about the same as those who voted for Bush in 2000. This suggests that the idea of a Democratic bias in the media is pervasive among Republicans even if they did not vote in 2000. However, those who identify as Democrats saw less Republican bias than those who voted for Gore in 2000. This suggests that the idea of a Republican bias in the media not as widespread among Democrats. The finding that Gore voters scored further from zero in comparison with Democrats suggests that those Democrats who did not vote for Gore in 2000 are less concerned about media bias. There is a higher concentration of people who see higher levels of Republican bias among Gore voters than among Democrats in general. In contrast, there is little difference between voters and party identifiers among Republicans.

This is further evidence that those "on the right" are more critical of the media. These observations support the claims that perceptions of a "liberal media" are more dominant than claims of a "conservative media". Further, this analysis demonstrates that the idea of a "liberal media" influences the perceptions that those on "the left" have of the media. Those associated with the Republican Party are more likely to see Democratic bias than Democrats are to see a Republican bias. However, the mean score among those who see a Republican bias (those who scored below zero) is roughly the equal distance from zero as the mean score among those who see Democratic bias (those who scored above zero).

TABLE 5.2: PERCEIVED PARTY BIAS BY POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION

	Perceived Party Bias			
	Democratic	None	Republican	N
Bush Voters	51.9%	39.7%	8.4%	809
Gore Voters	11.5	45.1	43.4	716
Republican	51.1	41.0	7.9	757
Democrat	14.2	50.2	35.5	858
Total Sample	**28.2**	**50.1**	**21.7**	**2453**

The crosstabular analysis in Table 5.2 confirms that "the right" is more critical of the news media and more united on the issue of media bias. They are less likely to see the news media as neutral and more likely to see a bias that favours their opponents. Slightly more than half of Republicans saw a Democratic bias but only about 36 percent of Democrats saw a Republican bias. Differences based on voting behaviour were less emphatic. About two in five Gore voters saw a Republican bias while about 52 percent of Bush voters saw a Democratic bias. About half of the sample saw no party bias in the media. Gore voters and Democrats were more

likely than Bush voters or Republicans to not see any party bias. Specifically, 45 percent of Gore voters saw no bias while about 40 percent of Bush voters saw no party bias. About forty percent of Republicans saw no bias but about half of Democrats saw no party bias. Democrats were slightly more likely than Republicans to see a bias that favours the interests of their own party. About 14 percent of Democrats see a Democratic bias while about eight percent of Republicans see a Republican bias in the news media.

The N values above demonstrate that perceptions of political party bias are widespread. Slightly less than one thousand respondents identified with either the Republican or Democratic parties. About the same number voted for either Bush or Gore in 2000. However, over 1200 saw a party bias in the media. This demonstrates that seeing a political party bias is not restricted to those with party identifications or to voters.

A comparison of the means of the media audiences presented in Table 5.1 suggests that none of the examined media audiences see a Republican bias in the news media. Most of the audiences scored very close to the total sample. Standard deviation values demonstrate that the audiences for all of the media sources are fairly heterogeneous. The most distinct audience was the Fox News viewers. As expected by Hypothesis 2, those who watch the Fox News Channel saw Democratic bias. The audience's mean score of -1.15 is slightly closer to zero than those who voted for Bush in 2000 and equally distant from zero in comparison with Gore voters. As anticipated, those who use talk radio or religious radio saw Democratic bias in the media. However, these scores are only marginally different from the total sample offering little support for Hypothesis 1. The talk radio audience is associated with mean score of -0.62 and the religious radio audience is associated with a mean score of -0.48. While political cable talk show viewers saw a Democratic bias, they saw less of a bias than the total sample. The group is

associated with a mean score of –0.18. This finding is too close to 0 to support the expectation of Hypothesis 1 that this audience would see a Democratic bias. The variable was not significant at the multivariate level. Contrary to expectations, the non-profit media audiences each scored means that suggest that they see almost no party bias in the news media. These audiences were expected to see a Republican bias.

Correlations were also used to examine the relationship between the perceived educational value of various media sources and the party bias scale. In these cases, media variables were coded from zero to three. Higher scores are associated with higher levels of perceived learning. Correlations were calculated for all of the above media sources with the exception of the Fox News audience. The survey instrument does not allow for a higher order coding scheme of this variable.

Only the C-SPAN and radio variables have significant relationships with the scale. The talk radio audience had the strongest relationship. The correlation between perceived learning from talk radio and the scale was -0.135. The religious radio and C-SPAN audiences were associated with correlations of –0.091 and 0.062 respectively. In the case of the C-SPAN audience, the correlation suggests the opposite of what is demonstrated by the means analysis. A closer analysis suggests that those who "regularly" learn about the campaign through C-SPAN see a Republican bias while those who "sometimes" or "hardly ever" learn through C-SPAN see a Democratic bias. Scores increase linearly as respondents claim to learn more from C-SPAN. This finding offers little evidence to support Hypothesis 3.

Income and religiosity both had negative and very weak associations with the scale. These correlations were –0.099 and -0.094 respectively. No significant relationship was found

for age. A moderate relationship of –0.354 was found for ideology. This is not surprising as the scores the highest scores on the scale capture those who identify as "very conservative".

No significant relationship was found for education. This seems to contradict the above discussion about the connection between education and the amount of perceived bias in the news media. Education may not be related to the above scale because it addresses two types of bias. Education is less related to party bias. Significant relationships were found between education and the amount of overall political bias that a person sees as well as scales that measure only one type of party bias. The correlation between education and overall political bias is 0.240. The correlations between education and Democratic and Republican bias are 0.123 and 0.137 respectively. The closeness of these correlations demonstrates that education is not particularly related to one type of party bias.

5.4   Multivariate Analysis-Perceived Party Bias Scale:

The model in Table 5.3 uses pairwise deletion for missing cases in order to allow for the use of the form variable: talk radio. As a result income missing cannot be entered into the model.

The voting behaviour variables have the greatest impact on individual scores. Entering them into the model almost quadruples the percentage of variance explained by the first block of the model. This is not surprising as the bivariate analysis demonstrates that voting behaviour is related to placement on the perceived party bias scale. Having voted for Gore has a greater impact on scores than having voted for Bush in 2000. The model increases the scores of Gore voters by about 1.5 points and decreases the scores of Bush voters by about 1.2 points. While it seems redundant to include these election variables in the model, they have been included to

isolate which media people choose because they are concerned about the credibility of the media. Without controlling for political identification it would be difficult to determine if the media sources were only related to the implicit party identification aspect of the scale. The aim of this model is to identify which media people use when they are concerned about media bias.

TABLE 5.3: REGRESSION RESULTS: PERCEIVED PARTY BIAS SCALE

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	1.326		6.007	**
Male	-0.591	-0.135	-3.730	**
White	-1.022	-0.192	-5.343	**
Born Again	-0.814	-0.175	-4.802	**
Income (in $1000s)	-0.005	-0.101	-2.782	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.078**		
Block 2				
Constant	0.661		3.220	**
Male	-0.400	-0.091	-2.904	**
White	-0.499	-0.094	-2.939	**
Born Again	-0.515	-0.111	-3.472	**
Income (in $1000s)	-0.003	-0.065	-2.027	*
Gore Voters	1.443	0.297	8.525	**
Bush Voters	-1.325	-0.285	-7.944	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.308**		
				**
Block 3				
Constant	1.001		4.717	**
Male	-0.322	-0.073	-2.363	*
White	-0.518	-0.097	-3.113	**
Born Again	-0.502	-0.108	-3.457	**
Income (in $1000s)	-0.003	-0.064	-2.030	*
Gore Voters	1.473	0.304	8.828	**
Bush Voters	-1.197	-0.258	-7.260	**
Talk Radio^	-0.213	-0.107	-3.453	**
FNC	-0.730	-0.132	-4.296	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.337**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=1352				
^Form-specific variable				

Entering the talk radio and Fox News variables increases the amount of variance explained by almost three percent. The FNC dummy variable is the third most influential variable on predicted scores. Being a part of this audience decreases scores by 0.730 points. The variable is associated with a beta value of –0.132. This is more evidence that concerns about bias in the news media draw viewers to the cable station and supports Hypothesis 2. As expected by Hypothesis 1, talk radio listening is also related to the scale at the multivariate level. However, the variable has less impact on predicted scores than watching Fox News. The talk radio variable is almost as influential on scores as the born-again variable. In contrast with expected outcomes, the non-profit and cable television talk show and religious radio variables were not significant in the context of the above model. The model does not identify any sources that are used by those who are concerned about a Republican bias. After entering the media variables into the model, over a third of the variation between cases can be explained. The background variables explain only 7.8 percent of the variation associated with the scale. The media offers no support for Hypothesis 3 and supports aspects of Hypothesis 1.

"Race", sex and income have relatively less influence on scores than the other variables. Income is the least influential variable throughout all blocks of the model. No significant relationship was found for education. Being White is the most powerful variable in Block 1. In the final block of the model, "race" is among the least influential variables. Identifying as born again becomes more influential on scores than being White when voting behaviour is included in the equation.

The only variable that reduces scores is the Gore variable. Analysis of residual statistics demonstrates that the model is more likely to under-predict scores. Predicted scores range from –3.2 to 2.4 while observed scores range from –3 to 3. The distribution of standardized residuals

values is somewhat normal and ranges from –2.339 to 3.086. There is an above normal

concentration of values between –0.45 and –0.30.

6.0   Political Participation:

Political participation refers to a person's involvement, including activism, with political processes and institutions including government and non-government organizations. A number of media sources were expected to be related to the political participation scales. The entertainment oriented content variables (comedy, late night and morning show television) and magazine television use were expected to have negative relationships with the scales. Fox News Channel viewing, non-profit media (C-SPAN, PBS and NPR) and issue oriented talk programming (talk radio, religious radio, political talk shows on cable television and Sunday morning network talk shows) use were expected to have positive relationships with the scales. Four of the above variables are form-specific survey items. The morning show and religious radio variables only appear on Form 1 while the talk radio and television magazine show variables were only asked on the Form 2 version of the survey.

As per Hypothesis 4, Blacks are expected to be less likely to use local television news, see more bias in the news media and will differ from the total sample in its relationship between local news use and political participation.

Hard news use is expected to be a stronger predictor of political participation among younger Americans in comparison with the total sample. Local news is expected be positively associated with political participation for the total sample but not among Blacks.

The language used to describe media content can be confusing. To clarify, the "comedy" label represents programs such as *Saturday Night Live* and *The Daily Show* whereas the "late night" label refers to comedy programs that air late at night such as those hosted by Jay Leno and David Letterman. Sunday morning network programs are politically oriented and are exemplified to respondents through *This Week* and *Meet the Press*. In contrast, the morning

television variable captures programs such as *Good Morning America* and *The Today Show*, which draw on news stories as well as lifestyle-oriented topics. The political cable talk show category was exemplified to respondents through CNN's *Crossfire* and CNBC's *Hardball.* Magazine programs were exemplified to respondents through *60 Minutes*, *20/20* and *Dateline*.

