

VALUES, MEDIA USES, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:
A COMPARISON BETWEEN CHINA
AND THE UNITED STATES

by

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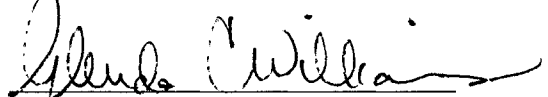
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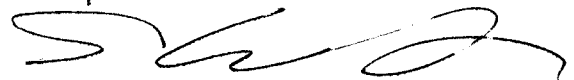
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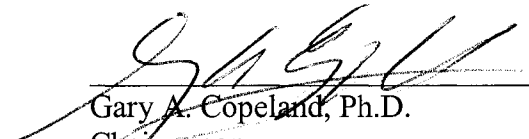
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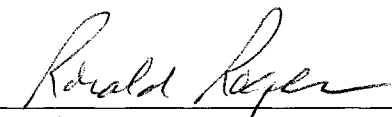

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ABSTRACT

This study employed a cross-national survey to examine the linkages among materialistic and postmaterialistic value priorities, patterns of media use, and political participation in China and the United States. The study hypothesized that support for postmaterialist values is positively related to liberal political environment and advanced economic condition, and the use of public affairs media. It was also posited that the use of public affairs media has positive relations with public affairs knowledge, reflective integration of information, and political participation. In addition, this study explored the relationships between value support, political environments, economic conditions, and political participation. The results indicated that political environments and economic conditions did not exhibit statistically significant relations with the support for postmaterialist priorities or political participation, but a significant positive relationship was found between the postmaterialist value support, and political participation and the public affairs media use. The public affairs media use also demonstrated positive correlations with public affairs knowledge, reflective integration, and political participation.

To further enlighten the understanding of functions and political consequences by these various linkages in different national and cultural contexts, future research pursuit would benefit from explorations of mediating factors other than political and economic conditions in value formation and media uses, as well as survey sampling covering a wider range of demographic groups and societies.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mass media have played a vital role in contemporary political discourse, and often function as an essential mediator in the relationship among individuals with diverse values and political behaviors (Cohen, 1963; Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; McComb & Shaw, 1972; Marks, 1997; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). However, the majority of the investigations on the associations among values, media, and political behaviors are conducted in either the United States or mainly Western nations (Inglehart, 1997). Very limited effort has been made to examine the media's mediating power in different political cultures and economic contexts in which values are developed. Therefore, to expand and place the previous research on how media usage mediates the influence of values on political participation into a comparative context (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), this dissertation attempts to explore the relationships among values, media use, and political participation in two different societies: China; the most influential nation in the East, and the United States; the most powerful country in the western hemisphere.

One of the essentials of democratic theory is an active and autonomous civil society that involves informed citizens participating in a discussion and deliberation process in a public sphere to further make demands on the states and hold state officials accountable (Diamond, 1996; Meyer, 2000). Nevertheless, a healthy civil society requires a foundation of a well-functioning public sphere with access to pertinent

information about the actions of governmental institutions and opportunities for citizens to engage in rational-critical deliberation and sequential action (Habermas, 1984, 1987; Hass, 2004). In such a theoretical account, media then become a key component for bridging the governed to the governing through a supply of public affairs information, which then mediates the public's gain of political knowledge and participation in the political process.

In practice, the media do take their part in informing the public. Research evidence has indicated that, among various forms of news media, television news has become a major source of political information, which rivals the newspaper in some respects (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997). Yet, many scholars have argued that unlike the ideal role elaborated in the democratic theory, different media uses are not equally conducive to a vigorous political society. Putnam (1995) asserted that the amount of television viewing was strongly and negatively related to social trust; civic engagement, and voter turnout, and he further claimed that the mass media, television in particular, should be responsible for the collapse of community and social capital due to the their occupancy of the audience's time previously dedicated to civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). Some even contemplate that the manner of news presentation and the perspective from which news is presented directly affect political perceptions and behaviors, and thus resulting in mass political apathy (Sigman & Fry, 1985).

On the other hand, not all the evidence points in the same direction, and some alternative forms of political activity may have arisen over time (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). In fact, the public is not merely passive the receiver of the media message, but citizens have varying preferences and expectations for the roles the news media ought

to play (McLeod, Guo, Daily, & Eveland, 1994). Some choose to attend to particular media and content according to the functions they think media should serve in reaching society's higher priority goals. Also, research indicates that individual patterns of media use have influenced the perceived salience of social issues (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), decision-making outcomes (McLeod, Sotirovic, Voakes, Guo, & Huang, 1998), learning (Ferejohn & Kuklinski, 1990), and political participation (McLeod & McDonald, 1985).

In addition to the link between different media usages and diverse social or political consequences, it is also imperative to understand why and how people decide which media to consume, and therefore leading to difference cognitive or behavioral consequences (McLeod, Sotirovic, & Holbert, 1998; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). Research has been done on the influence of values that have been internalized by the people of a given society, widely shared within the society from generation to generation, and have both consciously and unconsciously affected every aspect of daily life (Inglehart, 1997). To empirically examine the influences and changes of values, political scientist Ronald Inglehart in his *The Silent Revolution* (1977) adopted a battery of measurements that enabled the assessment of materialist and postmaterialist values: Materialist values emphasize the priorities on the fulfillment of physical needs and economic security, whereas postmaterialist priorities focus on self-actualization and the issues about the intellectual and environmental quality of life. These two sets of value systems are argued to closely relate to the choices of media uses (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), and may lead to different political consequences (Inglehart, 1977).

Subsequently, McLeod and his colleagues (1998) employed Inglehart's value scheme as constructs in their study and found in their study that materialism had stronger

influences on consensual news media functions, higher entertainment television use, and less discussion diversity, whereas postmaterialism had stronger influences on pluralistic news media functions. In a later study, Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) found that the positive effects of postmaterialist values on participation are mediated through reading public affairs content in newspapers. In contrast, materialist values negatively affect participation through watching television entertainment.

Nevertheless, value is such a multidimensional concept that merely discerns certain aspects of a culture and makes distinctions among societies. Despite the effort to operationalize reliable constructs and measurement instruments to study values and to assess their influence on attitudes and behavior in different contexts, the effort is frequently bounded in Western democratic societies, predominantly the United States, and it is seldom extended to nondemocratic or non-Western societies (Butovsky, 2002; De Graaf & Evans, 1996; Ester, Halma, & de Moor, 1993; Inglehart, 1997). In order to go beyond the boundary of Western societies to obtain a thorough understanding of human phenomena and value changes, Inglehart and his colleagues launched the World Values Survey project (WVS) in the early 1970s and expanded the project from mainly Western Europe and North America to 65 societies that include more than 75% of the world's population. In the analyses of time-series data collected by several waves of the WVS, Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997) presented new insights into the relationships between materialist and postmaterialist value shift, economic developments, and social and political changes.

Despite the criticism on the framing of the thesis and the ethnocentric constructs Inglehart's World Values Survey has not only provided a comprehensive view of the

societies founded on various cultural, economic, and political bases, but it has also opened an avenue for subsequent pursuits of validation or interrogations in this area (e.g., Marks, 1997; Pfeiffer & Cote, 1991; Western & Tranter, 2001). Then again, in spite of evidence from the WVS and other studies indicating that economic development tends to propel societies in a roughly predictable direction (Inglehart, 1997; Lipset, 1959, 1981; Rowen, 1996), Inglehart and Baker (2000) have also cautioned that these consequences are rather probabilistic trends, and more crucially, culture has to be taken into consideration. Different societies follow different trajectories even when they are subjected to the same forces of economic development, because of situation-specific factors, such as an enduring cultural heritage that constantly shapes a society's political and economic performance (Fukuyama, 1996; Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

Although numerous scholars have recognized that the importance of cultural factors in formatting value systems is indisputable, the difficulty of operationalizing culture has sometimes limited the scope of research; aspects of culture are seldom incorporated into empirical research variables in mass communication research. Studies of the mediation of communication patterns between value influences and political behaviors are concentrated in the United States (e.g., Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Feather, 1991; Guo, 1996; Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), which cannot avoid the inadequacy that the surveyed population may come from an homogenous economic, cultural, or political background, namely economically advanced Western liberal democracy. The explanatory power of their findings and theoretical propositions are then constrained in such a context.

On the other hand, numerous political scientists have extensively examined influences of culture and values in political discourse, but their research interests rarely included the effect of communication. The power of modern mass media is frequently overlooked in studies of political processes. In such a comprehensive crossnational effort like the WVS, the role of communication, interpersonal communication or media usage, is not incorporated in the survey variables. Inglehart (1997) only implied in his work (1997) that informal communication patterns mediate the influence of education on postmaterialist values.

With a concern for the scarcity of adequate crosscultural or crossnational investigations in mass communication studies in mind, this study intends to expand research effort to various societies by adopting a comparative examination between China and the U.S., the most politically and economically influential representatives for the East and the West. The selection of China is also based on the rationale that very little research of this nature has been conducted in China, despite the fact that China has risen to be one of the economically and politically influential nation in the world during the last decade. Also, culturally and historically, China has played an important role in the East Asia.

Moreover, the current study attempts to bridge Inglehart's (1997) conceptualization of materialist and postmaterialist value systems, and Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) innovative model on the mediation of various patterns of media uses between materialist/postmaterialist values and political participations. It also intends to strengthen the weaknesses in each of the two research areas in order to advance the knowledge of relationships among values, media use, and political participation.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Values

Values are widely shared, and this instinctive consensus sometimes needs not to build a cognitive support for values (Maio & Olson, 1998). From Milton Rokeach's (1973) definition, the concept of values can be summed as a belief that a given endstate for the society is preferable to its alternatives. Also, values are abstract ideals that people regard as important in their lives, and are learned and developed through experiences (Feather, 1990; Rokeach, 1968, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). An adult may have hundreds of thousands of beliefs or attitudes, but only dozens of values. A value system is a hierarchical organization of ideas or values in terms of importance (Rokeach, 1968), and societies differ in their patterns (hierarchies and priorities) of values, which at the same time set goals for the societies

Scholars have studied and proposed the functions of values in various societies. Values provide bases for decision-making in response to certain situations, or direct individuals toward specific modes of conduct (Rokeach, 1973). Specifically in the political context, research has also indicated that values work in organizing political thinking (Kinder & Sears, 1985) and constitute a foundation for attitude and opinion formation toward the whole spectrum of governmental policies (Ball-Rokeach & Loges, 1994; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1987; Kronsnick, Berent, & Boninger, 1994). For instance, Rokeach (1973) has devised a model of political beliefs based on two orthogonal values:

positive or negative values for *freedom* and *equality*. The finding from a content analysis of political tracts supported Rokeach's (1973) two-value model, in which socialists value both *freedom* and *equality* highly; conservatives value *freedom* highly but not *equality*, communists value *equality* positively and *freedom* negatively, and fascists devalue both *freedom* and *equality*.

It is also argued that values are preceded by worldviews, which are general assumptions about the world underlying people's orientation to the environment (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Lerner, 1980). New worldviews normally emerge as finding regularities and solutions to events in one's life, and the process of forming new worldviews can help individuals to function in society (Rokeach, 1973). For instance, Lerner (1980) suggested that the judgment that in most situations people deserve what they get is manifested in a just worldview. The greater the belief in a just world, as a result of individuals being prevented from "facing the facts of life" (Lerner, 1980, p. 142), the more likely an individual is to perceive society as fair, to see the status quo as desirable, to be politically and economically conservative, and to be less cynical about politics and politicians. Moreover, Feather (1991) has found that people who strongly believe in a just world see values that support conformity to social rules and obedience to authority as more important than other values. The political consequence of this worldview is the belief that social change is impossible, and there follows acquiescence to the status quo (Jost, 1995).

Nevertheless, the formation of a value system requires a complex process that involves a constant interplay of enormous factors. Some contend that religion plays an important role in shaping some social values and attitudes (Huntington, 1996; Inglehart,

1997; Norris & Inglehart, 2002). Others have examined and explained the influences of education, parental values, economic, or political context on value molding (Abramson & Inglehart, 1994; De Graaf & Evans, 1996; DiMaggio, 1994; Duch & Taylor, 1993; Inglehart, 1997). Although attempts have been made to explain the process of value formation, the process is certainly not unidirectional. Exploring the hypothesis that mass belief systems are changing in ways that have important economic, political, and social consequences in the WVS, Inglehart (1997) cautions that the results of the survey do not assume either economic or cultural determinism, and the findings of the survey suggest that the relationship among values, economics, and politics is reciprocal, and “the exact nature of the linkages in given cases is an empirical question, rather than something to be decided a priori” (p. 4).

Materialism and Postmaterialism

Among the ample variety of studied values that are considered crucial to societies, values of materialism and postmaterialism are compounds of different factors. In fact, in Inglehart and his colleagues' crossnational time-series data, collected in nations of a full economic and political spectrum (Inglehart, 1971, 1977, 1997), these two sets of values are found to be closely related to the level of political participation. In this series of surveys, the values of materialism and postmaterialism are interpreted as that materialist values deemphasize communal obligations but accept social mobility; believe that social status can be achieved; economic growth came to be equated with progress, and was seen as the hallmark of a successful society. On the other hand, postmaterialist values emphasize the quality of life: broad latitude for individual choice of lifestyle, intellectual freedom, environmental quality, and individual self-expression (Inglehart, 1997). Aside

from affluence, Duch and Taylor (1993) suggested that the indicators of postmaterial values can also be thought of as measuring a dimension of liberal values relating to commitment to democratic norms involving freedom of speech, tolerance, and a concern with ideas and individual rights.

Elaborating on the relationship between materialist and postmaterialist values, Inglehart and his colleagues (1997) hypothesized that these two sets of values tend to go in hierarchical order: those who feel secure about the satisfaction of their materialist needs are likely to give top priority to postmaterialist goals: belonging, self-expression, and intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction. Furthermore, Inglehart's theoretical framework specifies its relation to Abraham Maslow's (1954) theory of a need hierarchy underlying human motivation. Maslow's theory is based on the assumption that people tend to fulfill needs in hierarchical order. Greater priority is given to satisfying sustenance needs as long as these have not been met, and the need for physical safety comes next. Once individuals have attained economic and physical security, the so-called materialist values, they may begin to pursue other nonmaterial needs, such as the need for love, belonging, and esteem, and later a set of goals related to intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction, the self-actualization needs in Maslow's terms (Knutsen, 1990).

However, postmaterialists are not necessarily nonmaterialist or antimaterialists. The term *postmaterialist* denotes a set of goals that are emphasized after people have attained material security, and because they have attained material security. Thus, scholars have argued that if materialist values take precedence, generating reasons for materialist values might also instigate a change of perspective on postmaterialist values, thereby altering the perceived importance of the latter values. The collapse of security

would lead to a gradual shift back toward materialist priorities (Bernard, Maio, & Olson, 2003; Inglehart, 1977). Also, the emergence of postmaterialism does not reflect a reversal of polarities, but a change of priorities. Postmaterialism does not place a negative value on economic and physical security, but unlike materialists, they give even higher priority to self-expression and the quality of life. In fact, some evidence suggests that the large proportion of Western publics are repeatedly classified as “mixed” and indicate that for most citizens, materialist and postmaterialist values are not mutually exclusive (Marks, 1997).

Shift of Materialist and Postmaterialist Values

A small number of scholars have dedicated themselves to examining the factors contributing to the formation and shift of materialist and postmaterialist values through both crossnational and longitudinal approaches. Continuing the previous effort, Inglehart and Baker (2000) synthesized the analyses from the WVS of 1999-2000 and time-series data from the earlier waves of surveys. Their findings have offered new and rich insights into the relationship between economic development, and social and political change. The results demonstrate that the publics of all 20 advanced industrial societies increasingly emphasized the values of self-expression. Most of these societies (60%) also moved toward secular/rational values, but the pattern was mixed. Two contrasting trends are found in advanced industrial societies. First, established religious institutions are losing the allegiance of their followers, but there is a growing interest in spiritual concerns at the individual level. On the other hand, the ex-Communist societies fall into two groups: those that experienced economic, political, and social collapse, and those that made a successful transition to market economies. All of the Soviet successor states fell

into the former group, and they have shifted toward an increasing emphasis on survival values, whereas three of the four publics that experienced economic growth shifted in the opposite direction.

Inglehart and Baker (2000) concluded that economic development has systematic and, to some extent, predictable cultural and political consequences, and that it provides a crucial element in the shift from materialist to postmaterialist values. The caveat is that these changes are not ironclad laws of history but are probabilistic trends: the probability of changes taking place tends to be high once a society has embarked on industrialization. In fact, different societies follow different trajectories even when they are subjected to the same forces of economic development due to situation-specific factors. An exceptional example can be found in Kotzé and Lombard's (2002) study that compared data from 1991, 1995, and 2001 collected by the WVS in South Africa. The authors argued that the value shift hypothesis by Inglehart appears largely uncorroborated, whereas an overall trend away from prematerialism (preindustrialization economy) toward increased mixed type value priorities, with a slight increase in materialist, has become evident (Kotzé & Lombard, 2002).

