

A STUDY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
HOSTILE MEDIA PERCEPTION AND SELECTIVE
EXPOSURE PHENOMENON

By

CHANJUNG KIM

Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications

Korea University

Seoul

2001

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 2013

A STUDY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
HOSTILE MEDIA PERCEPTION AND SELECTIVE
EXPOSURE PHENOMENON

Thesis Approved:

Kenneth Eun Han Kim

Thesis Adviser

Derina Holtzhausen

Lori McKinnon

Name: CHANJUNG KIM

Date of Degree: MAY, 2013

Title of Study: A STUDY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOSTILE
MEDIA PERCEPTION AND SELECTIVE EXPOSURE
PHENOMENON

Major Field: MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Abstract: This study aimed to determine how hostile media perception theory would change under selective exposure phenomenon. The 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) data were used for analysis. First, the results revealed that selective exposure phenomenon existed during the 2008 presidential election throughout all types of media. Second, it was found that people who selectively exposed themselves to the politically congruent campaign media program tended to perceive the media coverage as in favor of their supporting candidate. Finally, the results showed that unlike the previous findings, people with strong partisanship tended to perceive the campaign media coverage as in favor of their supporting candidate. The theoretical and practical implications were discussed. Also, the limitations of the study were suggested.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	4
Selective Exposure Phenomenon.....	4
Selective Exposure and its Impacts.....	8
Hostile Media Perception.....	10
Hostile Media Perception in the Fragmented Information Era.....	14
Hypotheses.....	17
III. METHODOLOGY.....	19
Data.....	19
Measurement.....	20
IV. FINDINGS.....	27
V. CONCLUSION.....	35
Discussion.....	35
Implication.....	39
Limitation.....	41
Future Research.....	42
REFERENCES.....	44

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.....	26
2.....	28
3.....	30
4.....	32
5.....	34

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Selective exposure phenomenon refers to the audience member's selection of information that is agreeable to their predispositions (Klapper, 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). In their landmark article, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1948) found that people tend to expose themselves selectively to partisan propaganda that supports their pre-existing positions. The phenomenon was highlighted and recognized as a factor that could lead to large-scale change in existing theories (Bennet & Iyengar, 2010; Klapper, 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). They argued that this phenomenon limits the effects of media in reinforcing, rather than altering, people's previous attitude (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948).

This phenomenon was dormant in the middle of the 20th century, as the three media networks, namely, NBC, ABC, and CBS, dominated around 80% of the media markets and provided homogeneous content (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008; Webster, 2010). However, in the 21st century, when the development of communication technology and the growth in the number and variety of news outlets created a fragmented information environment, selective exposure phenomenon was again documented (Lawrence, Sides, & Farrell, 2010; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Stroud, 2007; 2008).

The resurgence of this phenomenon drew attention to the effects of selective exposure on existing theories. Bennet and Iyengar (2008) argued that media messages can only serve to reinforce prior predispositions, as audiences try to see what they think is in favor of their beliefs, whereas other scholars argued that selective exposure phenomenon fosters the explanatory power of persuasion theories (e.g., Holbert, Garrett, Laurel, & Gleason, 2010). However, compared with the abundance of anecdotal debates, little empirical evidence supports the influence of this phenomenon on existing theories.

The current study pays attention to change in hostile media perception theory, as the selective exposure phenomenon seemingly negates its premise. Hostile media perception or hostile media effect refers to the tendency of people highly involved in an issue to see presumably balanced media coverage of that issue as biased against their point of view (Gunther, Miller, & Liebhart, 2009). Based on the above definition, hostile media perception assumes balanced news. In other words, hostile media perception has been examined to determine the psychological mechanism or the different perceptions of people when facing balanced news. Although this assumption may have been valid when balanced news was arguably the norm (Gunther, Edgerly, Akin, & Broesch, 2012), the new media environment characterized by selective exposure phenomenon makes it seem outdated. According to selective exposure theory, when media outlets provide fragmented information, and audiences seek information that supports their views, the premise of hostile media perception, namely, balanced news, could be invalidated.

Therefore, how would hostile media perception change if people selectively expose themselves to information agreeable to their beliefs or views rather than balanced

news? Is hostile media perception still observed in a more naturalistic rather than experimental setting? This study seeks to provide answers to these questions.

This study uses 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) data. The survey measured media usage, political opinions, and beliefs of electorate in the United States throughout the 2008 presidential election, and thus the data contain indicators of people's perception of campaign news coverage. Moreover, sharp conflicts surrounding the presidential election have arisen among partisans, making such conflict a good focus for this study. Several studies have been conducted on hostile media perception in the context of the elections (Huge & Glynn, 2010; Richardson, Huddy, & Morgan, 2008).

This study can contribute to the theoretical development of the communication academic field in two ways. It is the first attempt at providing empirical evidence for debates regarding the effects of selective exposure phenomenon on the existing theory. By doing so, this study can contribute to refining hostile media perception theory.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Selective exposure phenomenon

Selective exposure phenomenon was discovered over half a century ago. Lazarsfeld et al. (1948) examined how mass media influences the people's choice in voting for the president. They found that electorates selectively expose themselves to media propaganda. According to the study, during the presidential election in 1940, three-fourths of the respondents paid attention to media propaganda from their own party, whereas only 20% of the respondents exposed themselves to propaganda from the opposition. Furthermore, Democrats tended to listen to the radio more to obtain information for decision making, whereas Republicans used newspapers more, as the majority of the nation's newspapers openly supported Republican candidates at that time. The authors pointed out the availability of news sources and personal predispositions of the audience as reasons for this phenomenon.

A decade later, Klapper (1960) conceptualized this phenomenon as "selective exposure" (p.18), and argued that because of the selectivity of audiences, "persuasive mass communication functions far more frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as

an agent of change” (p.15), marking the start of the so-called *minimal effect* era and finishing the *strong effect* era. Around the same time, several empirical studies lent support for the selective exposure phenomenon (e.g. Schramm & Carter, 1959).

Dissonance theory gave theoretical context to the phenomenon, suggesting that attitude-inconsistent information induces mental discomfort, called dissonance (Festinger, 1964).

As dissonance is perceived as an aversive arousal, people are motivated to reduce this state. One of the best ways for reducing this state is that people would selectively expose themselves to attitude-consistent information supporting their views and neglect inconsistent information (Frey & Rosch, 1984).

However, this minimal effect era soon led to another strong effect era. From the 1960s to the 1980s, two important changes in the media environment and in social structure allowed scholars to again posit the strong media effect on audiences: a) almost all people were exposed to the same information from one of the three network newscasts, and b) the social network that exerted influence on information filtering grew weak (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008). The implication is that the monopolistic media environment and the mass society, in which interpersonal relationships no longer influence people’s public affair, brought people no other alternative for seeking information but to rely on the media. As Bennet and Iyengar (2008) described, more than 80% of audiences primarily depended on the three evening news broadcasts to keep abreast of public affairs. Therefore, the environment created by the three network news environment constrain audiences from seeking information , and force audiences to be exposed to homogeneous information (Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009). In other words, this media environment prevented people from exposing themselves to

media outlets that were aligned with their views. During that era, Chaffee and Miyo (1983) conducted an experiment but could not find any evidence for selective exposure. They concluded that reinforcement of prior beliefs “may have been well suited to an earlier political era” (p. 34).