6.1   Indicators:

Four scales were used to measure political participation. These scales include the online political participation, election participation and political involvement and combined scales. The combined scale is the sum of a respondent's scores on each of the other scales.

The online political participation scale ranges from 0 to 7. The scale items are associated with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.809. Respondents' scores on the scale increase by one point for each of the following questions that respondents answered, "yes" to:

> Have you sent or received e-mails about the candidates or campaigns, either with personal acquaintances or from groups or political organizations?

> Have you participated in any other campaign-related activities using the Internet, such as reading discussion groups, signing petitions, or donating money?

Respondents' scores were increased by one point for each of the following activities that they claimed to have participated in: 1) Online discussions about the election including involvement with "blogs" or "chat" groups; 2) Online research on candidate positions; 3) Online research about local campaign organizations and activities; 4) Visiting campaign websites or 5) Visiting websites set-up by groups or organizations that promote candidates or positions.

The wording of questions leaves the timing ambiguous. It is unclear if respondents are being asked specifically about their involvement with the 2004 election or if they are being asked about their general online behaviour. Because the survey was collected during the winter of

2003 and 2004, it is likely that many respondents used the Internet for campaign related activities between the time of the survey and the election in November of 2004.

The election participation scale combines information about the 2000 and 2004 elections. The scale ranges from 0 to 3. Those who voted in 2000 scored one point. Those who claimed that they had registered for the 2004 election at the time of the survey scored an additional point. Respondents who were "absolutely certain" that had registered scored an additional point. These three scale items are associated with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.830.

The political involvement scale ranges from 0 to 4. This scale measures the extent that the respondent demonstrates political concern. All of the behaviours that contribute points to this scale represent actions that reveal high levels of political concern. Each activity requires time or a financial commitment. While some political interest is associated with voting, the items in this scale demonstrate higher levels of interest. Respondents scored one point for each of the following activities that they have ever engaged in: 1) contributing monies to a candidate, 2) contacting an elected official, 3) joining an organization in support of a particular cause or 4) attending a campaign event. These scale items are associated with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.637. The activities on this scale range in the amount of time required. For example, while it only takes a few minutes to write a cheque, attending a campaign event involves a longer time commitment. These differences may explain the modest scale reliability associated with this scale.

The combined scale is the respondent's aggregate score on all three of the scales described above. This indicator allows for wider variation between cases as scores range from 0 to 14. The combined scale is associated with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.773.

6.2   **Distribution of Cases on the Political Participation Scales:**

The online political participation scale is the most homogeneous of all of the political participation indicators as about 81 percent of cases scored zero on the scale representing no online political participation. As a result, the distribution is platykurtic and very positively skewed. The distribution is associated with a skew statistic of 3.0. The mean score was 0.466 and the standard deviation was 1.182. About seven percent of cases scored one on the online participation scale. The remaining categories included four or less percent of cases.

The election participation scale is the only participation scale where the bulk of cases are associated with high levels of participation. About 60 percent of cases were associated with the highest point on the scale. The mean score and standard deviation associated with this scale are 2.188 and 1.145 respectively. This represents a wide range of deviation from the mean for such a narrow scale. The zero and two categories are each associated with about one in six cases. The distribution negatively skewed, as the bulk of cases are associated with the highest category. The distribution is associated with a skew statistic of −1.045.

The range of the political involvement scale is four. About 52 percent of cases did not score any points on the political involvement scale. About 23 percent of cases scored one on the scale. The number of cases associated with each point on the scale decreases as political involvement increases. About fourteen percent scored two on the scale. This scale is associated with a mean score of 0.90 and has a standard deviation of 1.15. The distribution is positively skewed and peaked as the majority of cases are associated with no points on the scale.

Because of the clustering of cases in each of the above political participation scales, the scale scores have been added together to create a higher order indicator of political participation. The scale range is fourteen.

FIGURE 6.1: BAR CHART DISTRIBUTION OF CASES ON COMBINED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SCALE

Cases weighted by weight
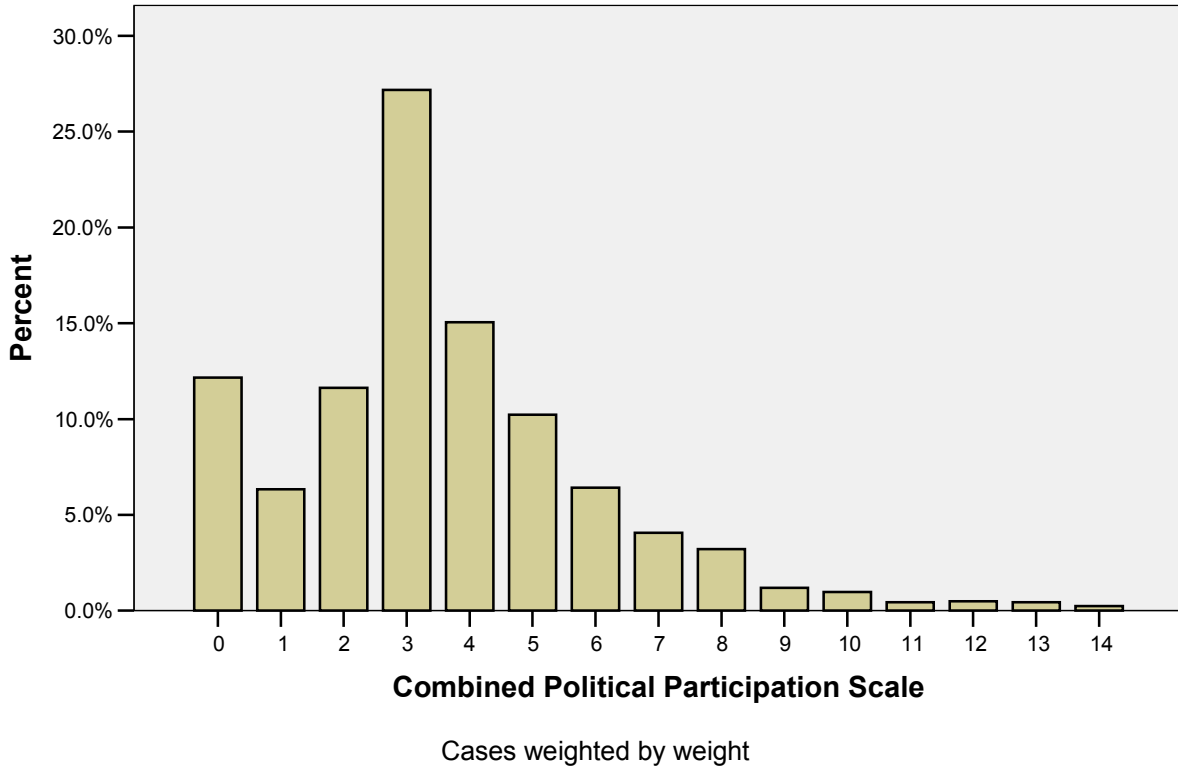
Figure 6.1 illustrates that the distribution of cases on this scale is fairly leptokurtic and is associated with a kurtosis statistic of 1.711. There is a clustering of cases in a few categories. The asymmetrical distribution is positively skewed as most cases are associated with the low end of the scale. The mode and median scores are three. About 27 percent of cases are in this category. Eleven percent scored more than six on the scale.

6.3   Bivariate Analysis- Political Identification Scales:

As indicated in Table 6.1, age has a weak positive association with the political involvement scale and a weak negative association with online political participation. These

correlations are 0.152 and –0.133 respectively. These findings are not surprising as online

activities are somewhat generational. A moderate positive association of 0.319 between voting

and age was found.

TABLE 6.1: CORRELATIONS: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VARIOUS
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

	Online	Election	Involvement	Combined	N
Age	-.133**	.319**	.152**	.156**	3166
Income (in $1000s)	.157**	.164**	.251**	.267**	2743
Education	.219**	.227**	.288**	.346**	3182
Religiosity	-.053**	.122**	.056**	.057**	3176
Election Interest	.231**	.220**	.296**	.351**	3166
Political Ideology	-.115**	.053**	-0.024	-.042**	3016

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Education and income are positively associated with all three forms of political

participation. In all cases, education had stronger associations. The correlation between

education and the combined scale was 0.346. Religiosity is weakly and positively associated

with participation in voting and the political involvement scale and has a weak negative

association with online political participation. However, no religious group was found to differ

significantly from the total sample at the bivariate level.

Positive weak to moderate associations between election interest and the three forms of

political involvement were found. The strongest correlation of 0.351 was found for the

combined scale.

Political ideology was most strongly related to online political participation. The

negative correlation suggests that online political participation is associated with liberalism. The

other indicators had relationships with ideology that were very weak or not significant.

TABLE 6.2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR VARIOUS GROUPS

	Online		Election		Involvement		Combined		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	N
Black	0.53	1.23	2.15	1.13	0.54	0.97	3.22	2.24	362
Hispanic	0.34	0.99	1.57	1.33	0.55	0.92	2.45	2.26	317
Income Missing	0.34	1.04	2.25	1.09	0.67	1.02	3.27	2.08	445
Rent	0.58	1.37	1.79	1.21	0.65	0.98	3.02	2.52	846
Union	0.66	1.41	2.54	0.92	1.22	1.27	4.42	2.51	281
Suburb	0.66	1.39	2.38	1.01	1.07	1.19	4.10	2.50	667
Bush Voters	0.40	1.02	2.85	0.49	1.09	1.19	4.34	1.90	1071
Gore Voters	0.75	1.55	2.81	0.56	1.14	1.28	4.70	2.45	912
FNC	0.44	1.13	2.20	1.14	1.04	1.22	3.67	2.49	622
Total Sample	**0.47**	**1.18**	**2.19**	**1.15**	**0.90**	**1.15**	**3.55**	**2.46**	**3188**

Hispanics were slightly less active according to all three scales. In particular, the findings suggest that Hispanics are less likely than the total sample to vote. There is a difference of 0.62 between the mean score among Hispanics and that of the total sample on the election scale. The survey instrument does not address citizenship. Low election participation among Hispanics, in some cases, is likely attributed to citizenship status. Blacks scored slightly lower than the total sample on the political involvement, election and combined scales. However, the group scored above the total sample in online political participation. Those with union ties were slightly more politically active than the total sample according to all of the indicators. This group's high score on the political involvement scale is related to the scale item measuring membership in organizations included in the scale.

Those who voted for Gore in 2000 scored means slightly above the total sample on all forms of political participation. Bush voters scored closer to the total sample on the online and political involvement scales. Party identification did not offer utility in making distinctions between groups.

