MASS MEDIA AND POLITICAL CULTURE: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF MEDIA USE

ON POLITICAL TRUST AND PARTICIPATION IN KOSOVO

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who managed to overcome their hardship and fears

to support my education. They have my unending love and gratitude.

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Lindita Camaj

MASS MEDIA AND POLITICAL CULTURE: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF MEDIA USE

ON POLITICAL TRUST AND PARTICIPATION IN KOSOVO

The aim of this study is investigate the role of mass media in democratization processes in Kosovo, a transitional society in South-Eastern Europe, by examining media effects on political culture. The rationale for the overarching theoretical and empirical approach of this study derives from the lively debate on the role of mass media in promoting and sustaining political culture and civic orientation in Western democracies. I test two contradicting theoretical traditions that explain these interactions: the "Media Malaise" thesis and the "Mobilization" approach. First, this study sets to investigate the relationship between citizens' media use and their trust in political institutions in a theoretical model that engages attribute agenda-setting and priming theories as intervening variables. Then it connects media use and political trust with citizens' political participation, investigating media effects on elite-directed (institutional) and elite-challenging (un-institutional) participation.

The results of this study give support to the "Mobilization" approach, suggesting that the more people use mass media for political information, the more they tend to participate in different forms of political actions. Giving credit to the second-level agenda-setting theory to explain cognitive effects of mass media in a transitional society, this study provides evidence that citizens learn from the media about the efficacy and integrity of political institutions in their country, thus gaining an in-depth understanding of their general performance. Consequently, the information acquired through news media becomes an important dimension of attitude formation towards those political institutions.

This study, though, does not discredit some of the "Malaises" assumptions either, suggesting that under certain conditions media use has a negative relationship with some aspects of political trust. However, it provides theoretical argumentation and empirical evidence suggesting that by affecting different levels of political trust, mass media create an environment in which citizens are not blindly submissive and trusting but neither totally distrustful of the political institutions in their country. This, in turn, leads to a more participatory citizenry who feel that their influence on political authorities is necessary but also possible.

Yet, media effects in transitional societies are not overreaching. Similar to the evidence from Western countries, they are rather contingent on the media platform where news is consumed (print vs. broadcasting vs. online), the source of information (independent vs. partisan-oriented media), and on the audience characteristics (need for orientation and political ideology). The evidence from this study suggests that rather than inducing opinion change, media effect in a transitional society are more likely to crystallize previous predispositions. Particularly, the existence of a pluralistic partisan press in some transitional societies might provide to have a rather important role in building partisan loyalties and stabilizing the volatile electorate, characteristic for transitional societies.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the role of mass media in democratization processes in Kosovo, a post-conflict transitional society in South-Eastern Europe, by examining media effects on citizens' political trust and participation. Normative theories of democracy claim that these two aspects of political culture are critical to democracy (Diamond, 1993) since they link citizens to the institutions that represent them (Bianco, 1994) and enhance both the legitimacy and the effectiveness of democratic government (Gamson, 1968; Hetherington, 1998). A democratic regime is considered to be consolidated when there is no doubt about the legitimacy of the democratic system and the majority of the citizens believe "that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern" (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p.6). Since political trust influences both perceptions about the quality of the democratic regime and political involvement (Norris, 1999; Putnam, 1993, 2000), it directly affects both the survival of the regime and its effective functioning.

This study acknowledges that, as Gunther & Mughan (2000) put it, "the causal processes linking politics and the media are not one-dimensional and are incompatible with some of the simplistic assumptions that guided the early research in this field" (p.403). These processes are shaped by a variety of macro and micro level factors as previous research has already pointed out. Whereas, a great deal of studies in this areas have focused on the macro-level interactions between media freedom and democratization (Buchner, 1988; Groshek, forthcoming; Weaver, Buddenbaum, & Fair, 1985; Winham, 1970), the present study takes the micro-level approach by analyzing how the media content the audiences receive and the characteristics of message recipients – their media use habits, political interest, prior political perceptions - shape media

effects and role in a transitional society. Instead of aiming for a "universal theoretical generalization" regarding the relationship between media and democratization, this study is in "search of a middle-level and contingent theoretical proposition" (Gunther & Mughan, 2000, p.403-404).

The present dissertation makes important theoretical contributions in three fields of scholarship: it investigates the benefits of free media for democratic consolidation in transitional societies; it addresses some important shortcomings in media effects literature, presenting a theoretical model that compares and contrasts the 'malaise/mobilization' debate and extends the concept of agenda-setting beyond cognitive effects; and it provides the democratization literature with a new variable that helps explain the origins of political culture.

Scholars in different fields of academia seem to have reached a common consensus that recognizes the critical role of mass media for democratization processes in transitional societies. Normatively, mass media are considered to lie "at the heart of both the theory and practice of democracy" (Granham, 1992); they represent the "connective tissue of democracy" (Gunther & Mughan, 2000), drive "the conduct of democratic (or undemocratic) politics, nationally and internationally" (McQuail, 1994), whereas the lack of free media undermines the very concept of democracy (O'Neil, 1998) while their existence builds democracies even "where they do not exist" (Ungar 1990, p. 368). Mounting empirical evidence is supporting the notion that media freedom and democratization have a symbiotic relationship, with media being an intrinsic element of democracy in the transition process (Pasek, 2006; Reljic, 2004; Hyden & Okigbo, 2002; Hall & O'Neil, 1998; Jakubowicz, 2002). The literature seems to agree on the fact that as countries become more democratic, mass media come to assume a critical role, and as media become more free their role increases (Price & Rozumilowicz, 2002).

A big unanswered question in this puzzle is whether "mass media lead or follow change, whether they mirror or mold society, and whether they should be conceptualized as agents of change or of the status quo," (Jakubowicz, 2002, p.203). Maybe most importantly, "beyond the question of whether media lead or follow, or whether media can actually affect positive social change," as McConnell and Becker (2002) claim, "is the question of whether media are inherently beneficial to the democratization process" (p.3). This still remains uncharted territory for empirical research (Randall, 1998) as only a couple of comprehensive studies explore this question and fewer attempts have been made to integrate the literature on the role of the media in democratization (see Price, Rozumilowicz, & Verhulst, 2002). Scholars acknowledge the supporting role of free media during the early stages of democratic transition, but are cautious to presume their positive effects on the quality of democracy evolving in subsequent phases of democratic saturation (Gunther & Mughan, 2000, p.402; McConnell & Becker, 2002). Critics, especially warn that in transitional societies media can encourage democratic and undemocratic reform (Bennet, 1998).

The present study engages in an empirical venture to test these claims in Kosovo, a post-conflict transitional society which has been generally ignored in the literature (Price, 2002). Kosovo has emerged as an internationally supervised democracy from a civil conflict in former Yugoslavia that dissolved this socialist country into little independent and democratically oriented nations in the Balkan Peninsula. During the last decade Kosovo has built its new democratic institutions in a parliamentary democratic system under the supervision and guidance of the United Nations, NATO forces, EU institutions, and the U.S. The self-governing power has been gradually transferred from the international institutions to the local authorities as the country built its local ensembles, national parliament, local and central government, the police

forces, and the court system. However, while the administrative institutions are under full competence of the local authorities, the major institutions of law and order are still under international administration.

Along the process of establishing new democratic institutions, the international community has assisted the young country to establish a democratic media system. Similar to media systems established in other Eastern European countries, Kosovo media are composed of a publicly owned television and radio broadcaster and an array of privately owned television channels, radio stations, and newspapers that represent a wide spectrum of opinions. The debate about the democratization and the free media in Eastern Europe has long been focused on the empowering virtues of the state and the market on media freedom. My study responds to the call to shift this discourse toward the relationship between media and their audiences (Mickiewicz, 2008) in order to determine the role of free media institutions in new democracies of Eastern Europe. Kosovo represents a unique case study to investigate the relationship between mass media use, citizens' trust in institutions, and their political participation.

This dissertation makes an elaborate connection between media use, political perceptions, political attitudes, and participation in a hierarchical model of media effects that investigates these relationships simultaneously. In doing so, it tests Western media effects theories in a new political environment while modifying and presenting the "malaise/mobilization" debate under a new light. Moreover, it provides compelling arguments that expand the attribute agenda setting theory beyond its cognitive effects into attitudinal and behavioral consequences, thus providing another brick in the further advancement of this classic theory.

Investigating media effects on political attitudes and behavior builds on recent efforts by Western scholars to analyze media effects beyond cognitive outcomes while responding to a call

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for linking "individual behavior with political system institutions" (McLeod et al, 2009, p.243). The rational for the overarching theoretical and empirical approach of this study derive from the lively debate on the role of mass media in promoting and sustaining political culture and civic orientation (Almond & Verba, 1963) that has marked the last several decades of media scholarship in Western democracies. Two contradicting theoretical traditions compete to explain this interaction: "media malaise" thesis predicts that mass media cause political alienation by fueling citizens' cynicism (Patterson, 1998; Robinson, 1979); the "mobilization" approach, on the other hand, asserts that mass media contribute to citizen's political awareness, interest, learning, efficacy, and participation (Newton, 1999; Norris, 2000; Bennet et al., 1999; Bowen et al. 2000; O'Keefe, 1980; Moy & Pfau, 2000). I argue that these theories are not mutually exclusive and both propositions have their merit in explaining media effects on political culture. I also argue that the contradictory results produced by this line of research that fueled their rivalry are due to their misconceptualization.

First, as Voltmer & Schmitt-Beck (2006) point out, these two theoretical claims measure media impact on political culture from different perspectives when it comes to the dependent variable. The "media malaise" thesis concentrates on the relationship between media use and political attitudes towards authority. The "mobilization" claim, instead, tests the relationship between citizens' media use and political knowledge, stressing the importance of information for self-efficacy and political participation. Second, their conceptualization of political trust also differs. Within the "malaise" approach, political trust is measured at the specific level (in Eastonian terms, 1965), towards government or incumbents, and it is assumed that the negative attitudes caused by negative and superficial media reports lead to politically disengaged citizens. The "mobilization" claim emphasizes "self-efficacy," or trust in ones' capabilities to affect

political change. However, this literature fails to recognize that these two types of trust have different consequences for participation.

Beside specific level of political trust toward government or political leadership, scholars emphasize the importance of also distinguishing the diffuse levels of political trust, those at a more abstract level (Easton, 1965). These are deeply rooted perceptions about the rules of the game in a political system as a whole, thus they are resilient to the perceptions of daily governmental performance. The diffuse type of trust is more closely related to the concept of self-efficacy. In order to have faith in their own capabilities to bring about change, citizens feel the need for the assurance that democratic procedures and institutions at the systemic level will respond to their demands (Catterberg, 2003). Thus high levels of trust in the core institutions of democracy at the diffuse level are needed for a greater participatory tendency (Norris, 1999). Yet, the relationship between specific type of trust and political participation is not so clear cut. As Gamson (1968) claims, high levels of trust in authorities can diminish citizens' necessity to take action. Empirical studies imply that low assessment of institutional performance and low levels of trust in government can fuel citizens' feeling that action is necessary (Catterberg, 2003). This literature points to the conclusion that "a combination of high sense of political efficacy and low political trust is the optimum combination for mobilization" (Gamson, 1968, 48).

Moreover, the contradictory results found in the literature are also due to the measurement of the independent variable. Whereas some studies have focused on media content, emphasizing negative frames through which political information is reported (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar, 1991; Patterson, 2003), others have differentiated between media channels through which the information is consumed (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Becker &Whitney, 1980; Miller & Reese, 1982; Davis & Owen, 1998). In addition, the

accumulated evidence leads on to believe that media effects on political culture are not only dependent on the type of content citizens consume, but also on audience characteristics (Pinkleton, Austin, & Fortman, 1998, Bennet, 1997; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 2000; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001).

In general, the literature seems to provide arguments for "a dual effects hypothesis" (Aarts & Semetko, 2003) when it comes to media effects on political attitudes, yet accumulating studies point to a positive relationship between media use and political participation. However, we still lack convincing evidence on the relationship between negative attitudes and political participation, and the literature is less clear on the relationship between positive media framing and political attitudes and participation. This emphasizes the need for a conceptual refinement of the multifaceted news coverage of politics (De Vreese, 2004) integrated into a theoretical framework that allows for simultaneous testing of media effects on multiple levels of political culture. Bowen et al. (2000) underline the need that "malaise hypothesis be revised to more clearly indicate the contingent conditions under which it holds" (p.12). Given that most studies treat media use as an independent variable when predicting political trust, O'Keefe and Reid-Nash (1987) suggest that media variables be treated as dependent, intervening and independent variables.

The present dissertation research undertakes such a theoretical and empirical endeavor intending to close this void in the media effects literature. Relying on a theoretical framework that merges attribute agenda-setting and affective priming - two prominent media theories that have proved fruitful in explaining cognitive and attitudinal effects of mass media - this dissertation thesis predicts a positive relationship between media use and political participation, which is mediated by trust in political institutions. I assume that through the salience of different

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institutional attributes, media prime citizens to use those attributes when forming their opinions about political institutions, consequently stimulating different levels of political trust. Thus, by creating an environment in which citizens are not blindly submissive and trusting, but neither are totally distrustful of the political institutions in their country, media have an indirect effect on different forms of political participation that are not limited to voting. I test these relationships with institutional or elite-directed forms of participation (e.g. voting, campaign participation) and un-institutional or elite-challenging participation (e.g. protest behavior). Moreover, this dissertation takes in consideration need for orientation and media partisanship as two contingent conditions helping to explain the relationship between media use and elements of political culture.

The study of political culture has returned to the research agenda of the third wave of democratization - a global trend of political transitions in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa during the last forty years (Huntington, 1991) – it's "renaissance" (Inglehart, 1990) counterbalancing the rational choice theories that have dominated the political science during the first part of the 20th century. The literature on democratization has searched for the origins of political culture in historical influences, institutional performances and political leadership, and social and economic changes (Almond &Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993; Inglehart, 1997; Przeworski, 1996; Hetherington, 1998; Diamond, 1993). Media effects in these processes have been generally taken for granted based on the largely untested theoretical assumption that free media pave the way to healthy democracy. Thus, little is empirically know about the mass media's role in this equation.

This study adopts the 'Lifetime learning models' (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001; Rose & McAllister 1990) to explain political trust as an interaction between long-term and recent

experiences with political institutions. According to this theory, the initial predispositions to trust, developed by pre-political experiences, may be reinforced or revised depending on the degree to which they are challenged by later experience with political (Diamond, 1999) and economic (Przeworski et al., 1996) performance of the institutions. I differentiate between substantive and perceptive political evaluations (Moy & Pfau, 2000), arguing that political trust is largely based on perceptive evaluations that derive from the mediated political experiences citizens acquire through exposure to channels of mass media (Nimmo &Combs, 1983).

Drawing on the theory of agenda-setting, I argue that the news media set the public agenda through the transfer of salience of issues, objects and their attributes, influencing what issues and objects the public thinks about and, in this case, also how the public thinks about those issues and subjects (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Generally, the literature suggests that people devote more thought to issues and objects they regard as important, which in turn strengthens their attitudes towards them. Priming theory explains the psychological link between agenda-setting effects and the formation of political judgments. Research suggests that media coverage influences the criteria people use to judge the performance of political leadership (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Kling, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007) and that citizens formulate and revise their political attitudes as a consequence of the content they consume (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990).

This study, though, expands the consequences of agenda-setting theory beyond political attitudes, arguing that agenda-setting and priming effects are significant moderating variables between media use and political participation. It argues that while agenda-setting provides food for thought it also builds consensus about issues that need to be solved. By transferring the salience of institutional attributes and performance, media also influence different levels of trust,

creating the feeling that action is not only necessary, but also possible. Traditionally, scholarship has investigated the relationship between media use and institutional forms of political participation - such as voting, campaigning, donating and such- which have been considered beneficiary for democracy (Almond & Verba, 1963). However, lately scholars have pointed to the democratic benefits of un-institutional forms of political engagement – like protesting, boycotts, sit-ins, etc – which address issues with demands from below while challenging political leadership (Kaase, 1999; Welzel et al., 2005).

Moreover, the recent trends in political behavior of news generations involve a decline in institutional forms of participation and increase in elite-challenging un-institutional political involvement (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). The strength of this dissertation is its attempts to observe and explicate the relationship of media use with both types of political engagement. This study merges the scholarly fields of political communication and democratization to provide empirical results beneficial not only to theory building in these two academic fields, but also valuable to policy makers and media institutions in transitional countries.

This study relies on primary quantitative and qualitative data gathered specifically for the purpose of this study. It employs three investigative methodologies that include content analysis, survey research and focus group interviews. Media content analysis provides a systematic investigation of which political institutions and issues are most salient in Kosovo media coverage and what institutional and issue attributes are emphasized in those news reports. Survey research and focus group interviews generate quantifiable and rich qualitative data about citizens' use of news media and their implications for their political culture and civic orientations. Combining survey research with media content analysis, I link media use measures to indicators of media content so as to provide a compelling link between citizens' exposure to media content and

effects on political attitudes and behavior. The focus group interviews penetrate to the core of how citizens consume news media and how they reflect on the content they receive.

Chapter 2:

Mass Media and Political Mobilization

> I have discovered only one prominent suspect against whom circumstantial evidence can be mounted, and in this case, it turns out, some direct incriminating evidence has also turned up. This is not the occasion to lay out the full case for prosecution, not to review rebuttal evidence for defense. However, I want to illustrate the sort of evidence that justifies indictment. The culprit is television. (Putnam, 1995, p.677)

The publication of Robert Putnam's book (1995, 2000) "Bowling Alone" has sparked a stimulating debate in academia and beyond about the consequences of media use for democracy. In his seminal study on social capital in the United States, he indicted television as the root cause of vanishing participation in civic organizations that reduces citizens' feelings of social responsibility. Based on aggregate-level data, Putnam concluded that the rise of the television viewership and the decline of the newspaper readership during the second part of the 20th century coincided with the decline in citizens' engagement in civic groups that build social and political trust and affect political participation. From this point on, the big puzzle in the media effects scholarship pursued by the new generation of scholars in political communication has been to investigate "what kind of media effects" rather than "how much effects." Two major theoretical camps explain these effects: "media malaise" and media "mobilization" approaches.

Putnam's arguments brought back on the research agenda Michael Robinson's "videomalaise" thesis developed in the 1970s, according to which "dependence upon video journalism is associated with (a) social distrust (b) political cynicism (c) political inefficacy (d) partisan disloyalty (e) and third party viability" (1976, p.425). Among the factors that explain the phenomenon of "videomalaise," Robinson initially identified negativity and conflict-oriented themes in news reporting, concluding that television news organizations have bombarded their

audiences "with interpretive, sensational, aggressive, and anti-institutional news items" (p.426) producing deep cynicism towards democratic institutions.

Over the years the literature on 'media malaise' has expanded the arguments supporting this thesis to include all types of political communications – television, newspapers, internet political news reporting, and campaign communication. The arguments for the 'media malaise' thesis fall into cultural and structural perspectives. While the argument based on cultural accounts emphasizes the specific events that changed the relationship between journalists and politicians into an adversarial one, the structural arguments stress institutional developments within media including the emergence of economically oriented business-like media industry and the decline of the public-service broadcasting, especially in European context (see Norris, 2000 for a full account).

Political reporting in mass media

Even though Robinson's statements about negative media reporting were an assumption rather than an empirically based claim, subsequent empirical research on media coverage of politics has indeed demonstrated a trend toward negativity in the Western media news reporting. Research in the United States has shows that network television news tends to be highly negative particularly toward the office of the presidency (Hallin, 1992; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Robinson &Sheehan, 1983) and congress (Moy & Pfau, 2000; Robinson, 1981; Robinson & Appel, 1979). In the European context, concerns about the 'tabloidization' of the news media, that stress sensational and negative aspects of politics (Dahlgren, 1995; Schulz, 1998), and the "Americanization" of the electoral campaigns (Swanson & Mancini, 1996) have been raised and empirically sustained.

Patterson (2003) claims that the American Liberal Model of journalism that emerged during the 60' and 70' has encouraged "a preference for the negative" (p.64). According to many

scholars, the Vietnam and Watergate events have changed the relationship between journalists and political leaders leading to what has been referred as the attack journalism (Patterson, 1993, 2003; Robinson, 1976). Moreover, another cause of this negativity in television news is the style of reporting with overly shrinking sound bites (Hallin, 1992), the rise of an interpretative journalism that added the "why" to the news reporting (Weaver, 1972) and put the journalists (instead of the newsmaker) at the center stage of the news reports (Hallin, 1992), and the adoption of the "episodic" news coverage that does now provide much thematic or historic context to political news (Iyengar, 1991).

One widely studied aspect of this negativity in the media content, which "is becoming its dominant mode" (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997, p.33), is "strategic framing" of politics - defined by Cappella and Jamieson as a specific media frame that carries within assumptions "that leaders are self-interested to the exclusion of the public good, that their votes can be swayed by monied or special interests that do not serve their constituents' ends, and that they are dishonest about what they are trying to accomplish and driven privately by a desire to stay in power" (p.39). Rather than focusing on political content and issues, the central domain of this news packaging is to focus on "winning" and "loosing" or the "horse race" aspects of political game (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2003; Lichter & Noyes,1996; Patterson, 1993).

Some studies of election campaigns in European countries such as Britain, Germany and the Netherlands, suggest that the strategic/horse race frame in political reporting has been diffused from the U.S. to the journalism practices abroad (Brettschneider, 1997; Norris et al., 1999). Swanson & Mancini (1996) argue that during the last decades the journalism styles of campaign reporting in European countries have undergone, what they refer to as "Americanization," with the emphasize of the horse race aspect of the campaign and the negative

of attack advertising from political parties. The rise of the commercial channels and the decline of the public broadcasting, and the competition created by in this new media environment have compromised the quality and diversity of political information to some degree (Dahlgren, 1995) while giving raise to the sensational and negative political news (Schulz, 1998). Nevertheless, differences in the use of strategic versus substantive news frames between and within European countries have been recorded as well (Strömbäck & Lee Kaid, 2008).

As Moy & Pfau (2000) emphasize, it would be inappropriate "to draw conclusions about mass media as a whole" based on the negativity of network television news toward institutions, convincingly evidenced in the empirical literature. In one of the most extensive content analysis of media depictions of political institutions in the U.S., Moy & Pfau found that "media coverage of democratic institutions is not indiscriminately negative…coverage of institutions not only differs across modalities, but also fluctuates from year to year" (p.186). Even though their study confirmed that the coverage of political institutions by the network television was predominantly negative, they found that other news channels, such as CNN and local television news, were less hostile toward institutions. Variations in coverage emerged also among other broadcast genre, with political talk radio and television entertainment shows being consistently hostile towards most institutions, while television news magazine, such as 60 Minutes, provided the most consistently positive coverage of all institutions.

Consistent with previous studies, Moy & Phau (2000) found that of all the media sources, print media were the most 'benign' in their depiction of the political institutions, with magazines somewhat more negative than newspapers. Previous newspaper content analyses have implied that the majority of the articles published in newspapers tend to be neutral (Miller, Goldenberg, Erbring, 1979) with news articles "rarely classifiable as explicitly negative" (Tidmarch & Pitney,

1985, p.480), while the editorial pages express more negativity toward Congress (see also Dowling, 1989).

Norris (2000) brings on another argument why the cultural and structural changes on the media should not be much of a concern. Parallel to the growth of the "tabloidization' and the negative reporting in the commercially oriented channels, she recorded also a trend in the increase of the quality information channels an overall trend she labels media *"diversification."* Based on comparative data from the U.S. and countries of Western Europe, Norris concludes "postindustrial societies have experienced the emergence of what can be termed 'postmodern communications,' characterized by greater diversification and multiplication of news *sources* and leading towards a richer and more pluralistic news environment" (p117, italics by the author).

Media and Political Engagement: What kind of effects?

What are the implications of media political reporting for audiences' trust in government and their general political attitudes? Does negative reporting consistently produce a feeling of distrust, cynicism or even total political alienation? It depends. The differences in news media depiction of political institutions coupled with audiences' previous predispositions tend to produce mixed effects on political attitudes, as the accumulated research in this area of political communication suggests.

Indeed, several earlier studies have linked negative news coverage with the decline in citizens' political trust (McLeod, Brown, Becker, & Ziemke, 1977; Miller, Goldenberg, & Erbring, 1979) and the rise of cynicism and alienation (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Robinson, 1979; De Vreese & Semetko, 2002; De Vreese, 2004) blaming the tone and the frames used in the political news content. Confirming Putnam's thesis, this empirical evidence firmly points

toward television as the main culprit for citizens' loss of confidence in institutions. Robinson (1976) explains this process as follows:

> But because the networks are too credible to be dismissed in their messages, these viewers respond to the content by growing more cynical, more frustrated, more despairing; they become increasingly less enamored of their social and political institutions. Then, and some-what ironically, these more vulnerable members of the audience transfer their estrangement, either through polls or the media, to those who are not, themselves, as politically unsophisticated. Eventually the entire society begins to show the symptoms of a growing political malaise. (p.426)

Other studies relying on aggregate data, have also found a link between newspaper coverage and lack of political trust. McLeod et al. (1977) found that, at least for young people, "attention to Watergate in the print media is linked to strengthening anti-Nixon attitudes, to seeing the scandal as atypical" (p.19). Miller et al. (1979) study suggested that "readers of papers containing a higher degree of negative criticism directed at politicians and political institutions were more distrustful of government, and also somewhat more likely to believe that the government was unresponsive" (p.80), even though newspaper coverage did not foster anti-system sentiments given that their criticism was directed mostly to the office holders rather that political norms and institutions.

Engaging in a different methodological approach to measure media effects on political cynicism towards politicians, Cappella & Jamieson (1997) conducted multiple experiments using media content from an election campaign and from the health-care debate as stimuli. Instead of assuming a negative association between trust and general media exposure as Robinson and Putnam have done, they focused on specific news frames producing results that suggested that strategic news frames activate cynicism in their audiences, whereas this does not seem to be true for the issue oriented frames. Cappella & Jamieson (1997) concluded "the effect is not large; sometimes it is only marginally significant. But the pattern of differences in consistent. The

effect occurs for broadcast as well as print news, and when the two are combined, the combination is additive" (p.159).

Relying on survey panel data and media content analysis, de Vreese & Semetko (2002) confirmed Cappella & Jamieson's findings in the context of the 2000 Danish referendum campaign on the introductions of euro, showing that exposure to strategically framed news on the campaign contributed to an increase in citizens' political cynicism. Similar effects were found in Western Europe for a regular political issue in a non-electoral context (de Vreese, 2004) and in an electoral environment in Eastern Europe (Bogdanova, 2008).

The "videomalaise" thesis, however, has been contradicted based on theoretical grounds (Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton, & Cole, 1990) and empirical evidence (Miller & Reese, 1982; O'Keefe, 1980; Pinkleton, Austin, Fortman, 1998). Garramone et al., (1990) make the case that even negative information can be informative for audiences, while in a competitive electoral context negative news reporting might enhance involvement. Scholars that have scrutinized the "malaise" thesis under more controlled empirical conditions have produced from mixed support (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 2000) to challenging results (Bennet, Rhine, Flickinger, & Bennet, 1999; Bowen, Stamm, & Clarke, 2000; O'Keefe, 1980).

After finding that higher reliance on political media content was positively related to "integrative citizen orientation towards political system," O'Keefe (1980) concluded that "there is no direct evidence that greater television reliance evokes political disaffection or malaise on the part of viewers" (p.127). Bowen et al. (2000) study provided evidence more "consistent with a rival hypothesis that newspaper reliance reduces malaise," while the "malaise hypothesis was unable to explain the persistent finding that the malaise scores for television reliant voters were no higher than those not reliant on either medium" (p.12). Bennet at al. (1999) concluded "if

there is an underlying dimension that causes trust in different institutions to rise and fall together over time…it resides neither in socioeconomic status nor in media exposure patterns" (p.18).

Additionally, recent studies carried out in the context of European politics showed that "strategic reporting is not per se cynicism-invoking" thus "challenges conventional wisdom about the negative effects of news media and offers an antidote to…a 'persistent negativity' in research on politics and the media" (de Vreese, 2005, p.284).

In a more extensive comparative study of media effects on trust in European countries, Norris (2000) found mixed effects. On one hand, the aggregate level data suggested that the "*extensive and sustained negative coverage of the euro was significantly associated with lowered levels of diffuse and specific public support for Europe*" (p.206, italics by the author), supporting the "weaker version" of the 'malaise thesis' according to which "negative news erodes support for specific leaders or policies" (p.223). However, their individual level data could not support the "stronger version" of the 'malaise thesis' that "a systematic pattern of political reporting coverage is capable of generating widespread disillusionment with the political system" (p.250-251), given that "the attentive public exposed to the most news consistently displayed the most positive orientations towards the political system, at every level" (p.251).

Recent literature on political communication has offered more substantial proof against the "videomalaise" thesis, providing evidence for a strong link between media use and political engagements (Norris, 2000; McLeod et al., 1996; Scheufele, 2002; Scheufele, Nisbet, Brossard, and Nisbet, 2004; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). "The evidence suggests that whatever loss of social capital Britain may be suffering is not obviously attributable to the effects of television or the mass media in general," claims Newton (1999, p.598). McLeod, Scheufele, and Moy (1999) conclude that "Communication plays a critical role in either motivating participation or making it

possible" (p.229). Even thou negative news reporting can erode specific support for leaders, government or policies, generally the literature points out that "People who watch more TV news, read more newspapers, surf the Net, and pay attention to campaigns are consistently more knowledgeable, trusting of government, and participatory" (Norris, 2000, p.17). "Far from being the case of 'American exceptionalism,'" claims Norris (2000), "this pattern is found in Europe *and* the United States" (p.17).

Rather than emphasizing a direct relationship between media use and political participation, scholars have developed the *communication mediation model* that explicates media effects indirectly by increasing political knowledge, political discussion, trust, and efficacy (McLoid & McDonald, 1985; McLeod et al., 1999; Shah, Cho, Eveland, and Kwak, 2005; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). These models generally suggest that "Individuals use the news information they acquire via broadcast or print to reflect and deliberate about local issues," thus mass media "help individuals organize their thoughts about their "imagined community" while also providing the basis for political discussion that can lead to civic action" (Shah, Rojas, & Cho, 2009, pp.210-211).

A more moderate approach in the debate on the media effects on political mobilization suggest that people are at the same time simultaneously educated and confused, motivated and alienated, empowered and politically weakened by their exposure to the media and its interaction with their more deeply held knowledge, values, and beliefs (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Delli Caprini, 2004). The relationship between media use and political attitudes is highly dependent on the type of content citizens consume (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Bennet et al., 1999; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Moy & Scheufele, 2000) and on audience characteristics (Pinkleton, Austin, & Fortman, 1998, Bennet, 1997; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 2000; Pinkleton

& Austin, 2001), providing ground for "a dual effects hypothesis" (Aarts & Semetko, 2003) or, as Graber (2001) characterizes it, a "Jeckyll and Hyde force."

Studies that have taken a comparative approach between television and newspaper effects on political attitudes suggests a pattern according to which television news is negatively associated with political trust, while the use of print media shows a more positive association with trust (Moy & Pfau, 2000; Becker &Whitney, 1980; Miller & Reese, 1982; Robinson, 1975). Some scarce evidence also points to the difference between traditional vs. nontraditional news media formats, with political talk radio, TV news magazines, entertainment shows, and Internet exercising more limited effects on political trust than newspaper and television news media (Davis & Owen, 1998; Moy & Pfau, 2000). While public television news seems to have a positive impact on political attitudes and behavior, commercial news broadcasts in general (Aarts & Semetko, 2003) and entertainment programs in specific (Newton, 1999) show a negative impact. Drawing on these data, Moy and Pfau (2000) conclude that "judgment about media influence on public perceptions of confidence must be confined to specific communication sources, concerning individual institutions and at particular points in time" (p.81).

Moreover, audiences' motivations for media use seem to be important catalysts for the relationship between media use and political trust, with 'active' media users showing a lower level of cynicism (Norris, 2000; Pinkleton, Austin, & Fortman, 1998). In Norris (2000) words

> The most political knowledgeable, trusting, and participatory are most likely to tune in to public-affairs coverage. And those most attentive to coverage of public affairs become more engaged in civic life. (p.317)

The most plausible explanation for these effects is a two-way flow, with attention to the

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news media acting as a "virtuous circle", a diffuse type of effects "operating cumulatively over a lifetime exposure to the news, rather than being specific to the impact of particular media messages" (Norris, 2000, p.318).

Other studies have found that perceived orientations towards informational sources, importance and trust in mass media, has a positive association with political attitudes and involvement (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001). Moreover, empirical evidence supports the claim that relationship between media use and trust is mediated by citizens' political expertise (Moy & Pfau, 2000) with the use of news media influencing evaluations of democratic institutions by raising "levels of awareness, interests, and knowledge of a given institution, which in turn enhanced evaluations of institutions" (p.98). Political knowledge has been found to mediate these effects in multiple studies (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; De Vreese, 2004).

The literature on media effects on political trust suffers from several theoretical and methodological challenges. First, most of the studies lack a concise theoretical explication regarding psychological processes undergoing in citizens' head between media exposure and opinion formation. Studies that have made a theoretical effort in this regard have mostly relied on long-term media effects explicated by the micro level theory of framing effects (e.g. Cappella & Jamieson, 1997) and by macro-level theories, such as cultivation paradigm or diffuse cumulative effects (e.g. Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 2000).

Despite the fact that media effects on political trust have been explained with long-term effects theories, albeit in many occasions tested under short-time exposure experiments or with cross-sectional data, some empirical evidence points to the fact that, at least, media effects on specific type of media trust (like in incumbent government) might be rather short-lived. In their experimental research on strategic news frame on cynicism, De Vreese (2004) found that the

participants from the delayed posttest in the strategy condition did not differ from participants in the issue condition in their level of cynicism suggesting that the news effects on political cynicism "were not persistent and disappeared over time." They concluded, "the data do not provide empirical support for claims inferred from previous studies about the long-term effects of strategic news coverage" (p.206). However, I could not find any instance when the theories explaining short-term media effects, like agenda-setting or framing, have been engaged in exploring media effects on politic trust.

