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How Americans Get Political Information: Print Versus Broadcast News

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the extent to which major sources of political information affect citizen learning. Recent empirical comparisons of mass media channels show, contrary to earlier research, that television news is informative for American voters, albeit in ways different from newspapers. Television news provides more information about candidates; newspapers, more about parties. Both are sources of issue information. Print media are consulted more often than television by people who are actively seeking information. Television reaches groups that tend to lack political information, such as young people, immigrants, and less interested citizens. Newspaper coverage does more to close knowledge gaps between socioeconomic strata. Newsmagazines and radio are receding as political knowledge sources, relative to television and newspapers.

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PRESIDENT Thomas Jefferson praised the American people for "the discernment they have manifested between truth and falsehood." The public, he asserted, "may safely be trusted to hear everything true and false, and to form a correct judgment between them." This faith had formed the basis for the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech and of the press; Jefferson concluded that the confidence had been justified.

Today we have more sources of information, but also a more complex world, than in Jefferson's time. We also have more empirical evidence to guide us. As technologies expand the channels of public communication, we need to update our understanding of how people acquire the knowledge on which they base their political behavior.

In this article, we compare the major channels, particularly newspapers and television. Our main theme is that television news appears, from recent research, to be a serious source of political information, a conclusion that runs contrary to much previous scholarly criticism.

SELF-REPORTED MEDIA USE

For more than four decades, pollsters have asked American citizens questions like, "Where do you get most of your news—from the newspaper or radio or television or magazines or talking to people, or where?" In the 1960s, the predominant answer shifted from "newspapers" to "television."[1] But self-reports are not convincing evidence of learning; scholars note that people who rely on television alone get less news than do newspaper and magazine readers. They are less able to answer factual questions about politics than are those who say they rely more on print.[2]

It is not surprising that people who spend a lot of time watching television tend to be poorly informed; little television fare is designed to enlighten the electorate. In the 1970s, academics began to question seriously the value of television news as a source of political knowledge.

Patterson and McClure noted that during the 1972 presidential campaign, substantive issues were rarely covered in television news, and people who watched news programs regularly were no more likely than others to know how the candidates—Nixon and McGovern—differed on major issues.[3] This study, which was supported by other research at that time, became a benchmark for subsequent investigations.[4]

1. Burns W. Roper, *Trends in Attitudes Toward Television and Other Media: A Twenty-Four Year Review* (New York: Roper Organization, 1983).

2. Lee Becker and D. Charles Whitney, "Effects of Media Dependencies: Audience Assessment of Government," *Communication Research*, 7:95-120 (Jan. 1980); M. Mark Miller, Michael W. Singletary, and Shu-ling Chen, "The Roper Question and Television vs. Newspapers as Sources of News," *Journalism Quarterly*, 65:12-19 (Spring 1988); Jack M. McLeod and Daniel G. McDonald, "Beyond Simple Exposure: Media Orientations and Their Impact on Political Processes," *Communication Research*, 12:3-33 (June 1985).

3. Thomas E. Patterson and Robert McClure, *The Unseeing Eye: The Myth of Television Power in National Elections* (New York: Putnam's, 1976), pp. 47-58.

4. Garrett J. O'Keefe and L. Erwin Atwood, "Communication and Election Campaigns," in *Handbook of Political Communication*, ed. Dan D. Nimmo and Keith R. Sanders (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1981), pp. 329-57.

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

How do researchers determine what people know about politics and how they have come to know it? One standard of knowledge is accurate understanding of issue differences between major political parties or candidates.

A typical measure asks which candidate is more in favor of various public policies, such as legal abortion, gun control, environmental regulation, or affirmative action. The researcher determines the correct answer from campaign content analysis.[5] Results are often dismaying. Patterson estimated, for example, that by mid-1976 less than half the voters could identify President Ford's issue positions, and fewer still knew those of Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan.[6]

Other studies measure biographical knowledge about candidates, such as their professional and political accomplishments or their home states.[7] Another common test is knowledge of current events.[8]

In single-item studies, people often can recall how they heard about a major event, such as a political assassination.[9] Learning calamitous news, though, does not represent the usual flow of political information from media; often people are told of tragedies by others.[10]