TABLE 6.3: CORRELATIONS: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND PERCEIVED MEDIA LEARNING

	Online	Election	Involvement	Combined	N
Talk					
Talk Radio^	.130**	.105**	.133**	.174**	1594
Religious Radio^	0.014	.055*	.005	.035	1594
Cable Political Talk	.124**	.107**	.134**	.172**	3188
Non-Profit					
C-SPAN	.175**	.073**	.166**	.196**	3188
NPR	.214**	.052**	.226**	.233**	3188
PBS	.198**	.115**	.205**	.245**	3188
Entertainment					
Comedy	.132**	-.099**	.020	0.027	3188
Late Night	0.018	-.058**	-.020	-0.028	3188
Morning Television^	-0.025	.030	.009	0.007	1594
Current Affairs					
TV Magazine^	-.044	.113**	.024	0.040	1594
Sunday Morning Network	.117**	.163**	.161**	.207**	3188

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
 ^Form-specific variable

Many significant correlations were found between political participation and media use. All of the non-profit media are positively related to all of the scales offering support for Hypothesis 3. The strongest relationships were found for the combined scale. Correlations between perceived learning from C-SPAN, public radio and public television and the combined scale were 0.196, 0.233 and 0.245 respectively. As expected by Hypothesis 1, cable talk show and talk radio learning were positively related to all of the indicators of political participation. Religious radio was only significantly related to election participation. This relationship was very weak. There was little evidence at the bivariate level to support the hypothesis that the perceived learning from entertainment-oriented content would be negatively associated with

political participation. Comedy and late-night television were weakly and negatively related to election participation offering support for Hypothesis 8. These correlations were –0.099 and -0.058 respectively. Most other relationships between the entertainment media and political participation were not significant. In contrast with Hypothesis 8, perceived learning from comedy programming was positively associated with online political participation. No significant relationships were found for morning television. There is no evidence supporting the expectation that of Hypothesis 10 that television magazine use is associated with political participation. However, as anticipated, the Sunday morning network programs variable was positively related to all of the indicators as anticipated by Hypothesis 9.

The relationship between Fox News Channel viewing and political participation was evaluated through a mean analysis as the FNC variable is dummy coded. There is little evidence to support the hypothesis that the Fox News Channel audience is more active than the total sample. The Fox News audience scored only marginally above the total sample on the scales offering little evidence for Hypothesis 2.

The percentages of each media audience that voted for Bush or Gore or Nader in 2000 have been summed together in Table 6.4 to approximate the voting participation of each audience. Those who "regularly" or "sometimes" learn from the media were considered to be part of the audience. Again, the Fox News audience is dummy coded and is not measured using the perceived learning scale. The talk, non-profit and current affairs audiences were more likely than a random respondent to vote in 2000 offering evidence that supports Hypotheses 2 and 3. However, Hypothesis 10 expected the television magazine audience to be less active in elections. In the cases of the FNC and magazine television audiences, viewers were only marginally more likely to vote. The comedy and late-night audiences were slightly less active than the total

sample. The comedy audience differed the most from the total sample. In contrast with the

outcomes expected by Hypothesis 8, the morning television audience included a greater

percentage of voters than the total sample did.

TABLE 6.4: VOTERS IN THE 2000 FEDERAL ELECTION AS A PERCENTAGE OF AUDIENCES

		N
Talk		
Talk Radio^	68.70%	738
Religious Radio^	69.7	323
Cable Political Talk	69.6	1400
Non-Profit		
C-SPAN	67.7	915
NPR	69.6	1104
PBS	71.3	1041
Entertainment		
Comedy	55.6	840
Late Night	59.3	874
Morning Television^	66.6	727
Current Affairs		
FNC	65.8	622
TV Magazine^	64.7	1104
Sunday Morning Network	70.5	1227
Total Sample	**63.8**	**3188**

^Form-specific variable

6.4 Multivariate Analysis-Political Participation Scales:

Models have been built to predict scores on each of the political participation scales.

Several media sources were found to be related to political participation. The small sample size

resulting from the use of form-specific variables likely reduces the number of significant

relationships between media and the scale constructs. In some cases, form-specific variables were not entered because background variables that were significant in models that did not include survey specific variables were not significant in the context of the smaller sample.

All of the media variables were entered into the same block of each model because there is no substantive reason to enter the media in separate blocks. As a result, the models presented do not represent all combinations of media use variables. In some situations entering one media variable into the model increases the p value of another media variable to value above the criteria level. The models below were selected because they explain more variation than other possible combinations of media variables. All of the models predicting political participation use pairwise deletion of missing data in order to accommodate form-specific variables.

There was a range in the amount of variance explained by the models. These differences reflect the amount of variation between cases on the scale. The models predicting online participation explain the least. Each model explains about one sixth of the variation on the scale. Almost one-third of the variation in the combined political participation scale is explained by each of the models. Election interest has not been included in any of the models despite that it is a powerful predictor of political participation in order to focus on more measurable variables. In this context, the variable offers little analytic utility.

Two models predicting online political participation are presented because of the use of form-specific variables. These models are presented in Tables 6.5 and 6.6.

In both models, computer use is the strongest predictor of online computer use. This variable is included in the model despite its obvious connection to the dependent variable in order to help to isolate the relationship that media use has with online participation. It is possible that someone who occasionally uses a computer may not use the Internet or use a computer for

political activities. The variable is associated with of beta values of 0.188 and 0.194 in the Form 1 and Form 2 versions of the model respectively. In both cases, using a computer on an occasional basis for any purpose increases predicted scores by about half of a point. Having voted Gore in 2000 is also a powerful predictor in both models. Those in the reference group for that variable had their scores increase by about three-tenths of a point. Voting for Bush was not significant. Being Roman Catholic is the only background variable that decreases scores in the models. In both models, the variable is among the least powerful predictors.

TABLE 6.5: REGRESSION RESULTS: ONLINE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION USING FORM 1

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	-0.132		-2.056	*
Roman Catholic	-0.200	-0.075	-2.929	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.003	0.104	3.879	**
Use Computer	0.562	0.218	8.199	**
Gore Voters	0.395	0.151	5.893	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.093**		
Block 2				
Constant	-0.278		-3.806	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.002	0.072	2.767	**
Roman Catholic	-0.178	-0.067	-2.683	**
Use Computer	0.485	0.188	7.227	**
Gore Voters	0.314	0.120	4.753	**
Comedy	0.141	0.122	4.256	**
C-SPAN	0.097	0.084	3.209	**
Late Night	-0.084	-0.072	-2.515	*
Morning TV^	-0.062	-0.063	-2.486	*
NPR	0.128	0.122	4.662	**
PBS	0.118	0.108	4.019	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.151**		
^Form-specific variable				
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=1391				

TABLE 6.6: REGRESSION RESULTS: ONLINE
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION USING FORM 2

Independent Variables	*B*	Beta	*t*	
Block 1				
Constant	-0.132		-2.027	*
Roman Catholic	-0.200	-0.075	-2.887	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.003	0.104	3.825	**
Use Computer	0.562	0.218	8.083	**
Gore Voters	0.395	0.151	5.809	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.093**		
Block 2				
Constant	-0.154		-1.919	
Roman Catholic	-0.164	-0.062	-2.440	*
Income (in $1000s)	0.002	0.069	2.634	**
Use Computer	0.500	0.194	7.383	**
Gore Voters	0.317	0.121	4.774	**
Comedy	0.130	0.113	3.913	**
C-SPAN	0.112	0.097	3.634	**
Late Night	-0.076	-0.065	-2.261	*
NPR	0.126	0.120	4.555	**
PBS	0.139	0.128	4.613	**
TV Magazine^	-0.136	-0.120	-4.554	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.160**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=1352				
^Form-specific variable				

In both models, the media variables are powerful predictors. In the Form 1 model, media variables increase the amount of variance explained by 5.8 percent. In the Form 2 model, media use increases the amount of variance explained by 6.7 percent. In most cases, the media variables had the predicted relationship with the dependent variable. However, consistent with the bivariate analysis, comedy program use/learning was positively related to online political participation: the opposite of that predicted by Hypothesis 8. Further, comedy television use is among the most powerful media variables. The variable is associated with beta values of 0.122 and 0.113. This raises questions about the effect of age. The comedy audience is younger than

other media audiences and online activities have a generational component. However, age was

not significant in the context of the models above. The partial correlation between the comedy

variable and online participation controlling for age was 0.095. The positive value of this

correlation suggests that generational differences in computer use do not explain the positive

relationship between the comedy variable and online participation. Income is positively related

to the scale and is associated with beta values of 0.072 and 0.069 in the Form 1 and 2 models

respectively. Because income is a determinant of computer and Internet access, it is likely that

income would be associated with a higher beta value if computer use were not included in the

model.

It is curious that the late night and comedy variables had opposite relationships with

online political participation. The survey is not detailed enough to offer a sense of which

comedy programs respondents are watching most. However, interviewers used *The Daily Show,*

hosted by Jon Stewart, to describe the category. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and

Sciences selection of Jon Stewart as the 2006 Oscar awards ceremony host is evidence that *The*

Daily Show resonates with the American public. While those who claim to learn from comedy

shows may or may not be viewers of the program, *The Daily Show* is a leader in the comedy

program category. Assuming that many of the respondents who claimed to be viewers of

television comedy programs are viewers of Jon Stewart's show that mocks American journalism

and draws heavily on news stories, this difference in relationship with the scale construct may

suggest that comedy programs draw a more politically concerned audience because of its greater

emphasis on news stories. While *The Daily Show* deals with current affairs in each episode, late

night programs give less attention and detail to current events. Generally these programs draw

on political news stories only when they facilitate "one liners" or humour that does not require

producers to provide the audience with background information. For example, the late-night talk show hosts drew extensively on the relationship between Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. In contrast, *The Daily Show* includes many segments that focus on specific issues using mock investigative reporters thereby exposing viewers to more political content. *The Daily Show*, despite airing on Comedy Central in the United States and the Comedy Network in Canada seems to capture the attention of those looking for politically loaded content.

The morning and magazine television had negative relationships with online political participation as expected by Hypotheses 8 and 10 respectively. They are associated with b values of –0.062 and –0.136 respectively. Further research using content analysis would be useful in comparing the amount of explicitly political content that is included in these programs. On the surface, morning television shows appear to emphasize lifestyle and celebrity oriented topics over detailed political stories. While magazine programs are associated with the news genre, they are often sensational and represent the qualities of the tabloid described in the literature review. These issues may explain how programs that are considered news oriented are not associated with online political participation.

All of the non-profit media variables were positively associated with the scale offering support to Hypothesis 3. PBS and NPR were among the most influential variables. In most cases, non-profit media variables are associated with unstandarized values of more than 0.1. This suggests that these audiences are more politically inclined.

In comparison with the online political participation scale, the model in Table 6.7 can explain a greater proportion of the variation between cases on the political involvement scale. However, entering the media variables has less relative impact on the amount of variance explained. Entering the media variables into the model increases the amount of variance

explained by just less than five percent. Only one model predicting placement on the political

involvement scale is presented as no form-specific variables were used.