Moreover, the literature seems to suggest that generally negative media coverage has a higher potential for effects on political attitudes and behavior (Ansolabehere et al, 1994), even though some studies have recognized that negative information could have a different effect on voters when framed differently, supporting the argument on different levels and types of negativity in the news (Bogdanova, 2009; De Vreese, 2005; Kahn & Kenney, 1999). For this reason positive media coverage of politics has been somewhat neglected, albeit some scholars have pursued to some degree the effects of issue-specific frames (considered positive coverage) producing mixed results (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003; Schuck & De Vreese, 2006). This literature suggests the need to make a conceptual refining of the multifaceted news coverage of politics (see also De Vreese, 2004) and integrate them into a theoretical framework that allows for simultaneous testing the effects of multiple aspects of political reporting on political trust.

In this study, I explore media effects on political trust through a theoretical framework that merges agenda-setting with priming, two prominent media theories that have proved to be fruitful in explaining short –term media effects at the cognitive and attitudinal level. As I explain in more details later, this theoretical framework provides a different explanation for information processing mechanisms that leads to short-term effects on opinion formation. These theories,

also, allow for the simultaneous measurement of the effects of substantial and affective characteristics of news coverage on political trust.

Although multiple terms and definitions have been used to describe political discontent, most studies have focused on politicians as the object of trust, with some exceptions (Moy & Pfau, 2000, Norris, 2000), and have tested trust in the reliability of politicians (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997) disregarding trust in their competence. The literature on political trust shows that political disaffection is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon. Political trust can be based on performance - the ability and competence of the political institutions and leadership to fulfill their task - and on integrity - the idea that political objects represent the public interest and act in a honest way (Orren, 1997). Agenda-setting and priming studies have shown that media can affect the way people perceive politicians' personal characteristics (e.g. trustworthiness) as well as issue performance (e.g. economic performance) (see McCombs, 2004).

Moreover, scholars have distinguished between different levels of political trust that range between trust in the regime principles, in regime performance, political institutions and political authorities (Easton, 1965; Norris, 1999). While most studies have measured media effects on specific level of trust (such as the U.S. president), one study has distinguished between specific and diffuse trust, finding that while media use is negatively associated with specific policies support, generally shows a positive association with the diffuse support for the system of governance (Norris, 2000). Given that the distinction between political institutions and leadership of these institutions tends to get blurred (Norris, 1999), the present study concentrates on media effects on trust in political institutions as a more diffuse level of trust (in Eastonian terms, 1965), incorporating a more specific type of trust by distinguishing between trust in institutional performance and integrity.

Finally, agenda-setting and priming theories provide for methodological improvements in the investigation of media effects on political trust. Previous research shows some shortcoming in this regard as well. Macro-level effects have mostly measured these effects at the aggregate levels using single shot surveys and neglecting media content (see Miller et al., 1979 for a critique that still holds at the present day), while individual level studies have exposed their subject to artificially constructed content in experimental setting making assumptions that it replicates the majority of news consumption. The present study merges media content analysis with survey data to construct individual level measures of media use and agenda-setting effects in order to test their relationship with political trust.

Chapter 3:

Assessing media impact on political trust and participation: A theoretical framework

Defining Political Trust

Research on people's dispositions toward authority, especially research on political trust, has taken center stage in the democratization scholarship following theoretical stipulations of its importance for the emergence of a diffuse political culture that supports stable democratic system. As Verba (1965) claims, "the extent to which members of a political system have trust and confidence in their fellow political actors is a crucial aspect of horizontal integration of a political culture" (p.535).

As originally defined by Almond & Verba (1963), the term political culture refers to the psychologically internalized political orientations of a society towards social objects and processes. It represents a cognitive map or a set of expressive symbols that orient people toward evaluating the operations of a political system (Samuel Beer, 1974; cited in Almond, 1989, p.27) providing "structure and meaning to the political sphere" (Pye, 1965, p.8). As such, political culture includes

> (1) "cognitive orientation," that is, knowledge of and belief about political system, its roles and the incumbents of these roles, its inputs, and its outputs; (2) "affective orientation," or feelings about the political system, its roles, personnel, and performance, and (3) "evaluational orientations," the judgments and opinions about political objects that typically involve the combination of value standards and criteria with information and feelings. (Almond &Verba, 1963, p.15)

Verba (1965) identifies several dimensions of political culture that consist of beliefs about what a polity is - the sense of national identity as a vertical form of identification and attitudes toward one's fellow citizens or horizontal identification - and beliefs about how a polity operates - attitudes and expectations regarding governmental performance and knowledge and attitudes toward the political processes of decision making. Elaborating further on this concept,

Almond &Powell (1978) separate the approach to political culture into three levels that include the system, process, and policy political culture. System culture consists of cognitions, feelings, and evaluations toward the regime and nation and it deals with the legitimacy of a political system itself. Process culture encompasses cognitions, feelings, and evaluations toward the self as political actor and toward other political actors (political elites). Finally, policy culture consists of orientations toward outputs of the system, including its internal and external policies, decisions or enforcements of decisions (see also Almond &Verba, 1963; Almond, 1990).

As the above definitions imply, among the most important element of political culture is disposition toward authority, which itself "drive(s) to the very heart of what democracy is about" (Diamond, 1993, p.12). In order to have a clear idea about the dispositions encompassed in a democratic political culture, it is useful to compare it with its opposite as Inkeles (1961) does. If democratic culture represents the inverse of the authoritarian personality syndrome - defined as faith in powerful leaders, hatred of outsiders and deviates, a sense of powerlessness and ineffectiveness, extreme cynicism, suspicion and distrust of others, and dogmatism (Inkeles, 1961) – then it should include "flexibility, trust, efficacy, openness to new ideas and experiences, tolerance of differences and ambiguities, acceptance of others, and an attitude towards authority that is not neither "blindly submissive" nor "hostilely rejecting" but rather "responsible…even though always watchful" (Diamond, 1993, p.12; citing Inkeles, 1961, pp.195-198).

Gamson (1968) defines political trust as "the probability, P_b, that the political system (or some part of it) will produce preferred outcomes even if left untended. In other words, it is the probability of getting preferred outcomes without the group doing anything to bring them about," (p.54). Scholars have traditionally characterized political trust as a measure of the degree of

correspondence between citizen expectations and perceived government performance (Craig, 1993; Miller, 1974). Political trust *"tends to vary according to whether an individual believes that the outputs and/or outcomes generated by the system and its representatives are consistent with his or her politicized values"* (Craig, 1993, p.5; italics by author). Thus, political support is "an affective orientation to political objects [especially incumbent authorities] and processes [especially channels of democratic linkage, such as voting], which can be positive, neutral, or negative" (Craig, 1993, p.17, citing Kronberg, 1990, p.710).

Empirically, most of the studies of political trust have concentrated on three main lines of research: diagnostic or measuring to what degree democratic systems and their institutions enjoy the trust of the population; analytical, or what are the origins of political trust; and prescriptive, or identifying the consequences of political trust for democratic governance (see Norris, 1999).

Diagnosing political trust. Multiple scholars have alarmed the academic and policy circles about the rise of a prevailing "crisis of confidence" (Craig, 1993) and even "erosion of confidence" (Moy & Pfau, 2000) in political institutions and leadership that has reached the stage of "an epidemic" (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996) spreading around the world and infecting established as well as newly emerging democratic countries. Extensive cynicism and distrust in executive and legislative bodies has been documented in the United States (Craig, 1993; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 1999), Great Britain (Curtice & Jowell, 1997), Sweden (Holmberg, 1999), Canada (Delacourt, 1993), European Union (Hayward, 1995), etc.

In a similar fashion, the initial euphoria of the political transition period in the new post-communist societies of Eastern Europe has been transformed into a remarkable degree of political cynicism and mistrust toward political institutions. Citizens of Central-Eastern Europe are at least skeptic of political parties (Rose, 1994), civil society institutions (Mishler & Rose,

1997), parliaments (Hibbings & Patterson, 1994) and other political institutions (Mishler & Rose, 2001), but they are specifically distrusting toward executive institutions, including prime-minister, executive president and government (Miller et al, 2004).

Michel & Rose's (1997) diagnosis of the situation in these new democracies is summarized in the following passage

> Gains in freedom since the fall of Communism, perceptions of increased government fairness, and hopes for a better economic future have dampened the legacy of distrust from the old regime, but concerns about current macroeconomic conditions and the decline in family living standards have inhibited the development of positive trust in contemporary civil and political institutions (p.446).

Even though it is recognized that decades long experience with the Communist party has produced demobilized citizens with a highly distrusting attitudes toward authority which will wane as experience with democracy accumulates, concerns with the high distrust toward political institutions prevail as the legitimacy of the new democratic institutions and governance is questioned (Miller et al, 2004; Rose, 1994). In a circumstance in which citizens do not trust their governments but neither trust political parties that represent political alternatives "free elections register the negative and transient preferences of anti-party voters" (Rose, 1994, p.24).

True, similar to Western democracies, political distrust in post-communist societies is an expression of lack of support for specific institutions rather than a lack of diffuse support for the democratic system as a whole (in Easton's terms). Though "many citizens of Central and Eastern European countries express distrust of their parliaments, they do not want them to go away, become innocuous, or become superannuated by a restored authoritarian regime," claim Hibbing and Patterson (1994, p.590). Easton (1975) recognizes that diffuse support tends to be resilient to current dissatisfactions with specific political objects; however "if discontent with perceived

performance continues over a long enough time, it may gradually erode even the strongest underlying bonds of attachment" to the political regime (p.445). Once lost, the diffuse or regime support is more difficult to recover (Easton 1975, Gamson 1968).

The origins of political trust. Two theoretical traditions compete to explain the origins of political trust: cultural theories , a bottom up approach that assumes political trust originates in beliefs rooted in cultural norms developed through early-life socialization (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1965; Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 1993), and institutional theories, a top-down approach that regards political trust endogenous thus shaped by the performance of political institutions (Coleman, 1990; Dasgupta, 1988; Hetherington, 1998; Levi, 2000). These theories are not mutually exclusive (Norris, 1999), however, as they "share a fundamental assumption that trust is learned and linked at some level to experience" (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p.37-38). Even Almond (1990) and Verba (1965), the founders of the cultural approach to politics, reject cultural determinism approaches (Putnam, 1993; Inglehart, 1997) claiming that the causal arrows between culture and structure go both ways. Verba (1965) elaborates the two main sources of political culture as

> (1)One is experience in non-political situations that have an impact on attitudes towards political objects. These experiences in turn consist of either pre-adult experiences with family, school, or peer group; or adults' extra-political experiences with family or peers or at work place or in non-political associations. (2) The other is experience with the operation of the political process – contact with political governmental figures, exposure to communications about politics – or reports of the experiences of others (pp.550-551; see also Almond, 1990).

Hence, a general consensus that political trust results from experiences over time. According to 'Lifetime learning models' (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001; Rose & McAllister 1990) the initial predispositions to trust, developed by pre-political experiences, may be reinforced or revised depending on the degree to which they are challenged by later experience with political

(Diamond, 1999) and economic (Przeworski et al., 1996) performance of the institutions. Indeed, political socialization theories recently acknowledge the predominance of adult learning over childhood and adolescent socialization for most political attitudes (Conover and Searing, 1994).

According to Easton (1975), "in ongoing systems…we would expect the processes of socialization…to contribute significantly to this sentiment of diffuse support" while "performance and output satisfaction, as the major element of specific support, can emerge from experience alone" (p.449). For citizens of the Eastern European countries that lack a democratic socialization experience, recent experience with democratic freedoms seems to be more relevant in generating political trust at both levels (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001; Letki & Evans, 2005), especially when comparing it with their experiences during communism (Mishler & Rose, 1999). Certainly, the socialization under Communism was not successful in producing the "Ideal Socialist citizenry" and generating preferences for the Communist regime (Rose, 1994), which decreases the possibility that pre-democratic socialization might impact substantially the current political trust. The reasons behind the decline in political trust in Western societies might be partially explained by the decline in social capital (Putnam, 1993) or the development of post-materialist cultures (Inglehart, 1997, 1990). But, the cultural explanations seem to be less relevant for post-communist societies whose decline in political trust is mostly "a result of these new demands, higher standards for evaluating governmental performance (that) emerged after regimes had changed" (Catterberg and Moreno, 2005, p.33).

Substantive vs. perceptive evaluations. To be able to recognize and distinguish between different substantive problems with institutional performance, there is an "assumption that people are *capable* of evaluating government according to the perceived closeness of fit

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between their own political values and official performance with respect to those values" (Craig, 1993, p.18, authors italics). However, empirical research casts doubts on citizens' capability of such political sophistication. It is believed that political sophistication is related to people's education and some empirical evidence points to the fact that education might be associated also with political trust, even though the direction of this association is debatable (Abramson, 1983; Converse, 1972). If the direct impact of education on political trust is somewhat contentions (see Lipset & Schneider, 1987), its indirect effect through political knowledge is a well-argued fact in the literature (Delli Caprini & Keeter, 1996). People with "institutional expertise" - defined as knowledge and interest in political objects including persons, issues, and institutions (Moy & Pfau, 2000) - tend to have more elaborated political attitudes, thus more expressed perceptions of political trust (Fiske, Lau & Smith, 1990; Price & Zaller, 1990).

However, even if citizen's levels of trust in political institutions and leadership are "a response to events, and to the perception of events, primary in the political sphere" as some scholars claim (Lipset & Schneider, 1987, p.399), we cannot expect them to have a direct experience with these events and institutions; in fact very few citizens do which leaves them without much awareness, interest and knowledge about political processes (Zaller, 1992). Instead, as Zaller (1992) claims, "the public opinion…can rarely be considered a straightforward response to "the facts" of a situation" (p.13), but rather a "response to the elite-supplied information," a process in which mass media takes a great responsibility. People tend to learn about the political world mostly through news reported in the media, thus living in "mediated political realities" (Nimmo &Combs, 1983). Even Lipset and Schneider (1987) recognize media institutions as a major source of political information in society; while Capella and Jamieson

(1997) claim that "people learn about the motives of political actors through the media and their representation of political action" (p.145).

Moreover, several scholars have argued that the relationship between media and politics in modern political communication has extended beyond "mediation" - in which mass media merely transmit politics descriptively - becoming increasingly *"mediatized"* - creating a media-driven influence in the political environment (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; Stromback, 2008). Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) claim that mediatization is "a phenomenon that is common to the political systems of all democratic countries, where it has taken different shapes and developed at different speeds" as a consequence of "expansion and commercialization of media systems and the modernization of politics" (p.249).

Pointing to the negative media reporting on politics and their criticism toward institutions, some scholars tend to blame mass media as a source of public discontent (Patterson, 2002; Putnam, 1995, 2000) claiming that the low levels of trust are grounded in perceptions that come from a distorted representation of reality. Considering mass media as an explanation for the decline of political trust does not necessarily exclude the argument of substantive governmental performance as a source of problem, however. In fact, as Moy and Pfau (2000) claim,

> Specific events and the mass media both may have contributed to the erosion of public confidence, sometimes exercising their influence on confidence independently and at other times exerting their influence in concert with each other, with the media inflaming the impact of events. The melding of the substantive and media explanations for the problem of confidence is a form of blend causation, which we argue constitutes the most plausible causal rational. (p.41)

If Moy & Pfau's argument holds true, instead of assuming a constant malaise from media reporting on institutions, we can expect to see a variation in media portraits of institutions and

policy processes that would follow the variations in institutional effectiveness on different issues. Consequently, the implication for the media effects on political trust might be diverse for different institutions and leadership. In fact, existing empiric evidence provides mixed results regarding media effects on political trust, giving some ground to Moy & Pfau's case.

A full model about the theorized relationship between audience predispositions (Need for Orientation), audience media use, agenda-setting and priming effects, political trust, and political participation see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Dissertation theoretical model
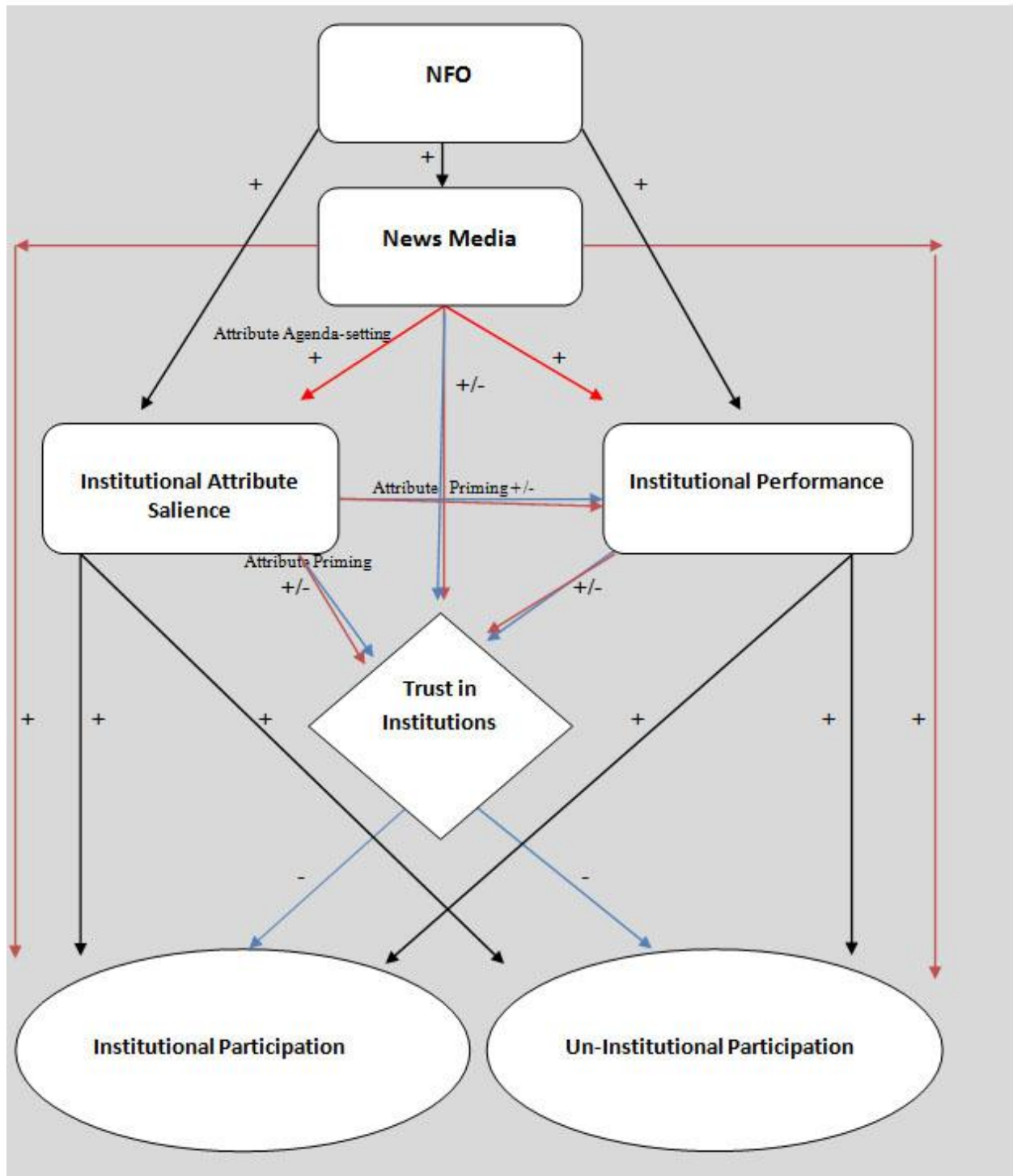
> Bernard Cohen's (1963) classic summation of agenda setting – the media may not tell us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about – has been turned inside out. New research exploring the consequences of agenda setting and media framing suggests that the media not only tell us what to think, but also how to think about it, and consequently, what to think. (McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p.65)

Over more than three decades, agenda-setting research in mass communications has accumulated abundant empirical evidence to support Walter Lippmann's claim in the 1920s that news media are the bridge between "the world outside and the pictures in our head,' while inducing a revision on Bernard Cohen's argument that 'media might not tell us what to think, but they do tell us what to think about.' In fact, the research from first and second level agenda-setting points to the fact that mass media are quite powerful in painting our picture of the world in great detail by emphasizing the issues and objects we ought to think about and, in some occasions, even the ways we ought to think about them.

Agenda setting: **Salience of issues and objects.** As originally conceptualized by its founders, agenda-setting theory explains how mass media affect peoples' perception of the most important issues of the day by transferring the salience of those issues from their news reports into people's head (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By affecting the prominence of an issue or object, mass media influence "whether any significant number of people really regard it as worthwhile to hold an opinion about that issue" (McCombs, 2004, p.2). Edelstein (1993) elaborates that "by their emphasis and other forms of presentation, they (media) override salience values as a way of creating attention, asserting importance in the minds of audiences, provoking thinking, or even thinking about" (p.87). Dearing and Rogers (1996) claim that agenda-setting theory offers a remarkable explanation not only on "why information about certain issues, and not other issue, is available to the public in a democracy; how public opinion is shaped" but also "why certain

issues are addressed through policy actions while others are not" (p.2). Considering it a distinguished theory of media effects, Kosicki (1993) refers to agenda-setting as a type of media effects model or "one type of complex media effects hypothesis linking media products, content and audiences' (p.102).

McCombs (2004) asserts that the agenda-setting function of the mass media is not a deliberate process but rather a process that results out of the limited capacity of mass media and their audiences to process information. Even though at every point in time there are dozens of issues competing for public's attention, "no society and its institution can attend to more than a few issues at a time" claims McCombs (2004, p.38). Due to the press' limited space and broadcasts' limited time, news media have to be selective in their day-to-day display of news. Further, the media audiences also have limited resources to deal with more than a few issues, related to the available time and psychological capacity. Thus, news media communicate a host of cues about the salience of issues (front page display/news ranking, the presence of a picture/video, or the space/time allocated) which the public picks up to identify in an efficient way the most important issues of the day.

However, Kosicki (1993) claims that beside transmitting the issue agenda passively by monitoring social activity and providing surveillance of the sociopolitical environment, mass media also tend to actively construct issue agendas in order to lead to political or social reform (pp.110-111). Agendas are thought to be dynamic interplays between different proponents who compete for public attention (Dearing & Rogers, 1996), a process in which media professionals have a significant role. Empirical studies have shown that the agenda setting process is a consequence of both processes; mass media transmit the reality and, to a certain degree, they play an active role in defining that reality (Weaver & Elliot, 1985).

Agenda-setting: Salience of attributes. Through the process of the first level agenda-setting, mass media provide their audiences 'food for thought' engaging public thinking and discussion- the initial phase of public opinion formation (McCombs, 2004). But, evidence is accumulating that mass media do not only tell us "what to think about," but they also tell us "how to think about it" (McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p.62), thus expanding the agenda-setting theory into another level and providing an avenue to expand media effects beyond initial cognition.

By emphasizing certain attributes or characteristics while describing objects or issues in their news reports, mass media draw their audiences' attention to those properties so that when people think or talk about those issues (or objects) the same attributes are salient in their mind (Weaver, McCombs, and Shaw, 2004, p.259). This concept is known as the second level or attribute agenda setting. Takeshita (1997) elaborates that "attribute agenda setting explores how media content is related not only to people's perceived salience of public issues, but also to their understanding of the substance of those issues" (p.27). Attribute agenda setting theory involves two basic hypotheses: the way an issue/object is covered in the media affects (a) the salience of that issue/object and (b) its attributes on the public agenda (Ghanem, 1997, McComs, 2004, Weaver et al., 2004). McCombs (2004) refers to it as the 'compelling arguments' in the media message.

Thus, attribute agenda setting is perceived as an expansion of the classic agenda setting theory, building and reinforcing its hypothesis rather than negating it. If the issue agenda setting focuses on the early step in opinion formation - gaining public's attention - the attribute agenda setting elaborates on the comprehension step of this process (McCombs, 2004). If first level agenda setting examines the 'shell of a topic' (Kosicki, 1993) the second level dimension

explores 'what is inside the shell' (Ghanem, 1997). In the words of Ghanem (1997), "it is one highway linking up with another major thoroughfare" (pp.3-4).

The definition of attributes in the second level agenda setting is quite wide and in several occasions overlaps with framing theory. In fact multiple scholars have used "attributes' and 'frames' interchangeably (Ghanem, 1997; Wanta, Willimas & Hu, 1991), while one of the fathers of the agenda setting theory has vociferously advocated for the merge of the two theories (McCombs, 2004). However, in a heated debate about the relationship between second level agenda setting and framing theories, critics (Scheufele, 2000) have opposed the merge of these two theories emphasizing differences in their conceptual premises and assumptions. It is beyond the scope of this study to get into this debate, however.

Even though Ghanem (1997) argues that second-level agenda setting consists of four dimensions – subtopics, framing mechanisms, affective and cognitive elements – the majority of the attribute agenda setting studies (Kiousis, Bantimaroudis, and Ban, 1999; Kiousis, 2005; McCombs, Lopez-Excobar, & Lamas, 2000, McCombs et al. 1997) have concentrated on the later two dimensions following McCombs' (1995; cited in Kious et al. 1999) articulation that substantive and affective attributes might be among the most instrumental attributes. These two types of attributes encompass what McCombs et al. (2000) refers to as aspects of the object (issue) or "what the picture includes and what is outside" (p.79). Moreover, cognitive and affective attributes can be conceptualized in terms of "signature matrix" containing condensing symbolism (Gamson, 1992), which has been argued to be closer to the concept of attribute agenda-setting (Weaver, 2007; Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004) given that the semantic devices used draw attention to certain attributes and away from others (McCombs & Estrada, 1997).

Kiousis et al. (1999) define substantive attributes as "pertaining to those characteristics of news that help us cognitively structure news and discern among various topics" while affective attributes are referred to "those facets of news coverage that elicit emotional reactions from its audience members" (pp.416-417). Ghanem (1997) claims that cognitive dimension moves us from "topical categories by identifying meaning in topics regardless of what the topic is," and affective dimension deals with the emotional response that media exert over their audiences through the narrative structure of the news (p.12-13).Thus, while cognitive attributes provide information about issues or objects, affective attributes involve opinions about those issues or objects (Golan & Wanta, 2001, p.249).

In terms of media coverage of political candidates, McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar & Rey (1997) have identified three subcategories of substantive attributes - ideology and issue position, qualifications and experience, and personality – and three subcategories of affective dimension – positive, negative, neutral. Despite the fact that the literature on candidate images has identified a wide range of substantive attributes emphasized in the media, the majority of the second-level agenda setting studies have concentrated on the qualification and personality traits (Kinder & Sears, 1985; Kiousis, 2005; Kiousis et al., 1999) with the justification that these two types of substantive attributes might be among the most dominant in public consciousness. Indeed, the majority of these studies have provided solid empirical evidence that the more people consume mass media the more their assessment of objects/issues' attributes is closer to the attributes emphasized by the media.

The concept of attribute agenda setting advanced by media scholars in the context of political figures can be applied to another major set of political objects: political institutions. Theoretically, news media use can affect positive and negative attribute salience of political

institutions. This study assesses media effects on the salience of positive institutional attributes. It combines substantive and affective attributes of political institutions into an index that measures the distance between media salience of institutional positive attributes and respondents' positive evaluation of institutional traits. Thus, the first step in the model building of this study assumes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (attribute agenda setting*): There will be a significant correlation between media use and political institutions' attribute agenda-setting effects.*

From knowledge to attitudes: Media effect on opinion formation

Media priming: Judging political leaders based on issue salience. Research on political priming, accumulated during the last decade, has moved media scholarship beyond the notion that media influence "what people think about" to the idea that media coverage influences the criteria people use to judge the performance of the political leadership (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Kling, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007, p.60). Adopted from cognitive psychology, priming theory has provided a psychological link between agenda-setting effects and the formation of the political judgment by offering a comprehensive explanation on how citizens formulate and revise their political attitudes as a consequence of media content usage (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990).

Priming theory is conceived as the outgrowth of agenda setting (Iyengar & Otatti, 1994), or "the impact that agenda setting can have on the way individuals evaluate public officials by influencing the thematic areas or issues that individuals use to form their evaluations" (Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002, p.8; Kim & McCombs, 2007). By calling attention to some issues, problems, or personal attributes and ignoring others, mass media provide their audiences with specific political knowledge they tend to use when forming political judgments. In this manner, mass media constantly create new foundations for judgment, thus "changing the standards that

people use to make political evaluations" (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987, p. 63). Consequently, "fluctuations in the importance of evaluations standards may well depend on fluctuations in the attention each receives in the press" (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, 1982, p.849). See Figure 2 for a theoretical explanation of the relationship between agenda-setting and priming theories.

Figure 2. Theoretical links between agenda-setting and priming
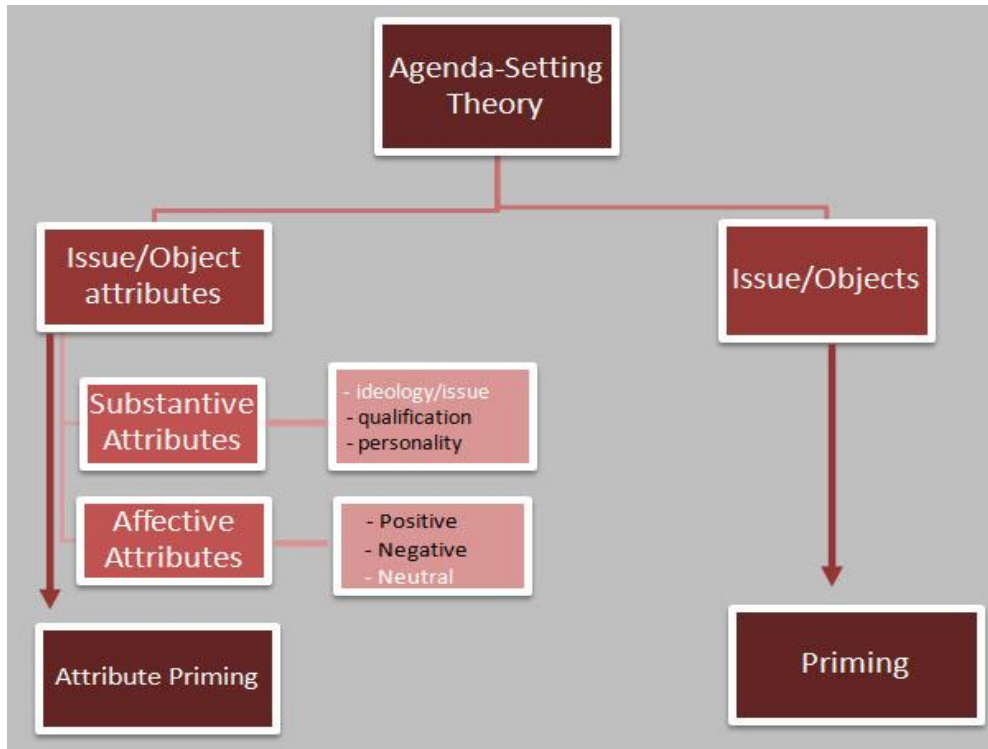
Classical media priming studies consider that people usually tend to relay on intuitive shortcuts and rules of thumb when faced with a judgment, rather than carefully examine and weight all the information available in order to integrate them into a their decision (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Pan & Kosicki 1997). Information that is most accessible in the memory and can be retrieved effortlessly will most likely be used when making judgments. Several characteristics of the mass media institutions make them good sources of priming effects, including the ubiquitous nature of the media in people's lives, the nature of certain media content that pertains to represent the reality (like news) and the repetitive nature of the news information (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2007). However, the public rarely engages in systematic comprehension of all the information provided by the media. Rather, "they tend to get

the big message or the overall evaluative tone from the totality of the media coverage in each issue regime" (Pan & Kosicki 1997, pp.24-25).

Translated in more concrete terms, scholars have provided consistent evidence that "priming occurs when media attention to an issue causes people to place special weight on it when constructing evaluations of overall presidential job performance" (Miller & Krosnick, 2000, p.301). One study focused on Americas' evaluation of the Ronald Regan's performance during the Iran-Contra affair, concluding that before this issue was primed by the media, people relayed on domestic issues when forming their judgment about the president rather than on foreign affairs; but after the event broke out the opposite was true (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). In a similar context, television news coverage of the Gulf conflict significantly affected the ingredients that citizens relied on to assess George Bush's performance, by switching from economy and crime to foreign policy considerations (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). After the Gulf war, Bush's overall performance ratings increased based on beliefs on his effectiveness in managing the conflict (Krosnick & Brannon, 1993), and this positive evaluation generalized to Bush's handling of the economy (Pan & Kosicki, 1997).

The majority of the political priming research falls into the "politician/issue ingredients" category, in which the president (or some other politicians) are the target of political evaluations while the policy issues are the ingredients of evaluations (McGraw &Ling, 2003). The prevalence of this line of research in priming derives as a consequence of the first-level agenda-setting research in communication studies in which the salience of public issues is the main focus (Kim & McCombs, 2007). Lately, the emergence of the second-level agenda setting research has paved the ground for the expansion of the priming research into other categories, especially in the "politician/other ingredients" and "other target/other ingredient" categories (borrowing from

McGraw &Ling's (2003) categorization), in which ingredients of evaluation go beyond issue salience into the salience of issue or object attributes.

