Understanding the News Landscape:

How Young People Think and Talk About the News Media

By

Stephanie Edgerly

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Dhavan V. Shah, Professor, Journalism
Douglas McLeod, Professor, Journalism
Young Mie Kim, Assistant Professor, Journalism
Zhongdang Pan, Professor, Communication Arts
Katherine Cramer Walsh, Associate Professor, Political Science

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Table of Contents

Introduction

> **BILL MOYERS:** You've said many times, "I don't want to be a journalist, I'm not a journalist."
> **JON STEWART:** And we're not.
> **BILL MOYERS:** But you're acting like one. You've assumed that role. The young people that work with me now, think they get better journalism from you than they do from the Sunday morning talk shows.
> **JON STEWART:** I can assure them they're not getting any journalism from us.
>
> - *Bill Moyers Journal, April 27, 2007*

I often wonder what it was like to be a news consumer fifty years ago. To get home from a hard day's work, to turn on the television and have only three channels to choose from—all airing national news programs. To see the familiar face of someone like Walter Cronkite who would tell you "the way it is." There would be no second-guessing his credibility or political orientation. There would be no turning to another channel to see the same new story presented in a completely different way. In a lot of ways the simplicity of the past seems preferable. If you wanted to follow the news, you knew where to look.

Fast-forward to the contemporary, and the modern news consumer has the news world at their fingertips. At any moment they can access news and have to the ability to sample from a variety of news sources. If they want to hear opinions, if they want to laugh, if they want to produce their own news—all are possible in the modern news landscape. There is not one "way it is," but several often-contradictory ways. The modern media environment is crowded and colorful and allows users to engage with news in some pretty awesome ways.

As I write this introduction, a debate about researching and teaching the work of Stephen Colbert is making its way through the news media. Is Colbert a valid area to devote research and education resources toward? One argument, coming from the *Washington Post*, lambasts academics for giving Colbert more attention than deserved. Columnist Paul Farhi writes, "Last we checked, Colbert was a mere TV comedian, or a satirist if you want to get fancy about it" (Farji, 2012 July 9). Similarly, *The Atlantic's* John Hudson argues that college courses should

not be teaching Colbert, saying "if you have to explain this stuff at length in a classroom setting, you're ruining the joke" (Hudson, 2012 July 10). A contrasting position comes from the *Huffington Post*. Guest bloggers (and academics) Sophia McClemmen and Remy Maisel explain if you think about Colbert as "just a guy doing a shtick on *Comedy Central*…then it makes sense to question why he would be the subject of study at our universities." However, if you think Colbert is "playing a role in U.S. society that will have a major historical impact, then there is good reason to study him" (McClemmen & Maisel, 2012 July 11).

This debate is one example of the murky waters the modern news consumer swims in. With Stephen Colbert being just one part of this murkiness. It's not so much that we need to understand Colbert, but that we need to understand Colbert vis-à-vis other news entities. Rather than honing in on the research/teaching of Colbert, the larger area of focus is the radical changes to the news media landscape (Colbert is certainly one example of this) and what it means for the role the news media plays and how news consumers inform themselves (or don't inform themselves).

For my part, this dissertation project is not about the hilarity of Stephen Colbert or the absurdity of Bill O'Reilly. They are the faces of larger trends working their way across the news landscape. Instead, I seek to uncover how the modern media user adapts to these changes. Who (besides Paul Farhi) believes Colbert is a mere TV comedian? Who believes Colbert plays a larger role in society? Are there completely different beliefs about Colbert? But more importantly, I want to know how do these beliefs structure an understanding about the way the news world works. I'd be the first to admit that this wide-scope approach is ambitious and my methods are not the only (or best) way of addressing these questions. It is, however, my sincere hope that this dissertation sheds light on the creative, confusing, messy, and innovative ways that

people make sense of the news world they live in. In what follows, I briefly summarize the outline of this dissertation project.

In Chapter 1, I explore the claim of increased media choice by detailing three key changes to the new media environment: infotainment, niche news, and news flows. Also outlined in this chapter are two divergent research narratives explaining the effects these changes. The decline narrative argues that the high-choice media environment produces democratically harmful effects by lowering the standards of news content and making it easier for people to avoid certain types of news or news all together. Conversely, the opportunity narrative takes a more optimistic approach arguing that the current news media environment offers more diverse content that appeals to wider audience.

To shed more light on the concerns of the decline and opportunity narratives, Chapter 2 takes a closer look at news exposure. Using survey data from a nationally representative sample, a cluster analysis is performed on a wide array of news media measures. Six distinct news clusters emerge. One news cluster, for example, is made up of only conservative news media, while another cluster samples from both liberal and conservative media. To gain a better understanding of the people who inhabit different clusters, a descriptive analysis is performed on each of the six clusters. The relationship between cluster membership and levels of participation is also explored. The chapter ends by suggesting that different people approach the same news content in different ways.

Chapter 3 chronicles past research about how new users think about the news media. As the new media becomes more diverse, so do the ways audiences understand the news media. Chapter 3 lays the foundation for the rest of this dissertation project. I argue that news has become a murky, or ‘open’, concept that can be defined in many different ways. A person would

be correct to think of Stephen Colbert as a news source or an entertainment source. A person would be correct to think of the *Huffington Post* as a news blog or as a news magazine. As a result, greater attention needs to be paid to the ways individuals define and draw distinctions between news media. I introduce the concept of a news vocabulary as a way to understand the cognitive and expressive ability people have regarding the news media. In Chapters 4-7, I explore the news vocabulary of a selective audience, young adults. In doing so, I describe the composition and variance of news vocabularies, identify several factors that shape news vocabularies, and explore the potential of news vocabularies to guide news exposure and effects.

Using in-depth interview data, Chapter 4 investigates the ways that young people talk about the news media. This chapter highlights two aspects of talk: immediate reactions and more effortful processing. The immediate reactions of participants reveal several consistent elements among participants' news vocabularies. For example, Jon Stewart is adored; *Fox News* is pegged as conservative, and the *NY Times* is a superior news organization. More variations in talk emerge when participants are asked to engage in more effortful processing. In particular, four news characteristics are identified as tools participants use to make distinctions between news media. Several interview examples describe the ways participants talk about and combine the news characteristics in distinct ways.

Chapter 5 takes a different approach to describing the composition of a news vocabulary. In this chapter survey data from a college sample is used to systematically map how participants compare different news organizations and news personalities. Using a multi-dimensional scaling procedure, I visually depict how participants arrange various news organizations and figures in relation to each other. Also considered in this chapter is the role of individual characteristics—namely ideology, media exposure, and news flow, in producing different maps.

Using the same survey dataset, Chapter 6 focuses on the ways college students evaluate news organizations. At the forefront of this chapter are the evaluation differences associated with different ideologies, media exposure, and news flows. Results from this chapter indicate a variety of individual differences are related to evaluation judgments. For example, not only is conservative media exposure related to more favorable evaluations of *Fox News*, but also more negative evaluations of other news media, like *CNN*, *NY Times*, and *NPR*. In other words, watching *Fox* colors evaluations of *Fox* and also the larger news landscape.

Chapter 7 goes back to the in-depth interview data to explore the relationship between a news vocabulary and the news exposure process. Using a series of hypothetical situations, interview participants are asked to describe the actions they would take to find news content. Results indicate a large amount of variance in the strategies that interview participants imagine taking. Whereas some participants articulate multiple strategies that are situation-specific, others rely on a few, hard to carry out, strategies. The chapter concludes by likening a news vocabulary to a type of media literacy.

Lastly, in the concluding chapter I present a theoretical model describing news socialization. I argue that news socialization is the process where a news vocabulary is acquired and used. The model is discussed in terms of the ingredients that make up a news vocabulary, the factors that shape a news vocabulary, and the implications for news exposure and effects.

Chapter One: The New News World

> "Today's 24/7 echo-chamber amplifies the most inflammatory sound bites louder and faster than ever before. And it's also, however, given us unprecedented choice. Whereas most Americans used to get their news from the same three networks over dinner, or a few influential papers on Sunday morning, we now have the option to get our information from any number of blogs or websites or cable news shows"
>
> *-President Barack Obama, May 1, 2010*

Media choice. It's arguably the most defining characteristic of our new media environment. Gone are the days of only a few broadcast television channels, radio stations, and sources of written news. Today we have access to television channels, smart phone technology, virtually unlimited options available on the Internet. We choose to spend our time watching videos on YouTube or searching images on Pinterest. We choose websites to visit first thing in the morning. And when breaking news happens, like Osama bin Laden's death, we choose where to go for more information.

There is no denying that our current media system bestows media users with the gift of choice. The more complicated question involves the effects of living in a high-choice media environment. That is, do people use media choice for "good" or for "bad?" Before tackling this question, I will first discuss how media producers have responded to the prospect of competing in a more cluttered media system. There are three interrelated news trends that should be considered when weighting the virtues of increased media choice. They are: 1) infotainment, 2) niche news, and 3) news flows.

Infotainment. One by-product of the high-choice media environment is the blurring of the lines between news and entertainment, or infotainment. Mathew Baum (2003a) explains this trend as a reaction to the economic pressures of securing and maintaining sizeable audience in the face of competition. For example, creating an evening news program that mimics the style

and structure of established network news programs would garner only a small audience. Audiences who want that type of news already have it with the likes of *NBC Nightly News* and the *CBS Evening Show*. Not to mention the established channel loyalty and report that many audiences share with these programs (McQuail, 1997). Moreover, there is a financial advantage to creating infotainment. This type of content is generally cheaper to produce but can still turn a quick profit with advertising revenue. In a particularly illustrative example, Baum (2003a) shows that *60 Minutes*, a news magazine program, netted a quicker profit for *NBC* than the immensely popular drama ER. These pressures culminate in the production of content that falls somewhere on a continuum anchored by traditional models of journalism on one end, and fictional entertainment on the other.

The term infotainment is often associated with a negative stigma (Baym, 2010). One reason for this may be its liberal use to describe a wide variety of media content. In an effort to clarify this concept, two types of infotainment trends are described.

The first infotainment type is 'entertainment that informs,' or what some may call "soft news". These sources do not regularly touch on current events topics, but social events can turn these sources into providers of politically relevant information. For example, television programs like *Entertainment Tonight*, *E! News*, and *People Magazine* fall into this category. Daytime and late-night talk shows are also described as entertainment programs that have the potential to inform (as well as entertain). Appearances by public officials and celebrity activists have catapulted these shows into the dialogue about sources of politically relevant information. In 2009, President Obama became the first sitting president to appear on a late-night talk show with visits to *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *Late Shows with David Letterman*. Daytime hosts like Ellen DeGeneres and Oprah Winfrey use their shows to speak out regarding political

candidates and public referenda. Lastly, broadcast morning shows and magazine programs can be placed under this category. With ties to more traditional models of journalism, these programs resemble news programs in format, content, and resources. For example, *Today Show* (ex) co-anchor Ann Curry regularly appears on *NBC Nightly News.* However, these programs also skew more toward human-interest and lifestyle stories.

Another type of infotainment is 'news that entertains.' These programs more consistently tackle topics of current events, but do so by embracing elements of entertainment. Cable and radio news talk shows that feature conflict-laden discussions are one example of this trend. These shows promote animated debate and reflect a move toward different journalism norms and practices (Baym, 2010). Hosts like Bill O'Reilly, Chris Matthews, and Rush Limbaugh approach the presenting the day's news through a more entertaining, theatrical fashion. The result is a program that entertains (as well as inform). We can also place political news satire in this category. The popularity of the *Daily Show* and *Colbert Report* exemplify the model of entertaining while informing. These shows tackle current events issues with a hardy slab of snark. Ultimately the rise of infotainment—both the entertainment that informs and news that entertains—contribute to the high-choice media environment with options that blur the clean distinctions between news and entertainment.

Niche News. The second trend related to media choice is the specialization of news content, or niche news (Stroud, 2010). Similar to the competitive motivations that drive infotainment, the production of niche news content is rooted in the need to appeal to a specific audience (McQuail, 1997). Increased competition means that news organizations must produce content that distinguishes them in a noisy media environment. The question facing many news

organizations is now, "What *type* of news provider are you?" Nowhere is this more evident than in cable television news.

The first twenty-four hour news station was *CNN*, founded in 1980. Compared to its broadcast counterparts, *CNN* offered something new—content that was more in-depth, covered a wider array of issues, and was available around the clock (Fallows, 1996). It was not until 1996, with the addition of *MSNBC* and *Fox News*, that the trend toward niche news started emerging. With three television channels now offering twenty-four hour news coverage, there was increased pressure to differentiate, to produce content that would be distinct from other television news options. The most successful at this is *Fox News*. The channel has a strong evening news line-up that offers viewers opinionated, more conservative, talk show hosts, or what we have come to know as "pundits". And their strategy is effective. *Fox News* consistently garners a larger audience than either *CNN* or *MSNBC*, and has even seen a growth in audience size while other television news stations (cable and broadcast) are in the decline (State of the News Media, 2009). But the *Fox News* audience is not a general news audience, but rather a niche segment of the news audience. *Fox* has carved out a particular type of news that appeals to more Republican and conservative viewers. Most recently, *MSNBC* seems to be adopting a similar branding strategy by targeting Democrats and liberals. They have an evening line-up of opinionated, more liberal, hosts to counter the offerings of *Fox New*s. Much of *CNN*'s ratings struggles have been attributed to their inability to provide a distinct type of news content (Baym, 2010). The simple preference for news no longer reflects audience selection patterns, or the array of news content to choose from.

The Internet brings niche news to the forefront. Not only do television news and newspaper organizations provide online content—the distinctions between *Fox News*, *MSNBC*,

CNN, and networks remain—but additional sources of specialized news are available online. Political and news weblogs, blogs, are one example of online niche news. Blogs are first-person frequently updated online journals presented in reverse chronological order. Although blogging initially started in 1994 within art counter-cultures (Rosenberg, 2009), by 2004 news blogs were garnering millions of readers and receiving extensive attention from traditional media. According to Mathew Hindman (2009), "Of all the changes in the media environment between the 2000 and 2004 elections, the growth of blogs ranks among the biggest" (p. 103). Of course blogs are not a news-only enterprise—anyone can create a blog on any topic. It is estimated that across all genres there are over 133 million blogs online (Technorati, 2012). But in terms of blogs as a news and political source, Internet users are choosing to visit blogs. During 2008 presidential elections, over a quarter of Americans consulted blogs for information about the election (PEW, 2009). Top political blogs include conservative offerings (e.g., Red State, Michelle Malin) and well as liberal (e.g., Daily Kos, The Huffington Post). News blogs have become so popular that mainstream news organizations have started their own. The *NY Times*, for example, has an official election blog called, "The Caucus".

The digital world is also home to several online-only news magazines that offer more opinionated and specialized content. *Salon Magazine*, for example, was created in 1995 and was the first online-only news publication. The magazine's mission is to create an online space for information and discussion, much like the French salons of the 1800s. Similarly, *Slate Magazine,* is an ad-supported website known for its contrarian positions. Another aspect of niche news is the availability of hyper-local news. The low-barrier of entry to publish online content means that neighbors can maintain there own news websites, or suburbs, even local organizations like

the Parent-Teacher Associations. These online spaces focus on the current affairs regarding a specific locale and are often coordinated with offline affiliations.

Take together, media choice translates into the availability of niche content. We can think about this specialization in terms of ideological positions (liberal voices versus conservative), styles (conventional reporting verses opinionated), and topics (national news versus local/issue). The bottom-line being that there is a lot of variety to choose from. A telling demonstration of this are the types of questions PEW uses to measure news exposure. No longer do they use a single question regarding television news exposure, or newspaper, or Internet. In order to adequately capture news trends, PEW asks about television news through exposure to evening broadcast news, local news, morning news shows, cable news, cable talk shows, *PBS*, and late-night comedies. And that's just television. A similar deconstruction takes place with sources of online news.

News Flows. The last factor related to media choice is the development of news flows—or how people encounter news. Increases in the number of media sources means that people need a way to manage their choices, to know what their options are. With television, choices are constrained by the number of channels a person has access to. The average US household has 118 channels (Nielsen, 2009). To help navigate this environment, television users rely on "guides" that let them know what is on. These guides have gotten fancier since paper versions of the *TV Guide*. Digital guides allow users to search for titles, maintain a list of favorites, and scroll through current listings. The point being that as people have gained more television channels, some navigational assistance is needed. These guides help people make more efficient use of the options available to them, but they can also alter the television viewing experience. For example, it's highly likely that I have not watched a television program that I would have

enjoyed very much, but because it aired on a channel that was not on my favorite list, I did not even consider watching it.

Compared to television, it is harder (if not impossible) to know all the Internet options available. The Internet houses approximately 555 million websites (Web Server Survey, 2011), all different in relevance and credibility. Users need help managing this online information environment to efficiently find what they are looking for and to avoid information overload. This is where information flows come in. Because people use "guides" to manage their Internet choices, they encounter news in very different ways. The exact same news story, let's say a *NY Times* article about President Obama's budget proposal, can be "found," "accessed," "encountered," in very different ways.

Search engines are one source of navigational assistance. Websites like Google.com and Yahoo.com allow citizens to erect some sort of information filter about a given search term. They present users with search returns that are relevant and accredited by the traffic of other users (although the exact interworking of search returns remains unknown). What we do know is that Google, and other like-companies, have developed sophisticated algorithms that take into consideration location, past searches, and recent websites visit, to provide users with an efficient search return. And people like using search engines to direct them to relevant websites. So much so that Google.com is the number one website in the United States, and the demographics of Google users mirror the general Internet public (the only exception that users over 65-year-old are underrepresented) (Alexa, 2012). To go back to the above example, one Internet user encounters the *NY Times* article by "googleing" the budget proposal.

Another mechanism for navigating the Internet involves customization. Here users set long-term filters to provide only the news that they are interested in. Internet users can design

homepages (or readers) that compile news from sources and topics that they specify. iGoogle, for example, let's user select the types of websites they want on their homepage. For example, if you are interested in sports, you might put *Sports Illustrated*; if you also care about politics, you could put the *NY Times* and the *Huffington Post* also your homepage. In a way, people are designing the front page of their own personal newspapers. And it is no coincidence that the layout of iGoogle resembles a newspaper template. Google can also suggest websites that users might be interested in putting on their homepage. Different from searching, users make decisions about the websites and issues they want continuous updates from. With so many choices, it is not hard to imagine that one person's iGoogle homepage will look very different from another's. So another way that an Internet user might encounter the *NY Times* story is by having previously selected the *NY Times* to be on their homepage. This a pretty radical change! Customization allows for greater specificity in the type of news we want to see (e.g., I only want to read content from liberal-oriented news sources), but also the ability to filter out currents events altogether (e.g., I only want to read content about sports and video games). Though infotainment and the next mechanism make this strict avoidance hard to maintain.

The last way that news "flows" is through social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter. Encountering news via one's social network is not a new phenomenon. There is nothing new about the passing of news via family, friends, and co-workers (Cramer Walsh, 2004; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1991; Mutz & Mondak, 2006). What is new, however, are the digital spaces where social networks can share news. Beginning in 2006, Facebook included a "news feed" to gather important information (Sanghvi, 2006). In essence, the news feed manages users' social contacts by prioritizing the new information they share. The most recent updates occur at the top of the news feed and by reading (or skimming) the news feed users can see what their

friends sharing. Much of this sharing could probably be classified as superfluous. However, it can also involve the posting of news stories and commentary about news stories. Recent changes to Facebook suggest that the company is committed to making news a key part of their website. Facebook has improved its linking technology to include a thumbnail image of news story links. This makes linking to a news story more aesthetically pleasing (not just seeing a long URL), as well as being more descriptive (including the headline, logo, photo). Facebook has also allowed news organizations to develop applications that allow users to share the articles they read with their friends (the *Washington Post Social Reader* is one example of this) (Sonderman, 2011). Many news industry professionals believe that understanding the nature of "social news" is key to unlocking the "mystery" of young people's news consumption patterns (Pariser, 2011). Similar to customized readers, news feeds can resemble the front page of a newspaper with an assembly of headlines. The key differences being that friends are endorsing the headlines that appear on Facebook. Within this context, there is an unavoidable sociality about news. A person can read the *NY Times* article about the budget proposal because it appeared on their news feed. Users have less control over the types of sources and topics that appear on their news feeds. In other words, Facebook friends can make users aware of news stories that they would not otherwise see. It should be noted that Facebook has recently developed a feature that prioritizes the postings of the friends users interact with most, thus, potentially decreasing the breadth of news content they are exposed to (Pariser, 2011).

A similar exchange of news takes place on Twitter. Although users are limited to only 140 characters, linking (or tweeting) of news stories are a regular occurrence. There are websites specifically devoted to shortening URLs to make twitter linking more space efficient. Twitter users decide which accounts to follow. Individuals (e.g., friends, acquaintances, celebrities,

journalists, politics) and organizations (e.g., news, television shows, websites, and other groups) can create accounts. Among Twitter users, 41% say that they regularly or sometimes learn about the 2012 campaign from Twitter. Similarly, among social networking users, 36% say the same about Facebook (PEW, 2012).

News "flows" to us through a variety of channels. Some channels are more premeditated (e.g., searches, customized readers), while others are less so (e.g., social networking websites). It is now important to understand the back-story of encountering news. The same *NY Times* story can be encountered through a variety of channels, potentially having varying effects.

What Does It All Mean?

What are the effects of all this change to the amount of mews media, the types of news content available, and ways that news flows toward users? In general, there are two narratives put forth by scholars.

The Decline Narrative. The first narrative, which I refer to as the decline narrative, argues that media choice weakens the production of informed and engaged citizens. One of the common concerns here is that the new media environment is making it easier to avoid content. If people don't want to see news, then they have the ability to avoid it. Incidental news exposure is a relic of the past. In Mathew Hindman's (2009) book, *The Myth of Digital Democracy*, he argues that only a small percent of Internet use is devoted to news and politics (2.9% and 0.12%, respectively). Markus Prior (2007) makes a similar argument about cable and satellite television. Mindich (2005) chronicles this decline in his book, *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News*, explaining that for many people news is not a regular part of their media diet. We see this reflected in the decrease in Americans who regularly read a daily print newspaper,

from around 65% in 1993, to 40% in 2010. The amount of Americans who regularly watch nightly network news has fallen from around 60% in 1993, to 28% in 2010 (PEW, 2010).

Extending this argument further, sophisticated search algorithms also create unequal 'playing fields' where users do not see the same information. Fueled by the challenge to present only relevant information, a variety of individual-level data is accounted for when generating a search return. So if news and politics is not part of a person's regular Internet diet (as Hindman suggests), then they are not seeing the same results as someone who does often consumes news. Facebook also operates on a similar algorithm. It prioritizes posts from friends whom users interact with, posts that are more important (i.e., breakups, job changes), and recency. If a Facebook user normally bypasses news post from friends, then this content will soon disappear from his news feed, assuming, of course, that his facebook friends are posting news content in the first place. For some of people, there is no news to avoid on facebook because they operate within a social network that is disinterested in news. For others, Facebook filters news away from them because *they* are unlikely to be interested in it. And yet for another group of people, Facebook makes news content extremely easy to access. Taken together, changes to the high-choice media environment result in an information inequality between the "news rich" and the "news poor."

Within the decline narrative, there is also concern about the lowering standards of news quality. Baym (2010) argues that current journalism routines and technology promote a personalization of news—tighter camera shots, more frequent speculation, and "ad-libs" from reporters. Whereas journalists used to be thought of as 'stenographers' of the news, they are now 'storytellers' who connect with audiences on an emotional level. News can also be characterized by more frequent, shorter, sound bites (Hallin, 1992), the use of individualized language by

journalists, and a disproportionate amount of negative stories (Patterson, 2000). There are also concerns about the apparent move away from notions of objectivity and neutrality and toward more biased, one-sided presentations (Fallows, 1996). Bennett (2003a) argues that ultimately news has become too sensationalized, prompting many to turn away because it holds little informative value. *The New York Times* website, for example, recently fell under criticism for giving their 'above the fold' story position to an article about model Kate Upton being named the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue covergirl. The article was adjacent to a story about the ongoing violence in Syria (Grose, 2012). Advocates of the decline narrative would point to this example as a shift, for the worse, in the priories of news organizations.

Ultimately these concerns culminate in research indicating some worrisome effects. Chief among these is the decline in traditional forms of political participation, political knowledge, and media trust. Putnam (2001) argues that the many options afforded by television and the Internet results in individuals no longer participating in community organizations and activities. These new, sensational, entertaining, ways to occupy our time displaces the civic activities people use to take part in. Similarly, Prior (2007) argues the high-choice media environment makes it easy to people to avoid news content—resulting in individuals who are less informed and less inclined to participate in the bedrock of democracy, voting. And there has been a steady decline in levels of trust in the news media. In 1985, only 34% of Americans claimed that news stories were inaccurate, by 2011, this number has about doubled (66%) (PEW, 2011).

There is also evidence that the newer forms of news content, born from the high-choice media environment, are democratically harmful. For example, conflict-laden talk shows have been linked to decrease support for political institutions, parties, and trust (Forgette & Morris, 2006; Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Mutz, 2007). Similarly, talk shows featuring uncivil political

debate can hinder information recall (Mutz & Holbrook, 2003) and promote negative attitudes about journalism (Ben-Porath, 2010). The intermingling of humor and public affairs information also produces a similar pattern of effects. Exposure to the *Daily Show* is linked to increases in negative ratings of candidates and cynicism toward the media and the electoral system, while reducing gratifications from more traditional news programming (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Holbert et al., 2007). And exposure to late-night talk shows is related to lower levels of political trust (Tsfati, Tukachinsky & Peri, 2009). There is also evidence that use of social networking websites is unrelated to increases in political knowledge or offline participation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010).

The decline narrative also laments the change in how audiences are conceptualized. Gone are the days of a unified, mass audience. Instead, audiences are fragmented into particular enclaves of news consumption (Sunstein, 2001). In the low-choice media environment, scholars spoke about *the* "news audience," or maybe a "*television* news audience" compared to a *print* news audience" (MaQuail, 1997). Now, audiences are defined in more specific terms. There is a "*Fox News* audience" and a "*CNN* news audience" (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009). "It is clear that the days when one television network could routinely command the attention of the nation are over, and there is no media institution on the horizon to inherit that function" (Webster, 2005, p. 379). Because there is no one common staple in our information diet, news effects become more contingent. In one of the most illustrative examples, Kull, Ramsey, and Lewis (2003) found vast differences in misperceptions about the Iraq War depending on where people received their news. Eighty percent of respondents who listed *Fox News* as their main news source held one or more misperceptions about the war; compared to only 23% of respondents who received their

news from either *NPR* or *PBS*. In sum, the decline narrative is concerned about the changes that have taken place over the past fifteen years and their implications for our democracy.

The Opportunity Narrative. The second narrative, which I refer to as the opportunity narrative, takes a more optimistic approach to the new media environment. First and foremost, this position advocates that the news audience is expanding, not shirking. Yes, more traditional forms of media (e.g., print newspapers, magazines) have seen readership declines, but that does not mean that people are avoiding news altogether. Rather there is a reshuffling in where people are getting their news. This position is supported by a recent PEW study (2010) finding an increase in the amount of total time Americans spend following the news. The overall increase reflects an upward trend of using the Internet for news. In the low-choice media environment, news was more tightly controlled: available only during certain hours of the day or through a subscription. Now, anyone with an Internet connection has access to an incredible amount of news at any time of the day. The open-access of online news reduces the socioeconomic differences that were once present between news consumers (e.g., newspaper readers) and the general population (Davis & Owen, 1998).

The widening of the news audience is also seen with the blurring of news and entertainment. Matt Baum (2002b) presents evidence that the trend of infotainment actually engages subsets of the population that would normally forgo any news content. He argues that incidental exposure to news content is *more* prevalent in the high-choice media environment because entertainment (and social) preferences can drive exposure to programs like the *Daily Show* or *O'Reilly Factor*. Additionally, indirect exposure to news via social networking websites is occurring. That is, a person doesn't necessarily go to Facebook looking for news stories, but news is a part of their news feeds. Contrary to the arguments of Prior (2007) and Hindman

(2009), when the distinctions between news content and entertainment content become messy, it's harder to avoid news content. For example, viewers who tuned into the preshow of *Super Bowl XLVI* watched Bill O'Reilly interview President Obama about foreign policy and healthcare reform. Over 17 million people watched the interview. It is highly likely that some of these people were 'hold overs' from the preshow and did not explicitly seek out this interview. And others may have deliberatively sought out the interview, but not for its news value. They tuned in because the interview was a highly touted as a "showdown" between "the highest rated cable news host" and "the leader of the free world" (Schnider, 2011). There are two processes at work here, both poking holes in the argument that incidental news exposure is a relic of the past. First, people do stumble upon news content particularly in spaces where information and enthronement collide. Second, a wide array of media preferences can be linked to news exposure.

There is also the possibility that infotainment-type content can serve as a springboard to more traditional news content. What sparks regular consumption of news? Past evidence points to socioeconomic factors (e.g., income, education, age, parental influence), that can be difficult to transcend (Bimber, 2003). Recent evidence suggests that programs like *The Daily Show* or late-night talk shows create pathways to traditional news exposure, particularly during elections (Feldman & Young, 2008; Young & Tisinger, 2006). Humor can spark an interest in understanding more about the candidates and the election, which in turn mobilizes a growth in news-seeking patterns.

The opportunity narrative also celebrates that news comes in a variety of colors and shapes, penned by a wide array of individuals. This diversity means that more perspectives or issues have the opportunity to be raised (Benkler, 2006). The low-choice media environment, a

small number of news editors decided what stories were most important and should receive coverage (White, 1950). In doing so, these 'gatekeepers' of news weighed deadline constraints, audience reception, and organizational pressures into their decisions (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). For example, if an important story was too complicated or too abstract, it was probably passed over. The high-choice media environment, with its ample choice of news content, lessens the gate-keeping processes. Sure, gatekeeping still exists; prioritizing comes with the journalism territory. But the news hole is larger and news organizations are not confined to a specific amount of space or airtime. Twenty-four hour cable networks are presumably able to cover a wider variety of stories and in more depth. The *New York Times* can publish online only content or elongated versions of their news stories. The advent of blogs also adds a dimension of diversity to news content. Blogs tend to feed off of traditional news stories. One story found that over 90% of the blog posts linked to a mainstream media news story (Pariser, 2011). This intermingling can take the form of referencing, critiquing, or even elaborating on news stories. The gold standard of bloggers doing investigative work involves a report by *CBS*'s Dan Rather on President George W. Bush's military service (also known as "Rathergate"). Weeks before the 2004 presidential election *CBS* aired a report claiming that Bush's military record had been falsified. Bloggers from *Powerline, Little Green Footballs*, and the *Drudge Report* investigated the documents featured in the report and found serious gaps in the evidence (Pariser, 2011). The issue resulted in *CBS* retracting the story and Rather retiring amidst a blemished reputation. The story symbolizes the potential for blogs to check-and-balance news organizations, a mechanism that was lacking in the pre-Internet age. The new media environment allows producers of news content to shine their flashlights in many different directions—uncovering new stories, and shedding light on other news organizations.

The opportunity narrative also points to research finding positive, democratically beneficial, effects of new news. For example, uncivil political talk shows increase attention and enhance awareness of other viewpoints (Mutz, 2007). More sensationalized presentations of news content are effective attention-grabbers. Others argue that laughing at political and the news media is cathartic (Bennett, 2007). It's what keeps us engaged when politics seems broken or the news media too biased. There is also evidence that interviews on daytime or late-night talk shows help voters form attitudes about candidates (Moy, Xenos, & Hess, 2005a; Parkin, 2010) that are consistent with their informed counterparts (Baum & Jamison, 2006). Also, programs that blur news and entertainment can produce greater learning effects (Baek & Wojcieszak, 2009; Brewer & Cao, 2006; Parkin, 2010) and increases in political participation (Moy, Xenos, & Hess, 2005b). Lastly, use of social networking websites is linked to greater online political participation and offline civic participation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2010).

Lastly, the optimistic narrative believes that we need to move past traditional notions of the mass audience and news use. In agreement with the decline narrative, past views of a single mass audiences should be put to bed. However, the key difference is that the opportunity narrative takes a wider lens approach to defining audiences and their relationship with news. In the new media landscape, old and new media converge together (Jenkins, 2006). No media is an island, especially in the new media landscape. Instead, people couple media together, choosing a handful of media, and arranging them in ways that work for their needs. The result is a different approach to audiences. Instead of a '*Fox News* audience' there may be a 'conservative voice' audience that samples from television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet. Even still, there may be a faithful (and aging) print news audience that does not have an ideological bent to their news

selection patterns. Or an audience that enjoys opinion giving and watches all three cable news channels. People whose overall news diet is quite different can view the same news program. The point being that a richer definition of audience is gleaned from news media clusters—not defining by single news use. The handful of news media we do choose (against the backdrop of the media we don't choose) yields a more telling definition of audience.

Chapter 2 takes a closer look at the ways individuals cluster their news exposure. Given all the choice and diversity the modern news landscape affords, what does a person's overall news diet look like and can we drawn any connections the decline and opportunity narrative?

Chapter Two: News Clusters

This chapter builds from past research on media repertoires to explore the ways news audiences combine exposure across a wide array of media and content (Hasebrink & Popp, 2006; Heeter, 1985; Yuan, 2011). More so than ever before, news users have the ability to sample from many different types of news. If the average American spends 70 minutes per day consuming news content (PEW, 2010), they are likely pulling from a variety of sources to reach this time total. Research has repeatedly found a link between being Republican and watching *Fox News* (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Morris, 2005, 2007). Is this link bad? Is it evidence of the decline narrative? The answers to these questions depend on the other news sources Republicans pair with *Fox News.* If they also consume broadcast news and *CNN* we are probably less concerned about the decline narrative (i.e., increased political polarization, decreased participation, knowledge). If they pair *Fox News* with conservative talk radio and conservative news websites decline narrative concerns are likely to be amplified.

To explore this possibility the current chapter uses data from nationally representative survey to describe the different news clusters that exist. Rather than looking at news exposure as a single media selection, this chapter looks at news exposure as a complex pattern of news decisions. This approach is grounded in past work on media repertories, which argues that we can learn a lot about audiences by examining what combinations of media they choose over others.

A Repertoire Approach

The repertoire approach to media exposure was first developed by Heeter (1985) to describe the channel-watching routines of television users. At this time, cable subscribers were weighing the options of around 30 different channels when making decisions. By analyzing the

handful of channels that were most frequently used, Heeter and co-authors were able to sketch the portraits of different television audiences and their viewing styles (Heeter, D'Alessio, Greenberg, & McVoy, 1998). Since this pioneering effort, numerous other studies have elaborated on the concept of repertoires, with each shedding light on media repertoires against the changing media landscape.

One line of research has focused on repertoires within a single medium. Ferguson and Perse (1993) found that cable subscription, increased television exposure, and channel changing behavior was related to a larger TV channel repertoire (i.e., more channels regularly watched) (also see Yaun & Webster). Additionally, older audiences and those with lower levels of education were more likely to have smaller TV channel repertoires (Ferguson & Melkote, 1997; Neuendorf, Jeffres, & Akin, 2000). A similar approach has been applied to the patterns of websites people visit (Ferguson & Perse, 2000).

Another line of research looks at repertoires across media platforms. Reagan, Pinkleton, Chen, and Aaronson (1995) introduce the idea of 'information repertoires'—the set of sources that an individual selects for a given topic. The authors identify a 'sports repertoire' consisting of older media (radio and newspaper use), and a 'community news repertoire' that includes the mixing of old and new media (newspaper, television, radio, computer, cellular phone). Hasebrink and Popp (2006) identify six different 'news repertoires' by examining hard news exposure via the television, radio, and newspapers. And most recently, Yuan (2011) examines television, radio, newspapers, magazines, Internet and mobile use in her study of news repertoires in China.

As the media landscape becomes more diverse, the ways that individuals combine media content also becomes more complex. Or to put it another way, the underlying architecture of news patterns becomes more detailed. The most recent work on news repertoires (Hasebrink &

Popp, 2006; Yuan, 2011) has examined news exposure at the medium level (e.g., *television* use for current events, *newspaper* use for current events). However, this approach tells us little about the specific types of television or newspapers that audiences are turning to. As a result, past work may have diluted more specific repertories that function at the program or genre level. To explore this possibility, I am including a wider array of news content, such as ideological driven news and infotainment, when examining news clusters.

Data

To explore these issues, data from YouGov/Polimetrix's *2008 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project* is analyzed. This project consisted of a multi-wave national data collection that took place between December of 2007 and November of 2008. The project brought together research teams from several universities who designed custom content for specific waves. For the purpose of this study, data from the March 2008 wave is used (with basic demographics taken from the baseline wave in December). This specific wave was selected because it contains a comprehensive battery of media use questions. The March data was collected for two weeks beginning on March 21, 2008. The response rate against the competed baseline wave for the matched sample was 92% for the March wave.

YouGov/Polimetrix employed a sample matching procedure to compile the final set of responses. They first defined the target sample by constructing a stratified sampling frame from the 2005-2007 American Community Study. The sample was defined and selected by stratifying age, race, gender, education, and state (with battleground states double samples) using simple random sampling within strata, excluding non-registered voters. Next, YouGov/Polimetrix chose respondents based on a five-way cross-classification and invited them to complete the online survey. A participant "pool" was obtained by matching the approximately 48,000 completed

responses to the target frame using a weighted Euclidean distances metric. With 48,000 people in the pool, there are, on average, between 2 and 3 possible matches from the pool for each of the 20,000 respondents in the target sample. Eventually, a "matched sample" of 20,000 responses was drawn from this pool. Due to missing cases on some combinations of characteristics, the matched sample was weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The final sample is deemed representative of registered voters ($N = 1191$).

Media Measures. Survey participants were asked to indicate how regularly they watch 27 types of news/current events content across multiple media platforms (see Appendix A for exact question wording). Answers were given on a four-point scale from "never" to "regularly". Twelve questions were asked in relation to television exposure. Seven questions related to online news exposure. Four questions asked about print media use. And lastly, four questions detailed news radio exposure.

Table 1. *Overall means for news exposure*

	Exposure Means
Television	
Evening network news	2.39 (1.09)
Local news	2.87 (1.08)
Sunday debate shows	2.14 (1.07)
News magazines shows	2.28 (.99)
Morning network news	1.93 (1.04)
CNN news programs	2.21 (1.09)
MSNBC news programs	1.98 (1.04)
Fox News programs	2.19 (1.19)
PBS news	2.07 (1.03)
Late-night talk shows	2.01 (.94)
Political satire programs	1.99 (1.04)
Daytime talk shows	1.67 (.87)
Print	
National newspapers	1.89 (.96)
Local newspapers	2.43 (1.15)
News magazines*	2.20 (1.05)
News commentary magazines*	1.83 (.97)

Internet	
National newspaper websites	2.43 (1.15)
Local newspaper websites	2.58 (1.08)
Online-only news magazines	1.76 (.99)
Conservative blogs	1.55 (.90)
Liberal blogs	1.48 (.83)
News aggregators	2.91 (1.09)
TV news websites	1.89 (1.13)
Radio	
Conservative radio	1.89 (1.13)
Progressive radio	1.37 (.73)
NPR radio	1.78 (1.06)
Christian radio/television	1.44 (.82)

Means reported with standard deviations in parenthesis
**Question specified print or online use*

Step 1: Grouping Media

Following the methodological approach of Hasebrink and Popp (2006), the first step in identifying news repertoires is to group media by the components that explain the largest amount of variance in news exposure. To accomplish this a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using varimax rotation was used on all 27 news items. For component retention the criteria was a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0. Six components were retained, explaining almost 60% of the total variance. For an item to be retained within a component it needed to have above a .5 loading with no strong loadings on any of the other components. Upon inspection, five media items did not meet the minimum criteria (e.g., news magazine shows, news satire, *PBS* news, online national newspapers, and news commentary magazines).[1] These items were dropped and the principal component analysis was run again, this time with 22 media items.[2]

[1] It should be noted that several of the cross-loaded items were infotainment items. The cross-loadings of these items reflect the blurriness of this type of media content. While dropping these items limits the veracity of infotainment measures retained in the analysis, in order to perform a cluster analysis on the components, overlap needed to be kept to a minimum.

[2] The data produces a strong Kaiser-Meyer Olkin statistic of .82 (the recommended value is .6), and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, indicating suitability for the component analysis (Hayes, 2005).

As seen in Table 2, the PCA outcome is a six-component solution explaining 62% of the total variance. The component loadings vary from .52 to .84, with no double loadings greater than .38. Whereas past studies have found media PCA results organized by medium-level differences (Hasebrink & Popp, 2006) or within-medium differences (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010), this analysis produces a little bit of both.

