

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

MEDIATED CITIZENS: MASS MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF CITIZENS AND THE
INFLUENCE OF THOSE DEPICTIONS ON INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DEMOCRATIC CITIZEN

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment for the requirements of

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2007

UMI Number: 3274522



UMI Microform 3274522

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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude for the immense support and assistance I have received, not only in completing this dissertation but also throughout my doctoral program. I owe a great deal of thanks to my exceptional doctoral committee. I could not have asked for a better group of people to provide guidance, review, and feedback throughout the coursework, exam, and dissertation process. Each member of my doctoral committee provided input and advice not only through the formal structure of the committee, but also through individual interaction associated with courses, directed readings, and independent studies.

Specifically, I first thank Dr. Michael Pfau who served as Chair of my dissertation committee and has provided advice and support throughout my Ph.D. program. I cannot imagine a more generous mentor. Dr. Pfau has provided me with numerous opportunities to work with him on first-rate research projects, one of which resulted in the chance to co-author a book with he and Shane Semmler. These opportunities have improved my research and writing skills, and have also given me the publications necessary to begin a research career. The coursework that I have had with Dr. Pfau—from the inoculation seminar, to the summer SEM course, to an independent study—have all been among the best courses I have experienced as a graduate student. I have been fortunate to be at the University of Oklahoma Department of Communication during a time that allowed me to work with one of the most prolific researchers in the field. I know my career will benefit from being trained according to Dr. Pfau's high standards (both in research quality and productivity).

Dr. Claude Miller and Dr. Glenn Hansen, though they may not realize it, have also shown me much with regard to how one ought to approach both the research process and a career in the academic profession. Dr. Miller's coursework on social influence and affect are two of the most fascinating courses offered in the communication department. Dr. Miller is inherently supportive of innovative ideas and good argument, and encourages this in his students. I am grateful for the introduction to Terror Management Theory and Regulatory Fit, both of which I would not have encountered were it not for Dr. Miller's coursework. Dr. Hansen has provided me with the most honest insight in to the realities of an academic career, and this has been extremely helpful. Understanding the reality of where one is headed makes planning the journey much easier, and Dr. Hansen has helped with this task. Dr. Hansen also provided a summer independent study focused on meta-analysis. I appreciate that he made time during the summer term for this, and found the course very beneficial.

I owe special thanks to Dr. Jill Edy who suggested the topic of how the media depict citizens during her political communication seminar. Though she bears no responsibility for any errors or weaknesses contained in this dissertation, she does deserve credit for what I still consider to be—even after wrestling with it for over one-year—a fantastic research topic. Dr. Edy provided much guidance on the political theory component of this dissertation, and this was extremely helpful in navigating a complex theoretical terrain.

Dr. Keith Gaddie, from the department of Political Science, served as my outside doctoral committee member, and he did so with great skill. I'm guessing that serving on doctoral committees outside of one's department is a significant burden to

already busy faculty members, but Dr. Gaddie provided all of the input and feedback that I needed and did so always with good humor. He has been extremely generous with his time and insight.

Beyond my doctoral committee, I am extremely grateful to Dr. Betty Pfefferbaum, Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, and Ms. Dana Davis, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Dental Association, both of whom provided constant and generous support for my educational activities while I worked for them in professional positions. Dr. Pfefferbaum and Ms. Davis were accommodating in providing me time to complete my degree requirements and they both also provided tremendous encouragement for my educational activities.

Dr. Mary Outwater, Director of the University of Oklahoma's Public Opinion Learning Laboratory (OU POLL), conducted the national survey included in this project. Dr. Outwater provided helpful suggestions about the survey instrument, conducted the survey quickly and professionally, and was incredibly helpful during every step of the process. I am thankful for her assistance. Furthermore, OU POLL supported much of the survey data collection cost through an extremely generous Public Opinion Research Grant. Financial support for this research was also provided through a University of Oklahoma Graduate College Robberson Research Grant and by Dr. Michael Pfau.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contribution of Shane Semmler and Jacqueline Eckstein to this work. Shane, Jackie, and I conducted a more preliminary version of the content analysis portion of this dissertation as part of Dr. Jill Edy's

political communication seminar. The project we worked on together was, frankly, the most difficult of my doctoral program, a difficulty that was due to the inherent complexity of the subject and the determination by all parties to produce solid research. While the final success of that project is debatable, what is certain is that as a group we did much of the heavy lifting with regard to teasing apart the citizen concept and how it would be measured in media content. If we would not have done that work as a group, then the project conducted in this dissertation would have been much more difficult. So I owe both Shane and Jackie a great deal of thanks.

Thanks also to the other University of Oklahoma Ph.D. students who have taught me much, will be colleagues and friends in the years to come, and have made my time here enjoyable: Jeanetta Sims, Bobi Ivanov, Shane Semmler, Michel Haigh, Shelley Wigley, Josh Compton, and others.

I, of course, owe a great deal of thanks to my parents, John and Barbara Houston, who have always supported me without condition. I know they are proud of this achievement, but they would have been just as proud no matter what path I chose as long as it was true to my calling. This unconditional support is beyond value.

Most importantly, my wife Jennifer deserves immeasurable thanks, both for her support of this undertaking and her patience with the sacrifices it entailed. She never complained about the numerous evenings and weekend mornings that I was away from the family working on coursework or other projects. When I began this program, our daughter, Reyna, was just a baby, and since that time our son, Coltrane, was born. It has been an incredible journey. I feel stronger, wiser, and richer for it all, and none of it

would be possible without Jennifer. I will always be hopeful for the future when I am with her. And so with that, on to the next chapter.

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Abstract

This study examined how the mass media depict democratic citizenship, how individuals think about what it means to be a democratic citizen, and how the two are related. To address these issues a content analysis of television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspaper content was conducted to determine how the media depict citizens. In addition to the content analysis, individual perceptions of democratic citizenship were assessed through a national telephone survey. To compare the ways in which media depictions and individual perceptions of citizens were related, this study proposed a citizen framework of three key citizen dimensions: knowledge, activities, and decision-making standards. Media content and individual perceptions of citizens were compared along these three dimensions.

The content analysis portion of this project found differences in the ways that traditional media modalities (television news and newspapers) and new media (cable talk news and late night comedy news) depicted citizens. Traditional media included more depictions of citizens than did new media. Traditional media content also associated citizens with social capital activities more often than did new media content. New media depicted citizens with greater amounts of agency than did traditional media, but traditional media depicted citizens in a more positive tone and as possessing more knowledge than did new media. The content analysis also documented ways in which citizen depictions were similar for all media modalities. The Iraq war was a popular citizen issue for all media modalities, and all media depicted citizens most frequently as individuals compared to any other group association.

The survey portion of this study found that overall media use had a weak impact on perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizen. However, while media use did not strongly influence individual perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizen, the media did exhibit a potential to impact individual perceptions of citizenship as when associations between media use and citizen attitudes were found, they were generally supported by media content patterns. The overall weak impact of media use on perceptions of citizens is likely due to citizens not appearing frequently enough in media content, as well as the inherent complexity of the citizen concept.

In addition to describing the ways in which media use impact perceptions of democratic citizenship, this research also outlines the extent to which citizen depictions are the same for the media forms included in this project, the ways that citizen depictions differ between the individual media modalities, and the ways in which citizens depictions differ between traditional and new media forms.

Chapter I

Introduction

“With faith rooted in the *demos*—the people—as the source of authority and legitimacy, democratic theory is justifiably afraid of a public that can be misled or tricked by powerful interests or, perhaps worse, may become too distracted or poorly informed to develop meaningful preferences.” – Sociologist Andrew J. Perrin (Perrin, 2006, p. 4).

“In a democracy citizens rule, yet if they rule badly, all will suffer.” – Political Scientist David M. Ricci (Ricci, 2004, p. 3).

It almost goes without saying that citizens are the key to an effective democracy. This is because in its simplest form, a democracy is a system in which citizens make the decisions that guide society. The word “democracy” has its origin in the Greek terms *demos*, which means the people, and *kratos*, which means rule. Democracy, then, is the rule of the people. Because citizens make the political decisions in a democracy, from a normative perspective what citizens know, how citizens form opinions and make decisions, and the way citizens behave are all important issues, as these citizen characteristics will ultimately determine what type of laws and policies are chosen to guide society.

For example, when it comes time to vote, the citizen who knows nothing about the political candidates vying for office or has no knowledge of current policy issues will be unable to purposefully make political decisions that are in his or her best interest or are in the interest of the broader community. Worse still, the citizen who does not participate in the democratic process does not even have the opportunity to make a bad

decision because, by not voting, the citizen's perspective on the matter being decided is not included when the votes are tallied, so the citizen's opinion does not count. When portions of the citizenry do not show up on Election Day, then the people who are actually making political decisions in a democratic society are not really *the* people, but are only *some of* the people. Low political participation rates mean that the democracy as originally conceived is not realized, because in this instance political decisions are based on the preferences of only some of the citizens while others do not have a say in the process.

Unfortunately, if citizen participation and knowledge are necessary for a healthy democracy, then there is currently reason for concern in America today as political participation rates are generally declining (Patterson, 2003; Putnam, 2000) and Americans have been found to possess low-levels of political and civic knowledge (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Somin, 2004). This means that in America only a portion of the population casts their lot at the ballot box, and, even for people who do participate, many lack the knowledge necessary to make an informed decision. The lack of participation and knowledge among American citizens justifies a concern about the state of democracy in the United States.

Education is often trumpeted as the antidote to a non-participating, ignorant citizenry. Lippman (2005) wrote that "education has furnished the thesis of the last chapter of every optimistic book on democracy" (p. 12). The promise of education—and specifically civic education—lies in the idea that individuals can be taught what it means to be a good citizen, and that this education will cultivate more curious and active citizens. While civic education has been found to increase civic knowledge

(Niemi & Junn, 1998), education as a panacea for citizen ills is likely overstated. For example, one of the major concerns about the current state of American citizenry is that political participation has not increased even as overall levels of education have gone up (Patterson, 2003). Granted, a general level of education says nothing about whether civic education has increased, but the lack of a link between education and participation is troubling for those who would argue education is the primary means of solving citizen problems. Additionally, the education process generally takes place during childhood and adolescence, so schools function as an agent of primary socialization. While primary socialization is necessary to create a baseline of political and civic knowledge, it may be that what really matters with regards to political socialization is the learning that takes place during periods of secondary socialization. Secondary socialization is socialization that occurs after childhood, and it is a process that can occur throughout life as individuals take on new roles and come into contact with new institutions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Secondary socialization is particularly important for the process of political socialization because political matters have an increased likelihood of being perceived as relevant to individuals as they grow older and acquire things like jobs, money, children, and property.

If secondary socialization has the potential to play a significant role in the political socialization process, then political socialization research should focus on the agents of secondary political socialization. Perhaps the main agent of secondary political socialization is the mass media. The mass media are a known agent of secondary socialization (Pfau & Mullen, 1995), so it makes sense that the media would serve a significant secondary political socialization function, socializing individuals

even after they have completed their schooling and left their childhood home. In fact, the media are ever-present and likely provide individuals with stories and content about what it means to be a democratic citizen throughout one's lifetime.

Past research on the mass media's role as an agent of political socialization has examined the impact of media on children and adolescents (Atkin & Gantz, 1978; Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; Conway, Wyckoff, Feldbaum, & Ahern, 1981; Eveland, McLeod, & Horowitz, 1998; Garramone & Atkin, 1986; Jackson, 2002; Kiouisis, McDevitt, & Wu, 2005; McLeod, 2000; Rubin, 1978) or the impact of mass media use on family discussion of politics (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). Research has not examined the impact of media use on the secondary socialization of citizens. This research seeks to fill this gap in knowledge. Using framing and cultivation theory as mechanisms by which the media impact viewer's perceptions, this research will first determine how citizens are constructed in the media and will then focus on how these depictions impact the perceptions of viewers. This project hopes to produce an understanding of both what the media are teaching individuals about what it means to be a democratic citizen and what individuals are learning from that content.

Questions of how the media depict citizens and how viewers perceive mediated depictions of citizenship are particularly important because the standards of good citizenship are not absolute. While knowledgeable and active citizens are better for a democracy than ignorant and inactive citizens, there is no consensus on exactly how much citizens must know and what specific actions are required of a good citizen. For example, if a citizen understands just the issues that are deemed personally important to

him or her and also votes in every election, then does this make the person a good citizen? Or should a good citizen be knowledgeable about all issues, and not just vote but also participate in various social capital activities such as volunteering for community groups and participating in community affairs? There are no definitive answers to these questions. Citizen standards were never formalized in the documents that defined American democracy. In fact, what is expected from citizens in terms of knowledge and action has changed throughout the history of the United States (Schudson, 1998).

For example, the earliest American conception of citizenship was based on an assenting model of citizenship, a model in which the citizen chose a political leader and then retreated from political involvement leaving the business of governing solely to the elected officials (Schudson). Such a model of citizenship is very different from the informed citizen model of the Progressive Era, in which the citizen is supposed to be fully informed about and aware of all political matters. Additionally, citizen models are not mutually exclusive; today's rights-based citizen—a citizen model focused on individual rights—might also be influenced by the idea of the informed citizen that emerged in the early twentieth-century. Ideas about good citizenship have changed repeatedly in the past and continue to evolve today.

The complexity of citizenship makes the concept inherently difficult to measure. In order to understand how citizens are depicted in the media and how individuals think about citizenship, it is necessary to create a framework of normative citizen dimensions. The normative dimensions of citizenship that will be examined in this research include citizen knowledge, citizen actions, and citizen decision-making standards. Historical

and philosophical models of citizenship are discussed along each of these dimensions so that major models of democratic citizenship can be analyzed along each dimension. The final citizen framework allows for the measurement of both media depictions and audience perceptions of citizenship. This in turn allows for media depictions and audience perceptions of citizens to be compared in order to determine how media content and audience perceptions are related.

Several arguments will be made over the course of this project. These arguments posit that citizens are the essence of democracy; that citizens must be active for a democracy to be healthy; that the concept of citizenship is in play because what it means to be a citizen has changed in the past and continues to evolve now; that individuals learn what it means to be a good citizen across their lifetime from a variety of sources; and that a major agent of learning about what it means to be a citizen during adulthood is the mass media. In addition to these arguments, the complex issue of what it means to be a democratic citizen will be examined by breaking the concept of citizen into separate dimensions of citizen knowledge, citizen action, and citizen decision-making. The examination of these dimensions will require a review of writings from across the social sciences, writings that deal with sociological, psychological, philosophical, and historical conceptions of citizenship. The variety of perspectives on how citizens should think, act, and make decisions are plentiful, so it will be necessary for this research to deal with only major citizen models and perspectives. In addition to these tasks, this research will also explore the communication theories of framing and cultivation in order to understand the process by which the media might socialize citizens. These are the arguments, framework, and theories needed to understand what

the media are telling us about what it means to be a democratic citizen, and what we are taking away from that story.

Chapter II

The Meaning and Importance of Citizens

“In the Aristotelian sense, to be a citizen defines who one *is*. But beyond that, the Greeks spoke of what citizens should *do*, whereupon an aspiration to practicing citizenship properly, rather than just possessing it defined the social role of *good citizen*” – Political Scientist David M. Ricci (Ricci, 2004, p. 23).

“Citizen participation is at the heart of democracy.” – Political Scientists Sydney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995, p. 1)

Citizens are everywhere in a democracy. Citizens are the individuals who collectively make up neighborhoods, communities, cities, states, and the overall society. Definitionally, citizens are rather ordinary, in that citizens are simply individuals who “are full and equal members of a democratic political community” (Mouffe, 1995, p. 217). While all nations have their own method for determining who is and who is not a citizen, generally individuals can become a citizen of a democratic country through one of the following means: if the individual is born in the country, if the individual’s parents were born in the country, or if the individual becomes a naturalized citizen through specific legal procedures proscribed by the state. While defining the legal parameters of citizenship and corresponding immigration policy are important matters that are often the subject of much debate (Beck, 1996; Huntington, 2004; Johnson, 2003; Johnson & Hing, 2005), the legal determination of who is and who is not a citizen is only half of the story when thinking about democratic citizens. This is because in a democracy there is a second dimension to citizenship. If the first dimension of

citizenship is whether an individual is a legal member of a state, then the second dimension of democratic citizenship is the capacity for the citizen to influence social decision-making.

David Ricci (2004, p. 8-9) discusses these two aspects of democratic citizenship and labels the separate citizen dimensions Citizenship I and Citizenship II. Citizenship I involves the determination of whether an individual can legally reside in a country, and Citizenship II concerns the active participation of the citizen in a political system. From this perspective, the primary level of citizenship is whether an individual is a member of a state, and the second level of citizenship is related to whether a citizen is politically active. Citizenship III, Ricci's third dimension of citizenship, involves questions of whether the citizen is making virtuous decisions when participating in the political process. To determine whether a decision is virtuous requires the establishment of some standard of political decision-making. There are varying standards of political decision-making in a democracy and these are discussed in Chapter Five, however; what is important here is that the citizen can be conceptualized as having two basic dimensions, the first being the citizen proper and the second being the citizen active.

Ricci (2004) is not alone in distinguishing between the legal citizen and the active citizen. Janoski and Gran (2002) write about passive and active citizenship, with passive citizenship equaling Ricci's concept of Citizenship I and active citizenship approximating the idea of Citizenship II. As Janoski and Gran explain, "citizenship involves active capacities to influence politics and passive rights of existence under a legal system" (p. 13). Dagger (1997) calls passive citizenship "legal citizenship" and writes that this conception of citizenship "inclines us to think of citizenship in

categorical terms: either one is a citizen of a certain country or one is not” (p. 104). The passive, legal conception of citizen can be compared to the active citizen, which Dagger labels the “ethical” citizen (p. 104). The ethical citizen is an individual who participates in political processes and does his or her part to determine what is best for a society. The distinctions of ethical and legal citizenship emanate from the Greek conception of a good citizen (Ricci). The Ancient Greeks defined a good citizen according to what the citizen did as opposed to simply who the citizen was. In other words, a good citizen is active in political decision-making process, whereas regular citizens simply possess the legal status that allows them to reside in a state, but they do nothing to help guide the state.

The research conducted here deals with the second dimension of citizenship, which is the active component of citizen identity. Of concern is how individuals think about what it means to be a good or ethical citizen, and how the media depict such citizens. Legal questions of who is or is not a citizen are not investigated in this project; the focus is solely on what individuals who are legal citizens think that it means to be a good or ethical citizen.

Why Citizens Matter

How democratic citizens participate in the political process is important because in a democracy it is the citizens who make decisions. Questions of how political decisions are made (and who actually makes the decisions) speak to the effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy of a democratic government. Whether or not citizens are involved in the political process is important because citizens are “the basis of self-government” (Mill, 1962). Citizens are tasked with considering issues and making the

decisions in a democracy.¹ Democratic decisions are made when citizens decide policy matters directly or when citizens choose the people who will do the daily work of governing (the political leaders). Either way, a democratic system presupposes that the people—that is, all the people, not just select sub-groups—are involved in the political decision-making process. When citizens do not participate—when individuals function as legal citizens only and not as ethical citizens—then the work of deciding who will serve as political leaders is left to only those individuals who show up to vote. Such a disparity of political involvement is problematic in a democratic system for several reasons.

First, when substantial portions of the electorate are not participating in the decision-making process, then the decisions that are made are not based on the will of the entire democracy, but are instead based on the will of only certain portions of the democracy. Low voting turnout creates a situation in which the sociodemographics of those voting do not match the sociodemographic make-up of the entire society (Abramson, 1995; Piven & Cloward, 1988; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). This is problematic because if the citizens who are actually voting tend to be from a specific social class or demographic, then the desires of that particular class or demographic will be favored over the general will of society simply because those showing up to vote tend to be from a particular group. Political decisions are based only on the will of those people who actually vote, so democratic decisions are the verdict of *the people* only when all people participate.

Second, low participation in the democratic process is problematic because democratic decision-making based on the will of the few creates a situation in which

those who are making decisions tend to be more partisan and less open to compromise. When partisans are the ones electing political leaders, then the leaders who are chosen tend to have ideologically extreme views. As Patterson (2003) explains, “as electorates shrink, they tend to calcify,” in that “hard-core partisans (the ‘wing nuts’) become an increasingly larger proportion of those voting” (p. 12). When the voting public is disproportionately composed of partisans, Patterson argues that this leads to less moderation and compromise, both in policy decisions and in the characteristics of elected political leaders.

Third, political leaders are more responsive to an active citizenry because leaders who do not follow the will of an active citizenry run the risk of being held accountable on Election Day (Burnham, 1987; Verba, 1996). Conversely, a citizenry that is not active will likely find political leaders to be unresponsive to the desires or wishes of the citizenry. This relationship applies to groups within the citizenry as well, in that political leaders are more likely to respond to the wishes of specific segments of a population that are continually active, as opposed to taking into consideration the welfare of the segments of society that do not participate in elections. Political leaders respond to groups in society who vote, simply because those who vote are the ones who will determine if a political leader retains his or her elected office in the future. Groups within a society that do not vote will not help decide whether a political leader is re-elected, so if a political leader is motivated by a desire to remain in office, that leader can essentially ignore the desires of non-participating segments of society. Patterson (2003) provides an example of this when he writes that, “as the electorate has shrunk, it has come to include proportionally more citizens who are older, who have higher

incomes, or who hold intense opinions on such issues as gun control, labor rights, and abortion” (p. 13). If this example is true, then this means that political leaders would benefit from being more responsive to the needs of older and richer citizens, as older and richer citizens are the ones who vote on Election Day and are therefore the ones who choose the political leaders. Conversely, if young people and individuals with lower incomes are not voting, then the needs of those groups will be less likely to be realized in social policy because the desire of these groups are less likely to be taken into consideration when political leaders make policy decisions.

Finally, incomplete participation in the political process also leads to decisions that are viewed as less legitimate in the eyes of those who do not participate, because those who do not participated do not have a hand in the process. As Mouffe (1995) explains:

In a democracy, the source of all authority—the legitimate basis of all power—is the collective body of the people, the citizens of the polity. There is popular sovereignty of the citizens and thereby government by consent of the governed.
(p. 217)

Democratic decisions are not completely consensual when portions of the electorate do not participate. Even the purposeful non-participation of legal citizens—as opposed to the forced non-participation of disenfranchised citizens—leads to less investment in political decisions by those who do not participate. Purposeful decisions not to participate indicate some form of disconnect with the democratic process that can lead to non-participating citizens being less vested in election outcomes. In the most extreme circumstances, the inability to affect change through the democratic process leaves only

the possibility of revolution. Such a sentiment can be found in Malcolm X's discussion of "the ballot or the bullet," wherein the African-American leader argues that the African-American community must be guaranteed the right to vote, and if this does not happen then the only course of action left is a bloody revolution (X, 1964). In this view, the ballot—the ability to vote—is believed to be the only way in which a political or social revolution can be accomplished without bloodshed.

Ultimately, democracy as a system of government only works when citizens in a democracy are active (Fishkin, 1995; Mill, 1962; Pateman, 1970; Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). The belief that a democracy requires active citizens "has been a truism for centuries" (Putnam, 2000, p. 336). However, participation in American democracy is declining (Patterson, 2003; Putnam, 2000), and the decline in political participation is problematic for reasons beyond its impact on the overall effectiveness of the democratic system. As Bellah and colleagues (1996) explain, "if we face a crisis of civic identity, it is not just a social crisis, it is a personal crisis as well" (p. xi). Society suffers when citizens do not understand their role, but not realizing one's place in a democracy is also detrimental to the individual.

In addition to whether a citizen participates in the democratic process, what a citizen knows also matters from a normative democratic perspective. As Perrin (2006) explains, "democratic theory is justifiably afraid of a public that can be misled or tricked by powerful interests or, perhaps worse, may become too distracted or poorly informed to develop meaningful preferences" (p. 4). Citizens need to know something about policies and candidates if they are to make decisions regarding these matters.

While it is generally understood that a democracy needs active, informed citizens, an exact idea of what citizens should do specifically, how much knowledge a citizen should possess, and on what standard a citizen should make decisions are not set in stone. There is no citizen standard that is part of the U.S. Constitution or any other formal American document. There are no final, shared, specific details about what exactly constitutes a good American (or democratic) citizen. In fact, general ideas about what makes a good citizen have changed over the history of the United States (Schudson, 1998). Therefore the normative concept of what constitutes an ethical citizen is in play, it is a fluid idea that has changed in the past and likely continues to evolve and morph today. For example, in a historical review of the changing nature of democratic citizenship in America, Schudson argues that the earliest model of American citizenship was the assenting citizen. The assenting citizen participated in the process of electing political leaders and then left the business of governing to those elected leaders. The assenting citizen was not involved with or knowledgeable of political decision-making details. This model of citizenship is very different from the Progressive Era's informed citizen, which is a model of citizenship in which the citizen is knowledgeable about all political issue and policies. Beyond the informed citizen, the modern citizen is monitorial in nature (watching the environment for issues that matter to the individual citizen and then acting) as well as focused on individual rights (Schudson). Furthermore, Schudson describes the modern "widening web of citizenship" (p. 264) as a way of acknowledging the continually changing notions of citizenship.

Each of these citizen models are explained more fully in Chapter Four, but what is important now is that if standards of good citizenship have changed and are changing,

then an important issue for those interested in citizen behavior concerns what individuals are being taught that it means to be a good citizen. Or, to put it in the language of political science, how are individuals being socialized politically? This area of study is important because if there is a gap between normative conceptions of citizens and the ways that citizens actually behave, then perhaps a partial explanation for this discrepancy is that individuals are not being socialized according to a model of active and knowledgeable citizenship. The fact that there is fluidity and variety in the way that an individual might think about good citizenship—a range of knowledge standards, normative activities, and decision-making standards which are all explored in subsequent chapters—indicates that how individuals are socialized possibly differs from how political theorists typically argue citizens should behave. In order to understand what citizens are being taught about citizenship, a review of how individuals learn to be citizens is required. Therefore the following chapter explores the agents of political socialization and examines one political socialization agent in particular: the mass media.

Chapter III

Learning about our Place in Democracy: The Socialization of Citizens

How does an individual learn what it means to be a citizen? Where does an individual get information about being a citizen? If citizenship norms and standards have changed throughout the course of American history (Schudson, 1998), then how have individuals learned the citizenship standards that are in favor at any given time? As citizen norms have evolved, how do individuals find out about such changes? The political science sub-field of political socialization focuses on these types of questions. Political socialization research has identified three main agents of socialization: family, schools, and the media. Families have been found to pass down political identity (Hyman, 1959; Westholm, 1999) and the family system is thought to serve as a “powerful incubator of citizenship” (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002, p. 281). Educational activities are known to inform citizens about what it means to active and engaged politically (Niemi & Junn, 1998). In fact, education has always been considered one of the best ways of creating democratic citizens. Schudson (1998) notes that, “in colonial America and afterward, schooling and reading were understood to be instruments of inducting citizens more firmly into the established order” (p. 71), and Lippman (2005) writes that “education has furnished the thesis of the last chapter of every optimistic book on democracy” (p. 12).

In addition to family and education, the media have been found to be a source of political socialization (Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; Easton & Dennis, 1969; Garramone & Atkin, 1986; Hess & Torney, 1967; Ichilov, 1998; Jackson, 2002; Jennings & Niemi, 1974). Individuals learn what it means to be a citizen by seeing

citizens in the media. Ricci (2004) writes that “people learn how to behave civically from stories they hear about public life and how they should contribute to it” (p. 16). The media are a source of such stories, and citizen stories can be found in entertainment television, newspapers, the Internet, or any other media modality. Of all media modalities, television in particular is regarded as a socializing medium (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002; Nabi & Sullivan, 2001), so it makes sense that television would function as a source of political socialization.

