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The Affective Citizen Communication Model:
How Emotions Engage Citizens with Politics through Media and Discussion

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The Affective Citizen Communication Model:

How Emotions Engage Citizens with Politics through Media and Discussion

BY

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Dedication

To Tere and Simón, who have motivated me to be a most affective—if not effective!—

husband, father, and friend.

Acknowledgements

It is said that the most pleasant section to write on a dissertation is the acknowledgements section. I agree. I wouldn't be writing these lines were it not for the tremendous assistance provided to me by many faculty, friends and family members. Here at last I have the formal opportunity of saying "Thank you, I owe you big time!"

Max McCombs has been a supportive advisor to me throughout my graduate education. Since the day we first met, back in Santiago when I was still a working journalist for *El Mercurio*, he has given me a push—both intellectually and financially—to move forward in my academic career. My first job as a graduate research assistant, my first book chapter, my first experimental design, my first trip as a guest lecturer, my first job as conference organizer, and my first reader of the master's thesis—I owe these formative experiences to Max. Most importantly, he has taught me how to excel in academia without becoming an arrogant scholar in the process. He has always respected my work outside agenda setting—including this dissertation—and offered detailed comments of my writings whenever I asked him. More often than not, I have found his comments a cause of gratitude (for their detailed consideration of my ideas), envy ("Why didn't I think of *that* before?") and amusement (for his ability to weave humor into the most arcane theoretical discussions). I am honored by his dual role as a mentor and a friend. I will never forget our joint "content analysis" sessions, especially when he provided the "raw data" (I'm still savoring that Silver Oak!) and our wives helped us estimate "inter-coder reliability." Thank you, Max, for helping me these past six years. I will be forever indebted to you.

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was Spanish, and with a knack for listening to classic rock non-stop, AC/DC included. I admire his tenacity and passion for work, even when excitement translated into heated discussions. No one else but Homero could have created and directed the CJCR, a formidable collective of researchers, and I will be always grateful for his generous invitation to become part of this "monster"—his words—and operate as student leader. His generosity spills to my resumé in many other ways too. First and foremost, he is co-author of many of my publications, which speaks in a loud voice about his dedication to the graduate program and its students. Homero has also helped me immeasurably in my professional socialization. He has always taken time to introduce me to people within the discipline, especially during the AEJMC socials, and has been a strong, persistent advocate for me—the dozen or so letters of recommendation he has written for me are testament to that. I'm very fortunate of having him not only as co-chair of this dissertation, but as an enduring friend and colleague that has always gone beyond the call of duty. *¡Gracias, pirámide!*

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And Simón, our beautiful son, when you finally grow up and get to read this, I want you to know: you have been inspiring and amazing me every day since you were born. You truly make me want to be a better person. *Eres lo mejor*.

The Affective Citizen Communication Model:
How Emotions Engage Citizens with Politics through Media and Discussion

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This dissertation seeks to improve our understanding of the process by which emotions enable citizens to learn about public affairs and engage in political activities during electoral campaigns. It advances a theoretical model that incorporates the dynamics of emotions, various forms of media use, interpersonal communication and political involvement. This affective citizen communication model integrates into a single framework the insights of affective intelligence theory (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000) and the work on communication mediation (McLeod et al., 1999, 2001) and its two iterations, cognitive mediation (Eveland, 2001) and citizen communication mediation (Cho et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2005, 2007). More specifically, it suggests that the effects of emotions triggered by political candidates (e.g., enthusiasm, anxiety, anger) on knowledge of the candidates' stands on issues and on political participation are largely mediated by communication variables, including news media use, political discussion and debate viewing. By positing emotions as an antecedent of both mediated

and interpersonal communication, the study extends current research based on affective intelligence theory. At the same time, the study adds emotions to communication mediation processes, which to date have been studied from a mostly cognitive perspective.

To test the relationships between the variables identified in the affective citizen communication model, I rely on panel survey data collected for the 2008 and 2004 U.S. presidential elections by the American National Election Studies (ANES) and the National Annenberg Election Surveys (NAES), respectively. Two types of structural equation models are tested, cross sectional (to relate individual differences) and auto-regressive (to relate aggregate change across waves). Results suggest that positive emotions spark media use, whereas negative emotions spark political discussions, and both types of communication behavior influence issue knowledge and participation in campaign activities. Furthermore, the theorized structure is found to perform better than an alternative structure where communication variables cause positive and negative emotions. Thus, results provide strong support for the proposed affective citizen communication model. Refinements to the proposed model, connections with existing theories of political communication, such as agenda setting and partisan selective exposure, and directions for future research are also discussed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

White students appalled by the violence in the South in the 1960s went on buses into a world they had not known to seek justice for others. Similarly, the environmental movement, the AIDS movement, the pro-choice and pro-life movements, and many others recognize not only that claims of justice must be advanced but also that people get angry, that people get attentive, that people get hopeful, and that they can be moved to action by emotions evoked by well-crafted campaigns (Marcus, 2002, p. 45).

Political communication is built on emotions. Fear ads are a mainstay of American electoral campaigns (Geer, 2006; Mark, 2009). Candidates tailor their messages to spark enthusiasm and hope in their voters—and anxiety and anger toward their opponents (Brader, 2006b). Journalists are accused of a negativity bias towards politicians and the political process in general (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Patterson, 1993). Anger and resentment are the defining traits of many grassroots movements and their messages, from the New Left of the 1960s to the tea party of the Obama age (Bunch, 2010; Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001).

The commonality of affect in politics notwithstanding, most theories of political communication tend to deemphasize the role played by emotions. Agenda setting (McCombs, 2004), priming (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) and framing (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2009; Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2001)—the three most salient paradigms of media effects in the field (Graber & Smith, 2005)—as well as longstanding models of citizen communications, including the two-step flow (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) and democratic deliberation (Gastil, 2008), are all rooted in models that stress cognitive aspects, such as attention, elaboration and knowledge activation (cf., Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Eveland, 2004; Price & Tewksbury, 1997).

If included at all, affective aspects such as arousal, valence and discrete positive and negative emotions are brought in as auxiliary variables, perhaps as moderators of a

more important relationship or as additional consequences of a causally prior cognitive process. With some notable exceptions (e.g., Brader, 2005; Coleman & Wu, 2010; Druckman & McDermott, 2008; Holbert & Hansen, 2008; Miller, 2007; Parsons, 2010b; Valentino, Hutchings, Banks, & Davis, 2008; Way & Masters, 1996a), political communication research has not fully realized the fact that emotions are central to human experience. This is neither surprising nor unique to the field of political communication. There is a long tradition in Western thought—think Plato, Descartes and Kant—that downplays the contribution of affect (i.e., emotion) while highlighting the benefits of reason (i.e., cognition). Furthermore, the cognitive revolution that swept social psychology—one of the mother fields of political communication—in the 1950s and 1960s, with its human-mind-as-computer-processor metaphor, reinforced the prevalence of emotionally-devoid models of political communication (Marcus, 2003).

In the last two decades, however, the era of "cognitive imperialism" (Lau & Sears, 1986, p. 8) has receded, prompting observers to talk of an "affective revolution" within the social sciences (Holbert & Geidner, 2009, p. 353). While the idea of revolution may sound hyperbolic, certainly more scholars in political communication are studying the determinant role played by emotions in human behavior and decision making (a good overview is the edited volume by Neuman, Marcus, MacKuen, & Crigler, 2007). In the last few years, various specialized journals in the field of politics and communication have devoted special issues to the theme of emotions. This growing interest notwithstanding, current scholarship has only scratched the surface on the affective determinants of political communication processes.

If political communication is to become a more relevant field, researchers need to be aware of existing models in related fields of inquiry and update their understanding of the processes of communication about politics accordingly. Perhaps

the best example of this productive route is the work on selective exposure, which started firmly entrenched in social psychology (e.g., Erlich, Guttman, Schönbach, & Mills, 1957; Freedman & Sears, 1965) and now is a central body of work within political communication (e.g., Stroud, 2011). Fortunately, this exercise is more attainable than before because we can borrow from existing theoretical approaches to emotion from psychology and political science—fields that have developed in the last two decades a rich literature on the links between emotion, cognition and behavior (for brief literature reviews on the study of affect in each of these fields, see Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999; Marcus, 2000, respectively).

Research Objectives

This dissertation seeks to improve our understanding of how citizens learn about public affairs and engage in political activities by advancing a model that incorporates the dynamics of emotions, various forms of media use, and interpersonal communication to explain citizens' political involvement during electoral campaigns. This model, which I have labeled the affective citizen communication model, integrates into a single framework the insights of affective intelligence theory (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000) and the work on communication mediation (McLeod et al., 1999; McLeod et al., 2001) and its two iterations, cognitive mediation (Eveland, 2001; Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003) and citizen communication mediation (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005; Shah et al., 2007). More specifically, the affective citizen communication model proposes that the effects of positive (e.g., hope) and negative (e.g., anger) emotions triggered by political candidates on citizens' knowledge of the candidates' stands on the issues and on participation in

campaign activities are largely mediated by information-seeking behaviors, such as news media use, debate viewing and political discussions with peers.

By positing emotions as an antecedent of both media use and interpersonal communication, the study extends current research based on affective intelligence theory. In the realm of political communication, this theory has focused mostly on campaign news attention as an outcome of political emotions. Conversely, studies using affective intelligence theory to study the impact of emotions on political discussion tend to so in isolation of media variables. At the same time, the dissertation adds emotions to communication mediation processes, which to date have been studied from a purely cognitive perspective only. Here lies the greatest contribution of the current study.

Importantly, the affective citizen communication model also builds a theoretical bridge between affective intelligence and communication mediation, two strands of the political communication literature that have developed separately but, nonetheless, are compatible. Affective intelligence has studied the direct link between feeling emotions towards political objects and individuals' learning of, and engagement with, political affairs, without specific attention to the intervening processes by which this influence occurs (MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010; Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Marcus, Wood, & Theiss-Morse, 1998). Communication mediation models, on the other hand, usually elaborate on the intervening psychological and communication processes between media use (e.g., attention, elaboration and deliberation) and outcomes such as civic participation, paying far less attention to the psychological underpinnings of media use beyond political interest and surveillance motivations (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Eveland, 2004; Holbert, 2005; Shah et al., 2007). Showing the compatibility between these two theoretical approaches is the main purpose of the study.

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To examine the relationships between the variables identified in the affective citizen communication model, I rely on panel data from the American National Election Study (ANES) of the 2008 U.S. presidential election and the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) of the 2004 U.S. presidential election. There are several advantages to employing separate data sets: (1) it provides a check on the generalizability of the theorized model across different election cycles; (2) it allows for variation in the time-span to measure effects; and (3) it permits to test the robustness of the substantive findings to alternative measurement of key variables. The use of two-wave panel data, on the other hand, allows stronger causal inference than cross-sectional data because it explicitly builds in the time dimension of a dynamic process that is thought to be of a causal nature (Finkel, 1995). That is, change in a set of variables can be directly measured. Furthermore, by having measured each key variable at two different points in time, alternative specifications to the proposed model can be tested and compared to find the best-fitting model. Prior measurement of control variables, on the other hand, makes it more plausible to regard them as exogenous to the processes connecting the variables of interest.

The data sets used in this dissertation, however, cannot fully address the problem of measurement error; three-wave panel surveys would be better equipped to separate instability from unreliability (Bartels, 2006). Furthermore, while panel surveys are more consistent with causal inference than cross-sectional surveys, it is important to note that they are not a cure all. The issue of omitting alternative causal factors looms all research that is not based on random assignment of participants to treatment conditions. Perhaps lab experiments could better address the causality quandary (although the variety of causal relationships implied by the affective citizen communication model are not easily captured in one single experiment). These

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limitations notwithstanding, use of the ANES and NAES panels was warranted because both are based on nationally representative samples, which are well equipped to address concerns over the external validity of the proposed model.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

A focus on political knowledge and participation as outcomes of interest is justified on both normative and empirical grounds. Democratic theory assumes a knowledgeable citizenry that is able to reach political decisions after careful consideration and evaluation of available information on current and future courses of action (Dahl, 1989, 1999). When people are informed about the affairs of the polity, they can better safeguard their preferences and check that the government acts in the public good (Delli-Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Luskin, 2003). A basic assumption of elections—the most visible manifestation of democracy—is that individuals use their knowledge to understand the issues being discussed and to vote in line with their interests (Althaus, 2001; Bartels, 1996; Wlezien & Soroka, 2007). On the other hand, it has long been recognized that the average level of political knowledge of the public, at least in the U.S., is low (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Converse, 1964; Lippmann, 1922) and skewed towards the better educated, higher income and dominant groups of society (Holbrook, 2002; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000). In fact, some scholars have argued that the current media environment, particularly with the diffusion of the Internet and cable television, has increased the gaps in political knowledge and involvement (e.g., Prior, 2007). This is a cause of concern because previous empirical research (Junn, 1991; Leighley, 1991) has demonstrated that political knowledge is positively correlated with active participation in politics (although the strength of this relationship is still a matter of dispute; see

Levendusky, 2011). And when people participate, they have a voice in public affairs, they can hold authorities accountable, and they are empowered to act on their own behalf (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). As Marcus (2002) argued, "participation is the irreducible requirement to ensure that the citizens retain, individually and collectively, the status of autonomous citizens" (pp. 42-43).

Furthermore, there is an empirical advantage for studying political knowledge and participation. Both concepts have been widely examined in the literature. By studying how emotions and communication relate to knowledge and engagement, the dissertation gains theoretical leverage: it can use and expand extant scholarship on the subject.

Examining the emotional foundation of communication, knowledge and participation is also important. From a scientific perspective, we can develop a more nuanced and accurate description of how citizens think, decide and behave in public affairs. Our models may be cognitive-dominated, but this does not mean that individuals' learning and engagement involves the cognitive system only; in fact, neuroscience tells us that it may be more appropriate to say that individuals are rational and cognitive *as a consequence* of being affective and emotional (Carver & White, 1994; Gray, 1985, 1987).

From a normative perspective, studying the important role played by emotions in driving information processing and stimulating democratically desirable outcomes could lead to new ways of reinvigorating citizen engagement. For government and policymakers, a better understanding of the role played by emotions may lead to developing more effective campaign messages, while politicians and individuals seeking public office would benefit from more successful mobilizing and recruitment efforts. For journalists wishing to spark greater attention to public affairs, understanding the role of

emotions could lead them to develop storytelling techniques that foster affective responses positively related with news attention and learning information. Most importantly, a better understanding of the role of affect can help citizens make better decisions. For instance, it has been shown that in an electoral campaign, affect towards the candidates can provide a useful—and, perhaps, more accurate—heuristic for one's evaluations of the merits of each candidate (Brady & Sniderman, 1985; Bucy & Newhagen, 1999).

ORGANIZATION

This dissertation is organized into four chapters in addition to this introduction. Chapter 2 summarizes the two main bodies of work informing the study, affective intelligence and communication mediation. Based on these two paradigms, a new model for linking emotions, communication, political information and behavior is introduced, the affective citizen communication model. This model posits that positive and negative emotions people feel towards political candidates trigger exposure to public affairs content in the media (i.e., news use and debate viewing) and political discussions (i.e., conversations with family and friends about politics and elections), which in turn influence levels of political knowledge (i.e., candidates' issue stances) and campaign behavior (i.e., political participation).

Chapter 3 describes the methods used in the analysis. First, I provide a general overview of the data sets, the ANES 2008-2009 Panel and the NAES 2004 Debates Panel. After addressing some of the problems in the conceptualization and operationalization of the main variables of the affective citizen communication model, I detail the measures used in the subsequent statistical analyses. Because I employ structural equation modeling, this chapter includes with a discussion of the advantages of this

technique over more traditional forms of multivariate analysis. The chapters ends with a detailed account of the analytical strategy that will be used to estimate the proposed model.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the structural equations testing the fit of the affective citizen communication model to the data employed. The findings are presented separately for the ANES and NAES surveys, as each deal with a different election cycle. The chapter also presents the results of an alternative causal ordering of the variables, so as to assess the robustness of the theorized model. At the end of the chapter, a summary of the hypotheses that were supported is presented.

Lastly, Chapter 5 discusses the findings, poses the methodological strengths and limitations of the study and elaborates on directions for future research. More specifically, I discuss possible ways of refining and expanding the model examined in this study, and provide possible applications of the model to existing theories of communication (namely, agenda setting, priming and selective exposure). The chapter ends with a discussion on the implications of the dissertation for democratic citizenship.

Chapter 2: From Emotions to Communication to Political Involvement

> Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them (Hume, 1739/1888, p. 415).

> There can be no knowledge without emotion. We may be aware of a truth, yet until we have felt its force, it is not ours. To the cognition of the brain must be added the experience of the soul (Bennett, 1932).

INTRODUCTION

The resurgence of scholarly interest on the effects of emotions about politics and political figures on American voters' gained full traction in the 1980s (e.g., Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Conover & Feldman, 1986; Marcus, 1988; Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986; Sears & Citrin, 1982; Sullivan & Masters, 1988). The seminal work laid out then translated later into several lines of research relating political affect to citizens' cognitions and judgments. Chief among these new theoretical accounts is affective intelligence, which has garnered substantial scholarly attention in the last few years. According to Google Scholar, as of April 2011, the first incarnation of this theory—a journal article by Marcus and MacKuen (1993)—has been cited in 301 works. The more developed version of the theory—distilled in book form (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000)—has received 480 citations, which translates into 40 citations per year. This is comparable to the amount of scholarly attention garnered by Iyengar and Kinder's (1987) *News that Matters*, a bedrock of the political communication literature. With 1,141 citations since its first year of publication, this classic work on media priming effects has had an average of 46 annual citations.

The use of affective intelligence theory is justified for several reasons. Unlike other theories of emotions and politics, it is explicitly based on the work of neuroscientists—most notably, Gray's dual affect system (1985; , 1987; , 1990)—thus

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providing direct links between political behavior, evolutionary theory and current knowledge on the way the human brain works. Contrary to appraisal theories of emotion (Scherer, 1999; Smith & Kirby, 2001), affective intelligence is specific enough to predict relationships between feelings, media attention, political learning and participation—central concepts of the affective citizen communication model proposed in this study. Furthermore, affective intelligence posits dynamic (i.e., changing over time) associations between emotions and concrete behaviors, which fits with the dynamic nature of political campaigns and the longitudinal nature of the data used in this study.

Another reason for employing affective intelligence relates to the cumulative nature of social science. There is substantive evidence collected using a variety of methods, including cross-sectional surveys, panel designs, controlled lab experiments and field experiments, supporting the basic tenets of the theory as it applies to the realm of political campaigns (see, e.g., Brader, 2006b; Crigler, Just, & Belt, 2006; MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010; Redlawsk, Civettini, & Lau, 2007). Lastly, and from a more practical perspective, this theory can be operationalized using self-reports, rather than more costly and cumbersome physiological measures adopted by other work relating emotions and communication, such as skin conductance, heart rate, facial EMG data, and secondary task reaction times (e.g., Lang & Newhagen, 1996; Lang, Park, Sanders-Jackson, Wilson, & Zheng, 2007). For all these reasons, affective intelligence provides a solid framework on which to build research on emotions, communication, and political outcomes.

On a similar vein, I rely on a particular theoretical approach to examine the effects of mediated and interpersonal communication on political knowledge and participation—the second component of the affective citizen communication model.

This approach is the communication mediation model (McLeod et al., 1999; McLeod et al., 2001) and its two iterations, the cognitive mediation model (Eveland, 2001; Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003) and the citizen communication mediation model (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, forthcoming; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). While the field of political communication is ripe with media effects theories, few bodies of work explicitly integrate the effects of political media use and talk on citizens' knowledge and participation. The two-step flow of communications (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Robinson, 1976), diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003), communicatory utility (Atkin, 1972) and the differential gains hypothesis (Scheufele, 2002) come readily to mind, but not much else. Perhaps this is a natural division of labor, similar to the divide between mass media and interpersonal communication research. In any case, this is somewhat surprising, considering that political discussions do not occur in a vacuum of media content (Chaffee, 1986; Southwell & Yzer, 2007). On the contrary, news coverage often sparks informal political conversations, particularly during election campaigns (Gamson, 1992; Just et al., 1996; Walsh, 2004). Talk, on the other hand, influences what people get from the media, such as when individuals monitor the news more closely because they anticipate having discussions with others (Eveland, 2004). These examples should make it apparent that the effects of political conversation and news consumption on political outcomes are related. In fact, it may well be that the effects of news are mediated by discussion.

Against this context, the model of communication mediation stands out as a useful framework for studying the direct and indirect relationships between media use, discussion, political knowledge and participation. Particularly, it provides a framework of structural paths between various forms of media use and communication within social networks. There are other reasons for choosing this model, too. It forces one to consider

the process and intervening processes of communication effects, rather than a focus on simple, direct effects. Among the outcomes for which this model has been found to be applicable are political knowledge and campaign participation, the same outcomes studied in this dissertation (see, e.g., Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Eveland, Hayes, Shah, & Kwak, 2005b; Gil de Zúñiga & Valenzuela, Forthcoming). Furthermore, its premises have been found to be robust to tests conducted using both cross-sectional and longitudinal data, that is, there is cumulative evidence of the causal links between the variables of the model.

In what follows, I will provide brief summaries of affective intelligence theory and the communication mediation model, and subsequently integrate the insights of these approaches into a novel theoretical model, labeled affective citizen communication. After examining existing research about the various hypothesized links, the last section presents the formal research hypotheses that will be tested in the dissertation.

A Brief Summary of Affective Intelligence

Affective intelligence posits that people have a dual emotional system that produces specific emotional appraisals, which in turn determine both thought (e.g., information-processing and cognitive activities) and behavior (e.g., media use, discussion, political participation) (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000). While the disposition system triggers emotions that fall along the continuous ranges of happiness or satisfaction, the surveillance systems gives rise to emotions of anxiety and unease (Brader, 2006b, p. 60). Which emotional system is activated depends on incoming information. When received information suggests that the execution of one's plans is consistent with expectations, the disposition system kicks

in by giving rise to emotions of enthusiasm, such as hope and pride. Think, for instance, when your candidate of choice is doing well in the polls and seems likely to win the election. Conversely, if there's inconsistency between the executions of one's plans and expectations, sadness and depression, even aversion, may arise. Think, for instance, if your candidate is not doing well in the polls and, furthermore, you can attribute this failure to a specific something (e.g., the opposition party's attack ads) or someone (e.g., the candidate's own *gaffes*). Thus, enthusiasm, and lack thereof, reflect the typical affective components of liking and disliking, or what psychologists term approach and avoidance (Wolak, MacKuen, Keele, Marcus, & Neuman, 2003, p. 2). The enthusiasm and aversion dispositions act as guiding cues; they indicate that things are going as planned, whether we like it or not.

Nevertheless, as Wolak and her colleagues (2003) noted, "single-minded reliance on routines is efficient only so far as one can be confident they produce outcomes in line with their best interests" (p. 3). Here lies the importance of the surveillance system, the second component of the emotional system. According to the theory of affective intelligence, the surveillance system is activated by threatening stimuli, that is, when things are unexpectedly novel and merit careful attention. Think, for instance, when your political party nominates a candidate you believe is incompetent or will not be able to attract independents. The surveillance system signals that continued reliance on routines may not produce the best course of action—in fact, careful attention to the threatening stimuli may lead to a new course of action (i.e., voting for the candidate of another political party).

In the course of a political campaign, affective intelligence suggests two alternative scenarios. If a political candidate activates in a voter his/her disposition system, as suggested by the emotions of enthusiasm and hope, the individual will rely

on existing habits and established preferences when deciding what to think, how to think and what to do about that particular candidate. Simply put, the election for that voter will be business as usual: voting according to established predispositions (e.g., party ID and ideological matching). If, however, the candidate activates in a voter his/her surveillance system, as manifested by the emotions of anxiety, uneasiness and worry, it is more likely that the election will be anything but business as usual. These emotions will stimulate increasing attention on the source of the threat in order to learn and have a more informed understanding of it. Therefore, the surveillance system motivates the abandonment of established predispositions and promotes seeking out novel information. Thus, emotions determine one of two courses of action: maintaining current political habits or engaging in "stop-and-think" moments in which existing beliefs are less useful.

The key assumption of affective intelligence, then, is that emotions precede, and trigger, cognitive processes. In the now classic academic debate between the primacy of affect and the primacy of cognition (Lazarus, 1984; Zajonc, 1984), affective intelligence sides clearly with the former. Another important assumption of affective intelligence is that myriad emotions towards political figures and issues can be reduced to a few dimensions. So, unlike discrete models of emotions (e.g., Roseman, 1991; Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994), individuals can experience emotions on two or three different dimensions that may well be orthogonal to each other (e.g., voters can be worried and hopeful about the candidates at the same time).

Evidence supporting the theory of affective intelligence comes in many forms: neuroscientific research (Gray, 1990), survey analysis—particularly work using ANES data (Marcus, 2000; Marcus & MacKuen, 1993)—and experimental research (Brader,

2006b; Marcus, Wood, & Theiss-Morse, 1998; Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009). Therefore, it provides a solid ground for the current research endeavor.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF COMMUNICATION MEDIATION

When researchers analyze the direct effects of media use on political outcomes such as issue knowledge and campaign behavior, their analyses tend to follow a simple stimulus-response framework (for a good example of this line of work, see Drew & Weaver, 1991, 1993, 1998, 2006; Weaver & Drew, 1995, 2001). Nevertheless, for decades researchers in communication have rejected the notion of media use as a "magic bullet" or "hypodermic needle." Oftentimes, media effects on citizenship are indirect and mediated by psychological and communication processes (McGuire, 1972). The communication mediation model developed initially by McLeod and his colleagues (McLeod et al., 1999; McLeod et al., 2001) takes this notion by heart by concluding that "informational media use and political discussion largely channel the effects of background dispositions and orientations on citizen learning and participation" (Shah, Rojas, & Cho, 2009, p. 216). More specifically, as an outgrow of Markus and Zajonc's (1985) Orientation–Stimulus–Orientation–Response (O-S-O-R) model, the communication mediation model integrates and extends past research on the effects of audience members' predispositions (O_1) on the reception of media messages (S) and the ways in which they interact with media content (O_2) and respond to it (R).

Originally, this model was interested in studying how individual-level orientations (e.g., values) had an effect on civic participation via news media use and interpersonal communication. However, subsequent research led to refinements in the original model. Eveland and colleagues (Eveland, 2001, 2004; Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003) used cross-sectional and panel survey data to examine more closely the O_2 part of

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the model and asked: What cognitive mechanisms mediate the effects of news attention on political knowledge? Their findings showed that mental elaboration of the messages partially mediated the effects of attention to media messages on learning, while both elaboration and attention fully mediated the motivations to use informational media on political knowledge. Thus, a cognitive mediation model was advanced. Subsequently, a team of researchers led by Shah (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005; Shah et al., 2007) proposed a citizen communication mediation model by theorizing that the effects of media use (i.e., exposure and attention combined) on participatory behaviors were largely mediated through face-to-face and online discussions about news. Using panel data and a series of alternative causal orderings of the communication and outcome variables, they found that both interpersonal political conversation and interactive political messaging channeled the effects of traditional and online media effects on civic engagement.