However, research effort on multifarious forces leading to the shift in value system has not provided consistent findings. In fact, there are competing presumptions made that in addition to economic and political development, many other factors do play a role in effecting the shift from materialist to postmaterialist values. De Graaf and Evans (1996) examined the impact of both individual level and contextual factors on the relationship between year of birth and postmaterialism in eight countries: UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, United States, Italy, Switzerland, and Finland. The authors

argued that value change appears to be related to noneconomic factors, such as education and severity of wartime experience. Starting with Inglehart's model of value change, with additions from liberal democratic and heuristic availability theories, their research examined to what extent formative economic context, education, wartime experience, and life cycle effects account for the relationship between year of birth and postmaterialism. It found that war experience and education are by far the most important predictors of postmaterial values, but formative affluence has no impact on levels of postmaterialism.

In his contention for the processes involved in the formation of the values, Marks (1997) distinguished five general influences on these values: parental socialization, formative security within the family of origin, societal or economic formative security on reaching adulthood, education, and contemporary influences. His survey study found that parents' materialism is one of the strongest influences on children's materialism. Similarly, parent's postmaterialism has a substantial effect on children's postmaterialism. There is also an evidence of a generation gap regarding values; children's postmaterialism is inversely associated with parent's materialism.

Flouri (2003) also examined the role of parental socialization in offspring on materialist and postmaterialist values in adult life by employing the data from the British National Child Development Study (NCDS). The examination found that poor relations with the father in adolescence and absence of partner in adult life predicted postmaterialist values in women, and religiosity and absence of financial difficulties in childhood predicted materialist values in men.

Both Marks (1997) and Flouri's (2003) research found that for both genders, educational attainment was positively associated with postmaterialist values. Marks

interpreted the research findings as the strongest effect was with materialism; the longer the time spent at school, the weaker the materialist values. But there was no evidence to support the hypothesis that higher education has a lasting and positive effect on postmaterialism. The graduates of the humanities and social sciences are more postmaterialist than other graduates (Marks, 1997).

Also, in Knutsen's (1990) study on the relationship between materialist and postmaterialist political values and sociostructural variables in a comparative Nordic context, mainly postindustrial democracies, the principal findings demonstrate a partial support of the thesis that the postwar generations and the educated strata are adherents of postmaterialist political values. Yet, the findings also contradict the hypothesis that economic affluence and financial security play a central role in value change. In this respect, it is especially important that income and economic security values are not strongly correlated in any of these Nordic countries (Knutsen, 1990).

In addition to the hierarchical relationship between materialist and postmaterialist values, Inglehart's "silent revolution" thesis proposes that rapid technological and economic development after World War II has led to the fulfillment of many basic needs, such as food and shelter, and the emergence of concern with new nonmaterial needs, such as esteem and self-actualization. As a consequence, older generations are supposedly more concerned with material values, whereas younger generations tend to be more concerned with postmaterial values (Inglehart, 1977, 1981, 1990). Further elaboration has explained the differences in values of different generations. First, there are cohort or generation effects, which are associated with year of birth and concern all events that one generation has experienced and that other generations have not. Second, there are period

effects, which concern those events that affect all generations equally and at the same point in time. These two types of effects can account for the relationship between year of birth and postmaterialism (De Graaf & Evans, 1996).

Meanwhile, Abramson and Inglehart (1987), using the analyses from their study on Western Europe, have argued that intergenerational replacement is gradually taking place; as older, more materialist Europeans die, they are replaced continuously by younger, more postmaterialist Europeans. The result then indicates that generational replacement gradually reduces the proportion of materialist and gradually increases the proportion of postmaterialists (Abramson & Inglehart, 1987). The authors also project that the likely impact of generational replacement on the overall distribution of European values from 1985 to 2000 may lead Western Europeans to become more postmaterialist despite the fact that change created by replacement is relatively slow.

Values and Political Participation

Political scientist Seymour M. Lipset (1959) claimed with statistical analyses that economic development is related casually to democracy: the more people enjoy modest levels of property, prosperity, and education, the more likely they are to want a say in making the rules under which they live, which is more likely to promote democracy (Lipset, 1981; Rowen, 1996). As hypothesized and demonstrated in the series of value surveys (Inglehart, 1977; 1997; Inglehart & Baker, 2000), economic development exerts a vital force in the shift of materialist and postmaterialist values, which may have influences on political consequences. Duch and Taylor (1993) also suggested that aside from affluence, the indicators of postmaterial values can also be thought of as measuring a dimension of liberal values relating to commitment to democratic norms involving

freedom of speech, tolerance, and a concern with ideas and individual rights (Duch & Taylor, 1993).

In fact, Sieminska (2000) investigated the effect of different conditions before and after 1990 in two groups of democratic countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, France, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, United States): the long-established democratic countries, and those that began to build a democratic system about 10 years ago, when communist systems were overthrown in Central and Eastern Europe. Sieminska compared different generations on political values and attitudes. The study surveyed generations born between 1900 and 1926, and 1967 and 1976, and those who were at least teenagers during the transformation. The study not only contended that interest in politics springs from a wide range of sources, such as current economic or political situations or a long tradition of political culture, but that level of education and gender exert influence on values and attitudes. Respondents with a higher level of formal education expressed higher levels of interests in politics. Also, male respondents with a postmaterialist orientation, rather older, less religious, expressed higher levels of interest in politics.

Therefore, considering the possible political consequences that value systems may contribute, questions can be raised about the relationship between materialist/postmaterialist values and political change. Does the shift toward postmaterialism lead to democracy, or does the shift of values in economically advanced liberal democracies positively relate to levels of political participation?

Despite the comprehensive findings of the WVS and the predictive power of value shift thesis, the inductive assertion that the shift to postmaterialist values leads to

the increase in level of political engagement has not obtained significantly consistent support. Research, particularly conducted in long-established democracies, has generated divergent findings. In the 1990-1993 WVS, the hypothesis that traditional democracies, in which the shift to postmaterialism takes place, host a larger share of citizens seriously interested in politics than new democracies was not confirmed (Inglehart, 1997). Rather, it might be that citizens periodically become active, especially when they are dissatisfied with the political regime. Surveys from the early 1990s have shown that in recently democratized nations, such as South Korea, South Africa, Lithuania, and Bulgaria, more respondents reported that politics plays a “very important” or “quite important” role in their lives than in those liberal democracies, for example, Switzerland, Austria, France, or Italy.

Moreover, taking a different perspective in examining hypotheses of value shift in political venues, Butovsky (2002) argued that little evidence was found in his study that supports the hypothesis that postmaterialist issues are replacing materialist ones at the core of Canadian politics despite Inglehart’s value-change thesis on Western democracies. According to Canadian election surveys, materialist issues like unemployment, the deficit, and taxes are still the primary focus of voters during elections. The research also found that Canadians have become less rather than more positive toward postmaterialist issues over the past 15 years or so. Butovsky (2002) concluded that rather than uncovering a global shift in Western politics, Inglehart only identified a locally specific phenomenon.

In addition, Tranter (2001) attempted to test the hypothesis of whether the adoption of postmaterialist values by major political parties would suggest that voting in

Australia has come to be more dependent on postmaterialist values than on perceptions of economic, materialist interest. The authors used data from the 1990, 1993, 1996, and 1998 Australian Election Studies to investigate postmaterialist and materialist voting in the Commonwealth House of Representatives and the Senate. Using various statistical methods, they first explored bivariate relationships between key variables and then used multivariate models of postmaterialist and economic voting to adjudicate between the contending positions. The authors, however, found no relationship between postmaterialist values and voting behavior, whereas economic evaluations remained a strong determinant of voting behavior.

To examine the competing claims of values-based and economic voting accounts in Canada, Gow (1990) used logistic regression analysis with a dichotomous dependent variable to predict the likelihood of voting against the then Labor government in the federal House of Representatives. With the exception of retrospective household evaluations, Gow found all economic variables to be significant predictors of voting against the then Labor government. The finding also suggests no relationship between postmaterialism and voting, and the author consequently concluded that voters' economic evaluations rather than their underlying values shape electoral choices.

On the other hand, Inglehart (1997), in defending his thesis, further elucidated that in postmaterialist society, the emphasis on the basic political participation—voting, has shifted to more active and issue-specific forms. The loyalty to long-established hierarchical political parties is eroding, and the public has gradually become autonomous and elite-challenging. Therefore, although voter turnout is declining, people tend to participate in politics through alternative channels. Moreover, a growing segment of the

population is coming to value freedom of expression and political participation as things that are good in them, rather than simply pursuing economic security (Inglehart, 1997).

Nevitte's (1990) study on the relationship between values and political behaviors in Canada also demonstrates a resonance to Inglehart's claim. The study examined the association between postmaterialist values and a host of issue variables ranging from politics to the economy, work, and family. Regarding politics, Nevitte found that postmaterialists indeed have lower levels of confidence in government institutions, more involvement in nontraditional forms of political protest, and greater distaste for traditional authority groups.

In summary, although it has always been argued that values influence the formation of political attitudes or participation, and the value shift from materialism to postmaterialism also has political consequences, research findings show little support to the link between postmaterialist values and an increase in political involvement. Yet, it is not to say that values do not make a contribution to political behavior, but instead, it has to be taken into consideration that there may be other sources promoting political participation, or mediating factors that weaken or strengthen the relationship between values and political behavior. For instance, sometimes it is the result of a current economic or political situation, and sometimes it is a persisting element of a long tradition of political culture. Among possible mediating factors, the influential role that mass media have played in modern politics nationally or internationally should not be overlooked, and different patterns of media use may also have attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in the political process.

Media Use

Mass media have unquestionably become inseparable from people's daily lives in this modern era, especially in societies where mass media are readily accessible. As the media started to occupy a noticeable portion of people's life, Lasswell (1948) concluded from his research findings that media serve three basic functions: surveillance of the environment, correlation of events in the environment, and transmission of social heritage. To understand audiences' media uses, research efforts have also been expanded to look for the dynamics linking decisions and patterns of media use. There have been critiques of the media, which are grounded on the assumption that there is one mass communication experience rather than multiple motives and uses, and one audience rather than different types of users. Therefore, a considerable amount of mass communication research challenges this perspective to investigate differences in media usage and effects across various groups of audiences (McLeod, 2000; McLeod et al., 1996; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Norris, 1996; Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001).

On the other hand, since the 1960s, a significant number of researchers have studied the motives of media uses, mainly television viewing, through the uses and gratifications approach, which focuses on audience members' pre-existing orientation, interests, preferences, and "the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 20). In line with the uses and gratifications perspective (e.g., Blumler & Katz, 1974), researchers have found that self-

reported interest in the program and desire to seek information rather than entertainment determines channel and content choice (Neuman, 1976).

Also, early research on people's media behavior tended to emphasize the role of the social milieu in which a person resides with measurement typically anchored in global demographic variables such as age, income, education, and religiosity (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). For example, McQuail (1994) summarized previous empirical findings and reported that higher income and better education tended to lead to diminished use of television and choice of more "informational content or content favored by dominant educational and cultural values" (p. 301). Conversely, the less well educated and those low in socioeconomic status have been found to express a general subjective preference for television over newspapers as a source of news (Delli-Carpini & Keeter, 1992; Miller & Asp, 1985).

A handful of research endeavors have focused on variables, such as perceptions of media functions, beliefs or values that correlate to, if not directly affect, media uses. Individuals may use media according to their perceptions of the media as social institutions that are instrumental in reaching certain societal goals. For example, if one perceives change as an important societal goal, this value may be translated into the view that media as social institutions have a function to provide a forum for a wide range of viewpoints. Consequently, media may be used according to how they perform that function, or what they do to lead to change in society (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

Furthermore, citizens have varying preferences for the roles the news media ought to play in the community (McLeod, Guo, Daily, & Eveland, 1994). Individuals choose to

attend to particular media and content according to the functions they think media should serve in reaching the societal goals they give higher priority. For instance, support for the news media function of activating citizens is associated with attentive local news use, whereas endorsement of more consensual functions leads to a preference for soft local news (McLeod et al., 1994). Also, Loges and Ball-Rokeach (1993) suggested that individuals' perception of media usefulness for reaching their personal goal of social understanding, such as staying on top of what is happening in the community, predicts a dependency relationship with newspaper reading.

Guo (2000) has argued that perceptions of media may be couched in people's media habits, and these perceptions in turn mediate political effects attributable to mass media. Guo's analysis of data from a survey of 503 local residents during the first Legislative Council election in Hong Kong yielded several revelations. First, audience expectations of campaign media performance have distinct dimensions stemming from different social structural backgrounds. Also, various dimensions of audience expectations are also associated with unique patterns of media use habits. Third, media's effects on campaign political knowledge and participation are to some extent mediated by what audience members expect from media coverage. In addition to Guo's finding, some research found that people who are more issue-oriented receive information primarily through the newspaper. Those voters interested in the personal qualities of the candidates are more likely to attend to television news and advertisements (e.g., Lowden et al., 1994; Rosenberg & Elliot, 1989; Sue, 1994).

Inevitably, how individuals use media also has social consequences. For instance, Sotirovic (2001) examined how differences in individuals' media uses are related to

public perceptions of the characteristics of a typical welfare recipient and of welfare programs. The evidence shows a positive relationship between more viewing of thematic television stories about welfare and poverty, more reading of public affairs content in newspapers, and the accuracy of perception of welfare. On the other hand, the exposure and attention to television cable news and entertainment shows is significantly linked to typical biases in welfare perceptions, such as perception of welfare recipients as non-White, female, and of younger age, and of higher federal spending on welfare programs. Other research indicates that individuals' patterns of media use have influenced perceived salience of social issues (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), causal attributions (Iyengar, 1991), decision-making outcomes (McLeod et al., 1998), learning (Ferejohn & Kuklinski, 1990), and political participation (McLeod & McDonald, 1985).

Values and Patterns of Media Use

As previously mentioned, the influences of values encompass all aspects of our lives and directly or indirectly model attitudes and behaviors, and certainly the motives, choices, or patterns of media uses. Although limited support has been provided to determine the relationship between values of materialism and postmaterialism, and activities in the political process, it is argued that media uses may have been a mediating force in the effects of postmaterialist priorities on political participations (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001).

A few scholars took the challenge to examine how value systems are related to patterns of media use, and there is some evidence that materialist and postmaterialist values are associated with various uses of media. For example, Roberts and McCoby (1985) found that those who are postmaterialist value holders (wealthier, older, and more

educated) tend to belong to the group of newspaper readers, whereas women, the younger, the less wealthy, and the less educated people, who preserve materialist values, watch more television.

Johansson and Miegel (1992) studied the link between Swedish adolescents of different values and their choices of media content and found influence of both social and personal values on music and film tastes. Materialist youth like mainstream pop and disco music, and movies featuring horror, porno-violence, and comedy. Postmaterialist-oriented youths demonstrate music tastes that included folk and rock, jazz, opera/musicals, and socially conscious work, and they like romantic, poetic/psychological, and socially conscious movies. Johansson and Miegel also found that values sharply differentiated other leisure-time activities of these Swedish adolescents.

Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) have, in fact, taken a seminal and comprehensive approach by conjecturing a model to explore the correlations among values, communication patterns, and political participation. They regarded materialism and postmaterialism as main mediators between individuals' structural location and three types of communication behaviors: exposure or attention to newspaper public affairs, exposure or attention to television entertainment, and expression of disagreement in discussions of controversial topics. In fact, in their earlier research, the two authors and their colleague differentiated between adopting newspaper public affairs and television entertainment as two media use variables with the consideration of content over medium forms (Sotirovic, McLeod, & Holbert, 1998). They utilized analyses on uses of opposite types of content within each medium: soft news in newspapers and news on television, to

differentiate. With respect to their origins in values and news functions, newspaper soft news reading tends to be more like television entertainment viewing than like newspaper public affairs reading. Likewise, television news use exhibits relationships closer to those of newspaper hard news reading than to entertainment viewing. They concluded that the possible differentiations in effects of media uses are found in the content rather than in medium forms.

Therefore, in Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) study, the findings from a telephone survey revealed that postmaterialism has a strong direct influence on the endorsement of pluralistic media functions, whereas material values have a significantly weaker link to consensual functions. Sotirovic and McLeod further explained that those respondents who most strongly value freedom and equality would see the news media as instrumental in reaching these goals.

Sotirovic and McLeod's study also found that newspaper public affairs reading has a positive impact on discussion diversity, whereas entertainment television watching has no influence. The positive effects of postmaterialist values on political participation are then mediated through reading public affairs content in newspapers. On the other hand, materialist values negatively affect participation through watching television entertainment. Interpersonal discussion in which disagreement occurs mediates both the positive effect of reading public affairs and the negative effect of materialism on political participation (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001).

Nevertheless, through decades of observations and research, the consumption of media content and forms is found to be mediated by pre-existing factors and closely related to different political consequences. It has been long believed that various patterns

of media use not only provide a source of information, but also place effects in the modern political process. The following section contains a brief review of research on the link between different media uses and involvement in political discourse.