In addition to functioning as a primary source of political socialization along with the family and schools, the mass media are also a source of secondary socialization (Pfau & Mullen, 1995). Primary socialization is the first instance of socialization that occurs in childhood, whereas secondary socialization includes additional episodes of socialization that continue to occur throughout life as individuals encounter new roles and institutions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). While most of the political socialization that occurs via education and family takes place in childhood and adolescence, the media offer a lifelong source of socialization. Socialization via the mass media occurs even after an individual finishes school and leaves the childhood home. Moreover, secondary socialization is particularly important for the issue of citizenship because adulthood often brings about things that make political issues particularly important to the individual: money, property, and family.

Secondary socialization via the media is most likely to occur for issues, concepts, and experiences for which individuals have no direct experience (Moy & Pfau, 2000). Therefore it is likely that individuals who are not politically or civically active—individuals who do not have the experience of functioning as an active citizen

or do not have the experience of interacting with other active citizens—will be more influenced by mediated depictions of citizens found on television or newspapers when compared to individuals who have real world citizen experiences. Furthermore, “the likelihood of accepting mass mediated depictions of reality is the most pronounced for heavier media users” (Moy & Pfau, p. 46). Basically, the more individuals consume media content, the more likely it is such content will impact the way in which individuals think about concepts such as social roles.

Therefore, because the mass media function as a source of secondary political socialization it is important to understand what specifically the media teach individuals about being a citizen. That is, how do the media depict citizens? In order to answer this question the process of framing is explored in the next section.

Media Depictions of Citizens

Framing Theory

Framing theory proposes that the way issues are presented in the media influences how an audience understands those issues. Media “frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Entman (1993) writes that frames “promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). From a framing perspective then, the way media content is structured directly impacts how viewers evaluate the issue being addressed by the media.

The selection of specific media frames is not necessarily a conscious decision by the individuals who create media content. Gitlin (1980) argues that media framing is

unavoidable because, at the institutional and individual journalist level, framing is necessary to interpret, organize, and understand large amounts of information. In other words, frames must be used to funnel an infinite universe of information into something that is comprehensible by the audience. Frames are also used to communicate issue importance or to relate current issues to something that might have happened in the past (and thus make a new event understandable via the experience of a past event). For the research conducted here, how citizens are framed in the media matter because how citizens and citizen action are defined, evaluated, and emphasized implicitly illustrate what citizens should (and should not) be thinking and doing. It is likely that media frames of citizens tell the audience—as a group of citizens—something about what citizens do and who citizens are. This project examines several different frames that address different aspects of citizenship, and these frames are reviewed in the following section.

Citizen Frames

The first citizen frame that is examined in this research considers how often citizens—ethical or active citizens, that is—appear in media content. The citizens of concern for this investigation are not legal citizens—individuals who have the legal right to reside in a country (Dagger, 1997)—but rather this investigation is concerned with ethical (Dagger) or active (Janoski & Gran, 2002) citizens. Active citizens are individuals who participate in the political process and do their part to determine what is best for society. Ethical or active citizens are recognized by their actions. That is, ethical or active citizens will—when depicted in media content—be involved in some sort of political activity, whether the activity is voting or participating in a community

meeting. The process of determining who is or is not an ethical or active citizen within media content is detailed in Chapter Six.

The frequency with which ethical or active citizens appear in media content is an important question because according to agenda-setting theory, issues that are prominent in media content are, in turn, the issues that are thought about by viewers (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Therefore, the frequency with which citizens appear in media content is likely associated with how much viewers do or do not think about citizenship. If mass media content frequently depicts democratic citizens, then according to agenda-setting theory viewers of media content will think about citizenship. Conversely, if citizens do not frequently appear in media content, then viewers will not think about democratic citizenship. In order to determine how often citizens appear in media content the following research question is asked:

RQ1: How frequently are citizens depicted in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

In addition to frequency of depiction, it is important to understand who is characterizing citizens when citizens are depicted in media content. That is, within media content are citizens speaking for themselves (through citizen-quotes), are the references to citizens within media content contained in the rhetoric of government officials, or are journalists directly describing the thoughts and actions of citizens? While journalists, editors, and producers ultimately make all decisions about what information is contained in media content, from a framing perspective it matters if citizens are speaking for themselves and are being represented by their own actions or if citizens are depicted by journalists or politicians. Herman and Chomsky (1988) caution

that the news media tend to exhibit an over reliance on “official sources,” meaning that the majority of information in newscasts comes from politicians or government leaders. An over reliance on official sources might impact the way that citizens are typically depicted in media content because it is possible government leaders construct the normative behavior of citizens in a manner that is different than how such behavior would be understood by citizens themselves. It matters who is speaking for citizens when media content is focused on citizens. Therefore, this research seeks to understand exactly who is constructing citizens in the mass media by asking the following research question:

RQ2: Are citizens, politicians, or journalists more frequently employed in constructing media depictions of citizens in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

The next citizen frame that is included in this research concerns the issues that are associated with citizens in media content. Citizens have the potential to be concerned about a range of issues or policies. Citizens might be concerned with issues such as taxes, education, the environment, social issues, and others (Verba et al., 1995). If citizens are depicted as being concerned primarily with specific issues, and if the mass media are indeed socializing citizens, then the citizens who are being socialized could perceive that the issues depicted in media content have some sort of priority for the citizen. Therefore it is important to understand what issues are associated with citizens in media content:

RQ3: When citizens are depicted in media content, what issues are most frequently associated with those depictions in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

In addition to understanding what issues are associated with citizens, it is also useful to determine whether the issues that appear when citizens are featured in media content are different than the issues that appear in media content when citizens are absent. In other words, if citizens are most frequently associated with an issue like crime and at the same time crime is also the most frequently discussed issue in all media content, then there is likely nothing particularly special about citizens being associated with crime, as crime is a major issue for all media content. On the other hand, if crime is frequently associated with citizen depictions in media content but is not a prevalent theme in media content without citizens, then crime would inherently be a citizen-issue in the media content. In order to understand the relationship between citizen-issues and non-citizen-issues, the following research question is proposed:

RQ4: How do the issues that are associated with citizen depictions in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers compare to issues that are not associated with citizen depictions?

Walsh (2004) writes that, “social identities occupy a central role in the perspectives people use to think about public affairs” (p. 28). When thinking about politics, how individuals think of themselves socially can convey their sameness or individuality when compared with others (Walsh). Therefore, the way that citizens are portrayed in the media in relation to different groups (or the absence of groups) is

important. If citizens are portrayed as generally affiliated with political parties, then the social identity of a citizen is clearly related to organized political parties. If citizens are portrayed as individuals absent group association, then the citizen could be understood to be an individualistic entity, existing apart from groups. Therefore the social identity of citizens—as constructed through group or non-group association—is an important aspect of understanding how citizens are depicted in the media. To determine how citizens are depicted in relation to groups, the following research question is posed:

RQ5: When depicted in media content, what groups are citizens associated with in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

The agency of citizens in the media is also of importance. Agency speaks to whether citizens in media content are depicted as acting or being acted upon. Citizens who are routinely depicted as agents of their own action—actions such as voting, voicing opinions, or protesting—are much different than citizens who are routinely being acted upon by the government, corporations, or other external agents, in that citizens who are agents of their own action are more efficacious and in control of their lives than citizens who are routinely acted on by outside forces beyond their control. Therefore, in order to understand the extent to which citizens are depicted in media content as agents of action, the following research question will be explored:

RQ6: When depicted in media content, to what extent are citizens depicted as agents of action in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

The tone with which citizens are presented in media depictions is also an important issue when considering media constructions of citizens. Not all citizen depictions in media content will be inherently positive. If media depictions of citizens influences user's perceptions of citizens, then positive depictions of citizens will likely lead to different user perceptions than would negative depictions. Therefore it is important to understand the tone of citizen coverage in media content. The following research question addresses this issue:

RQ7: What is the tone of coverage of media depictions in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

Finally, while this project is concerned with understanding how democratic citizens are constructed in the media, it is likely that media content will also depict citizens from other non-democratic countries. It is worth comparing constructions of democratic and non-democratic citizens along the frames discussed here in order to understand if democratic citizens are constructed differently than citizens from other systems of government. The following question addresses the possible differences in democratic and non-democratic citizen frames:

RQ8: Compared to democratic citizens, how do the U.S. media depict citizens of non-democratic nations in terms of: (a) frequency of appearance, (b) source of citizen depiction, (c) the issues associated with the citizens, (d) the groups associated with citizens, (e) the agency of the citizens, (f) the overall tone of the citizen depictions, (g) knowledge of citizens, and (h) concerns of citizens?

Influence of Depictions on Viewers

Each of these research questions has addressed ways in which citizens are depicted in the media. This information is an important first step in understanding how the media construct citizens. However, evidence of different media frames alone tells us nothing about whether such frames influence the perceptions of viewers. While previous framing research has provided evidence of associations between frames and audience perceptions (Iyengar, 1991; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Shah, Kwak, Schmierbach, & Zubric, 2004), “the presence of frames in the text, as detected by researchers, does not guarantee their influence in audience thinking” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). In order to determine if frames are influencing audience perceptions, then in addition to documenting specific media frames the beliefs or attitudes of an audience must also be measured. Because this research seeks to understand how media depictions of citizens influence the ways that individuals think about what it means to be a citizen, a framework must be constructed that allows for measurement of both media frames and audience perceptions. Such a framework—focused specifically on three dimensions of normative democratic citizenship—is advanced in the next two chapters. However, before the framework is explored, it is necessary to consider how media depictions of citizens might be associated with audience perceptions. If the media socialize viewers—in this case, socialize them to be citizens—then how does this socialization process work, and what are the parameters of such a process? An appropriate theoretical model is needed to explain and understand the media socialization effects. Theoretical guidance on how these effects might take place is offered by Pfau, Moy, Radler, and Bridgeman (1998) who argue that socialization via the mass media occurs through the

cultivation process. The next section reviews cultivation theory and explores the theory's utility for explaining the media socialization process.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory begins with the premise that “television has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information” (Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 44). The fact that television is so ubiquitous and that the programming on television is generally developed for large, heterogeneous audiences has prompted cultivation theory researchers to posit that the medium of television is particularly well suited for creating “a shared national culture” (Gerbner et al., p. 44). What the process of cultivation theory means in terms of media effects is that those who watch television are likely to develop conceptions of reality that match the depictions of reality that are presented on television. According to cultivation theory, a television viewer's perceptions of the real world will match the depictions of the world that is found in television content. Evidence of cultivation is found if heavier viewers of television report a perception of reality that is more like what is depicted on television than what is reported by light television viewers. The idea is that the more one watches television, the more the version of reality shown on television is cultivated within the viewer's mind.

The early findings of cultivation research focused on the “mean world” syndrome, which found that heavier viewers of television believe the world is a more dangerous and violent place than do light television viewers (Stossel, 1997). This effect was related to the fact that television content was found to depict more instances of violence than what actually occurs in the real world (the “mean world” index). The

television world was found to be more violent than was the real world, and individuals who were heavy viewers of television believed the world to be more like the one depicted on television (Gerbner et al., 2002; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1979; Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003).

Cultivation theory research has also explored issues beyond violence. Researchers have found that television viewing cultivates authoritarian attitudes (Shanahan, 1998) and materialistic values (Burroughs, Shrum, & Rindfleisch, 2002; Harmon, 2001), and that television viewing influences perceptions of minorities (Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000), attorneys (Pfau et al., 1998), and physicians (Pfau & Mullen, 1995). Also, whereas cultivation research was originally concerned with the generalized viewing of all television (Gerbner et al., 2002), more recent cultivation theory work has found that the viewing of different genres of television leads to different cultivation effects (Bilandzic & Rossler, 2004).

The research constructed here builds on the genre specific aspect of cultivation theory by focusing on television news, cable talk news, and late night comedy news. Television news is likely a good source of citizen depictions because so much of television news deals with political and social issues—areas in which citizens should abound. Cable talk news programs such as *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Hannity and Colmes*, and *Larry King Live* also deal with political and social issues, and these programs both report and comment on recent events. Late night comedy news shows such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* are also genres that likely provide content that may socialize citizens. While television news programs are traditional sources of information about newsworthy events around the world, non-traditional or

new media sources such as late night comedy news programs are increasingly a source of political and social information for many individuals (National Annenberg Election Survey, 2004). Moy and Pfau (2000) write that while non-traditional media such as late night television programming is not designed primarily to inform, such media still provide “a large portion of Americans with information about current affairs” (p. 180). In fact, viewers of late night comedy news programs have been found to more informed about political candidates than are non-viewers (National Annenberg Election Survey, 2004). However, while late night news comedy programs are increasingly becoming a primary source of political information for many individuals, these individuals “are not ‘political junkies’ who avidly seek out information about the candidates” (Benoit & Hansen, 2004), instead these individuals learn about politics from whatever media sources they happen to encounter while using media content for other purposes (primarily entertainment, presumably). The fact that viewers of late night comedy news television are less politically interested and motivated than are users of television news or newspapers warrant the inclusion of such media content in this investigation. This is because if individuals are accidentally learning about politics while watching entertaining media content, then it is important that an investigation into media depictions of citizens attempt to understand what such viewers are learning about what it means to be a citizen while being entertained.

In addition to television content, this project also examines citizen depictions in newspapers. While cultivation theory was originally posited as a theory of television effects, research has also found cultivation effects for newspapers (Vergeer et al., 2000). Newspapers are an ideal media text for this examination of contemporary citizenship

behavior. Tocqueville (2003) called America a nation of newspapers, and Davis (1996) argues that America was born on the pages of newspapers. Newspapers have always held a special place in the development of American democracy, and while newspaper use has declined in recent years (Norris, 2000) newspapers are still sources of political information, particularly for the politically interested and active. In fact, media research has demonstrated a positive relationship between newspaper use and both citizen participation in elections (McLeod et al., 1996; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Wilkins, 2000) and social capital building (Brehm & Rahn, 1997).

Psychological Mechanisms of Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory has been posited to work through two processes, one process involves increasing construct accessibility (Shrum, 1996; Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993; Shrum, Wyer, & O'Guinn, 1998) and the other process occurs by updating on-line judgments or attitudes (Shrum, 2004). Both of these processes are discussed in turn. First, cultivation has been found to increase the accessibility of specific constructs. For example, if a heavy viewer of television sees repeated instances of violence, and then the violence construct becomes more accessible for that individual. If such a viewer is then asked to estimate the amount of violence that takes place in society, then the fact that the violence construct that has been made accessible through television viewing may cause the individual to over-estimate the amount of violence that takes place in society. In the end, episodes of violence on television have made the violence construct more accessible than it would have been without exposure to television violence. In this example, without the mediated depictions of violence, the accessibility of the violence construct (and thus the estimate of real-world violence) might have been much lower.

Individuals rely on memory to form generalizations about issues, and exposure to television content can influence the construction of such memories (Romer et al., 2003).

The second process by which cultivation effects might occur involves television viewing influencing on-line judgments and attitudes. An on-line model of memory proposes individuals maintain a tally of generic evaluations about an attitude object that leads to an overall positive or negative evaluation of that object (Lodge, 1995; Lodge, McGraw, & Stroh, 1989; Lodge & Steenbergen, 1995). This on-line model is contrasted with a memory-based information processing system (Zaller, 1992; Zaller & Feldman, 1992), which proposes that individuals store specific information about an attitude object in long-term memory, so that when an evaluation of an object is needed it is specific information that is retrieved from memory. The on-line memory model posits that attitudes exist absent (or largely absent) specific information or experiences that support the attitude. Returning to the example of television violence, an individual might have an attitude that his or her community neighborhood is violent. Viewing violence depicted in television dramas, network news, or any other television program might strengthen the attitude by updating the certainty of the judgment that exists in on-line memory. The attitude is not constructed on specific examples of violence, but is an overall evaluation that is strengthened (or weakened) when new content is encountered.

The explanation that cultivation creates effects through two distinct processes results in the specification of two different types of cultivation effects. The two types of cultivation effects are generally referred to as first-order and second-order judgments. “First-order judgments pertain predominately to set-size or probability judgments, whereas the second-order judgments are for the most part attitude and belief judgments”

(Shrum, 2004, p. 330). First-order judgments are related to knowledge of facts, such as estimations of how much crime occurs in one's neighborhood. Second-order judgments are related to attitudes, such as perceptions of how safe a neighborhood is (as opposed to the actual factual knowledge of crime rates). Bilandzic and Rossler (2004) argue that "learning from television facts may impact attitudes (second-order-effects), but not factual knowledge (first-order-effects)" (p. 310). This research deals explicitly with second-order effects as it is interested in individual perceptions of normative citizen behavior (that is, attitudes about what it means to be a good citizen).

Using cultivation theory as a framework for understanding the process of secondary political socialization via the mass media leads to the prediction that viewing television will influence perceptions of normative citizenship behavior. This will be the main hypothesis of this research. However, specific hypotheses cannot be offered at this point because a citizen framework must be established before media content and audience perceptions can be measured. The proposed framework will be based on the citizen dimensions of knowledge, action, and decision-making. These dimensions will be explored in the following two chapters at which time hypotheses informed by the preceding discussion of cultivation theory will be offered for each citizen dimension.

Overall, the current application of cultivation to perceptions of citizenship is important for the field of cultivation research because this project deals with the ways that media content socializes viewers to understand their own social roles. There is some precedence for investigating how media use impacts perceptions of social roles. Previous cultivation research has focused on how media use is related to perceptions of gender roles (Morgan, 1982; Rothschild, 1984) as well as perceptions of marriage and

work (Signorielli, 1991, 1993). However, gender, marriage, and work roles apply to individuals differently. That is, individuals have different needs and purposes for both work and marriage, and both or neither may be relevant or important to any given individual. At the same time, gender, because it is divided into male and female, inherently provides a similar and dissimilar other for any given individual. Citizenship, unlike marriage and work, is inherent to every individual that legally resides in a country. And citizenship, unlike gender, provides a uniform status for all legal individuals in a state. There is no “other” from a citizen perspective (while the non-citizen could be considered the other from a citizen perspective, because this investigation only considers citizen perspectives of citizens and not non-citizens, such an other is not included in this analysis). Therefore, this project investigates an individual’s perception of how an individual should function socially, absent the variability that is inherent to issues such as work, marriage, and even gender. Previous cultivation work has found that “television images contribute to secondary socialization, even about those professional roles that people directly encounter on a regular basis” (Pfau & Mullen, 1995, p. 455), but does media content socialize individuals about themselves? Does cultivation socialize individuals to understand their specific roles within a group when everyone belongs to the group equally?

Because this project is investigating how television cultivates perceptions of citizens, it is important to account for individual levels of participation and interest in the political process and to explore how these variables are related to the influence of mediated depictions of citizens on viewers. While active citizens are likely socialized politically through the actual experience of voting, volunteering for campaigns,

protesting, and other activities, this socialization will not occur for the politically inactive. Therefore it is likely that active citizens are less influenced by mediated depictions of citizens than are inactive citizens. Just as doctors are likely influenced less by mediated depictions of doctors when compared to non-doctors (because doctors are actually physicians and know through direct experience what it means to be doctor, whereas non-doctors do not), so should active citizens know something about what it means to be a citizen that inactive citizens do not. Therefore, political participation should be associated with perceptions of democratic citizenship.

Political interest will also be accounted for in this investigation. Political interest is important because interest in a subject creates a motivation to process information related to that subject. If an individual is inherently interested in politics, then that individual will be motivated to process political content (or content involving depictions of democratic citizens). The motivation to process media content leads to a systematic, central processing of that content, and this central processing of content prevents a cultivation effect from occurring (Shrum, 2004). Therefore, interest in politics should be associated with perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizen.

Moving forward with an overall idea of cultivation-based expectations of the impact of media content on viewing depictions of citizens, it is now necessary to explore the dimensions of citizenship and offer specific hypotheses. As has been stated previously, normative democratic citizenship is inherently complex and the expectations of what makes a good citizen have changed throughout history. Therefore, in order to explore the ways that individuals think about citizenship and the ways that the media depict citizens, a citizen framework must be constructed. This is accomplished by

exploring three main dimensions of democratic citizenship: citizen knowledge, citizen behavior, and citizen decision-making standards. The first two dimensions are explored in the following chapter, and citizen decision-making is addressed in Chapter Five.

Chapter IV

Thinking and Acting: The Knowledge and Behavior of Good Citizens

What is an active citizen? In what types of activities should a good citizen be involved? What exactly should a citizen know? How should citizens think about their participation in a democracy? These are all basic questions that address what it means to be a democratic citizen, yet none of these questions have simple answers. Some people might say that an active citizen is someone who votes on Election Day, whereas others might consider a citizen to be active only if the citizen is involved in community organizations, contributes to political campaigns, and votes. Regarding the question of how much a citizen should know, some people might respond that a good citizen should know a great deal about the major issues of the day, whereas others could answer that a citizen should know just enough to understand what issues are important to him or her. The standards of what a citizen should know and what a citizen should do are not absolute. Ideas about citizen knowledge and actions vary both across and within historical time periods.

Since conceptions of how democratic citizens should think and act differ, a review of major perspectives on democratic citizenship is needed in order to examine how citizens are constructed in the media and how individuals think about what it means to be a citizen. This review will include historical and modern conceptions of citizenship, and it will be conducted in order to understand the ways that democratic citizenship is conceived. It should be mentioned that the conceptions of citizenship discussed here do not divide into mutually exclusive categories. For example, the model of citizenship constructed during the Progressive Era might still influence modern

thinking about citizenship, even as modern ideas of citizenship have expanded to include citizen expectations beyond being fully informed. Also, it is quite likely that when individuals think about what it means to be a citizen, they borrow aspects of several different citizen models. The variability of citizenship is one of the justifications for the research conducted here, in that this project is an effort to document how individuals perceive citizenship and how citizens are depicted in the media. To begin the process of reviewing common aspects of and perspectives on democratic citizenship, the issue of how much and what a citizen should know is addressed first.

Citizen Knowledge

The earliest model of the American citizen was the assenting citizen (Schudson, 1998). As Schudson explains, “from the early days until the 1760s, American politics was politics by assent, elections largely a communal ritual of reaffirming rule by gentleman” (p. 27). According to this initial model of American citizenship, the citizen simply elected political leaders and then returned to the farm, leaving political leaders to do the work of governing. While the assenting citizen model says something about how a citizen should act (i.e., a citizen should vote for leaders then leave the business of governing to those elected), the model also implies something about what a citizen should know. For the assenting citizen the knowledge needed to decide who to vote for was an overall opinion or judgment of that candidate or incumbent’s ability to govern. This conception of citizen knowledge did not require a full understanding of policy issues and government nuances. Instead, citizen political decisions involved an evaluation of a candidate’s ability to govern. Ultimately, in a system of assenting

citizens the individual decisions of political leaders were not examined by the citizen, but rather once the political leader was chosen the citizens and leaders existed apart.

The assenting citizen could make decisions about political leaders absent detailed knowledge of government and policy because so much about the early United States was thought to be self-evident or easily grasped by hard working men. Ricci (2004) argues that the *Declaration of Independence* formulated a government in which regular people were able to make decisions through the use of common sense. Common sense requires no specialized knowledge or expertise, it only requires individuals to be thoughtful and sincere in their consideration of the issues that need to be decided, and for the assenting citizen the decisions revolved solely around choosing the individuals who would lead the government.

The American citizen model would move away from a conception of the assenting citizen to a more active citizen as the American political party system expanded and offered benefits such as employment to citizens who supported the winning party. When political parties were at their strongest there was a direct and explicit benefit for those actively supporting a party, and these benefits motivated American citizens to pay attention to the political process. However, the strong party system would not last, as the *quid pro quo* system of votes for jobs was eventually brought to an end during the Progressive Era (Schudson, 1998). While the Progressive Era reforms meant the electoral process was much less a process of outright bribery, the jobs that had been offered as rewards for political support (which were now gone) had also motivated the American citizenry to be active in the electoral process. Once this

compensation was gone, gone too was the overt stimulus that had caused so many citizens to be engaged in elections.

What emerged in the wake of the reformation of the party system was a normative construction of citizens as informed and active individuals. Instead of a system of politics in which those supporting the winners received employment and those supporting the losers received nothing, the Progressive Era introduced the idea of citizens as engaged in the political process simply because it was what good citizens did. “Progressive Era politics instructed people in a citizenship of intelligence rather than passionate intensity” (Schudson, 1998, p. 182) and this meant that “a twentieth-century voter was obliged to act out something new and untested in the political universe—citizenship by virtue of informed competence”(Schudson, p. 173). This turn in the American conception of citizenship brought about the idea of the informed citizen, an idea that in many ways is still in existence today. The informed citizen is one who understands the facts related to political issues and then makes educated decisions about political matters. The informed citizen knows much more than the assenting citizen did about political policies and issues.

It is frequently argued that an informed citizen is best for democracy (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Somin, 2004). Criticisms of how little American citizens typically know about government and politics are made by democratic theorists because these theorists assert that knowledge is necessary for citizens to make correct choices in the democratic process. Citizens must understand numerous political issues in order to make decisions that are best for the individual and community. Althaus (1998) found that “low levels and uneven social distribution of political knowledge in the mass

public” prevent the publics’ true preferences from being measured in public opinion surveys. This means that a fully informed public would likely produce different opinions on any number of issues and might vote differently come Election Day than would a poorly informed public. The point is that information matters; being informed allows individuals to understand both political issues and their own preferences relative to those issues.

While the idea of an informed citizen remains a popular model of the modern democratic citizen, Schudson (1998) argues that today’s citizen are not actually functioning like the Progressive Era’s informed citizen ideal, but instead are monitorial in nature. This means that instead of being informed or knowledgeable about all issues, modern citizens actually survey the political landscape and pay attention only to issues that specifically concern them. The monitorial construction of citizenship has implications for behavior also, as the monitorial citizen will likely only act with regard to those issues that specifically affect the individual’s interests. As Schudson explains, “monitorial citizens tend to be defensive rather than proactive. The monitorial citizen engages in environmental surveillance more than information-gathering” (p. 311). The existence of monitorial citizens implies that the political and social landscape is too congested for the citizen to pay attention to and know about all issues (Jones, 1999). Instead of being completely informed, the monitorial citizen pays attention to the big picture of social and political issues and waits for issues or events that seem particularly important before acting.

With regard to the model of a monitorial citizen, the question remains as to what a monitorial citizen actually needs to know. Schudson (1998) does not specify

knowledge requirements, but two possibilities seem likely. One is that monitorial citizens must know a little bit about all issues in order to make the initial determination of what issues will affect the citizen. In other words, a citizen would need to know a little bit about immigration, the environment, taxes, and other political issues so that the citizen could determine which of these issues are important. The other option is that the monitorial citizen does not need to know much about anything, but instead the citizen waits for issues to capture his or her attention. For example, an event like 9/11 might capture the monitorial citizen's attention and cause the citizen to realize that terrorism is an important issue as it has a clear potential to impact the citizen's well-being or interests. Regardless of which of these approaches best fits the monitorial citizen, the conclusion that can be drawn from either possibility is that the monitorial citizen needs to know less than does the informed citizen of the Progressive Era.

Overall then, from a historical perspective the proscribed level of political knowledge associated with citizen models forms a curvilinear pattern, with the earliest citizen—the assenting citizen—beginning the pattern of required citizen political knowledge at its lowest levels (see Figure 1). The normative level of knowledge that citizens' need increases to its highest level with the creation of the Progressive Era's informed citizen. Finally, the current monitorial citizen model requires the citizen know between some and very little about political events.

