

Political Communication 2011 Abstracts

Ad Claim Accountability: Examining News Coverage of Political Advertising in the 2008 Presidential Election • Michelle Amazeen, Temple University • In a media environment where candidate ads are increasingly influencing U.S. news coverage, how do news organizations hold politicians accountable for their ad claims? Using semantic network analysis, four clusters emerged among the 18 sampled press organizations covering candidate advertising during the 2008 presidential election. Horserace reporting predominated among a plurality of newspapers. Other clusters were identified by partisan-style and pluralist-style reporting conventions. One cluster was notable for its hallmarks of consistently holding politicians accountable for their ad claims. This “adwatching” group focused more than anything else on verifying the accuracy of candidate claims as they relate to the policy and governance matters facing the electorate. Additionally, this research demonstrates that influential factors such as candidate endorsement and political ideology can be conditionally independent from ad watching.

Viewer Ideology and the Effect of Argument Flow on Guest Evaluations in Political Talk Shows • Mitchell Bard, University of Wisconsin School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Melissa R. Gotlieb, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Bryan McLaughlin, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Keith J. Zukas, University of Wisconsin – Madison; Jackson Foote, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Young Mie Kim, University of Wisconsin-Madison • Contested political issues are inevitably debated on political talk shows, with two guests on ideologically opposite sides of the issue. Using an experimental design, we test the impact of viewers’ ideology and argument flow (i.e. the number of arguments offered by each guest) on guest evaluations. We find a significant impact for moderate viewers, who rate the guests lower when they make fewer arguments. This finding has normative implications for television news and democracy.

Examining news frames in the new media landscape: Moderating effects of incivility in the political blogosphere • Porismita Borah, Maryville University • Increasingly researchers are being faced with questions about new theoretical perspectives to investigate the contemporary media landscape. The anonymity and flexibility of the online world allows the free expression of views. This same anonymity and unconstrained expression can initiate uncivil debate. The political blogosphere is thus replete with uncivil discussions and becomes an apt context to examine the influence of incivility on news frames. Moreover, although there is an increasingly growing literature on framing, few have examined framing effects in the new media landscape. Thus, the present study brings in literature from incivility and framing effects and uses an experiment embedded in a web survey to examine the influence of incivility on news frames for democratic outcomes such as willingness to participate, openmindedness, and attitude certainty. Findings indicate the detrimental effects of incivility causing less openmindedness and more attitude certainty. At the same time, incivility causes more willingness to participate. The findings also demonstrate how incivility interacts with news frames. For instance, incivility effects are primarily prominent in the value-framed condition. Implications for news framing effects in the new media landscape are discussed.

What do they want us to do? Global warming Web sites use of mobilizing information • Michael Boyle, West Chester University; Lisa Parcell, Wichita State University • Information is key to the democratic process. For individuals to be involved in political and social change they must know what to do as well as where and how to do it. Yet, the literature suggests that mainstream news media typically lack the so-called mobilizing information individuals need to act on their beliefs and interests. News media are not the only sources individuals can use to gain information – Web sites for activist and political groups can potentially fill that void. However, little research has explored the extent to which these sites provide mobilizing information. This paper analyzes global warming Web sites for how well they present mobilizing information. The findings show that mobilizing information tends to be incomplete and typically centers on online actions as opposed to “real world” actions. In addition, pro-global warming sites provides more thorough mobilizing information than sites that deny global-warming is a problem.

Poaching from the Male Preserve? The Influence of Gender and Political Connectedness on Contacting Government Officials Online and Offline • Jennifer Brundidge, University of Texas, Austin; Kanghai Baek, University of Texas at Austin; Larissa Williams • This study employs a secondary analysis of data from the Pew Internet 2008 civic engagement study to examine whether people are more likely to contact government officials online than offline as well as the degree to which both ways of contacting public officials is explained by gender. Results suggest that people are more likely to contact government officials online than offline. While women are somewhat less likely to contact government officials through direct means, such as emailing a congress person, they are more likely to sign petitions. Furthermore, after controlling for political connectedness and demographic variables, women are actually somewhat more likely than men to contact government officials online, while there are no gender differences in contacting government officials offline.