Table 2. *Groupings of news exposure*

Component Variable	**% of Variance** Component loadings
Component 1: Liberal Voice	**22.6**
Liberal blogs	.83
Online news magazines	.75
Progressive radio	.71
NPR	.64
Component 2: Broadcast TV	**11.8**
Day-time talk shows	.76
Network morning news	.73
Local news	.72
Evening network news	.69
Late-night talk shows	.57
Component 3: Conservative Voice	**10.2**
Conservative radio	.84
Fox News	.72
Conservative blogs	.69
Christian radio/tv	.62
Component 4: TV News Commentary	**6.5**
CNN	.79
MSNBC	.77
Sunday debate shows	.55
Component 5: Online News	**5.7**
Online news aggregators	.79
TV news websites	.69
Local NP websites	.59

Component 6: Print News	**5.2**
Local NP	.80
National NP	.71
News Magazine	.52

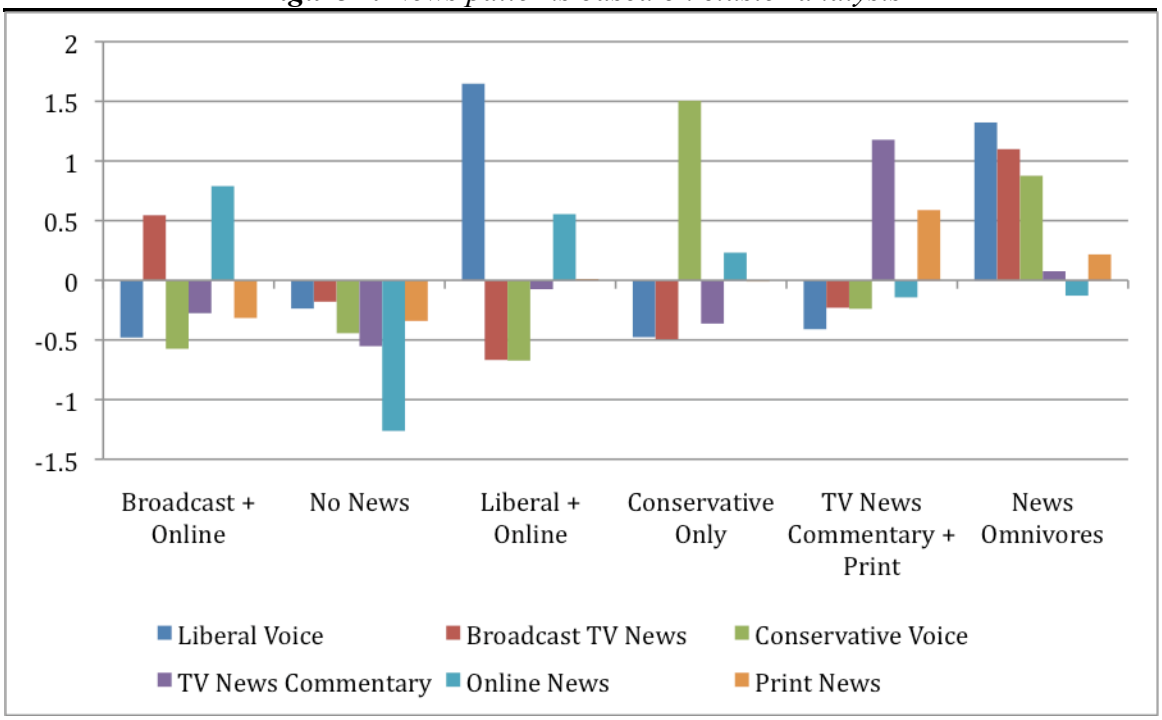
Component 1, 'Liberal Voice,' includes liberal blogs, progressive radio, *NPR,* and online news magazines. It would appear that the underlying component here is a liberal voice that stretches across media platforms. Component 2 is labeled 'Broadcast TV News,' and includes an array of broadcast news offerings—morning national news, evening national news, local news, daytime talk shows, and late-night talk shows. Not only does this factor split broadcast news away from other types of TV news (e.g., cable news), it also lumps together sources of 'hard' news and infotainment. Component 3, 'Conservative Voice,' includes *Fox News*, conservative blogs, conservative radio, and Christian radio/TV. Again, we see that ideological voice (this time conservative) tends to erode medium-level groupings. Component 4 is a specific style of television news, referred to as 'TV News Commentary,' that includes Sunday morning debate shows, *CNN*, and *MSNBC*. The last two factors encompass clear medium-level differences. Component 5, labeled 'Online News,' includes local news websites, TV news websites, and news aggregators. Lastly, Component 6, 'Print News,' includes national newspapers, local newspapers, and news magazines.

Step 2: Clustering News

The next step in uncovering news repertories is to analyze how the above components cluster together (see Hasebrink & Popp, 2006). A cluster analysis was performed on the six components identified in the PCA. A two-step method was used to determine the number of clusters. First, Ward's method was used to identify a jump in cluster coefficients, singling the

number of clusters. Second, k-mean clustering was used to specify a cluster-number solution. Based on Ward's method, a 6-cluster solution was selected. Cluster sizes varied from 96 to 220 respondents. Figure 1 presents the group means of the component scores for each of the 6 clusters. Negative scores indicate low use, while positive scores indicate high use for that component.

Figure 1. *News patterns based on cluster analysis*



Means reported are z-standardized component scores

The makeup of Cluster 1 is characterized by two type of news—broadcast TV and online news. These users are defined by their use of two different media—TV and the Internet—and the absence of ideologically driven media. Cluster 1 is labeled 'Broadcast + Online' and is the most popular cluster (23%).

Cluster 2 is characterized by low overall news use. These people report low use of all components of news, particularly online news. Cluster 2 is labeled 'No News' and 17% of respondents inhabit this news-avoiding cluster. This cluster uses the high-choice media

environment to flee from news content (as least the news content measured here) echoing the arguments of Prior (2007) and others (Mindich, 2005; Patterson, 2008; Putnam, 2000).

Cluster 3 is characterized by very high liberal news and also online news use. For these people, television news holds little value. Instead these people seek out news with a liberal voice (via the Internet and radio) and also general online news. The fact that liberal media is so prominent in this cluster supports the argument that news patterns are now based around ideologically driven news (in this case liberal). We could say that people in this cluster are living in the 'blue media' landscape. Cluster 3 is referred to as 'Liberal + Online' with 11% of respondents belonging to this cluster.

Cluster 4 is characterized by the high use of conservative news media. Different from the other clusters, cluster 4 rates high on only one component of news. These users are mainly interested in news with a conservative voice, and seek it out across TV, radio, and the Internet. They exemplify a news repertoire that is structured around ideological attributes, not medium. People in this cluster are very much living in the 'red media' landscape. Cluster 4 is labeled 'Conservative Only' and 19% of the respondents belong to this cluster.

The make up of Cluster 5 is characterized by a very high use of TV news analysis and print use. This cluster demonstrates an affinity for a specific type of television news—opinionated analysis and debate—coupled with print news (which also provides a version of analysis within its editorial pages). This cluster is called 'TV commentary + Print' and 19% of respondents are in this cluster.

Finally, cluster 6 is characterized by high overall news use. These people sample for both liberal and conservative news, as well as network news. In terms of crosscutting news exposure (Mutz, 2006), this cluster has a wider lens for what they are exposed to. We could think of these

people as living in the 'purple media' landscape. To borrow from Massanari and Howard's terminology (2011), cluster 6 is labeled 'News Omnivores' and 10% of respondents belong to this cluster.

Taken together, the cluster analysis results indicate diverse ways news users pattern their exposure. For some people, the colorful news landscape provides the opportunity to consume specific types of ideological news. For others, the high-choice media environment is used to seek out a variety of news styles and ideological voices. But who are these people? The next section examines the socio-demographic makeup of the clusters.

Descriptive Analysis

Five individual difference items are included in the descriptive analysis. Age was measured by asking respondents to indicate their birth year. Following Zukin, Ketter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini's (2006) conceptualization, four age cohorts were identified: Dutifuls (born 1918-1946; 25%), Boomers (born 1947-1964; 40%), GenX (born 1965-1973; 12%) and DotNet (born 1974-1990; 25%). Gender was also identified, with the sample including 52% males and 48% females. Highest level of education was broken into four categories: less than a high school diploma (4%), high school graduate (23%), some college or trade school (41%), and college graduate or post-graduate education (32%). Political party affiliation was considered as identification with being a Democrat (35%), Republican (31%), or Independent (30%). And lastly, survey respondents rated their agreement with the statement, "Most news media coverage is biased against my views" on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Respondents were considered 'low' in media bias if they disagreed with the statement (17%); 'medium' in bias if they selected the scale midpoint (36%); and 'high' in media bias if they agreed with the statement (48%).

Table 3. *Individual Differences Within News Clusters*

	Broadcast + Online N = 220	No News N = 167	Liberal + Online N = 109	Conserv. Only N = 181	Comment. + Print N = 186	News Omniv. N = 96
Percentage of sociodemographic within the cluster						
Age cohort						
Dot Net	25.7%	27.8%	28.6%	9.6%	20.5%	23.2%
Gen X	16.1%	13.9%	13.3%	12.7%	4.3%	14.2%
Boomer	35.3%	39.4%	43.8%	43.9%	37.3%	44.2%
Dutiful	22.9%	18.9%	14.3%	33.8%	37.8%	17.9%
Gender						
Male	49.5%	40.6%	62.9%	67.7%	51.4%	42.1%
Female	50.5%	59.4%	37.1%	32.3%	48.6%	57.9%
Education						
No hs grad	7.8%	1.7%	1.9%	3.8%	1.6%	4.2%
HS grad	18.4%	47.8%	5.8%	17.7%	20.5%	20%
Some college	36.4%	33.9%	41.3%	41.8%	44.3%	51.6%
College/ post-grad	37.3%	16.7%	51%	36.7%	33.5%	24.2%
Party ID						
Democrat	44.6%	42.1%	42.7%	2.3%	42.3%	60.8%
Republican	18.6%	36.1%	3.4%	75.8%	25.5%	16.5%
Independent	36.7%	21.8%	53.9%	21.9%	32.2%	22.8%
Media bias						
Low	26.7%	18.3%	19.2%	4.5%	21.2%	9.6%
Medium	43.3%	45.7%	42.3%	5.7%	39.1%	50%
High	30.0%	36%	38.5%	89.8%	39.7%	40.4%

As indicated in Table 3, the ‘Broadcast + Online’ cluster is characterized by a general balance among age cohorts, gender, and media bias. There is, however, a distinct imbalance in partisanship, with a large subset of Democrats (44.6%) and Independents (36.7%) in the cluster.

The ‘No News’ cluster is made up of more females (59.4%), a large portion of users with only a high school education and some college (nearly 82%), and also people with a medium level of media bias (45.7%).

The ‘Liberal + Online’ cluster is comprised of almost 29% Dot Net users and 44% Boomer users. Additionally, there are striking gender differences with nearly 63% males belonging to this cluster. There is also an overwhelming education skew with 51% having at least graduated from college. This cluster includes only 3% of Republicans.

In a clear break from its liberal counterpart, the ‘Conservative Only’ cluster is mostly comprised of older users (44% Boomer and 39% Dutiful). Additionally, 90% of users in this cluster are high in media bias. And 76% are Republicans. It would be a mistake to think of ideologically driven media as appealing to audiences with similar demographics. There are clear differences (beyond partisanship) between audiences with a liberal news repertoire and those with a conservative repertoire. There is, however, one similarity worth noting. The conservative cluster also skews toward males (68%), suggesting a common underlying dimension to ideologically driven media that is related to being male.

The ‘TV Commentary + Print’ cluster skews more toward the older age cohorts (75% are Boomers or Dutifuls), with no striking gender differences. Users with ‘some college’ education are also prominently represented in this cluster (44.3%). There is a general balance regarding partisanship and media bias.

Lastly, the ‘News Omnivore’ cluster includes 44% Boomers and 23% Dot net users. This group has more females (58%) and 52% have some college education. The group is also 61% Democrats and half of the cluster is holds a medium level of media bias. What is particularly interesting about this cluster is its distinctiveness from the two ideological clusters. Although there is overlap in the types of news consumed, there are still clear differences in socio-demographic factors. For example, consuming only ideologically driven news (i.e., the ‘Liberal + Online’ and ‘Conservative News Only’ clusters) is related to being male, while audiences who

sample from both (i.e., 'News Omnivores') skews more toward females. This difference may underscore a general trait of open-mindedness or a greater capacity for deliberation—both have been linked to females (Kanter, 1979; Marsden, 1987). But more importantly, these three clusters probably exhibit different effects.

Cluster Effects

To explore the cluster-effects link three political outcomes were measured: civic participation, online political participation, and offline political participation. For each of these, survey respondents were asked how regularly they engaged in different activities over the past month (for complete question wording see Appendix A). Answers were given on a 7-point scale, ranging from "not at all" (1) to "frequently" (7). The averages of three questions were used to measure civic participation (e.g., worked on a community project). Four questions were averaged to measure offline political participation (e.g., attended a political meeting). And four questions were averaged to measure online political participation (e.g., forwarding a political email). With cross-sectional survey data a causal relationship cannot be observed. As such, this analysis explores the relationships between news clusters and participation outcomes, relying on past research that has found a casual relationship from news consumption to participation levels (Putnam, 2001; Shah, 1998; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005).

Three separate one-way ANOVAs for cluster membership were run for the different participation outcomes, using LSD post-hoc comparisons. There was a significant difference among the news clusters in terms of civic participation (f (5, 1121) = 17.96 = $p \leq .001$). Scoring the highest in civic participation were 'News Omnivores' (M = 3.15, SD = .14), while scoring the lowest was the 'No News' cluster (M = 1.90, SD = .10). The two ideologically driven clusters produced similar participation levels ('Liberal + Online': M = 2.80, SD = .13; 'Conservative

Only': $M = 2.96$, $SD = .10$), followed next by 'Commentary + Print' ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .09$) and 'Broadcast + Online' ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .09$) clusters.

In terms of significant comparison differences, post-hoc tests reveal that all comparisons are significant with the exception of three comparisons: the difference between 'Commentary + Print' and 'Broadcast + Online,' the difference between 'Liberal + Online' and 'Conservative Only,' and the difference between 'Conservative Only' and 'News Omnivores.' In making sense of these results, allow me to highlight a couple of comparisons of interest. First, there is a significant difference between the levels of civic participation among 'News Omnivores' and the 'Liberal + Online' cluster ($p \leq .10$). Even though these clusters share the common element of exposure to liberal voice news, they are different in what they pair it with. And this difference is related to civic participation differences, with 'News Omnivores' engaging in more civic participation. The same pattern is observed for the 'Liberal + Online' and 'Broadcast + Online' clusters ($p \leq .001$). Even thought they share a common use of online news, they produce different levels of civic participation.

For offline political participation, there was a significant difference among the news clusters ($f(5, 1120) = 22.984 = p \leq .001$). Scoring highest in political participation was the 'News Omnivores' ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .10$), followed by 'Liberal + Online' ($M = 2.06$, $SD = .09$), the 'Conservative Only' ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .07$), 'TV Commentary + Print' ($M = 1.66$, $SD = .07$), 'Broadcast + Online' ($M = 1.33$, $SD = .06$) and lastly, the 'No News' cluster ($M = 1.19$, $SD = .07$). All pairwise comparisons were significant except for: the difference between 'Broadcast + Online' and 'No News,' the difference between 'Liberal + Online' and 'News Omnivores,' and the difference between 'Conservative Only' and 'Liberal + Online'. Key comparisons of interests include the significant difference between 'News Omnivores' and 'Conservative Only' ($p \leq$

.001). Despite the fact that the clusters share the common element of conservative voice exposure, 'News Omnivores' pair it with other types of new media (e.g., liberal voice and broadcast TV) and exhibit high levels of offline political participation. Also the significant difference between the 'Liberal + Online' cluster and the 'Broadcast + Online' ($p \leq .001$). Even though these clusters both partake in online news consumption, their overall news diet is different, and the 'Liberal + Online' cluster participates at a higher rate.

Lastly, the ANOVA for online political participation produced significant difference among the news clusters (f (5, 1111) = 72.73= $p \leq .001$). A completely different order emerges for online participation. The 'Liberal + Online' (M= 4.58, SD = .13) cluster reports the highest level of participation, followed by 'News Omnivores' (M = 3.42, SD = .14), 'Conservative Only' (M = 3.41, SD = .10), 'TV Commentary + Print' (M = 2.78, SD = .10), 'Broadcast + Online' (M = 2.47, SD = .09), and the 'No News' cluster ranks the lowest (M = 1.60, SD = .10). In terms of pairwise comparisons, all pairs were significant except for the difference between 'News Omnivores' and the 'Conservative Only' clusters. It is interesting to note the significant difference between the two Internet clusters—'Liberal + Online' and 'Broadcast + Online' ($p \leq$ .001). Even though both these clusters rely on the Internet for news, they don't engage in online participation at the same rates. The 'Liberal + Online' cluster engages in this type of behavior at almost double the rate. Why might this be? One possibility relates to the audience composition of the 'Liberal + Online' cluster. Recall from the descriptive analysis, this cluster skews toward the youngest cohort and the more educated—both are factors related to online political participation (Bimber, 2003; Dalton, 2009; Davis & Owen, 1998). This finding points toward the complex threads connecting audience characteristics, news clusters, and effects. Certain people consume certain types of news media and exhibit certain effects.

There are several limitations that should be acknowledged in light the findings presented in this chapter. The data used in this chapter was collected during the 2008 presidential primary campaign. Much has been written about the uniqueness of the 2008 election (Kenski, Hardy, & Jamieson, 2010); the news patterns described here may be an artifact of this unusual, noisy, and special election context. On a similar note, this analysis did not test the stability of these news patterns over time. Lastly, the news measures included in this chapter dictated the scope of possible new patterns. Although the 27 news exposure questions are an improvement over past studies (Hasebrinlk & Popp, 2006; Yuan, 2011), they are by no means a comprehensive list. Newer media, like smart phones or digital tablets, were not specifically accounted for.

The Gray Area

In the previous chapter, I laid out the arguments of the decline and opportunity narratives. Results from this chapter suggest that both the decline and opportunity narratives can be true. Both coexist within the same media system at the same time. Under some circumstances the decline narrative is true. Under others it is not. For some audiences the opportunity narrative is very true and for others it is not. It would be wrong to classify the recent changes to the media environment (e.g., ideological news, infotainment, etc.) as strictly good or bad. After all the first law of technology is that "technology is neither good or bad; nor is it neutral" (Melvin Kranberg, 1986). Results from this chapter suggest that some people approach ideological news as a way to sample from multiple perspectives (e.g., 'News Omnivores'), while others approach ideological news as a way to consume only a specific type of news ('Conservative Only'). It's not that *Fox News* is inherently bad for democracy; rather, it depends on how audiences approach *Fox News*. It depends on what they do with it.

The potential of the high-choice media environment to produce knowledgeable and engaged citizens is very contingent. For example, late-night talk shows are linked to increases in political talk—but only among individuals who rate themselves *high* in perceived political knowledge (Moy, Xenos, Hess, 2005). For these people the humor of late-night talk shows is fodder for their everyday discussions. For people lacking in this perceived knowledge, there is little springboard effect for these shows, the material is of little relevance to their everyday dissuasions. On the flip side, other research finds effects to be centered on individuals with *lower* engagement. Baum (2003b) finds that soft news exposure and learning effects are contingent on lower educational levels. Similarly, low levels of attention (Beak & Wojcieszak, 2009), awareness (Baum & Jamieson, 2006) interest (Xenos & Becker, 2009) are related to increased learning from infotainment media. In these cases, individuals with little background in political issues are helped by the entertaining, flashy, incidental exposure to current events information. What this suggests is a more complicated relationship between individuals, media content, and what they do with it.

To make heads or tails of the new media environment and its democratic implications we need to take a step back. We need to understand how the high-choice media environment alters how we *think* about news. Is this the start of the contingent effects? Maybe highly knowledgeable people approach late-night talk shows not expecting to learn (they are already pretty knowledgeable), instead they expect these shows to provide them with humorous talking points for future discussions they will have. The reverse might be true for people who are low in knowledge. And depending on the approach (e.g., Jay Leno is good for talking material or Jay Leno keeps me up to date on current events) people will attend to content in different ways, producing different effects. Ultimately, to predict who lives in the decline narrative and who

lives in the opportunity narrative, we first need to understand the locus of selection and effects—how people cognitively structure the news media environment. This is a task that the rest of this dissertation project takes on.

The next chapter addresses research that sheds light on the cognitive processes that lurk beneath cognitive media selection and effects.

Chapter Three: Thinking About News

"Ask not what media does to you, but what you do with media"
-Elihu Katz

How do people think about the news media? This is not uncharted territory in the filed of mass communication. Frameworks like Uses and Gratifications, selective exposure, and social norms have spawned decades of research linking the ways audiences think about media and selection behavior (see Bryant & Cummins, 2007; Perse, 2007). However, the new media environment presents several challenges to traditional models of news exposure and effects. Increased media choice, new forms of news content, and social media all create a new media landscape for individuals to navigate. And consequently, this makes thinking about the news media a more complicated process.

This chapter begins by detailing three areas of research on the specific and diverse ways individuals think about the high-choice media environment. I will argue that thought diversity is party due to the interpretability, or 'openness', of news content—is *The Daily Show* news? Entertainment? Both? A person would not be incorrect in taking any of these positions. Finally, I conclude this chapter by introducing the concept of a news vocabulary as a way to better explore how individuals understand the news world they live in.

News Preferences

One way to think about the media, and news in particular, is by its ability to satisfy specific preferences. Uses and Gratifications (U&G) is a framework that emphasizes the antecedents of media exposure and effects. That is, "to explain media effects we must first understand the characteristics, motivation, selectivity, and involvement of audience members" (Rubin, 2002, p. 526). Under this approach audiences are viewed as active and goal oriented.

Individuals make intentional and conscious media choices based on specific motivations. As implied by its name, media users at drawn to media that they believe will most fully satisfies a particular goal or preference.

Early U&G research made the distinction between the preferences for news versus entertainment (Furu, 1971; Schramn, 1949; Schramn, Lyle, & Parker, 1961). Rubin (1983) added to this line of research by identifying five different motivations for television viewing—pass time/habit, information, entertainment, companionship, and escapism. He argued that these motivations underscore two television user preferences: 1) those who use television for consumption and entertainment, and 2) those who use television for non-escapist, information seeking (also see Rubin, 1984; Rubin & Perse, 1987).

Even in the high-choice media environment, the preference for news and entertainment has remained a salient way of thinking about the media. Markus Prior (2007) argues that the overall preference for entertainment (over news) coupled with access to cable TV or the Internet, results in the avoidance of news content (and consequently lower levels of knowledge and greater polarization). However, recent research suggests that a blanket, all-encompassing news preference does not cut it anymore. With so many news options, individuals are developing more specific preferences about news. For example, individuals with the preference for "news that shares your personal views" are more likely to consume *Fox News* (Morris, 2005) and *The O'Reilly Factor* (Coe et al., 2008). In contrast, individuals with the preference for "news with in-depth interviews with public officials" are more likely to consume *CNN* and network news. Among the college demographic, individuals with the preference for "news that offers competing points of view" gravitated toward news on the radio, newspaper, Internet, and, perhaps surprisingly, *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010). In my own

work, I found that 24% of adults surveyed indicated a preference for "hearing pundits offer their opinions over traditional news reports" and this preference was related to increased viewing of *Fox News* throughout the 2008 election campaign (Edgerly, Thorson, Vraga, & Shah, 2011).

Under this framework the connection between how individuals differ (e.g., their media preferences) and the media they seek out is highlighted. However, there is an implied middle step at work—the process where audiences associate certain media with the ability to satisfy a particular need. Not only do people hold a preference for hearing pundits' opinions, but they also know that watching *Fox News* will likely satisfy this preference.

Red News and Blue News

Another way individuals think about the news is by categorizing its level of agreement with their political point of view. Selective exposure argues that individuals choose information that is consistent with their attitudes or beliefs. Under this approach, individuals are motivated to seek out media that will produce harmony with their prior attitudes or decisions. Conversely, individuals are motivated to avoid media that will produce the adverse state of cognitive dissonance. The tendency to prefer supportive over non-supportive information dates back to early cognitive dissonance and balance theories (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958; Osgood & Tannen-baun, 1955). And some support for this has been found in the low-choice media environment. For example, Sweeney and Gruber (1984) observed a selective exposure tendency during the Watergate hearings. The authors found that McGovern supporters paid more attention to the hearings, while Nixon supporters avoided them. In a field experiment, Bartlett et al. (1974) mailed envelops to area Democrats and Republicans from the organization "Voters for Nixon" or "Voters for McGovern." Upon opening the envelope, people were asked to return a self-addressed stamped postcard. The authors found that Democrats receiving the McGovern

envelope were twice as likely to return the postcard, compared to Democrats receiving the Nixon envelope. The same selective exposure trend was observed for Republicans.

The high-choice media environment has accelerated this partisan way of thinking about media. With the increased availability of ideologically driven media, it becomes easier (and perhaps more necessary) for audiences think about media options in terms of agreement with their political predispositions. For example, Republicans and conservatives tend to choose *Fox News* as their source of news, while Democrats and liberals avoid it (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009). In terms of talk radio, 70% of Rush Limbaugh radio listeners are conservative, while only 19% of 'liberal /moderate talk radio' listeners are conservative (Cappella, Turow, & Jamieson, 1996). And in an analysis of aggregate Internet click-stream data, Hindman (2009) finds that only 2.6% of political site-to-site traffic crosses ideological lines. The results from Chapter 2 would also support the selective exposure framework. Recall that the 'Conservative Only' news clusters was made up of 75% Republicans. Despite all the colorful options the news media landscape offers, many audiences think in terms of 'red media' or 'blue media' and base selection decisions accordingly.

Social Images of News

Larger social forces also influence how we think about news. Social norms, for example, are expectations about what values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are appropriate within a given group, context, or society. Blumler (1979) argues that individuals can become socialized into thinking about media in a particular way. "Individuals may learn from forces in their social environment which satisfactions people like themselves are expect to derive from media use" (p. 27). As such, our thoughts about the news are less an artifact of content and exposure, and more attributed to social and cultural awareness.

Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld (1983, 1984) tested the normative expectations of eight different media (e.g., books, magazines, films, newspapers, radio, recorded music, television, and friends) among individuals who differed in their levels of media exposure and affinity. They found no differences in the expectations individuals held for each medium—even when considering medium exposure, affinity levels, and asking people to consider their own motivations versus the motivations of "most people." For example, exposure to newspapers was associated with the motivation "*to keep up with the way the government is doing its job,"* while film exposure was "*to release tension."* These results suggest that media platforms have clear socially defined images that exist independent of media exposure, affinity, and self-other differences. Living in the social world creates certain expectations about the services media provide.

As we encounter news in more diverse ways, there are more opportunities to develop normative expectations about news sources and content. Whereas Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld (1983, 1984) approached social norms from the medium level (e.g., *the* newspaper image), recent research on social norms operates at the organizational level (e.g., *CNN*'s image, *New York Times'* image). These normative expectations are less about the general service they provide and more about the specific brand (or niche personality) of news. News brand are defined as the "names, terms, signs, symbols, or other identities used by news organizations to differentiate themselves from competitors" (Baek, Kim, & Martin, 2010, p. 119). And these news brands are becoming more personified—people are thinking about news in ways that parallel the ways we think about people. Through a series of surveys, Chan-Olmsted and Cha (2007) asked individuals to rate six news organizations along 28 brand personalities. They found that *CNN* was the *most* "reliable," "hardworking," "secure," "intelligent," "sophisticated," and "serious";

while *Fox News* was the *least* "honest," "reliable," "honest," "real," "liberal," and "reputable" news brand. And these ratings are independent of exposure levels. Adopting a similar approach, Beak, Kim, and Martin (2010) indentify five news brand personality dimensions: trustworthiness, dynamism, sincerity, sophistication, and toughness. They find *The Wall Street Journal* is viewed as most trustworthy, *Time Magazine* as most dynamic, *PBS* as most sincere and sophisticated, and *Fox News* as most tough. These results suggest that individuals in the post-broadcast age are aware of a wide variety of specific news images, and as Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld (1983, 1984) suggest, these images are learn by living in the social world.

The Glasses We Wear

Compared to thirty years ago, we think about news in more specific ways. With this specificity comes more complexity and variance in how we think about news. *Fox News*, for example, can be thought of as a source of punditry, as a piece of conservative 'red media,' or as ranking high in 'toughness.' A recent crop of research highlights the dynamic nature of our thoughts. Finding that the variance in how we think about news can have strong and powerful effects. But at the core of these findings is the need for a deeper understanding in how we structure our thoughts about the news media environment.

When writing about thought structures I like to evoke the metaphor of glasses, a device that we use to help us see, to help us understand. There are different glasses out there (e.g., a wide range of prescription lenses, glasses to protect us from the sun, and even 'trendy' fashion glasses). Depending on who we are and the conditions we find ourselves in, we wear different glasses. The selective exposure study by Iyengar and Hahn (2009) suggests that many people rely on ideological (or partisan) glasses when making news selection choices. The authors randomly assigned a series of news headlines to *Fox News*, *CNN*, *NPR*, or the *BBC* and asked

participants if they wanted to read the full news story. In other words, the content of a specific headline remained the same, the only difference was the logo (source) attached to the headline. The authors found that the same news story attracted a different audience when labeled as a *Fox*, *CNN*, or *NPR* report. Conservatives and Republicans preferred to read new stories attributed to *Fox News* and to avoid news from *CNN* and *NPR*. The opposite pattern was observed for liberals and Democrats. Interestingly, Independents were not influenced by source changes when making selection decisions. This study highlights the complexity in thought structure regarding the news media. I can image that the wearing liberal ideological glasses results in an internal dialogue along these lines, "This news story about the Iraq War is from *Fox News*, they are conservative, I don't want to read this report because it will be biased against my liberal views. These steps can be summarized as: recognition of where the news story is coming from, retrieval of the most salient thoughts regarding that source, and the development of a rule of action directed toward the task at hand. Much more than just the act of selective exposure and avoidance, the Iyengar and Hahn (2009) study suggests that content effects are secondary to the effects of thought structures.

Thoughts about news can also influence how individuals process content. Parkin (2010) finds that the same content attributed to either *The Late Show with David Letterman* or *Face the Nation* produced different effects. Specifically, when an interview transcript was attributed to *The Late Show* greater learning and policy-based evaluations occurred, compared to the *Face the Nation* transcript. Again, this suggests that effects are rooted in the glasses audiences wear when processing content. It's not Letterman's use of humor or his 'simpler' questions that produce greater learning. But rather, it's the *expectation* is that David Letterman is funny or pithy in his questioning, that prompts individuals to pay closer attention and learn. There may also be a lack

of expectations with *Face the Nation*, or negative expectations that are also at play. The cognitive steps involved here may resemble, "this is a transcript from *Face the Nation*, they are one of those boring news shows I don't watch, I'm not going to spend much energy reading this interview."

In the high-choice media landscape thought structures about news play a more prominent role because there are so many distinct types of 'glasses' available. In particular, the rise of infotainment has resulted in different ways of looking at content. The essence of infotainment is that it retains the features of news and entertainment, thus there are at least three ways to approach infotainment— by wearing news glasses, entertainment glasses, or a mixture of both (i.e., bifocals, if you will). A study by Feldman (2011a) explicitly tests this argument and its effects. She found that viewers who naturally orient to the *Daily Show* as news or as a mix of news and entertainment invested more mental effort and subsequently learned more, compared to viewers who have a purely entertainment orientation. The *Colbert Report* is also source that spurs divergent thought structures. LaMarre, Landreville, and Beam (2009) found that conservatives believe Stephen Colbert is genuine in his comments and is a political conservative, while liberals believe Colbert uses satire and is not serious about his viewpoints. Depending on who you are (conservative or liberal) and which glasses you use to view Stephen Colbert (genuine versus satire), different effects emerge. Conservatives were more likely to believe that Colbert personally favored embedded journalists in the Iraq War, which in turn lead more support for embedded journalists.

Although initial research has focused on infotainment, and political satire specifically, there is reason to believe that other trends in the high-choice media environment accelerate divergent thought structures. Cable talk shows can be viewed as a source of news, entertainment,

or a mixture of both. The hosts of these shows might be thought of as journalists or pundits, or as ideological mouthpieces. When encountering news on Facebook we may have specific thought structures related to the person who posts the news story (e.g., "I like Suzy therefore I will probably like the new stories she just posted," or "Suzy is a crazy liberal therefore the article she just posted must be crazy liberal too"). We might also have specific ways of thinking about news on Facebook (e.g., no one ever posts anything of real value on Facebook so I should not pay attention to this post). The point being that the vibrant and diverse ways we encounter current events information results in equally vibrant and diverse thought structures regarding news.

Talking about News

Thought diversity is also seen in the differing ways individuals talk about media. How people express themselves—the comparisons they make, the words they choose, the reasons they articulate—are all reflections of how they think about news. Certainly, this is messy work; talk cannot automatically be taken at face value. But this type of open and unconstrained talk provides great insights into the complexities of thoughts, often revealing the surprising and creative connections that people make to media.

Evaluating News. With the Internet providing us with unlimited information options, being able to sift through the bad-stuff and find the credible stuff is important. To address this issue, Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders (2010) observed how individuals talk about their strategies for evaluating online information. Several interviewees mentioned the importance of "social confirmation" in establishing credibility. That is, the reputations they perceive certain media sources to have was instrumental in making quick assessments regarding their credibility. The following two statements from interviewees capture this idea:

> You don't know which is really true and which isn't, except by what you believe. Like if Rush Limbaugh said it, I wouldn't believe it. If someone more liberal said it, I would probably trust it more, because I lean more that way (p. 423).
>
> I think it depends on the credibility of the company of the site itself. If it's a government Web site or if it's a big company like *CNN*, they've already established their credibility and so their Web site, you're gonna be more trusting of it (p. 426).

Both comments support the argument that people come into media exposure with specific thought structures in place. The first quote suggests the use of ideological glasses for interpreting the credibility of Rush Limbaugh. For this person, there's so much information out there that ideological glasses are an easy way to make evaluations. It's highly likely that two versions of information (one attributed to Rush Limbaugh and the other to a fictitious reporter) would yield drastically different evaluations from this person. The other quote suggests a favorable reputation that *CNN* has in the mind of the interviewee. For whatever reason (social image, habitual use) this person thinks of *CNN* as an exemplar of credibility. It's likely that two versions of information (one attributed to *CNN* and the other to different news source) would yield different evaluations from this person.

Other work focuses on how people talk about their dissatisfaction with the news media. In his book, *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News*, Mindich, (2005) speaks with young people about their opinions of the news media. He finds that many young people don't see that value in news, especially if their social networks (e.g., friends, coworkers) don't value it. Similarly, other focus group research suggests that people are critical of the production process of news and its growing bias toward certain political viewpoints (Delli Carpini & Williams, 1998; Press & Cole, 1999). Focus groups with adolescents in the US and UK revealed that even pre-adults have a strong sense that news is flawed (Buckingham, 2000). They commonly mentioned that news was both too boring and too geared toward entertainment.

But most importantly, he says that adolescents speak about news in ways that reveal their general alienation from it. They approach the topic of news with a "cynical chic" (Eliasoph, 1990) mindset that news does not pertain to them nor will they be fooled by it.

Turning Media into Something Bigger. How people talk about media also provides a window into the process where media takes on a greater meaning. Schaefer and Avery (1993) used a focus group methodology to observe differing interpretations of *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Focus group discussions highlight the differences between Johnny Carson and Letterman, with Letterman representing a younger, more spontaneous approach that fosters viewer identification.

> I love what Letterman does. Everybody says it's different than Carson. It's a spoof on Carson, a beautifully structured spoof. Here's the Carson show with a big band orchestra. I've played in a big band. Big band is an orchestra and it's orchestrated. What does Letterman have? Not an orchestra. A rock group, right? Uniforms? Are you kidding? They updated Carson. They spoofed it. And a spoof carefully carried out is one of the best bits of humor (p. 264).

> [Letterman's] one of us. He hates working for someone else but he's going to make the best of it. And I think that's why a lot of people identify with him. He's middle class America in that respect. He saying I'm just one of you guys and let's go get these boners! (p. 266)

The first quote highlights the distinct image Letterman holds in the mind of one interviewee. Just because he performs a similar job to Carson (on the same network, *NBC*), does not mean that they are thought of as the same. There is a realness and spontaneity to Letterman that stands in contrast to Carson. And things like the band and uniforms are all symbols that represent the larger difference in what Letterman is trying to accomplish. The second quote adds to the meaning that Letterman holds for some viewers. For the second interviewee Letterman is not some highly paid comedian living in New York City; instead he is relatable, someone who has 'boss issues' just like everyone else. This type of identification or parasocial interaction can be

quite powerful. When viewers identify with a media personality they pay closer attention and are more likely to be persuaded (Cohan, 2001). In media environment where political information is frequently featured on late-night talk shows, identification with a host can yield powerful effects. Viewers who come into a program thinking "I love Letterman, he pokes fun at the establishment*"* (i.e., wearing rose-colored identification glasses) are more likely to be influenced by politically relevant information discussed on late-night talk shows. Much was made of John McCain's appearance on *Letterman* during the 2008 presidential election. In a nutshell, McCain had first canceled his appearance (and temporarily suspended his campaign) to focus on the national budget crisis. Letterman did not take well to the cancelation and repeatedly poked fun at McCain during his opening monologues (e.g., "Senator John McCain is in favor of the bailout. He loves bailouts — he bailed out on me"). When McCain finally appeared on *Letterman*, some three weeks latter, 6.5 million viewers (double the average) tuned in to see McCain offer an apology for the cancelation. During the interview, Letterman asked McCain a series of tough questions related to his campaign, garnering much praise from several news organizations (Stelter, 2008; Susman, 2008). The person who attaches a greater meaning to Letterman, seeing him as representing Middle America or as bucking The Establishment, would process the McCain-Letterman 'showdown' very differently than the person without these expectations.

Connecting Media to Public Engagement. Another line of research gains insights into political engagement through talk about media. Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham (2007) set out to discover the ways individuals connect the media that they consume to a larger orientation toward public issues. The authors argue that entertainment media is not inherently bad, but its good depends on drawing connections to larger public issues. Having people talk about their media diets is one way to observe these points of connection. For example, one interviewee

spoke about celebrity media (e.g., reality programs, gossip shows) by criticizing the media's intrusion of into the private life. However, not all consumers of celebrity media bridged these two. The authors argue that the ability to see media through this larger orientation is key to political engagement. The person who views their use of celebrity media through a larger lens has a pathway to political engagement. For the person who views their use of celebrity media as purely entertainment, this pathway does not exist. These public connections (or lack there of) are visible by observing how people talked about their media use.

When people talk about politics, the line between fictional and news media is very thin. Delli Carpini and Williams (1998) observed how people reference media when discussing environmental issues. They found that focus group members were just as likely to reference entertainment media (e.g., *The Day After*, *The Simpsons*) as news media (e.g., *60 Minutes*, *CNN*) when making points about the environment. Moreover, the authors noted specific public figures mentioned by discussants and found entertainment figures to be most frequently mentioned (e.g., Bette Milder, Bill Cosby, Bob Barker), and often used as an authoritative source on the environment. Meanwhile there was a lack of references to elected public officials (only a *single* reference to (President George H.W. Bush). It appears that people do not make rigid distinctions between entertainment content and news content (a distinction that is increasingly difficult to make). Instead they draw on relevant topical information (seemingly asking themselves, "What do I know about the environment?") when having conversations about politics.

When taking stalk of the ways people think and talk about the news media, it's clear that they are making sense of the high choice media environment in a multitude of specific, creative, and divergent ways. One reason for this is that news content and news figures are increasingly hard to define. Whereas news was once easily identifiable—produced by a news organization

and delivered by a journalist—news is now a murky, more interpretable, concept. One person's news is another person's entertainment. One person's blog is another person's news. In other words, news has become open to interpretation.

News as an 'Open' Concept

The interpretability of *fictional* media content is long advocated by media scholars. During the 1970s and 80s, a series of scholarly works examined how audiences constructed multiple meanings from media content. For example, the popular primetime sitcom *All in the Family*, spurred contrasting interpretations of its main character, parodied bigot Archie Bunker (Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974). Audiences who identified or agreed with Bunker's viewpoints held more favorable impressions of his character and saw nothing wrong with his use of racial and ethic slurs. However, audiences who did not identify with Bucker or disagreed with this political views held negative impressions of him and viewed the show as making fun of Bucker's bigotry. Similarly, the research of Livingstone (1987, 1988) illustrates that soap opera characters are perceived in multiple ways.

These empirical findings support the theoretical arguments of Eco (1979) and Fiske (1986). Eco states that television programs should be thought of as an 'open text.' Media texts are written in such a way that audiences will decode them differently. There is not one interpretation, but rather multiple ones that reflect different socially located audiences. Fiske (1986) describes television texts as 'polysemic,' suggesting that different subgroups construct different meanings from a single text. He argues that interpretations extend beyond the different meanings attached to language, but in the ways that different socially audiences give meaning to language. Although this line of research is grounded within television, and fictional content, I

believe that the idea of an open text (or polysemy) can be readily applied to the new media environment.