Attribute priming: Affective evaluations of political leaders. Increase in the salience of an issue and the valence associated with it have been identified as two separate aspects of priming mechanism in forming political evaluations (Pan & Kosicki, 1997, p.25), thus leading to a comparative parallel between first and second level agenda setting with priming and attribute priming (Kim et al., 2002; Kim & McCombs, 2007; Sheafer, 2007). Kim et al. (2002) define attribute priming as the process during which "certain issue attributes emphasized in the media will become significant dimensions of issue evaluation among the public" (p.12). According to them, during the attribute agenda-setting process media make various aspects of an issue more or less accessible, priming "which pieces of information people will use when they are making decisions about policies or candidates" (p.21). They explored the attribute priming hypothesis in the context of the conflict about a proposed commercial development plan in a small community, noting how media emphasis on various advantages and disadvantages of the project influenced citizens' evaluation of the issue. "Priming effects can be far subtler, based on differences in the amount of coverage devoted to different aspects of an issue," they concluded (p. 21).

The concept of attribute priming has been more widely applied to the evaluation of the political leaders. Pan & Kosicki (1997) acknowledged that the affective valence associated with issues emphasized in the media might have an importance for the evaluation of the U.S. president. Kim (2005) proposed the "attitude structure modeling" as an alternative to assessing priming effects, which tested the directionality of the primed concepts or the themes and tones of the Gulf War news coverage. He compared the citizens' weight of "support for a diplomatic solution" vs. "military action" in evaluating the U.S. President's performance and the emphasis

of these two considerations in the news coverage of this crisis, concluding that when making a judgment people attend to the all aspects of the issues not only the issues salience per se.

Sheafer (2007) showed that the evaluative tone of media issues coverage plays an important role in the priming processes during an electoral campaign as well. Adding another dimension to the concept of priming, Sheafer (2007) argues for the affective compelling arguments according to which "an increased salience of a certain issue in the media signals voters about the direction of the evaluation of the incumbent's performance" (p.35). Thus, the attribute priming effects occur through combination of message strength and direction.

During the electoral campaigns in Israel, voters' evaluation of the importance of the economy was determined by the salience of this issue and its evaluative tone in the news media. Consequently, the affective attributes attached to the economy played an important role on people's judgment of the incumbent party. Shaefer (2007) found that negative issue attributes had a stronger impact on public opinion, concluding that the process of priming is indirectly affectively charged given that "negative information captures our attention much more than positive information and because the common operational definition of the public agenda (''what is the most important problem facing the nation'') focuses respondents' attention on negative information" (pp.33-34).

In another electoral setting, Kim & McCombs (2007) applied the concept of attribute priming to the evaluation of the political candidates during the 2002 Texas gubernatorial and U.S. senatorial elections. They distinguished between substantive and affective attribute primes, linking affective tone of specific attributes to public opinion. Their study found that candidate attributes that received extensive media attention were more likely to affect attitudinal judgments

about candidates, and that the positive and negative sides of the attributes were related to the corresponding opinions.

Theoretically, it is possible for the media to induce positive and negative evaluations of institutional performance based on the valence of issues and objects emphasized in media reports. The present study tests the relationship between media use and positive valence of issue priming on institutional performance. Second, it relates the positive priming effects with institutional trust. Based on empirical evidence provided to support the attribute priming theory, we pose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (attribute priming*): There will be a significant correlation between media use and priming effects on positive evaluations of institutional issue performance.*

Hypothesis 3a (attribute agenda-setting & trust): *Agenda-setting effects on political institutions' positive attributes will be positively associated with citizens' trust in those institutions.*

Hypothesis 3b (attribute priming & trust): *Priming effects on institutional positive issue performance evaluations will be positively correlated with citizen's trust in political institutions.*

While debate on the object of political trust has dominated the literature on political culture (Citrin & Muste, 1999; Dalton, 1999; Norris, 1999), scholars have also widely applied a differentiation between different bases of support (Citrin & Muste, 1999; Miller, 1974). Citrin & Muste (1999) claim that when assessing political trust in institutions, "one needs to specify what aspect of government is being evaluated," (p.467). The literature that explores the endogenous effects on political trust identifies economic and political factors as mains explanations (for a broad discussion see Norris, 1999; Nye, 1997). In Western countries that have a long tradition of

democratic governance and provide a continuing institutional structure, scholars claim that political institutions are trusted or distrusted to the extent they produce the desired economic outcomes (Przeworski et al., 1996). Empirical research has shown that "short-run changes in economic circumstances are generally linked to sentiments about government…economic outcomes influence approval of the president's job performance, which in turn affects more generalized feelings of confidence in government"(Citrin & Green, 1986, p.439-44; Hetherington, 1998).

Even though the economic performance argument is not totally discarded as a plausible explanation by the opposing camp (see Lawrence, 1997), it is generally claimed that its relationship with political trust is weak at best. While "the political economy of confidence of public orientations toward polity and society in contemporary Western democracies is real but limited" (Clarke, Dutt, Kornbeg, 1993, p.1015), when judging government performance "political circumstances are much more important" (Mcallister, 1999, p.203). High on the list of political causes of dissatisfaction in Western countries is the fault of poor leaders, initiated during the Watergate and Vietnam scandals in the U.S. and fueled by the public perception of politicians as selfish and unresponsive to citizens' concerns (Craig 1993, Lawrence 1997). Other political causes include the argument that by credible commitment of the government to uphold private property rights they positively affect political and social trust (Brehm & Rahn, 1997), while the political party polarization decreases trust in institutions (Craig 1996).

Lately, comparative research investigating variations of political trust across countries (Letki & Evans, 2005; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001; Norris, 1999) points to similar patterns beyond stable democracies of the West. A major determinant of political trust that has a robust effect across developing as well as developed democracies is economic performance, meaning

that "citizens' confidence in their political system is tied to the system's ability to increase or maintain well-being" (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005, p.46).

In post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, "trust is greatest among those who feel best about their family's current economic circumstances and are most optimistic about their future prospects" (Mishler & Rose, 1997, p. 444). Yet, political trust in post-communist countries is also tightly determined from the times in which citizens find themselves (Hibbing and Patterson, 1994, p.583) with those who are "highly satisfied with the economic circumstances in which they live, and who approve the performance of democracy in their country" being much more likely to trust political institutions than people with the opposite inclinations (Hibbing & Patterson, 1994, p.583).

However, comparative literature points out that in societies undergoing democratic transition "citizens weight independently - and much more heavily – the political performance of the system" that include the "the capacity to maintain order, to govern transparently, to maintain a rule of law, and to otherwise respect and preserve the democratic rules of the game" (Diamond, 1999, p.192, and p.171). Mishler and Rose (2001) model of the origins of regime support in the post-communist world shows that the majority of the variance is explained by the attitudes of political performance. Evans and Whitefield (1995) conclude "that people support democracies because they are seen to work, reflecting respondents' experience of the pay-offs from democracy itself, rather than on the basis of a simple 'cash nexus'" (p.503).

Beside increased freedoms and other items in the "political basket of goods" (Linz & Stepen, 1996), other political evaluations like corruption is also important for the regime support, and it becomes even more important when evaluating trust in political institutions and politicians alone. A close association between people's beliefs about governmental corruption and their

political trust have been recorded in multiple comparative studies in Eastern Europe (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005; Hibbing and Patterson, 1994; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001). After identifying a significant effect of citizens' perception that politicians are not greedy and politics in not corrupt on political trust in Central and Eastern Europe, Hibbing and Patterson (1994) conclude that "citizens' confidence in their parliaments is…very substantially a function of their general view of the integrity of politics and politicians" (p.583).

Overall, in the post-honeymoon period, citizens of Central Eastern Europe are more likely to put more weight on economic performance and regime transparency and honesty when evaluating government performances, thus these variables represent a potentially dynamic effect on political trust in long term. After all, as Mishler and Rose (1997) claim, "civil and political institutions in post-Communist societies have yet to prove themselves trustworthy in the eyes of the majority of citizens" (p. 447).

When assessing trust in political institutions, several scholars have pointed out the need to expand beyond economic and political arguments into more specific attributes that might have a direct impact on trust (Citrin & Muste, 1999). Citrin & Muste (1999) distinguish eight different bases of support which focus on institutions' trustworthiness, fairness, worthy of pride, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, compassion and integrity (p.467). Moreover, Miller et al. (1979) list attributes that compose the basis of popular support as "efficiency, honesty, competence and equity" (p.67). However, this literature does not pertain to identify which of these attributes has a stronger relationship with trust.

Priming literature sheds some light on this relationship. Iyengar et al. (1984) distinguished among three types of judgments when studding media effects on presidential evaluations: evaluations of the president's general performance, competence, and integrity. This

line of research has found that media priming effects tend to be greater for the evaluation of the president's general performance than on the personality assessment (Iyengar et al., 1984; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). However, this assessment still needs to be validated for the attribute priming media effects.

This literature leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3c (attribute agenda-setting & trust): *Agenda-Setting Effects on institutions' integrity attributes will be positively associated with citizens' trust in those institutions.*

Hypothesis 3d (attribute agenda-setting & trust): *Agenda-Setting Effects on institutions' competence attributes will be positively associated with citizens' trust in those institutions.*

Hypothesis 3e (attribute priming & trust): *Priming effects on economic performance will be positively associated with citizen's trust in those institutions.*

Hypothesis 3f (attribute priming & trust): *Priming effects on political performance will be positively correlated with citizen's trust in those institutions.*

Research Question 1: *Which priming effects, economic or political performance, will have a stronger correlation with political trust?*

Psychological processes underlying cognitive effects: How does the learning occur?

Emphasizing "the civic teacher" role of the news media, agenda setting has been originally described as a learning process about public affairs in which citizens' reflection on the most important issues "typically reflect the media's lessons" (McCombs, 2004, p.51). The long tradition in cognitive psychology, however, has pointed to the fact that learning and opinion

formation occurs through different mechanisms. Consequently, communications scholars have adopted different psychological explanations for cognitive media effects.

Initially, scholars from cognitive psychology (Iyengar, 1991, Price and Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007) have emphasized that agenda setting and priming effects of mass media occur through the accessibility model of information processing. However, recently media scholars have provided empirical evidence suggesting that agenda setting (Zucker, 1978; Wanta & Hu, 1994; Weaver, Zhu & Willnat, 1992; Wanta & Wu, 1992) and in some instances also priming effects (Carpentier et al., 2008) might occur through more complex systems of information processing that are closer to some form of "deliberative" model.

Accessibility Model – is a memory-based model of information processing which assumes that people have the tendency to make use of only a small amount of information contained in their long-term memory, and the pieces of information that are most easily accessible are those that dominate peoples' thought (Iyengar, 1990, p.2). According to Iyengar, in the domain of public affairs, more accessible information is the information that has been acquired most recently and frequently, and mass media have the power to make this information accessible in people's minds. In the words of Kim et al. (2002), "accessibility is essentially a function of "how much" or "how recently" a person has been exposed to certain issues" (p.9). Both agenda setting and priming effects of mass media have been considered to occur through the accessibility model of information processing (Iyengar, 1990, 1984, 1982; Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007)

Even though accessibility has many sources, "typically, what comes to mind when the citizen thinks about public affairs are the images and information that flash across the television screen" (Iyengar, 1990, p.4). Through the agenda setting process, mass media influence the

accessibility of issues that people retrieve from their memory. In this sense, according to Kim et al. (2002) the root of the agenda setting argument is quantity or frequency of exposure that makes issues more likely to be used by the audience. The agenda setting effects do not relay on "information about the issue" but rather, "it is the fact that the issue has received a certain amount of processing time and attention that carries the effect" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p.14).

In the same manner, "decision making is to a large degree a function of how easily accessible certain relevant considerations are in a person's mind when he or she makes the decision" (Kim et al., 2002, p.9). By emphasizing some issues and their attributes through the agenda setting process, mass media influence "audience's cognitive processing in three ways: increase the ease with which the related thought elements are being activated, increase the breadth of the accessible thought elements related to the issue, and increase the closeness in how these thought elements are linked" (Pan & Kosicki, 1997, p.10). Consequently, the information emphasized by the media is more likely to be used when forming an opinion (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

The accessibility-based model pertains that the agenda setting and priming effects of mass media are automatic and almost mindless (Takeshita, 2006, p.276).

Deliberate Information Processing- Mounting evidence from agenda setting studies suggests that agenda setting effects do not occur only through a passive process in audiences mind, but also through an active information processing mechanism. McCombs (2004) claims that "agenda setting effects are more than the result of how accessible or available an issue is in the minds of the public... the salience of an issue among the public is not simply a matter of its cognitive availability" (p.59). Several other authors have claimed that it is probably wrong to

explain agenda setting only with the accessibility processing model (Miller, 2007; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Takeshita, 2006; Weaver, 2007).

Miller and Krosnick (2000) emphasize that agenda setting effects are mediated by inference. News media use different implicit and explicit cues to convey the message that an issue or object is important, and their audiences pick up those cues to infer that some issues are worth 'thinking about.' Edelstein (1993) operationalizes 'thinking about' through the cognitive criterion variable he calls "the problematic situation."According to him, problematic issues identified in the news media reports induce their audiences' thinking not only about the topics but also about the meaning in topics.

Further, media audiences are not defenseless against the content they receive. As Weaver (2007) claims, "not all persons are equally affected by the same amount and prominence of media coverage, and not all easily accessible information is considered important" (p.167). Several methodological studies that have tested the open-ended questions about issue salience in different settings have also questioned the validity of the accessibility bias model, claiming that people tend to respond to what they have actively thought about instead of just what comes to their mind (Geer, 1991; Schuman, Ludwig, and Krosnick, 1986).

The most widely accepted psychological explanation for the agenda setting effects lies in the concept of need for orientation (Weaver, 1977, 1980; Matthes, 2006, 2008). According to Weaver (1977) people who have a high interest in issues and are high uncertain about them, thus have a high need for information, are more susceptible to the agenda setting effects. Moreover, agenda setting effects are mediated by the issue obtrusiveness (Zucker, 1978) and interpersonal communication (Weaver, Zhu & Willnat, 1992; Wanta & Wu, 1992) while the effects are found

to be stronger among people who trust the media and are knowledgeable (Miller & Krosnick, 2000).

Similarly, recent research in media priming has given scholars some ground to question the simple "accessibility model" as the psychological explanation of the political priming effects (Carpentier et al., 2008; Kim, 2005). Kim (2005) claims that "priming effects are not a simple function of the frequency and recency of the prime at the time of the stimulus" (p.752). Instead, "accessible information will be more or less influential depending on its perceived relevance to the judgment at hand" (Iyengar et al., 1984, p.779). When exposed to multiple concepts in the news media, in a conscious or unconscious manner people relay on the information that applies to their matter being evaluated, which is indirectly predetermined by previous predispositions of the audiences.

Some of the contingent factors that moderate priming effects include knowledge (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Valenzuela, 2009), media trust (McGraw &Ling, 2003; Miller & Krosnick, 2000), political leaning (Carpentier et al., 2008) and attentiveness to the dynamic flow of the news discourse (Kim, 2005). In Miller and Krosnick's words, "news priming does not occur because politically naïve citizens are "victims" of the architecture of their minds, but instead appears to reflect interferences made from a credible institutional source of information by sophisticated citizens" (p.301). These studies support Iyengar et al.' (1984) assumption that "the criteria people apply in reaching social judgments have both internal and external origins; they reflect both predisposition and circumstance"(p.786).

It is beyond the scope of this study to directly test and compare the assumptions of the two different psychological processes underlying cognitive effects. However, in line with recent research that have exposed some circumstances in which these effects tend to be more and less

powerful, the present study aims to explore for contingent factors that mediate agenda setting and priming effects. Kim et. al. (2002) claim that "attempts to differentiate the two models therefore have to focus on their outcomes" (p.9).

Contingent factors of media effects: Need for Orientation

Research in mass communication, including agenda setting and priming effects, suggests that people are certainly not slaves to the media. In their interaction with media messages, audiences bring to the table their baggage of knowledge, opinion and attitudes, which usually drives their media use in the first place. As 'Uses and Gratifications' theory emphasizes, audiences are guided by clear motivations when they seek political information. In the agenda-setting context, these motivations are defined and supported best by need for orientation (NFO), a concept that was introduced in the early stages of agenda setting theory during the 1972 Charlotte U.S. presidential election study (McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1977; Weaver, 1980).

As defined by McCombs (2004), need for orientation is a psychological concept which "describes individual differences in the desire for orienting cues and background information' (p.54). Based on the cognitive utilitarian theories of motivation, McCombs & Weaver (1973) first conceived the NFO as people's need to familiarize themselves with the environment in order to form cognitive maps that help them navigate that environment. Consequently, "as an individual strives to map the political issues through the use of the mass media he is susceptible …to the agenda-setting effects of the mass media" (McCombs & Weaver, 1973, p.3).

Need for orientation has been defined in terms of relevance, or importance of the information on a particular subject, and the degree of uncertainty, or the lack of sufficient knowledge about that subjects (Weaver, 1977, 1980; McCombs & Weaver, 1973, 1985), two out of three lower-order concepts that have been identified by cognitive utilitarian as explanations

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for people's motivation to seek information (Jones & Gerard, 1967). Under conditions of high relevance and high uncertainty, NFO is high, media exposure and interest is also high, and first-level media agenda-setting effects tend to be strong. Conversely, when the relevance of a topic is low, and people feel little desire for additional information, NFO is low and media agenda-setting effects are typically weaker. In the situation, when relevance is high but uncertainty is low, people express moderate NFO, and their susceptibility to agenda-setting effects is lower than the people with high NFO, but higher than people with low NFO.

As Winter (1981) puts it, for the agenda setting effects of the mass media "the need for orientation concept is one of only two contingent factors (the other is simple amount of media exposure) for which there is totally unambiguous evidence" (p.239). This evidence mostly comes from studies that have investigated this contingent factor at the first level or issue agenda setting based on aggregate level data. Empirical research has produced consistent evidence suggesting a strong relationship between NFO and media exposure (McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1977; Matthes, 2008) and media attention (Camaj & Weaver, 2010). As predicted by the theory, research shows that NFO explains variations in voters' adoptions of the media issue agenda during an electoral campaign (McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1977; Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal, 1981; Wanta, 1997) and in a non-electoral context (Matthes, 2008; Weaver, McCombs, & Spellman, 1975).

However, scarce studies that have investigated NFO as a contingent condition for agenda setting effects with individual-level, rather than aggregate data, have shown some inconsistent patterns. An earlier study from the 1974 U.S. elections found that people with high uncertainty (measured by party affiliation) and high interested in politics were positively related with attitudes towards government credibility (Erbring et al., 1980, cited in McCombs & Weaver,

1985). However, Schoenbach & Weaver (1985) found that during the 1979 European Parliamentary election campaign, "uninterested" Western German voters with low interest and high uncertainty at the moderate NFO level underwent the strongest media effects regarding European issue salience. These individual-level studies imply a somewhat nonlinear relationship between NFO and agenda setting at the individual level (Swanson, 1988) and emphasize the need for a refinement of the NFO construct (Matthes, 2006; McCombs & Weaver, 1985; Winter, 1981).

Indeed, the conceptualization of the NFO has somewhat changed over time. Initially, McCombs and Weaver (1973) gave priority to relevance over uncertainty claiming

> If relevance and uncertainly are in fact important psychological pre-conditions for arousal of a need for orientation, relevance must naturally precede uncertainty in time, since it is logically unsound to speak of a person being uncertain about a subject of which he has no knowledge or which is totally irrelevant to him. (McCombs & Weaver, 1973, p.4)

Recently, McCombs (2004) has echoed this original conceptualization stating that relevance is the initial condition of need for orientation, thus in cases when relevance is low NFO must be low. According to him, only after relevance of a topic is high, "the *level of uncertainty* about the topic must also be considered" (p.55, italics by the author). Other authors also have considered relevance as a stronger predictor of NFO (Matthes, 2006, 2008; Takeshita, 1993). In fact, in a recent enterprise to refine the concept and measurement of NFO, Matthes (2006) has proposed a new measure that explicitly assesses orientation toward topics (or issues), orientation toward aspects (or attributes) of those topics, and orientation toward journalistic evaluations. To a great degree, though, his instrument is primarily based on the measure of relevance, while disregarding uncertainty.

However, in a political context in which people are required to exercise some level of political actions (like vote in elections, or even express political attitudes during a survey),

uncertainty, as usually measured by political ideology or partisanship, might become more important in predicting political attitudes and action. This is suggested by a longitudinal agenda setting study conducted during an electoral campaign in the U.S., which found a more reciprocal and complex relationship between relevance and uncertainty (Weaver et al., 1981).

Weaver et al. found that agenda setting effects differed depending on the nature of issues considered, level of NFO, and the period between the study and the Election Day. While in the early stages of the campaign, the agenda setting effects were stronger for the more unobtrusive issues than for issue people had personal experience with, the opposite was true for NFO. The motivation to follow a campaign, as conceived by NFO, became a more important contingent factor toward the end of the campaign as people were still undecided for whom to vote for, even though quite certain about the issues under consideration. This study raised the need to modify the original typology of NFO and include another type of moderate NFO level that recognizes a category of people with low relevance and high uncertainty (Weaver, 1980).

As McCombs (2004) himself admits, "the relevance of a topic – feeling that an issue has any personal relevance or relevance to the larger society – springs from many sources" (McCombs, 2004, p.54). Conceptually, it can be argued that while people might not consider a particular issue very relevant for themselves individually, they might still think it important for the community or the society as a whole. In this sense, people might feel the need to get informed even for issues they personally do not care about, albeit we might expect this to a lesser degree. Thus, their orientation toward media will depend on the perception of the level of information gap about those issues. As Swanson (1980) claims, for unobtrusive issues - which might be of little personal relevance to people but of high relevance to the society as a whole - uncertainty might be higher, thus produce more agenda-setting effects.

Further, the consideration of two levels of uncertainty might be more relevant when testing second-level agenda-setting effects of mass media, for which empirical support is not as consistent as for the issue agenda. When asked to evaluate issues or objects at the cognitive and attitudinal level, previous knowledge (as measured by uncertainty) might prove to be of higher importance than when people are asked only about issues at the first level agenda setting. In some cases, even when people have little interest in a particular issue, they might still hold some knowledge or attitudes toward that issue, based on more general beliefs, like political ideology.

A recent study found that when asked to evaluate presidential candidates' attributes during an electoral campaign, political ideology was a notably better predictor than NFO and media consumption, suggesting that at the second level agenda setting the prior beliefs and attitudes of people matter more than media characteristics or interest in the campaign (Camaj & Weaver, 2010). This thinking gives credit to Weaver's (1980) conceptualization of NFO, which distinguishes people with low relevance and low uncertainty and low relevance and high uncertainty classifying them in two different categories of moderate NFO.

However, justly so, scholars have criticizes the fact that in previous literature the two moderate levels of NFO have been treated the same (Swanson, 1980). Even McCombs and Weaver (1985) give credit to the argument that "the two moderate need for orientation conditions are different qualitatively, if not quantitatively" (p.98). As they point out, still up to this day the conceptual differences between the two categories of moderate NFO have not been put under empirical test that would clarify their relationship with media use and media effects. However, before turning to empirical tests, a further elaboration of their conceptual differences is required. Some arguments have been made that "a person who feels the issue is highly relevant but is also quite certain what to think about it has a stronger NFO than a person who feels quite uncertain

about an irrelevant issue" (Matthes, 2005, p.426). Still, as Swanson (1980) claims, "the present conceptualization of need for orientation offers no basis for making differential predictions concerning the two different combinations of relevance and uncertainty that lead to moderate need for orientation" (p.608).

Beside, the theoretical and empirical research on NFO up to today has explained and supported why people turn to mass media for political information. However, as Uses and Gratification theory assume active audiences, people interested and knowledgeable about politics, have certain expectations and beliefs regarding media content available that will guide their decisions to which media to turn at when in need of information (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985). Yet, Weaver and McCombs (1985, p.104) questions about "what sets of believes guide the selection of media use by individuals seeking to fulfill their need for orientation…which perceived attributes of newspapers and television…available to each individual, guide his or her pattern of exposure?" still remain unanswered. We know very little about how people with high NFO decide which media to turn to fulfill their need. In the next section I will construct a theoretical framework that answers this question and at the same time offers an explication for the differences between the two categories of moderate NFO.

Need for orientation and audience 'Balkanization'. When devising a model for the concept of NFO, McCombs and Weaver (1973) heavily relied on cognitive utilitarian theories (McGuire, 1974; Jones & Gerard, 1967) to explain the motivations for information-seeking emphasizing primary relevance and uncertainty, as two important factors that differentiate various levels of NFO. Intentionally so, they left out of their NFO model the third factor emphasized by cognitive utilitarian: "the subjective probability that reliable information is available" (Jones & Gerard, 1967, p.125).

McCombs and Weaver (1973) thought of the third factor as irrelevant in the context of contemporary American politics given that at the time "the news media (newspapers and television in particular) permeate nearly every aspect of American life and are readily available source of political information for most citizens" (p.4). McCombs and Weaver's choice in this respect in not surprising when considering the media environment and academic discourses of the day. Up until the 90s, American media environment was plenty indeed, enjoying high trust and large audiences, but lacked much diversity. Dominated by mainstream newspapers and the three network television news, political news had some degree of uniformity. Objective journalism was highly praised and uniformly practiced whereas partisan journalism frowned upon. This was a media environment in which it was ''often difficult to get information even on one's own side and …almost inevitably more demanding to find information on the opposite side should one ever be motivated to look for it'' (McGuire 1968, p. 799). Thus, as media research of the time suggested, people were inclined to attend to the news without much selection (Freedman and Sears 1965; Sears and Freedman 1967) given that the "largely nonpartisan U.S. press makes it difficult for people to selectively expose themselves to media content" (Mutz & Martin, 2001, p.108).

Contemporary media environment, however, looks nothing like what it was up until the 90s. The diversification and specialization of the media outlets combined with the emergence of the internet as a new source of low cost and low control information supplier, has substantially changed and arguable made more perplexing the environment in which people seek out information. It can be argued that the increasing media choice and diverse media outlets may contribute to the increase of uncertainty regarding reliable sources of information.

Besides, it is almost impossible for people to consume all the relevant political information that is available out there, thus as Mutz and Martin (2001) note, ''As the number of potential news sources multiplies, consumers must choose among them, and that exercise of choice may lead to less diversity of political exposure'' (p. 111). Blumler (1979) defines an "active audience" as media consumers who are oriented towards particular sources of information based on utility, or the benefits people obtain for their personal use, and intentionality and selectivity, suggesting media use is directed by prior motivations, interests and preferences (p.13).

Selective exposure - an instance when people's beliefs guide their media selection - offers a relevant theoretical framework that helps explain which media sources will people turn to satisfy their need for orientation in the contemporary 'jungle of information supply.' Selectivity of the political information takes place at least at three different levels: exposure to a particular source of information, attention to the content of the news, and interpretation of the news through information processing (Mutz, 2006). When it comes to guiding people's actions some beliefs are more important than others, with personally relevant beliefs being the most likely to influence media exposure decisions (Donsbach, 1991). Thus, we can expect people with a high interest in politics to be more selective about the news media as source of political information than for people that are not as interested.

Political knowledge and attitudes also predisposes people towards selective exposure to media sources. Research shows that political ideology is a strong predictor of media consumption, suggesting that people expose themselves primarily to information that conforms to their political predispositions (Mutz, 2001, 2006; Zillmann & Bryant 1985). As Mutz (2001) claims, "selective exposure clearly occurs under the right real world conditions; when people

have a choice, they tend to use it to reduce their exposure to cross-cutting political views"
(p.109).

This political action is mainly explained by the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), according to which, people are predisposed to seek exposure to consonant or information they agree with and avoid dissonant or conflicting information which might cause psychological discomfort. Despite early criticism (Freedman and Sears, 1965; Sears and Freedman, 1967), more recent research gives credit to this strong theory (D'Alessio & Allen, 2002) supporting the thesis of selective exposure based on cognitive dissonance.

Yet another argument for selective exposure lies in the concept of hostile media bias, defined as the tendency of partisans to judge media coverage as unfavorable to their point of view (Vollone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985). Even though this theory is generally regarded in opposition to the Cognitive dissonance, or the assimilation biases, some empirical evidence gives credit to both approaches emphasizing that people have different attitudes towards media depending on the source of information (Gunther & Schmitt, 2004). Hostile media bias is more expressed among people with a strong partisan identification and people who are politically active (Dalton, Russel, Beck, and Huckfledt, 1998; Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003; Valone et al., 1985). Thus, the higher the intensity of political attitudes and the more extreme those attitudes, there is a higher likelihood that people will perceive mainstream media as biased and less trusting (Gunther, 1988). However, rather than affecting media exposure in general, trust in mainstream media affects primarily media choice (Rimmer & Weaver, 1987), with media skeptics having a more favorable disposition toward nonmainstream news (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003).

Thus, it can be argued that when partisan media are available, people with strong partisan affiliations will trust and seek information from ideologically consonant media. Conversely, citizens without strong political ideology might recognize and avoid the partisan media's biased political views, and be more trusting towards mainstream media which might feed their need for orientation. Thus, in a partially polarized media environment, the level of political interest is more likely to determine the insensitivity of media exposure and attention, while the level of political uncertainty will determine the media source. Previous research suggests that politically interested citizens with strong party identification - at the moderate NFO level - are the most likely to expose and pay attention to the political news across all media types, even though the difference between moderate and high NFO is not significant (Camaj & Weaver, 2010), suggesting that high political interest determines the high media consumption of this two categories.

However, one recent study shows that while people with high NFO are more likely to attend to horizontal mainstream media, people at the moderate NFO with high interest and low uncertainty consume more often vertical media (like radio talk shows, late night TV comedy shows, and Internet news which tend to be more politically skewed) (Weaver, Wojdynski, McKeever, & Shaw, 2010). This literature also suggests a clear qualitative difference between the two levels of moderate NFO. People with high political interest and low uncertainty – which I refer to as active moderate NFO – will differ in the intensity of media exposure and attention and the source of media information from people with low interest and high uncertainty – referred to as passive moderate NFO in this study.

This literature leads to the following hypothesis:

H4a (NFO & media use): *People with high NFO will be more likely to consume news media than people with low NFO.*

H4b (NFO & media use): *People with high NFO will be more likely to consume independent media than people with moderate or low NFO.*

H4c (NFO & media use): *Active moderate NFO people will be more likely to consume partisan media than people at the other levels of NFO.*

Need for orientation and attribute agenda-setting. Theoretically, the concept of NFO explains primarily the motivations of people's tendency to turn to mass media for information, which is the first major precondition for mass media effects. For any kind of media effects to occur - including cognitive, attitudinal or behavioral – there is a presumption that people need to be exposed to mass media and pay attention to their messages. Thus, if NFO explains motivations for media use, then, conceptually, NFO could serve as a relevant concept to explain practically most of the media effects. However, inexplicably, the employment of the concept of need for orientation has been confined to the agenda-setting studies, explaining cognitive effects of mass media. One exception is Weaver's (1980) study which showed that the relationships between media use for political information and political knowledge and the frequency of discussing politics was highest for people with high NFO. This study suggests that, beside explaining media effects at the cognitive level, NFO is also a reliable measure to predict behavioral effects.

The only two studies that have made an attempt to explore the NFO concept at the second level agenda setting – the level of interpretation and evaluation – have failed to offer any substantial support for this theory (Camaj & Weaver, 2010; Matthes, 2008). Matthes (2008) found no influence of the NFO measure on the perceived salience of affective attributes of the

issue of unemployment. Camaj & Weaver (2010) found no support for the importance of this measure of motivation as a predictor of which attributes of the candidates were considered most applicable during the 2008 U.S. elections. Instead their study suggested that political ideology was a better predictor. As the theoretical framework explicated above suggests, incorporating political ideology as another sub level of NFO might explain which media people attend to when they seek political information. In turn, identifying the specific type of media people turn to, might explain better media effects at the attitudinal level.

In order to explain the media effects at the cognitive and attitudinal level - second level agenda setting and priming - we now turn to Blumler (1979) theory of uses and gratifications. According to Blumler, among the most important orientations that drive people's media information-seeking behavior is *cognitive orientation* and *personal identity* function. In the case when people's information needs are at the cognitive level, they generally turn to the mass media for environment surveillance and "reality exploration"; in the context of politics they might turn to mass media to learn more about governmental policies, party platforms, or institutional performance. In this case, as Blumler claims, "*cognitive motivation will facilitate information gain*" with "the person who is more *strongly* and more *exclusively* moved to consume media materials for their informational content is more likely to acquire knowledge from them" (p.18). Ever since, countless studies have already confirmed this hypothesis Blumler posed in the 1970s, leaving not much doubt that news media do fulfill the cognitive needs of people interested in politics, while priming research suggests that the accumulated political knowledge form mass media leads to opinion and attitude formation about political leaders and issues.

Further, Blumler elaborates on the "personal identity" function of mass media, claiming that often people have the tendency to use media materials to highlight some important facets of

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audience's interests or life situations. In the context of political environment when audiences' political beliefs are established, they will most likely turn to the media that emphasize those particular beliefs. In such situations, according to Blumler, "*involvement in media materials for personal identity reasons is likely to promote reinforcement effects*" (p.19, italics by the author). Citing McGuire (1974), Blumler claims that "when people throw their identities into mass communication offerings, more often than not they will probably seek (and therefore presumably find) a reinforcement of what they personally appreciate, stand for, and value" (p.20).

Kiousis & McCombs (2004) claim that "perhaps the greatest shortcoming of media-effects scholarship on attitudes over the years has been the primary emphasis on attitude change," even though "This is not the only facet of attitudes that researchers should examine when exploring the impact of mass media, especially in the context of agenda setting" (p.38). Several agenda setting and priming studies suggest that audience's prior beliefs, such as partisanship and media credibility, do mitigate media effects at both cognitive and attitudinal level.

Kiousis & McCombs (2004) study suggested that during the 1996 Presidential election, the increased media salience of the candidates was highly correlated with attitude dispersion, or the emergence of nonneutral attitudes towards candidates, and attitude polarization - the emergence of strong positive and negative attitudes at the far end side of each other. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) found that political involvement and partisanship are important contingent factors for agenda setting effects, with independents undergoing the highest agenda setting effects when exposed to the network news in an experiment.