Damsel in Electoral Distress: Gendered framing in cable news coverage of Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign • Kathryn Cassidy, University of Massachusetts, Amherst • Voter consumption of partisan new media, specifically cable news programming, soared in the midst of the 2008 Presidential election, and so too did questions regarding the nature of reporting and its influence on citizens in the 21st century. As voters continue to choose the

construction of news that is best in-line with their political leanings, rather than that which challenges their value systems, it arguably becomes easier for new media outlets to perpetuate stereotypes, as they go unquestioned by viewers; they simply appear as "facts" of the news. The historic Presidential bid of Hillary Rodham Clinton provides a meaningful opportunity to assess how these partisan outlets relied on gender stereotypes as a means to frame her character and campaign in an attempt to affect the electoral outcome. If Clinton, as one of the most popular female candidates for President to date, was the target of such framing, the outlook for success for future female candidates appears grim, as they too will have to navigate this complex new media landscape. Further, the results of this study may serve as the basis for consciousness-raising among cable news program viewers, as well as an impetus for a media reform movement that rejects outlets that unjustly frame issues or individuals in the name of the political and corporate goals that they hold in higher esteem than their audiences.

The impact of political identity, efficacy, and selective media exposure on political participation. A comparative study of young adults in the United States and Hong Kong • Michael Chan, Chinese University of Hong Kong; Jing Guo, University of Maryland • This comparative study between an established democracy (US) and transitional democracy (Hong Kong) analyzed the interrelationships among political identification, self efficacy, collective efficacy and selective exposure; and subsequent effects on political participation among young adults. Regression analyses showed that self efficacy and selective exposure were significant predictors of political participation for both countries while collective efficacy was significant only for the Hong Kong sample. There were also significant interaction effects between efficacy and selective exposure in the US sample and between political identity and collective efficacy in the Hong Kong sample. The findings support the cross-contextual validity of self efficacy and selective exposure as general predictors applicable to democracies at different stages of development. Implications of the findings for youth participation in politics are discussed.

Political Talk Shows in Taiwan: Multiple Issue Publics, Political Efficacy and Their Relationships to Political Knowledge, Participation and Attitude • Hsuan-Ting Chen; Yonghwan Kim • This study examines political talk shows in Taiwan by understanding the factors and the influence of exposure to political talk shows. Using data from Taiwan's 2008 Social Change Survey, the findings showed that multiple issue public membership, as a construct of individuals as members of multi-issue publics, was positively associated with exposure to political talk shows. Individuals' internal and external political efficacy turned out to have different relationships with exposure to political talk shows, and an interactive effect was found to be significant between internal political efficacy and multiple issue public membership. In addition, exposure to political talk shows contributed to increases in political knowledge and online political participation; however, it leads to negative attitude towards the politics. In this sense, although the viewers tend to have negative attitude towards the politics, they are more likely to be well-informed, and open to political mobilization. Therefore, the role of political talk shows needs to be reconsidered.

Psychological Needs and Talk Show Host Style: News Effects in the Post-Broadcast Age • Stephanie Edgerly, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Melissa R. Gottlieb, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Emily Vraga, University of Wisconsin-Madison • We use an experimental design to test the effects of talk shows hosts who promote critical thought, conflict, or humor through their hosting styles. Specifically, we examine how host style interacts with the psychological needs for cognition, conflict, and humor to produce greater recall of information and valuing of open debate. Our results support this compatibility argument and suggest that post-broadcast news may engage a new audience who were left behind in the broadcast era.