A time-honored method of testing effects is showing people the front page of a newspaper or a single television news program and asking what they remember about it. Such experiments usually produce low recall, particularly for television news,[11] partly because open-ended measurement is unreliable. Cued recall on similar topics produces much higher estimates of knowledge effects.[12]

While we include in our review uncued measures, such as the num-

5. Patterson and McClure, *Unseeing Eye*; David Weaver and Dan Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1992 Presidential Election: Did the 'Nontraditional' Media and Debates Matter?" *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 72:7-17 (Spring 1995); Kathleen A. Martinelli and Steven H. Chaffee, "Measuring New-Voter Learning via Three Channels of Political Information," ibid., pp. 18-32; Xinshu Zhao and Steven H. Chaffee, "Campaign Advertisements Versus Television News as Sources of Political Issue Information," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59:41-65 (Spring 1995).

6. Thomas E. Patterson, *The Mass Media Election: How Americans Choose Their President* (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 153-56.

7. Steven H. Chaffee, Xinshu Zhao, and Glenn Leshner, "Political Knowledge and the Campaign Media of 1992," *Communication Research*, 21:305-24 (June 1994).

8. Vincent Price and John Zaller, "Who Gets the News? Alternative Measures of News Reception and Their Implications for Research," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 57:133-64 (Summer 1993).

9. Bradley S. Greenberg, "Diffusion of the News About the Kennedy Assassination," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 28:225-32 (Summer 1964); Karl-Erik Rosengren, "The Comparative Study of News Diffusion," *European Journal of Communication*, 2:227-55 (June 1987); Walter Gantz, "The Diffusion of News About the Attempted Reagan Assassination," *Journal of Communication*, 33:55-66 (Winter 1983).

10. Steven H. Chaffee, "Mass Media and Interpersonal Channels: Competitive, Convergent, or Complementary?" in *Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World*, 2d ed., ed. Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 57-77.

11. W. Russell Neuman, "Patterns of Recall Among Television News Viewers," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40:115-23 (Spring 1976); John P. Robinson and Mark R. Levy, *The Main Source: What People Learn from Television News* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1986), pp. 57-132.

12. Colin Berry, "Learning from Television News: A Critique of the Research," *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27:359-70 (Fall 1983).

ber of candidates or issues a person can recall, we note that this method is biased toward those with verbal skills. Our analysis does not consider every indicator of political learning. For example, we do not include the literature on agenda setting, which is well covered elsewhere.[13]

Because American voters evaluate candidates' character as well as parties and issues,[14] we consider indicators of image information even though they are not classifiable as correct or incorrect the way biographical and issue-difference answers often are.

Most voters, when asked about policy differences between the major political parties, answer accurately more often than not. Many also have a lot to say about character differences between candidates. Those who are not informed tend not to vote. Still, people vary considerably in political knowledge, and media usage accounts for much of this variation.

GAINING INFORMATION

One clear way to evaluate information sources is to measure knowledge gain and to identify the media sources that might account for it. Few studies, though, measure gains over time. Most are cross-sectional, so results are confounded by individual differences such as intelligence and socioeconomic status. Although educated, intelligent citizens know a good deal about public affairs and use certain media extensively, separating cause and effect is difficult even with rigorous statistical controls.

Not only is specific use of different channels difficult to measure, but these measures are usually correlated.[15] For example, most people who watch television news also see candidates' television ads, and many read newspapers as well. Surveys usually ask people to estimate their habitual exposure or attention to each channel, a measurement procedure that is weak in reliability.

Even so, knowledge-media correlations are better evidence than people's own reports of their learning. While cross-sectional studies cannot provide conclusive positive evidence, they can test causal hypotheses. If research shows no correlation between political knowledge and use of a given channel, the proposition that this channel is informative is rendered questionable.

COMPARING MEDIA

The media of political information that we compare in this section are primarily the newspaper and television news, and secondarily newsmagazines and radio news.

13. Maxwell E. McCombs, "The Agenda-Setting Approach," in *Handbook of Political Communication*, ed. Nimmo and Sanders, pp. 121-40.

14. Richard A. Brody and Benjamin I. Page, "Indifference, Alienation, and Rational Decision," *Public Choice*, 15:1-17 (Summer 1973); Wendy M. Rahn et al., "A Social-Cognitive Model of Candidate Appraisal," in *Information and Democratic Processes*, ed. John A. Ferejohn and James A. Kuklinski (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 136-59.

