

Political Socialization: The Political Messages in Televised
News and the Effect on Young Adults

BY

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POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION: THE POLITICAL MESSAGES IN TELEVISED
NEWS AND THE EFFECT ON YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

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This study is designed to examine how young adults are socialized through media outlets and how knowledgeable and cynical they are towards these media outlets. Survey research is used in order to answer four research questions pertaining to the amount of television young adults consume, their political knowledge, political cynicism, and bias towards the media. In order to examine these variables, young adults news viewing patterns were analyzed with the listed variables. The cohort group consisted of 397 subjects between the ages of 18 and 24 who were enrolled in classes at a mid sized university in the Midwestern United States.

The survey was constructed using measures designed for use in previous research and some were adapted to fit this study. In order to answer the four research questions, a series of statistical tests were conducted. A correlation analysis was used to look for relationships between the amount of television consumed and the difference in levels of political knowledge, political cynicism, and media bias in young voters. To answer the second research question on the relationship between political knowledge and perceived media bias in the televised media Pearson's r correlations were performed. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether or not news viewing patterns influenced cynicism and/or knowledge of young adult viewers. Finally, a one-way ANOVA and crosstabs was also used to determine if political affiliation influenced perceived bias and/or news viewing preferences. Post-hoc tests were also used in instances where they were appropriate.

This research yields three key findings. The first key finding is viewers of Fox News are less knowledgeable than viewers of any other cable network. Along with this, Fox News viewers are also the least cynical viewers among cable news networks. The third key finding showed that Democrats perceived more bias in the media than Republicans. This adds an interesting piece to the puzzle in regard to bias in the news media as previous research has found each group—Democrats and Republicans—to perceive more bias in the news media.

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Political socialization—“the learning about structures and environmental factors and the internalizing of customs and rules governing political life” (Graber, 2002, p. 198)—has been a hot topic in political communication studies over the past few election cycles. The United States government operates on the principle of democracy, which, in theory, relies on all of the citizens of the country to participate in the government’s decision making. Because of this, political socialization is an important concept to understand in order to help children engage the political process at home and in school from an early age. It is also crucial to understand how to aid in their socialization so they can actively participate in the U.S. democracy in order to preserve the political system on which the freedoms of our country were founded. By doing so, future generations can enjoy the right and freedom to vote for the candidates they see fit and place qualified officials in elected positions to keep the U.S. operating effectively—and in its citizens’ best interests—as a powerful nation.

Political socialization, according to researchers (Atkin, 1977; Conway, Wyckoff, Feldbaum & Ahern, 1981), begins at an early age. Children learn the basic attitudes to hold toward authority, property, decision making, and political symbols (Graber, 2002). These attitudes are learned through many different channels, one of which is television. At an early age children are socialized to many new areas of society through different messages on television; as they become teenagers and young adults they continue learning, continue being socialized by television, and it is this point in time when their political beliefs begin to form (Atkin, 1977; Conway et al.,

1981). While the news media is important to viewers of all ages by helping them form opinions and beliefs about different situations in society, others argue that the news media's impact is “essential and powerful but often quite subtle” (Calavita, 2005, p. 13). In other words, the environment “created by the news media works alongside—and interacts with—traditional agents to shape Americans' opinions and ideologies” (Calavita, 2005, p. 113).

The purpose of this study was to further explore young adults' television news viewing habits and the implications of regularly watching a specific news network. Based on the review of literature presented, factors such as political cynicism, political knowledge, political affiliation and media bias were also examined in order to identify potential effects. The research on political socialization and the role of the media establishes that socialization is indeed a phase dealt with by every individual, and, therefore, the method for the study was designed to demonstrate the logical process of surveying individuals about their television viewing habits and political beliefs. This study provides insight into how young adults view and interpret media based on their beliefs and socialization backgrounds.

Preview

Using survey research, this study examined how young adults' socialization experiences—voting exposure, cynicism, media influence, etc.—affected their views of televised news networks and their messages. This study also tested whether the amount of television consumed by young voters correlated with their political knowledge, political affiliation, political cynicism, and media bias. In order to present

a foundation for this study's rationale, the review of literature discusses the role of family in children's socialization experiences, the role of media in young adults' socialization experiences, political knowledge, political cynicism and media bias. Following the review of literature, Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the research method, Chapter 4 reports the results of this study, and Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings, limitations, and final conclusions.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

With scholars more frequently studying mass media and the resulting effects on the viewing public, it is critical to understand the role mass media plays in forming and maintaining individuals' political beliefs. To establish the importance of this research the relevant literature is reviewed, which highlights the family's role in the socialization process, political socialization at childhood, and the role of the mass media in the political socialization process.

Family Role in Political Socialization

People receive political messages from a variety of sources and then decode these messages in an attempt to understand the political world around them. This is the process of political socialization, and it is an activity in which all humans participate, in some manner, from a very young age (Ditto & Lopez, 1992). Although the current study focuses on attitudes and perceptions of young voters, in essence effects derived from this socialization, a literature review on the topic of political socialization would be remiss in not acknowledging the family's role in this process. Research argues that children tend to view their parents as significant others and they often emulate their parents' political and social values (Acock & Bengston, 1978; Connell, 1972; Ditto & Lopez, 1992; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). The similarities in children's values and those of their parents have also been attributed to the degree of specificity of the value or belief in the family (Jennings & Niemi, 1968). However, the clarity of the parents' values (Tedin, 1974), along with socioeconomic status and

parents' degree of political activity have also been considered in prior research as factors that affect socialization (Minnis & Williams, 1989). While research establishes these variables as factors in socialization, they have yet to be identified as influential on their own. As this study addresses young voters' attitudes and perceptions toward the media, it provides a first step for beginning a regressive approach to analyzing the political socialization process. Further, findings regarding young voters' socialization must be understood within this framework of socialization as an evolutionary development as opposed to one, isolated opinion.