These findings support the presuppositions of the selective media bias and selective exposure, given that strong partisans might perceive network news to be biased against their

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political views thus tune out media content which they regard dissonant with their own political views. Such a supposition is also based on a priming study which found that participants who liked or disliked the candidate experienced different priming effects when exposed to messages that were explicitly for or against the candidate, suggesting a stronger effect of the resistance to dissonant messages (Bizer & Petty, 2005). Another study found that political leaning was specifically important for the negative primes (Carpentier et al., 2008). When asked to evaluate the presidency of Ronald Reagan, subjects of an experiment who would agree with the messages, based on their political leaning, exhibited priming effects while people who would disagree resisted these effects.

Additional support for the role of selective exposure and prior beliefs for media effects lies in media credibility variable. In the context of agenda setting effects, Wanta (1997) found that, beside interest in information as the primary contingent factor, agenda-setting susceptibility was also contingent on media credibility, with people most interested in information and most trysting towards sources of that information expressing the highest agenda setting effects. In an experimental setting investigating priming effects, Miller and Krosnick (2000) also provide support for the role of trust in mass media as moderating media effects, concluding that when evaluating political figures "some citizens chose to use information they glean from media coverage as long as they trust its source." Similarly, McGraw and Ling (2003) study suggested that when evaluating President Clinton on different issues, priming was most likely to occur among people who trusted the media than for those who did not trust them.

This literature provides solid theoretical ground for the following hypothesis:

H5a (NFO & agenda setting): *People with high NFO will be more likely to reflect media depiction of political institutions attributes than people with low NFO people.*

H5b (NFO & priming): *People with high NFO will be more likely to judge institutional issue performance based on media coverage than people with low NFO.*

The consequences of media effects on political trust: From political attitudes to Participation

When Putnam, Patterson and other critics indicted mass media as the culprit for the decline of political trust and participation, they were building their argument on a simple premise: through their negative reporting of politics, mass media contribute to the erosion of political trust in political institutions and leadership, which consequently lead to the disillusioned citizens who stay at home on the election day rather than playing a role in the democratic process of their country. A close literature review of political science, sociology and social psychology enlightens the simplicity of this claim and the complexity of the relationship between media use, political attitudes, public opinion formation, and political behavior in democratic societies.

What does political behavior entitle? For the purpose of this study, I adopt Verba & Nie (1987) definition of political participation as "acts that aim at *influencing* the government, either by affecting the *choice* of government personnel or by affecting the *choices made by* government personnel" (p.2). I am basically interested in what Verba & Nie (1987) refer to as *democratic participation* from bottom-up in which citizens aim to affect governmental policies, but not carry them out themselves (like in revolutionary type of political behavior) even though the aim of this participation is change aimed to created new national priorities, rather than just support for the status quoi. For the purpose of this study, we disregard other forms of behavior that are civic in nature, like membership in civil and religious organizations or community engagement through voluntarism. However, this study expands beyond Verba & Nie (1987) limitation on political activities 'within the system.'

In line with 'elitist democratic theories' (Dalh, 1971; Lijphart, 1977; Rustow, 1970), democratic participation has been traditionally defined as citizens political participation through institutionalized channels recognized as legal and legitimate, such as party and civic organizations' membership, electoral engagement and voting. This type of participation is hierarchical and mostly elite-directed, in the sense that elites guide the participatory moods in a very structured way. Any other forms of uninstitutionalized participation have been linked to violent protest and political unrest that aims at systemic change. Consequently most of the research in political communication has mainly focused on media effects on institutionalized forms of civic participation (Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001) and political participation (Norris, 2000; McLeod et al., 1996; Scheufele, 2002; Scheufele, Nisbet, Brossard, and Nisbet, 2004; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001).

However, as Kaase & Marsh (1979) argue "*existing* political structures underestimates the actual impact of the substantive political philosophy of democracy, of political ideology as a constrained belief system, and of well-developed political cognitions upon processes of political change" (p.37). According to them, the fundamental principles of democracy entitle the citizen with the opportunity to influence decision-making of the political elites. In cases when this right is guaranteed and implemented, the legal institutional channels of participation tend to suffice.

Yet, the lack of authorities' responsiveness to citizens' demands can legitimate other forms of uninstitutionalized political participation. At different stages of political developments, these other forms of participation have been referred to from protest behavior (Muller 1977; Rusk, 1976), unconventional participation (Kaase & Marsh, 1979), to lately elite-challenging participation (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; Welzel, Inglehart, and Deutsch, 2005). They entitle "precise means for the political actor to achieve certain goals at minimal cost, goals that do not

seem to be otherwise achievable because of the lack of responsiveness of the political authorities and institutions" (Kaase & Marsh, 1979, p.39). According to Welzel et al. (2005), "Non-institutionalized actions are distinct from institutionalized ones by their 'challenging' nature, as they confront decision-makers with demands from 'below'" (p.122).

In the past, the literature has given advantage to the elite-directed forms of political engagement as the most desirable and beneficiary forms of participation in a democratic system (Almond & Verba, 1963). To a great extent, elite-challenging behaviors were considered at worst a danger to the political system (Easton, 1965), and at best, unconventional, disruptive and undermining to the civil society (Putnam, 2000). These early scholars argued that by engaging in activities such as protests, boycotts, sit-ins, etc, citizens are alienated from their commitment to institutionalized forms of political activities building a corrosive force against traditional forms of participation such as voting and party membership, which ultimately undermines the core of what democracy stands for.

During the last few decades, two divergent trends have dominated the political behavior of the new generations in the Western world: elite-directed forms of participations have declined while elite-challenging forms of participation have increased (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002) without causing a dramatic systemic change in these countries. Norris (1999, p.258) explains this trend by claiming , "channels of political participation may be evolving rather than declining, if people are becoming active in new ways." In fact, during the last decades, the latter forms of behavior have increased to such an extent that "petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, and other forms of elite-challenging activities are no longer unconventional, but have become more or less normal actions for a substantial part of the citizenry of post-industrial nations" (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002, p.302).

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While earlier empirical research offered a rather slim evidence for the negative effects of elite-challenging behavior on democracy, lately several scholars have pointed to the beneficiary aspects of this engagement for social capital (Kaase, 1999; Welzel et al., 2005). Welzel et al. (2005) defined elite-challenging behavior as a form of community involvement that is fuelled by self-expressive values which nurture emancipative social capital. As such, these actions are an emancipative form of social capital that spring from a self-assertive public. Engaging in nonviolent forms of elite-challenging behavior builds and reinforces the interpersonal trust among community members (Kasse, 1999). Moreover, this form of engagement strengthens the efficacy feeling, so people believe in their own capabilities to make a change as well as that the system will be responsive to their actions.

Media effects on non-violent forms of collective actions aimed at challenging different policies through uninstitutionalized forms of participation are largely neglected. Given their potential for building democratic deficit in democratizing societies, this study aims to integrate these forms of elite-challenging political action alongside institutionalized elite-directed forms of participation.

Trust and Political Behavior. The literature on political behavior in established democracies offers robust findings that suggest a strong relationship between people's political attitudes and action (Easton, 1965; Gamson, 1968; Verba & Nie, 1987). People who posses "civic attitudes" – efficacy, psychological involvement in politics, and the feeling of obligation to participate – have a tendency to be more political involved (Verba & Nie, 1987). These attitudes guide the evaluations of the political system in which they live, thus influencing people's action in the political sphere. In particular, political trust is a strong determinant of political action, and its effects can be stimulating or hindering.

Two different, and sometimes incompatible, hypotheses about the relationship between trust and participation are emphasized in the literature. One claim suggests that positive evaluations and high trust in the political system and government induces participation, while negative attitudes, distrust and alienation hinder political activities, at least in the realm of institutional participation (Easton, 1965). When analyzing the relationship between political trust and different types of conventional participation across democratic, semi-democratic and non-democratic countries, Norris (1999, p.260) found a significant relationship between trust and active membership in political parties, traditional economic associations and in voluntary organizations. Also cross-nationally, Dalton (2004) found that a positive association between trust and voting, concluding "correlations vary in strength, with the trustful generally voting more often" (p.176).

Overall the literature suggest, as Norris (1999) rounds it up in his study, that "Greater confidence in the core institutions of representative democracy – such as parliament, the civil service, and the legal system – is therefore associated with more active involvement in conventional forms of political participation and civic engagement" (p.261). In some cases, also the "positive image of politicians more than double the level of campaign activity" (Dalton, 2004, p.173). However, in the context of Western political processes, the literature offers a slim support for the hypothesis that political trust is related to the electoral turnout (Citrin, 1974, Citrin & Green, 1986).

The other theory explicating the relationship between trust and political participation, associated with Gamson (1968), claims that political inactivity can be caused by both, political alienation as well as political trust, given that high trust in authorities can also diminish the necessity to take action. Citizens must feel that the influence of political authorities is necessary

and possible, thus "a combination of high sense of political efficacy and low political trust is the optimum combination for mobilization" (Gamson, 1968, 48).

Catterberg (2003) argues that citizens need to feel the sense that the democratic procedures and institutions at the systemic level are responsive to their demands, to stimulate their incentives to participate. However, "people usually do no protest in a vacuum but rather react in regard to specific issues or situations, such as prosperity or economic collapse" (p.177). His study found that in the newly democratized nations of Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe, the "propensity to participate has been particularly high among those citizens who strongly supported democracy but who were, at the same time, dissatisfied with governmental performance" (p.177).

Drawing on Gamson's (1968) explanation of the link between trust and political mobilization, scholars have empirically pursued this link in the realm of elite- challenging forms of behavior, theorizing that distrust spurred unconventional participation. Research during the turmoilous period of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States found only a weak, and sometimes inconsistent, relationship between distrust and protest behavior (e.g. Jackson 1973, Sears & McConahay 1973, Abravanel & Busch 1975). As Kaase (1999) points out, "engagement in non-institutionalised action does not in itself necessarily reflect a loss in generalised political trust, but rather points to the desire of the people to have more say in political matters than just the vote, plus a belief that this can be actually achieved" (p.15). Moreover, research points out that low level of trust in authorities can lead also to elite-directed forms of participation, particularly guiding voting behavior. People dissatisfied with governmental performance or integrity have more incentives to go out vote for change. In these cases "through the scoundrels out" mentality guides the anti-incumbent vote.

In the light of this literature, the present study assumes that overall substantial support for democratic principles and rules exists among the citizens, but there are variations of trust in the performance and integrity of the institutions of democracy and their leadership. Thus the following hypotheses are derived:

H6a (trust & participation): *Trust in political institutions will have a negative relationship with overall political participation.*

H6b (trust & participation): *People with low trust in political institutions will be more likely to participate in institutional (elite-directed) political participation than people with high trust in institutions.*

H6c (trust & participation): *People with low trust in political institutions will be more likely to participate in un-institutional (elite-challenging) participation than people with high trust in institutions.*

Agenda-setting & Political Participation. Agenda-setting literature has expanded its reach beyond cognitive effects, widely scrutinizing the consequences of agenda-setting effects for attitude formation (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) and attitude strength (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; Weaver, 1991). Yet, as Kiousis & McDavid (2008) point out, "only a small body of research has examined agenda-setting behavioral outcomes" despite the importance of the research that expands "the boundaries of the theory to connect it with broader processes of public opinion, civic participation, and political development"(p.482). A few studies in this direction point to the potential of the agenda-setting theory to explain and support the link between media use and political behavior.

The behavioral consequences of agenda-setting effects have been initially explored within advertising research, through the two-step model of effects (Ghorpade, 1986; Sutherland

and Galloway, 1981). According to this model, in the first stage "the major goal of advertising may be to focus consumers' attention on what values, products, brands, or attributes to think about," while in the second stage, "Salience in the public mind is correlated with behavioral outcomes such as purchase and market share" (Sutherland & Galloway, 1981, pp.26-27).

The concept of the two-stage model that connects agenda-setting with behavioral effect has been successfully implement and supported also in political communication research (Ghorpade, 1986; Roberst, 1992; Sheafer & Weimann, 2005). Ghorpade's (1986) study of 1984 North Carolina senatorial race found that political advertising focused citizens' attention on particular candidate attributes, while voters reasons in choosing a candidate were positively correlated with advertising, implying that the transfer of salience can lead to voting outcomes. In the 1990 Texas gubernatorial election study, Roberts (1992) found that issue concerns emphasized in the media were associated with citizen's vote for candidates, concluding "that the mass media may not only tell us what to think about, but they influence what actions we take regarding those thoughts" (p.878).

Similar results of agenda-setting consequences for vote choice were found by Brosius and Kepplinger (1992) in a study that explored agenda-setting effects on partisanship of German voters. Sheafer & Weimann (2005) added another step to the hierarchical effects that connect agenda-setting with behavior during a study of four Israeli elections. Their data suggested that agenda-setting effects had a significant impact on the electoral success of various political parties mediated by priming. "By emphasizing certain issues and not others, the media may thus influence electoral results, because it appears that people tend to vote for parties that own the issues primed by the media," they concluded (p.360).

Other studies imply that the consequences of agenda-setting are not only confined to the vote choice of the already participant voters, but it can also mobilize citizens into different types of participation. Kiousis and McDavid (2008) suggested that agenda-setting effects do not only provide "a deliberative process of considerable awareness, effort, and individual autonomy, resulting in strengthened opinions," but provide a "theoretical model that reaches even farther out into the realm of political behavior, with agenda setting leading to electoral engagement among first-time voters" (p.498). Their study suggested that the more attention to the news media lead to knowledge and emphasis of the Iraqi issue, stronger feelings about governmental handling of the Iraqi issue, and voting turnout.

Similarly, Weaver (1991) found that during 1988 media salience of the federal budget deficit was correlated with public knowledge and opinion about this issue, and with "likelihood of participating in political behavior such as signing petitions, voting, attending meetings, and writing letters regarding the deficit issue" (p.66). Similar findings were obtained in a second-level agenda-setting study that used individual level data that emphasized the mediating role of agenda-setting effects that "generate higher civic energy for political participation" (Soo Jung Moon, 2009, p.26).

The present study assumes that through agenda-setting effects mass media transfer in the realm of the public the salience of certain issues that need to be addressed through concrete actions, by drawing attention, building consensus and emphasizing problem-solving properties. Thus, agenda-setting effects fulfill the first criterion for participation – the citizens' feeling that institutions need to be influenced to address these problems. Further, by emphasizing different attributes of political institutions - their performance and integrity in dealing with these issues - mass media influence citizens' attitude of trust towards institutions, which in turn mediates

different forms of political action. In cases when citizens trust in the capability, integrity and responsiveness of political institutions, they will be more likely to engage in elite-directed participation.

However, in cases when they hold low levels of trust in political authorities - a feeling that their individual actions through institutional forms of participation will not obtain the appropriate responsiveness of the authorities due to their inefficacy– citizens will be more predisposed to engage in elite-challenging forms of collective actions.

These assumptions are formulated in the following hypothesis:

H6d (agenda-setting and participation): *Attribute a*g*enda-setting effects will be positively correlated with political participation.*

H6e (agenda-setting and participation): *Attribute* priming *effects will be positively correlated with political participation.*

Chapter 4:

Methods

Methodologically, my dissertation research integrates the quantitative approach of content analysis and survey research with the qualitative focus group interview method. Combining survey research with media content analysis, I link media use measures to indicators of media content so as to provide a compelling link between citizens' exposure to media content and effects on political attitudes and behavior. The focus group interviews penetrate to the core of how citizens consume news media and how they reflect on the content they receive. In this chapter are described the measurements of each variable, its data sources and the procedures of collecting the data.

Content analysis: Media depiction of political institutions

Content analysis approach was engaged to assess news media depiction of political institutions in Kosovo, the first step in investigating media effects on public opinion. The agenda-setting and priming literature suggests that media emphasis on objects/issues, and object/issue attributes will influence the salience of those objects/issues and their attributes when people evaluate the same objects/issues. The content analysis was designed to assess the quantity of news media reports on each of the selected institutions governing Kosovo; the issues mentioned in relation to the institutions and their valence; and investigate the institutional cognitive and affective attributes emphasized in the media. The institutions included in this study represent a continuum from the most diffuse level of a political system to the more specific level institutions (in Easton's terms, 1965,1975; see also Norris, 1999). They are: KFOR (NATO military forces in Kosovo), EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo), local police, local courts, ICO (International Civilian Office), Parliament, and Government.

The initial goal of this study was to investigate the overall reporting of news media on the work of political institutions in Kosovo and also examine variations between different media outlets in their reporting on political institutions. This study was particularly interested in variations between independent (non-partisan) media and pro-government (partisan) media outlets, which partially guided the media sample selection criteria.

National level public opinion studies conducted in Kosovo have shown that national television remains the main source of information for citizens with 81% viewership, while radio and newspapers have considerably lower audiences, 26% and 25% respectively (INDEX Kosova, 2008). Despite the proliferation of Internet news in the last two years, its penetration is still limited in Kosovo. Our survey found results consistent with these national studies, giving us confidence in our sample.

The following media organizations were included in the media content sample: three national television channels - *Kosovo Public Television* (RTK), *Koha Television* (KTV) and *Television 21* (TV21); two national daily newspapers – *"Koha Ditore"* and *"Express"* ; and two national radio stations - *Radio Kosova* and *Radio Dukagjini*. While all national televisions channels have large audiences, public surveys point that *Radio Kosova* and *Radio Dukagjini* are the leaders in radio consumption; "Koha Ditore" is the most influential independent newspaper in Kosovo (36%), while "Express" is considered influential mainly among partisan elites associated with prime minister Hashim Thaci(6%).

RTK and *Radio Kosova* are both publicly owned broadcasting media, which have been under the control of the ruling parties during the last five years in Kosovo. In the same line, the daily newspaper *"Express"* is aligned with the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) the political party of prime-minister Hashim Thaci, which has the majority in the Kosovo Parliament. On the other

hand, *KTV* and *TV21* are both privately owned national televisions, as is *Radio Dukagjini* and *"Koha Ditore"* daily newspaper. All four of these news media are considered to be the most objective and trusted media in Kosovo, independent of governmental and party pressure. Given the high political pressure on public radio and television, I expect that *RTK, Radio Kosova* and the daily *"Express"* will report more favorably on governing institutions than the two commercial televisions channels, the commercial radio station or the independent newspaper.

Sampling and timeframe: The political news content of the 3 national television channels, two national radio stations, and two major national daily newspapers was collected and analyzed from September 15 to October 24, six weeks prior to the administration of this study's survey. This timeframe was chosen based on previous agenda-setting research that suggest that the optimal span of agenda-setting effects ranges from two to six weeks (McCombs, 2004; Stone and McCombs,1981).

Sampling of the news content for all the media followed several steps. The first step in collecting the content of the televisions news was selecting the main evening newscast of the all three national television channels for the timeframe set up in this study. All three televisions have 25-30 minutes evening newscasts 7 nights a week at 6:30pm (TV21), 7pm (KTV) and 7:30pm (RTK). Only political stories in each newscast were considered, excluding news stories on sports, culture, international news, and weather. Television news stories that mentioned one of the political institutions included in this study were manually selected for further analysis and coding.

The same practice was implemented with radio news content. The main newscast of the day was identified for *Radio Kosova* (*Info Plus* at 4pm) and *Radio Dukagjini* (*Lajmet Qendrore* at 4pm), and then the news stories mentioning political institutions were selected and coded. For

the newspaper content, the sampling method was a bit different. Given that this study focused on the news agendas, it was decided to select and analyze only the newspaper political stories that were located on the front page and that mentioned one of the institutions included in this study. The total number of news stories analyzed for this study was: 710 television news stories (389 for RTK, 320 for KTV, and 289 for TV21), 399 radio stories (133 for Radio Kosova, and 266 for Radio Dukagjini), and 347 newspaper stories (167 from "Koha Ditore," and 180 from "Express").

Coding: Adopting McCombs et al. (2000) approach, the unit of analysis for this study was each paragraph in a story that mentioned one of the institutions selected for this study. A single paragraph could mention more than one institution and have more than one attribute associated with the institutions mentioned. But, only one issue per paragraph was coded, and if the same attribute was mentioned more than one time within a single paragraph, it was coded only once. A codebook was developed for this study containing specific instructions for each of the categories included: institutions mentioned, issues associated with the institution, valence of the mentioned issue, and institutional attributes and their valence.

A final list of 18 issues was developed after a pilot pre-coding test was done to determine the most important issues that dominated the agenda during this period. The initial list of 10 issues was expanded into 18 issues because in some occasions it was difficult to determine the boundaries between specific issue categories. For example, stories that dealt with corruption could have been categorized either under "rule of law" or under "crime" categories. Thus, a separate category was created for corruption to facilitate a consistent coding. Similarly, the boundary between "foreign affairs" and "inter-ethnic relations" was hard to determine when coding stories about Kosovo diplomatic talks with the neighboring Serbia that partially dealt

with the minority rights of the Serbs in Kosovo. Moreover, two new categories, "Administration" and "Elections" were added.

During the period of this study the President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sejdiu, was found to have infringed the Kosovo Constitution by holding two offices at the same, the office of the President and the office of the LKD party leader. Consequently, after the Supreme Court found him guilty on this account, he resigned his post as Kosovo President and talks about possible extraordinary/early general elections in Kosovo started to dominate the agenda, especially during October 2010.

The final list of 18 issues coded for this study included: political dialog with Serbia; rule of law, corruption, foreign policy/independence recognitions, inter-ethnic relations, crime and violence, environment, health system, education system, economy/infrastructure, poverty/living standards, employment, energy policy, social security, agriculture, privatization of the publicly-owned enterprises, administration issues, and elections. Each paragraph was coded for the presence of one issue and the valence of the issue (positive, neutral, negative). Several issue categories were collapsed, ultimately producing a list of 13 issues: political dialog with Serbia; rule of law/crime, corruption, foreign policy/independence recognitions, inter-ethnic relations/minority rights, environment, health system, education system, economy/infrastructure, energy policy, social security, administration issues, and elections.

Additionally, the coding of the news content included a list of positive and negative institutional attributes that include the following traits: corrupt/fair, honest/dishonest, caring/selfish, efficient/inefficient, and knowledgeable/unwise. Similar to previous agenda-setting studies (Graber, 1972; Kim & McCombs, 20007; Kiousis, 2005; McCombs et al., 1997), the list of attributes captured two lines of institutional assessment: the job related attributes or the

degree to which institutions performed in the expected manner (efficient, knowledgeable) and personality traits or the degree to which the job performance was done within ethical bounds (fair, honest, caring).

Similar to Kiousis (2005), a long list of attribute synonyms and antonyms from conventional dictionaries and thesauruses was initially generated, which was expanded after the pre-testing to include additional keywords and phrases that were relevant to the Albanian language linguistics. In order to decide if the attribute was presented as positive or negative, the coder was guided by the attribute synonyms and antonyms and by the verbs in the sentence where the attribute appeared.

Reliability: The news content data were coded by the author, who was guided by instructions developed in a codebook specifically designed for this study. A graduate student in sociology, an Albanian native speaker, was hired and trained to code 10% of the news content for the inter-coder reliability test. Wimmer and Dominick (2003) recommend that for a reliability test to be acceptable, it should rely on a sample of 10-25 percent (p.157). Scott's Pi inter-coder reliability coefficients between the two coders ranged within the acceptable coefficients of .70 and higher (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). The coefficients for issues ranged from .80 to .97; coefficients for issue valence ranged from .72 to .77; and the coefficients for institutional attributes ranged from .74 to .88.

Survey Research: Measuring public opinion on political institutions

The majority of this study's analysis relies on survey data collected for the purpose of this study. Two main reasons fuel the need to implement survey as a research method in academia research, describing current conditions or attitudes and trying to explain larger social

phenomena (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003, p.167) through establishing causal relationships derived from peoples' attitudes and opinions (Shoemaker & McCombs, 2003).

Social Research Kosova, a media, market and public opinion research company based in Prishtina, was hired to implemented the public opinion survey used in this study. The survey for this research was designed to measure Kosovo citizens' media orientations, their opinions about institutional attributes and issue performance, their trust in political institutions, and their political behavior. The survey data were collected from October 22nd to November 1st 2011 with a representative sample of the Albanian population aged 18 + living in the region of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo with an estimated total population of 700 000 inhabitants.

Sampling and data collection: The total sample size for this study was 717, of which 550 respondents completed the survey and 167 refused. The sample for this study was composed following a stratified 3-stage probability sample. The first stratification was done according to type of settlement, with 65% of respondents from urban and 35% from rural settlements. The second sampling step was the selection of households by random route technique starting from polling stations (as designated in the last Kosovo elections prior to the survey). The final sampling step was the probabilistic selection of a household member to be interviewed. This was done using the Kish scheme developed for each household, a method that allows the data collection team to randomly select participants from households avoiding sampling bias. Kish's procedure is considered an optimal method to minimize noncoverage error especially suited for face-to-face interviews (Frey, 1989).

The survey was conducted face-to-face with interviewing performed at the respondent's home. Fieldwork control was done with 30% of totally interviewed in all strata proportional to

sample size, while the logic and consistency control was performed in 100% of the data collected. Sampling error calculated for this survey is +/- 3.7 at 95% confidence level.

Survey design and variable measurement

Independent variable: Need for orientation (NFO)

Following previous theoretical specification that NFO is a construct of two lower order components, relevance and uncertainty (Weaver, 1980; McCombs & Weaver, 1973), two separate variables were created for these two lower constructs which were subsequently combined into a single measurement. The relevance construct was measured by a specific question that assessed respondents' political interest. Each respondent was asked: How interested are you in information about what's going on in government and politics? If respondents were not interested at all, slightly interested, or moderately interested in politics news, they were classified in the low 'relevance' category. If the respondents said they were very interested, or extremely interested in politics, they were put into the 'high relevance' category.

The uncertainty measure was composed from two questions about the strength of respondents' political party identification. First, respondents were asked if they identified themselves with one of the main political parties operating in Kosovo (Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), Democratic League of Dardania (LDD), New Kosovo Alliance (ARK), "Vetvendosja", Other Party, No preference). Second, respondents were asked to what degree they identified themselves with the party. If respondents identified themselves as "very strong" or "strong" partisans of a particular political party, they were considered to have low uncertainty; if they claimed to be 'somewhat strong,' and 'not very strong' partisans or did not have party preferences, they were categorized as highly uncertain.

Finally, the above two sub-measures were combined to form the NFO measure which contained four values. In the 'low NFO' category were respondents with low political interest and low level of uncertainty, in the 'moderate-passive NFO' category were respondents with low political interest and high uncertainty; and the 'moderate-active NFO' category fell respondents with high interest and low uncertainly, and 'high NFO' category included respondents with high uncertainty and high political interest.

Intervening variables: Media Use

Following McLeod & McDonald (1985), media use was measured with three different measures: media exposure, media attention, and public affairs content use. Scholars who study media effects have suggested a need to distinguish between attention paid to media messages and frequency of exposure to these messages as these two measures assess different aspects of media use and have different consequences for media effects (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; McLeod & Kosicki, 1986; Drew & Weaver, 1990). Media exposure was measured by asking "During a typical week, how many days do you read news in a printed NEWSPAPER/watch news on national TELEVISION/listen to news on national RADIO/read news on INTERNET, not including sports?" The answers ranged from 0 days to 7 days per week. Further, the respondents were asked to assess their media attention with the following questions: How much attention do you pay to news about national politics in a printed NEWSPAPER/national TELEVISION/national RADIO/on INTERNET? The respondents could choose from the following answers: none at all, a little, a moderate amount, a lot, and a great deal. The third media use question asked the respondents to identify the primary source of information for all media types: Which daily NEWSPAPER/national

TELEVISION/national RADIO/INTERNET page is your primary source of information for news?

The sample size for the media attention and media source measures was significantly lower than the sample size for the media exposure measures, because survey participants who responded '0' days to the media exposure questions were not asked the media attention and media source questions. To maximize the number of cases in the final sample, we decided to add the lowest value for media attention (none at all) to the respondents who said they did not expose themselves to the media content. Media use indexes were created for each media type, combining the media exposure, attention and source questions.

Intervening variables: Attribute agenda-setting and priming indexes

This study is interested in agenda-setting and priming effects at the individual level, thus uses two alternative measures of media effects adopted by similar studies that measured agenda-setting effects at the individual level (Jung Moon, 2009; Wanta, 1997). Similar to Jung Moon (2009), the "*Attribute agenda-setting index"* measures the distance between the salience of institutional attributes in the media and the emphasis on these attributes by the audience, capturing the basic concept of second-level agenda-setting. More precisely, this index represents a scale that measures how closely are the media and the public agendas when it comes to the emphasis of the positive attributes of various institutions in Kosovo. Higher scores symbolize closer ties between media and public agendas thus stronger attribute agenda-setting effects.

Likewise, the *"Attribute priming index"* measures the distance between the salience of the positive valence of issues in media coverage and the likelihood that citizens will have a positive evaluation of institutional performance. When calculating this index, only the percentage of the positive coverage of the issues in the media is considered, while public opinion

is measured by considering only respondents' positive evaluation of how the institutions are dealing with those issues. The 'attribute priming' concept claims that the more media cover issues with a positive or negative tone, audiences are more likely to rely on the issue valence emphasized in the media when judging the performance of objects (politicians or institutions). Higher scores in the "Attribute priming index" represent public's tendency to rely on the positive tone of issues covered in the media when judging institutional performance, thus stronger attribute priming effects.

The two scales developed in this study are different from previous measures of attribute agenda-setting and priming in that they do not differentiate between "cognitive" and "affective" attribute measures, but rather they represent a combination of cognitive/affective attributes of issues and objects. "Agenda-setting index" represents the extent to which media affect the salience of the positive valence of institutional cognitive attributes, while "attribute priming index" represents the degree to which positive valence of issues reported in the media affects the positive evaluation of institutional performance.

Attribute Priming Index was created following a range of complicated steps that assessed the salience of the issues and their tone in the media and the likelihood that audiences have a positive evaluation of institutional performance in Kosovo. The first step in this process was to identify the most important issues in Kosovo and the evaluation of these issues by the media (positive tone) and to assess to what degree the Kosovo public judges government performance positively. In order to detect the salience of the most important issues for the public, survey respondents were asked in an open ended question "What are three most important problems in Kosovo?" This question was followed by "How do the institutions deal with those problems?" (not well at all, not that well, quite well, and very well).

Four major issues that dominated the public agenda during the period of this study were the economy, crime, corruption, and foreign affairs. Media content was also analyzed to identify the salience of these four issues and their coverage tone in the media agenda. Four issues mentioned by the public were high on the news media agenda as well with the issue of rule of law/crime ranking second, economy ranking forth, foreign affairs ranking fifth, and corruption ranking seventh out of the total 13 ranks. Moreover, these four issues had the most expressed valence in the news reports, with the issues of 'rule of law/crime' and 'foreign affairs' containing the most positive coverage, while the issues of 'economy' and 'corruption' having the most negative news coverage of all issues.

These four issues were coded into four variables and each person who mentioned any or all four issues was given the performance question score for each of the issues mentioned. If one of more issues were not mentioned by a respondent, that respondent received the score zero (0) for those issues. For example, if a respondent mentioned corruption as an issue, and thought that institutions were handling this issue 'not that well' (answer 2), that respondent was given the score "2" for the issue of corruption. If the same person also mentioned crime as a problem, and thought the institutions were dealing with this issue 'very well' (answer 4), he received the score "4" for the issue of crime. But, if the same person did not mention the issue of foreign affairs, he received the score "0" for this issue.

The second step in the process was to create media points for all four issues. The valence (positive/neutral/negative) of the four most important issues was analyzed and calculated from the news content. To create media points, only the percentage of the positive coverage of each issue was taken in consideration. This score was then divided by 25. This represented ¼ of the total (100%) possible chances on the performance question, because the question that measured

citizens' opinion on institutional performance had four possible answers (1. not well at all, 2.not that well, 3. quite well, 4. very well). For example, if the issue of 'corruption' received 35% of positive coverage, then the media point is 35/25= 1.4.

The third step involved creating the <u>distance value</u> between media points and opinion poll answers for each issue. This was calculated by subtracting the media point from the survey answer point. For example, if a respondent said that institutions are handling the problem of corruption 'not that well' (answer 2 on the performance question), then 2-1.4= .6 was the distance value. A distance value was created for each 4 possible answers to the "performance question" in the survey for all 4 issues included in the study.

The next step in the process was to weight the issue distance scores by the percentage of stories the issues received in the media during the six weeks prior to the survey. Given that the agenda-setting concept investigates the transfer of the salience of issues and attributes from the media to the public, scholars have argued that issues and attributes that are more salient in the media should have a higher weight than issues emphasized less (Wanta & Hu, 1994) and thus have a higher probability to influence citizens' judgment about institutional performance on those issues. For example, if the issue of corruption received 30% of the total media coverage of all issues, the weighted score for corruption was .30. Consequently, the distance values for the issue of corruption were multiplied by the media weight (.60 x .30 = .18). The weighted distance values for all four issues were summed. However, not all respondents received a distance value for all issue, because for the issues not mentioned the respondents received the score zero (0). Thus, the summed distance value for all issues was divided by 4 (the number of total issues).

The final score was an estimate of the magnitude of attribute priming effects for each individual in our survey, with higher scores representing stronger attribute priming effects.

Attribute Agenda-Setting Index examined whether the tone of the substantive attributes salient in the news media was related to the public's evaluation of political institutions attributes in Kosovo. The procedures to create this index were similar to the ones used to build the '*Attribute Priming Index*.' <u>Public opinion points</u> were extracted by a set of questions that examined citizens' evaluation of a range of 5 attributes for seven political institutions in Kosovo (government, parliament, courts, EULEX, police, KFOR and ICO). Respondents were asked to what degree the following attributes describe Kosovo political institutions: corrupt/fair; dishonest/honest; inefficient/efficient; and selfish/caring. People emphasizing the negative valence of an attribute received the value '1' for that attribute, while the positive valence of an attribute received the value '2.'