15. On measurement, see Steven Chaffee and Joan Schleuder, "Measurement and Effects of Attention to Media News," *Human Communication Research*, 13:76-107 (Fall 1986); Martinelli and Chaffee, "New-Voter Learning."

Newspapers

The American newspaper is clearly a major source of political information relating to issues and parties. A survey of California voters during the 1992 campaign, for example, found that newspaper reading and attention were the two strongest predictors of whether a voter would know about party-issue differences.[16] In a 1980 Wisconsin study, newspaper readers were similarly superior in their knowledge of political party differences on issues.[17] Patterson found the same relationship in 1976.[18] Self-reported reliance on the newspaper for one's news also predicts knowledge.[19]

It is, indeed, rare to find a study in which newspaper reading is not a significant predictor of political knowledge. In a tightly controlled 1992 Indiana study, Weaver and Drew report nonsignificant relationships between newspaper use and a four-item issue-knowledge index.[20] They note strong findings for newspapers in similar surveys in California and North Carolina, however,[21] and a 1988 California study of newly naturalized citizens found newspaper attention a significant predictor of a 26-item knowledge index.[22]

Survey research, then, consistently supports the propositions that newspapers are highly informative to their readers and that reading them is a strong predictor of political knowledge in the electorate as a whole.

Television news

No such general conclusion would be widely supported for television news. Many scholars share Patterson and McClure's view that exposure to television news does not inform voters.[23] But recent studies paint a different picture, especially regarding knowledge about candidates.

In studies reported from the 1992 campaign, television news is at least as strong a predictor of political knowledge as the newspaper. In North Carolina, television news was

16. Chaffee, Zhao, and Leshner, "Political Knowledge."

17. Steven H. Chaffee and Albert R. Tims, "News Media Use in Adolescence: Implications for Political Cognitions," in *Communication Yearbook 6*, ed. Michael Burgoon (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), pp. 736-58.

18. Patterson, *Mass Media Election*, pp. 156-65.

19. Lee B. Becker and Sharon Dunwoody, "Media Use, Public Affairs Knowledge and Voting in a Local Election," *Journalism Quarterly*, 59:212-18 (Summer 1982); Dan Berkowitz and David Pritchard, "Political Knowledge and Communication Resources," *Journalism Quarterly*, 66:697-701 (Autumn 1989); Gary R. Pettey, "The Interaction of the Individual's Social Environment, Attention and Interest, and Public Affairs Media Use on Political Knowledge Holding," *Communication Research*, 15:265-81 (June 1988); Hugh M. Culbertson and Guido H. Stempel III, "How Media Use and Reliance Affect Knowledge Level," ibid., 13:579-602 (Oct. 1986); Becker and Dunwoody, "Media Use."

20. Weaver and Drew, "Voter Learning in 1992."

21. Chaffee, Zhao, and Leshner, "Political Knowledge."

22. Martinelli and Chaffee, "New-Voter Learning."

23. Patterson and McClure, *Unseeing Eye*; Robinson and Levy, *Main Source*; Berkowitz and Pritchard, "Political Knowledge"; Becker and Whitney, "Media Dependencies"; Pettey, "Interaction"; Larry J. Weber and Dan B. Fleming, "Media Use and Student Knowledge of Current Events," *Journalism Quarterly*, 60:356-58 (Summer 1983); Patterson, *Mass Media Election*, pp. 156-65.

the most important correlate of knowledge of issue differences between candidates.[24] In Indiana, apart from general "campaign interest," television news exposure was the only significant predictor of knowledge of differences between Bush and Clinton on the issues.[25] In California, biographical knowledge about Bush, Clinton, and Perot was most strongly predicted by attention to news on television.[26]

Sue found that television news reliance—a measure that controls for other media—specifically predicts citizens' knowledge of personal information about candidates.[27] Television reliance correlated also with interest in personal qualities at the beginning of the 1992 election year, and with voting on the basis of personal qualities at the end. Television was clearly the principal medium through which voters informed themselves about candidates as individuals, as distinct from their identification with parties and their stands on issues.[28]

Television's impact is not limited to personal information, though.[29] A comparison of six elections in various states from 1984 to 1992 found television news consistently informative regarding differences between candidates on various issues.[30] In 1988, newly naturalized citizens learned about issue differences between Bush and Dukakis equally from television news and newspapers.[31]

A general rehabilitation of the reputation of television news has been building in the literature for some years. Becker and Dunwoody reported that in 1979, television news fostered learning in a local election,[32] as did Culbertson and Stempel regarding knowledge on a statewide issue in 1983.[33] In general, then, a variety of studies have been confirming the power of television news to enhance political knowledge.