Press Coverage of Nigerian President Yar'Adua's Pre-Election Campaign: A Case Study on Agenda-setting • Nnamdi Ekeanyanwu, Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria • The issue of whether our opinions are formed based on information we get from the media remains controversial as scholars maintain divergent views on the actual nature of media influence. This paper therefore examines if newspapers pre-election coverage of candidate Yar'Adua, influenced people's perception of him. The result shows that Yar'Adua had biased coverage in his favour. The paper therefore recommends that the media take political reporting to the next level of responsible journalism.

Learning about Politics from The Daily Show: The Role of Processing Motivations • Lauren Feldman, American University • Although late-night comedy and satirical news programs like The Daily Show have been recognized as an important source of political information, prior research suggests that viewers gain only a limited amount of political knowledge from watching these programs. Drawing from uses and gratification theory and studies of political information processing, this study examines whether learning from The Daily Show depends on whether viewers orient to the message as news or as entertainment. Results from an online experiment suggest that viewers who naturally orient to The Daily Show as news or as a mix of news and entertainment invest more mental effort and subsequently learn more than viewers who have a purely entertainment processing orientation. Further, among viewers who orient to The Daily Show as purely entertainment, providing them with an explicit informational processing goal increases the amount of invested mental effort and learning relative to viewers who are given no explicit viewing objective.

Understanding Support for Internet Censorship in China: An Elaboration of the Theory of Reasoned Action • Charles Feng • This study investigates young people's support for Internet censorship in China within the broad conceptual approach of the theory of reasoned action (TRA). Two concepts, authoritarian personality and third-person perception, were added as part of our elaboration of the TRA model. We closely examined dimensions pertinent to the unique social context of China such as party membership, Confucianism tradition, and one-child policy. A sample of 266 college students in a large metropolitan was surveyed and Structural Equation Modeling was employed in data analyses. Support for censorship based on TRA received general empirical evidence. So did the submissive dimension of authoritarian personality. Mixed findings were discussed and future research directions were suggested.

Framing the Rise and Fall of Sonia Gandhi during the 2004 General Elections in India • Rajul Jain; Maria De Moya, University of Florida; Juliana Fernandes, Florida International University • Informed by framing theory and critical and cultural perspectives, this study examines how newspapers in India framed the leading female Prime Minister

candidate and her male counterpart during the 2004 general elections. An analysis of the frames each candidate was associated with, as well as the differences in the scope and focus of news coverage accorded to the two candidates is provided. Results and implications are discussed in comparison to similar framing of political candidates in the U.S. and in the context of gender roles in Indian culture.

Audience frames elicited by political advertising: Reconsidering the audience • Elizabeth Housholder, University of Minnesota • This study used audience analysis to examine the audience frames elicited by political advertising. Participants between the ages of 25-60 discussed their individual responses to political advertising in in-depth interviews. Overall, this study found that three common frames were elicited: political cynicism frame, issue frame, and gender frame. Overall, the study concluded that future research in the area of political advertising must begin to consider more individual level difference variables beyond the usual demographic controls (age, gender, race, political party and education) such as personality, values and other psychographic variables. This study also advances the literature on audience framing, a relatively under-studied area of framing theory research.

Ideology and the Interactive Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Anxiety Predicting Discussion • Myiah Hutchens, Texas Tech University • The study aims to examine theoretical predictors of engaging in discussion with dissimilar discussion partners, which would be considered beneficial from a Democratic standpoint. Process models used in a variety of contexts suggest that both self-efficacy and anxiety are important variables to consider when examining communicative behaviors, yet the interaction appears to not have been adequately studied in a political communication context. Using data from the American National Election Survey, and supporting theoretical predictions, it was found that political moderates who have high levels of self-efficacy and anxiety are more likely to have diverse discussion networks; however, effects were not found when examining all individuals.