It is undeniable that there are different factors within a family which play a role in the socialization process; however it is clear there are two main conditions that contribute to the primary role family plays in the socialization process. First, the family has considerable access to socializing individual family members (Dawson, Prewitt, & Dawson, 1977). During the early stages of a child's life s/he primarily socializes with family members, targeting his/her information gathering strategies to access information by observing and interacting with their parents. In fact, most theories of personality formation, child development, and socialization hold that the early years are very significant in the formation of basic personality, social, and personal identities (Dawson et al., 1977). In the early childhood scenario, socialization is not about party affiliation (Republican or Democrat); rather, it is about the way parents communicate ideas and information about the world to their children. This information can consist of what is acceptable and unacceptable

behavior, how individuals should relate to each other, and other moral and ethical principals (Dawson et al., 1977).

The second condition that contributes to the primary role of the family in the socialization process is the strength of the ties formed among members of the same family (Dawson et al., 1977). It is known that human beings are more willing to go along with a set of information or believe in certain values if those close to them hold these same values. Arguably the relationships children have with their parents at a young age are their strongest relationships. This leads to the parents' beliefs and information being critical to the understanding the child is gaining of the world around him/her.

While families inevitably play a role in political socialization of their children, other research on "motivated reasoning" shows that people have a strong tendency to evaluate new information in a manner biased toward maintaining their pre-existing preferences (Lodge, McGraw & Stroh, 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen & Brau, 1995). This information is important because it draws a clear connection between what children learn when they are young and how they are continually socialized as young adults, as well as throughout their adult lives. While the above review of literature regarding the family's role in political socialization is compelling and suggests that socialization effects should be studied in the context of the family dynamic, other scholars offer a more discrete view of the family's influence.

Beyond the Family Role

The literature on socialization and the family provides concrete evidence that children are learning and building belief structures based on those of their parents (Dawson et al., 1977). However, early work on political socialization cautions that there is not necessarily a parallel between the information with which children are being socialized and their political beliefs as adults. For example, children may pick up that their parents are Republicans or Democrats or believe in certain issues, but this does not mean they will hold these same beliefs as adults. This is primarily due to the fact that many explicitly political roles and relationships are developed in adult life, not as a child (Dawson et al., 1977). Because political involvement is heavily dependent on current issues, governmental arrangements, and political groups, young adults are often most prone to making important decisions about their political beliefs in the time period after high school when they are able to fully engage in civic activity for the first time. Along with this, it is important to remember that the political climate during a child's life has probably changed greatly in the 10 to 15 year time period between childhood and the point at which they make their first political decisions. For example, when an eighteen-year-old goes to the polls to vote for the first time, s/he has had many other experiences, besides those learned from parents, to help mold beliefs. All of these life experiences build on what beliefs they have previously held and may work to alter their stances on candidates and issues.

To further the argument for other factors besides the family contributing to the political socialization of young adults, studies also point to the fact that many families

do not specifically train their child in politics (Dawson et al., 1977). For instance, a family may train a child in the importance of household chores, religious beliefs, and work ethic. While all of these may factor into political decisions, knowledge, and beliefs later in life, none of them deal specifically with practicing politics. This is an important point to consider because without practical political conversations in the family children will be more prone to picking up political ideologies in other places, such as school, church, and other recreational activities (Dawson et al., 1977).

While the literature on political socialization takes both sides of the argument on the role family plays in their offspring's political knowledge and beliefs—some feel the family has an important effect on children, while many feel outside influences such as school, church, and other social networks play an important role—both sides agree that the family does have some effect. It is the nature of the beast with politics that through “prescription, through discussion, by expressing their own outlooks, and through the example of their own political involvement, parents pass on political attitudes and evaluations to their children” (Dawson et al., 1977, p. 116). Because the amount of political knowledge and bias acquired through the child's family interaction is not conclusive, it is important to explore other factors which contribute to political socialization.

Media Socialization and Bias

While some research points to the effect of the family on molding children's and young adult's values, studies indicate that another influence has as much or more persuasive power in the political socialization process. Television media plays an

instrumental role in providing the information from which children, young adults, and adults learn about politics (Tompkins, 2005). Children are exposed to televised media at a very young age and watching political coverage on television and interacting with parents may work together to help younger children develop a schema for their own political beliefs (Powell & Cowart, 2003). While exposure to television and mass media begins at an early age, research suggest that exposure to mass media further increases with age and that as we age our political interest is often “nurtured through exposure to broadcast, print, and online media” (Powell & Cowart, 2003, p. 22).

While it is not believed that exposure to mass media translates directly into political attitudes, it is believed that exposure does have an impact on political knowledge (Powell & Cowart, 2003). The impact the mass media has on political socialization has not been directly correlated in research up to this point; however, Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton (1970) found that mass media outlets are the single most important source of political knowledge for children. This is mostly due to the immense hours of television to which many children are exposed. While this is a phenomenon that is interesting in children, the pattern of heavy media exposure continues into adulthood (Graber, 2002). The average American adult watches television upwards of four hours per day (Graber, 2002). Moreover, television is the single most important vehicle in delivering the same message to large audiences at the same time. “On a typical evening, the television audience is close to 100 million people” (Graber, 2002, p. 200). While researchers suggest newspapers are the best source of political knowledge for children and young adults, they have also noted that

newspapers are the least sought out form of media (Chaffee et al., 1970; Graber, 2002). Thus, Chaffee et al. (1970) conclude that “television serves as the heaviest source for most of [children’s] political information, particularly for highly visible aspects of politics, such as the presidency” (p. 451).

Even as it serves as the likely source for political information, the news media in the U.S. is constantly criticized for being biased toward one political party or another. Despite research to the contrary, the general public and a significant number of politicians are convinced the U.S. news media have a liberal and pro-Democratic bias (Lee, 2005). According to a survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2002), 47% of those who answered a question on media bias believed news organizations in general are politically biased in their reporting. Granted, 35% of respondents disagreed (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2002); however, it is notable that almost half of America perceives its news organizations to be biased in their reporting.

Studies on media bias have demonstrated that some reported bias can be attributed to, quite simply, that which is in the eye of the beholder. Conservative critics believe that most journalists are liberal, registered Democrat, and that news coverage reflects reporters' political leanings (Goldberg, 2001). “According to these observers, the news media and reporters are pro abortion, racial quotas, and gay rights, and they are anti business, capitalism, the military, Christianity, and the Republican party” (Lee, 2005). Other critics argue that the bias is in the opposite direction. In their eyes, conservative voices dominate the mainstream media, and

news organizations—most of which they view as controlled by the government and large corporations—are agents of power that promote and maintain the conservative status quo (Alterman, 2003).