Magazines and radio

Traditional media other than newspapers and television continue, of course, to produce and disseminate political news. In early research, newsmagazines appeared to make a significant contribution to political knowledge.[34] A 1980 Wisconsin survey found that magazine readers were better informed, on both free recall and cued political knowledge questions, even than those who regularly read newspapers.[35] More recent data suggest this impact has declined, however.[36]

24. Chaffee, Zhao, and Leshner, "Political Knowledge."

25. Weaver and Drew, "Voter Learning in 1992," p. 11.

26. Chaffee, Zhao, and Leshner, "Political Knowledge," p. 313.

27. Valerie M. Sue, "Television Reliance and Candidates' Personal Qualities in the 1992 Election" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1994).

28. Ibid.

29. Nancy B. Lowden et al., "Media Use in the Primary Election: A Secondary Medium Model," *Communication Research*, 21:293-304 (June 1994).

30. Zhao and Chaffee, "Campaign Advertisements."

31. Martinelli and Chaffee, "New-Voter Learning."

32. Becker and Dunwoody, "Media Use."

33. Culbertson and Stempel, "Media Use and Reliance."

34. Angus Campbell et al., *Elections and the Political Order* (New York: John Wiley, 1966).

35. Chaffee and Tims, "News Media Use," pp. 736-58.

36. Chaffee, Zhao, and Leshner, "Political Knowledge," p. 313.

Virtually no recent study attributes significant political learning effects specifically to radio news, which was a major source prior to the coming of television.[37] Radio use is difficult to measure; people tend not to know how much they listen or pay attention to news on the radio, which often accompanies primary activities such as work or driving. Several studies report no impact of radio news on political learning; often such nonfindings are omitted from published articles.[38]

Occasionally, radio is a widespread initial source of a breaking news story, particularly for those who are in transit when the calamity occurs.[39] But American television today often interrupts regular programming with news bulletins, so it usually plays the immediate role that radio once held—and still holds in some countries.[40]

Magazines provide information in depth to political elites, but the line between newspapers and newsmagazines is blurred, as most metropolitan newspapers today include weekly newsmagazine sections. While the print-broadcast comparison remains useful in political learning, rival media within each category have become less distinct as contributors to knowledge.

INFORMATION SEEKING

Most conceptions of media effects assume a rather passive audience. This model is not especially appropriate for understanding political learning, since many people actively seek information. Where do people go to find political information?

The answer is newspapers, according to most research. Newspaper use is consistently associated with informational purposes and with direct evidence of political information seeking.[41]

Several field experiments demonstrate this clearly. Frank found that heightened political involvement following a university class discussion of current events produced significant increases in newspaper reading but not in television news viewing.[42] A similar experiment by Atkin, who told high school students there was to be a class discussion, yielded a similar result.[43]

37. Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Sidney Kraus and Dennis K. Davis, *The Effects of Mass Communication on Political Behavior* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), pp. 48-54.

38. Berkowitz and Pritchard, "Political Knowledge"; Dan Drew and David Weaver, "Voter Learning in the 1988 Presidential Election: Did the Debates Matter?" *Journalism Quarterly*, 68:27-37 (Spring-Summer 1991); idem, "Voter Learning in the 1990 Off-Year Election: Did the Media Matter?" *Journalism Quarterly*, 70:356-68 (Summer 1993); idem, "Voter Learning in 1992"; Chaffee, Zhao, and Leshner, "Political Knowledge."

39. Gantz, "Diffusion of News."

40. Greenberg, "Diffusion of the News"; Rosengren, "Comparative Study."

41. Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch, and Hadassah Haas, "On the Use of Mass Media for Important Things," *American Sociological Review*, 38:164-81 (Apr. 1973).