The next step was to create <u>media points</u>. The political content of three national television channels, two national radio stations, and two daily newspapers was analyzed. Each story that mentioned one of the core institutions in the country was identified and coded for the following attributes associated with that institution: corrupt, fair, dishonest, honest, inefficient, efficient, unwise, knowledgeable, selfish, caring. To create <u>media points</u>, only the percentage of the positive media coverage of each attribute was considered and divided by 50. This represents 1/2 of the total (100%) possible chances on the institutional attributes questions, because the questions that measured the salience of institutional attributes in the public opinion pool had two possible answers (1. negative valence and 2.positive valence). For example, if the government attribute 'corrupt' received 35% of positive coverage, then the media point was 35/50= .7.

The <u>distance value,</u> calculated by subtracting the media point from the public opinion point, was weighted by the total media coverage of a particular attribute. For example, if a respondent said the government was "corrupt," the absolute distance (1-.7= .3) was weighted by

.30 (30% of the total coverage of the government attribute 'corrupt'), producing the score .09 (.30 x .30 = .09).

First, an "*Attribute agenda-setting index*" was created for each institution by summing up the scores of each attribute related to the following institutions: government, parliament, courts, EULEX, police, and KFOR. ICO did not get such an index as it did not receive much media coverage at all during the period of this study. Second, an overall "*Attribute agenda-setting index*" was created by summing the individual institutions' Indexes. Higher scores represented stronger agenda-setting effects.

Intervening Variables: Institutional trust

For a long time scholars have attempted to define and operationalize political trust in different ways, thus producing numerous measurements that have only heated the academic debate and failed to produce a consensus on this matter (see Citrin & Muste, 1999, for an overview of different measurements). The conceptualization and operationalization of political trust in this study is more similar to concepts and measures used in comparative literature that focuses on political institutions as a whole rather than on a particular institution (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Mishler & Rose, 1997). Thus, it is somehow different from traditional definitions in the U.S. which focus more on governmental performance (for example the National Election Studies).

Comparative literature scholars have argued that the standard trust questions in the U.S. are limited as they generally ignore trust in different political institutions, they focus on primary political incumbents rather than on regime trust, and are biased towards performance explanations of trust (Mishler & Rose, 1997, p.422). This literature points out that in societies undergoing political transition, political attitudes towards incumbents and institutions tend to be

more blurred as people in these societies have a shorter experience with the democratic regime and its procedures.

Thus, the political trust questions in this study were adopted from the New Democratic Barometer (developed by the Paul Lazarsfeld Society in Vienna) and respondents were asked "*I am going to name a number of political institutions. For each one, could you tell me to what extent you trust each of these political institutions. Please, indicate on a scale from 1, for the complete absence of trust, to 7, for great trust*." The institutions listed were government, parliament, courts, police, ICO, EULEX, KFOR.

For the purpose of the analysis on this study, three separate political trust indexes were created. First, an overall political institutions trust Index was created by summing trust scores in each of the institutions measured on a 7-points scale (Cronbach's Alpha: .804). The constructed variable is an index that goes from 7 to 49, with higher values expressing higher levels of trust in institutions. The second approach was to try to identify the clustering of political trust in different institutions, thus creating different trust indexes for different types of institutions. A Principal Component Factor analysis with Varimax Rotation was performed on all trust measures, producing two different dimensions that contained highly loaded constructs. The first factor was composed of 'trust in government' (with a loading of .886), 'trust in parliament' (.752), and 'trust in courts' (.728). The second factor contained 'trust in police' (.776), 'trust in EULEX' (.740), 'trust in ICO' (.750), and 'trust in KFOR' (.705). The institutions that fall into the two factor components are conceptually distinct between each other.

Given that Kosovo is still a sort of international protectorate, the leadership of different institutions is divided between self-governing institutions (governed by local leadership) and international institutions (governed by international bodies such as EU, UN, and NATO). The

administrative institutions, like the government, parliament and local courts are self-administered by the local population, while the majority of institutions that deal with law and order are administered by EULEX (the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, that administers special police forces and the justice system), and KFOR (NATO Kosovo forces, that compose the main military component in the country). Thus, two different indices of institutional trust were created - "Trust in Administrative Institutions" and "Trust in Law & Order Institutions" - to be used in further analysis in this study.

Dependent Variable: Political Participation:

This study adopts the Verba & Nie (1987) definition of democratic political participation as citizens' acts that aim at influencing the government through institutionalized forms of participation. The measurements of institutional political participation for this study are similar to Verba & Nie's (1972) measurements that have successfully used and validated also by ANES studies in the U.S. Thus, institutional participation was measured with the following four items "How often do you attend political meetings or rallies," How often do you spend time working for a political party or candidate?," How often do you vote in national or local elections?" and "How often do you Sign a petition?" The responses ranged from 'often,' 'sometimes,' 'seldom,' and 'never.'

Moreover, this study expands beyond Verba & Nie (1987) limitation on political activities 'within the system' to include also political acts outside of the system that aim to challenge elites. The elite-challenging or un-institutional forms of participation were assessed by measures developed by Barnes, Kaase et al. (1979) and successfully used by some of the most influential studies on contentious politics (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Jennings et al. 1990). Each respondent was asked if they "have actually done, would do, might do, or would

never do the following actions: join in boycotts, attend lawful demonstrations, join unofficial strikes, and occupy buildings or factories.

An overall participation index was constructed after all participation measures showed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha: .793). Moreover, the participation measures were subject to a factor analysis (with Varimax rotation) that extracted three factors exhibiting high loadings for un-institutional participation (join boycotts .768, occupy buildings .749, join strikes .733, and attend demonstrations .687), institutional participation (work for party or candidate .884, attend political rallies .837, and sign petitions .572), and voting (.991).

Control Variables

Three demographic variables were selected as control variables in this study's analysis: age, education, and gender. Communication scholarship has demonstrated that people with different characteristics tend to have different media use habits, with age, education and gender making a difference for news media use as a whole (Peterson, 1992; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Van Eijck et al., 2000) and news source/platform selection (Norris, 2001) . Further, political science literature points to the relevance of these three variables for political attitudes (Inglehart *et al.*, 1998; Dalton, 1996) and participation (Putnam, 1995; Norris, 1996).

Age was measured in years while gender represented a binary variable (0 for females, 1 for males). Education was assessed with a four-point scale measure ranging from 'elementary school,' 'high school,' 'college,' and 'graduate school.' Additional controls for partisanship and political interest were added in some regression paths for endogenous variables.

Focus Groups

Finally, my third research method involves focus groups interviews that aimed to investigate more closely Kosovo citizens' media use habits and their perceptions of the media content they

receive. Qualitative interviews are considered to be excellent tools of research given their adaptability (Lindlof&Taylor, 2002) while gathering exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory data (Hesse-Biber&Leavy, 2006). They are especially appropriate to generate deep information and knowledge about the meaning of respondents' life experiences, perspectives (Lindlof&Taylor, 2002, p.173; Warren, 2001, p.83), their values, decisions, ideology and culture (Johnson, 2001, p.104). Focus group interviews in particular have the advantage of generating data interactively in a group setting in which the researcher engages multiple participants in conversation and discussion of particular topics.

Three focus group interviews were conducted with 10 participants each. One focus group was done with younger cohorts, age 20-30, while the second groups was composed of older cohorts age 40-60. The third group contained participants of mixed ages from 20 to 50+. All participants of this study, half of which (15) were male and half (15) female, were citizens of Prishtina recruited by a trained graduate student. The focus groups interviews were from 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes long, and they were moderated by the author of this study.

The protocol of the focus groups interviews was divided into two parts. In the first part of the interview, participants were asked questions regarding their political knowledge, their attitudes toward politics, attitudes toward institutional performance, their media use and news sources, and their attitudes toward media coverage of politics and institutions. In the second part of the interview, the participants were shown three short television news clips (one from each national television: RTK, KTV, TV21) that covered the same issue. Participants were engaged in the discussion about the degree to which the issue represents a serious problem in Kosovo, the way the institutions were handling the problems, and the way media were reporting on this issue.

The issues discussed were privatization of public enterprises and corruption within institutional administration, two of the issues that were high on the media and public opinion agenda during the period this study was conducted. The video material on the issue of "privatization" contained three short news reports from three national televisions in Kosovo (Radio Television of Kosovo-RTK; Koha Vision –KTV; and Television 21) on a public protest organized by the workers syndicate against the privatization of the Post and Telecom of Kosovo (PTK). The protesters were asking that the Government not privatize PTK, and asking the Parliament members not to vote for PTK privatization. The protesters claimed that the PTK was functional and profitable and that there was no need to put this socially owned property in private hands.

The video material on the issue of "corruption" contained news reports from three national television channels in Kosovo (RTK, KTV; TV21) about a police investigation of corruption within the Municipality of Drenas. The police were reported to have searched the offices of the municipality officials and their private premises on the suspects of favoring some people during the distribution of apartments in a social housing project. The reports interview the suspected head of the Municipality and his lawyer to discuss the case against him, who denied the charges.

This study relies on the above described three methods in order to investigate the relationship between media use and political trust and participation. Content analysis and survey research offer excellent quantitative tools to investigate this study's hypothesis with aggregate and individual data that can be generalized. The focus group interweaving method is a good instrument to get a more in-depth understanding on how audiences' reactions to the news content they consume. In the following chapter, I will present the data analysis strategies and the results of this study.

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Chapter 5:

Results

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Preliminary Quantitative Analysis

Media coverage of political issues and Institutions

The first step in evaluating the influence of mass media on political attitudes and behavior

involves a systematic content analysis of the media coverage of politics. For the purpose of this

study - which investigates how attribute agenda-setting effects mediate the relationship between

media use and political trust and participation - we focus on the analysis of the salience of

political issues and their valence that dominated the news agenda, and on media depiction of

political institutions, particularly their performance and integrity traits. Thus, the political news

content of the three national television channels (RTK, KTV, and TV21), two national radio

stations (Radio Kosova, and Radio Dukagjini), and two major national daily newspapers (Koha

Ditore and Express) in Kosovo was collected and analyzed for the period September 15 to

October 24 2010, six weeks prior to the survey administration for this study. To study variations

in media depiction of political issues and institutions, several cross-tabulation analyses were

performed.

Media Issue Agenda. First, the news content was analyzed for the salience and valence

of the following 13 issues: political dialog with Serbia; rule of law, corruption, foreign

policy/independence recognitions, inter-ethnic relations/ minority rights, environment, health

system, education system, economy/infrastructure, energy policy, social security, administration

issues, and elections. Overall, the issues that dominated the news agenda across all media during

the period of this study were resignation of Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu (29.8% of overall

coverage) and the preparations for the early national elections in the country (16.9% of the

overall coverage). In late September 2010 the Constitutional Court ruled that the Kosovo

President, Fatmir Sejdiu, had violated the Constitution of the country by holding two public offices at the same time, the office of the President and the post of the LDK party leader. Sejdiu stepped down from the office of the president leading the way to the unexpected early elections in the country.

The events that led to these issues were unfortunate for the purpose of this study, given that the initial purpose was to assess the media agenda during a normal non-electoral/business-as-usual period. The worry was that the media coverage of the President would focus people's attention away from the other issues and would contaminate the public opinion on the other political institutions included in this study. However, it can be argued that such sudden administration changes are part of the growing democratic pains in a transitional society such as in Kosovo. Thus, these events might have less impact on public opinion agenda in a new democracy than in democratically established societies.

This was confirmed also by the results of our survey. When asked about the most important issues in Kosovo, the President's resignation and the organization of the early national elections were hardly mentioned by our respondents. The issues that were high on the public agenda were the economy, crime, corruption, and foreign affairs - the same four issues on which media had reported intensively as well. Moreover, the variations in public opinion salience of political institutions' attributes (see Table 1) and the variations in their trust in different institutions (see Table 2) suggest that the events surrounding the resignation of the President did not affect much people's opinions of other political institutions.

Table 1. Public opinion on institutional attributes

Attributes		Government	Parliament	Courts	Police	EULEX	KFOR
		N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %
Fair							
	Positive	77 (14%)	161 (29.3%)	91 (16.5%)	420 (76.4%)	264 (48%)	472 (85.8%)
	Negative	473 (86%)	389 (70.7%)	459 (83.5%)	116 (21.1%)	286 (52%)	78 (14.2%)
Honest							
	Positive	151 (27.5%)	226 (41.1%)	146 (26.5%)	434 (78.9%)	249 (45.3%)	461 (83.8%)
	Negative	399 (72.5%)	324 (58.9%)	404 (73.5%)	113 (20.5%)	301 (54.7%)	89 (16.2%)
Caring							
	Positive	88 (16%)	149 (27.1%)	104 (18.9%)	411 (74.7%)	227 (41.3%)	431 (78.4%)
	Negative	462 (84%)	401 (72.9%)	446 (81.1%)	139 (25.3%)	323 (58.7%)	119 (21.6%)
Efficient							
	Positive	191 (34.7%)	241 (43.8%)	152 (27.6%)	437 (79.5%)	277 (50.4%)	454 (82.5%)
	Negative	359 (65.3%)	309 (56.2%)	398 (72.4%)	113 (20.5%)	273 (49.5%)	96 (17.5%)
Knowledgeable							
	Positive	250 (45.5%)	301 (54.7%)	216 (39.3%)	428 (77.8%)	305 (55.5%)	462 (84%)
	Negative	300 (54.5%)	249 (45.3%)	334 (60.7%)	139 (25.3%)	245 (44.5%)	88 (16%)
Total	N	550	550	550	550	550	550

Table 2. Institutional trust

	Low trust					High trust		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Government	241 (43.8%)	104 (18.9%)	80 (14.5%)	64 (11.6%)	41 (7.5%)	5 (.9%)	15 (2.7%)	550
Parliament	125 (22.7%)	76 (13.8%)	123 (22.4%)	120 (21.8%)	54 (9.8%)	38 (6.9%)	14 (2.5%)	550
Courts	211 (38.4%)	107 (19.5%)	78 (14.2%)	77 (14%)	40 (7.3%)	25 (4.5%)	12 (2.2%)	550
Police	34 (6.2%)	29 (5.3%)	42 (7.6%)	87 (15.8%)	126 (22.9%)	116 (21.1%)	116 (21.1%)	550
EULEX	69 (12.4%)	64 (11.6%)	115 (20.9%)	135 (24.5%)	97 (17.6%)	34 (6.2%)	37 (6.7%)	550
KFOR	25 (4.5%)	19 (3.5%)	40 (7.3%)	86 (15.6%)	103 (18.7%)	120 (21.8%)	157 (28.5%)	550

The issue of "rule of law" ranked second in the media coverage with 1363 (17.3%) total mentions across all media. It was followed by economy with 1051 (13.3%) mentions, foreign policy with 589 (7.5%), diplomatic talk with Serbia with 324 (4.1%), and corruption with 272 (3.5%) (see Table 3). Similar to the inter-media agenda setting findings in the Western media, the issue agendas across all media in Kosovo were very closely related, with the same issues prevailing across media platforms (see Table 3). The Spearman's rho rank order correlations ranged from .963 (TV and radio, *N=13*), .955 (TV and newspapers, *N=13*), and .934 (radio and newspaper, *N=13*). This was also true when comparing the salience of issues between partisan versus objective media organizations (rho=.978, p<.000, *N=13*).

Table 3. Media coverage of political issues by media platform

Issues	Television				Radio				Newspapers				All Media				
	Pos. %	Neut. %	Neg. %	Total N	Pos. %	Neut. %	Neg. %	Total N	Pos. %	Neut. %	Neg. %	Total N	Pos %.	Neut. %	Neg. %	Total N %	Rank
Dialog with Serbia	3.6%	51.8%	11.6%	165	34.1%	54.9%	11%	82	33.3%	50%	3.4%	78	35.2%	52.2%	12.7%	324 (4.1%)	6
Rule of law	53.5%	26.7%	19.8%	789	61.4%	25.5%	13.2%	220	42.7%	28.2%	29.1%	354	51.9%	26.9%	21.1%	1363 (17.3%)	2
Corruption	29.8%	10.6%	59.6%	151	30.2%	13.2%	56.6%	53	35.3%	11.8%	52.9%	68	31.3%	11.4%	57.4%	272 (3.5%)	7
Foreign Policy	57.8%	25.7%	16.5%	327	61.4%	25.2%	13.4%	53	49.6%	21.5%	28.9%	135	56.7%	24.6%	18.7%	589 (7.5%)	5
Minority Rights	64.3%	19%	16.7%	42	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	15	24.4%	57.8%	17.8%	45	42.2%	38.2%	19.6%	102 (1.3%)	11
Environment	31.3%	12.5%	56.3%	32	50%	0%	50%	2	12.5%	12.5%	75%	8	28.6%	11.9%	59.5%	42 (.5%)	12
Health Care	32.9%	21.1%	46.1%	76	31%	17.2%	51.7%	29	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	13	29.7%	22.9%	47.5%	118 (1.5%)	10
Education	54.1%	17%	28.9%	135	46.2%	34.6%	19.2%	26	86.4%	9.1%	4.5%	22	56.8%	18.6%	24.6%	183 (2.3%)	8
Economy	31.5%	26.7%	41.7%	539	30.6%	27.4%	42%	219	16%	29.4%	54.6%	293	27%	27.6%	45.4%	1051 (13.3%)	4
Energy Policy	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%	9	33.3%	16.7%	50%	6	25%	50%	25%	8	34.8%	34.8%	30.4%	23 (.3%)	13
Social Sec.	46.9%	19.8%	33.3%	96	30%	23.3%	46.7%	30	60%	20%	20%	10	44.1%	20.6%	35.3%	136 (1.7%)	9
Administration	19.3%	42.4%	38.3%	1253	27.5%	37%	35.5%	324	15.7%	34.9%	49.4%	770	19.3%	39.2%	41.5%	2347 (29.8%)	1
Elections	22.6%	58.1%	19.3%	627	21.7%	57.1%	21.3%	240	21.3%	49.1%	29.5%	464	22%	54.8%	23.2%	1331 (16.9%)	3

However, when examining the salience of issue affective attributes, some important differences emerged between issues covered and among different media platforms. The overall issue coverage across all media ranged from neutral to balanced, with 31.8% positive coverage, 25.5% neutral coverage, and 32.8% negative coverage of issues (see Table 4). However, the data showed a significant relationship between media platforms and issue valence (Chi-Square =101.998, df=4, p<.000), with some media relying on certain affective attributes more than others. Of all examined media types, radio had slightly more positive coverage (36.2%), whereas newspapers showed a slightly more negative coverage of the issues than the other media (39.8%). A significant relationship was also found between the type of media partisanship and issue valence, with independent media covering issues most negatively (34.6%), while partisan media using a slightly more overall positive tone (34.7%) (see Table 4).

Table 4. Valence of issues covered in the media

Media Type	Valence of Issues			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	*Total*
Television	1483 (34%)	1551 (35.6%)	1326 (30.4%)	4360 (53.7%)
Radio	512 (36.2%)	503 (35.5%)	400 (28.3%)	1415 (17.4%)
Newspapers	583 (24.9%)	825 (35.3%)	932 (39.8%)	2340 (28.8%)
Pearson's Chi-square	101.998 (df4), p<.000			
Independent Media	1282 (29.3%)	1579 (36.1%)	1516 (34.6%)	4377 (53.9%)
Partisan Media	1296 (34.7%)	1300 (34.8%)	1142 (30.6%)	3738 (46.1%)
Pearson's Chi-square	29.605 (df 2), p<.000			
Total	2578 (31.8%)	2879 (35.5%)	2658 (32.8%)	8115 (100%)

These differences were exposed more when examining the valence of individual issues within media coverage. The data of our study suggest that mass media did not report on the valence of issues indiscriminately, with some issues receiving more negative coverage while other issues being covered in a more favorable light. The salient issues on the media agenda that received the most positive coverage across all media were 'rule of law' (51.9%), 'foreign policy' (56.7%), and 'education' (56.8%) – two of which were also high on the public agenda. On the other hand, the issues receiving the major negative media coverage were "corruption" (57.4%) and economy (45.4%), also very high on the public agenda. When looking across media platforms, not much difference was noticed, with the salient issues receiving the similar valence across all media platforms (see Table 3).

However, when comparing between partisan and objective media coverage of issue valence, some differences emerged. Whereas, 'rule of law,' 'foreign policy,' and 'education' received favorable coverage across both media types, partisan media were more keen to emphasize the positive valence when covering 'minority rights,' (47.4% versus 35.6%) and 'health care' (45.2% versus 21.1%). On the other hand, objective media reported on the issue of economy somewhat more negatively (50.3%) than the partisan media (37.9%) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Media coverage of political issues by media partisanship

Issues	Objective Media					Partisan Media				
	Pos. %	Neut. %	Neg. %	Total N	Rank	Pos. %	Neut. %	Neg. %	Total N	Rank
Dialog with Serbia	33.5%	52.9%	13.6%	191	6	37.6%	51.1%	11.3%	133	6
Rule of law/Crime	51.6%	26.7%	21.7%	748	2	52.4%	27.2%	20.5%	615	3
Corruption	28%	14.9%	57.1%	168	7	36.5%	5.8%	57.7%	104	7
Foreign Policy	56.9%	23.6%	19.5%	297	5	56.5%	25.7%	17.8%	292	5
Minority Rights	35.6%	37.8%	26.7%	45	11	47.4%	38.6%	14%	57	9
Environment	25%	12.5%	62.5%	16	12	30.8%	11.5%	57.5%	26	12
Health Care	21.1%	31.6%	47.4%	76	10	45.2%	7.1%	47.6%	42	11
Education	46.5%	19.8%	33.7%	86	8	66%	17.5%	16.5%	97	8
Economy	22.1%	27.6%	50.3%	634	4	34.5%	27.6%	37.9%	417	4
Energy Policy	27.3%	36.4%	36.4%	11	13	41.7%	33.3%	25%	13	13
Social Sec.	38.3%	22.2%	39.5%	81	9	52.7%	18.2%	29.1%	55	10
Administration	17.3%	39.7%	43%	1222	1	21.4%	38.7%	39.9%	1125	1
Elections	19.9%	58.7%	21.4%	683	3	24.2%	50.6%	25.2%	648	2

Media Institutional attribute Agenda. This study was interested in the media coverage of the core political institutions in Kosovo, which included government, parliament, courts, police, EULEX, and KFOR. As data in Table 6 on the overall media coverage of institutions together suggest, radio reported on the institutions in a more balanced way (50%/50%), whereas television and newspapers depicted a somewhat more negative picture of the overall political institutions, with newspapers showing the most negativity (64.1%). Institutions that were the most salient in the media were government (with 914 total mentions), parliament (183 mentions), EULEX (131 mentions), police (100 mentions), KFOR (95 mentions), and courts (80 mentions) (See Table 7b). As to the regard of the institutional attributes, Kosovo media concentrated mostly on the institutional efficacy (952 total mentions), followed by honesty (512 mentions), knowledge (293 mentions), caring (218 mentions), and fairness (200 mentions). The overall tone of the coverage suggests that the attributes of government and parliament had a predominantly negative valence, while courts, police, EULEX and KFOR attributes were depicted with a primarily positive tone (see Tables 7a and 7b). As data on Tables 7a and 7b suggest, mass media were not indiscriminately negative towards all political institutions, instead there were nuanced depictions of different features of individual institutions.

Table 6: All institutional attributes by type of media platform

Institutional Attributes		Media			
		TV	Radio	NP	Total
		N	N	N	N
Fair					200
	Positive	22	5	20	47
	Negative	89	19	45	153
Honest					512
	Positive	55	17	38	110
	Negative	163	48	191	402
Caring					218
	Positive	46	12	19	77
	Negative	64	19	58	141
Efficient					952
	Positive	298	96	130	524
	Negative	244	49	135	428
Knowledgeable					293
	Positive	64	28	65	157
	Negative	54	26	55	135
Total N		1099	316	756	2174
	% positive	44.2%	50%	35.9%	42.1%
	% negative	55.8%	50%	64.1%	57.9%

Table 7a. Institutional attributes by type of media platform

Attributes		Government			Parliament			Courts			Police			EULEX			KFOR		
		TV	Radio	NP	TV	Radio	NP	TV	Radio	NP	TV	Radio	NP	TV	Radio	NP	TV	Radio	NP
		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Fair	Positive	8	3	2	0	0	1	4	0	11	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1
	Negative	37	7	19	11	1	3	1	1	2	16	0	1	1	0	0	10	0	9
Honest																			
	Positive	13	7	5	2	1	7	5	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	1
	Negative	43	23	48	15	6	16	3	0	5	1	0	1	3	0	13	0	0	7
Caring																			
	Positive	7	6	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	Negative	23	10	14	4	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Efficient																			
	Positive	141	58	43	30	3	9	6	3	2	27	9	14	29	7	22	21	6	18
	Negative	158	34	76	26	9	20	8	0	8	13	1	3	24	7	11	3	0	1
Knowledgeable																			
	Positive	17	10	23	13	2	9	1	0	6	4	4	6	2	1	2	8	2	3
	Negative	33	21	24	7	7	4	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Total N		480	179	257	108	32	75	29	4	47	61	15	26	59	16	56	45	9	40
	% positive	38.7%	46.9%	29.9%	41.6%	21.8%	34.6%	55.2%	75%	55.3%	50.8%	93.3%	80.7%	52.5%	50%	53.5%	71.1%	100%	57.5%
	% negative	61.3%	53.1%	70.1%	58.4%	78.2%	65.4%	44.8%	15%	44.7%	49.2%	6.7%	19.3%	47.5%	50%	46.4%	28.9%	0	42.5%

Table 7b. Institutional attributes by type of media partisanship

Attributes		Government			Parliament			Courts			Police			EULEX			KFOR		
		Indep. Media N	Partisan Media N	Total N	Indep. Media N	Partisan Media N	Total N	Indep. Media N	Partisan Media N	Total N	Indep. Media N	Partisan Media N	Total N	Indep. Media N	Partisan Media N	Total N	Indep. Media N	Partisan Media N	Total N
Fair	Positive	8	5	13	1	0	1	10	5	15	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	3
	Negative	44	19	63	9	6	15	4	0	4	2	15	17	1	0	1	12	8	20
Honest																			
	Positive	16	9	25	7	3	10	4	7	13	0	0	0	4	0	4	1	1	2
	Negative	71	44	115	26	11	37	4	4	8	0	2	2	13	3	16	7	0	7
Caring																			
	Positive	6	4	10	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
	Negative	32	18	50	9	3	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Efficient																			
	Positive	128	114	242	12	11	23	7	4	11	29	21	50	43	15	58	28	17	45
	Negative	148	120	268	29	26	55	10	6	16	6	11	17	24	18	42	1	3	4
Knowledgeable																			
	Positive	29	21	50	10	6	16	5	2	7	6	8	14	2	3	5	8	5	13
	Negative	56	22	78	8	5	13	1	6	7	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0
Total *N*		538	376	914	111	72	183	45	35	80	42	58	100	90	41	131	58	37	95
	% positive	34.7%	40.7%	37%	27.1%	29.2%	27.9%	57.5%	54.3%	56.3%	85.7%	51.7%	66%	56.6%	56.1%	56.4%	65.5%	70.2%	67.4%
	% negative	65.3%	59.3%	63%	72.9%	70.8%	72.1%	42.5%	45.7%	43.7%	14.2%	48.2%	34%	43.3%	43.9%	43.5%	34.5%	29.8%	32.6%

Government. Our data suggest that government was the institution most negatively depicted in the media, independent of their partisanship features. About 63% of the attributes related to the government were depicted negatively, with independent media showing a slightly higher negative tone towards governmental attributes (65.3% versus 59.3%). The Kosovo government was depicted as mainly inefficient (268 mentions), dishonest (115 mentions) and unwise (78 mentions). The same was true when comparing between different media platforms. However, some differences emerged when examining the overall cognitive attribute and affective salience. Television news was the most likely to emphasize government attributes (with 480 mentions), followed by newspapers (257 mentions) and radio (179 mentions). However, newspapers were more likely to emphasize the negative valence of governmental attributes (70.1%) than television (61.3%) or radio (53.1%), even though negativity predominated them all.

Parliament. Whereas it was not as salient in the media coverage as the government was, the Parliament was depicted in a very similar fashion, with negative valence of its attributes prevailing the media agenda (72.1%). Especially, the Parliament was depicted as dishonest, selfish, corrupt and to some extent inefficient. However, some differences occurred between different media platforms when examining individual attributes and their valence. Television emphasized the positive valence of efficiency and knowledge slightly more than the other two

media. Overall, radio emphasized the negative valence of parliament attributes (78.2%) slightly more than newspapers (65.4%) or television (58.4%). Even though both independent and partisan media stressed the negative valence of Parliament's traits the most, we notice that similar to the depiction of the government, partisan media rely slightly less on the negative valence and more on the positive one than the independent media.

Courts. The media depiction of Kosovo courts was more nuanced, even though it was the least salient institution in the media. Courts were portrayed mainly as fair and honest, but inefficient. Newspapers emphasized the most positive attributes, followed by television. These findings were a bit of a surprise, given that Kosovo has been criticized for having one of the most inefficient and corrupt judicial systems in the region. However, one reason that explains our findings was the Constitutional Court's ruling on the case of the President that happened during the time this study was being conducted, which was welcomed by the community and prized by the law experts and the media as a professional handling of a sensitive matter.

Police. This was the fourth institution most salient in the media, but the most positively covered of all the institutions included in this study (66% of the overall coverage). Police were depicted as efficient and highly knowledgeable, but to some extent corrupt. Television emphasized the most police attributes, especially efficiency and corruption features. Newspapers and radio coverage of this institution was mostly positive. When comparing independent and partisan media, the latter were the ones that emphasized mostly the negative features (48.2%), while independent media's converge was highly positive (85.7%).

EULEX. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) had a high salience on the overall media agenda with predominantly positive coverage (56.4%). EULEX was especially salient in the news coverage of television and newspapers, with 59 and 56

mentions. While both of these media platforms were inclined to depict EULEX as highly efficient, newspapers were more inclined to also emphasize the attribute of dishonesty. EULEX was more salient in the independent media coverage (90 mentions), whereas partisan media paid slightly less attention to this institutions concentrating mostly on its efficiency, which had a somewhat negative tone.

KFOR. NATO military forces in Kosovo (KFOR) had a nuanced overall media coverage, even though it was predominantly positive (67.4%). Particularly, KFOR was depicted as highly efficient (45 mentions) and knowledgeable (13 mentions), even though somewhat corrupt (20). Television and newspapers emphasized significantly more KFOR attributes than radio did, but there were not any noticeable difference in the valence of the attributes emphasized. Moreover, independent media had slightly more mentions of KFOR attributes than the partisan media, but the attribute valence was somewhat more positive in the partisan (70.2%) than the independent media (65.5%).

Media impact on political knowledge and perceptions

Attribute Agenda-setting effects

In order to assess the relationship between media coverage and public opinion on political issues and institutions, the media coverage data were compared with the public opinion data. Our initial analysis suggested that mass media agenda and public opinion agenda were very close when assessing the depiction of institutional attributes. Similar to the media coverage, most of the respondents in our survey emphasized the negative valence of government and parliament attributes, while they stressed the positive valence of the police, KFOR and to a lesser degree the EULEX attributes (See Table 1).

A high percentage of people thought that the government was corrupt (86%), dishonest (72.5%), selfish (84%), inefficient (65.3%), and unwise (54.5%), whereas to a slightly less degree they thought the same of Parliament (corrupt-70.7%; dishonest -58.9%; selfish- 72.9%, inefficient – 56.2%; and unwise-45.3%). The most positive valence was emphasized when asked about KFOR attributes (fair-, 85.5%; honest- 83.8%; caring- 78.4%; efficient- 82.5%; knowledgeable - 84%), immediately followed by the police attributes (fair-, 76.4%; honest- 78.9%; caring- 74.7%; efficient- 79.5%; knowledgeable – 77.8%). EULEX got more nuanced evaluations in the opinion survey, with the majority of the people claiming EULEX was efficient (50.4%) and knowledgeable (55.5%), but corrupt (52%), dishonest (54,7%), and selfish (58.7%). Different from the media coverage that depicted courts traits in a positive light, the public opinion on courts' attribute evaluations was mostly negative with the majority of the people thinking the courts were corrupt (83.5%), dishonest (73.5%), selfish (81.1%), inefficient (72.4%), and unwise (60.7%).

Correlations between media and public agendas suggest that some second-level agenda setting effects occurred at the aggregate level. Spearman's Rho rank order correlations between media coverage of institutional attributes and public opinion were .80 for government, .87 for parliament, -.36 for courts, .72 for EULEX, .05 for police, and .30 for KFOR. When comparing these effects between independent and objective media, the correlation coefficients across most institutions were higher between partisan media and public agenda (see Table 8).

Table 8. Spearman's Rho correlations between media coverage of institutional attributes and public opinion (*N*=5)

	Public Opinion agenda					
	Government	Parliament	Courts	EULEX	Police	KFOR
Overall Media Agenda	.800	.872	-.359	.718	.051	.300
Partisan Media Agenda	.800	.800	.00	.783	.108	.667
Independent Media Agenda	.800	1.00	-.100	.410	.335	.051

The unexpected negative correlation between media and public salience of police attributes might be justified by the events that happen during the time this study was conducted. After ruling against the President Sejdiu case and other cases when the high political officials have infringed the Kosovo Constitution, the Constitutional court in Kosovo received positive coverage in the media and dominated the media discourse during this time. However, the overall assessment of the Kosovo judiciary has been generally very negative, as they have been accused of inefficacy and corruption.