Media Use and Political Participation

In dealing with the nature and origins of the growing mass political apathy and indifference, it is often argued that the manner of media content presentation, of news in particular, and the perspectives from which news is presented affect political perceptions and behaviors (Sigman & Fry, 1985). Similar to the discussion on links between values and media use, the relationship between media use and political participation should not be assumed to have a cause-effective relationship, but instead, a mediated relationship. In the realm of political communication concerns, individual assessments and uses of news media seem to affect message-induced consequences, such as the extent to which individuals gain political knowledge and engage in political actions (e.g., Kline et al., 1974; McLeod et al., 1986). Studies have demonstrated that major sources of information for the electorate are the news media—television, newspapers, radio, and magazines, and discussions with friends, neighbors or coworkers (Popkin, 1994). Kim (1997) also obtained support for his hypothesis that the news media encourage political conversation; the news media and political conversations then allow people to form better quality opinions, and thus in turn encourage political participation.

A study testing the validity of a model of deliberative democracy through examining the interrelationships among four components (news media use, political conversation, opinion formation, and political participation) found that news media use is closely associated with the frequency of political conversation in daily life,

both at general and issue-specific levels; willingness to argue against different opinions is influenced by the news media use and political talk, which also had a positive effect on the quality of opinion and is closely associated with participatory activities (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999).

Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) also provided what may be a better explanation for the influence of communication patterns on political participation by going beyond acquisition of factual political knowledge. Their study shows that individual efforts to think about news and search for additional information and perspectives modifies what people gain from media. Individual reflection about news and integrating information from various sources promote better understanding of the political world, and thus may provide a stronger cognitive base for political participation than factual political knowledge (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001).

Comparisons among Different Types of Media Use

Needless to say, the relationship between media uses, especially the news media in this research context, and political participation has been critically studied as the modern political process becomes increasingly more sophisticated. As crucial as the complex links between sets of values or perceptions and patterns of media usages are, the same inquiring rationale should be extended to examinations of how various media uses correlate to different degrees and forms of political participation. Due to a wide variety of factors affecting media consumption, such as values and intent, or individual cognitive ability in processing media content, it is anticipated that different medium forms may exercise different influences and are thus related to different political consequences. The

subsequent section is dedicated to a brief examination of research comparing the links between different types of media use and political behavior.

Television. It has been extensively debated whether the amount of television viewing is strongly and negatively related to social trust, group membership, and voting turnout, whereas the same correlations with newspaper readings were found to be positive (Putnam, 1995). Yet, not all the evidence blames television for the decline of social capital. It has to take into consideration that pre-existing factors affect the selection of television over other media, as well as the chosen program content, and thus influence levels of civic engagement. For instance, Wattenberg (1986) found that the politically apathetic or those who are uninterested and do not participate report either avoiding using media at all or using just one medium, which is by a large margin, television. It is found that those who regularly tuned into the network news and public affair programs were significantly more likely to be involved in all types of political activity (McLeod et al., 1996). A study also found that informational uses of mass media are positively related to the production of social capital, whereas social-recreational uses are negatively related to these civic indicators. Informational uses of mass media were also found to interact with community context to influence civic engagement (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001).

In fact, evidence from studies during the late 1990s concluded that television news has become a major source of political information that rivals the newspaper in some respects (National Television Association, 1995; Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997). Also, television has been the predominant channel by which young people first encounter

politics, and for those who are new to the United States and with weak English language skills (Chaffee, Nass, & Yang, 1990; Martinelli & Chaffee, 1995).

One should also consider that alternative forms of political activity may have risen over time as a result of the interplay between television news viewing and other media content consumption (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Although television news produces little increments of knowledge, studies have found that its coverage of political candidates and events during campaigns has a direct impact on voting (Crotty, 1991). Also, one study (Pan & Kosicki, 1997) indicated that call-in talk shows on television and radio have reached a significant segment of the mass audience. The exposure to these shows overlaps with exposure to other forms of news and public affairs information and is associated with certain modes of political participation, namely contacting elected officials and contributing to or being affiliated with political organizations for specific causes.

Television vs. Newspaper. Despite the fact that television may have become the dominant source of information, the newspaper certainly demonstrates a fierce competition in influencing audiences' subsequent acts. In all, survey research almost invariably supports the proposition that newspapers are highly informative in the realm of public affairs (Becker & Whitney, 1980; Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Miller, Singletary, & Chen, 1988). Sparkes and Winter (1980) reported that with respect to international news, television is judged by viewers to be more accurate than newspapers, and the medium is more successful in communicating the distant political issues, whereas print media are more successful with the more immediate issues and concrete subject matter.

Also, a large body of research has marshaled evidence showing that written news enhances information gain, political knowledge, and participation (Becker & Dunwoody, 1982; Furnham & Gunter, 1988; Jacoby et al., 1981; Milbrath, 1965), and television appears to have an “inhibiting effect” to learning (Clarke & Fredin, 1978). In general, the comparison between the two media suggests that people who read newspapers are more likely to be politically active and knowledgeable about public affairs (Kebbel, 1985; McLeod et al., 1996). McLeod and McDonald (1985) found that television exposure time and television reliance did correlate negatively with both knowledge and participation even after demographic controls; the viewing of news, however, is related to low participation only, and the level of attention to news shows a reverse pattern in being associated with the integrative side of these variables. Evidence also points to the positive integrative role of newspaper reading in the political process. The authors concluded in the study that newspaper public affairs content reading and the attention paid to this material predict high levels of economic knowledge and political participation.

Results from other research find that people who describe themselves as television-reliant have been less able to answer factual questions about politics than those who rely instead on newspapers and magazines (Becker & Whitney, 1980; Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997; Miller, Singletary, & Chen, 1988). Newspaper readership has been more significantly related to activism, although interestingly those who regularly tuned into talk shows on radio did not seem to be stimulated to participate in other forms of politics (McLeod et al., 1996).

Furthermore, the research findings from Guo’s (1996) three test models has revealed a general predictive structure of the medium–sophistication–participation

relationships. At the most general level, newspaper news is not only found to lead to political participation directly, but also make substantial contributions to political sophistication, which in turn is a major determinant of participation. In contrast, no matter what pattern of use is measured, television news predicts either negatively to or has no direct relationship with political participation. The only exception is that attentive viewing of local television news tends to boost participation in local institutional activities, which resonates with the finding in McLeod et al.'s (1996) study. Yet, when different content types are taken into consideration, television news does have a moderately positive relationship with some aspects of political sophistication (Guo, 1996).

On the other hand, seeing the overemphasis on the milieu of national media, Moy et al. (2004) examined the political correlates of attention to news in local newspapers and television, focusing on evaluations of journalists and news media, political knowledge, and political participation. The analyses of their survey data indicate that attention to news on television and in newspapers enhanced perceptions of knowledge. Yet, only the attention to newspaper local news promotes political participation. The research also found that both positive and negative evaluations led to participation, which may have suggested that unfavorable views of the press can in fact invigorate democracy.

In the meantime, other studies also found strong relationships among local media use, local political interest, knowledge, and participation. The findings suggest that the use of local news in newspapers is a somewhat better predictor of community knowledge and participation, but it is the local television news that had a decided edge in affecting local political interest (McLeod et al., 1996; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999).

However, in the relationship to political consequences, it is not to say that television is placed in an inferior position to newspaper. On the contrary, television may serve a complimentary role for regular users of other media channels, particularly for the avid information seekers and the sophisticated who engage in a deep level of processing. Research has found that newspaper readers are likely to keep up with the “news” generally also through television, and television news is sometimes used as an auxiliary device for a more complete picture of the information (Gunter, 1984).

Then again, there are also research findings that show slight inconsistencies as opposed to the numerous studies previously mentioned. In a replication of Kim, Wyatt, and Katz’s (1999) study on the correlation among news, talk, opinion, and participation, Wang (2001) hypothesized that the more media news people used and the more educated they were, the more political talk they would be involved in, and further predicted that the amount of media news use and political talk would predict political participation. This replication study found that television news was a weak predictor in the model, and newspaper use did not predict political participation. Eveland and Scheufele (2000) also found that neither television news use nor newspaper use is related to gaps in voting, although newspaper use is related to gaps in general political participation.

Radio and Internet. Research efforts regarding the link between media use and political participation has also been broadened to media other than newspaper and television, as the choices of media have swiftly turned diversified. Stamm and his colleagues (1998) found that radio has also emerged as a more significant contributor than television in supplying information to commuters, equaling the contribution of newspapers. The study also found support for Chaffee and Schleuder’s (1986)

hypothesis that media attention measures should be more strongly related to political knowledge than exposure measures, particularly in the case of television.

Also, an online survey found that the politically interested Internet users were more likely to report in 2000 than 1996 that they felt they had power to bring about political change, were very interested in the presidential campaign, and were likely to vote. The study also suggested that the Internet has provided a new venue of political participation and appears to be partially responsible for the increase in civic engagement, as reliance on the web was the strongest predictor of political attitudes (Johnson & Kaye, 2003). In addition, Shah, McLeod, and Yoon (2001) employed a multilevel test to explore the influence of mass media use (i.e., print, broadcast, and Internet) and community context on civic engagement based on the data set developed from the 1998 and 1999 DDB Life Style Studies. Their study also found that among the youngest adult Americans, use of the Internet for information exchange more strongly influences trust in people and civic participation than do uses of traditional print and broadcast news media.

From this brief review of research on links between different media use and political participation, it seems to be a plausible assertion that watching television news or reading about public affairs would encourage people to become more active in politics. Through paying attention to the news, people should become more aware of the issues facing their community or country, and the role of the government, civic associations, and volunteer groups in resolving those issues. Yet, as the review presents earlier, it cannot be concluded whether news media serve as a direct cause to the increase of audiences' political knowledge or civic engagements. It may be that those who hold

expectations of functions from news media, or are already actively involved in public life turn to the news media to find out more about current events.

In fact, the relationship is probably somewhat reciprocal, and the direction of causality cannot be sufficiently determined through correlational analyses, which are the case in most research studies of the subject. The caveat to keep in mind is that much of these findings on the direct relationship are generated from models that do not take into consideration the intervening role of numerous variables, such as cognitive activity, therefore the reported magnitude of effects may not reflect true relationships.

Nevertheless, research on the complex interrelationships among values, patterns of media uses, and political participation with acknowledgement of mediating factors should be incorporated into an ongoing effort in this ever-changing age. Research will help illuminate the interactions among those influential variables and contribute to the understanding of the world, as well as the distinctions from societies to societies, and from individual to individual. Derived from the premise that patterns of media uses may reflect values of individuals and can be symbolically influential in the political process, this current study intends to investigate and enhance the comprehension of the interrelationships through a crossnational or crosssocietal comparison. The next chapter presents the theoretical foundations of this study and research hypotheses for the examination of the links among values, media use, and political participation.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Enthused by the reviewed research effort, the present study intends to take a crossnational, comparative approach to examine the differences of how media use affects the publics of different value systems and their political behaviors. In order to advance the understanding of relationships among values systems, patterns of media use, and political participation, this study is founded on the theoretical frameworks and hypotheses explored by forerunners of the relevant fields.

Materialist and Postmaterialist Value Priorities

The differentiation of value systems in this research context is based on the theoretical components of Inglehart's "silent revolution"- materialist/postmaterialist value shift thesis (Inglehart, 1977, 1990). The thesis, in simple terms, proposes that rapid technological and economic development after World War II has led to the fulfillment of many basic needs, such as shelter and food, and the emergence of concern with new nonmaterial needs, such as self-actualization. Consequently, the unprecedented economic security experienced by the postwar generation in most industrial societies led to a gradual shift from materialist values, emphasizing economic and physical security, toward postmaterialist priorities, which embrace self-expression and the quality of life (Inglehart, 1997). Thus, a contrast of value priorities can also be found between older and younger generations.

The perseverance of materialist/postmaterialist value priorities and the shift from one set of values to the other at the macro-level are further elucidated by two fundamental hypotheses of the value shift thesis: scarcity hypothesis and socialization hypothesis. First, the scarcity hypothesis, rooted in Maslow's (1954) need hierarchy, argues that an individual normally places greater subjective value on those things that are in relatively short supply (Inglehart, 1977). Unmet physiological or survival needs would take priority over social, intellectual, or aesthetic needs, and this is also a reflection of an individual's socioeconomic environment.

On the other hand, whereas affluent individuals and nationalities tend to feel more secure than poor ones, the shaping of these feelings is also influenced by the cultural setting and social welfare institutions in which one is raised. Thus, the scarcity hypothesis must be interpreted in connection with the socialization hypothesis. The socialization hypothesis reasons that human development seems to be far more rapid during the preadult years, and enormous evidence points to the conclusion that the statistical likelihood of basic personality change declines sharply after an individual reaches adulthood (Block, 1981; Jennings & Markus, 1984; Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Because the basic human personality structure tends to crystallize by the time an individual reaches adulthood, generations maintain the values developed during their adolescent years.

Yet, this does not imply that no change would occur during adult years. In individual cases, dramatic behavioral shift may take place, and the process of human development never comes to a complete stop (Brim & Kagan, 1980; Erikson, 1982). Moreover, the improvements in economic conditions may also have some impact on

already molded values. Although the effect of economic improvement on the shift of value priorities may be delayed, Inglehart (1997) argued that the effect may gradually have an impact through processes of generational replacement.

Nevertheless, the essence of Inglehart's theoretical framework implies that individuals who emphasize economic security and physical security tend to demonstrate a fundamentally different outlook and political behavior from those who have obtained both economic and physical security. The satisfaction of these survival needs then leads to growing emphasis on postmaterialist goals, such as self-expression, belonging, and intellectual or aesthetic satisfaction. Cases of this kind can be found in many Western societies, which have been socialized in an environment that provides an unprecedentedly secure environment. Also, results from several waves of WVS have demonstrated powerful links between value systems and political and socioeconomic variables, such as democracy or economic growth rates (Inglehart, 1997).

Synthesizing Inglehart's thesis from the societal level, the first set of hypotheses for the present crossnational rather than longitudinal comparison can be developed:

H1a: Support for postmaterialist values is positively related to individuals raised in a liberal democratic society.

H1b: Support for postmaterialist values is positively related to individuals from economically advanced families.

Value Systems and Patterns of Media Use

Although there has been limited research effort dedicated to empirically investigating the relationship between values and media use, as discussed in the previous chapter, the formation of media use patterns may be influenced by value priorities. Few

studies have found that the differences between materialistic and postmaterialistic values are reflected in different media uses. For instance, Roberts and Maccoby's (1985) findings, for instance, suggest that materialist values are positive correlated with television use, whereas postmaterialists tend to belong to the group of newspaper readers.

Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) have taken a rather inclusive examination and constructed a structural equation model to illuminate the mediation of communication patterns on values and political participation.¹ To make better distinctions between media uses, the authors adopted two types of media content, newspaper public affairs and television entertainment. The selection justification was based on the assumption that individuals who value postmaterialistic priorities are expected to show interest in public affairs content, which may provide them with the view of a larger world and its problems. Thus, attentive reading of public affairs in newspapers leads to acquisition of knowledge and reflective thought about public issues, and thus higher level of civic engagement.

In contrast to positive relationship between postmaterialist values and use of public affairs content, Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) model further demonstrates that materialism is positively related to television entertainment viewing. Materialists tend to preserve the past and be resistant to change (Inglehart, 1990). They are also expected to see the status quo world of entertainment as matching their personal goals of conformity and security, and helping preserve their control over their lives and social events that may threaten them. McLeod et al (1998) further argued that materialists are less likely to

¹ Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) structural equation model consists of six exogenous variables (gender, age, education, income, ideology, and structural diversity) that potentially influence values, and six endogenous variables that are hypothesized to actively mediate the influences of values and communication patterns on political behaviors. The endogenous variables include values (materialist/postmaterialist), communication patterns (newspaper reading/television entertainment viewing, and discussion diversity), public affairs knowledge and reflective integration, and political participation.

accept the non-mainstream that threatens loss of control over their own lives, and thus prefer mainstream entertainment content. In return, the consumption of entertainment content tends to reinforce the status quo and values of materialism and conformity (Corbett, 1991, Sigman & Fry, 1985). Thus, materialism and television entertainment use are positively related (McLeod et al, 1998).

However, the amount of time and attention given to public affairs and entertainment content should not be considered mutually exclusive, but viewed in a relative sense. This is not to imply that readers of public affairs newspapers do not watch television entertainment, or vice versa. Individuals who seek public affairs information in news media may also allocate time for entertainment content. On the other hand, those who show preferences and devote more time to entertainment content may also consume news media occasionally. Therefore, it has been contended that time spent watching entertainment content may shorten the time available for consumption of public affairs content, and thus civic activities (Putnam, 1995), and because of its unrealistic representation, entertainment content may also discourage the aspiration or cognitive effort for public affairs information.

The model developed by Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) thus provides a rationale framework for the examination of links between values and media use in the current study. The second set of hypotheses on the relationship between values of materialism/postmaterialism and patterns of media uses are:

H2a: Materialist values and entertainment media use are positively related.

H2b: Postmaterialist values and public affairs media use are positively related.

H2c: Materialist values and active engagement in entertainment content are positively related.