The point is that knowledge—as a dimension of good democratic citizenship—varies according to different citizen models. The variability of citizen knowledge means that different normative standards of citizen knowledge could be communicated when socializing citizens. This research seeks to understand what the media as an agent of

secondary political socialization teaches individuals about citizen knowledge. Therefore the following research question is posed:

RQ9: How knowledgeable are citizens depicted in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

Additionally, in order to determine how media depictions of citizens impact individuals, it is necessary to establish how individuals perceive citizen knowledge:

RQ10: What do citizens believe is an appropriate level of citizen knowledge?

Answers to both of these research questions provide the information necessary to test the hypotheses that address cultivation theory's explanation of political socialization. These hypotheses are based on the discussion of cultivation theory from the previous chapter:

H1: Levels of (a) political interest and (b) citizen participation are associated with perceptions of citizen knowledge standards.

H2: Amount of (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspaper use influences perceptions of citizen knowledge standards.

While knowledge is important to a standard of democratic citizenship, the knowledge dimension tells only part of the story of who citizens are. To work towards a complete picture of democratic citizenship, one must also consider the actions of citizens.

Citizen Actions

Voting, contributing money or time to political campaigns, protesting unjust policies, appearing in court, talking to friends about politics: these and other actions fall under the rubric of democratic citizen activities. This project is concerned with which of these citizen activities are viewed by individuals as being within the purview of good citizen behavior. This research is also interested in how citizen activities are depicted in the media. To consider these questions, a review of typical citizen activities is needed, and this review begins with perhaps the most important political activity: voting.

Voting. Voting is the essence of political participation. Voting rates are typically examined in order to determine the health of a democracy (Patterson, 2003; Teixeira, 1992) thus serving as the final metric of citizen participation. In fact, it is the act of expressing one's opinion through the casting of a vote on Election Day (and having that vote be equal to all other votes in the decision of policy and selection of leaders) that most significantly separates a democracy from other forms of government (Dahl, 1998). Voting is also the one political activity that influences social policy and the selection of leaders. No other political activity has a direct effect on political decisions in the way that voting does. Elections decide who will govern a state and can also determine policy outcomes, and these outcomes are bound by law. Additionally, voting is more than simply the process of choosing leaders or making policy decisions, it also an expression of belonging to a democracy and being a citizen. A significant aspect of voting "is expressive rather than instrumental: a feeling that one has done one's duty to society" (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980, p. 7). Schudson (1998) agrees, writing that "voting is

an instrumental act to elect one candidate and not another, but it is also mass ritual, and failure to engage in it suggests declining fervor for the religion of democracy” (p. 301).

Forming and expressing political opinions. If citizens are to make political decisions through the process of voting, then it is natural that they should have opinions about political matters. That is, a citizen should have an opinion about which candidate is more qualified to lead the state before he or she votes for a particular candidate. This means that the possession of political knowledge that was discussed earlier in this chapter is inherent to the citizen activity of forming and expressing political opinions. Voting can be thought of as the final step in a process in which the citizen first considers the issue at hand and the choices available, and then forms a preference. These preferences could be formed either solely by the citizen or the citizen might discuss the issues and options with others. However when a citizen chooses to make a decision, this process is a type of citizen activity. As Perrin (2006) writes, “thinking and talking *are* citizenship activities” (p. 19). Not only are thinking and talking about politics citizen activities, but individuals who discuss politics with others are more likely to participate in the democratic process (Pfau, Houston, & Semmler, 2007; Scheufele, 2002). From a normative perspective, talking about politics is related to being an active citizen.

Forming an opinion about political issues is also an important element of the overall citizen decision-making process and is a key citizen activity in itself. In fact, one of the ways that the notion of public opinion can be understood is as the sum of individual preferences across a society (Glynn, Herbst, O’Keefe, Shapiro, & Lindeman, 2004). Understanding public opinion as the aggregate of individual opinions means that

it is symbolic of the voting process, in that both are the summation of citizen preferences. This is why public opinion is perceived as important by politicians, the media, and others; it appears to offer a clue as to what the public would choose if given a choice on an issue. For this reason, public opinion is watched and measured carefully. Formation of a citizen's individual-level preference is necessary before public opinion can be created or a vote can be cast, so a citizen's formation of a political opinion—as well as the expression of that opinion—is in itself a citizen activity.

Protesting. While forming and expressing a political opinion is integral to a well-functioning political decision-making process, other examples of political activity go beyond conventional political decision-making. One such activity is participation in political protests or demonstrations. Protesting and demonstrating involve the active and often collective expression of a political opinion, which is generally of displeasure for a current policy or course of action. While protesting or demonstrating is a “less conventional (and higher risk)” form of political participation (Schussman & Soule, 2005), these activities are generally understood to be a form of citizen political action (Dalton, 2002; McCarthy, McPhail, & Smith, 1996; Putnam, 2000; Tarrow, 1998).

The efficacy of protesting and demonstrating was made evident during the civil rights movement, in which “direct action methods” were used to both raise social consciousness and bring about political and legal change regarding civil rights (Schudson, 1998, p. 257). Beyond the legal acts of protesting or demonstrating, the civil rights movement also involved a dialogue regarding whether or not good citizens could in the spirit of good citizenship not only oppose, but actually break “bad laws” (Ricci, 2004, p. 229). Martin Luther King, Jr. (1964), the leader of the civil rights movement,

would argue that civil disobedience was justified when a society crafted and enforced laws that were inherently immoral and unjust. While a debate regarding whether or not a law is justified in being broken would likely be needed on a case-by-case basis, it is important to understand the perspective that there are instances in which good citizens break laws and that this perception flows from the experience of political protest and demonstrations.

The courtroom. The successes of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement brought about a new conception of citizen action and behavior, one in which litigation could be understood as “a tool of social change” and thus an activity within the repertoire of citizens (Schudson, 1998, p. 255). This “new model of citizenship added the courtroom to the voting booth as the locus of civic participation” (Schudson, p. 250). The turn to a rights-based model of citizenship gave citizens a new perspective on citizen concerns—the citizen could be concerned about the extent to which her rights were being upheld or violated—and also provided the courtroom as an avenue of influencing social policy. The move to a rights-based citizen also influenced the way that citizens thought about politics and public policy. The civil rights movement, as the genesis of the rights-based citizen, used “federal controls and...national power to circumvent local control” (Schudson, p. 259) and the appeal to federal powers for local enforcement of rights helped bring about a nationalization of public policy (Heclo, 1996).

While the idea of advocating for rights and interests essentially began during the civil rights movement in America, the advocacy model continued to grow through the Twentieth Century so that advocacy eventually expanded beyond individual rights to

include group rights and interests such as businesses and private associations. Additionally, as advocacy has become more prevalent it has also become more specified (Skocpol, 2003). However, even though the move to rights-based advocacy had its origins in a movement that sought to ensure all segments of society had access to the same basic social rights (and was thus an effort based on a common, social good); the current state of expanded rights advocacy is not uniformly perceived as good for democracy. Dagger (1997) argues that, “the more we appeal to rights...the less likely we are to find mutually satisfactory solutions to our social and political problems” (p. 3). Glendon (1991) agrees, writing that the rhetorical tendency to focus on “rights talk” is bad for political discourse because of “its exaggerated absoluteness, its hyperindividualism, its insularity, and its silence with respect to personal, civic, and collective responsibilities” (p. 14). Dagger (1997) also writes that:

Political disputes, particularly in the United States, reduce too quickly to contending claims over rights, which means not only that they are difficult to resolve but also that they often must be adjudicated by courts; and that means that the composition of the courts is increasingly a matter of open political dispute. (p. 4)

However, despite objections from some, the tendency to frame citizenship as focused on rights continues. Schudson (1998) illustrates the popularity of such a model of citizenship when he writes that, “rights and rights-consciousness have become the continuous incitements to citizenship in our time” (p. 273).

Citizen as consumer. While the rights-based citizen continued to grow in popularity during the Twentieth Century, so did another model of citizen: the citizen as

consumer. As consumerism increased throughout American society, the values of consumerism began to merge with those of citizenship. Cohen (2003) argues that the Great Depression saw the rise of the citizen consumer and that “by the end of the twentieth century, citizen and consumer had become interlocking identities for most Americans” (p. 409). The citizen as consumer means that “the economic behavior of consumption has become entwined with the rights and obligations of citizenship” (Cohen, p. 408).

In many ways it was easy for consumerism and citizenship to become associated because “economic rights have been both basic and central to the development of citizenship” (Woodiwiss, 2002, p. 53). Therefore the values and priorities of the economic perspective to a good life also became the values and priorities of citizenship. Ricci (2004) writes that as democratic republicanism failed to be a justifiable criterion for citizen action and decision-making, a new standard emerged which was the consumer standard, and that “to subscribe to consumerism was to believe in capitalism, or free enterprise, or private property as a positive force in American life” (p. 137).

In American society during the Twentieth Century, individuals existed freely and worked to sustain their existence. Increasingly, the product of American work was the money needed to consume goods and services (Ricci, 2004; Robertson, 1980). This money and attention to financial matters precipitated a turn to the idea of citizens as consumers. The electoral decision-making process has also been influenced by a consumer approach in that “American campaigns have come to treat voters like their shopping counterparts” (Ricci, p. 213). This means that choosing a leader becomes much like the process of choosing any commercial product, and the architects of

political campaigns tend to be the same professionals who work in the business of commercial advertising (McGinniss, 1988).

Consumerism has also lead to the creation of “consumption communities,” where a collective interest in a particular good or service creates a community that transcends geography (Ricci, 2004). So while geographic communities may have lost bonds in the late Twentieth Century, new communities appear, but these communities are based around product and service preferences instead of the commonality of living together in the same area. Voluntary political activity has also been influenced by the consumer model, in that within a consumer society citizens tend to give money rather than time to political interests or activities (Verba et al., 1995). Instead of volunteering and doing something participatory in a community or political organization, modern citizens tend to simply write a check for their contribution to a political or social cause. Consumerism as good citizenship continued to expand to the point where following the terrorist attacks on September 11th, “spending money on private consumption was touted as the highest expression of patriotic duty” by the American President (Skocpol, 2003, p. 249).

Ultimately, consumerism as citizenship provides a democratic approach to citizenship in that all individuals within a consumer society are free to work, earn, and spend in order to achieve the good life (Ricci, 2004). No longer is access to the good life pre-determined, but rather it is available to anyone who possesses the required resources to access such a life. Dagger (1997) writes that “the purpose of politics is to coordinate or aggregate individual preferences; hence the economic theory of

democracy and the idea of the citizen as consumer” (p. 104-5). The consumer-citizen is based on a system the stresses individual liberty.

However, such a system is not without its critics. Lewis and colleagues (2005) contrast traditional good citizens who “are actively engaged in the shaping of society and the making of history” with consumers who “simply choose between the products on display” (p. 5-6), basically arguing that citizen as consumers lack a collective or social perspective, and this lack of perspective ultimately leads to decisions that are not in the best interest of society. Villa (2001) agrees, and writes that the consumer-citizen model has reduced citizenship to “a set of rights and entitlements, and thereby encouraged a narrowly egoistic ethos which makes citizens more like consumers (or litigants) than members of a self-governing polity” (p. 57). However, it is unclear whether such critiques will have any impact on a citizen model that continues to gain in popularity, particularly as globalization pushes markets beyond national borders.

Social capital. Whereas the citizen as consumer model conceives the citizen as an individual earner and spender, the idea of social capital as a citizen activity places value on a citizen’s activity within a community. Social capital theory is based on the idea “that social networks have value” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). Activities such as participating in local civic organizations, volunteering with community groups, being active in competitive sport leagues, and even having dinner with friends are considered to be social capital activities as they are opportunities for individuals to interact and socialize with others. The idea behind social capital theory is that through social interactions and connections, individuals come to understand the perspective of others and then are able to broaden their outlook on any number of issues. For example,

Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) write that volunteering—a social capital activity—leads to situations in which “interacting with others for a broader cause than one’s own selfish interests pushes people to shift their attitudes. They learn to appreciate differences and they acquire basic democratic values. One of the most important of these values is tolerance” (p. 230).

Putnam (2000) connects declines in social capital activities to declines in overall political participation rates, arguing that social capital activities are essential for a healthy democracy. Putnam’s perspective is that good citizens should consider social capital activities to be citizen activities. However, the belief that social capital activities are essential to citizenship is not unanimous. Villa (2001) argues that social capital activities “do little, if anything, to encourage morally serious, thoughtful citizenship” (p. 300).

Overall then, there are different types of actions that can be considered citizen activities, many of which have been reviewed here. While the activities that have been reviewed do not represent the totality of all behaviors that can be associated with political activity, they do represent major forms of citizen activity. Therefore the following research questions are offered in order to clarify the ways in which citizen activities are presented in the media and the ways that citizen activities are in turn perceived by individuals. Hypotheses are also offered that explore the cultivation explanation of associations between the two:

RQ11: How are citizen activities depicted in (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

RQ12: What do citizens believe are appropriate citizen activities?

H3: Levels of (a) political interest and (b) citizen participation are associated with perceptions of appropriate citizen activities.

H4: Amount of (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspaper use influences perceptions of appropriate citizen activities.

Now that the citizen activity dimension of democratic citizenship has been explored, the next chapter will review the final dimension of normative citizenship: standards of political decision-making.

Chapter V

The Normative Citizen: Standards for Making Political Decisions

While the knowledge and activities of citizens tell the story of what citizens know and do, these dimensions of citizenship say nothing about how citizens make decisions. Citizen knowledge and actions do not address the standards that citizens use when weighing political options. Citizens are likely concerned about a great number of things, such as the well-being of themselves and their family members, their job, the safety of their community, the environment, and other matters. Any of these issues could be considered when making political decisions. So, if such a large number of considerations for making decisions exist, then what is the best and most common standard of political decision-making? For example, when making political decisions, do citizens first think of their own interests, or do they instead consider the good of the community-at-large?

In order to explore citizen decision-making, this chapter reviews two popular models of citizenship found in the literature of political theory—liberalism and communitarianism—and explores the implications of each philosophy for political decision-making standards. If either of these models of citizenship were employed by citizens, then the citizen would utilize specific standards and criteria for making political decisions because the standards and criteria differ for each model. This chapter explores those differences. It should be noted that the liberal and communitarian approach are not the only two ways in which one might conceptualize citizenship. However, the divide between liberalism and communitarianism is an ongoing debate in the field of political science (Mulhall & Swift, 1996), so it is a good starting point for

understanding both how citizens think about making decisions and how the media represent the political decision-making of citizens. Additionally, as will be seen in the remainder of this chapter, the liberalism and communitarian debate over the primacy of the individual versus the community are major distinctions in normative citizen behavior, and so this divide offers utility for beginning to think about any possible conception of citizen decision-making behavior.

Liberalism

Liberalism, as a modern conceptualization of citizenship (and citizen decision-making philosophy), is most related to the thinking of John Locke (2002). Locke argued that the relationship of citizens and government was dictated by the social contract. For Locke, the social contract is an agreement entered into by citizens where citizens subject themselves to government rule in return for protection and security. Locke argues that it is the individual who must make the choice to enter into the social contract because only the individual can decide to subject herself to the political rule of another. The social contract is worthwhile for the individual because the collective (society) offers more protection for the individual (and the individual's property) than can be achieved by the individual alone.

In the social contract then, the citizen subjects himself to the laws of the government. However, legal decisions in the liberal system are not arbitrary, nor are they made by a singular leader. Instead, the laws that govern citizens in a liberal society are those that are agreed upon by a majority of citizens. Whenever a political decision needs to be made within a society (such as the selection of government leaders), each citizen has an opportunity to cast his lot as to what should be done. Once all citizens

have been given an opportunity to participate, the decision that receives support from the majority is employed by the government. The individual must then adhere to this decision even if she disagrees with it. The recognition of majority rule is essential to the social contract and liberalism.

In addition to majority rule, liberalism focuses on the rights of the individual. “Liberalism places the clear weight of its ethical and moral theory behind individual and negative rights” (Janoski & Gran, 2002). Individual rights are emphasized in liberal systems because liberalism begins with the perspective that individuals enter society from a natural state of complete freedom (Locke, 2002). Since citizens enter the social contract in a state of complete freedom, the liberal system protects the citizen with strong individual rights. In other words, while the social contract requires citizens to abide by majority rule in exchange for safety and protection, the liberal system ensures that majority rule is not allowed to impinge on the individual rights of the citizen. Because liberalism is focused specifically on individual rights, liberal social systems promote individualism. This is the case in the United States where “individualism, the first language in which Americans tend to think about their lives, values independence and self-reliance above all else” (Bellah et al., 1996, p. viii).

In the liberal system, individuals are primary, and the social contract provides a structure where individuals can come together collectively to increase overall levels of safety and protection while still allowing the individual to pursue his own interests above all else. The individual in the liberal system is subject to majority rule, but majority rule cannot violate individual rights and all individuals have an equal say in deciding the majority opinion. Individuals can work together within a liberal system,

but the nature of agreement between individuals in the liberal system is contractual (Spragens, 1990). This means that when individuals decide to work together they do so with agreements that outline the parameters of the relationship, and the state of cooperation is undertaken to ultimately realize an individual interest. The contract of cooperation in the liberal system might be formal or informal, but agreements are needed for the liberal individual because there is no existing common goal to which all parties can point as a collective good. Instead, in the liberal system each individual has his or her own interests and so the finite episode of cooperation might actually be perceived to accomplish something different for each party involved.

The interest of the individual is therefore the standard by which any decision is made within a liberal society. The individual, existing within a society solely for the purpose of protection and security, turns to the policy or leader that would best realize the individual's self-interests when making a political decision. The liberal citizen favors the individual interest over a collective interest. From an economic perspective, using one's own self-interest as a metric for selecting from alternatives when making political decision is rational (Downs, 1957). That is, such decisions are logical and reasonable. The liberal citizen, then, is "a rights-bearing, interest pursuing voter" (Villa, 2001, p. 1). Political decisions in a liberal society are based on a system of "interest-aggregation" (Miller, 1989), where the decision that best achieves the most individual interests are chosen. The need for broad popular support of specific interests (in order to achieve majority support for political decisions that realize those interests) has led to a proliferation of associations in America.

Tocqueville (2003) first noted the prevalence of associations in American society, writing that “in the United States, associations aim to promote public safety, business, industry, morality, and religion. There is nothing the human will despairs of attaining through the free action of the combined power of individuals” (p. 220). Skocpol (2003) notes that “over the long run of U.S. history, voluntary membership federations have both complemented and rivaled political parties in setting the course of politics and government” (p. 124). Associations in a liberal society allow groups of individual to come together around common interests, and then marshal resources to see that the shared interest is achieved or protected. The collective that is inherent to an association implicitly conveys a sense of shared good, but ultimately “the will of each association is a private will” (Dagger, 1997, p. 87). In other words, even though associations are comprised of a group of individuals, the interest that is pursued by an association is not inherently a social or common good, but rather it is an individual good that is held by many people. Aggregating personal interests does not necessarily make an interest a public good. As associations continued to proliferate around more and more specialized interests (Skocpol, 2003), an “interest group society” (Berry, 1984) has emerged in which political marketing and mobilization has become more and more specialized and direct (Schier, 2000). In this way the modern conception of associations is not one of organizations with citizen participation and activity, but instead includes a host of “professionally run advocacy groups” and “memberless voluntary associations” (Skocpol, 2003, p. 127). This change has been criticized by Skocpol who argues that these “professionally managed, top-down civic endeavors simultaneously limit the

mobilization of most citizens into public life and encourage a fragmentation of social identities and trivial polarizations in public debates” (p. 232).

Skocpol’s (2003) critique of the proliferation of advocacy groups in modern liberal society is not the only critique of liberalism. Rousseau (1993), for example, writes that “nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests in public affairs” (p. 23) and liberalism offers a system based entirely on citizen’s assessment of their individual interests. Hamilton, writing in *The Federalist Papers*, states that “happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiased by considerations not connected with the public good. But this is a thing more ardently to be wished than seriously to be expected” (Hamilton, Madison, & Jay, 2003, p. 27). What both Rousseau and Hamilton are saying is that political decisions based purely upon the interest of the individual do not realize public goods. Therefore while personal interests might be realized, these realizations may come at the sake of broader, social goods. Shklar (1991) argues that voting according to the liberal standard of self-interest is merely an act of “self-promotion,” thus robbing the act of any virtue (p. 38-9).

Tocqueville (2003) introduced the idea of “self-interest properly understood” in which a voter sacrifices “some of his personal interests to save the rest” (p. 611-12). “Self-interest properly understood” means the liberal voter could make a political decision that was in opposition to one's self-interest if such a sacrifice of interests meant that other personal interests were preserved. In other words, one might sacrifice one interest to save many interests. However, the standard of self-interests as primary is still preserved in this instance, as this is not a different standard of decision-making, but

rather it is a different strategy for achieving that same goal. Instead of always making individual political decisions based on a singular self-interest, individuals might position themselves to lay down a single self-interest so as to increase the protection of other interests. So, while “self-interest properly understood” might be considered a more sophisticated or pragmatic application of the liberal philosophy in political decision-making, the criterion underlying such a system is still the self-interest of the individual.

Communitarianism

Communitarianism is a model of citizenship and citizen decision-making that finds fault with liberalism’s trumpeting of individual rights. Communitarian political philosophy argues that the promotion of liberal individualism “militates against maintaining faith in standards that may be necessary for fostering public life” (Ricci, 2004, p. 187). Communitarians “believe that understandings of citizenship should incorporate attachments to shared values and feelings of solidarity of nation states and local communities” (Conover, Searing, & Crewe, 2004, p. 1040). Communitarianism conceives of the community as a collective, and argues that there is meaning and value inherent to the community that is ignored by a liberal system.

Communitarianism builds on Rousseau’s civic republican thinking in that it “emphasizes the notion of a public good that exists prior to and independent of individual desires and interests (Mouffe, 1995, p. 219). Where Locke (2002) argues that individuals are free in nature and move into society for safety and security, Rousseau (1993) believes that in a natural state individuals are completely subjugated to their own desires and will, but by entering into society the individual is able to transcend the

natural state of self-centered primacy. Moving beyond the individual will in a society is possible because the society offers laws that essentially save the individual from his or herself, creating a state of “moral liberty” (Rousseau).

The laws in Rousseau’s (1993) society are not arbitrary, however; nor are they made by some entity removed from the citizenry. Instead, laws are made by the citizens for the purpose of achieving a “general will” (Rousseau). The general will is a will that is shared by all members of society; it is a will that transcends the individuals’ own interests. In contrast to the general will lies the private will, which is the personal will of the individual. So, where in the liberal system the private will is the final metric for making decisions, in the republican or communitarian system the private will is perceived to obfuscate the larger general will. The advantage of the general will is that it serves all members of society instead of just the individual. As Rousseau (1993) explains, “the particular will tends, by its very nature, to partiality, while the general will tends toward equality” (p. 200). Therefore, the general will may often be in conflict with the personal will (Shklar, 1991), however; a commitment by citizens to make decisions based on the common will leads to laws that are created in the public interest, which will ultimately benefit a society or community in a way that pursuing only the individual will cannot (Dagger, 1997; Ricci, 2004). Ultimately, communitarians and civic republicans would argue that making decisions based on a common will brings about true freedom and causes citizens to transcend the differences between them (Bellah et al., 1996; Renewal, 1997).

Overall, then, the liberal-communitarian debate offers two contrasting perspectives for making political decisions. Using a liberal approach involves each

individual weighing his or her own particular interests when deciding political matters. The best choice for the liberal is the choice that will most benefit the individual's interests. On the other hand, communitarianism—and its predecessor civic republicanism—argue that political decisions should be based on the choice that best realizes a general will or collective good. While some liberals might argue for a decision-making standard based on “self-interests properly understood” (Tocqueville, 2003) in which individual interests are sometimes sacrificed to benefit other interests, the communitarian approach goes far beyond such a system and favors the collective will even if the collective will is routinely in conflict with the individual's particular will.

However, while the liberal-communitarian debate is prevalent among political philosophers (Mulhall & Swift, 1996) this says nothing about the way in which citizens actually think about political decision-making. Therefore, to understand how individuals think about citizen decision-making, how the media depict citizen decision-making, and how the two are associated, the following research questions and hypotheses are offered:

RQ13: How is citizen decision-making depicted in (a) television news,

(b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspapers?

RQ14: What do citizens believe is appropriate citizen decision-making?

H5: Levels of (a) political interest and (b) citizen participation are associated with perceptions of appropriate citizen decision-making.

H6: Amount of (a) television news, (b) cable talk news, (c) late night comedy news, and (d) newspaper use influences perceptions of appropriate citizen decision-making.

Chapter VI

Methodology

This study seeks to understand how citizens are depicted in the media and how individuals perceive citizenship. Of particular interest is the question of how these media depictions and audience perceptions are related. In order to investigate these issues, a content analysis and national telephone survey were conducted.

Content Analysis

The content analysis portion of this project included analysis of television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspaper content. The content analysis was conducted on a random sample of content taken from specific television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspaper sources from a one-year period, which began on January 1, 2006, and ended on December 31, 2006. This time period concluded just before the telephone survey was conducted (the telephone survey began on February 6, 2007).

In order to sample a year's coverage of television news and newspaper content, a constructed week sample was used (Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993). A constructed week sample ensures that all days are represented in a sample, so that the inherent differences in media content for any particular day of the week (i.e., Sunday, Wednesday, etc.) are held constant (Riffe et al., 1993). In order to infer a year's coverage for television news and newspaper content, a two week sample was constructed (see Appendix C for dates included in all samples), meaning that 14 dates were randomly selected from a 365-day period (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998). To infer a year's coverage of cable talk news shows, a three week sample of weekdays (Monday through Friday) was constructed. This

sample resulted in 15 dates from a 365-day period, which is comparable to the sample for television news and newspaper content, but is based on the five-day broadcast schedule that is utilized by cable talk news programs. Finally, to infer a year's coverage of late night comedy news shows, four weeks of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays were constructed. This sample resulted in 16 dates from a 365-day period, so it is similar to the other samples but is based on the four-day broadcast schedule that is used by late night comedy news. For each of these sources, the content that appeared on the selected dates was analyzed for the content analysis.

Television news content. Evening television news broadcasts from three network news sources (*ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC*) were included in this analysis. The three network news sources were selected for inclusion because they are the most watched evening news broadcasts (TVNewser, 2007). The transcripts for each network evening news broadcasts for every date of the sample were retrieved from the Lexis-Nexis database. The unit of analysis for the television news content was the paragraph of content as it appeared in the television news transcript. All paragraphs that appeared in the evening television news broadcast for each day in the sample were analyzed. The paragraph of television news stories is the appropriate unit of analysis for this project (as opposed to the individual story) because there were numerous occasions in which different instances of citizens appeared in a single news story. If citizens are doing different things within a single television news story, then analyzing the content at a story-level would miss the varied depictions of citizens within the single story. Therefore utilizing the paragraph as the unit of analysis provided a better chance of capturing citizen diversity than would be possible if the analysis was based solely on the individual story.

Over 4,000 ($N = 4,035$) paragraphs of television news content were coded as part of this analysis (see Table 1 for the number of units of analysis coded for each media source).

Cable talk news content. Cable talk news programs include television shows broadcast on cable television that present the days' news, normally with generous amounts of commentary. For this research, cable talk news content was culled from *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Hannity and Colmes*, and *Larry King Live*; three of the most-watched cable talk news programs (TVNewser, 2006). The transcripts for each cable talk news show for every date of the sample were retrieved from the Lexis-Nexis database. The unit of analysis for the cable talk news content was the paragraph of content as it appeared in the cable talk news transcript. All paragraphs that appeared in the cable talk news broadcast during the first half of each day's broadcast were analyzed. By analyzing only the first half of the one-hour cable television news programs, the amount of cable television news content analyzed remained similar to the amount that was analyzed for both television news and late night comedy news programs (programs that are only 30-minutes in length). This procedure resulted in the coding of 5,027 paragraphs of cable talk news content.