The contribution of the cognitive mediation model and the citizen communication mediation model to the original communication mediation model has led researchers in the area to revise the O-S-O-R framework and propose an O-S-R-O-R model (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, forthcoming). In this revised framework, activities such as mental elaboration and political discussion are treated as reasoning (R_1) about media stimuli (S). As Shah and colleagues (2009) explained,

> Currently, the S-O portion of the model is a jumble of factors, including news consumption, thinking and talking about issues, and cognitions and attitudes that arise from this process. Mental elaboration and interpersonal discussion are particularly difficult to situate in this framework. They are not stimuli in the formal sense, since they have been found to be causally antecedent of exposure to mass media (Eveland et al., 2003; Shah et al., 2005). However, they are also not conventional outcome orientations in the sense of altered attitudes or

developed cognitions. Instead, they are between stimuli and outcome orientations, indicative of efforts to form an understanding and reason through ideas (p. 218).

Recently, researchers have started to map out the second set of orientations (O_2), which have been neglected in previous research. For instance, it has been found that internal political efficacy partially mediates the effects of discussion on political participation, both online and offline (Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, forthcoming). This makes sense. A perceived sense of ability to influence politics can be stimulated by political news use (Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998) and through political discussions (Min, 2007).

The refined and detailed account of media effects posited by communication mediation provides a robust foundation for studying the interactions between emotions, information-seeking behaviors and political outcomes.

The Affective Citizen Communication Model

So far, the reviews of affective intelligence theory and communication mediation and its various iterations have led to two alternative models explaining political knowledge and participation. As Figure 2.1 shows, affective intelligence predicts a direct link between emotions and attention to campaign news. In particular, surveillance-related emotions such as fear and anxiety should motivate increased attention to the media environment so as to extract useful information to decide how to act (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000; Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009). It also suggests a direct link between emotions and involvement in the activities of a campaign. In particular, emotions of enthusiasm towards the preferred candidate, such as hope and pride, and emotions of aversion towards the other candidate, such as anger, can motivate voters to go to the polls and get involved in different campaign activities of

their preferred candidate (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Valentino, Gregorowicz, & Groenendyk, 2009; Valentino, Hutchings, Banks, & Davis, 2008). Thus, while both feelings of enthusiasm, anxiety and anger can be conducive to media use and political participation, it is anxiety that most directly leads to knowledge acquisition.

Figure 2.1 Structural Paths Predicted by Affective Intelligence
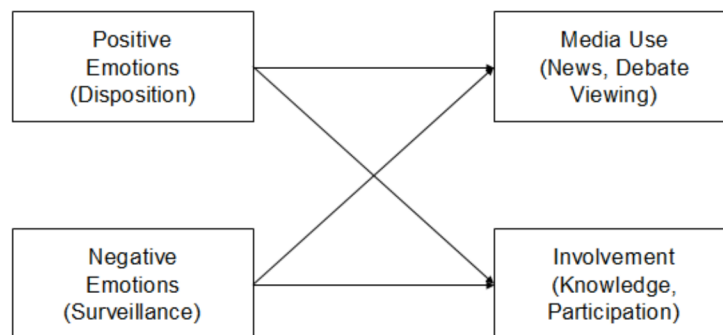
Processes of communication mediation, in turn, focus our attention on the indirect effects of informational uses of media, such as news use and debate viewing, on political knowledge and participation through citizen-to-citizen political discussion. In graphic form, the expectation is that political media use motivates conversations about politics, which in turn shape citizens' learning and behavior in electoral campaigns (see Figure 2.2). The rationale for the mediating role of conversations on news media effects is that by talking, people can make better sense of political information. Relatedly, there is a strong expectation that certain forms of communication, such as media use and debate viewing, lead to other forms of communication, such as interpersonal political discussion—in other words, "the most likely 'effect' of communication (…) is further communication" (Chaffee, 1986, p. 76).

Figure 2.2 Structural Paths Predicted by Communication Mediation
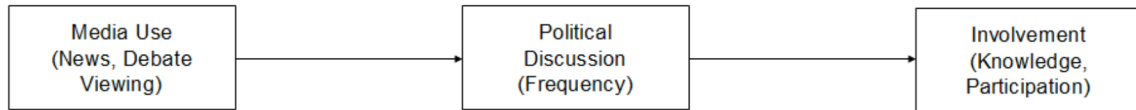
Having laid out the essential components and relationships predicted by each of the theoretical models that inform the current study, the next step is to synthesize the predicted effects of emotions, media use and political discussion on both political knowledge and behavior. This synthesis will take the form of the affective citizen communication model, which combines into a single framework the insights of affective intelligence theory and the communication mediation model. As explained in Chapter 1, the purpose of doing such a synthesis is twofold. On the one hand, the new model connects the burgeoning area of communication mediation with the affective route to political information and behavior. On the other hand, it forces affective intelligence theory to look at media use and particularly political discussion as a central element in the process of emotions leading to cognition and behavior.

At a theoretical level, emotions triggered by candidates, issues and other political stimuli should lead individuals to be more motivated to engage in communication behaviors and markers of political involvement, such as knowledge and participation. That is, individuals who feel emotions (whether positive or negative) are more likely to pay attention to the campaign and exchange information and opinions with others compared to individuals who experience apathy—or lack of emotion. Likewise, individuals with stronger emotions about the candidates and the campaign in general are more likely to learn about the policy stands of the candidates (in part

because they are consuming more information) and also to engage in campaign activity. In contrast, individuals for whom the campaign does not trigger any emotion are more likely to stay like that. Their emotional system will not cause them to reconsider paying attention to the campaign or engaging in political acts. They will remain in their habit of not following political news, not discussing about the campaign, not learning about the issue policies of the candidates and not volunteering for the candidates. In the words of Brown-Kramer (2009),

> They are not enthusiastic, so they feel no need to volunteer their time to support a candidate. They are not angry, so they are unmotivated to act to prevent a candidate from being elected. They are not anxious, so they need not reconsider their default attitude toward the candidate (p. 66).

If communication behaviors are intervening processes in the relationship between political emotions and both political knowledge and participation, then emotions represent a necessary but not sufficient condition for learning and engaging in campaign activity. Clearly, people who follow political news and programs and discuss with others what is going in the election are not blank slates that process information in a vacuum of emotions (Civettini & Redlawsk, 2009). Furthermore, communication behaviors are not constant throughout the campaign period. As the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) has shown (Jamieson & Kenski, 2006; Stroud, 2010), exposure to campaign news varies over time and changes following particular events. The same is true with talking about politics. According to NAES studies on the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections, after party conventions and presidential debates there is a spike in the frequency of political discussion reported by respondents (Hardy & Scheufele, 2005; Kenski, Hardy, & Jamieson, 2010). These communication dynamics reveal that people are responsive to the political environment. The type of response they enact, however, is governed by the disposition and surveillance systems. Therefore, emotions should be

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considered as antecedents of communication behaviors in the affective citizen communication model. Put another way, people who will follow campaign media content and discuss it with others must first feel something about the campaign that will motivate them to seek out more information through the media or through others.

Greater attention to news content and exposure to political programs, in turn, should lead to higher levels of political discussion, knowledge and behavior. Media use often sparks informal political conversations, particularly during election campaigns (Gamson, 1992; Just et al., 1996; Walsh, 2004). Media use also makes news content available in memory. Without media use, the information about the candidates policy stands cannot be learned because it is not brought to conscious awareness (Eveland, 2001; Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003). Media use also leads to participation by making information about campaign activities available and comprehensible (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2009; Moy, McCluskey, McCoy, & Spratt, 2004; Sei-Hill & Miejeong, 2005; Zhang & Chia, 2006). In fact, a variety of political acts require information, such as where to vote, where to donate money and how to do it (Lemert, 1977, 1984).

Lastly, political talk should directly affect learning and participation. When people talk about public affairs, they are more likely to mobilize and engage in political activities, particularly during election campaigns (for an overview, see Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). This is because conversations involve not only exchanges of information but also interpretive frameworks that help to process that information (Schmitt-Beck, 2008). By allowing people to grapple with ideas, elaborate arguments and reflect upon the information acquired, conversations are a rich form of political information (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). From a behavioral perspective, political discussions lower the costs of acquiring information and can motivate individuals to

learn and participate more often (Just et al., 1996; Klofstad, 2007; McClurg, 2003; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992).

The affective citizen communication model builds on the findings discussed above by positing a three-step causal chain of processes. As shown in Figure 2.3, in the first step and in line with affective intelligence, the political context activates individuals' disposition and surveillance systems, as signaled by feelings of enthusiasm, anxiety or anger towards political figures. In the second step, these emotions lead individuals to maintain, increase or abandon their consumption of informational media (i.e., news use, debate viewing) as well as the discussion of campaign information with others. Communication processes, in turn, directly influence individuals' cognitive and behavioral engagement with the campaign, which in this study are constrained to political knowledge and political participation.

Figure 2.3 Structural Paths Predicted by Affective Citizen Communication
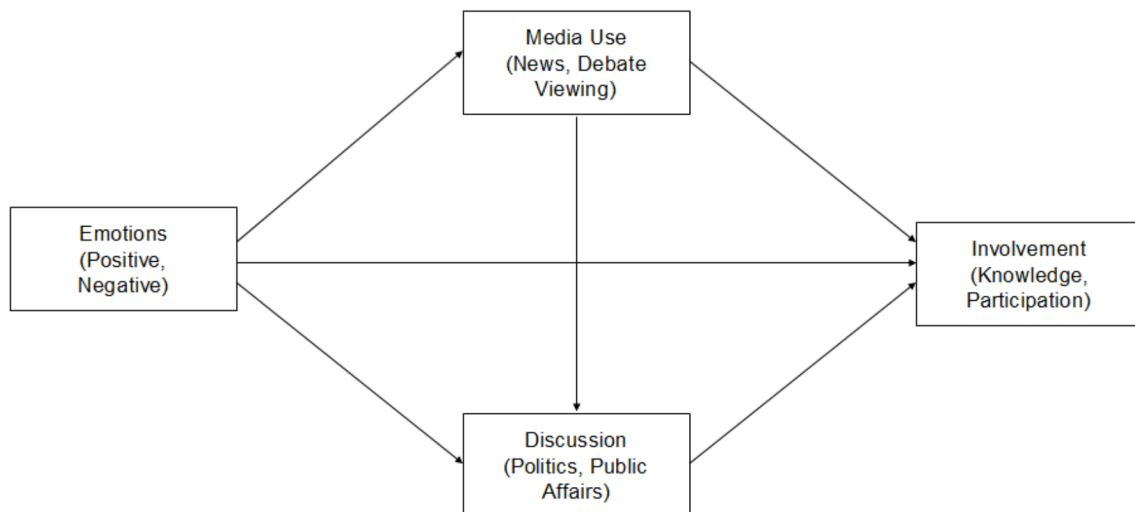
It is not clear, however, if communication fully or partially mediates the relationship between emotions and markers of political involvement. As aforementioned, emotions have been found to influence knowledge and participation directly or, at least, through other mechanisms not considered here. To represent this possibility of direct effects, emotions and involvement are also connected through an arrow in Figure 2.3.

REFINING THE AFFECTIVE CITIZEN COMMUNICATION MODEL

Positive vs. Negative Emotions

Certainly, the affective citizen communication model presented in Figure 2.3 is a simplistic representation of more complex relationships. First, it could be argued that not all emotions operate the same way. Watson and colleagues (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; Watson & Tellegen, 1985) argued that emotions could be described along two, orthogonal dimensions, positive and negative, which is consistent with affective intelligence's disposition and surveillance systems, respectively. In this case, the affective citizen communication model would look like Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4 Affective Citizen Communication with Positive and Negative Emotions
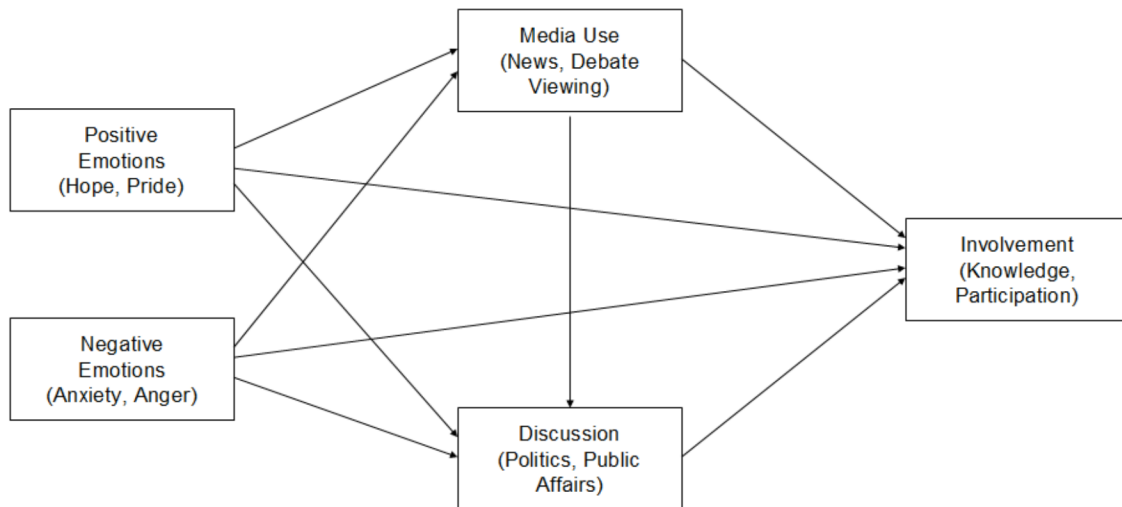
Viewing emotions as a two-dimensional concept of positive and negative affect leads to the question of which type of emotion is a more powerful driver of media use, political discussion, learning and campaign participation. In this case, the expectation from affective intelligence theory is quite clear: negative emotions should have a stronger effect than positive emotions. While it is possible that enthusiasm and hope could lead voters to support more decisively a particular candidate and participate more, the empirical evidence to date shows that there is a strong negativity bias in terms of the mobilizing effects of emotion (Geer, 2006; Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000, p. 90). The expectation is based on the fact that positive emotions could stem from satisfaction with the status quo, that is, no threats are perceived and thus no specific action is being required (Valentino, Brader, Groenendyk, Gregorowicz, & Hutchings, 2011). Negative emotions, on the other hand, motivates more effortful and systematic processing of information, but, most

importantly, directs attention to new information (Pratto & John, 1991). For instance, Weber (2008) found that anxiety increases information seeking and political engagement directly, while anger boosted participation through increased political efficacy.

The negativity bias notwithstanding, there is evidence that positive emotions can also have a significant, independent effect on communication behaviors if these emotions spark increased motivation to follow campaign news. In a summary of existing empirical evidence on affective intelligence, Brader (2006a) reported that 11 of the 21 tests conducted by six independent studies assessing the effects of enthusiasm on political interest and information-seeking variables (e.g., attention, time spent reading campaign information, etc.) yielded a positive, significant relationship. At the same time, several scholars have found that enthusiasm spurs political action in as much as anxiety and anger does (Brader, 2005, 2006b; Valentino, Brader, Groenendyk, Gregorowicz, & Hutchings, 2011).

Furthermore, there is reason to suspect that not all negative emotions can impact communication and involvement variables equally. For instance, it is quite clear that anxiety leads to heightened interest in and focus on threatening stimuli (LeDoux, 1996), both in laboratory experiments and in surveys. If that is the case, then one should expect that fear and anxiety be closely related to media use and discussion and, by extension, to learning effects. By the same token, anxiety should lead to less participation, considering that individuals would be less likely to commit themselves to a specific course of action. Would the same trends be applicable to anger, another important negative emotion? Previous research has found that anger is more closely related to approach behaviors, rather than to avoidance behaviors (Huddy, Feldman, & Cassese, 2007). That is, angry people are more likely than non-angry people to take

action. This contention was validated by the work of Valentino and colleagues (2011) using experimental data, panel surveys and ANES cumulative data sets. These scholars found that anger boosted participation in a more consistent fashion than fear did, because

> anger arises when threats are attributable to a particular source and the individual feels that she has control over the situation, while anxiety is triggered when an individual is less certain about the cause and does not feel in control (p. 160).

If anger has more mobilizing power than fear but a weaker effect on informational needs as represented by media use and discussion, then anger could lead to more participation and have a minimal, or even negative, effect on knowledge.

The previous discussion on the differential effects of emotions on political knowledge and political participation should make it readily apparent that it is not possible to rely on existing research to posit in advance (1) the specific structure of political feelings, and (2) the sign of the relationship between emotions and political involvement variables. This question, necessarily, needs to be addressed empirically, with the data at hand —a recommendation that, somewhat ironically, the same authors of affective intelligence have advanced (see Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, & Keele, 2006). Because the current study is based on the ANES 2008-2009 Panel and the NAES 2004 Debates Panel, I conducted an exploratory factor analysis via principal component analysis of the emotion items in order to clarify right away the structure of emotions elicited by candidates Obama and McCain in 2008 and by candidates Bush and Kerry in 2004. The results of this analysis, detailed in Chapter 3 and in tables A.3 and A.4 in the Appendix section, yielded two orthogonal dimensions: positive emotions (i.e., hope and pride in the candidates) and negative emotions (i.e., fear and anger towards the candidates). These results are consistent with affective intelligence's disposition and

surveillance systems and, thus, for the remaining of the dissertation I will refer interchangeably to positive emotions or feelings of enthusiasm and negative emotions or feelings of anxiety. The sign of the relationship between these two emotions clusters and communication and political behaviors, in turn, are the basis of the empirical results explained in Chapter 4.

News Use, Debate Viewing and Personal Communications

In addition to the different constructs used to examine the role of emotions, the communication variables incorporated in the model can also be further broken down into more specific constructs. Habitual exposure to news in traditional and online media is different from exposure to major political media events, such as party conventions and televised debates. The notion of intra-media mediation (Holbert, 2005) posits that different forms of media use have a complementary function. For instance, habitual news use can lead to debate viewing. Debate viewing, in turn, has been found to provide fresh material for political discussions (Landreville, Holbert, & LaMarre, 2010) and exert strong effects on a variety of political outcomes, including political knowledge (Benoit, Hansen, & Verser, 2003). Accordingly, the affective citizen communication model can be tested using the following structural model (see Figure 2.5):

Figure 2.5 Affective Citizen Communication with Habitual and Particular Media Use
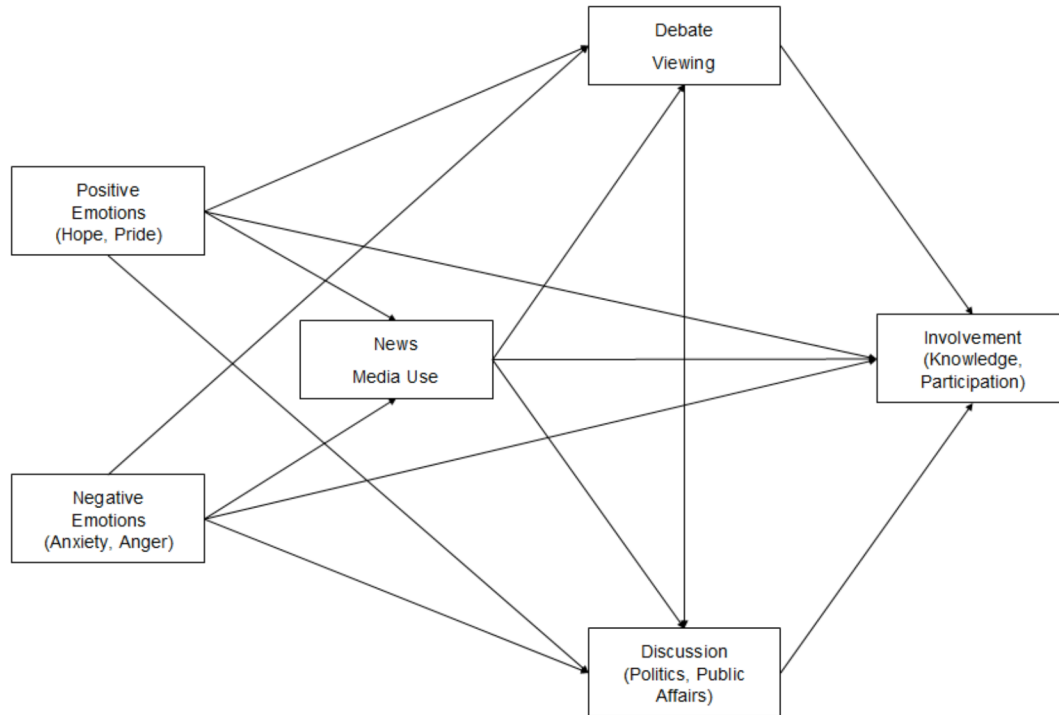
The different structural path models described above presume that exogenous factors related to emotions, communication behaviors, political knowledge and campaign participation have already been taken into account. These variables derive from existing models of political behavior and political knowledge, such as the civic voluntarism model (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995) and the opportunities-motivation-ability model (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Luskin, 1990), and from the antecedents of communication behaviors identified by the communication mediation model. While the influence of these exogenous forces was excluded from the previous discussion to simplify the presentation of the affective citizen communication model, I elaborate on them in the methods section (Chapter 3).

The hypotheses of the present study are implicit in the structural models presented in the previous figures. However, to make these hypotheses more explicit, each structural path described in Figure 2.5 will be formally tested.

Direct Effects

H1: Emotions will be positively related to news media use controlling for demographics and political orientations.

H2: Emotions will be positively related to debate viewing controlling for demographics and political orientations.

H3: Emotions will be positively related to political discussion controlling for demographics and political orientations.

H4: News media use will be positively related to political knowledge controlling for demographics, political orientations and emotions.

H5: News media use will be positively related to political participation controlling for demographics, political orientations and emotions.

H6: Debate viewing will be positively related to political knowledge controlling for demographics, political orientations and emotions.

H7: Debate viewing will be positively related to political participation controlling for demographics, political orientations and emotions.

H8: Political discussion will be positively related to political knowledge controlling for demographics, political orientations, emotions, news media use and debate viewing.

H9: Political discussion will be positively related to political participation controlling for demographics, political orientations, emotions, news media use and debate viewing.

Indirect Effects

H10: The relationship between emotions and political knowledge will be mediated, at least partially, by news media use, debate viewing and political discussion.

H11: The relationship between emotions and political participation will be mediated, at least partially, by news media use, debate viewing and political discussion.

H12: The relationship between news use and political knowledge will be mediated, at least partially, by political discussion.

H13: The relationship between news use and political participation will be mediated, at least partially, by political discussion.

H14: The relationship between debate viewing and political knowledge will be mediated, at least partially, by political discussion.

H15: The relationship between debate viewing and political participation will be mediated, at least partially, by political discussion.

Chapter 3: Methods

DATA SETS

The hypotheses derived from the affective citizen communication model will be examined using the American National Election Study (ANES) 2008-2009 Panel Study and the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) 2004 Debates Panel Study. As aforementioned, there are several advantages to relying on separate data sets, including: (1) checks on the consistency of the theorized model across different campaign cycles; (2) variation in the time-span to measure effects; and (3) robustness of the substantive findings to alternative operationalization of variables. Furthermore, both the ANES and NAES studies were designed as panel surveys, allowing for stronger causal inference than cross-sectional surveys. In addition to measuring individual differences, panel data permits measuring change over time in a set of variables among the same individuals (Finkel, 1995).[1] In addition, by gauging variables at two different points in time, alternative specifications to the proposed model can be tested and compared to find the best-fitting structure between key variables.

Because the surveys cover different election cycles, namely, the 2004 and 2008 U.S. presidential elections, the findings of the dissertation gain in generalizability. For instance, the Obama-McCain election campaign of 2008 was quite unique in that it was the first election without incumbents in the primaries since 1928, was the most costly in

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[1] Nevertheless, as explained in Chapter 1, panel data presents some limitations for causal inference. In addition to the problem of measurement error, there is always the possibility of reactivity when repeating the same questions over time (e.g., changes in political knowledge induced by previous exposure to the questionnaire, not because of other meaningful intervening process). Also, variations in the content of both media and interpersonal communication (e.g., high news coverage of the campaign before wave 1, followed by low news coverage during the interval between wave 1 and wave 2) may hinder the measurement of actual change in key outcome variables. Further discussion of these limitations is provided in Chapter 5.

terms of campaign spending, and saw an unprecedented level of mobilizing efforts by campaign volunteers (Kenski, Hardy, & Jamieson, 2010). Furthermore, one of the candidates based his central campaign message on hope—a central emotion of affective intelligence's disposition system—and the debacle of the financial sector in September of 2008 certainly increased voters' anxiety levels. Thus, the use of data collected during the Bush-Kerry election campaign of 2004 offers a check on the consistency of the findings obtained for the exceptional 2008 election. Lastly, by relying on data sets with somewhat different operationalizations of variables, the study is able to cancel out some of the measurement weaknesses inherent to the use of a single survey. For instance, the ANES survey gauged news media use based on exposure measures only, whereas the NAES survey asked both exposure and attention items. Likewise, the NAES study gauged negative emotions only. ANES, in contrast, had items on both negative and positive emotions.

Overview of the ANES 2008-2009 Panel Study

The 2008-2009 ANES Panel Study is a series of political and non-political surveys of a representative sample of U.S. adult citizens. Respondents were recruited by telephone and completed up to 21 surveys over the Internet each month between January 2008 and September 2009. A first cohort was recruited in late 2007 using random-digit-dialing (RDD) methods and offered $10 per month to complete surveys on the Internet. Those without a computer and Internet service were offered a free web appliance and free Internet service for the duration of the study. The second cohort was recruited the same way in the summer of 2008 and asked to join the panel beginning in September 2008. Before the first monthly survey, most respondents also completed an online profile survey consisting primarily of demographic questions. To limit panel

attrition and conditioning effects, only 10 of the 21 monthly surveys contained questions about political topics prepared by ANES. The panelists answered the ANES questions in January, February, June, September, October, and November 2008, and in January, May, July, and August 2009 (further details are available at DeBell, Krosnick, & Lupia, 2010).

The present study will use data collected during September, October and November 2008 (waves 9, 10 and 11, respectively), comprising respondents from the first and second cohorts.[2] These three waves were selected because they cover the official campaign period of the 2008 election as well as the post-election period. Furthermore, the items for measuring most of the variables of the affective citizen communication model were asked during these waves only, which prevented the use of earlier and/or later waves. The number of completed interviews for the three waves used in the study varied from 2,586 to 2,665. The estimated response rates (using the American Association of Public Opinion Research, 2008, RR3 calculation) for waves 9, 10, and 11 were 26%, 26%, and 27%, respectively.[3] These rates, although relatively low, are very similar to those reported by other organizations using RDD samples, such as the Pew Research Center (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2009) and, as will be explained shortly, to the NAES surveys. The retention rate across waves was relatively high: 93% of wave 9 respondents also completed wave 11.