However, radical change in the media environment in the 21st century led to the resurgence of the selective exposure phenomenon. With the invention of the Internet, development of cable channels, and explosion of media outlets, people were exposed to a totally different media environment compared with that only two decades ago (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008). Most of all, the availability of media channels had increased. People could easily access thousands of online sites and hundreds of TV channels to obtain information. The average household could receive over 100 channels of programming in 2004, compared with only 33 channels in 1990 (Webster, 2005).

Aside from availability, contents have been as diverse as the number of channels. In this multi-channel environment, media outlets have created and provided diverse information to be competitive (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008). Each channel tries to establish a distinctive brand by providing differentiated program, leading to a strong correlation between content and channel. Thus, as many content analyses have shown, Fox News characterizes itself as having a strong ideological slant toward conservatives, whereas MSNBC goes the opposite direction (Groeling, 2008; Groseclose & Milyo, 2005; Holtzman et al., 2011). Webster (2005) proposed three characteristics of this new era: a) diversity of programming, b) correlation between content and channel, and c) differential availability of channels. He argued that this new media environment leads to information fragmentation, “a process by which the mass audience, which was once concentrated on

three or four viewing options, becomes more widely distributed” (p. 367). Data from the national survey clearly show the tendency for fragmentation in the news environment. The regular audience for nightly network news, which dominated the media market in the 1980s, declined markedly through the 1990s, whereas the share ratio of cable TV increased. Thus, only 27% of audiences regularly watch the nightly network news on CBS, ABC, or NBC, compared with 34% who watch cable news channels (PEW, 2012).

Scholars did not hesitate to point to this fragmented information environment as a reason for the revival of the selective exposure phenomenon. For example, Iyengar and Hahn (2009) argued that in the fragmented media environment, “partisans gravitate to alternative sources perceived as more congenial to their preferences” (p. 22). They explained that the enormous and diverse supply of information and availability make it far easier for the audience to select information that exposes them to attitude-consistent information.

However, disputes have long existed on whether selective exposure really exists, as several empirical studies returned outcomes that differed from those anticipated by the theory. For example, Sears and Freedman (1965) conducted a mock jury experiment to test the theory. Participants were led to read an abbreviated report of a trial on juvenile crime and to vote on the verdict. Then, participants were asked to choose which among five articles they most wanted to read, as some of the articles were consonant with a pro-conviction vote and others were dissonant. Only 43.1% of subjects chose an article that supported their first position. A very similar experiment was conducted one year later, whereby 50% of the subjects chose material that was consonant with their first opinion (Sears, 1966).

Based on these results, Sears and Freedman (1967) argued that selective exposure was not necessarily motivated by any preference for supportive information, but was influenced by many other factors, such as personal network or utility. For example, businessmen or lawyers are likely to attend Republican political meetings that could provide useful friendship and information. Stockbrokers read the Wall Street Journal not because of their political predisposition but because of its extensive coverage of financial and business news. They described this phenomenon as “de facto” selective exposure (p. 196). The controversy surrounding selective exposure phenomenon persists today. However, a growing body of evidence has supported the validity of selective exposure phenomenon in various topics. For example, Stroud (2008) found that politically motivated selective exposure exists in all forms of mass media, including TV, radio, newspaper, and political websites. Lawrence et al. (2010) found that blog readers gravitate toward blogs that coincide with their political beliefs. Additionally, selective exposure occurs among film audiences (Stroud, 2007).

Selective Exposure and its Impacts

An important issue surrounding selective exposure phenomenon concerns its effects on existing theories. A consistent argument is that selective exposure limits the persuasive effect of media message. For instance, Lazarsfeld (1949) argued that because people turn to propaganda that reaffirms their original decision, selective exposure only serves to reinforce, rather than alter people’s previous attitudes. Klapper (1960) reasserted this argument a decade later, and was revived by current scholars. Bennet and

Iyengar (2008) argued that selective exposure leads to a return of the minimal effect era. They explained,

as media audiences devolve into smaller, like-minded subsets of the electorate, it becomes less likely that media messages will do anything other than reinforce prior predispositions. Most media users will rarely find themselves in the path of attitude-discrepant information. The increasing level of selective exposure based on partisan preference thus presages a new era of minimal consequences, at least insofar as persuasive effects are concerned (p. 725).

However, other scholars refute this perspective, arguing instead that selective exposure could foster attitudinal change. For example, Holbert et al. (2010) proposed an elaboration likelihood model (ELM) as framework for anticipating change in existing theories, and argued that persuasive media message increases, rather than reduces, influence on the audience. They explained that in the new media era, an audience who can choose a media source in light of personal political predisposition is likely to be vulnerable to persuasive message because the audience would have *motivation* and *ability* to consume the persuasive message. According to the ELM model, the motivation and ability of consumers are the two factors causing them to be engaged in the persuasive process (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996).

An ongoing debate surrounds the effect of selective exposure phenomenon on existing theories. Selective exposure certainly affects existing theories regardless of whether the effect attenuates the power of the theories or not. If so, what effect does selective exposure phenomenon have on hostile media perception?

Hostile Media Perception

Vallone et al. (1986) exposed both pro-Arab and pro-Israeli students to presumably neutral news coverage of the Middle East conflict, and they found that the pro-Arab students perceived the news coverage biased toward Israel, whereas the pro-Israeli students perceived the news coverage biased toward Arabs. They called this finding as hostile media phenomenon. Their finding is significant because it contradicts the results of previous studies. Before their documentation, research with a similar experimental setting has consistently reported biased assimilation, which refers to the tendency for partisans to interpret information as supporting their point of view (Lord, Ross & Lepper, 1979).

Gunther and Schmitt (2004) pointed out that the contradictory phenomenon is derived from the differences in experimental settings, and found that hostile media perception is elicited when participants watch broad-reaching sources, such as news media, rather than low-reaching sources, such as a student's essay. They concluded that hostile media perception could depend on how people perceive the reach of sources. Building on the third-person effect, they explained that people tend to think that other people are more vulnerable to slanted media coverage, making the former group process information in a defensive mode and generating hostile media perception rather than biased assimilation. Gunther et al. (2009) explained,

individuals believed the slant of media content could broadly influence public attitudes, and their perceptions of public opinion changed accordingly. Concerns about such widespread influence might, then, put partisans into a defensive

processing mode in which disagreeable information would seem to be especially prominent or prevalent and hence the overall content judged to be unfairly biased. (p. 749).

As to why hostile media perception occurs, the dominant explanation is that people's involvement and attitude toward a certain issue could influence their assessment of news coverage on that issue (Gunther & Liebhart, 2006; Gunther, Miller, & Liebhart, 2009; Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Schmitt, Gunther, & Liebhart, 2004). Drawing on social judgment theory, this line of explanation regards hostile media perception as a contrast effect. Social judgment theory views people's attitude to be composed of three latitudes: (a) latitude of acceptance, (b) latitude of non-commitment, and (c) latitude of rejection (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). The contrast effect arises when a message is placed in the latitude of rejection, whereas the assimilation effect arises when a message is placed in the latitude of acceptance. Contrast effect refers to the people's tendency to judge a message to be farther from their own views than it actually is (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Thus, when the contrast effect arises, people tend to disagree with a message and not be persuaded by it. Distinguishing between contrast and assimilation effects depends on the degree of ego-involvement that people have with a certain issue. Social judgment theory explains that people who have high ego-involvement with an issue are likely to reject a persuasive message about that issue, placing the message in the latitude of rejection (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

Involvement has been variously conceptualized in hostile media perception studies (Choi et al., 2009). Choi et al. (2009) classified the concept of involvement and found that some scholars used partisanship as an indicator of involvement (e.g. Christen

et al., 2002; Gunther & Schmitt, 2004), while others employed opinion extremity (Christen & Gunther, 2003; Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Gunther & Christen, 2002). Also, they found that political party attachment or political ideology was used as an indicator of involvement in the context of political issue (e.g. Huges & Glynn, 2010; Richardson et al., 2008).