There are two processes that underscore the 'openness' of modern news content. The first is the ambiguity in defining and recognizing news (Eco, 1979). It's a simple enough question, "What is news?" and yet the answer remains murky. One of the best examples of this is the decades-long legislative struggle to define broadcast news. Since 1934, federal regulations have required non-news broadcast programs to give political candidates equal airtime (or equal use of public airwaves). News programming, however, is exempt from this requirement. As a result, defining news became a matter of legislative importance that Congress set out to clarify. In 1959, the House decided that a "bona fide" news program was a, "regularly scheduled program, controlled and produced solely by broadcasters, exercising their professional news judgment" (Winch, 1997, p. 83). And rather than giving a more specific definition, the House offered up a list of programs that were examples of news. A clear case of, "I can't tell you exactly what news is, but I know it when I see it" (Winch, 1997, p. 84). The Senate, however, found it difficult to define news beyond "of current interest" and therefore, granted the FCC the power to evaluate the definition on a case-by-case basis.

Over the next thirty years the FCC climbed a slippery slope of recognizing news. In 1984, *The Donahue Show* was granted exemption from equal time (after first being rejected in 1981), in 1987 *Entertainment Tonight* and *Entertainment This Week* were found to contain moments of news value and thus exempt, and in 1991 the *Sally Jessy Raphael Show* made the exemption cut (Winch, 1997). These decisions mark an evolution of defining (or not defining) news. They reveal significant challenges to how we think about news, both legally and in our own lives. Programs do not have to be exclusively devoted to news content, but rather they can

have ‘moments of news’ that gives the program news value. Additionally, news does not have to come from news companies; *Donahue*, *ET*, and *EW* were owned and produced by the entertainment company *Paramount Pictures*. And lastly, the face of news is not necessarily that of a journalist; Mary Hart, host of *ET*, was an actress, singer, and former Miss South Dakota (Winch, 1997). The ambiguity of news was highlighted as television programming began to blur the lines between news and entertainment.

The high-choice media environment presents even more challenges to the definitions of news. Not only do the same issues remain for television news, but also glaring ambiguities now exist with online news sources. The *Huffington Post* recently won a Pulitzer Prize in the “online news site” category, raising the eyebrows of many who considered the site to be more of a news blog or news magazine (and therefore not eligible for the prize). A similar discussion surrounded the *National Enquirer*, a celebrity tabloid, and if its work breaking the John Edwards affair scandal should be considered for a Pulitzer (Oremus, 2012). The Pulitzer committee first rejected, and then accepted the *National Enquirer’s* submission. As these examples suggest, news is a thorny concept. If Congress and the Pulitzer committee have struggled with recognizing news, then media users are surely experience the same issues.

The second process related to the ‘openness of news’ is the role of personal characteristics. Following the arguments of Fiske (1986) and Eco (1979), the ‘openness’ of news rests on the interpretations of different socially located audiences. The finding of LaMarre et al. (2009) is one such example. Political liberals view Stephen Colbert one way; political conservatives view him in a different way. The meaning of the content is ambiguous. Is Stephen Colbert really a conservative, or it is an act? People will resolve this ambiguity in different ways. Here’s another one. Is Jon Stewart a journalist? Young people are more likely to say yes; older

people are more likely to say no (Baym, 2010). It is not outrageous to view the *Daily Show* as news source or an entertainment source. What is a cut and dry question for some is a really murky question for others. This is just the tip of the iceberg in exploring the 'openness' of news. Is *Fox News* fair and balanced? Are Bill O'Reilly and Rachel Maddow journalists? Is the *NY Times* more a credible source than the *Huffington Post*? Viewers with different political or media orientations will answer these questions in very different ways. These are just some of the issues that the modern news consumer navigates.

What I am proposing is an approach that brings together the ways we think and talk about news. The high-choice media environment presents new complexities in how we understanding the news world. There are vibrant and colorful news figures and organizations that coexist alongside more traditional ones. This change coincides with diverse news clusters and information flows that have the potential to drastically shape how we think about the news media environment. To shed light on this, I am developing the concept of a "news vocabulary." By positing this concept as a type of vocabulary it encompasses both a range of comprehension and expressive abilities.

Connecting Thought and Talk

Thought and talk are not strange bedfellows. In proposing the concept of news vocabularies I draw from theories and research that have long recognized the relationship between cognition and speech. One line of support comes from Symbolic Interaction. This perspective argues that the ways we act toward an object are based on the meanings associated with the object (Blumer, 1969). When walking in downtown Chicago, for example, I will act different if I think the neighborhood has a high crime rate compared to a low crime rate. Or to use a more relevant example, my reactions to watching *Fox News* will be different if I think of

the news organization as conservative propaganda compared to thinking of it as a cable news channel. How do we come to attach certain meanings to neighborhoods or news organizations? They arise from the interactions we have with our social networks and society at large. If my friends reinforce the notion that *Fox News* is conservative then I am likely to adopt this meaning. If my media diet reinforces the notion that *Fox News* is conservative than I am likely to adopt this meaning. So talking becomes the process by which we learn meaning and also how we express meaning (Maynard, 2003).

Scholars from the field of rhetoric argue that the words we use to express ourselves provide a portal to deeper, symbolic meaning (Burke, 1984). My use of the word "soda" (and not "pop") is a clue that I was not raised in the Midwest. Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1939) echoes this point in describing language as socially constructed and maintained, and infused with social evaluations. He states, "a vocabulary is not merely a string of words; immanent within it are societal textures—institutional and political coordinates" (p.677). We make meaning through the vocabulary at our disposal. By analyzing expression we gain insights into the complexities of meaning.

Work by Swidler (2001) teases out the connection between larger social influences (what she terms cultural from the "outside in") and internal meaning-making process (cultural from the "inside out"). She examines how middle-class couples talk about love and finds that people do not have a single, coherent notion of love and what it means. Rather they draw from diverse, and sometimes contradictory, "repertoires" in relation to their experiences and values. Swidler likens repertoires to a toolkit or a "bag or tricks" that guide understanding, expectations, and action (p. 24). Attending church or watching romantic comedies provides people with different tools for talking about love.

Also useful is Perrin's (2006) concept of a "democratic imagination." He argues that political engagement is largely contingent on what a citizen can imagine doing—"what is possible, important, right, and feasible" (p. 2). Individuals with a "thick" democratic imagination have more tools at their disposal and will exhibit higher levels of engagement. In developing this concept Perrin focuses on members of various civic associations and how they talk through different hypothetical situations. He finds that members of trade unions have thicker imagination compared to members of sports leagues. That is, they draw from a wider toolkit of resources and are able to imagine a wider set of responses. For Perrin, democratic life is rooting in the triadic relationship between thinking, talking, and practicing, with civic organizations shaping the nature of these relationships.

Swidler's repertoire and Perrin's imagination provide valuable insight to the linkages between thought, talk, and action and the influence of social world. To understand the world around us, be it love, politics, or the news world, we actively construct meanings that are both the product of our social positioning and reflected in the ways we express ourselves.

News Vocabulary

In light of the dramatic changes that have recently taken place in the news media landscape, I believe a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the ways that people understand the news. The term vocabulary is particularly useful as it taps into the dual processes of cognitions and expression. For example, when I traveled to Spain my remedial Spanish vocabulary (obtained through several years of high school Spanish courses) set the boundaries of what I was able to understand and how I expressed myself. The same is true for a news vocabulary. Living in the media world results in an acquired vocabulary about the news media

(e.g., what is news, who is a journalist, what sources are credible, who can be trusted?), and this vocabulary shapes how we understand and talk about the news media.

I am not the first to evoke the concept of vocabulary in relation to news products. When researching this concept, I found several websites devoted to the idea of a newspaper vocabulary with lists of news-related terms and definitions (e.g., byline, inverted pyramid, press release, etc.). These websites exist to enhance the vocabulary of newspaper readers. Similarly, a classroom in Vilas Hall bears a poster with the word "Glossary" printed above an image of a *NY Times* front page (there is an implied vocabulary that requires a glossary of definitions). The poster decodes the meaning of the first page of the newspaper. Words like "lead story" are located on the front page and defined (e.g., "the main (or leading) story of the issue, always positioned at upper right"). These examples all point to a certain type of vocabulary that is needed to smoothly navigate the newspaper terrain. My approach to a news vocabulary is less tied to a specific type of news, like a newspaper, and more reflective of the sense-making process regarding the larger news environment. I am less tied to a set of terms that a news consumer *should* know, and more interested in the terms, comparisons, and expectations that organically arise when people think about the news.

Moving forward, I propose four research questions related to the news vocabulary concept. Due to the exploratory and inductive nature of this project, I have decided against the use of more formal hypotheses and will instead rely on these research questions as a roadmap for exploration.

1. How do people think and talk about the news? What strategies or tools do individuals use to make sense of news environment and to render judgments?

2. To what extent is there variance among news vocabularies? Do some people have fairly sophisticated (fluent) ways of thinking/talking about the news media, while others draw from a more simple understanding?
3. To what extent are news vocabularies related to social positioning and other individual differences?
4. What role do news vocabularies play in news exposure decisions and in explaining news effects?

A Spotlight on Young Adults

In exploring the concept of a news vocabulary I am choosing to focus explicitly on young adults. Of course this research area is not only applicable to young people. I imagine a similar and interesting argument could be made for focusing on how older cohorts adjust from living in the low-choice media environment to one with lots of choice. My decision to focus on young people, however, was multifold. Given the exploratory nature of this project, I wanted to identify a more manageable subset of media users. It was my belief that I could better develop the concept of a news vocabulary when holding age differences constant. Beyond this methodological consideration, there are also strong empirical and theoretical reasons for focusing on young adults.

First, young people are "digital natives" who have only known the high-choice media environment (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). While this may make them better able to adjust and develop the skills needed to navigate this type of environment, it also means that they don't have the memories of a simplified media environment to structure their thoughts. They did not grow up with Walter Cronkite. They did not grow up in an environment where turning on the television at 5'oclock in the evening meant a choice between three broadcast news programs.

Many did not grow up with home delivery of newspapers and have never head of afternoon newspapers. In essence, they have been socialized under a different media system. And when thinking about the news media young people may not have a clear idea of what's changed. They may think in ways that are not grounded in the old media system. Is there a difference between broadcast news and cable news? Young people have only lived in a media world where these two have co-existed. They may see little difference. Is Jon Stewart a journalist? If you hold him to the standard of Walter Cronkite your answer might be no. If you don't have a Cronkite gold standard, your answer might be yes. Given that young people have come of age within a diverse media landscape, they may possess an innovative and creative news vocabulary that will have implications as they age.

Second, compared to older cohorts young people make very different media decisions. Books like, *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News* (Mindich, 2005) and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Putnam, 2000) paint a bleak picture of young people's engagement with news content. These arguments are supported by a recent PEW (2010) study finding that only 23% of 18 to 29 year-olds regularly read a newspaper, compared to 55% of the people 65-years or older who regularly read a newspaper. The same trend exists for network evening news (14% vs. 42%). However, the overall trend is not so much that young people are 'tuned out,' but rather that they are tuned into a different array of news programming. This younger cohort gets its news from online sources (48%) and newer forms of television news content like *Fox News* (17%) *CNN* (13%) and the *Daily Show* (13%) (PEW, 2010). Results from Chapter 2 also illustrate the news cluster differences between younger cohorts (i.e., Dot Net) and older ones (i.e., Dutifuls). Young people's news exposure suggests that they may have a different outlook on the new environment.

Third, young people are a different type of citizen. Several scholars have advocated that the youngest generation of voters is reinventing what it means to be a good citizen (Dalton, 2009). In addition to a decline in traditional news exposure, young people are less trusting of others, have lower levels of knowledge about government, and participate less their local communities (Bennett, 2008). These outcomes reflect a general move away from more traditional duty-based notions of citizenship (Schudson, 1998). Instead young generations are gravitating toward what Bennett (2003b) refers to as a "self-actualizing" form of citizenship involving "highly personalized forms of identify politics anchored in lifestyles and consumer choices" (p. 138). Armed with new media technology, this actualizing citizen is more likely to upload a music video mash up about global warming or wear a t-shirt expressing their views, than visit a voting precinct or write an elected official about the global warming issue. Similarly, Dalton (2009) suggests a move toward an "engaged citizen" where young people are more aggressive and passionate about particular social causes. Engaged citizens are not continuously invested in the on-goings of the political system, rather they develop a deep connection and knowledge bank about a particular issue and base subsequent decisions around that issue (Kim, 2007). To examine how people think about the news is to do so against the changing backdrop of what it means to be a citizen. Young people in particular are defining politics and their participation in new and unconventional ways. They may also being doing the same for the news media.

Taken together, there is strong ground to stand on with focusing on young people. They are digital natives who have distinctive news diets and are redefining what it means to be a citizen. By developing the concept of news vocabulary I can add to the growing line of literature

on this young cohort and its future democratic implications. As such, the remaining chapters of this dissertation will focus solely on the news vocabularies of young adults.

The next chapter is the first of four empirical chapters exploring the news vocabulary concept. The chapter uses in-depth interview data to explore the ways that young people construct meaning and express their understanding about the news media environment.

Chapter 4: Talking About News

"We do not first see, then define, we define first and then see"
-Walter Lippmann (1965)

In this chapter, and the three that follow, I consider in some detail the ways that young people make sense of the news environment. The focus of the current chapter is to observe how young talk about the news environment. How do young people classify the news media world around them? How do they draw distinctions between news organizations and make comparisons? What are their expectations and opinions about news figures and organizations? The quote from Lippmann indicates the filtering process that stands in between young people and how they see the news media. There is a messy, middle step where we rely on some preconceived definition to enable vision. Here again is the glasses metaphor. By observing how young people work through their thoughts and expressions about the news media, the different glasses young people wear—news vocabularies—takes shape.

In-depth Interviews

Sample. I conducted a series of in-depth interviews over a nine-month period in 2011 and 2012. The goal of my recruiting strategy was not to construct a representative sample of young Americans. Rather, I wanted to focus on a few key characteristics, like age and education, that previous research has suggested as important factors in talking about news. As detailed in Chapter 2 and 3, age is a powerful predictor of news exposure and attitude differences. In general, young people seek out more nontraditional sources of news (PEW, 2010) and are less tied to notions of objectivity and credibility compared to their older counterparts (PEW, 2011; Tsfati & Cappella, 2005; Mindich, 2005). Education is also a strong positive predictor of overall news consumption (PEW, 2010) with distinct medium-usage patterns (Davis & Owen, 1998;

Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Gaziano, 1983; Kwak, 1999). For example, lower education levels tend to rely more on television as a source of news than do higher education levels. Past research has also linked age and education to higher perceptions of news media bias (Morris, 2007) and distrust (Cook & Cronke, 2001). With this in mind, I constructed a sampling frame to highlight education differences among young adults, aged 18-to-29 years old. In particular, my sampling frame enabled comparisons between a) young adults who were in the first year of a four-year college, b) young adults who did not intend to pursue a four-year college education, c) and young adults who were college graduates or in their last semester of college.

Participants (N = 15) received twenty dollars for participating in the interviews. I used a snowball sampling method, relying on initial contacts from university students, personal connections, and a neighborhood sports league. After each interview, participants were asked to recommend friends or acquaintances that might be interested in participating in the interviews. All interviews were conducted in person, and took place at a coffee shop or eatery of the participants' choice.

Procedure. The average length of the interviews was around 45 minutes, with interview lengths ranging from 30 to 60 minutes. All interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' permission granted through written consent. The interviews are best described as informal and conversational in nature (see Appendix B for interview guide). Each of the interviews included four parts. The first portion of the interviews explored the open-ended life history of participants. The instructions (adapted from Thorson, 2010) are included below:

> Thank you so much for agreeing to do this. Let me tell you a little bit more about the project I'm working on. I'm talking to all sorts of different people who are around the same age, between 18-29, trying to understand the media choices people make in their daily lives.

> Our discussion will have a couple parts. First, I want to get to know you a bit, hear about where you're coming from. Then I'll have some more specific questions.
>
> I'd like to spend the first part of the interview hearing about your life history in general. Tell me about where you're from, and what it was like for you growing up. I just want to get to know you a little bit. I may ask a few questions along the way and pause you to ask for more detail but you can tell the story however you'd like.

While I listened to the participants, I kept my note taking to a minimum. I found taking notes, especially at the start of the interviews, resulted in the participant being more aware of what they were saying. I did keep a copy of the interview guide handy as a way to ensure certain topics were touched upon when the conservation lent itself to the topic. For example, when a participant mentioned her mother working a lot when she was younger, I made sure to ask about the mother's occupation. This was especially important given the flexible nature of the interviews. Participants were able to elaborate on memories or opinions whenever they felt compelled. The second part of the interview involved asking participants about their current media routines. This included access and exposure to different types of media (e.g., Internet, cable, smart phone, etc.) and questions about their social networks (online and offline). The first two interview portions were designed to give me a glimpse into possible factors that shape a participants' news vocabulary.

The later half of the interviews (portions three and four) directly explored the concept of a news vocabulary. The third part involved a series of hypothetical vignettes that participants responded to (similar to the approaches of Swidler (2001) and Perrin (2006)). A more detailed account of this procedure and its corresponding analysis in presented in Chapter 7. The forth and final part of the interview involved a flashcard exercise. The bulk of this chapter focuses on an analysis of the flashcard exercise.

Analysis of Interview Data. The 15 interview transcripts were analyzed using the content comparison method (Kruger & Casey, 2000; Lindlof, & Taylor, 2002). Responses to the news vocabulary exercises were analyzed by grouping similar responses together and setting aside unique responses for further analysis. These grouping were then categorized based on the criteria of frequency, specificity, and extensiveness (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Kruger & Casey, 2000). For example, responses that were most frequent or contained the most detail were categorized as such. This approach proved quite successful for Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders (2010) who used this technique to understand how people make news credibility judgments online (excerpts of which were presented earlier on page 51). The last step in this procedure involves identifying emergent themes from the categorized responses and the unique responses.

After identifying key themes, my analysis then shifted to the connections between vocabulary themes and group differences. To accomplish this I reanalyzed the interview data, specifically looking for background characteristics similarity within each emergent theme. This type of analysis is useful when a researcher expects that responses will vary by some group-level difference (Ragin, 1994; Thorson, 2010). Admittedly, this type of analysis is more iterative than the content comparison method. My analysis involved a back-and-forth between the original data, the vocabulary themes, and charting the presence of group differences.

Flashcard Exercise

During the final part of the in-depth interviews, participants were shown a series of image-barring flashcards and asked to voice any thoughts that come to mind and to make comparisons among flashcards (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). By asking interviewees to speak top-of-mind, the most salient thoughts about particular aspects of the news media are observed (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). The exercise also allowed me to observe any nonverbal reactions to

the flashcards. I took note of instances when participants frowned or smiled as they spoke about the flashcards. Participants were free to elaborate as little or as much as they wanted (or were capable of). When applicable, I asked follow-up questions about the flashcards, or asked participants to draw comparisons between flashcards (though for many people this was a natural part of talking about the news figures and organizations).

The images of seven television news personalities and the logos of five news organizations were shown to participants. I chose the news figures to maximize the diversity of thoughts that participants might have about the news. The news figures included: Jon Stewart, Bill O'Reilly, Keith Olbermann, Rachel Maddow, Brian Williams, Katie Couric, and Matt Lauer. The same considerations were made in selecting the news organizations. The organizations included: The *Daily Show*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *Fox News*, and *New York Times*. Admittedly, the flashcards skew toward television. My focus on television was purposeful due to the salience of television news figures among the general public (PEW, 2010 October) and the fact that television remains a popular source of news among the 18-to-29-year-old demographic (PEW, 2010, September). I thought these people and organizations were familiar and provocative enough to get participants talking about the news, not to mention that many of these television news figures have strong presences across multiple media platforms. It would be unfair to characterize Jon Stewart, for example, as solely a television media figure when his program has a strong online presence.

News Vocabularies At Work

In Chapter 3, I argued that a news vocabulary is a cognitive and expressive process that reflects how an individual sees the news world. These thoughts and expressions can be both immediate and reactionary, but also a more effortful process where a person consciously works

through their thoughts. The first analysis I want to present is more of the immediate and reactionary nature. When going through the interview data, there were three flashcard sets that produced strong responses from all participants. I present these findings in more of a summary fashion. As my analysis progresses, I will focus on more specific instances of news vocabularies at work and the people who voice them.

Jon Stewart and The Daily Show

If there were an award for winning the hearts and minds of participants, it would go to Jon Stewart and the *Daily Show*. All of the 15 participants provided some sort of positive reaction. At the most basic level, participants mentioned descriptor-type words that would generally be considered positive. Words like "funny," "comic," "great," and "joking" were all common responses to thinking about Stewart and the *Daily Show*. There were even a couple of participants who expressed *extremely* favorable responses—animated facial expressions coupled with declarations of "love" for Stewart and his show (one respondent mentioned her love for Stewart three times in one statement!). These reactions may be unsurprising. Ya, young people have the warm fuzzies for Jon Stewart. I wanted to begin with this most general reaction to Stewart and the *Daily Show*. What's important is not just this blanket favorable response, but that Stewart and the *Daily Show* are highly accessible in the minds of young people. This is pretty fertile ground that distinct vocabularies grew from. Beyond this favorable reaction, two different reactions to Stewart and the *Daily Show* emerged.

One reaction was an elaboration of Stewart's role in the news world. Participants who tapped into this line of thought expressed an awareness of the larger media and political system. For example, one respondent said that Stewart is doing a good thing by "calling political people out." Others remarked that he "holds people accountable" and "calls attention to inaccuracies and

b.s. in the media." Related to this line of thought was praise for Stewart's intellect—references to him being "smart," "witty," "intelligent," "well informed," "well educated," "ask[ing] intelligent questions" and having "good insight." Also common were mentions of Stewart's particular style of humor—satire—when describing him and his show. For these people, not only are their reactions to Stewart favorable, but also they have an appreciation for what he is trying to accomplish and how he goes about doing it.

The other reaction to Stewart and the *Daily Show* was steeped in a rather pessimistic outlook on the state of news and current affairs. For example, one participant remarks that Stewart "takes all of these serious problems in news and makes them funny and somewhat bearable listen to." There is an underlying distain for the way that news currently operates. It's unbearable. Stewart recues news by making it funny. One possible culprit in the failing of news is that it's just too depressing, as one respondent details.

> News sometimes is really depressing. For some reason we always decide to make news about all the bad things that are happening and promote that. I think [Stewart] gives it his own twist so you end up thinking, "Hey, yeah, it's bad, but we have to lighten up here."

Both of these responses remind me of the title of Bennett's 2007 piece about Jon Stewart entitled, "Relief in Hard Times." In the article Bennett suggests that state of news and politics can be so corrupt and scandalous that making fun of it and laughing is cathartic. To some extent these responses are tapping into this negatively and relief. Another potential failing of traditional news is that it's just too darn boring and dry, something another participant echoed. "Instead of just news blah, blah, blah, blah, [Stewart] throws in a comedic twist so people will watch because they want to laugh." This statement is similar to the conclusions drawn from Mindich (2005), that young people find news uninteresting and therefore unappealing. However, Stewart rescues the banality of news, making it funny and therefore appealing. For participants with this

type of vocabulary, their favorable reaction to Stewart and the *Daily Show* is grounded in their displeasure with more traditional aspects of news viewing.

Bill O'Reilly and Fox News

Also producing a fairly consistent response from participants was Bill O'Reilly and *Fox News*. But unlike Stewart and the *Daily Show*, their reactions were more on the negative and critical side. One participant described his thoughts about O'Reilly as the polar opposite of his thoughts about Stewart. He had just finished gushing about Stewart when I showed him a flashcard of O'Reilly. He frowned, threw up his hands, and said, "All my stuff that I said about John Stewart, it's the opposite for him." This was the essence of the responses O'Reilly and *Fox* garnered. Everyone had some understanding *Fox* was not just your run-of-the-mill news organization. Everyone understood they offered something different, and this difference was often characterized with strong words and non-verbal reactions. For example, all 15 participants pegged O'Reilly or *Fox* as "conservative", ideologically on the "right," or "Republican." Related to this line of thought were comments about being "biased," "slanted," and "opinionated." And add a dose of colorful language for good measure ("crazy," "insane," "mad," "self-absorbed," "self-righteous," "ridiculous," "disingenuous" and "asshole"). I would say the gravity of dislike for O'Reilly and *Fox* by far exceeded the adoration expressed for Stewart and the *Daily Show*.

Honestly, I was a little surprised by the consistency of these responses. Several young people I spoke with were far removed from news coverage and warned me that they were unsure how much they could offer in terms of talking about news. And yet, they had no problem telling me that *O'Reilly* and *Fox* were conservative and producing a fairly strong reaction to thinking about them. Not to belabor this point, but I asked one participant about this. His name is Joey, a 19-year-old college student still deciding on a major. He's a self-described sports-a-holic and

avid *Jersey Shore* watcher who does not keep up with the news. When I ask him how he knew that O'Reilly is a conservative, he tells me:

> Just from his reputation, what I have heard from other people. I don't know. I have heard people talk about him before, that he's a complete idiot. Stupid views on things, like that. Also, I have seen him on the *Daily Show*.

This is a news vocabulary at work. Joey has never watched *Fox News*, but has a colorful reaction to Bill O'Reilly. For Joey, this knowledge about O'Reilly is second nature. He has picked it up from other people (friends and family maybe, or even teachers) and his viewing of the *Daily Show* (which interestingly this something he does not consider news) also provides him with a pretty coherent thought structure regarding O'Reilly. These reactions are just the tip of the news vocabulary iceberg. Underneath the surface lies a complex process whereby a vocabulary is shaped and formed.

There was one additional element of participants' initial reaction to O'Reilly and *Fox News* that extended beyond the above description. A fair amount of participants also commented on the more contentious practices of O'Reilly and *Fox*. For example, one participant mentioned that, "If [O'Reilly] has to bring on other perspectives, he'll just cut off their microphone in the middle of them talking." Another adds, "The way [O'Reilly] argues sometimes. The people he invites sometimes on his shows -- he just cuts them off." Others use the words "emotionally charged," "interested in emotions" and "aggressive and argumentative" to describe how O'Reilly and *Fox* present information. What these responses tap into is the recent trend, developed in tandem with cable news, of incorporating conflict and incivility in news programming (Baym, 2010). O'Reilly writes in his book, *The O'Reilly factor: The good, the bad, and the ridiculous in American Life*, "If a producer can find someone who eggs on conservative listeners to spout off and prods liberals into shouting back, he's got a hit show" (2000, p. 52). And these hit shows are

not without effect. As detailed in Chapter 1, the effects of conflict-laded and uncivil news programs can be positive—heighted attention and awareness of contrasting viewpoints (Mutz, 2007) and also negative—increased distrust and cynicism in news and politics (Ben-Porath, 2010; Forgette & Morris, 2006; Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Vraga et al., 2012). While the nature of these effects is mixed, conflict and incivility does appear to resonate with audiences in a way that produces effects. The effects prior research has found may be related to the salience that this style of news has in the minds of many people. They are increasingly expecting this type of behavior and seeing it confirmed only amplifies effects (be it positive or negative).

The New York Times

Reactions to the *NY Times* were also fairly consistent. Compared to the *Daily Show* and *Fox News*, thoughts and expressions about the *NY Times* were pretty tame. What did emerge was a pattern of considering the *Times* to be a high-caliber news organization. All 15 participants remarked in some form about the *Times*' superior class. Descriptions like "crème of the crop," "the most well-established newspaper in America" "reputable," "sophisticated," "solid," and "I would almost consider it scholarly" illustrate this point. As one participant succinctly puts it, "When you think of good newspapers, you just think of the *New York Times*." Related to this line of thought were comments about the *NY Times* representing a more "unbiased," "telling-it-how-it-is," "balanced," "reliable," "objective," and "neutral" reporting standards. These reactions are similar to Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (1984). He argues that society assigns certain goods (in this case a newspaper) the attributes of excellence to enforce class-based distinctions. People know that the *NY Times* is a superior newspaper and those who read it are differentiated from those who read other newspapers, like *USA Today*. Two additional reactions were layered on top of this overall esteem.

Several participants also acknowledged that the *NY Times* is associated with a more liberal perceptive. This reaction should not be interpreted as contradicting the thoughts about its neutrality and objectivity. Rather participants expressed awareness that *other people* think the *Times* is liberal. And they either disagreed with the sentiment or were not willing to definitively say the *NY Times* is liberal (unlike the absolute statements regarding *Fox*). For example, one participant said, "I would say [the *NY Times*] are probably liberal, but that wouldn't me scare me away from thinking of it as a balanced source." Another respondent admits, "I think that a lot of times [the *NY Times* is] accused of having a liberal bias by some." This hesitancy is probably related to the stronger reaction that the *NY Times* has as being a more impartial news source. And yet, these participants have some knowledge that the *Times is* considered is considered liberal. They have some awareness of the red media, blue media way of carving up the news media.

The other response to the *Times* was to indicate its separation from participants' everyday life. Yes, it's a reputable newspaper that produces high caliber news reports, but its nothing that that these participants would ever consider in their own lives. This response elaborates on the class distinction argument of Bourdieu (1984). There are two participants in particular that embody this type of thinking. The first is Shawna, a 20-year-old college student. She admits to me, "Honestly, I think boring and it doesn't apply to my life." The second is Ricky, a 21-year-old college student, who describes the *Times* as a "big boy paper" that is read by "someone who's educated" or "who's looked into the retail value of things." For Shawna and Ricky, there's a separation between the *NY Times* and their own everyday life. They know the newspaper has a high social stigma that does not pertain to them. What I found interesting when listening to Shawna and Ricky is the relationship between their thoughts about the news world and their life story (or what Bourdieu refers to as social position). Both Shawna and Ricky are first-generation

college students. They come from working class backgrounds and are not embedded in newsy networks. Their families don't really keep up with the news, it's not an important topic among their friends, and both tell me that they never encounter news on Facebook. This does not mean that Shawna and Ricky have no news vocabulary. On the contrary, they have not problem talking about the news, it just means their thoughts about the news world are differently shaped. The *Times* seems very disconnected from their lives because it is. They don't regularly encounter it or hear it mentioned in the way that that people who live within a different social networks might (think back to Joey's quote about *Fox News*).

The first analysis of the in-depth interviews highlights the stable, initial reactions of participants. One glimpse into the ways people think about the news world is through the gut, instinctual, top-of-mind reactions. Emerging from this analysis were three news entities that were extremely salient and similar in the minds of all 15 participants. In a nutshell, the instinctual reactions were that Jon Stewart and the *Daily Show* are great, Bill O'Reilly and *Fox* are conservative, and the *New York Times* is a top news organization. But what I also hoped to accomplish, was to demonstrate the cleavages within these reactions. They are more nuanced, as was the case of Jon Stewart. Some people liked him because he holds people accountable and others liked him because he makes news funny. These initial reactions are also the product of different forces, as seen in Joey's comment about *Fox News* and Shawna and Ricky's reactions to the *NY Times*.

The next series of analyses more squarely tackle the relationships between a new vocabulary and making sense of the news world. Here I am taping the more conscious and reflective thoughts that participants work through. During the interviews, I asked follow up questions to their initial reactions, I ask participants to compare news organizations and people,

or to explain to me who they consider a journalist. Although I am presenting this aspect of the interview as less reactionary and more conscious in thought, that does not necessarily mean that responses were well articulated and organized. On the contrary, responses reveal the more messy, yet rich, aspects of a news vocabulary. This line of questioning and subsequent analysis is more along the lines of Swindler's (2001) cognitive culture. As I listen to the participants, I am searching for the cognitive resources that they draw from when thinking about the news media. I am searching for the ways they see the news environment—the distinctions they make and the opinions they hold.

Shades of News

Over the years, much has been written about the normative definition of news (Gans, 1979; Shoemaker, & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978). From the production side, Winch (1997) examined how journalists engage in "boundary work" to distinguish news from entertainment. Analyzing statements and interviews by journalists he argues that two key dimensions explain how journalists define journalism: entertainment vs. news value, and what the public "wants" to know vs. what the public "should" know. News scores high on the latter of the two dimensions. However, journalists face a constant tension between what is "interesting" (i.e., entertaining) and "newsworthy" (i.e., important and verifiable) (Winch, 1997, p.143). Media events like political campaigns will often challenge this internal definition (e.g., President Obama's birth certificate, John Edwards' affair, Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, etc.). McNair (2005) adds to this normative definition by indentifying three "requirements" of journalism: supply information so people can monitor their environment, be a resource for people to engage in public life, and a medium for enlightenment and entertainment. In its role as an "information supplier" journalism provides people with a specific type of information (something that is not readily available through other

sources). The information value of journalism is distinguished by its accuracy (i.e., stories that are factual), reliability (i.e., stories that actually happened), and objectivity (i.e., stories that are true). These characteristics have been the pillars of describing news for a long time.

What is lesser known is how everyday media users make these distinctions. The news landscape is crowded and colorful. This begs the questions of if these more top-down, normative definitions or distinctions still hold, especially among the youngest news consumers. The in-depth interview data shed more light on this. As participants talked about different news organizations and news figures, I found that they would carve out distinctions between them (think back to the participant who described Bill O'Reilly as the opposite of Jon Stewart. It was my job to follow up on this comparison, to try to unpack this opposite meaning). For many participants, there was a natural tendency when making comparisons to arrange news organizations or news figures along some imaginary continuum. The flashcards were especially useful for this (admittedly, this was unplanned). As the flashcards lay on the table, participants would pick up two and talk about them. Or arrange three or four of them in a particular order. What emerged from the interview data (and my notes about any flashcard orderings) were different characteristics of news. I use this term pretty broadly. It encapsulates strategies for differentiating non-news from news, or pundits form journalists, and so on. In what follows, I highlight the consistent news characteristics mentioned by participants and how people with different news vocabularies rely on them in different ways.

News Can't Be Entertaining…Or Can It?

Common among many participants was the distinction between news and entertainment. A wide range of news organizations and figures were mentioned in conjunction with this characteristic. For example, one respondent said of the *Today Show*, "That's not news. I would

never watch it, way too much fluff." Another respondent explained to me that she did not consider Matt Lauer (host of the *Today Show*) a journalist because, "He's just the family fun guy that you watch in the morning when you're getting ready for work." Comments about the entertainment value of morning news shows, like the *Today Show*, are to be expected. Scholarly research has long considered morning news as part of its soft news definitions (see Baum, 2003; Brewer & Cao 2006; Holbert, 2005a; Prior, 2005). More intriguing, and more to the point of general news characteristics, was the use of entertainment criteria to make sense of another types of news products. When talking to me about cable news one male respondent used entertainment to differentiate *CNN* from *Fox News*.

> When I see *CNN* I think informative, I think like *BBC*. I think that they are not trying to entertain you or anything. I think that they are trying to give you the information. I know *Fox News* is pretty [biased] and conservative, so I would never watch *Fox News*, just because I know that they are not a good source for information.

Implied in his statement is that *CNN* is concerned with information (and not entertainment), while the opposite is true for *Fox* (who priorities entertainment over information). Another respondent uses this characteristic to distinguish Katie Couric from Jon Stewart: "I guess they're both similar, but I feel like Jon Stewart is more sarcastic. It's like more of a character and it's not supposed to be taken as seriously, while hers is like, 'This is serious news.'" This respondent considered Couric a journalist and not Stewart, because Stewart most clearly resembles an entertainment figure that plays "a character" and uses "sarcasm"—hardly the makings of a journalist! The more young people I talked with, the more it was clear that the entertainment value of a news program was a handy strategy for making sense of the complex news media environment. And entertainment and news are often thought of as opposites, existing in a mutually exclusive world. That is not to say that everyone uses this entertainment characteristic in the same way.

I mentioned Ricky earlier. He's a 21-year-old college student from Southern California. He's Mexican-American, the first in his family to be born in the U.S. and then first to attend college. Ricky is a jovial type of guy who's easy to talk with. He tells me that his parents do watch the news and like to talk with him about it, but they primarily watch the Hispanic news channels and talk about what's happening in Mexico (where most of his family still lives). Compared to the other people I interviewed, Ricky is a heavy television consumer. He likes all sorts of things: mainly sports, but also the *Food Network* and the *Discovery Channel.* He does not, however, consume a lot of news. When he does encounter news its usually online through a tool bar Ricky likes called, *StumbleUpon* (a program that shows you webpages based on your varied interests). It would be fair to say that, in general, Ricky 'stumbles upon' (or is indirectly exposed to) news. For example, one of the questions I asked consistently of interview participants was to tell me how they found out that Osama Bid Laden was killed. Ricky tells me that he found out through a breaking-news alert from *MTV News*. When we start talking about the *Daily Show* I am a bit surprised that Ricky is so vocal. He does not watch his show after all. I ask him if news can also be entertainment.

> **Ricky:** I think news can be entertaining. I mean, in Southern California we had *Channel 11*. The newscasters weren't regular newscasters who would just say it straight and that's it. They would joke around and be funny about it. So I think you can be entertaining and not as blunt and forward where it makes society look like, "Oh, God, we're going to die," or "Things are not really looking good." There are other things to talk about that are actually good things that are happening in society.
>
> **Stephanie**: Recent survey numbers say that young people are watching the *Daily Show* more and more and traditional news less and less. Do you think there's a problem with that?
>
> **Ricky**: I don't think there's a problem with that as long as both sources comment on the same topic or they present the same field of subjects. That's good. Anything beats what our parents were traditionally watching. It's getting kicked out to our new age or new era of what we're looking at. Back then, we had the traditional -- read the newspaper in the morning. Now if you have an iPod or if you're on the computer in the mornings and you have a laptop, you're usually checking out Yahoo or any websites that give news. We're

> kind of getting into an electronic phase. Things are being implemented to a more funny way where younger kids get into it and they like it. We're no longer the serious type.

Unlike the participants before him, Ricky has no issue with the blurring of news and entertainment. He welcomes it! I can tell by listening to Ricky that he's excited about new technology and all of the choice and freedom that goes along with it. His use of *StumbleUpon* makes more sense in this light—it's a feature to efficiently manage online choice, or to make sure he sees the interesting stuff. Ricky has no sense of nostalgia for the news world of the past—perhaps because his parents did not impress it upon him. Instead, he likes the shift toward choice and entertainment. I think he sees it as more aligned with his interests, the media he would choose to consume ("the way younger kids get into it and they like it"). So the entertainment characteristic is important to Ricky, just like it's a useful strategy from other participants to figure out the news world. The significant difference being that Ricky comes down on the side that entertainment and news can coexist; whereas other participants used the entertainment characteristic as the opposite of news.

The Opinion Factor: Anchors, Pundits, and Journalists

One reason I was drawn to the concept of a news vocabulary is that it taps into the language aspect of the news media. Recall from Chapter 3 the need for glossaries to define the language of a newspaper. The new media environment has introduced a new lexicon to media users. Words like "blogs," "pundits," and "wikis" are now staples of the new media environment and the choice it provides. Nowhere was this more clear than with the news characteristic of opinion giving. As participants worked through their thoughts about the news media, the opinion factor (and its corresponding language) was often evoked. Below is one example of a participant who draws from a rather sophisticated news vocabulary to differentiate news figures.

Jared is a 19-year-old student in his first year of college. Before coming to college, his family moved around a lot due to his dad's job as a labor negotiator. I ask him if it was difficult moving around the country. He tells me that is was not too bad, that he became really good at making friends and the adapting to new environments. He also explains that news played an important role in adapting process. "We would always get a newspaper. That was the first thing we would do getting into town, it was important." And different from the other young people I talked with, Jared has vivid memories of news events during his childhood. His first memory of watching the news was during Hurricane Bonnie in 1999 (he was living in Florida at the time). This event was quickly followed up memories of the Florida recount during the 2000 Presidential Election. Despite news being a part of his childhood, he says that politics was rarely discussed. He knows that both his parents are Conservatives and Jared agrees with them on most issues, but admits that being away at college has changed some of his views, "I guess the medicine's gotten to me a little bit."

When we discuss his media use, it becomes clear that Jared in still very engaged with the news. Every morning he checks the *NY Times* online (a requirement for his Political Science class) and *CNN* is his homepage. He's also very into Twitter, telling me that he will, "try to spin [his tweets] off of current events and try to make it funny." Twitter is also a source of news flow for Jared. It was where he found out about Osama Bin Laden's death. I ask him if there is a difference between Twitter and Facebook.

> Facebook is like what my Grandma will see. I have to think about [what I post] a little bit more. I don't really use it, post stuff on it that often. It's a weird way of keeping tabs on old friends. Twitter turns over fast enough that you can post multiple times a day and you're not an attention whore. I'll do that. It turns over faster. Follow complete strangers...If you say something stupid, it'll just get buried.