H2d: Postmaterialist values and active engagement in public affairs information are positively related.

Patterns of Media Use and Political Participation

In general, most results of survey research invariably support the view that compared to other news media, newspapers tend to be more informative in the realm of public affairs (Becker & Whitney, 1980; Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Miller, Singletary, & Chen, 1988). Although neither television news use nor newspaper use has been found directly related to gaps in political behavior, such as voting, the proposition that newspaper use is related to a discrepancy in general political participation has been supported (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000). Also, some research findings have also suggested that reading public affairs and diverse discussion have a direct positive impact, whereas television entertainment viewing has a direct negative effect on participation (McLeod et al., 1996; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001).

Yet, in addition to the link between various media uses and political participation, Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) model provides an explanation of the mediation of different media uses on political participation by going beyond factual political knowledge. It not only investigates the links between media usage, but also incorporates cognitive processing variables, such as public affairs knowledge, reflective integration, and discussion diversity, which are considered the antecedent of political activity. Sotirovic and McLeod further purported that individual effort to think about news and

search for additional information and perspectives modify what people gain from media. Individual reflection about news and integrating information from various sources promote better understanding of the political world and thus may provide a stronger cognitive base for political participation than factual political knowledge.

On the other hand, there has been strong evidence supporting the notion that interpersonal discussion of politics plays a crucial antecedent of political participation. Although it is anticipated that hard news media use has an overall positive main effect on political participation, there is a significant difference between those who frequently engage in conversation with others about politics and those who do not (Scheufele, 2002). Other evidence demonstrates that news media use is closely associated with the frequency of political conversation in daily life, and news media use and political conversation have positive effects on certain measures of the quality of opinions, and also closely associated with participatory activities (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999).

As implied in the aforementioned research findings, the relation between different patterns of media uses and participations in the political process is presumably mediated by different factors, such as cognitive processing strategies and interpersonal communication. The mediation and possible consequences of those factors may also vary due to differences among individuals and societal contexts. Although it is difficult to encompass all the factors influencing the link between media use and political behavior, Sotirovic and McLeod's (2000) model furnishes this current study a clear structure from which to examine the link between various patterns of media usage and political participation by incorporating mediation of political knowledge, reflective

integration, and participatory activities. Accordingly, the third set of hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H3a: The use of public affairs content is positively correlated with public affairs knowledge.

H3b: The use of public affairs media and reflective integration are positively related.

H3c: The use of public affairs content is positively correlated with political participation.

Political Participation and Value Systems

In addition to those three sets of hypotheses, the relation between value systems and political participation will also be investigated. In Inglehart's (1977) claim, different value systems would have different political consequences. He also has contested that in postmaterialist societies, the level of political participation tends to be higher than it is in materialist societies, and types of political participation have been diversified through various channels, and no longer restrained in conventional form—voting (Inglehart, 1997; Nevitte, 1990). Yet, numerous research attempts have not generated consistent, but rather disparate findings. Therefore, instead of establishing hypothetical linkage, this study intends to examine how value systems and political participation are correlated in this research context by posing the following research question:

RQ1: Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who support postmaterialist priorities than among those who support materialist priorities?

On the other hand, extended from the claim that development of democracy is closely associated with economic advancement (Duch & Taylor, 1993; Lipset, 1959;

Rowen, 1996), two research questions can also be constructed in emphasizing the relationship between societies of different political and economic characteristics, and the level of involvement in political process:

RQ2: Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who are raised in a liberal democratic society?

RQ3: Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who are from economically advanced families?

As these nine hypotheses and three research questions are formed and provide a skeleton for the current study, the following section will present the proposed method design to be employed to investigate the different links and the operationalization of construct variables.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Sample

For the objective of this crossnational investigation, participants were recruited from various lecture classes and student bodies in two universities; one located in the southeastern United States and another in the east coast of China. The class levels in which participants were studying ranged from freshman to first-year master's level, and consisted of students majoring in social sciences, humanities, engineering, natural sciences, and mathematics.

The rationale of the sample selection was derived from two assumptions. First, according to Inglehart's (1977) value shift thesis, the socialization hypothesis posits that generations maintain the values developed during their adolescent years. Second, education has been researched and contended to be closely related to political liberalism; the more individuals are educated, the higher the tendency to value postmaterial priorities (Siemienska, 2000). To minimize the interference of variance in ages and educational levels, this study targeted its sample population at university students, who just went through their adolescent period and have formed their initial value systems. Therefore, participants who did not experience adolescent years (12-18 years of age) in either China or the United States or whose ages were not between 17 and 27 years were not included for further analyses.

Procedure

All of the surveys in the two selected universities were administered immediately after regular class sessions were concluded, and students who were willing to partake in the survey after a brief description of the survey stayed in the classrooms. First, student participants were provided an explanation of the survey objective and procedure. Prior to proceeding to the questionnaire, all of the participants were also asked to read and sign a informed consent, which assured that all participation was voluntary; participants' identities and questionnaire answers would be maintained in confidentiality, and data analyses would be conducted in a manner to ensure anonymity. Then, each of the participants received a survey questionnaire with instructions attached and completed the questionnaire independently in the presence of the researcher. After each participant had completed the paper-and-pencil questionnaire, he or she returned the questionnaire in person to the researcher.

Measures

The survey questionnaire was designed to address three major sets of variables: value systems, patterns of media use, and political participation, as well as various demographic control variables (e.g., age, gender, and nationality). The basic structure of the questionnaire was founded on the Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) survey instrument applied in their Dane County, Wisconsin study. Yet, several modifications were made to categories, and subsequently to the questions within those modified categories. The scales of discussion diversity originally in Sotirovic and McLeod's instrument were not included in this study's questionnaire.

The original English version of the survey instrument was translated into Chinese by three Chinese-English bilinguals (two translations and one back translation).

Necessary adjustments were also made to accommodate to survey sessions in China. For instance, the U.S. dollar was replaced with Chinese “Renminbi” (RMB), and the income categories were altered according to the local economic standards.

Materialistic and Postmaterialistic Values

Departing from Sotirovic and McLeod’s (2001) 10-item index, the measurement of materialist and postmaterialistic values in this study were approached using an index of 12 national aims on 7-point scales (Appendix), including the full battery of items that closely corresponded to Inglehart’s (1990) modified index of 12 goals. Also, as discussed in the literature review, if the Maslowian hierarchy is presumed, the postmaterialistic values will be placed at a higher level than materialistic values, based on the premise that basic material and security needs are fulfilled. In other words, postmaterialists can support not only materialist but also postmaterialistic values, but on the contrary, materialists may only support materialistic values and do not value postmaterialistic priorities. Therefore, this measurement instrument employed rating in place of ranking the 12 items as applied in Inglehart’s battery. This allowed the rating of each item to be independent of one another, and enabled a creation of continuous and sequential rather than categorical measures of values, avoiding the “mixed” group (Marks, 1997).

Moreover, the selected goals in the index dealt with broad societal or national goals rather than individuals’ immediate needs, and long-term concerns as opposed to immediate situations. Materialists were then anticipated to show higher ratings on 6 of

the 12 goals that emphasized survival and physical needs: (a) fight rising prices, (b) maintain high rate of economic growth, (c) have a stable economy and comfortable life, (d) maintain social order, (e) have strong defense forces, and (f) fight against crime.

Conversely, the other six items, which were closely associated with political attitudes and behaviors, were intended to capture support for postmaterialistic priorities. These six items included the following: (a) protect freedom of expression, (b) make cities and countryside more beautiful, (c) have more say in the decisions of the government, (d) have equal opportunity for all in their jobs and in their communities, (e) show kindness and friendliness to each other, and (f) move toward a society where ideas count more than money. The order of these 12 goals was randomized prior to the distribution.

Patterns of Media Uses

To identify the patterns of media use, this study focused its assessment on distinction among types of media content, instead of forms of media that provide the content. Two main types of media content were employed: public affairs and entertainment. The choice of content over media forms could be rationalized by the fact that the proliferation of new media forms, such as the Internet and satellite programming, and newly developed program genres, has added complexity and changed the channels people use to acquire information and entertainment. Also, in general, public affairs content is deemed more conducive to gain of political knowledge and level of civic engagement, whereas entertainment content is considered as delivering little factual information about politics and reinforcing values of materialism (Corbett, 1991; McLeod et al., 1986; Sigman & Fry, 1985).

The patterns of media use were measured by the variables indicating respondents' frequency of exposure and closeness of attention on a daily basis to these two types of media content on 7-point scales. Public affairs content referred to the content with subjects focusing on public issues, policies, or public administration, and this type of content can normally be presented in newspapers, television news programming, newsmagazines, or online newspapers. Due to the vast variety of public affairs content formats and topics covered across different media, four general categories of this content were included in the measurement: international affairs, national government and politics, local government and politics, and news editorials.

Likewise, the entertainment content embraced media content that is intended to eliminate boredom and hold the attention of different audiences, and not limited to material found in a particular medium. Likewise, four general categories of entertainment content were used for current assessment: entertainment news, sports news, reality-based programs (e.g., games shows, or reality shows), and dramatic programs (e.g., primetime dramas, situation comedies, or soap opera). Entertainment or sports news may embrace information of this nature in all types of media. Yet, Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) argued that entertainment content may also contain "certain implicit messages about human behavior and problem solving that may generalize to viewers' political attitudes" (p. 279). For instance, reality shows, the currently most popular genre, present a manipulated reality (Mascaro, 2004), whereas situation comedies depict an undifferentiated picture of reality in overrepresenting underemployed singles, whose problems deal with personal relationships for the most part, and thus discourage the use of cognitive frames conducive to support for certain social policies (Sotirovic, 2000).

Active Engagement

Active engagement was assessed through the frequency of engaging in the behavior to locate desired media content, such as using various channels to locate preview information of certain content. Although rarely included in research, the evaluation of active search for media content, in fact, would help demonstrate the magnitude of respondents' aspiration toward obtaining certain types of content as well as the quality of their commitment to the content. In this study, presumably those who value materialistic priorities may tend to actively engage in the search for entertainment content, whereas postmaterialists tend to actively seek preview information for public affairs content.

Therefore, the frequency of active engagement was assessed through a six-item index: (a) check out previews (*TV Guide* in U.S./Broadcast Weekly in China, TV, or Internet) for my favorite programs, (b) make sure not to miss any segment of my favorite programs, (c) video-record or download my favorite programs for later appreciation, (d) subscribe or purchase newspapers or newsmagazines, (e) use different ways to locate news and issue updates, and (f) go to Internet for news coverage about home origin (e.g., hometown, home country). The first three items aimed to assess the frequency of active search and commitment for entertainment content, and the last three items were for the public affairs content.

Public Affairs Knowledge

Public affairs knowledge can be simply described in this context as knowledge concerning public issues, policies, or public administration. It is conventionally considered to be a cognitive base for making informed decisions in political participation

and deemed an effective mediator between the use of media and political participation (Popkin, 1994; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). Thus, public affairs knowledge was assessed through the responses to an index consisting of two sets of questions: local/national affairs and international affairs (Appendices B and C); each set had six questions. Presumably those who are able to provide more correct answers will show more preservation of political knowledge.

In order to make the nature of public affairs questions equivalent to both surveyed countries, three criteria were adopted for each of the local/national and international affairs categories; two questions for each criterion. For local/national affairs, the first criterion was to name the head of a government division; second, the most current events in national politics, and third, the most current headlines related to local politics. On the other hand, for international affairs, two questions dealt with the names of leaders in well-known world organizations; two questions on the most current events in international politics; and the last two questions on current headlines in the region where the surveyed country was located (i.e. East Asia for China, North America for United States). Furthermore, to assure the timeliness, current affair questions for both categories were drafted according to the headlines within 2 weeks prior to the distribution date. The 2-week time frame for the Chinese current affair questions was from December 5th to the 18th, 2004, and the timeframe for the American counterpart was from December 26th, 2004 to January 8th, 2005. The sources for current event questions were the mostly visited websites: www.sohu.com.cn and www.sina.com.cn for the Chinese questionnaire, and www.nyt.com and www.cnn.com for the U.S. survey.

Reflective Integration

Reflective integration involves the replay of media messages in one's mind and the use of these messages as discussion topics, and is normally examined as information processing strategies and interpersonal communication (Kosicki & McLeod, 1990). It has been postulated to influence the knowledge and understanding of the political environment and go beyond the mere gathering of factual information. Research findings also have started to confirm the positive relationship between discussion of news or politics and political knowledge (Bennett, Flickinger, & Rhine, 2000; Eveland, 2004; Scheufele, 2000, 2002). Thus, reflective integration will further help enhance individuals' political interest, and thus is expected to stimulate political activity (Kosicki & McLeod, 1990).

This study adopted a slightly modified index composed of five items on 7-point scales, based on Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) four items. These five items included the following: (a) think about the news stories just learned, (b) recall the news stories and think about them again, (c) find additional information about the news stories, (d) talk about the news stories with friends, and (e) search for additional information about discussed news topics. The first three items focus on personal information processing strategies, whereas the last two emphasize an aspect of interpersonal communication.

Political Participation

As diversified forms of civic engagement have continuously emerged on the contemporary political landscape, the concept of political participation has also required numerous reconsiderations. Converging various research efforts, political participation can be simply defined as involving legal actions taken by private citizens that are

intended to directly or indirectly influence the decisions of government and the society (e.g., Arterton, 1988; Conway, 1985; Milbrath, 1965; Nagel, 1987; Uhlaner, 1986; Verba & Nie, 1972; Verba et al., 1995). In terms of categorizations of political actions, four basic dimensions of political activities have been identified (Verba et al., 1995): voting, campaign activity, communal activity, and particularized contacts (individuals contacting a government official on a personal problem).

Based on the four dimensions of political activities, a seven-item index was structured to measure political participation, including individual involvement in both nonelectoral and electoral political participation. Also, in order to insure the equivalency in both national contexts, these statements of actions were phrased in general terms with possible political sensibility and implication extracted. The seven items were the following: (a) electoral participation (no specification of electoral types), (b) membership in any organizations (no specification of organizational natures), (c) attendance at meetings on certain public issues, (d) work with others in a group for resolutions on local problems or issues, (e) circulation of a petition for something of interest, (f) expression of views, and (g) contacting of leaders, lobbying or persuading others.

Demographic Profile

In addition, various demographic control variables were employed for aggregate measurements. First, age, gender, and parents' income were included. Second, respondents' educational levels were also acquired by selecting to one of the seven categories ranging from four undergraduate levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) to graduate (master's and doctoral), and "other" for any other conditions not

falling into those six categories. Also, information as to where respondents spent adolescent years was also incorporated in order to determine their origins.

For the categories of parents' incomes, the criteria of classification were achieved through employing the index of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) prepared by the International Comparison Program of World Bank in 2003. PPP indicates the relative purchasing power of different countries' currencies over the same types of goods and services, because goods and services may cost more in one country than in another. Thus, PPP allows us to make more accurate comparisons of the standard of living across countries. Different categories were drafted in local currencies: Renminbi (Yuan) for China and U.S. Dollar for the United States.

Demographic Description

A total of 536 students voluntarily participated in the survey, and after ascertaining the ages and nationalities, 511 responses (229 in China and 282 in the United States) were then included in further statistical analyses (see Table 1). More than half (53%, $N = 272$) of the combined sample were females. The Chinese sample also contained a greater proportion of female respondents (59%, $N = 136$), whereas 51% ($N = 146$) of the sample from the United States were males. The average age of the combined sample was 20.3, with Chinese respondents averaging at 20.9 and the U.S. sample 19.9.

Furthermore, approximately one third of the total sample came from families with parents' combined income greater than 80,000RMB (76,000US), and 53% ($N = 150$) of the U.S. respondents collapsed into this highest income category. On the other hand, among the Chinese sample, only 9% ($N = 21$) belongs to the highest income category, and nearly two thirds of respondents in the Chinese sample (64%, $N = 147$) were from

families with parents' income less than 40,000 RMB. Noticeably, almost 6% ($N = 30$) of the combined sample did not provide sufficient information on parents' income levels.

Table 1

Demographic Data

	China		United States			Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
From Each Group	229	44.8	282	55.2	511	100.0	
Gender							
Male	93	40.6	146	51.8	239	46.8	
Female	136	59.4	136	48.2	272	53.2	
Age							
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	
	20.9	2.10	19.9	1.68	20.3	1.94	
	China		United States			Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Parents' Income							
	(\$RMB)		(\$US)				
< 19,999	65	28.4	< 19,999	5	1.8	70	13.7
20,000–39,999	82	35.8	20,000–35,999	25	8.9	107	20.9
40,000–59,999	36	15.7	36,000–55,999	36	12.8	72	14.1
60,000–79,999	12	5.2	56,000–75,999	49	17.4	61	11.9
> 80,000	21	9.2	> 76,000	150	53.2	171	33.5
Not Answered	13	5.7	Not Answered	17	6.0	30	5.9
Educational Level							
Freshman	26	11.4	90	31.9	116	22.7	
Sophomore	110	48.0	97	34.4	207	40.5	
Junior	22	9.6	75	26.6	97	19.0	
Senior	1	0.4	17	6.0	18	3.5	
Master's program	67	29.3	2	0.7	69	13.5	
Doctoral program	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Other	3	1.3	1	0.4	4	0.8	
Total Each Group	229		282		511	100.0	

As to educational level of the sample, 72% ($N = 420$) of the total sample came from freshman, sophomore, and junior levels, with sophomores contributing the greatest proportion (40%, $N = 207$). The U.S. sample also exhibited a consistent tendency, in which 92% ($N = 262$) of the respondents were from those three levels. Conversely, the Chinese sample included a considerably large proportion of respondents from the master's program level (29%, $N = 67$), despite the fact that 48% ($N = 110$) of the sample was from sophomore classes.