Further statistical analyses that tested this relationship with individual level data provided more evidence that supports hypothesis H1. Two structural equation models (SEM) discussed below were computed to test the relationship between media use, agenda-setting index, attribute priming index, political trust and participation for independent and partisan media types. As Figure 4 shows, partisan media had the most significant relationship with the individual attribute agenda measure, confirming our aggregate level results. *"Attribute agenda-setting index"* showed a positive significant relationship with partisan television use (.103) and partisan radio use (.137). Given that the "*Attribute agenda-setting index*" measured the distance between media emphasis on institutional positive attributes and citizens' positive evaluations of institutional

traits, our data suggest that the more people relied on partisan television and radio for their political information, they were more likely to adopt the positive valence of institutional traits from the media agenda.

On the other hand, only independent television use showed a significant relationship with *"Attribute agenda-setting index"* (-.078), which had a negative sign and was slightly weaker than the coefficient for partisan media. As expected, these data suggest that the more people watched independent television channels, they were less likely to adopt the positive institutional attributes.

Priming effects

At first the salience of media issue valence did not seem to be as close to the public evaluations of institutional issue performance. Whereas the same issues were salient on both agendas, media coverage of political issues was more balanced with the majority of the issues covered positively (31.8%) and neutrally (35.5%) while the majority of the public claimed that the institutions were handling the issues "not well at all" (43.8%) or "not that well" (44%).

However, the SEM analysis suggested that some media institutions were related to the measure of priming' effects, confirming hypothesis H2. As Figures 3 and 4 indicate, both independent (.076) and partisan (.072) newspaper use for political information had a significant positive relationship with the *"Attribute priming index,"* which measured the distance between media salience of issue positive valence and positive evaluations of institutional issues performance by the public. This means that people who used newspapers for political information were more likely to rely on the positive issue valence emphasized in the media when judging institutional performance on those issues. However, only partisan television (.079) and radio (.072) use exhibited significant positive relationships with priming index. The overall

relationship between these individual measures of media use and *"Attribute priming index"* were positive. This suggests that the more people relied on partisan television channels and radio stations as their sources of information, they were more likely to use positive valence of issues emphasized in the media when evaluating institutional performance. Indeed, the media reporting on political issues was more balanced than the reporting on institutional traits, with the majority of news items ranging from neutral (35.5%) to positive (31.5%) (see Table 4).

Overall, these findings suggest that people who rely on mass media for political information tend to adopt the media agenda when thinking about overall political institutions' traits and their handling of issues, confirming earlier findings on media cognitive and perceptive effects. However, not all media seem to have the same effects. These effects vary depending on the media platform on which news is consumed as well as on the particular source of information from which news is learned. Contrary to previous research, our findings suggest that when it comes to learning about institutional traits electronic media play a slightly more significant role than newspapers, particularly so when comparing different news sources among partisan media. Newspapers seem to be important sources of information only when judging institutional performance based on media reports on issues.

However, the lesson learned from the media is nuanced rather than indiscriminately bad, as previous research has suggested. People who use partisan television and radio sources tend to learn about the positive valence of institutional traits, while those using independent television are more likely to reject the positive valence of institutional traits. Yet, the same people who use newspapers for political information, independent or partisan, are more likely to rely on the positive tone of issues emphasized by the media when judging institutional issue performance.

Contingent Conditions: Need for Orientation

Several analyses were performed to assess the degree to which mass media were used for political information and the conditions that affected media use in the first place. Overall, respondents in our sample were avid television news users. They all claimed to watch news on television at least once a week and more than half (57.6%) claimed to watch television news seven days a week, with the TV weekly use mean M=5.62 (SD=1.9). The other news media were used to a significantly less degree. Slightly more than 75% of respondents claimed to read newspapers at least once a week (mean weekly use M=3.39, SD=2.63), whereas only 59.5% claimed to do so for radio (M=1.89, SD=1.89), and about 38% for internet (M=1.88, SD=2.72). Moreover, people using television and newspapers claimed to pay more attention to the news they consumed than people using the other types of media. More than 29% respondents claimed to pay attention to news on TV "a lot" and about 40.4% said "a moderate amount" (M=2.74, SD=.977), while 24.5% and 49.3% respectively claimed to do so for newspapers (M=2.85, SD=.951).

Similar to previous studies of citizens' media use habits, our study found that demographic variables are important mediators of news media use among Kosovo audience. Our data suggest that in general, highly educated young males were the most likely to consume news media for political information. However, while age and education was not significant when measuring TV and radio use, younger and more educated respondents were more likely to read the news on newspapers and the internet. These data are not congruent with findings in the U.S. which indicate that older people are more inclined to consume political news and be more avid readers of newspapers (Stone, 1987; Schonbach et al., 1999). However, at least another study found that younger people were more likely to read magazines (Moy & Pfau, 2000). One

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explanation for our findings might lie in the fact that the Kosovo population is very young, with more than 70% estimated to be under the age of 30. Moreover, younger people in Kosovo also tend to be more educated, which might mediate the relationship between age and media use.

The next puzzle in this study was to assess the relationship between need for orientation (NFO) and media use. We predicted that people with higher need for information, measured as a combination of high relevance and high uncertainty, will be more likely to use news media than people with lower NFO (H4a). We also predicted that while people with high NFO will be more likely to consume independent media, people with moderate-active levels of NFO will be more likely to consume partisan media (H4b & H4c). These hypotheses were only partially supported by our data.

As predicted by H4a, the ANOVA test with NFO as the between-subjects factor and overall news media use as dependent variable resulted in a significant main effect for television, radio, and newspapers, but not for internet. These results indicate that depending on the level of NFO, respondents used news media to a different degree. The post-hoc pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments revealed that respondents with moderate NFO tended to exhibit the most frequent use of mass media on average for TV (*Mean*=32.34, *SD*=5.64), Radio (*Mean*= 11.94, *SD*=9.45) and newspapers (*Mean*=20.61, *SD*=11.73) which was significantly different from low NFO and moderate-passive NFO (see Table 9). These data were also supported by regression models in which other demographic variables were accounted for. NFO had a positive and statistically significant relationship with the overall media use, but also with the individual measures of TV and newspapers use after controlling for age, gender and education.

Table 9. Mean scores of overall media use by levels of need for orientation

NFO	TV (N=549)	Radio (N=549)	Newspaper (N=548)	Internet (N=1137)
Low	27.58_a (9.01) [91]	8.11_a (8.35) [91]	14.62_a (12.48) [91]	11.40 (13.32) [91]
Moderate-passive	24.36_b (10.78) [254]	8.35_a (9.42) [254]	14.38_a (12.83) [254]	8.17 (11.88) [254]
Moderate-active	32.34_c (5.64) [128]	11.97_b (9.45) [128]	20.61_b (11.73) [128]	10.13 (12.95) [128]
High	29.12_a (8.22) [76]	7.91_c (8.85) [76]	19.75_b (12.16) [76]	10.24 (13.36) [76]
F	22.61**	5.37**	9.51**	$1.82^{n.s.}$

Note: *= $p < .05$, **= $p < .001$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means; the number of cases appears in brackets. Means with different subscripts within columns are different from each other at least at .05 significance level based on Bonferroni post hoc paired comparisons.

Additional ANOVA tests were performed to test the relationship between NFO, individual independent media and partisan media. The data presented in Tables 10 and 11 partially support H3b and H3c. The ANOVA test with NFO as the between-subjects factor and independent news media use as dependent variable resulted in a significant main effect only for newspapers. As predicted, there was a significant difference between people with low NFO and high NFO, with the highest NFO expressing the highest independent newspaper use for political information. However, the difference between high NFO and moderate-active NFO was not statistically significant. Additionally, as the results in Table 11 suggest, when we tested the relationship between NFO and partisan media use, we found a significant main effect only for television and radio. As predicted, people with moderate-active NFO levels were the most likely to use partisan TV and radio for their political information.

Table 10. Mean scores of independent media use by levels of need for orientation

NFO	TV (N=549)	Radio (N=549)	Newspaper (N=548)
Low	12.32 (15.17) [91]	4.52 (6.87) [91]	9.37$_a$ (11.57) [91]
Moderate-passive	9.89 (13.71) [254]	4.09 (7.31) [254]	12.06$_a$ (12.93) [254]
Moderate-Active	11.69 (15.94) [128]	4.55 (8.23) [128]	16.42$_b$ (12.45) [128]
High	12.99 (15.05) [76]	3.33 (6.25) [76]	16.26$_b$ (12.91) [76]
F	1.27	.522	7.68**

Note: *= $p < .05$, **= $p < .001$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means; the number of cases appears in brackets. Means with different subscripts within columns are different from each other at least at .05 significance level based on Bonferroni post hoc paired comparisons.

Table 11. Mean scores of partisan media use by levels of need for orientation

NFO	TV (N=549)	Radio (N=549)	Newspaper (N=548)
Low	15.27$_a$ (15.19) [91]	4.04$_a$ (7.93) [91]	5.56 (10.86) [91]
Moderate-passive	14.52$_a$ (14.62) [254]	4.69$_a$ (8.18) [254]	2.70 (7.39) [254]
Moderate-active	20.82$_b$ (16.21) [128]	7.70$_b$ (9.24) [128]	4.33 (10.91) [128]
High	16.14 (16.28) [76]	5.07 (8.11) [76]	3.52 (9.68) [76]
F	4.95**	4.63**	2.42

Note: ^=$p<.1$, *= $p < .05$, **= $p < .001$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means; the number of cases appears in brackets. Means with different subscripts within columns are different from each other at least at .05 significance level based on Bonferroni post hoc paired comparisons.

The last step in this first set of analysis was to test H5a and H5b that predicted a positive relationship between NFO and attribute agenda setting and priming effects. Data from Table 12 suggest that our hypothesis were partially supported. ANOVA test assessing the relationship between NFO and attribute agenda setting effects found significant main effects for both measures. Bonferoni post-hoc pairwise comparisons suggested that respondents with moderate-active NFO level exhibited the highest effects for "Attribute agenda-setting" (*Mean*=3.72, SD=1.45) and "Attribute priming" (*Mean*=.213, SD=.221). SEM and OLS analysis controlling for additional confounding variables suggested a positive significant relationship between NFO and 'Attribute agenda-setting" measure, suggesting that people with high NFO were more likely to reflect media depiction of political institutions attributes. However, the same relationship was not found for the 'Attribute Priming" measure.

Table 12. Mean scores of media effects measures by levels of need for orientation

	Attribute Agenda-setting	Attribute Priming
Low	2.99_a (1.23) [91]	.179 (.226) [91]
Moderate-passive	3.08_a (1.31) [254]	$.119_a$ (.219) [254]
Moderate-active	3.72_b (1.45) [128]	$.213_b$ (.221) [128]
High	3.06_c (1.41) [76]	$.116_c$ (.234) [76]
F	8.09**	5.92**

Note: $^=p<.1,$ *= $p < .05$, **= $p < .001$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means; the number of cases appears in brackets. Means with different subscripts within columns are different from each other at least at .05 significance level based on Bonferroni post hoc paired comparisons.

Our overall path for independent media showed a direct and indirect relationship between NFO and media effects measures. The significant path coefficient between NFO and newspaper use (.189) suggested that newspaper use mediated the relationship between NFO and media effects. Moreover, the significant coefficient between NFO and "Attribute agenda-setting" measured (.092) suggested also a direct effect. The SEM model for partisan media suggested only an indirect relationship between NFO and measures of media effects. The positive coefficient between NFO and partisan television use (.082) and partisan radio use (.089) were significant at least at .05 level after controlling for media effects at other levels. In turn, partisan television and radio use had significant positive relationships with attribute agenda-setting and attribute priming indexes. The coefficients between "attribute agenda-setting" with television (.103) and radio (.137) and the coefficients between "attribute priming" index and television use

(.079) were significant at least at .05 level, while the relationship between "Attribute priming" and radio use (.072) was significant at .10 level.

Media impact on political attitudes: Priming Political Trust

Our next path in the model was to analyze the relationship between media use, agenda-setting and priming measures, and political trust. A series of OLS regressions were computed to obtained some preliminary data on these relationships (see Table 13).

The data presented under Model 1 in Table 13 confirm our H3a and H3b. These data show a significant positive relationship between agenda-setting and priming measures and overall trust in political institutions. They suggest that people who tend to adopt the positive valence of institutional attributes salient on the media agenda and people who are likely to use media positive issue valence when judging institutional performance are more likely to trust political institutions, implying an indirect effect of mass media on political trust. However, as the individual media coefficients in model 1 suggest, most of the mass media did not show any significant direct effects on political trust, expect for television which had a negative relationship. These data explain about half of the variation in our dependent variable (R^2=.535).

The SEM analysis of the two models in this study indicated somewhat different results. For the independent media model, the coefficient between agenda-setting measure and trust (.639) and priming measure and trust (.088) were both significant at least at .05 level, indicating a significant positive relationship between attribute agenda-setting and priming effects and trust in institutions. These results suggest that the more citizens adopt positive institutional attributes and the positive issue performance from the media agenda, they are more likely to have higher trust in institutions.

However, for the partisan media model, only the coefficient between attribute agenda setting index and trust (.710) was significant and strong, suggesting that only the adoption of the positive institutional attributes from the media is related to high levels of institutional trust. Overall, these results imply that attribute agenda-setting effects are better moderators between media use and political trust than attribute priming effects.

Data in Model 2 in table 13 also support hypothesis H3c and H3d, suggesting that both, institutional integrity and competence attribute agenda-setting effects, have a significant relationship with trust in institutions. The more people adopt the media attribute agenda suggesting that institutions are fair, honest, efficient and knowledgeable, the more they trust those institutions. This same relationship was not found for the attribute 'caring.' In this model, the direct effect of independent television use measure is reduced to non-significant, while the coefficient for partisan television use is close to significance. Overall, these data, which explain more than half of the variation in political trust measure (R^2=.543), imply that media effects on political trust are mainly channeled through institutional attribute agenda-setting effects.

In model 3 we tested H3e & H3f, finding support only for H3e that predicted a positive relationship between priming effects on economic performance and citizen's trust in political institutions. Only the coefficient for the measure that assessed the distance between media reporting on economy and public opinion on institutional economic performance was significantly and positively associated with political trust, while the measures for "foreign affairs," "corruption," and "crime" did not show any significant. These data suggest that media effects on economic performance perceptions are more important than the political performance when forming public opinion on trust in institutions in Kosovo.

Table 13. OLS regressions with overall political trust as dependent variable

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	-.109*	-.085	-.141^
TV-partisan	-.125*	-.103^	-.098
Radio-independent	.011	.026	-.017
Radio-partisan	.047	.046	.111*
NP-independent	-.006	-.004	-.024
NP-partisan	-.048	-.038	-.133**
Attribute priming	.095**		
Attribute agenda-setting	.687**		
Priming Economy			.270**
Priming Foreign Affairs			-.056
Priming Corruption			.058
Priming Crime			-.007
Institutions-Fair AS		.110**	
Institutions-Honest AS		.220**	
Institutions-Caring AS		.019	
Institutions-Efficient AS		.341**	
Institutions-Knowledge. AS		.163**	
Partisanship	-.033	-.020	.088^
Political Interest	-.010	-.006	.020
Age	.009	-.003	-.007
Gender	.064*	.064*	.065
Education	-.042	-.042	-.079
Constant	15.252(1.45)**	11.908(1.936)**	25.472 (1.939)**
R^2	.535	.543	.147
N	517	543	517

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Our next step in this analysis was to perform a series of OLS regressions to analyze the relationship between media use, agenda-setting measures and political trust in individual institutions. The data are presented in Tables 14a, 14b, 14c, 14d, 14e, 14f.

Administrative Institutions. Individual analysis for political institutions that deal with administrative issues, government and parliament, suggest that both agenda-setting and priming effects of mass media were important mediators between media use and political trust in these two institutions (see Tables 14a and 14b). Integrity and competence attribute effects for both, government and parliament, had a significant positive relationship with citizens' trust in those institutions. For government - fairness, honesty, efficiency, and knowledge - were all important

determinants of trust in this institution, however knowledge did not show any significant relationship for parliament.

Overall, efficiency was the strongest predictor of trust in government and parliament, while honesty was the second strongest predictor. Further, positive performance on economy and foreign affairs were important when assessing trust in government, but for trust in parliament only economy showed significant relationship while the issue of corruption approached significance. Finally, individual measures of media use did not show any significant relationship with trust in government. However, the data suggest that television and newspaper use for political information had a negative direct relationship with trust in Parliament.

Table 14a. OLS regressions for trust in Government

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	-.082	-.117	-.068
TV-partisan	-.025	-.032	.005
Radio-independent	-.023	-.028	.005
Radio-partisan	-.038	.005	-.013
NP-independent	.020	.014	.003
NP-partisan	.000	-.041**	-.013
Attribute priming	.148**		
Attribute agenda-setting	.648**		
Priming Economy		.440**	
Priming Foreign Affairs		-.124*	
Priming Corruption		.015	
Priming Crime		-.006	
Government-Fair AS			.196**
Government-Honest AS			.246**
Government-Caring AS			-.016
Government-Efficient AS			.341**
Government-Knowledge. AS			.145**
Partisanship	-.016	.067	.000
Political Interest	.008	.067	.024
Age	-.021	.014	-.028
Gender	.033	.014	.053^
Education	-.102**	[-.127]**	-.099**
Constant	1.483(.276)**	2.98 (.375)**	.302(.299)
R^2	.535	.206	.571
N	517	517	543

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Table 14b. OLS regressions for trust in Parliament

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	-.141*	-.244**	-.130*
TV-partisan	-.144*	-.200**	-.121
Radio-independent	-.012	-.016	-.001
Radio-partisan	.029	.062	.029
NP-independent	-.043	-.050	-.013
NP-partisan	-.148**	-.182**	-.111
Attribute priming	.202**		
Attribute agenda-setting	.544**		
Priming Economy		.251**	
Priming Foreign Affairs		-.065	
Priming Corruption		.102^	
Priming Crime		.040	
Parliament-Fair AS			.128**
Parliament-Honest AS			.296**
Parliament-Caring AS			-.058
Parliament-Efficient AS			.302**
Parliament-Knowledge. AS			.022
Partisanship	-.037	.065	-.009
Political Interest	.083	.067**	.095*
Age	.026	.051	.000
Gender	.050	.056	.058^
Education	-.037	-.066	-.060
Constant	1.326(.325)**	2.750 (.393)**	1.245(.341)**
R^2	.417	.199	.437
N	517	517	543

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Law & Order Institutions. As data on Tables 14c, 14d, 14e, 14f suggest, different measures of integrity and competence attributes' media effects were all important factors for trust in most of the institutions that deal with law and order in Kosovo, except for KFOR military forces for which only the measures of integrity – honesty and caring - were significant. When comparing the strength of different institutional traits coefficients, efficiency and honesty are the strongest predictors of trust in judiciary institutions (courts and EULEX), while honesty, fairness and caring are the strongest predictors of trust in security forces (police and KFOR).

Moreover, the issue of economic performance was a significant determinant for trust in courts and EULEX, but not so for police and KFOR. Television use showed a negative relationship with trust in police, while a small positive relationship with trust in courts.

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Newspaper use, on the other hand, showed a positive relationship with trust in KFOR and courts, while a negative relationship with trust in police. Radio use showed only a significant positive relationship with trust in EULEX and approached significance for trust in police.

Table 14c. OLS regressions for trust in Courts

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	.075	.076	.082
TV-partisan	.054*	.061	.079
Radio-independent	-.001	.000	.014
Radio-partisan	-.021	.056	-.021
NP-independent	.100*	.089^	.117**
NP-partisan	.030	.001	.039
Attribute priming	.187**		
Attribute agenda-setting	.519**		
Priming Economy		.329**	
Priming Foreign Affairs		-.045	
Priming Corruption		.028	
Priming Crime		-.028	
Courts-Fair AS			.047
Courts-Honest AS			.144**
Courts-Caring AS			-.214
Courts-Efficient AS			.149**
Courts-Knowledge. AS			.149**
Partisanship	.037	.077^	.067^
Political Interest	-.158**	-.163**	-.141**
Age	-.026	-.032	-.036
Gender	.067^	.095*	.081*
Education	-.153**	-.163**	-.171**
Constant	2.982(.328)**	2.97 (.411)**	3.679(.358)
R^2	.397	.154	.404
N	517	517	543

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Table 14d. OLS regressions for trust in Police

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	-.173*	-.168*	-.149*
TV-partisan	-.125^	-.111	-.110^
Radio-independent	.054	.024	.051
Radio-partisan	.080^	.114*	.094*
NP-independent	.008	-.017	.009
NP-partisan	-.114**	-.168**	-.073^
Attribute priming	.060		
Attribute agenda-setting	.485**		
Priming Economy		-.023	
Priming Foreign Affairs		.003	
Priming Corruption		.066	
Priming Crime		.074	
Government-Fair AS			.196*
Government-Honest AS			.233**
Government-Caring AS			.152**
Government-Efficient AS			.081
Government-Knowledge. AS			.100*
Partisanship	.009	.047	.013
Political Interest	.068	.102*	.086*
Age	-.005	-.015	-.025
Gender	-.008	-.015	.016
Education	-.006	-.025	-.035**
Constant	3.973(.373)**	5.053 (.443)**	2.730(.582)**
R^2	.294	.073	.364
N	517	517	543

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Table 14e. OLS regressions for trust in EULEX

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	-.041	.008	-.021
TV-partisan	-.073	.018	-.055
Radio-independent	-.028	-.026	-.001
Radio-partisan	.115**	.151**	.117**
NP-independent	-.038	-.081	-.017
NP-partisan	-.050	-.121*	-.032
Attribute priming	.097*		
Attribute agenda-setting	.499**		
Priming Economy		.204**	
Priming Foreign Affairs		-.084	
Priming Corruption		.046	
Priming Crime		-.056	
Government-Fair AS			.100^
Government-Honest AS			.121*
Government-Caring AS			-.016*
Government-Efficient AS			.213**
Government-Knowledge. AS			.096^
Partisanship	-.024	.030	-.011
Political Interest	-.013	-.013	.012
Age	.051	-.001	.036
Gender	.029	-.001	.037
Education	-.001	.004	-.013
Constant	2.350(.365)**	3.351 (.425)**	2.612(.425)**
R^2	.296	.076	.308
N	517	517	543

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Table 14f. OLS regressions for trust in KFOR

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
TV-independent	[-.080]	[-.093]	[-.062]
TV-partisan	[-.105]	[-.092]	[-.062]
Radio-independent	[-.029]	[-.051]	[-.012]
Radio-partisan	[-.027]	[.068]	[.008]
NP-independent	[.100]*	[.114]*	[.064]
NP-partisan	[.123]*	[.068]	[.057]
Attribute priming	[-.101]*		
Attribute agenda-setting	[.324]**		
Priming Economy		[.068]	
Priming Foreign Affairs		[.098]^	
Priming Corruption		[-.002]	
Priming Crime		[-.072]	
Government-Fair AS			[.071]
Government-Honest AS			[.210]**
Government-Caring AS			[.124]*
Government-Efficient AS			[.063]
Government-Knowledge. AS			[.027]
Partisanship	[-.037]	[.021]	[.035]
Political Interest	[-.033]	[-.019]	[-.015]
Age	[-.016]	[-.022]	[-.007]
Gender	[.071]	[.074]	[.035]
Education	-.021	-.043	.006
Constant	4.425(.426)**	5.726 (.437)**	3.512(.601)**
R^2	.106	.025	.186
N	517	517	543

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Media impact on Political participation: The consequences of attribute agenda-setting and priming

The next path of analysis examined the relationship of measures of media use, agenda setting effects, and political trust with political participation with SEM analysis. H6a that predicted a negative relationship between political trust and overall participation was supported by both SEM models. The coefficient between political trust and participation in the independent media model (-.078) is significant at .5 level, while this coefficient in the partisan media model (-.069) is significant at .10 level. These data suggest a negative relationship between political trust and political participation, implying that people with lower levels of trust in political institutions are more likely to be politically active in general across a range of political behavior measures.

Moreover, the data suggest a positive relationship between 'Attribute agenda-setting' measure and political participation. The positive and significant coefficients (.393 and .375, for independent and partisan media respectively) imply that cognitive effects of mass media lead to more politically engaged citizens supporting hypothesis H6d. No significant relationship was found between "Attribute priming" index and participation (H6e). A further direct significant relationship was detected between media newspaper and radio use and political participation for both models. The data in SEM Model 1 account for about 13 % of variations in the participation variable while the data in SEM Model 2 accounted for more than 16%.

Additional OLS regression models were performed to parcel out the relationships between exogenous and mediating variables and different types of political engagement. The results are presented in Table 15. The data in Model 1 and 3 suggest that political trust had a significant negative relationship with institutional participation but not also with voting, only partially confirming hypothesis H6b. Moreover, no significant relationship was found for un-

institutional participation, even though the coefficient for political trust was negative (H6b). The coefficients for "Attribute agenda-setting" index continued to be positive and significant for both types of participation in Model 1 and 2, confirming hypothesis H6d, but it was not significantly related to voting. Moreover, newspaper media use also continued to maintain a positive significant coefficient when parceling out the two types of participation. However, for voting only television use had a statistically significant coefficient (.179 for partisan television) while positive attribute priming had a negative coefficient with voting that approached significance (.-.088).

Overall, the data of this study imply that the relationship between media use and political participation is quite complex. On one hand, these path analyses suggest that newspapers and radio have a positive direct effect on un-institutional and most forms of institutional participation except voting. Only partisan television is a significant positive indicator for voting. Moreover, media use also seems to have an indirect significant relationship with different forms of participation, as channeled through attribute agenda-setting. However, "Attribute agenda-setting" index has a positive relationship with un-institutional and institutional participations except voting, while "Attribute priming" index has a negative relationship only with voting.

Table 15. OLS regressions for political participation

	Model 1 Institutional Participation	Model 2 Un-institutional Participation	Model 3 Voting
TV-independent	.056	.128^	.129^
TV-partisan	-.017	.106	.179*
Radio-independent	.027	.045	.025
Radio-partisan	.031	.044	.041
NP-independent	.171**	.110*	-.041
NP-partisan	.256**	.184**	-.021
Attribute priming	.008	-.013	-.088^
Attribute agenda-setting	.335**	.319**	.086
Political Trust	-.182**	-.009	-.027
Partisanship	.264**	.088*	.067
Political Interest	-.045	-.102*	.155**
Age	-.017	-.111**	.165**
Gender	.161**	.225**	.010
Education	.066	.064	.178**
Constant	1.640(.574)**	1.949(.857)*	.764 (.354)*
R^2	.298	.266	.132
N	517	517	517

Note: **p<.01, **p<.05, ^ p<.10. This table presents Standardized Coefficients (Betas).

Comparing Independent vs. Partisan Media effects: A Structural Equation Modeling approach

The next step in the analysis was employing structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques to test the hypothesized assumptions of this study. SEM has several advantages compared to multiple regression analysis. SEM techniques provide the ability to test models with multiple dependent variables while testing coefficients across multiple between-subjects groups. Further, it provides the means to model mediating variables rather than be restrictive to an additive model and to include in the model the error terms. Finally, SEM statistics allows for the overall model testing rather than just testing coefficients individually, while SEM strategy provides comparisons of alternative models to asses relative model fit, which makes it a more robust statistical procedure than the mere regression analysis (see Kline, 2011). To examine the

simultaneous effects of media use, agenda setting, and priming on political participation, we employed two different SEM analytic strategies using AMOS. We determined if the pattern of variances and covariances in the data is consistent with a path model specified by this study, and seek for alternative models that might fit our data best.

To determine the best fit between the data and each approach, we compared the relative performance of tested models across several "goodness-of-fit" fit statistic tests which compare the observed covariance matrix to the one estimated on the assumption that the model being tested is true. Whereas a large number of fit statistics exists, researchers commonly recommend and tend to report at least three fit test from different categories (Jaccard & Wan, 1996; Kline, 1998, 2011): chi-square (CMIN), RMSE, one of the baseline fit measures (NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, CFI), and in case when comparing multiple models, one information theory measures (AIC, BIC, CAIC, BCC, ECVI, MECVI).

The most basic model test statistic is chi-square (χ^2), which tests "if the covariate matrix implied by the researcher's model is close enough to the sample covariate matrix that the differences might reasonably be considered as being due to sampling error" (Kline, 2011, p.193). Kline (2011) refers to this test also as the "badness-of-fit" index since the statistically significant result (p<.5) indicates problematic model-data correspondence. The chi-square value that is not statistically significant denotes lower deviance within data and thus a good model fit.

However, the model chi-square is considered to be very conservative and sensitive to the sample size, thus prone to the Type II error. In very large samples (N> 200-300), "it is possible that rather small model-data discrepancies can result in a statistically significant value of χ^2" (Kline, 2011, p.201). Thus, to reduce the sensitivity of the sample size, several authors propose the use of the value of χ^2 divided by its degrees of freedom (called normed chi-square). The

accepted values of χ^2/df ranges from values as low as 2 (Carmines & McIver, 1981; Ulman, 2001) to as high as 5 (Bollen, 1989; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004), for a model fit to be acceptable.

The other fit statistics used in this study are the 'Root Mean Square Error of Approximation' (RMSEA), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Akaiki Information Criterion (AIC). RMSEA is an accept-support test where failure to reject the null hypothesis favors the researcher's model. RMSEA values closer to zero indicate the best fit, whereas the accepted norm value of RMSE≤.05 represents a "good fit" while the value of .08 an "adequate fit" (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004, p.82). CFI compares the existing model fit with a null model which assumes the indicator variables in the model are uncorrelated (the "independence model"). Even though this index does not indicate the significance by statistical tests, its values above .95 have traditionally been regarded desirable for a model to have a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). AIC is a goodness-of-fit measure that adjusts model chi-square to penalize for lack of model parsimony, reflecting a discrepancy between model-implied and observed covariance matrices. The absolute value of AIC has no intuitive value, except by comparison with another AIC, in which case the lower AIC reflects the better-fitting model.

Model Specification and modification. To identify the best fitting model for our data, we started by fitting a saturated model with all structural paths freed up to be estimated for both models in our study, the 'Independent Media Model' and the 'Partisan Media Model.' That is, all news media use variables were set to have a direct influence on agenda setting indexes, political trust and participation. Then, we trimmed each model by removing all non-significant paths within both models, which we present in this study as our final models.

As indicated in Table 16, these models fit the data best and explain the same amount of variance in the criterion variable (political participation) as the saturated and theorized models while providing the most parsimonious solutions. Examining the performance of these models, we notice a decrease in the values of χ^2/df, RMSEA and AIC in the trimmed models indicating that a better fit for our data. Given these results and the principle of parsimony we accept these models as final models to be discussed further.

Table 16. Fit Statistics of the structural equation models

	AIC	CFI	RMSEA	χ^2(df, p)	χ^2/df	R^2 (%)
Independent Media Model						
Model 1: Saturated[a]	88.00	1.00	---	---	---	
Model 2: Theorized[b]	88.02	.991	.043	10.02 (df=5, p=.075)	2.00	13
Model 3: Trimmed[c]	74.75	.993	.020	20.75 (df=17, p=.238)	1.221	13
Partisan Media Model						
Model 1: Saturated[a]	88.00	1.00	---	----	---	
Model 2: Theorized[b]	98.549	.973	.075	20.549 (df=5, p=.001)	4.110	16
Model 3: Trimmed[c]	97.928	.957	.055	39.93 (df=15,p=.000)	2.662	17

Note: AIC is the Akaiki information criterion. RMSEA is the root mean squared error of approximation. R^2 is the squared multiple correlation coefficients for structural equations.
[a] This is the fully saturated model with all structural paths freed to be estimated
[b] This is the model with only the theorized paths freed to be estimated
[c] This is the trimmed model (final model) with all non-significant paths removed.

Results. Figure 3 presents the AMOS estimates of the structural relationships between NFO, independent media use, agenda setting indexes, political trust and participation. Overall, this model fits the data very well, yielding a χ^2=.238 (χ^2/df=1.221), RMSEA=.020, and CFI=.993. The coefficients for this model are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Structural equation model coefficients for the independent media model

Paths	Standardized	Unstandardized		
	Coefficients	Coefficient	S.E.	S.R.
NFO				
→TV news	--	--	--	--
→Radio News	--	--	--	--
→Newspaper News	.189	2.660**	.592	4.490
Attribute agenda-setting				
→NFO	.092	.138*	.064	2.169
→TV news	-.078	-.007^	.004	-1.832
→Radio News	--	--	--	--
→Newspaper News	--	--	--	--
Attribute priming				
→NFO	--	--	--	--
→TV news	--	--	--	--
→Radio News	--	--	--	--
→Newspaper News	.076	.001^	.000	1.578
→Attributes agenda-setting	.303	.050**	.007	7.299
Political Trust				
→TV news	--	--	--	--
→Radio News	--	--	--	--
→Newspaper News	--	--	--	--
→Attributes agenda-setting	.693	3.955**	.177	22.409
→Attribute priming	.088	3.057**	1.095	2.792
Political Participation				
→TV news	--	--	--	--
→Radio News	.074	.055^	.029	1.871
→Newspaper News	.140	.059**	.017	3.507
→Attributes agenda-setting	.393	1.536**	.224	6.854
→Attribute priming	.088	3.057**	1.095	2.792
→Political Trust	-.115	-.078*	.039	-1.996

Note. ^ p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01. Only the significant paths are reported here.

The relationship observed in this model suggests that independent media use for political information contributes to citizens learning about institutional traits and issue performance, which in turn affects political trust and participation. However, this relationship is not consistent across all media types. Instead, the use of television news is negatively associated with "Attribute agenda-setting" index (γ= -.078, p=.060), while newspaper use has a positive relationship with "Attribute Priming" index (γ=.076, p=.070).