The importance of involvement has been supported through many studies. For instance Vallone et al. (1985) first documented hostile media perception with strong partisan, from pro-Arab and pro-Israeli students, in the context of the Middle East conflict. Also, Christen, Kannaovakun, and Gunther (1998) conducted an experiment in the context of the 1997 UPS strike with highly partisan participants, that is, UPS managers and UPS workers, and found clear hostile media perception. Also, in a gubernatorial election, highly involved Republican and Democrat groups displayed strong hostile media perception (Huges & Glynn, 2010). On the other hand, Giner-Sorolla and Chaiken (1994) recruited participants from college classes, rather than from partisan groups, and measured their perception of news coverage on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Interestingly, this experiment produced only partial support for hostile media perception. They explained that the result can be attributed to the use of participants with low involvement. Thus, involvement was pointed out as a necessary condition for hostile media perception studies.

Extensive research has replicated such hostile media perception in various topics and settings. Meanwhile, several studies have focused on the theoretical mechanism of hostile media perception and have contributed to elaborating the theory (Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Gunther, Miller, & Liebhart, 2009; Schmitt, Gunther, & Liebhart, 2004;

Choi, Yang & Chang, 2009). Through those studies, other predictors on hostile media perception, as well as involvement, were found, such as prior belief about media credibility (Arpan & Raney, 2003; Giner-Sorrola & Chaiken, 1994) and interpersonal communication network (Eveland & Shah, 2003), to name a few. For example, Arpan and Raney (2003) investigated hostile media perception in a sports news context, and found that people displayed more hostile perception to a news article reported by a rival town newspaper, compared with that of a hometown newspaper. They argued that the people's prior belief that the rival town newspaper is less likely to report truth favoring their hometown team was what leads to hostile media perception.

In addition to predictors, it was found that hostile media perception could occur in forms other than the news. Richardson, Huddy, and Morgan (2008) found that the political debate moderator in the 2004 Bush-Kerry presidential election debate brought hostile media perception to the audience. They documented that people saw the debate moderator as biased against their preferred candidate, but they perceived that their candidate won the debate. For the presence of such empirical evidence and theoretical refinement, hostile media perception was acknowledged as one of the most robust phenomena in the communication field (Huge & Glynn, 2010).

Hostile Media Perception in the Fragmented Information Era

As indicated in its definition, hostile media perception occurs not because of the actual slant of news coverage, but because of the audience's own beliefs or attitude. Hostile media perception has been demonstrated in the context of balanced news (Gunther et al., 2012). However, this assumption is seemingly no longer valid. As

selective exposure theory indicates, the appearance of opinionated media outlets and audience's selection of information on the basis of their beliefs invalidate the assumption of balanced news. This change in media environment results in conflict and incompatibility between these two phenomena. If the theory is correct, the existence of hostile media perception is not possible, as people can be exposed to slanted information from the outset, which negate the basis of hostile media perception. On the other hand, if hostile media perception is correct, then selective exposure phenomenon makes no sense as people would not find any information that supports their views. Nonetheless, selective exposure and hostile media perception have been successfully observed in previous works, although the coexistence of two phenomena is unlikely from the standpoint of ecological validity. The methodological artifact appears to be one of the reasons for the coexistence of two phenomena. Almost all laboratory experiments on hostile media perception assume the coexistence of balanced articles on a certain issue and audience who seek those articles. However, these experimental settings are very different from the consumption of information in the real world (Bennet & Iyengar, 2010). In other words, the presence of hostile media perception in experimental settings may not correspond to media consumption in the fragmented information environment.

This contradictory situation begs the following questions. How will hostile media perception be changed when the methodological artifacts are eliminated? Is hostile media perception still observed in the new media environment, in which audiences are exposed to news coverage agreeable to their points of view? Predicting the answer to these questions is difficult given the lack of empirical evidence. However, several studies have given a hint for the answers to these questions. In an experiment, Gunther et al. (2001)

exposed participants to explicitly slanted news coverage. They showed pro-animal slanted news to two oppositional groups: animal rights activists and primate-research supporters. They found that partisans on each side of the issue perceived the news coverage to be biased toward the animal rights activist group, but both groups perceived the coverage as more unfavorable toward their position than others. In other words, primate-research supporters saw the news as significantly more biased against primate research than did the animal rights activist. They termed this finding as “relative hostile media perception.” However, strictly speaking, this finding may show assimilation bias from the animal rights activists’ standpoint because they perceived the article to be biased toward them although the degree of perceptual bias was relatively smaller than that of the primate-research supporters.

Another study showed similar results. In another experiment, Gunther et al. (2012) showed three types of articles, that is, pro-vaccination, neutral, and anti-vaccination articles, to two groups: anti-vaccination partisans and a disinterested group. They found that, when the anti-vaccination partisans read the neutral article or pro-vaccination slanted article, these news articles were perceived to be more biased in the pro-vaccination direction compared with the disinterested group, thereby validating the existence of hostile media perception. However, when the anti-vaccination partisans read the anti-vaccination slanted article, they perceived the news article to be in favor of their group rather than to the pro-vaccination direction. In other words, hostile media perception disappeared when the partisans encountered the news article that was congenial to their views. Therefore, the authors concluded that hostile media perception may occur only under the condition of fair and balanced information. These findings

provide a basis for the assumption that hostile media perception may undergo a change in terms of its direction under selective exposure condition, in which people see the news coverage slanted toward their views.

In addition to the body of evidence on the issue, the theoretical concern between selective exposure and hostile media perception should be considered. As the definition of selective exposure indicates, selective exposure phenomenon occurs because of personal beliefs or predisposition, whereas in the context of political information, it would be due to political predisposition. Thus, in almost all research, political predisposition has been operationally defined as political partisanship, such as political identification or political ideologies (e.g. Garret, 2010; Iyengar, 2010; Stroud, 2008; Stroud, 2009; Stroud 2010). Also, as mentioned earlier, involvement has been conceptualized as partisanship in hostile media perception studies. Especially, it has been operationally defined as political partisanship in the context of political issue, which is the same operational definition as political disposition in selective exposure.

The duplication of these two concepts provides a logical reason to predict how hostile media perception theory is likely to change. According to selective exposure theory, political predisposition is positively related with selective exposure. Also, selective exposure might be negatively related with hostile media perception on the basis of the literature mentioned earlier. Thus, political predisposition would have a negative relationship with hostile media perception. When considering that the operational definition of political predisposition is identical with involvement in hostile media perception, it would be plausible to propose that involvement would have a negative relationship with hostile media perception. In other words, people who have high

involvement in a certain issue are likely to perceive news coverage about that issue as in favor of their point of view. However, there is little theoretical and empirical evidence for this reasoning, so it is difficult to predict the accurate change of hostile media perception theory.