A comparison of the demographics of the ANES sample with known population parameters indicates some important differences when using the unweighted estimates

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[2] Specifically, interviews were conducted between September 3 and October 2, 2008 (wave 9), between October 2 and November 3, 2008 (wave 10), and between November 5—just after Election Day—and December 15, 2008 (wave 11).

[3] Alternatively, the minimum response rate (AAPOR's RR1) for waves 9, 10 and 11 was 16%, 16% and 17%, while the maximum response rate (AAPOR's RR5) for each of the same waves was 46%, 46% and 47%, respectively.

(see Table A1 in the Appendix). In general, respondents were older and more educated. However, few biases remain in the sample when using weighted estimates. In this case, of the 29 statistics included in the comparison, 18 are within 2 percentage points, 7 are between 3 and 6 percentage points, and 4 exceed 7 percentage points. Therefore, following the recommendation of the principal investigators of the ANES 2008-2009 Panel (DeBell, Krosnick, & Lupia, 2010), all statistical analysis will be conducted using the appropriate weights supplied with the original data files.[4]

Overview of the NAES 2004 Debates Panel Study

The NAES 2004 Debates Panel is a two-wave survey of a representative sample of U.S. adults initially interviewed for the NAES 2004 National Rolling Cross-Section Study (RCS) before the first presidential debate of September 30, 2004, and re-interviewed after the last debate of October 13, 2004. Respondents for the RCS were recruited via RDD techniques and interviewed by telephone. The response rate for the RCS was in the 22 to 25% range (Winneg, Kenski, & Adasiewicz, 2006, p. 21). The Debates Panel consists of 1,248 completed interviews out of 3,013 respondents contacted originally for the RCS, yielding a cooperation rate of 41%. The fielding period for the pre-debates survey was September 20, 2004 to September 29, 2004, while the fielding period for the post-debates survey was October 14, 2004 to October 24, 2004 (further details are available at Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2006).

The current study will use a subsample of respondents who were asked a series of questions about negative emotions towards the candidates, knowledge of the candidates' issue stances and political participation during the pre- and post-debates survey phases. Using a split-sample methodology, two thirds of respondents (n = 850)

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[4] Specifically, the cumulative late panel weight for Wave 11 will be employed. This weight is labeled WGTL11 in the SPSS file provided in the ANES Web site, http://www.electionstudies.org

were randomly assigned to complete questions on emotions and knowledge; a further random one third (n = 415) was selected to complete items on participation in campaign activities. The complete sample was asked questions on news media use, debate viewing and frequency of political discussion. Although the loss of statistical power due to a reduced sample size is unfortunate, there was no other choice considering that emotions, political knowledge and participation are key variables of the affective citizen communication model. On the other hand, the retained sample size (n = 415) was still large enough to accommodate the sample requirements of the statistical techniques used in the dissertation.

A comparison of the demographics of the NAES Debates Panel sample with U.S. Census data shows few biases in the sample when using weighted estimates (see Table A.2 in the Appendix). Of the 23 statistics included in the comparison, 8 are within 2 percentage points, 12 are between 3 and 6 percentage points, and only 3 exceed 7 percentage points. In general, the average respondent in this panel was more educated and more likely to be female than the average member of the population. Importantly, the income distribution of the sample was remarkably similar to population parameters. Therefore, all statistical analysis of the NAES data set will be conducted using post-debates weighted estimates.

DEFINITION OF KEY VARIABLES

The conceptual diversity on what scholars mean by political knowledge and political participation has had the unfortunate consequence of preventing a straightforward comparison of existing research quantifying how much citizens know about politics and how much they participate in political activities. For instance, Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1996) index of general political knowledge is relatively easy to

calculate—it is the sum of correct answers to a list of political questions. Luskin's (1987) measurement of political sophistication, in contrast, involves a complex formula to estimate the organization of political cognitions. Using one approach over the other can lead to different conclusions about how knowledgeable American citizens are.

Consequently, in this section I will review the strengths and weaknesses of different conceptual definitions and measurement approaches to political knowledge and political participation, followed by my own explanation of how these two important political variables will be empirically examined. In addition, I will delve into the conceptual and methodological definitions of the three main predictor variables of the affective citizen communication model: emotions, media use and political discussion. While there is less controversy over the meaning and operationalization of emotions and political discussion in the literature (but see Eveland, Hively, & Morey, 2009; Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, & Keele, 2006), the same is not true of media use. Medium or content, behavior or self-report, exposure, attention, retention or knowledge—all these aspects need to be settled before pursuing research on the antecedents and consequences of media use.

Political Knowledge

As is the case with other political variables, political knowledge is a multidimensional concept. While the number of dimensions varies, most researchers identify at least two. One refers to the quantity of stored political cognitions; the other refers to the organization of stored political cognitions (Luskin & Bullock, 2004). These two dimensions have been known under different rubrics: factual vs. structural knowledge (Eveland, Marton, & Seo, 2004), denotative vs. connotative knowledge (Graber, 2001), and differentiation vs. integration (Neuman, 1981), to name a few. The

important distinction here is that knowledge as organization represents a higher-order type of knowledge than knowledge as quantity. The latter refers to having learned facts and concepts about politics. The former, instead, means having learned the meanings and inferences behind those facts and conceptual statements. In the language of information-processing theory, factual knowledge refers to the number of nodes in human memory; structural knowledge refers to the density of links and connections between these nodes (Graber, 2001).

Despite the notable conceptual and operational differences between structural and factual political knowledge, there is substantial evidence suggesting that the quantity of political information a person holds is highly correlated with both how well he or she has organized it and how accurate it tends to be (Eveland, Marton, & Seo, 2004; Luskin, 2003; Luskin & Bullock, 2004). This makes sense. Since memory works by organized nodes of information (or schemas; see Graber, 2001), it is unlikely that an individual can have a large but disorganized system of political knowledge. As a consequence, factual measures of political knowledge may serve as rough proxies of more sophisticated measures of knowledge. Thus, in this dissertation, measures of factual political knowledge will be used, with the assumption that they are positively correlated with structural political knowledge.

The challenge, of course, is to define the type of factual knowledge questions to be used. In their oft-cited work on political knowledge, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) studied three dimensions: the rules of the game, the substance of politics, and people and parties. However, these three categories are far from being exhaustive. A review of the literature on political knowledge during election campaigns shows that studies have focused on knowledge about the candidates' issue stances (Drew & Weaver, 1991, 1993, 1998, 2006; Weaver & Drew, 1995, 2001), knowledge of the candidates'

biographical background (Chaffee, Zhao, & Leshner, 1994; Feldman & Price, 2008) and knowledge of presidential campaign endorsements (Holbert, 2005). The choice of questions should be defined in terms of the purpose these questions serve. In the case of a study trying to uncover the learning effects of affective and communicative processes occurring at a specific time frame such as an electoral campaign, it is preferable to use items for which the correct answer depends upon recent exposure to information. With general civic questions, one need only remember civics lessons and high school textbooks. With domain-specific questions—to use the terminology of Delli Carpini and Keeter (1993)—news use, political discussion, and general attention to campaign materials become the more important source. Therefore, domain-specific, not general, knowledge items will be used in the operationalization of political knowledge.

Settling for domain-specific questions, however, implies defining the number of domains to be asked about. There is some debate over whether or not to distinguish among different domains of factual questions. The literature on issue publics (Carmines & Stimson, 1989) indicates that some groups of the population are especially informed about particular domains, be they the environment, civil rights or religion. In this context, measuring political knowledge requires asking about a variety of topics and issues. This is why a valuable approach is to rely on questions assessing candidates' issue stands. By inquiring about different policy realms, the responses of individuals who belong to different issue publics have a higher likelihood of being taken into consideration.

The review of the existing literature on political knowledge has addressed differences in both conceptual and empirical approaches. While not exhaustive, this effort in concept explication is a necessary step for providing a proper definition and operationalization of political knowledge as applied in the current study. An oft-cited

definition of political knowledge is Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1996): "The range of factual information about politics stored in long-term memory" (p. 10). While such a definition has the advantage of distinguishing political knowledge from values, attitudes and behaviors, it is too broad. Nevertheless, one can elaborate on Delli Carpini and Keeter's definition by specifying that political knowledge should be useful information on which to base decisions to participate and vote. In formal terms, the concept advanced here could be summarized as follows:

> *Political knowledge is the range of factual information about politics stored in long-term memory that is useful for citizens to make decisions that represent their interest.*

In the context of electoral campaigns, the most important decision for citizens is to vote in accordance with their own preferences and priorities (Lau, Andersen, & Redlawsk, 2008). Arguably, knowing the stances of the candidates in the issues that are important for voters should facilitate decision-making. Thus, political knowledge will be operationalized as knowledge of the issue positions of the main presidential candidates. By using candidate-issue knowledge, we are employing a domain-specific approach, which is the preferable approach when studying electoral campaigns and the role played by information sources, such as the news media and social networks. Because this study relies on survey data, multiple-choice, close-ended questions will be used to compute an index of political knowledge.[5] Detailed information as to the operationalization of knowledge is provided in the measures section below.

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[5] Settling for close-ended questions that tap factual knowledge about specific policy domains does not resolve an important problem of assessing political knowledge, and that is the problem of coding. In the last few years, political scientists have debated over what to do with those respondents who chose "don't know" categories in multiple- choice knowledge questions. Some researchers, such as Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) recommend the encouragement of don't know responses. Others, such as Mondak (2001), have argued vehemently against this practice, arguing that it contaminates the efforts to obtain valid knowledge indexes. For instance, it has been found that respondents' propensity to guess and willingness to give correct answers is not constant across the population (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Other research,

Political Participation

Political participation is a slippery concept; several interpretations have been given of what exactly is meant by this construct. Some researchers identify political participation with electoral activities, such as voting and working for political parties (e.g., Conway, 1985). Recognizing that participation goes beyond elections, others have included in their measures activities such as working for the community and attending a protest (e.g., Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Even processes such as media use and news attention have been identified as markers of participation (e.g., Zaller, 1992). The heterogeneity of conceptual definitions has led, inevitably, to a cacophony of empirical measures of participation and thus to contradictory results regarding the antecedents and consequences of political participation.

Identifying the types of activities that fall under the rubric of political participation requires, first of all, a normative definition. As Teorell (2006) noted, the literature has been dominated by three different conceptualizations of political participation:

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however, has not found support for this finding and, actually, has argued that promoting don't know responses is a better approach (Sturgis, Allum, & Smith, 2008). Even if one decides to encourage or discourage don't know responses, there is the issue of what do to with incorrect responses when creating summated indexes of political knowledge. Some researchers distinguish between not answering or not knowing the correct response to a question from providing incorrect answers, so as to correct for propensity to guess and for misinformation—holding incorrect factual information and believing in it (Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schwieder, & Rich, 2000). Thus, incorrect answers are sometimes subtracted from correct answers, while missing values and don't knows are scored as zero. While there are merits for this approach, common practice in political communication research is to just compute correct answers while leaving all other options, incorrect or missing, as zero (e.g., Drew & Weaver, 2006; Eveland & Thomson, 2006). Because this dissertation is based on a secondary analysis of existing ANES and NAES surveys, there were constrains to the scoring approach of political knowledge indexes. For instance, the knowledge questions of the ANES Panel Study relied on Mondak's recommendations by encouraging respondents to guess and not providing a don't know response choice. Thus, by common practice and by force, this dissertation will compute knowledge scores by counting only correct answers—all other responses will be scored as zero.

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1. *Participation as influence*: This view stems from the classic work of Verba and Nie (1972) and Milbrath and Goel (1977) and views participation as "an instrumental act through which citizens attempt to make the political system respond to their will" (Teorell, 2006, p. 789). Based on notions of democratic representation and government responsiveness to public opinion, this view understands participation as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action—either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995, p. 38). The best example of participation as influencing attempts is voting: when people vote, they choose politicians who are supposed to deliver what they want in policymaking (Wlezien & Soroka, 2007). However, other types of campaign behavior, such as attending rallies by candidates and donating money to political parties, are also indicators of political participation as influencing.

2. *Participation as decision making*: This view stresses citizen behavior that results in direct policymaking, rather than indirect policymaking via influence on government officials. In representative democracies, the realm of direct decision making by citizens is somewhat constrained to local issues, so active participation in local affairs is what participation as decision making is mostly about. Barber's (1984) definition of political participation falls within this paradigm: "[P]olitics in the participatory mode (...) is self-government by citizens rather than representative government" (as cited in Teorell, 2006, p. 790). The important distinction here is that participation is regarded as direct involvement in the policymaking process, not delegation into a representative body. Belonging to a city council, working in neighborhood associations and, in general, participating in institutions that have the power to decide policies, are indicators of participation as decision making.

3. *Participation as deliberation*: Based on the idea of deliberation and deliberative democracy (Cohen, 1989; Dryzek, 2000; Fishkin, 1991; Gastil, 2008; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Habermas, 1996), some political theorists have construed political participation as involvement in a collective process of discussion. Through interpersonal (and intrapersonal) processes of reasoning and argument exchange, people who participate are able to express their public concerns, learn about important issues affecting their communities and, eventually, reach some kind of decision on how policymakers should move forward (Conover & Searing, 2005; McLeod et al., 1999). The best example of participation as discussion is the Deliberative Polling project, which creates a formal instance of deliberation for citizens (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Luskin & Fishkin, 2002).

As Teorell (2006) noted, participation as influencing attempts has dominated the literature on political participation in the U.S. and elsewhere, to the point that textbooks (Brady, 1999) and major reviews (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004; Milbrath & Goel, 1977) rely on this definition exclusively. The current study will not depart from this tradition. This is warranted for two reasons. First, citizens' involvement in direct decision-making processes is relatively infrequent, at least when compared to citizens' participation in elections and other traditional modes of influencing policymaking. Second, citizens' deliberative behaviors, even of the informal kind such as talking about politics with friends and family, is treated in the affective citizen communication model as an antecedent of participation, not a constituent form of it. Hence, the participation as deliberation model is inapplicable to this study. The formal definition adopted here, then, stresses that

> *Political participation is the breadth of political activities carried out by citizens to influence the selection of people who make government policies.*

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From a normative point of view, citizens' participatory behavior, like trust, is regarded as vital for the good functioning of democratic systems. When people participate, they have a voice in public affairs, can hold authorities accountable and empower themselves to act on their own behalf (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001). Still, participation, like trust, is not automatically conducive to democratic governance. Those who support the "limited citizenship" model, for instance, argue that too much participation can obstruct and complicate governance by delaying, politicizing and oversimplifying policy problems that require skilled leadership and expertise (Gamson, 2001, p. 56). Most scholars, however, agree that the problem of most democracies in the 21st Century is not of an excess of participation but of stagnation or outright decline of it, particularly among young cohorts (Putnam, 1995b).

The most traditional approach to measuring political participation in survey research is to dummy-code a host of participatory behaviors and, subsequently, combine the discrete behaviors into an index. Some researchers separate participation into voting and everything else (Bimber, 2001), or subdivide the participation index into acts inside and outside of the political system (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999), acts that have a potential of public confrontation or not (Mutz, 2002), and several studies examine individual participation acts as distinct dependent variables (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). As Dylko (2010) noted, indexes gauge the breadth of activities in which respondents have taken part—regardless of their specific nature. Therefore, in the current study participation will be measured as an additive index of political campaign activities. This is warranted for two reasons. First, it is consistent with previous work that has tracked political participation back to emotions (Brader, 2005; MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010; Parsons, 2010b; Valentino, Gregorowicz, & Groenendyk, 2009; Wolak, MacKuen, Keele, Marcus, & Neuman, 2003). Second, it is in line with the

measurement approach to participation adopted by scholars working with communication mediation models (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Gil de Zúñiga, Puig-i-Abril, & Rojas, 2009; Gil de Zúñiga & Valenzuela, Forthcoming; Shah et al., 2007; Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, Forthcoming).

Emotions

There are a variety of labels used in political communication to refer to affective processes. Terms such as affect, moods, emotions and feelings are sometimes used interchangeably (e.g., Holbert & Hansen, 2006; Neuman, Marcus, MacKuen, & Crigler, 2007). However, these terms are not exact synonyms. A review of the distinctions made by Brader (2006b, p. 51), Parsons (2010a, pp. 34-36), and Thoits (1989, pp. 318-319), yields the following definitions:

1. *Mood*: A diffuse, long-lasting positive or negative mental state that is not attributable to a specific attitude object. For instance, political scientists speak of a "liberal policy mood" (Stimson, 1999) to describe American voters' positive dispositions towards liberal governmental policies (e.g., abortion, gun control, gay rights, etc.)

2. *Emotion*: A specific mental and/or physiological (e.g., increased heart rate) disposition triggered in response to the perception or appraisal of an external stimulus. It is generally attributable to a specific attitude object (e.g., when a voter is anxious at the prospects of Candidate A winning the election).

3. *Feelings*: Refers to the awareness and experience of emotions as well as basic human drives (e.g., pleasure, pain, fatigue). Contrary to moods but in a similar fashion as emotions, feelings are typically targeted at a specific attitude object (e.g.,

when a voter says: "Candidate A makes me feel anxious"). In other words, feelings are the subjective interpretation of emotions.

4. *Affect*: A catch-all term that encompasses phenomena such as moods, emotions, feelings and basic human drives (e.g., pain and pleasure). Scholars in the social sciences tend to use the term affect in opposition to the term cognition, as in the scholarly debate between the primacy of affect and the primacy of cognition (Lazarus, 1984; Zajonc, 1984).

Considering that this project deals with responses elicited by specific attitude objects, namely, presidential candidates, I will avoid the term mood. Feelings, however, will be used interchangeably with emotions, as the existence of an emotion is a necessary condition for a feeling. Affect will also be employed when referring to the general influence of emotions and feelings on communication behavior, political learning and political participation.

An important issue that remains to be addressed is how to operationalize emotions. Social scientists still debate about the proper structure of emotion. Early work on social and political psychology arranged emotions using a single valence dimension, such as positive-negative, like-dislike or approach-avoidance (e.g., Brady & Sniderman, 1985). Other researchers have advanced two-dimensional models of emotions (Cacioppo, Berntson, Klein, & Poehlmann, 1997; Russell, 1980; Watson & Tellegen, 1985), although there is disagreement on the characteristics of these two dimensions. Russell (1980) has argued that one dimension determines the valence of emotional experience while the other determines the level of arousal. Such a structure of emotions allows researchers to distinguish, say, the effects of being terrified from being afraid (i.e., more negative and aroused), in addition to the more obvious distinction between being afraid and being elated. Another dual model of emotions, often associated with

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the work of psychologists Tellegen and Watson (Tellegen, Watson, & Clark, 1999; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; Watson & Tellegen, 1985; Zevon & Tellegen, 1982), posits that each channel performs a unique function. One dimension gauges the novelty or threat of environmental stimuli, while the other evaluates the performance of familiar routines and behaviors. Contrary to the valence-arousal model of emotion, these two dimensions are viewed as orthogonal to each other. In this sense, affective intelligence theory clearly sides with Tellegen and Watson's model of the structure of emotions because it posits that the surveillance and disposition systems operate in parallel (a similar argument is made by Valentino, Hutchings, Banks, & Davis, 2008).

Considering that this dissertation is based on affective intelligence theory, a natural choice is to create separate measures for positive and negative emotions, treating both as orthogonal to each other. Nevertheless, previous work has found that emotions towards political candidates do not always fit this dual pattern. For instance, an analysis of the emotional reactions to then president Bill Clinton found that anger and aversion constituted a separate dimension from enthusiasm and anxiety (Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, & Keele, 2006). Other work has found that the effects of anger and fear on both political knowledge and participation are quite different (Huddy, Feldman, & Cassese, 2007; Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009). Thus, as was mentioned in Chapter 2, the issue of measurement of emotions was tackled empirically using exploratory factor analysis techniques (i.e., principal component analysis), the results of which are addressed in further detail in the measures section below.

News Media Use

Theories of media effects rest on the assumption that people are influenced by media messages, either directly through exposure to media content or indirectly

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through people's conversations about it. In the context of political communication research, news reception is of particular interest, making its empirical measurement a critical step in studies that examine various outcomes such as political knowledge and political participation. Considering the central role assigned to this concept, its lack of consistent measurement is somewhat surprising. Exposure to, attention to, reliance on, and relative preference for news—all these have been used to gauge individuals' use of news media (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Drew & Weaver, 1990; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Price & Zaller, 1993; Prior, 2007; Slater, 2004).

Part of the multiplicity of instruments to capture citizens' news consumption is due to the fact that experiencing news requires a behavioral component (exposure), a cognitive component (attention), and, in many instances, an attitudinal component, such as a motivation to follows news. In McGuire's (1972) information processing model, exposure is a prerequisite for attention, comprehension, acceptance and retention of media messages. Thus, exposure is a necessary but not sufficient condition for media effects. And, yet, there is evidence that the different dimensions of news media use are strongly correlated with each other (Eveland, Hutchens, & Shen, 2009). People who are more exposed to news tend to also pay more attention to it and, consequently, learn and retain more media information. In fact, several scholars rely on these relationships to justify the use of exposure items only. Thus, to the extent that the ANES and NAES surveys contained measures of exposure and attention to media information about the campaigns, both will be taken into account.

One common way of measuring media exposure is through survey items asking global assessments of exposure, such as time spent online or frequency of watching television. This is problematic because these measures miss completely the specificity of exposure to actual media content, with the subsequent problem of underestimating

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effect sizes. Putnam's infamous indictment of television as the culprit of civic disengagement in America (Putnam, 1996) and Kraut et al.'s (1998) dismissal of the pro-social role of the Internet are good examples of the pitfalls of relying on global assessments of exposure. A better approach, in this case, is asking for exposure to specific media content (news, entertainment, etc.), following the approach of the uses and gratification tradition (Katz & Gurevitch, 1974). Existing research shows that informational uses of media have a pro-social effect, increasing people's political knowledge and participation (Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). Thus, exposure to campaign news or public affairs news will be used in the current study, rather than time spent using a particular medium.

Compared to news exposure, the measurement of news attention is not as straightforward. This is because "attention is a covert mental activity occurring within the 'black blox' of a person" (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986, p. 77). In the case of surveys, attention has been gauged by directly asking people their level of attention to news and/or public affairs content using Likert-type scales. As it happens, this is also the approach adopted by both the ANES and NAES surveys.

A final issue with measurement of news use refers to the combination of exposure and attention. Should these measures be channel- specific (text vs. audiovisual content), medium-specific (cable TV vs. national TV networks, or print newspapers vs. online news) or content-specific (generic categories such as "news" or "foreign affairs" vs. particular news events, such as "presidential elections" or "the Iraq War")? While previous work has compared these different approaches (e.g., Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986), I believe this issue is dependent upon the specific purposes of the research. If the project seeks to identify the contribution of the news media in general to individual's political involvement, as is the case in this dissertation, then generic measures of news

exposure and attention may suffice. Conversely, if the interest is on the impact of the coverage of a specific issue such as health reform on individuals' behaviors, then attention and exposure to particular news content would be more appropriate. Therefore, I will measure overall exposure and attention to news combined because a central purpose of the study is to gauge the overall effect of emotions on information-seeking in the media.

Political Discussion

According to Conover and colleagues (Conover & Searing, 2005; Conover, Searing, & Crewe, 2002; Searing, Solt, Conover, & Crewe, 2007), there is (1) structured deliberation, which usually takes place in formal, public settings, following specified rules and procedures, such as Congress, juries and deliberative polls; (2) informal public discussion, which is more informal and less structured but also takes place in public settings, such as in political parties, interest groups, work, churches, school boards and town hall meetings; and (3) casual political talk, which is also informal and unstructured, but takes place in private settings, such as a family dinner and with friends.

This dissertation deals mainly with research that has taken place in the latter two settings (i.e., a focus on the individual or interpersonal level). Specifically, I will borrow the definition advanced in the *Encyclopedia of Political Communication* (Schmitt-Beck, 2008, p. 341) and conceptualize political discussions as:

> *Episodes of political conversation and discussion that take place between the non-elite members of a political community.*

Two problems arise here. First, what is a political conversation? If I go to the supermarket and then I discuss with my wife the rising cost of produce, does that count as political discussion? Or do I need to blame government to make it political? Second,

what counts as discussion? Mansbridge (1999, p. 214) refers to a "snort of derision" in front of friends in response to a television character's sexist behavior to be "a political act." There is reason to suspect that scholars' definition of politics differs from that of most people. In this regard, Walsh (2004, pp. 38-41) found that the participants in her study thought of politics as consisting of elections, elected officials and political parties, and did not recognize political discussion even when they were engaging in it. It could be argued that political discussion is whatever it means to people, which would be fine if perceptions of being involved in a political discussion were of interest to researchers. But, as Eveland and colleagues (2009) noted, if the actual act of being involved in a political discussion is the variable of interest, this response is insufficient. On the other hand, what qualifies as discussion or not is also of importance.

Therefore, I will also borrow from Rafaeli's (1988) concept of interactivity, which refers to the extent to which communication transcends reaction and involves reciprocal exchange messages (i.e., messages must recount the relatedness of earlier messages). Thus, neither shouting at the TV in response to a sexist message nor a mere answer to a question about party ID would count as discussion. Rather, political discussion will be measured as the frequency in which respondents have engaged with other people in conversations about public affairs, including elections, government and news.

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

The affective citizen communication model as it will be tested here contains the four groups of theoretical endogenous variables explained in the previous section and a host of exogenous variables included as controls. Drawing from studies on affective intelligence (Brader & Valentino, 2006), uses and gratifications (Eveland, 2004; Shah,

Rojas, & Cho, 2009), political knowledge (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Luskin, 1990) and political behavior (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Verba & Nie, 1972; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995), the antecedents common to emotions, communication and involvement revolve around three classes: (1) resources (e.g., education, income, self-efficacy); (2) incentives (e.g., interest in politics); and (3) identity (e.g., party identification). Therefore, these factors have been included in the analyses as controls to strengthen claims that the relationships between the variables of the affective citizen communication model are not spurious.

All variables were measured in both the ANES and NAES surveys, though their operationalization was not identical. Consequently, the following two sections describe the measurement of the exogenous variables and theoretical constructs, separately for each data set.

Variables from the ANES 2008-2009 Panel Study

Demographics

The analyses on the ANES data set included seven exogenous variables measured at wave 9—the first of the waves of ANES data used in the current study. The measures of *age* (M = 47.47 years, SD = 16.89 years) and *gender* (52.5% females) were relatively straightforward. *Education* levels were assessed on a 5-point scale ranging from "no high school diploma" to "graduate degree" (M = 2.88, SD = 1.12, Mdn = 3.00). Respondent's *income* was measured using a non-linear 19-point scale which increased in $2,500 increments between incomes of below $5,000 and $14,999, in increments of $5,000 for incomes between $15,000 and $39,999, in $10,000 increments for incomes between $40,000 and $59,999, in increments of $15,000 for incomes between $60,000

and $99,999, and in increments of $25,000 for incomes higher than $100,000 (Mode = $60,000 to $74,999, *Mdn* = $50,000 to $59,999).