Marginalized Critical News Content, Spiked Stories and Series • Andrew Kennis • This paper focuses on all major and reported post-Cold War instances of anti-democratic phenomena occurring within the U.S. news media industry: the "spiking" of news stories and investigations with critical inclinations; demotions to enterprising journalists or editors; cancellations of TV programs due to critical content and forced resignations of journalists; independent and wire-based stories overlooked by mainstream media; and investigative series whose follow-ups are either marginalized out of existence or simply spiked altogether. The reported occurrences are based on a plethora of damning evidence and documentation: testimony by journalists and/or their newsroom colleagues; audio-recorded conversations between editors and journalists; documented pressure by advertisers and/or powerful public officials; and documented meetings between editors and high powered officials, with subsequent decisions to spike stories and/or follow-up reporting. This underlying evidence shows a clear pattern of institutional constraints resulting in varying forms of censorship. The focus on these occurrences, which is not only an attack on journalists but an attack on democracy as a whole, is of significant theoretical importance. The most important theoretical tension between two models of media analysis – the indexing and propaganda models (IM and PM) – is a conflicting attribution of culpability for poor media performance and the subsequent lack of news media independence. This paper represents an attempt to resolve this underlying theoretical tension by criticizing the disproportionate fault attributed to journalists themselves, as well as the underestimation by the PM of the role of "crude intervention" resulting from institutional constraints.

Campaign Agenda-Building Online: Emotions, Evaluations, and Important Perceptions • Ji Young Kim; David Painter; Maridith Miles • This experimental investigation explored 311 participants' emotional and evaluative responses to online campaign information during Florida's 2010 gubernatorial election using a two (campaign website vs. social network sites) by three (interactivity levels) between-subjects factorial design. Interaction effects in one campaign notwithstanding, the emotions and evaluations elicited by the other campaign were positively associated with public agenda-building. Thus, those responding favourably to the winner's campaign were likely to consider the election more important and to vote.

Humor Works in Funny Ways: Examining Humorous Tone as a Key Determinant in Political Humor Message Processing • Heather LaMarre, University of Minnesota; Kristen Landreville, University of Wyoming • The purpose of this study was to re-conceptualize two competing political humor message processing theories as complementary models under a higher order theoretical framework. Using data from an online experimental survey (N = 115), message discounting (Nabi, Moyer-Guse, & Byrne, 2007) and reduced cognitive capacity to scrutinize (Young, 2008; Baumgartner 2007) were examined as potentially co-existing (rather than competing) message processes, which occur as a function of humorous tone. Results indicate that political cartoon viewing directly influences individual-level political attitudes, and that affective disposition toward the cartoon moderates the effect. More importantly, evidence was found to support the development of a political humor process model that encompasses competing frameworks and makes sense of seemingly disparate findings in extant literature. Specifically, light-hearted political humor led to message discounting while serious-toned political humor suppressed argument scrutiny.

Crisis and kairos: Activists use social media to support political protests • Jacqueline Lambiase, Texas Christian University • Moldova, Iran, Tunisia, Egypt, and Sudan: These nations and their citizens engaged in political dialogues during 2009-2011, resulting in government accommodations of demands, regime change, hard-line responses, or civil war. Frequently, these dialogues occurred in computer-mediated spaces, especially blogs and social media. Some online activism burst into protests in public squares, resulting in violence and showdowns for power. This qualitative case study traces social media efforts, both crisis communication strategies and tactics, in five nations that raised awareness of revolutionary ideas, garnered support for these efforts, and transformed this spirit from digital expression to flesh-and-blood resistance.

Mass-Mediated Political Messages, Uncertainty Arousal, and Interpersonal Political Discussion • Kristen Landreville, University of Wyoming • Constructive interpersonal political discussion among citizens is traditionally regarded as an indicator of a healthy democracy (e.g., Fishkin, 1991, 1995; Habermas, 1962/1989; Tarde, 1901/1989). At the same time, politics bears an inherent complexity, ambiguity, and intricacy (Delli Carpini & Williams, 1996) that makes it a topic ripe for uncertainty arousal. Considering that uncertainty arousal is more likely when situations are

ambiguous, complex, and unpredictable (Babrow, Hines, & Kasch, 2000; Babrow, Kasch, & Ford, 1998), Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger, 1979; Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) is applied to study the crossroads of interpersonal political discussion and the consumption of a variety of mass-mediated messages about politics. The overarching research question that guides this work is: What is the extent to which people interpersonally communicate their uncertainty about mass-mediated political messages? A computer-mediated discussion experiment was conducted to answer the study's hypotheses, which concern the amount and type of uncertainty expressions in response to several kinds of mass-mediated political messages.