42. Stacey Blair Frank, "Situational Influence on Political Involvement and Information Seeking: A Field Experiment" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995).

43. Charles K. Atkin, "Anticipated Communication and Mass Media Information-Seeking," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:188-99 (Summer 1972).

A field experiment to evaluate an intensive school curriculum about voting found much greater effects on newspaper reading than on viewing of television news.[44] In a field survey, Pettey found that variance in political knowledge is explained by information seeking via newspapers but not television.[45]

Television is the preferred source for judging candidates' personal qualities, such as intelligence or character.[46] During a 1992 primary campaign, issue-oriented voters relied mainly on newspapers, but if they were also concerned about a candidate's electability, they turned to television.[47]

Television, though, seems to be a more passively used medium, characterized by "learning without involvement."[48] Patterson found, for example, that the least interested voters gained the most issue knowledge from watching party conventions and candidate debates on television.[49] Neuman, Just, and Crigler concluded that television "can break the attention barrier for issues of low salience," while "newspapers and magazines are better sources for new information when the audience is already motivated to pay attention."[50]

In crisis situations when breaking news is of great public concern, people often turn to television and radio for up-to-the-minute information.[51] Television was frequently consulted by American citizens during the 1986 Reagan-Gorbachev summit, for example, and during the Persian Gulf war of 1991.[52] Situations of national uncertainty stimulate constant updating via electronic media.

GROUPS THAT LACK INFORMATION

Jeffersonian democracy presumes that all citizens are equal, but this is no more true with regard to political information than in any other sphere. Which channels are most important in enlightening those who, for various structural reasons, normally tend not to know as much as others?

Young people

A political system must socialize its youths to become adult citizens, and there is a good deal of research

44. Steven H. Chaffee et al., "Stimulation of Communication: Reconceptualizing the Study of Political Socialization" (Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, DC, Aug. 1995).

45. Pettey, "Interaction."

46. Sue, "Television Reliance."

47. Lowden et al., "Media Use."

48. Herbert Krugman, "The Impact of Television Advertising: Learning Without Involvement," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 29:349-56 (Fall 1965).

49. Patterson, *Mass Media Election*, pp. 163-65.

50. W. Russell Neuman, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler, *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 114.

51. Greenberg, "Diffusion of the News"; Rosengren, "Comparative Study."

52. Walter Gantz, Michael Fitzmaurice, and Ed Fink, "Assessing the Active Component of Information-Seeking," *Journalism Quarterly*, 68:630-37 (Winter 1991); Stephen Earl Bennett, "The Persian Gulf War's Impact on Americans' Political Information," *Political Behavior*, 16:179-201 (June 1994).

on the role of mass media in this process.[53]

Television is the principal channel by which young people in America and other Western democracies first encounter politics. When asked about government, young children usually respond with instances from television.[54] This pattern continues until early adolescence, when the young divide into two groups, readers and nonreaders.[55] Those who follow politics in newspapers and newsmagazines tend to become the more knowledgeable and active sector of the electorate.[56]

The long-range importance of reading does not mean that television's role in political socialization is negligible. Television provides a necessary bridge in development from the child who is innocent of the political world to the adult reader well versed in issues of politics.

Research on adolescents from the 1960s onward shows positive correlations between political knowledge and watching television news.[57] Similar relationships are found for newspaper reading.[58] This means that young people are drawing upon both television and print to learn about politics. As they mature, many continue to rely on television. Today's young adults, reared on television, seem to be learning more from that medium than did earlier generations.[59]

Political socialization does not simply follow a smooth upward curve.[60] The process is episodic and intertwined with information from mass media. Most of the time, an adolescent's cognitions and behaviors reinforce one another. Young people who are politically oriented follow the news, express opinions, and keep abreast of events; those who are not do not.

Occasionally, though, a dramatic political event—for example, an election, or a politically oriented television series such as *Roots*[61]—can destabilize a person's structure of political opinions and activities. This may lead to information seeking in order to establish a new equilibrium.[62] Although external destabilizing events often reach young people

53. Steven H. Chaffee, L. Scott Ward, and Leonard P. Tipton, "Mass Communication and Political Socialization," *Journalism Quarterly*, 47:647-59, 666 (Winter 1970); Margaret Conway, A. J. Stevens, and Robert Smith, "The Relation Between Media Use and Children's Civic Awareness," *Journalism Quarterly*, 52:531-38 (Autumn 1975); Kraus and Davis, *Effects of Mass Communication*, pp. 8-47; Charles K. Atkin, "Political Socialization," in *Handbook of Political Communication*, ed. Nimmo and Sanders, pp. 299-328; Steven H. Chaffee and Seung-Mock Yang, "Communication and Political Socialization," in *Political Socialization for Democracy*, ed. Orit Ichilov (New York: Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1990), pp. 137-57.