Political Orientations

In addition to demographics, three important political orientations measured also at Wave 9 were included as exogenous in the statistical analyses. *Internal political efficacy* was tapped with the following question: "How much can people like you affect what the government does?" Responses were measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from "a great deal" to "not at all" (reverse coded, *M* = 2.65, *SD* = 1.04). For *strength of partisanship*, respondents' party identification was measured using the typical 7-point scale ranging from strong Democrat to strong Republican, with the midpoint being true independent (the other categories were weak Democrat, independent leaning Democrat, independent leaning Republican, weak Republican). This item was folded into a 4-point scale, ranging from "no partisanship" to "strong partisanship" (*M* = 1.90, *SD* = 1.06). *Habitual interest in politics* was measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from "extremely interested" to "not interested at all" (reverse coded, *M* = 2.56, *SD* = 1.03).

Measures of Emotions

For the first component of the affective citizen communication model, *emotions*, several measures were constructed using questions from waves 9 and 11 about the intensity with which respondents felt several emotions about the presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain. Respondents were asked how angry, hopeful, afraid and proud had each candidate made them feel using a 5-point scale ranging from "extremely" to "not at all," with the midpoint being "moderately." For easier comparison with the items on emotions from the NAES survey, responses were

recoded to range from 0 to 1, with higher values for more intense feelings of emotions. Descriptive statistics of these items are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics for Emotion Items in the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	M	SD	N	Min	Max
Wave 9 data					
Emotional reaction to Obama					
Angry	.20	.31	2,304	0	1
Hopeful	.37	.35	2,304	0	1
Afraid	.31	.35	2,304	0	1
Proud	.35	.35	2,303	0	1
Emotional reaction to McCain					
Angry	.17	.28	2,304	0	1
Hopeful	.33	.30	2,304	0	1
Afraid	.23	.30	2,303	0	1
Proud	.39	.34	2,304	0	1
Wave 11 data					
Emotional reaction to Obama					
Angry	.18	.30	2,309	0	1
Hopeful	.47	.37	2,310	0	1
Afraid	.28	.34	2,310	0	1
Proud	.45	.38	2,306	0	1
Emotional reaction to McCain					
Angry	.16	.27	2,309	0	1
Hopeful	.30	.29	2,308	0	1
Afraid	.18	.28	2,308	0	1
Proud	.40	.33	2,305	0	1

In order to have single measures for each emotional reaction, scores of total anger, hope, fear and pride were computed for all respondents by averaging each pair of emotion across both candidates (for a similar methodological choice, see Marcus & MacKuen, 1993). Subsequently, these four measures of emotion were subjected to an

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exploratory factor analysis, to uncover the structure that best fit the data. This exercise was conducted separately for both Wave 9 and Wave 11 data. In both waves, the rotated solution suggested the existence of two orthogonal dimensions (details are displayed in tables A.3 and A.4 in the Appendix section).[6] More specifically, positive emotions loaded strongly on one dimension, while negative emotions loaded equally strongly on another dimension, a structure that matches the dual-channel structure advanced by Watson et al. (Watson & Clark, 1997; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; Watson & Tellegen, 1985, 1999). Affective intelligence theory also provides a theoretical rationale for conceptualizing positive and negative emotions as orthogonal to each other, following the nature of the disposition and surveillance systems. In this case, the two factors indentified in the principal component analysis can also be labeled enthusiasm and anxiety, respectively.

Considering the results of the exploratory factor analysis, a scale of *negative emotions* was constructed averaging items on anger and fear (Cronbach's α = .77, M = .23, SD = .18 for Wave 9; Cronbach's α = .81, M = .20, SD = .18 for Wave 11), while *positive emotions* was the average of measures of pride and hope (Cronbach's α = .81, M = .36, SD = .17 for Wave 9; Cronbach's α = .83, M = .40, SD = .19 for Wave 11).

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[6] Based on the recommendations of previous work on political emotions (Brader & Valentino, 2006; Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, & Keele, 2006), the results of both unrotated and rotated solutions of principal component analysis are presented in the Appendix in Table A.3 and Table A.4, respectively. The two unrotated solutions presented in Table A.3 replicate the same pattern, with the emergence of two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Clearly, the first factor represents a valence dimension, with positive and negative emotions loading highly but with opposite signs. The second factor contributes nearly as much explained variance as the first one, but in this case all four variables load on it in the same direction. Arguably, the second factor may represent arousal, that is, the intensity with which respondents feel something toward candidates Obama and McCain (for a similar choice of factor labels, see Brader & Valentino, 2006). The structure of emotions suggested by the unrotated solution consistent with the valence-arousal model identified by Russell (Russell, 1980; Russell & Bullock, 1985; Russell, Weiss, & Mendelsohn, 1989). However, I will rely on the rotated solution presented in Table A.4 because it is the most consistent with affective intelligence theory.

Measures of Communication Behavior

Habitual *news media use* was an index (M = 14.14, SD = 6.27 for Wave 9; M = 14.02, SD = 6.31 for Wave 10) constructed by averaging four items tapping the number of days in a typical week that the respondent was exposed to news on television, radio, the Internet, and printed newspapers, not including sports. *Debate viewing* was measured in wave 11 as the number of McCain-Obama debates watched by the respondent on television (range 0 to 3, *Mode* = 1, *Mdn* = 2).[7] For *political discussion*, respondents were asked the frequency with which they talked "about politics with family or friends" in a typical week. The response scale was identical to the scale of the items on news media use (M = 3.17, SD = 2.11 for Wave 9; M = 3.22, SD = 2.17 for Wave 11).

Measures of Political Involvement

The two final endogenous or outcome variables were political knowledge and political participation. A scale of *candidate issue knowledge* combined 20 items measuring respondents' knowledge of the issue positions of both McCain and Obama. Each correct response was coded as 1, while all other responses (i.e., don't knows, incorrect responses, refusals) were coded as 0.[8] Subsequently, the items were added and divided by 20 so that the scale run from 0 to 1 (Cronbach's α = .82, M = .54, SD = .23

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[7] The three debates took place on September 26, October 7 and October 15, 2008.

[8] The ANES staff followed Mondak's (2001) recommendations and explicitly instructed respondents to provide their best estimate even if they were not completely sure about the best answer. Thus, a "don't know" response choice was not available to respondents. In any case, to check that the results of the analyses are not an artifact of using a dichotomous scoring scheme, another scale was constructed from items that were recoded to correct for guessing. That is, correct responses were scored as 1, incorrect responses were scored as -1, and all other responses (refusals, missing, etc.) were scored as 0. Preliminary analyses revealed that there were no substantive difference between the "truncated" index and the "corrected for guessing" index. However, because endogenous variables will be standardized to a 0 to 1 scale in the multivariate analyses, the truncated scale explained in the text will be used since it does not contain negative scores.

for Wave 9; Cronbach's α = .81, *M* = .58, *SD* = .22 for Wave 11). The issues were same-sex marriage, federal income taxes, government funding of prescription drugs, health care, trial of terrorist detainees, government wiretapping, illegal immigration, global warming, and environmental regulations of automakers. The list of issues combined candidates' stances on thoroughly discussed topics (e.g., taxes, illegal immigration) with more obscure issues (e.g., regulations for automakers, wiretapping), providing a rich measure of respondents' political knowledge.

Campaign political participation was measured as an additive scale of dichotomous items measuring whether respondents had ever: (1) joined a protest, march, rally, or demonstration; (2) signed a political or social petition on the Internet; (3) signed a political or social petition on paper; (4) given money to an non-religious organization concerned with political or social issues; (5) attended a meeting to discuss political or social concerns; (6) invited people to attend a meeting about political or social issues; and (7) distributed information or advertisements supporting a political or social interest group. Affirmative responses were coded as 1 and negative responses were coded as 0. Subsequently, the items were added and divided by 7 to have a scale running from 0 to 1 (Cronbach's α = .75, *M* = .39, *SD* = .29 for Wave 11).[9]

Variables from the NAES 2004 Debates Panel Study

Demographics

The analyses of the NAES Debates Panel set includes the same exogenous variables used with the ANES Panel, in this case all measured in the pre-debates wave.

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[9] While these participation items were asked in Wave 11, they were not asked in Wave 9, as all the other variables detailed above. This does not represent a problem for the cross-sectional analyses using Wave 11 data only. However, for the longitudinal analysis, I had no other choice than to exclude participation from the analysis.

Age (*M* = 47.17, *SD* = 16.12) was measured in years and *gender* (55.9% females) was a dummy variable, with males as the reference category. *Education* was gauged on a 9-point non-linear scale ranging from "grade 8 or lower" to "graduate or professional degree", with the median category being "some college, no degree." To make the scale of the variable comparable to the measure of education used in the ANES data set, it was recoded into a 5-point scale ranging from "less than high school" to "graduate degree" (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = 1.19, *Mdn* = 3.00). *Income* was measured using a non-linear 9-point scale which increased in $5,000 increments between incomes of below $10,000 and $34,999, in increments of $15,000 for incomes between $35,000 and $49,999, in $25,000 increments for incomes between $50,000 and $149,999, and in increments of $50,000 for incomes higher than $150,000 (Mode = $50,000 to $74,999, *Mdn* = $35,000 to $49,999).

Political Orientations

There were three political orientations treated as exogenous variables in the analyses. *Internal political efficacy* was measured on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with the statement "politics seems too complicated to understand what is going on" (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = 1.56). For *strength of partisanship*, respondents were asked about their party identification. Four response choices were given: Republican, Democrat, independent, and something else. These responses were recoded into a dummy variable, where Republicans and Democrats were coded as 1, and independents and something else were coded as 0 (60.9% identified with a party). *Habitual interest in politics* was a measure of frequency of following what is going on in government and public affairs using a 4-point scale, ranging from "most times" to "hardly at all" " (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = 0.86).

Measures of Emotions

As for the first component of the affective citizen communication model, emotions, the NAES survey contained measures gauging negative feelings only. Specifically, the survey asked respondents the intensity with which George W. Bush and John Kerry made them feel angry, uneasy and afraid using a 5-point scale ranging from "yes, very [angry/uneasy/afraid]" to "does not make me [angry/uneasy/afraid]." The middle category was "little." In a similar fashion as the recoding of items on emotions from ANES data set, responses were recoded to range from 0 to 1, with higher values for more intense feelings of emotions. Descriptive statistics of these items are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Descriptive Statistics for Emotion Items in the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	M	*SD*	*N*	Min	Max
Pre-debates wave data					
Emotional reaction to Bush					
Afraid	.31	.42	800	0	1
Uneasy	.42	.44	799	0	1
Angry	.37	.43	801	0	1
Emotional reaction to Kerry					
Afraid	.24	.37	790	0	1
Uneasy	.40	.43	793	0	1
Angry	.21	.35	800	0	1
Post-debates wave data					
Emotional reaction to Bush					
Afraid	.31	.42	795	0	1
Uneasy	.42	.44	794	0	1
Angry	.36	.43	796	0	1
Emotional reaction to Kerry					
Afraid	.25	.39	793	0	1
Uneasy	.37	.43	793	0	1
Angry	.21	.37	794	0	1

In order to have single measures for each emotional reaction, scores of total fear, uneasiness, and anger were computed by averaging each pair of emotion across both candidates. In line with the structure of emotions examined using the ANES data set, the three negative emotions gauged by the NAES formed a single dimension when conducting an exploratory factor analysis (see Table A.5 in the Appendix section). Thus, a scale of *negative emotions* was developed by averaging the measures of fear, uneasiness and anger (Cronbach's α = .72, *M* = .32, *SD* = .20 for the pre-debate wave; Cronbach's α = .75, *M* = .32, *SD* = .19 for the post-debate wave).

Measures of Communication Behavior

There were three endogenous communication variables measured at both the pre- and post-debate waves, including media use, debate viewing and political discussion. Habitual *news media use* was an index created using measures of exposure and attention to news content, as suggested by previous research (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Eveland, Hutchens, & Shen, 2009). Exposure was an average of four items tapping the number of days in the previous week that the respondent was exposed to national network news, cable news channels, local television news, and a daily newspaper. Responses were recorded on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 to 7 days. For attention to news, respondents were asked to report how much attention they paid to stories (for national network or cable television news and local television news) and articles (for newspapers) about the campaign for president in the past week. A 4-point response scale was used for these items, ranging from "a great deal" to "none." Subsequently, the three items of attention were averaged. To create a single scale of news media use, measures of exposure and attention were standardized into a common metric running

from 0 to 1 and averaged (Cronbach's α = .78, *M* = .53, *SD* = .23 for the pre-debate wave; Cronbach's α = .82, *M* = .49, *SD* = .25 for the post-debate wave).

Debate viewing was measured in the post-debate wave as amount of exposure to the first Bush-Kerry debate of September 20, 2004 using a 4-point scale ranging from "yes, all" to "did not watch" (range 1 to 4, *Mode* = 4, *Mdn* = 3).[10] An index of *political discussion* was created by averaging respondents' answers to questions about the frequency with which they discussed politics with family and friends and with co-workers in the previous week. The response scale was identical to the scale of the items on exposure to news media (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = 1.98 for the pre-debate wave; *M* = 2.78, *SD* = 2.02 for the post-debate wave).

Measures of Political Involvement

The last two endogenous variables were related to political knowledge and political participation. *Candidate issue knowledge* was a scale of seven items measuring respondents' knowledge of the policy stances of Bush and Kerry. Respondents were queried about tax policy (e.g., tax cuts for companies), social issues (e.g., abortion), health care (e.g., government health insurance), and Social Security (e.g., investment of pension funds in the stock market). Responses were coded as 1 if they were correct, 0 otherwise. As was the case with the measure of political knowledge used with the ANES data, the items were added and the divided by 7 so that the scale ran from 0 to 1 (Cronbach's α = .65, *M* = .57, *SD* = .28 for the pre-debate wave; Cronbach's α = .63, *M* = .70, *SD* = .26 for the post-debate wave). Although this measure covers fewer issues than

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[10] The post-debate questions of news media use and political discussion queried respondents engaging in either activity over "the previous week." A majority of all respondents in the debates panel data set were interviewed within a week after the third and final Bush-Kerry debate, and a still sizeable percentage was interviewed within a week after the second Bush-Kerry debate. Consequently, the only way to maintain a consistent temporal ordering of the pre-debate, debate viewing, and post-debate measures while retaining a decent sample size was to work with the first debate viewing measure only.

those covered in the ANES surveys, it combines salient topics of the campaign with less prominently discussed topics.

Campaign political participation was also measured as an additive scale of dichotomous items measuring if during the presidential campaign respondents had: (1) gone to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners or events in support of a presidential candidate; (2) given money any of the presidential candidates; (3) done any type of work for a candidate; (4) tried to influence the way other people vote; and (5) worn a presidential campaign button, put a campaign sticker on the car, or displayed a sign on their property. Subsequently, the scale was divided by 5 so as to have a measure with a 0 to 1 range (Cronbach's α = .62, *M* = .19, *SD* = .23 for the pre-debate wave; Cronbach's α = .66, *M* = .21, *SD* = .24 for the post-debate wave).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Structural Equation Modeling

The affective citizen communication model advanced in the current study is the result of a series of hypothesized relationships between affective, communication and political involvement variables in the form of a structural equation model (SEM) (see Figure 2.5 from Chapter 2). Although each path could be examined separately through a simple multivariate regression model, by testing simultaneously the structural paths between variables one can gain a better understanding of the multiple processes of effects (i.e., direct and indirect paths of influence) theorized. As Holbert (2006) noted, SEM forces researchers to "see the whole board" by focusing on the study of processes rather than discrete concepts. SEM is able to examine the process that links several variables by relying on full-information estimation (e.g., maximum likelihood) rather than partial-information estimation (e.g., OLS regression-based path analysis). Thus, it is

particularly appropriate for testing the communication model advanced here, which proposes that emotions have a direct as well as an indirect effect on political knowledge and participation through various communication behaviors.

Within the field of communication, three approaches to SEM have been common: observed variable (OV), latent composite (LC), and hybrid (HY) (Holbert & Stephenson, 2002). The OV approach uses observed (or manifest) variables only, be they single-item measures or scales and indexes combining several indicators.[11] As such, it is similar to regression path analysis (Wright, 1918, 1921) with the added advantage that it employs full-information estimation. The LC approach also relies on single-item measures or indexes but specifies all variables as latent (i.e., not manifest). The HY method is also based on latent variables but, contrary to the LC approach, does not use indexes; rather, each observed variable loads individually on its respective latent variable.

In general, the greatest advantage of the LC and HY approaches over the more simplistic OV technique is that they account for measurement error by combining the structural model with a measurement model (via confirmatory factor analysis). Nevertheless, this study will adopt an OV approach. This decision is justified on both theoretical and empirical grounds. First, it allows for a simpler statistical model, with fewer paths to estimate, aiding the graphic presentation of the results and the substantive interpretation of it. Second, only a single indicator was available for some of the variables tested in the model, which prevents the estimation of measurement error

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[11] Strictly speaking, all scales are indices but not all indices are scales. While both employ multiple items of measurement, indices combine items without concern about their intercorrelation (e.g., the Consumer Price Index used to gauge inflation). Scales, on the other hand, reflect a latent concept and thus the items used to construct the scale must be intercorrelated (e.g., the Big Five personality scale by Goldberg, 1990).

and factor variance. Lastly, previous research in political communication, particularly the literature on communication mediation models (e.g., Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, forthcoming; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005), has also used an OV approach. In fact, the communication sciences in general rely on OV models (Holbert & Stephenson, 2002).

Assessing Model Fit in SEM

Model fit in SEM is assessed through a variety of statistical tests. In this dissertation, the model fit statistics used will be those reported by Mplus 6.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010), a statistical modeling software. Specifically, two absolute fit indices—the chi square goodness-of-fit test and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR)—and five incremental indices—the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI),[12] the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), Akaike's information criterion (AIC) and Bayesian information criterion (BIC)—will be included for every estimated model. According to SEM experts (Benter & Chou, 1987; Bollen & Long, 1993; Holbert & Stephenson, 2002; Hoyle, 1995; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kaplan, 2000), a non-significant chi-square is preferable because it demonstrates that the model is not a null model. However, the chi-square test is sensitive to sample size. To correct for this shortcoming, it is advisable to calculate the discrepancy level, defined as the ratio of chi square to degrees of freedom of the model. In this case, values of 5 or below are considered acceptable (Kline, 1998). A good fit is also indicated by a SRMR value of .09 or less, a RMSEA index of less than .06, and CFI and TLI values close to .95 or higher. The AIC and BIC impose different penalties on models that include more structural paths, with the AIC more generous and BIC more conservative. Because both

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[12] The TLI index is also known as the non-normed fit index (NNFI).

AIC and BIC are not absolute measures, they are used to compare the fit of two or more models estimated from the same data set. In this case, the model with the smaller AIC and BIC is to be preferred.

Analytical Strategy

To test the proposed relationships, several structural models will be estimated. Before fitting the theorized model to the data sets, a residualized covariance matrix among the key endogenous variables (i.e., emotions, communication, and involvement variables) will be created with a partial correlation matrix controlling for the exogenous variables (i.e., demographics and political orientations). By using the residualized covariance matrix as input in the estimation of the structural models, the subsequent analyses will already be taking into account the influence of demographics and political orientations.[13]

Subsequently, each data set will be analyzed using two different modeling strategies, a cross-sectional model and an auto-regressive model. The cross-sectional model will relate individual differences in emotions, media use, discussion, issue knowledge and campaign participation based solely on one wave of data (see Figure 3.1 for a graphical representation). With the ANES data, this model means using variables measured at Wave 11 only (with the exception of news exposure, measured at Wave 10); with the NAES data, in turn, this means using the post-debate wave variables only. The cross-sectional model does not take advantage of the panel design of the surveys used in the study. Nevertheless, as Shah et al. (2005) explained, it is useful for two

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[13] For reference, the partial correlation tables for the ANES and NAES data sets are displayed in Table A.6 and Table A.7, respectively, in the Appendix section. Because the nature of this study is to test the relationships hypothesized by the affective citizen communication model, the influence of control variables will not be discussed in the text. Nevertheless, Table A.8 and Table A.9 in the Appendix detail the direct effects of demographics and political orientations on the variables of interest via regression analysis.

reasons. It allows me to connect the current research with existing literature that has relied mainly on cross-sectional analyses, and, importantly, it serves as a baseline for comparing the performance of the model that does take into account the panel design of the surveys—the auto-regressive model—explained shortly.

Figure 3.1 Theorized Model Using Cross-Sectional Data
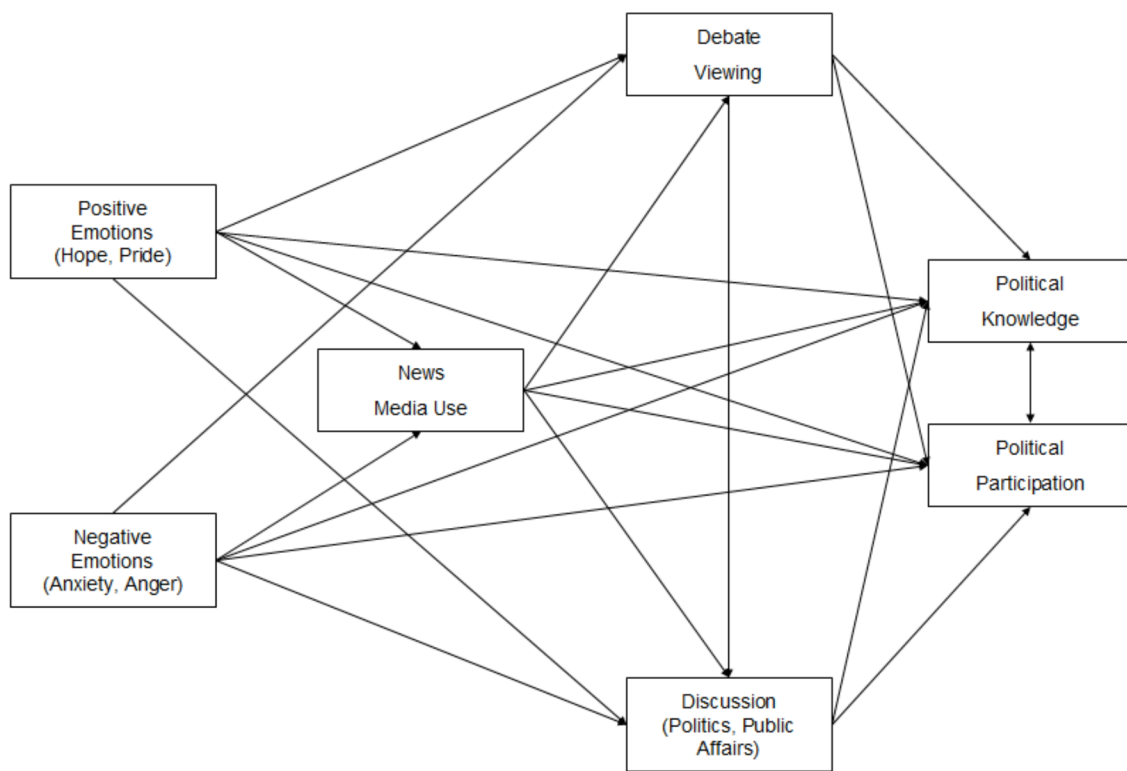
In a nutshell, the auto-regressive model takes into account the dynamic nature of the data by relating aggregate change estimates generated by lagging first wave variables on their second wave counterparts for all endogenous variables in the model (Finkel, 1995). With the ANES data, this model will be estimated with lagged Wave 9

variables on their Wave 11 counterparts. Likewise, with the NAES data set, the post-debates wave variables will be lagged on their pre-debates wave counterparts —with the obvious exception of debate viewing, which was measured only in the second wave of both surveys. The auto-regressive approach sets a more stringent test of the affective citizen communication model because it takes into consideration both temporal stability and covariance of the key endogenous variables. Furthermore, it has been used by previous scholars in political communication (Binder, Dalrymple, Brossard, & Scheufele, 2009; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005) and has several advantages over the cross-sectional model:

> "This approach aims to explain the unexplained variance among endogenous Wave 2 variables while accounting for stability in these variables over time. Estimates of change are derived across the sample rather than within each individual. As a result, error variances are generally reduced, producing more stable, albeit potentially less sensitive, estimates of gains or losses" (Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005, p. 543).

The specific structure of the appropriate auto-regressive model, however, needs further clarification because it can take several forms. Synchronous models consider the relationships among variables within waves, controlling for the values of those variables in a previous wave. An example of this model would be a structure in which knowledge at time 2 is predicted by news use at time 2, controlling for knowledge at time 1 and news use at time 1. Lagged models, in contrast, involve relationships among variables across waves. For instance, a time 2 measure of knowledge is predicted by a time 1 measure of news use, controlling for time 1 knowledge. Previous research has found greater support for the claims of a synchronous influence of communication behaviors on political knowledge and civic engagement than for a lagged influence of these variables on both outcomes (see Eveland, Hayes, Shah, & Kwak, 2005b; Shah, Cho,

Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). For the influence of emotions, however, it is not clear which structure is more appropriate. If emotions have a short-term effect on communication behaviors, a synchronous model may perform better than a lagged model. On the other hand, if emotions have a long-lasting or cumulative effect, a lagged model may outperform a synchronous model.

To decide which structure is more appropriate, I tested the synchronous model shown in Figure 3.2 below with two other possible lagged models, using both the ANES and NAES panels. The first one was a lagged auto-regressive model that estimated relationships among time 1 measures of emotions, time 1 media use and political discussion, and time 2 political knowledge and participation, controlling, of course, for time 1 political knowledge and participation. The second lagged auto-regressive model estimated relationships among time 1 emotions, time 2 media use and political discussion, and time 2 political knowledge and participation (again, controlling for time 1 measures of involvement). The goodness-of-fit statistics revealed that neither of the lagged models fit the ANES and NAES data well (see Table A.10 and Table A.11 in the Appendix). The synchronous model, in contrast, exhibited a very good fit and, thus, will be used for the auto-regressive specification estimated in Chapter 4.