TABLE 6.7: REGRESSION RESULTS: POLITICAL
INVOLVEMENT SCALE

Independent Variables	b	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	-0.607		-6.941	**
Age	0.010	0.145	7.768	**
Male	0.140	0.061	3.421	**
Black	-0.317	-0.087	-4.806	**
Roman Catholic	-0.128	-0.050	-2.789	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.004	0.159	8.468	**
Education	0.151	0.216	11.312	**
Union	0.200	0.049	2.790	**
Bush Voters	0.255	0.105	5.030	**
Gore Voters	0.383	0.151	7.177	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.174**		
Block 2				
Constant	-0.800		-8.720	**
Age	0.010	0.149	7.787	**
Male	0.080	0.035	2.008	*
Black	-0.370	-0.102	-5.744	**
Roman Catholic	-0.130	-0.050	-2.895	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.004	0.140	7.637	**
Education	0.131	0.187	9.925	**
Union	0.208	0.051	2.982	**
Bush Voters	0.240	0.099	4.837	**
Gore Voters	0.301	0.118	5.722	**
Comedy	0.070	0.063	3.067	**
C-SPAN	0.090	0.081	4.415	**
FNC	0.183	0.063	3.679	**
Late Night	-0.044	-0.039	-1.984	*
NPR	0.129	0.127	7.030	**
PBS	0.064	0.060	3.135	**
Sunday Morning Network	0.055	0.054	2.887	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.223**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=2730				

Education, income and age are the most influential on predicted scores. These variables all have positive relationships with the political involvement scale. Education is associated with a beta value of 0.187. Being Black or Roman Catholic decreases predicted scores. The former is associated with a beta value of –0.102 and the latter is associated with a beta value of –0.050. The Black variable becomes more powerful than the variable capturing Bush voters when the media variables are included in the model. Not surprisingly, those who voted in 2000 are more politically involved. Gore voters were more active than Bush voters. These variables are associated with beta values of 0.118 and 0.099 respectively. Union membership increases predicted scores on the scale by 0.208. Being male is among the weakest predictors and became less powerful than the union and Roman Catholic variables after the media variables were entered into the model.

As with the models predicting online political participation, all of the media variables that were included in the model had the expected relationship with the dependent variable with the exception of comedy television use. The NPR variable is the most influential of all of the media variables offering further support to Hypothesis 3. It is associated with a beta value of 0.127. The other non-profit media variables were less powerful predictors than voting behaviour. Being a part of the Fox News Channel's audience increases predicted scores by 0.183 offering support to Hypothesis 2. Late night television viewing is the least powerful variable in the model.

These findings are further evidence that using content that is more politically detailed or presented as "hard news" draws an audience that is more politically active. This observation is based on the assumption that watching *The Daily Show* largely drives comedy program viewing.

About a quarter of the variation on the election participation scale can be explained by the model in Table 6.8. Adding the media variables only marginally increases the powerfulness of the model.

TABLE 6.8: REGRESSION RESULTS: ELECTION PARTICIPATION SCALE

Independent Variables	b	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	0.247		2.435	*
Male	-0.077	-0.034	-1.958	
Age	0.018	0.283	15.531	**
Hispanic	-0.441	-0.115	-6.464	**
Protestant	0.242	0.105	4.543	**
Roman Catholic	0.329	0.128	5.504	**
Education	0.157	0.226	12.503	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.002	0.081	4.367	**
Union	0.255	0.063	3.713	**
Rent	-0.165	-0.063	-3.500	**
Identifiers	0.322	0.136	7.981	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.230**		
Block 2				
Constant	0.215		2.125	*
Male	-0.095	-0.041	-2.419	*
Age	0.018	0.272	14.963	**
Hispanic	-0.446	-0.117	-6.583	**
Protestant	0.229	0.099	4.326	**
Roman Catholic	0.293	0.114	4.909	**
Education	0.152	0.217	12.059	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.002	0.076	4.155	**
Union	0.237	0.059	3.473	**
Rent	-0.184	-0.071	-3.921	**
Identifiers	0.299	0.126	7.433	**
Cable Political Talk	0.046	0.045	2.482	*
Sunday Morning Network	0.088	0.087	4.775	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.242**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=2730				

Age and education had the greatest influence on predicted scores. These variables were associated with beta values of 0.272 and 0.217 respectively. Those who identified with either of the major political parties were found to be more active. Being in the reference group for this variable increases predicted scores by about 0.3. In contrast with the political involvement scale, being male is negatively related to this scale while being Roman Catholic is positively related to the scale. Being Protestant is associated with a b value of 0.229. Being Hispanic is negatively related to the scale and is associated with a beta value of –0.117. Renters were found to be less active. This is not surprising as two of the scale items deal with election registration. Renters tend to be more transient making their registration process more involved. Union ties are positively associated with the scale. Being male is only significant in the last block of the model.

Only two media variables were found to be significant in the model above. Both Sunday morning network program and political talk shows on cable use/learning increased scores offering some evidence to support Hypotheses 9 and 1 respectively. The former was more influential on scores and is associated with a beta of 0.087 and a b value of 0.088. The cable talk show variable is associated with a beta value of 0.045. This is further evidence that issue oriented shows draw audiences that are more likely to vote.

Two models predicting scores on the combined political participation scale are presented. While only one uses form-specific variables, both are presented because when used together they identify more relationships between media use and the scale. The model using the Form 2 specific variables includes variables for talk radio and television magazines. The comedy and late night variables are only significant in the other model. The born again variable is not significant in either block of the Form 1 model. This suggests that this issue is related to the smaller sample size that that model is based on.

TABLE 6.9: REGRESSION RESULTS: COMBINED
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SCALE USING
FORM 1

Independent Variables	b	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	-0.866		-3.173	**
Age	0.031	0.224	8.331	**
Hispanic	-0.741	-0.090	-3.656	**
Born Again	0.259	0.050	2.032	
Education	0.378	0.253	9.349	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.008	0.156	6.005	**
Union	0.621	0.072	2.988	**
Use Computer	0.968	0.180	6.338	**
Democrats	0.525	0.101	4.179	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.231**		
Block 2				
Constant	-0.994		-3.606	**
Age	0.030	0.214	8.192	**
Hispanic	-0.790	-0.096	-4.056	**
Born Again	0.224	0.043	1.831	
Education	0.328	0.220	8.359	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.007	0.133	5.305	**
Union	0.512	0.059	2.560	*
Use Computer	0.912	0.170	6.187	**
Democrats	0.401	0.077	3.272	**
C-SPAN	0.170	0.071	2.817	**
NPR	0.208	0.096	3.799	**
PBS	0.208	0.092	3.512	**
Sunday Morning Network	0.236	0.108	4.162	**
Talk Radio^	0.137	0.062	2.453	*
TV Magazine^	-0.207	-0.088	-3.551	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.292**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=1343				
^Form-specific variable				

TABLE 6.10: REGRESSION RESULTS: COMBINED
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SCALE USING NO
FORM-SPECIFIC VARIABLES

Independent Variables	b	Beta	t	
Block 1				
Constant	-0.866		-4.518	**
Age	0.031	0.224	11.861	**
Hispanic	-0.741	-0.090	-5.205	**
Born Again	0.259	0.050	2.893	**
Education	0.378	0.253	13.310	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.008	0.156	8.550	**
Union	0.621	0.072	4.255	**
Use Computer	0.968	0.180	9.024	**
Democrats	0.525	0.101	5.950	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.233**		
Block 2				
Constant	-1.194		-6.036	**
Age	0.031	0.219	11.360	**
Hispanic	-0.757	-0.092	-5.518	**
Born Again	0.246	0.047	2.858	**
Education	0.331	0.222	11.967	**
Income (in $1000s)	0.007	0.134	7.625	**
Union	0.544	0.063	3.862	**
Use Computer	0.884	0.165	8.529	**
Democrats	0.337	0.065	3.909	**
Comedy	0.163	0.068	3.499	**
C-SPAN	0.183	0.076	4.373	**
Late Night	-0.124	-0.051	-2.743	**
NPR	0.240	0.110	6.406	**
PBS	0.182	0.080	4.382	**
Sunday Morning Network	0.201	0.092	5.193	**
Adjusted R-Square		**0.290**		
*p<0.05, **p<0.01				
N=2730				

The modeles predicting scores on the combined political participation scale are presented

in Tables 6.9 and 6.10. In both models, media variables increase the amount variance explained

by about six percent. The most powerful variables do not vary from model to model. Education,

age, computer use and income are the most powerful predictors in the models. Education and age are associated with beta values of about 0.2. Computer use is also a top predictor of scores on the scale. This is not surprising as half of the points on the scale pertain to online activities. Identifying as a Democrat is positively associated with the scale. The variable capturing those with union ties is associated with beta values of about 0.06. Consistent with the scale predicting election participation, being Hispanic decreases scores. In both models predicting scores on the aggregate scale, the Hispanic variable ranks near the middle in terms of its relative powerfulness.

In both models, the NPR and Sunday morning network programs variables are the most powerful of all media variables offering evidence that supports Hypotheses 3 and 9 respectively. In the case of the full sample model, NPR is associated with a beta value of 0.110. The other non-profit media variables are more powerful than the late night and comedy media variables. The comedy variable is associated with a beta value of 0.068 and the late night variable is associated with –0.051. The Form 1 model allows for the inclusion of the talk radio and television magazine variables. Talk radio is the least powerful media variable in this model. It is associated with a b value of 0.137 and a beta value of 0.062. The television magazine model is not as influential on predicted scores as the PBS, NPR and Sunday morning network television variable. It is associated with a beta value of –0.088.

All of the media variables have the anticipated relationship with the combined scale. No media variable was significant only in the combined scale model. Media variables that are included in multiple models have the same relationship with each dependent variable.

The clustering of cases and crude nature of the scale constructs and independent variables is reflected in the analysis of the residuals statistics associated with the above models. With the exception of the election participation model, all models are more likely to under-predict than to

over-predict scores. This reflects that the voting participation scale was the only scale with the more cases at the positive end. The distribution of residuals is somewhat normal for the combined scale models. In the context of the political involvement scale, there are more cases associated with standardized residuals values between zero and negative one in comparison with what would characterize a normal distribution of residual values. The standardized residual values in this model range from –2.300 to 3.545.

There is a clustering of standardized residuals values between about –0.8 and 1 for the models predicting online political participation. The standardized residual values for this model range from about –1.5 to 6.1 in the case of the Form 1 model and 5.5 in the case of the Form 2 model. The mean standardized residuals for Forms 1 and 2 are -0.082 and 0.097 respectively.

The voting participation model is also problematic. Its standardized and non-standardized residuals range from about –3.4 to 2.2. The mean standardized residual and residual are about –0.015. This distribution is somewhat leptokurtic with a major peak where residuals values are between zero and one. There are more cases with negative residual values. The standard deviations of standardized residuals on the online and election participation scales are about one. The distribution of residuals for the models predicting scores on the aggregate scale is close to normal. The mean standardized residual for the Form 1 model is 0.07. The other model predicting scores on the scale has a mean residual value of 0.009.

These residual statistics are a function of the dependent variable scale constructs. Because these variables are ordinal and include relatively few categories, they are problematic for multiple regression analysis. Continuous variables are better suited to such techniques.

6.5 "Race", Local News Use and Political Participation:

Hypothesis 4 expects that Blacks are less likely to use local television news, see more bias in the news media and will differ from the total sample in its relationship between local news use and political participation.