Investigating media's agenda-setting effects on different generations in the new media environment, 1976-2004 • Jae Kook Lee; Renita Coleman, University of Texas • This study tests two competing hypotheses of media's agenda-setting effects on different generations in the new media environment. Using ANES surveys and the New York Times Index data from 1976 to 2004, this study found that different generations perceived similar issues as important for society. The public agenda is fairly stable across generations despite increasing signs of media diversification and audience specialization over the time period. More importantly, the three generations' agendas were highly correlated with the agenda of the New York Times in each year, indicating robust agenda-setting effects of the media on the public regardless of generations differential media use. Implications of the findings are discussed.

Burned by the Spark: Tea Party Identity and News Media • Colin Lingle, University of Washington; Damon Di Cicco, University of Washington • News media have covered the Tea Party intensively since 2009. Behind the scenes, members have responded by reframing political identities and adapting strategies. We examine attitudes and opinions of individuals within the movement, culled from 12 semi-structured interviews across eight states. Data suggest that disaffection with news media can be an inciting factor leading people to political action, and that an oppositional posture toward news media drives important decisions about movement-building and alternative information networks.

Citizens' Perceptions of Online Political Information Credibility • Hsiao-Ying Liu, University of Florida; Spiro Kioussis, University of Florida • This investigation explored citizens' perceptions of online political information credibility, their attitudes towards candidates, and their intentions for political participation. A 2 (high vs. low Facebook site interactivity) X 2 (high vs. low involvement) factorial experiment was completed to examine these relationships. The results indicate that both involvement and interactivity affect perceived information credibility, citizens' attitudes towards candidates, and their intentions to participate politically. The implications of the findings are discussed.

Mixing Strategy and Issues: Campaign Coverage and Candidate Communications in the 2010 U.S. Senate Midterm Election • Jason A. Martin, Indiana University School of Journalism • There is much disagreement and a lack of precise knowledge about the framing and public affairs issue content of campaign coverage and candidate press releases. One of the few points of consensus is that news coverage consistently focuses on candidate strategy and the outcome of elections. Yet it remains unclear to what extent this emphasis on strategy obscures, eliminates, or prohibits coverage of substantive public affairs issues. Most empirical research on non-presidential election content suggests substantial variation in the media's coverage and candidate communications based on factors such as the office contested and the news appeal of the campaign. To address this research problem, a quantitative content analysis was conducted on election information available in a 2010 U.S. Senate midterm campaign in a top-20 media market. Using the media sources most popularly identified by a survey of registered voters, all newspaper articles, television stories, and candidate press releases in a two-month period preceding the election were systematically and comparatively analyzed. By accounting for the possibility of simultaneous or overlapping frames, a deeper and better-rounded understanding of the issue content was produced. Among the key findings was that while media campaign coverage mostly used the strategy frame, public affairs issues were well represented on a daily basis, especially in newspaper coverage. Candidates focused mostly on issues but also indulged in strategy framing. These data support related research that has suggested that attention to methodology is needed to better understand the sophisticated ways that issues are embedded within strategy-framed election coverage.