Hypotheses

This study is interested in the theoretical change of hostile media perception under selective exposure phenomenon, and thus, it first needs to establish the existence of selective exposure phenomenon within the sample. As mentioned earlier, some studies have documented that selective exposure phenomenon does not exist (e.g., Sears & Freedman, 1965; 1967), and debates continue to surround the existence of selective exposure phenomenon. However, recent studies have consistently documented the existence of selective exposure phenomenon in various topics and settings. Therefore,

H1) People with more strongly held political partisanship will be more likely to select politically congenial media outlets.

Several hostile media perception studies have documented that when people encountered media coverage overtly slanted in favor of their point of views, they perceived the media coverage as in favor of their point of views. Therefore,

H2) The more people selectively expose themselves to media coverage that is agreeable to their political partisanship, the more they would perceive campaign media coverage to be in favor of their supporting candidate.

Selective exposure phenomenon has long been argued to limit the effect of persuasive media message on the audience, begging the question what effect selective exposure has on hostile media perception theory. The duplication of involvement and political predisposition provides underpinnings to predict how selective exposure phenomenon influences the change in hostile media perception theory. Nonetheless, there is little theoretical and empirical evidence to predict the change of relationship between involvement and hostile media perception. Thus, the following research question is posed :

RQ1) How do political partisanship and selective exposure operate in hostile media perception?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Data

This study used data from the 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES). This survey measured media usage, political opinions and beliefs of electorate in the United State throughout the 2008 presidential election. One of the biggest advantages of this data is that it contains indicators of people's perception of campaign news coverage and measurement for selective exposure phenomenon. The NAES survey is composed of two sets of data: telephone and online survey. In this study, however, only the telephone survey data will be used for analysis because the measurement of the news coverage perception was only included in the telephone survey data. The telephone component is a rolling cross-sectional (RCS) survey conducted daily over the course of the 2008 election from December 17, 2007 to November 3, 2008. The total number of cases of the telephone survey is 56,000.

Generally, the hostile media perception was measured when the oppositional two groups perceive media coverage as biased in favor of the other group's point of view. However, the NAES survey started before the primary, so more than 15 candidates

appeared in the questionnaire. Thus, it needs to limit the candidates up to two in order to avoid methodological complexity. To do so, this study only included data collected after June 24, when the primary election was finished and candidates for presidential election of the two major parties was decided. After all, the total of the cases used in main analysis was 24,942.

Measurement

Hostile Media Perception. According to the definition of hostile media perception, its presence was claimed when a negative relationship was found between personal opinion and perceived media coverage (Gunther et al., 2001). Drawing on this definition, Choi et al. (2009) invented the measurement by calculating the directional distance between one's perception on news coverage (i.e., perceived media slant) against one's own viewpoint (i.e., personal opinion). This study employed the same method. To do so, first, a perceived media slant measurement was constructed. Survey respondents who were exposed to the media programs in the past week were asked which presidential candidate the media favored during the campaign. Then, the respondents listened to the name of each candidate, and evaluated the media slant with a nominal scale. Because of number of candidates, there were two dichotomous measurements. These two measurements were united into one measurement and recoded into 1 and -1. If respondents perceived media coverage as biased toward Obama, -1 was given. However, if respondents perceived media coverage as biased toward McCain, 1 was given.

Second, personal opinion measurement was created using candidate support variable. Since the origin questionnaire asked respondents to answer the question about how much they supported the candidate who they already selected for support in the previous question, there were two measurements for each candidate. These two measurements were also summed into one measurement, range from -3 (strongly support McCain) to 3 (strongly support Obama).

Finally the perceived media slant measurement was multiplied by the measurement of candidate support. Thus, the constructed measurement for hostile media perception was from -3 to 3, in which larger values indicates stronger hostile media perception and smaller values indicate lower hostile media perception. The same way was applied to the all media types.

Political partisanship. Political partisanship was constructed by combining items asking: party identification, strength of party identification, and party leanings (for those who did not categorize themselves as partisan). Then sorted into a five point scale: Strong Republican, not very strong Republican, not leaning toward either party, not very strong Democrat, and strong Democrat. Because political ideology and political party attachment were significantly correlate ($r = 0.55, p < .01$), two variables were summed in order to form a single measurement of political partisanship (range from -4 to 4). In this measurement, smaller values indicate strong conservative Republican and larger values indicate strong liberal Democrat.

Selective exposure. As mentioned earlier, partisan selective exposure means that people selectively view media which is congenial to one's own political partisanship. Thus, to measure selective exposure, it is necessary to match the respondents' political partisanship with media programs they are consuming (Stroud, 2010). In line with this logic, the measurement of selective exposure was constructed through two steps. First, media programs were classified by its political leaning. Second, selective exposure was constructed by multiplying these two measurements: political partisanship and media consumption (range from -4 to 4). In this measurement, smaller values indicate the strong selective exposure to the conservative media programs and larger values indicate the strong selective exposure to the liberal media programs. Each of the media classifications by political leaning was described below.

Television news. Respondents were asked to identify which news program they watched most often in the last week. They could choose one among 33 programs from 'unspecified ABC' program (1) to 'Your world with Neil Cavuto' (33). Several studies suggested a criterion to classify the TV news. Holtzman et al. (2011) examined the media bias and found that MSNBC had a liberal bias while Fox News had a conservative bias. The CNN news program had a smaller liberal bias compared to MSNBC but it showed a greater pro-liberal bias than Fox News. Similarly, Groseclose and Milyo (2005) found that CNN News was to the left of FOX News. Drawing on this research, programs from Fox News channel was categorized into Republican leaning news while CNN and MSNBC news programs were categorized into Democrat leaning. To create a measurement of watching program leaning toward conservative, respondents who

watched the programs from Fox news channel was given a 1, and respondents watching other programs, not watching a TV program, not able to name a program that they watched was given a 0. Similarly, to construct a measurement of watching program leaning toward liberal, respondents who watched the programs from CNN or MSNBC were given a 1, and respondents watching other programs, not watching a TV program, not able to name a program that they watched were given a 0. Finally, on the basis of content analysis, respondents who watched programs from three networks were given a 0.

Newspapers. Survey respondents who read a daily newspaper in the past week were asked which newspaper they read most often. Then, they were asked to identify the newspaper they read among 34 newspapers from ‘Arizona Republic’ (1) to ‘Washington Post’ (34). The political leanings of the newspapers were determined based on the presidential candidate endorsement in the 2008 presidential election. Several studies showed that there was a significant relationship between newspaper endorsements and political leaning of the newspaper (Druckman & Parkin, 2005; Kahn & Kenney, 2002). Also, using newspaper endorsements to measure political leanings were used in previous literatures (Stround, 2008; 2010). To determine newspaper endorsement, public information sources (e.g. Editor & Publisher) was used. Again, two dichotomous measurements were created. To create a measurement of reading newspapers leaning toward conservative, respondents who read a newspaper endorsing McCain were given a 1, and respondents reading another newspaper, not reading a newspaper, and not able to name a newspaper that they read were given a 0. Also, respondents who read a

newspaper endorsing Obama were given a 1, and respondents reading another newspaper, not reading a newspaper, and not able to name a newspaper that they read were given a 0.

Political talk radio. Respondents reporting that they listened to talk radio in the past week were asked to identify the radio shows they listened to. Respondents then chose a program among 22 programs from ‘All things considered’ (1) to ‘Schlessinger Laura’ (22). The talk radio programs were coded based on the ideological affiliations classified by trade magazines, or the way previous research classified the programs (e.g. Stroud, 2008). Again two dichotomous variables were constructed in the same way as TV news program or newspapers. Thus, to create a measurement of listening to a talk radio leaning toward conservative, respondents who listened to a talk radio affiliated to conservatives were given a 1, and respondents listening to another talk radio, not listening to a talk radio, and not able to name a talk radio were given a 0. Also, to construct a measurement of listening to a talk radio leaning toward liberal, respondents who listened to a talk radio affiliated to liberals were given a 1, and other cases were given a 0.