Blacks were marginally over-represented in the local news audience. While Blacks represent about eleven percent of the total sample, approximately thirteen percent of Blacks claimed that they "regularly" or "sometimes" learned about the Presidential campaign through local television news. This suggests that Blacks are only slightly more likely to watch local news than the total sample. The mean score on the overall media bias scale for Blacks was only marginally higher than the total sample's mean. The mean score among Blacks on the perceived news media bias scale was 1.76, slightly less than the total sample mean of 1.88. These findings offer little support for Hypothesis 4a.

TABLE 6.11: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERCEIVED LEARNING FROM LOCAL TV NEWS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR BLACKS, NON-BLACKS AND TOTAL SAMPLE

Perceived Learning From Local TV	Online	Election	Involvement	Combined Scale	N
Blacks	-0.020	0.007	-0.096	-0.048	184
Non-Blacks	-0.048	.139**	.079**	.081**	1411
Total Sample	-.051*	.123**	.052*	.060*	1594
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
Local News Learning is a form-specific variable.					

As indicated in Table 6.11, for the total sample and non-Blacks, watching local television news is weakly and positively associated with participation in elections, the political involvement scale and the combined political participation scale. This is consistent with the work discussed in the literature review. However, a negative relationship between local news

use and online political participation was found for the total sample. No significant relationship

was found for non-Blacks. As anticipated, local news learning among Blacks was not

significantly related to any of the indicators of political participation. However, these findings

should be interpreted with caution due to the few number of Black respondents that were asked

the Form 1 survey questions.

Perceived local news learning was measured using the same survey question structure

used for the other media that places cases on a scale that ranges from 0 to 3.

6.6   Age, Hard News Use and Political Participation:

Hypothesis 11 anticipates that hard news consumption will be a stronger predictor of

political participation among younger Americans in comparison with the total sample.

TABLE 6.12: CORRELATIONS: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND INFORMATION-
SEEKING BY AGE GROUP

	Online	Election	Involvement	Combined Scale	N
18-34 years	.466	.197	.290	.457	961
35 and older	.372	.166	.313	.404	2227
Total Sample	.407	.164	.292	.409	3188

All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Partial correlations between the information-seeking scale and the political participation

indicators controlling for age group were calculated to test Hypothesis 11. The correlations in

Table 6.12 reveal that the range of hard news sources that a person uses as measured by the

information-seeking scale is positively associated with all indicators of political participation.

This supports Hypothesis 7b. Generally, these relationships were stronger among younger

Americans. However, the relationship between the information-seeking scale and the political

involvement scale did not differ for younger Americans. According to most indicators, hard news use is a slightly stronger predictor of political participation among those under thirty-five years of age than for the total sample.

7.0   Conclusions and Recommendations:

7.1   Summary of Findings:

In general, the media related variables were weakly related to the dependent variables examined in the present analysis. Most of the beta coefficients describing media use were associated with values that had absolute values that were less than 0.1. Blocks including media related variables generally increased the amount of explained variance by only a few percent. This is largely related to narrow and crude scales used in the analysis. Most dependent variable constructs were highly skewed, as cases were very clustered at the low end of scale constructs. The use of survey forms limited the analysis by reducing the sample sizes in some models, restricting the possibilities for crosstabular analysis and making it inappropriate to use mean substitution in some models.

The analysis found support for most of the hypotheses. Multivariate analysis found that listening to talk radio, religious radio and watching the Fox News Channel were weakly associated with conservatism. Closer analysis revealed that the relationships between talk radio and FNC use and political ideology were mediated by perceptions of Democratic bias in the news media. The expectation that political talk shows on cable television would be related to conservatism was not supported. Multivariate analysis found that all of the non-profit media use variables were weakly associated with liberalism.

The expectation that those who prefer news that does not "have a particular point of view" would use more sources was not supported. However, positive relationships between the amount of bias that a person sees in the news media and the range of sources and mediums used was found. More specifically, in the case of medium, most respondents used television to get their election news. Those who perceive bias in the news media were more likely to also use the

Internet or newspapers. The information seeking scale, which measures the number of news and current affairs sources that a person uses, was positively related to the amount of perceived bias in the news media. These mediums and information seeking scales were positively related to income and education and all of the indicators of political participation. Generally, the scales had slightly stronger relationships with political participation for those less than 35 years of age. There was some evidence that television use is less related to socio-economic status and political objectives than the other media use scales examined in Chapter 4. The analysis suggests that those on the "left" use slightly more sources in comparison with those on the "right".

Using the Fox News Channel and talk radio were associated with perceptions of a Democratic Party bias in the news media at the multivariate level. The analysis found little bivariate and no multivariate support for the expectation that using non-profit media was associated with perceptions of a Republican bias in the news media. The analysis suggests that Republicans are more sceptical of the news media than Democrats. No variable was found to be associated with perceptions of a Republican bias in the news media.

Many of the expected relationships between media use and political participation were found. However, in contrast with expectations, comedy television use was positively related to most of the indicators of political participation at the multivariate level. Comedy television use negatively related to election participation at the bivariate level. With the exception of the comedy television variable, none of the media variables had both positive and negative relationships with the various political participation indicators. As expected, late-night television use was negatively related to many of the political participation indicators. Morning and magazine television were negatively related to online political participation. The latter had the same relationship with the combined scale. Sunday morning network talk show use was

positively related to most of the indicators and was associated with weak to moderate

relationships with political participation at the bivariate level. There was little evidence that

watching FNC is associated with political activity. The FNC use variable was only weakly

associated with higher levels of participation according to the political involvement scale.

Watching political talk shows on cable and listening to talk radio were each related to one

indicator of political participation at the multivariate level. These media were positively related

to all of the political participation indicators at the bivariate level.   Many multivariate positive

relationships between non-profit media use and political participation were found. While local

television news use is positively associated with most of the political participation indicators for

the total sample, no significant relationships between the variables were found for Blacks. There

was little evidence that Blacks are less likely to watch local news or that Blacks see more bias in

the news media.

   While the analysis identified a number of associations, the generalizability of findings is

limited by a sample that only included those in the United States. The implications of this are

discussed in further detail below.

7.2 **Implications of Findings and Areas for Future Research:**

   The term "narrowcasting" is used by the broadcasting industry to denote television

services with niche programming. The implication of this is that media consumers have a great

range of channels to choose from each offering distinct programming. In addition to the

expanded list of television channels to choose from, media users now have an increasing range of

media to choose from as a result of new media including Internet based media such as

WebPages, audio and video streaming and file sharing. These developments have triggered what

the media industry calls a "fragmentation" of media audiences. The term continues to be a buzzword in industry discourse. It implies that media consumers have greater choice and control over their media use. Recently, Rosen (2004-5) coined the term "egocasting". She explains that, "we have moved beyond narrowcasting into 'egocasting'-a world where we exercise an unparalleled degree of control over what we watch and what we hear. We can consciously avoid ideas, sounds, and images that we don't agree with or don't enjoy" (Rosen 2004-5: 67). This concept was influenced by the advent of technologies such as the iPod[1] and Digital Video Recorders (DVR)[2] that make it easier for media users to filter the media that they are exposed to. The concepts of narrowcasting and egocasting both suggest a more empowered media consumer. The former is the framework that explains the exponential growth in media offerings for one to choose from, while the latter refers to the tools that allow media users to negotiate their use of these offerings. The present analysis aims to identify associations in the choices that media consumers make.

The idea of a more empowered media user and the availability of highly specific media content suggest that media use habits would be fairly patterned. While many associations were identified through the present data analysis, in general, these relationships were weak. While this is may be partly due to the methodological limitations of the project, it raises questions about the distinctiveness of the various media offerings.

A number of media scholars demonstrate that the media is far less diverse than many would perceive based on the range of choices available. The small beta coefficients described in

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[1] iPod is a product of Apple Computer Inc. that allows for portability of large volumes of digital files including media files. The devices allow owners to listen to music or watch videos using small hand held devices.
[2] DVRs allow for the storage of large volumes of broadcast television content on hard drives. The implication is that owners of the devices can develop large libraries of television content without concern for broadcast schedules, skip commercials and pause live television. Many of the devices include features that track the user's viewing preferences to suggest and store content.

the present analysis can be interpreted to support the arguments made by McChesney (2004) and

Herman and Chomsky (1998) described in the literature review. These thinkers argue that media

content is highly filtered by market forces resulting in a homogeneous range of content that

favours conservative values. From this perspective, most media content encourages viewers to

prefer larger police forces, longer prison sentences, less government involvement, lower taxes,

privatization and high defence spending. This view sees media use as only weakly related to the

dependent variables in the present analysis because media content is not unique enough to draw

easily defined audiences. McChesney (2004: 182) calls the current media system in the United

States "an irony" and explains that, "what is lost in the blizzard of channels is that twenty of the

twenty-five largest cable TV channels are now owned by the five first-tier media firms, the same

firms that own the networks and many of the TV stations in the largest markets." Mullen (2003)

also points to a lack of diversity on cable television despite the exponential growth in the number

of cable channels. She identifies reliance on syndicated programming and "reruns" as

characterizing the development of cable television.

The present analysis finds that perception of a bias in the news encourages use of a

greater number of sources and mediums. This finding, in the context of the agenda-setting

framework and expanding media options, requires further examination. As described in the

literature review, agenda-setting research demonstrates that people place greater importance on

the news stories that are given more attention by the media. How has growth in the number of

news services impacted agenda setting? If coverage levels, on their own, explain a lot about why

people find some stories to be more important than others, one would expect that a greater

diversity of news services would reduce the media's agenda setting capacity. This interpretation

assumes that a greater number of available sources encourage coverage of a greater number of

issues from more angles. The implication of a broader range of media choices is a less shared culture. In an environment with a greater number of media sources, each with differentiated coverage, agenda setting is highly regulated by media use choices. However, as described above, media critics do not equate growth in the number of television channels with expanded coverage. Future research examining if those who make attempts to broaden their coverage by using more sources are exposed to broader coverage will help in understanding the diversity that media users are exposed to. Is there evidence that those who deliberately seek information from multiple news organizations are actually exposed to a greater number of news stories and story attributes? The present analysis found that socio-economic status was positively related to the range of sources and mediums that a person uses, suggesting that the costs associated with different media subscriptions and technologies restrict those with lower incomes from using some media. Research examining if use of a broader range of sources exposes users to greater coverage will help to assess the extent of class bias in information access. The arguments that depict a homogeneous media suggest that discretionary income would have little influence on the range of news items and story attributes that a person can be exposed to.

Media fragmentation is related to forces that both increase and decrease the diversity of news content. Intuitively, growth in the number of media offerings provides media consumers with more choices and the potential for a broader range of content producers. However, the implication of fragmentation is that the audiences for individual sources are smaller. By reducing the potential sizes of audiences, fragmentation also reduces the budgets allocated to individual services. As discussed earlier, budget sizes impact media content by discouraging investigative journalism and encouraging the use of official sources. Cost constraints also encourage a greater influence by interested public relations (PR) firms on news stories. These

firms can reduce newsroom costs by providing background information, footage and experts.

McChesney (2004:71) explains that:

> Media owners welcome PR because it provides, in effect, a subsidy for them by offering filler at no cost. Surveys show that PR accounts for anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of what appears as news. Because PR is most successful if it is surreptitious, the identity of the major players and knowledge of their most successful campaigns is usually hidden from the general public.