Late night comedy news content. Late night comedy news shows utilize much of the formatting and style of network or cable news broadcasts, but late night comedy news shows are satirical treatments of television news programming and daily news. Late night comedy news shows feature a monologue (or daily news) portion, reports from fake news correspondents that follow the structure of a comedy skit, and interviews with guests. For this research, late night comedy news shows content from *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, and *The Colbert Report* was analyzed. Videos of the

two late night comedy news shows were taken from comedycentral.com, the broadcast web site for both shows. Content from late night comedy news programs was coded directly from video. Each paragraph of spoken dialogue served as the unit of analysis, and 3,083 paragraphs of late night comedy news content were coded.

Newspaper content. Newspaper content was culled from *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Houston Chronicle*. The *New York Times* was included in this analysis because it is widely regarded as the United States' newspaper of record (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), and boasts a national circulation. Furthermore, the issues prominent in the *Times* eventually appear in other state and local newspapers (Danielian & Reese, 1989). *The Los Angeles Times* was selected because it is a prominent West Coast newspaper, *The Washington Post* was used because it is a major East Coast newspaper located in the Nation's capital, and *The Houston Chronicle* was included because it is a prominent paper in the mid-section of the United States.

Articles from both the front page of the newspaper and the front page of each paper's metro section were included in this analysis. The front page was selected as one location of news articles because it is the most important page of the paper, the news location that both active and passive readers see first. The metro page was selected because it focuses on issues of relevance specifically to the local community. Therefore using both of these locations as sources of articles captured the diversity of content that appears in newspapers. Newspaper articles were retrieved from the Lexis-Nexis database and analyzed. Like all other content, the unit of analysis for newspaper content was the individual paragraph. The first seven paragraphs of each story that appeared on

the newspaper's front page and the front page of the metro section were analyzed for citizen content. Examining the first seven paragraphs approximated the portion of each story that appeared on the first page of each section (before the story was eventually continued on a different page further back in the paper). This approach meant that the portion of each story that was most likely to be read was included in the content analysis. This decision also limited the amount of content to be analyzed, which ensured the feasibility of coding and prevented coder fatigue. Over 4,000 ($N = 4,187$) paragraphs of newspaper content were coded as part of this project.

Coder training. Two coders were used to analyze all media content. The same coding instrument was used for all media sources. A preliminary coding instrument was first developed on which the coders were trained. Following training, the coders separately coded a small portion of the content and made minor revisions to the instrument based on a discussion of their separate experiences. The coders then separately coded 10% of all content. Reliability was calculated on this content for each variable using Scott's *pi* (1955) for the nominal-level variables (citizen, issue, characterizing the citizen, citizenship, and group) and Rosenthal's (1984) effective inter-coder reliability for interval-level data (knowledge, agency, and tone of coverage). All variables (which are described in the following section) were found to be reliable: citizen = .81, issue = .80, characterizing the citizen = .90, citizenship = .94, group = .86, knowledge = .81, agency = .84, tone of coverage = .83, citizen concerns = .80. Following the successful reliability check, the coders coded the remainder of the content independently.

Variables

The name of the coder, the date the content appeared, and content source were recorded for all units of analyses. Additionally, all media content was coded for the following variables.

Citizen. The first variable coded indicates whether a citizen is present within the unit of analysis. If a citizen is present in the unit of analysis, then this variable also records the specific activity of the citizen.

Potential citizen activities include: public proclamations of opinion on social or political issues (this would include polling data or results); the act of voting; participation in a political campaign or organization; participation in a political protest or demonstration; social capital activities (e.g., participation in community organizations, social interactions); participation in legal proceedings; buying goods or services; being acted upon by any governmental institution, policy, law, or rhetoric; participating in a military campaign; participating in terrorist or militia activities; or being the object of a journalist's rhetoric. This range of political activities is based on the various citizen models discussed in Chapter Four. If an individual or group of individuals appears in media content but is not engaged in any of these activities, then the depiction of that individual or individuals is not a *citizen* depiction.

Issue. Each unit of analysis was coded for the primary issue that appears in the individual unit of analysis. A list of 13 issue categories were established based on the American National Election Studies (ANES) questionnaire, which asks voters to indicate the issues on which they will base their vote for president (National Election Studies, 2004). Additional issues were added to the ANES list in order to include issues

that were raised in the citizenship literature. For example, Putnam's (2000) idea that social connections are inherent to citizenship led to the creation of a social capital issue that was added to the original NES list. The final list of issues include: agriculture, economics, foreign affairs, government functioning, labor issues, natural resources and environment, public order, racial problems, social welfare, elections, community and social capital building, science and technology; the Iraq war, immigration, and entertainment. In addition, coders were instructed to write in any issues that did not fit the provided categories so that these exceptions could be analyzed.

All units of analysis—regardless of whether they include a citizen depiction as indicated through the coding of the citizen variable—were coded for the main issue present in the unit of news content. Coding an issue for all units of analysis allows for a comparison between the issues that appear when citizens are and are not depicted in media content. This provides evidence of whether issues are primary for citizens because media content focuses on these issues when citizens are present, or whether the issue is simply the most popular issue of the day and is thus present in all news content regardless of whether citizens are present or not. The issue variable and the citizen variable are the only variables that were coded when a citizen instance did not appear in a unit of analysis. The remaining variables are specifically related to the citizen depiction within a unit of analysis, so the subsequent variables were only coded for those content units that depicted a citizen.

Characterizing the citizen. Units of analysis that contain depictions of citizens were coded according to who is depicting the citizen within the news content. In other words, this variable captures whether citizens are talking about themselves and

discussing issues directly, or whether someone else is defining the citizen within media content. Sources of citizen characterization include the citizen, political/governmental officials, or journalists.

Citizenship. Each citizen depiction was coded according to whether the depiction featured an American citizen or a non-American citizen. Non-American citizens were coded as either the citizen of the United States, another democratic nation, a transitional democratic nation (i.e., Iraq at the time of the coding and analysis), or a non-democratic nation. Determinations of how a nation fit into these categories were made by consulting the Central Intelligence Agency's *World FactBook* (2006). For analysis, citizens of the United States and other democratic nations were combined into a democratic citizen group, and citizens on transitional democratic nations and non-democratic nations were combined into a non-democratic citizen group.

Group. Each citizen instance was coded according to the group that is associated with the citizen. Possible citizen groups include: political (e.g., Democrat, Republican, Green Party, etc.), demographic (African-American, soccer mom, middle class, etc.), interest group (environmentalists, corporations, Union members, etc.), all (Americans, voters, or any other holistic, all-encompassing term), individual (e.g., Joe Smith—an individual without group membership), and military (troops and soldiers).

Knowledge. The citizen instance was coded to indicate the extent to which the citizen was shown to be knowledgeable. Citizen knowledge was assessed along a 7-point differential scale with responses ranging from 1=not at all knowledgeable to 7=very knowledgeable.

Agency. The unit of analysis was coded to indicate whether the citizen depiction is acting or is being acted upon. Active citizens are acting, performing, starting, or precipitating the citizen activity. Situations in which citizens are not the agent of action involve episodes in which another individual or system is acting upon the citizen. Agency was assessed along a 7-point differential scale with responses ranging from 1=entirely acted upon to 7=entirely an agent of action.

Tone of coverage. Overall tone of citizen depiction was assessed using a global attitude measure adapted from Burgoon, Cohen, Miller, and Montgomery (1978). This measure consists of six 7-interval semantic differential scales: good/bad, positive/negative, wise/foolish, valuable/worthless, favorable/unfavorable, and acceptable/unacceptable. The reliability for this measure was $\alpha = .99$.

Citizen concerns. This variable records whether a citizen is associated with a personal or a social issue. Citizen concern was assessed using a 7-point scale anchored by 1=entirely a personal issue and 7=entirely a social issue. This differential scale acknowledges that many citizen issues may have components of both personal and social aspects.

The knowledge, agency, citizen concerns, and citizen variables just described were analyzed in order to determine how citizen knowledge, citizen activities, and citizen decision-making standards are constructed in the media. The findings of how citizens are constructed in the media will be compared to the ways that users of media think about citizens. User perceptions of citizen knowledge, activities, and decision-making standards were ascertained through a national telephone survey that is explained in the following section.

Telephone Survey

To determine individuals' perceptions of citizen knowledge, activities, and decision-making standards as well as media use and political interest and participation, a national telephone survey was conducted. The survey was conducted by The University of Oklahoma Public Opinion Learning Laboratory using a national sample of households in the 48 contiguous states. The sample was obtained from Survey Sampling, Inc. and was screened of non-residential numbers. Respondents were adults 18-years-old or older. The survey resulted in 453 completed interviews and one partially completed interview. The 453 complete interviews represent a margin of error of +/- 4.6% at a 95% confidence level. The overall response rate for the survey was 31.3%. The response rate is the result of dividing the number of completed interviews by the number of known eligible households ($N = 1,450$) that were dialed by the survey team. This response rate calculation conforms to the American Association of Public Opinion Research's (AAPOR) Standard Definitions. The cooperation rate for the survey—calculated as the completed interviews as a percentage of completed interviews, partial interviews, and refusals—was 50%.

The following variables were included in the telephone survey (see Appendix E for informed consent script used in telephone survey and Appendix F for the complete survey instrument).

Sociodemographics

All of the sociodemographic measures included in the telephone survey were adapted from the 2004 American National Election Studies (ANES) survey (National Election Studies, 2004). Sociodemographic results from this survey plus a comparison

of these results to the 2004 ANES survey results are presented in Table 2. For this survey, respondents' gender was recorded as male (39.5%) or female (60.5%) and was determined by the interviewer without specifically asking. As Table 2 indicates, the survey respondent sample for this project contained more female respondents than did the ANES sample. The overrepresentation of female respondents in this sample limits the extent to which the results can be generalized back to the population. Ethnicity was determined by asking "What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you?" with possible response including White (82.8%), Black (6.0%), Asian (0.9%), Native American (1.3%), Hispanic (3.3%), or other (3.1%). Education was ascertained by asking "What is the highest degree that you have earned" with responses including grade school or less (0.2%), some high school (3.3%), high school graduate (22.5%), some college (25.8%), college graduate (32.2%), and advanced degree (14.8%). Respondent income was attained based on household income with responses including the following income ranges: less than \$15,000 (4.2%); \$15,000-\$29,999 (7.1%); \$30,000-\$44,999 (10.8%); \$45,000-\$59,999 (11.3%); \$60,000-\$74,999 (8.6%); \$75,000 to \$89,999 (6.0%); \$90,000 to \$104,999 (5.3%); \$105,000 to \$119,999 (3.5%); \$120,000 to \$134,999 (1.8%); and \$135,000 or more (6.0%). Age was determined by asking respondents to report their current age (see Table 2 for age distribution of respondents).

Political party affiliation was ascertained by asking, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" If respondents answered either Republican or Democrat, then a follow-up question was asked, "Would you call yourself a strong (Republican or Democrat) or a not very strong

(Republican or Democrat).” If the respondent answered Independent, other, or no preference to the initial question, then a follow-up question was asked, “Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?” Based on responses to these questions, each respondent was placed into one of the following categories: strong Democrat (17.7%), weak Democrat (15.7%), Independent-Democrat (6.2%), Independent (18.8%), Independent-Republican (4.6%), Weak Republican (18.1%), Strong Republican (15.2%), or don’t know/other (3.8%).

Independent Measures

Media use. Media use functions as an independent variable in this analysis because it is hypothesized to be associated with respondents’ perceptions of citizenship. Media use was measured for television news, cable television news (*The O’Reilly Factor*, *Hannity & Colmes*, and *Larry King Live*), late night comedy news (*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*), and newspapers, and was operationalized as a combination of exposure and attention paid to each communication form (Pfau et al., 2007). Both media attention and exposure were assessed using 7-point differential scales that are based on work by Chaffee and Schleuder (1986) and McLeod and McDonald (1985). Possible responses to the exposure scale ranged from 1=rarely use to 7=frequently use, and responses on the attention scale ranged from 1=little attention to 7=close attention. Reliability for the media use measures was as follows: television news = .84, cable television news = .89, late night comedy news = .88, and newspapers = .87. Television news was the most used media modality overall ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 2.07$), followed by newspapers ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 2.14$), cable talk news ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 2.21$) and late night comedy news ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 1.54$).

Political interest. The measurement of interest in politics was based on an American National Election Studies' (2004) question that states, "Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How often would you say that you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?" Possible responses ranged from 1=not at all to 7=a great deal ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.36$).

Political participation. Political participation was measured using seven questions that attempt to assess the range of possible political activities (as discussed in Chapter Four). Each of the political participation questions were based the 2004 American National Election Studies survey (National Election Studies, 2004).

The first political participation question assessed voting by asking, "In talking to people, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote in the last election because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have the time. For the most recent election in November 2006, which of the following statements best describes you?" Responses to the question included "I did not vote (12.1%)," "I thought about voting this time, but didn't (3.1%)," "I usually vote, but didn't this time (7.9%)," or "I am sure I voted (76.2%)."

Talking about politics was measured by asking, "Do you ever discuss politics with your family or friends?" If respondents answer yes, a follow-up question was asked "How often do you discuss politics with your family or friends?" Responses ranged from every day to less than once per week ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.26$).

Contributing to political campaigns was assessed by asking, "As you know, people are often asked to make a contribution to support political campaigns or social

causes. During the past year did you give any money to an individual candidate, to a political party, or a social organization?” If the respondent answers yes, then a follow-up question was asked “During the past year, how often did you give money to a candidate, party, or organization” with responses ranging from only once to more than ten times ($M = 1.69$, $SD = 1.12$).

Participation in a political protest was measured by asking respondents if they participated in a political protest or demonstration in the last 12 months and, if so, how often they participated in a protest or demonstration ($M = 1.08$, $SD = 0.36$).

Finally, three questions measured the extent to which respondents are involved in social capital activities. Participation in social organizations was ascertained by listing a variety of social organizations (e.g., hobby clubs, labor unions, fraternal groups, sports leagues, etc.) and then asking the respondent whether they belong to any of these types of organizations. This question specifically told respondents to exclude participation in a church or synagogue when considering social organization membership. If a respondent answered yes to belonging to any of these organizations, then a follow-up question was asked, “How often do you attend meetings or events for any of these organizations” with responses ranging from once or twice a week to less than once per month ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.36$).

Religious participation was then measured separately by asking, “Lots of things come up that keep people from attending religious services even if they want to. Thinking about your life these days, do you ever attend religious services, apart from occasional weddings, baptism or funerals?” Respondents who reported attending religious services were then asked how often they attended religious services with

responses ranging from once or twice per week to less than once per month ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.79$).

Finally, community meeting participation was measured by asking, “During the past 12 months, did you attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?” Those who reported attending community or school meetings were then asked how often they attended such meetings during the previous year, with responses ranging from once to more than 10 times ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 0.93$).

Following the guidance of Verba and colleagues (Verba et. al, 1995), a participation index was formulated by summing responses from all political participation responses. In order to ensure that these activities were related, a correlation matrix of the participation measures was computed (see Table 3), which found all of the participation activities to be significantly correlated with the exception of church attendance (which was not significantly correlated with contributing to a political campaign, belonging to a social organization, attending a meeting about a community issue, or participating in a political protest). Therefore, church attendance was dropped from the political participation index².

Dependent Measures

Citizen knowledge. Respondents’ perceptions of citizen knowledge was measured using four questions that were developed based on the overview of historical and philosophical differences in citizen knowledge standards presented in Chapter Four. Each of these questions included 7-point differential scales with responses ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The citizen knowledge questions addressed an informed model of citizen knowledge (“Citizens should be knowledgeable about all

political issues,” [$M = 5.86, SD = 1.20$]), monitoring models of citizen knowledge (“Citizens should pay attention to all political issues and only learn about those that are very important,” [$M = 4.42, SD = 1.98$] and “Citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens,” [$M = 2.78, SD = 1.80$]), and an assenting model of citizen knowledge (“Citizens should elect government officials and then leave the political decision-making to the elected government leaders,” [$M = 3.13, SD = 1.93$]). The order of these four questions was rotated for each respondent.

Citizen actions. A variety of possible citizen actions were presented to respondents so that respondents could indicate the extent to which they believe each activity is something in which a citizen should be involved. Responses for each citizen activity were based on a 7-point differential scale with responses ranging from 1=Should not be considered a citizen activity to 7=Is a very important citizen activity. The specific activities presented in this portion of the survey were based on the discussion of various citizen activities in Chapter Four. The following activities were assessed: “participating in a political demonstration or protest” ($M = 4.35, SD = 1.79$), “expressing political opinions” ($M = 5.55, SD = 1.30$), “voting in an election” ($M = 6.63, SD = 0.72$), “being active in community organizations” ($M = 6.04, SD = 0.93$), “joining a sports league or hobby club” ($M = 4.93, SD = 1.41$), “buying goods or services” ($M = 5.99, SD = 0.93$), “appearing in court” ($M = 6.02, SD = 1.00$), and “working for a political campaign or being active in a political organization” ($M = 4.69, SD = 1.45$).

Citizen decision-making standards. Citizen decision-making standards were assessed using three questions based on the discussion of citizen decision-making standards that was presented in Chapter Five. The questions assessed a liberal model of citizen decision-making (“Citizens should consider their or their families own interests above everything else when making political standards” [$M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.90$]), a communitarian model of citizen decision-making (“Citizens should consider the good of their community or society above everything else when making political decisions” [$M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.70$]), and a middle-ground model of citizen decision-making (“When making political decisions, citizens should sometimes sacrifice their own interests for the good of the community or society” [$M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.54$]). Responses to these questions were based on a 7-point differential scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. These three questions were rotated for each respondent.

Chapter V

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine both how citizens are depicted in the media and how these depictions influence people's perceptions of democratic citizenship. In order to understand how the media depict citizens, a content analysis of television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspapers was conducted. Individual's perceptions of citizens were assessed through a national telephone survey. A citizen framework consisting of citizen knowledge, citizen activities, and citizen decision-making standards was developed that will be used to explore media depictions and individual perceptions of major elements of democratic citizenship.

To begin, content analysis data will be used to answer Research Questions 1 through 8.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to understand how frequently democratic citizens appeared in television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspapers. Newspapers and television news content included the most frequent depictions of citizens for all the media sources, as 32.3% of all newspaper content and 31.0% of all television news content included depictions of citizens. Cable talk news contained less frequent citizen depictions (21.3%) than did newspapers and television news, and late night comedy news contained the least frequent depiction of democratic citizens (12.0%). The frequency of citizen depictions in media content for the four media

sources differed from what would be found by chance, $\chi^2 = 10.88$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$.

Overall, for all media sources, citizens were depicted in 24.8% of all content.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 addressed how often citizens, politicians, and journalists were employed to depict citizens in media content. As Table 4 reveals, all four media sources followed the same pattern in which the majority of citizen depictions were the product of journalist constructions, followed by citizens speaking for themselves, and then citizens constructed by official sources. The significant chi-square for each media form indicates that the distributions of the sources of citizen depictions for each media modality differed significantly from the distribution that would have occurred by chance.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked what issues were most frequently associated with media depictions of citizens. For television news, issues of foreign affairs were most frequently associated with depictions of citizens, as 22% of all citizen depictions in television news programming were associated with foreign affairs issues (see Table 5). The foreign affairs category includes issues of national security and terrorism (see Appendix D for full content analysis codebook that includes description of all issue categories). After foreign affairs, the most frequent citizen issues on television news were Iraq (18.4%), social capital (16.3%), social welfare (13.7%), economics (9.8%), and public order (8.6%). There was no television news content that featured citizens associated with labor, racial, or entertainment issues.

For cable talk news content, the most frequent issue associated with citizen depictions was also foreign affairs (29.8%), followed by Iraq (21.3%), public order (18.6%), immigration (8.4%), elections (5.2%), and government functioning (5.1%). Cable talk news featured no citizen content for labor, the environment, social capital, science, or entertainment issues. Late night comedy news programs most frequently associated citizen depictions with the issues of Iraq (37.4%), social welfare (29.5%), economics (8.4%), and public order (5.7%). Late night comedy news programs featured no citizen depictions associated with the issues of foreign affairs, government functioning, labor, environment, social capital, science, immigration, or entertainment issues. Newspaper depictions of citizens were most frequently associated with public order (20.6%), social welfare (17.8%), social capital (12.6%), foreign affairs (11.8%), elections (7.8%), Iraq (7.4%), and government functioning (7.3%).

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 focused on how the issues associated with citizen depictions compared with the issues that were associated with content that did not feature citizens. On television news, the issues that appeared most often in non-citizen content (see Table 6) were foreign affairs (22.7%), social welfare (18.1%), economics (14.6%), entertainment (8.4%), public order (7.9%), government functioning (6.6%), and the environment (6.2%). Television news featured no non-citizen content on labor or racial issues.

For both citizen and non-citizen television news content, the most frequent issue that appeared in television news content was foreign affairs (see Figure 2). Iraq was the second most frequent issue for citizen content, but was only the eighth most frequent

issue for non-citizen content. Social capital was the third most frequent citizen issue, but social capital was not an issue for non-citizen content as there were no instances of social capital content without citizen depictions on television news. Social welfare issues were prevalent in both citizen and non-citizen content, as were economic and public order issues. Election, science, and immigration issues were comparable for both citizen and non-citizen content. The issue of government functioning appeared more frequently in non-citizen content than in citizen content. Environment and entertainment were two issues that appeared much more often in non-citizen content than citizen content.

For cable talk news, the most frequent non-citizen issue was foreign affairs (27.9%), followed by government functioning (23.1%), public order (14.7%), entertainment (9.7%), elections (7.7%), and Iraq (5.4%; see Figure 3). Cable talk news featured no non-citizen content on the issues of labor, environment, social capital, or science issues. Overall for both citizen and non-citizen content, the most frequent issue in cable talk news content was foreign affairs. Government functioning was more frequently a non-citizen issue (the second most frequent issue for non-citizen content) than a citizen issue (the sixth most frequent citizen issue). Entertainment was also more frequently a non-citizen issue as it was the third most frequent issue for non-citizen content, but did not appear as a citizen issue at all. Conversely, Iraq was more frequently a citizen issue (the second most frequent citizen issue) compared to a non-citizen issue (sixth most frequent issue for non-citizen content). Public order, racial issues, social welfare, elections, and immigration were all comparable with regard to how frequently they appeared in both citizen and non-citizen content.

For late night comedy news programs, the most frequent non-citizen issue was Iraq (20.0%), followed by elections (17.7%), entertainment (17.4%), government functioning (15.4%), social welfare (12.2%), and foreign affairs (8.3%; see Figure 4). Late night comedy news programs did not feature non-citizen content on labor, environment, and social capital issues. Overall, Iraq was the issue that appeared most frequently for all citizen and non-citizen late night comedy news content. Social welfare tended to be more of a citizen issue in late night comedy news content as it was the second most frequent issue for citizen content and only the fifth most frequent issue for non-citizen content. Economics was also an issue more frequently associated with citizen than non-citizen content. The issues of public order, racial issues, immigration, science, and elections were comparable in frequency of association with citizen and non-citizen depictions. However, the issues of entertainment, foreign affairs, and government functioning were only associated with non-citizen issues.

For newspaper content, social welfare (21.1%) was the most frequent non-citizen issue, followed by public order (17.0%), government functioning (15.4%), economics (9.0%), elections (8.5%), and foreign affairs (8.3%; see Figure 5). For newspapers, all of the issues included in the content analysis were associated with some non-citizen content. Overall, public order and social welfare were the top two issues for both citizen and non-citizen content (social welfare was the most frequent non-citizen issue and public order was the second most frequent non-citizen issue, with the pattern reversed for citizen content). Generally, all issues were comparable for citizen and non-citizen newspaper content with the following exceptions: entertainment was only a non-

citizen issue, government functioning was a more frequent issue in non-citizen content than in citizen content, and social capital was a more frequent issue for citizen content.

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 addressed which group was most frequently associated with citizen depictions in media content (see Table 7). For television news the most frequent group associated with citizens was the individual, which comprised 37.6% of all citizen depictions in the analyzed content. Following the individual, the most popular groups in newspaper content were the military (21.7%), demographic (16.7%), all (11.7%), interest groups (11.4%), and political (1.0%). For cable talk news, the most prevalent group associated with citizens was the individual (42.4%), followed by interest groups (19.8%), all (14.6%), political (9.9%), demographic (7.8%), and military (5.5%).

In late night comedy news content the most popular group association for citizens was the individual (48.5%) and then all (30.4%), military (12.5%), interest group (5.7%), demographic (3.0%), and political (0.0%). In newspaper content the individual proved most frequent (43.2%), followed by demographic (25.9%), interest group (14.1%), all (6.9%), military (6.4%), and newspapers (3.5%).

Overall then, for all media sources the individual was the most frequent group-type associated with citizen depictions. Political group affiliation was the least frequent group association to appear with citizen depictions in television news, late night comedy news, and newspaper content. Cable news programs utilized the political group affiliation more often than television news, late night comedy news, and newspapers in

that it was the fourth most frequent group association for citizens in cable talk news content.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6 sought to determine the agency of citizens in media depictions for television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspapers. Late night comedy news citizens exhibited the highest levels of agency ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.92$), followed by citizens on cable talk news ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 2.36$), television news ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 2.29$), and in newspapers ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 2.21$). In order to test for differences in the citizen agency levels for the four media forms a one-way ANOVA was computed. Results revealed differences in agency levels for the four media sources, $F(3, 4039) = 12.19$, $p < .01$. A Scheffe post-hoc test revealed that the level of citizen agency in late night comedy news programming was significantly greater than citizen agency levels in television news content, $t(1618) = 11.61$, $p < .01$, cable talk news content, $t(1435) = 8.81$, $p < .01$, and newspaper content, $t(1718) = 14.26$, $p < .01$. Additionally, the level of citizen agency in cable talk news content was significantly higher than citizen agency in newspaper content, $t(2421) = 5.56$, $p < .05$.

Research Question 7

Research Question 7 addressed the tone of citizen depictions for each media modality. To answer this question a one-way ANOVA was computed that compared tone of citizen depictions in television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspapers. Results revealed differences in tone for the four media sources, $F(3, 4039) = 52.608$, $p < .01$. Tone of citizen depictions was most positive for television news ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 2.07$), followed by newspaper content ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.85$), late

night comedy news content ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.92$), and cable talk news content ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 2.17$).

Scheffe post-hoc test revealed that the tone of citizen depictions in television news content was significantly more positive than the tone of citizen depictions in newspaper content, $t(2600) = 8.67$, $p < .01$, late night comedy news content, $t(1618) = 18.0$, $p < .01$, and cable talk news content, $t(2321) = 24.75$, $p < .01$. Additionally, the tone of citizen depictions in newspapers was significantly more positive than the tone of citizen depictions in late night comedy news content, $t(1718) = 11.33$, $p < .01$, and cable talk news content, $t(2421) = 15.00$, $p < .01$.

Research Question 8

Research Question 8 addressed the differences in media depictions of citizens from democratic nations versus media depictions of citizens from non-democratic citizens along the dimensions of (a) frequency of appearance, (b) source of depiction, (c) issues associated with citizens, (d) groups associated with citizens, (e) agency of citizens, (f) tone of citizens, (g) knowledge of citizens, and (h) concerns of citizens. Comparisons between media depictions of democratic citizens and non-democratic citizens were made across all media content.