As we talk about various news figures, Jared uses his familiarity with the news to make nuanced distinctions. He tells me that Bill O'Reilly wants to be perceived as a legitimate journalist but to do that, "you have to take a step back." In Jared's mind, a legitimate journalist does not vocalize his opinion. So what is O'Reilly? Jared tells me he's "more of a pundit." This idea becomes more fleshed as he talks about Keith Olbermann and Rachel Maddow.

> *[On Keith Olbermann]* Anti-Bill O'Reilly, but also aggressive, argumentative. I actually dislike him a little more than Bill O'Reilly. O'Reilly will at least yell that he thinks that you're opinion is a wrong opinion. Olbermann, well he started out on *ESPN*. And then, he got a little too big for his britches, moved down. He'll belittle his opponents rather than just argue. I just don't like that style of acting.
>
> *[On Rachel Maddow]* She's closer to journalism, just because she's not prime time. Prime time really has to suck you in, reaffirming your own values. She does get a little angry at stuff that really doesn't deserve that much anger at times.

Similar to O'Reilly, Jared sees Olbermann as an opinion-giving pundit. He does not, however, care for Olbermann's "style of acting" when expressing his opinion. Initially, I thought this might be a partisan reaction. Jared is a conservative; he recognizes that O'Reilly and Olbermann are similar in approach, but dislikes Olbermann more. His classification of Maddow, however, surprises me. He makes a pretty subtle distinction with her. I soon realize that Jared is drawing from a more complex way of thinking. Maddow is different ("closer to journalism") because her show does not air during primetime (i.e., 8p.m.). For Jared, primetime is the home of pundits who try to "suck you in" and "reaffirm your own values." Maddow escapes this fate (albeit only by an hour) and in doing so she is less of a pundit and more of a journalist. The final piece of the puzzle falls into place when Jared talks about Katie Couric and Brian Williams. His immediate reaction to seeing the flashcard of Couric is to call her an "anchor" because "she's pretty impartial." The opinion characteristic is again useful in making this distinction. Couric is not a

pundit because she is impartial. So why is she an anchor and not a journalist? I ask Jared this question.

> *[On Katie Couric]* I wouldn't really say she's a journalist though in that role she has, because she'll report [news], but she doesn't "report it" report it, like take a report and show that report. She's a good intermediary of the story.
>
> *[On Brian Williams]* He does a really good job of being [*NBC's*] "trustworthy guy." … He's pretty close to a journalist, too. He is an anchor, but he did do stories on his own before he was the anchor. He's the closest out of the bunch so far.

We've come full circle, or rather full continuum, now. For Jared, a journalist is someone who goes out into the field and writes their own stories (they don't just report it). He is drawing from another news characteristic to make this final distinction. Jared is familiar enough with Brian Williams to know that this is something he regularly did. Listening to Jared navigate the news figures and their roles is impressive. Although he did not claim to watch any of these people, he showed remarkable knowledge about them (he knew Olbermann was on *Sports Center*). This apparent contradiction can be reconciled by Jared long engagement with the news media (from childhood to adulthood, from newspapers to the *NY Times* and Twitter). His experience with the news media has given him a strong vocabulary for differentiating news. It gave him a structure for organizing different news people, from opinion-giving pundits, to impartial news anchors, and investigative journalists.

Wearing the Fedora: Investigating and Breaking the News

Faced with the messy and complex news environment, many respondents relied on reporting ability and resources to define the news world. For example, when describing how the *NY Times* is different from other news organizations one respondent said, "they have a big budget so they do a lot of investigative reporting. Start stories on their own. They don't go off what other people say." This statement is the essence of the news characteristics of investigative

reporting and first-hand reporting (or breaking the news). When I ask one participant if Jon Stewart is a journalist, he said no: "I don't think he actually goes out and does stuff with journalism. I think he has people that do that for him, and he just reports it and comments on it." The investigative and news breaking characteristics were often used by participants when weighing the journalistic merits of Jon Stewart. As one participant explains, "He's not the first source of things. He always has a different take on it, but he's not the one who reports to begin with…I think by that time it's been diluted into something else." Another participant considers Jon Stewart a journalist but concedes, "He has a whole group of writers behind him writing his jokes. He's a journalist, and he brings news to people, but it's not necessarily his news. He can't be credited with all of it." As reflected by these statements, one strategy for understanding the news media is to consider their potential to investigate and produce original content. But as one participant illustrates, a news vocabulary that prioritizes these reporting characteristics results in high standards for judging news content.

Vanessa, a 21-year-old college student, is late to our interview. She shows up about 15-minutes late and extremely apologetic. She quickly explains that an issue came up with one of the political campaigns she works for. I quickly learn that Vanessa is a politically active person. She talks the political talk and walks the political walk. And has been from an early age. She grew up in California, raised by a single-mother, a medical doctor. Vanessa credits her mother for her interest in politics. She tells me that her first memory of getting involved with politics was an Iraq War opposition rally that her mother took her to. News exposure was also a major part of Vanessa's upbringing. Although they had a television it was rarely on. Instead, every room in the house had a radio, tuned to public radio. She laughs recalling, "they are all on so you can hear the news everywhere you go!" Talking about news and current events with her mother

was also a regular occurrence. “I've been following the news for a long time, living with a single parent I was the next oldest person to talk to about important stuff.”

When we start talking about the new media environment, it’s clear that Vanessa news vocabulary is heavily influence by her political interests and long history of news consumption. She thinks like a political strategist and expects a lot from news. In the excerpt below, Vanessa starts off talking about Matt Lauer and whether he’s a journalist. As our conversation unfolds, she identifies several characteristics in explaining her viewpoint on the news media.

> **Vanessa**: I guess [Matt Lauer] talks about stuff, but it's not really that important to me. I don't watch the morning shows that often. At least not these types of morning shows. He seems like a solid guy. Nice. But, I would not really call him a journalist.
>
> **Stephanie**: I like to bring this up in my classes because I think it complicates the situation. On the same day, on the *Today Show*, he had an interview with Lindsey Lohan. She got out of rehab, one of those stories. And then later that evening, he had the first sit-down interview with President Bush, his first since coming out of the White House.
>
> **Vanessa**: [President Bush] went for an easy guy for his first interview out of the White House. He wasn't about to go on…
>
> **Stephanie**: Rachel Maddow?
>
> **Vanessa**: That would just be stupid! [Laughter]. He'd be asking for it. That’s the right call. [Laughter]. That's what I would have done too.
>
> **Stephanie**: Spoken like someone who's in politics.
>
> **Vanessa**: If I was George Bush or I was his adviser, I'd say we're going with Matt Lauer. That's what's going to sell it.
>
> **Stephanie**: But do you think he's a journalist when he's interviewing an ex-president?
>
> **Vanessa**: I didn't see the interview. I couldn't tell you, but I can imagine that it wasn't exactly the hard-hitting questions. I don't know if that makes a valid journalist. You're not defined as a journalist by being really investigative.
>
> **Stephanie**: Then how do we define it?
>
> **Vanessa**: I don't know how we define a journalist. That brings an interesting concern to the table as I'm trying to define people as journalists or not. I guess I have this—[Bob] Woodward, whatever his name, he's the second one [in breaking the Watergate Scandal]—picture in my mind of journalism.

Stephanie: Wearing a hat. [Laughter].

Vanessa: Wearing a hat and scouting out things, having secret informants and breaking scandals. [Laughter].

Stephanie: President Obama giving a two-minute interview to Jay Leno on the *Tonight Show*?

Vanessa: No, that's not journalism.

Stephanie: Not a journalist?

Vanessa: He's not going to cover anything. It's not going to be any new news, number one. You don't announce stuff on *Leno*.

Stephanie: You announce running for office on *Leno*.

Vanessa: I guess. That's questionable, in my opinion. I wouldn't call that a journalistic thing. I don't know what word I'm looking for right there.

Stephanie: It's hard, there's no clear answer.

Vanessa: I don't like Leno either, but that's just because I don't think he's funny. [Laughter].

And similar to Jared, the complexity of Vanessa's new vocabulary is seen as she draws upon multiple news characteristics when working through her thoughts. Her initial reaction to Matt Lauer is that he is not a journalist. When pressed about this, she does not reference an entertainment value as many other participants do. Rather, she goes for a more specific characteristic, explaining that Lauer does not ask "hard-hitting questions." However, Vanessa questions herself and wonders if probing questions is really the nectar of journalism. To reassure herself, Vanessa goes to her gold standard of journalism: the Watergate Scandal and Bob Woodward. This reference is clearly an accessible part of her news vocabulary. To other people, this reference would hold little meaning. For Vanessa this reference taps into investigative reporting, mixed with a little Hollywood glamour, and the value of the information being conveyed. This last characteristic, information value, is fully referenced when I ask about Jay

Leno. Vanessa is again hesitant to consider these infotainment programs as journalism. In this case it is because they don't "cover anything" of value.

Vanessa's news vocabulary can easily be contrasted with Ricky's. Where Ricky has loosey-goosey views on news, Vanessa is more specific in her considerations. Where Ricky is excited about the mixing of news and entertainment, Vanessa sees problems with it. Where Ricky disparagingly references the boring news media of the past, Vanessa longingly holds to the past as her standard for news. My intention in drawing this comparison is not to paint one of these vocabularies in better or worse light. Rather, it is an illustration that Ricky and Vanessa speak very different news languages. And faced with watching the *Daily Show* or reading a *NY Times* article, they would likely respond in very different ways.

Journalism 101: Information Value

The last news characteristic mentioned by interview participants related to information value. One respondent said, "I think the key to journalism, for me at least, is the potential to have change or the importance of the story." This characteristic is probably the most abstract and subjective. What's importance? How do we measure ability to produce change? Despite its lack of clear evidence, several participants drew distinctions between news entities by weighting their information importance. The last news vocabulary I want to highlight belongs to Christopher. Out of everyone I interviewed, Christopher probably possesses the most complex and sophisticated thoughts about the news media. It's no coincidence that my interview with him was the longest, lasting over 60 minutes. During our talk he drew on nearly all of the news characteristics in expressing his understanding of the news media.

Christopher is a 19-year-old college student. He was raised in New York City with his twin brother and older brother. It soon becomes clear to me that Christopher comes from a

unique background. His mother is a social worker for a non-profit organization. His father was born in Egypt, but grew up in Italy after his family was kicked out of Egypt following a change in government. His father immigrated to the U.S. as a young adult and is now a professor at a local New York university. Christopher considers both his parents to be very well informed, but in different ways. His mother keeps up to date on social and domestic policies—news relevant to her job. His father interests lie more with news about the Middle East, where he can be a little too outspoken at times. Christopher credits his parents for his strong interest in news. He tells me, "You can't go about daily life not knowing what's going on in the world."

When we talk about his media use, Christopher mentions the *NY Times* and *CNN* as websites he visits daily. He also regularly checks "a couple of crappy, trashy, New York City daily newspapers" to keep in touch with news from back home (and "fun crime stories"). I am surprised to learn that Christopher does not really use Facebook. In fact, he deactivated his account for most of last year. He does not see the point of it. The only way he uses Facebook is to live chat with friends from the East Coast (he never posts things or reads his news feed). He laughs and shakes his head no when I ask if he uses Twitter. His offline social network, however, is very news saturated. Christopher considers his close friends (particularly his roommates) to well informed and they often talk about news and politics. It's from this rich news background that Christopher has developed his news vocabulary. Like many other interviews, I ask Christopher if Matt Lauer interviewing President Bush makes him a journalist. He responds by identifying several news characteristics and the complexities that resides within the blurring of news and entertainment.

> **Christopher:** News anchors are hard to quantify as journalists. When you interview a president, when you interview anyone, you're being a journalist. You're being inquisitive. You're asking questions. You're trying to gauge their perspective on things without trying to load questions. That's all of journalism. That's Journalism 101. That's what you do as a

journalist. But I'd say that the importance of that, the value of it, is what makes it news. Lindsay Lohan getting out of jail is pretty much more or less worthless to everyone on Earth. No one can draw any sort of significance from that. So it's not really news. It's really not. I really don't count it as news. And therefore it's not really journalism when you ask people about it. But when you talk to someone like a president, that's very important. That's the last eight years of our country. A lot of people have died in Iraq. A lot of people have lost their homes. A lot of people, their lives took a turn for the worse under that president.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Christopher: And not necessarily was it [Bush's] fault, it was hard times, but he has some questions to answer. That's like journalism right there, when you present people the opportunity for them to learn something of their lives through someone else. [Matt Lauer] is a journalist when he does stuff like that, but when he spends all morning with Lindsay Lohan. That's not really journalism.

Stephanie: So, by that, do you think someone like Jay Leno, if Obama stops by his late night talk show, and interviews him for three minutes, is that also an opportunity to be a journalist?

Christopher: It is, I feel like a lot of times comedians like Jay Leno or John Stewart are put in a tough situation because they have the opportunity to report the news, and to be a journalist, and to ask important questions to a leader. No one ever wants the power from an opportunity like that. John Stewart never wants to ask Bill Clinton about blowjobs, he wants to ask important questions, he doesn't want to be a jerk all the time. Jay Leno wishes that he could probably have an informed discussion with Obama. But at the same time, they are being paid to do something else. I feel like comedians are always tough to judge, because they probably want to do some stuff that they can't do.

What is most remarkable about Christopher's understanding of the news is his fluid categorization of news and journalism. He sees "opportunities" to be a journalist. For Christopher, being a journalist is not a cut and dry label. It depends on the circumstance. On whether the person interviewed is of significance (Lindsay Lohan—no; President Bush—yes). And on weather the person conducting the interview is inquisitive enough to produce valuable information (Jay Leno—probably no; Brian Williams—probably yes). He also recognizes that comedians are presented with this journalistic opportunity, but its' a difficult opportunity to seize. They have different expectations and pressures that can prevent them from asking the

types of questions that would yield valuable information. Moreover, Christopher does not possess the same anger that Vanessa has about comedians being given this journalistic opportunity. Christopher sympathizes with what he imagines to be their internal struggle. Being the avid news consumer that he is, Christopher is aware of different news trends (e.g., humor, opinion-giving) and sees past them. He takes his cues from what he perceives to be the value of the information. For example, Christopher considers Bill O'Reilly a journalist because opinion giving is not necessary bad, it can be valuable in some situations and not in others. He says, "Everyone has their opinion. You need to acknowledge that your opinion is not fact." Taken together, Christopher's vocabulary is oriented toward a more complex understanding of what qualifies as news.

Moving Forward

The two analyses presented in this chapter indicate both stable aspects of young people's news vocabularies and an incredible amount of variance. On one hand, the young people I interviewed have similar initial reactions to the humor of Jon Stewart, the opinions of Bill O'Reilly, and the superiority of the *NY Times*. On the other hand, more effortful thoughts about the news environment appear to be heavily influenced by a variety of factors. Central among these are partisanship/ideology, media exposure patterns, and news flow via social networks. As the cases highlighted in this chapter illustrate, young people draw from a variety of experiences when expressing their thoughts about the news media. Ricky, who largely lives in a non-news social network, is excited about the shift toward more entertaining news programs. Vanessa, a strong partisan and ideologue, views this trend as a distraction from more serious, investigative news. Jared, an avid news consumer and Twitter user, organizes news figures according to their levels of opinion giving. And Christopher, who lives in a news-saturated (offline) social network,

sees the fluidity of news and journalism. Ultimately, all of the young people I talked with recognized the complexity of the media world they live in, but processed and talked about it in different ways.

The in-depth interviews directly tap the cognitive and expressive aspects of a news vocabulary. It was my aim to probe the thoughts of participants and analyze the language they chose to express. The next two chapters present another method for exploring the news vocabulary concept. Both chapters focus exclusively on the cognitive aspects of a news vocabulary, as measured by a survey of college undergraduates. Chapter 5 analyzes how participants compare different news organizations and people. As seen with the in-depth interviews, comparisons are a common way of ascertaining difference. Chapter 5 presents the results from several multi-dimensional scaling analyses, with the goal being to visually depict how participants think about the news environment. Overall trends and the influence of ideology, media exposure, and news flows are considered.

Chapter 5: Mapping News

If you were to paint a picture of the news media environment, what would it look like? Who would you include, how would you arrange your painting, would some parts be more colorful and bigger than others? Although this may seem like a silly hypothetical question, it is actually the inspiration for this chapter.

In what follows, I rely on survey data to systematically map (or paint) the news environment using a multi-dimensional scaling procedure. Throughout this chapter several news maps are presented. I will first discuss a map of 10 news organizations and a map of 10 news personalities. My analysis will focus on the arrangement of the maps and the underlying dimensions that characterize them. In the second part of the chapter, I will consider the role of several individual characteristics in producing map differences. Drawing from the in-depth interviews, the influence of ideology, media exposure, and news flows are included in the mapping analysis. Findings suggest both a level of consistency and irregularity among the maps. Specifically, ideologues, consumers of conservative news, and Twitter news users produce different maps.

Procedure

Data was collected during the first two weeks of April 2012. Students from several large undergraduate courses participated in the study in exchange for extra credit. In total, 270 students completed the survey. About half of the participants came from an introductory mass communication course that is open to all students and fulfils a university writing requirement. The other half was recruited from four upper level journalism courses. It should be noted that

this sample is not representative of the general public or of college students. That being said, the convenience sample does provide an initial backdrop to systematically map news thoughts.

Sample

The average age of respondents was 19.87 years (*SD* = 1.28, *range* = 18 – 27). The majority of the sample was female (73%) and racially identified as white (91%). For number of years in college, the average and modal response was a second year college student (*M* = 2.23, *SD* = 1.05, *range* 1 – 6). Political ideology was asked on a 7-point scale ranging from "Very Liberal" to "Very Conservative," with the midpoint labeled as "Moderate." Ideological breakdown was 54% of respondents identified to some degree as liberal, 25% identified to some degree as conservative, and 21% identified as moderate.

Similarity Measures

Respondents were asked to compare several media organizations and indicate their similarity on a 7-point scale, ranging from "Not at all Similar" (1) to "Extremely Similar" (7). Respondents were instructed to base their assessments on whatever criteria they saw fit. Ten news organizations were included: *NY Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, PBS, NPR, BBC, and the Huffington Post*. Resulting in 45 pairwise comparisons that respondents answered. The ten news organizations were selected to optimize organization diversity (i.e., three newspaper sources, three cable, two public broadcasting, one international, and one hard-to-define *Huffington Post*). Although the ten organizations hardly reflect the diversity found in the new media environment, time-constraints and concerns about respondent fatigue did not allow a more extensive list of organizations. To avoid question order bias, the 45 pairs were presented in a randomized order.

Similarity Ratings

The highest average similarity rating was given for the comparison between *NPR* and *PBS* (*M* = 5.15, *SD* = 1.54) followed by the comparison between the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* (*M* = 4.77, *SD* = 1.48). The lowest average similarity rating (i.e., more dissimilar) was given for the comparison of *Fox News* and *PBS* (*M* = 2.34, *SD* = 1.20), followed by the comparison between *Fox News* and *NPR* (*M* = 2.43, *SD* = 1.28). Table 4 contains a complete breakdown of all organization similarity scores.

Table 4. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.77 (1.48)								
USA Today	4.06 (1.35)	3.77 (1.32)							
CNN	4.41 (1.31)	3.91 (1.21)	3.95 (1.24)						
PBS	3.51 (1.29)	3.15 (1.26)	3.18 (1.27)	3.33 (1.30)					
Fox News	2.75 (1.31)	3.41 (1.48)	3.29 (1.23)	3.2 (1.54)	2.34 (1.20)				
MSNBC	3.95 (1.32)	3.49 (1.29)	3.89 (1.23)	4.53 (1.34)	3.28 (1.29)	3.16 (1.81)			
NPR	3.97 (1.28)	3.46 (1.26)	3.37 (1.19)	3.62 (1.28)	5.15 (1.54)	2.43 (1.28)	3.41 (1.30)		
Huff. Post	3.63 (1.36)	3.15 (1.34)	3.8 (1.26)	3.55 (1.16)	2.99 (1.22)	3.0 (1.49)	3.97 (1.23)	3.16 (1.23)	
BBC News	4.14 (1.27)	3.74 (1.19)	3.59 (1.18)	4.23 (1.21)	4.44 (1.56)	2.75 (1.28)	3.55 (1.18)	4.48 (1.46)	3.20 (1.16)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

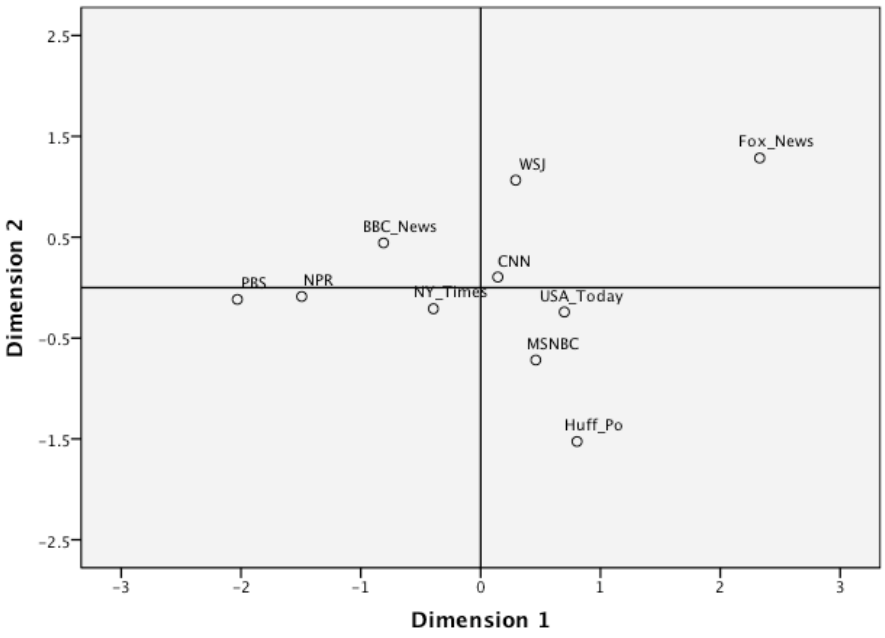
Mapping News

The similarity measures were designed for a multi dimensional scaling (MDS) analysis. This type of methodology represents "the implicit and spontaneous knowledge structures used in everyday interpretation" (Livingstone, 1998, p. 114). MDS is based on a spatial metaphor of meaning. That is, to make sense of the world around us we group objects together, recognize opposites, make comparisons along different dimensions. The pairwise similarity measures allow me to systematically map the ten news organizations in relation to each other. By pitting the 45 similarity scores against each other, the MDS analysis exposes the underlying dimensions of the similarity scores. Objects, or in this case news organizations, that are close indicate a meaningful similarity, whereas organizations that are far away indicate some meaningful dissimilarity. This type of analysis is particularly appropriate given the exploratory nature of uncovering the structure of respondents' thoughts about the news media. To my knowledge, no other research has attempted this type of analysis on the news media. It has been successfully used in mapping the implicit thoughts about soap opera characters (Livingstone, 1987, 1989), persuasive strategies (Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1997), and product brands (Friedland, Shah, Lee, Rademacher, Atkinson, & Hove, 2007).

The raw data was averaged over all subjects and the mean similarity score for each pairwise comparison (as seen in Table 4) was entered into the ALSCAL program. A two dimensional solution was specified due to its ease of interpretation (Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1997). Results indicate that the two dimensional model scaled well. The stress statistic for the model was .07. Although there is no set value for an acceptable stress level, the general rule of thumb is that a stress less than .15 is considered satisfactory, and a stress level less than .10 is desirable (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2008). The stress level for the news organization model

falls with the desirable range. Additionally, the R^2 value was .98. According to Roskos-Ewoldsen and Roskos-Ewoldsen (2008) an R^2 value greater than .90 is satisfactory and an R^2 greater than .95 is desirable. Taken together, a two dimensional figure appears to be highly powerful model for mapping news organizations. The solution can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Two-Dimensional Representation of News Organizations*



The next step is to derive the two dimensions that reflect the plot points. Admittedly, there is a little bit of wiggle room and subjectivity that enters into this type of interpretation (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2008). My first reaction to Figure 2 is to note the extremity of *Fox News* and the *Wall Street Journal* at the top of the figure and *MSNBC* and *Huffington Post* near the bottom. The remaining organizations are plotted around the center of the figure. So what does this tell us? Well, we can effectively rule out any medium-level organizing principle for dimension 2 (i.e., the vertical y-axis). The scaling of *Fox News* (cable news) with the *Wall Street Journal* (newspaper) and *MSNBC* (cable news) with the *Huffington*

Post (online news) rules this possibility out. What seems most likely is that dimension 2 represents a continuum of ideology—with conservative news scaling high along this dimension and liberal media scaling low. A closer look at the organizations in the center of dimension 2 reveals that many of them could be considered not ideologically driven. This type of organization was also reflected in the comments of several interview participants (from Chapter 4) about the partisan/ideological bias in *Fox News* and *MSNBC*, and the more middle-approach of *CNN*. Therefore, dimension 2 represents an underlying ideological structure to how respondents think about news organizations. We can also think of this dimension as a by-product of the high-choice media environment. At the extremities are relatively new providers of news content.

The first dimension (i.e., the horizontal x-axis) places *NPR*, *PBS*, and *BBC News* at the left side of the figure, while *Fox News*, *Huffington Post*, and *USA Today* are toward the right side. Again, there is no apparent medium-level differentiation happening. Dimension 1 appears to represent a continuum from a normative-orientation (on the left) to a market-orientation (on the right). News organizations on the left side of the figure are sources that are grounded in the more traditional norms of serving the public interest, or of providing content that audiences "should know." The idea of news organizations upholding the normative standards of news is an old one, born from a time when organizations used public airwaves and therefore were obligated to serve the public's best interest (e.g., the Hutchins Commission's 1947 report). That is, the new media should, first and foremost, produce content that enhances the general welfare of the public. The organizations of the left are still committed to this idea. *NPR*, for example, recently changed its ethics codebook to highlight their firm dedication to the public interest. Included in the handbook are statements like "the mission of *NPR*… is to create a more informed public" and

NPR will "meet the highest standard of public service in journalism and cultural expression" (Rosen, 2012). Whether these organizations succeed in producing content that eclipses this standard is debatable. But Figure 2 indicates that in the mind's eye of participants, these orientations approach their information-providing function in a different way than organizations on the right. There is a clear separation from news organizations like *NPR* and *PBS* who are orientated toward a normative function and organizations like *Fox News* and *USA Today* who are oriented toward a market function. When examining the right side of the dimension 1 the news organizations become more orientated toward providing content that audiences "want to know." These organizations are popular sources of news media (*Fox News* is the most popular cable news station, while *USA Today* is the most widely read newspaper in the U.S.) that are more oriented toward providing content that appeals to their audience. It is worth noting the extremity of *Fox News* along dimension 1. It's a clear outlier with more than a one-point difference separating it from the closest organization. The in-depth interviews shed some light on the type of thinking that reflects the right side of dimension 1. Several interviewees expressed concern that *Fox News* only tells one side of the story or that they're only interested in stories that "fit their agenda". When taking into consideration both dimensions in Figure 2, the previous statement may be referencing Fox News' conservative (dimension 2) market-orientated (dimension1) agenda. In-depth interview participants also mentioned that the *USA Today* tended to oversimplify or sensationalize important information, reflective of their market-orientated approach (dimension 1).

Taken together these results shed light on the ways that respondents think about news organizations. However, increasingly news personalities are becoming colorful and divisive representations of the news media. Personalities like Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert are the

face of the political humor movement, while Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh personify the conservative media movement. It stands to reason that the modern media user makes sense of these different news figures when living in the high-choice media environment. In the same way that respondents differentiate news organizations, they also have ways of sorting out news figures. To explore this possibility, the same procedure was repeated for news figures.

Another Look at News

Upon completing the similarity questions for news organizations, survey respondents then answered a similar bank of questions about news figures. The ten news figures included: Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Rachel Maddow, Anderson Cooper, Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, Brian Williams, Katie Couric, Jay Leno, and Oprah Winfrey. The news figures were selected to reflect ideological and cable news (Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Rachel Maddow, Anderson Cooper), infotainment (Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, Jay Leno, Oprah Winfrey) and more traditional legacy news (Brian Williams, Katie Couric). Respondents were presented with a pair of people and indicated their similarity on a 7-point scale, ranging from "Not at all Similar" (1) to "Extremely Similar" (7). All together there was 45 pair-wise comparisons that respondents answered. To avoid any order bias, the pairs were presented in a randomized order.

Similarity Ratings

The highest average similarity rating was given for the comparison between Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert ($M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.48$) followed by the comparison between the Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.64$). The lowest average similarity rating (i.e., more dissimilar) was given for the comparison between Rush Limbaugh and Oprah Winfrey ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.18$), followed by the comparison between Bill O'Reilly and Oprah Winfrey ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.27$). Table 5 contains a complete breakdown of all news figure similarity scores.

Table 5. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures*

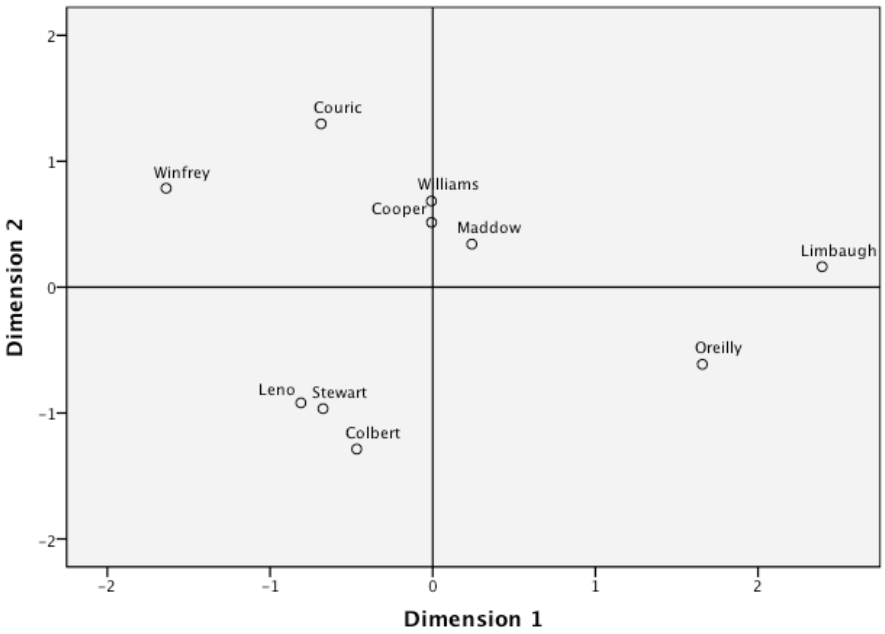
	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.93 (1.64)								
Jon Stewart	2.87 (1.56)	2.46 (1.41)							
Rachel Maddow	3.20 (1.58)	3.12 (1.63)	3.72 (1.51)						
Stephen Colbert	3.13 (1.72)	2.65 (1.53)	5.75 (1.48)	3.38 (1.41)					
Brian Williams	3.03 (1.25)	2.95 (1.35)	3.27 (1.22)	3.59 (1.19)	3.15 (1.24)				
Anderson Cooper	3.15 (1.46)	2.82 (1.45)	3.53 (1.31)	3.99 (1.30)	3.29 (1.32)	4.20 (1.36)			
Jay Leno	2.97 (1.41)	2.66 (1.37)	4.44 (1.38)	3.14 (1.27)	4.38 (1.43)	3.18 (1.20)	3.20 (1.26)		
Oprah Winfrey	2.44 (1.27)	2.18 (1.18)	3.01 (1.34)	3.25 (1.31)	2.76 (1.33)	3.18 (1.24)	3.51 (1.44)	3.73 (1.50)	
Katie Couric	2.75 (1.16)	2.54 (1.23)	3.03 (1.18)	3.66 (1.35)	2.80 (1.21)	4.45 (1.47)	4.25 (1.39)	2.95 (1.24)	3.83 (1.42)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Mapping News Figures

The mean similarity score for each pairwise comparison was entered into the ALSCAL program and a two-dimensional solution was selected. Results indicate that the two dimensional model scaled well. The stress statistic for the model was .11; which is slightly above desirable range but still considered acceptable (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2008). The R^2 value was .93, which also falls within the acceptable range. The solution can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. *Two-Dimensional Representation of News Figures*



Right away it is apparent that the spread of plot points in Figure 3 is very different from those presented in Figure 2. There is a noticeable cluster near the bottom consisting of Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert and Jay Leno. Near the center there is another cluster of Brian Williams, Anderson Cooper, and Rachel Maddow. It appears that Oprah Winfrey and Katie Couric are related in some capacity, as are Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly. The uniqueness of Figure 3 means that the dimension used to interpret the map of news organizations will not suffice for the map of news figures. When interpreting the Figure 3, I found myself drawing on non news-related dimensions. And this makes sense. Even though many of these people are the 'faces' of news organizations, they are also people. And how we think about them is anchored in the ways we think about people. So rather than thinking about political ideology or commitment to the public interest, implicit thoughts about news figures are driven by people perceptions.

According to the implicit personality theory, a key part of judging people is placing them between binary traits (Schneider, 1973). We ask ourselves, "Is this person nice or mean?"— they can't be both. A salient trait in people perception research is the soft-hard continuum (Ben, 1981). For example, Livingstone's (1989) found that audiences differentiated soap opera characters along this continuum. A 'soft' person is associated with being open and warm, while a 'hard' person is closed and cold. A soft person knows how to charm business associates at cocktail party; a hard person negotiates the business deal. The distinction between soft/hard personalities should not be confuse with the idea of "soft news" and "hard news"—though there is an interesting connection to be made between the two. My interpretation of the horizontal x-axis is a dimension of soft-hard. The people on the left side of the graph are associated with being soft, while the figures on the right side are hard. People like Stewart and Leno use humor as a getaway to 'softness', while Winfrey and Couric interviewing styles seem to grant them a 'softer' approach. The middle cluster of Williams, Cooper, and Maddow do not stand out as particularly soft or hard. But O'Reilly and Limbaugh are clear stand out of hard personalities.

The second dimension (i.e., the y-axis) is murkier. Again, relying on implicit personality theory and past work on multidimensional scaling I think it is likely that the vertical axis represents a continuum from earnest (top) to mocking (bottom). At the top of graph are news figures that convey information in an earnest manner. This includes Katie Couric and Oprah Winfrey. At the bottom of the graph are people who convey information in a mocking manner. This includes Colbert, Leno, Stewart, and Leno. When considering dimensions 1 and 2 together, different clusters emerge. For example, the upper-left (soft-earnest) consists of two women, Couric and Winfrey. This result is supported by past research that links these traits to females (Ben, 1981). Support is also generated from the in-depth interviews where one person referred to

Couric as a “mother journalist”. It appears that these women are thought of a compassionate and caring in disseminating information. Interestingly, Rachel Maddow, the other female news figure, is not located in this quadrant. Instead, she is grouped with Williams and Cooper who represent a middle ground along the two dimensions. This suggests that Maddow functions in a different capacity in the mind’s eye of the survey respondents. She hosts of a cable news show and is often associated with a liberal perspective—factors that make her less soft and earnest than her female counterparts.

Another key difference comes from the lower-left quadrant (soft-mocking). Residing in this part of the figure are three comedians: Colbert, Stewart, and Leno. Although these people are soft (i.e., they welcome us in and make us laugh) they are also using sarcasm and parody to make fun of people. Colbert, specifically, best embodies the dichotomy of being both soft and mocking. Results from Figure 3 also suggest conceptual differences in the infotainment trend. There is initial support that soft news and daytime talk shows live in the upper left quadrant, while late-night talk shows and political satire are in lower left.

Lastly, the lower right quadrant (hard-mocking) consists of Bill O’Reilly. His conservative and conflict-oriented approach makes him both hard and mocking. It is interesting to note that O’Reilly is alone in this quadrant. Absent are the other cable news figures (Maddow and Cooper). It may be that O’Reilly’s approach is objectively “harder” and “more mocking” compared to Maddow and Cooper. Alternatively, it could be that survey respondents (who are disproportionately liberal) are more inclined to think of O’Reilly as hard and mocking, than they are Maddow and Cooper. What this suggests is that individual differences, such as ideology, media exposure, and information flows, produce different maps of the news.

Considering Ideology

To explore this possibility, separate matrix tables were created for liberals, conservatives, and moderates and entered into the INDSCAL (Individual Difference Scaling) program. This program produces an overall composite figure (similar to the ones discussed in Figures 2 and 3) and then separate dimensional weights for each of the ideology categories. The dimensional weights are analogous to partial correlations (Kruskal & Wish, 1991). The higher the weight for a given dimension, the more relevant it is to the interpretation of the map. Dimensional weights can be compared between individual difference categories to shed light on dimension preferences. That is, moderates may find one dimension more important than do liberals. This type of analysis is often referred to as three-way multidimensional scaling (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2008). Complete matrix tables for all the individual differences considered are provided in Appendix C. For simplicity purposes, I will only present the corresponding figures in the space below.

Organizations. The composite map for liberals, conservatives, and moderates is presented in Figure 4a. The overall solution has a stress statistic of .11 and a R^2 of .93 (liberal model stress = .09, R^2 = .96; conservative model stress = .12, R^2 = .93; moderate model stress = .13, R^2 = .91). It is expected that composite INDSCAL solutions will have weaker model statistics because they are accounting for variance across matrices (Kruskal & Wish, 1991).

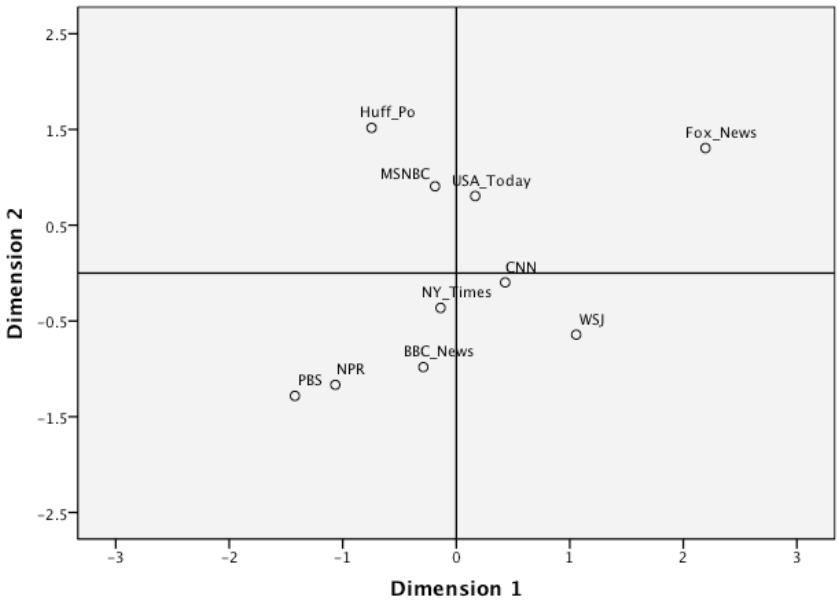
As seen in Figure 4a, the two dimensions of normative-market and ideology hold when accounting for different ideologies of survey respondents. In general, the composite map in Figure 4a resembles the map discussed in Figure 2, with a few minor changes. The normative-market dimension is reflected along the vertical axis. Located at the bottom of the figure are organizations that are grounded in a normative orientation (e.g., *PBS*, *NPR*, *BBC News*), while

located at the top of the figure are organizations that are more market orientated (e.g., *Huffington Post*, *Fox News, MSNBC*). Dimension 1, however, produces a difference plot pattern compared to the overall map seen in Figure 2. I would still interpret the horizontal axis as a continuum of ideology with the right side of the figure containing organizations that are considered more conservative. The left side of the figure, however, is murkier with *PBS*, *NPR* and *Huffington Post* scoring high on a liberal dimension. Although it may seem odd to lump the *Huffington Post* with an organization like *NPR*, it should be noted that there is a great deal of distance between the cluster of normative-oriented organizations and *Huffington Post*. What this does suggest is that in the mind's eye of ideologues, *PBS* and *NPR* are not ideologically neutral, but have some liberal associations.