While both sides may be based in some truth, these claims are hard to prove in empirical research and therefore do not hold much clout in the academic realm.

Media critic Michael Parenti (1996) offers several explanations for conservatives' consistent accusations. First, most U.S. media are owned and controlled by large corporations, and consequently conservative voices are dominant and can repeat their complaints with greater frequency than liberal critics (Parenti, 1996). Second, conservative politicians and commentators habitually attack the media to put them on the defensive. As a result, liberal opinions often are self-censored by journalists because “anything short of unanimous support for a rightist agenda is treated as evidence of liberal bias” (Parenti, 1996, p. 103). Lastly, the material reported in the news, even if it is factual, can be identified as liberal or radical to conservative viewers.

Because there is no way to “prove” media bias in U.S. news organizations, it is important to focus on viewer’s perceptions of bias. Bias in the news media is an issue that has been addressed in many recent studies looking at a wide range of factors. Among those factors considered as potential causes of bias are source variables, such as the media organization or actual news outlet (Licheter & Noyes, 1996), viewer’s involvement or strength of political affiliation (Stamm & Dube, 1994), and individual partisanship in reporting (Dalton, Beck, & Huckfeldt, 1998).

While all of these factors may be legitimate concerns for researchers and the viewing public, research has not been able to show a consistent bias in one direction or the other (Waldman & Devitt, 1998; D'Alession & Allen, 2000). However, Eveland and Shah (2003) did find that individuals' political orientations and social networks helped shape their perceptions of media bias. Therefore, it is possible that the perceived media bias is much more in the eye of the beholder than the broadcaster or network.

While television is the most useful source of political information for the media consuming public, regardless of its orientation almost half of the public perceives that a bias exists (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2002). Beyond the favoring of a liberal slant or a conservative slant, what are the implications? It is likely that those perceiving a biased slant *not* in their favor may be more cynical of the information they receive and, in turn, lose interest in the political information the media relays to them.

However, the cynicism effect may not be equally evident by political ideology. Current research finds that conservative viewers are more likely than liberal viewers to believe the media reports in a biased fashion (Lee, 2005). To understand what drives this liberal versus conservative perception about media bias, Lee (2005) offers three possible explanations as to why conservatives are more likely than their ideological counterparts to believe in a media bias. The first reason is due to "conservative and Republican elites repeatedly encourage[ing] their followers to distrust the media" (Domke, Watts, Shah, & Fan 1999; Watts, Domke, Shah, & Fan,

1999). This explanation stems from the politicians and conservative political commentators reminding supporters that political reporters tend to have a more liberal stance.

The second explanation is a result of the way journalists report environmental problems and social realities such as pollution, even though these types of stories are the journalistic norm (Parenti, 1996). In other words, journalists are reporting on stories that are more pertinent to everyday life than politics on Capitol Hill may seem to be. As a third explanation, Lee (2005) draws on conclusions from his own research stating that “conservatives tend to be uneasy about new and unfamiliar situations at a personal level” (p. 62). While all three explanations are useful in explaining the perceived media bias among conservatives, further research is needed to fully explain why television viewers, especially conservatives, perceive different levels of bias in the media they consume. Further, considering Lee’s first explanation, it is useful to examine if in fact their media diet is uniquely different.

While there are multiple logical explanations for the perceived media bias among television viewers, there is no “one size fits all” answer as to why viewers feel the messages they are receiving are biased in some way. However, the literature review here does suggest that ideology is a key variable in the level of perceived media bias. Yet, it is unclear to what extent those more “novice” in their political ideology find a bias exists. While this study includes political ideology (conservative/liberal) as a variable for studying young voters’ attitudes about media

bias, two other variables likely linked to shaping orientations toward the media must be addressed: political knowledge and political cynicism.

Political Knowledge

Political knowledge has been studied in various ways and most studies have come to similar conclusions—that Americans do not know much about politics or the political system they are a part of. Two of the foremost researchers on political socialization, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) found that “compared with what people ought to know as determined by a textbook model of citizenship, the public is ignorant about much of the detail of government and politics—just as conventional wisdom holds” (p. 17). Only about a third of people are able to name both their U.S. senators, 57 percent know which party is more conservative, and 59 percent can name the party to which their governor belonged, while only a little more than 70 percent are able to name the vice president (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996, p. 74). These findings are crucial because further research suggests that a lack of political knowledge could be a leading cause of the decline in voters going to the polls on Election Day, as well as the increase in the electorate’s cynicism in the system (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). This lack of political knowledge and resulting cynicism could also be a contributing factor to the public’s news media bias as will be discussed below.

In the U.S. democratic system everyone is allowed to vote once they meet the general standards set by the U.S. constitution (US Citizen, at least 18 years old, not been convicted of a felony, etc.) and state regulations regarding residency and

registration. However, these standards do not include requirements about possession of specific political knowledge or even knowledge of how the United States voting system works. Many scholars argue that the electorate's lack of knowledge is crucial to understand because of an inherent belief among researchers that a well-informed electorate is essential to the functioning of a democracy (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Converse, 1962, 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Other researchers even admit surprise that the U.S. democracy functions as well as it does given the low levels of political knowledge that are observed (Neuman, 1986).

With political knowledge seemingly so poor among Americans, what factors are contributing to this lack of understanding about the issues, the system, and the representatives in office? Americans report receiving their political information from a variety of sources, however three traditional sources—local television, national television, and print media—are among the most often reported (Jamieson, 2000). While local television is one of the most reported sources for gathering news, those who view local television for news are less informed than those who get their news from national news programs and print media (Jamieson, 2000). Readers of newspapers are the most well informed: however, fewer people read newspapers than watch local television or national television (Jamieson, 2000). The conclusion could be drawn that Americans who view local television news are looking to become better informed, but the information provided through this medium is not enough to help them become more informed about their political system.

In addition to the above, Jamieson's (2000) research has also found that while local government issues and knowledge of congressional candidates should be correlated with local television news more so than national television news or newspapers, this is not the case. Essentially, local television news is ignoring key aspects of the local democratic system that would be beneficial to their viewing constituency. Therefore, a majority of the potential voting public are not well informed about the issues and candidates facing them when they arrive at the polls on Election Day. This lack of knowledge that arises, in part, due to the local news not covering the national political scene, increases the need for further understanding of the level of political knowledge that individuals hold, as well as the need to further understand how to increase the level of political knowledge of television viewers.