By recognizing how increases in the number of sources can decrease the range of coverage, connecting choice with a more empowered media user looses credibility.

Others would attribute the lack of diversity in the media to the dominance of a "liberal media". This argument also points to homogeneity as explaining why media audiences are not particularly distinct. However, instead of seeing a media that is overwhelmingly conservative, this argument assumes that liberal values are widespread in media content. As described in Chapter 5 the perception of a Democratic bias is much more prevalent than seeing a Republican bias.

There is debate over the type of political bias that characterises media coverage. If one were to reduce the argument to two sides: those who describe a conservative bias and those who point to a liberal bias, both sides of the debate are associated with organizations that document political ideological bias in the media. While public opinion sees more liberal than conservative bias, the academic community (for example, Herman and Chomsky 1998, McChesney 2004, Alterman 2003, Winter 1997 and Bagdikian 2004) describes a conservative bias. Arguably, Chomsky has the highest profile of those describing a free market bias in the media. However, there appears to be no counterpart among those who see a liberal bias in the academic realm. Generally, scholars highlight the structural forces that filter media content. These arguments tend to be rooted in political economy and emphasize systemic forces that are maintained by

power relations. This group sees journalists as being manipulated directly and indirectly by the interests of media company owners and advertisers. The high profile faces among those who draw attention to liberal biases come from non-academic circles: politics, religion and talk radio. These claims point to evidence that journalists overwhelmingly identify as liberals (Sutter 2001: 440). The divergent area for these interpretations is the difference in extent of power that journalists are perceived to have.

While some will argue that the lack of peer reviewed scholarly work describing a liberal bias is evidence that the argument is flawed, the reasoning used by those arguing that the media has a liberal bias questions the integrity of the academic on the same grounds that it questions the veracity of journalists. Both workforces are perceived as attracting those who place higher value on egalitarianism than on individualism and market forces.

Rush Limbaugh is known for his anti-university polemics. For example, he writes that (1993: 211), "We have known for some time that liberals believe in moral relativism. It now appears that they believe in physical and gender relativism as well. Pretty soon we will probably be seeing university courses spring up whose purpose is to inquire into whether our existence is real or merely an extension of Freddy Krueger's dream". This excerpt reveals a connection between the university and liberalism. Such a perspective would attack the academic peer reviewing process for discouraging non-liberal work.

Lipset (1979: 36) also draws parallels between academics and journalists. He explains that, "in the United States and in other Western countries, journalists and broadcasters increasingly have the same values and political orientations as the critical intellectuals." Lipset (1979) and Ladd Jr. and Lipset (1975) document survey findings that point to a high

concentration of liberals in the university, particularly in the social sciences. To the straight

talking radio host, both groups are dominated by "bleeding liberals" who complicate issues.

Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) ideas address the connection between intellectualism and

language use. They see the university "tending to rule out the question of the informative

efficiency" of its communication in order to help maintain the "status authority" of the

professoriate (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 108). The authors observe that the language used in

universities is not a language that children, of any social class, are socialized to speak. (Bourdieu

and Passeron 1990: 115). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990: 110) explains that:

> If dissertational rhetoric gives the teacher the impression that his words have not
> been too badly understood, this is because the dissertation authorizes a discourse
> and a relation to discourse which prohibit *clear-cut* choices and induce the marker
> to pass a judgement as prudent as its object" (emphasis added).

Many conservative talk radio hosts position their shows as cutting through the "BS" with

easily understood arguments that do not hide behind abstraction. They claim to offer more clear-

cut logic. This is evident in the book titles of books written by talk radio hosts. For example,

Bill O'Reilly (2001) wrote a book called, *The No Spin Zone*. His title links truthfulness with the

accessibility of communication.

While the analysis in Chapter 4 only finds very minor differences between the number of

sources used by the political cleavages, those on the "left" were more likely to use more sources.

This finding is consistent with the connection between liberalism and perceptions of a more

complicated world. With this interpretation, liberals are more inclined to use more sources

because they seek nuance. However, as proposed in Chapter 4, this finding may also stem from

depictions of a "liberal media". If one sees the entire media as "liberal" there is little perceived

advantage to using additional sources as all sources are seen as reflecting the same bias.

Mayer (2004) also questions why talk radio has become a conservative forum. He considers the argument that talk radio "demands broad slogans and uncomplicated, simple-minded discussions of the issues, a task at which conservatives, it is argued, are particularly good. Liberals, by contrast have a more nuanced view of the world not easily reducible to simple catch-phrases and quick solutions" (Mayer 2004: 93). He eventually dismisses this interpretation, which he sees as ego massage for liberals. He explains that:

> For every simple-minded conservative slogan there is an equally vacuous catch-phrase on the Left. For every Republican who has ever claimed that "big government" is the cause of all our problems there is a Democrat who thinks that all Republican policies are "tax cuts for the rich" and sweetheart deals for big business (2004: 93).

While both political cleavages have the ability to develop catch phrases, future research should assess if conservative values are better suited to the techniques that draw audiences to talk radio. It appears that conservative values better lend themselves to such phrases because it is easier to excite a listener about their *own* social location and problems. Content analysis that compares the use of catch phrases by liberal and conservative radio hosts will help to evaluate this expectation.

Mayer (2004: 101) explains that "demographic and identity-based divisions" make liberal talk radio more of a challenge. Anyone feeling overtaxed is in the market for programming hosted by someone raving about how far away "Tax Freedom Day" is. Conservative talk radio demonstrates that comments rooted in individualism can easily trigger excitement and emotional responses from listeners. It is more challenging to peak a listener's interest through discussion about *other* people's problems. The paradox is that people are united by their individualism. In contrast, liberal concerns have less mass appeal. They focus on the experiences of specific marginalized groups making them less able to cross demographic boundaries. With this in mind,

it is not surprising that conservative talk radio's presence is largely attributed to its use of

syndicated distribution allowing one program to be heard nationwide. Conservative talk is less

dependent on attention to local issues than liberal talk because of the more universal appeal of

individualism.

While the non-profit media that were examined in the present analysis are not specifically

academic media sources, they embody the qualities that characterize academic materials through

their attempts to avoid reducing their ideas to short arguments: the opposite of the strategy used

by the talk radio loudmouth genre. The findings in the present analysis that link political

ideology with media choices match popular perceptions of conservatives being drawn to "black

and white" while liberals are drawn to "grey". Talk radio listening, a medium associated with

straight-forward clear cut logic, was found to be associated with conservatism while public

media sources, which are perceived as emphasising the complexity of topics; were associated

with liberalism.

However, it is possible for liberal oriented media to make use of sound-bite style media.

This has been demonstrated by Michael Moore's various films as well as Mark Achbar and Bart

Simpson (2003) who produced the film *The Corporation*. These filmmakers draw in audiences

because of their emphasis on power relations. They offer examples and implications of

disparities in wealth and influence in the sense that Mills (1959) describes. They aim to mobilize

activism by appealing to their audiences' vulnerabilities by illuminating exploitation and

encouraging viewers to relate with those on the screen. Ultimately, this style also uses

individualism to stimulate viewers. Qualitative research would be useful in examining if these

techniques explain the box office success of films that use individualism to attack neo-

conservatism. Such research would interview viewers about which aspects of these films are most resonate and easy to identify with.

Few American syndicated radio programs air on Canadian stations. Because the CRTC encourages local programming, apart from Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio, Canada does not have high profile national talk radio voices. Further research would be useful in determining if this has any implications on differences in the role that talk radio has in Canada in comparison with the United States. The "tell it like it is" quality of talk radio has positioned the medium as a conservative forum for those frustrated with the media in the United Sates. Canada also has a wealth of conservative talk radio hosts; however, Canada's lack of high profile national hosts may mean that Canadians are less likely to recognize the medium as a conservative forum. The present analysis suggests that many in the United States see talk radio as an alternative to the liberal media. As Canadians may be less likely to see the genre this way, those in Canada may be more likely to see the media as more unified and lacking non-liberal alternatives. However, it is not clear if Canadians are as sceptical of the media as Americans and if they perceive a liberal bias to the extent that Americans do. Future research that surveys both those in Canada and the United States about their perceptions of media bias using consistent indicators and methodology will help to explore this question.

While the present analysis associates non-profit media use with liberalism, it offers no evidence that those who use non-profit media are concerned about a Republican bias in the news media. This is evidence of the pervasiveness of discourse pointing to a liberal bias in the media. Claims of a liberal bias not only encourage liberals to perceive a liberal bias; they also discourage liberals from seeing a conservative bias. This manifests itself in survey data by revealing that those on the "left" are more likely not to perceive a bias in the news media.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Regardless of how one evaluates the balance of media coverage, claims of media bias are influential because they open the foundations of arguments to question. They suggest that citizens have insufficient information to properly evaluate the claims and reasoning used by newsmakers. As described in the literature review, there is some evidence that claims of media bias influence public opinion about Presidential candidates. Critical discourse analysis offers utility in understanding how claims of media bias are used to support and discount arguments. Briefly, critical discourse analysis studies how language and discourse relate to power. The approach sees "semiosis as an irreducible element of all material social processes. Social life is seen as interconnected networks of social practises of diverse sorts (economic, political, cultural, family, etc.)" (Chiapello and Fairclough 2002: 193). Fairclough (1985: 746) who has published extensively on the approach explains that, "ideologies and ideological practises may become dissociated to a greater or lesser extent from the social base, and the particular interests, which generated them". Research making use of these techniques can address how claims of media bias are supported and presented. Critical discourse analysis will be useful in identifying assumptions that underlie claims of media bias and reveal how such claims become "truths". Further, the approach, through attention to logic and reasoning, can reveal how assumptions about media credibility are implicitly and explicitly used to support arguments that pertain to public policy.

Elite claims of media bias relate to Abercrombie's (1990) assessment of Gramsci's work in comparison with Adorno. In contrast with Adorno, Abercrombie and Gramsci see hegemony as a process that involves some struggle and negotiation. Elite claims of media bias reveal a perception that the public has ability to question. Further, they represent attempts to encourage the public to see conservative ideas as more legitimate than liberal ones. From this perspective,

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by encouraging the public to see liberal ideas as lacking substantiation, the dominant class, while not acknowledging its own power, is seeking the "consent" of the public by influencing its trust in values and reasoning that conflict with its interests.

While some non-profit media users who identify as liberals are influenced by depictions of the media as liberal, other liberal audience members will point to the leverage that corporate sponsors have on public media. This group sees corporate sponsors as having the ability to encourage programming to conform to their interests. While this group sees a conservative bias in the media and may prefer non-profit media to corporate owned media, its first choice for news is likely non-government organizations and alternative media that is user funded.

In contrast, cable news services are generally owned by media conglomerates and depend on advertising revenue. As mentioned earlier, CNN is the result of Ted Turner's idea to apply the news radio format to television (Auletta 2003). While CNN is not a part of the present analysis, the Fox News Channel was found to attract a conservative audience that see a Democratic bias in the news media. FNC and talk radio use were the only media that predicted perceptions of a party bias in the media. Both audiences were associated with perceptions of Democratic Party bias.