Creating, Sustaining, or Dispelling Misconceptions: A Discourse Analysis of Coverage of Obama's Religious Identity • Laura Meadows, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill • Since Barack Obama announced his candidacy for president in 2007, his Christian religious identity has been called into question. At present, a plurality of Americans do not know what religion he follows. In light of the increased relevance of religion in today's political landscape, such confusion poses a serious threat to his continued political viability. This qualitative discourse analysis examined coverage of President Obama's religious identity in the mainstream print media from the time he announced his candidacy for president in January 2007 through his first two years in office. The study found six themes that have potentially shaped both understandings and misinterpretations of Obama's religious beliefs, including current faith practices, connections to history, blame game, otherness, politicization, and Muslim connections. The study considers the ways in which the mainstream print media's use of these themes created, sustained, or dispelled misconceptions of Obama's religious identity.

Registered voters on the web: Looking for information, looking for confirmation, not looking at all • Ericka Menchen-Trevino, Northwestern University • There are several theories about how the internet may impact democratic politics. Some heralded the internet as inherently democratizing, claiming that it would help citizens become more informed about a broader array of issues, and help them organize for political action. Others warned that partisans would use online technologies to screen out opposing views and thus increase political polarization. Recently some have cautioned that with all of the entertainment options available in today's media environment, more citizens may opt out of political information altogether. This study examines these claims using real-world web data collected from forty-one carefully selected adult participants during the 2010 mid-term campaign in Illinois using software created for this project. The full text content of the web pages participants accessed was analyzed for information pertaining to the Illinois U.S. Senate race. The participants also completed ten online surveys and an in-person interview. The web data is interpreted in the context of participants' interviews and survey responses. Although this small-scale study cannot provide generalizable results, it does offer in-depth cases that reveal the mechanisms that underlie the broader effects seen in

larger but less contextual studies. Some cases illustrate how online political information can inform voters, while one case shows how partisan information helped to polarize a participant. Other cases show that it is possible to ignore political information online, although it is not clear that it is easier to do so online than in other media. Avenues for future research are discussed.

U.S. presidential election: International assessment of U.S. media coverage of male and female candidates • Uche Onyebadi, Southern Illinois University Carbondale; Yusuf Kalyango, Ohio University • Several studies have addressed how United States media cover candidates in U.S. elections. Some of the findings show that female contestants are poorly covered and stereotypically portrayed in the media, impeding their chances of victory. In this study, the focus was on how foreigners resident in the U.S. assessed media coverage of candidates in the 2008 presidential election. Results support previous research findings on negative coverage of female candidates, and suggest further investigation into candidates' issues and personal characteristics as factors that may also impact the type of media reports a candidate gets, irrespective of his or her gender. The survey instrument was used in this study.

Political Window: Analyzing Newspapers' Images of Candidates in 2010 California gubernatorial election • Kyung-Gook Park, University of Florida; Enjung Kang, University of Florida • The goal of this study is to explore how candidates in the 2010 California gubernatorial election were covered by the news media. This study uses visual frames as a significant determinant of how the media differently portrayed these candidates. In particular, this study places emphasis on four major newspapers, USA Today, New York Times, LA Times, and the San Francisco Chronicle, since these are currently the primary California regional and nationwide newspapers. Furthermore, past researches associated with agenda-setting theory and visual framing are widely reviewed in order to verify the topic question. Taken together, this study provides evidence that USA Today and the New York Times tried to create a balance in their image coverage of the gubernatorial candidates in the 2010 campaign, whereas the LA Times and San Francisco Chronicle were not trying to balance the images used. Furthermore, this study shows that a significant difference occurred in the frequency, prominence and behavioral of the frames chosen by the media in the candidates. Regardless of its limitations, this study provides a basis on which future studies regarding political communication and visual framing can follow..

Cite of The Times: How 2008 Presidential Campaign Advertisements Used News-Mediated Information As Evidence • Chris Roberts, University of Alabama • This paper uses the functional theory of campaign discourse to discover how candidates and political parties used news-mediated information as evidence in broadcast advertising during the 2008 presidential election cycle. More than a third of video ads included more than 340 pieces of evidence originally produced by news organizations. Hypotheses showing types of news items, and purpose of use in ads, based on previous election cycles are supported.