54. Robert W. Connell, *The Child's Construction of Politics* (Melbourne, Australia: University of Melbourne Press, 1971).

55. Chaffee and Yang, "Communication and Political Socialization."

56. Chaffee and Tims, "News Media Use."

57. Atkin, "Political Socialization."

58. Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton, "Mass Communication and Political Socialization"; Chaffee and Schleuder, "Measurement and Effects."

59. Atkin, "Political Socialization"; Chaffee and Tims, "News Media Use"; Chaffee and Schleuder, "Measurement and Effects."

60. Chaffee et al., "Stimulation of Communication."

61. K. Kyoon Hur, "Impact of 'Roots' on Black and White Teenagers," *Journal of Broadcasting*, 22:289-98 (Summer 1978).

62. John H. Flavell, *Cognitive Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 6-11.

via television, the search for new, restabilizing information appears mostly to involve increased newspaper reading.[63]

Immigrants

Absorption of immigrants is a long-standing feature of American political culture. What role do American media play for adults who have already been socialized in another political system?

Television is the key bridging medium for immigrant socialization, much as it is for adolescents. Television news and the newspaper made approximately equal contributions to political enlightenment in two surveys of immigrants in California.[64] Television news exposure, much more than print, predicted knowledge of issue differences between the political parties—especially among more recent immigrants and those with lesser skills in English.

Knowledge gaps

The concept of "knowledge gap" processes was introduced in a study of rural development, but it has been applied to political knowledge as well.[65] The model assumes that lower socioeconomic groups tend to be less knowledgeable than higher strata. A sustained communication effort, such as an election campaign, can either widen or narrow this gap, depending on the kinds of information it provides and to whom they are provided.

Some authors suggest that television may have a leveling influence on political knowledge,[66] but research to date has not supported that view. Most analyses indicate that newspaper reading contributes more to closing the knowledge gap.[67] Even though newspapers are more accessible to upper socioeconomic groups, heavy press coverage of a divisive issue tends to reduce the gap.[68] Very few studies attribute this kind of effect specifically to television news.

CONCLUSION

This review suggests a rough parity between television news and the newspaper, a conclusion at odds with what was thought twenty and even ten years ago. But such a summary judgment would obscure our more important finding that the contributions these competing media make to political knowledge are complementary.

63. Chaffee et al., "Stimulation of Communication."

64. Steven H. Chaffee, Clifford Nass, and Seung-Mock Yang, "The Bridging Role of Television in Immigrant Political Socialization," *Human Communication Research*, 17:266-88 (Dec. 1990); Martinelli and Chaffee, "New-Voter Learning."

65. Phillip J. Tichenor, Clarice N. Olien, and George A. Donohue, "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 34:159-70 (Summer 1970).

66. Neuman, "Patterns of Recall"; Walter Gantz, "How Uses and Gratifications Affect Recall of Television News," *Journalism Quarterly*, 55:664-72, 681 (Winter 1978).

67. Cecilie Gaziano, "The Knowledge Gap: An Analytical Review of Media Effects," *Communication Research*, 10:447-86 (Oct. 1983).

68. Phillip J. Tichenor et al., "Community Issues, Conflict, and Public Affairs Knowledge," in *New Models for Mass Communication Research*, ed. Peter Clarke (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1973), pp. 45-79.

Although people seek information primarily via print, those who are not actively seeking political news learn more from television. Television provides voters a close look at candidates, while newspapers tell more about policy differences between the major parties. Reading news is characteristic of politically active citizens; television is a bridging medium, familiarizing young people and immigrants with the American political system.

Television brings news highlights to the less assiduous citizens, while the newspaper covers political content in greater depth and is preferred by those who are more involved in politics. In all, the informational power of television news appears to be stronger than earlier authors believed.