Figure 3.2 Theorized Model using Panel Data

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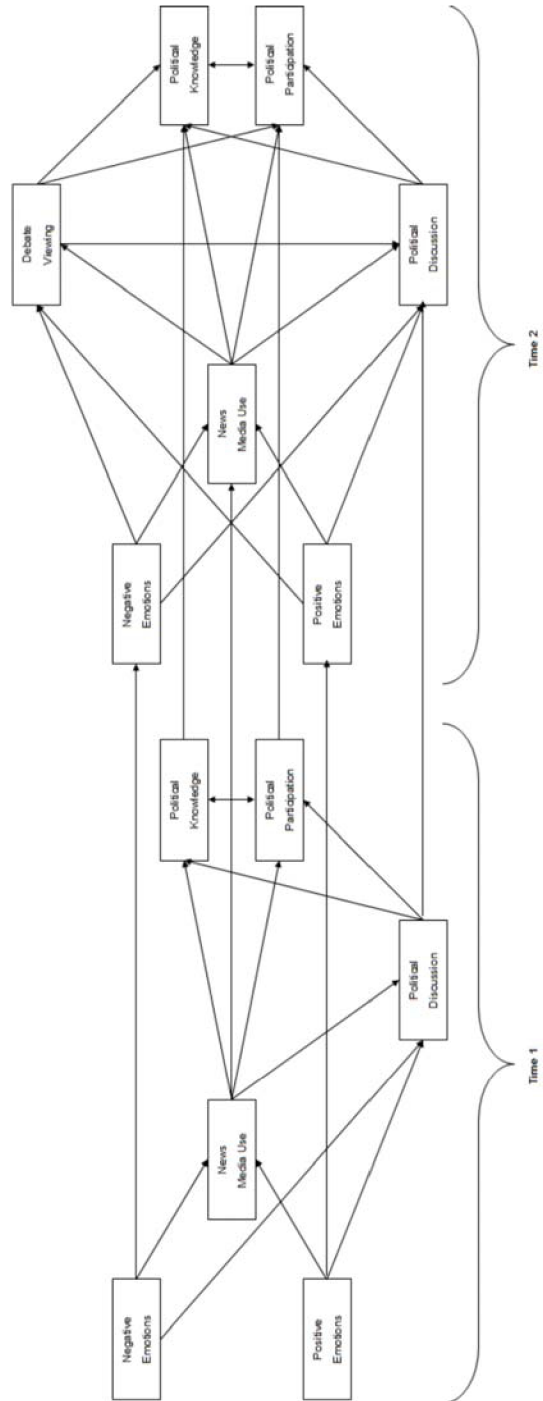
Although the synchronous auto-regressive model depicted in Figure 3.2 has a superior performance than the lagged models, it does not resolve the issue of causality. Therefore, I will also test an alternate causal ordering of the variables using a synchronous model as well (see Figure 3.3 below). In this case, the directionality of effects will flow from communication behaviors to emotions and, subsequently, to political knowledge and campaign participation. By comparing the goodness-of-fit statistics of the proposed and alternative models, which I will do using both the cross-sectional and auto-regressive approaches, one can gain a better sense of the match between the proposed and observed relationships among variables across data sets. Simply put, if the theorized structure has a better fit than the alternative structure, the results should be interpreted as further support for the affective citizen communication model.[14]

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[14] Certainly, I could test for additional alternative causal models, such as one running from involvement to emotions to communication. However, there is strong empirical evidence that media use and discussion frequency are causal antecedents of involvement (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Rojas, 2006). Less clear is the direction of the relationship between feeling emotions and engaging in communication behaviors, which justifies using this particular alternative model to contrast it with the proposed theoretical model of this dissertation.

Figure 3.3 Alternative Model using Panel Data

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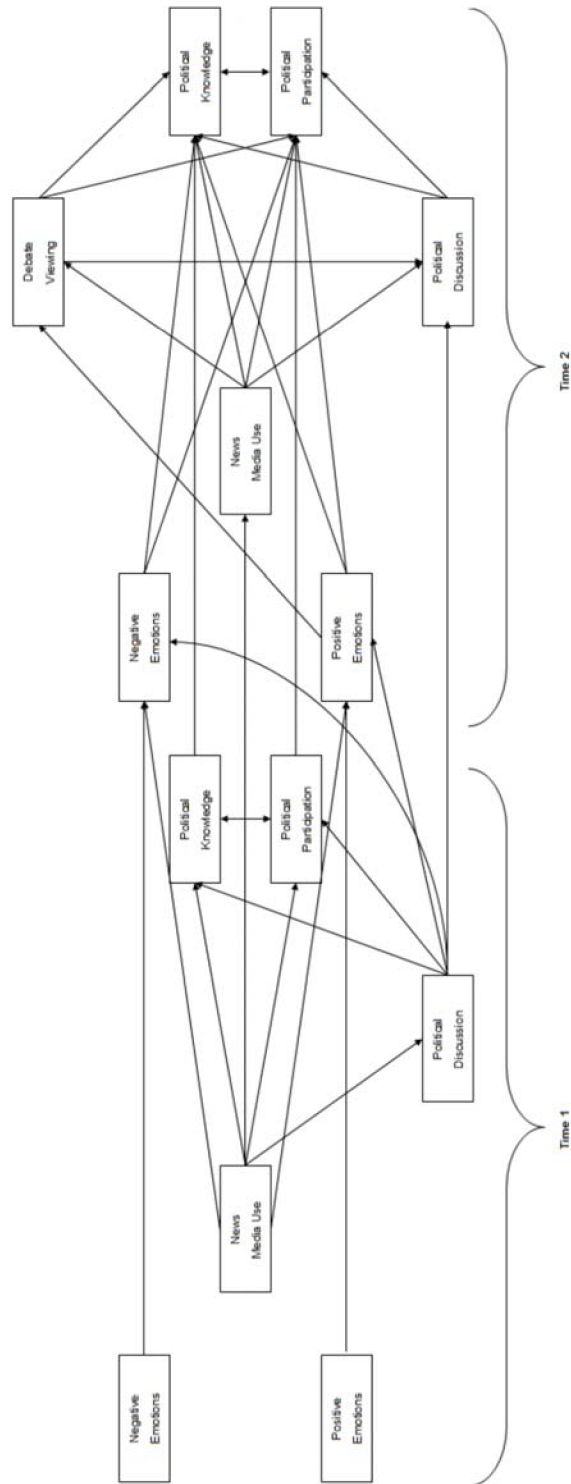
Indirect Effects

With SEM, researchers can examine three types of effects: direct, indirect, and total effects. Usually, direct effects receive the most attention, in part because the structural paths of a model estimated via SEM represent the direct influence of one variable on another (Holbert & Stephenson, 2003). Nevertheless, indirect effects, that is, the effects of one variable on another as that variable's effect operates through one or more intervening variables, are also relevant. Classic theories of communication, such as the two-step flow (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) and diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003), are based on the notion that media effects are indirect (i.e., via opinion leaders or early adopters, respectively).

The affective citizen communication model advanced in the current study posits that the effects of emotions on political knowledge and participation are both direct and indirect, through communication processes. At the same time, the effects of news media use and debate viewing on knowledge and participation are also direct and indirect, through political discussion. Oftentimes, indirect effects are labeled mediating relationships, that is, these terms tend to be used interchangeably. In the case of the affective citizen communication model, those familiar with Baron and Kenny (1986) would argue that communication variables mediate—at least partially—the effects of emotions on political knowledge and participation.

The most popular method to assess mediation in the social sciences is Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal step approach. However, this approach has several shortcomings that make its use in this study less than optimal. Most importantly, it has low statistical power and cannot quantify with precision the indirect effect being tested (Hayes, 2009). Therefore, to test for indirect (or mediating) effects in the affective citizen communication model, the study will use Bollen's (1987) delta method, which produces

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point estimates and standard errors for any indirect effect in a structural model estimated via maximum likelihood.[15] Mplus has a built-in delta method function for estimating indirect effects. Therefore, there is no need to use additional macros or scripts to compute them, as would be the case with SPSS and =other popular statistical packages.

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[15] Bootstrapping offers an alternative method to estimate indirect effects, and has been advocated by several methodologists to be the most robust method to date to examine multiple mediator models (Hayes, 2009; MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Nevertheless, it has been found that the delta method produces the same results than the bootstrapping technique when using large samples, such as the ANES and NAES studies employed here (Bollen & Stine, 1990).

Chapter 4: Results

The affective citizen communication model advanced in this dissertation proposes that the effects of emotions triggered by political candidates on knowledge of the candidates' stands on issues and on campaign participation are largely mediated by communication variables, including news media use, political discussion and debate viewing. The current chapter presents the empirical tests of these structural relationships, which were specified in hypothesis form in Chapter 1. The tests are based on statistical analyses of the two data sets explained in detail in Chapter 3, the ANES 2008-2009 Panel and the NAES 2004 Debates Panel.

Due to the variety of tests for each data set, some repetitiveness in the reporting of the results will be unavoidable. However, to present the findings in a clearer manner, the results will be organized by survey, beginning with the ANES and ending with the NAES. Within the analysis of each survey, I will refer to the tests of the theorized affective citizen communication model examined through structural equation modeling. As explained earlier, the model will be estimated using two specifications: cross-sectional and auto-regressive. Subsequently, the theorized model will be compared to an alternative model—also outlined previously in Chapter 3—where communication behaviors lead to feeling emotions about the candidates, and these processes together predict learning candidates' issue stands and engaging in campaign activities. This exercise will also be conducted using both cross-sectional and auto-regressive specifications. Goodness-of-fit statistics will be used to assess if the affective citizen communication model represents a stronger causal model than its alternative.

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Lastly, I will review the research hypotheses outlined in Chapter 2 in light of the statistical analyses and discuss how well the data supported each of them.

Cross-Sectional Model

In order to identify the best fitting cross-sectional model, the estimation proceeded in three stages. In the first step, all emotion variables were set to have a direct influence on both communication and involvement variables, and all communication variables, in turn, were set to have a direct influence on the outcome variables (this is called a "saturated" model, depicted earlier in Figure 3.1). Subsequently, all non-statistically significant paths from emotions to the outcome variable were removed so that indirect effects of emotions through communication variables could be examined. This model tests if communication behaviors partially or fully mediate the relationships between emotions and the political involvement variables considered here (this is the "trimmed" model). Likewise, in the trimmed model all non-statistically significant paths from news media use and debate viewing on the outcome variable were removed to assess possible mediation by political discussion. Lastly, a final model was estimated in which all non significant structural paths were removed (this is the "final" model).[16] Table 4.1 shows the goodness-of-fit statistics of these three models. Because it is the most parsimonious (i.e., has the lowest AIC, BIC,

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[16] This step-by-step process was borrowed from Shah and colleagues (2005), who argued that these final models

> "fit the data best and explain the same amount of variance in the criterion variable (...) as the saturated and trimmed models while providing the most parsimonious solutions. Given the performance of these trimmed models on a number of criteria, including their empirical fit across measures and their relative parsimony compared to other specifications [they are accepted] as (...) final models" (pp. 544-545).

and discrepancy level), the results will be explained using the estimates of the final model only.

Table 4.1 Comparison of Theorized Cross-Sectional Models using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	Saturated Model	Trimmed Model	Final Model
AIC	2,834.74	2,832.00	2,826.73
BIC	2,977.99	2,963.79	2,941.33
χ^2	--	1.26	1.99
df	--	2	5
p value	--	n.s.	n.s.
χ^2/df	--	.63	.40
CFI	--	1.00	1.00
TLI	--	1.00	1.00
RMSEA	--	.00	.00
SRMR	--	.00	.01

Notes: All models were estimated using Wave 11 data only (n = 2,276). The saturated model has all proposed structural paths outlined in Figure 2.5. Thus, relative goodness-of-fit statistics cannot be computed. The trimmed model has all non-significant emotion effects on knowledge and participation removed. The final model has all non-significant paths removed.

The concurrent relationships among emotions, communication and involvement estimated by the final model are shown in Figure 4.1. Overall, this model fitted the data extremely well, yielding a chi-square value of 1.99 with 5 degrees of freedom (RMSEA = .00, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, SRMR = .01). The variables included in this model accounted for 5.6% of the variance in political knowledge, 4.2% in campaign participation, 5.2% in debate viewing, 9.4% in political discussion and 0.7% in news media use.

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Figure 4.1 Final Cross-Sectional Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel
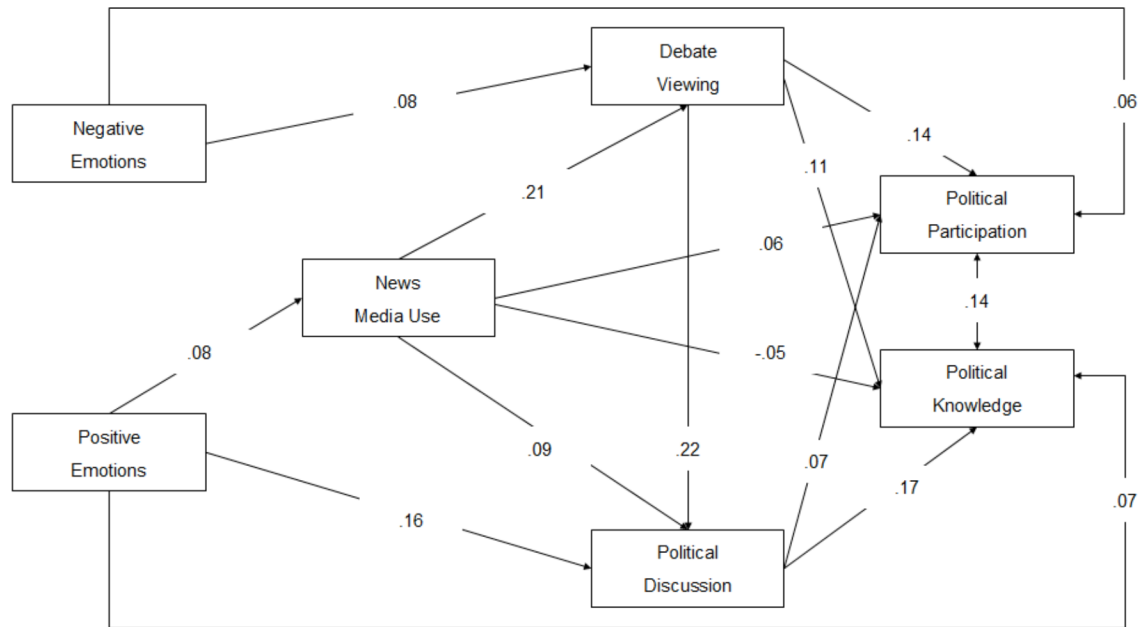
Notes: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .05

The relationships observed in Figure 4.1 support the view that both positive and negative feelings towards Obama and McCain in the 2008 election were positively related to communication behaviors. Specifically, negative emotions towards both candidates such as fear and anger were associated with watching the televised presidential debates, whereas positive emotions, namely, pride and hope, were predictive of both greater news media use and more frequent political discussions with family members and friends. These communication behaviors, in turn, were positively related to greater knowledge of where the candidates stood on the issues and also to greater involvement in campaign activities. The only exception to this trend of positive influences was the negative path from news to knowledge, which was significant once

all controlling variables and other relationships in the model were taken into consideration.

Does this finding suggest that news use spurred issue ignorance in the 2008 election? A full answer to this question requires a look at the indirect effects of news use on knowledge, which are displayed along all other indirect effects in the model in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Cross-Sectional Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Political Participation
Positive Emotions:					
Direct	.08	--	.16	.07	--
Indirect	--	.02	.01	.03	.02
Total	.08	.02	.17	.09	.02
Negative Emotions:					
Direct	--	.08	--	--	.06
Indirect	--	--	.02	.01	.01
Total	--	.08	.02	.01	.07
News Media Use:					
Direct	--	.21	.09	-.05	.06
Indirect	--	--	.05	.05	.04
Total	--	.21	.14	--	.10
Debate Viewing:					
Direct	--	--	.22	.11	.14
Indirect	--	--	--	.04	.02
Total	--	--	.22	.15	.16
Political Discussion:					
Direct	--	--	--	.17	.07
Indirect	--	--	--	--	--
Total	--	--	--	.17	.07

Note: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .05. Indirect and direct effects might not add up to total effects due to rounding error and nonsignificant indirect links.

Actually, the relationship between news media use and political knowledge is quite complex. As shown in Table 4.2, consuming news is positively related to debate viewing and political discussion frequency, both of which are strongly associated with

greater knowledge of where Obama and McCain stood on the issues of the campaign. Thus, two mechanisms seem to be working in opposite directions simultaneously: the direct effect of news is negative, but its indirect effect is positive. Because both of these effects are of the same magnitude, the total effects of news on knowledge are null. This particular, if not surprising, finding is not—as will be shown later—unique to the ANES cross-sectional analysis. Therefore, we will elaborate further on it in Chapter 5.

Another important finding from the results of this cross-sectional model refers to the indirect effects of positive and negative feelings on citizens' involvement in the campaign. As was expected, communication variables fully mediated the effect of enthusiasm on McCain and Obama on participation in campaign activities. At the same time, watching the debates and discussing about the campaign more frequently fully mediated the relationship between anxiety and learning the candidates' issue stances. Likewise, discussion frequency partially mediated the relationship of both debate viewing and news use on political knowledge and participation.

Auto-Regressive Model

As explained in Chapter 3 (see footnote 8), political participation was measured in the ANES data set in Wave 11 only. Therefore, of the two involvement variables, only political knowledge will be used in the estimation of the auto-regressive model using the ANES panel.

Table 4.3 contains a summary of the goodness-of-fit statistics for each of the three auto-regressive models: saturated, trimmed and final. As was the case with the cross-sectional analysis, the best performing model was the final model, with all nonsignificant paths removed. While the discrepancy level exceeded 5, (χ^2 = 182.03, df =

35), all other tests were within acceptable ranges (RMSEA = .04, CFI = .99, TLI = .96, SRMR = .02). Consequently, the results that follow refer to the final model only.

Table 4.3 Comparison of Theorized Auto-Regressive Models using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	Saturated Model	Trimmed Model	Final Model
AIC	10,135.62	10,134.00	10,124.86
BIC	10,347.64	10,328.83	10,285.31
χ^2	174.79	179.17	182.03
df	26	29	35
p value	< .001	< .001	<.001
χ^2/df	6.72	6.18	5.20
CFI	.98	.98	.98
TLI	.95	.95	.96
RMSEA	.05	.05	.04
SRMR	.04	.04	.04

Notes: All models were estimated using Wave 9 and Wave 11 data (*n* = 2,276). The saturated model has all proposed structural paths outlined in Figure 3.1. The trimmed model has all nonsignificant emotion effects as well as nonsignificant media use effects on knowledge removed. The final model has all nonsignificant paths removed.

The over-time relationships among emotions, communication and involvement estimated by the final model are depicted in Figure 4.2. In Wave 11, this structural model accounted for 30.9% of the variance in positive emotions, 35.9% in negative emotions, 54.7% of news media use, 4.6% in debate viewing, 32.6% in political discussion and 30.6% in political knowledge.[17]

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[17] For Wave 9, the model explained 1.8% of the variance in news media use, 4.7% in political discussion, and 1.7% in political knowledge.

Figure 4.2 Final Auto-Regressive Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel
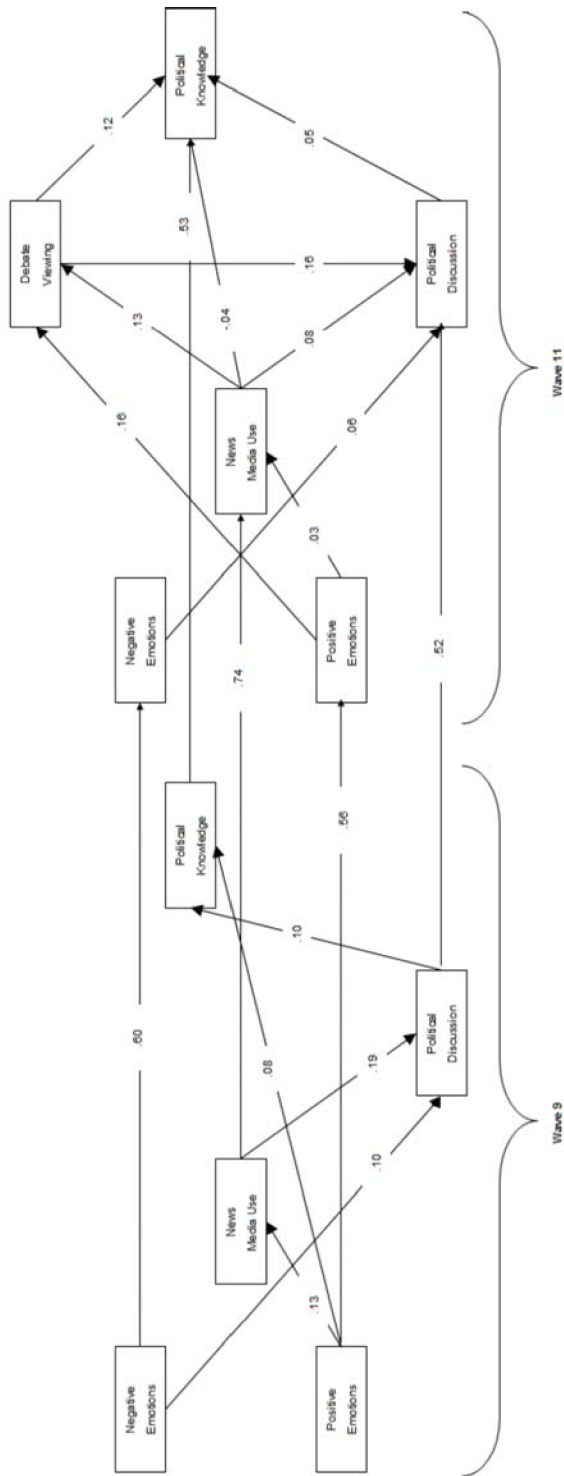
Temporal stability was relatively strong for all variables. In other words, past behavior in terms of news media use, political discussion and participation in campaign activities was a strong predictor of subsequent behavior. Likewise, positive and/or negative feelings towards McCain and Obama as well as knowledge of their issue stances at the beginning of the official campaign period were the best predictors for feelings toward and knowledge of these figures after Election Day.

As for the endogenous relationships, several of the structural paths of this model are consistent with the previous cross-sectional model. As shown in Table 4.4, even after accounting for prior levels of the variables, Wave 11 positive emotions were a significant positive predictor of Wave 11 news media use (for full results with Wave 9 variables, see Table A.12 in the Appendix). Likewise, the estimates of change in Wave 11 consumption of campaign news were positively associated with watching more presidential debates, discussing politics and the election more frequently, and knowing more about the candidates issue stances, even when accounting for the lagged effects of discussion and knowledge. As was the case with the previous model, the more debates respondents said they watched, the more days they discussed politics with friends and family members, even when accounting for the sizeable effect of past political discussion. Lastly, debate viewing and unexplained variance in the Wave 11 measure of discussion had a positive influence on Wave 11 political knowledge, again, even after including the influence of prior political knowledge and discussion.

Table 4.4 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

Wave 11	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge
Positive Emotions:				
Direct	.03	.16	--	--
Indirect	--	.004	.03	.02
Total	.03	.16	.03	.02
Negative motions:				
Direct	--	--	.06	--
Indirect	--	--	--	.003
Total	--	--	.06	.003
News Media Use:				
Direct	--	.13	.08	-.04
Indirect	--	--	.02	.02
Total	--	.13	.11	--
Debate Viewing:				
Direct	--	--	.16	.12
Indirect	--	--	--	.01
Total	--	--	.16	.12
Political Discussion:				
Direct	--	--	--	.05
Indirect	--	--	--	--
Total	--	--	--	.05

Note: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .05. Indirect and direct effects might not add up to total effects due to rounding error and nonsignificant indirect links. Full results with Wave 9 effects are available in Table A.12 in the Appendix.

Nevertheless, there were three notable differences detected between the results of the cross-sectional model and the synchronous auto-regressive model. First,

using the auto-regressive approach, it was found that there was a direct link between feelings of hope and pride in candidates Obama and McCain as measured in Wave 11 and watching the televised debates. Second, the influence of Wave 11 positive emotions on Wave 11 political knowledge was fully mediated by communication behaviors once lagged knowledge was included in the equation. And third, there was no significant relationship between Wave 11 negative emotions and debate viewing. I will return to the meaning of these differences in Chapter 5.

Comparison with Alternative Model

To further examine the performance of the theorized model, I run additional tests of an alternative causal ordering of the key variable clusters for both the cross-sectional and auto-regressive approaches. In the alternative specification, the directionality of effects flows from communication behaviors to emotions and, subsequently, to political knowledge and campaign participation (refer to Figure 3.3).

As seen in Table 4.5, reporting final models (i.e., with all nonsignificant paths removed), the theorized relationship between feeling emotions and subsequently engaging in communication behaviors, which in turn lead to knowledge and participation, has a better fit than its inverse, of communication behaviors leading to feeling emotions and both jointly leading to involvement. The differences in goodness-of-fit statistics are dramatic across cross-sectional and auto-regressive models, particularly in regards to discrepancy levels and the AIC and BIC fit indices. This evidence provides more support for the affective citizen communication model.

Table 4.5 Comparison of Theorized Model with Alternative Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	Cross-Sectional		Auto-Regressive	
	Theorized Model (Emotions → Comm. → Involvement)	Alternative Model (Comm. → Emotions → Involvement)	Theorized Model (Emotions → Comm. → Involvement)	Alternative Model (Comm. → Emotions → Involvement)
AIC	2,826.73	16,097.24	10,124.86	10,597.60
BIC	2,941.33	16,223.31	10,285.31	10,746.58
χ^2	1.99	4.08	182.03	265.17
df	5	5	35	34
p value	n.s.	n.s.	< .001	< .001
χ^2/df	.40	.82	5.20	7.80
CFI	1.00	1.00	.98	.96
TLI	1.00	1.00	.96	.94
RMSEA	.00	.00	.04	.06
SRMR	.01	.01	.04	.05

Notes: The cross-sectional models use Wave 11 data only (n = 2,276). The auto-regressive models use Wave 9 and Wave 11 data (n = 2,276). The theorized cross-sectional model refers to the final model with all non-significant paths removed illustrated in Figure 4.1. The theorized auto-regressive model refers to the final model with all non-significant paths removed illustrated in Figure 4.2. The alternative models have also all their non-significant paths removed..

Cross-Sectional Model

Table 4.6 displays the goodness-of-fit statistics of the saturated, trimmed and final cross-sectional models using data from the NAES 2004 Debates Panel. As was the case with the ANES survey, the final model was the most parsimonious and with the best fit of all three (χ^2 = 6.29, df = 4, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .99, TLI = .96, SRMR = .02). The variables included in this model accounted for 15.5% of the variance in political knowledge, 19.1% in campaign participation, 9.4% in debate viewing, 15.0% in political discussion and 1.0% in news media use.