Further, both "Attribute agenda-setting" (β=.639, p=.000) and "Attribute priming" (β=.088, p=.005) yield significant positive association with political trust. That is, people who adopt the media agenda on institutional positive traits and issue performance are more trusting of the political institutions in general. These two variables account for about 53% of variance in political trust. Finally, political participation has a positive relationship with "Attribute agenda-setting" (β=.393, p=.000), while it has a negative relationship with trust (β=-.115, p=.040). A significant positive direct relationship is also observed between participation and newspaper use (β=.140, p=.000) and radio use (β=.074, p=060). These variables account for 13% of variance in participation.

These results indicate that independent newspaper use has a dual relationship with participation, through a direct positive effect and an indirect negative effect operating through agendas setting measure and trust. Moreover, television news use for political information yielded only an indirect negative relationship with participation that operated through "Attribute sgenda-setting" and trust (see Table 17). Worth noting is that only radio use is found to have a direct effect on political participation ($\gamma = .074$, $p < .060$) when all other paths are considered simultaneously.

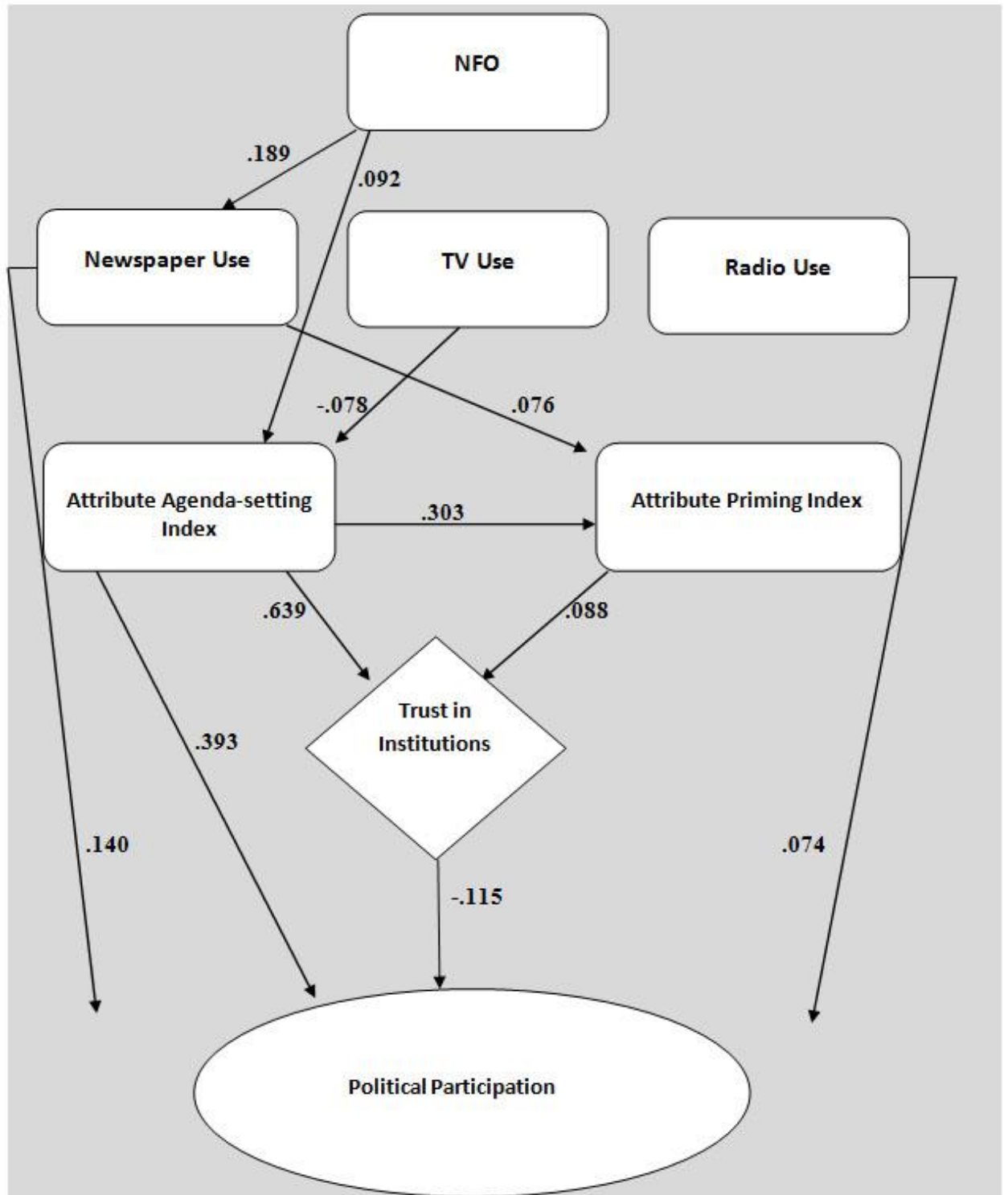**Figure 3. Structural equation model for independent media**

Figure 4 represents the results from the partisan media model. This model also yields a good fit to the data, with χ^2= 39.93, 15 degrees of freedom, for a ratio below 3 (χ^2/df= 2.66); RMSEA=.055, and CFI=.957. The coefficients are presented in Table 18.

The results presented here show a different indirect relationship between partisan media use and politician trust and participation, providing more support to the thesis that partisan media use for political information contributes more to citizens learning about institutional traits and issue performance. Both, partisan television use (γ=.103, p=.001) and radio use (γ=.137, p=.014) have a significant positive relationship with "Attribute agenda-setting." Moreover, partisan newspaper use (γ=.072, p=.080) and television use (γ=.079, p=.057) have a slight positive relationship with "Attribute priming" index. These data are consistent with our results from the OLS regression models and previous research in the field that found a significant relationship between media use and attribute agenda setting effects.

However, only "Attribute agenda-setting" effects had a positive significant relationship with political trust (β=.719, p=.000) and participation (β=.375, p=.000). Similar to the Independent Media model, partisan media use for political information had no direct effects on trust, while newspaper use (β=219, p=.000) and radio use (β=.076, p=.050) had a significant positive direct relationship with participation. These variables account for about 52% of political trust variance and more than 16% of variance in participation.

Overall, as the decomposed effects imply that partisan television and radio use for political information have an indirect effect on political trust operating through "Attribute agenda-setting." Moreover, newspaper and radio use have a direct and indirect positive effect on participation (operating through agenda-setting and priming effects and trust), while television has only a marginal indirect positive relationship with participation.

Table 18. Structural equation model coefficients for the partisan media model

Paths	Standardized Coefficients	Unstandardized		
		Coefficient	S.E.	S.R.
NFO				
→TV news	.082	1.398*	.723	1.934
→Radio News	.089	.827*	.394	2.099
→Newspaper News	--	--	--	--
Attributes agenda-setting				
→NFO	--	--	--	--
→TV news	.103	.009*	.004	-1.832
→Radio News	.137	.022**	.007	.3.258
→Newspaper News	--	--	--	--
Attribute Priming				
→NFO	--	--	--	--
→TV news	.079	.001*	.000	1.900
→Radio News	.072	.002^	.000	1.724
→Newspaper News	.066	.001^	.000	1.578
→Attributes agenda setting	.298	.049**	.007	7.162
Political Trust				
→TV news	--	--	--	--
→Radio News	--	--	--	--
→Newspaper News	--	--	--	--
→Attributes agenda-setting	.719	4.110**	.169	24.268
→Attribute priming	---	---	---	---
Political Participation				
→TV news	--	--	--	--
→Radio News	.076	.049^	.029	1.871
→Newspaper News	.219	.127**	.023	5.588
→Attribute agenda-setting	.375	1.471**	.227	6.474
→Attribute priming	---	---	---	---
→Political Trust	-.101	-.069^	.037	-1.798

Note. ^ p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01. Only the significant paths are reported here.

Figure 4. Structural equation model for partisan media
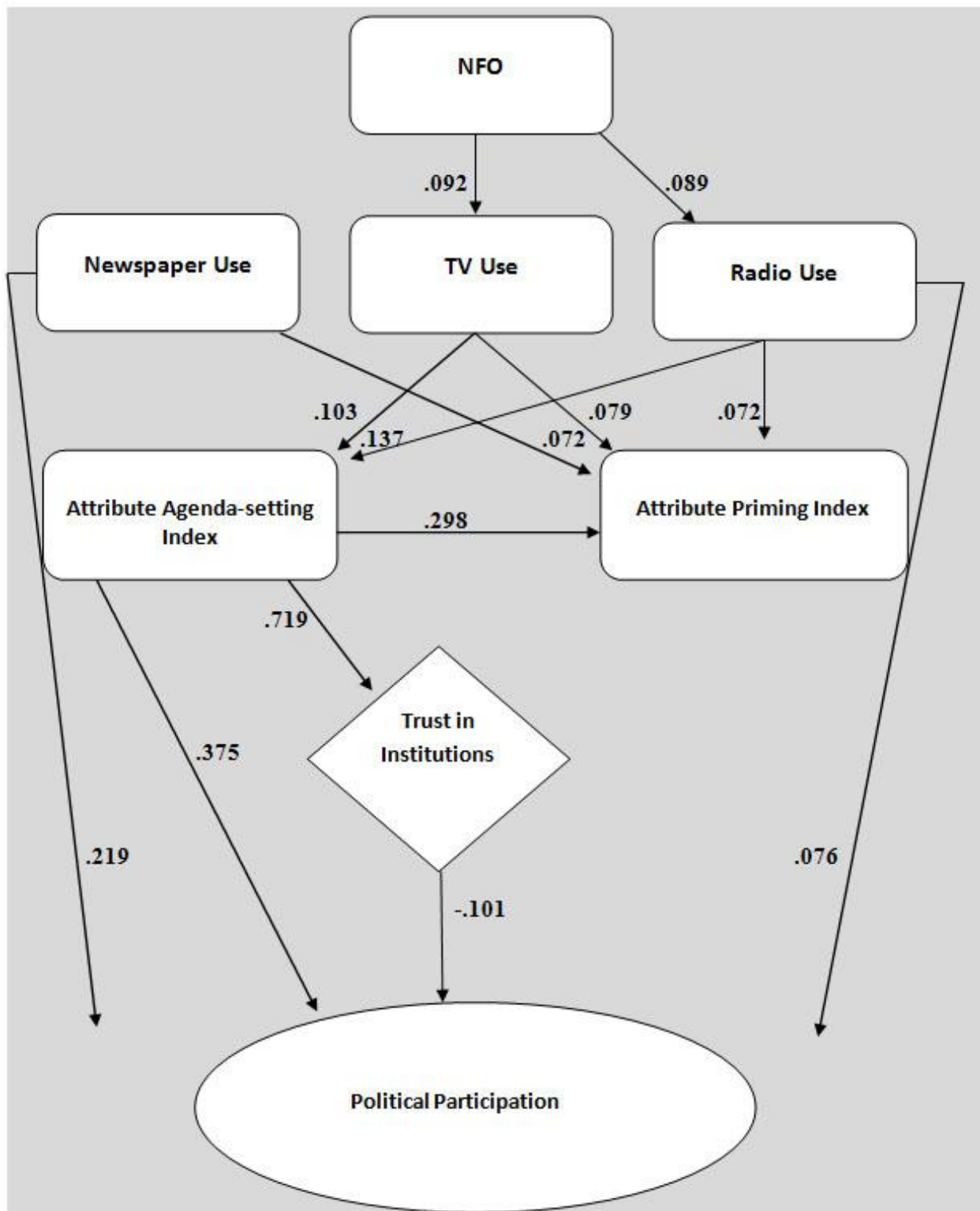
Explaining Media Effects in a Transitional Society: Qualitative Analysis

Citizens' attitude regarding media coverage of politics and institutions

Similar to the previous public opinion research, the results of this study suggests that Kosovo citizens are quite interested in information about public affairs. More than 37% of the survey respondents claimed to be extremely interested (10.7%) or very interested (26.4%) in information about what's going on in government or politics, whereas another 31.8% of the respondents claimed to be moderately interested. In a similar public opinion poll conducted with a representative sample of Kosovo adults citizens, Gallup found that on a scale from 1 (do not pay much attention to current affairs) to 5 (pay a lot of attention), 26% of the respondents selected 5 as their response, 9% said 4, and 13% said 3 (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2008). Moreover, another recent study found that about 60% of Kosovo citizens have a high to moderate interested in following election campaign news (Kosovo Democratic Institute, 2008).

Interest in public affairs information is fueled by multiple changes and uncertainties which transitional societies such as Kosovo undergo. The focus group participants pointed to the fact that it is impossible to escape politics when it "rules our lives." Amir, a sociology student, claims "Main evening news are known for their political reporting. Every news item is about politics. Thus, we as common citizens that make the majority cannot escape but get acquainted with political issues."

Participants of our focus groups appeared to be very informed and maintain strong opinions about what's going on in their country. They were concerned about multiple political issues that include the issue of Kosovo statehood, such as international recognition and integration, and Kosovo territorial integrity; but were mostly interested and worried about the slow economic development, high unemployment and high corruption in their country, and the

rule of law. They mostly agree that there has been some political and economic progress during the last decade of post-war Kosovo transitions.

However, the dissatisfaction of the group with the progress made during the last decade was emphasized during the dialog between Durim (a 21-year old English language and literature student), Zana (a 21-year old paralegal at the Kosovo Judiciary Chamber) and Shpendi (an economy student).

> **DURIM:** *We have to consider that we are a country in transition. I think there have been some positive developments. If you compare us with other countries that have gone through a war and have not shown so much progress as we have. ..if we have a fair judgment then we must say that we must be satisfied.*

> **ZANA:** *I agree with Durim. It's correct to say that Kosovo is a country that just came out of a war…still in transition. Just two years ago we were still building the country, under international supervision. We have two political branches fighting for power, one that came out of the war and the other composed of academics and intellectuals. They clash on their political approaches while the internationals have the power over them and do not give them much ground to get experience in policy-making. I believe that due to the lack of their political experience we have this situation today in Kosovo.*

> **SHPENDI:** *…I would say that the people who spoke just now are only partially right. The government mainly invested in things that are visible by plain sight like roads and infrastructure. However there is much stagnation in other processes such as justice. I am aware that they could not do miracles, however ten years is not a short period of time and in many aspects there are stagnations.*

Particularly, participants express their criticism and distrust towards politicians and political parties whom they identify as the main culprits for the Kosovo problems. Amir thought that most of the political parties in Kosovo lack political maturity and clear political platforms. Zana, a law student, claimed that in Kosovo "political parties emerge like mushrooms after the rain. We see groups and people who have no political background…they might only be some kind of intellectuals or academics in their respective fields." Behxheti, a 37 years old publisher, expressed his distrust by claiming "you know that a certain political candidate goes on television

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and lies and then asks you to give him your vote." Nazmiu, a 70 years old mechanic, stated "Politicians did not bring any achievements, they make many promises but they do not implement any of them." Mire, a 35 years female student, asserted that politicians, old and new, are not interested in doing anything for the people and "all the parties, those in power and those in opposition, fight for their own interests."

This study was interested to investigate what were the main sources of information for citizens of Kosovo and the reasons why they select particular media source for their news. Similar to previous research, our survey findings indicated that the majority of Kosovo citizens rely on television news for their political information, with more than 57% claiming they watch TV news seven days a week. More than half of people who consume television news, claimed to do so on the RTK, Kosovo public television service (58.6%), followed by the private televisions KTV (24.5%) and RTK21 (16.4%). Also, all focus group participants mentioned television as their primary source of news, with the three national televisions being mentioned the most.

Their decisions for news source selection seemed to be affected mainly by their trust in the particular media. A recent national survey with a representative sample of Kosovo adults suggested that 17% of the respondents believed all the information they got from the media, while 10% believed none. This study suggested that the majority of the Kosovo citizens (65%) only partially believed in the information they received from mass media (UNDP, 2008). This trend was depicted also among the focus groups participants of this study. Xhuli, a 43 years old maintenance lady, claimed to trust the media "to some degree." Mehdiu, a 49 years old taxi driver, said he trusted only about 30% of the information he gets form the media. Rajmonda, a 21 years old arts student, thought that about 80% of the media in Kosovo were biased. Bedriu, a 22 year old architecture student, claimed that media in Kosovo "lack neutrality. The issues are

mostly presented from the government's side or opposition's side. There is not neutral reporting."

However, the majority of focus group participants claimed that overall they manage to extract from the media reporting a somewhat accurate picture of what's going on in the country. The strategy they seem to have adopted to achieve a balanced picture of their world was by consuming news at least from two different mediums. This feature came out especially during a conversation in the focus groups with older generations, between Suzana, a 39 years old teacher, Dani (a 47 years old unemployed broadcasting technician), Hajrie (a 47 years old municipality public service worker), Behxhet (a 37 years old publisher), and Remziu (70 years old mechanic):

> *SUZANA: I like to watch the news. I usually watch the news on television, most often on KTV and RTK since I am convinced that they are the most serious news programs.*
>
> *DANI: I also mostly watch RTK, which I trust the least. I like to watch the news also from media I do not trust. I get the reliable information from other local media whom I trust to some degree, but also international media.*
>
> *HAJRIE: I think RTK is the most reliable of them all.*
>
> *BEHXHET: I don't agree, I also do not trust RTK at all. We all know that RTK is a medium contorlled by the governing party, thus why would I waste half an hour of my time to watch their news? How is possible for a publik medium to be at the same time on the side of the public but also on the side of the government?*
>
> *SUZANA: I do not care which party is RTK alighned with, I am a non-partisan person. But, I like to watch their news. At the end of the day I try to come up with a medium truth about what's going on in Prishtina. If I like some news, I listen to it more carefully.*
>
> *REMZIU: I believe that KTV reports the news somewhat differently from RTK. I am aware that RTK sides with the government. However, I watch news on both RTK and KTV and in between the two of them I derive a medium which represents the truth.*

Focus group participants in this study were aware that the information presented to them in any particular medium was not totally complete. One of the main obstruction to the media reporting that emerged from the conversations in these focus groups was the political control of mass media in Kosovo. However, the participants pointed out that there are differences between different media with regard to political biases. When asked about their opinion on how the media in Kosovo cover the political news in the focus group with young people, Bedriu (an architecture student), Morfina (a philology university student), Amir (a sociology student), Etnike (an economy student), and Zana (the law student) expressed their views in this dialog:

> *BEDRIU: I usually watch the Parliament's sessions on TV. Whenever the situation gets tense the broadcasting is cut off and then only a short summary is reported during the evening news. Not everything is reported.*

> *MORFINA: I would say that media in Kosovo usually report the news in the same way. I cannot' say that they do not report issues, because they try hard and it's not their fault. The politics in Kosovo is very blurry and mysterious, nobody knows what's going on.*

> *AMIRI: I think that a short analysis of the news can give you the overall picture what's going on in Kosovo politics…the media mostly report about politics…I think we need to be aware and categorize the media into those that are politically biased and those that are not biased.*

> *ETNIKE: I do not agree with Amir that a short analysis of the news will provide you with all the information what's going on. All people in politics operate as a chain, the leader of a party has his own people behind…I think that he controls what are the issues that we need to know about. Nobody gives out all the information.*

> *ZANA: …I think Amir expressed a fair observation, there are differences on how the media report on issues.*

If most of our focus group participants believed that the media were controlled and politicized to a great degree, there wasn't as much agreement as to which media fell into the partisan group. The dialog between Bajram K., the 60 years old book seller, and Noli, the 20

years old economy student, especially emphasizes the generational differences when it comes to assessing media bias.

> **BAJRAM K.:** *I think KTV has the most professional journalists, people who know their profession such as Adriatik Kelmendi, the moderator of Rubikon. Regarding newspapers, I think "Express" (the daily) is at the top of the media list. They go deep into the essence of the stories…I do not agree with the student who claims that the information that comes from the media is distorted. I cannot believe that, because I know that the news is selected by an editorial committee, and if they only publish positive news about Prime minister of the President, what is left for them then?*

> **NOLI:** *I do not agree with 'uncle Bajram,' especially when it comes to "Express."*

> **BAJRAM K.:** *But, their news is always fresh…*

> **NOLI:** *Yes, but only a couple of days ago, the editor-in-chief and some of their leading journalists publicly claimed to support PDK. I mean, it has been continually evident that the "Express" editors, Berat Buzhala, Petrit Selimi, and Ilir Mirena, had a pro-PDK attitude. I think that a newspaper that claims to be 'a free media' should not be politicized (politically biased); but if they publicly claim to be PDK's newspaper, then it is OK. Moreover, if the editor-in-chief becomes the party member, it is evident that they have been looking after the interests of this party and its leader Hashim Thaci, meaning the government.*

> **BAJRAM K.:** *Everywhere in the world is a practice that some media side with some political parties. Let's not make it sound like a tragedy if the public television or some newspaper has a pro-government bias. It's all a matter of professionalism. Do you think that Thaci (the Prime Minister) has nothing better to do than go and tell the television do not cover this or that issue?*

Noli elaborated that bias is manifested through different levels, "it's not only about how you are reporting on an issue, but also it's about which news you are emphasizing and reporting first, whom are you mentioning in your news the most." He pointed that the Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci, was on TV all the time and if you "keep seeing him on TV constantly you will start to think he is a good person indeed. But he is not good, it means he is just controlling that television." Noli also brought the attention of his focus group fellows to the KFRO

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advertisement that was airing on TV about security. "If you think about security in Kosovo, it is not good, it could explode any minute. But you see the ads and keep thinking it looks like we are secure. This is how the public is calmed down and controlled," claimed Noli while most participants in his group nodded in agreement.

Focus group participants also pointed out the lack of professionalism in the field. When asked to assess what they deemed to be lacking in the media reporting about current affairs in Kosovo, Alltone, emphasized the lack of investigative journalism in Kosovo. According to her investigative journalism and in-depth reporting on controversial issues depended on the strength of oppositional parties in Kosovo. "There is investigative journalism as far as the opposing parties are contradicting teach other," she said. Kadri, a 56 years old businessman, justified the lack of investigative journalism with the lack of resource and budgets that would support such expensive journalism in Kosovo.

Yet, Nysrete, a 62 years old teacher, complained that even when guests were invited in a TV studio, the questions asked by all journalists were the same "as if those questions were a routine." Amiri though that journalists were afraid to report on sensitive issues. For example, "if they report on prostitution and night clubs, and they are threatened for doing so, probably they will not report on it anymore." Durim didn't agree with him, claiming that if all journalists were reporting on it as a group threats would not work as much. "What if they all write about it…two hundred of them?" Burimi, a 30 years old doctor, maintained that journalists did not have enough qualifications, in terms of education and experience, to deal with hard-core political and social issues. According to him, to be able to be a good journalist they needed to be knowledgeable about issues "at the rank of a diplomat. If you want to interview properly a diplomat, you need to be in the same level as the person you are interviewing." Moreover, Leonora, a 32 years old

female working at the Airport, complained about the style of newspaper article writing which she described as 'bombastic' titles with shallow and boring content.

Attitudes towards media coverage of privatization. This study decided to concentrate parts of the focus group discussions on specific issues that have dominated the public and the media agenda during the time this study was conducted. One of the most salient issues that emerged during the survey research and the media content analysis research was the issue of privatization, or the redistribution of socially owned assets to private individuals or enterprises. Following the end of the Kosovo conflict, the economy of the country was in shambles due to years of underinvestment and mismanagement. The international community administering Kosovo during the last decade decided to rely on the privatization of the socially owned enterprises as the most important elements of the economic revitalization of Kosovo and international statebuilding process (Knudsen, 2010).

Similar to other post-socialist countries, privatization has been a politically charged process in Kosovo. Whereas the Kosovo local government has gone along with the privatization policies set up by the international community in Kosovo, civil society association and some oppositional parties have deemed this whole process inadequate and a failure. Critics claim that the manner in which privatization is being implemented in Kosovo, it is causing an immense trade deficit in the country and failing to attract serious foreign and domestic investments (KIPRED, 2005), its legislation fails to protect individual rights of the people involved, and does not provide for transparency of the process (OSCE, 2008) leading to corruptive affairs within administration.

During the period this study was conducted, the privatization process of the Post Telecom of Kosova (PTK) was in full heat of a national debate in Kosovo. In early summer 2010, the

Kosovo Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci, announced the strategy for the PTK privatization according to which 75% of the company's assets would be sold to private investors. This strategy faced resistance in the Parliament by the LDK party - Thaci's governing partner - and oppositional parties, as well as from the civil society. The critics claimed that the PTK was one of the most profitable companies in Kosovo and the current global economic crises would not permit a fair assessment of its value in the market.

Whereas not all the focus group participants of this study engaged in this conversation, the ones who did had strong opinions. Similar to the general public opinion in Kosovo, the opinions on this issue were divided. Leonora and Mendihu, the older participants in the mixed cohort group agree that privatization is a "good thing for our country." Referring to the case of the Pristina Airport where she worked, Leonora described the dire conditions in which this public company was "we did not have drinking water the whole summer…I think the government cannot administer this company. When the private owner comes in, I am sure I won't be without drinking water." According to Mehdiu, the privatization "makes things better. There is not corruption, no dishonesty because it's in private hands. Also the wages of the workers are better."

Still, Noli, the 20 years economic student, did not agree claiming that in Kosovo "privatization is a political issue…We have the law that mandates privatization at any costs and without asking anybody…to privatize Airport, KEK (Kosovo Electric Corporation), the PTK…all these are strategic assets for Kosovo."

As to the media reports on the privatization issue, Noli claimed that his views and the views of people opposing the privatization process in Kosovo were not represented in the media reports. "Every day we see Dell (the U.S. ambassador in Kosovo) supporting privatization, we

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see Hashim (Kosovo prime minister) on TV emphasizing everything must be privatized, no voice against privatization…the negative effects of privatization have never been discussed on television," said Noli. Most of the other participant agreed with Noli that the media have not elaborated the negative effects of privatization for their audiences.

> *MIRE: I think that the population is not directly informed about everything. Some of us are knowledgeable more or less about these things. However 70% of the rest of the Kosovo citizens are not aware what's going on with the PTK, for example.*
>
> *BAJRAM K.: I agree completely that the media did not treat this issue properly. Not even the workers of the factory where I used to work were informed. Where is now Ramiz Sadiku (the textile factory) which used to be to be a huge economic giant? Media do not write about this.*

Because the perception of news coverage of a particular issue might be more affected by personal biases when discussed in abstract terms, we decided to show to the participants of this focus group three different news pieces from national televisions covering the same story on the privatization of PTK. This strategy also provided with concrete examples to gauge how citizens perceive specific news content and to investigate further how they differentiate between different news channels.

Again, participants emphasized that overall the news reports lacked background information about the issue of PTK privatization and did not provide an in-depth analysis of the important arguments. For example as Leonora stated, "if I am in Kosovo for the first time and I look for some explanations of this issue, there was nothing in those reports. There was a lack of a summary explanation why is the privatization happening. What's in it for the citizens? The report only seemed to scare the people, creating panic." According to her, the information provided in the reports was more addressing important issues for the government than for the people. Mehdiu agreed claiming that if the news reports "explained to the people what does

privatization mean in reality, what are the benefits and losses of Kosovo from it, maybe the issue would not come to the situation in which we have mass protests."

However, participants with stronger political views did seem to differentiate more strongly between news reports on the three televisions. This issue invoked their partisan attitude towards this particular issue. The youngest participants, critical of the government, tended to accuse the public television reports as biased and pro-governmental and express a more favorable view towards private television, especially KTV. However, the older participants had a more tolerant view towards the pro-governmental bias in the public media.

> *NOLI: It was evident that RTK and TV21 transmitted more or less the same declarations (from the protest speeches). For example, RTK did not show Visar from Vetvendosja, only his name was mentioned. Moreover, the timing of the reports was the same for both televisions. There were little differences, for example TV21 gave space to Visar, however the images from the protest participants were few, suggesting that only a small group of people from PTK protested…However, in the report from KTV all three speakers were presented including Visari, and their statements were different from RTK and TV21. Moreover, only KTV mentioned that PTK was a profitable institution. This shows that KTV has some editorial independence, while RTK and TV21 are biased and show unimportant information without context.*

> *BAJRAM K.: We saw some difference, especially the report from TV21was a catastrophe as always. First of all, the journalist does not have a radiophone voice. Second, the information presented there were less up-to-dated and the pictures were not as complete as those presented in the KTV report. When it comes to RTK, we should not forget that this is a public television, and its nature as such is to be more reserved. After all it is a television representing the state.*

> *NOLI: Take a look at BBC. That is also a public television.*

> *BAJRAM K.: Yes, but England has been a country more than 200 years. We have been only for 2 years.*

> *MIRE: Exactly because RTK is publicly owned, it should be more open and not subject to influences by the political parties that come and go.*

> *BURIM: I agree with Noli. KTV (report) was more liberal, it was not one-dimensional but two-dimensional. It was evident that their camera was showing us a different perspective…I don't know why, maybe because it is a private*

company. However, it is owned by a person who used to be a party leader, who is not in such position anymore officially but has direct relationships with politics. Thus, we cannot expect miracles from this them either…

Attitudes towards media coverage of corruption. The second topic we used to gauge how television viewers perceive news content they perceive and how they differentiate between various media in the country, was corruption. Anecdotal evidence of high scales of corruption has continued to exist in Kosovo during the last decade of transition. Public opinion surveys have shown that corruption has been high on citizens agenda from at least 2007, with 30% of Kosovo citizens believing that there is large scale of corruption in 7 out of 14 public institutions of the country, while the rest believing there is some degree of corruption in all of them (UNDP, 2008).

In the Progress Report for Kosovo, published in 2010, European Commission reaffirmed the persistence of high level corruption in the country identifying it as the most problematic areas of this country's democratic development while fight against organized crime and corruption one of the weakest areas of progress by the country's institutions (EU Commission, 2009). The corruption debate dominated the public discourse in Kosovo especially during 2010 when the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) stared a wide hunt against "big fishes," alluding to the high-profile cases involved in corruptive activities (KIPRED, 2010).

Participants of our focus groups also believed that corruption was a persistent issue in Kosovo. However, they acknowledged the lack of evidence and persecution of such cases. "It's always talked about, but it is never documented or fought," claimed Nazmi. Etnike stated that actually the issue of corruption was not discussed enough in Kosovo while Altone considered that people do not know enough about it since there were little facts documented on this issue. Dani thought that the problem with corruption was tight with the problem of judiciary overload. According to him, the courts were overloaded with corruption cases and they did not have the

capacity or the will to deal with these cases given that "they were under pressure from corrupted people who were trying to prohibit the cases from being prosecuted." Besmir also believed that Kosovo lacked good mechanisms to fight corruption "otherwise it would disappear."

Participants admitted that most of what they knew about corruption came from media reports. They claimed to mostly trust the reports they read in newspapers or watch on TV, given that they were their only source of information in what's going on regarding this issue. However, participants of the focus group with older cohorts and well as young cohorts where the issue of corruption was discusses claimed that media reports about this issue were blurred and not very clear and straight-forward. Shpendi, a 23 years old student of economy claimed that there are instances when "some medium has the information in details, but they report about the case only indirectly." Besmiri, a 40 years old unemployed man, stated that media tend to only report "what somebody else said, and that's it." Suzana, the 39 years old teacher, added that media reports "do not say this is what so and so clamed, but they report the issue as blurred, not everything is black on while."

However, participants from two of the focus groups where corruption was discusses emphasized that there were discrepancies in media reports when they reported about EULEX corruption claims against Fatmir Limaj, the minister of Transport in Thaci's government. This was one of the most high profile cases of corruption that has been under the investigation of EULEX during the 2010. Dani pointed that reports on RTK and KTV and among the newspapers on this issue were quite different and the citizens were confused on what was going on. The media reports presented "a general truth or a skeleton of the truth that was superficially identical, but if you analyze their reports in more details you see that everybody interprets the issue in different ways." Altone thought that from the news reports people learned that huge sums have

been officially allocate to Limaj's accounts, but it was never learner the exact official sums, let alone the unofficial ones he is suspected of. "This case was reported in the media only 3-4 days, and then it disappeared. We know nothing," she said.

After watching news reports from national televisions on the EULEX investigations in the municipality of Skenderaj and corruption allegations against Sami Lushtaku and other municipal officials, the participants evaluated that reports on all televisions were more or less the same, even though they pointed to some differences between the public television and private televisions. Besmir and Suzana both evaluated that the private KTV had a more complete report on this issue than the public television RTK.

> *BESMIR: We all saw that in general the news reports were the same. Horever what distinguished KTV report was that they mentioned the names of the people who were advantaged during the distribution of appartmnets, while RTK menioned two people involved without mentionin ghtheir name. The information provided by the KTV journalist was definitely more broad than the information on RTK, even though they both reported on the same issue.*

> *SUZANA: Compared with RTK, we could notice that KTV gives more detailed information with names, pictures and other details that are usefull to understand th eissue...the images from the balconies of the appartment and the woman standing there signifying they were already inhabited...*

When asked to explain the differences in reporting, the same two arguments came out: political control and profesionalism. Morfina assessed that "a high level of media cenzure exists in Kosovo. Journalists do not have the freedom to report as they should." Dani agreed, adding that when it comes to reporting on sensitive issues media also exercise self-cenzure. However, he also stressed that in these matters the elements of professionalism matter a lot as well. According to Suzana, if journalists were skilled they would be able to use different strategies to report on sensitive issues without getting in troubles. Durimi stated "if we had good journalists, we would know much more about corruption. It's all about the courage."