Political Cynicism

Political cynicism is perpetuated in our culture through the media's reporting strategies, political advertisements negative messages, and people's general view of politics as something that takes place without their input (Tedesco, 2002). "Cynicism is commonly operationalized as a person's perception that his or her opinion is not important to political leaders, that governmental institutions and political leaders are not trustworthy, or that leaders do not always act in the interests of their constituents" (Tedesco, 2002). Researchers have argued that high levels of political cynicism may also lead to lower voter turnout and to decreased information seeking about political issues and candidates (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000). This phenomenon is not well understood, which makes it difficult for anyone to make an effort to decrease the

public's cynicism. Therefore, it is critical to continue to try to understand how cynicism develops, and to what factors it is most closely related, in order to gain a better understanding not only of why people are cynical, but also what can be done to decrease cynicism about politics.

As it relates to media bias and young voters, the link also remains unclear. In other words, are young voters more cynical because they perceive a media bias exists? And, to what extent does their political ideology factor into their cynicism and media diet? This study will seek to, in part, explore these remaining questions.

Rationale

Cable news is becoming increasingly important in covering political events and the viewership numbers for cable news networks have now surpassed the viewership numbers for broadcast news channels (Alan, 2003). Because cable news is an influential source of political information and Americans are socialized through messages received on television, it is important to gain a better understanding of how political messages on cable networks work in the socialization process of individuals, especially young adults, age 18 to 29, who experience voting in democratic elections for the first time in their lives. In addition to researching cable news in this study, the leading national broadcast network news stations (NBC, CBS, and ABC) were included as well to see if there are differences in the interpretations of cable news networks messages and those on broadcast news (Tompkins, 2005). While research from psychology and communication has examined how political socialization takes place at an early age, the ongoing and constant process of socialization is often

overlooked and can be just as crucial to the process (Greenstein, 1965) for various voting groups, such as the less experienced young voter group.

Because family and political socialization have been heavily studied, along with the effect mass media has on political knowledge, this research study examines the relationship mass media, particularly television media, has on the continued socialization of young adults ages 18 to 24. Based on previous research on political socialization, both in the family and on television, along with existing research on cable news media, this study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Will the amount of television consumed correlate with a change in the level of political knowledge, political cynicism, and media bias young adults have?

RQ2: What is the relationship between political knowledge and perceived bias in the televised news media?

RQ3: Will cynicism and knowledge of young adult viewers vary according to their network news viewing preference?

RQ4: Will perceived bias and/or news viewing preference vary according to party affiliation?

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to explore what role television news viewing patterns play in young adults' levels of political knowledge, political cynicism, and political affiliation. In order to examine the research questions posed in this study, a survey instrument was used to determine levels of political cynicism in young adults, as well as their news viewing patterns and level of political knowledge.

Subjects

A total of 426 subjects participated in this study, consisting of undergraduate (n = 418) and graduate students (n = 8) enrolled in communication courses at a large Midwestern university. After 29 subjects were removed due to incomplete responses or exceeding the maximum age range, a total of 397 (undergraduate = 391, graduate = 6) subjects met the proper criteria and their data was analyzed. These subjects ranged in age from 18 to 24 ($M = 20$, $SD = 1.4$). Of those subjects, 236 (59%) were female and 161 (41%) were male. When describing political beliefs 156 (39%) subjects identified themselves as Republican, 152 (38%) as Democrat and 89 (23%) identified as "Independent/ Other." When subjects were asked to report whether or not they voted in the 2004 Presidential election, 209 (53%) said no, while 188 (47%) said yes.

Procedures and Measures

This study was conducted via the online survey service Survey Monkey. Participants were able to log into the survey via a link provided on their course websites. Students who were enrolled in communication studies courses in the

summer and fall of 2006 were informed about this survey by their instructors and had the option of completing the survey for course credit. The questionnaire used in this study gathered information about participants' political cynicism, television and news viewing patterns, perception of bias in the news media, political knowledge, as well as additional demographic information (See Appendix A-HSCL).

Political Cynicism Measure

The survey used single-item questions in order to measure some of the respondent's feelings. The cynicism scale (Kaid et al., 2000; Rosenstone et al., 1997) was a summation of eight items used to determine the level of trust or confidence in government. The scale included efficacy items such as "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do" and distrust items such as "One cannot always trust what politicians say." Respondents were asked to agree or disagree on a 5-point scale. These items achieved an acceptable Cronbach's alpha level for reliability ($\alpha = .68$), which is similar to other studies (i.e., Kaid et al., 2000; $\alpha = .62$). Thus an overall mean score from all 8 items was calculated for analysis.

News Media Bias Measure

A six-item scale was used to capture the respondents' perceived bias on different news networks. The items asked about the respondent's feelings toward each of the different networks that were a focus of this study. The questions read "Do you see (insert network) as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?" The response choices were in the form of a semantic differential scale and ranged from (1) Very Liberal to (7) Very Conservative. These responses helped to

distinguish how the participants felt about the bias of different televised news media outlets. The Cronbach's alpha level for reliability on this measure was low ($\alpha = .48$).

Political Knowledge Measure

The next measure was used to determine political knowledge. This scale was adapted from Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1996) scale on political knowledge. This scale contained five questions about the participants' political knowledge. The Cronbach's alpha level for reliability was low on this measure ($\alpha = .64$). These questions inquired as to whether or not the participants knew what office was held by Dick Cheney, who the current governor of their home was, which party had the most representatives in the House of Representatives, and which party was considered more conservative. An aggregate score was used to determine the political knowledge score of each survey participant.

News Viewing Preferences Measure

The last scale used in this research measured news viewing preferences. The scale design was adapted from previous studies (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). These items achieved an acceptable Cronbach's alpha level for reliability ($\alpha = .67$). The survey sought to find out how frequently participants utilized different forms of news media to gain information. This scale consisted of five questions which asked how frequently participants viewed different media sources—morning news shows, local news, national news, daytime talk shows, late night talk shows—to gain news information.