Political websites. Survey respondents who accessed information about the campaign for the 2008 presidential election via internet websites were asked which sites they visited most often. Then, they were asked to identify the site among 31 sites from ‘ABC News.com’ (1) to ‘YouTube’ (31). Political websites were coded as liberal or conservative in accordance with their identification. For example, news organization

websites were coded based on the ideological leaning of the news organization. Also, candidate websites followed the same way. Again, two dichotomous variables were made in the same way as other media outlets.

Controls. Demographic variables such as gender, age, education and income were controlled. Also, the media usage variable was used as controls for analysis of hostile media perception. Political knowledge and political interest were controlled for the analysis of selective exposure. On the basis of a previous study (Thorson, 2012), political knowledge were constructed by summing up 5 questions about the specific issues in the 2008 election. Respondents answered questions about whether particular policies (e.g., closing Guantanamo) were supported by Barack Obama or John McCain.

Table 1. Variable and Coding

Variable	Coding
Political partisanship	-4 (Strong conservative Republican) to 4 (Strong liberal Democrat)
Candidate favored by TV news	Obama: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) McCain: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Candidate favored by Talk radio	Obama: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) McCain: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Candidate favored by Newspaper	Obama: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) McCain: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Candidate favored by Online site	Obama: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) McCain: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
TV program most frequently watched	1 (ABC) to 33 (Your World with Neil Cavuto)
Talk radio most frequently listened to	1 (All things considered) to 22 (Schlessinger Laura)
Newspaper most frequently read	1 (Arizona Republic) to 34 (Washington Post)
Online site most frequently visited	1 (ABC News.com) to 31 (YouTube)
Degree of support	1 (Definitely will vote for candidate) to 3 (Good chance will change mind)
Hostile media perception	-3 (Low hostile media perception) to 3 (High hostile media perception)
Media consumption (TV)	Liberal: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) Conservative: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Media consumption (Radio)	Liberal: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) Conservative: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Media consumption (Newspaper)	Liberal: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) Conservative: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Media consumption (Website)	Liberal: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO) Conservative: 1 (Yes) to 0 (NO)
Selective exposure	-4 (Selectively expose to conservative media) to 4 (Selectively expose to liberal media)
Age	18 to 97
Gender	1 (Male) to 0 (Female)
Income	1 (Less than 10,000) to 9 (150,000 or more)
Education	1 (Grade 8 or lower) to 9 (Graduate or professional degree)
Media usage	0 to 7
Political knowledge	0 to 5
Political interest	1 (Very closely) to 4 (Not closely at all)

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1 aimed to substantiate the existence of selective exposure phenomenon within the survey sample. To verify Hypothesis 1, logistic regression analyses were conducted across all media types. Table 2 shows that people who have more strong conservative Republican partisanship tend to watch conservative TV news programs, such as Fox News, this finding is statistically significant including all control variables ($B = -0.422, p < 0.01$). Conversely, liberal Democrats are more likely to watch liberal TV news programs ($B = 0.472, p < 0.01$). In addition, political partisanship is significantly related to consumption of media type. Conservative Republicans are more likely to read newspapers endorsing McCain ($B = -0.208, p < 0.01$), listen to conservative radio talk shows ($B = -0.716, p < 0.01$), and access conservative political websites ($B = -0.499, p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, liberal Democrats tend to read newspapers endorsing Obama ($B = 0.253, p < 0.01$), listen to liberal radio ($B = 0.752, p < 0.01$), and access liberal websites ($B = 0.184, p < 0.01$). Hence, the results showed that selective exposure phenomenon exists based on political partisanship.

Table 2. Logistic regression analyses of media exposure by political partisanship

	TV news		Newspaper		Talk radio		Political internet	
	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
Gender	-.039	-.164**	-.062	-.289**	.427**	-.507**	.131	.197**
Age	.006**	-.005**	-.002	.007	.018**	-.015**	-.014**	-.010**
Income	-.017	-.035*	-.098*	.038	-.045	.038	.012	.087**
Education	-.086**	.070**	-.088*	.036	-.219**	.244**	-.001	.109**
Media usage	-.063**	-.034	-.026	.041	-.025	.012	.102**	.103**
Political interest	-.065	-.227**	-.188	-.065	.225*	-.304**	.563**	.265**
Political knowledge	-.028	-.039	-.011	-.001	-.243**	.242**	.125*	.051
Political partisanship	-.422**	.472**	-.208**	.253**	-.716**	.752**	-.499**	.184**
Nagelkerke R-square	.231	.322	.059	.106	.604	.626	.198	.115

Notes : Dependent variable is media consumption of each media outlet.

*p<.05, **p<.01

Media usage means usage of TV news, newspaper, talk radio, and political internet respectively according to the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that selective exposure would have a negative correlation with hostile media perception. In other words, the more the people expose themselves to campaign media coverage that supports their political predisposition, the more they would perceive such media coverage to be in favor of their nominee. To substantiate Hypothesis 2, multiple regression analyses were conducted including all controls. Model 1 in Table 3 indicates that people who selectively watch conservative TV news tend to show a low degree of hostile media perception at a statistically significant level ($\beta = -.116, p < 0.01$). Also, Model 2 shows that the more people selectively expose themselves to liberal TV news, the more they perceive the news coverage to be in favor of their nominee ($\beta = -0.093, p < 0.01$).

The same was true of radio talk shows and political websites. Selective exposure to conservative radio shows and political websites had a significant negative relationship with hostile media perception ($\beta = -0.237, p < 0.01$ and $\beta = -0.092, p < 0.01$, respectively). Selective exposure to liberal counterparts of the above also had statistically significant negative correlation with hostile media perception ($\beta = -0.072, p < 0.05$ and $\beta = -0.103, p < 0.01$, respectively). However, this tendency disappeared in the case of selective exposure to conservative newspaper. People who selectively read conservative newspapers are more likely to perceive the newspaper coverage to be biased against their supporting candidate, although not at a statistically significant level ($\beta = 0.02, p = 0.501$). As a result, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Table 3. Regression analyses of hostile media perception by selective exposure

	Model 1				Model 2				
	TV news	Newspaper	Talk radio	Political internet	TV news	Newspaper	Talk radio	Political internet	
Gender	.028	-.057	-.042	-.050	Gender	.036	.011	-.041	-.035
Age	-.036	.074*	-.052	-.039	Age	-.064*	.038	-.107**	-.042
Income	.006	.071*	.016	.053	Income	-.049	.014	-.041	.029
Education	-.098**	-.137**	-.034	-.081**	Education	-.065*	-.040	.047	-.066*
Media usage	.025	-.099**	.012	-.003	Media usage	.030	-.083*	-.063*	.005
Selective exposure (Conservative media)	-.165**	.020	-.328**	-.083**	Selective exposure (Liberal media)	-.071**	-.388**	-.116**	-.185**

Notes : Dependent variable is hostile media perception of each media outlet.

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

Media usage means usage of TV news, newspaper, talk radio, and political internet respectively according to the dependent variable.