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Chapter 6:

Discussion and Conclusions

This study confirms general assumptions that in societies undergoing political transitions, a free but also plural media system can serve one of its most basic democratic functions - provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing. To answer the fears of the skeptics: mass media *are* beneficial to the democratization process, as they keep the governing institutions under public opinion scrutiny while enhancing civic orientations that see citizens as active participants in a democracy. Rather than fearing media consequences for undemocratic reform (Bennet, 1998), the present study suggests that mass media contribute to citizens' trust in core institutions of democracy (Norris, 1999) enhancing the legitimacy of the political system as a whole (Linz & Stepan, 1996) and contribute to building partisan loyalties. However, instead of impacting overly trusting citizens, media uses for political information incite watchful citizens, knowledgeable about important issue and institutional performance on those issues

The present study confirms claims about the role of the media in strengthening democracy while providing the democratization literature with a significant variable for the development of a democratic culture in transitional societies. The results of this study support the "mobilization" thesis, suggesting the more people use mass media for political information, the more they tend to participate in different forms of political actions. Giving credit to the cognitive effects of mass media in a transitional society, this study provides evidence that citizens learn from the media about the efficacy and integrity of political institutions in their country, gaining an in-depth understanding of their general performance. Consequently, the information acquired through news media becomes an important dimension of attitude formation and trust towards those political institutions. This study, though, does not discredit totally some of the "malaise"

assumptions either, suggesting that under certain conditions media have a negative effect on some aspects of political trust. However, it provides theoretical argumentation and empirical evidence suggesting that by affecting different levels of political trust, mass media can create an environment in which citizens are not blindly submissive and trusting but neither totally distrustful of the political institutions in their country (Diamond, 1993; Inkeles, 1961). This is the first factor that contributes to a more participatory citizenry.

In congruence with findings in Western democracies, the results of this study also emphasize that media audiences in transitional societies are not complete slaves to the media messages. Rather, as the need for orientation approach explains, these audiences turn to mass media to fulfill certain information needs while being guided by their previous predispositions in regard to what particular sources of information they turn to. Consequently, as the evidence from this study suggests, media effects in a transitional society are more likely to crystallize previous predispositions (particularly political orientations) rather than induce opinion change. In fact, it can be argued that this might turn out to be a rather major role for the mass media in building partisan loyalties and stabilizing the volatile electorate, which seems to be characteristic for transitional societies. This factor makes loyal citizens more likely to participate in campaign activities and voting. However, I also maintain that such a role for the partisan press can be beneficial only in societies with a pluralistic media system that offers citizens access to a variety of opinions and points of view.

I summarize the findings of this dissertation by addressing the study hypothesis regarding media effects at the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral level and relating these results with the body of literature about media effects at each level. Along this process I derive implications for theory building and advancing the media effects scholarship. But, before I engage in such

analysis, I must asses political reporting in Kosovo news media, given that this study is conducted in a transitional society where the transition is also affecting the free media institutions.

Media Depiction of Institutions and Issues: Negative and Biased or Not?

The results of this study suggest that Kosovo media agendas are closely related to each other as they all emphasize more or less the same issues and objects in their news reports. These findings are compatible with results reported by the inter-media agenda-setting studies is Western countries (Boyle, 2001; Golan, 2006). One explanation for these results, according to Dearing and Rogers (1996), is that other media provide a cue to the real world that is impossible to observe directly: "News people operate in a special kind of environment, without much contact with their audience members. So they take their cues about an issue's priority from other media" (p.33). The inter-media agenda-setting process is also a consequence of professional norms about news values (McCombs, 2004) and the competitive setting of the news markets (Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004). These findings imply that in Kosovo, media coverage of political issues is influenced by professional values of free media institutions that operate in a market-led environment. Moreover, inter-media agenda-setting effects can be considered important evidence of media effects on behavioral consequences (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2008), the main aim of this study.

The results of this study suggest that the overall media depiction of political issues and institutions is dominated by a somewhat balanced reporting. The overall issue coverage across all media ranged from neutral to balanced. However, differences appeared when comparing the attributes of individual issues and individual institutions. While reports on "rule of law" and "foreign policy" issues had mostly positive valence, 'corruption' and 'economy' were mostly

reported with a negative tone. Similar to studies in the U.S. (Hallin, 1992; Robinson & Sheehan, 1983; Robinson & Appel, 1979; Moy & Pfau, 2000), our results suggest that mass media in Kosovo are more negative when reporting about government and parliament as they emphasize more the negative attributes. However, a more positive valence is emphasized when they report on the attributes of institutions of law and order, especially police and the military KFOR, and to a lesser degree courts and EULEX.

This study suggests that mass media are not indiscriminately negative towards all political institutions and issues, while their reporting provides nuanced depictions of different features of individual institutions and issues. These data contradict Patterson's (2003) claims of the predominance of negativity in news reports. Even though Kosovo media have adopted the Western model of journalism news values and professional norms, their reporting is not dominated by negativity. Rather, as Moy & Pfau (2000) found in their study, mass media do discriminate between issues and institutions rather than having an overall preference for negativity.

Some surprising differences emerged when comparing political reports between different media platforms, however. Radio news coverage was the most benign, with their coverage of political issues being slightly more positive than in other media, whereas their reports on political institutions' attributes were the most balanced of them all. On contrary, news reports on issue and institutional attributes were the most negative in newspapers. These findings are contrary to previous research that has found the most negative reporting on television news (Robinson, 1981; Hallin, 1992; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Robinson &Sheehan, 1983), while newspaper articles were found to be mostly neutral (Miller, Goldenberg, Erbring, 1979; Tidmarch & Pitney, 1985).

The differences in these findings might be explained by the way in which negativity was measured in different studies. In this study we analyzed the media emphasis not only on affective attributes but also on cognitive attributes of institutions. We can expect that cognitive attributes such as fairness, honesty, efficiency or knowledge will be more salient in news reports that are more investigative and analytic in nature, more typical of the press than broadcast media. It is documented that television news (we can include radio news as well) is heavily dominated by the "episodic" frame, political news reports that do not providing much thematic context that explain their meaning (Iyengar, 1991). However, consistent with previous research, this study found that newspaper reports were particularly negative towards government and parliament (Patterson, 1993; Robinson, 1981; Tidmarch & Pitney, 1985), but were fairly neutral or positive when covering other institutions in the country (Moy & Pfau, 2000).

More subtle nuances emerged when comparing news reports between politically independent and partisan oriented media. The results indicate that a slightly more negative valence emerged in independent media reports of political issues, while partisan media had a more overall positive tone. In a similar fashion, even though both independent and partisan media stressed the negative valence of Government and Parliament's traits the most, we noticed that partisan media relied slightly less on the negative valence and more on the positive one when reporting about the attributes of these institutions than the independent media. However, partisan media were less likely to emphasize the overall institutional attributes at all. These results suggest that independent media news tended to be more analytical and critical than partisan media, especially toward the administrative institutions, confirming our earlier predictions. The partisan media included in this study are considered to be influenced by and biased towards Hashim Thaci's government and his party that dominated the Kosovo parliament

while this study was conducted. However, this study implies that media biases in news reports in Kosovo media were not that obvious, but rather subtle, alluding to the media struggle for professionalism and objectivity.

Overall, the data of this dissertation suggest that political reporting in the transitional society of Kosovo is nuanced rather than uniform. Negativity is not overreaching, yet political biases are subtle. This study suggests that in general "once liberalized, television, radio, and the press in transitions allow diverse elites unprecedented opportunities to communicate with the mass public" (Gunther & Mughan, 2000, p.417), projecting a rather diverse picture of political affairs to their audiences. Thus, as Moy & Pfau (2000) suggested, "judgment about media influence on public perceptions of confidence must be confined to specific communication sources, concerning individual institutions and at particular points in time" (p.81).

Media impact on political knowledge and perceptions

Hundreds of studies published in mass communication have demonstrated that mass media play the "civic teacher role" in a democratic society by setting citizens' agenda on issues and subjects and their respective attributes, and by providing "food for thought" – the first step in public opinion formation and participation (McCombs, 2004). The present study confirms previous research while going on step beyond - presenting empirical data that agenda-setting effects of mass media have important consequences for citizens' political culture. The results from this dissertation not only robustly analyzed and updated the agenda-setting findings from previous research, but also test the explanatory power of this media theory in new territory providing a context to understand how agenda-setting effects mediate political trust and participation. Taking a larger view as McCombs (2004) suggest, this study provides evidence that the media agenda-

setting influence on "broad civic attitudes is far more important than any agenda-setting effects on specific issues and opinion" (p.137).

Similar to the second-level agenda-setting results found in Western countries, our study suggests that media content is related "to people's perceived salience of public issues (and objects), but also to their understanding of the substance of those issues (and subjects)," (Takeshita, 1997, p.27). Citizens of Kosovo learn from the news media about the efficacy and integrity traits of political institutions in their country, achieving an in-depth understanding of their general performance on the most important issues. McCombs (2004) refers to this process as the comprehension phase of the issues and objects, that derive as a consequence of "elements prominent in the mass media's presentation of the vast world affairs become(ing) prominent elements in our individual pictures of the world" (p.84). These findings hold strong not only with the aggregate data correlations, but also with individual level data controlling for other confounding variables. Moreover, confirming previous research on attribute priming, the results of this study suggest that the valence of issues emphasized in the media content become important dimensions when people judge institutional performance on those issues (Kim et al., 2002; Shaefer, 2007).

However, our results also point to several contingent conditions under which these effects are more likely to occur. First, they emphasize the importance of the media platform on which the information is reported. Newspaper use for political information has a significant positive relationship with "Attribute priming," suggesting that the more people get their news from newspapers the more they adopt the positive issue valence from the media content when judging institutional performance. Moreover, our data imply that electronic media also play an important role not only for the "Attribute priming" effects but also for the transfer of institutional attributes.

The positive relationship between television and radio news use and "Attribute agenda-setting" and "Attribute priming" indexes implies that the more people use electronic media for their political information the more they learn about positive traits of institutions as well as about their positive issue performance.

These results are compatible with several previous findings (McCombs et al 2000; McCombs et al, 1997) that suggested a close relationship between public's agenda with both the newspaper and television agendas. However, contrary to previous results, our individual level data suggest stronger second-level agenda-setting effects for television and radio than for newspapers. One possible explanation for these divergences might have to do with the agenda-setting and priming measurements. While previous studies have relied on aggregate data, differentiating between substantive and affective dimensions of issue and object attributes, both individual indexes used in this study represent a combination of these two dimensions. At least another study that used the similar individual level agenda-setting measures produced similar results indicating that the coefficient between television use and agenda-setting effects was slightly stronger (.16) than the coefficient that measured the relationship between newspaper use and agenda-setting effects (.14) (Jung Moon, 2009). Moreover, the analysis technique employed in this study, which measures the relationship between media use and attribute agenda-setting and priming indexes, while controlling for other effects at attitudinal and behavioral level as well as audience characteristics, is somehow different from traditional analysis of agenda-setting and priming effects.

Maybe most importantly, this dissertation makes a significant contribution in understanding how the source of political information mediates attribute agenda-setting and priming effects. This study differentiated between politically independent (objective) and

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partisan oriented types of media sources and engages the interaction between the concept of "Need for orientation" and "Selective Exposure" to explain citizen's motivations to seek information from specific media sources. Our data confirm Weaver and his colleagues' findings that NFO is a good predictor of media exposure while adding another intervening variable between NFO and exposure that explains the type of media source people with different levels of NFO are likely to seek.

High NFO people, those with high relevance and low uncertainty, are more likely to seek information from independent (objective) newspaper sources, while people with moderate-active NFO – indicating high relevance and low uncertainly – are more likely to use partisan television and radio sources. These data confirm that previous political ideology is a strong predictor of selective media exposure. In cases when people have strong political opinions they are more likely to be exposed to consonant or information they agree with and avoid dissonant or conflicting information which might cause psychological discomfort (Festinger, 1957; D'Alessio & Allen, 2002).

These findings expose important consequences for agenda-setting and priming effects as well. First, contrary to Matthes (2008), this study found a significant relationship between NFO and attribute agenda-setting and to some extent also with priming effects. People with moderate-active NFO levels showed the closest relationship between media agenda and citizen agenda regarding positive institutional attributes and regarding positive evaluations of institutional performance. However, only the relationship between NFO and agenda-setting effects remained positive and significant after testing this relationship through robust SEM analysis. Moreover, when comparing the agenda-setting and priming effects in the overall fit models, the data suggest that people exposed to partisan media were more likely to adopt the media agenda on positive

institutional attributes and were more likely to use the positive issue valence when judging institutional performance.

These results confirm previous research that found significant confounding effects of political ideology and partisanship on agenda-setting and priming effects (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Bizer & Petty, 2005; Carpentier et al., 2008). Strong partisans have an enhanced accessibility of partisan attitudes which makes them more reliant in their own belief system and more likely to generate favorable cognitive responses to messages consistent with their opinion (Young, 2004).

Together, these studies give credit to Kiousis & McCombs' (2004) observations that attitude change should not be "the only facet of attitudes that researchers should examine when exploring the impact of mass media, especially in the context of agenda setting" (p.38). Rather, our study points out that, in a politically polarized media environment, it might be more prudent to talk about reinforcement effects of mass media. As Blumler claims, "when people throw their identities into mass communication offerings, more often than not they will probably seek (and therefore presumably find) a reinforcement of what they personally appreciate, stand for, and value" (p.20). In addition, these findings provide further evidence that rather than occurring through accessibility-based model of information processing, attribute agenda-setting and priming effects occur through an active information processing mechanism during which the new information input is negotiated with previous knowledge and attitudes. These findings are in line with recent research that suggest that agenda setting and priming effects are "not likely to be a mindless and automatic process" (Takeshita, 2006, pp.278-279), but rather **"more thoughtful, deliberate process than previously thought"** (Miller and Krosnick, 2000, p. 312). Nevertheless, this does not negate the accessibility bias model, but merely implies, as Takeshita (2006) claims,

that "there might be two types of agenda setting: a deliberate 'genuine' agenda setting involving active inference and an automatic 'pseudo' agenda setting explained by the accessibility bias" (p.279).

Further, this study builds on and expands previous research that has explored the potential of agenda-setting research to explain the link between media use and political participation (Ghorpade, 1986; Roberst, 1992; Sheafer & Weimann, 2005; Kiousis and McDavid, 2008, Weaver, 1991). Similar to previous research, the results suggest that the relationship between agenda-setting effects and political participation is mediated by political attitudes, in the case of this study measured as political trust. However, the overall results of this dissertation hardly offer any support for claims of huge media effects on public opinion, but rather limited but significant impact that is channeled through different mediating conditions. Consistent with previous media effects literature, our results suggest that the salience of issues, objects and their attributes on the media agenda is more likely to strengthen preexisting attitudes (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004) or to "contribute(ing) to the crystallization of political predispositions, which lead to electoral participation," (Kiousis & McDavid, 2008, p.495).

Media Use, Political trust and Participation

This dissertation does not only provide a new theoretical perspective to examine the relationship between media use, political trust and participation, but also provides compelling empirical evidence that sheds new light on this relationship. Giving credit to the "malaise" and "mobilization" literature at the same time, the results of this dissertation suggest that media use for political information has a dual effect on political trust. Contrary to what some previous research suggests, our results do not support the claim that media content produces only cynic (Capella & Jamieson, 1997) and disengaged (Putnam, 2000) citizens, and certainly does not

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provide any simplistic uni-dimensional explanations for these effects. Rather, media effects on political trust and participation are channeled through the content transmitted by different communication platforms that enhances political learning and perceptions, and through different predispositions that people bring to the table when encountering that content.

This outcome not only followed previous empirical patterns suggesting that "media use results in learning of most important issues, and it can generate interest and awareness in particular issues" (Moy & Phau, 2000, p.184, see also Norris, 2000), but also explains how this knowledge is used to form political perceptions about institutional performance and integrity and how these perceptions affect political trust at different levels.

Media use has mostly a positive indirect relationship with general trust in institutions, mediated through agenda-setting and priming. However, the use of some media can also have a negative indirect relationship with institutional trust (mainly through agenda-setting effects). Newspaper use showed a positive association with positive priming of institutional performance, which in turn affected positively the general trust in political institutions. The indirect relationship between television use and political trust was more mixed. Watching news on independent television was negatively associated with the positive valence of institutional attributes, but partisan media use showed a positive association with agenda-setting effects of positive institutional attributes and also with positive priming effects on institutional performance judgment. Radio use for political information showed only an indirect positive relationship with trust in the partisan media model. These finding corroborate Moy & Pfau (2000) work on the relationship between different sources of political information and political trust. When disaggregating these data even further, we observe that the interactions between media use and trust in individual institutions are even more complex with different media

affecting different levels of trust in different institutions. Overall, they point that the relationship between media use and perceptions of administrative institutions is negative, while showing a somewhat more positive relationship with perceptions on institutions of law and order.

Similar to previous research that has emphasized political knowledge as an intervening variable between media use and political participation (McLeod et al., 1999; Norris, 2000; Moy et al., 2005), this study found that agenda-setting effects on institutional attributes were positively and significantly related with institutional types of political participation (Weaver, 1991) and un-institutional political activities. However, we did not find any relationship between agenda-setting effects and tendency to vote, contrary to what previous research has shown (Kiousis and McDavid, 2008). Moreover, our results suggest a negative relationship between political trust and participation, contrary to previous theoretical assumptions (Pinkleton et al., 1998; Robinson, 1979). These findings echo Moy et al.'s (2005) conclusion that "only do the data reflect a considerably stronger potential for distrust to mobilize citizens to action, but in addition, attention to news provides a strong and direct link to participation, perhaps as news media give people raw information about events they could use to participate" (p.75). However, whereas political trust was negatively associated with institutional participation, it did not show any significant relationship with un-institutional participation nor voting alone. Pinkleton et al. (1998) also found that cynicism toward political institutions had a minimal impact on voting.

Overall, the results presented by this dissertation confirm the "Virtuous Circle" hypothesis advanced by Norris (2000) that emphasizes a "two-way interactive process" between media use and civic orientations in which "those who are most interested and knowledgeable pay the most attention to political news. Learning more about public affairs (the policy stances of the

candidates and parties, the record of the government, the severity of the social and economic

problems facing the nation) reduces the barriers for further civic engagement" (p.18).

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Appendix: Coding of variables

Latent Variable	Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha	CFA	Questions wording	Min	Max	Mean	SD	N
Media Use Index				During a typical week, how many days do you read/watch/listen to news on..., not including sports? How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on...?	4	136	62.69	28.96	548
	Newspaper Index		.778	...daily NEWSPAPER?	1	36	16.58	12.73	549
	TV Index		.617	...national Television?	1	36	27.43	9.69	550
	Radio Index		.466	...national Radio?	1	36	9.08	9.38	550
	Internet Index		.687	...on Internet?	1	36	9.49	12.65	549
NFO					1	4	2.34	.914	549
	Uncertainty			Generally speaking, do you identify yourself with...(LDK, PDK, AAK, LDD, ARK, "Vetvendosja," Other Party, no preference)?	1	8	4.17	2.97	550
				Would you consider yourself a ...(very strong partisan of this party, strong partisan, somewhat strong partisan, not very strong partisan)?	1	5	2.93	1.17	550
	Interest			How interested are you in information about what's going on in government and politics? (extremely interested, very interested, moderately interested, slightly interested, not interested at all, don't know)	1	6	2.94	1.17	550
Institution-Attribute Agenda-Setting Index				According to you, how well do the following attributes describe each of the political institutions listed below? Please, place the number of the attribute that you consider to be a good description of each of the political institutions listed below. If you are not sure about the answer, please, take a guess. (1.Fair, 2.Corrupt; 1.Honest, 2.Dishonest; 1.Efficient, 2.Inefficeint; 1.Knowledgable, 2. Unwise; 1.Caring, 2. Selfish)	.208	5.79	3.21	1.37	550
Administrative Institutions' Attribute Agenda-Setting Index					.738	3.56	1.74	.979	550
	Government		.866		.329	1.75	.796	.582	550
	Parliament		.803		.450	1.46	.88	.41	550
	Courts		.736		-.046	.352	.063	.135	550
Law & Order Institutions' Attribute Agenda-Setting Index					-.530	2.23	1.47	.690	550
	KFOR		.816		-.373	.630	.466	.322	550
	Police		.569		-	.664	.45	.36	550

		CFA	CFA	Question	Min	Max	Mean	SD	N
					.336				
	EULEX		.536		.179	.940	.55	.348	550
Institutions-Integrity AS									
Institutions-Competence AS									
Political Trust		.804		I am going to name a number of political institutions. For each one, could you tell me to what extend you trust each of these political institutions. Please, indicate on a scale from 1, for the complete absence of trust, to 7, for great trust.	7	49	25.66	7.83	550
Trust in Administrative Institutions		.748			1	21			550
	Government		.886	Central Government run as a self-administered body	1	7	2.34	1.56	550
	Parliament		.752	Parliament	1	7	3.13	1.63	550
	Courts		.728	Courts run by local administration	1	7	2.55	1.65	550
Trust in Institutions of Law and Order		.773			1	21	13.81	3.92	550
	Police		.776	Local Police forces	1	7	4.92	1.73	550
	EULEX		.740	International police forces and court administration	1	7	3.69	1.65	550
	ICO		.740	International Civil Office	1	7	3.84	1.66	550
	KFOR		.705	NATO military forces	1	7	5.2	1.68	550
Participation		.793			0	29	12.79	5.37	550
Institutional Participation		.759		How often do you...? (often, sometimes, seldom, never, don't know)	0	12	4.10	2.29	550
	Political rallies		.837	...attend political meetings or rallies?	1	5	3.38	1.05	550
	Work for party		.884	...spend time working for a political party or candidate?	1	5	3.80	.79	550
	Sign petition		.572	...sign a petition?	1	5	3.27	.93	550
Vote			.991	...vote in national or local elections?	1	5	1.97	1.26	550
Un-institutional Participation		.785		People can take different forms to participate in politics. For each of the following political actions, can you tell me whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it, or would never do it:	0	14	5.66	3.35	550
	Boycotts		.768	Join in boycotts	1	5	3.39	1.22	550
	Demonstrations		.687	Attending lawful demonstrations	1	5	3.17	1.4	550
	Strikes		.733	Join unofficial strikes	1	5	3.9	.91	550
	Occupy buildings		.749	Occupying buildings of factories	1	5	3.89	.58	550
Demographic variables									550
	Age			What is your age?	18	80	39	15.67	550
	Gender			Male/Female	0	1	.49	.50	550
	Education			What is the level of your education? (Elementary school, high School, college, graduate School)	0	4	2.13	.70	550

Note: CFA = standardized loadings of the indicators on a latent variable constructed via confirmatory factor analysis.

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EDUCATION

PhD in Mass Communication, 2011, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- Concentration in Political and International Communication
- Dissertation research: "Mass Media and Political Culture: Examining the impact of Media Use on Political Trust and Participation in Kosovo"
- Dissertation chair: David H. Weaver, IU School of Journalism

MA in Journalism and Mass Communication, 2005, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- Thesis: "New world order and 'The Voices': International Radio Broadcasters and Transatlantic Relationships"

BA in English Language and Literature, 2001, University of Pristina, Pristina, Kosovo

Journalism training, "Faik Konica" School of Journalism, 1999-2001, Pristina, Kosovo
- Professional School of Journalism Certificate

RESEARCH AND TEACHING AREAS OF INTEREST

RESEARCH

➢ Political Communication: Media effects on political culture (trust, efficacy and participation), the impact of the news media on government, politics and elections.
➢ International Communication: News media role in democratic transitions, Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation in transitional societies, media institutions and journalism practices in post-Communist countries, international media institutions and their effects.
➢ New media in democratic processes

TEACHING

➢ Journalism skills: Reporting, writing, editing; Journalism ethics; International reporting.
➢ International media: International media systems; Cross-cultural communication in the era of globalization; access to information, media and democratic consolidation in Russia and East European countries, government and mass media;
➢ Mass communication theory (agenda-setting, priming, framing) and Quantitative research methods (statistics, SPSS)

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

➢ **SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS**

✓ **Peer Reviewed Publications**

Lindita Camaj (2010). Gate-keeping the Gatekeepers: International Community and Freedom of Information in Kosovo. Global Media Journal, 10 (7).

Lindita Camaj (2010). Media framing through stages of a political discourse: International news agencies' coverage of Kosovo's status Negotiations. Journal of International Communication Gazette, 72 (7).

Lindita Camaj (2010). Media effects in a transitional society: Setting the political agenda in the Kosovo elections of 2007. Central European Journal of Communication, 3 (2).

Christine Ogan, Manaf Bashir, Lindita Camaj, Yunjuan Luo, Brian Gaddie, Rosemarie Pennington, Sonia Rana, and Mohammed Salih. (2009). Development Communication: The State of Research in an Era of ICTs and Globalization. Journal of International Communication Gazette, 71(8), 655-670.

✓ **Invited Publications**

Lindita Camaj (Forthcoming). Institutional Design, Political Culture and Media Freedom in Kosovo: Uses and misuses of the Freedom of Information Legislation. In Peter Molnar (Ed) *Working title: Free speech and FOI since 1989*. Budapest: Central European University Press.

Lindita Camaj (2011). International Communication at the Intersection of the Global & the Local. Review of the book *International Media Communication in a Global Age,* edited by G. J. Golan, T. J. Johnson and W. Wanta (New York, London: Routledge). Global Media Journal, 11(8).

✓ **Conference Paper Presentations**

Lindita Camaj and David H. Weaver, "Need for Orientation and Attribute Agenda-Setting effects During a U.S. Election Campaign." Presented at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Braga, Portugal, July 2010.

Lindita Camaj, "Media and Corruption: Media Effects on Horizontal and Vertical Accountability." Presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Media (AEJMC), Denver, August 2010.

Lindita Camaj, "Competing agendas in 2007 Kosovo Elections: Who sets the agenda for whom?"
Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Boston, August 2009
Won Top Student Paper award

Lindita Camaj, "Gate-keeping the Gatekeepers: International Community and Freedom of Information in Kosovo." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Boston, August 2009.

Lindita Camaj, Seong Choul Hong, Gerry Lanosga, and Yunjuan Luo, "Political Discourse on Facebook: A New Public Sphere?" Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Boston, August 2009.

Lindita Camaj, "The smuggling of the public information in Kosovo: Uses and misuses of the Freedom of Information legislation in a transitional country." Paper presented at the "Beyond East and West" conference at the Central European University, Budapest, June 2009.

Lindita Camaj, "Government Publicity, Public Sphere and Media in South-Eastern Europe: Analysis of the Freedom of Information Legislation." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Stockholm, July 2008.

Lindita Camaj, "New World Order and the "Voices": International Radio Broadcasters after the Cold War." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Stockholm, July 2008.

Lindita Camaj, "Media framing through stages of a political discourse: International news agencies' coverage of Kosovo's status Negotiations." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Chicago, August 2008.

✓ **Colloquia/Public Lectures**

"Gatekeeping the 'Gatekeepers': Uses and misuses of the Freedom of Information legislation in a transitional country," Indiana University School of Journalism Research Colloquia, February, 2010.

➢ **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

Roy W. Howard Research Assistant, September 2009 – June 2010, Indiana University School of Journalism
• Assisting Roy W. Howard Professor, David Weaver, in preparing his forthcoming book *Global Journalists*, co-edited with Lars Willnat.
• Worked with Doctor Weaver on the co-authored paper "Need for Orientation and Attribute Agenda-Setting effects During a U.S. Election Campaign."
Research Assistant, Spring 2008/Spring 2009, Indiana University School of Journalism
• Assisted professor Mike Conway in preparing his book *The Origins of Television News in America: The Visualizers of CBS in the 1940s* for publication in addition to other research needs as they rise.

Survey Research Interviewer, Summer 2007, Stone Research, Indianapolis, IN
• Conducted survey interviews for different marketing research projects

Project Research Assistant, February-July 2006, EnCompass LLC, Washington DC
- Survey Coordinator of the project that investigated women and Minorities in Kosovo media
- Conducted 5 Focus Groups for the project

Research Consultant, January-July 2006, 'Gani Bobi' Institute of Humanistic Studies, Pristina
- Helped design surveys
- Conducted focus groups for different projects

Research Intern, Summer 2004, 'Media Tenor' international institute for media analysis, NY
- Assisted in media content analysis projects
- Conducted research for the PR department

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

➢ **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

C201 – Hot Topics in Journalism and Mass Communication, Spring 2011, Indiana University
- Instructor of Record
- Designed syllabus, lesson plans, evaluation materials, and lead lecture as co-instructor for a class of about 40 students

J200 – Reporting, Writing, and Editing, Fall 2007/Fall 2008, Indiana University
- Instructor of record
- Designed syllabus, lesson plans, evaluation materials, and independently taught a class of about 18 students

J110- Foundations of Journalism and Mass Media, Fall 2006/Spring 2007, Indiana University
- Course: Associate Instructor
- Graded and helped create tests, quizzes, and assignments; assisted in lecturing on substitution bases for a class of about 160 students.
- Supervisors: Dr. John Dilts, and Dr. David Boynik

➢ **INVITED GUEST LECTURES**

"**Governmental PR and the International image of Montenegro,**" Spring 2008, Indiana University
- Presented to visiting professor Jim Bright's "International Public Relations" (J460) course

"Theories of Media Effects: Agenda-setting," Spring 2007, Indiana University
- Presented to professor David Boeyink's "Foundations of Journalism and Mass Communication" (J110) course

➢ **TEACHING SEMINARS AND TRAINING**

"Improving Learning in Lectures through In-class and Out-of-class Activities," February 2010, Indiana University
- Workshop Organized by IU Campus Instructional Consulting

"From the Trenches: Strategies for Effective Teaching," February 2010, Indiana University
- Workshop Organized by Indiana University Office of Women's Affairs

"Experiential Learning: What Makes It Authentic," February 2010, Indiana University
- Workshop Organized by IU Campus Instructional Consulting

"Deep Learning in Large and Small Classes," October 2007, Indiana University
- Workshop Organized by IU Campus Instructional Consulting

"Designing Grading Rubrics," September 2007, Indiana University
- Workshop Organized by IU Campus Instructional Consulting & Campus Writing Programs

New Associate Instructors' Training, August 2007, Indiana University
- Teaching Orientation organized by Indiana University School of Journalism

J555 Teaching Mass Communications in College, Fall 2006, Indiana University
- This course explored the theory and practice of college pedagogy. The content of this course was particularly focused on skills required for teaching mass communications.

JOURNALISM ACTIVITIES

➢ **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Senior Reporter, "Koha Ditore" national daily newspaper, October 2005/July 2006, Pristina, Kosovo
- covered public affairs and Judiciary System

Public Relations Assistant, Summer 2004, National Albanian American Council, New York, NY
- Helped public relations campaign
- Helped organize a fundraising event

Reporter, 1999/2003, "Koha Ditore" national daily newspaper, Pristina, Kosovo
- Covered political affairs in Kosovo and the Balkan region, specialized in election coverage in the region

Reporter, 2001/2002, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, London based news service
- Correspondent from Pristina

TV Reporter, December 2001/July 2003, "Koha Vision" national TV in Kosovo
- Part time correspondent from Serbia and Montenegro

Radio News Producer, January 2000/march 2000, "Radio Free Europe", Prague, Czech Republic
- Gathering and producing international news

➢ **PROFESSIONAL SEMINARS AND TRAININGS**

Human rights reporting, May 2003, Tirana, Albania
- Organized by International Media Institute and Albanian Media Institute

Ethics within Modern Societies, July 2002, University of Pristina, Kosovo
- Regional Summer University seminar

Human Trafficking and Investigative Journalism, May 2002, Opatia, Croatia
- Organized and supported by "Voice of America" and the U.S. Department of State

Professional training at Finish media organizations (Helsinki Sanomat and Yule TV), September 2001

Human Rights and Minorities, June 2001, Bar, Montenegro
- Organized by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights

AWARDS, GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Frances G. Wilhoit Research Award, 2010**,** Indiana University School of Journalism

Dissertation Grant-in-Aid, 2010, Indiana University School of Journalism, $1000

Roy W. Howard Fellowship, 2009/2010, Indiana University School of Journalism, $9,300

Top Student Paper Award, 2009, Markham Student Paper Competition, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)

Doctoral Student Conference Travel Grants, 2008/2010, Indiana University School of Journalism
- $1,000 for travel to present research at AIMCR annual convention, Stockholm, July 2008
- $ 500 for travel to present research at AEJMC annual convention, Chicago, August 2008
- $ 500 for travel to present research at "Beyond East and West" conference at the Central European University, Budapest, June 2009.
- $ 600 for travel to present research at AEJMC annual convention, Boston, August 2009

Conference Travel Grant, 2009, Central European University, Budapest
- $ 400 for travel to present research at "Beyond East and West" conference at the Central European University, Budapest, June 2009

Conference Travel Grant, 2009, IU Graduate and Professional Students Organization, $ 250

Pre-dissertation Travel Grant, 2008, Indiana University
- Granted by the Office of the Vice President for International Affairs, the Office of Research and University Graduate School, $ 3,000

Conference Travel Grant, 2008, International Association for Media and Communication Research
- $ 1,000 for travel to present research at AIMCR annual convention in Stockholm

Graduate Journalism Fellowship, 2006-2009, Indiana University School of Journalism
- $27,000 granted for three consecutive years

Floyd G. Arpan Fellowship, Fall 2006, Indiana University School of Journalism , $ 500

Ron Brown Scholarship, 2003/2005, U.S. Department of State
- $ 52,240 grated to complete the masters degree at Indiana University

MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICE

Journal of Mass Communication and Society, paper reviewer, January 2010

International Communication Association, Member, 2008/present

International Communication Association, Paper reviewer, 2008

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Member, 2008/present

Indiana University Journalism Alumni Association, appointed board member, 2007/present

Journalism Graduate Student Council, appointed member, 2006/2007, Indiana University School of Journalism

Association of Professional Journalists in Kosovo, elected board member, 2005/2006

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

LANGUAGE SKILLS
Albanian (native)
English (fluent)
Serbian-Montenegrin-Croatian (fluent)
Italian (intermediate)

STATISTICS SKILLS
Linear Regression Models
ANOVA/MANOVA
Categorical data analysis (Probit, Logit)
Hierarchical linear Regression

Structural Equation Analysis
SPSS, STATA statistical packages

REFERENCES

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E-mail: rparames@indiana.edu
Phone: 812-855-8569