Data Analysis

In order to answer the four research questions, a series of statistical tests were conducted. A correlation analysis was used to look for relationships between the amount of television consumed and the difference in levels of political knowledge, political cynicism, and media bias in young voters. To answer the second research question on the relationship between political knowledge and perceived media bias in the televised media Pearson's r correlations were performed. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether or not news viewing patterns influenced cynicism and/or knowledge of young adult viewers. Finally, a one-way ANOVA and crosstabs was also used to determine if political affiliation influenced perceived bias and/or news viewing preferences. Post-hoc tests were also used in instances where they were appropriate.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Amount of television consumed

The first research question asked if the amount of television consumed would correlate with a change in level of political knowledge, political cynicism, and media bias in young adults. To test this research question Pearson's r correlations were conducted. The results indicated there were no significant correlations between the hours of television watched and political knowledge, cynicism, or perceived bias. Further analysis using a one-way ANOVA was conducted, with the number of reported news viewing hours per week (responses included, 0-3, 4-7, 8-11, and 11+) as the independent variable and level of political knowledge, political cynicism, and media bias as the dependent variables. The results indicated there were no significant differences in the hours of television consumed ($M = 9.67, SD = 6.85$) and subjects' levels of political knowledge ($M = 4.11, SD = 1.22$), subjects' levels of political cynicism ($M = 3.20, SD = .582$), or subjects' levels of media bias ($M = 3.99, SD = .528$).

Political knowledge and bias

The second research question asked if there was a relationship between political knowledge and perceived bias in the televised news media. To test this research question Pearson's r correlations were conducted. The results indicated there was no significant correlation between a young voters' level of political knowledge and their perceived bias in the televised news media ($r = -.020$).

News viewing preferences effect on cynicism and political knowledge

The third research question asked if news-viewing patterns influence cynicism and political knowledge of young adult voters. A one-way ANOVA was used to test this question. Results showed there was no significant relationship between young voters' news viewing patterns and level of cynicism ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .571$) in regard to network news stations (See Table 1). However, there was a significant relationship between network news viewing preferences and political knowledge level ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.19$), of young voters $F(3, 393) = 3.75$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .028$. Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc tests found that CBS and Other networks viewers have significantly higher knowledge scores than ABC and NBC viewers, $p < .05$ (see Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of One-Way ANOVA Analysis for Cynicism and Political Knowledge by Broadcast Network

| Broadcast Network | Mean | SD | F | p |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| <i>Cynicism</i> | | | .396 | .756 |
| ABC | 3.20 | .560 | | |
| NBC | 3.23 | .567 | | |
| CBS | 3.14 | .604 | | |
| Other | 3.17 | .566 | | |
| <i>Political Knowledge</i> | | | 3.75 | .011 |
| ABC | 3.76 | 1.43 | | |
| NBC | 4.09 | 1.20 | | |
| CBS | 4.21 | 1.56 | | |
| Other | 4.30 | 1.01 | | |

In regard to cable news networks there were multiple significant findings.

First, a one-way ANOVA showed there was a significant difference in the level of

young voters' cynicism based on which cable network they viewed most $F(3, 393) = 3.139, p = .025, \eta^2 = .023$ (See Table 2). Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc tests found that viewers of CNN ($M = 3.17, SD = .585$), MSNBC ($M = 3.22, SD = .514$), and CNBC ($M = 3.34, SD = .542$) had significantly more cynicism than Fox News Channel viewers ($M = 3.09, SD = .572$), $p = .05$. Next, there was also a significant difference in the level of political knowledge of young voters based on the cable network ($M = 4.11, SD = 1.19$) viewed most frequently $F(3, 393) = 6.209, p = .000, \eta^2 = .045$. Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc tests found that viewers of CNBC ($M = 4.13, SD = 1.11$) and CNN ($M = 4.38, SD = 1.05$) had significantly more political knowledge than viewers of MSNBC ($M = 3.79, SD = 1.41$) and Fox News Channel ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.32$), $p = .05$.

Table 2

Summary of One-Way ANOVA Analysis for Cynicism and Political Knowledge by Cable Network

| Cable Network | Mean | SD | F | p |
|----------------------------|------|------|-------|------|
| <i>Cynicism</i> | | | 3.139 | .025 |
| FNC | 3.09 | .572 | | |
| CNN | 3.17 | .585 | | |
| MSNBC | 3.22 | .514 | | |
| CNBC | 3.34 | .542 | | |
| <i>Political Knowledge</i> | | | 6.209 | .025 |
| FNC | 3.80 | 1.32 | | |
| CNN | 4.38 | 1.05 | | |
| MSNBC | 3.79 | 1.41 | | |
| CNBC | 4.13 | 1.11 | | |

Party affiliation

The fourth and final research question asked if perceived bias and news viewing patterns varied according to party affiliation. In order to evaluate this question a one-way ANOVA and crosstabs were conducted. A one-way ANOVA results indicated there was a significant difference by party affiliation in perceived bias of the televised news media $F(2, 394) = 15.15, p = .000, \eta^2 = .075$ (See Table 3). A Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc test found that Democrats ($M = 4.11, SD = .441$) and those who identified “Independent/Other” ($M = 4.04, SD = .512$) had significantly higher perceived bias than Republicans ($M = 3.81, SD = .528$), $p = .05$.

Table 3

Summary of One-Way ANOVA Analysis for Party Affiliation Influence on Amount of Television Consumed and Perceived Bias

| | Mean | SD | F | p |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------|------|
| <i>Perceived Bias</i> | | | 15.16 | .000 |
| Republican | 3.81 | .528 | | |
| Democrat | 4.11 | .441 | | |
| Other | 4.04 | .512 | | |

Finally, a chi-square analysis indicated there is no significant difference across party affiliation in the broadcast network subjects preferred for news coverage ($p = .110$). However, a chi-square analysis did indicate a significant difference by party in the cable network subjects preferred for news coverage, $\chi^2(6, N = 397) = 50.63, p < .001, \text{Cramér's } V = .25$ (See Table 4). Republicans were most likely to report a preference for FNC (73, 47%), while 18% ($n = 16$) of others and 14% ($n =$

21) of Democrats indicated FNC as their primary cable news network. Democrats were most likely to report a preference for CNN, 55% (n = 84), while 44% (n = 39) of Independents/Others and 29% (n = 45) of Republicans reported turning to CNN. Proportionately speaking, “Independent/Other” were more likely to mention MSNBC, 11% (n = 10), with Democrats tuning in 9% (n= 13) of the time, and Republicans 7% (n = 11) of the time. “Independent/Other” were also more likely to mention CNBC, 27% (n = 24), while Democrats tuned in 22% (n = 34) of the time and Republicans 17% (n = 27) of the time.