Measurement Instrument Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the modified measurement scales based on Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) instrument, a Cronbach scale reliability analysis was performed. The results of reliability analysis indicated that the six sets of scales incorporated in the questionnaires are strong, with the lowest Cronbach alpha score at .707 and the highest at .856 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Survey Questionnaire Cronbach Alpha Scores

Scale	Number of Items	Alpha
Value Assessment	12	.792
Public Affairs Content Use	4	.826
Entertainment Content Use	4	.826
Active Engagement	6	.707
Reflective Integration	5	.856
Political Participation	7	.805

Changes in the amended questionnaire included the following: (a) a 12-item value index replaced the original 10-item index in accordance with Inglehart's (1990) 12 national goals; (b) news editorials was added as the fourth category in the scales of exposure and attention to the public affairs media content; (c) four new contextualized categories were drafted for entertainment media content; (d) a six-item active engagement index was developed to evaluate respondents' involvement in the media content; (e) one more statement was added to the four-item reflective integration index; and (f) the original four-item scales for political participation were expanded to seven items.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

All analyses of the survey data were performed using SPSS version 12.0, and the applied analytical methods and results are presented in this section corresponding to the order of posited hypotheses and research questions. The last portion of this section provides a summary of the examined hypotheses and research questions, and their results.

Hypotheses I

The first set of hypotheses was intended to examine the linkages between different value systems and political cultures, and between value systems and economic environment. For *H1a*: “Support for postmaterialist values is positively related to individuals raised in a liberal democratic society,” the aim was to find whether individuals raised in the United States, the liberal democracy, would demonstrate stronger support for the postmaterial priorities than their Chinese counterparts. A factor analysis was conducted on the scale index of materialist/postmaterialist value items by using Varimax rotation, and two dimensions emerged: Six materialist items were placed under one factor, whereas six postmaterialist value items were under another factor. The result resonated with the conceptualization by Inglehart (1990). A series of independent-samples *t* tests were then conducted to compare the mean total scores of six postmaterial items, as well as the mean scores of individual items, between the Chinese and American aggregates (see Table 3). Using the mean scores of the Chinese (33.40, *SD* = 5.25) and

the American (33.60, $SD = 5.49$) support for postmaterialist values, the result revealed that the difference between the two groups was not significant, $t(509) = -.420, p = .675$.

Table 3

T Test of Support for Postmaterialist Values between China and the United States

	China			United States			<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>		
Postmaterialist Values	229	33.40	5.25	282	33.60	5.49	-.420	.675
More Say in Government	229	5.52	1.37	281	5.52	1.25	-.006	.995
Kindness and Friendliness	228	5.38	1.42	280	5.83	1.34	-3.677	.000
Freedom of Expression	229	5.97	1.22	282	6.07	1.08	-.988	.323
Beautiful Cities/Countryside	229	5.23	1.59	282	5.17	1.40	.403	.687
Equal Opportunity for All	229	6.24	1.04	281	5.77	1.31	4.391	.000
Ideas Count More	228	5.11	1.54	281	5.31	1.51	-1.414	.158

Moreover, although the six postmaterialist priorities were adopted into a composite index, it is understandable that each of these six goals may receive comparatively different levels of support if situated in different national or cultural contexts. Therefore, within the *H1a* framework, the difference in support for each of these six items was also examined to see whether these individual priorities receive stronger support from the American respondents than from the Chinese. The mean scores of the American respondents' support for Freedom of Expression (6.07, $SD = 1.08$) and Ideas Count More (5.31, $SD = 1.51$) are slightly higher than the Chinese counterparts' scores 5.97 ($SD = 1.22$) and 5.11 ($SD = 1.54$), although not at significant levels. Yet,

there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the Chinese (5.38, $SD = 1.42$) and the United States (5.83, $SD = 1.34$) for Kindness and Friendliness, $t(506) = -3.677$, $p < .001$. Contrary to *H1a*, the Chinese respondents scored slightly higher on Beautiful Cities/Countryside (5.23, $SD = 1.59$), and the t -test result revealed a significant difference between the Chinese (6.24, $SD = 1.04$) and the American (5.77, $SD = 1.31$) mean scores of Equal Opportunity for All, $t(508) = 4.391$, $p < .001$.

Additionally, in response to the second hypothesis *H1b*, which conjectured “Support for postmaterialist values is positively related to individuals from economically advanced families,” as postulated by Inglehart’s (1971) value shift thesis, a one-way analysis of variance was administered to investigate the relation between support for postmaterialist values (mean total scores) and families’ economic conditions (five levels of parents’ incomes). Due to the discrepancy in income levels and Purchasing Power Parity, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted separately for each of the two countries, excluding the 30 Not-Answer cases (13 in China, and 17 in the United States). The results of the analysis of variance indicated that for both China and the United States, there was not a significant difference among the postmaterialist value scores of these five different income groups (China: $F(4,211) = .170$, $p = .954$, $\eta^2 = .013$; U.S.: $F(4, 260) = 1.424$, $p = .226$, $\eta^2 = .014$; see Table 4).

Despite the lack of statistical significance, the Chinese sample demonstrated a trend that the mean score of postmaterialist values gradually increased from 33.05 ($SD = 5.29$) to 34.08 ($SD = 3.99$) as the total parents’ income increased from below \$19,999 RMB to \$60,000–\$79,999 RMB. Yet, the group with parents’ income higher than

\$80,000 RMB only had a mean score of 33.10 ($SD = 4.98$), which was only .05 more than the group with below \$19,999 RMB.

Table 4

One-way ANOVA of Support for Postmaterialist Values among Economic Conditions

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
China ($N = 216$)						
Parents' Income (\$RMB)						
< 19,999	65	33.05	5.92			
20,000–39,999	82	33.38	5.09			
40,000–59,999	36	33.75	5.57			
60,000–79,999	12	34.08	3.99			
> 80,000	21	33.10	4.98			
Between Groups				.170	.954	.013
United States ($N = 265$)						
Parents' Income (\$US)						
< 19,999	5	37.00	1.58			
20,000–35,999	25	33.32	6.65			
36,000–55,999	36	33.75	5.53			
56,000–75,999	49	34.55	5.39			
> 76,000	150	32.91	5.34			
Between Groups				1.424	.226	.014

On the other hand, the U.S. sample displayed a drastically different trend in mean score variation. Among the groups of \$20,000–\$35,999 US, \$36,000–\$55,999 US, and \$56,000–\$75,999 US, the mean score also increased as income increased. However, it was the lowest income group (< \$19,999 US), in fact, that had the highest mean score on postmaterialist values among all the five groups (37.00, $SD = 1.58$), whereas the highest income group (< \$76,000 US), where more than half of the U.S. sample falls ($N = 150$), had the lowest mean score (32.91, $SD = 5.34$).

Hypotheses II

The second set of hypotheses attempted to examine the correlations among values, patterns of media uses, and engagement in media content. Several significant relationships emerged from the various Pearson Product Moment Correlations. The premise of these various correlations was that all of the participants were asked to register scores on the same scales of all investigated variables during the survey administration, and the questionnaire items were arranged in the same manner for distribution in China and the United States. Therefore, although respondents displayed a preferred pattern over another, they did not tend to indicate a pure utilization of only one style. These correlations coefficients were gauged with the score sums from three sets of indexes: six materialist and six postmaterialist items in value index; eight public affairs content and eight entertainment content items (both exposure and attention) for media uses, and six active engagement items, of which three were for public affairs content and the other three for entertainment. The correlations were then obtained from the total combined sample, as well as from the China sample and the U.S. sample separately for comparative

purposes. All of these three sets of variables (values, media uses, and active engagement) are positively correlated at various significant levels (see Table 5).

Table 5

Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Values, Media Uses, and Active Engagement

	Mat	PMat	PAff	Ent	ActEnt	ActPAff
Combined						
Mat	1.00	.480**	.114*	.324**	.158**	.146**
PMat	–	1.00	.118**	.153**	.130**	.081
PAff	–	–	1.00	.075	.216**	.500**
Ent	–	–	–	1.00	.412**	.163**
ActEnt	–	–	–	–	1.00	.392**
ActPAff	–	–	–	–	–	1.00
China						
Mat	1.00	.383**	.119	.335**	.145*	.149*
PMat	–	1.00	.076	.224*	.193**	.083
PAff	–	–	1.00	.167*	.237**	.596**
Ent	–	–	–	1.00	.414**	.123
ActEnt	–	–	–	–	1.00	.319**
ActPAff	–	–	–	–	–	1.00
United States						
Mat	1.00	.565**	.154**	.268**	.203**	.180**
PMat	–	1.00	.158**	.101	.090	.085
PAff	–	–	1.00	.119*	.174**	.413**
Ent	–	–	–	1.00	.543**	.297**
ActEnt	–	–	–	–	1.00	.425**
ActPAff	–	–	–	–	–	1.00

Note. Mat = Materialist Values; PMat = Postmaterialist Values; PAff = Public Affairs Content Use; Ent = Entertainment Content Use; ActPAff = Active Engagement in Public Affairs Content; ActEnt = Active Engagement in Entertainment Content

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Focusing on the correlations between value variables and media uses variables, *H2a*, “Materialist values and entertainment media use are positively related,” was supported by a significant correlation coefficient of .324 ($p < .01$) from the combined sample. Comparing the samples of two nations, the Chinese sample demonstrated a slightly stronger relationship ($r = .335, p < .01$) between materialist values and entertainment content use than its American counterpart ($r = .268, p < .01$).

Conversely, *H2b*, examining whether “Postmaterialist values and public affairs media use are positively related,” was not sufficiently supported. Within the entire survey responses, there was a low positive correlation ($r = .118, p < .01$) between support for postmaterialist values and public affairs content use, but a similar relationship could only be found in the U.S. sample ($r = .158, p < .01$). The correlation in the Chinese sample was not significant, but in contrast, a low positive correlation ($r = .224, p < .05$) was found between postmaterialist values and entertainment content use in the Chinese sample.

The correlation coefficients addressing to *H2a* and *H2b* may have demonstrated an overview of relationships between values and media uses, but these cannot explain any direction of causality among these variables. The low correlations or insignificant relationship may have been reflecting the “coexistent” characteristics of two value sets and patterns of media uses. Also, there are factors, such as accessibility of media content, that may have mediated the relationship between the values and the selection, exposure, and attention to different media content.

Likewise, the scores from materialist values scales demonstrated a low but positive correlation to active engagement in entertainment content ($r = .158, p < .01$ for

the combined sample), and the correlation in the U.S. sample ($r = .203, p < .01$) was slightly higher than its Chinese counterpart ($r = .145, p < .05$). This provided support for *H2c*, “Materialist values and active engagement in entertainment content are positively related.” The positive correlation was also consistent with the aforementioned correlations between materialist values and media use, and between media use and active engagement.

However, *H2d*, “Postmaterialist values and active engagement in public affairs information are positively related,” did not find support from the survey sample. Neither of the two samples demonstrated significant correlations. The lack of support for *H2d* can be attributed to the different levels of ease (e.g., physically, financially, etc.) in taking committing actions to media content as incorporated in the questionnaire: various accessibility of media forms, or unexpected patterns of media consumption and programming as the result of the surrounding media environment and infrastructure.

Nevertheless, the most significant relationships among all were found between public affairs content use and active engagement in public affairs content, with the strongest relationship in the Chinese sample ($r = .596, p < .01$), and a moderate level in the combined sample ($r = .500, p < .01$) and the U.S. ($r = .413, p < .01$). Likewise, fairly significant relationships were also found between entertainment content use and active engagement in entertainment content; the U.S. sample revealed the strongest relationship at $.543, (p < .01)$, and the correlation coefficients in the Chinese ($r = .414, p < .01$) and combined sample ($r = .412, p < .01$) shared similar strength. In fact, all the paired factors between different media uses and active engagements indicated strong positive relationships, which may have suggested that the level of active engagement in media

content is strongly correlated with the exposure and attention given to the media in general, regardless of distinctions in media content. In addition, there was a moderately positive relationship between the ratings of materialist and postmaterialist values in all three sets of samples: .480 in combined, .383 in China, and .565 in the United States, all at $p < .01$. This resonated with the claim that these two sets of values are not mutually exclusive, but rather are coexisting preferences (Mark, 1997). Also, limited statistical significance in the analyses for four hypotheses that examined the support for postmaterialist values (*H1a*, *H1b*, *H2b*, and *H2d*) may be attributed to numerous confounding causes (e.g., unstable value development and immediate surroundings), limited sampling frame (education and age), and sample size.

Hypotheses III

The third set of hypotheses intended to assess how the use of public affairs media was linked to the retention of public affairs knowledge, the frequency of engaging in reflective integration, and political participation. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were utilized, and as hypothesized, numerous significantly positive correlations were found (see Table 6).

Addressing *H3a*, “The use of public affairs content is positively correlated with public affairs knowledge,” a positive but fairly low correlation coefficient .308 was found using the entire sample. Yet, looking at the two countries individually, the strengths of correlation coefficients from both of the Chinese ($r = .277, p < .01$) and American samples ($r = .269, p < .01$) tended to be less. It is understandable that the more exposure and attention given to the public affairs content by an individual, the more knowledgeable this individual is on public affairs. Yet, the levels of retention of public affairs

knowledge may vary according to individual differences, such as in comprehension ability and information processing strategy.

Table 6

Pearson Correlations Coefficients of Public Affairs Content Use, Public Knowledge, Reflective Integration, and Political Participation

	PAff	PKnow	RefInt	PolPar
Combined				
PAff	1.00	.308**	.543**	.347**
PKnow	–	1.00	.297**	.113*
RefInt	–	–	1.00	.383**
PolPar	–	–	–	1.00
China				
PAff	1.00	.277**	.593**	.330**
PKnow	–	1.00	.235**	.151**
RefInt	–	–	1.00	.373**
PolPar	–	–	–	1.00
United States				
PAff	1.00	.269**	.483**	.370**
PKnow	–	1.00	.307**	.109
RefInt	–	–	1.00	.399**
PolPar	–	–	–	1.00

Note. PAff = Public Affairs Content Use; PKnow = Public Affairs Knowledge
RefInt = Relective Integration; PolPar = Political Participation

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Furthermore, a relationship between the use of public affairs media and reflective integration was revealed to be significant and positive, with a moderately strong correlation coefficient of .543 ($p < .01$), which was supportive of the *H3b*. Comparing

the responses from China and the United States, the Chinese sample demonstrated a stronger correlation of .593 ($p < .01$), .11 higher than the American sample's .483 ($p < .01$). Indeed, the use of public affairs media and the involvement in reflective integration (information processing strategies) can be regarded as reciprocally beneficial, if not in a causal relationship, because more public affairs media use may lead to more involvement in reflective integration, and thus enhance the need for public affairs content.

The *H3c*, "The use of public affairs content is positively correlated with political participation," was also supported with a fairly significant correlation of .347, $p < .01$ (.330 in China and .370 in the United States). This is not to suggest that the relationship between these two sets of variables is direct, but to some extent, this relationship can be illuminated by an also fairly significant positive correlation between public affairs knowledge and reflective integration ($r = .297, p < .01$), and between reflective integration and political participation ($r = .383, p < .01$). Weaving together the examined variables in this set of hypotheses, the overwhelmingly positive correlations have exhibited consistency in the contention that the use of public affairs media, the retention of public affairs knowledge, and the engagement in reflective integration are conducive to the participation in political activities (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999; Scheufele, 2002; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001).

Research Questions

In addition to the hypotheses, three research questions were also posed to examine the frequency of political participation as conditioned by different value supports, and the political environments and parents' incomes with which the surveyed individuals were raised. Thus, the first research question *RQ1* was formulated to see if there is a higher

frequency of political participation among individuals who support postmaterialist priorities than among those who support materialist priorities. To gauge the differences in political participation, all the valid responses were first classified into four categories: uninvolved, materialist, postmaterialist, and undifferentiated, according to each individual's two scores: the sum from six materialist items and the sum from six postmaterialist items, as compared to the sample's mean scores of the materialist and the postmaterialist items. The mean scores on materialist items were 34 for the China sample and 35 for the United States, and the mean point on postmaterialist items was 33 for both China and the United States. The uninvolved group should have both scores lower than the mean scores, whereas the undifferentiated had rated both materialist and postmaterialist priorities higher than the mean scores. Those who scored higher than the materialist mean score but lower on the postmaterialist items were categorized as materialist, and conversely, those who had higher scores on postmaterialist items but lower on materialist priorities were deemed postmaterialist. The procedure resulted in a total of 349, more than two thirds of the responses, classified as either uninvolved ($N = 162$) or undifferentiated ($N = 187$), 77 materialists, and 83 postmaterialists (see Table 7). The materialists took up the smallest proportion in the Chinese sample ($N = 36$), but within the American sample, the smallest proportion was inhabited by the postmaterialists ($N = 35$).