Table 4.6 Comparison of Theorized Cross-Sectional Models using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	Saturated Model	Trimmed Model	Final Model
AIC	372.69	372.76	370.98
BIC	451.28	447.42	433.85
χ^2	--	2.07	6.29
df	--	1	4
p value	--	n.s.	n.s.
χ^2/df	--	2.07	1.57
CFI	--	.99	.99
TLI	--	.93	.96
RMSEA	--	.05	.04
SRMR	--	.02	.02

Notes: All models were estimated using the post-debates data only (n = 376). The saturated model has all proposed structural paths outlined in Figure 2.5. The trimmed model has all non-significant emotion effects on knowledge and participation removed. The final model has all non-significant paths removed.

Figure 4.3 below illustrates the direct structural paths between the variables included in the final cross-sectional model.

Figure 4.3 Final Cross-Sectional Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel
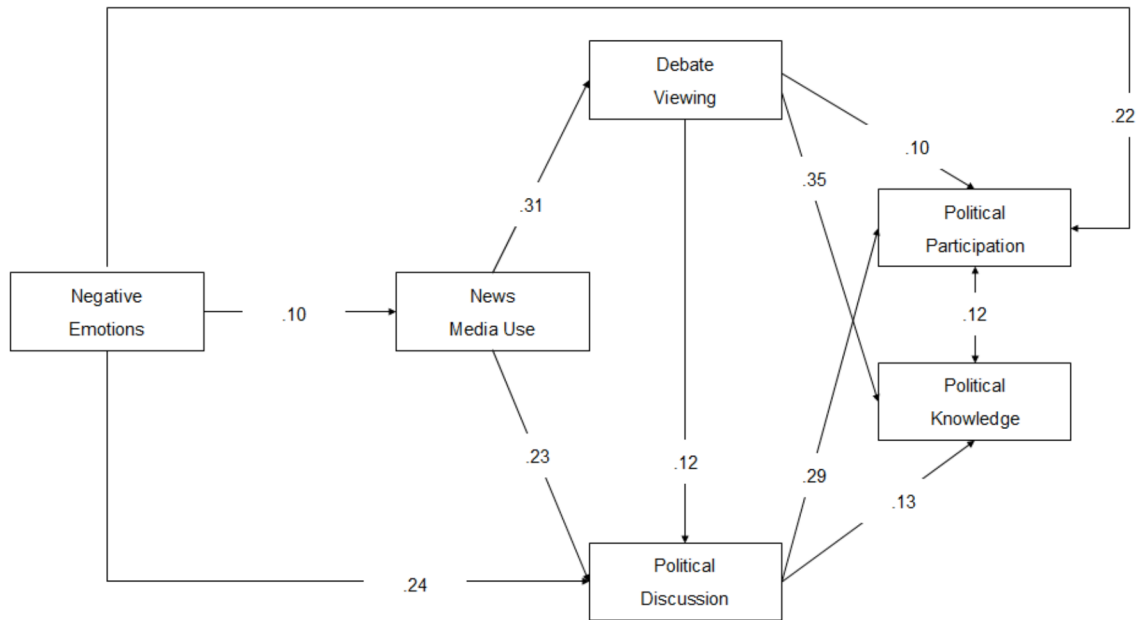
Notes: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .05

In this case, feeling negative emotions towards then-president Bush and candidate Kerry was positively associated with greater exposure and attention of campaign news. News media use and debate viewing, in turn, were strong predictors of the frequency with which respondents discussed about the campaign with their family and friends. As for the outcome variables, both debate viewing and interpersonal discussion exhibited direct, significant associations with political participation and political knowledge.

As is manifest in Table 4.7 below, even after considering communication behaviors, negative emotions towards candidates Bush and Kerry had a noticeable direct relationship with political participation. Still, there was a significant indirect effect of negative feelings operating mainly through political talk. In regards to political knowledge, the contribution of feelings of anger, anxiety and uneasiness were completely indirect, operating mainly through discussing more frequently.

Lastly, there was evidence that discussion frequency mediated the relationship between media use variables and involvement variables, as debate viewing and news media use had indirect effects on knowledge and participation via frequency of conversations about the campaign.

Table 4.7 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Cross-Sectional Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Political Participation
Negative Emotions:					
Direct	.10	--	.24	--	.22
Indirect	--	.03	.03	.04	.08
Total	.10	.03	.26	.04	.30
News Media Use					
Direct	--	.31	.23	--	--
Indirect	--	--	.04	.14	.11
Total	--	.31	.26	.14	.11
Debate Viewing					
Direct	--	--	.12	.35	.10
Indirect	--	--	--	.02	.04
Total	--	--	.12	.36	.13
Political Discussion					
Direct	--	--		.13	.29
Indirect	--	--	--	--	--
Total	--	--	--	.13	.29

Note: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .07. Indirect and direct effects might not add up to total effects due to rounding error and nonsignificant indirect links.

Auto-Regressive Model

When comparing the fit of the saturated, trimmed and final auto-regressive models, all three had adequate discrepancy levels and CFI values above .95 (see Table 4.8). Nevertheless, the final model outperformed the other two in terms of relative fit, with lower AIC, BIC and RMSEA values, and a higher TLI value. Furthermore, it was more

parsimonious, as all nonsignificant structural paths were removed. As a consequence, the findings that will be discussed below refer to the final model only.

Table 4.8 Comparison of Theorized Auto-Regressive Models using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	Saturated Model	Trimmed Model	Final Model
AIC	243.79	241.82	237.34
BIC	391.12	385.37	346.90
χ^2	76.95	76.98	87.18
df	26	27	34
p value	< .001	< .001	< .001
χ^2/df	2.96	2.85	2.56
CFI	.96	.96	.96
TLI	.92	.93	.94
RMSEA	.08	.08	.07
SRMR	.06	.06	.07

Notes: All models were estimated using pre- and post-debates data (*n* = 323). The saturated model has all proposed structural paths outlined in Figure 3.1. The trimmed model has all non-significant emotion effects on knowledge and participation removed. The final model has all non-significant paths removed.

The relationships among emotions, communication behaviors, political knowledge and participation estimated by the final model are depicted in Figure 4.4. In the post-debates wave, this structural model accounted for 48.3% of the variance in negative emotions, 57.6% of news media use, 10.5% in debate viewing, 45.7% in political discussion, 27.4% in political knowledge, and 65.3% in political participation.[18]

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[18] In the pre-debates wave, the model explained 10.1% in political discussion, 2.4% in political knowledge and 20.8% in political participation.

Figure 4.4 Final Auto-Regressive Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel
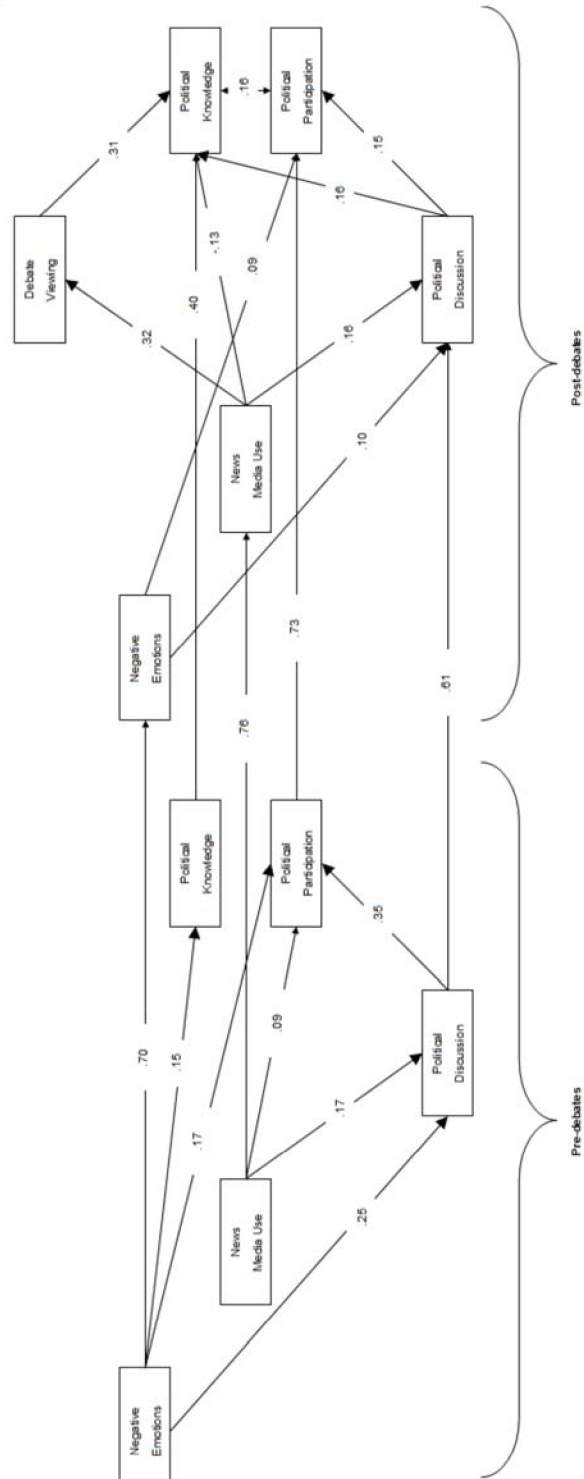
As could be expected from the short time-span between waves, the stability of the variables before and after the presidential debates between Bush and Kerry was strong. This was particularly true for negative emotions, news media use and political participation. This sets an extremely conservative test for the synchronous relationships among key variables in the post-debates wave.

As can be gleaned from Table 4.9, the structural paths of this model are consistent with the cross-sectional model detailed earlier. Feelings of anger and anxiety towards Bush and Kerry were positively related to discussion frequency, even after accounting for the lagged effects of emotions and discussion. Similarly, negative emotions were associated with participation in campaign activities, even after including previous participation and emotions in the model. The strong effects of news media use on debate viewing, as well as the relationship between news and political discussion, were significant when controlling for prior levels of these variables. The contribution of watching the Bush-Kerry debates on knowing the candidates' issue position was—just like in the cross-sectional analysis—among the most robust effects detected in the final auto-regressive specification. This relationship was evident even after taking into account pre-debate knowledge of candidates' issue positions. On the other hand, the influence of discussing political affairs with friends and family members on both knowledge and participation was also positive and significant, even when accounting for prior levels of these variables. Lastly, the positive indirect effect of news consumption on learning the candidates' issue positions through discussion frequency was significant, even when including lagging effects of knowledge.

Table 4.9 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

Post-Debates Wave	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Political Participation
Negative motions:					
Direct	--	--	.10	--	.09
Indirect	--	--	--	--	.02
Total	--	--	.10	--	.10
News Media Use:					
Direct	--	.32	.16	-.13	--
Indirect	--	--	--	.13	.03
Total	--	.32	.16	--	.03
Debate Viewing:					
Direct	--	--	--	.31	--
Indirect	--	--	--	--	--
Total	--	--	--	.31	--
Political Discussion:					
Direct	--	--	--	.16	.15
Indirect	--	--	--	--	--
Total	--	--	--	.16	.15

Note: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .05. Indirect and direct effects might not add up to total effects due to rounding error and nonsignificant indirect links. Full results with pre-debates wave effects are available in Table A.13 in the Appendix.

The similarity of the results with the cross-sectional model, however, is part of the story. The auto-regressive approach identified a number of differences that are noteworthy. After taking into consideration lagged news media use, negative emotions were not significantly related to post-debate media use. This also caused all indirect effects of negative emotions on debate viewing, political discussion and political

knowledge through news media to be nonsignificant. Another important difference was the negative direct effect of post-debate news media use on post-debate knowledge after accounting for pre-debate knowledge. This result brings up the complex relationship between news use and learning candidates' issue positions found previously in the ANES data set; while news use by itself can cause people to inaccuracies in candidates' issue stances, it can also spark learning so long as it gets people to talk about the election. The fact that these inverse relationships are of the same magnitude makes the total effect of news use on knowledge null. A third major difference relates to the contribution of debate viewing on both political discussion and participation. In this case, there was no significant direct or indirect effect detected, contrary to what was found in the cross-sectional analysis. I will return to the significance of these relationships in the discussion section (Chapter 5).

Comparison with Alternative Model

To further address the issue of causality, I tested alternative causal ordering of the variables of the affective citizen communication model, separately for cross-sectional and auto-regressive approaches. As may be recalled, in the alternative specification the effects flow from communication to emotions to political knowledge and campaign participation (refer to Figure 3.3).

As seen in Table 4.10, both theorized and alternative models adequately fit the data. All discrepancy levels are well below 5, the CFI and TLI values are .94 or higher, and the highest RMSEA value is .07. However, in both cross-sectional and auto-regressive specifications, the AIC and BIC values are significantly lower for the theorized structure than the alternative. This means that the affective citizen communication

model, as tested with data from the NAES 2004 Debates Panel, is more parsimonious and thus preferable to the alternative model.

Table 4.10 Comparison of Theorized Models with Alternative Models using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	Cross-Sectional		Auto-Regressive	
	Theorized Model (Emotions → Comm. → Involvement)	Alternative Model (Comm. → Emotions → Involvement)	Theorized Model (Emotions → Comm. → Involvement)	Alternative Model (Comm. → Emotions → Involvement)
AIC	370.98	1,378.13	237.34	1,159.81
BIC	433.85	1,437.07	346.90	1.269.36
χ^2	6.29	8.28	87.18	88.07
Df	4	5	34	36
p value	n.s.	n.s.	< .001	< .001
χ^2/df	1.57	1.66	2.56	2.45
CFI	.99	.99	.96	.96
TLI	.96	.96	.94	.94
RMSEA	.04	.04	.07	.07
SRMR	.02	.03	.07	.07

Notes: The cross-sectional models use the post-debates data only (n = 376). The auto-regressive models use pre- and post-debates data (n = 323). The theorized cross-sectional model refers to the final model with all non-significant paths removed illustrated in Figure 4.3. The theorized auto-regressive model refers to the final model with all non-significant paths removed illustrated in Figure 4.4. The alternative models have also all their non-significant paths removed.

INTEGRATING RESULTS ACROSS DATA SETS

The results presented up to this point provide a comprehensive examination of the affective citizen communication model and its implied relationships across key clusters of variables. As explained in Chapter 2, the model was broken down into 15

research hypotheses, which presents some difficulty in summarizing the tests for these hypotheses. In order to facilitate the synthesis and substantive interpretation of the multiple analyses employed in the study, Table 4.11 provides a measure of the proportion of hypotheses supported across data sets and structural models. In addition, Figure 4.5 presents en edited version of the original model depicted in Figure 3.1 showing only the major, significant paths.

Table 4.11 Proportion of Hypotheses Supported using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel Sample and the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	ANES 2008-2009 Panel		NAES 2004 Debates Panel		
	Final Cross-Sectional Model	Final Auto-Regressive Model	Final Cross-Sectional Model	Final Auto-Regressive Model	Overall
Hypotheses:					
1: Emotions → News Use	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3/4
2: Emotions → Debate Viewing	Yes	No	No	No	1/4
3: Emotions → Discussion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4/4
4: News Use → Knowledge	No	No	No	No	0/4
5: News Use → Participation	Yes	--	No	No	1/3
6: Debate Viewing → Knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4/4
7: Debate Viewing → Participation	Yes	--	Yes	No	2/3
8: Discussion → Knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4/4
9: Discussion → Participation	Yes	--	Yes	Yes	3/3
10: Emotions → News, Debate, Discussion → Knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3/4
11: Emotions → News, Debate, Discussion → Participation	Yes	--	Yes	Yes	3/3
12: News → Discussion → Knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4/4
13: News → Discussion → Participation	Yes	--	Yes	Yes	3/3
14: Debate Viewing → Discussion → Knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3/4
15: Debate Viewing → Discussion → Participation	Yes	--	Yes	No	3/4
Proportion of hypotheses supported:					
Count	14/15	7/9	12/15	7/15	40/54
Percentage	(93.3%)	(77.8%)	(80%)	(46.7%)	(74.1%)

Figure 4.5 Significant Paths of the Affective Citizen Communication Model
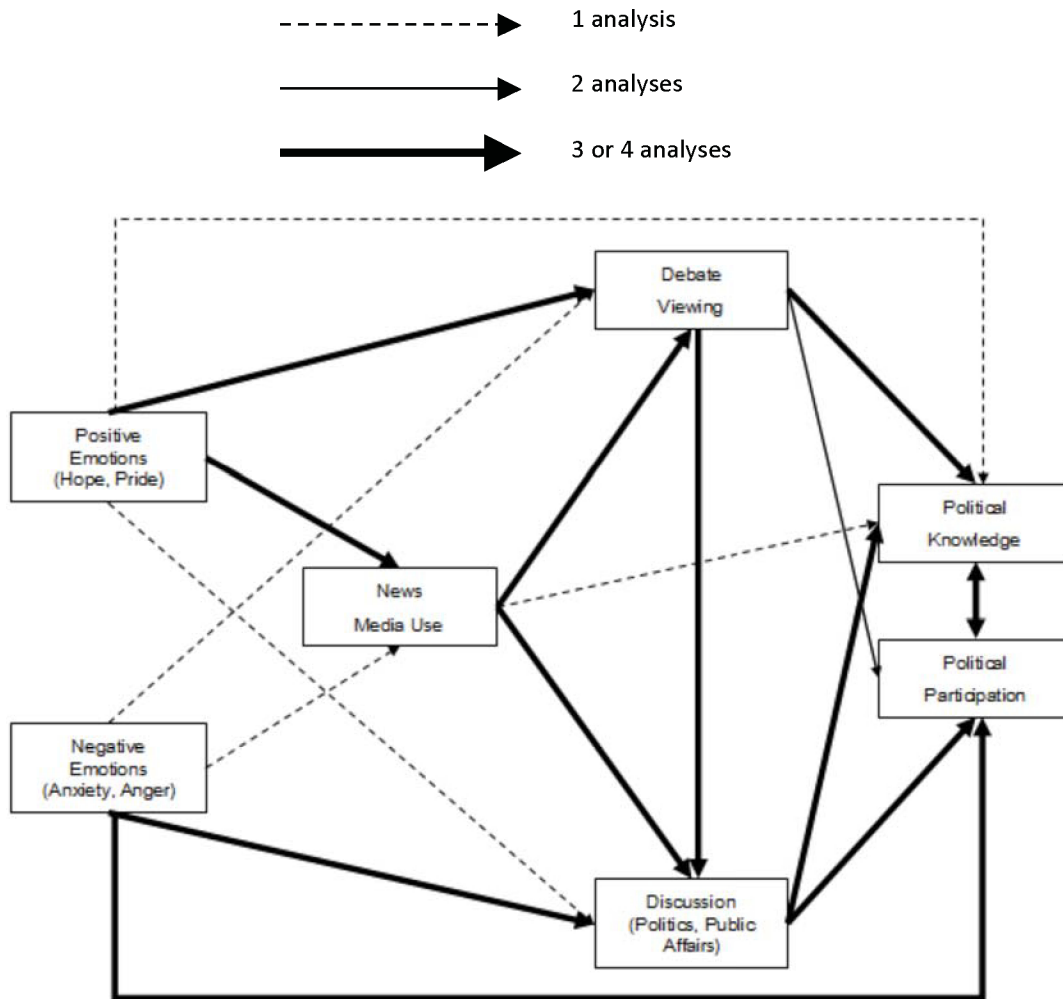
Across data sets and models, there was considerable support for the hypotheses derived from affective intelligence theory, as feelings towards presidential candidates were directly correlated to news media consumption and frequency of political discussion. The direct relationship between emotions and debate viewing, however, was supported in the ANES cross-sectional analysis only. The hypotheses derived from communication mediation were also supported in a consistent fashion across surveys

and models. The positive effects of news media use on both political knowledge and political participation were found to be fully mediated by political discussion. A similar trend occurred with watching the televised debates between the main presidential candidates, although in this case the mediation by political talk was partial. Notably, face-to-face discussions with friends and family members about political affairs were a more immediate cause for political involvement than media use variables. Lastly, and in clear support of the affective citizen communication model advanced in this study, in all but one test emotions were found to have (in addition to direct effects) significant indirect effects on political knowledge and political participation that operated through a host of communication behaviors, including news use, debate viewing and political discussion. Summing all tests of hypotheses presented in Table 4.11, it can be concluded that the null was rejected, on average, three-quarters of the time. This may be interpreted as substantial support for the affective citizen communication model.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it. (Van Gogh)

The emotions aren't always immediately subject to reason, but they are always immediately subject to action. (William James)

INTRODUCTION

Feelings towards public figures running for office are one of myriad sources voters rely on to decide what to do during a political campaign. Issues, values, identities and socialization are oftentimes key determinants of paying attention to media, talking about the campaign, learning candidates' policy stands and getting involved in political activities. And for a substantial portion of voters, campaigns do not stir their emotions at all; if anything, they trigger apathy and indifference. Yet, there is consistent evidence showing that presidential candidates elicit feelings of enthusiasm and anxiety—if not outright anger—on the American voter (Crigler, Just, & Belt, 2006; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000; Neuman, Marcus, MacKuen, & Crigler, 2007; Roseman, Abelson, & Ewing, 1986; Valentino, Brader, Groenendyk, Gregorowicz, & Hutchings, 2011). In this sense, the elections studied in this research are typical. In the 2008 campaign, ratings of hope and pride in Barack Obama were in the upper 40s (on a scale from 0 to 100, averaging across Democrats and Republicans). In the 2004 election, negative feelings towards George W. Bush's were in the near 40s as well. This dissertation has attempted to elaborate on the individual-level consequences of these emotions. In so doing, it has provided a model that goes beyond the simple claim that feelings cause political knowledge and campaign participation. Rather, it has suggested—and empirically examined—the various communication channels by which emotions exert an influence

on political involvement. Thus, the study has focused on the process and mechanisms by which emotions lead to learning and participating.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the tests of the theorized affective citizen communication model presented in Chapter 4. I will also elaborate on the strengths of the study as well as its limitations and how these shortcomings may be overcome in future research. Subsequently, I will suggest how the affective citizen communication model may be expanded and used to address other phenomena of interest for communication scholars. The convergence between the proposed model and existing communication theories, including agenda setting, priming and partisan selective exposure, will also be addressed. Lastly, I will discuss what the results of this study tell us about current debates on citizen competence.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This project relies on the theoretical insights of robust bodies of work in political communication, namely, affective intelligence (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000) and citizen communication mediation (Cho, Shah, McLeod, McLeod, & Scholl, 2009; Eveland, 2001; McLeod et al., 2001; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). Building on these two paradigms, I have argued that feelings towards presidential candidates lead individuals to engage in a variety of communication behaviors, such as consuming news, discussing politics with fellow citizens, and watching the televised debates between the main candidates. These communication practices, in turn, have a more immediate effect on two important political outcomes: learning where the candidates stand on the issues of the campaign, and participating in a variety of political activities, such as donating money to a candidate and attending rallies.

To test the proposed relationships, I used survey data from the 2004 and 2008 U.S. presidential elections, collected independently by the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) 2004 Debates Panel and the American National Election Study (ANES) 2008-2009 Panel, respectively. Using structural equation modeling to estimate both concurrent and over-time relationships among variables, I found considerable support for the theorized model. In particular, I found that when voters feel enthusiastic about the candidates, they consume more news about the campaign and are more likely to watch the debates. On the other hand, when they report negative feelings, such as fear and anger, they tend to discuss politics with their friends and family members more frequently. These communication behaviors, in turn, are related to each other. Habitual news use is predictive of exposure to major programs such as the presidential debates, and both types of media use spur political talk in a similar fashion.

Notably, people's emotions, media use and political discussion are all related to how much they know about the issue policies of the candidates and also to the breadth of their participation in campaign activities. Sometimes this influence is straightforward, as when watching the debates and engaging in political conversations lead directly to greater knowledge, or when having negative emotions towards the candidates spurs political action. Oftentimes, however, the process is indirect, such as when negative feelings trigger learning the candidates' issue stances if only because they motivate discussing the campaign with others on a more frequent basis. Likewise, people who feel stronger emotions towards the candidates are more likely to be involved in the campaign, both cognitively and behaviorally, due to the communication behaviors sparked by their feelings. In this sense, among all the indirect mechanisms of influence detected in the study, the most complex refers to the role of news use on knowledge; once demographics, political orientations and other components of the proposed model

are taken into consideration, news consumption has a *negative* direct effect, but a *positive* indirect effect, on learning. I will come back to this finding shortly.

While the specific evidence supporting the links advanced by the affective citizen communication model was detailed in Chapter 4, six patterns emerge across data sets and structural models. First, the structure of emotions towards candidates yielded the existence of two orthogonal dimensions, positive and negative. This finding is consistent with most survey-based research of affective intelligence theory, and is in contrast to the discrete view of emotions posited by appraisal theories and some experimental work. One could think of a number of reasons for this. Perhaps it's a methodological artifact; surveys may not be as sensitive as other methods to gauge political emotions. It could also be a timing issue; by the time the surveys employed here were fielded, emotions towards candidates were already crystallized into distinct valence dimensions, with most voters answering emotions questions using the familiar approach-avoidance or like-dislike framework. Therefore, a future direction for research is to map out the conditions under which a third dimension of emotion arises, which would help sorting out the issue of the proper structure of affect in political campaigns.

Second, the paths flowing from emotions to communication variables are weaker than the paths flowing from communication variables to knowledge and participation. To facilitate comparisons, Table 4.12 displays average standardized coefficients weighted by sample size. These averages are computed only for the variables that were measured in both the ANES and NAES data sets and were included in the cross-sectional and auto-regressive specifications.

Table 4.12 Average Direct, Indirect and Total Effects Weighted by Sample Size

	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge
Negative motions:				
Direct	.01	.03	.05	--
Indirect	--	.002	.01	.01
Total	.01	.04	.06	.01
News Media Use:				
Direct	--	.19	.10	-.05
Indirect	--	--	.03	.05
Total	--	.19	.14	.01
Debate Viewing:				
Direct	--	--	.17	.14
Indirect	--	--		.02
Total	--	--	.17	.16
Political Discussion:				
Direct	--	--	--	.11
Indirect	--	--	--	
Total	--	--	--	.11

Notes: Cells report average standardized coefficients that were significant at $p < .05$ obtained from each of the four final structural equation models presented in tables 4.2, 4.4, 4.7 and 4.9, weighted by sample size.

Several explanations are possible for this trend. First, it may be a measurement artifact. Simply put, self-reports of frequency of media use and discussion may be more accurate relative to self-reports of intensity of feelings. This is an unlikely possibility, however, because all emotion variables were measured with additive scales exhibiting a strong internal consistency and high test-retest correlations (i.e., the path coefficients from one wave to another for positive and negative emotions were in the .6 to .7 range). Another explanation lies on the central role played by communication processes

in U.S. politics. Journalistic organizations—be they legacy media or new outlets—exert a considerable degree of control over the electoral process and over campaign communications (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001). Furthermore, candidates devote considerable resources to advertising in the media, particularly television. Even the 2008 Obama campaign, notorious for its novel use of social network sites and digital technologies (Dickinson, 2008), spent nine times more money on broadcast and print media than it did on the Internet (Center for Responsive Politics, 2011). It should not come as a surprise, then, that what voters learn and do in regards to electoral politics is shaped far more by their attentiveness to media messages and the amplification of these messages through informal conversations, than by the emotions elicited by candidates in the first place.