For frequency of depictions, democratic citizens comprised 87.68% ($n = 3,545$) of all citizen depictions, whereas non-democratic citizens made up 12.32% ($n = 498$) of all citizen instances, $\chi^2 = 56.8$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$.

For source of citizen characterization, both citizen and non-democratic citizens were most frequently the product of journalist depictions (see Table 8). After the journalist, democratic citizens were most frequently characterized by the citizen and

then official sources. Conversely, the non-democratic citizen was depicted by official sources more often than by citizens.

The issues most frequently associated with democratic citizens were public order (16.6%), social welfare (16.0%), Iraq (15.5%), foreign affairs (13.9%), and social capital (10.6%). For non-democratic citizens, the most frequent issues were foreign affairs (52.4%), Iraq (29.5%), and immigration (6.6%). See Table 9 for complete distribution of democratic and non-democratic citizen issues.

The groups associated with democratic and non-democratic citizens were largely comparable (see Table 10). However, non-democratic citizens were more frequently associated with interest groups than were democratic citizens (43.3% compared to 30.1% respectively). In fact, interest groups were the most prevalent group with respect to non-democratic citizens, whereas the most frequent group for democratic citizens was the individual. Another difference between democratic citizens and non-democratic citizens was that relatively few non-democratic citizens were associated with the military (4.4%) compared to democratic citizens (12%).

Media depictions of democratic and non-democratic citizens were compared for levels of agency, tone of depiction, levels of knowledge, and concerns (personal versus social). Democratic citizens were found to have higher levels of citizen agency ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 2.20$) than did non-democratic citizens ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 2.56$). An independent sample t-test found these differences to be significant, $t(4041) = 7.38$, $p < .01$. Likewise, democratic citizens were depicted with a more positive tone ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 2.33$) than were non-democratic citizens ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 2.39$), and an independent sample t-test found this difference to be significant, $t(4041) = 20.74$, $p <$

.01. Democratic citizens were depicted as more knowledgeable ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.62$) than non-democratic citizens ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.68$), and an independent sample t-test found these differences to be significant, $t(4043) = 14.31$, $p < .01$. Finally, democratic citizens were also depicted as more concerned with social issues compared to personal interests ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 2.19$) than non-democratic citizens ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.77$), a difference that was significant, $t(4039) = 9.79$, $p < .01$.

The remainder of the research questions included in this study, as well as all of the hypotheses, addressed the impact of mediated citizen depictions on individuals. The research questions that address media content (Research Questions 9, 11, and 13) utilize data from the content analysis, whereas the research questions that address individual perceptions of aspects of democratic citizenship (Research Questions 10, 12, and 14) use data from the national telephone survey. These research questions determine how citizens are depicted in the media and how individuals think about what it means to be a democratic citizenship. Each of the hypotheses posed are tested using national telephone survey data. The hypotheses examine the extent to which political interest, political participation, and media use are associated with perceptions of democratic citizenship.

Research Question 9

Research Question 9 examined how knowledgeable citizens were depicted as being in media content. A one-way ANOVA was computed to answer this question. Results revealed differences between the four media modalities in depiction of citizen knowledge, $F(3, 4041) = 6.40$, $p < .01$. Citizens were depicted as being most knowledgeable in television news content ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.65$), followed by

newspaper content ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.85$), cable talk news content ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.85$), and late night comedy news content ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.91$). A Scheffe post-hoc test revealed that television news depicted citizens as being significantly more knowledgeable compared to the citizen depictions found in late night comedy news programs, $t(1618) = 9.76$, $p < .01$.

Research Question 10

Research Question 10 sought to determine how respondents viewed various models of citizen knowledge standards. Data from the telephone survey portion of this project were used to answer this research question. Four questions in the telephone survey presented different conceptions of citizen knowledge level and asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each conception. Confidence levels were calculated at the 99% level in order to test for differences in support for the different citizen knowledge standards. Questions with confidence levels that do not overlap were concluded to differ significantly.

The first question assessed the extent to which respondents agreed with the statement that “citizens should be fully informed about all issues” (an informed model of citizenship). This informed model of citizenship received the most support from respondents ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.20$, $CI = 5.71$ to 6.01) compared to the other citizen knowledge models. Two questions assessed respondent support of monitoring citizen models. The first (“Citizens should pay attention to all political issues and only learn more about those that they think are very important”) received more support ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.98$, $CI = 4.17$ to 4.66) than did the second (“Citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens,” [M

= 2.78, $SD = 1.80$, $CI = 2.56$ to 3.00)). Finally, the last citizen knowledge question asked the extent to which respondents supported an assenting model of citizenship (“Citizens should elect government officials and then leave the political decision-making to the elected government leaders,” [$M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.93$, $CI = 2.90$ to 3.38])).

Overall then, the informed model of citizen knowledge received significantly more support than did all other models of citizen knowledge standards (see Figure 6). Next, the first version of monitorial citizenship received significantly more support than did the second model of monitorial citizenship or the assenting model of citizenship. The second model of monitorial citizenship and the assenting model of citizenship were supported least and did not differ significantly.

Hypothesis 1 and 2

Hypotheses 1 and 2 proposed that political interest and citizen participation would be associated with perceptions of citizen knowledge standards, and that amount of media use would influence perceptions of citizen knowledge standards. These hypotheses were tested on data from the telephone survey using hierarchical regression with three blocks of variables for the four measures of citizen knowledge (full models are available in Table 11). The first block of variables included sociodemographic variables (gender, age, race, education level, political affiliation). The second block of variables featured political interest and political participation. The third block of variables contained the media use variables.

The first dependent measure included as part of these hypotheses assessed support for an informed model of citizen knowledge. None of the sociodemographic variables were associated with this measure of citizen knowledge. There was a

significant positive association between an informed model of citizenship and political interest ($\beta = .13, p < .05$). Political participation was not significantly associated with an informed model of citizenship ($\beta = .08, p = .20$). There were also no significant associations between the media use variables and an informed model of citizenship.

The second dependent measure assessed the first version of a monitorial citizen model of knowledge (“Citizens should pay attention to all political issues and only learn more about those that they think are important”). Race was the only sociodemographic variable that was significantly associated with this measure, in that Caucasian respondents were less likely to support the monitoring citizen than were minority respondents ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$). There was a significant negative relationship between political interest and this measure of monitorial citizenship ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$), but political participation was not associated with this measure. Additionally, none of the media use variables were related to this measure.

The third dependent measure related to citizen knowledge assessed a second version of the monitorial model of citizen knowledge (“Citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens”). Gender was associated with this measure of citizen knowledge, in that female respondents were less likely than male respondents to support this idea of citizen knowledge ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$). Education level was negatively related to support for the monitorial version of citizen knowledge ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$). Also, Republicans were less likely than Democrats to support the idea of the monitorial citizen ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$). Political interest was negatively related to the monitorial citizen model of knowledge (β

= -.19, $p < .01$), but political participation and media use were not related to the measure.

The last measure of citizen knowledge assessed support for an assenting model of citizenship. Gender was negatively associated with support for an assenting model of citizenship (meaning that females were less likely than males to support the idea), though the relationship was not quite significant ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .05$). Likewise, being a Republican was positively associated with the assenting citizen model, though the relationship was not quite significant ($\beta = .10$, $p < .10$). Political interest was negatively associated with support for an assenting citizen ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .05$), but there was no significant association with political participation. Finally, two of the media use variables (late night comedy news and newspapers) approached a significant positive relationship with support for an assenting citizen ($\beta = .10$, $p = .06$ and $\beta = .10$, $p = .05$ respectively).

Overall, Hypothesis 1a was supported as political interest had a significant positive relationship with an informed model of citizenship and significant negative relationship with both monitorial citizen knowledge models and the assenting model of citizenship. Hypothesis 1b was not supported as political participation was not related to any of the citizen knowledge measures. Hypothesis 2 had very weak support as only two media use variables (cable talk news and newspaper) were weakly associated with one of the knowledge measures (the assenting model of citizenship).

Research Question 11

Research Question 11 sought to determine how various citizen activities were depicted in media content. This question was answered using content analysis data. The

frequency with which each citizen activity appeared in the content of each media modality was computed in order to understand what political activities were common or uncommon for each communication form. Stating a political opinion was the most frequent citizen activity for late night comedy news (56.6%) and cable talk news (34.1%) content (see Table 12 for full distribution of citizen activities). Compared to late night comedy news and cable talk news, stating political opinions occurred less frequently in newspaper (16.9%) and television news (15.5%) content. Voting consisted of no more than 3.0% of all citizen activities for any of the media forms examined here.

Participation in a political campaign consisted of 8.4% of all late night comedy news citizen activities and 5.4% of newspaper citizen activities. Compared to late night comedy news and newspapers, participation in campaigns occurred less frequently in television news and cable talk news content (1.3% and 0.1% respectively). For all the media modalities included in this study, participation in political protest was most frequently depicted in cable talk news content (5.7%) and least frequently depicted in late night comedy news content (1.9%). Social capital activities were the second most frequent activity in newspaper content (17.6%) and the third most frequent activity in television news content (17.3%). Conversely, social capital activities were only 3.2% of all citizen activities in cable talk news content and did not appear at all in late night comedy news content.

Participation in legal proceedings comprised 14.0% of cable talk news citizen activities and 12.1% of newspaper citizen activities. Compared to cable talk news and newspapers, citizens were depicted as participating in legal proceedings less frequently in television news and late night comedy news (1.4% and 0.0% respectively). Buying

goods or services consisted of 5.2% of television news citizen activities and 2.9% of newspaper citizen activities. Consumer activities were not featured in cable talk news or late night comedy news citizen depictions. Citizens depicted as the object of government action or law was the most frequent citizen activity for newspaper (31.5%) and television news (29.7%) content, and it was the second most frequent citizen activity for late night comedy news content (15.4%) and the fourth most frequent activity for cable talk news (10.4%). Participation in the military was 21.2% of all citizen activity in television news content (the second most frequent citizen activity for that media form), but consisted of no more than 5.8% of citizen activities for any of the other three media modalities.

Participation in terrorism activities consisted of between 5.7% (late night comedy news) and 2.3% (cable talk news) of citizen activities in media depictions. Finally, citizens were the object of journalist rhetoric in 26.8% of cable talk news content (the second most frequent citizen activity for that media form), whereas this citizen activity comprised only 3.3% of late night comedy news citizen depictions and none of the citizen depictions in television news and newspaper content.

Research Question 12

Research Question 12 addressed how individuals perceived various citizen activities. Data from the telephone survey was used to answer this question. As part of the survey, respondents were read a list of various citizen activities and asked to indicate to what extent they thought that activity was something a democratic citizen should do. Confidence levels were calculated at the 99% level in order to test for

differences in support for the different citizen knowledge standards. Questions with confidence levels that do not overlap were concluded to differ significantly.

The activity that received the most support as being an appropriate citizen activity was voting ($M = 6.63$, $SD = .72$, $CI = 6.54$ to 6.73), followed by participating in community organizations ($M = 6.04$, $SD = .87$, $CI = 5.93$ to 6.15), appearing in court ($M = 6.03$, $SD = 0.98$, $CI = 5.91$ to 6.15), buying goods and services ($M = 6.00$, $SD = .93$, $CI = 5.88$ to 6.12), publicly expressing political opinions ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.27$, $CI = 5.42$ to 5.74), joining a sports league or hobby club ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.39$, $CI = 4.77$ to 5.12), volunteering to work for a political campaign or organization ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.43$, $CI = 4.55$ to 4.91), and participating in a political protest ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.77$, $CI = 4.16$ to 4.61).

Overall then, support for voting as a citizen activity was significantly greater than for any of the other activities that were measured (see Figure 7). Support for participating in a community organization, appearing in court, and buying goods and services did not differ, but were each greater than support for expressing a political opinion, participating in a sports league or hobby club, participating in a political campaign, and participating in a political protest. Respondent support for expressing political opinions was greater than support for participation in a hobby club or sports league, political campaign, and political protest. Also, support for participation in a sports league or hobby club was greater than support for participation in political protest.

Hypotheses 3 and 4

Hypotheses 3 and 4 proposed that political interest and citizen participation would be associated with perceptions of appropriate citizen activities, and that amount of media use would influence perceptions of appropriate citizen activities. These hypotheses were tested on data from the telephone survey using hierarchical regression with three blocks of variables (full models are available in Tables 13). The first block of variables included sociodemographic variables (gender, age, race, education level, political affiliation). The second block of variables included political interest and political participation. The third block of variables contained media use variables.

The first citizen activity examined as part of these hypotheses was voting. Two sociodemographic variables were significantly correlated with support for voting as a citizen activity. Being Caucasian was positively associated ($\beta = .10, p < .05$) and age was negatively associated ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$) with support for voting as a citizen activity. Political participation was significantly related to support for voting as a citizen activity ($\beta = .24, p < .01$), but there was not a significant association between political interest and support for voting. There were also no significant associations between the media use variables and support for voting as a citizen activity.

Stating a political opinion was the second citizen activity included in this study. The only sociodemographic variable that was significantly associated with support for stating a political opinion was political party affiliation ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$). This means that Republicans were less likely than Democrats to believe the act of stating a political opinion was a normative citizen activity. Political interest was significantly related to support for stating a political opinion as a political activity ($\beta = .06, p < .05$), but

political participation was not associated with support for this activity. Additionally, none of the media use variables were significantly associated with support for stating political opinions as a normative citizen activity.

The third citizen activity was participation in political protest. Women were less likely than men ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$) and Republicans were less likely than Democrats ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$) to endorse political protest as a citizen activity. Age was negatively related to support for protest as a citizen activity ($\beta = -.23, p < .01$). Both political interest and political participation were positively associated with support for protest as a significant citizen activity ($\beta = .16, p < .01$ for both measures). Use of newspapers was almost significantly related to the disapproval of political protest as a citizen activity ($\beta = -.09, p < .10$).

Buying goods and services was the fourth citizen activity included in this project. Age was the only sociodemographic variable associated with the perception of buying goods or services as a normative citizen activity ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$). Neither political interest nor political participation was significantly related to perception of buying goods and services as a normative citizen activity. Additionally, none of the media use variables were associated with perceiving buying goods and services to be an appropriate citizen activity.

The fifth citizen activity was participation in community organizations. None of the sociodemographic variables were related to this dependent measure. Political participation was positively associated with the perception of participation in a community organization as an appropriate citizen activity ($\beta = .27, p < .01$), but

political interest was not. None of the media use variables were associated with perception of participation in a community organization as a normative citizen activity.

Participation in a hobby club or sports league was the next citizen activity examined. Age was the only sociodemographic variable significantly associated with perception of hobby club or sports league involvement as an appropriate citizen activity ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$). Neither political interest nor political participation was associated with perceiving hobby club or sports league participation as a normative citizen activity. Newspaper use was the only media use variable to be significantly related to this dependent measures, in that newspaper users were more likely than non-newspaper users to perceive hobby club or sports club involvement to be an appropriate citizen activity ($\beta = .12, p < .05$).

The next citizen activity was appearing in court. None of the variables regressed on support for appearing in court as a normative citizen activity produced significant relationships with the dependent measure.

Participation in a political campaign was the last citizen activity included in this project. Education was weakly related to perception of participation in a political campaign as a normative citizen activity ($\beta = .10, p < .10$). Political participation was also almost significantly associated with the dependent measure ($\beta = .10, p < .10$), but political interest was not associated with perception of participation in a political campaign as an appropriate citizen activity. Additionally, none of the media use variables were related to perception of participation in a political campaign as a normative citizen activity.

Overall then, there was weak support for Hypothesis 3a as political interest was found to be associated with perceptions of stating a political opinion and participating in a political protest as normative citizen activities, but was not related to the other activity measures. There was better support for Hypothesis 3b, as political participation was associated with support for voting, participation in a political protest, and participation in community organization as appropriate citizen activities. Also, there was almost a significant relationship between political participation and support for the citizen act of participating in a political campaign.

There was no support for Hypotheses 4a, 4b, and 4c as none of these media use variables (television news use, cable talk news use, and late night comedy news use) were related to any of the citizen activity measures included here. Hypothesis 4d exhibited minor support as newspaper use was associated with support for participation in hobby clubs or sports leagues as an appropriate citizen activity, and was close to a significant negative relationship with support for political protest as a normative citizen activity.

In light of the two associations (one significant and one near significant) for newspaper use and perceptions of appropriate citizen activities, the content analysis data was re-examined in order to determine tone of depictions for the various citizen activities depicted in newspaper content. Means for the tone of each citizen activity in newspaper content are found in Table 14. What is most relevant to the issue of newspaper use and perception of citizen activities is that the citizen activity with the most positive tone in newspaper depictions was social capital activities ($M = 6.20$, $SD = .67$). Participating in a hobby club or sports league—the citizen activity measure

included in the telephone survey that was found to be positively associated with newspaper use—is a social capital activity. Therefore the broad area of citizen activities that was most positively depicted in newspaper content includes the citizen activity that was found to be positively associated with newspaper use in the telephone survey. Additionally, it is worth noting that social capital activities appeared more frequently in newspaper content than in any of the other media forms (see Table 12). Overall then, social capital activities appeared frequently in newspaper content and when those activities appeared they were depicted positively. In turn, newspaper users were more likely to perceive that participation in a hobby club or sports league (social capital activities) as appropriate or normative citizen activities.

Conversely, newspaper users were less likely than non-newspaper users to perceive political protest to be an appropriate citizen activity. The overall tone for newspaper depictions of citizens who participated in political protests was the lowest of the citizen activities that were measured on the telephone survey (participation in terrorism and citizens as object of the government had lower tone means in newspaper content, but those activities were not assessed as part of the telephone survey). Therefore the political activity that was depicted most negatively in newspaper content was the activity that was found to be judged by newspaper users to not be an appropriate citizen activity. Political protest activities were not represented as often as social capital activities in newspaper content (17.6% compared to 3.8% of all content respectively), so perhaps more frequent coverage of protest issues would have resulted in a significant relationship between newspaper use and perception of political protest.

Research Question 13

Research Question 13 examined how citizen decision-making was depicted in television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspaper content. Citizen decision-making in media content was assessed by determining the extent to which the issues associated with citizens were either personal issues or social issues. Whether the issue was personal or societal indicates the extent to which the citizen is concerned primarily with issues that are related to the good of the individual or to the good of society. By understanding the citizen's concerns within media depictions, it is possible to ascertain the decision-making priorities that are attributed to citizens in media content.

To answer the question of how citizen's decision-making (or concern) is depicted in media content, a one-way ANOVA was computed. Results revealed differences between the four media modalities in depiction of citizen decision-making standards, $F(3, 4039) = 12.43, p < .01$. Citizens were depicted as being most concerned with social issues (compared to personal issues) in late night comedy content ($M = 3.64, SD = 1.97$), followed by television news content ($M = 3.31, SD = 2.37$), newspaper content ($M = 3.30, SD = 1.99$), and cable talk news content ($M = 2.93, SD = 2.18$). A Scheffe post-hoc test revealed that television news, $t(2321) = 9.50, p < .01$, late night comedy news, $t(1439) = 13.09, p < .01$, and newspapers, $t = 9.25, p < .07$, all depicted citizens as being more concerned with social issues than did cable talk news.

Research Question 14

Research Question 14 sought to determine what individuals believed are appropriate citizen decision-making standards. Three questions in the telephone survey addressed this question. Confidence levels were calculated at the 99% level in order to

test for differences in support for the different citizen knowledge standards. Questions with confidence levels that do not overlap were concluded to differ significantly.

The first question measured support for a liberal model of citizen decision-making (“Citizens should consider their own interests or their family’s own interests above everything else when making political decision,” [$M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.90$, $CI = 3.74$ to 4.21]). The second question measured support for a communitarian model of citizen decision-making (“Citizens should consider the good of their community or society above everything else when making political decisions,” [$M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.70$, $CI = 4.62$ to 5.04]). The third question assessed a middle-ground between the liberal and communitarian perspectives (“When making political decisions, citizens should sometimes sacrifice their own interests for the good of the community or society,” [$M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.54$, $CI = 4.99$ to 5.37]). Overall then, support for both the middle-ground and communitarian models of citizen decision-making received significantly more support than did the liberal model of decision-making (see Figure 8).

Hypotheses 5 and 6

Hypotheses 5 and 6 proposed that political interest and citizen participation would be associated with perceptions of appropriate citizen decision-making standards and that amount of media use would influence perceptions of appropriate citizen decision-making standards. These hypotheses were tested on data from the telephone survey using hierarchical regression with three blocks of variables for the three dependent measures of citizen decision-making (full models are available in Tables 15). The first block of variables included sociodemographic variables (gender, age, race, education level, and political affiliation). The second block of variables featured

political interest and political participation. The third block of variables contained media use variables.

The first citizen decision-making standard that was examined was the liberal model. The liberal model of citizen decision-making was assessed by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement that “Citizens should consider their own interests or their family’s own interests above everything else when making political decisions.” Two sociodemographic variables were significantly and negatively correlated with support for a liberal model of citizen decision-making. These variables included race ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$) and education ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$). This means that individuals who were members of a minority ethnic group and those who had lower levels of education were more likely to support a citizen decision-making standard that places priority on the individual (or family) interests. Additionally, age approached a significant relationship with support for a liberal model of decision-making ($\beta = -.09, p < .10$), meaning that younger individuals were more likely than older individuals to support a liberal model of citizen decision-making.

With regards to political interest and political participation, both variables approached a significant negative relationship with support for a liberal model of citizen decision-making ($\beta = -.09, p < .10$ and $\beta = -.10, p < .10$ respectively). Two media use variables also approached a significant relationship with support for the liberal model of citizen decision-making. Use of cable talk news and newspaper were positively, but weakly, correlated with support for the liberal model of citizen decision-making ($\beta = .10, p < .10$ for both).

The second model of citizen decision-making measured as part of this project was the communitarian model. This model was assessed by asking respondents to indicate how much they agreed with the statement that “Citizens should consider the good of their community or society above everything else when making political decision.” Support for the communitarian model of citizen decision-making was not related to any of the sociodemographic variables. It was also not related to the variables of political interest or political participation. However, support for this model was positively associated with use of television news ($\beta = .12, p < .05$).

The final model of citizen decision-making assessed a middle ground model of citizen decision-making. This model was assessed by asking respondents how much they agreed with the statement that “When making political decisions, citizens should sometimes sacrifice their own interests for the good of the community or society.” Gender was associated with support for the middle ground model of decision-making ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$), in that males were more likely to support the idea than were female respondents. Race and education were weakly related to support for the middle ground model ($\beta = .09, p < .10$ and $\beta = .10, p < .10$ respectively), in that Caucasian and highly educated respondents showed more support for middle ground decision-making.

Political participation was positively associated with support for the middle ground model ($\beta = .17, p < .01$), but there was no relationship between political interest and a middle ground model of citizen decision-making. One media use variable was significantly related to the middle ground model. Users of cable talk news were less likely to support this model of citizen decision-making ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$) than were those who did not use cable talk news.

Overall then, there was very weak support for Hypothesis 5a as political interest was only weakly associated with support for one of the decision-making models (the liberal model). Hypothesis 5b fared better and was partially supported as political participation was related to support for the middle ground model of citizen decision-making and approached a significant negative relationship with the liberal model. Hypothesis 6a had marginal support as television news use was related to support for the communitarian decision-making model. Hypothesis 6b also had marginal support as cable talk news use was significantly and negatively related to support for a middle ground model of decision-making, and cable talk news use approached a significant relationship with support for the liberal model of decision-making. There was no support for Hypothesis 6c as late night comedy news use was not related to any of the decision-making measures. Finally, there was very little support for Hypothesis 6d as newspaper use was only weakly related to support for the liberal model of citizen decision-making.

Results for Hypothesis 6b can be tied back to the content analysis portion of this project. Cable talk news content featured citizen depictions that were the most concerned with personal issues (compared to the other three media modalities examined here). The relationship of cable talk news to the decision-making measures included in the telephone survey reflect this content trend, in that cable talk show users were more likely to support the liberal decision-making model (a relationship that approached significance), were significantly opposed to the middle ground model of decision-making (which proposes that individual interests may sometimes be sacrificed for community interests), and—although the association was not significant—use of cable

talk news was negatively related to support for a communitarian model of citizen decision-making. Therefore, users of the media form that featured the most individual focused citizen depictions exhibited support for individual-focused political decision-making standards.

However, the results of Hypothesis 6a are more surprising as they are not supported by the content analysis portion of the research. Use of television news was found to be related to support for a communitarian model of citizen decision-making. However, television news content did not depict citizens as particularly interested in social issues. The mean for television news depictions of citizen concerns was less than the mid-point of the scale, meaning that television news citizens were more concerned with individual issues as opposed to social issues. This is why the finding that television news users supported a community-focused model of citizen decision-making is so surprising. Furthermore, while Putnam (2000) argues that time spent watching television is displacing time spent developing social networks—a consequence that leads to less social capital and is thus bad for American democratic health—here time spent watching television news is found to be good for developing a preference for making political decisions based on what is good for society (as opposed to only thinking of oneself).

Chapter VI

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine how the mass media depict democratic citizenship and how individuals think about what it means to be a democratic citizen. This study proposed that the media depictions would, in turn, influence individual perceptions of democratic citizenship. To address these issues two types of data were collected: content analysis data and data from a national telephone survey. The content analysis focused on content from four media modalities (television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspapers) measuring various dimensions of citizen depictions in the media content. The national telephone survey asked respondents to indicate what they thought about three key dimensions of citizen behavior (knowledge, activities, and decision-making standards). The citizen dimensions assessed in the survey coincided with some of the data collected on the content analysis portion of this project.

Media Depictions of Citizens

Media depictions of citizens, within the context of this study, are best understood by comparing the ways in which citizen depictions both vary and are the same for the four media modalities that were included in the content analysis. The content analysis included two traditional media modalities (television news and newspapers) and two new media or non-traditional media modalities (cable talk news and late night comedy news). By examining content from each media modality for various aspects of democratic citizenship, a distinct model of mediated citizenship should emerge for each media form.

Individual Media Forms

Television news. Television news is one of the two traditional media modalities examined in this study. Television news, along with the other traditional media form—newspapers—included depictions of democratic citizens more frequently than did the two non-traditional media modalities (cable talk news, late night comedy). For television news content, democratic citizens comprised 31% of all content. This means that democratic citizens appeared in almost one-third of all television news content.

Perhaps surprisingly, the most frequent issue to be associated with citizen depictions in television news content was foreign affairs. This was also the most frequent issue for non-citizen television content. Foreign affairs—as an issue category in the content analysis portion of this research—included issues of national defense and terrorism. Therefore it is likely that homeland security-related issues drove the popularity of foreign affairs issues in television content, though a content analysis with more specific issue categories would be necessary to confirm this.

While foreign affairs was frequently associated with citizen depictions, the fact that it was also frequently associated with non-citizen depictions on television news contents means that the issue was associated with citizen depictions not as the result of any particular relationship between the foreign affairs issue and citizen constructions, but simply because it was a frequent issue on television news. Therefore foreign affairs is not fundamentally a citizen issue even though it was associated with a lot of citizen depictions. A citizen issue is something that is frequently associated with citizen depictions and less frequently associated with non-citizen depictions. In other words, citizen issues are issues that more regularly appear in citizen content than in non-citizen

content. Conversely, non-citizen issues are issues that appear more often in non-citizen content than in citizen content.

For television news, two main citizen issues emerged: Iraq and social capital. First, Iraq proved to be the second most frequent issue associated with citizen content on television news, but was only the eighth most frequent issue for non-citizen television content. Therefore Iraq was frequently associated with citizens and much less frequently associated with non-citizens—it was a citizen issue. Social capital was also a citizen issue as it was the third most frequent issue associated with citizens and was not featured in any non-citizen television content. Non-citizen issues in television news included entertainment and the environment.