As the four groups were distinguished, the mean scores for political participation were then obtained for each group. Comparing the mean scores for political participations, unanimously in the Chinese and American samples, Materialists had the lowest mean scores on political participation frequency (17.03, $SD = 7.02$ in China and

18.66, $SD = 6.69$ in the United States), but postmaterialists had the highest mean scores (21.08, $SD = 8.61$ in China and 22.46, $SD = 9.04$ in the United States). A one-way analysis of variance was conducted, and the results revealed that the difference in political participation frequency among the four groups was significant, $F(3, 508) = 2.874, p = .036, \eta^2 = .017$.

Table 7

One-way ANOVA of Political Participation Frequency among Value Groups

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Combined (<i>N</i> = 509)						
Uninvolved	162	20.38	8.26			
Materialist	77	17.90	6.85			
Undifferentiated	187	20.20	8.60			
Between Groups				2.847	.036	.017
China (<i>N</i> = 229)						
Uninvolved	76	21.05	9.09			
Materialist	36	17.03	7.02			
Postmaterialist	48	21.08	8.61			
Undifferentiated	69	20.64	10.01			
Between Groups				1.917	.128	.025
United States (<i>N</i> = 280)						
Uninvolved	86	19.79	7.44			
Materialist	41	18.66	6.69			
Postmaterialist	35	22.46	9.04			
Undifferentiated	118	19.94	7.68			
Between Groups				1.645	.179	.018

Yet, looking at the two national samples individually, the differences among the four groups were not significant, which could be attributed to the fact that the composition proportions of these four groups differ in the Chinese and American samples and lead to this statistical discrepancy. To ensure the difference for *RQ1*, in which the mean score of political participation frequency in the postmaterialist group was higher than the mean score of the materialist group, a *t* test was also conducted. Within the entire sample, *t*-test results demonstrated that the difference in mean scores between the two value groups was significant, $t(158) = -3.012, p = .003$ (see Table 8).

Table 8

T Test of Political Participation Frequency between Materialists and Postmaterialists

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Combined					
Materialist	77	17.90	6.85		
Postmaterialist	83	21.66	8.77	-3.012	.003
China					
Materialist	36	17.03	7.02		
Postmaterialist	48	21.08	8.61	-2.308	.024
United States					
Materialist	41	18.66	6.69		
Postmaterialist	35	22.46	9.04	-2.101	.039

In both countries' samples, the differences in the mean scores of materialists and postmaterialists were also significant, at the .024 level for China and the .039 level for the United States. Thus, in response to *RQ1*, there is a higher frequency of political participation among postmaterialist individuals than among materialist individuals.

Following the inquiry thread, *RQ2* asked, "Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who are raised in a liberal democratic society?" To answer the question, a *t* test was conducted to compare the mean scores of political participation frequency between samples from China and the United States. The mean of political participation in the Chinese sample was 20.30 (*SD* = 9.05), and the mean score in the U.S. sample was 20.02 (*SD* = 7.68; see Table 9).

Table 9

T Test of Political Participation Frequency between China and the United States

	China			United States			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>		
Political Participation	229	20.30	9.05	280	20.02	7.68	.377	.706

Even though the apparent mean score of the Chinese sample was .28 higher than that of the American sample, the results indicate that the difference between the two means was not significant, $t(507) = .377, p = .706$. The insignificant difference between the mean scores of political participation in the Chinese and American samples was not sufficient to provide a positive answer to *RQ2*.

Similar to *H1b*, differentiating the responses by parents' income level, *RQ3* posited, "Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who are from economically advanced families?" Two one-way analysis of variance tests were

conducted separately on each of the Chinese and American samples to compare the mean scores of political participation frequency from different parents' income groups. The results of the analyses for China and the United States were also reported independently due to the different income classifications. In both cases, the differences of mean scores among income groups' were not statistically significant (China, $F(4, 211) = .717, p = .581, \eta^2 = .003$; U.S, $F(4, 258) = .939, p = .442, \eta^2 = .021$; see Table 10).

The variations of the mean scores in the Chinese and American samples displayed two slightly different patterns. In the China case, the mean score increased as the family income increased from below \$19,999 RMB ($M = 19.32, SD = 8.97$) to the \$40,000–\$59,999 RMB ($M = 22.28, SD = 7.66$), where nearly 85% ($N = 183$) of the Chinese sample was from. Yet the mean score started to decrease in the \$60,000–\$79,999 RMB ($M = 20.83, SD = 6.53$) and above \$80,000 RMB ($M = 19.62, SD = 10.39$) groups. On the other hand, the American sample mean also increased from 17.00 ($SD = 7.04$) at the lowest level to 20.06 in the \$36,000–\$55,999 U.S. group, slightly dropped to 19.14 ($SD = 7.53$) in the \$56,000–\$75,999 level, and then went up to the highest mean score 20.73 ($SD = 7.71$) within the group with the highest range of parents' income, from which more than half of the U.S. respondents ($N = 150$) came. On the other hand, except for the mean scores in the highest income groups, the mean scores of political participation in the four income groups from China tended to be greater than those of their U.S. counterparts. Yet, with the inconsistent patterns of mean score variations within both of the samples and the lack of statistical significance in between-group differences, *RQ3* could not be sufficiently answered.

Table 10

One-way ANOVA of Political Participation Frequency among Economic Conditions

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
China (<i>N</i> = 216)						
Parents' Income (\$RMB)						
< 19,999	65	19.32	8.97			
20,000–39,999	82	20.74	9.16			
40,000–59,999	36	22.28	7.66			
60,000–79,999	12	20.83	6.53			
> 80,000	21	19.62	10.39			
Between Groups				.717	.581	.003
United States (<i>N</i> = 265)						
Parents' Income (\$US)						
< 19,999	5	17.00	7.04			
20,000–35,999	25	18.42	5.82			
36,000–55,999	36	20.06	8.78			
56,000–75,999	49	19.14	7.53			
> 76,000	150	20.73	7.71			
Between Groups				.939	.442	.021

Nonetheless, to furnish a clearer view of the findings in this study, a summary of the applied statistical tests and analytical results to the three sets of hypotheses and one

set of research questions, and thus provided in the following segment (see Table 11).

Among all tested, the first three of Hypotheses II (*H2a*, *H2b*, and *H2c*), all of Hypotheses III (*H3a*, *H3b*, and *H3c*), and *RQ1* were supported. Yet, no significant support was found for Hypotheses I (*H1a* and *H1b*), *H2d*, *RQ2*, and *RQ3*.

Table 11

Summary of Results for Hypotheses and Research Questions

Hypotheses I	
<hr/>	
H1a: Support for postmaterialist values is positively related to individuals raised in a liberal democratic society.	<i>(Not supported)</i>
(T test): China: $M = 33.40$ ($SD = 5.25$)	
U.S.: $M = 33.60$ ($SD = 5.49$)	
$t = -.420, p = .675$	
H1b: Support for postmaterialist values is positively related to individuals raised in economically advanced families.	<i>(Not supported)</i>
(One-way ANOVA): China: $F = .170, p = .954, \eta^2 = .013$	
U.S.: $F = 1.424, p = .226, \eta^2 = .014$	
<hr/>	
Hypotheses II (Pearson Correlation Coefficients)	
<hr/>	
H2a: Materialist values and entertainment media use are positively related.	
$R = .324^{**}$ (China: $.335^{**}$; U.S.: $.268^{**}$)	
H2b: Postmaterialist values and public affairs media use are positively related.	
$R = .118^{**}$ (China: $.076$; U.S.: $.158^{**}$)	
H2c: Materialist values and active engagement in entertainment content are positively related.	
$R = .158^{**}$ (China: $.145^*$; U.S.: $.203^{**}$)	
H2d: Postmaterialist values and active engagement in public affairs information are positively related.	<i>(Not supported)</i>
$R = .081$ (China: $.083$; U.S.: $.085$)	

(Table 11, continued)

Hypotheses III (Pearson Correlation Coefficients)

H3a: The use of public affairs content is positively correlated with public affairs knowledge.

$$R = .308^{**} \text{ (China: } .277^{**} \text{ ; U.S.: } .269^{**} \text{)}$$

H3b: The use of public affairs media and reflective integration are positively related.

$$R = .543^{**} \text{ (China: } .593^{**} \text{ ; U.S.: } .483^{**} \text{)}$$

H3c: The use of public affairs content is positively correlated with political participation.

$$R = .347^{**} \text{ (China: } .330^{**} \text{ ; U.S.: } .370^{**} \text{)}$$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who support postmaterialist priorities than among those who support materialist priorities?

(*T* test): Materialist: $M = 17.90$ ($SD = 6.85$)

Postmaterialist: $M = 21.66$ ($SD = 8.77$)

$$t = -3.012, p = .003$$

RQ2: Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who are raised in a liberal democratic society? (*Higher frequency not supported*)

(*T* test): China: $M = 20.30$ ($SD = 9.05$)

U.S.: $M = 20.02$ ($SD = 7.68$)

$$t = .377, p = .706$$

RQ3: Is there a higher frequency of political participation among individuals who are from economically advanced families? (*Higher frequency not supported*)

(One-way ANOVA): China: $F = .717, p = .581, \eta^2 = .003$

U.S.: $F = .939, p = .442, \eta^2 = .021$

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The overarching purpose of this research was to provide a further understanding of the linkages among values, patterns of media uses, and political participation through a comparative context between China and the United States, representing the East and the West. This study was also framed by Inglehart's (1997) concepts of materialist and postmaterialist value systems, and Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) study of the mediation of media uses on value systems and political participations. Although the findings of this study were not overwhelmingly consistent with the theses or conjectures purported by previous research efforts, the study indeed instigated further contemplation on factors that may influence or mediate each of the examined linkages in this research. The following section will review the study results and provide possible explanations to better understand the differences in the findings from the two sampled countries.

Materialist and Postmaterialist Value Priorities

Inglehart's (1977) scarcity hypothesis posited that an individual would subjectively prioritize values that are in relatively short supply, and this relation has been demonstrated in several waves of World Values Survey, which also suggests that political and socioeconomic variables are two of the chief players in value formation (Inglehart, 1997). Derived from the WVS findings, the first two hypotheses intended to determine whether individuals raised in a liberal democratic society, namely the United States, are more likely to support postmaterialist values, and whether affluent individuals and

nationalities, who feel more secure, tend to focus more on quality of life than people from poorer nations, and therefore score higher on postmaterialistic items. Instead of basic physical and economic security, the quality of life in such a context refers to the higher levels of the Maslowian need hierarchy, focusing on intellectual advancement, self-actualization, or environmental quality.

However, the statistical results of this study did not reveal significant differences in the sample, and did not support either hypothesis. Although the factor analysis indicated that two factors can be extracted from the 12-value-item index, these value items may not necessarily reflect a dichotomous value dimension, as either toward materialism or postmaterialism. When respondents were asked to rate the 12 value items that are equally desirable, they may rate each value on its own terms without reference to a common underlying value dimension, or being “materialist,” “postmaterialist,” or “mixed” (Davis & Davenport, 1999, Marks, 1997). Moreover, the insignificant findings from these two hypotheses may have also suggested that the formation of materialist and postmaterialist values is not merely associated with political environment and economic conditions, but it is instead a complex process influenced by enormous confounding factors.

Despite the finding of no significant difference in postmaterialist value ratings, the summary of mean score comparison found that the U.S. sample had slightly higher mean scores on materialist values, but this does not necessarily suggest that the sampled American students are more materialistic than their Chinese counterparts. In fact, it may be helpful to examine the Chinese and American samples’ ratings separately, as each country has its unique context and constant changes within each context. For example, it

could be that at the time of the survey in the United States, the personal associated economic issue, such as the rise in gasoline prices and housing expenses (most students drive and pay monthly rent in the United States, whereas the majority of university students in China live in dormitories) attracted more attention than other types of issues, and thus led to the higher scoring on the materialist value items.

The positive correlation between materialist and postmaterialist priorities found in this study's statistical analyses agrees with the claim that materialist and postmaterialist values are not mutually exclusive, resonating with Marks' (1997) contention that the majority of the public are in fact classified as neither persistent materialist nor postmaterialist, but mixed. Furthermore, if prioritization of values can shift from materialist toward postmaterialist, it is also rational that the direction can shift from postmaterialist to materialist. One set of priorities may outweigh the other at certain points in time, but the weighing is personally subjective and may change along with the changes in the environment.

On the other hand, the socialization hypothesis (Inglehart, 1977), on which the respondent sample (i.e., university students aged from 17 to 27) was based, contends that rapid human development takes place during the preadult years, and as basic personality change declines during an individual's adulthood, values developed during the adolescent years are likely to be maintained during adulthood (Jennings & Markus, 1984). This claim may be valid in a stable environment, but in practicality, numerous extrinsic or intrinsic factors, such as a sudden political or individual ability to adjust to the changes, may still play a role in value shaping.

Furthermore, the statistical analyses were conducted by treating the Chinese and American respondents' ratings in two aggregations, and the mean scores of ratings on the value priorities from both sets of samples were then used for comparison. In such a macro-level analysis, participating individuals' characteristics in value support were thus overlooked. Also, the level of support for a value system in early adulthood may change in later adulthood due to human developmental factors, such as employment or marriage (Ting & Chiu, 2000). These sampled university students may not have had much realistic contact with the issue priorities used for materialist or postmaterialist values, and thus are not able to demonstrate distinctions among the values.

Despite the fact that political and economic conditions are two key players, the findings for the first two hypotheses also imply that the formation of value systems relies on many other factors. For example, Marks (1997) proposed five general influences on values: parental socialization, formative security within the family of origin, societal or economic formative security on reaching adulthood, education, and contemporary influences. Postmaterialist values, such as freedom of expression or having more say in government decisions, are not the natural consequences of the fulfillment of physical and economic security, but are rather learned in later developmental stages. In fact, education has been proven the single most important predictor of postmaterialist values, and research findings have suggested that the postmaterialism scale is not related to material issues but to those associated with having more or less education, such as liberal values (De Graaf & Evans, 1996; Moore, 2003). On the other hand, high levels of educational attainment can also be treated as an indirect measure of family prosperity. As succeeding generations become more economically secure during early socialization, they have

greater access to education and become more postmaterialist in their attitudes (MacIntosh, 1998). College education in both China and the United States has been considered a high educational level, and in such an educational institution students are nurtured with the more liberal view of pursuing quality of life. In addition to the political and economic factors hypothesized in Hypotheses I, the current study attempted to control age and educational levels by recruiting university students to participate in the survey, and the results of the ratings on the value index were thus inevitably mediated by educational attainment, leading to insignificant difference between the Chinese and American samples.

Moreover, in breaking down the support for the six postmaterialist items, there are significant differences between the two countries on two items: the American respondents rated “to show kindness and friendliness to each other” higher, whereas the Chinese respondents demonstrated a higher mean on “to have equal opportunity for all at their jobs and in their community.” If values are only an aspect of a culture, different magnitudes of support to these two items may also reflect the difference between both cultures. Pan, Chaffee, and his colleagues (1994) have compared and provided several distinctions between the cultural systems of the Chinese and Americans. They argued that the U.S. culture emphasizes horizontal dimensions of interpersonal relationships, whereas traditional Chinese culture places more weight on vertical interpersonal relationships. This may explain the fact that the Chinese rated showing kindness and friendliness to others lower than other values, as traditionally, there is a high degree of distrust between people who are not related (Tu, 1984). In comparing to their American counterpart, the Chinese gave an average higher score to “equal opportunity for all,”

which may suggest a rebound effect from the situation of an immeasurable polarization and inequality between the have and have nots. Education is considered a conventional gateway to remove inequality. In the reality of Chinese university students, equal opportunities will then become an urgent personal concern before they enter into society.

As to the obvious decline of support for postmaterialist values among individuals from the most affluent families, it seems to be the case in both the Chinese and the U.S. samples. This decline, which goes against the direction of the scarcity hypothesis, demands close examination. This may have insinuated that economic comfort exerts its influence in value development. The lowest income group in the U.S. sample unexpectedly demonstrated the highest mean score for postmaterialist, but conversely, the support decreased among individuals of the highest income families. For those who were from the lowest income group, they have fewer needs satisfied but less to lose, and thus, it is conceivable that they would rate all the value items high if these items could be fulfilled. Yet, when individuals are situated in an upper class setting, they are more willing to maintain materialistic conditions, such as status and income, and less likely to jeopardize their holdings to support seemingly riskier postmaterialist priorities. That being said, more than half of the American respondents were from the highest income families but scored the lowest among the five groups on postmaterialist items. In such a case, the prevalent state of political apathy, disagreement with the current government, and economic volatility in the United States may lower postmaterialist priorities, causing it a reverse shift in value priorities.