A third prominent trend of the results presented in Chapter 4 is the complex relationship between habitual news media use and political knowledge. As aforementioned, whereas consuming news was directly related to inaccuracies in reporting candidates' issue policies, it was indirectly associated—via debate viewing and political discussion—to a more accurate understanding of the candidates' issue stances. And this contradictory relationship holds across surveys and structural models. Again, there are a number of possible explanations. The most straightforward possibility is that, as some previous research has suggested (e.g., Craig, Kane, & Gainous, 2005; Hansen & Benoit, 2007; Weaver & Drew, 2001), exposure to news in the mainstream media hinders, indeed, objective knowledge of the candidates' positions on the issues of the campaign. This argument is based on the decades-old finding that professional news outlets focus considerable attention on the "horse race," polls, campaigns' strategic moves and candidates' *gaffes*, instead of providing a more substantive, issue-oriented coverage of politics (Benoit, Stein, & Hansen, 2005; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar,

1991; Patterson, 1993). This should not be interpreted as news consumption being detrimental to all forms of political knowledge. There is a vast literature suggesting that news media exposure and attention is positively related to recognition of public figures, awareness of domestic and international affairs, and knowledge of candidates' biographical background (Druckman, 2005; Eveland, 2001; Price & Zaller, 1993). But when it comes to issue knowledge, the role of the press may be insignificant, if not outright negative as was found here.

A second possibility is related to the assumption of linear effects between news media use and political knowledge. Previous research has documented the existence of curvilinear associations between media exposure and political outcomes, including political learning (e.g., Eveland, 1997; Valenzuela, 2009; Zaller, 1992). It may well be that knowledge of candidates' issue positions increases as news use increases, but at some level, knowledge starts decreasing as news use increases more. According to this logic, news junkies may fare worse than regular news users on tests of issue knowledge because of information overload (Graber, 1984), or because they also happen to have other characteristics that cause them to be misinformed. For instance, political psychologists have long contended that some voters are "motivated reasoners," in that they use a variety of strategies to explain away information that is incongruent with their prior knowledge (Kunda, 1990; Lodge & Taber, 2000; Redlawsk, 2002). To the degree that citizens who are most exposed to news are also most biased in their information processing, their knowledge of where the candidates stand on the issues will be sketchy at best.[19]

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[19] To test for the possibility of curvilinear relationships, I re-run the cross-sectional models using both the ANES and NAES surveys including two measures of news media use: the original variable—now representing linear effects—and the square of the variable—now representing quadratic effects. The estimations yielded insignificant effects on political knowledge for both measures of news consumption.

A fourth regular pattern in the findings of the study pertain to the central mediating role played by personal communications on the influence of emotions on both political knowledge and political participation. More specifically, negative emotions towards the candidates were found to predict how often respondents' talked about politics. There are a number of explanations available from previous research that help understanding the nature and importance of this finding. It could be that a negative affective state signals that some action needs to be taken in order to obtain a positive outcome and prevent a negative one (Schwarz & Clore, 1996). This is particularly true of anger, which has been dubbed an "approach" emotion because it impels people to a behavioral response (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009). If that is the case, then political discussion may offer an efficient route to political action—and, indeed, the results in Chapter 4 confirm a strong link between frequency of discussion and political participation. Relatedly, previous research has found that anger has a strong motivational component (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Nabi, 2002). To the extent that political talk is more likely among individuals with higher political interest, a likely outcome of being angered at political figures is to share with others those feelings as well as coordinating political action through personal communication. Anxiety—the other component of negative emotions studied in this dissertation—can also lead to talking about politics more frequently, albeit through a different mechanism. This assertion is based on previous work by Valentino and colleagues (2011), who gathered data from surveys and randomized experiments to compare the differential effects of anger and anxiety. Their results suggest that anxiety—but not anger—boosts political

However, the sign of the coefficients for the squared term was consistent with an inverted U-shape curve. In other words, had this coefficient achieved significance, it would have suggested that issue knowledge was highest for those in the moderate category of news use and lower for those at either end of the distribution of the variable.

behavior that is less costly, such as information-seeking and opinion expression. In this sense, interpersonal political communication may offer an inexpensive way to obtain political information.

The fifth noteworthy trend in the results of this dissertation also pertains to the mediating role of political discussion, though in this case as a channel for the effects of media use on political involvement. It has long been argued that communication within social networks is essential for media effects on political engagement (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). This is because conversations involve not only exchanges of information but also interpretive frameworks that help to process media messages (Eveland, 2004; Feldman & Price, 2008; Scheufele, 2002; Schmitt-Beck, 2008). By allowing people to grapple with ideas, elaborate arguments and reflect upon the information acquired, conversations are a rich form of political information (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). Specific to the measure of political discussion employed here, Graber (2001) argued that greater frequency of discussion increases the probability of incorporating into one's current understanding of a topic a greater number of facts. The relationship between political discussion and participatory behavior is also a finding consistent with a long line of research in political communication.

> The mechanism assumed to account for this effect is (...) the more people interact with one another within a social context, the more norms of participation will be transmitted, and the more people will be recruited into political activity (Mutz, 2002, p. 839).

Of course, finding that people who often talk about the campaign happen to know more about the candidates and are more active than their less politically talkative peers says nothing about the specific participatory effects of like-minded versus heterogeneous social networks—a hotly contested topic in political communication (cf.,

Eveland & Hively, 2009; Feldman & Price, 2008; Huckfeldt, Johnson, & Sprague, 2004; McClurg, 2006; Mutz, 2006; Nir, 2011; Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, Forthcoming). However, considering that the measure of discussion across the ANES and NAES surveys was based on personal communication with family and friends—the so-called "strong ties" (Granovetter, 1973)—it could be argued that the results refer to the effects of homogenous, rather than diverse, social networks. The lack of measures of the level of agreement and disagreement among discussion partners, however, makes this claim speculative at best.

Lastly, a prominent finding from the analyses refers to the televised debates between major-party presidential candidates. On the one hand, there was evidence that both positive and negative emotions were significant predictors of watching the debates. This could mean that people who have strong feelings towards the candidates are more likely than their apathetic counterparts to tune in to the debates. If that is the case, then this finding would be another evidence for the motivating force of political emotions argued earlier. As for which type of emotional set, positive or negative, was more predictive of debate viewing, the results were not clear cut. This is, indeed, a methodological problem. The NAES survey was designed specifically to examine in depth the role of the debates on voters' attitudes, knowledge and involvement. Unfortunately, it only measured negative emotions. The ANES survey, in contrast, gauged both types of emotions but the time-span between interviewing waves was not designed to measure with precision the role of the debates. Thus, I cannot compare if the influence of positive effects on debate viewing that was manifest in the analyses of the ANES survey was unique to this data set or not. Nevertheless, it is not far-fetched to say that some level of enthusiasm with the campaign is necessary for people to tune in to the debates.

It has also been argued that debate viewers are a self-selected population, in that they are generally more interested in political affairs than the general audience who tunes into the news, oftentimes, for non-political stories (Hansen & Benoit, 2007). To the degree that political interest is positively related to intensity of feelings and attitudes towards the candidates (Bizer, Visser, Berent, & Krosnick, 2004), it may well be that viewers of the televised debates come with strong positive feelings towards their preferred candidate and equally—if not stronger—negative feelings for the opposite candidate. Thus, both sets of emotions will be manifest prior to debate viewing.

On the other hand, following the debates had a unique influence on political discussion and political involvement, particularly on knowledge of the candidates' issue positions. This is to be expected; debates are a unique media event in the American political landscape and, as such, they still command large audiences. Each debate between Obama and McCain on 2008 drew, on average, 57 million viewers (Nielsen Media Research, 2008). For the 2004 debates between Bush and Kerry, the average viewership hit 53 million. Contrast these figures with the 36 million viewers who sat to watch the Clinton-Dole debates of 1996—and this was before the Internet age fully blossomed, distracting many from political campaigns altogether ever since (Prior, 2007). With these impressive levels of attention, it is to be expected that debates have a sizeable effect on the audience on a range of political outcomes, especially when compared to habitual news media use. Prior research is consistent with such an expectation. For instance, a meta-analysis estimating the influence of various forms of communication found that debates were significantly correlated to increased levels of issue knowledge in more than two-thirds of the 31 studies sampled. Political discussion and newspaper exposure, in turn, produced significant results in half of the studies,

while the proportion for television news was, at one third, significantly lower (see Hansen & Benoit, 2007).

The learning potential of debates is due, in part, to the opportunities afforded by the debates for candidates to lay out their policy views. Contrary to common wisdom, most of the utterances made by the candidates on televised debates relate to policy, not to personal character (Benoit et al., 2002). Compared side by side, the proportion of issue content on both newspapers and television news is significantly lower than the proportion of issue content available during the presidential debates (Hansen & Benoit, 2007). It is reasonable, therefore, to find that citizens' campaign issue knowledge increases from watching debates.

Taken together, the trends reported in this study have implications for current scholarly debates on citizen competence, that is, the ability with which citizens can make a meaningful, informed decision when they are asked to choose the leader of the Executive power. Here, it has been shown that passionate politics is positively related to desirable outcomes, such as knowing the issue policies of the candidates and getting involved in campaign activities. Rather than distracting citizens from deliberative behaviors, positive and negative emotions are closely related to information seeking in the media and more frequent informal conversations about politics. These behaviors, in turn, make for a more informed and participatory electorate. In this sense, the implications of this study suggests that emotion is not only an unavoidable fact of political campaigns in the U.S., but a desirable fact altogether.

STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

The conclusions reported throughout this project are bolstered by the employment of different data sets across election years, as well as by the comparison of

a theorized structural model with an alternative causal model using a cross-sectional approach relating individual differences and a longitudinal approach relating change over time within individuals. These multiple tests of the affective citizen communication model were necessary in order to provide more convincing evidence of the causal relationships between emotions, communication and political involvement. Further, it has been argued that replication is a necessary step for the advancement of science, as it allows for generalizing the finding of particular effect as well as improving the methodology for detecting it (King, 1995). In this regard, the variety of tests detailed in Chapter 4 fulfill to some extent the need for replication. The unique characteristics of the 2008 campaign (e.g., no incumbent, first African-American major-party candidate, worst financial crisis since 1929, etc.) would have made suspicious any claim of generalizability obtained from the analysis of the ANES surveys. The fact that there was an important degree of consistency with the findings reported using the NAES surveys for the 2004 election reduces this concern. Therefore, the employment of panel data and the multiple replications of the affective citizen communication model are a strength of this project.

Another strength is that, while grounded on existing theories of political communication, the study covers new theoretical territory. Most scholars in the affective intelligence tradition have assumed a direct influence of feeling emotions towards political objects (e.g., candidates and issues) and individuals' learning of, and engagement with, political affairs. In Brader (2006a), I would argue that there is sufficient evidence pointing out that not all voters are equally affected by their emotions, and even if feeling enthusiasm, fear or anger at candidates is common, levels of issue knowledge and participation in political activities are not particularly high. Thus, something else beyond emotions must be at play between emotions and involvement.

The model advanced here provides (a very partial) map of the process of becoming informed and engaged with presidential campaigns through emotions. In particular, it suggests that the communication behaviors triggered by positive and negative feelings towards candidates shapes, in part, how much they learn and participate over the course of a campaign. On the other hand, scholars in the tradition of the communication mediation model have implicitly assumed that the psychological predictors of media use and personal discussion refer to political interest and surveillance motivations. Here, I present the case for emotions as unique determinants of these communication behaviors and provide ample evidence for it. Therefore, the project is at one time an exploration of new territory as well as a return to known territory. It opens up new communication-oriented processes for affective intelligence theory and traces citizen communication mediation back to emotions. It confirms that emotions are conducive to learning and political action, and that media effects on citizen engagement tend to operate through political discussion. Thus, borrowing McCombs' (1992) metaphor of agenda-setting researchers, the affective citizen communication model is the outcome of both explorers' and surveyors' work.

A third strength of the research refers to the external validity of the findings. Experimental work on the political effects of emotions is vast and growing (e.g., Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008; Gross, 2008; McClain, 2009; Miller, 2007; Miller & Krosnick, 2004; Valentino, Brader, Groenendyk, Gregorowicz, & Hutchings, 2011; Valentino, Hutchings, Banks, & Davis, 2008). The difficulty of manipulating various variables at the same time, however, has translated into research that mostly tests direct effects of political emotions. At most, researchers have included self-reports of one mediating mechanism (e.g., political interest, informational utility, etc.) A thorough experimental test of the affective citizen communication model, in contrast, would require

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manipulating simultaneously several variables—some of which are not amenable to experimentation. For instance, the few published experimental studies aimed at detecting a causal role of emotions on informal political talk have failed to produce significant results due to problems in the manipulation of treatment conditions (see Kim, 2009; McClain, 2009). On the other hand, even if one were to come up with a solid experimental design to test this study's theorized model, all we would know is that the proposed relationships between emotions, communication behaviors and political involvement *can* happen—not that they, indeed, happen—in real-world contexts. In this sense, the findings obtained from nationally representative surveys are better equipped to inform us about the ability of the proposed model to adequately describe the affective and communication processes that citizens experience over the course of a presidential campaign.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Having argued for the use of observational research to test the affective citizen communication model does not mean that the study is impermeable to the limitations imposed by surveys. A first problem deals with causal attribution. So as not to repeat the earlier point on the utility of experiments versus surveys, I will concentrate on some of the inherent problems of relying on the panel design of the ANES and NAES studies to assess causality, as well the shortcomings of the structural equation models employed to test the affective citizen communication model.

A serious disadvantage of panels refers to the possibility of conditioning effects by repeating the same questions over time, that is, an initial interview may affect a subsequent interview so much that observed changes may result from nothing but the previous interview. To these conditioning effects, one must add the problem of attrition

or mortality effects, which occurs when a portion of the original respondents is not reinterviewed and the sample becomes increasingly unrepresentative of the population. In either case, noted Bartels, "the observed (...) change [in the variables of interest] in the surviving panel sample may provide a biased estimate of the corresponding (...) change in the relevant population" (Bartels, 1999, p. 3). Panel mortality is less of a concern for the ANES panel than it is for the NAES panel, because the re-contact rate for the former was, at 93%, much higher than the re-contact for the latter (41%). Still, all the analyses presented here employed weights to adjust for the probability of being selected for the surveys, relieving somewhat the concerns over lack of representativeness due to panel attrition.

Less clear is the magnitude of possible conditioning effects. One common strategy to study these effects is to compare the responses from the panel sample with responses from a cross-sectional sample that has not been exposed to previous interviews. Bartels (1999) conducted such an analysis for the ANES panels of 1992 and 1996 and concluded that conditioning effects were rare in most cases. A similar exercise does not seem to be available for the NAES panel. Therefore, additional analyses to tease out panel effects are warranted.

A second limitation of the research refers to the structural equation models employed for the longitudinal analyses. Chapter 4 presents the results of synchronous models, where the direction of influence runs one way from emotions to knowledge and participation via communication. The choice of a synchronous approach was borne out by the data; the lagged models had worse fit than the synchronous models. Of course, it goes without saying that a model with good fit is not necessarily a correct model—in fact, all models are wrong because they are an over-simplification of a complex reality (Shoemaker, Tankard, & Lasorsa, 2004). For this reason, a more crucial test for the

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causal attributions made by the theorized affective citizen communication process was provided by the estimation of another synchronous model with an alternative causal ordering of the variables, with the proposed model exhibiting a better fit with the data. On the other hand, previous research using two-wave panels to assess the effects of communication variables on political knowledge and participation has also found that the synchronous approach outperforms the lagged approach (see Eveland, Hayes, Shah, & Kwak, 2005a, 2005b; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). Nevertheless, the issue of lagged versus synchronous models when examining the influences between political feelings, media messages, personal communications and involvement could be further explored with panel data comprising more than two waves.

The ability to draw causal conclusions is also limited based on the time lag between waves. Previous work in political science and political communication is mixed, at best, in terms of the ideal time-lag for estimating the effects of emotions. Experimental work on the influence of emotions and communication assumes, by the very nature of the method, short-term effects. On the other hand, survey-based research considers longer time spans. For instance, in their seminal work on affective intelligence, Marcus and MacKuen (1993) used the ANES 1980 Panel, which interviewed respondents every two months and a half between February and September. This lag-length is longer than that between waves 9 through 11 of the ANES 2008-2009 Panel employed in the current study. The time lag between pre- and post-waves of the NAES 2004 Debates Panel was even shorter; a few weeks for most respondents. Certainly, the lack of consensus on proper lag specification is a problem for most panel research designs (Finkel, 1995), not only for work on political emotions and communication. Still, it is a problem that merits some caution in the interpretation of the results because it is possible that some of weaker or null effects found among some variables—particularly

between affective and communication variables—could be more robust or significant with the specification of a proper time lag. Again, the recommendation is for future research based on panel surveys to test for different time lags when testing the relationships among the variables of the affective citizen communication model.

Lastly, there are limitations in the measurement of the variables which need to be further addressed. As with any secondary analysis of surveys, the researcher has to work with questions collected by another organization for perhaps completely different purposes. The lack of measures of news attention in the ANES 2008-2008 Panel is unfortunate, considering the well-known validity problems of self-reports of news exposure items (Bartels, 1993; Prior, 2009a, 2009b). Likewise, the lack of measures for positive emotions elicited by candidates Bush and Kerry in the NAES 2004 Debates Panel prevents a direct replication of the effects encountered for feelings of enthusiasm in the ANES data. On other hand, the items to measure emotions are far from exhaustive. Using a longer list of emotions terms, some researchers have identified an additional dimension, labeled aversion, that is distinct to the typical enthusiasm and anxiety dimensions (e.g., Marcus & MacKuen, 1996). Perhaps employing a longer list of affective terms could have yielded a different picture than the dual model found in the study. Nevertheless, the list of items on emotions measured did form a structure consistent with affective intelligence theory and the dual-model of affect advanced by Watson and colleagues (1988) using the PANAS list of 20 emotion terms. This issue, of course, is as much a methodological quandary as a theoretical one because appraisal theories of emotion (Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994; Scherer, 1999; Smith & Kirby, 2001) assert that each emotion has a discrete effect on individuals' attitudes, cognitions and behaviors. Thus, a fruitful venue for future research could be to explore the predictive power of alternative theoretical models of affect.

The theoretical model thus advanced and tested posits that emotions citizens feel towards presidential candidates lead them to information-seeking behaviors, including news media use, debate viewing and interpersonal political discussion, which in turn lead to political learning and campaign participation. This model can certainly be expanded to incorporate additional influences that have been left out in the original formulation. Furthermore, the model can be used to explain additional phenomena than markers of political involvement. I will briefly outline some of these refinements to, and alternative applications of, the model.

Bringing in the Moderators

The effects outlined in the affective citizen communication may not be constant across different segments of the electorate. A variety of moderating variables could be incorporated into the model to account for these differences. In the context of a political campaign, variations in the motivating force of emotions may well be conditional on the relevance of the election itself and on individuals' perceived ability to undertake political action.[20] People who perceive the election to be personally irrelevant tend to rely less on the media because they have less need for orienting cues (McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1980). On the other hand, individuals with little or no interest in political affairs—another dimension of relevance (Bizer, Visser, Berent, & Krosnick, 2004; Lee, 2005)—are less likely to be familiar with the candidates (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004), which is strongly associated with more intense feelings towards them (Miller, 2007). Thus, the relationships between the different components of the

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[20] These variables, as may me remembered, where included as controls in the analyses due to their known relationship with media use, political discussion, issue knowledge and political participation. Here, I am arguing for treating them as variables of interest, instead of serving as controls.

affective citizen communication model may be stronger among individuals who perceive the election as relevant compared to individuals who perceive it as irrelevant. Future research could bring in relevance as a moderator of the relationship between emotions and information-seeking behaviors as well as between communication and political involvement.

Self-efficacy or internal political efficacy—to use the label preferred by political scientists (Morrell, 2003; Niemi, Craig, & Mattei, 1991)—has been found to moderate the relationship between anxiety and political participation (Rudolph, Gangl, & Stevens, 2000). It has also been found to be a causal factor in developing feelings of anger, which in turn relates to more active participation in campaign activities (Valentino, Gregorowicz, & Groenendyk, 2009). These studies suggest that internal political efficacy can play various roles in the process linking feelings with political involvement, as both an antecedent and moderator. Both roles could be re-examined in the context of the affective citizen communication model by testing, for instance, a structural model running from efficacy to emotions and communications, and comparing it to another model in which efficacy interacts with emotions and, perhaps, communications, to explain political involvement. Of course, it may well be that self-efficacy plays dual roles in the whole process. Future research could delve deeper into this issue by incorporating internal efficacy into the processes outlined in the affective citizen communication model.

A third factor not considered in the study that could moderate the relationships posited by the proposed model refers to the composition of individuals' discussion networks. This project corroborated the literature on the effects of frequency of personal discussions on both learning and participating in political activities (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004; Eveland, 2004; Just et al., 1996). Yet, it is left to discern

what specific attributes of discussions may spur such outcomes. Particularly fruitful has been the study of how political disagreement among discussants relates to participation (Brundidge, 2010; Huckfeldt, Mendez, & Osborn, 2004; Mutz, 2006; Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, Forthcoming). Thus, future research could investigate the relationship between emotions and exposure to agreement and disagreement within individuals' social networks.

There is tentative evidence that people whose feelings towards candidates are more polarized (e.g., strong positive emotions towards the preferred candidate and strong negative emotions towards to opposite candidate) tend to talk more with people who share their political views and less with people who do not share their views (Parsons, 2010b). This finding raises the possibility that the influence of emotions and political discussion frequency examined in this study could operate differently at various levels of discussion disagreement. The existing literature also shows that disagreement in informal political discussions can regulate the effects of both media use and discussion frequency on issue knowledge (Feldman & Price, 2008). One can think of a number of reasons for this findings, such as the confusion and ambivalence brought about by being exposed to contradictory information through personal communications. However it may be, network disagreement is a likely candidate for moderator of the processes implied by the affective citizen communication model.

A fourth contingent factor for the relationships implied by the model refer to contextual effects. The question here is what difference does it make for the outcomes predicted by the model country-level characteristics, such as political system, civic culture and media system. It may well be that emotions in presidential campaigns have different effects in other types of campaigns, such as referendum campaigns. To the extent that the affective citizen communication model refers to psychological processes

derived from neuroscientific evidence, some level of uniformity in the associations thus mapped out should be evident. Nevertheless, having an open press, competitive elections, and freedom of expression seem necessary conditions, too, and these factors are not constant across countries.

Beyond Political Involvement

The focus of this study has been on the influence of emotions and communication behaviors on two dimensions of political involvement, knowledge and participation. However, other political and non-political outcomes could be studied using the proposed theoretical model. I will sketch some of these possibilities.

The hierarchy of influences model posits that campaigns activate cognitions, attitudes and behaviors (McGuire, 1989). A notable absence from the current study is the attitudinal component. For instance, how do emotions and communication aspects relate to voters' political attitudes? Future research could fill in this gap by addressing the role of attitudes towards candidates in their dual role of being an antecedent and a consequence of affective and information-seeking processes. For instance, experimental work by Way and Masters (1996b) revealed direct and indirect effects of participants' anxiety on their evaluations of politicians. Thus, it would be apt to test if the affective citizen communication model can predict differences in the ratings of various public figures. Reversing this direction of causality could also prove a fruitful venue for research. Since the early work on affective intelligence theory, scholars have analyzed alternative mechanisms for explaining the relationship between emotions, learning and decision-making. Of relevance here is the significance of the association between emotions and political evaluations. For some researchers (e.g., Ladd & Lenz, 2008, 2011), positive and negative emotions towards candidates are rationalizations of a

causally prior evaluative process; liked candidates are more likely to provoke enthusiasm, while disliked candidates are more likely to provoke anxiety and anger. Others scholars rely on experimental evidence to support a view that the effect of emotions on attitudes is stronger than the reverse (Brader, 2011; Marcus, MacKuen, & Neuman, 2011). Of course, it may well be that—as it happens with processes of media selectivity and media effects (Slater, 2007)—there is a reciprocal, reinforcing relationship between feelings and attitudes elicited by political figures. However it may be, the previous discussion should make it readily clear that attitudinal outcomes, such as evaluations of candidates, are one way of moving forward the affective citizen communication model.

In addition to new political outcomes, the proposed model could be tested to explain non-political phenomena. Instead of knowledge of the candidates' issue positions, one could test knowledge of local news, social issues, scientific discoveries, businesses or any other domain of news and current events likely to trigger strong feelings in the public. In addition to campaign participation, future research could delve into civic participation, or in participation in issue-specific activities (e.g., a health campaign). Once the targets of emotional appraisal are properly identified, it should be a simple matter to adapt the wording of the media and interpersonal communication variables to reflect the specific domain under study.

CONVERGENCE WITH OTHER COMMUNICATION THEORIES

The current work has been informed by affective intelligence theory and communication mediation processes. These paradigms offered solid theoretical ground on which to expect a relationship between emotions, media use, personal discussions and political involvement. The implications of the relationships established by the

proposed model, however, need not be restricted to affective intelligence and communication mediation. In the following paragraphs, I will point out possible areas of convergence with prominent theories of communication (namely, agenda setting, priming, and selective exposure).

Agenda Setting and Priming

As mentioned in Chapter 1, agenda-setting theory as developed by McCombs and colleagues (McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shaw & McCombs, 1977; Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981) is one of the most influential theories of media effects. What started as a metaphor to describe the role of the news media in defining the salience of issues for the public now comprises five different domains, and scholars worldwide have found new applications for the theory (e.g., Coleman & McCombs, 2007; Huck, Quiring, & Brosius, 2009; Matthes, 2008; Shehata, 2010; Stroud & Kenski, 2007; Valenzuela, Forthcoming). Within these domains, three seem to be most compatible with the affective citizen communication model.

First, it is a well-known fact that the narrative structure of news can exert considerable effects on the public's emotional response to issues and public figures featured in the news. In fact, experimental researchers usually manipulate emotional states in the lab by exposing participants to media messages (e.g., Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009). One way in which agenda setting deals with the effects of specific news narratives on audiences is through the notion of "attributes," those characteristics and traits that describe and define objects in the news. While some attributes are emphasized, others receive less attention, and many receive no attention at all. Just as objects vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object. Thus, for each object there also is an agenda of attributes. The question of interest here is which

attributes in the news are more likely to produce enthusiasm, anxiety, anger and other feelings on the audience. Existing research on attribute agenda-setting has focused mostly on cognitive (e.g., personal qualities of candidates), attitudinal (e.g., thermometer ratings of candidates), and behavioral effects (e.g., vote choice) (Golan & Wanta, 2001; McCombs, López-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000; Son & Weaver, 2006; Valenzuela & Correa, 2009). To my knowledge, the only study that has explicitly incorporated emotions into attribute-agenda setting is Coleman and Wu's (2010), and its results were promising: there was a significant, positive relationship between the content of TV visuals about the 2004 U.S. presidential candidates and the public's negative emotional responses towards Bush and Kerry. More research is needed to examine the attributes in the news that arouse stronger feelings and compare these to people's emotional responses—adding emotional effects to the process of attribute agenda setting. For instance, Tan and Weaver (2010) found that different sources in the news evoked different affective responses among the public, a study that opens the way to examining a host of news story attributes. This type of research endeavor would have the added benefit of tracing the origins of emotions, which in the current study were conceptualized as exogenous.