In order to the analysis, selective exposure measurement was separate and recoded. Thus, two selective exposure measurements were constructed: selective exposure to conservative media programs (range from 0 to 4), selective exposure to liberal media programs (range from 0 to 4). In these two measurements, larger values indicate the strong selective exposure respectively.

Research question 1 asks how the relationship between political partisanship and hostile media perception changes. As confirmed by the multiple regression analysis model, Table 3 shows that people who have a strong conservative Republican political partisanship are more likely to perceive TV news as being congenial to their supporting candidate at a statistically significant level ($\beta = -0.080, p < 0.01$). Also, people with strong liberal Democrat political partisanship tend to show a low degree of hostile media perception ($\beta = -0.085, p < 0.01$). Similar results were found in other media types. The more the people had strong partisanship, the more they tended to perceive the radio talk shows to which they listen to be in favor of their nominee; this was true for both Republicans and Democrats ($\beta = -0.317, p < 0.01$ and $\beta = -0.202, p < 0.01$, respectively). The same could be said regarding political websites ($\beta = -0.108, p < 0.01$ and $\beta = -0.183, p < 0.01$). As such, unlike previous findings, political partisanship has a negative correlation with hostile media perception. However, this tendency was not supported in the case of conservative Republicans exposed to conservative newspapers. People with strongly held conservative Republican political partisanship perceive newspaper coverage to be biased against their candidate ($\beta = 0.153, p < 0.01$).

Table 4. Regression analyses of hostile media perception by involvement

	Model 1				Model 2				
	TV news	Newspaper	Talk radio	Political internet	TV news	Newspaper	Talk radio	Political internet	
Gender	.056*	.059*	-.011	.040	Gender	.007	-.012	-.142**	-.004
Age	-.019	-.008	-.085**	-.087*	Age	-.021	.083**	.075	-.018
Income	-.058*	.032	-.061*	-.008	Income	-.030	-.010	.078	-.005
Education	-.020	-.064*	.028	-.050	Education	-.076*	-.045	-.039	-.045
Media usage	-.017	-.026	.000	.041	Media usage	.015	-.025	-.027	-.062
Partisanship (Conservative Republican)	-.080**	.153**	-.317**	-.108**	Partisanship (Liberal Democrat)	-.085**	-.110**	-.202**	-.183**

Notes : Dependent variable is hostile media perception of each media outlet.

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

Media usage means usage of TV news, newspaper, talk radio, and political internet respectively according to the dependent variable.

In order to the analysis, political partisanship measurement was separate and recoded. Thus, two political partisanship measurements were constructed: partisanship to conservative Republican (range from 0 to 4), partisanship to liberal Democrat (range from 0 to 4). In these two measurements, larger values indicate the strong political partisanship.

Apart from the research question, an additional analysis was conducted using multiple regression models with the interaction term between political partisanship and selective exposure in order to confirm the effect of selective exposure on hostile media perception theory. Table 5 shows that when the level of selective exposure to conservative TV news was low, strong conservative Republican partisans perceived TV news to be biased against their nominee ($\beta = -0.211, p < 0.01$). Similarly, political partisanship had a positive correlation with hostile media perception, when the level of selective exposure to conservative newspapers ($\beta = -0.119, p < 0.05$), radio talk shows ($\beta = -0.113, p < 0.01$), and political websites ($\beta = -0.181, p < 0.01$) decreased. However, the interaction effect on hostile media perception disappeared among the Democrats, except for radio talk shows.

Table 5. Regression analyses of hostile media perception by partisanship and selective exposure

	Model 1				Model 2				
	TV news	Newspaper	Talk radio	Political internet	TV news	Newspaper	Talk radio	Political internet	
Gender	.053	.100*	.015	.039	Gender	.046	-.034	-.142*	-.006
Age	-.053	-.040	-.110**	-.112*	Age	-.072	.054	.108	-.019
Income	-.030	-.010	-.041	-.007	Income	-.194	.003	.117	-.003
Education	-.068*	-.118*	.036	-.044	Education	.238*	-.024	-.157*	-.044
Media usage	.026	-.083	-.004	.057	Media usage	-.078	-.066	-.021	-.060
Partisanship (Conservative Republican)	-.144**	.185**	-.429**	-.048	Partisanship (Liberal Democrat)	.143	.091	-.098	-.221**
Selective exposure (Conservative media)	.021	-.070	.186	-.042	Selective exposure (Liberal media)	-.156	-.235*	.147	.108
partisanship * Selective exposure	-.211**	-.119*	-.113**	-.181**	partisanship * Selective exposure	-.042	-.088	-.417**	-.076

Notes : Dependent variable is hostile media perception.

*p<.05, **p<.01

Media usage means usage of TV news, newspaper, talk radio, and political internet respectively according to the dependent variable.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore how hostile media perception theory would change under selective exposure phenomenon. The development of communications technology and the growth in the number and variety of news outlets has created a fragmented information environment, which has resurrected selective exposure phenomenon. Several findings and theoretical conflicts imply the change of hostile media perception theory. To investigate the change, two hypotheses and one research question were proposed.

Hypothesis 1 predicted the existence of selective exposure phenomenon. Although the existence of selective exposure is still debated, many studies have recently documented its existence. Results of the current study showed that selective exposure phenomenon existed during the 2008 presidential elections. This result is consistent with findings of recent research in which selective exposure was supported throughout all types of media.

However, the robustness of the results for the relationship among political predisposition, newspaper consumption, and political website visit was relatively small compared with that for other media types. Regarding newspapers, a possible explanation

is the limited access to newspapers that publish agreeable articles. In many communities, only a single newspaper exists, and consumers have limited opportunity to subscribe to non-local papers (Stroud, 2008). Thus, if people live in a community with likeminded members, they may be more likely to consume newspapers that cater to their opinions. However, if people live in a community that does not share their political partisanship, the chance for them to consume an agreeable newspaper is likely to decrease. As a result, this limited availability may reduce selective exposure to newspaper. The low correlation between political partisanship and political website visit needs another explanation. According to several studies, people may use the Internet to explore diverse opinions. For instance, Stromer-Galley (2003) found that people discussing politics online tend not to mention that they purposefully seek views that are congenial to their views and avoid counter-attitudinal views. Thus, this characteristic of Internet users lowers selective exposure in political websites. However, all these explanations could be verified only through additional studies.

Hypothesis 2 predicted the negative correlation between selective exposure and hostile media perception. Much research about hostile media perception has been conducted in the context of balanced news (Gunther, 2012). Partisans tend to perceive balanced news coverage as biased toward other groups. What if people are exposed to news coverage agreeable to their own views, rather than balanced news? Several studies showed that, when participants were lead to encounter overtly slanted news in the direction of their own position, hostile media perception does not occur. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 2 was suggested, and the results showed that the more the people expose themselves to media coverage that is agreeable to their political leanings, the less

they have hostile perception of the coverage. This result is also consistent with previous findings.

However, this tendency was not supported among Republicans who selectively exposed themselves to politically congruent newspapers. One possible explanation is the limited availability to such newspapers. As mentioned earlier, the opportunity to subscribe to various papers is limited. Thus, even when people live in a community with likeminded newspaper, they could feel that the paper leans far from their political partisanship. In other words, if a person with very strong conservative Republican political inclination could not help reading a newspaper that is congruent with his political views, but not so strongly compared with his political partisanship, then that person perceives the newspaper as biased against his own views, even if the person is defined as one who selectively exposed to a politically congruent newspaper. However, this explanation still cannot explain why only people who selectively expose themselves to conservative newspapers have high hostile media perception.