Table 4

Summary of Chi-Square Analyses for Party Affiliation and Cable Network Preference

| Party Affiliation (N = 397) | <i>Republican</i> | <i>Democrat</i> | <i>Other</i> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>FNC</i> | 73 (46.8%) | 21 (13.8%) | 16 (18%) |
| <i>CNN</i> | 45 (28.8%) | 84 (55.3%) | 39 (43.8%) |
| <i>MSNBC</i> | 11 (7.1%) | 13 (8.6%) | 10 (11.2%) |
| <i>CNBC</i> | 27 (17.3%) | 34 (22.4%) | 24 (27%) |

Chapter 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine what contribution different televised media outlets have on young voters. Factors such as political knowledge, political cynicism, and media bias were all examined in order to analyze the potential effects of mass televised media. While there are countless studies to analyze agenda setting in the news media and the effects the news media has on its viewers (e.g. Tompkins, 2005, Powell & Cowart, 2003, Graber, 2002), this study adds to this line of work by examining differences in viewers of cable and network news. The number of cable news viewers in the United States is increasing providing reason for understanding what viewers of different networks gather from their viewing (Tompkins, 2005). Furthermore, while network news is typically viewed as unbiased, or nonpartisan, cable news networks are generally categorized as liberal or conservative by many of their viewers. This research provides an interesting look at the implications of similarities and differences in the viewers of different televised news networks.

This research yields three key findings. The first key finding is viewers of Fox News are less knowledgeable than viewers of any other cable network. Along with this, Fox News viewers are also the least cynical viewers among cable news networks. The third key finding showed that Democrats perceived more bias in the media than Republicans. This adds an interesting piece to the puzzle in regard to bias in the news media as previous research has found each group—Democrats and Republicans—to perceive more bias in the news media.

The first research question examined the relationship between the amount of television consumed by an individual and that individual's political knowledge, political affiliation, political cynicism, and media bias. The study's results yielded no significant correlations between the amount of time in television viewing and their political knowledge, political affiliation, political cynicism, or media bias. While the amount of television consumed may vary drastically among individuals, television viewing frequency may not affect other types of socialization.

The second research question tested the relationship between political knowledge and perceived bias in the televised news media. The results found no significant relationship between these two factors. Therefore, one's political knowledge did not significantly increase or decrease in relationship to the increase or decrease in perceived bias in television news. Previous research shows that people do perceive bias in the media (Pareneti, 1996; Lee, 2005; Watts et al., 1999; Domke et al., 1999). It also shows that political knowledge is not particularly high among Americans (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). However, there has been no link drawn between political knowledge and perceived bias. There may not be a link between these two factors due to the fact that whether a person is knowledgeable about politics or not they can perceive the media as biased. It would seem as though a person with more political knowledge would be more likely to perceive a bias in reporting due to the fact that they may feel they know more of the facts. Yet this research was unable to draw that conclusion.

Political knowledge was also examined in the third research question. This question sought to determine if news-viewing preferences have any influence on levels of cynicism and political knowledge in young voters. While no significant relationship between young voters' network news viewing preferences and their level of cynicism emerged, significant differences were found between the network news outlet being watched by young voters and their political knowledge scores. Specifically, those viewing CBS or "other network news" possessed significantly higher political knowledge than did viewers of ABC and NBC. There is no way to determine whether this relationship is formed due to politically knowledgeable news viewers selecting CBS or if CBS news simply increases the political knowledge of its viewers more effectively than other stations. However, it does present interesting possibilities for further analysis. For instance, one might consider the influence of the twenty-four year long career of Dan Rather as the anchor for CBS Evening News in either the design and presentation of the news on CBS or in the type of viewer attracted to his newstyle; whereas ABC and NBC have both had numerous anchors during this same time period perhaps attracting a more sporadic and less committed viewer. Further, is there a structural difference between news stations in how the news is presented that offers better information retention for CBS viewers? While this study is not designed to answer these specific questions, the difference in political knowledge and news station is worth further exploration.

While there was a significant finding in regard to political knowledge and network news choice, there was an even more interesting finding between young

voters' cynicism and their cable news network choice. Viewers of CNN, MSNBC, and CNBC reported significantly higher levels of cynicism than viewers of Fox News. This finding could suggest several different trends are emerging among these cable news networks. First, CNN, MSNBC and CNBC may be reporting more hard line news than Fox News Channel, which could in turn encourage viewers to form their own opinions on the events being reported. While forming opinions on the news can be a positive experience, thinking and processing what is seen in the news could lead a person to be more cynical in their viewing. In addition, the presentation style of many of the Fox News Channel anchors and correspondents is much more personable and friendly, which may in turn lead them to be more believable, and therefore lead the viewing audience to be less cynical. Next, it is possible that the more conservative base audience for Fox News Channel watches the channel with less cynicism as the channel is often reinforcing their views and beliefs rather than challenging them. On the other hand, CNN, MSNBC, and CNBC all report the news in a manner that may challenge personally held beliefs of the viewing audience, in turn causing them to have a higher level of cynicism. While these networks have different reporting styles, each of them uses a more hard line approach. Whatever the reason may be, this is an important finding along the road to understanding the relationship between news viewing patterns and the viewers perceptions of the news.

The theoretical implications of these results may in fact offer insights as to the relevance of cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) in this context. Although not a key foundation for this study's design, the results suggest that perhaps the type of

news a person is viewing could affect their attitudes and behaviors. Further, based on these results, ongoing research in the area may seek to examine the application of selective exposure theory (Graber, 2002). While Graber (2002) argues “selective exposure occurs to a lesser extent than was thought initially” (p. 205), it remains likely that the increasing number of cable channels encourages selective exposure. With the increased segmentation of content and the emerging differences – or at least perceived differences – in the styles of news coverage and presentation across the cable news channels, viewers can choose to expose themselves to presentation styles with which they are most comfortable and which do not challenge pre-existing assumptions. The finding here that Fox viewers were both more Republican and less cynical offers opportunity for additional study in this area.