These findings speak to the parallels between talk radio and 24-hour news services. Both rely on the use of segments: a style that encourages the use of sound-bite production techniques. Generally, both are continuous news services. They aim to extend the duration of the time that audience members spend watching them. This encourages the use of climax building strategies such as sensationalism, teasers and is incentive for sound bite production. Stories are presented as ongoing and constantly developing. However, the small portion of overall viewing that they represent limits the revenue generated by these services. They have endless time to fill and much

pressure to keep costs low. As described above, Herman and Chomsky (1998) and McChesney (2004) describe how the pressure to keep costs low influences programming. Future research would be useful in assessing if pressure for sound bites and cost minimization pushes 24-hour news services into appealing to conservative values. While identifying connections between these pressures and the values encouraged by 24-hour television is difficult, discussions with journalists about which kinds of footage and news stories are more likely to be covered and aired will help to determine how operational objectives influence what is broadcast on 24-hour news services. The use of experimental design and content analysis could assess the link that these pressures have on content. For example, a comparison of what is produced by journalism students given different objectives and resources will help to reveal how the values included in television content are influenced by various restraints.

Critics of the argument that 24-hour news services face some of Herman and Chomsky's (1998) filters to a greater extent than other media may raise CNN as evidence of a liberal profit-motivated 24-hour news service. Work by Morris (2005) described in the literature review points to differences in the audiences and raises questions about differences in content on CNN compared with FNC. However, it is not clear how CNN's programming stands on its own terms. CNN's programming may be perceived as liberal in comparison with that of Fox News; but further analysis is necessary to evaluate CNN.

There is evidence that small budgets and continuous coverage are not deterministic features of the 24-hour news format. The Fox News Channel in the United States and Canada's CBC Newsworld represent different approaches to the format. As described in the literature review, Fox News has been the subject of much discussion because of its distinct approach to news: one that self-identifies as objective but is criticized by those who see it as hyper-patriotism

and neo-conservatism propaganda disguised as value free news. The findings in the present analysis and the literature in the area of media credibility suggest that marketers may see Fox News as an attempt to capitalize off of the segment of the news seeking audience that is concerned about the liberal bias that they see in the other news services. The Fox News Channel is very emphatic about its flag-waving approach. For example, in March of 2003 when anti-war protesters were demonstrating in New York City, the electronic ticker on the Fox News offices suspended regular headlines to display, "Attention Protesters: The Michael Moore Fan Club Meets Thursday at a Phone Booth At Sixth Avenue and 50th Street" (Auletta 2003).

In contrast with Fox News, CBC Newsworld's schedule includes a number of programs that prioritize information ahead of climax building and sound-bite production including investigative journalism programs. On the surface, Newsworld's programming seems closer to what is aired on PBS than to Fox News programming. While Newsworld includes debate-oriented programs, it does not seem to rely on shouting-matches to the extent that FNC does. The major difference between Fox and Newsworld is that both advertisers and the government fund the latter. The Fox News Channel is not a public broadcaster. A political economy perspective points to these operational differences between the broadcasters in explaining why FNC and CBC Newsworld represent different approaches to news.

As described in discussion of the methodological aims of this project, the present analysis does not attempt to point to causal connections between media use and political variables. However, media companies are becoming increasingly niche oriented and consumers have a greater range of individual media sources to choose from. It is becoming easier for people to restrict the ideological range of the content that they are exposed to.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Satellite radio is of interest to discussions about such trends. These services, which were licensed for distribution in Canada in June of 2005, sell subscribers access to at least one hundred radio channels. Company press releases indicate that there are approximately 180, 000 satellite radio subscribers in Canada (Sirius Satellite Radio Canada 2006 and XM Satellite Radio Canada 2006)[3]. Because of greater economies of scale and their operational models, satellite radio companies include dozens of niche-oriented channels in their offerings. Some news and talk stations are named and branded to communication associations with political ideologies. Most non-music stations have very little or no advertising. Because of subscriber revenues and the niche-oriented aspect of the service, advertisers have a different relationship with satellite providers than they do with more traditional media. Satellite companies market their line-ups to subscribers as packages whereas terrestrial radio and television broadcasters aim to increase their individual share of overall radio tuning. Because of the breadth of channels on satellite, advertisers can choose stations that suit their ideologies and business objectives. Programmers have far less, or no pressure, to produce consumer oriented or mass appeal content. Satellite radio represents an opportunity for radio that is less influenced by advertisers. Examples of channels that provide news coverage and discussion of current events include Sirius Satellite radio's Public Radio International (PRI) which airs news from several international public radio news organizations and The Power, an African American talk station, which is carried by XM Satellite Radio and currently available only to subscribers residing in the United States. However, most of the news channels available to satellite radio subscribers are services offered by existing news organizations such as CNN, ABC, Fox, the British Broadcasting Corporation

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[3] Sirius Satellite Radio Canada claimed to have 100,000 subscribers on May 10 2006. XM Satellite Radio Canada claimed to have 80,000 subscribers on June 5 2006.

(BBC), CBC and Bloomberg. The present range of news channels available on satellite radio duplicates many of the services available on cable and satellite television.

Satellite radio does not address all of the limitations of profit-motivated media described by McChesney (2004) and Herman and Chomsky (1998). The operations are very centralized and potential owners are reduced by the highly capital intensive nature of the infrastructure required. While some satellite radio companies are publicly traded allowing for ownership by the middle class, controlling ownership is out of reach for the vast majority of people. In contrast, The Real News (formerly International World Television) is a non-profit organization that plans to fund itself completely from small donations from the international community to support a to be launched network that will aim to diversify news. The founding Chair of the organization is Paul Jay, Creator and former Executive Producer of CBC Newsworld's *counterSpin.* Other founders include actress and Air America host Janeane Garofalo, labour leader Buzz Hardgrove, author and activist Naomi Klein, professor and activist Robert McChesney and former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations Stephen Lewis among others including some from outside of North America. The organization is adamant about the implications that advertisers and owners, including governments, have on content representing a deterministic view of ownership and profit motivations. Both satellite radio and The Real News demonstrate attempts to add diversity through new operational models.

The findings described of the present analysis demonstrate that existing media differ in the types of associations that they have with political participation. Most of the media use variables that were found to be significantly related to the various political participation scales at the multivariate level had the expected relationship with the dependent variables. The comedy television variable was the exception to this. As discussed in Chapter 6, *The Daily Show*

includes much discussion of current events and is expected to represent a major portion of the

tuning to comedy programs described by respondents. Despite that Baumgartner and Morris

(2006) found through experimental and survey analysis that watching *The Daily Show* was

associated with lower support for presidential candidates and higher cynicism for the electoral

process among college students, the findings from the present analysis found that watching

comedy programs was positively associated with political participation. While these associations

were weak, the association between comedy television use and online political participation is

among the strongest of all of the coefficients involving media use in the various models.

Assuming that the expectation about the relative influence of Jon Stewart's program in

comparison with other programs is accurate, these findings raise questions about the connection

that Putnam (2000) makes between cynicism and low participation.   However, there are a

number of considerations to be mindful of when placing the present analysis in the context of

these works. First, the findings in the present analysis do not address cynicism with the electoral

process and therefore cannot support the inference that cynical members of *The Daily Show*

audience are also politically active. Second, Putnam (2000) discusses civic participation, a more

general concept than political participation. Finally, Baumgartner and Morris (2006) used a

much narrower sample**.** However, the findings pertaining comedy television identified by the

present analysis, in the context of other research, raise the possibility that media has the potential

of motivating participation through cynicism. The present analysis found associations between

comedy television use and scales that included items that measured political participation outside

of the electoral system suggesting that some comedy television audience members may be

frustrated with the electoral system and therefore seek other political forums. Future qualitative

research would be useful in understanding if and how such processes take place. A stronger

understanding of the connection between electoral cynicism and political activism can be gained

by interviewing members of political organizations about their perceptions of the electoral

system and their motivations for activism. Further cross-sectional survey data analysis would be

useful in identifying trivariate relationships between media use, political cynicism and political

participation.

The findings pertaining to comedy television watching and political participation

suggests that news is not the only media that can be associated with political participation.

Further, as described in the literature review, not all current affairs news sources are associated

with political participation and studies are inconsistent in their findings. There is evidence that

newspaper use is positively related to political participation (Eveland Jr. and Scheufele 2000;

Shah, et al. 2001b; Scheufele 2002). Baum's (2003 and 2005) work points to the link that

entertainment oriented media can have on attentiveness to current issues. Baum (2003: 270)

explains that:

> Strategic media practices, undertaken in response to changing economic,
> regulatory, and technological circumstances, have altered many American's
> propensity to pay attention to select high-profile political issues, including foreign
> policy crises. My findings demonstrate that this effect is most pronounced for
> individuals who are neither intrinsically interested in such issues nor actively
> seeking such information.

While attentiveness does not always translate into participation, Baum's (2003) findings

and the present analysis have implications on the debate about the link between television use

and civic participation. As described in detail in the literature review, Putnam's works see

television as reducing civic participation. In response, Norris (2002) suggests that it is important

to consider the specific type of media use. Norris' argument is supported by the present analysis

as media with both positive and negative relationships to political participation were identified.

The findings that describe comedy television use point to the complexity involved when

distinguishing between media sources. It demonstrates that the entertainment/information dichotomy is reductive and highlights the difficulty in separating the two categories.

Putnam (2000) sees television as time filler and therefore an inhibitor of civic engagement. Further research that focuses on specific media sources while distinguishing between appointment viewing and television use that is unplanned would be useful. Putnam's characterization of television seems to emphasize non-appointment television use. Consideration of this distinction will help to separate the habitual and lifestyle implications of television viewing from the role played by the content itself.

The introduction of new media technologies suggests that media use is impacting lifestyle habits and political life in new ways. DVRs, iPods and satellite radio are only some examples of such technologies. As market researchers seek to understand the marketplace potential of such products and services, it is critical that academics seek to better understand the implications that these technologies have. The extent that these technologies impact political life is unclear. As a result, public policy is not sufficiently informed about a potentially major aspect of political life. As new media products and services become more pervasive, it becomes increasingly important that market research findings are scrutinized and expanded with critical analysis.

The crudeness of the media use indicators in the survey used in the present analysis demonstrates that it is important that media researchers have access to more detailed media use indicators. Ideally, scholars would have access to data describing television viewing and radio use through people meters such as those used by the organizations that measure television viewing for broadcasters and the advertising industry. Such data would be linked to demographics and information about political views and behaviours as well information about use of non-broadcast media. Metered data is better than questionnaire methodology at capturing

the "channel surfing" that viewers do with their remote control devices. The lack of surveys that measure media use and political participation and identification using a Canadian sample singles the lack of understanding of the role of media use in the Canadian context.