Parenting Styles in Political Socialization: How the Path to Political Participation Begins at Home • Esther Thorson, University of Missouri; Edson Jr. Tandoc, University of Missouri-Columbia; Mi Jahng, University of Missouri-Columbia • Political socialization research suggests that parent-child relationships exert strong influences on political outcomes among children like interest in politics, political knowledge, and participation in community and politics, both in the real world and online. In a survey of 399 parents and their children in a Midwest city right after the off-term Fall 2010 elections, this study found that evaluative parental mediation of children's news use directly predicted only political interest among children. The effects of parental news mediation on political knowledge and participation appear to be absorbed by children's media use and engagement in political talk, variables that parental styles also predict. It is often taken for granted, if not overlooked, but parents' mediation of their adolescents' news access has significant effects on adolescents' political awakening and development that goes through a complex pathway from the home to the political arena. The role of parents is central in their adolescents' political socialization that starts with encouraging their children to be interested in politics.

Knowing is half the battle: Youth, civic norms and the informed citizen in late modern society • Kjerstin Thorson, University of Southern California • This paper draws on theorizing concerning late modern society to synthesize findings from a multi-methodological investigation into how young citizens are negotiating and acting (or not acting) on civic norms related to political knowledge acquisition. Using evidence from in-depth interviews and national survey data, the paper argues that our current era of information abundance and institutional decline has paradoxical consequences for young citizens' relationships political knowledge, at the same time providing magnificent opportunities for the motivated and disempowering the less interested. As a result, the link between endorsing norms related to getting informed and actual, demonstrated political knowledge is eroding for younger cohorts of American citizens.

Deliberation or Small Talk? Motivations for Public Discussion and their Effects on Civic Engagement • Sebastian Valenzuela, University of Texas at Austin; Sun Ho Jeong, University of Texas at Austin; Homero Gil de Zuniga, University of Texas – Austin • We use original survey data to examine (1) the motivations people have for engaging in online and interpersonal discussions, and (2) the influence of instrumental and relational goals on civic participation. Using structural equation modeling, we find that both goals trigger discussions online and offline, which in turn lead to civic engagement. These results cast citizen-to-citizen communication on a different perspective than deliberative theory and point to social motivations as an alternative path to civic life.

Can I Support That Candidate's Party? Implications of Disagreement with Party Candidates for Political Attitudes • Emily Vraga, University of Wisconsin-Madison • Candidates are heralded as the standard-bearers for their party, but how do a party candidate's issue positions impact political attitudes more generally? This study uses an experimental manipulation to test response to issue disagreement, which is corroborated through analysis of a panel dataset during the 2008 presidential election. The results support expectations: individuals who see greater distance between themselves and candidates adjust their political attitudes, and emotions play a key part in this process.

Televised Debates Matter...Sort Of • John Williams, Principia College • A vast and expanding literature on the effects of presidential debates finds ample evidence that "debates matter." Debates have the capacity to influence

individual vote choice and provide voters with more information about candidates and public policy issues. In a presidential election not involving a sitting president or vice president, two U.S. senators as the major party candidates, the first African-American to head a major party ticket and only the second female to be on a major party ticket, the 2008 Election seemed like a prime opportunity to test some of the expectations about the impact of presidential debates. Taking advantage of scheduled debate-watching events on our campus for the three presidential and one vice-presidential debate, we conducted a repeated field experiment under controlled conditions. Collectively, we found evidence that the debates did result in some shifts in expressed vote intentions but relative stability in the assessment of candidate leadership traits and perceived capacity to address pressing domestic and foreign policies. We also see evidence of the ability to separate partisan leanings and pre-debate vote intentions from the evaluation of candidate debate performance.