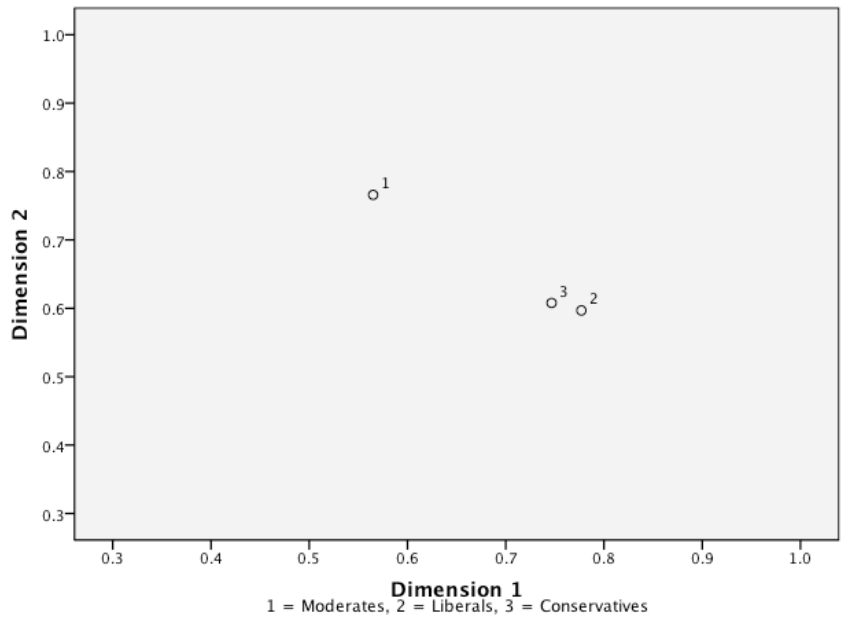
Figure 4b contains the dimensional weights for moderates, liberals, and conservatives. In general, the two dimensions are important to moderates, liberals, and conservatives. Moderates produce the highest score for the normative-market dimension with a weight of .765, following by conservatives and liberals (.607 and .596, respectively). The opposite is true of the ideology dimension. Liberals and conservatives score highest (.777 and .746, respectively), followed by moderates (.565). Although the two dimensions fit well for the three ideology categories, these results do suggest that moderates rely more on considerations of normative vs. market approach, while liberals and conservatives rely more on considerations of ideology when thinking about news organizations.

Figure 4. *Composite Map of News Organizations for Ideologues and Corresponding Dimensional Weights*

a)



b)



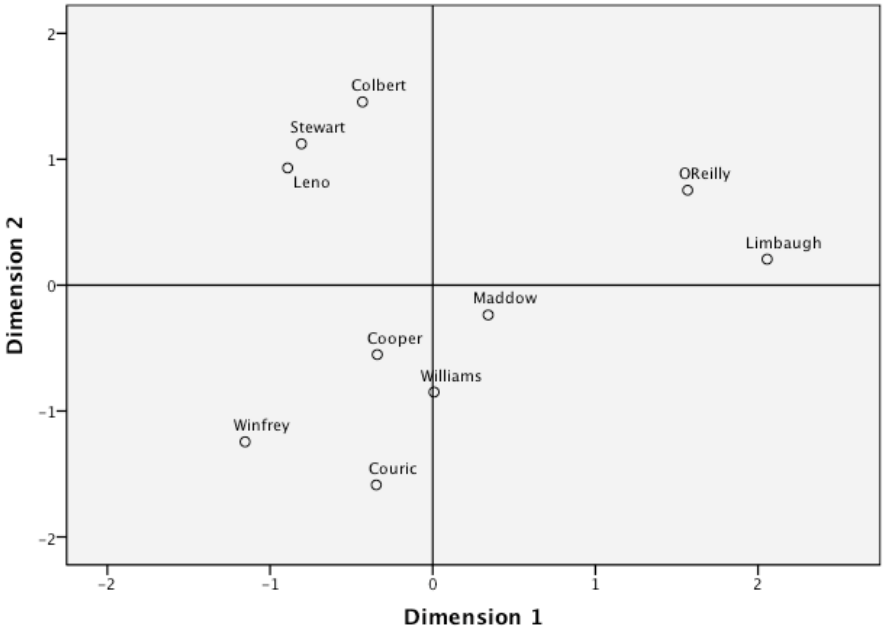
People. The composite map for liberals, conservatives, and moderates is presented in Figure 5a. The overall solution has a stress statistic of .14 and a R^2 of .88 (liberal model stress = .11, R^2 = .94; conservative model stress = .15, R^2 = .86; moderate model stress = .17, R^2 = .85).

The ideology composite map presented in Figure 5a resembles the overall map presented in Figure 3. Dimension 1 reflects a soft (left) to hard (right) continuum. Dimension 2 reflects a mocking (top) to earnest (bottom) continuum. The only key difference in the ideology composite map is smaller distance between O'Reilly and Limbaugh, and the breaking away of Maddow.

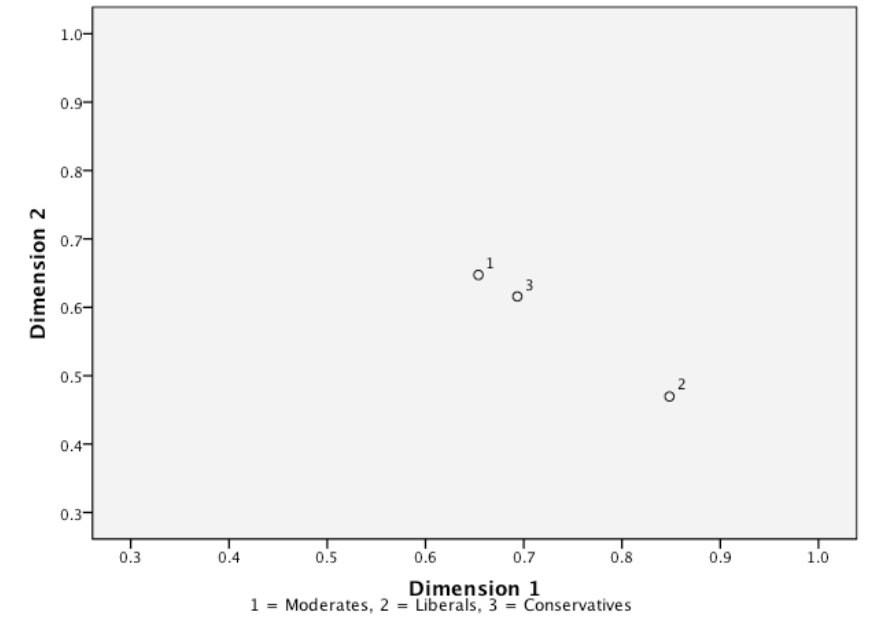
A more telling result emerges from the dimensional weights presented in Figure 5b. Both dimensions are fairly important to moderates (dim. 1 = .653, dim. 2 = .647) and conservatives (dim 1 = .693, dim 2 = .615). Among liberals, however, there is a clear valuing of dimension 1 (.848) over dimension 2 (.469). In other words, when thinking about news figures the soft-hard distinction is more salient than the mocking-earnest distinction. Why might this be? One possibility is the relationship between the soft-hard dimension and the infotainment trend. The outliers of dimension 1 are all infotainment figures (Winfrey, Leno, Stewart on the left and O'Reilly and Limbaugh on the right). It might be that liberals are particularly attuned to the infotainment trend and are more apt to structure their thoughts around it. Conversely, moderates and conservatives are more concerned with mocking-earnest levels.

Figure 5. *Composite Map of News Figures Among Ideologues and Corresponding Dimensional Weights*

a)



b)



1 = Moderates, 2 = Liberals, 3 = Conservatives

Considering Media Exposure

It is also possible that media exposure shapes thought structures about the news media. To explore this possibility, survey respondents indicated how many days in the typical week they consumed 26 types of news media content, ranging from zero to seven days a week (the complete battery of media items is presented in Appendix C). A principal components analysis was then preformed on the 26 news media items. To be retained in the final solution a media item needed to have a strong loading (above .50) with no high cross loadings (above. 40). Over discarding items that do not meet this requirement, the result was an 18-item model yielding six distinct components (Appendix C contains the PCA solution).

Following the results of the PCA, six measures of news media exposure were created. A measure of 'conservative news exposure' was constructed by averaging exposure to *Fox News*, conservative blogs, conservative radio, and *Fox News* online (M = .31, SD = .82, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .85). Because I am interested in those people who are avid consumers of particular types of news media, a measure of 'high conservative media exposure' was created by assigning a score of one to respondents who were in the top 25% of conservative media exposure (.25 or above, n = 69).[3]

A measure of 'infotainment exposure' was constructed by averaging exposure to entertainment news programs, daytime talk shows, late-night talk shows, and offline/online entertainment news (M = 1.36, SD = 1.30, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .73). A measure of 'high infotainment exposure' was constructed by assigning the upper 25% a score of 1 (2.01 or above, n = 65).

[3] The decision to take the top 25% is in many ways an arbitrary cut. Ultimately, what drove me to using a quartile split (and not a median or 33% split) was the desire to isolate *high* consumers of specific types of media. My interest is not in the difference between high vs. medium vs. low consumption of a certain type of news media, but rather how high consumption produces a different map compared to another type of high media consumption. Using the 25% cut provided a stricter definition or high, while also maintaining a respectable sample size.

'Television news exposure' was measured by averaging exposure to national broadcast news, *MSNBC* news, and *CNN* news (*M* = .65, *SD* = .97, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .76). A measure of 'high TV news exposure' was constructed by assigning the upper 25% a score of 1 (.68 or above, *n* = 69).

'Print news exposure' was measured by averaging exposure to national newspapers offline/online, local newspapers offline/online, and news magazines offline/online (*M* = 2.13, *SD* = 1.68, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .69). A measure of 'high print news exposure' was constructed by assigning the upper 25% a score of 1 (3.01 or above, *n* = 65).

'Liberal news exposure' was measured by averaging exposure to liberal blogs and liberal radio (*M* = .49, *SD* = 1.06, *inter-item* = .58). A measure of 'high liberal news exposure' was constructed by assigning the upper 25% a score of 1 (.51 or above, *n* = 51).

Lastly, a measure of 'sports news exposure' was constructed by averaging exposure to sports talk show programs and sports news offline/online (*M* = 1.44, *SD* = 2.00, *inter-item* = .68). A measure of 'high sports news exposure' was constructed by assigning the upper 25% a score of 1 (2.01 or above, *n* = 69).

Organizations. To consider the role of media exposure differences, separate matrices were created for each of the 'high exposure' categories and entered into the INDSCAL program. The composite map, seen in Figure 6a, produced a strong fit with a stress statistic of .11 and an R^2 of .95 (conservative model stress = .10 and $R^{2 =}$ .95; infotainment model stress = .13 and $R^{2 =}$ .93; TV news model stress = .10 and $R^{2 =}$ .96; print news model stress = .08 and $R^{2 =}$ .97; liberal model stress = .12 and $R^{2 =}$ .93, and sports news model stress = .12 and $R^{2 =}$ .94).

Results from the composite map seen in Figure 6a indicate that the two dimensions of normative-market and ideology still hold when accounting for various types of news exposure.

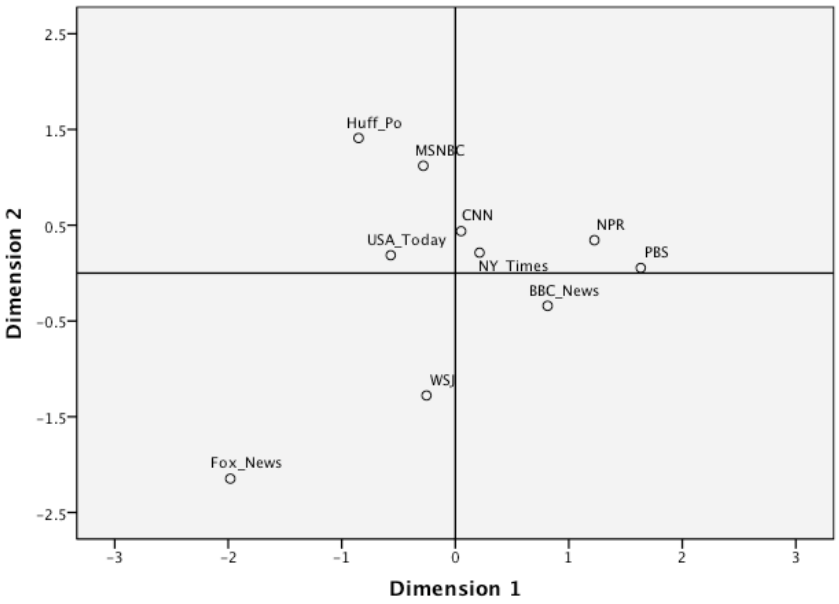
Dimension 1 reflects a continuum from market (left) to normative (right); while dimension 2 reflects an ideological continuum from liberal (top) to conservative (bottom).

Dimension weights, shown in Figure 6b, indicate some variance among media exposure. In general, the normative-marking dimension (dimension 1) was highly important for all media categories. People high in sports news exposure valued this dimension the most (.89), while conservative and liberal news exposure valued it the least (.80 and .81, respectively). The ratings for the ideology dimension (dimension 2) were more moderate. People high in conservative media exposure valued this dimension the most (.56), while high sports news exposure valued it the least (.39).

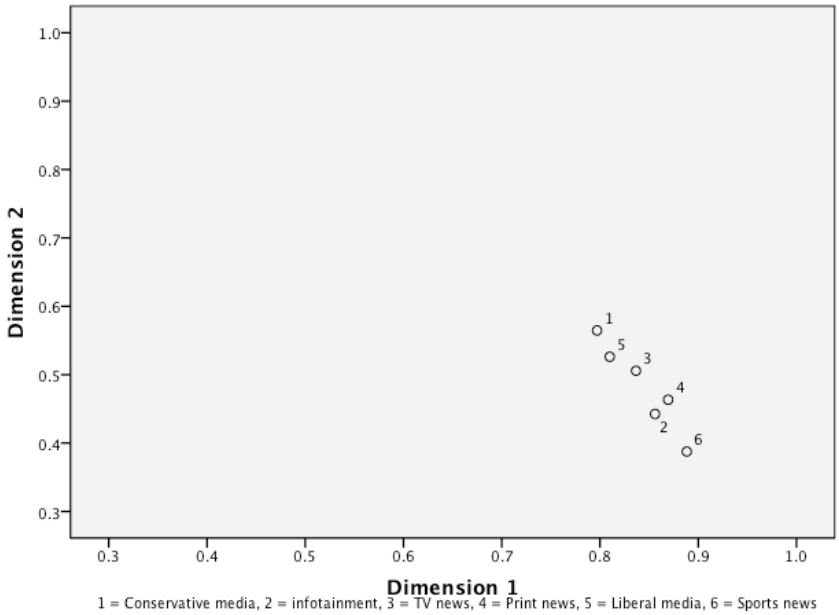
There are two implications that can be drawn from this analysis. The first involves the distinctiveness of high sports news exposure. For these people, their thinking about the news media environment is less about ideology and more about the different orientations news organization adopt in providing information. These people rely on cues about organizations that are well rounded and committed to informing the public, versus cues about organizations that are more committed toward serving the wants of a specific audience. Much like the moderates in the ideology analysis, people high in sports news are not making ideological cuts across the news landscape. The second implication involves those high in conservative and liberal media exposure. Compared to the other media categories, these people exhibit a stronger valuing of ideology and lesser valuing of normative-market dimension. Although the differences are small, this result mimics the pattern found in the analysis of ideologues. Similar to liberals and conservatives, consumers of ideologically driven media are more prone to think about the news media landscape in ideological ways. They are more attuned to the ideological differences between news organizations and use them when making comparison judgments.

Figure 6. *Composite Map of News Organizations Among High News Exposure and Corresponding Dimensional Weights*

a)



b)



1 = Conservative media, 2 = infotainment, 3 = TV news, 4 = Print news, 5 = Liberal media, 6 = Sports news

People. Separate matrices were created from each of the 'high exposure' categories and entered into the INDSCAL program. The composite map for news people produced a stress statistic of .12 and an R^2 of .92 (conservative model stress = .13 and R^2 = .90; infotainment model stress = .12 and R^2 = .92; TV news model stress = .11 and R^2 = .93; print news model stress = .11 and R^2 = .93; liberal model stress = .13 and R^2 = .90, and sports news model stress = .11 and R^2 = .93).

As seen in Figure 7a, results from the composite map indicate that the dimensions of hard-soft and mocking-earnest hold when accounting for various types of news exposure. Specifically, dimension 1 reflects a continuum from hard (left) to soft (right) and dimension 2 reflects a continuum from earnest (top) to mocking (bottom). The biggest change compared to previous maps involves the earnest dimension. Colbert, O'Reilly, and Limbaugh are plotted more toward the bottom of dimension 2, while Stewart and Leno and more toward the middle.

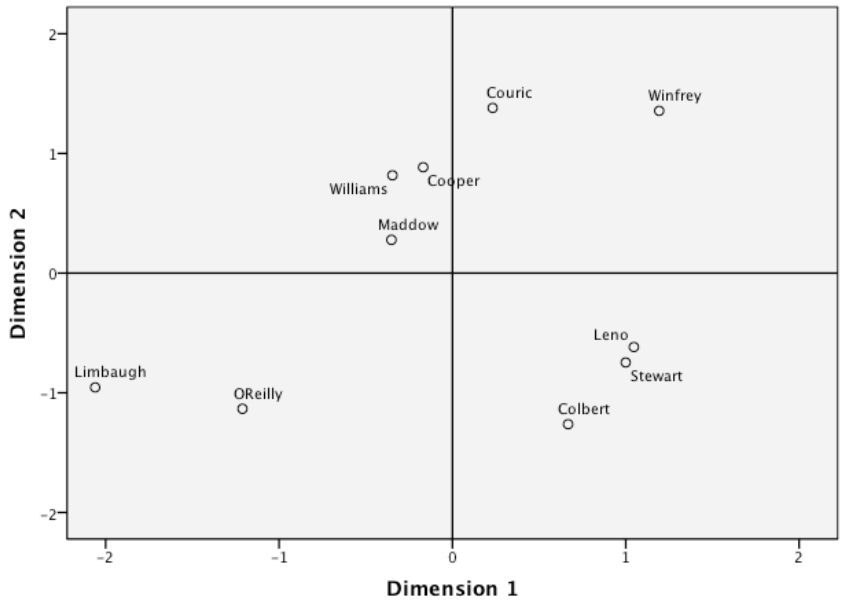
Dimensional weights, shown in Figure 7b, indicate that both dimensions are fairly important among media exposure categories. However, it appears that the hard-soft continuum (dimension 1) is more important than the mocking-earnest continuum (dimension 2). People high in infotainment exposure and sports news exposure valued the hard-soft dimension the most (.81 and .80, respectively), while high conservative media exposure valued this dimension the least (.67). For the mocking-earnest dimension, those who are high in conservative media valued this dimension the most (.67), while high infotainment and sports news people valued it the least (.52 and .53, respectively).

There are two implications that can be taken from this analysis. First, the soft-hard dimension is more important for people who are high consumers of media that blurs the news-entertainment divide. This dimension is anchored by infotainment figures—Winfrey, Leno, and

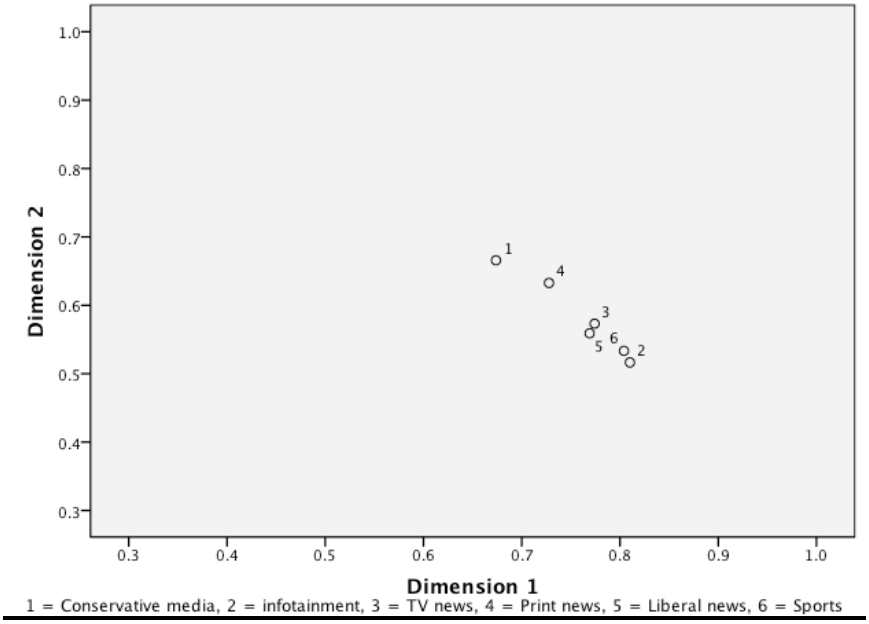
Steward at one end, Limbaugh and O'Reilly occupy the other. People high in infotainment exposure and sports exposure structure their thoughts around this personality-centered dimension. They are more comfortable in thinking about likability and disagreeableness, than they are thinking about the sincerity of news figures. Second, the mocking-earnest dimension is more important for conservative media users, compared to the other media users. It is likely that this result is related to the movements of Colbert, O'Reilly, and Limbaugh in the composite map. When looking at dimension 2, Colbert is more similar to O'Reilly and Limbaugh than he is to Stewart and Colbert. As such, conservative media users are more inclined to think about Colbert in ways that plot him with outspoken conservative figures, whereas other media users (and the overall figure presented in Figure 3) plot Colbert with the comedy likings of Stewart and Leno. This finding in particular underscores the 'open' nature of news figures, and Colbert in particular (LaMarre et al., 2009).

***Figure** 7. Composite Map of News Organizations Among High News Exposure and Corresponding Dimensional Weights*

a)



b)



Considering News Flows

The final individual difference considered is news flow. Specifically, three types of news flows and their intensity are explored. For all questions, respondents indicated how often the following situations occur, ranging from "Never" (1) to "Very Frequently" (7). Exact question wording is provided in Appendix C.

A measure of 'offline news flow' was constructed by averaging six questions about the propensity of family and friends to talk about news and current events, share their opinions about news/current events, and critique news stories ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.27$, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .88). A measure of 'low offline news flow' was constructed by assigning the bottom 25% a value of one (3.17 and below, $n = 74$). 'High offline news flow' was constructed by assigning the top 25% a value of two (5.01 and above, $n = 67$).[4]

[4] Different from the media exposure analysis, the focus here is on different avenues for news to flow *and* their intensity. In the media exposure analysis, a high/low distinction did not tell us much. A low score on sports news, for example, could mean a multitude of things (these people don't watch sports news, they don't watch television,

A measure of 'Facebook news flow' was constructed by averaging seven questions about Facebook friends posting news stories, friends sharing their opinion about news/current events, the respondent checking their news feed, and liking news organizations (M = 3.70, SD = 1.11, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .83). A measure of 'low Facebook news flow' was constructed by assigning the bottom 25% a value of one (2.86 and below, *n* = 62). Additionally, 'high Facebook news flow' was constructed by assigning the top 25% a value of two (4.30 and above, *n* = 68). It should be noted that 98% of respondents had a Facebook account (the average number of friends was 735, with a range from 13 friends to 3,180 friends). Only the respondents who had a Facebook account answered questions about their Facebook activities.

A measure of 'Twitter news flow' was constructed by averaging seven questions about followed accounts posting news stories, followed accounts sharing opinions about news/current events, the respondent checking their Twitter feed, and following news organizations (M = 4.28, SD = 1.40, *Cronbach's Alpha* = .84). A measure of 'low Twitter news flow' was constructed by assigning the bottom 25% a value of one (3.29 and below, *n* = 53). Additionally, 'high Twitter news flow' was constructed by assigning the top 25% a value of two (5.30 and above, *n* = 51). It should be noted that 78% of respondents indicated they had a Twitter account (the average number of accounts followed was 180, with range from 1 account followed to 1,300). Only the respondents who had a Twitter account answered the questions about their Twitter activities. As such, the low Twitter group still uses Twitter, but does not encounter much news.

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they are avid consumers of other types of news). As a result, it made more sense to compare high users of sports news (i.e., people we know have this single variable in common) to other media users. For news flows, the question is different. Here I am interested in the impact of these flows on shaping thoughts about the news landscape. The natural comparison is between people whose social networks have an open flow of news traveling through, and people whose networks do not. Given the changes in where these news flows take place (i.e., the offline world versus the digital), separate measures tapping types of news flows also made sense.

Organizations. To consider the role of news flow differences, separate matrices were created for each of the 'low' and 'high' categories and entered into the INDSCAL program. The composite map produced a strong fit with a stress statistic of .12 and an R^2 of .94 (high offline model stress = .12 and $R^{2 =}$ .94; low offline model stress = .13 and $R^{2 =}$ .93; high Facebook model stress = .12 and $R^{2 =}$ .94; low Facebook model stress = .11 and $R^{2 =}$ .94; high Twitter model stress = .13 and $R^{2 =}$ .92; low Twitter model stress = .11 and $R^{2 =}$ .95).

Results from the composite map, seen in Figure 8a, indicate that the two dimensions of normative-market and ideology hold when accounting for news flows. Dimension 1 reflects a continuum from market (left) to normative (right); while dimension 2 reflects an ideology continuum from conservative (top) to liberal (bottom).

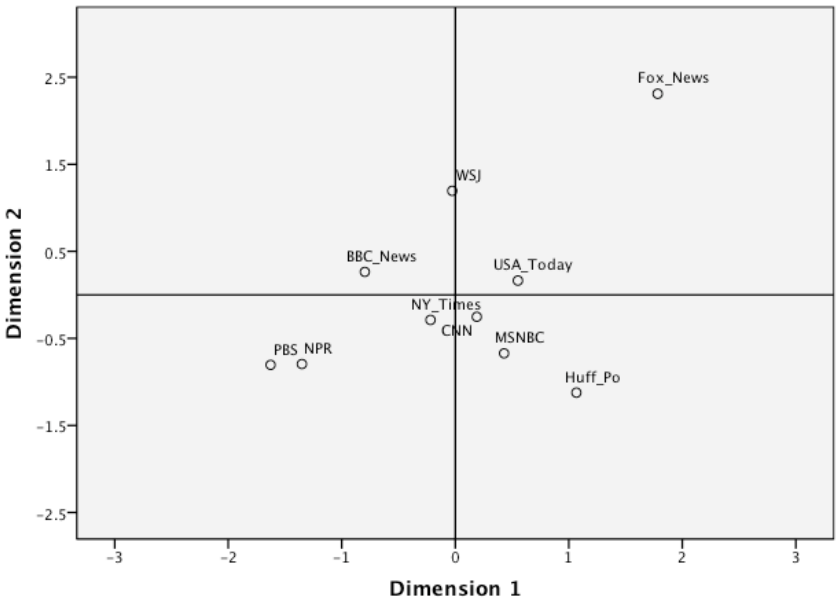
Dimension weights, shown in Figure 8b, indicate a great deal of variance among intensity of news flows. For all categories, the normative-market dimension (dimension 1) is relatively important. However, there are clear differences between the low and high news flow groups. The normative-market dimension is extremely important for the low news flow groups (low offline = .93, low Facebook = .92, low Twitter = .87), while the high groups indicate a relatively lower valuing of this dimension (high offline = .79, high Facebook = .74, high Twitter = .69). The biggest difference in weighting occurs for the ideology dimension (dimension 2). This dimension is more important to the high news flow groups (high offline = .56, high Facebook = .63, high Twitter = .68), while the low groups exhibit an extreme devaluing of the dimension low offline = .23, low Facebook = .31, low Twitter = .43).

In light of these findings, two key implications are elaborated upon. First, there is a clear difference between low and high news flow groups. People whose social networks provide them with a steady flow of news have two dimensions that structure their thinking about news

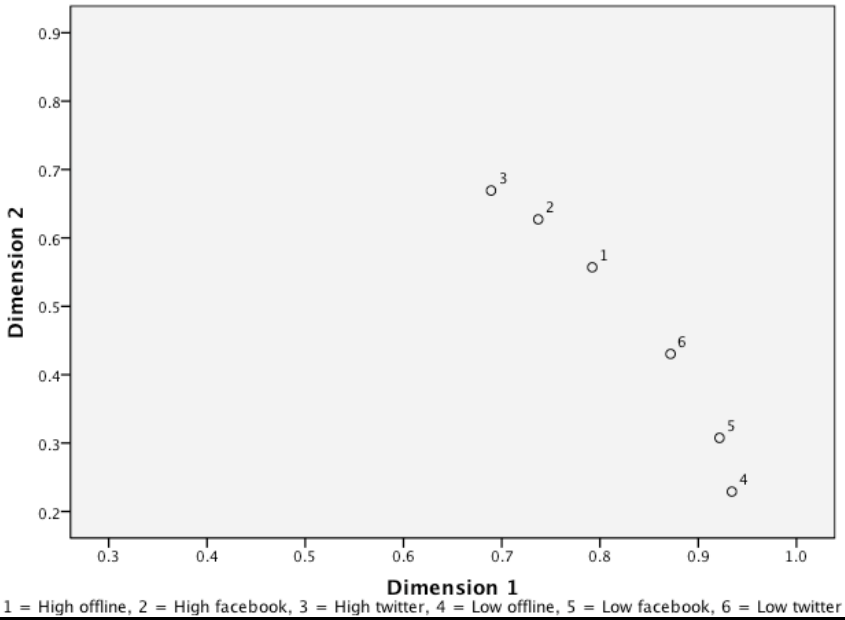
organizations. This allows for more clarity and precision when thinking about news. A more pessimistic interpretation is that increased news flows result in more ideological thinking, which could be related to increased political polarization or media distrust. When thinking about the news landscape, these people are more incline to think in terms of "red media" and "blue media." The second implication relates to differences among types of news flows. It appears that Twitter use is related to increased ideological thinking. Amongst the 'high' groups, Twitter scores the highest on this dimension, followed by Facebook and offline. Amongst the 'low' groups, Twitter scores the highest, followed by Facebook and offline. There may be something about the nature of Twitter, even for people who don't use it a source for news, which makes this dimension more salient. Compared to Facebook, Twitter use often involves fewer close ties (we use terms like "followings" not "friends" when referencing the Twittersphere) and Twitter places a greater emphasis on its live feed, than does Facebook. Several people during the in-depth interviews used Facebook without checking the news feed. As such, using Twitter means encountering information that shapes thoughts along an ideology dimension.

Figure 8. *Composite Map of News Organizations Among High and Low News Flows and Corresponding Dimensional Weights*

a)



b)



1 = High offline, 2 = High facebook, 3 = High twitter, 4 = Low offline, 5 = Low facebook, 6 = Low twitter

People. The composite map for news figures produced a strong fit with a stress statistic of .12 and an R^2 of .91 (high offline model stress = .13 and R^2 = .91; low offline model stress = .12 and R^2 = .92; high Facebook model stress = .12 and R^2 = .93; low Facebook model stress = .12 and R^2 = .92; high Twitter model stress = .13 and R^2 = .90; low Twitter model stress = .13 and R^2 = .91).

Results from the composite map, seen in Figure 9a, indicate that the hard-soft dimension and mocking-earnest dimension hold then accounting for news flows. Specifically, dimension 1 reflects a continuum of mocking from low (left) to earnest (right). Dimension 2 reflects a personality continuum from soft (top) to hard (bottom). There are, however, several plot differences that are worth discussing. For the first time, clear quadrant patterns emerge. The upper-left quadrant (mocking-soft) contains people who readily use political humor. And different from the media exposure map (Figure 7a), the distance between Colbert, Stewart, and Leno is quite small. The lower-left quadrant (mocking-hard) contains the conservative pundits Limbaugh and O'Reilly. The upper-right quadrant (earnest-soft) contains daytime talk show host Oprah Winfrey. This is a key change from previous maps where Couric was closely aligned with Winfrey. The lower-right quadrant (earnest-hard) contains broadcast/cable new figures. When accounting for news flows, it appears that the implicit thoughts of respondents yield meaningful clusters of news figures.

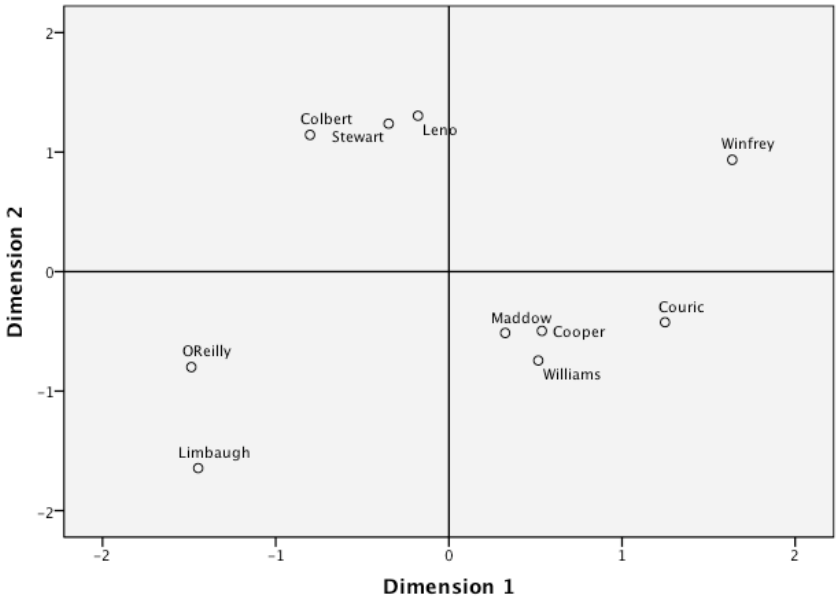
Dimension weights, shown in Figure 9b, indicate a great deal of variance among intensity of news flows. Overall, the mocking-earnest dimension (dimension 1) is more important, though not by much. People high in Facebook and offline news flows value this dimension the most (.79 and .78, respectively), while those who are low and high in Twitter flow value it the least (.53 and .67, respectively). The opposite is true for the hard-soft continuum. People low and high in

Twitter news flows find this dimension more important (.79 and .67, respectively), while those high in Facebook and offline rate lowest in its importance (.55 and .54, respectively).

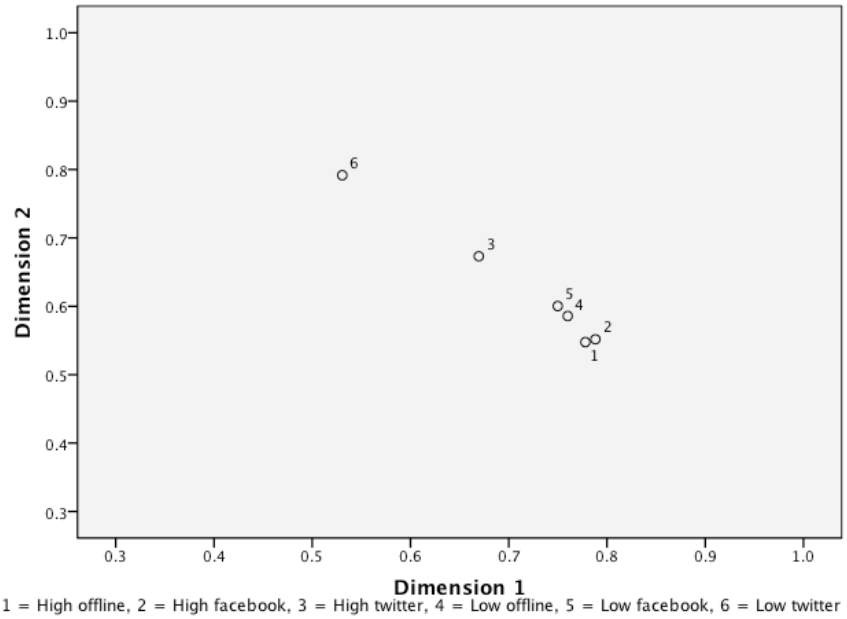
Results from the dimensional weights support the argument that Twitter may function differently than other types of news flows. Twitter users seem to have a greater reliance on the hard-soft continuum. People with low Twitter flow have a clear preference for this dimension, while high Twitter people are able to simultaneously draw from the two dimensions. What might this be? It could be that low flow people are not using Twitter for news purposes and the content that makes its way to their live feeds is more viral, sensational, and entertainment oriented. As a result, the soft-hard continuum resonates more with them. They are more apt to think about people in terms of softness (likeability, warmness, humor) and hardness (tough, argumentative). High Twitter flow people, on the other hand, receive a constant stream on news related topics. This is supported in the descriptives of Twitter and Facebook use. The mean for Twitter flow is higher than Facebook (4.28 vs. 3.7), with the *high* Twitter group being one-point higher than the *high* Facebook group (5.3 vs. 4.3). As a result, people with a high Twitter news flow rely both dimensions when thinking about news figures. Given the clear interpretation of the quadrants when interacting the two dimensions, high Twitter people are able to map news figures in more precise ways.

Figure 9. *Composite Map of News Figures Among High and Low News Flows and Corresponding Dimensional Weights*

a)



b)



1 = High offline, 2 = High facebook, 3 = High twitter, 4 = Low offline, 5 = Low facebook, 6 = Low twitter

Overall Summary

The multidimensional analyses produced a remarkable level of consistency regarding the dimensions used when thinking about news organizations and figures. At the very beginning of the chapter the overall analysis revealed the dimensions of normative-market and ideology were present when thinking about news organizations, and the dimensions of soft-hard and mocking-earnest when thinking about news figures. Even when accounting for several individual differences (i.e., ideology, media exposure, news flows) these dimensions held consent. What this indicates is a common set of criteria used by respondents when asked to make implicit comparisons. That is, when thinking about news organizations respondents ask themselves if the organization is committed to providing information that the public "needs to know" or what they "should know," and if the organization has an ideological leaning. When thinking about news figures, respondents ask themselves if the person has a soft or hard personality and how mocking or earnest they are in conveying information.

Even though the individual difference analyses did not produce different dimensions, it did shed light on how salient these dimension are for different groups of people. In regards to news organizations, the normative-market dimension was more important for moderates, while liberals and conservatives found the ideology dimension to be more important. Respondents high in Twitter and Facebook news flows valued both dimensions equally. In regards to news figures, the soft-hard dimension was more important for liberals, high consumers of liberal media, infotainment, sports media, and Twitter users with low news flows. Finding both dimensions important were moderates, conservatives, high consumers of conservative media, print news, and Twitter users with a high news flow. Although there is stability with the dimensions across

several individual difference categories, it does not necessarily mean that everyone relies on these dimensions to the same extent.

Results from this chapter suggest a starting point in how young people think about the high-choice news landscape. The MDS analysis tapped implicit thoughts about the news media. Recall that respondents were instructed to use whatever criteria they saw fit when making assessments of similarity. Another way to explore this is to venture into the explicit thoughts of respondents. That is, how do respondents evaluate the news media when given specific criteria to use? To next chapter explores this process.

Chapter 6: Evaluating News

The MDS analyses revealed the larger concepts that respondents automatically reference when comparing news organizations and figures. I use the term 'larger' because the dimensions reflect concepts that can be explicated, or broken down further, by respondents. For example, it is unlikely that respondents label their thoughts as "a normative orientation toward informing" when thinking about this dimension. Instead they think of specific characteristics like informing the public, investigative reporting, and low entertainment value. In fact, during the in-depth interviews I found that many people referenced the idea of a normative orientation without actually evoking the term. What this suggests is rather than asking respondents to evaluate *Fox News* in terms of its normative-market orientation or ideology, it is also useful to ask about specific characteristic related to these larger concepts. By doing so, participants' attention is drawn to the specific criteria they should use when making evaluations.

To shed light on the ways people think about the news landscape the same undergraduate sample was also asked to evaluate news organizations along several news characteristics. I am focusing solely on news organizations, and not also news figures, because the evaluation items used in this chapter complement the news organization MDS analyses. The news figure analyses revealed dimensions that were largely structured around people perception theory, as a result the evaluation items are not as useful for explicating the dimensions.

Evaluation Measures

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with five statements about each of the same ten news organizations. Answers were provided on a 7-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). The five statements addressed opinion giving,

entertainment value, investigative work, breaking news, and information value. For example, respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statement, "The *New York Times* presents information that is opinionated." These statements were constructed to complement the four news characteristics discussed in Chapter 4. That being said, a single survey question cannot encapsulate the richness of each news characteristics. Rather, the survey statements used here should be thought of as one aspect of a news characteristic. Complete question wording for these items is provided in Appendix D. To avoid question order bias, the organizations were presented in a randomized order.

Table 6. *Evaluations of News Organizations Along Five Characteristics*

	News Characteristics				
	Opinion Giving	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
News Organizations					
BBC	3.45 (1.39)*	4.30 (1.23)*	5.07 (1.30)*	5.29 (1.31)*	5.57 (1.29)
CNN	4.24 (1.49)	4.67 (1.43)*	5.14 (1.50)*	6.18 (1.21)*	6.06 (1.23)*
Fox News	6.11 (1.23)*	4.66 (1.68)	4.25 (1.57)*	4.25 (1.57)*	5.24 (1.40)
Huff. Post	4.84 (1.47)*	5.00 (1.43)*	3.85 (1.52)*	4.61 (1.56)*	5.27 (1.29)*
MSNBC	5.07 (1.42)*	4.69 (1.34)*	4.66 (1.22)	5.36 (1.35)*	5.59 (1.27)*
NPR	3.69 (1.64)*	4.32 (1.64)	4.86 (1.49)*	4.33 (1.53)*	5.27 (1.41)*
NY Times	3.96* (1.54)	4.76 (1.33)*	5.51 (1.20)*	5.70 (1.38)*	6.20 (1.09)*
PBS	3.20 (1.44)*	3.94 (1.47)*	4.16 (1.53)*	3.32 (1.48)*	4.27 (1.53)*
USA Today	3.98 (1.25)	4.70 (1.20)*	4.22 (1.33)*	4.68 (1.49)*	5.32 (1.27)
WSJ	4.17 (1.32)	3.96 (1.38)*	4.93 (1.36)*	4.82 (1.46)	5.59 (1.21)*

Grand Means	*4.27 (.77)*	*4.49 (.82)*	*4.69 (.77)*	*4.95 (.82)*	*5.44 (.86)*

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses. Means with an asterisk (*) are significantly different from the grand mean ($p \leq .05$), reading column-wise.