In television news content, citizens were most frequently constructed by the journalist, followed by citizens speaking for themselves, and then citizen constructions resulting from official sources. This pattern was the same for all of the media modalities included in this study. Television news content, though, exhibited the lowest frequency of journalist depictions of citizens for the four media forms, and also exhibited the highest frequency of official sources used as sources of media depictions.

Television news content, like all the media modalities, depicted citizens as individuals more often than any other group. This meant that television news more often featured individual citizens such as “Bob Johnson” or “Jane Smith,” citizens who were depicted on their own as opposed to being explicitly associated with an interest group, demographic group, political party, or any of the other groups coded as part of this content analysis. The second most frequent group association on television news content was military members, a group which includes depictions of troops and soldiers.

Television news included military citizens more frequently than did any of the other media forms (almost twice as often as any other media modality). The next most popular citizen group was the demographic group, followed by the “all” group and interest groups. The least frequent group to be associated with citizen depictions on television news was the political group.

Television news content depicted citizens as having significantly less agency than late night comedy news. Television citizens also had less agency than cable talk news citizens, though the difference was not significant. Higher levels of agency mean that the citizens in media depictions were the source of action as opposed to being acted upon by other actors and institutions. While levels of citizen agency in television content were low compared to the other media modalities, the tone of citizen depictions on television news content was the most positive of all of the media forms examined as part of this study. Television news also featured the most knowledgeable citizen depictions among the four media modalities. Additionally, television news content featured citizens who were more frequently depicted as concerned with personal issues than with societal issues.

The most frequent citizen activity in television content was citizens being acted upon by government laws or policies, followed by participation in a military campaign, involvement in social capital activities, and stating public political opinions. Television news featured the highest proportion of citizens participating in consumer activities for all media modalities included in this study; however even for television only 5.2% of all citizens were featured buying goods or services.

Cable talk news. Cable talk news featured citizens in 21.3% of all content. This frequency of citizen depiction was less than both of the traditional media modalities, but was a more frequent depiction of citizens than was found in late night comedy content.

Foreign affairs issues were the most frequent citizen and non-citizen issues to appear in cable talk news content. Iraq was the main citizen issue for cable talk news, as Iraq was the second most frequent non-citizen issue and only the sixth most frequent citizen issue. Iraq was actually the only citizen issue in cable talk news content. Non-citizen issues on cable talk news included government functioning, an issue that was the second most frequent for non-citizen content and only sixth most frequent for citizen content, and entertainment, which was fourth most frequent for non-citizen content and was not associated with any citizen depictions. Cable talk news did not include any content (either citizen or non-citizen) on social capital, science, environment, or labor issues.

With regard to what sources were employed to construct citizen depictions, cable talk news followed the same patterns as all media modalities, as the journalist was employed most frequently as the source of citizen depictions, followed by the citizen himself, and then official sources.

Like each of the other media modalities, the individual was the most frequent group associated with citizen depictions in cable talk news content. Interest groups were the second most frequent group depicted with citizens in cable talk news content, and interest groups associated with citizens were more frequent on cable talk news than on any of the other media sources. This means that cable talk news featured more representatives from interest groups providing a citizen's opinion than did the other

media modalities. The least frequent citizen group to appear on cable talk news content was the military (citizen members of the military that is, in the form of troops or soldiers. Military leaders, like political leaders, were not counted as citizens in this analysis). When comparing frequency of depictions within overall content, television news featured almost four times as many citizens associated with the military than did cable talk news.

The agency of citizens in cable television content was comparable to television news content, significantly higher than the agency in newspapers, and significantly lower than late night news comedy. However, the tone of citizen depictions for cable talk news content was the lowest for all of the media sources. Cable talk news also depicted citizens with the second-lowest levels of knowledge for the media forms included in this study. The difference between cable talk news citizen knowledge levels was not significantly lower than television news and newspaper content, but the mean of cable talk news citizen tone was lower than for these media modalities. Cable talk news content also featured citizens who were the most concerned with personal issues (compared to societal issues) for all media modalities.

The most frequent activity associated with citizens in cable talk news content was the stating of political opinions. The second most frequent cable talk news citizen activity was instances of the citizen as object of the journalist. Citizen as object of the journalist was a category created specifically as a result of content found in cable talk news. This category of citizen actions included instances in which a journalist makes evaluative declarations about what citizens think or about the impact of citizen's beliefs or actions on the world. So, for example, a journalist might say something like

“Southern, Christian, conservatives are completely misguided in the stem cell debate.” Through a statement such as this, the journalist is judging whether a citizen’s opinion or policy position is valid. Or a journalist might say something like “liberals who constantly complain about Iraq are causing us to lose this war.” Through a statement like this, the journalist is ascribing consequences to citizen’s actions. While journalists define citizen actions and beliefs for a large portion of all citizen content depictions, this category contains those instances in which the journalist is explicitly passing judgment on a citizen opinion or action. Basically, this category includes explicit, non-objective descriptions of citizens. There were no instances of this category for newspapers or television news depictions citizens, and only a few (3.3%) on late night news comedy content. Therefore, the evaluation of citizen opinions and activities is basically a cable talk news phenomena.

The third most frequent citizen activity on cable talk news content were citizens involved in legal proceedings. Cable talk news featured this citizen activity more often than did any of the other media sources. The fourth most frequent citizen activity was the citizen as object of government law or policy. Cable talk news featured this activity less frequently than any of the other media sources included in the study.

Late night comedy news. Late night comedy news featured citizens less frequently than any of the other media sources included in this study. Only 12% of late night comedy news content featured citizen depictions. This means that television news and newspapers featured almost three times as much citizen content (as a portion of overall content) than did late night comedy news.

Iraq was the most frequent citizen and non-citizen issue for late night comedy news; however, Iraq could still be considered a citizen issue for this media source as Iraq was associated with almost twice as much citizen content as non-citizen content in late night comedy news content (37.4% of citizen content and 20.0% of non-citizen content). Social welfare and economics were also citizen issues on late night comedy news. Non-citizen issues for this media modality included entertainment, government functioning, and foreign affairs. Late night comedy did not feature any content on social capital, environment, or labor issues. It also had very little content on immigration and science.

As with all of the media sources examined as part of this content analysis, citizens in late night comedy news content were most frequently characterized by journalists, then citizens, and official sources. Late night comedy news content utilized the least amount of official sources as sources of citizen characterization when compared to the other media forms included in this study.

The most frequent citizen group to be associated with citizen depictions in late night comedy news content was the individual. The next most frequent group to be associated with citizen depictions was the “all” group, which included broad references to the American citizenry, utilizing terms such as “Americans,” “citizens,” or “voters.” The military was the next most frequent group to be depicted with citizens in late night comedy content. The least frequent group to be associated with citizen depictions was the political group. In fact, citizen depictions and political party affiliation were never associated in the late night comedy news content that was analyzed as part of this project.

Late night comedy news featured citizens with the highest levels of agency for any of the media modalities included in this study. Levels of late night comedy news citizen agency were significantly higher than levels found in television news, cable talk news, and newspaper content. However, late night comedy news exhibited the second lowest tone for citizen depictions. The tone of citizens in late night comedy news content was significantly lower (and thus more negative) than the citizen tone found in television news and newspaper content. Only cable talk news presented citizens with a lower overall tone than late night comedy news (and this difference was not significant). Late night comedy news content also depicted citizens as possessing the lowest levels of knowledge for all the media modalities. At the same time, citizens in late night comedy news content were the most concerned with societal issues for all of the media modalities included in this study.

The most common citizen activity in late night comedy news content was the expression of a political opinion. This activity occurred for over half of all citizen depictions (56.6%). Late night comedy news featured the most frequent occurrence of expressing political opinions for any of the media modalities. The second most frequent late night comedy news citizen activity was the citizen as the object of government law or policy and then participation in a political campaign. Late night comedy news content featured no depictions of citizens participating in social capital activities, legal proceedings, or buying goods or services.

Newspapers. Citizens appeared in newspaper content more frequently than in any of the other media sources included in this study, though the difference between newspaper content and television news was slight (32.3% and 31.0% respectively).

Newspaper content exhibited the best overall distribution of issues related to both citizen and non-citizen content. There were basically no issues (with the exception of entertainment) that were not associated with some amount of citizen or non-citizen content, and almost all of the issues that appeared in newspaper content had approximately the same frequency of citizen and non-citizen content. The few exceptions were social capital issues, which were much more often associated with citizens than non-citizens; entertainment, which was not associated with citizens at all but did occur for some non-citizen content; and government functioning, which tended to be a non-citizen issue.

With regard to source of characterization for citizen depictions, newspapers followed the pattern of all other media sources in this study and featured citizens constructed by journalists most often, followed by citizens and then official sources. The most frequent group associated with citizen depictions in newspaper content was the individual followed by the demographic group (which made-up just over 25% of all citizen depictions). The least frequent citizen group to be featured in newspaper depictions was the political group.

Newspaper citizens exhibited the lowest levels of agency for all of the media sources. While the differences between the newspaper citizen agency mean and the television citizen agency mean were not significant, newspaper citizens did exhibit significantly less agency than citizens in cable talk news or late night comedy news. With regard to citizen tone, newspapers portrayed citizens with the second-most positive tone (to television news). The tone of newspaper citizens was significantly more positive than cable talk news and late night comedy news citizens, but the

difference in overall tone for newspaper and television tone was not significant. The level of knowledge for citizen depictions in newspapers was essentially equal to the average for the four media modalities, as it was less than the knowledge level for television news citizens, more than the knowledge level for late night comedy citizens, and approximately the same as cable talk news citizens. With regard to citizen concerns, newspaper citizens were more concerned with personal issues than societal issues, though cable talk news exhibited citizens who were significantly more concerned with personal issues than societal issues when compared to newspaper depictions.

The most frequent activity associated with citizen depictions in television content was the citizen as object of government law or policy. The second most common citizen activity in newspapers was social capital activities, and newspapers featured this activity more frequently than any other media source. The next most frequent newspaper citizen activity was citizens stating a political opinion.

Traditional Media versus New Media

In addition to examining each media form individually, some differences between traditional media (television news and newspapers) and new media (cable talk news and late night comedy news) emerged from the content analysis. For example, traditional media sources featured a higher frequency of citizen depictions than did new media. When the two traditional media forms (television news and newspapers) are collapsed into a traditional media group and the two non-traditional media forms (cable talk news and late night comedy news) are collapsed into a new media group, the difference in frequency of citizen appearance becomes clearer, as 31.6% of traditional

media content included citizen depictions whereas only 17.8% of new media content included citizens.

With regard to issues associated with citizens, only traditional media sources featured citizens associated with social capital activities. New media sources did not feature social capital activities in citizen (or non-citizen) content. If the decline of social capital activities in America is potentially harmful to the nation's democratic health (Putnam, 2000), then the new media forms examined here are doing nothing to remedy this situation as there is no depiction of social capital issues in new media content.

The two new media modalities that were included in this study depicted citizens as having more agency than did the two traditional media forms. When the media modalities were collapsed into a traditional media and a new media group, an independent sample t-test found that new media citizens exhibited significantly more agency ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 2.26$) than did traditional media citizens ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 2.25$), $t(4043) = 4.47$, $p < .01$. However, an independent sample t-test found that traditional media citizens were depicted more positively ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.97$) than were new media citizens ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 2.10$), $t(4043) = 11.53$, $p < .01$.

The finding that the new media forms included in this study depicted citizens as having more agency but a less positive tone than traditional media citizens is interesting. One might guess that citizens who were depicted as having more agency would in turn be depicted more positively, as citizens with agency act as opposed to being acted upon and are therefore controlling their own agenda and choices. However, what appears to be happening in the new media modalities is that citizens are being depicted as acting, but those actions are framed negatively. For cable talk news content,

it is the journalists who are creating a negative tone for citizen depictions. This research found that cable talk news frequently featured journalists judging citizen opinions, actions, and the consequences of both. These evaluations tend to be negative evaluations of citizen actions, which is evident from the overall negative tone of cable talk news content. Similarly, late night comedy news presented citizens as more active than the citizens found in traditional media modalities, but the citizen action presented in late night content tends to serve as the set-up for or punch line to a joke, thereby resulting in an overall negative citizen tone. For this study, then, new media citizens are depicted as active but with a negative tone and traditional media citizens are depicted as less active, but with a more positive tone.

Additionally, new media modalities depicted citizens as significantly less knowledgeable ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.87$) than did traditional media sources ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.55$), $t(4043) = 2.90$, $p < .01$. The quality of possessing less knowledge may also contribute to the more negative tone associated with citizen depictions in new media sources compared to traditional media sources.

The citizen activity most frequently associated with new media citizen depictions was the stating of political opinions. Citizen depictions in cable talk news and late night comedy include citizens presenting opinions that are subsequently judged by the journalist in cable talk news content or mocked by the host in late night comedy news content. Either way the overall evaluation of the citizen is more negative than in the traditional media forms. However, this does not mean that traditional media forms present an empowered, positive depiction of citizen actions. The most frequent traditional media citizen activity for both television news and newspapers was the

depiction of the citizen as object of the government. This means the traditional media citizen is frequently acted upon. The most popular citizen activities for traditional and new media modalities exemplify the previous discussion related to citizen agency, the new media citizen is an actor and the traditional media citizen is acted upon (relative to each other), while at the same time the new media citizen is depicted more negatively than the traditional media citizen (as discussed previously). If individuals are learning what it means to be a democratic citizen from media content, then neither traditional media nor new media modalities are providing depictions of an ideal citizen as a model for viewers.

All Media

Some of the findings that emerged from the content analysis of citizen depictions apply to all or most of the media modalities included in this analysis. For example, all of the media sources featured citizen depictions based most frequently on journalist characterizations, followed by citizens speaking for themselves, and citizen characterizations from official sources. It is not surprising that citizen depictions are most frequently attributed directly to journalists, but from a normative perspective it is reassuring that citizens are more frequently depicted as speaking for themselves than being framed through content attributed to official sources. Stating a political opinion was the most frequent activity for the new media modalities in this study and was within the top three activities for traditional media forms, so media depictions of citizens include a reasonable amount of citizens speaking for themselves by providing political opinions.

For almost all of the media included in this project, the war in Iraq emerged as a citizen issue. Iraq was more of a citizen issue for the television-based modalities than for newspapers; but overall, all modalities featured more citizen content on Iraq than non-citizen content on Iraq. What this means is that when the Iraq war was featured in any of these media modalities, the Iraq content tended to involve depictions of either American citizens, citizens from other countries such as Iraq, or military troops and soldiers. Public support for the war in Iraq continued to decrease between the time that the war began and the time in which this telephone survey was conducted (Pew Research Center, 2007). Conventional wisdom is that media images of violence, death, and injury that are related to the Iraq war have caused the public to lose faith that the Iraq military effort is justified or worth the cost. However, perhaps part of the reason why public opinion on the Iraq war has changed is because the war is generally framed as a citizen issue in media content. The relevance of the war to citizens may therefore be greater because media depictions of the Iraq war often include citizens. This is an empirical question that should be tested in future research; however, the results here provide anecdotal evidence to support such a cause and effect.

For all media modalities, citizens were most frequently depicted as individuals. This means that citizens were most likely to be depicted as isolated entities, absent association with demographic, interest, or political groups. In a way, this is an episodic framing of the citizen (Iyengar, 1991) in that the citizen concept is most frequently presented through single, unconnected instances of the citizen. Conversely, a thematic framing of the citizen would associate the citizen with groups so that the citizen depiction would be broader and more generalized. When citizens are presented as

individuals, it is possible that viewers are less likely to see citizen depictions as relevant then would be the case if citizens are associated with a group to which the viewer might also belong. For instance, if a citizen is depicted as stating a political opinion, and that citizen is depicted only as “Bob Johnson,” then the viewer of such depictions might not perceive how that citizen action or opinion is relevant to the viewer. Conversely, if a citizen is depicted as stating a political opinion and the citizen is constructed with a group association such as “American” or “voter,” then the viewer may be more likely to perceive the sameness that he or she shares with that mediated depiction. Again, the impact of individual and group depictions of citizens on viewers should be tested empirically in future research.

While citizens were most often depicted as individuals, overall citizens were least often depicted as belonging to a political group. The political group was the least frequent group to which citizens were depicted as belonging for all of the media modalities with the exception of cable talk news (for cable talk news the political group was the third least frequent group). This means that of all group associations, citizens in media content were least likely to be associated with an explicitly political entity, whether that be in terms of belonging to a political party or possessing a political ideology. Given that the sampling timeframe for the content analysis involved a period in which politics were considered to be particularly partisan and the electorate was typically characterized as divided (Black & Black, 2007), it is surprising that citizens were so infrequently associated with a political affiliation in media content. Basically, in media content political identity is depicted as not being particularly important for democratic citizens.

Democratic versus Non-democratic Citizens

Almost nine out of ten of all media depictions of citizens featured democratic citizens (as compared to non-democratic citizens). The media modality that provided the most coverage of non-democratic citizens was late night comedy news, and newspapers provided the least. Non-democratic citizens spoke for themselves less often than did democratic citizens, and non-democratic citizen depictions were more often the product of official sources than were democratic citizens.

Non-democratic citizens were frequently associated with foreign affairs issues (over 50.0% of all non-democratic depictions) and Iraq (almost 30.0% of all citizen depictions). Non-democratic citizens were more likely to be associated with interest groups and less likely to be depicted as individuals, compared to democratic citizens. Non-democratic citizens were depicted as having less agency and knowledge than democratic citizens. They were also depicted with a more negative overall tone than democratic citizens, and were depicted as being more concerned with personal (as opposed to social) issues than were democratic citizens.

Perceptions of Democratic Citizenship

The national telephone survey portion of this project measured respondent's sociodemographics, media use, and support for different models of the three citizen dimensions.

Overall, with regard to levels of appropriate citizen knowledge, respondents indicated the most support for an informed model of citizen knowledge. This is the Progressive Era notion of citizen knowledge, which argues citizens should know a great deal about all citizen issues. The first of the two monitorial citizen conceptualizations

received the second most support for citizens. This concept of citizen knowledge proposes that citizens should pay attention to all citizen issues and then learn more about just those issues that seem important. This model of the monitoring citizen is practical, as it proposes that citizens should at least be aware of all issues in the public sphere, but only need to learn more about those that are deemed particularly important. If the public and political landscape is congested with issues and ideas (Jones, 1999), and if individuals are limited in the amount of information they can process cognitively (Lang, 2000), then this strategy seems to be a logical way to be aware of what is going on without having to know everything as is required by the Progressive Era model of citizenship.

On average, the other two models of citizen knowledge assessed as part of this study were not supported by respondents. Individuals reported overall levels of disagreement with the statements that citizens should “elect government officials and then leave the political decision-making to the elected government leaders” (an assenting model of citizenship) and the other conception of the monitorial citizen (“Citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens”).

With regard to citizen activities, respondents indicated the most support for voting as a normative citizen activity, followed by participating in community organizations (a social capital activity), appearing in court, buying goods or services, publicly expressing political opinions, and joining a sports league or hobby club. The two activities that received the least amount of support from individuals as being normative citizen activities (though overall support for both of these activities were

above the scale mean, meaning that on average the activities were perceived by respondents to be appropriate citizen activities) were volunteering to work for a political campaign or organization and participating in a political protest or demonstration. While it is perhaps not surprising that participation in political protests and demonstrations received the least support for all citizen activities that were assessed, it is interesting that participation in a political campaign or organization was low on the list in terms of respondent support. However, as was discussed previously, citizens in media content were depicted as political actors less frequently than any other citizen group. Therefore the media modalities investigated as part of this project did not depict citizens as political actors, and citizen respondents did not indicate high levels of support for political activities as citizen activities. In this instance media content is in agreement with citizen perceptions, and vice versa. Future research should examine the reasons why citizens do or do not robustly support political activities to be citizen activities.

The third dimension of citizenship included in this research involved citizen decision-making standards. Overall citizens indicated the most support for a middle-ground decision-making standard. This standard argues that citizens should sometimes sacrifice their own interests for the good of the society or community. The next most popular citizen decision-making standard was the communitarian principle that argues citizens should consider the good of the community over everything else when making political decisions. Lastly, the liberal standard of considering the individual's interest first when making political decisions received the least support of the citizen decision-making standards included in the telephone survey.

Impact of Sociodemographics

Several of the sociodemographics included in the survey were associated with perceptions of citizen dimensions. Males were more likely than females to support the second monitorial citizen model of knowledge (that citizens should live their own lives and only learn more if something important happened), the assenting model of citizen knowledge, political protest as a citizen activity, and the middle ground of citizen decision-making (that personal interests should sometimes be sacrificed for community interests). What is most striking about these results is that men were more likely than women to support having low levels of political knowledge as acceptable citizen behavior. However, at the same time gender was not related to support for the high political knowledge level models of citizenship.

Younger respondents indicated more support for the activities of voting, participating in political protest, buying goods and services, participating in hobby and sports, and a liberal model of citizen decision-making. Caucasian respondents were less likely to support the first model of monitorial citizenship, more likely to support voting as a citizen activity, less likely to support the liberal model of citizen decision-making, and more likely to support the middle-ground model of citizen decision-making than respondents from all other races.

The higher the respondent's level of education, the less likely the respondent was to support the weaker model of monitorial citizenship, the more likely the respondent was to support participation in political campaigns as a citizen activity, the less likely the respondent was to support the liberal model of citizen decision-making,

and the more likely the respondent was to support the middle-ground model of citizen decision-making.

Finally, the more Republican a respondent was, the less likely the respondent was to support the weaker model of monitorial citizenship, the more likely the respondent was to support an assenting model of citizenship, and the less likely the respondent was to support stating a political opinion or participating in a political protests to be a citizen activity.

Impact of Political Participation and Interest

Political interest was related to all four of the citizen knowledge measures. The more interested in politics respondents were, the more likely they were to support an informed model of citizen knowledge and to oppose all of the other models of citizen knowledge (each of which require citizens to be less than fully informed). This makes sense in that if respondents are interested in politics, they expect citizens to be informed about political matters. Levels of political participation, on the other hand, were not related to any of the citizen knowledge measures.

Political interest and participation were both associated with opposition to a liberal model of citizen decision-making (though this relationship was weak). However, even though political interest and participation predicted opposition to a liberal standard of decision-making, this did not translate into support for a communitarian standard of decision-making. Where this study conceptualized a continuum of citizen decision-making with individual preferences anchoring one end and social preferences anchoring the other, individuals did not seem to think in such terms as the correlations of support for one and opposition to the other at the same time are not evident in this data.

Political interest and participation did predict some support for various citizen activities, but neither was a predictor of widespread citizen activity support. In fact, political interest was only associated with support for two citizen activities and political participation was associated with support for three of the activities (out of the eight that were ultimately assessed on the survey). Therefore, political interest and participation do not translate into support for all citizen activities.

Impact of Media Use

Overall, media use had little impact on perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizen. To test for the impact of media use on perceptions of democratic citizenship, four media use variables were regressed on 15 dependent variables. This process resulted in 60 possible relationships between media use and citizenship perceptions; however, only three significant relationships were found (with four more relationships approaching significance). Therefore, the best conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the mass media weakly impact individual's perceptions of citizenship.

Why is this? It is logical to have expected the media to influence citizen perceptions as the mass media are a known agent of secondary socialization (Pfau & Mullen, 1995), and citizenship seems to be something that becomes more important later in an individual's life when he or she is likely to acquire a job, property, and family (therefore it is applicable to the secondary socialization process). Also, the mass media have found to be a source of political socialization (Chaffee et al., 1970; Eveland et al., 1998, Jackson, 2002; Hess & Torney, 1967) and cultivation research has detailed a process through which media use influences viewer beliefs (Gerbner et al., 2002;

Harmon, 2001; Pfau & Mullen, 1995; Romer et al., 2002; Shanahan, 1998; Stossel, 1997). Yet, in light of these previous findings and overall reasoning the impact of media use on perceptions of citizens was minimal.

However, there was *some* media influence on citizen perceptions. There were three instances of significant association between media use and citizen perceptions: cable talk news use was negatively associated with support for a middle-ground model of citizen decision-making, newspaper use was associated with support for participating in hobby clubs or sports leagues as a citizen activity, and television news use was associated with support for a communitarian model of citizen decision-making. Additionally, both the cable talk news and newspaper associations with citizen perceptions were supported by results from the content analysis. In other words, the relationships between those media use variables and the specific perceptions of democratic citizenship dimensions were in line with what was found in the actual media content. While the television news result was more puzzling and not directly supported by the media content, overall these results indicate that something—even if the results are minimal—is going on between media use and citizenship perceptions.

The conclusion to be drawn from this study does not seem to be that the media are incapable of influencing citizen perceptions about what it means to be a citizen, as clearly there are significant and near significant associations in this data set, but rather that the media are not broadly causing such an effect. The two best explanations for why the media are not widely influencing perceptions of citizenship have to do with the infrequency of citizen depictions in the media and the inherent complexity of the citizen concept. Both of these explanations are discussed in turn.

First, perhaps the most obvious explanation for the weak relationship between media depictions of citizens and user perceptions of what it means to be a citizen is that there are simply not enough citizen instances in mass media content to socialize viewers. The media modality with the most frequent occurrence of citizens was newspapers, which included citizen depictions in 32.3% of all content. This might be enough content to influence some citizen perceptions among viewers, but that is difficult to say. What is the lowest threshold of content needed for a cultivation effect to occur? This question has not been answered.

Newspaper use was weakly associated with three and strongly associated with one of the citizen measures. Perhaps given the amount of citizen content found in newspaper content this is an appropriate effect. The citizen measure that newspaper use was most strongly related to was support for joining a hobby or sports league as a citizen activity, which was a social capital activity. Newspaper content included frequent and positive depictions of social capital activities, so the association between using newspapers and supporting social capital activities makes sense. It is conceivable that if more newspaper content included citizens, then some of the other citizen measures would have been correlated with newspaper use. For example, newspaper use was weakly associated with opposition to political protest as a citizen activity. The content analysis found that political protest was indeed presented with a negative tone in newspaper content, but that political protest comprised less than 5% of all citizen activities for newspapers. Perhaps more instances of this activity would have led to a larger (and thus significant) impact on user perceptions of political protest.

The explanation that perhaps the mass media do not contain enough citizen content to result in a strong impact on users is supported by the case of late night comedy news. Late night comedy news featured citizen depictions less frequently than any of the other media modalities (cable talk news, the modality with the next fewest citizen depictions, featured citizens almost twice as often as did late night comedy news). At the same time, late night comedy news was the only media modality to not be associated with a single citizen measure (at either the alpha .05 or even .10-level). In other words, late night comedy news content did not impact users' perceptions of what it means to be a citizen because it featured so few citizens. Essentially, there was nothing to learn about what it means to be a citizen from late night comedy news content.

Late night comedy news content is explicitly political and viewers have been found to exhibit higher levels of political knowledge than do viewers of other media modalities (National Annenberg Election Survey, 2004). So while late night comedy news is teaching viewers about politics, it leaves citizens out of the picture. The conclusion viewers might draw from late night comedy news content is that citizens are not an important part of the political process. The fact that late night comedy includes information about the political process but does not include a role for the citizen might explain why late night comedy news viewers are knowledgeable about politics but have been found to exhibit cynicism towards the electoral process (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006). Late night viewers may possess political knowledge, but, absent depictions of citizens impacting the political process, they are not being shown how to affect political change or impact the political process.