The second domain in agenda-setting research that seems convergent with the affective citizen communication model refers to need for orientation, a key psychological moderator of agenda-setting effects (Chernov, Valenzuela, & McCombs, 2009; Matthes, 2006; Weaver, 1980). As explained earlier, a key defining condition for individuals' need for orientation is relevance. When people find an issue relevant, they are more likely to seek information about it on the media, which increases the likelihood of being influenced by it. Among the various dimensions of relevance, both survey (Evatt & Ghanem, 2001; McCombs, 1999) and experimental (Miller, 2007) research points to

emotional relevance as a major determinant of agenda-setting effects. This evidence is consistent with the affective citizen communication model, which predicts that stronger feelings lead to increased information-seeking in the media, with the consequent learning and behavioral effects described earlier. Thus, researchers interested in the concept of need for orientation may find it useful to look at the theoretical and empirical affordances of the model advanced in this dissertation.

A third point of convergence is offered by the consequences of agenda setting for opinions about political figures and public issues. Among these consequences, media priming—the influence of the news media on the criteria used to evaluate political objects—remains the most widely investigated (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Miller & Krosnick, 1996; Valenzuela, 2009). A more restricted version of media priming refers to attribute priming, the phenomenon by which the attributes emphasized in press coverage determine the weight individuals assign to those same attributes in their political judgments. Sheafer (2007) studied five elections in Israel and found consistent evidence that the negative tone with which the media covered the economy had a subsequent effect on evaluations of performance of the incumbent political party. This finding raises the question of what explicates this relationship. Is it a cognitive process of attribution of responsibility for the state of the economy to the incumbent party, or an affective process of news making voters feel anxious, which in turn causes them to pay more attention to the economy and thus update their evaluation of the incumbent party? As the affective citizen communication model posits, there may well be other intervening processes involved as well, such as political discussion within individuals' social networks. This example illustrates that one potential area for future research in priming refers to the emotional basis for voters' political judgments.

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Selective Exposure

The increasing segmentation of the news market into niche audiences, coupled with the nearly unlimited choice people have to choose their media preferences has reinvigorated scholarly interest on selective exposure—the process by which people deliberately select information channels that match their predispositions and beliefs (Stroud, 2008). Previous research demonstrates that the way individuals select information is determined, in part, by their emotional state. For instance, anxiety can motivate selecting particular content that is useful to address the problem that caused anxiety in the first place (Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009). This is to be expected. As affective intelligence theory predicts, fear and anxiety lead to increased attention, processing and recall of information that is related to the source of these emotions (Boyle et al., 2004; Civettini & Redlawsk, 2009; Redlawsk, Civettini, & Lau, 2007). This perspective offers a more nuanced view on information-seeking behaviors than the one presented in previous chapters. It may well be that negative and positive emotions do not lead to news consumption in general as has been stated but, say, to news consumption in high-choice media platforms only (e.g., cable television news and online news). Or, perhaps, in some contexts emotions may lead to choosing interpersonal channels of information over mediated channels, rather than to both forms of communication as was proposed here. The basis for these expectations would be that the informational utility of each channel is different for different emotional states.

Some evidence of the relationship between selectivity processes and preferred communication modality could also be derived from this dissertation's finding that negative emotions were more closely associated with political discussion than they were with habitual news use and debate viewing. If future research replicates this result, the

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next step would be to theorize about the causes behind the differential effects of emotions. And selective exposure may provide a useful answer.

A second path of convergence relates to individual-level effects of selective exposure. Research by Stroud (2011) provides ample evidence that exposure to politically congenial news outlets leads to political reinforcement and polarization, at least during U.S. election campaigns (e.g., conservative Republicans are more likely to watch FOX News, and by doing so, their political opinions become more entrenched and extreme over time). Thus, a developing area of study is the extent to which exposure to the partisan press contributes to the polarization of emotions towards political issues. For instance, a study conducted in Switzerland using a three-wave panel survey detected significant effects between selective attention paid to political advertising about immigration and negative emotions towards immigrants (Schemer, 2010). These results are interesting because they emphasize the causes of political feelings, which—as explained earlier—were not addressed empirically in the dissertation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study applied affective intelligence theory and the communication mediation model to further our current understanding of the consequences of emotions on learning and participating in the context of presidential campaigns. An affective citizen communication model connecting emotions, communication behaviors and political involvement variables was proposed and tested using secondary analysis of nationally representative panel surveys from the 2004 and 2008 U.S. elections. The results of various structural equation models specifying concurrent and longitudinal relationships yielded strong support for the theorized model.

Affective intelligence posits that learning and behavior are determined by a dual-system of emotional appraisal. The disposition system, characterized by emotions related to enthusiasm and/or aversion, regulates individuals' habitual routines. The surveillance system, activated by fear and anxiety, regulates individuals' information-seeking behaviors, which lead to learning and involvement. Communication mediation, on the other hand, proposes that media use affects knowledge and participation indirectly, by triggering a series of intra- and interpersonal deliberative behaviors, such as mental elaboration and political discussions with family and friends.

Based on these two bodies of work, the current project theorized that positive and negative affect towards presidential candidates is related to three information-seeking behaviors: news media use, debate viewing and political discussion. These communication processes, in turn, are associated to each other and can, directly and indirectly, cause issue learning and campaign participation. To test the model, data from the ANES 2008-2009 Panel and the NAES 2004 Debates Panel studies was used. Overall, 40 of 54 tests of the hypotheses were supported, a proportion of 74.1%. The limitations of the study notwithstanding, the tests of the model indicate that emotions are connected to communication in the ways that were predicted, and these two factors jointly affected political outcomes.

Future research, as was discussed earlier, can refine the model in a number of directions. One is by incorporating moderating variables, such as relevance and internal political efficacy. Another is by distinguishing between media platforms and examining the attributes of political discussion (e.g., agreement and disagreement with discussion partners). The affordances of the model to agenda setting, priming and selective exposure—key theories of communication—were also highlighted as possible venues for future studies. By pursuing these lines of research, we can refine our knowledge on

the influence of emotions on political life and better specify the role that media and personal communications bear in this process.

Appendix

This appendix includes information on the demographic characteristics of the ANES and NAES samples used in the dissertation, along with a comparison with population parameters gathered by the U.S. Census (Tables A.1 and A.2), as well as detailed results of the factor analyses of emotions items described in Chapter 3 (Tables A.3, A.4, and A.5). The partial correlation matrices used to estimate the structural models (Tables A.6 and A.7) and the multiple regressions estimating the effects of the control variables (Tables A.8 and A.9) are also displayed. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the synchronous and lagged auto-regressive structural models described in Chapter 3 are also included in this section (Tables A.10 and A.11). The Appendix ends with tables showing all direct, indirect and total effects of the estimated synchronous models (Tables A.12 and A.13).

Table A.1 Demographic Profile of ANES 2008-2009 Panel Sample and U.S. Census Data

	ANES Wave 11 Unweighted	ANES Wave 11 Weighted	CPS March 2008
Age			
18-29	8.3%	18.0%	21.3%
30-39	15.3%	17.1%	16.4%
40-49	21.6%	20.4%	19.3%
50-59	25.2%	19.1%	18.3%
60-69	19.0%	12.7%	12.6%
70 or older	10.6%	12.6%	12.2%
Gender			
Male	42.1%	47.5%	48.0%
Female	57.9%	52.5%	52.0%
Race / ethnicity			
White	87.6	83.7%	83.4%
African American	9.2%	12.0%	12.5%
Asian	3.9%	4.0%	3.7%
Native American / Alaska	1.9%	2.4%	1.8%
Pacific Islander	0.9%	1.2%	0.3%
Hispanic	4.9%	7.5%	9.5%
Other	6.5%	8.4%	0.0%
Education			
Less than high school	3.3%	9.6%	11.2%
High school diploma	15.6%	30.9%	31.7%
Some college	36.9%	30.7%	29.6%
Bachelor's degree	24.6%	19.3%	18.5%
Graduate degree	19.6%	9.6%	9.0%
Annual household income			
Less than $14,999	5.5%	5.9%	8.9%
$15,000 to $29,999	10.7%	12.9%	13.6%
$30,000 to $49,999	21.7%	22.7%	18.0%
$50,000 to $74,999	22.5%	24.1%	19.2%
$75,000 to $99,999	15.3%	14.8%	14.4%
$100,000 or more	24.3%	19.7%	26.1%

Notes: Estimates use the 2,312 respondents who completed Waves 9, 10 and 11 of the ANES Panel Study 2008-2009. Distribution of race/ethnicity does not at 100% because respondents could check more than one category.

Source: (Table 17 of DeBell, Krosnick, & Lupia, 2010, p. 79).

Table A.2 Demographic Profile of NAES 2004 Debates Panel Sample and U.S. Census Data

	NAES Post-Debate Unweighted	NAES Post-Debate Weighted	CPS November 2004
Age			
18-29	9.1%	14.5%	19.9%
30-39	15.7%	21.8%	18.3%
40-49	21.1%	22.2%	21.2%
50-64	31.2%	24.3%	23.8%
65 or older	22.9%	17.2%	16.9%
Gender			
Male	41.8%	44.1%	47.6%
Female	58.2%	55.9%	52.4%
Race / ethnicity			
White	89.2%	81.8%	80.4%
African American	5.8%	11.1%	13.1%
Asian	1.1%	1.5%	4.6%
Hispanic	3.9%	7.8%	14.4%
Other	3.9%	5.6%	1.9%
Education			
Less than high school	3.9%	7.1%	14.3%
High school diploma	19.5%	32.4%	32.3%
Some college	21.2%	22.0%	19.2%
Bachelor's degree	32.7%	24.6%	25.5%
Graduate degree	22.8%	13.9%	8.7%
Annual household income			
Less than $14,999	8.7%	10.3%	13.3%
$15,000 to $24,999	7.9%	7.8%	11.6%
$25,000 to $49,999	29.6%	33.3%	25.1%
$50,000 to $74,999	21.8%	21.5%	18.1%
$75,000 to $99,999	13.7%	11.4%	12.0%
$100,000 or more	18.3%	15.6%	19.9%

Notes: Estimates use the 1,248 respondents who completed the NAES post-debate panel survey in October 2004. Distribution of race/ethnicity does not add 100% because respondents could check more than one category.

Source: Compiled by the author directly from NAES 2004 Debates Panel Study and CPS.

Table A.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Emotional Reactions to Presidential Candidates in the ANES 2008-2009 Panel (Unrotated Solution)

	Wave 9 data		Wave 11 data	
	I (Valence)	II (Arousal)	I (Valence)	II (Arousal)
Emotional reaction				
Proud	.81	.44	.73	.57
Hopeful	.80	.45	.72	.58
Angry	-.46	.78	-.63	.66
Afraid	-.47	.77	-.62	.68
Eigenvalues	1.72	1.60	1.84	1.55
% Variance	43.0%	39.9%	46.0%	38.8%
(Valid cases)		2,303		2,305

Notes: Principal component analysis.

Table A.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Emotional Reactions to Presidential Candidates in the ANES 2008-2009 Panel (Rotated Solution)

	Wave 9 data		Wave 11 data	
	I (Positive / Enthusiasm)	II (Negative / Anxiety)	I (Positive / Enthusiasm)	II (Negative / Anxiety)
Emotional reaction:				
Proud	.92	-.01	.93	-.05
Hopeful	.92	-.02	.93	-.03
Angry	-.01	.90	-.05	.91
Afraid	-.02	.90	-.03	.92
Eigenvalues	1.72	1.60	1.84	1.55
% Variance	43.0%	39.9%	46.0%	38.8%
(Valid cases)		2,303		2,305

Notes: Principal component analysis with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization.

Table A.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Emotional Reactions to Presidential Candidates   in the NAES 2004 Debate Panel (Unrotated Solution)

	Pre-Debate Wave	Post-Debate Wave
	I	I
	(Negative / Anxiety)	(Negative / Anxiety)
Emotional reaction		
Afraid	.81	.85
Uneasy	.80	.82
Angry	.80	.77
Eigenvalues	1.93	2.000
% Variance	64.4%	66.7%
(Valid cases)	782	786

Notes: Principal component analysis.

Table A.6 Partial Correlation among Key Variables in the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	W9 Positive Emotions	W11 Positive Emotions	W9 Negative Emotions	W11 Negative Emotions	W9 News Use	W10 News Use	W11 Debate Viewing
W9 Positive Emotions	1.00						
W11 Positive Emotions	.56**	1.000					
W9 Negative Emotions	-.06**	-.08**	1.000				
W11 Negative Emotions	-.06**	-.03	.60**	1.000			
W9 News Media Use	.14**	.07**	-.004	.00	1.000		
W10 News Media Use	.10**	.08**	.02	-.01	.74**	1.000	
W11 Debate Viewing	.16**	.17**	.02	.01	.10**	.15**	1.000
W9 Political Discussion	.02	-.03	.10**	.05*	.19**	.20**	.14**
W11 Political Discussion	.00	-.001	.09**	.08**	.17**	.21**	.24**
W9 Political Knowledge	.08**	.07**	.02	.07**	.03	.05*	.17**
W11 Political Knowledge	.06**	.08**	.01	.03	-.02	.01	.21**
W11 Political Participation	.03	.02	.12**	.07**	.08**	.10**	.12**

Notes: Valid cases (using listwise deletion) = 2,267. Controlling for education, income, age, female, internal political efficacy, strength of party identification, and habitual political interest.

* p < .05; ** p < .01

Table A.6 Partial Correlation among Key Variables in the ANES 2008-2009 Panel (continued from previous page)

	W9 Political Discussion	W11 Political Discussion	W9 Political Knowledge	W9 Political Knowledge	W11 Political Participation
W9 Positive Emotions					
W11 Positive Emotions					
W9 Negative Emotions					
W11 Negative Emotions					
W9 News Media Use					
W10 News Media Use					
W11 Debate Viewing					
W9 Political Discussion	1.000				
W11 Political Discussion	.55**	1.000			
W9 Political Knowledge	.11**	.15**	1.000		
W11 Political Knowledge	.08**	.15**	.55**	1.000	
W11 Political Participation	.17**	.17**	.14**	.17**	1.000

Notes: Valid cases (using listwise deletion) = 2,267. Controlling for education, income, age, female, internal political efficacy, strength of party identification, and habitual political interest.

* p < .05; ** p < .01

Table A.7 Partial Correlation among Key Variables in the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	W1 Negative Emotions	W2 Negative Emotions	W1 News Use	W2 News Use	W2 Debate Viewing	W1 Political Discussion	W2 Political Discussion
W1 Negative Emotions	1.000						
W2 Negative Emotions	.70**	1.000					
W1 News Use	.09	.07	1.000				
W2 News Use	.09	.11*	.76**	1.000			
W2 Debate Viewing	-.09	-.024	.27**	.32**	1.000		
W1 Political Discussion	.27**	.28**	.20**	.22**	.19**	1.000	
W2 Political Discussion	.25**	.28**	.17**	.31**	.22**	.66**	1.000
W1 Political Knowledge	.15**	.18**	.08	.18**	.14*	.10	.17**
W2 Political Knowledge	.07	.08	.02	.09	.36**	.24**	.25**
W1 Political Participation	.27**	.27**	.18**	.17**	.12*	.42**	.36**
W2 Political Participation	.30**	.32**	.13*	.19**	.16**	.43**	.44**

Notes: Valid cases (using listwise deletion) = 323. Controlling for education, income, age, female, internal political efficacy, strength of party identification, and habitual political interest. W1 = pre-debates wave. W2 = post-debates wave.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table A.7 Partial Correlation among Key Variables in the NAES 2004 Debates Panel (continued from previous page)

	W1 Political Knowledge	W2 Political Knowledge	W1 Political Participation	W2 Political Participation
W1 Negative Emotions				
W2 Negative Emotions				
W1 News Use				
W2 News Use				
W2 Debate Viewing				
W1 Political Discussion				
W2 Political Discussion				
W1 Political Knowledge	1.000			
W2 Political Knowledge	.46**	1.000		
W1 Political Participation	.13*	.10	1.000	
W2 Political Participation	.25**	.25**	.80**	1.000

Notes: Valid cases (using listwise deletion) = 323. Controlling for education, income, age, female, internal political efficacy, strength of party identification, and habitual political interest. W1 = pre-debates wave. W2 = post-debates wave.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table A.8 Regression Analysis of Key Variables on Controlling Variables in the ANES 2008-2008 Panel

	W9 Positive Emotions	W9 Negative Emotions	W9 News Use	W11 Debate Viewing[21]
Block 1: Demographics				
Education	.10***	-.03	.12***	.10***
Income	.02	-.03	.10***	.12***
Age	.12***	.01	.33***	.25***
Female	.06**	-.01	-.003	.02
Δ R^2 (%)	2.9%	0.3%	14.5%	9.4%
Block 2: Political Orientations				
Internal Political Efficacy	.16***	-.02	.04*	.01
Strength of Party Identification	.15***	.09***	.06**	.07***
Habitual Political Interest	.17***	.19***	.33***	.33***
Δ R^2 (%)	10.7%	4.7%	11.9%	9.8%
Total R^2 (%)	13.6%	5.0%	26.4%	19.2%
(Valid cases)	(2,288)	(2,287)	(2,295)	(2,293)

Notes: All control variables measured at wave 9. Cell entries show upon-entry standardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

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[21] Considering that debate viewing is a count variable, a Poisson regression was performed in addition to the OLS regression results shown in the table. There were no significant differences in the results of both types of regression analysis. Thus, OLS estimates are shown for easier interpretation.

Table A.8 Regression Analysis of Key Variables on Controlling Variables in the ANES 2008-2008 Panel (continued from previous page)

	W9 Political Discussion	W9 Political Knowledge[22]	W11 Political Participation[23]
Block 1: Demographics			
Education	.13***	.25***	.26***
Income	.08***	.12***	.09***
Age	.24***	.17***	.19***
Female	.01	-.06**	.03
Δ R^2 (%)	9.2%	14.2%	13.6%
Block 2: Political Orientations			
Internal Political Efficacy	.02	.04*	.11***
Strength of Party Identification	.02	.13***	.01
Habitual Political Interest	.57***	.31***	.23***
Δ R^2 (%)	30.5%	13.6%	7.2%
Total R^2 (%)	39.8%	27.8%	20.9%
(Valid cases)	(2,295)	(2,296)	(2,287)

Notes: All control variables measured at wave 9. Cell entries show upon-entry standardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

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[22] Political knowledge is also a count variable. Nevertheless, the Poisson regression results were virtually the same as the OLS regression results.

[23] Political participation is a count variable; the results of a Poisson regression revealed no significant differences with the results of the more familiar OLS regression shown in the table.

Table A.9 Regression Analysis of Key Variables on Controlling Variables in the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	W1 Negative Emotions	W1 News Use	W2 Debate Viewing[24]	W1 Political Discussion
Block 1: Demographics				
Education	.12**	-.08*	.04	.06
Income	-.06	.07	.09*	.19***
Age	.15***	.25***	.14***	-.06
Female	.03	.03	-.01	-.11**
Δ R^2	3.1%	7.5%	2.7%	7.5%
Block 2: Political Orientations				
Internal Political Efficacy	.01	-.08*	.13***	.08*
Strength of Party Identification	.04	.00	.03	.00
Habitual Political Interest	.20***	.39***	.31***	.35***
Δ R^2	4.2%	13.5%	12.7%	13.2%
Total R^2 (%)	7.3%	21.0%	15.4%	20.7%
(Valid cases)	(775)	(783)	(790)	(793)

Notes: All control variables measured at the pre-debates wave. Cell entries show upon-entry standardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

[24] Because debate viewing is an ordinal variable with four values, an ordinal regression with complementary log-log function was also conducted but the results were virtually the same as those obtained with OLS regression.

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Table A.9 Regression Analysis of Key Variables on Controlling Variables in the NAES 2004 Debates Panel (continued from previous page)

	W1 Political Knowledge[25]	W1 Political Participation[26]
Block 1: Demographics		
Education	.35***	.16**
Income	.05	.04
Age	.09*	-.06
Female	-.14***	.02
Δ R²	16.3%	3.8%
Block 2: Political Orientations		
Internal Political Efficacy	.18***	.18***
Strength of Party Identification	.05	.08
Habitual Political Interest	.35***	.32***
Δ R²	17.9%	16.4
Total R² (%)	34.2%	20.2%
(Valid cases)	(696)	(390)

Notes: All control variables measured at the pre-debates wave. Cell entries show upon-entry standardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

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[25] Political knowledge is a count variable, so a Poisson regression was also conducted to check the consistency of the OLS estimates reported in the table. There were no significant differences.

[26] Political participation is also a count variable. Nevertheless, the Poisson regression results were virtually the same as the OLS regression results.

Table A.10 Comparison of Theorized Auto-regressive Models using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

	Synchronous Model	Lagged Model 1	Lagged Model 2
AIC	10,124.86	1,301.81	-1,134.15
BIC	10,285.31	1,376.31	-1,042.47
χ^2	182.03	74.69	121.83
Df	35	9	14
p value	< .001	< .001	< .001
χ^2/df	5.20	8.30	8.70
CFI	.98	.95	.97
TLI	.96	.89	.95
RMSEA	.04	.06	.06
SRMR	.04	.04	.04

Notes: All models were estimated using Wave 9 and Wave 11 data (n = 2,276). The synchronous model estimates the structural paths outlined in Figure 3.1. Lagged Model 1 predicts Wave 11 political knowledge with Wave 9 emotions, Wave 9 communication variables, and Wave 9 political knowledge. Lagged Model 2 predicts Wave 11 political knowledge with Wave 9 emotions, Wave 9 and Wave 11 communication variables, and Wave 9 political knowledge. All models have non-significant paths removed.

Table A.11 Comparison of Theorized Auto-regressive Models using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

	Synchronous Model	Lagged Model 1	Lagged Model 2
AIC	237.34	-49.06	-454.86
BIC	346.90	30.27	-371.76
X^2	87.18	105.33	149.63
Df	34	12	27
p value	< .001	< .001	< .001
χ^2/df	2.56	8.78	5.54
CFI	.96	.84	.88
TLI	.94	.71	.85
RMSEA	.07	.16	.12
SRMR	.07	.13	.14

Notes: All models were estimated using pre- and post-debates data (*n* = 323). The synchronous model estimates the structural paths outlined in Figure 3.1. Lagged Model 1 predicts post-debates political knowledge and political participation with pre-debates emotions, pre-debates communication variables, and pre-debates political knowledge and political participation. Lagged Model 2 predicts post-debates political knowledge and political participation with pre-debates emotions, pre- and post-debates communication variables, and pre-debates political knowledge and political participation. . All models have non-significant paths removed.

Table A.12 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel

		Wave 9					Wave 11			
		News Media Use	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge
Wave 9	Positive Emotions:									
	Direct	.13	--	.08	.56	--	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	.03	.003	--	--	--	.10	.04	.05
	Total	.13	.03	.08	.56	--	--	.10	.04	.05
	Negative Emotions:									
	Direct	--	.10	--	--	.60	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	.01	--	--	--	--	.09	.01
	Total	--	.10	.01	--	.60	--	--	.09	.01
	News Media Use:									
	Direct	--	.19	--	--	--	.74	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	.02	--	--	--	--	.18	--
	Total	--	.19	.02	--	--	.74	--	.18	--
	Political Discussion:									
	Direct	--	--	.10	--	--	--	--	.52	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	.10	--	--	--	--	.52	--

Table A.12 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel (continued from previous page)

		Wave 9					Wave 11			
		News Media Use	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge
Wave 9	Political Knowledge:									
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.53
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.53
	Positive Emotions:									
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	.03	.16	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	---	.004	.03	.02
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	.03	.16	.03	.02
	Negative motions:									
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.06	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.003
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.06	.003
	News Media Use:									
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	--	.13	.08	-.04
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.02	.02
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	.13	.11	--

Table A.12 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the ANES 2008-2009 Panel
       (continued from previous page)

		Wave 9					Wave 11			
		News Media Use	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge
Wave 11	Debate Viewing:									
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.16	.12
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.01
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.16	.12
	Political Discussion:									
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.05
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Note: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at p < .05. Indirect and direct effects might not add up to total effects due to rounding error and nonsignificant indirect links.

Table A.13 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel

		Pre-debates Wave			
		News Media Use	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Political Participation
Pre-debates	Negative Emotions:				
Wave	Direct	--	.25	.15	.17
	Indirect	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	.25	.15	.17
	News Media Use:				
	Direct	--	.17	--	.09
	Indirect	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	.17	--	.09
	Political Discussion:				
	Direct	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--
	Political Knowledge:				
	Direct	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--
	Political Participation:				
	Direct	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--

Table A.13 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel
      (continued from previous page)

		Post-debates Wave					
		Negative Emotions	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Political Participation
Pre-debates wave	Neg. Emotions:						
	Direct	.70	--	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	.22	.10	.28
	Total	.70	--	--	.22	.10	.28
	News Media Use:						
	Direct	--	.76	--	--	--	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	.23	--	.15
	Total	--	.76	--	.23	--	.15
	Pol. Discussion:						
	Direct	--	--	--	.61	--	.35
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	.61	--	.35
	Pol. Knowledge:						
	Direct	--	--	--	--	.40	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--	.40	--
	Pol. Participation:						
	Direct	--	--	--	--	--	.73
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--	--	.73

Table A.13 Direct, Indirect and Total Effects in the Final Auto-Regressive Model using the NAES 2004 Debates Panel (continued from previous page)

		Post-debates Wave					
		Negative Emotions	News Media Use	Debate Viewing	Political Discussion	Political Knowledge	Political Participation
Post-	Negative emotions:						
debates	Direct	--	--	--	.10	--	.09
Wave	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	.02
	Total	--	--	--	.10	--	.10
	News Media Use:						
	Direct	--	--	.32	.16	-.13	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	.13	.03
	Total	--	--	.32	.16	--	.03
	Debate Viewing:						
	Direct	--	--	--	--	.31	--
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--	.31	--
	Pol. Discussion:						
	Direct	--	--	--	--	.16	.15
	Indirect	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	--	--	.16	.15

Note: Standardized coefficients displayed here are at least significant at $p < .05$. Indirect and direct effects might not add up to total effects due to rounding error and nonsignificant indirect links.

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Vita

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