The Power of Local Political Debates to Influence Voters: An Experiment at the Congressional Level • John Williams, Principia College • We know a lot about presidential debates and there is a large body of literature on the impact and effects of such debates. But, there is very little literature on the impact and influence of local political debates. This study uses a debate between an incumbent and a challenger for a seat in the US House of Representatives as its treatment. In addition to measuring the shift of position of the audience from pre-test to post-test, the study examines impact of partisanship and influence on likely voters. Because of the nature of the audience—a combination of college students and local constituents, the treatment group was capable of subdivision into “likely voters” and non-voters (those students registered in other jurisdictions). This and other dimensions helped refine the research.

How blog use affects voter behavior: Engagement, expressiveness and voting • W. Joann Wong, Indiana University • This survey study investigates the effects of political blogs on voters during the 2008 presidential election. Blogs have been an increasingly popular and important means of communication, helping voters obtain campaign information and exchange political opinions as well as helping candidates motivate and mobilize their supporters. The relationship between political blogs and voter behavior has not been thoroughly understood through empirical evidence. This research sheds some light on how blog users behave politically. The findings suggest that political blogs significantly contributed to both campaign engagement and political expressiveness. Political expressiveness also strongly predicted voter turnout. With the vanishing mobilizing function of traditional media, political blogs appeared to be an effective media format in 2008 to energize voters to participate in politics.

Does Internet News Contribute to Make More Efficacious Citizens?: Role of Efficacy in Communication Mediation Model of Political Socialization • JungHwan Yang, University of Wisconsin-Madison • This paper examines political socialization process of the youth based on communication mediation model, and elaborates the model by providing a link between news media use and political discussion. I suggest that political efficacy and discussion efficacy would mediate the impact of news media use on political discussion and further political socialization. For this investigation, this study analyzed online survey data for 300 college students from Metropolitan area of Seoul, South Korea (N = 300). The results suggest that (a) news media use (i.e. Internet news and television news), efficacy (i.e. political efficacy and discussion efficacy), and political discussion (i.e. interpersonal discussion, family conversation, online opinion exchange) are meaningful predictor of political participation of the youth; (b) only political efficacy, however, is a meaningful predictor of political knowledge; and (c) efficacy mediates impact of Internet news use and newspaper use on interpersonal discussion and online opinion exchange. Implications for communication mediation model and future political socialization research are discussed.

A Free Bonus in the Internet: Incidental News-Exposure Effects on Political Knowledge, Online and Offline Participation • Sung Woo Yoo, University of Texas at Austin; Yonghwan Kim; Homero Gil de Zuniga, University of Texas – Austin • This study examines the effect of the incidental news exposures of the Internet and television on political knowledge and participation. Using US national data from an online survey, this study found incidental news exposure of the Internet to be positively and significantly associated with political knowledge, and online and offline political participation. This effect is fully mediated by political discussion. In contrast, incidental news exposure of television was not associated with knowledge or participation.

Twenty years of the internet and civic engagement: A review beyond hypes and hopes • Inzhi Zhang • This paper provided a theoretical review of the research tradition on the internet use (and other internet-based media) and civic and political engagement in the past twenty years. Based on 130 pieces of referred journal articles retrieved from Web of Sciences Database, I identified five “camps of research” based on the scholars’ explanation on the mechanism of internet’s political impact, namely, 1) the internet has direct mobilization effects on civic participation; 2) the impact from internet is conditional and indirect on individual’s psychological traits; 3) both the internet use pattern and civic engagement are multi-dimensional and differential; 4) demystifying the reciprocal relationship and causality of internet use and politics; and 5) extending the research in nondemocratic or transitional societies with comparative research design. Chaffee and Berger’s (1987) and Whetten’s (1987) criteria for theory evaluation were addressed during the critical of the above literature. Suggestions to future research along this line followed, including, a) to address established theories or hypotheses in political science or sociology to catch the essential process of media-society relationship; b) to conduct longitudinal research design even panel study to confirm the causal relationship between media use and political engagement; and c) to take context background with comparison study across societies with different political nature, and use multi-level perspective, integrating macro-, meso-, and micro- levels of constructs.