Evaluating News Organizations

Opinion Giving. Rating highest in opinion giving and significantly above the overall average were *Fox News* (t (267) = 24.28, $p \leq .001$), *MSNBC* (t (269) = 9.19, $p \leq .001$), and *Huffington Post* (t (268) = 6.40, $p \leq .001$). Significantly below the grand mean were *PBS* (t (268) = -12.14, $p \leq .001$), *NPR* (t (269) = -5.83, $p \leq .001$), and *BBC News* (t (268) = -9.65, $p \leq .001$). The order of the news organizations along this characteristic is similar to the order of the normative-market continuum. This suggests that the news organizations that are more market oriented are high in the characteristic of opinion giving, while organizations that are more normative oriented are low in opinion giving. It is also likely that the opinion-giving characteristic is also related to the ideology dimension. However, a more specific question asking about a liberal or conservative opinionated voice would be a better explication of the ideology dimension. That being said, the results do indicate a connection between the implicit normative-market dimension and explicit evaluations regarding opinion giving.

Entertainment Value. Rating highest and significantly above the overall average for entertainment value are the *Huffington Post* (t (267) = 5.85, $p \leq .001$), followed by the *NY Times* (t (268) = 3.30, $p \leq .001$) and the *USA Today* (t (268) = 2.85, $p \leq .01$). Rating lowest and significantly below the overall average are the *Wall Street Journal* (t (269) = -6.35, $p \leq .001$) and *PBS* (t (269) = -6.08, $p \leq .001$). The entertainment characteristic can also shed more empirical light on the normative-market dimension. Concerns about orientation can be related to entertainment value. In the previous chapter, both the *Huffington Post* and *USA Today* were plotted more toward a market orientation. In this chapter both are found to rank high in

entertainment. As such, implicit thoughts about normative vs. market orientation can also be connected to specific evaluations regarding entertainment value.

Investigative. In terms of investigative reporting, rating highest and significantly above the mean are the *New York Times* (t (266) = 15.21, $p \leq .001$), followed by *CNN* (t (266) = 4.94, $p \leq .001$), and *BBC News* (t (266) = 4.84, $p \leq .001$). Rating lowest and significantly below the overall mean are the *Huffington Post* (t (267) = -8.99, $p \leq .001$), *PBS* (t (268) = -5.72, $p \leq .001$) and *USA Today* (t (266) = -5.79, $p \leq .001$). There is no clear parallel to the ordering of the normative-market continuum found in the previous chapter. This result may indicate the existence of another dimension, one that the two-dimensional MDS solution did not account for. Recall that in the MDS maps, both the *NY Times* and *CNN* were plotted near the center—not extraordinary in normative-market orientation or ideology. The remaining news characteristics, however, reflect their strong evaluations compared to the other news organizations.

Breaking News. Rating highest and significantly above the overall average in breaking news is *CNN* (t (267) = 16.65, $p \leq .001$), followed by the *New York Times* (t (266) = 8.83, $p \leq .001$) and *MSNBC* (t (269) = 5.01, $p \leq .001$). Rating lowest and significantly below the overall mean are *PBS* (t (267) = -18.01, $p \leq .001$) and *NPR* (t (269) = -6.66, $p \leq .001$).

Information Value. In terms of information value, rating highest and significantly above the overall average are the *New York Times* (t (267) = 11.28, $p \leq .001$) and *CNN* (t (268) = 8.18, $p \leq .001$). Rating lowest and significantly below the overall mean is *PBS* (t (268) = -12.48, $p \leq .001$).

The overall averages and distributions suggest that the characteristics of opinion giving and entertainment value are related to thoughts about an organizations commitment to the normative function of the press compared to a market function. The other three characteristics—

investigative reporting, breaking news, and information value—seem to be taping into a different dimension of thinking about the news, not addressed by the two-dimensional analyses. The next part of this chapter focuses on how these evaluations change according to individual differences, specifically ideology, media exposure, and news flows. For example, it may be that liberals rate *Fox News* as lower in information value compared to conservatives, or consumers of the *NY Times* rate it higher in breaking news than do non-consumers. Although the MDS maps did not reveal any striking differences in the general appearance of the maps, the explicit evaluations of news organizations may capture nuanced differences in thinking about news.

Differences Among Ideologues

Do liberals and conservatives evaluate news organizations in different ways? In general there was little variation in the *ordering* of news organizations among the ideology categories (evaluation means are provided in Appendix D). *Fox News*, for example, was rated highest in opinion giving among liberals, conservatives, and moderates. Just as the MDS analyses suggested, there is a somewhat consistent way of evaluating these news organizations. It is not the case that liberals see *Fox News* was extremely opinionated while conservatives see them as non-opinionated. The social images (i.e., branding) of these organizations are powerful and undoubtedly provide a coherent structure to the news evaluations. But important to consider is changes in the *intensity* of these evaluations. Everyone may rate *Fox News* as high in opinion giving, but how different are the intensity of these ratings? If thoughts about the news lay the foundation for news effects, than intensity differences could be the building blocks for these effects.

To address this possibility separate one-way ANOVAs for ideology were run for each of news characteristic questions (that is, five characteristics for each of the 10 news organizations)

with LSD post-hoc comparisons. Rather than present a laundry list of findings, I would like to highlight a couple interesting patterns that emerged. The biggest being that while some news organizations breed a lot of evaluation differences, others are far less controversial.

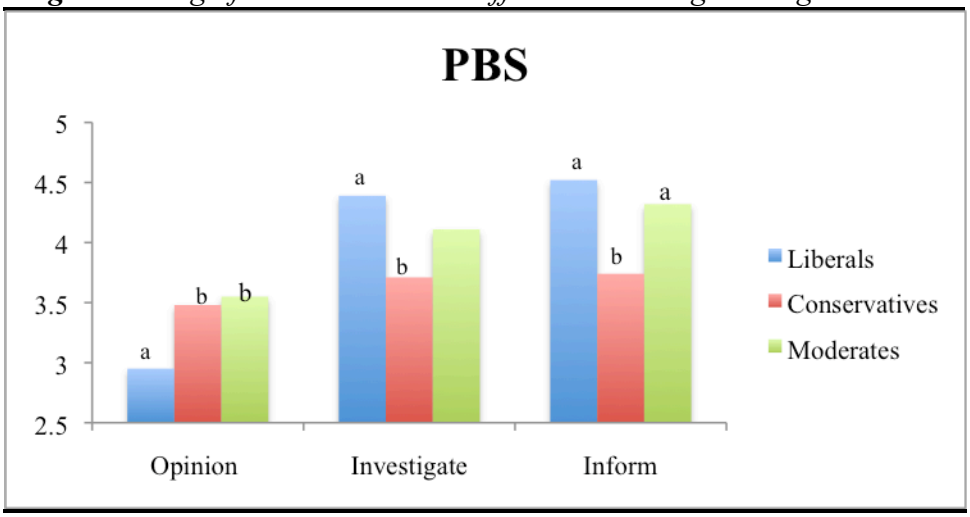
The Less Controversial. Across all five news characteristics, there were no significant differences among ideologues' evaluations of *USA Today* and *Wall Street Journal*. It is not that respondents did not have strong evaluations of these news organizations. Both organizations see a fair amount of movement in how they were evaluated along the various news characteristics. Instead, it appears that liberals, conservatives, and moderates see these movements in similar ways.

Also less divisive were evaluations of the *NY Times*, *NPR*, and the *Huffington Post*. The only significant difference for the *NY Times* was regarding its entertainment value (f (2, 266) = 3.46 = $p \leq .05$). Specifically, liberals rated it as significantly more entertaining (M = 4.97, SD = 1.30) than moderates (M = 4.49, SD = 1.39) ($p \leq .05$). For *NPR*, the only significant difference involved its information value (f (2, 266) = 6.72 = $p \leq .01$); with liberals (M = 5.55, SD = 1.36) rating it as more informative, compared to conservatives (M = 4.92, SD = 1.40) ($p \leq .01$), and moderates (M = 4.95, SD = 1.40) ($p \leq .01$). And the *Huffington Post* produced significant differences for its information value (f (2, 265) = 3.78 = $p \leq .05$). Driving this finding was the significant difference between liberals (M = 5.47, SD = 1.18) and conservatives (M = 4.97, SD = 1.40) ($p \leq .01$).

The More Controversial—Public News. The remaining five organizations all reported significant differences for a majority of the news characteristics. The first group involves two publically funded news organizations, *PBS* and *BBC*. Evaluations of *PBS* produced significant differences among ideologues for opinion giving (f (2, 265) = 5.39 = $p \leq .01$), investigative

reporting (f (2, 265) = 4.56 = $p \leq .05$), and information value (f (2, 265) = 6.09 = $p \leq .01$). At seen in Figure 10, liberals (M = 2.95, SD = 1.41) perceived *PBS* to be less opinionated, compared to both moderates (M = 3.55, SD = 1.36) ($p \leq .01$) and conservatives (M = 3.48, SD = 1.49) ($p \leq .05$). Additionally, liberals (M = 4.39, SD = 1.50) viewed *PBS* as more of a source of investigative news compared to conservatives (M = 3.71, SD = 1.55) ($p \leq .01$). In regards to information value, there was a significant difference between liberals (M = 4.52, SD = 1.48) and conservatives (M = 3.74, SD = 1.56) ($p \leq .01$), and between moderates (M = 4.32, SD = 1.45) and conservatives ($p \leq .05$).

Figure 10. *Significant Evaluation Differences Among Ideologues*

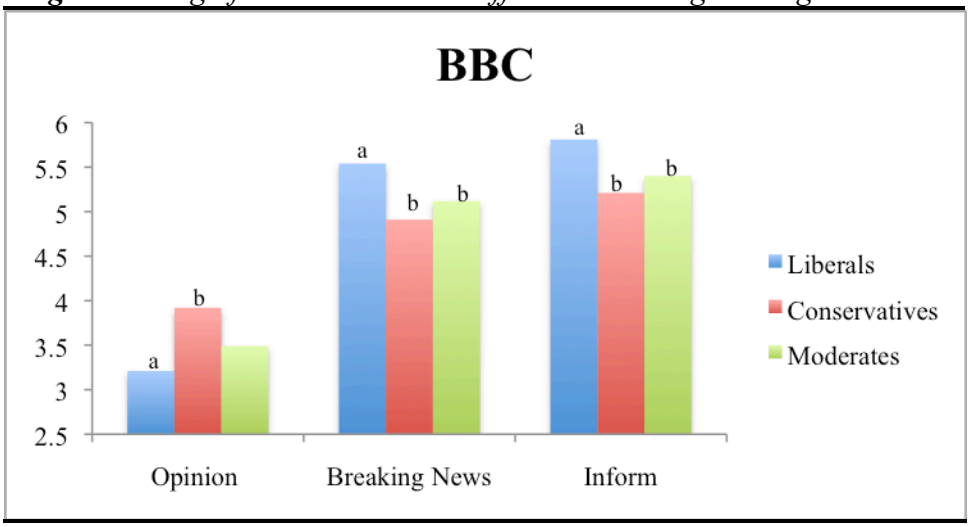


Note: For each news characteristic, different alphabetical values indicate a significant pairwise comparison at the p ≤ .05 level, using the LSD method.

Evaluations of *BBC News* produced significant differences among ideologues for opinion giving (f (2, 265) = 6.29 = $p \leq .01$), breaking news (f (2, 264) = 6.15 = $p \leq .01$), and information value (f (2, 265) = 5.78 = $p \leq .01$). As indicated in Figure 11, liberals (M = 3.21, SD = 1.39) viewed *BBC* as less opinionated compared to conservatives (M = 3.92, SD = 1.28) ($p \leq .001$). For breaking news, liberals perceived the organization as higher (M = 5.54, SD = 1.28) compared to conservatives (M = 4.91, SD = 1.30) ($p \leq .01$) and moderates (M = 5.12, SD = 1.29) ($p \leq .05$). The same was true for information value. Liberals (M = 5.81, SD = 1.22) viewed *BBC* as higher

in information value compared to conservatives ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.30$) ($p \leq .01$), and moderates ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.33$) ($p \leq .05$). Overall, it seems that liberals see the journalistic merits of *PBS* and the *BBC* in a more favorable light. For liberals, these news organizations are less opinionated and more dedicated to informing the public.

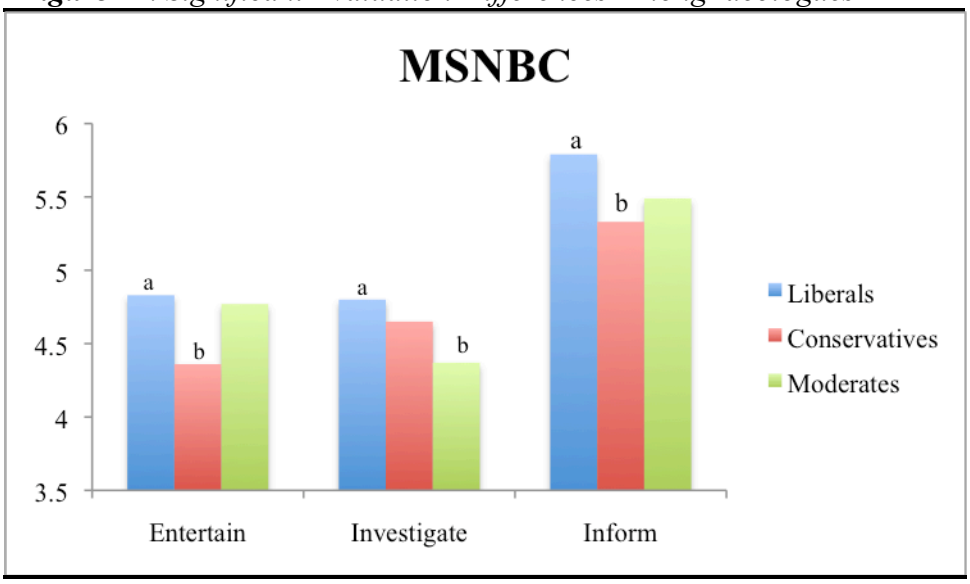
Figure 11. *Significant Evaluation Differences Among Ideologues*



Note: For each news characteristic, different alphabetical values indicate a significant pairwise comparison at the $p \leq .05$ level, using the LSD method.

The More Controversial—Cable News. The last group involves the three cable news organizations, *MSNBC*, *CNN*, and *Fox News*. Evaluations of *MSNBC* produced significant differences among ideologues for entertainment value ($f\,(2, 266) = 2.90 = p \leq .10$), investigative reporting ($f\,(2, 264) = 2.61 = p \leq .10$), and information value ($f\,(2, 265) = 3.42 = p \leq .05$). As seen in Figure 12, liberals ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.17$) rated *MSNBC* as more entertaining compared to conservatives ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.42$) ($p \leq .05$). Liberals ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.17$) also viewed *MSNBC* are more investigative, compared to moderates ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.15$) ($p \leq .05$). And rated the news organization as higher in information value ($M = 5.79$, $SD = 1.17$) compared to conservatives ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.35$) ($p \leq .05$).

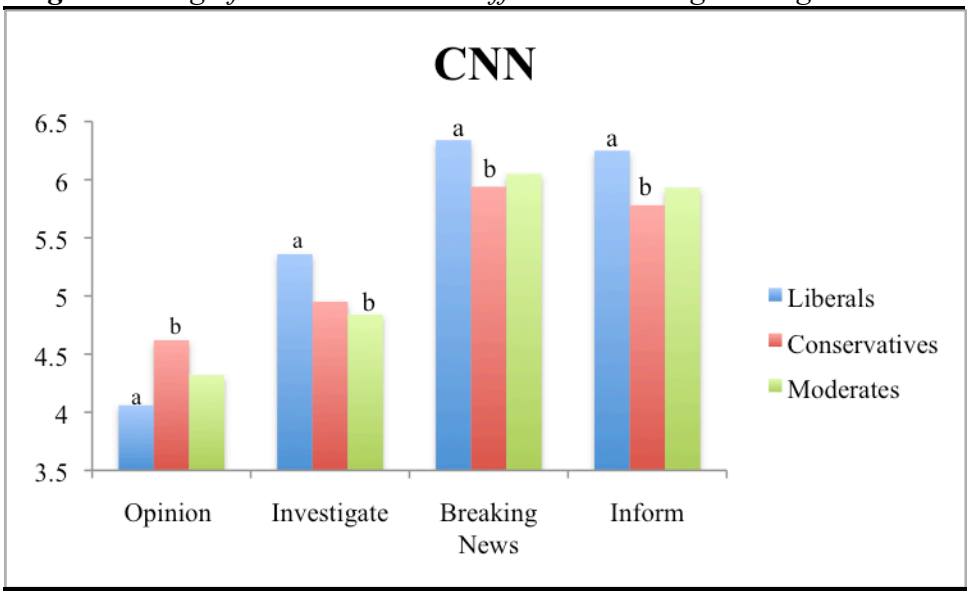
Figure 12. *Significant Evaluation Differences Among Ideologues*



Note: For each news characteristic, different alphabetical values indicate a significant pairwise comparison at the p ≤ .05 level, using the LSD method.

Evaluations of *CNN* produced significant differences for opinion giving (f (2, 264) = 3.28 = $p \leq .05$), investigative reporting (f (2, 265) = 3.14 = $p \leq .05$), breaking news (f (2, 265) = 2.96 = $p \leq .10$), and information value (f (2, 265) = 3.74 = $p \leq .05$). Significant pairwise comparisons are presented in Figure 13. Liberals (M = 4.06, SD = 1.47) viewed *CNN* as less opinionated compared to conservatives (M = 4.62, SD = 1.47) ($p \leq .05$). Liberals (M = 5.36, SD = 1.45) also viewed *CNN* as more investigative compared to moderates (M = 4.84, SD = 1.61) ($p \leq .05$). Regarding breaking news, liberals (M = 6.34, SD = 1.09) viewed *CNN* higher than did conservatives (M = 5.94, SD = 1.41) ($p \leq .05$). Liberals (M = 6.25, SD = 1.09) also rated *CNN* higher in information value compared to conservatives (M = 5.78, SD = 1.35) ($p \leq .05$).

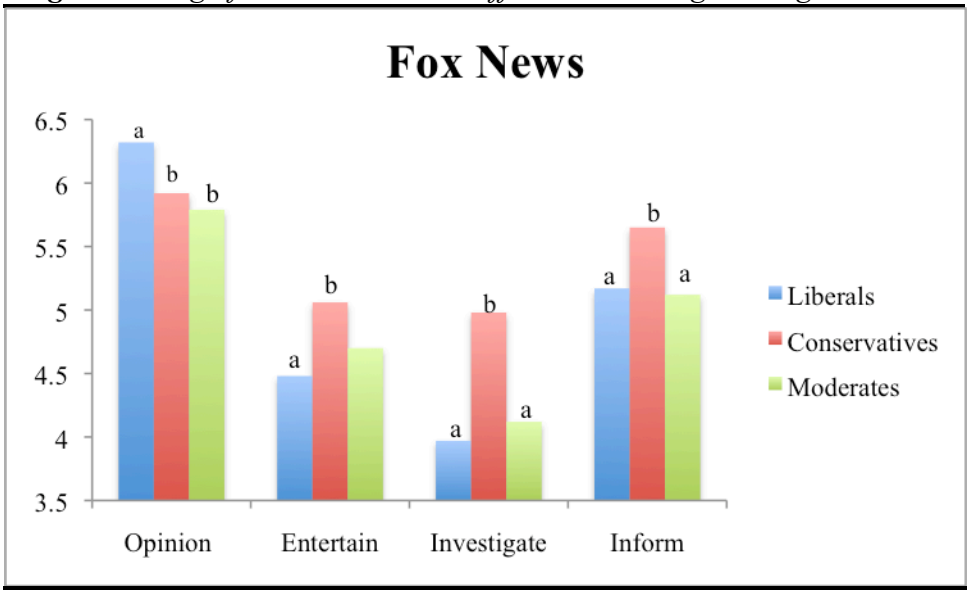
Figure 13. *Significant Evaluation Differences Among Ideologues*



Note: For each news characteristic, different alphabetical values indicate a significant pairwise comparison at the $p \leq .05$ level, using the LSD method.

Lastly, evaluations of *Fox News* produced significant differences for opinion giving (f (2, 265) = 4.81 = $p \leq .01$), entertainment value (f (2, 265) = 2.77 = $p \leq .10$), investigative reporting (f (2, 265) = 10.25 = $p \leq .001$), and information value (f (2, 265) = 2.98 = $p \leq .10$). Specifically, liberals (M = 6.32, SD = 1.19) rated *Fox* as significantly higher in opinion giving compared to both conservatives (M = 5.92, SD = 1.19) ($p \leq .05$), and moderates (M = 5.79, SD = 1.31) ($p \leq .01$). For entertainment value, conservatives (M = 5.06, SD = 1.36) rated *Fox* as significantly higher compared to liberals (M = 4.48, SD = 1.86) ($p \leq .05$). Conservatives (M = 4.98, SD = 1.33) also evaluated *Fox News* significantly higher in investigative reporting compared to both liberals (M =3.97, SD = 1.68) ($p \leq .001$), and moderates (M = 4.12, SD = 1.28) ($p \leq .01$). And finally, conservatives (M = 5.65, SD = 1.22) also viewed *Fox News* as higher in informational value compared to both liberals (M = 5.17, SD = 1.53) ($p \leq .05$) and moderates (M = 5.12, SD = 1.36) ($p \leq .05$).

Figure 14. *Significant Evaluation Differences Among Ideologues*



Note: For each news characteristic, different alphabetical values indicate a significant pairwise comparison at the $p \leq .05$ level, using the LSD method.

Overall, the analysis of ideologues provides a clear illustration of the different vocabularies people draw from when thinking about the news. Much of this difference can be attributed to two types of news organizations, public news and cable news. When thinking about public news liberals see news organizations that are cast in a more favorable light. There was a consistent pattern of statistically significant differences between how liberals evaluated public news organizations and the evaluations of conservatives. The preverbal million-dollar question facing many (all) researchers is, "okay, you found statistically significant differences, but are the differences *socially* significant?" My answer is I believe the differences are. I think these evaluation differences signify larger differences in how ideologues seek out and process content coming from these sources. If liberals suspect that *PBS* is low in opinion giving and high in investigative reporting, they will be more likely to seek out *PBS*, and be more trusting and less critical of its news stories. Conversely, conservatives whose evaluations of *PBS* are not as intensely favorable will not seek out the source, and process its content in a less trusting and

more critical manner. Essentially, the intensity differences among ideologues lay the foundation for selective exposure and contingent effects.

Support for this argument is further illustrated when looking at differences in how ideologues think about cable news organizations. For liberals, *MSNBC* and *CNN* were consistently viewed in a more favorable light. These organizations were evaluated as more investigative and having a greater information value. For conservatives, *Fox News* was consistently viewed in a more favorable light. The organization was rated as less opinionated, and more investigative and informative. *Fox News* was also viewed as more entertaining by conservatives, compared to liberals. These evaluation differences can be layered on top of existing research examining the contingent nature of cable news exposure and effects. In regards to exposure, Iyengar and Hahn (2009) found that conservatives sought out content from *Fox News* and avoided news from *CNN* and *NPR*; whereas liberals sought out *CNN* and *NPR*, while avoiding *Fox News*. And this makes sense when taking into account the evaluation differences. The process of selective exposure is more complicated than ideologues simply adhering to the cues about which media should be consumed/avoided ("I am liberal…must like *CNN*…must dislike *Fox*"). Rather ideologues see quality differences across multiple characteristics. Of course more liberals would select *CNN*, they view the organization as less opinionated and more informative than do conservatives. Of course more conservatives select *Fox News*, they view the organization as less opinionated and more informative than do liberals. These evaluation differences may originate from the strong ideological desire to 'like' *CNN* or 'dislike' *Fox*, however, the selective exposure process is more complex. In the mind's eye of ideologues they see very different news organizations and draw from different vocabularies when selecting news content.

These evaluation differences also shed light on contingent news effects among liberals and conservatives. For example, Coe et al. (2008) found that after watching a *Fox News* clip conservatives rated it was more "interesting" than did liberals. Why might this be? Results from the evaluation analysis indicate that conservatives bring with them a preexisting expectation that *Fox News* will be entertaining. Therefore, Coe et al.'s findings may be less attributed to the bias processing that takes place during the video clip, and more an artifact of prior evaluations that ideologues bring with them (which then prompts biased processing). Recent research has also explored partisan evaluations of cable news credibility and slant. Feldman (2011b) found that conservatives who encountered a like-minded news host (i.e., Glenn Beck) found the host to be less biased compared to liberals; whereas liberals who encounter a like-minded host (i.e., Keith Olbermann) found the host to be less biased compared to conservatives. Again, a plausible explanation for the biased processing that Feldman finds is the unequal baggage (i.e., differing news vocabulary) that partisans bring with them when encountering news content—particularly cable news content.

While it is apparent that ideology/partisanship creates a particular way of viewing the news landscape, the next set of analyses examines the role of media exposure and news flows in the evaluation process.

Media Exposure and News Flows

In the same way that ideology provides a particular lens to view the news world, news exposure (via direct exposure or through news flows) can also shape views. To explore this, the influences of media exposure and news flow are examined together. Because these variables were measured as continuous and non-independent (i.e., there is a range of exposure to certain media and a person can be a high consumer of multiple types of media/news flows), it makes

more sense to examine these variables using regression models (Hayes, 2005). Furthermore, by accounting for multiple media exposure and news flows in the same regression model, a more stringent test is employed. Variables that are significant are so when controlling for other variables in the model. As such, separate OLS regression models were run predicting the five news characteristics for each of the 10 organizations (50 regression models in total). Each model contained a single block of predictor variables, including six media exposure items and three news flow items. Despite its simplistic nature, the regression analysis sheds light on the key influencers in the news evaluation process. Complete regression results are available in Appendix D.[5]

The Less Controversial. Similar to the ideology analyses, *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* produced largely non-significant findings. For *USA Today*, all of the five regression models predicting news characteristics were non-significant. For the *Wall Street Journal*, only the model predicting information value was significant, with Twitter news flow being the only significant variable in the model ($\beta = .302$, $p \leq .001$). In other words, greater use of Twitter as a source of news was related to higher evaluations of the *Wall Street Journal* being a source of information about current events. Ultimately, evaluations of these two news organizations appear to be driven by social images and not by the variables accounted for in the regression models.

The More Controversial—Public News. Two public news organizations produced significant results for media exposure and news flows. For *NPR*, four of the five news characteristic models were significant. As indicated in Table 7, evaluations of *NPR*'s

[5] Ideally, partisanship would be included in the models to present a much cleaner and comprehensible analysis; however, concerns about sample size particularly when using dummy variables, negated this option. As such, only the variables for media exposure and news flows were used in the models. The regression diagnostics of kurtosis and tolerance were all in the healthy range. Also the adjusted R^2, which is a more conservative statistic that accounts for the number of predictor variables vis-à-vis sample size (Hayes, 2005), is reported for all models.

entertainment value were significantly influenced by exposure to conservative media, print media, liberal media, and sports media. Specifically, consumers of conservative media and sports media evaluated *NPR* as *less* entertaining, while consumers of print and liberal media evaluated it as *more* entertaining. A similar pattern is repeated for investigative reporting: consumers of conservative and sports media rated *NPR* as less investigative, while print media consumers found it *more* investigative. Consumers of sports media were also negatively related to evaluations of breaking news value. Lastly, Twitter news flow was positively related to evaluations of information value.

***Table** 7. OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of NPR*

	NPR			
	News Characteristics			
	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure				
Conservative	-.24**	-.23**	-.01	-.15#
Infotainment	-.02	.00	-.03	-.14#
TV news	.03	.03	-.06	.01
Print	.20*	.18*	.05	.10
Liberal	.18*	.06	.09	.10
Sports	-.19*	-.15*	-.25**	-.12
News Flows				
Offline	-.01	.06	-.03	.08
Facebook	.02	.07	-.00	.02
Twitter	.01	.10	.07	.18*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.12 (.08)**	.13 (.10)**	.09 (.05)*	.13 (.10)***
N	207	208	208	208

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Results from the *BBC News* regression models yield similar findings. The models predicting breaking news and information value were especially powerful. There is a consistent finding that conservative media exposure was *negatively* related to evaluations of public news, in this case lower ratings of the *BBC's* breaking news and information value. Conversely, print news exposure was *positively* related to evaluations of public news, in this case high ratings of

the *BBC*'s breaking news and information value. The *BBC* analysis also produces a strong positive relationship between Twitter news flow and evaluations of investigative reporting, breaking news, and information value.

Table 8. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of BBC News*

	BBC News		
	News Characteristics		
	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure			
Conservative	-.16#	-.20*	-.22**
Infotainment	-.14#	-.08	-.12
TV news	.07	.01	-.00
Print	.07	.21*	.19*
Liberal	.03	.05	.03
Sports	-.03	-.14#	-.08
News Flows			
Offline	.10	.06	.11
Facebook	-.04	-.03	-.08
Twitter	.17*	.15#	.22**
Total R^2 (adj.)	.10 (.06)**	.14 (.10)***	.18 (.14)***
N	207	206	207

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

When evaluating public news, the results from the regression analyses suggest that media exposure and news flows do play an important role. In particular, exposure to conservative media and print news were consistently related to evaluation ratings (though in opposite directions). And Twitter news flow also produced a pattern of significance.

The More Controversial—Cable News. As in the ideology analysis, evaluations of the three cable news organizations produced several significant relationships. As seen in Table 9, *Fox News* produced significant models for four of the news characteristics. Exposure to conservative media was related to perceptions of *Fox* as less opinionated, more investigative, and more informative. The opposite was true for exposure to TV news and liberal media. Consumers of TV news (recall that this measure includes broadcast, *CNN*, and *MSNBC* news) were more

likely to evaluate *Fox News* as less investigative, less breaking news, and less informative; consumers of liberal media found *Fox* to be less investigative and less informative. Again, Twitter use was positively related to information value and (marginally) investigative and breaking news value.

Table 9. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of Fox News*

	Fox News			
	News Characteristics			
	Opinion	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure				
Conservative	-.31***	.31***	.16#	.22**
Infotainment	.00	.13#	.09	.12
TV news	.10	-.18*	-.29***	-.34***
Print	.19*	-.03	.06	-.05
Liberal	.05	-.26***	-.13	-.17*
Sports	-.10	-.01	.05	-.06
News Flows				
Offline	.14#	-.06	.04	.07
Facebook	-.08	-.03	-.04	-.03
Twitter	.12	.16#	.15#	.17*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.16 (.12)***	.13 (.09)***	.08 (.04)#	.14 (.10)***
N	207	207	206	207

*# p ≤ .10, * p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001.*

Results from the *CNN* regression models, presented in Table 10, indicate that conservative media exposure and news flows play an influential role in the evaluation process. Different from the *Fox News* models, the only significant media variable was conservative media exposure. Increased exposure to conservative media was related to lower evaluations of *CNN*'s breaking news and information value. The other strong predictive variable was Twitter news flow. Increased use of Twitter as a source of news was positively related to ratings of investigate reporting, breaking news, and information value. Also producing a significant relationship was offline news flow and increased evaluations of *CNN*'s investigative reporting. This finding lends

support to the argument that news flows (and Twitter in particular) play an important role in viewing news organizations in more favorable light.

Table 10. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of CNN*

	CNN		
	News Characteristics		
	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure			
Conservative	-.12	-.28***	-.23**
Infotainment	.07	.04	-.01
TV news	-.08	.03	-.01
Print	-.03	.06	.08
Liberal	-.04	.01	.01
Sports	-.13#	-.05	-.10
News Flows			
Offline	.21**	.06	.09
Facebook	.00	.02	-.00
Twitter	.22**	.21*	.17*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.15 (.11)***	.13 (.09)***	.12 (.08)**
N	207	207	207

*# p ≤ .10, * p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001.*

Evaluations of *MSNBC* also indicate several key players in the evaluation process. As seen in Table 11, all five of the regression models were significant (I omitted the one model that produced no significant individual variables). Conservative media exposure continued to play an influential role in its negative relationship with entertainment, breaking news, and information value. Interestingly, infotainment exposure was significantly related to evaluations of *MSNBC*. Increased consumption of infotainment media was related to higher ratings of *MSNBC*'s entertainment value, breaking news, and information value. Also producing significant findings for entertainment value was TV news (a positive relationship) and sports news (a negative relationship). Of all the regression models run, the entertainment model for *MSNBC* yielded the most significant relationships. Four different media items produced significant relationships with the news characteristic, with two indicating a negative relationship and two indicating a positive.

Lastly, Twitter news flow was positively related to ratings of opinion giving and (marginally) entertainment and information value.

Table 11. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of MSNBC*

	MSNBC			
	News Characteristics			
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure				
Conservative	-.06	-.21**	-.40***	-.34***
Infotainment	.11	.21**	.13#	.15*
TV news	-.04	.19*	.05	.02
Print	.08	-.04	.11	.02
Liberal	-.04	.11	.08	.09
Sports	.07	-.17*	-.11	-.07
News Flows				
Offline	.01	.02	.10	.10
Facebook	-.54	.09	.04	.09
Twitter	.25**	.14#	.07	.15#
Total R^2 (adj.)	.08 (04)*	.18 (.15)***	.17 (.13)***	.17 (.13)***
N	208	208	208	207

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Surprisingly Controversial—The New York Times. The last organization I want to highlight is the rather powerful models for the *NY Times*. As seen in Table 12, all five regression models were significant (though two were at the marginal value). When looking across the five models, consistent relationships emerge for several variables. Conservative media exposure was significantly related to higher ratings of opinion giving, lower entertainment value, lower investigative work, lower breaking news, and lower information value. The opposite was true for print news exposure, which was related to lower ratings of opinion giving, higher investigative work, higher breaking news, and higher information value. The other consistent pattern involved Twitter news flow. Increased use of Twitter for news was related to higher evaluations of entertainment, investigative reporting, and information value.

Table 12. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of NY Times*

	NY Times				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.18*	-.17*	-.25**	-.18*	-.25**
Infotainment	.04	.19*	.06	.09	.09
TV news	.17#	-.00	.07	.03	.00
Print	-.16#	.02	.22**	.30***	.25**
Liberal	-.09	.06	-.03	.00	-.06
Sports	-.09	-.03	-.13#	-.22**	-.11
News Flows					
Offline	.06	.03	-.06	-.10	-.07
Facebook	-.04	-.14#	-.00	.02	-.00
Twitter	.04	.14#	.18*	.10	.25**
Total R^2 (adj.)	.08 (.03)#	.07 (.03)#	.14 (.10)***	.15 (.11)***	.19 (.15)***
N	206	206	206	205	206

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Overall Summary

The focus of this chapter was to highlight the ways that individuals evaluate news organizations along five news characteristics. Different from the MDS mapping analyses, respondents were given specific criteria to measure 10 news organizations against. The overall results suggest some overlap between the MDS maps and specific news characteristics. In particular, the ordering of the normative-market dimension was related to the ordering of news organizations along the characteristics of opinion giving and entertainment value. What this suggests is an explication of the normative-market dimension. When thinking about an organization's commitment to what the public "should know," respondents also think about organizations that are low in opinion giving and entertainment. These characteristics are less abstract and more easily used when making quick assessments. Organizations that are high in opinion giving or entertainment are more orientated toward what their audiences "want to know." Complementing the MDS analysis, the overall evaluations pointed to *Fox News*, *MSNBC*

and *Huffington Post* as high in opinion giving, while *Huffington Post* and *USA Today* rated high in entertainment value. The public news organizations—*BBC*, *NPR*, and *PBS*—rated low on opinion giving and/or entertainment value. Ultimately, these results shed light on the internal architecture of news vocabularies (or at least the news vocabulary for this specific sample). When making sense of the high choice news landscape, specifically the 10 news organizations highlighted in the last two chapters, respondents relied on the normative-market dimension and perceptions of opinion giving and entertainment value.

The other focus of this chapter was to explore the influence of several individual differences on the evaluation process. There is support for the argument that ideology, media exposure, and news flows play a role in producing evaluation differences. When considering ideology, there were consistent evaluation differences regarding two types of news—public news and cable news. Most of the differences were among liberals and conservations, with moderates resembling liberals in some cases and conservatives in others. Results indicate that liberals see more journalistic merit in public news, *CNN*, and *MSNBC*, compared to conservatives. In turn, conservatives see more journalistic merit in *Fox News*. Arguably these differences are the impetus for selective exposure and contingent effects of news content.

Media exposure also produced evaluation differences. Each of the media exposure variables was, at some point, a significant part of the evaluation process. Even the more tangential items of infotainment and sports news played a role in shaping evaluations. The results presented in this chapter indicate the varied pathways that a media vocabulary is learned. Media exposure does not exist in a vacuum. In the high-choice media environment awareness and thoughts about a news organization do not necessarily come directly from exposure to that source. In other words, evaluations about the *New York Times'* investigative reporting do not

only come from exposure to the *Times*. Yes, this type of direct exposure-to-evaluation is definitely one path. But another path includes exposure to conservative media. Part of the experience of consuming conservative media (i.e., *Fox News*, conservative radio, conservative blogs) involves learning that the *NY Times* is low in investigative reporting. I can imagine this learning process might include a conservative blog or pundit critiquing the *NY Times* in some fashion.

The same process is true for thoughts about *Fox News*. There is a direct relationship between conservative media exposure and higher evaluations of *Fox News*. This is the, "I consume this content, I know what it's all about" pathway. But it is not the only pathway. Consumers of TV news (i.e., broadcast, *CNN*, *MSNBC)* learn that *Fox News* is low in journalist merits. So do consumers of liberal media (i.e., liberal radio, liberal blogs). We can think of this as the, "I don't consume it, but have heard a lot about it" pathway. If asked, I suspect that these people along this path could articulate a couple examples from their news exposure that supports their rather critical stance regarding *Fox News*. Lastly, there is an "I just know" path that reflects the strong social brand that *Fox News* has. Ultimately, the results indicate that several types of media exposure produce strong evaluations about news organizations. Furthermore, it does appear that conservative news and print news are especially influential shapers of the evaluation process. These variables consistently produced significant relationships with news evaluations, suggesting that learning about the news environment is particularly part of this type of exposure.

Lastly, results also support the role of news flows in producing evaluation differences. In particular, significant findings were focused primarily on Twitter news flows. Complementing the MDS analysis, the evaluation results indicate that the nature of a Twitter news flow is distinct from offline news flows and Facebook news flows. There is something unique about Twitter that

makes it an especially influential shaper of evaluations, even when controlling for direct news exposure. Furthermore, results indicate that the influence of Twitter news flow is positive, that news exposure via Twitter sharpens evaluations of news organization. For example, increased Twitter news was related to higher evaluations of *Fox News*' investigate, breaking news, and information value. The same was true for evaluations of *CNN*. While the media exposure analysis produces contrasting findings regarding the merits of *Fox News* and *CNN,* Twitter news use is related to more uniform, favorable evaluations. This suggests that consistently encountering news via Twitter enhances the value that news organizations (especially divisive ones like cable news) can have. An alternative possibility, however, is that the positive relationships are an artifact of the general news flow questions. If the news flow questions were more specific, like considering the different types of news encountered on Twitter, then positive and negative relationships would emerge. Nonetheless, coming in contract with news over Twitter appears to be an experience where respondents develop more specificity in how they think about the news landscape.

Up to this point I have argued for: 1) the existence of a news vocabulary, 2) that news vocabularies vary in composition and complexity, and 3) that different factors—namely ideology, media exposure, and news flows—shape news vocabularies. In this chapter I also introduced the argument 4) that news vocabularies are the building blocks for news exposure and effects. It is this last argument that I will more fully develop in the next chapter. Relying on data collected during the in-depth interviews, I demonstrate the ability of news vocabularies to guide the news exposure process, especially in the high-choice online environment.

Chapter 7: Searching for News

How big is the Internet? Over 900,000 blog posts, 50 million tweets, 60 million Facebook status updates, and 210 billion emails are composed every day (Pariser, 2011, p.11). In terms of raw content, the Internet is home to some 555 million websites (Web Server Survey, 2011). Understanding how users navigate this environment of unlimited content is of great interest and concern to many media researchers and educators.