Value Systems and Patterns of Media Use

The second linkage examined was primarily between the two value systems and patterns of media uses. Research has found that postmaterialist value supporters tend to be news media users, whereas materialists tend to place preferences on entertainment-oriented or mainstream media content (Johansson & Miegel, 1992; Roberts & Mccoby, 1985; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). Drawn from previous research findings, Hypotheses 2a and 2b focused specifically on the correlation between support for materialist or postmaterialist values and frequency of public affairs or entertainment media use, whereas hypotheses 2c and 2d looked at the relationship between value support and types of active media engagement. Yet, these four hypotheses only aimed to correlate all of the sampled individuals' support for both value sets with the patterns of their media use, not make any differentiation of materialist and postmaterialists among the respondents or suggest causality among these variables.

The results of several correlation analyses presented modest support for the two hypothesized correlations in which rating of materialist values was set as a variable. However, unlike the findings in Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) study, the correlations between the support for postmaterialist values and public affairs media use, or between postmaterialist values and active engagement in public affairs media, were rather weak. Relating to the first set of hypotheses, the insignificant relationships between the support for postmaterialist priorities and other variables can be explained by the fact that the sampled respondents may not have developed concrete sets of value priorities at their current ages. Regardless of their natures, as all of the 12 value items juxtaposed together, it is possible that the rating of an item may have interfered with the ratings of the others.

Moreover, another consideration affecting the weak correlations could be that the two types of media contents are presented in fundamentally different manners. Although the four categories of public affairs information (i.e., international, national, local affairs, and news editorial) can be obtained through various medium forms, such as TV nightly news, newspapers, or Internet websites, these categories are normally assembled in one program, a daily newspaper, or a group of web pages. In other words, an individual is able to locate different kinds of news in one place all at once, which is not the case for the four types of entertainment content. In fact, the distribution channels of entertainment content, and content lengths, breadths, and depths, suggest a sharp difference from the public affairs content. Thus, these various distinctions should be taken into consideration as influencing participants' answers on their use of the two types of media content, and their active engagements in the content.

Also, in spite of the finding from the previous section of little difference between the Chinese and American respondents' scores on postmaterialist value support, the nonsignificant relationship between postmaterialist priorities and public affairs media use may be due to the immense variation in media accessibility (e.g., easier to obtain copies of newspapers or get online than own a TV set for students in China), programming strategies (e.g., more news channels and more variety of newscasts in the United States), or media consumption patterns as the consequence of different developments of media environments in China and the United States.

Nonetheless, when correlating all the major variables examined for these four hypotheses, fairly strong positive relationships were found between public affairs media and active engagement, and between entertainment media use and active engagement. It

is reasonable that the exposure and attention given to media content are closely associated with the extra action taken in search of the preferred content. The more frequently an individual consumes a certain type of media content, the higher level of involvement in this content this person may have, and the more likely that he or she would take further action (e.g., videotape shows, subscribe to newspapers, etc.) to engage in the content, and eventually this would lead to more exposure and attention paid to the content. In this research context, the results suggest a strong correlation between the use of media content and active engagement activities, and yet, the findings are not sufficient to suggest these two sets of variables are in any causal relationship, which may be another area calling for examinations.

Although the current findings on the linkage between values and media uses are not in agreement with the previous research endeavors, these findings have to be interpreted in a crossnational, comparative context, in which each of the surveyed countries has its characteristic factors contributing to the significance or nonsignificance. Yet, whether value systems influence the choice of media content, or media content help shape or reinforce the values is not to be answered by these correlational interpretations.

Patterns of Media Use and Political Participation

To political communication scholars, the relation between mass media and civic activities is generally the focal point. In particular, public affairs media are deemed a crucial element in contemporary democracy, as opposed to entertainment media, which are normally associated with materialist values not related to civic engagement. Research findings also support the assertion that having frequent contact with public affairs information and diverse discussions lead to a positive impact on participation (Eveland &

Scheufele, 2000; McLeod et al., 1996; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). Founded on this rationale, the current study intended to cross national boundaries to find out whether the assertion also exists not only in the United States but in China.

In addition to the use of public affairs media and its relationship to political participation, this study also included examination of the links between political participation and two other cognitive factors, public affairs knowledge and reflective integration, which are considered the interplaying antecedents of political activity. Based on the models proposed by Sotirovic and McLeod (2001), this study conjectured that the frequency of use of public affairs content is positively correlated with the retention of public affair knowledge, reflective integrating activities, and political participation.

These three hypotheses of positive correlations in the current study were supported by the statistical results. The strongest positive correlation existed on the pair of public affairs media use and reflective integration in both the Chinese and U.S. samples. This positive correlation in the Chinese sample appeared to be slightly stronger than the correlation in the U.S. sample. This may be explained by the lack of variance and higher frequencies of using public affairs media and engaging in reflective integrating activities in the Chinese sample.

Nonetheless, the lowest positive correlation was found between public affairs media use and public affairs knowledge, and this demonstrates relatively weak support to the normal assumption that the more frequent exposure and attention given to the news media should lead to a gain in public affairs knowledge. Yet in this study, question should be raised concerning the measure of the levels of public affairs knowledge.

Although an equivalency was attempted for the 12 public affairs questions in both the Chinese and English versions of the survey, and the questions were drafted based on common criteria (e.g., government officials' or world organization chief officers' names, local or international current affairs), different emphases on public affairs in the two countries should also be taken into account when considering the variance among the scores on public affairs knowledge. For instance, students in China may be accustomed to paying more attention to national and international affairs, whereas American students may focus more on national and regional affairs.

Another complication in the statistical correlation between public affairs media use and public affairs knowledge was that there was a tremendous discrepancy in the scores of the 12 general public affairs questions between the Chinese and Americans. The average score in the Chinese sample was 5.48, with a standard deviation of 2.62, whereas the American counterpart only scored 1.90 on average, with a small standard deviation of 1.72. The discrepancy, especially the low score in the U.S. sample, may be the result of the inappropriate drafting of the public affair questions, although questions were composed on a general basis and concerned with events taking place 2 weeks prior to survey administration. The other confounding factor could be that the answer rate was simply low, or survey participants did not truthfully provide their knowledge on public affairs. No matter which of the factors are held more accountable, they certainly hinder the statistical analysis process and resulting interpretation.

Furthermore, reminiscent of the previous research findings, this survey found that in both the Chinese and U.S. samples, public affairs media use is positively correlated with political activity, including electoral and nonelectoral behavior. Also, a somewhat

stronger positive correlation was found between reflective integration and political participation. This places engagement in reflective integration in the mediating position between public affairs media use and political participation, as hypothesized by Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) model. That is, the more individuals consume and think about the news and search for additional related information, the more public affairs knowledge the individuals may gain, and thus increase their understanding of the political world. These processes then provide a strong cognitive base for political participation.

As the use of public affairs media is suggested to be conducive in promoting political activity, the importance of public affairs media, mainly news media, in the political process is reaffirmed. On the other hand, the allegation is often made against the news media that biased and manipulated media presentations of political reality in recent decades have contributed to a great degree to political apathy and cynicism, particularly in the United States. This study does not attempt to defend the public affairs media, nor does it attempt to suggest the causes of declining civic participation. The intent to use, exposure frequency, and attention paid to public affairs media are as crucial as the messages incorporated into the media content for individuals to understand the political world, but these factors also have to compete with enormous interfering factors ranging from individual differences to societal influence that may play a part in the political process.

Political Participation

In addition to the linkages among values, media use, and political participation, this research also extended its inquiry to the involvement in the political process by comparing support of different value priorities among individuals raised in different

political systems and economic backgrounds. Postmaterialist values are considered to encourage political behaviors, and also it has been argued that development of democracy is closely associated with economic advancement (Duch & Taylor, 1993; Lipset, 1959; Rowen, 1996). Although China is still classified as a not-free regime (Freedom House, 2004), it has experienced tremendous growth during its economic reform in the 1990s. Thus, in hope of promoting understanding of the current state of political sense and attentiveness in China, this study intended to adopt political participation as an indicator and compare the involvement in China and the United States, a long standing liberal democracy. Because research efforts using a comparative perspective in this area have not established sound theories, this study began its exploration in this subject area by posing three research questions about whether postmaterialists, individuals raised in a relatively liberal country, and those growing up in more affluent families would demonstrate a higher frequency of participating in the political process.

This study found that in both the Chinese and American samples, the persistent postmaterialists demonstrated a significantly higher frequency of political participation than did the materialists, despite the fact that these two groups were only a small portion of the entire sample, as opposed to the majority of “mixed” (Marks, 1997). Also, the results revealed that in the United States, the frequency of engaging in political behaviors increased when families had higher incomes, although not at a consistent rate. Yet, the mean scores of political participation in the Chinese sample showed a curvilinear pattern: they increased as parents’ income increased to the middle range and started to decline as the increase in incomes continued. Contradictory to the common sense notion that involvement in political participation tends to be constrained in nondemocratic societies,

this study found that the level of political engagement among the Chinese respondents appears slightly higher than its American counterpart, although the difference was statistically nonsignificant.

However, this does not suggest that the political atmosphere in China has become more tolerant or that American democracy is undermined by the decline of civic engagement. The assessment of these differences should start with how political participation is perceived in this survey questionnaire as well as in general sense. First, the construction of the political participation scales in this survey was intended to explore the attitudinal bases of political participation through statements of civic or political engagement, which is considered a strong predictor of participation (Klesner, 2003). In doing so, the statements were phrased in a general way, avoiding politically sensitive words or references for distribution in China and the United States. Although the essence of these scales was to capture these student participants' attitudes and involvement in civic activities (e.g., vote in class or student government elections, or be members in nonpolitical organizations), and not actual counts of the behaviors, these scales of statements were likely interpreted or understood as statements in an actual political context. Thus, to many students, they have not had actual experiences in the political process, such as attending town hall meetings, and casting votes in presidential, gubernatorial, or local elections. This misinterpretation of the questionnaire is more likely the case in the U.S. sample, because the respondents were raised in a democratic political culture, in which political activities take place constantly.

On the other hand, although the political system in China is regarded as being far from a democratic regime, the Chinese political culture and individuals' political attitudes

have encountered enormous changes during the recent economic and political (stagnated in the early 1990s after the June 4 democratic movement) reforms in the last decade. Traditionally, Chinese weak deference to authority has created a greater need for an authoritarian political system in Chinese societies. Because state authority is less respected in China, the danger of social chaos and fear of disintegration are what have continued to make Chinese rulers reluctant to liberalize the political system (Tu, 1984). In today's China, those who are better educated, young, and more liberal tend to be more cynical of political institutions, but at the same time more active in the political process. Moreover, political reform has progressively taken place at the local, grass-roots level, and elections are regularly held in the villages. Some argue that the village industrialization, villagers' ties to the economy, and the rise in income are closely correlated with interest in political participation (Qi & Rozelle, 2000). Although these changes are not to be treated as the prevailing phenomenon nationwide, they tend to occur in regions of political importance.

Another factor contributing to the variance in the responses of political participation between the two samples could be the different curricular designs. University students in the United States have full autonomy in selecting courses and composing class schedules and can study at their own pace. In China, pre-established curricula and class schedules are normally the case, and politics-oriented courses are mandatory for all of the students. Although the courses of this nature are not to be deemed in the same sense or nature as common civic education, these courses more or less help encourage an awareness of, and attitudes or values toward politics. Also, within the surveyed sample are students from various disciplines, which suggests that

respondents' sensibilities toward the political process may vary at individual levels associated with different academic majors. For example, students majoring in the social sciences or law may have a stronger sense about politics as compared with the natural sciences or mathematics majors.

The model posited by Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) that public affairs media are the mediating factor for political participation may also shed light on the different levels of political involvement between the Chinese and U.S. samples. Based on the model, the statistical results in the third set of hypotheses indicated that public affairs media use, public affairs knowledge, reflective integration, and political participation are positively correlated. These are also the variables that showed the Chinese sample demonstrating higher mean scores and stronger correlations than the U.S. sample. With more frequent use of public affairs media, more awareness of public affairs, and frequent engagement in reflective integrating activities, it is logical to find impressively more involvement in civic activities from the Chinese sample. Yet, when the focus is on political participation, especially in this research context, it must not be interpreted as in a democratic society, because political activities associated with democracy are still prudently constrained in China.

The theoretical foundation of this study has been an attempt to bridge Inglehart's (1977) thesis and conceptualization of materialist and postmaterialist values, and the theoretical model of linkages among values, communication behaviors, and political activity. The study also intended to investigate the various relations in a comparative context by expanding the effort to non-Western society. Three sets of hypotheses and three research questions were thus examined. Yet, both supportive and inconsistent

results were found in the study. Although the link between postmaterialist values and public affairs media use was not substantial, all the correlations among values, media use, and political participation were positive, congruent to the hypothetical model of Sotirovic and McLeod (2001). Variables of active engagement and reflective integration were also incorporated in the survey as indicators of commitment toward media use and information processing, which are considered to strengthen the importance of distinguished media use. Also, support for postmaterialist values was also shown to be positively related to engagement in political behaviors, which agrees with Inglehart's (1997) argument that postmaterialist priorities pose political consequence.

On the other hand, the inconsistent findings occurred when values and political participation variables were compared in a crossnational context, between China and the United States. The research found that tendency toward postmaterialism and involvement level in political process did not differ significantly in the two countries, and did not increase as a society or political system was more liberal. The results actually were in the opposite direction from the normal understanding of the tight relation between liberal democracy and civic engagement. Nonetheless, this inconsistency is rather encouraging and invites more in-depth examination of the factors contributing to the differences between the two nations.

Also, although postmaterialists tend to demonstrate a higher frequency of political participation, it is not to be overlooked that values instigate political consequence through the mediation of many factors, such as varied media usage. No matter whether the patterns of media use are influenced by accessibility and content, or by beliefs and values,

and no matter in what cultures, it is evident that media, particularly public affairs media, hold in a vital position in the modern political process.

In its current state, the media environment in the United States is filled with a wide variety of choices in terms of media forms and content, so the share of public affairs media (time and interest) is constantly threatened by other types of media content, for instance, new entertainment genres. The role played by public affairs media in America's daily life has been fixed, and the impact level of content remains fairly stable, except for exceptional cases, such as election periods, particular policy issues, or breaking news events. Yet, although the media in the United States do not need to take the sole responsibility for declining political interest, the content format and appeal of the public affairs media may not constrain their functions to merely informing the public. Acknowledging their crucial position in the political process, the public affairs media themselves should refocus their role in not only providing information and being the watchdog for the public, but also leading the public to exercise its rights and liberties.

On the contrary, the media, print or electronic, in China are still officially owned and operated by central and local governments, and the governments normally place a great emphasis on public affairs. Although it is difficult to avoid the color of propaganda, the Chinese government has allowed some extent of reform in news media policy. Issues can be discussed in the media, editorial independence has also been pursued, and critical voices against local government or issues are permissible on the premise that the interests of central government are not affected. An example can be found in the current affairs program "Jiaodian Fangtan" launched by Chinese Central Television, and the program claims to attract more than 300 million viewers each day

(Chan, 2002; Li, 2002). In general, these gradual changes are favorable to the public and have energized the public interest in public affairs, and therefore, encourage exposure and attention to these media. In the meantime, the changing trend enables the public to be more informed and have a clear self-identity in the political process. That being the case, the changes in media environment or political interest and behavior should still be seen in its national circumstance, and by no means suggests that China is experiencing any democratization process.

Limitations of Present Study

As with any research in social sciences, there are limitations and potential weakness in this research design. First, the limited sample may have been the greatest shortcoming of this research. As a comparative survey study, the number of participants in each country tends to be small, and this leads to difficulties with statistical significance, obscuring results by covering potential meaningful differences. Furthermore, due to a lack of funding, the method of sampling was not based on randomization but convenience within two frames: age and educational level. Thus, the samples consisted of university students from a major university in the east coast of China, and a major university in the southeastern United States. The homogeneity within the two sets of sample could lead to rather skewed results, and the homogeneity could take place as students in each of the universities may have been situated in similar living environments, taken the same courses, or exposed to similar environmental conditions.

Another drawback of this convenience sampling is the unrepresentativeness to the targeted population, namely all college students. Although the research intends to compare the various linkages of values, media uses, and political participation among

university students, the two universities included in the research did not provide equivalent levels of representativeness for students in the two nations. The university selected in China is located in a major east coastal city, and considered one of the top major universities in China, in which students are admitted after competing in national entrance examinations. Compared to schools in inland China, students in this university tend to be aware of political current affairs as well as indicate more interest in political discourse. On the other hand, the university in the United States is located in the southeast, which is normally labeled the most conservative region. Although in the school setting the political atmosphere can be slightly moderate, the majority of the student body are individuals from the same region, a relatively conservative political environment as opposed to many other regions in the United States. Students may hold different views of political affairs from students from other places in the United States. Thus, attempts to generalize the results of this study to the full student populations of China and the United States can only be done tenuously. However, the main purpose of this research was to explore a new direction of study using a crossnational design. Significant mark can only be made on the larger landscape through replication and adapting under more generalizable conditions.