The other explanation for why the mass media did not impact media users' perceptions of democratic citizenship more broadly might be related to the inherent complexity of the citizen concept. For this project, a framework of major citizen dimensions was developed that included citizen knowledge, citizen activities, and citizen decision-making standards. These dimensions evolved after a reading of numerous political, sociological, and historical sources. While the dimensions as proposed here can each be conceptualized along some sort of continuum, such a framework betrays the inherent complexity of the citizen idea. Perhaps it is impractical to believe that the media can convey clear concepts about a subject as complex as citizenship, particularly given how infrequently citizens tend to be depicted in media content.

If the cultivation effect was not betrayed by an insufficient amount of citizen content in this study, then perhaps it was the complexity of the subject that prevented cultivation from occurring. This project may have been too ambitious in the questions it asked of respondents. In reality, an appropriate question to have asked respondents given the results of the content analysis might have been, "Who is more important in the political process, government leaders or regular citizens?" Given the fact that citizens make-up less than one-third of mass media news content, cultivation theory would predict that viewers would be more likely to answer that political leaders were more important than citizens. This is a question for future research.

Another reason why the citizen concept might be too complex to expect a strong cultivation effect is related to the viewers of media content. Research has found the American public to be deficient in the ability to organize political information or actors

along an ideological continuum (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Converse, 1964; Hamill, Lodge, & Blake, 1985; Luttbeg & Gant, 1985). If the organization of information according to modern American political ideology is difficult for the American public, then organizing the various attributes of normative citizen behavior is likely equally difficult. This study provides some evidence of this. For example, newspaper use was associated with support for a communitarian model of citizen decision-making, but it did not produce a negative association with support for the liberal model. Liberalism and communitarianism decision-making standards can be placed on a continuum with the primacy of the individual on one end and the primacy of the society on the other, so that support for the primacy of the society should also mean disagreement with the idea that the individual is primary. While citizen decision-making can be conceptualized in this manner, if the American public does not think in such terms (similar to the way that the American public has been found to not generally think in terms of liberalism and conservatism), then perhaps whatever information the media are providing about citizens is not having an impact on the cognitive structure that individuals possess about citizenship.

A way to address this in future research is to assess how individuals think about citizenship from a more qualitative perspective that does not utilize a citizen framework based on political theory. If Americans do not cognitively organize the concept of citizenship in a way that matches how the concept is organized by political philosophers, then research should seek to determine what common perceptions of democratic citizenship are and how these conceptions differ from the literature. From

this point, an investigation of how media content influences those perceptions might provide different results than what was found here.

Ultimately this study found that using the media provide minimal influence on perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizenship, this influence was neither typical nor broad. The weak effects are likely primarily due to the infrequency with which citizens are depicted in media content. If the mass media, particularly the news media, perceive any part of their function to be informing citizens about how to participate in the democratic process, then the media would do well to feature more citizens in their content. Another reason why media coverage of citizens might not be influencing users has to do with the inherent complexity of the democratic citizen concept. The democratic citizen has changed throughout history and continues to evolve. The diversity with which one could view democratic citizenship provides a multiplicity of ways that citizens can be depicted in media content. This diversity, especially in light of the infrequency of citizen depictions, may contribute to why users are not cultivated to understand citizenship through media content. Furthermore, citizens may not possess coherent cognitive conceptions of democratic citizenship, meaning that the information presented in the media about citizens might not have a clear way to be organized in the minds of viewers.

Research Limitations

The most significant limitation of this research is the use of single-item measures to assess various conceptions of the three citizen dimensions. Single-item measures were used because the practicality of conducting a national telephone survey required that the number of questions be limited where possible, and scales addressing

the citizen dimensions do not currently exist. As mentioned before, the citizen dimensions are inherently complex and scaled measures might have better captured attitudes about these dimensions. Future research should work toward developing scales to assess these citizen dimensions. Scales intended for this purpose might use common political issues (such as taxes or property rights) as proxies for support of concepts such as citizen decision-making standards.

There also exists a possibility that responses to many of the survey questions that assess perceptions of normative citizen dimensions in this project were affected by a social desirability bias. That is, when asking respondents whether citizens should be knowledgeable about all political issues or if citizens should base political decisions on the good of the community above all else, it is possible that respondents perceived it as socially desirable to believe such things, thus causing them to report a higher-level of agreement with these statements than they actually believed. Social desirability bias is the inclination for individuals to present themselves in ways that will be perceived favorably by others. Therefore if respondents believe that they will be perceived more favorably by answering the questions addressing normative citizen standards included in this project in a certain way, then such bias may have influenced the results. This social desirability bias is another reason to assess perceptions of citizen standards through a scale that uses issues or hypothetical scenarios to assess support for the various citizen dimensions proposed here. Using issues or scenarios might be more effective in circumventing the social desirability bias threats that exist in this project.

This project was also limited by the number and forms of mass media that were included in the analysis. While this research sought to include diverse forms of mass media, numerous popular media modalities were not included (such the Internet, political talk radio, political dramas, and presidential debates). Citizen depictions in media content from these other media sources could have easily varied from what was documented here, and several of these media forms might have been more powerful sources of political socialization. Political talk radio and the Internet, for example, might be particularly powerful socializing agents and were not included as part of this project. Future research should replicate this project and include other media forms.

The sample of respondents for this survey included more female respondents than did the 2004 American National Election Studies (ANES) survey. This preponderance of female respondents limits the extent to which the survey results from this project can be generalized back to the general population.

Finally, this research was limited in that the democratic citizen conceptualization that was utilized for the content analysis and survey was based on writings in political theory, sociology, and history. As such, it was the democratic citizen as formulated and conceptualized by scholars. It may be that the American public does not conceive the citizen concept along similar dimensions. Using a citizen framework based on ideas from typical American citizens might have produced an alternative citizen conceptualization that would have appeared more frequently in media content. Future research should take on this alternate approach and assess democratic citizenship as expressed by individuals absent a pre-existing framework, and then analyze media content according to this conceptualization of the citizen.

Conclusion

This study examined how the mass media depict democratic citizenship, how individuals think about what it means to be a democratic citizen, and how the two are related. To address these issues a content analysis of television news, cable talk news, late night comedy news, and newspaper content was conducted to determine how the media depict citizens. In addition to the content analysis, individual perceptions of democratic citizenship were assessed through a national telephone survey. To compare the ways in which media depictions and individual perceptions of citizens were related, this study proposed a citizen framework of three key citizen dimensions: knowledge, activities, and decision-making standards. Media content and individual perceptions of citizens were compared along these three dimensions.

The content analysis portion of this project found differences in the ways that traditional media modalities (television news and newspapers) and new media (cable talk news and late night comedy news) depicted citizens. Traditional media included more depictions of citizens than did new media. Traditional media also associated citizens with social capital activities more often than did new media. New media depicted citizens with greater amounts of agency than did traditional media, but traditional media depicted citizens in a more positive tone and as possessing more knowledge than did new media. The content analysis also documented ways in which citizen depictions were similar for all media modalities. The Iraq war was a popular citizen issue for all media modalities, and all media depicted citizens most frequently as individuals compared to any other group association.

The survey portion of this study found that overall media use had a weak impact on perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizen. However, while media use did not strongly influence individual perceptions of what it means to be a democratic citizen, the media did exhibit a potential to impact individual perceptions of citizenship as when associations between media use and citizen attitudes were found, they were generally supported by media content patterns. The overall weak impact of media use on perceptions of citizens is likely due to citizens not appearing frequently enough in media content, as well as the inherent complexity of the citizen concept.

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Appendix A

Notes

¹ The perspective that citizens should be involved in all aspects of political decision-making in a democracy is not universal. Dahl (1956; 1972) advocates a democratic system in which citizens vote to select one of several competing groups that will in turn govern society. In this system the political leaders from the group that is chosen by the citizenry to rule make the individual political decisions. In such a representative system of democracy, citizens simply select the leaders and then leave the business of governing to those leaders.

This investigation proposes a broader conception of citizen participation than the system proposed by Dahl. However, even if Dahl's representative system were favored, it still seems likely that broad interest and participation in politics by the democratic citizenry would lead to more participation in the elections held to choose the group that would eventually govern society. Broad citizen participation in the election would likely mean that the leaders selected to govern would be more compelled to pursue the interests of the entire citizenry than they would if only a small portion of the electorate participated in choosing the group that will govern society.

² While Verba and colleagues (1995) originally argued that church attendance was a type of citizen activity, Scheufele, Nisbet, & Brossard (2003) have since documented that "religious belief overall has detrimental effects on indicators of democratic citizenship" and that "the primary role that previous research has attributed to religion as a catalyst for America's re-engagement is oversold" (p. 318). This finding

by Scheufele and colleagues provides support for removing church attendance from the political participation index in this project.

Appendix B

Tables and Figures

Table 1

Total number of content analysis units for each media source

Units of analysis	
New York Times (front page)	546
New York Times (metro page)	465
Washington Post (front page)	602
Washington Post (metro page)	657
Los Angeles Times (front page)	511
Los Angeles Times (metro page)	533
Houston Chronicle (front page)	447
Houston Chronicle (metro page)	426
Newspaper Total	4,187
ABC World News	1,263
NBC Nightly News	1,304
CBS Evening News	1,468
Television News Total	4,035
The Daily Show	1,560
The Colbert Report	1,523
Late Night Comedy News Total	3,083
The O'Reilly Factor	1,732
Hannity & Colmes	1,706
Larry King Live	1,589
Cable Talk News Total	5,027
All Content Total	16,332

Note: The unit of analysis for newspaper, television news, and cable talk news content was the individual paragraph as it appeared in program transcripts. Late night comedy news programs were coded directly from video, and the individual paragraph of spoken dialogue served as the unit of analysis.

Table 2

Sociodemographic variables of sample survey versus 2004 ANES sample

	Current Sample	2004 ANES Sample
Gender		
Female	60.5	53.3
Male	39.5	46.7
Age		
18-25	5.0	12.4
26-35	9.9	16.9
36-45	19.2	17.9
46-55	23.0	19.5
56-65	19.8	17.9
66+	19.3	15.4
Did not answer	3.8	--
Education		
Grade school or less	0.2	3.2
Some high school	3.3	6.0
High school graduate or GED	22.5	29.3
Some college	25.8	21.8
Junior or community college	N/A	9.9
College graduate	32.2	18.4
Advanced degree	14.8	11.5
Did not answer	1.1	--
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	82.8	72.3
Black/African-American	6.0	14.9
Asian	0.9	2.3
Native American	1.3	1.0
Hispanic	3.3	6.7
Other	3.1	2.5
Did not answer	2.6	0.3
Political Party Affiliation		
Strong Democrat	17.7	16.7
Weak Democrat	15.7	14.8
Independent Democrat	6.2	17.3
Independent	18.8	9.7
Independent Republican	4.6	11.4
Weak Republican	18.1	12.7

Strong Republican	15.2	15.9
Did not answer/Other	3.8	1.4
Income		
Less than \$15,000	4.2	14.9
\$15,000-\$29,999	7.1	14.7
\$30,000-\$44,999	10.8	14.2
\$45,000-\$59,999	11.3	10.8
\$60,000-\$74,999	8.6	11.1
\$75,000-\$89,999	6.0	7.2
\$90,000-\$104,999	5.3	4.5
\$105,000-\$119,999	3.5	3.1
\$120,000-\$134,999	1.8	9.7 (see note)
\$135,000+	6.0	N/A (see note)
Did not answer	35.5	9.8

Note: All data are presented in percentages. Data from the first column is from the current sample. Data in the second column is from the 2004 ANES survey. Two differences between the surveys are evident in this table: the sample survey, unlike the ANES survey, did not provide an option for “junior or community college graduate” in response to the education question, and the ANES survey used “\$120,000+” as the final income category available to respondents, whereas the current survey provided the options of “\$120,000-\$134,999” and “\$135,000+.”

Table 3

Political participation correlation matrix

	Discussed Politics	Made Political Contribution	Belong to Social Organization	Attended Meeting about Social Issues	Participated in Political Protest	Attended Religious Service
Voted	.135**	.109*	.122**	.107*	.057	.182**
Discussed Politics		.176**	.136**	.186**	.152**	.117*
Made Political Contribution			.252**	.244**	.195**	.090
Belong to Social Organization				.248**	.123**	.075
Attended Meeting about Social Issues					.164**	.078
Participated in Political Protest						.027

Note: Each activity was measured by asking respondents to indicate how much they thought the activity was something an American citizen should do. Higher scores indicate more agreement that the activity is something a citizen should do.

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

Table 4

Sources of depiction for citizens in media content

	Source of Citizen Depiction			χ^2	Total
	Citizen	Official Source	Journalist		
TV News	28.9% (<i>n</i> = 361)	17.7% (<i>n</i> = 222)	53.4% (<i>n</i> = 668)	20.01**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 1251)
Cable News	26.9% (<i>n</i> = 288)	8.4% (<i>n</i> = 90)	64.7% (<i>n</i> = 694)	44.30**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 1072)
Late Night Comedy	28.2% (<i>n</i> = 104)	3.3% (<i>n</i> = 12)	68.6% (<i>n</i> = 253)	65.17**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 369)
Newspapers	19.1% (<i>n</i> = 258)	14.4% (<i>n</i> = 195)	66.5% (<i>n</i> = 898)	49.84**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 1351)
Total	25.0% (<i>n</i> = 1011)	12.8% (<i>n</i> = 519)	62.2% (<i>n</i> = 2513)	39.77**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 4043)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each source was associated with citizen depictions in each media form.

** $p < .01$

Table 5

Issues associated with citizen depictions in media content

	Issue						
	Economics	Foreign Affairs	Government Functioning	Labor	Environment	Public Order	Racial Issues
TV News	9.8% (n = 123)	22.0% (n = 275)	2.6% (n = 32)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.2% (n = 3)	8.6% (n = 108)	0.0% (n = 0)
Cable News	2.9% (n = 31)	29.8% (n = 319)	5.1% (n = 55)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	18.6% (n = 199)	4.1% (n = 44)
Late Night Comedy	8.4% (n = 31)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	5.7% (n = 21)	3.0% (n = 11)
Newspapers	5.3% (n = 71)	11.8% (n = 159)	7.3% (n = 98)	0.9% (n = 12)	1.6% (n = 22)	20.6% (n = 278)	1.2% (n = 16)

Table 5 Continued

Issues associated with citizen depictions in media content

	Issue							Total
	Social Welfare	Elections	Social Capital	Science	Iraq	Immigration	Entertainment	
TV News	13.7% (n = 172)	3.2% (n = 40)	16.3% (n = 204)	1.7% (n = 204)	18.4% (n = 230)	3.4% (n = 43)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 1,251)
Cable News	4.7% (n = 50)	5.2% (n = 56)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	21.3% (n = 228)	8.4% (n = 90)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 1,072)
Late Night Comedy	29.5% (n = 109)	16.0% (n = 59)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	37.4% (n = 138)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 369)
Newspapers	17.8% (n = 240)	7.8% (n = 105)	12.6% (n = 170)	1.2% (n = 16)	7.4% (n = 100)	4.7% (n = 64)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 1,351)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each issue was associated with citizen depictions for each media form. Chi-square was not computed because of the frequency of empty cells.

Table 6

Issues associated with non-citizen media content

	Issue						
	Economics	Foreign Affairs	Government Functioning	Labor	Environment	Public Order	Racial Issues
TV News	14.6% (n = 407)	22.7% (n = 631)	6.6% (n = 183)	0.0% (n = 0)	6.2% (n = 173)	7.9% (n = 221)	0.0% (n = 0)
Cable News	0.1% (n = 3)	27.9% (n = 1,103)	23.1% (n = 915)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	14.7% (n = 583)	3.0% (n = 119)
Late Night Comedy	0.4% (n = 11)	8.3% (n = 225)	15.4% (n = 417)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	3.0% (n = 81)	2.3% (n = 63)
Newspapers	9.0% (n = 256)	8.3% (n =236)	15.4% (n = 438)	0.5% (n = 13)	4.1% (n = 115)	17.0% (n = 483)	1.0% (n = 29)

Table 6 Continued

Issues associated with non-citizen media content

		Issue						
		Social Welfare	Elections	Social Capital	Science	Iraq	Immigration	Entertainment
		Total						
165	TV News	18.1% (n = 505)	5.3% (n = 147)	0.0% (n = 0)	3.3% (n = 92)	5.9% (n = 163)	1.0% (n = 28)	8.4% (n = 234)
	Cable News	4.0% (n = 160)	7.7% (n = 304)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	5.4% (n = 213)	4.3% (n = 172)	9.7% (n = 383)
	Late Night Comedy	12.2% (n = 332)	17.7% (n = 480)	0.0% (n = 0)	2.8% (n = 76)	20.0% (n = 543)	0.6% (n = 15)	17.4% (n = 471)
	Newspapers	21.1% (n = 599)	8.5% (n = 241)	2.4% (n = 67)	2.6% (n = 75)	4.4% (n = 124)	1.4% (n = 41)	4.2% (n = 119)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each issue was associated with media content that did not contain citizen depictions for each media form. Chi-square was not computed because of the frequency of empty cells.

Table 7

Groups associated with citizens in media content

	Group						χ^2	Total
	Political	Demographic	All	Interest Group	Individual	Military		
TV News	1.0% (n = 12)	16.7% (n = 209)	11.7% (n = 146)	11.4% (n = 142)	37.6% (n = 470)	21.7% (n = 272)	41.22**	100.0% (n = 1,251)
Cable News	9.9% (n = 106)	7.8% (n = 84)	14.6% (n = 157)	19.8% (n = 212)	42.4% (n = 454)	5.5% (n = 59)	39.05**	100.0% (n = 1,072)
Late Night Comedy	0.0% (n = 0)	3.0% (n = 11)	30.4% (n = 112)	5.7% (n = 21)	48.5% (n = 179)	12.5% (n = 46)	90.60**	100.0% (n = 369)
Newspapers	3.5% (n = 48)	25.9% (n = 350)	6.9% (n = 94)	14.1% (n = 191)	43.2% (n = 584)	6.4% (n = 86)	52.58**	100.0% (n = 1,353)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each group was associated with citizen depictions for each media form.

** $p < .01$

Table 8

Source of characterization for democratic and non-democratic citizens

	Source of Characterization			χ^2	Total
	Citizen	Official Source	Journalist		
Democratic Citizen	27.1% (n = 960)	12.5% (n = 444)	60.4% (n = 2,141)	36.58**	100.0% (n = 3,545)
Non-Democratic Citizen	10.2% (n = 51)	15.1% (n = 75)	74.7% (n = 372)	77.44**	100.0% (n = 498)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each source was associated with citizen depictions for both democratic and non-democratic citizens.

** $p < .01$

Table 9

Issues associated with democratic and non-democratic citizens

	Issue						
	Economics	Foreign Affairs	Government Functioning	Labor	Environment	Public Order	Racial Issues
Democratic Citizen	6.9% (n = 246)	13.9% (n = 492)	5.2% (n = 184)	0.3% (n = 12)	0.6% (n = 21)	16.6% (n = 590)	2.0% (n = 71)
Non-Democratic Citizen	2.0% (n = 10)	52.4% (n = 261)	0.2% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.8% (n = 4)	3.2% (n = 16)	0.0% (n = 0)

Table 9 Continued

Issues associated with democratic and non-democratic citizens

	Issue							Total
	Social Welfare	Elections	Social Capital	Science	Iraq	Immigration	Entertainment	
Democratic Citizen	16.0% (n = 567)	7.3% (n = 259)	10.6% (n = 374)	0.5% (n = 16)	15.5% (n = 549)	4.6% (n = 164)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 3,545)
Non-Democratic Citizen	0.8% (n = 4)	0.2% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	4.2% (n = 21)	29.5% (n = 147)	6.6% (n = 33)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 498)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each issue was associated with democratic and non-democratic citizen depictions. Chi-square was not computed because of the frequency of empty cells.

Table 10

Groups associated with democratic and non-democratic citizens

	Group						χ^2	Total
	Political	Demographic	All	Interest Group	Individual	Military		
Democratic Citizens	4.4% (<i>n</i> = 157)	16.2% (<i>n</i> = 575)	12.0% (<i>n</i> = 426)	11.6% (<i>n</i> = 411)	43.3% (<i>n</i> = 1,537)	12.4% (<i>n</i> = 441)	55.72**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 3,547)
Non-Democratic Citizens	1.8% (<i>n</i> = 9)	15.9% (<i>n</i> = 79)	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 83)	31.1% (<i>n</i> = 155)	30.1% (<i>n</i> = 150)	4.4% (<i>n</i> = 22)	45.84**	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 498)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each group was associated with citizen and non-democratic citizen depictions.

** $p < .01$

Table 11

Media use and support for citizen knowledge models

	Informed Citizen	Monitorial Citizen (1)	Monitorial Citizen (2)	Assenting Citizen
Demographic variables				
Gender (Female)	.05	-.04	-.14**	-.10†
Age	-.04	.06	.08	.06
Race (Caucasian)	-.03	-.10*	-.05	-.04
Education	-.01	.02	-.16**	.00
Party identification (Republican)	.05	-.03	-.10*	.10†
R^2	.00	.01	.06	.02
Political activity				
Political interest	.13*	-.17**	-.19**	-.12*
Political participation	.07	.01	-.07	-.09
Incremental R^2	.03	.03	.03	.01
Media use				
Television news use	.02	-.01	-.01	.02
Cable news use	.01	.04	.04	.10†
Late night comedy news use	.00	-.05	.00	-.06
Newspaper use	.01	.03	.02	.10†
Incremental R^2	.00	.00	.00	.01
Final R^2	.03	.04	.09	.04
Model F (11, 398)	1.15	1.60†	4.40**	2.71**

Note: Entries are final standardized coefficients from ordinary-least-squares regression.

Support for an informed model of citizenship was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should be knowledgeable about all issues. Monitorial citizen (1) was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should pay attention to all political issues and only learn about those that they think are very important. Monitorial citizen (2) was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens. Assenting citizen was measured by asking citizens to indicate

the extent to which they agree that citizens should elect government officials and then leave the political decision-making to the elected government leaders. Possible responses to all questions ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 12

Citizen activities in media content

	Citizen Activities					
	Stating Political Opinion	Voting	Participation in Political Campaign	Participation in Political Protest	Social Capital Activities	Legal Proceedings
TV News	15.5% (n = 194)	1.0% (n = 13)	1.3% (n = 16)	3.5% (n = 44)	17.3% (n = 217)	1.4% (n = 18)
Cable News	34.1% (n = 366)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.1% (n = 1)	5.7% (n = 61)	3.2% (n = 34)	14.0% (n = 150)
Late Night Comedy	56.6% (n = 209)	3.0% (n = 11)	8.4% (n = 31)	1.9% (n = 7)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Newspapers	16.9% (n = 228)	1.1% (n = 15)	5.4% (n = 73)	3.8% (n = 51)	17.6% (n = 238)	12.1% (n = 164)

Table 12 Continued

Citizen activities in media content

	Citizen Activities					Total
	Buying Goods and Services	Citizen as Object of Government	Military Participation	Participation in Terrorism	Citizen as Object of Journalist	
TV News	5.2% (n = 65)	29.7% (n = 372)	21.2% (n = 265)	3.8% (n = 47)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 1,251)
Cable News	0.0% (n = 0)	10.4% (n = 112)	3.4% (n = 36)	2.3% (n = 25)	26.8% (n = 287)	100.0% (n = 1,072)
Late Night Comedy	0.0% (n = 0)	15.4% (n = 57)	5.7% (n = 21)	5.7% (n = 21)	3.3% (n = 12)	100.0% (n = 369)
Newspapers	2.9% (n = 39)	31.5% (n = 426)	5.8% (n = 78)	2.9% (n = 39)	0.0% (n = 0)	100.0% (n = 1,351)

Note: Percentages indicate how often each citizen activity was depicted with citizen depictions for each media form. Chi-square was not computed because of the frequency of empty cells.

Table 13

Media use and support for citizen activities

	Vote	State Political Opinion	Participate in Political Protest	Buy Goods and Services
<hr/>				
Demographic variables				
Gender (Female)	.05	-.07	-.14**	.04
Age	-.12*	-.07	-.23**	-.12*
Race (Caucasian)	.10*	.06	.06	.08
Education	.07	-.05	-.01	.04
Party identification (Republican)	-.02	-.10*	-.16**	.06
R^2	.04	.02	.11	.02
Political activity				
Political interest	.03	.16**	.16**	.07
Political participation	.24**	.09	.16**	-.02
Incremental R^2	.06	.04	.05	.00
Media use				
Television news use	.03	.05	-.01	.05
Cable news use	.03	.01	.01	-.01
Late night comedy news use	-.04	-.04	-.01	-.01
Newspaper use	.06	-.03	-.09†	.01
Incremental R^2	.01	.00	.01	.01
Final R^2	.11	.06	.17	.03
Model F (11, 398)	4.26**	2.37**	7.47**	.98
<hr/>				

Table 13 Continued

Media use and support for citizen activities

	Participate in Community Organization	Participate in Hobby or Sports	Appear in Court	Participate in Political Campaign
<hr/>				
Demographic variables				
Gender (Female)	-.01	-.01	.05	.01
Age	-.13	-.13*	-.04	.00
Race (Caucasian)	.03	-.02	.08	.01
Education	.04	-.05	.03	.09†
Party identification (Republican)	-.02	.09	-.06	-.06
R^2	.02	.02	.02	.02
Political activity				
Political interest	-.03	-.08	.08	.05
Political participation	.27**	.06	.07	.10†
Incremental R^2	.06	.00	.01	.01
Media use				
Television news use	.07	.03	.01	.08
Cable news use	.06	.09	.01	.04
Late night comedy news use	-.01	.04	.04	-.04
Newspaper use	.06	.12*	-.04	-.01
Incremental R^2	.02	.03	.00	.01
Final R^2	.10	.05	.03	.04
Model F (11, 398)	4.01**	1.86*	1.23	1.60†

Note: Entries are final standardized coefficients from ordinary-least-squares regression.

Dependent measures indicated the extent to which respondents believe each activity is something that American citizens should do, with higher scores indicating support for the activity as a citizen action.

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 14

Tone of Citizen Activities in Newspaper Content

	Tone Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Social Capital Activities	6.20	.97	238
Voting	5.29	.91	15
Buying Goods or Services	4.98	.82	39
Participation in Military	4.96	1.22	78
Stating Political Opinion	4.82	1.12	228
Participation in Political Campaign	4.81	1.12	73
Participation in Legal Proceedings	3.52	1.75	164
Participation in Political Protest	3.44	3.44	51
Citizen as Object of Government	3.30	1.80	426
Participation in Terrorism	1.64	1.12	39
Total	4.30	1.85	1,351

Note: Mean scores indicate the tone of coverage for each activity in newspaper content.

Higher scores indicate media content with more positive tone.

Table 15

Media use and belief about citizen decision-making

	Liberal Decision- Making	Middle Ground	Communitarian Decision- Making
<hr/>			
Demographic variables			
Gender (Female)	-.05	-.10*	-.08
Age	-.09†	.01	.65
Race (Caucasian)	-.10*	.09†	-.01
Education	-.14**	.10†	.04
Party identification (Republican)	.25	.00	-.02
R^2	.06	.06	.01
Political activity			
Political interest	-.09†	.04	-.01
Political participation	-.10†	.17**	-.06
Incremental R^2	.02	.03	.01
Media use			
Television news use	.08	.08	.12*
Cable news use	.10†	-.13*	-.08
Late night comedy news use	-.01	.09	.04
Newspaper use	.10†	.03	.06
Incremental R^2	.03	.02	.02
Final R^2	.11	.11	.04
Model F (11, 398)	4.33**	4.38**	1.39

Note: Entries are final standardized coefficients from ordinary-least-squares regression.