The most interesting and important finding was the change of relationship between political partisanship and hostile media perception. Research question asks what change the hostile media effect would undergo under the selective exposure phenomenon. The results showed that people with strong partisanship tend to perceive news coverage as in favor of their nominee, rather than biased against. Many previous studies have documented that political partisanship has a positive correlation with hostile media perception. As mentioned above, the result could be understood from the duplication of concept of involvement and political predisposition. Selective exposure theory has predicted that political predisposition is positively related with selective exposure. Also,

the literatures predicted that selective exposure would be negatively related with hostile media perception, which means political predisposition would have a negative relationship with hostile media perception. When considering that the operational definition of political predisposition is identical with involvement in hostile media perception, it could be a reasonable result that involvement would have a negative relationship with hostile media perception.

Nonetheless, an opposite result was obtained for newspapers. Republicans with strong partisanship showed a tendency to evaluate the newspapers they read as biased against their candidate. The reason may be explained in association with the Hypothesis 2. The results of Hypothesis 2 showed that selective exposure to conservative newspapers had a positive relationship with hostile media perception, which could mean positive correlation between political predisposition and hostile media perception. The results of research question 1 was explained based on the negative relationship between selective exposure and hostile media perception. Thus, it is a natural result that partisans may have hostile media perception when they perceive news coverage as hostile although they are selectively exposed to politically congruent media coverage.

An addition analysis was conducted to determine whether or not the reason of the change in hostile media perception could be selective exposure phenomenon. The results showed that the effect of political partisanship on hostile media perception would differ by the degree of selective exposure. Republicans with a strong political partisanship perceived TV news to be biased against their nominee, but only when the level of selective exposure to conservative TV news was low. This result clearly showed that the

direction of correlation between partisanship and hostile media perception is influenced by selective exposure.

However, it should be noted that a sharp difference was observed between Republicans and Democrats. The interaction effect only appeared among conservative Republicans. One explanation may be the influence of the atmosphere of the campaign. In a gubernatorial election, Huges and Glynn (2010) found that Democrats' hostile perception increasingly decreased, whereas that of the Republican's persisted. They attributed the non-equivalence to the atmosphere of the campaign. They explained that when the Democrats' candidate held a lead, this group may quell the fear that biased coverage could influence other voters, which resulted in the decrease of hostile media perception. Their explanation could be applied to the current study. In the 2008 presidential elections, Obama held a lead from the outset, which became larger as the election approached (Kenski et al., 2010). In this situation, Democrats perceived the campaign news coverage to be in favor of Obama regardless of whether they were exposed to politically congruent media or not. However, this explanation could only be justified by additional study.

Implication

This research has an implication for the theoretical refinement of hostile media perception. Hostile media perception has been studied in the psychological academic realm. Thus, people have been assumed to perceive news coverage to be biased toward their point of view, not because of the slant of news coverage, but because of their own

involvement in a certain issue. The theory has had strong explanatory power to the media environment, in which three major networks dominated the media market and featured balanced news (Gunther, 2012). However, the change in the media environment exposes people to ideologically congruent media coverage. Extensive studies have predicted the influence of selective exposure phenomenon on existing theories, and the present study revealed that the mechanism of hostile media perception has changed. The results showed that people with high involvement in a certain issue tend to see media coverage to be in favor of their point of view, which is totally opposite of the result compared with previous theories. Nonetheless, many experimental studies about hostile media perception have not captured the change as they have been conducted without considering the effect of selective exposure phenomenon. Thus, the current study has a theoretical implication for hostile media perception theory in that the mechanism of hostile media perception theory could change when considering the media consumption.

In addition to theoretical implication, the results of this study also have an implication for the role of media in a democracy. According to persuasive press inference theory, people infer public opinion from their perception of media coverage because of their assumption that media has a substantial influence on others (Gunther, 2001). Thus, if partisans perceive the media coverage to be in favor of other groups, they are prone to infer that the climate of opinion would be more favorable to other groups. As a result, hostile media perception has a role in reducing such projection, which refers to partisans' misjudgment of opinion dynamics whereby partisans perceive public opinion as more favorable to their own point of view (Gunther, 2001). When considering the literature that the perception of public opinion could change individual attitude (e.g., Noelle-

Neumann, 1977), the increasing of projection among partisans would be concluded as reinforcement of existing attitude, opinion polarization. Thus, the results of the current study would imply an ever-worsening polarization in society, as the selective exposure to politically congruent media outlets is growing over time (e.g., Stroud, 2008). In this sense, the results call for the attention to the effect of opinionated media outlets on democracy.

Limitation

The current study is limited by several factors. First is the nature of the secondary data. Although the data contained questions on selective exposure and hostile media perception, the data still suffered from validity of measurement. For example, when selective exposure to TV news was measured, the questionnaire asked the respondents regarding their most-watched program, not on all the programs that they watched. This manner of measurement has a flaw of not capturing the complex pattern of information consumption. Specifically, a person with a Democratic leaning may mostly watch CNN and MSNBC based on political ideology, but the person can also watch Fox News for any reason. In this situation, the current questionnaire opts to classify the person as one who is selectively exposed.

Second is the problem in the classification of media programs. As mentioned earlier, classifying media programs into conservative and liberal is necessary to measure selective exposure. The current study sorted the programs based on a previous research; however, finding accurate criteria for TV news programs is difficult. Specifically,

previous studies classified CNN as a liberal media outlet, but did not provide guidelines for specific CNN programs. Thus, all programs from CNN were classified as liberal programs regardless of their unique characteristics. As a result, the current study could not reflect the characteristics of each program. The correlation between the political leaning of a TV channel and its program has been documented (Groeling, 2008; Groseclose & Milyo, 2005; Holtzman et al., 2011). Nonetheless, the classification of the current study is still vulnerable to the exception.

The third limitation has to do with the question of causality. This study showed that exposure to ideological media is associated with a decrease in hostile media perception. However, hostile media perception can arguably lead people to seek exposure to politically congruent media. This explanation is inconsistent with the recent findings that, while people do not actively avoid incongruent or disconfirming channels, they have a strong preference to expose themselves to ideologically congruent news outlets (Garrett, 2009). Nonetheless, the findings could not justify the current study because the question about reverse causality could only be answered by further research.

Future research

Although the current study revealed the change of mechanism of hostile media perception theory, there still are many topics which need more research. First, it needs to scrutinize the characteristics of media consumers. The results of the current study showed that the selective exposure phenomenon differed by media outlets. Also, the people's perception on the media programs differed by media outlets. As mentioned earlier, it

could be explained in the context of the characteristics of media outlets; however, the difference could come from the difference of media consumers themselves. For example, Pfau, Houston, and Semmler (2007) found difference of media usage between Republicans and Democrats. They documented that Republicans gravitated to talk radio whereas Democrats tuned into television, news magazines, and late-night entertainment television. Also, younger generations are more and more using an online source to get news while the older generation still adheres to traditional media such as television and newspaper (PEW, 2012). Given this shift, selective exposure and its effect on existing theory should be studied along with different media consumption patterns.

Second, the reverse causality question should be solved. Some can still argue that hostile media perception would cause people to select media program congenial to their point of view though recent findings negate the reverse causality between selective exposure and hostile media perception. Thus, this problem should be solved with sophisticated research design such as longitudinal analysis.