It seems reasonable to expect the findings from the present analysis to apply to Canada. Canada and the United States share many of the same media offerings. All of the major U.S. networks and many U.S. cable channels are available in Canada. All of the media sources examined in the present analysis are available in Canada. Those in American states that neighbour Canadian provinces have access to some Canadian media. People in both countries use many of the same print and online sources. In both cases, the vast majority of high profile media companies are privately owned and funded by advertisers. However, because American media, which generally assumes a U.S. audience, is much more prevalent than Canadian media in both countries, Canadian news stories are mostly restricted to Canadian newscasts and have little presence in other forums including most entertainment oriented programming. For example, Jon Stewart's program, while popular in Canada, focuses on issues pertaining to the United States. In the present analysis, respondents were asked about media that emphasizes their country's stories. In contrast, Canadians have to be more deliberate when seeking information on Canadian current events and are often in positions where their evaluations of local issues are influenced by topics covered in foreign media.

Further, there are differences in the values between those in Canada and the United States. For example, Grabb and Curtis (2005: 251) found that those in the United Sates had "higher levels of religiosity and sexual and moral conservatism" while Canadians were found to be more politically active and "tolerant" of racial and ethnic diversity. In addition to suggesting that a Canadian sample would differ in its distribution along the political ideology and

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participation scales used in the present analysis, these findings signal that American media is aimed at a more conservative audience. As a result, Canadians are using media that has been developed to match the tastes of an audience with somewhat different values.

Despite parallels between the media environments in Canada and the United States, it is unclear how these issues would impact the strength and direction of the relationships between media use and the dependent variables examined in this analysis with a Canadian sample. These concerns highlight the need for tools that would make it possible to examine the link between media use and political behaviour and identification in Canada.

Appendix 1: Audience Composition Comparison

TABLE A1.1: BACKGROUND VARIABLES AS A PERCENTAGE OF AUDIENCE:

	Radio		Non-Profit		
Regularly or sometimes learn from:	**Religious^**	**Talk^**	**C-SPAN**	**NPR**	**PBS**
N	323	738	915	1104	1041
Gender					
Male	41.5%	54.1	50.5	51.7	52.3
Female	58.5%	45.9	49.5	48.3	47.7
Age					
18 to 29	17.0%	21.8	20.9	21.9	16.3
30 to 39	17.0%	20.7	20.0	20.9	18.8
40 to 49	22.5%	21.0	21.4	22.3	21.9
50 to 59	19.4%	14.0	15.4	15.6	18.0
60 to 69	6.2%	9.6	8.6	8.0	10.2
70 to 79	7.7%	11.0	9.0	7.4	9.7
80 plus	10.2%	1.9	4.6	3.9	5.0
"Race"/Ethnicity					
White (Not Hispanic)	66.0%	78.9	73.8	80.7	77.1
Black (Not Hispanic)	24.6%	12.8	16.8	11.1	14.5
Hispanic	9.6%	12.4	10.1	9.3	9.7
Religion					
Protestant	83.0%	52.8	52.6	50.0	51.4
Roman Catholic	13.9%	29.1	28.1	25.8	28.3
Born Again	69.8%	34.4	35.0	34.0	31.6
Education					
Grade 8 or less	2.8%	1.6	1.0	1.1	1.3
Some High School	12.1%	8.2	8.2	6.6	8.1
High School	38.1%	31.8	34.0	33.4	31.5
Business, Technical, Voc.	3.7%	3.3	2.2	2.0	3.2
Some College	22.0%	26.1	24.8	22.4	22.5
College Graduate	15.8%	19.2	19.3	19.3	20.0
Post-grad or Professional	5.6%	9.9	10.5	15.2	13.5
Annual Family Income					
Less than $10,000	11.7%	7.3	4.1	6.2	5.8
$10,000 to under $20,000	17.6%	12.9	10.4	10.8	11.8
$20,000 to under $30,000	16.9%	11.4	13.1	12.7	14.7
$30,000 to under $40,000	14.8%	14.0	20.0	16.1	14.3
$40,000 to under $50,000	13.4%	10.1	11.6	9.6	10.9
$50,000 to under $75,000	11.7%	17.1	12.8	16.1	13.3
$75,000 to under $100,000	5.2%	13.6	12.1	14.2	14.9
$100,000 to under $150,000	5.2%	8.6	9.3	7.6	8.2
$150,000 or more	3.4%	5.0	6.7	6.7	6.2

^Form-specific variable

Appendix 1: Audience Composition Comparison

Table A1.1 cont'd	Television				
Regularly or sometimes learn from:	**Magazine^**	**Cable Political**	**Sun AM**	**FNC***	**Local News^**
N	1104	1400	1227	622	548
Gender					
Male	46.2	51.5	49.6	51.8	46.7
Female	53.8	48.5	50.4	48.2	53.3
Age					
18 to 29	18.1	20.8	19.6	18.4	17.7
30 to 39	19.0	19.3	16.4	20.0	20.3
40 to 49	21.5	23.5	21.0	17.4	23.1
50 to 59	16.4	14.6	16.6	18.7	17.1
60 to 69	11.8	10.4	11.6	10.6	7.7
70 to 79	10.2	7.6	10.0	12.1	8.9
80 plus	3.0	3.9	4.7	2.9	5.2
"Race"/Ethnicity					
White (Not Hispanic)	79.5	75.1	77.6	82.8	78.4
Black (Not Hispanic)	12.6	15.1	14.7	10.6	13.4
Hispanic	9.7	12.2	9.7	76.0	10.4
Religion					
Protestant	53.1	51.9	53.0	55.0	55.4
Roman Catholic	30.2	31.2	32.0	27.8	28.7
Born Again	32.1	34.3	35.5	40.4	32.8
Education					
Grade 8 or less	2.6	1.7	2.0	2.7	2.2
Some High School	7.7	7.4	8.7	8.7	10.4
High School	34.7	32.8	36.3	37.6	34.5
Business, Technical, Voc.	3.4	2.0	2.3	2.1	2.3
Some College	25.4	25.2	23.2	26.6	24.0
College Graduate	17.6	20.9	17.0	15.1	18.0
Post-grad or Professional	8.6	10.0	10.6	7.2	8.6
Annual Family Income					
Less than $10,000	7.2	5.7	6.6	5.5	6.4
$10,000 to under $20,000	10.2	11.8	13.5	12.1	13.3
$20,000 to under $30,000	13.5	13.0	13.2	12.8	16.4
$30,000 to under $40,000	15.2	17.4	16.5	16.6	16.0
$40,000 to under $50,000	11.9	10.1	10.2	15.2	13.9
$50,000 to under $75,000	15.5	14.8	15.0	15.9	14.6
$75,000 to under $100,000	14.7	13.6	12.0	11.3	9.4
$100,000 to under $150,000	8.2	8.2	8.4	6.6	5.6
$150,000 or more	3.6	5.5	4.6	4.0	4.4

^Form-specific variable; *Get "most" of TV news from

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Appendix 1: Audience Composition Comparison

Table A1.1 cont'd

Regularly or sometimes learn from:	Entertainment TV			
	Comedy	Late Night	Morning^	Total Sample
N	840	874	727	3188
Gender				
Male	53.8	49.4	40.2	**48.5**
Female	46.2	50.6	59.8	**51.5**
Age				
18 to 29	39.3	33.8	20.1	**20.9**
30 to 39	20.9	20.1	19.1	**18.6**
40 to 49	21.6	19.8	22.6	**21.9**
50 to 59	8.8	8.7	17.2	**16.1**
60 to 69	3.7	5.9	7.4	**8.9**
70 to 79	3.7	7.7	8.3	**9.4**
80 plus	2.0	4.0	5.4	**4.0**
"Race"/Ethnicity				
White (Not Hispanic)	70.6	74.3	73.9	**80.1**
Black (Not Hispanic)	16.1	13.8	15.0	**11.7**
Hispanic	15.5	15.3	10.5	**10.0**
Religion				
Protestant	46.4	49.0	56.7	**54.1**
Roman Catholic	29.4	31.2	30.0	**27.2**
Born Again	28.8	31.5	38.4	**33.4**
Education				
Grade 8 or less	1.7	3.4	2.6	**3.0**
Some High School	9.3	9.5	11.7	**9.8**
High School	31.8	37.8	38.3	**33.9**
Business, Technical, Voc.	3.7	3.6	2.2	**2.9**
Some College	27.7	21.8	22.3	**23.7**
College Graduate	16.9	14.6	13.6	**17.5**
Post-grad or Professional	8.9	9.3	9.2	**9.1**
Annual Family Income				
Less than $10,000	9.9	12.7	9.9	**7.6**
$10,000 to under $20,000	10.6	13.0	11.8	**12.5**
$20,000 to under $30,000	13.0	12.7	17.2	**14.8**
$30,000 to under $40,000	20.2	19.0	18.0	**15.5**
$40,000 to under $50,000	10.0	7.8	12.3	**12.0**
$50,000 to under $75,000	13.4	12.7	13.4	**14.5**
$75,000 to under $100,000	9.6	10.2	7.3	**11.7**
$100,000 to under $150,000	7.4	7.4	4.5	**6.7**
$150,000 or more	6.0	4.4	5.6	**4.8**

^Form-specific variable

Appendix 1: Audience Composition Comparison

This appendix is included to offer readers a sense of how the audiences of the various media differ. Apart from the expectation that non-profit media use will be positively associated with socio-economic status, this discussion does not directly relate to the hypotheses in the present analysis. It has been included to provide readers with a context of how media use relates to the control variables. The audiences of the content categories are defined as those respondents who "sometimes" or "regularly" learn about the election from the source. The Fox News Channel audience includes those who get "most" of their television news about the election from FNC. Percentages are based only on valid cases for "race", education and income. The bases used to calculate the percentages of the other variables include missing cases. There were no missing cases for age or gender.

Most audiences closely mirror the composition of the total sample. There were some differences:

- Sex: The talk radio and comedy show audiences were slightly more male while the morning television audience were slightly more female in comparison with the total sample.

- Age: Those aged between 18 and 29 had the most distinct media use. This age group is more highly represented in the audience for late-night television and comedy programs. The group is under-represented in the audiences for public television and network newscasts. Those older than 50 years of age are under-represented in the comedy audience.

- "Race"/Ethnicity: The audiences for religious radio, C-SPAN, political talk shows on cable television, late night, comedy and morning television had a smaller proportion of

Whites than the total sample. Of these groups, Blacks were over represented in the religious radio, C-SPAN, CNN, comedy and morning talk show television audiences. Hispanics are more likely than the total sample to consume late night and comedy television. No audience had disproportionately more Whites than the total sample.

- Religion: There were differences in the religious composition of the audiences of the various broadcasters. The religious radio audience is predominately Protestant and under-represents Roman Catholics. The comedy television audience represents less Protestants than the total sample. Those who identify as born again are over-represented in the audiences for religious radio, morning television and The Fox News Channel.

- Socio-economic status: The non-profit media users had slightly higher incomes and educational attainment than the total sample. Further, weak positive correlations between the education and income and the learning scales for NPR, C-SPAN and PBS were found. These findings support Hypothesis 3. Religious radio listeners, late-night television and morning talk show viewers are more likely to have not furthered their education after high school. Comedy show viewers are more likely to have some college training. Over-representation of this group is likely related to the young audience that watches these programs. There is a large over-representation of those with annual family incomes that are less than $20, 000 in the religious radio audience.

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