One area of focus is to examine how people use the Internet and the situations that prompt different searching patterns. In his examination of aggregate-level hitwise data, Hindman (2009) finds that when using the Internet most people visit social and entertainment websites, not political are news websites (also Tewksbury, 2003). In fact, news makes up only 3% of Internet behavior. Furthermore, he finds that people are unsophisticated in their search engine queries, using on average three-words per search and never going beyond the first page of search results. Other work explores the context in which people will engage in different search behaviors. Situations that activate partisanship (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009), issue involvement (Kim, 2008), emotional anxiety (Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009), and specific information goals (Kim, 2007) can alter information seeking behaviors. This line of search is very much rooted in exploration of content patterns—where are people going and why.

Another area of focus is to explore the digital skills needed to traverse the Internet. It is argued by many that the 'digital divide' is no longer the difference between users and non-users, but also the skills-based inequalities that exist amongst Internet users (Hargittai, 2005; Mossberger, Tolbert, & Stansbury, 2003; van Dijk, 1999; 2005). One way for assessing skill differentials is by having people complete navigational tasks where they attempt to find specific types of online information. Nielsen (2005), for example, found that young people are generally

more confident in their digital skills and unafraid to 'learn by doing' compared to older adults. However, young people exhibit less patience and, ultimately, score lower in research tasks. Other work uses knowledge of Internet-related terms as a proxy for skill (i.e., you must have the knowledge in order to have the skill). Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) measure young adults' knowledge of the terms like "jpg," "preference settings," and "pdf." They find that young people with higher education and those with more Internet experience report higher levels of digital knowledge (also Hargittai, 2010). The authors also explore visits to news and political websites, something they referred to as "capital-enhancing online behavior," and find that young people with more education and digital knowledge engage is this behavior more frequently.

Taken together research suggests that Internet users adapt to the high-choice media environment by developing routines. This staves off the babble objection (Benkler, 2006) or information overload. With unlimited options, developing some sort of information routine is paramount. Pariser (2011) argues we are very mouselike in our information habits. Mice are very pattern based—they develop a food-seeking route that they visit 30 times a day. The same is true of many Internet users. We have a set of websites that are regularly checked and provide some sort of filtering of information content. iGoogle filters selected news content; Facebook filters the content of our friends; *Sports Illustrated.com* filters the latest sports news from the world. And information habits are largely reflective of our digital skills. The savvy Internet user, for example, might set up RSS feds, or use a 'reader' program as part of their information habits.

This chapter sheds light on the cognitive aspects of searching the Internet. While the bulk for existing research focuses on the acts of searching (i.e., what websites people go to, how long they stay there, skills that enable search, etc.), little is known about the thought processes that

proceeds search behavior. Data from the in-depth interviews provide insights into the ways people make decisions about where to go to find information online.

Searching For News in All The Wrong Places?

Interview participants were presented with a series of hypothetical situations and asked what media selection choices they would make. This approach is taken from Swidler (2001) who found how people work through given "vignettes" is reflective of the "cultural repertories" at their disposal. Perrin (2006) also used a similar approach in developing his concept of a "democratic imagination." He asked members of local civic organizations how they would respond to different situations (e.g., racial profiling by local police, noise concerns regarding a proposed airport expansion). He argues that responses reflect the diverse ways people think about democracy and the resources available to them. Or more generally, responses reflect "what is possible, important, right, and feasible" (p. 2). In this vein, interview participants were asked where they would look for more information about particular topics or in particular situations. To answer these questions interviewees relied on their vocabulary of the media environment, specifically the types of information they thought particular sources offered (or what they believed was possible, important, right, and feasible).

The specific search vignettes evolved over the course of conducting the in-depth interviews. At the beginning of fielding, four "search vignettes" were asked; by the conclusion of fielding, five additional search vignettes were identified and explored. Each designed to tap into a different aspect of the news media. The ultimate goal of this approach was to discern how different people go about searching for information they want to find. Do people differ, for example, in how they would look for information about the candidates in the Republican primaries? Does everyone just Google and read the topic result, as Hindman (2009) finds? We

might also think of this as individual variance in search strategies. Are the same strategies repeated over and again? Or as different topics and situations arise, do people alter their search strategy?

Search Vignettes. A total of nine different hypothetical situations were developed in conjunction with testing a news vocabulary in action (See Appendix B for complete interview guide). Each was designed to elicit varied responses from participants by activating a different aspect of their news vocabulary. For example, participants were asked where they would go to find: 1) the latest news about an issue of importance to them, 2) the latest news about the Republican presidential primaries, 3) information about a political scandal involving the governor of their state 4) information about the DREAM Act, and 5) credible information. The exact wording of each vignette was tailored to each interview participant such that they were first asked to name an issue that was important to them, or their state's governor was inserted into the vignette description. As expected, there was a large amount of variance in participant responses. Some gave vague, short responses and others more detailed, long responses. When applicable I asked follow-up questions in between each search vignette.[6]

When listening to the interview participants talk through the search vignettes, it became clear that some people draw from a toolbox full of many recourses, while others have a single tool they employ repeatedly—no matter the situation. This is another instance of a news vocabulary at work. A news vocabulary provides a roadmap for searching for information. It provides a plan of attack and the tools to put said plan in motion. The strategies young people use (or can imagine using) are very much reflective of the ways they think about the news media environment. In what follows, I highlight several examples of the inequality that exists in

[6] The search vignette (part 3 of the interview guide) exercise took place before the flashcard exercise (part 4). This was intentional to minimize any priming that would occur during the flashcard exercise.

relation to search strategies. I start by focusing on the strategies that were common among people drawing from more robust toolkits (or more developed news vocabularies), and then move to the strategies that were common among people with less robust toolkits (or less developed news vocabularies). Ultimately, the vignette exercise shows that not only does a news vocabulary color the way young people see the new media world, but also the ways they traverse it.

Robust Toolkits

Knowledge is power. Participants with a developed news vocabulary have more power in navigating the high-choice media environment. They know the tools available to them and reach for the appropriate one when different situations arise. To demonstrate this process, I will highlight two participants—Jared and Christopher—who articulated diverse and detailed search strategies.

I introduced Jared in Chapter 4 as an example of the opinion news characteristic. His background of news consumption and social influences created a vocabulary where he was able to make distinctions between pundits, anchors, and journalists. Jared's responses to the search vignettes are also reflective of his understanding of the media world. He had a different response to every situation. Jared tells me that the situation in Iraq and the presidential candidates' stance on it is an issue he feels strongly about. When I ask him where he would find information about this issue, he provides two answers: the *NY Time*s for news about Iraq (because it has an easier search format) and *CNN* (because they are a better source for aggregating candidate stances). I can tell his answer is based on past experience. It's a strategy he's employed before. When I ask Jared about a related topic, news about the Republican primaries, his answer changes. He tells me, "The *Washington Post* actually has this really handy map of who won what state and how many delegates won where. I'd go there." Jared clearly knows where to find sources that will

easily inform him on the latest changes in the election primaries. For the most part, Jared's answers are pretty news centric (e.g., *CNN* for natural disasters, a Google news search of California's Proposition 8). He does, however, mention that Twitter as being useful for information about the DREAM Act.

> This is where Twitter is actually very helpful. A bunch of journalists and news heads will tweet a lot about the Dream Act and they'll link back to an article about it or why they think it should or shouldn't happen. Usually there's a little blurb defining it.

Jared is referencing the trend of tweeting during a live event. In other words, if he was watching the debate and wanted more information about what a candidate had just said, his Twitter followings would provide it, or at least a link to it. Taken together, Jared's expressed a variety of strategies for finding different types of information.

Christopher also drew from a diverse set of information strategies. An important issue to Christopher is U.S. policy in Syria. When I ask where he'd go for the latest information he mentions two types of sources—news and government websites, but ultimately explains that news sources are what he prefers.

> I would first probably try reading about it on *CNN* or *New York Times*. If I couldn't find anything I would probably try. A lot of the government websites have articles, not articles but updates on what's going on. So you can always check those out. But I usually don't because I feel like whichever government websites you usually get...Your range of what you're reading is more confined to people who are releasing it. I'd rather check a journalist's perspective so I'd usually check newspapers or online newspapers.

This choice between news and government websites will come up again when describing sparse toolkits. For information about a state recall, Christopher references his school's local newspaper and also gives the name of a state newspaper that he would visit. He also tells me that his roommates would probably he a good source of the latest information (remember Christopher's offline social network is very newsy). Similar to Jared, Christopher has a vivid description of where he would go from the latest news on the Republican primaries. "Probably CNN.com, they

have a lot of graphs, and if I wanted to look at a graph in two seconds I would understand who had a better chance of winning." Notice that this very specific strategy allows him more efficiency in keeping up with the election. For news about a political scandal, Christopher falls back on his New York roots, mentioning both the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post*. What I found most interesting was Christopher's adamant defense of Wikipedia. He mentions Wikipedia as a strategy for quickly finding more information about the DREAM Act.

> **Christopher**: I always do that. In class, if like the professor says something that sounds interesting or I am not sure, I open my computer and I Google, "Wikipedia." Wikipedia is like one of the most underrated sources of information. People hate on it cause it's free, but the people who post on it are pretty well informed, you know? I rely on Wikipedia. I will I'll say it.
>
> **Stephanie**: [Laughter].
>
> **Christopher**: That's where I get a lot of my information. I read a lot about many things on Wikipedia, I informed myself on the Russian Revolution, based solely on Wikipedia.
>
> **Stephanie**: Is the difference between what you would see on Wikipedia and what *CNN* would write about the DREAM Act?
>
> **Christopher**: I've realized that there is not much of a difference. Like I will read an article on *CNN*, maybe about the DREAM Act, and they'll define it. And then, I will look on Wikipedia and it will be the same thing, like verbatim, the exact same definition. I realize that you won't get the opinion of the article on Wikipedia, but you will get the facts… A high percentage of the time you will get a good reading of what something is. That's what I came to realize over the years that if I am reading an article on Syria and then I go to Wikipedia to read more about it. They have same type of information, sometimes more. So it's like interesting to see how... Over the years, its lost a lot of its legitimacy 'cause it's an online freebie, anyone can contribute; but it's also gotten a lot more respect. People are not as open about it, but they rely on it a lot more. I see my dad as an educated person and he's on Wikipedia like 100 percent of the time. I think he would let students cite it if they needed to.

Underneath Christopher singing the virtues of Wikipedia, lays a key strategy in how he keeps informed. He uses Wikipedia to complement what he reads in the news. It's not that he has stopped consuming information produced by news organization, but rather that Wikipedia allows him to be a more discerning and enlightened consumer of news. It gives him the facts so he can

better spot opinions. Christopher recognizes that Wikipedia is free and anyone can contribute—cues that would normally raise quality concerns. But he can see past these potential criticisms to its value in providing baseline knowledge about issues, like the DREAM Act (or the Russian Revolution).

I highlight Jared and Christopher's responses to illustrate the diverse ways they answered the different search vignettes. Additionally, I want to draw attention to a common theme that several participants touched on when talking about news credibility. This serves as another illustration of how participants with a more robust toolkit worked through situations.

An Example: DIY Credibility

Credibility can mean many things. My intention for using such a loaded, yet vague, word was for participants to interpret it at will. Recent scholarly work suggests that news credibly is a multi-dimensional concept whereby trust in the selectivity of topics, selectivity of facts, accuracy of depictions, and journalistic prowess are all weighted (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). However, as several interview participants explained, credibility (at least online credibility) was not weighing the merits of a single piece of news, but pitting its merits against other news stories. For them, credibility was a process of cross-validation. For example, to find credible information Jared tells me he would "go to a bunch of different sites and see what the common threads were." Another interview participant admits that there is no such thing as a single credible news story, but that she'd read as many stories as she could and compare them. She explains, "I think you have to read a few different viewpoints and maybe you can form your own about what's accurate." One participant had an interesting motivation for going through the process of establishing credibility. She tells be that "people are so disillusioned" with thinking that *CNN* is liberal and *Fox News* is conservative. As a result, she seeks out a variety of sources (e.g., different news websites,

candidate websites, organization websites) to make sure she has credible information. She goes through this process not so much for herself (she agrees with *CNN* and thinks they are credible most of the time), but so other people can't undermine the information she finds and shares.

In all of these comments participants acknowledge that there are less credible sources out there in the digital world. Their strategy for dealing with this is to sample from as many sources as they can. They are not looking for a journalist, or news organization, to provide them with credible information. Instead they achieve credibility on their own. I refer to this as "do it yourself credibility." DIY credibility is similar to Metzger et al.'s (2010) consistency heuristic for assessing credibility in online sources. The researchers also found four other heuristics, like the reputation of the website or the aesthetics of the webpage, that are used when making credibility judgments. The news vocabulary concept dovetails nicely with the different heuristics outlined by Metzger et al., such that the ways people think about the news media guide the strategies (or heuristics) they use to make credibility judgments. The reason Metzger et al. identified a range of heuristics (i.e., there is not just one strategy that everyone uses) is related to the range of news vocabularies that exist. For example, individuals with a more developed news vocabulary may be more apt to use consistency heuristics—something that takes more effort and skill. This was certainly true among the young people I talked with. Conversely, individuals with a less developed news vocabulary may gravitate toward heuristics like the persuasive intent or number of views when making credibility judgments—something that is more manageable with the limited set of tools they draw from.

The final analysis sheds more light on this toolkit disparity by highlighting common responses among people with less developed news vocabularies.

Sparse Toolkits

When I moved into my first apartment, my mother gifted me a screwdriver. At the tender age of 20, it was my only tool. Over time, I became pretty proficient with the screwdriver. But ultimately my skills were limited. A screwdriver can only be used in so many ways. It's not a hammer (yes, I tried); it's not a wrench. The same is true for some participants and their news vocabularies. If their tools are limited, their strategies for finding information are often difficult to put into practice and redundant.

One strategy voiced by some respondents with sparse toolkits was to seek out government websites or official documents. When I asked Shawna (a first-generation college student mentioned in Chapter 4) where she would look for credible information she answers with government websites. Why does she turn to government websites over other sources, like news websites? Shawna tells me that it's a "straight source" that has "just the facts" and does not engage in opinion giving. To be honest, when I hear this I am a little shocked. It's not that Shawna's logic is flawed, rather it seems like this is a lot of work. I can't say that I would put forth the type of effort this search strategy requires (also recall Christopher's rationale for preferring news over a government website). The bureaucratic nature of government websites can sometimes crowd out their usability. Point blank: more often then not, they are difficult to read. A news website would probably be easier to navigate and read. It's clear to me that Shawna is aware of the rise in opinionated news sources and her reaction is to avoid them all together. What she is left with is a difficult plan of action. And she is not alone. When I ask Ricky where he would look for information about the upcoming Presidential election he tells me "government websites."

> [Government websites] would probably be the most legit ones that are being put out there. You know how other websites might make fun of [the election], and other websites

> are built up for basic fun and giggles and just to laugh. Others are just there to be rude, improper websites towards any topic, even the presidential elections to see who's running. They might say, "Oh, yea, Obama's running." But they might put a picture of him as something else and call him something else.

I am unsure if Ricky actually means candidate websites. It's evident to me that this strategy is not something Ricky has actually put into practice in his own life. Nonetheless, his rationale is *not* rooted in the type of information he will find of these websites (e.g., personal background, issue stances, etc.), but the type of information he is trying to avoid. Similar to Shawna, Ricky's preference for government sources is fueled by his skepticism about the news media and other websites available on the Internet. Compared to strategies uttered by Jared and Christopher, this is a steep barrier to entry. Shawna and Ricky are so concerned with avoiding 'bad' sources, but don't have the tools to point them toward the 'good.' As a result, they're left with a difficult search strategy to pursue.

Another strategy employed by Shawna, and others with sparse toolkits, was a heavy reliance on Google, and only Google. When I ask Shawna she where she would go for the latest information about the candidates in the Republican primary, she tells me Google. Her response to several of the vignettes is also exclusively Google. This strategy is much simpler compared to the specific and varied resources that other participants drew from. Jared and Christopher both reference specific website maps and graphs that would provide them with easy, succinct information. This does not mean that Shawna's use of Google will necessarily result in worse information. Letting Google decide the best sources is one way from avoiding a filter bubble (though personalized search returns are increasingly calling this into question). However, as Hindman (2009) cautions people don't search beyond the first page of Google results and use simple search terms. So it is not that Shawna won't find information if she uses Google, rather she has no clear idea of the many places she can visit to get easy to understand information.

Herein lies that irony of news vocabularies. Searching the Internet is easier for people who have well developed vocabularies. People like Jared or Christopher know where to turn from the latest information, presented in the most comprehensible way. But for people like Shawna, searching for information is harder. She doesn't have the roadmap for which sources to compare and which websites present clear information. As a result, she's left to decipher government websites or to rely on Google's search algorithms to provide her with the best information. My worry is that people like Shawna will easily burn out, or quit before they even start implementing their strategies. One possibility for declines in news consumption that Hindman (2009), Mindich (2005), and Putnum (2000) point to is that Shawna, and other young people like her, don't have a news vocabulary to help them navigate their news options. Their vocabulary tells them that news in increasingly opinionated, biased, or unreliable. That you can't trust everything that is available. We live in a world where credibility no longer comes from knowing a piece of information was printed in a newspaper, or from the mouth of a television journalist. The young people I talked with know they must be discerning media consumers, the key difference being the resources they draw from to accomplish this.

The new media landscape offers unprecedented choice. As a result, it's more important than ever for media users to know how to navigate this world—to have a way of carving up the media environment, of drawing distinctions between news organization and figures, and identifying different news characteristics. For the media users who process this type of well-developed vocabulary, the new media environment is their oyster. They are able to rock and roll with the ever-changing media ocean, navigating with relative ease through the waters. But for the media users who lack this ability, they are adrift in this sea. Overwhelmed by choice and looking into the night's sky in hopes of locating the North Star.

A Type of Media Literacy

Media literacy refers to the "ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms" (Aufderheide & Fireston, 1993, p.7; Livingstone, 2004). Possessing these skills results in a more fruitful learning environment for the modern media user (Buckingham, 2003). Two of these skills—the ability to analyze and evaluate news—have been directly implicated in my exploration of the news vocabulary concept. The other two skills, though not as heavily touch upon in this dissertation, are certainly relevant to a news vocabulary. What I am pointing to is the natural connection between media literacy and news vocabulary. After all, the extent of one's literacy is often measured by the size of their vocabulary (Luke, 1989). Therefore, a person with a more sophisticated and developed news vocabulary is a person who is more media (or news) literate. Their news vocabulary gives them the skills to actively compare (analyze) and evaluate news entities in a way that gives them more power navigating the media environment.

This is not to say that the knee-jerk reaction that *Fox News* is conservative or Bill O'Reilly is an asshole is a correct one. News vocabularies are biased, steeped in the individual's background and social influences. Many times the concept of media literacy is taken to be the developing of the 'proper' or 'correct' approach to media content (Meyrowitz, 1998; Potter, 2010). "Actually, that television violence is fake," says the co-watching parent to their young child. A news vocabulary is not that type of media literacy. Instead it focuses on developing more complex thinking about what is news and the varied resources available. This complex thinking might include a better understanding of the different flavors of news. Knowing that there are pundits who espouse opinions and comedians who highlight real issues. Recognizing which news entities are reporting news first-hand and which are reporting second-hand. Developing the skills for DIY credibility. Think of 100 pieces of paper, haphazardly scattered

across the floor. A sophisticated news vocabulary makes piles of out this paper mess. It's not 100 pieces of paper, but six tidy piles of papers—easy to look though the papers in a specific pile, and easy to sample a couple papers from each pile. When talking with people like Jared and Christopher it was clear that they had piles for thinking about the news. Although their piles are undoubtedly different (the goal is not pile uniformity), rather what's important is that they have piles. As interest in media literacy and its intervention efforts increase, I would like to suggest that a more developed news vocabulary is central to this cause. Recognizing the variety of news sources out there, understanding similarity and differences between news sources, and knowing when to draw upon one type of news source over another is the language the savvy news user speaks.

Conclusion: Learning the News Media

In this concluding chapter, I first summarize the findings of the previous chapters and their implications for the news vocabulary concept. Finally, I present a theoretical model that describes the process where news vocabularies are formed and shaped. This model is by no means exhaustive and empirically tested; rather it serves as jumping off point for theorizing the process of 'learning the news media.'

Vocabularies at Work

The dissertation began with the argument that individuals approach news content with pre-existing thought structures. That multiple people could perceive the same content differently. I termed this existing thought structure as a news vocabulary—a way of understanding and making sense of the diverse media environment. The bulk of this dissertation project was devoted to exploring evidence of this concept, factors of influence, and potential effects.

In Chapter 4, an analysis of the interview data described both the immediate reactions of participants and more effortful processing where young people make sense of the news environment. There was evidence that some news media are incredibly salient in the minds of participants and yield similar initial reactions. For example, the *Daily Show* is liked, *Fox News* is Republican, and the *NY Times* is superb. This is the basic skeleton of a news vocabulary. But within these immediate reactions is evidence of divergent thought structures. For some, the *Daily Show* is liked because it makes news less depressing, for others the *Daily Show* is liked because it acts as a political and news watchdog. Chapter 4 also identifies four news characteristics: entertainment, opinion giving, first-hand reporting, and information significance. The characteristics severed as tools for explaining the differences between news entities. Some

participants had a news vocabulary that included multiple news characteristics, others held to a single characteristic.

Chapter 5 used survey data and a multi-dimensional scaling method to visually map how participants think about news organizations and people. Results indicated that the dimensions of normative-market and political ideology structured thoughts about news organizations. In terms of news people, the dimensions of a soft-hard personality and mocking-earnest structured thoughts. Beyond a descriptive function, the MDS analysis also shed light on individual variance in mapping news. The ideology dimension, for example, was more important in structuring the thoughts of liberals and conservative, consumers of liberal and conservative media, and high Twitter news users. Moderates, consumers of sports news, and people with low news flow relied more on the dimension of normative-market in structuring their thoughts.

Chapter 6 highlighted evaluation differences among survey participants. The intensity of evaluation ratings was related to differences in ideology, media exposure, and news flows. Results indicated that two types of news media—public news and cable news—produced significant evaluation disparities. Liberals, for example, saw more journalistic merit in *CNN* and less merit in *Fox News*, compared to their conservative counterparts. Consumers of conservative media evaluated *Fox News* more favorably and *CNN* and *MSNBC* unfavorably. And using Twitter for news was related to seeing the journalistic merits in all public and cable news organizations. Results from Chapter 6 indicated a learning process that occurs through ideology, media exposure, and news flows. There is something about being a liberal, or something about consuming conservative media, or something about viewing a steady stream of news tweets, that is related to evaluating a wide array of news organizations.

Lastly, Chapter 7 used the interview data to make the connection between a news vocabulary and online searching behavior. Again there was variation in the ways participants talked about the news environment. Some participants had multiple strategies they employed under different situations. Others relied upon a few, difficult to carryout, strategies. Participants with a wider awareness and familiarity of the news media landscape had an easier time articulating strategies that would easily produce the information they sought. Participants without this awareness and familiarity, turned to search engines and government websites to procure information. Results from Chapter 7 suggested that not only does a news vocabulary color thoughts and evaluations of the news media, but also the news decision-making process.

Taken together the results from this dissertation project address the four research questions regarding the concepts of a news vocabulary. First, young people have a news vocabulary. Even those who stand outside the news bubble have an understanding about key organizations and people in the news environment. Second, news vocabularies vary in composition and complexity. Vocabularies are not one-size fits all. The descriptive nature of the data analyses reported in Chapters 4-7 is testament to this. Vocabularies are messy, overlapping, and hard to draw tidy parameters around. That being said, this dissertation project provides firm ground for future typologies of vocabulary variance to occur (i.e., the reliance on different combinations of news characteristics, dimensions, evaluations, etc.). Third, news vocabularies are shaped by a variety of factors. Key ‘shapers’ include childhood news exposure, ideology, media exposure, and news flows. And fourth, news vocabularies are the building blocks of future news exposure and effects. Recent research finds that exposure and effects of the high-choice media environment is contingent. Exposure to conservative media, for example, depends on several individual characteristics like partisanship, age, and media trust (Morris, 2005, 2007; also

Chapter 2). We don't expect everyone to consume this particular favor of news. And we don't expect the same news content to produce uniform effects. A *Daily Show* clip can have different effects depending on whether a person views the show as a source of entertainment or a source of news/watchdog news (Feldman, 2011a; also Chapter 4). The linchpin in explaining the contingent nature of exposure and effects is a news vocabulary. The ways people understand, classify, evaluation the news media will underscore their selection choices and how they are affected by news content.

Along with these findings and implications, several limitations related to the data used in this dissertation should be considered. First, I focused on young adults in my exploration of the news vocabulary concept. As such, the results found in Chapters 4-7 are not generalizable to larger population. The news characteristics identified by in-depth interview participants, for example, are not necessarily the same characteristics that an older age sample would draw from. Similarly, the maps generated by the multi-dimensional scaling analyses are not the same maps that a different (more representative) sample would produce. A second limitation is related to the procedures used obtain the samples of young people. The in-depth interviews used a snowball sampling procedure while the survey data was collected from a convenient sample of college students. Both of these procedures are not representative of the population of young adults. Therefore, the results highlighted in this dissertation are not to be taken as true to all young people. Instead, these results provide a jumping off point for future research to test the generalizability of the news characteristics, dimensions, and evaluation differences highlighted within these pages. And third, the methods used in this dissertation project are just a starting off point. There are other methodologies or analytical procedures that would shed a different light on news vocabularies. My use of in-depth interview and survey data, for example, limits my ability

to make casual claims. I can point to the connection between Twitter use and evaluation differences, but ultimately the nature of this relationship cannot be disentangled with cross-sectional survey and interview data. Future research that makes use of longitudinal data or an experimental design is needed to fill in these gaps. Additionally, there are many other ways of measuring news vocabularies. I approached this task by developing several in-depth interview exercises and specific survey questions. Other approaches exist and future research should study news vocabularies from a variety of methodological and analytical procedures.

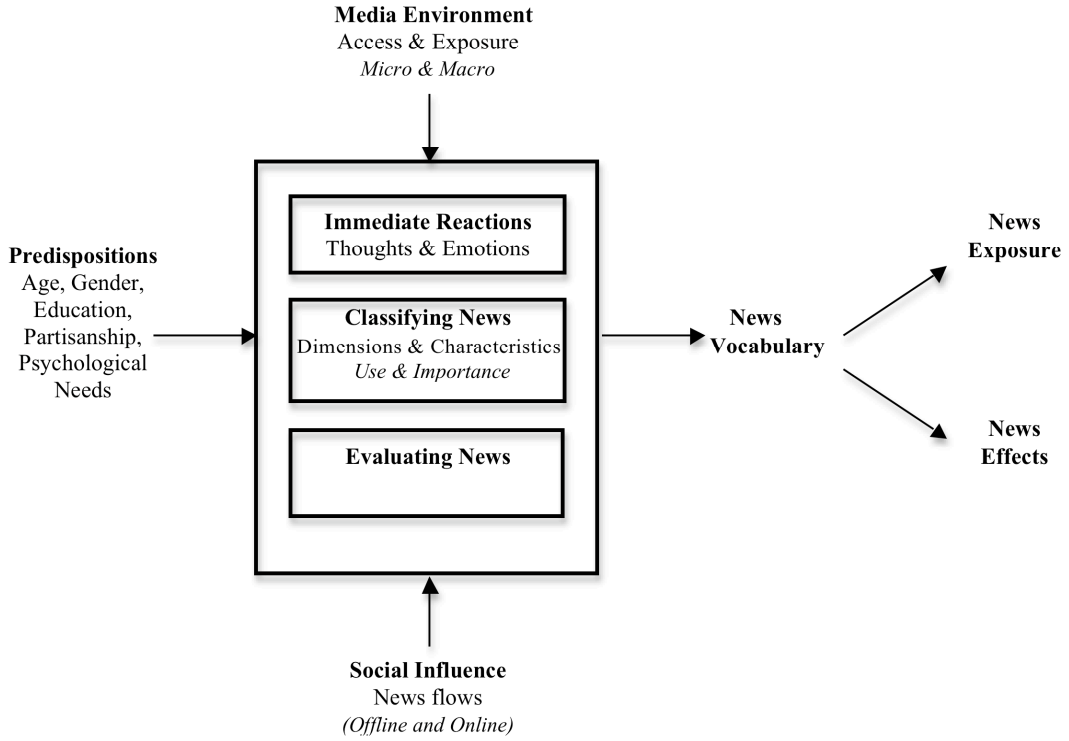
Learning the News Media

In the remaining pages, I would like to sketch a theoretical model that summarizes the four-research question process I described above. There is no pretense that this model is empirically tested, rather the model is informed by existing literature and insights from the findings of this dissertation.[7]

In other work, my co-authors and I have argued that people are socialized into media consumption in ways that are similar to the political socialization process (Kim, Edgerly, Bode, 2012). I take this position one step further arguing that news socialization is the process by which individuals acquire a news vocabulary. Whereas political socialization is defined as the "learning of the norms, values, attitudes, and behavior accepted and practiced by the ongoing political system" (Sigel, 1965, p. 2); news media socialization is the learning of the news media system. And similar to political socialization, the process of media socialization is shaped by a variety of factors (Lee, Shah, McLeod, 2012). The model presented in Figure 15 describes the news socialization process.

[7] Many of the variables presented in the theoretical model are interrelated (see Holbert, 2005b; Shah et al., 2005). For my purposes I am presented a model that describes one type of relationship (i.e., sets of arrows), many others could be applied.

Figure 15. *Model of News Media Socialization*



News Vocabulary. Developing and describing news vocabularies is at the heart of this dissertation project. At the conceptual level, a news vocabulary represents the ways we think and talk about the news media (i.e., the product of learning the news). I explicated this concept in three ways. The first was young peoples' immediate reactions to news—the words they uttered and the emotions they expressed. Research from the field of cognitive psychology tells us that top-of-mind thoughts are more readily available and used when rendering judgments and decision-making (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981; Zaller, 1992). In our everyday lives, we don't spend a lot of time parsing out our thoughts and emotions; instead many of us take action or render

judgments based on initial reactions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). In this vein, news vocabularies are much like a schema that is activated and guides information processing. A person sees an image of Bill O'Reilly and immediately thinks biased, conservative, *Fox News*, and experiences the emotion of anger. This person will then process information with these thoughts and emotions freshly activated.

The nature of news vocabularies is also reflective of more effortful processing. The second avenue explored in this dissertation was the ways young people classify news entities. The MDS analysis (Chapter 5) reveals the larger dimensions that news organizations and personalities are placed along. The in-depth interviews (Chapter 4) reveal the news characteristics that participants rely on when making distinguishing news. But most importantly, people differ in the *use* of certain dimensions and characteristics over others, and how *important* they are in making categorizations. The last aspect of a news vocabulary was the evaluation process. When asked to make evaluations about news organizations or personalities, people rely on their vocabulary to guide them. They evaluate *Fox News* as more or less opinionated depending on their understanding of the news organization and the larger news media. They evaluate the *NY Times* as more or less investigative depending on their understanding of the news organization and the larger news media.

The three aspects of a news vocabulary highlighted in this dissertation—immediate reactions, categorizing, and evaluating—are just a starting point. There are many facets of a news vocabulary that were not accounted for in the pages of this dissertation. As the news media becomes more colorful, so do the ways people think about the news, and so must the research methods designed to capture this.

Agents of Socialization. If news socialization is the process of acquiring a news vocabulary, then shapers of a news vocabulary can be thought of as agents of socialization. As seen in Figure 15, there are three agents that apply pressure to shape a new vocabulary. The first is the umbrella term of predispositions, or more specifically the influence of personal attributes and social position (McQuail, 1997). Age, education, and partisanship/ideology were explicitly accounted for in this dissertation. For example, it may be that the young people who provided data for this project differ in the dimensions they use, compared to older people. The role of ideology was also continuously found to produce interesting differences in evaluations. Other variables like gender, preferences, and personalities traits were unexplored, but likely play a role in shaping a vocabulary.

The next source of influence comes from the media environment. This includes media access and exposure, at both the micro and macro levels. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a person's news diet plays a role in shaping their thoughts and expressions about the news. High consumers of news have more familiarity with the news environment and make more nuanced categorizations. Certain types of news exposure, like exposure to *Fox News*, also shape evaluations of *Fox News* and evaluations of other news organization, like *CNN* and the *NY Times*. Also at work is the larger media environment person lives in. A recent trend in mass media research is to account for the role of the macro media context in conditioning exposure and effects (Cho, 2008, Kang & Kwak, 2003; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; Paek, Yoon, & Shah, 2005). Geographical media markets, for example, dictate the number and types of television channels and newspapers a person has access to (Althaus, Cizmar, & Gimpel, 2009). Media market differences are especially powerful during political elections, when markets air different volume and types of television ads (e.g., a market within a swing state vs. a market within a non-

competitive state) (Kim, Wang, Gabay, & Edgerly, 2012). Not only does a media market directly control the parameters of media exposure, it also provides indirect exposure. Living in a high-volume media environment provides people with a type of second-hand, indirect, exposure that is not conscientiously sought after. Think the New York City commuter who sees various news headlines on billboards or newspaper stands as he walks to work. Or to use an example from the in-depth interviews, Christopher (a NYC native) told me that everyone in the city knows about the *Today Show* (he called it an "institution of New York"). These are examples of the larger media environment shaping a news vocabulary.

The other source of influence is of the social variety. As seen in Figure 15, the existence of different pathways that news flows toward individuals can shape their new vocabulary. Some people operate within a social network where news is regularly talked about (Cramer Walsh, 2004; Huckfedt & Sprague, 1991). They are aware of their family or friends' opinions about the news media or become aware of news stories because their network brings news to them. Conversely, some people operate within a network of family and friends that do not prioritize news. Also playing a role are different types of news flows. News flows can be offline (family and friends talk about news) or online (Facebook friends and Twitter Followers post news). The nature of these different news flows also exerts different pressure on a news vocabulary (Hermida, 2010). Receiving news via offline talk is a different experience then receiving news via Twitter.

Taken together the three agents of personal predispositions, media environment, and social networks exert pressure in the shaping a news vocabulary.

Using a Vocabulary. The right-hand side of Figure 15 illustrates the role of a news vocabulary in guiding news exposure and effects. Acquiring a news vocabulary is the process

where individuals learn how to make heads or tails of the media environment and develop a sense of appropriate beliefs and actions. When confronted with a situation where a decision must be made ("where do I go for more information about this news story?") or when exposed to news ("how should I react to this *Fox News* clip?") people rely on their news vocabulary. The scope of actions that a person can take is very much defined by their news vocabulary (Chapter 7). Their reactions after consuming news are very much defined by their news vocabulary. Why would the same exact news story—one attributed to *Fox News* and the other to *CNN*—produce opposite effects among partisans? My answer is that partisans have different news vocabularies regarding *Fox* and *CNN*. Their vocabularies are activated and used to process the content, thus producing divergent effects.

The contemporary news environment is crowded, loud, and colorful. Unprecedented choice and diversity lay at the hands of the modern media user. As research continues to wrestle with the democratic implications of living in this environment, more attention should also be paid to the ways that media users understand the new world they live in. Does all this choice make it easier or harder to keep up with news? Do we live in the decline narrative or the opportunity native? Well, it depends. And hopefully this dissertation project shed some theoretical and empirical light on the complexities of these questions and their answers.

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Appendix A:
YouGov/Polimetrics Survey Items (Chapter 2)

Media Measures
For each media listed, tell us if you use it regularly, sometimes, hardly ever, or never.

National nightly news on CBS, ABC, or NBC
Local news about your viewing area (e.g., 5:00 PM, 6:00 PM, or 10:00 PM)
Sunday morning news shows such as Meet the Press, This Week or Face the Nation
News magazine shows such as 60 minutes, 20/20 or Dateline
The Today Show, Good Morning America or The Early Show
CNN cable news programs (e.g., Anderson Cooper, Lou Dobbs, Larry King)
FOX cable news programs (e.g., O'Reilly, Hannity & Colmes, Shepard Smith)
MSNBC cable news programs (e.g., Olbermann, Chris Matthews, Scarborough)
PBS news and documentary programs (e.g., NewsHour, Frontline, NOW)
Late night TV shows such as David Letterman and Jay Leno
News satire programming (e.g., The Daily Show, The Colbert Report, Weekend Update)
Daytime talk shows (e.g., Oprah, Ellen DeGeneres, The View; Regis & Kelly)
National newspaper (e.g., New York Times, USA Today)
Local newspaper
News magazines – print or online (e.g., Newsweek, Time, US News and World Report)
News commentary magazines - print or online (e.g., New Yorker, National Review)
National newspaper website
Local newspaper website
Online-only news magazines (e.g., Slate, Huffington Post, Salon)
Conservative political blogs (e.g., Instapundit, Michelle Malkin, Red State)
Liberal political blogs (e.g., Daily Kos, Talking Points Memo, Crooks & Liars)
Internet news aggregators (e.g., Yahoo News, Google News)
TV news websites (e.g., CNN.com, MSNBC.com, Foxnews.com)
Conservative talk radio (e.g., Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage)
Progressive talk radio (e.g., Randi Rhodes, Rachael Maddow)
News programming on NPR (e.g., Morning Edition, All Things Considered)
Christian TV and radio programs (e.g., 700 Club, Focus on the Family)

Participation Measures
For each activity listed below, please indicate how frequently you have engaged in that activity over the last month *(1-7)*.

Civic Participation (M = 2.40, SD = 1.50, *Cronbach's alpha* = .70)
Contributed money to a charitable organization
Did volunteer work
Worked on a community project
Offline Political Participation (M = 1.58, SD = 1.08, *Cronbach's alpha* = .78)
Contributed money to a political campaign
Attended a political meeting, rally, or speech
Worked for a political party or candidate

Displayed a political campaign button, sticker, or sign

Online Political Participation (*M* = 2.90, *SD* = 1.73, *Cronbach's alpha* = .82)

Read comments posted by readers on a news website

Watched political videos online

Forwarded a link to a political video or news article

Received a link to a political video or news article

Appendix B:
Interview Guide (Chapters 4 & 7)

Thank you so much for agreeing to do this. Let me tell you a little bit more about the project I'm working on. I'm talking to all sorts of different people who are around the same age, between 18-25, trying to trying to understand the media choices people make in their daily lives.

Our discussion will have a couple parts. First, I want to get to know you a bit, hear about where you're coming from. Then I'll have some more specific questions.

Part 1: Life History
I'd like to spend the first part of the interview hearing about your life history in general. Tell me about where you're from, and what it was like for you growing up. I just want to get to know you a little bit. I may ask a few questions along the way and pause you to ask for more detail but you can tell the story however you'd like.

- [Check for: age, occupation, marital status, education, parents' occupations]
- [Probe] Where did you grow up? What was your neighborhood like? How long have you been here? What are you doing now?

What was your family like? Siblings? What did/do you parents do?

How about the kind of media you used when you were younger? As you were growing up, what did you watch, read, do on TV or the Internet or whatever? Has that changed as you grew up?

What about your parents? Did they watch the news when you were younger? Would you call them political? Did you/do you know if they supported certain candidates or parties? What ideas did you have about politics when you were a kid? Did you talk about politics? ... Do you consider your parents informed about current events?

Media Exposure Now
Next, I am curious about the types of television shows or websites you like. Let's say you wake up, first thing in the morning. You've got some time to kill before class/work. What do you do?
[Check to see if they have television, cable, Internet, computer]
Do you have a favorite television show?

- Do you watch sports? News? Reality Shows?

What websites do you visit most often?

- Sports team? News? Perez Hilton? Hobby sites

Part 2: Social Information
I want to talk through some different ways people have of getting information. Just tell me what you think of them.

- [Probe] Have you/do you ever do that?
- [Probe] Why or why not?

Are you on Facebook?

- Do you pay attention to the information in your news feed?
- What type of information is posted?

- Do you have any facebook friends that post about political issues?
    - Do they ever try to get you involved in political causes?
- Do you have any facebook friends that state their opinions about political issues on facebook?
    - Do they ever try to persuade you?
- Do you think political information or opinions SHOULD be posted on facebook?
- Do you ever state your own opinions, or comment on others' opinions about political issues?

Are you on Twitter?

- What do you use twitter for?
- What do you enjoy about twitter?
- How is it different from facebook?
- What type of information do you get from twitter?

Do you have a smart phone?

- What types of apps do you have?
- Any news organizations?

Do you ever talk about politics or news with friends?

- Describe as recent discussion you had?
    - Topic? People involved? Information sharing or arguing?
- Is talking about politics uncomfortable?

How did you find out about Osama Bin Laden's death?

Do consider yourself informed about current events? Do you consider you friends informed?

Part 3: Search Vignettes

In the next part of the interview I am doing to describe different situations. Let me know what you would do in that situation. What action you would take, where you would go for more information. There's no right or wrong answers, just let me know how you would react.