Third, the subsequent effect of the change of hostile media perception theory needs to be studied. As mentioned above, the change of hostile media perception theory could accelerate the opinion polarization. However, this prediction was only based on the logical reasoning, so it needs to be studied with empirical data. Although debates about the effect of selective exposure phenomenon on existing theories continues to be as vigorous as ever, it still remains on the effect on theory itself. However, more the important thing would be the concerns about the effect on democracy, considering that all the theories have meanings when they take roots on the society.

REFERENCES

- Arpan, L., & Raney, A. (2003). An experimental investigation of news source and the hostile media effect. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *80*, 265-281.
- Bennet, W. L., & Iyengar, S. (2008). A new era of minimal effects? The changing foundations of political communication. *Journal of Communication*, *58*, 707-731.
- Chaffee, S. H., & Miyo, Y. (1983). Selective exposure and the reinforcement hypothesis. *Communication Research*, *10*, 3-36.
- Choi, J., Yang, M., & Chang, J. (2009). Elaboration of the hostile media phenomenon: The roles of involvement, media skepticism, congruency of perceived media influence, and perceived opinion climate. *Communication Research*, *36*, 54-75
- Christen, C., Kannaovakun, P., & Gunther, A. C. (2002). Hostile media perceptions: Partisan assessments of press and public and public during the 1997 UPI Strike. *Political Communication*, *19*, 423-436.
- Druckman, J. N., & Parkin, M. (2005). The impact of media bias: How editorial slant affects voters. *Journal of Politics*, *67*(4), 1030-1049.
- Eveland, W. P., & Shah, D. V. (2003). The impact of individual and interpersonal factors of perceived news media bias. *Political Psychology*, *24*(1), 101-117.
- Festinger, L. (1964). *Conflict, decision, and dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Frey, D., & Rosch, M. (1984). Information seeking after decisions: The roles of novelty of information and decision reversibility. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *10*, 91-98.
- Garret, R. K. (2009). Politically motivated reinforcement seeking: Reframing the selective exposure debate. *Journal of Communication*, *59*, 679-699.

- Giner-Sorrola, R. & Chaiken, S. (1994). The causes of hostile media judgments. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 30*, 165-180.
- Groeling, T. (2008). Who is the fairest of them all? An empirical test for partisan bias on ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox News. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 38*(4), 631-657.
- Groseclose, T., & Milyo, J. (2005). A measure of media bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 120*(4), 1191-1237.
- Gunther, A. C., Christen, C., Liebhart, J. L., & Chia, S. C. (2001). Congenial public, contrary press, and biased estimates of the climate of opinion. *The Public Opinion Quarterly, 65*(3), 295-320.
- Gunther, A. C. & Liebhart, J. L. (2006). Broad reach or biased source? Decomposing the hostile media effect. *Journal of Communication, 56*, 449-466.
- Gunther, A. C., Miller, N., & Liebhart, J. L. (2009). Assimilation and contrast in a test of the hostile media effect. *Communication Research, 36*, 747-764.
- Gunther, A. C., Edgerly, S., Akin, H., & Broesch, J. (2012). Partisan Evaluation of Partisan Information. *Communication Research, 39*(4), 439-457.
- Gunther, A. C., & Schmitt, K. (2004). Mapping boundaries of the hostile media effect. *Journal of Communication, 54*, 55-70.
- Holbert, R. L., Garrett, R. K., & Laurel S. Gleason, L. S. (2010). A new era of minimal effects? A response to Bennett and Iyengar. *Journal of Communication, 60*, 15-34.
- Holtzman, N. S., Schott, J. P., Jones, M. N., Balota, D. A., & Tal Yarkoni, T. (2011). Exploring media bias with semantic analysis tools: validation of the Contrast Analysis of Semantic Similarity (CASS). *Behavior Research, 43*, 193-200.
- Huge, M., & Glynn, C. J. (2010). Hostile media and campaign trail: Perceived media bias in the race for governor. *Journal of Communication, 60*, 165-181.
- Iyengar, S., & Hahn, K. S. (2009). Red media, blue media: Evidence of ideological selectivity in media use. *Journal of Communication, 59*, 9-39.
- Kahn, K. F., & Kenney, P. J. (2002). The slant of the news: How editorial endorsements influence campaign coverage and citizens' views of candidates. *American Political Science Review, 96*(2), 381-394.
- Kenski, K., Hardy, B. W., & Jamieson, K. H. (2010). *Obama Victory*. New York: Oxford.
- Klapper, J. T. (1960). *The effects of mass communication*. New York: The free press.

- Lawrence, E., Sides, J., & Farrell, H. (2010). Self-segregation or deliberation? Blog readership, participation, and polarization in American politics. *Perspectives on Politics, 8*(1), 141-157.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1948). *The people's choice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion. *Journal of Communication, 24*(2), 43-51.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1996). *Attitudes and persuasion: Classic and contemporary approaches*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- PEW (2012). In changing news landscape, even television is vulnerable trends in news consumption: 1991-2012. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2012/09/27/section-1-watching-reading-and-listening-to-the-news-3/>
- Pfau, M., Houston, J. B., & Semmler, S. M. (2007). *Mediating the vote: The changing media landscape in U.S. presidential campaigns*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Richardson, J. D., Huddy, W. P., & Morgan, S. M. (2008). The hostile media effect, biased assimilation, and perceptions of a presidential debate. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 38*(5), 1255-1270.
- Schmitt, K., Gunther, A. C., & Liebhart, J. L. (2004). Why partisans see mass media as biased. *Communication Research, 31*, 623-641.
- Schramm, W., & Carter, R. F. (1959). Effectiveness of a political telethon. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 23*, 121-126.
- Sears, D. O. (1966). Opinion Formation and Information Preferences in an Adversary Situation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 2*, 130-142.
- Sears, D. O., & Freedman, J. L. (1965). Effects of expected familiarity with arguments upon opinion change and selective exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2*(3), 420-426.
- Sears, D. O., & Freedman, J. L. (1967). Selective exposure to information: A critical review. *The Public Opinion Quarterly, 31*(2), 194-213.
- Sherif, M., & Hovland, C. I. (1961). *Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Stromer-Galley, J. (2003). Diversity of political conversation on the Internet: Users' perspectives. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 8*(3).

- Stroud, N. J. (2008). Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure. *Political Behavior*, *30*, 341-366.
- Stroud, N. J. (2007). Media effects, selective exposure, and Fahrenheit 9/11. *Political Communication*, *24*, 415-432.
- Stroud, N. J. (2010). Polarization and partisan selective exposure. *Journal of Communication*, *60*, 556-576.
- Thorson, E. (2012). Beyond opinion leaders: How attempts to persuade foster political awareness and campaign learning. *Communication Research*, DOI: 10.1177/0093650212443824.
- Valentino, N. A., Banks, A.J., Hutchings, V. L., & Davis, A.K. (2009). Selective exposure in the Internet age: The interaction between anxiety and information utility. *Political Psychology*, *30*(4), 591-613.
- Vallone, R., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. (1985). The hostile media phenomenon: Biased perception and perception of media bias in coverage of the Beirut Massacre. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *49*, 577-585.
- Webster, J. G. (2005). Beneath the veneer of fragmentation: Television audience polarization in a multichannel world. *Journal of Communication*, *55*, 6-382.

VITA

Chanjung Kim

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOSTILE MEDIA
PERCEPTION AND SELECTIVE EXPOSURE PHENOMENON

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Mass Communications
at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2013.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications
at Korea University, Seoul, Korea in 2001.