As was the case with broadcast news networks, there was also a significant difference in political knowledge of viewers among cable news networks. The results indicated that viewers who turned to CNBC and CNN had significantly more political knowledge than viewers of MSNBC and Fox News Channel. It is easy to point to the fact that Fox News Channel viewers are less cynical and have lower political knowledge than viewers of CNN as a sign that CNN may be delivering news with more factual information. The information they provide, along with the style in which they report it could lead viewers’ to think and process the information more logically. These two cable networks have gone back and forth in the ratings over the last two years with Fox News currently in the lead, but they are undoubtedly the top two cable news networks (Nielsen Media Research, 2004). While the findings in this research

could help to build an argument for a news network increasing the political knowledge of its viewers, it is more likely that viewers with different levels of political knowledge simply better understand and identify with different networks.

While there is no conclusive evidence to prove that the majority of Fox News Channels viewers are Republicans or that the majority of CNN's viewers are Democrats, it is a common belief that many researchers and political followers hold. This research also supports this belief. Fox News Channel was the preference of cable news network for almost half of the Republicans in this study as 47% indicated tuning into Fox News Channel. To the contrary, only 14% of Democrats reported tuning into Fox News Channel. CNN was 55% of the Democrats viewing choice, while 29% of the Republicans indicated tuning into CNN. This finding is in line with Gleitman's (1986) cognitive balance theory, "which concluded that people, with their established values, beliefs, and attitudes do not like to encounter information that contradicts those beliefs and attitudes; they find it disturbing to be confronted with such inconsistencies" (p. 191).

In addition to the finding that Fox News Channel viewers are both less cynical and have lower political knowledge than viewers of CNN, data relating to the final research question further substantiate that there is a difference among news viewers and their political socialization. The fourth research question asked if perceived bias and news viewing patterns varied according to party affiliation. Of note, there is a significant relationship between respondent's party affiliation and their perceived bias in the televised news media. Specifically, Democrats and Independents reported a

greater perception of bias in the televised news media than did Republicans. By Republicans reporting less perceived bias, the trend towards conservative viewers being more passive and accepting the news content is continued. However, this finding contradicts conclusions drawn by Goldberg (2001) that conservative critics believe most journalists are liberal and Democrats and that news coverage reflects reporters' political leanings. It is not possible to conclude why Republicans are more accepting of the news but multiple theories may be offered. First, Republicans may have more trust in their news source (Fox News as indicated in this research) and therefore do not need to be as cynical or biased in their viewing (Alterman, 2003). A differing view could be that Republicans show less political knowledge, are not as cynical or as biased in their viewing, and therefore are not knowledgeable enough to even differentiate between factual news and dramatic news coverage. Whatever the reasons, this research does at least show a trend towards viewers of Fox News being less knowledgeable and less biased while Democrats and viewers of CNN seem to question the news content more while being more knowledgeable and perceiving more bias in the news coverage they watch.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this research was able to answer many of the relevant questions posed, there were limitations on this data. First and foremost this research was self-reported survey research conducted via an online survey source. Survey research has always encountered the built in limitation of self reported data. Even though this limitation exists, scales from past studies, which reported acceptable internal reliability, were

incorporated to help the legitimacy of this research. Along with this, the research was promoted in communication studies courses at one university. However, the sample in this research was equally distributed by party affiliation, gender, and age, and there were participants from many different states. An online survey accomplished the goal of obtaining a large sample size in which to increase the statistical strength of the findings.

Future research in political socialization could benefit from the findings of this research by expanding to include more about the socialization experiences of young adults at the present time, as well as in their childhood years. This could be accomplished by looking at a cohort group over time in order to see how their responses to questions about their family change. There could be a greater emphasis on exploring the parent's political views in the home they grew up in or the type of school system through which they were educated. A study looking at one cohort group over time may be useful in getting an accurate picture of how children are being socialized over time. This could be useful in further analyzing children and the numerous things that influence them. Other question sets could include information about their television viewing habits and/or rules while growing up and their experience or lack thereof in student governments throughout their years in school. There has been other research conducted on cable and network news programming, but future research could look at particular shows and correspondents to see what type of people—Republican or Democrat, viewers age, socioeconomic status, etc.--are drawn to them. While this information may seem more important to a network

executive looking for help with programming decisions, it is very valuable in the academic community to increase the knowledge of researchers seeking to understand what causes people to gather information from different sources. It is also important to know what people are learning or not learning from the news source they spend the most time viewing.

In the early stages of development for this study, many alternative ideas were considered for inclusion in the study. One that may be of particular importance for future research is the inclusion of videotaped segments of news stories broadcast on different networks to be used as a stimulus for different groups of participants to view prior to filling out the survey questions. This could help participants recall their feelings about a particular network's broadcast style or it could help them to develop ideas about the networks broadcast style if they have little or no exposure beforehand. This could help find more accurate results in the viewing patterns portion of the research and could allow a researcher to delve further into the questions they ask about the particular media networks.

Despite limitations that were faced in this survey research, there were findings that will add to the current research focus on political socialization and mass media. This research has added to the debate about the common viewer for Fox News Channel and for CNN. It was clear through this research that Republicans not only preferred Fox News Channel and Democrats preferred CNN, but also those viewers of Fox News channel were less cynical, less knowledgeable, and less biased than viewers of CNN. It was also obvious that there are much clearer and more obvious

differences in the viewers of cable news networks than broadcast news networks. Nearly all of the significant results found in this study were found in regard to cable news networks rather than broadcast news networks. Furthermore, this research has added to the continually building research on politics and mass media, which has intrigued academicians since before the advent of television. Hopefully, this research will assist in furthering the research of others as they set out to find even more connections between what we see and hear in the media, and how that translates into action in politics.