The second limitation of the study lies in the measurement instrument. As with most crossnational research, linguistic differences have been the major challenge in constructing measurement instruments. In this case, English and Chinese were used to compose the survey questionnaires. The original questionnaire was a slight modification based on Sotirovic and McLeod's (2001) instrument and had to be translated from English to Chinese. Although the translation was conducted by three Chinese-English

bilinguals (two from English to Chinese, one from Chinese to English), there were some English expressions that did not have Chinese equivalents and were rephrased in a more understandable way. Also, although the reliability tests demonstrated acceptable levels for all the item scales, item statements included in each set of examined variables, such as media use or political participation, may not show sufficient breadth and depth to determine respondents' tendency.

Finally, the last limitation of this research design is its correlational nature. Because the survey sessions were conducted only once for all the participants, and no element of time or scientific intervention was included, there was no position to make any substantial claims as to direction or causation of any of the variables studied. Also, there is always the possibility of unrecognized mediating or moderating variables affecting the results. Thus, without further examination, the study cannot adequately infer which, if any, variables are factors in this question. Yet, although there are insufficiencies in this comparative research design and interpretations of limited findings, this is, in fact, a call for further study.

Suggestions for Future Research

Previous research efforts suggests that the relationship between value dimensions and media use is reciprocal, that values may affect choices of media, and, in turn, media content reinforces certain values. This dynamic relationship further places direct and indirect effects on the political process (Shah, Domke, & Wackman, 1996). Further, research also illuminates that the relationship is influenced by microlevel differences in the motives underlying media use; there are age-cohort differences in patterns of media

use and levels of civic engagement, and macro-level differences in community/communication context (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001).

The current research, taking a step further with a crossnational comparison, has added national cultural variables to the examination of the linkages among values, patterns of media use, and political participation. The main objective of the crossnational comparison is, on one hand, to examine whether the linkages hold in various societies, and on the other hand, to contribute to the understanding of the differences each society demonstrates on the linkages.

Pursuit of this line of investigation would benefit from more rigorous sampling methods. First, the sample size in this study was constrained in two rather culturally specific regions in China and the United, and within a relative constant age group and education level. If ages and education level are to be controlled in the comparison as in this research context, the sampling frame can be extended to student populations of more diverse regional backgrounds in each studied nation, and thus it would help strengthen the comparisons and differentiations among countries. Also, randomized samples of diverse demographic groups can not only enhance the degree of representativeness in the national samples, but also enable identification of potential moderating or mediating factors on the links among values, media use, and political involvement from specific societal or national contexts. All of these suggestions on the sampling techniques aim to raise the level of ecological validity in crossnational comparative approaches, and are not intended to use as bases of generalization.

Additionally, the scope of crossnational examination can be expanded to multiple Western and non-Western societies on wide cultural, political, and economic spectrums.

The larger scale of crossnational research on this series of linkages would facilitate the corroboration conjectures on the relationships of the three elements. In the meantime, comparing variations in the relationships among different countries can also facilitate the recognition of emergent patterns of the relationships because of different societal characteristics.

Furthermore, although the survey method is normally deemed the most feasible approach for covering crossnational contexts, other methodological approaches, including both quantitative and qualitative, would also complement the results generated through survey research. For example, time-series analyses may help enlighten the order of precedence of values, media use, or political engagement in the relationships in certain cases in spite of the indisputable reciprocity of influences among the three components. Also, the lack of depth in findings from quantitative approaches can be balanced by qualitative methods, which would help identify unique elements of each culture or society and thus provide more in-depth explanations of the differences.

Nevertheless, this line of research not only interprets the crossnational differences on the linkages among value systems, media use patterns, and civic involvement, but it also has implications for international relations. In fact, in this global era, there are continuous contacts among nations and societies, and the consequences of changing international affairs and issues have put many countries in a shared lifeboat. Also, global media consolidations and crossborder information flows may have made impacts on the weights of the elements (i.e., value, media use, and political activities) in the linkages. Therefore, the political consequences of the linkages will take place not only within a society, but also expectedly on the stage of global affairs.

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APPENDIX A
Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in our survey on values, patterns of media uses, and participation in the political process. In this survey, approximately 400 people will be asked to complete a survey that asks questions about how they view and know about their world, how they use various media, and what types of activities they do. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. By signing this form, you are certifying that you are at least 18 years of age and agree to participate in this survey. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for us to learn your opinions.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and stored securely in the investigator's office. Data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact Dr. Gary Copeland (phone: 348-6350; email: copeland@ua.edu), or Amy Chu (phone: 348-8604; email: chu004@bama.ua.edu).

If you have any research related problems or questions regarding subject's rights, you may contact Dr. Thomas Ward (phone: 348-3178; email: ward@ccm.ua.edu).

Please print your name: _____

Please print your CWID: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____, 2005

Please proceed to the next page for the questionnaire after signing this consent form.

APPENDIX B

Survey Questionnaire (U.S.)

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

People sometimes talk about different goals that are important to their own nations in the future years. In this section, we would like to know how important in your judgment each of the following goals is to your country by marking the scale provided next to each goal. On this 7-point scale, “1” means that the goal is *not at all important* and “7” means it is *extremely important*. For each item, please circle the number on the scale to indicate how important you consider each goal is.

	<i>Not at all important</i>						<i>Extremely important</i>		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
a. To maintain social order	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
b. To have more say in the decision of the government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
c. To have a stable economy and comfortable life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
d. To have strong defense forces	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
e. To fight rising prices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
f. To show kindness and friendliness to each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
g. To protect freedom of expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
h. To make cities and countryside more beautiful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
i. To maintain high rate of economic growth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
j. To have equal opportunity for all at their jobs and in their communities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
k. To fight against crime	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
l. To move toward a society that values ideas over money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

In this section, please tell us how often you read/watch each of the following types of news content each day by circling your answer on the scale. “1” means *don’t read/watch at all*, and “7” means *read/watch all the time*.

	<i>Don’t read/watch at all</i>						<i>Read/watch all the time</i>		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
a. International affairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
b. Coverage about national government and politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
c. Coverage about local government and politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
d. News editorials	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

When you read/watch these news content, how much attention do you normally pay to them?
In the scale below, “1” means *very little attention*, whereas “7” means *very close attention*.

	<i>Very little attention</i>					<i>Very close attention</i>	
a. International affairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Coverage about national government and politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Coverage about local government and politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. News editorials	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Likewise, please tell us how often a day, on the average, you read/watch the following types of content. Again, “1” means *don't read/watch at all*, and “7” means *read/watch all the time*.

	<i>Don't read/watch at all</i>					<i>Read/watch all the time</i>	
a. Entertainment news	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Sports news/games	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Variety programming (e.g., reality shows, music programs, game shows)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Dramatic programming (e.g., TV series, movies, dramas)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When you read/watch the following content, how much attention do you normally pay to them?
In the scale below, “1” means *very little attention*, whereas “7” means *very close attention*.

	<i>Very little attention</i>					<i>Very close attention</i>	
a. Entertainment news	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Sports news/games	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Variety programming (e.g., reality shows, music programs, game shows)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Dramatic programming (e.g., TV series, movies, dramas)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following is a set of activity statements related to media uses. We would like to know how frequently you would engage in these activities. On the scale, “1” means *never*, and “7” means *very frequently*.

	<i>Never</i>						<i>Very frequently</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a. Check out schedules or previews of my favorite programs in the TV Guide, TV promotions, or on Internet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Make sure not to miss any episode of my favorite programs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Video-record/download, rent, or purchase my favorite programs for multiple viewings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Subscribe or purchase newspapers or newsmagazines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Use different media sources to get news and issue updates (e.g., radio, TV, Internet, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Go to Internet for news coverage about my home town	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Below are some current affairs questions. For each question, please write your answer in the provided space next to the question. If you don't know the answer to any of the question, please leave the space blank.

- a. Who is the current U.S. Secretary of State?
- b. In what region did Mahmoud Abbas just won in the recent presidential election in early January 2005?
- c. Which Chilean dictator was recently arrested on charges of human right cases related to the death and disappearances of dissidents in the 1970s?
- d. U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos, leading a team of his aides, went to North Korea in early January 2005 and anticipated to discuss with North Korean officials several international issues. Please name one of the serious issues associated with the situations in North Korea.
- e. According to the announcement by the Justice Department in last December, which company has agreed to pay the U.S. government \$325 million to settle numerous allegations that the company defrauded Medicare and other government programs?
- f. In which branch of the federal government does William Rehnquist serve?

- g. Who is the current United Nations Secretary-General?
- h. What controversies or policies have brought Attorney General nominee Alberto R. Gonzales before the Senate Judiciary Committee?
- i. In December 2004, with which nation did the U.S. issue a new agreement which aims to stop asylum seekers from landing in one country and seeking refuge in another?
- j. Please name two of the countries that were impacted by the Indian Ocean Tsunami on December 26, 2004.
- k. Who is Shirley Chisholm?
- l. Since the pressure from the European Union in March 2003, frosty relation between Cuba and eight European nations finally became improved recently due to the positive response by the Castro government. What was the main issue causing the past tension?

The following statements are some ways about how people use various types of news content, and we would like to know how frequently you take the actions as described in the following segment. Please tell us the frequency that you take each of these actions. On the scale, "1" means *never*, and "7" means *very frequently*.

	<i>Never</i>						<i>Very frequently</i>
a. I spend time thinking about the news stories that I read or heard earlier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. I talk with friends about stories learned in the news, and see what they think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. When I have learned about something in the news, I will recall it later and think about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. I seek out additional information about a topic when I feel the news stories are incomplete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. I search for additional information about the most discussed news topics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Now we would like to ask how often you participate in each of the following acts. On the scale, please indicate the frequency that you engage in these actions, and again, “1” means *never*, and “7” means *very frequently*.

	<i>Never</i>						<i>Very frequently</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a. I cast vote in an election.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. I hold memberships in organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. I attend meetings on public issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. I work with others in a group for resolutions on local problems or issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. I circulate a petition for something I am interested.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. I write to the news editors to express my views.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. I contact leaders, lobby or persuade others for the interests I support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In the following section, please briefly tell us about your demographic background.

- a. Your gender: 1) Male _____ 2) Female _____
- b. Your age: _____ years old
- c. The place you lived the longest between the ages of 12 and 18:
 _____, _____, _____ (city, state/province, country)
- d. Your parents' combined annual income: (\$ U.S.)
 1) < \$ 19,999 _____ 2) \$ 20,000 ~ 35,999 _____ 3) \$ 36,000 ~ 55,999 _____
 4) \$ 56,000 ~ 75,999 _____ 5) > \$ 76,000 _____
- e. What is your current educational level?
 1) Freshman _____ 2) Sophomore _____ 3) Junior _____ 4) Senior _____
 5) Master's program _____ 6) Doctoral program _____ 7) Other _____
- f. What is your major? _____

This is the end of the questionnaire.
 Again, we appreciate your help and wish you all the best!

APPENDIX C

Survey Questionnaire (China)

感谢您抽空协助填写这份问卷。这一问卷是学术研究性质的，旨在了解青年学子对国家发展的看法及使用传媒的习惯。问卷采用匿名形式，我们将对您的个人答案严格保密，请您在放松的心情下完成问卷。

下面列出的是一些不同的国家目标，这些目标在未来几年对国家的发展具有不同程度的重要性，按照您的见解，这些目标对中国的重要程度如何？请在每行评价指标中圈出能代表你的评价的数字。请注意：在所提供的评价指标中，“1”表示不具有任何重要性，“7”则表示极具重要性，并且重要程度从1至7逐渐增强。

	不具任何重要性				极具重要性		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
保持社会秩序	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
能更多地参与政府决策	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
保有稳定的经济和舒适的生活	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
拥有强大的国防军事力量	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
抑制物价上涨	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
人们能以和善相待，友好相处	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
保护言论自由	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
美化城市和乡村	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
保持经济的高增长率	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
民众在社会上能获得平等机会及待遇	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
打击犯罪	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
建设一个民众意识比金钱物质更重要的社会	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

在这一部分，请告诉我们你每天阅读/收看以下不同类型新闻内容的频率。“1”表示毫无接触，“7”表示接触十分频繁，请圈出反映你情况的数值。

	毫无接触				接触十分频繁		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
国际新闻	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
国内政府或政治报道	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
地方政府或政治报道	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
新闻评论	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

当你阅读/收看这些新闻内容时，你通常给予多少程度的注意力？“1”表示很少注意，“7”表示注意力十分集中，从1至7程度逐渐递增。请圈出反映你情况的数值。。

	很少注意			注意力十分集中			
国际新闻	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
国内政府或政治报道	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
地方政府或政治报道	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
新闻评论	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

同样，在此请告诉我们你每天阅读/收看以下媒体信息的频率。“1”表示毫无接触，“7”则表示十分频繁的接触，从1至7程度逐渐递增。请圈出反映你情况的数值。

	毫无接触			接触十分频繁			
娱乐新闻	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
体育新闻/比赛	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
综艺类节目(例如真人秀，歌舞节目，游戏节目等)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
戏剧类节目(例如电视剧，电影，戏剧等)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

当你阅读/收看这些媒体内容时，你通常给予多少程度的注意力？“1”表示很少注意，“7”则表示注意力十分集中，从1至7程度逐渐递增。请圈出反映你情况的数值。

	很少注意			注意力十分集中			
娱乐新闻	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
体育新闻/比赛	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
综艺类节目(例如真人秀，歌舞节目，游戏节目等)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
戏剧类节目(例如电视剧，电影，戏剧等)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

接下来所列出的是几项与媒体接触相关的活动，请告诉我们你从事这些活动的频率。“1”表示从来没有，“7”则表示非常频繁，从1至7频率逐渐递增。请圈出反映你情况的数值。

	从来没有					非常频繁	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
在广播电视报、节目预告或因特网上寻找自己喜爱节目的播出时间或节目内容。							
尽量不错过自己爱好的节目。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
下载、租看或购买喜爱的节目以便多次欣赏。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
订阅或购买报纸和新闻杂志。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
通过不同媒体渠道获知最新的时事消息。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
通过因特网知晓家乡的新闻事件。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

以下是几道时事题目，请在题后线上写下你的答案。如有不知答案的，请在线上空白。

- a. 谁是中国现任外交部部长？ _____
- b. 今年11月初在美国总统大选中哪一州因计票争议而使其州选票必需重验？ _____
- c. 日前有哪一国的国家总理施罗德前来中国访问？ _____
- d. 中国驻哪个亚洲国家的临时所在地屡次遭受炮击？ _____
- e. 上周于南京举办的悼念活动其目的为何？ _____
- f. 谁是中国现任最高人民法院院长？ _____
- g. 现任联合国秘书长是谁？ _____
- h. 位于中东的哪个国家在今年年底首次由民选产生总统，并在日前正式宣誓就？ _____
- i. 卫生部目前正积极策划于明年大规模地推动哪种疾病的防治工作？ _____
- j. 欧盟近日承诺将于明年六月对中国解除何种禁令？ _____
- k. 台湾陈水扁因于本月初立委选举失利而请辞哪一党之党主席职位？ _____
- l. 日前东亚的哪个国家表示盼望其能名列联合国安理会新增之永久成员？ _____

下面所列出的是关于人们以不同方式来运用所获新闻内容的陈述，我们想知道你运用这些方式的频繁程度如何。在这个指标中，“1”表示从来没有，“7”表示非常频繁。请圈出反映你情况的数值。

	从来没有				非常频繁		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
我会花些时间思考先前得知的新闻事件。							
我会与朋友们讨论最新的时事事件，同时了解他们的想法。							
我会回顾且加以思考过去从新闻中获知的某些事件。							
当我觉得有些新闻未告知完整的信息时，我会试图再找一些补充性的资讯。							
对人们讨论的新闻热点话题，我会主动去找寻一些额外的信息。							

通过下面部分，我们想了解你参与一些活动的情况。请圈出能表示你个人情况的数字，其中“1”表示从来没有，“7”表示非常频繁。请圈出反映你情况的数值。

	从来没有				非常频繁		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
我会在选举中投票。							
我是一些组织的会员。							
我会参与讨论公众议题的会议。							
我会参与旨在解决地方问题的组织活动。							
我会以书面形式为我感兴趣的议题争取多方面的支持。							
我会写信给新闻编辑表达自己的观点。							
我会联系相关领导者，为我所支持的利益游说。							

接下来，请告诉我们一些你个人的简单情况。

- a. 你的性别： 1) 男 2) 女
- b. 你的年龄： _____ 岁
- c. 在你 12 至 18 岁期间，居住时间最久的地区： _____ (国家和省份)
- d. 你父母的年均收入（元）总和：
1) < 19,999 2) 20,000—39,999 3) 40,000—59,999
4) 60,000—79,999 5) > 80,000
- e. 你目前的教育水平：1) 大一 2) 大二 3) 大三 4) 大四
5) 硕士研究生 6) 博士研究生 7) 其他 _____
- f. 你目前所在的系科： _____
-
-

问卷到此结束，再次向您表示感谢，并祝您学业顺利！