- **Important Issue**: What if there was a cause that you thought was really important? Is there? If you wanted the latest news about [issue] where would you go? How you would go about finding it?
- **Relevant Issue:** A lot of college students are concerned about student loans and how they will go about repaying them after college. If there were big changes in student loan reform, like President Obama announcing a new payment plan, how would you find more information about this? [Asked only if participant is a college student]
- **National Issue:** Right now we are in the lead up/middle of the Republican primaries to decide which candidate will run against President Obama in the November national election. If you wanted to find out the latest information about the candidates running and how their campaigns are going, where would you turn?
- **Local Issue:** Locally, a lot of people in [city] are talking about [local issue]. If you wanted to find more information about [issue], where would you turn?
- **Political Scandal:** Say you overheard someone talking about a scandal, something really juicy, involving Governor [state specific]. How would you find out more information about this scandal?
- **National Disaster:** Say there was a big Earthquake about 150 miles from here. It's small enough that there's no damage here, but big enough that there's a lot of damage at the epicenter. Where would you go to find out more information?

- **Vague Political Issue:** Let's say you were watching one of the Republican candidates speak, like maybe during one of the debates or a clip shown on the news. And the candidate kept mentioned thee DREAM Act over and over again. But the candidate never really defined it. Never really explained what the DREAM Act is. How would you find more information about the DREAM Act to understand what the candidate was saying?
- **Social Encounter:** Let's say you were taking a class and one of the assignments was talk with another student in the class about the issue of same-sex marriage. Should it be legal? What are the issues at stake? That sort of thing. How would you go about preparing for this discussion? [Asked only if participant is a college student]
- **Credible Information:** I know this can mean a lot of different things to people. If you wanted to find credible information about something that just happened, where would you turn?

Part 4: Flashcard Exercise

I would like to show you some images of people on television. I am interested in if you recognize the people and what thoughts come to mind about them. Just tell me whatever comes to mind about the person. If you don't recognize the person, just let me know. [Show cards]

- [Probe] What is you immediate reaction? What have you heard about this person? What are your expectations? Do you know anyone for watches this person? Would you consider this person a journalist? How are they similar or different from any of these other people?

Finally, I would like to ask you about your thoughts on different news sources. Please tell me whatever comes to mind. [Show cards]

- [Probe] What is you immediate reaction? What are your expectations? How are they similar or different from other news organizations?

Appendix C:
MDS Analysis (Chapter 5)

Table C1. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Liberals*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.77 (1.52)								
USA Today	4.08 (1.31)	3.77 (1.36)							
CNN	4.5 (1.30)	3.93 (1.28)	4.11 (1.25)						
PBS	3.43 (1.30)	3.03 (1.16)	3.14 (1.20)	3.33 (1.32)					
Fox News	2.4 (1.27)	3.32 (1.53)	3.19 (1.27)	3.02 (1.57)	2.01 (1.10)				
MSNBC	4.08 (1.33)	3.52 (1.37)	3.86 (1.19)	4.59 (1.27)	3.29 (1.33)	2.96 (1.82)			
NPR	4.06 (1.25)	3.38 (1.22)	3.42 (1.17)	3.66 (1.30)	5.48 (1.51)	2.13 (1.18)	3.49 (1.28)		
Huff. Post	3.68 (1.28)	3.14 (1.29)	3.79 (1.25)	3.59 (1.17)	2.89 (1.18)	2.88 (1.52)	4.08 (1.26)	3.07 (1.22)	
BBC News	4.26 (1.25)	3.75 (1.23)	3.6 (1.13)	4.31 (1.23)	4.5 (1.53)	2.54 (1.28)	3.55 (1.11)	4.66 (1.49)	3.06 (1.07)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table C2. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Conservatives*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.83 (1.53)								
USA Today	4.21 (1.36)	3.83 (1.17)							
CNN	4.49 (1.30)	3.98 (1.13)	3.97 (1.26)						
PBS	3.45 (1.29)	3.26 (1.43)	3.27 (1.39)	3.27 (1.33)					

Fox News	3.23 (1.18)	3.83 (1.44)	3.52 (1.19)	3.45 (1.54)	2.62 (1.14)				
MSNBC	4.02 (1.33)	3.62 (1.11)	3.94 (1.29)	4.58 (1.48)	3.33 (1.29)	3.31 (1.83)			
NPR	3.77 (1.18)	3.45 (1.30)	3.36 (1.19)	3.55 (1.29)	4.75 (1.49)	2.89 (1.27)	3.47 (1.38)		
Huff. Post	3.74 (1.41)	3.23 (1.45)	3.77 (1.31)	3.59 (1.17)	3.19 (1.32)	3.22 (1.53)	3.97 (1.33)	3.32 (1.32)	
BBC News	3.95 (1.30)	3.69 (1.10)	3.72 (1.26)	4.08 (1.20)	4.3 (1.64)	3.26 (1.25)	3.55 (1.23)	4.33 (1.40)	3.41 (1.24)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table C3. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Moderates*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.68 (1.36)								
USA Today	3.81 (1.42)	3.69 (1.42)							
CNN	4.09 (1.43)	3.75 (1.29)	3.53 (1.12)						
PBS	3.79 (1.27)	3.34 (1.29)	3.16 (1.34)	3.39 (1.23)					
Fox News	3.05 (1.36)	3.16 (1.33)	3.3 (1.18)	3.37 (1.43)	2.81 (1.28)				
MSNBC	3.54 (1.25)	3.26 (1.27)	3.93 (1.30)	4.33 (1.35)	3.23 (1.23)	3.5 (1.75)			
NPR	3.95 (1.45)	3.67 (1.32)	3.23 (1.26)	3.63 (1.25)	4.81 (1.52)	2.67 (1.35)	3.14 (1.22)		
Huff. Post	3.4 (1.48)	3.09 (1.36)	3.86 (1.24)	3.39 (1.14)	3.00 (1.20)	3.05 (1.36)	3.69 (1.01)	3.18 (1.14)	
BBC News	4.04 (1.29)	3.72 (1.20)	3.4 (1.22)	4.19 (1.18)	4.47 (1.57)	2.68 (1.14)	3.54 (1.32)	4.2 (1.38)	3.3 (1.26)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table C4. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Liberals*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.15 (1.67)								
Jon Stewart	2.65 (1.58)	2.07 (1.31)							
Rachel Maddow	3.07 (1.65)	2.93 (1.70)	3.87 (1.70)						
Stephen Colbert	2.98 (1.80)	2.3 (1.43)	6.03 (1.32)	3.35 (1.53)					
Brian Williams	2.86 (1.23)	2.76 (1.40)	3.27 (1.25)	3.63 (1.29)	3.07 (1.21)				
Anderson Cooper	2.94 (1.53)	2.51 (1.42)	3.53 (1.33)	4.21 (1.33)	3.12 (1.33)	4.37 (1.39)			
Jay Leno	2.82 (1.35)	2.47 (1.34)	4.59 (1.30)	3.05 (3.05)	4.38 (1.41)	3.03 (1.14)	3.04 (1.21)		
Oprah Winfrey	2.16 (1.25)	1.88 (1.02)	2.91 (1.37)	3.14 (1.38)	2.73 (1.34)	3.14 (1.26)	3.44 (1.49)	3.68 (1.54)	
Katie Couric	2.55 (1.17)	2.31 (1.24)	2.97 (1.21)	3.59 (1.37)	2.66 (1.20)	4.69 (1.48)	4.41 (1.40)	2.86 (1.18)	3.77 (1.50)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table C5. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Conservatives*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.82 (1.53)								
Jon Stewart	3.23 (1.46)	3.15 (1.37)							
Rachel Maddow	3.28 (1.57)	3.27 (1.59)	3.73 (1.32)						
Stephen Colbert	3.3 (1.55)	3.18 (1.48)	5.35 (1.54)	3.62 (1.36)					
Brian Williams	3.26 (1.29)	3.09 (1.22)	3.4 (1.23)	3.69 (1.14)	3.42 (1.22)				
Anderson Cooper	2.46 (1.37)	3.29 (1.36)	3.69 (1.29)	3.78 (1.26)	3.48 (1.39)	4.02 (1.30)			

Jay Leno	3.18 (1.45)	2.89 (1.32)	4.32 (1.44)	3.31 (1.33)	4.35 (1.43)	3.42 (1.27)	3.51 (1.34)		
Oprah Winfrey	2.81 (1.25)	2.58 (1.36)	3.39 (1.33)	3.42 (1.26)	2.85 (1.38)	3.45 (1.25)	3.64 (1.41)	3.89 (1.54)	
Katie Couric	3.02 (1.09)	2.74 (1.22)	3.09 (1.19)	3.83 (1.26)	3.09 (1.20)	4.22 (1.39)	4.09 (1.37)	3.23 (1.34)	4.05 (1.28)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table C6*. Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Moderates*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.54 (1.58)								
Jon Stewart	3.04 (1.56)	2.63 (1.39)							
Rachel Maddow	3.44 (1.40)	3.41 (1.47)	3.33 (1.10)						
Stephen Colbert	3.28 (1.71)	2.93 (1.53)	5.54 (1.64)	3.2 (1.11)					
Brian Williams	3.18 (1.19)	3.23 (1.29)	3.16 (1.14)	3.38 (.92)	3.04 (1.30)				
Anderson Cooper	3.32 (1.30)	3.05 (1.47)	3.39 (1.30)	3.67 (1.20)	3.54 (1.19)	4.02 (1.32)			
Jay Leno	3.14 (1.48)	2.87 (1.47)	4.23 (1.45)	3.18 (1.02)	4.42 (1.48)	3.25 (1.22)	3.27 (1.24)		
Oprah Winfrey	2.72 (1.22)	2.47 (1.13)	2.82 (1.19)	3.32 (1.20)	2.74 (1.28)	3.00 (1.16)	3.58 (1.36)	3.67 (1.38)	
Katie Couric	2.95 (1.12)	2.89 (1.11)	3.14 (1.08)	3.65 (1.42)	2.86 (1.23)	4.14 (1.43)	4.04 (1.36)	2.88 (1.22)	3.75 (1.35)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table C7*. Battery of News Media Exposure Questions*

Please indicate how many days in a typical week you watch the following TELEVISION programs. Answer options range from "0 days" to "7 days" a week.

National nightly news on CBS, ABC, or NBC
The Today Show, Good Morning America or CBS This Morning
Local news about your viewing area
CNN cable news programs (e.g., Anderson Cooper, Piers Morgan)
FOX cable news programs (e.g., Bill O'Reilly, Shepard Smith)
MSNBC cable news programs (e.g., Rachel Maddow, Chris Matthews)
Entertainment news programs (e.g., Entertainment Tonight, E! News!)
News satire (e.g., The Daily Show, The Colbert Report)
Daytime talk shows (e.g., Ellen, The View)
Late night talk shows (e.g., David Letterman, Chelsea Lately)
Sports talk shows (e.g., Around the Horn, PTI)

For each of the following types of media, please indicate how many days in a typical week you use it. Answer options range from "0 days" to "7 days" a week.

National newspaper – print or online (e.g., New York Times, Wall Street Journal)
Local newspaper – print or online
News magazines - print or online (e.g., Slate, Salon, Time)
News satire -- print or online (e.g., The Onion, The Daily Show)
Sports news– print or online (e.g., ESPN, Sports Illustrated)
Entertainment news -- print or online (e.g., People Magazine, Perez Hilton)
Internet news aggregators (e.g., Yahoo News, Google News)
Conservative political blogs (e.g., Instapundit, Michelle Malkin)
Liberal political blogs (e.g., Daily Kos, Talking Points Memo)
CNN online news
FOX online news
MSNBC online news
News-related videos on YouTube
Conservative talk radio – radio or online (e.g., Rush Limbaugh)
News programming on NPR – radio or online (e.g., All Things Considered)

Table C8. *Groupings of News Media Exposure (Final Model)*

Component Variable	**% of Variance** Component loadings
Component 1: Conservative Media	**29.29**
Fox News television programs	.842
Conservative blogs	.797
Conservative radio	.803
Fox News online	.775
Component 2: Infotainment	**11.70**
Entertainment news programs	.795
Daytime talk shows	.673
Late-night talk shows	.746
Entertainment news -- print or online	.728
Component 3: TV News	**9.89**
National broadcast news	.651
CNN television programs	.811
MSNBC television programs	.751
Component 4: Print News	**9.04**
National newspaper – print or online	.795
Local newspaper – print or online	.744
News magazines - print or online	.722
Component 5: Liberal Media	**6.47**
Liberal blogs	.786
Liberal radio	.850
Component 6: Sports News	**5.99**
Sports talk shows	.876
Sports news– print or online	.910

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .78
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = Chi-squared (153) = 1994.09, p = .000
Total variance explained = 72.4%
Extraction method: Principal components analysis
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table C9. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Consumers of Conservative Media*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.42								
USA Today	4.04	3.8							
CNN	4.43	3.67	3.65						
PBS	3.65	3.46	3.4	3.61					
Fox News	3.13	3.83	3.33	3.14	2.72				
MSNBC	4.09	3.43	3.84	4.44	3.46	3.03			
NPR	3.87	3.48	3.49	3.52	4.88	2.87	3.41		
Huff. Post	3.9	3.38	3.94	3.68	3.25	3.06	4.09	3.37	
BBC News	4.07	3.8	3.65	4.03	4.42	3.04	3.49	4.26	3.4

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C10. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Consumers of Infotainment*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.77								
USA Today	4.25	3.64							
CNN	4.52	3.92	3.69						
PBS	3.51	3.19	3.09	3.4					
Fox News	2.85	3.75	3.17	2.95	2.51				

MSNBC	4.03	3.64	3.95	4.69	3.25	2.77			
NPR	3.74	3.52	3.56	3.6	4.95	2.64	3.15		
Huff. Post	3.75	3.03	3.75	3.6	2.94	2.75	3.71	3.21	
BBC News	4.09	3.69	3.46	4.09	4.58	2.74	3.44	4.52	3.25

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C11. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Consumers of TV News*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.23								
USA Today	3.99	3.81							
CNN	4.62	3.8	3.88						
PBS	3.87	3.25	3.48	3.39					
Fox News	2.94	3.94	3.28	3.16	2.54				
MSNBC	4.25	3.45	3.97	4.44	3.57	3.03			
NPR	4.25	3.46	3.55	3.84	5.09	2.66	3.65		
Huff. Post	3.96	3.3	4.03	3.77	3.12	2.97	4.12	3.41	
BBC News	4.28	3.77	3.68	4.32	4.48	2.86	3.63	4.62	3.37

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C12. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Consumers of Print News*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.62								
USA Today	3.86	3.78							
CNN	4.52	3.82	3.98						
PBS	3.69	3.35	3.14	3.45					
Fox News	2.91	3.45	3.22	2.84	2.34				
MSNBC	4.1	3.38	3.89	4.51	3.42	2.89			
NPR	4.22	3.68	3.44	3.86	5.43	2.49	3.53		
Huff. Post	3.73	3.15	3.94	3.72	2.95	3.05	4.14	3.18	
BBC News	4.38	3.83	3.47	4.23	4.48	2.72	3.52	4.57	3.08

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C13. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Consumers of Liberal Media*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.73								
USA Today	3.63	3.71							
CNN	4.41	3.84	3.92						
PBS	3.63	3.31	3.27	3.43					
Fox News	2.84	3.51	3.1	2.78	2.27				

MSNBC	4.08	3.51	3.78	4.7	3.63	2.70			
NPR	4.24	3.49	3.53	3.84	5.45	2.36	3.86		
Huff. Post	3.84	3.37	4.04	3.78	3.02	2.92	4.38	3.6	
BBC News	4.35	3.67	3.78	4.4	4.35	2.84	3.69	4.73	3.48

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C14. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Consumers of Sports Media*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.71								
USA Today	4.34	4.06							
CNN	4.46	4.1	4.17						
PBS	3.72	3.61	3.42	3.48					
Fox News	3.06	3.41	3.26	3.13	2.48				
MSNBC	4.19	3.47	3.87	4.5	3.52	3.26			
NPR	4.21	3.62	3.78	3.77	5.42	2.53	3.6		
Huff. Post	3.94	3.51	3.88	3.64	3.12	3.26	4.15	3.41	
BBC News	4.39	3.97	3.87	4.47	4.78	2.81	3.71	4.71	3.49

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C15. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Consumers of Conservative Media*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.57								
Jon Stewart	3.22	2.84							
Rachel Maddow	3.4	3.32	3.63						
Stephen Colbert	3.49	3.06	5.18	3.61					
Brian Williams	3.35	3.28	3.45	3.56	3.47				
Anderson Cooper	3.32	3.17	3.52	3.76	3.43	4.23			
Jay Leno	3.25	3.00	4.16	3.26	4.25	3.49	3.35		
Oprah Winfrey	2.78	2.65	3.06	3.48	2.78	3.28	3.56	3.65	
Katie Couric	3.13	2.79	3.23	3.9	3.07	4.07	4.12	3.41	3.9

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C16. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Consumers of Infotainment*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.25								
Jon Stewart	2.91	2.37							
Rachel Maddow	3.16	3.27	3.66						
Stephen Colbert	3.08	2.56	5.75	3.54					
Brian Williams	3.09	3.08	3.25	3.59	3.08				

Anderson Cooper	3.4	2.77	3.48	3.91	3.41	4.18			
Jay Leno	2.92	2.55	4.49	2.94	4.55	3.08	3.33		
Oprah Winfrey	2.35	2.32	2.94	3.4	2.75	3.19	3.75	3.83	
Katie Couric	2.78	2.62	3.06	3.54	2.82	4.43	4.34	3.02	4.35

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C17*. Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Consumers of TV News*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.86								
Jon Stewart	2.74	2.43							
Rachel Maddow	3.45	3.25	3.66						
Stephen Colbert	3.06	2.74	5.58	3.42					
Brian Williams	3.03	2.72	3.41	3.5	3.13				
Anderson Cooper	3.13	2.81	3.39	4.03	3.25	4.45			
Jay Leno	3.03	2.71	4.49	3.23	4.23	3.28	3.15		
Oprah Winfrey	2.61	2.35	2.96	3.35	2.81	3.04	3.4	3.9	
Katie Couric	2.84	2.55	3.3	3.55	2.93	4.54	4.31	3.13	3.79

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C18. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Consumers of Print News*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.05								
Jon Stewart	2.75	2.51							
Rachel Maddow	3.18	2.97	3.83						
Stephen Colbert	3.05	2.51	5.65	3.2					
Brian Williams	2.71	2.64	3.25	3.52	2.94				
Anderson Cooper	2.97	2.63	3.45	3.95	2.97	4.43			
Jay Leno	3.03	2.57	4.32	3.03	4.02	3.06	3.03		
Oprah Winfrey	2.49	2.18	2.88	3.46	2.67	3.29	3.83	3.63	
Katie Couric	2.65	2.33	3.06	3.58	2.65	4.78	4.59	3.03	4.03

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C19. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Consumers of Liberal Media*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.24								
Jon Stewart	3.08	2.47							
Rachel Maddow	3.22	2.96	4.18						
Stephen Colbert	3.18	2.73	5.75	3.73					
Brian Williams	2.94	2.98	3.51	4.02	3.25				

Anderson Cooper	2.96	3.00	3.65	4.14	3.25	4.39			
Jay Leno	3.00	2.76	4.63	3.12	4.26	3.4	3.18		
Oprah Winfrey	2.47	2.49	3.12	3.62	2.92	3.22	3.62	4.02	
Katie Couric	2.78	2.46	3.47	4.04	2.86	4.47	4.43	3.1	3.86

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C20. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Consumers of Sports News*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.29								
Jon Stewart	2.97	2.38							
Rachel Maddow	3.32	3.25	3.88						
Stephen Colbert	3.07	2.68	6.04	3.54					
Brian Williams	2.86	2.71	3.49	4.02	3.26				
Anderson Cooper	2.83	2.59	3.42	4.06	3.26	4.54			
Jay Leno	2.79	2.62	4.75	3.09	4.62	3.38	3.18		
Oprah Winfrey	2.46	2.23	3.38	3.42	3.17	3.5	3.67	4.07	
Katie Couric	2.78	2.58	3.31	3.93	2.94	4.45	4.46	3.14	3.94

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C21. *Battery of News Flow Questions*

In general, please indicate how frequently the following situations occur, ranging from "Never" to "Very frequently."

Family members talk about news and current events
Family members share their opinion about news and current events
Family members criticize news stories
Friends talk about news and current events
Friends share their opinion about news and current events
Friends criticize news stories

When thinking about your social network on Facebook, please indicate how frequently the following situations occur, ranging from "Never" to "Very frequently."

Your Facebook friends post links to news stories
Your Facebook friends post their opinion about news stories or current events
Your Facebook friends criticize news stories in their posts
You check your Facebook news feed
You "friend" (or "like") a politician on Facebook
You "friend" (or "like") a news organization on Facebook
You "friend" (or "like") a political organization on Facebook

When thinking about your social network on Twitter, please indicate how frequently the following situations occur, ranging from "Never" to "Very frequently."

The accounts you follow tweet links to news stories
The accounts you follow tweet opinions about news or current events
The accounts you follow criticize news stories in their tweets
You check your Twitter feed
You follow a politician on Twitter
You follow a news organization on Twitter
You follow a political organization on Twitter

Table C22. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among High Offline News Flow*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.69								
USA Today	4.01	3.91							
CNN	4.59	4.13	3.95						
PBS	3.54	3.18	3.15	3.58					
Fox News	2.72	3.52	3.27	2.91	2.36				
MSNBC	4.18	3.66	3.89	4.77	3.28	2.92			
NPR	4.1	3.63	3.25	3.96	5.33	2.4	3.63		
Huff. Post	3.72	3.22	3.97	3.81	3.05	2.94	4.32	3.33	
BBC News	4.16	3.7	3.61	4.33	4.57	2.58	3.75	4.78	2.99

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C23. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Low Offline News Flow*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.86								
USA Today	4.32	3.89							
CNN	4.24	4.00	4.01						
PBS	3.27	3.01	3.05	2.93					
Fox News	2.84	3.16	3.39	3.41	2.36				

MSNBC	3.88	3.45	3.89	4.41	3.18	3.56			
NPR	3.81	3.35	3.32	3.29	4.75	2.43	3.23		
Huff. Post	3.64	3.19	3.55	3.49	2.9	3.08	3.72	2.8	
BBC News	4.03	3.82	3.68	3.95	4.15	2.8	3.64	4.23	3.29

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C24. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among High Facebook News Flow*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.63								
USA Today	3.75	3.72							
CNN	4.41	3.78	3.73						
PBS	3.54	3.17	3.18	3.46					
Fox News	2.71	3.4	3.19	2.76	2.47				
MSNBC	4.01	3.59	3.57	4.58	3.5	2.6			
NPR	4.09	3.41	3.32	3.56	5.28	2.42	3.63		
Huff. Post	3.94	3.35	3.88	3.76	3.13	2.73	4.17	3.35	
BBC News	4.07	3.65	3.53	4.13	4.56	2.91	3.57	4.65	3.29

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C25. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Low Facebook News Flow*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									

WSJ	5.06								
USA Today	4.08	3.77							
CNN	4.29	3.84	3.98						
PBS	3.45	3.25	3.15	3.18					
Fox News	3.06	3.42	3.34	3.58	2.53				
MSNBC	3.97	3.62	4.06	4.52	3.32	3.39			
NPR	3.8	3.39	3.39	3.50	5.12	2.65	3.37		
Huff. Post	3.55	3.31	3.73	3.6	2.98	3.11	3.85	3.15	
BBC News	4.03	3.69	3.76	4.34	4.06	2.98	3.85	4.15	3.42

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C26. *Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among High Twitter News Flow*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	5.00								
USA Today	3.86	3.49							
CNN	4.57	3.94	3.88						
PBS	3.61	3.33	3.43	3.75					
Fox News	2.78	3.61	3.24	2.75	2.43				
MSNBC	4.12	3.49	3.73	4.61	3.61	2.58			
NPR	4.14	3.47	3.39	3.8	5.57	2.51	3.58		
Huff. Post	3.62	3.18	4.08	3.69	3.18	2.9	3.98	3.22	

BBC News	4.39	3.69	3.6	4.45	4.61	2.67	3.68	4.75	3.22

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C27*. Similarity Matrix of News Organizations Among Low Twitter News Flow*

	NY Times	WSJ	USA Today	CNN	PBS	Fox News	MSN.	NPR	Huff. Post
NY Times									
WSJ	4.58								
USA Today	3.96	3.67							
CNN	4.15	3.64	3.85						
PBS	2.98	2.85	3.02	3.11					
Fox News	2.67	3.28	2.98	3	2.25				
MSNBC	3.79	3.58	3.96	4.72	3.15	2.88			
NPR	3.49	3.42	3.1	3.34	4.65	2.47	3.25		
Huff. Post	3.52	2.91	3.7	3.53	2.85	2.94	3.73	2.91	
BBC News	3.7	3.64	3.43	3.83	4.21	2.81	3.38	4.06	3.17

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C28*. Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among High Offline News Flow*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.18								
Jon Stewart	2.54	2.42							
Rachel Maddow	3.27	3.03	4.06						

Stephen Colbert	2.9	2.61	5.91	3.45					
Brian Williams	3	2.73	3.36	3.66	2.97				
Anderson Cooper	2.96	2.4	3.55	4.34	3.34	4.6			
Jay Leno	2.96	2.55	4.57	3.25	4.45	3.24	3.44		
Oprah Winfrey	2.3	2.12	2.75	3.47	2.71	3.25	3.82	3.7	
Katie Couric	2.6	2.38	3.21	3.72	2.73	4.7	4.46	3.12	4.04

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C29. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Low Offline News Flow*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.49								
Jon Stewart	3.11	2.62							
Rachel Maddow	3.08	3.04	3.46						
Stephen Colbert	3.24	2.81	5.52	3.07					
Brian Williams	3.05	3.08	3.16	3.52	3.15				
Anderson Cooper	3.14	3.01	3.45	3.7	3.28	3.89			
Jay Leno	3.05	2.69	4.46	3.1	4.54	3.07	3.19		
Oprah Winfrey	2.51	2.33	2.91	3.12	2.8	3.01	3.23	3.53	
Katie Couric	2.7	2.7	2.82	3.55	2.64	4.3	3.97	2.72	3.65

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C30. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among High Facebook News Flow*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.99								
Jon Stewart	2.88	2.4							
Rachel Maddow	3.00	2.85	4.09						
Stephen Colbert	3.34	2.69	5.66	3.5					
Brian Williams	2.81	2.81	3.32	3.72	3.03				
Anderson Cooper	3.18	2.69	3.49	3.94	3.06	4.25			
Jay Leno	2.9	2.41	4.63	3.15	4.22	3.26	3.33		
Oprah Winfrey	2.18	1.97	2.65	3.22	2.72	3.19	3.57	3.49	
Katie Couric	2.58	2.48	3.12	3.72	2.66	4.47	4.25	3.13	3.88

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C31. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Low Facebook News Flow*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.58								
Jon Stewart	3.13	2.85							
Rachel Maddow	3.28	3.21	3.44						
Stephen Colbert	3.23	2.92	5.68	3.26					
Brian Williams	3.23	3.25	3.33	3.68	3.21				
Anderson Cooper	3.28	3.16	3.52	3.9	3.38	4.18			

Jay Leno	2.95	2.7	4.5	3.2	4.75	3.39	3.32		
Oprah Winfrey	2.42	2.23	3.00	3.31	2.61	3.16	3.22	3.85	
Katie Couric	2.85	2.69	3.00	4.07	2.89	4.21	4.16	3.11	3.66

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C32. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among High Twitter News Flow*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	5.31								
Jon Stewart	2.65	2.24							
Rachel Maddow	3.31	3.00	3.82						
Stephen Colbert	3.12	2.47	5.8	3.37					
Brian Williams	2.78	2.69	3.18	3.53	2.82				
Anderson Cooper	3.24	2.65	3.57	4.18	3.14	4.29			
Jay Leno	2.86	2.39	4.8	3.00	4.53	3.18	3.42		
Oprah Winfrey	2.24	2.00	2.71	3.44	2.74	3.04	3.84	3.92	
Katie Couric	2.58	2.24	3.18	3.55	2.61	4.51	4.49	3.14	4.02

Note. Cell entries are means.

Table C33. *Similarity Matrix of News Figures Among Low Twitter News Flow*

	O'Rly.	Limbgh.	Stewart	Maddw.	Colbert	Willms.	Cooper	Leno	Winfrey
Bill O'Reilly									
Rush Limbaugh	4.43								

Jon Stewart	2.83	2.36							
Rachel Maddow	3.13	3.10	3.36						
Stephen Colbert	3.06	2.49	5.49	3.23					
Brian Williams	3.33	3.3	3.02	3.46	3.09				
Anderson Cooper	3.25	3.04	3.43	3.94	3.15	3.75			
Jay Leno	2.87	2.63	3.77	3.10	4.21	2.94	2.89		
Oprah Winfrey	2.58	2.29	3.00	3.4	2.66	3.26	3.3	3.64	
Katie Couric	2.94	2.68	2.98	3.58	2.89	4.09	4.00	2.98	3.77

Note. Cell entries are means.

Appendix D:
News Evaluation Tables (Chapter 6)

Table D1. *News Evaluations Questions*

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7).

[News organization] presents information that is opinionated
[News organization] presents information that is entertaining
[News organization] does investigative reporting
[News organization] is a source of breaking news
[News organization] informs people about current events

Table D2*. Evaluations of News Organizations Among Liberals*

	News Characteristics				
	Opinion Giving	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
BBC	3.21 (1.39)	4.30 (1.24)	5.34 (1.23)	5.54 (1.28)	5.81 (1.22)
CNN	4.06 (1.47)	4.82 (1.38)	5.36 (1.45)	6.34 (1.09)	6.25 (1.09)
Fox News	6.32 (1.19)	4.48 (1.86)	3.97 (1.68)	5.25 (1.46)	5.17 (1.53)
Huff. Post	4.81 (1.38)	5.17 (1.37)	3.89 (1.56)	4.81 (1.58)	5.47 (1.18)
MSNBC	5.02 (4.55)	4.83 (1.27)	4.80 (1.17)	5.53 (1.34)	5.79 (1.17)
NPR	3.52 (1.74)	4.48 (1.74)	5.06 (1.51)	4.49 (1.56)	5.55 (1.36)
NY Times	3.90 (1.56)	4.97 (1.30)	5.94 (1.11)	5.78 (1.41)	6.35 (.95)
PBS	2.95 (1.41)	4.09 (1.49)	4.39 (1.50)	3.45 (1.49)	4.52 (1.48)
USA Today	3.87 (2.21)	4.71 (1.13)	4.30 (1.29)	4.75 (1.44)	5.29 (1.26)
WSJ	4.20 (1.35)	3.92 (1.40)	4.89 (1.37)	4.88 (1.49)	5.64 (1.17)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table D3. *Evaluations of News Organizations Among Conservatives*

	News Characteristics				
	Opinion Giving	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
BBC	3.92 (1.28)	4.42 (1.17)	4.77 (1.22)	4.91 (1.30)	5.21 (1.30)
CNN	4.62 (1.47)	4.54 (1.46)	4.95 (1.49)	5.94 (1.41)	5.78 (1.35)
Fox News	5.92 (1.19)	5.06 (1.36)	4.98 (1.33)	5.39 (1.32)	5.65 (1.22)
Huff. Post	4.98 (1.45)	4.74 (1.48)	1.47 (1.47)	4.42 (1.53)	4.97 (1.40)
MSNBC	5.27 (1.40)	4.36 (1.42)	4.65 (1.34)	5.24 (1.30)	5.33 (1.35)
NPR	3.89 (1.51)	4.14 (1.47)	4.64 (1.47)	4.14 (1.46)	4.92 (1.40)
NY Times	4.20 (1.56)	4.59 (1.26)	5.68 (1.30)	5.59 (1.40)	6.06 (1.12)
PBS	3.48 (1.49)	3.82 (1.40)	3.71 (1.55)	3.06 (1.47)	3.74 (1.56)
USA Today	4.08 (1.39)	4.76 (1.41)	4.18 (1.45)	4.79 (1.65)	5.52 (1.28)
WSJ	4.06 (1.22)	4.09 (1.24)	4.92 (1.42)	4.76 (1.52)	5.52 (1.24)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table D4. *Evaluations of News Organizations Among Moderates*

	News Characteristics				
	Opinion Giving	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
BBC	3.49 (1.39)	4.14 (1.28)	4.77 (1.43)	5.12 (1.29)	5.40 (1.33)
CNN	4.32 (1.51)	4.47 (1.52)	4.84 (1.61)	6.05 (1.21)	5.93 (1.30)
Fox News	5.79 (1.31)	4.70 (1.47)	4.12 (1.28)	5.07 (1.31)	5.12 (1.36)
Huff. Post	4.81 (1.69)	4.93 (1.47)	3.74 (1.49)	4.35 (1.48)	5.16 (1.36)
MSNBC	5.00 (1.30)	4.77 (1.33)	4.37 (1.15)	5.16 (1.30)	5.49 (1.22)
NPR	3.86 (1.52)	4.14 (1.55)	4.61 (1.41)	4.14 (1.50)	4.95 (1.40)
NY Times	3.84 (1.48)	4.49 (1.39)	5.70 (1.19)	5.67 (1.27)	6.05 (1.24)
PBS	3.55 (1.36)	3.74 (1.48)	4.11 (1.48)	3.32 (1.46)	4.32 (1.45)
USA Today	4.18 (1.16)	4.63 (1.10)	4.04 (1.30)	4.45 (1.38)	5.21 (1.26)
WSJ	4.23 (1.38)	3.89 (1.48)	5.05 (1.30)	4.74 (1.35)	5.53 (1.18)

Note. Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table D5. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of NPR*

	NPR				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.02	-.24**	-.23**	-.01	-.15#
Infotainment	-.01	-.02	.00	-.03	-.14#
TV news	-.02	.03	.03	-.06	.01
Print	.09	.20*	.18*	.05	.10
Liberal	.05	.18*	.06	.09	.10
Sports	-.09	-.19*	-.15*	-.25**	-.12
News Flows					
Offline	.03	-.01	.06	-.03	.08
Facebook	.01	.02	.07	-.00	.02
Twitter	.04	.01	.10	.07	.18*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.03 (-.01)	.12 (.08)**	.13 (.10)**	.09 (.05)*	.13 (.10)***
N	208	207	208	208	208

*# p ≤ .10, * p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001.*

Table D6. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of BBC News*

	BBC News				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.13	-.01	.16#	-.20*	-.22**
Infotainment	.07	.10	.14#	-.08	-.12
TV news	-.04	-.05	.07	.01	-.00
Print	-.13	.02	.07	.21*	.19*
Liberal	.00	.01	.03	.05	.03
Sports	.07	.04	-.03	-.14#	-.08
News Flows					
Offline	-.16*	-.03	.10	.06	.11
Facebook	.09	.09	-.04	-.03	-.08
Twitter	-.01	-.02	.17*	.15#	.22**
Total R^2 (adj.)	.06 (.02)	.02 (-.03)	.10 (.06)**	.14 (.10)***	.18 (.14)***
N	207	207	207	206	207

*# p ≤ .10, * p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001.*

***Table D7**. OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of PBS*

	PBS				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.18*	-.08	.00	.24**	.06
Infotainment	-.11	-.09	-.11	-.21**	-.24**
TV news	.01	.06	-.03	.06	-.05
Print	.13	.08	.06	-.05	.06
Liberal	-.07	.06	-.02	.10	.12
Sports	-.08	-.23**	-.10	-.23**	-.05
News Flows					
Offline	-.10	.02	-.06	-.08	-.05
Facebook	-.02	-.11	-.02	-.05	-.01
Twitter	.01	.09	.11	.03	.12
Total R^2 (adj.)	.04 (.00)	.07 (.03)#	.04 (-.01)	.12 (.08)**	.08 (.05)*
N	207	208	207	208	208

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

***Table D8**. OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of Fox News*

	Fox News				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	-.31***	.11	.31***	.16#	.22**
Infotainment	.00	.01	.13#	.09	.12
TV news	.10	-.12	-.18*	-.29***	-.34***
Print	.19*	.01	-.03	.06	-.05
Liberal	.05	.08	-.26***	-.13	-.17*
Sports	-.10	-.03	-.01	.05	-.06
News Flows					
Offline	.14#	.01	-.06	.04	.07
Facebook	-.08	.05	-.03	-.04	-.03
Twitter	.12	-.01	.16#	.15#	.17*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.16 (.12)***	.03 (-.01)	.13 (.09)***	.08 (.04)#	.14 (.10)***
N	207	207	207	206	207

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Table D9. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of CNN*

	CNN				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.05	-.12	-.12	-.28***	-.23**
Infotainment	.11	.06	.07	.04	-.01
TV news	.03	.11	-.08	.03	-.01
Print	.07	.13	-.03	.06	.08
Liberal	-.06	.07	-.04	.01	.01
Sports	-.02	-.10	-.13#	-.05	-.10
News Flows					
Offline	-.08	.04	.21**	.06	.09
Facebook	.02	.08	.00	.02	-.00
Twitter	-.02	-.07	.22**	.21*	.17*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.03 (-.02)	.06 (.02)	.15 (.11)***	.13 (.09)***	.12 (.08)**
N	206	207	207	207	207

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Table D10. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of MSNBC*

	MSNBC				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	-.06	-.21**	-.05	-.40***	-.34***
Infotainment	.11	.21**	.07	.13#	.15*
TV news	-.04	.19*	.02	.05	.02
Print	.08	-.04	-.09	.11	.02
Liberal	-.04	.11	.13	.08	.09
Sports	.07	-.17*	-.10	-.11	-.07
News Flows					
Offline	.01	.02	.12	.10	.10
Facebook	-.54	.09	.04	.04	.09
Twitter	.25**	.14#	.14	.07	.15#
Total R^2 (adj.)	.08 (04)*	.18 (.15)***	.09 (.05)*	.17 (.13)***	.17 (.13)***
N	208	208	206	208	207

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Table D11. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of NY Times*

	NY Times				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.18*	-.17*	-.25**	-.18*	-.25**
Infotainment	.04	.19*	.06	.09	.09
TV news	.17#	-.00	.07	.03	.00
Print	-.16#	.02	.22**	.30***	.25**
Liberal	-.09	.06	-.03	.00	-.06
Sports	-.09	-.03	-.13#	-.22**	-.11
News Flows					
Offline	.06	.03	-.06	-.10	-.07
Facebook	-.04	-.14#	-.00	.02	-.00
Twitter	.04	.14#	.18*	.10	.25**
Total R^2 (adj.)	.08 (.03)#	.07 (.03)#	.14 (.10)***	.15 (.11)***	.19 (.15)***
N	206	206	206	205	206

*# p ≤ .10, * p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001.*

Table D12. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of Huffington Post*

	Huff Post				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	-.03	-.17*	.07	-.06	-.18*
Infotainment	.01	.10	.11	.08	.06
TV news	.01	.02	.02	-.08	-.01
Print	.21*	.08	-.13	.05	.10
Liberal	-.04	.06	.10	.05	.03
Sports	-.11	-.25***	-.05	-.06	-.10
News Flows					
Offline	-.00	.11	.01	.09	.12
Facebook	-.09	-.02	.07	.09	-.00
Twitter	.18*	.17*	.05	.02	.14
Total R^2 (adj.)	.09 (.04)*	.17 (.13)***	.06 (.02)	.05 (.01)	.10 (.06)*
N	207	206	206	207	207

*# p ≤ .10, * p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001.*

Table D13. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of USA Today*

	USA Today				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	.06	-.04	-.10	-.12	-.08
Infotainment	-.02	.07	.14#	.10	.05
TV news	.09	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.16#
Print	-.08	.07	-.07	.03	-.00
Liberal	-.08	-.04	.00	.00	-.11
Sports	-.14#	-.05	.13#	.06	-.06
News Flows					
Offline	.10	.04	.02	-.13	.10
Facebook	-.02	-.03	.04	.15#	-.03
Twitter	-.08	.03	.02	.01	.18*
Total R^2 (adj.)	.04 (-.00)	.03 (-.02)	.03 (-.01)	.04 (-.01)	.07 (.03)#
N	207	207	205	207	206

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*

Table D14. *OLS Regression Predicting Evaluations of Wall Street Journal*

	WSJ				
	News Characteristics				
	Opinion	Entertain. Value	Investigate	Breaking News	Inform. Value
	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta	St. Beta
Media Exposure					
Conservative	-.07	.07	.05	-.01	-.05
Infotainment	.07	.09	.07	.09	-.01
TV news	.17#	-.11	-.17#	-.05	-.16#
Print	.04	.00	-.02	.09	.09
Liberal	-.08	-.01	.06	-.00	-.02
Sports	-.04	.14#	.16*	-.04	.06
News Flows					
Offline	.06	.03	-.01	.00	.03
Facebook	.08	.10	.03	.09	-.05
Twitter	.03	.04	.22**	.13	.31***
Total R^2 (adj.)	.06 (.02)	.04 (.00)	.08 (.03)#	.07 (.02)	.11 (.08)**
N	208	208	207	208	208

*# $p \leq .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.*