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Appendix A: HSCL Form

Political Socialization Questionnaire

1. What is your name? _____
2. What is your teacher's last name? _____
3. What state have you resided in the majority of your life? _____
4. What is your age? _____
5. Your gender is _____ Male _____ Female
6. What year are you currently in your college career?
 - (1) Freshman
 - (2) Sophomore
 - (3) Junior
 - (4) Senior
 - (5) Graduate Student
7. Which of the following best represents your ethnic background (*circle one*):
 - (1) Asian or Pacific Islander
 - (2) Non-Hispanic White (Caucasian)
 - (3) African-American
 - (4) Spanish or Hispanic origin
 - (5) Multi-racial or mixed race
 - (6) Native American
 - (7) Other (*name*): _____
8. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or other?
 - (1) Republican
 - (2) Democrat
 - (3) Independent
 - (4) Other (please specify) _____
9. Thinking of the party affiliation that you have just identified, what is the **strength of your affiliation**?
 - (1) Weak-----
 - (2)-----
 - (3)-----
 - (4)-----
 - (5) Strong
10. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or the Democratic party?
 - (1) Democrat-----
 - (2)-----
 - (3)-----
 - (4)-----
 - (5) Republican

11. Are you registered as a Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Reform, or did you name no party when you registered?
- (1) Republican
 - (2) Democrat
 - (3) Libertarian
 - (4) Reform
 - (5) No affiliation
12. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?
- (1) Yes
 - (2) No
13. Do you plan to vote in the 2006 midterm elections?
- (1) Yes
 - (2) No
14. How informed would you say you are about politics?
- (1) Not Informed----- (2)----- (3)----- (4)----- (5)----- (6)----- (7) Informed
15. On political issues, do you consider yourself a:
- (1) Liberal
 - (2) Conservative
 - (3) Moderate
16. Do you think of yourself as closer to being liberal or being conservative?
- (1) Liberal----- (2)----- (3)----- (4)----- (5)----- (6)----- (7) Conservative
17. In the debate over abortion policy, do you consider yourself pro-life, pro-choice or somewhere in between?
- (1) Pro-life
 - (2) Pro-choice
 - (3) Somewhere in between

DIRECTIONS: Following are some feelings about politics and politicians. For each one, please circle whether you strongly agree, agree somewhat, have no opinion, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly.

18. Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

19. One never knows what politicians really think.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

20. People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

21. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

22. One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

23. Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

24. Politicians are more interested in power than in what people think.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

25. One cannot always trust what politicians say.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Have no Opinion Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

26. How many hours a week do you spend watching television? _____

27. Of those hours, how many hours a week do you watch news?

- (1) 0-3 hours
- (2) 4-7 hours
- (3) 8-11 hours
- (4) 11 or more hours

28. Within the range chosen above, please also provide your best estimate in hours and minutes that you watch news per week; _____ hours and _____ minutes.

29. What broadcast network do you turn to most often for news coverage?

- (1) ABC
- (2) NBC
- (3) CBS
- (4) Other

30. What cable network do you turn to most often for news coverage?
- (1) Fox News Channel
 - (2) Cable News Network (CNN)
 - (3) MSNBC
 - (4) CNBC
 - (5) Other
31. Which network news station do you most identify with?
- (1) ABC
 - (2) NBC
 - (3) CBS
 - (4) Other
 - (5) None
32. Which cable news station do you most identify with?
- (1) Fox News Channel
 - (2) Cable News Network (CNN)
 - (3) MSNBC
 - (4) CNBC
 - (5) Other
33. Do you see NBC as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?
- (1) Very Liberal----(2)----(3)----(4)----(5)----(6)----(7) Very Conservative
34. Do you see Fox News Channel as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?
- (1) Very Liberal----(2)----(3)----(4)----(5)----(6)----(7) Very Conservative
35. Do you see ABC as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?
- (1) Very Liberal----(2)----(3)----(4)----(5)----(6)----(7) Very Conservative
36. Do you see CBS as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?
- (1) Very Liberal----(2)----(3)----(4)----(5)----(6)----(7) Very Conservative
37. Do you see CNN as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?
- (1) Very Liberal----(2)----(3)----(4)----(5)----(6)----(7) Very Conservative
38. Do you see MSNBC as being more liberal or more conservative in their reporting?
- (1) Very Liberal----(2)----(3)----(4)----(5)----(6)----(7) Very Conservative

39. Do you trust the media to provide fair and balanced information to viewers?
 (1) Not at all -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very much so
40. How much of the time do you feel you can trust the news media?
 (1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Always
41. How frequently do you watch **Morning News Shows** (example: Good Morning America , Fox & Friends in the Morning, Today Show, Live with Regis and Kelly, etc.)?
 (1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
42. How frequently do you watch **Local News** (example: local KC or Topeka News, morning or evening, etc.)?
 (1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
43. How frequently do you watch **National News** (example: CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, ABC World News Tonight, Fox News Channel Special Report with Brit Hume, CNN Lou Dobbs Tonight, etc.)?
 (1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
44. How frequently do you watch **Daytime Talk Shows** (example: Oprah, The View, Dr. Phil, CNN Your World Today, Fox News Channel Fox News Live, etc.)?
 (1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
45. How frequently do you watch **Late Night Talk Shows/Comedy** (example: The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Late Show with David Letterman, Late Night with Conan O' Brien, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, etc.)?
 (1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
46. Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Dick Cheney?
47. Who is the current Governor of the state of Kansas?
48. Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington currently?
49. Would you say that one of the political parties is more conservative than the other at the national level?
 (1) Yes
 (2) No

50. If yes, which party is more conservative?
(1) Republican
(2) Democratic
51. How frequently do you watch **Morning News Shows** in order to receive news (example: Good Morning America , Fox & Friends in the Morning, Today Show, Live with Regis and Kelly, etc.)?
(1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
52. How frequently do you watch **Local News** in order to receive news (example: local KC or Topeka News, morning or evening, etc.)?
(1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
53. How frequently do you watch **National News** in order to receive news (example: CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, ABC World News Tonight, Fox News Channel Special Report with Brit Hume, CNN Lou Dobbs Tonight, etc.)?
(1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
54. How frequently do you watch **Daytime Talk Shows** in order to receive news (example: Oprah, The View, Dr. Phil, CNN Your World Today, Fox News Channel Fox News Live, etc.)?
(1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently
55. How frequently do you watch **Late Night Talk Shows/Comedy** in order to receive news (example: The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Late Show with David Letterman, Late Night with Conan O' Brien, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, etc.)?
(1) Never -----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----(6)-----(7) Very Frequently

STOP HERE

Thank you for taking the time to thoughtfully fill out this survey.

Your responses are extremely important to this research!