Decision-making standards were measured by asking citizens how much they agreed with the following statements: “citizens should consider their own interests or their family’s own interest above everything else when making political decision” (liberal decision-making), “citizens should consider the good of their community or society above everything else when making political decisions” (communitarian decision-making), and “when making political decisions, citizens should sometimes sacrifice

their own interests for the good of the community or society” (middle ground). Higher scores indicate more agreement with statements.

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

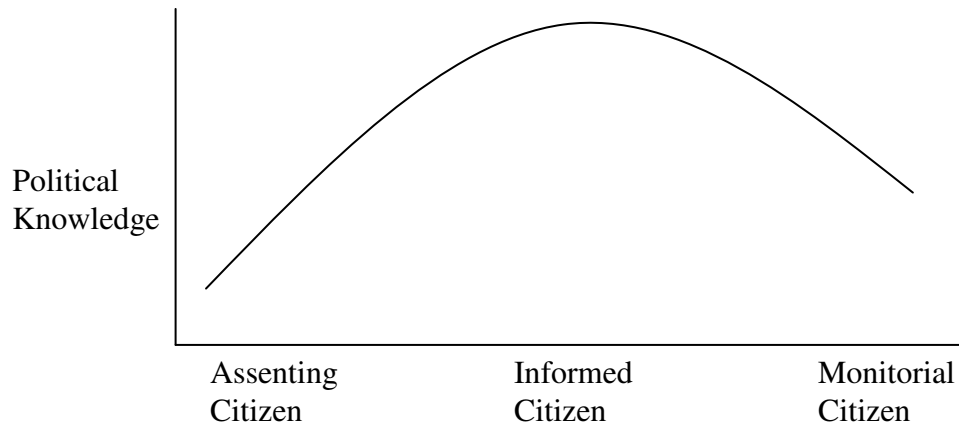


Figure 1. Political knowledge and citizen-typology. *Note:* Political knowledge represents level of knowledge needed for a citizen to function normatively as proscribed by each citizen model.

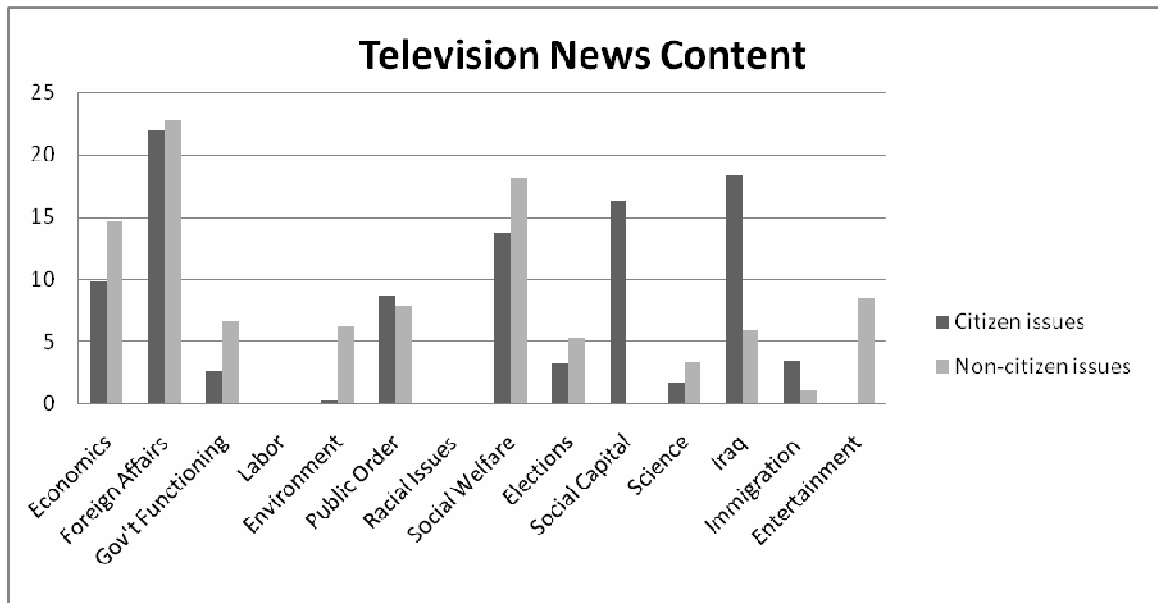


Figure 2. Citizen and non-citizen issues for television news content. *Note:* Citizen issues are presented as percentage of all citizen content. Non-citizen issues are presented as percentage of all non-citizen content.

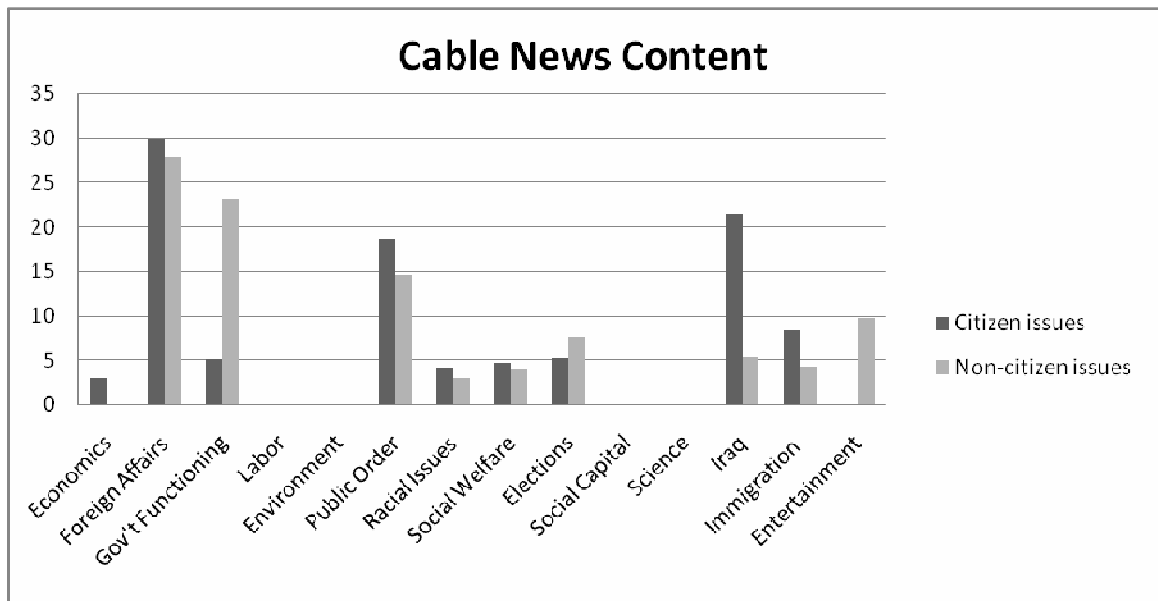


Figure 3. Citizen and non-citizen issues for cable news content. *Note:* Citizen issues are presented as percentage of all citizen content. Non-citizen issues are presented as percentage of all non-citizen content.

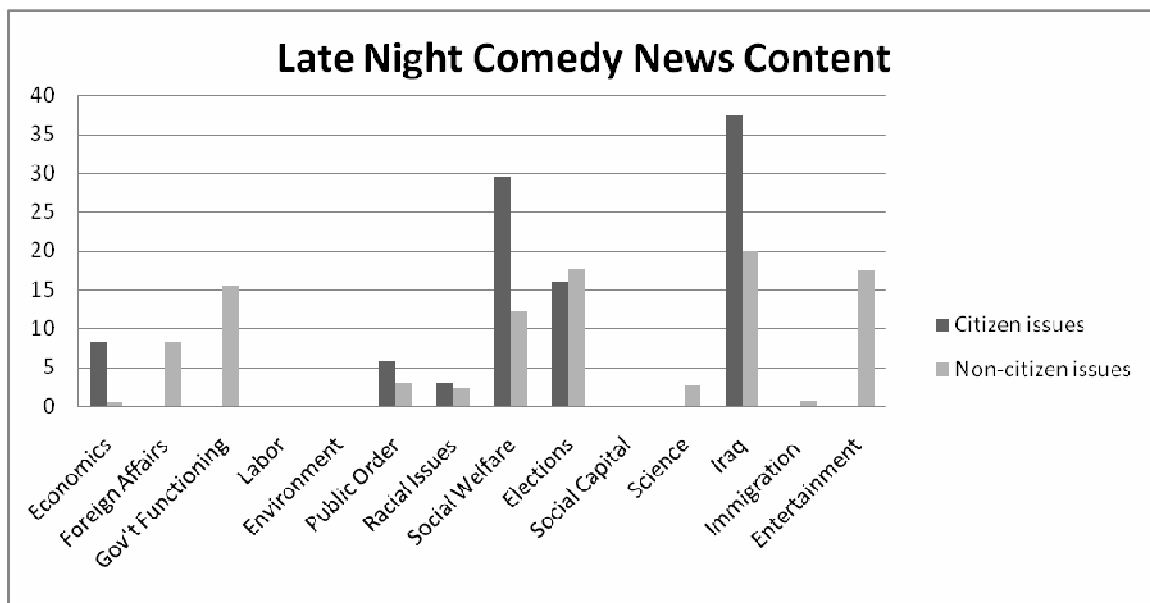


Figure 4. Citizen and non-citizen issues for late night comedy news content. *Note:*

Citizen issues are presented as percentage of all citizen content. Non-citizen issues are presented as percentage of all non-citizen content.

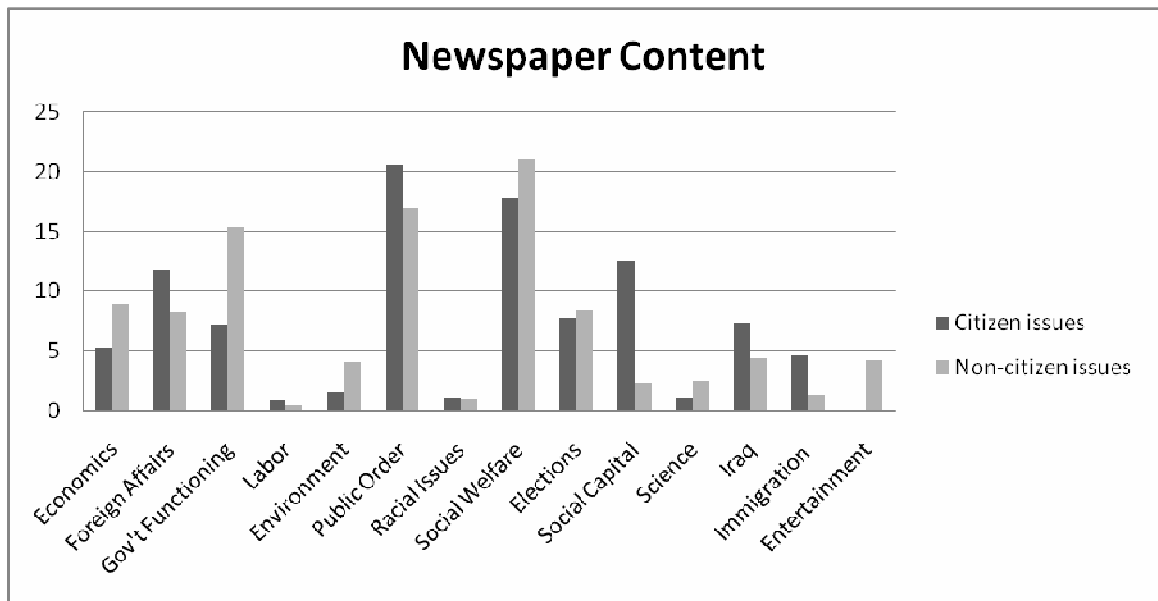


Figure 5. Citizen and non-citizen issues for newspaper content. *Note:* Citizen issues are presented as percentage of all citizen content. Non-citizen issues are presented as percentage of all non-citizen content.

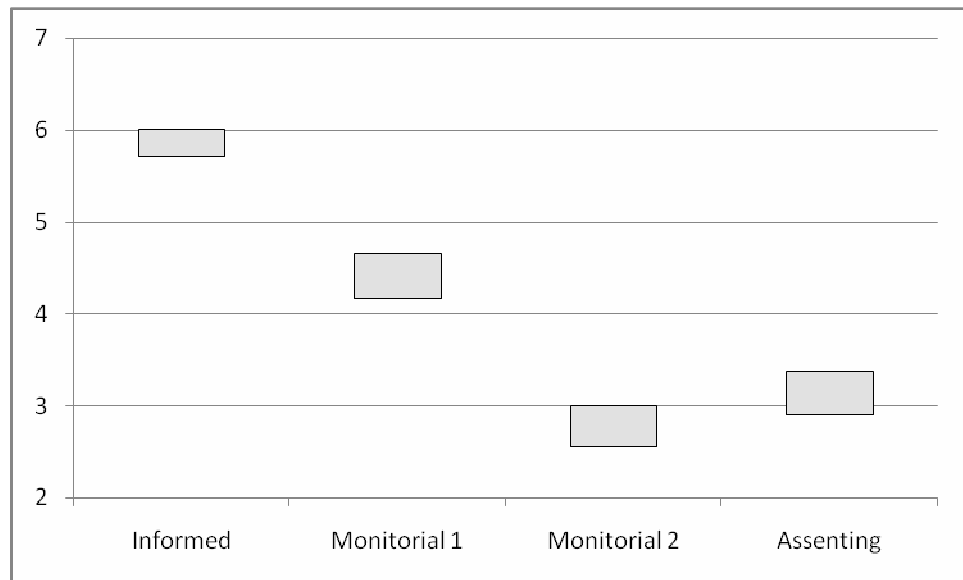


Figure 6. Confidence intervals for support of citizen knowledge standards. *Note:*

Confidence levels are 99% level. Support for an informed model of citizenship was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should be knowledgeable about all issues. Monitorial citizen (1) was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should pay attention to all political issues and only learn about those that they think are very important. Monitorial citizen (2) was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens. Assenting citizen was measured by asking citizens to indicate the extent to which they agree that citizens should elect government officials and then leave the political decision-making to the elected government leaders. Possible responses to all questions ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

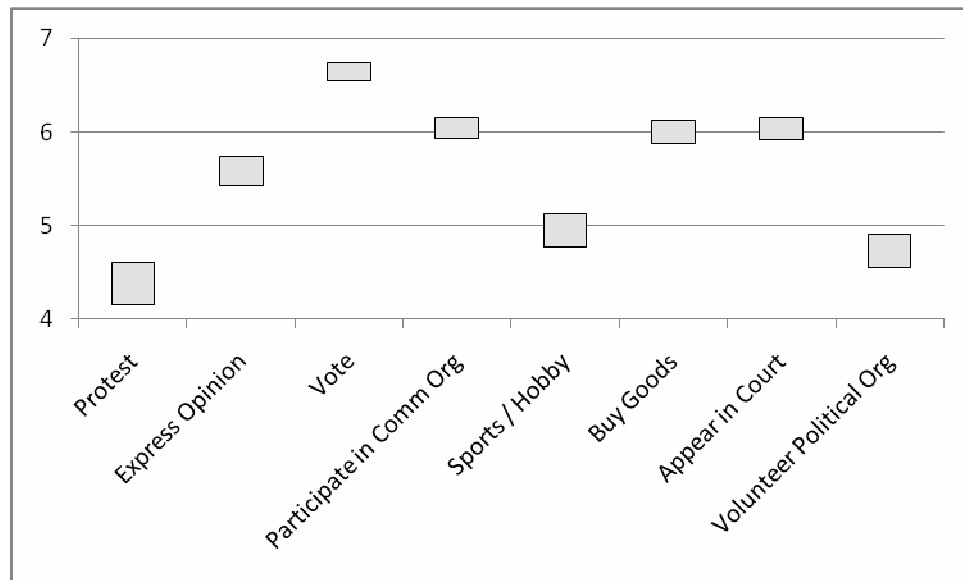


Figure 7. Confidence intervals for support of citizen activities. *Note:* Confidence levels are 99% level. Support for citizen activities is measured as the extent to which respondents believe each activity is something that American citizens should do, with higher scores indicating support for the activity as a citizen action.

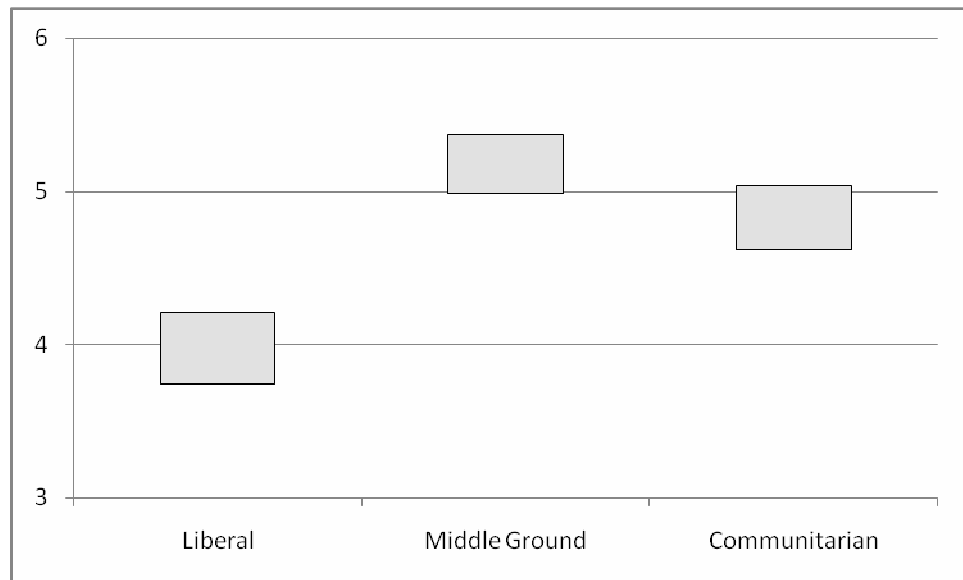


Figure 8. Confidence intervals for support of citizen decision-making standards. *Note:* Confidence levels are 99% level. Decision-making standards were measured by asking citizens how much they agreed with the following statements: “citizens should consider their own interests or their family’s own interest above everything else when making political decision” (liberal decision-making), “citizens should consider the good of their community or society above everything else when making political decisions” (communitarian decision-making), and “when making political decisions, citizens should sometimes sacrifice their own interests for the good of the community or society” (middle ground). Higher scores indicate more agreement with statements.

Appendix C

Dates Used for Constructed Week Sample

7-day week sample

Sunday, July 23
Monday, January 23
Tuesday, September 5
Wednesday, January 4
Thursday, December 14
Friday, November 17
Saturday, April 22

Sunday, October 8
Monday, February 6
Tuesday, December 26
Wednesday, October 25
Thursday, August 17
Friday, August 25
Saturday, May 13

5-day week sample

Monday, April 3
Tuesday, July 18
Wednesday, May 31
Thursday, July 13
Friday, September 15
Monday, November 6
Tuesday, February 21
Wednesday, July 12

Thursday, April 20
Friday, May 12
Monday, October 2
Tuesday, July 25
Wednesday, November 22
Thursday, November 23
Friday, July 7

4-day week sample

Monday, March 13
Tuesday, August 22
Wednesday, December 27
Thursday, July 27
Monday, October 30
Tuesday, December 26
Wednesday, November 15
Thursday, July 27

Monday, January 16
Tuesday, September 26
Wednesday, January 25
Thursday, April 13
Monday, August 28
Tuesday, February 21
Wednesday, December 20
Thursday, November 30

Appendix D

Content Analysis Codebook

Code Book: Citizen

Case: _____

Coder: 1 2

Date: _____

Source:

NY Times – Front	NY Times – Metro	Wash Post – Front	Wash Post – Metro	LA Times – Front
1	2	3	4	5
LA Times – Metro	Houston – Front	Houston – Metro	ABC	NBC
6	7	8	9	10
CBS	Stewart	Colbert	O'Reilly	Hannity
11	15	16	17	18
Larry King				
19				

Unit of Analysis Coding Protocol

Use the following steps to perform the variable coding for each unit of analysis:

1. *Read each unit of analysis*
2. *Determine if the unit of analysis contains a representation of a person, persons, group of people, or a corporation (this range of representations are from here known as human representations and the behavior or actions of these representations are known as human activity):*
 - a. *If a human appears, examine the human representation [first consider the details provided in step #3 below and then if continuance is justified after considering #3] determine if the human action fits into any of the citizen activities described in the Citizen Variable.*
 - i. *If the human action meets a Citizen Variable description, the person is a citizen. So, code the unit as is appropriate for the Citizen Variable and then proceed to all subsequent variables.*
 - ii. *If the unit contains a human representation that does not fit into one of the Citizen Variable's categories, code the unit as a "6"*

- for the Citizen Variable, continue to the next unit of analysis and begin this protocol again.*
- b. If a human does not appear, code the unit as a “6” for the Citizen Variable, code a value for the Issue variable and then continue to the next unit of analysis and begin this protocol again.*
 - 3. Instructions for determining if the human that appears in the unit of analysis is a citizen:*
 - i. Government officials, politicians, and military leaders (and their official representatives) are not citizens. Therefore, if the only human representation in the unit is a government official or politician, code the unit as a “6” for the Citizen Variable and continue to the next unit of analysis and begin this protocol again.*
 - 1. HOWEVER, if the government official or politician is speaking about a human, determine if the description of human in the politician or government leader rhetoric matches one of the citizen activities available in the Citizen Variable. If the rhetorical activity matches a citizen activity, code the Citizen Variable as appropriate (relevant to the citizen activity in the rhetoric).*
 - 2. If the rhetorical activity does not match a citizen activity, code the unit as a “6” for the Citizen Variable and continue to the next unit of analysis.*
 - ii. Children may be citizens. Representations of children in a unit of analysis should be examined for possible citizen activity. In this way children are no different from any other human in regards to possible citizen behavior*
 - iii. Human embryos are not citizens*
 - iv. Troops /soldiers are citizens*

Unit of Analysis Coding Rules

- The first instance of a citizen trumps all other instances of a citizen within a unit of analysis. If environmentalists are mentioned in a paragraph followed by lawyers, then PTA members...the analysis of the unit of analysis rests solely and completely on the first citizen (the environmentalists in this case).*

Citizen Variable: Does the unit of analysis portray citizen activities? Citizen activities are verbs, as they are active processes. *Code this variable for each unit first. If unit is coded as a “6,” code only for this variable plus the Issue variable, and then move to next unit of analysis. If variable has any other value than a “6” continue coding the unit for all subsequent variables.*

1 = opinion/statement of fact (i.e., public proclamations of opinion, poll data, citizens professing beliefs or opinions on issues relevant to the public sphere, discussing politics)

2 = voting

3 = participation in political campaign or organization (i.e., attending meetings, contacting government officials, joining a political party, donating money or time to a campaign, donating money or time to a political action or interest group)

4 = demonstration (i.e., civil disobedience, protests, or political strikes)

5 = social capital building (i.e., community activities, sports leagues, book clubs, philanthropy, adult education, church attendance, and well, anything that Putnam might refer to, not family relationships or interactions, not simply leaving the house, not simply living in a geographic location)

6 = legal proceedings (all legal proceedings, administrative law, regulations, regulators)

7 = buying/consuming goods or services

8 = no citizen activity and no citizens

9 = nonspecific citizen activity

10 = citizen as OBJECT of government action/policy/law/rhetoric

11 = participation in a military campaign (by troops or soldiers, does not include military forces)

12 = acts of terrorism, participation in a militia, guerilla action, violent rebellion (also includes planning for these actions)

14 = citizen as OBJECT of journalist's rhetoric (journalist ascribes beliefs or intentions to citizen or citizen-group, journalist blames citizen for events, journalist provides opinion about what citizen or citizen-group should do)

Issue: What is the main issue of the unit of analysis (full explanation of categories on last page of codebook)

1 = agricultural

2 = economics/business/consumer issues

3 = foreign affairs/national defense/terrorism

4 = government functioning and legal order

5 = labor issues

6 = environment/weather/natural resources

7 = public order

8 = race

9 = social welfare

10 = elections
 11 = community and social capital building
 12 = science and technology
 13 = other
 14 = Iraq
 15 = immigration
 16 = entertainment and sports

Issues other: _____ (Provide description of any interests that were coded in the previous variable as “13” meaning “other.”)

Tone of coverage: Is the tone of the citizen depiction:

Bad						Good
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Negative						Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unacceptable						Acceptable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Worthless						Valuable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unfavorable						Favorable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Foolish						Wise
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Characterizing: Who is characterizing the citizen?

1 = citizen (unit contains a direct citizen quote or a summation of citizen statement)
 2 = official source (unit contains a direct political/government leader, lawmaker, police officer quote or summation of statement)
 3 = journalist

Citizenship: What is the citizenship of the citizen? (if necessary, make democratic/non-democratic nation distinction using CIA world factbook). Presume American citizenship for this variable, except for international stories where citizen ambiguity may not automatically mean American citizenship.

- 1 = American
- 2 = citizen of democratic nation
- 3 = citizen of transitional democratic nation
- 4 = citizen of non-democratic nation

Group: The citizen belongs to which group?

- 1 = Political (Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Libertarian, Green Party, Liberals, Moderates, Conservatives, Communists, Anarchists, Fascists, etc.)
- 2 = Demographic (age, gender, race, class, profession, income, etc.)
- 3 = All (voters, public, citizens, Americans, etc.)
- 4 = Interest group (PTA, labor union, NRA, ACLU, Swift Boat Veterans, PAC, 527s, etc.)
- 5 = Individual (Joe Bob, Susie Smith, an person with no affiliation)
- 6 = Troops (soldiers)

Knowledge: Is the citizen shown to possess knowledge?

Not at all knowled geable	Unknowl edgeable	Somewh at unknowl edgeable	Neither knowled geable or unknowl edgeable	Somewh at knowled geable	Knowled geable	Very knowled geable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Agency: Is citizen acting or being acted upon?

Active = the citizen is acting, performing, starting, or precipitating the activity.

Acted upon = the citizen is not acting or performing the activity, but is being acted upon by another individual or system.

Entirely acted upon	Mostly acted upon	Somewh at acted upon	Neither an agent or acted upon	Somewh at an agent of action	Agent of action	Entirely an agent of action
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Concerns: How is the citizen framed with respect to concerns?

Entirely a personal issue	Personal issue	Somewh at a personal issue	Neither a personal or social issue	Somewh at a social issue	Social issue	Entirely a social issue
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Explanation of Issue Categories

01. AGRICULTURAL

02. ECONOMICS; BUSINESS; CONSUMER ISSUES

(includes employment, taxes, oil and gas, foreign investment, tariffs/protection of U.S. industries, international trade deficit/balance of payments, interstate commerce/transportation;
does not include unemployment [09], defense spending [03], foreign [03] or government spending on domestic social welfare [09])

03. FOREIGN AFFAIRS/NATIONAL DEFENSE.TERRORISM

(includes: terrorism, war, conflict, foreign aid, defense spending, the space program, NASA;
does not include: international trade deficit [02])

04. GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING AND LEGAL ORDER

(includes: campaign finance reform, electoral reform, term limits, waste management, general laws, lawsuits, criminal prosecution, property rights, intellectual rights;
not "the economy" [02])

05. LABOR ISSUES

(not unemployment [09])

06. ENVIRONMENT/WEATHER/NATURAL RESOURCES

(includes: climate change, pollution, environment, ozone depletion, animal rights, urban sprawl, suburbs, nuclear and alternative energy)

07. PUBLIC ORDER

(includes: violence, crime, drugs, civil liberties and non-racial civil rights, women's rights, abortion rights, gun control, prisons, censorship, flag burning, family/social/religious/moral 'decay,' prayer in schools, child abuse, pornography, gambling, euthanasia, church and state, lesbian and gay marriage, capital punishment, premarital sex, prostitution, secondhand smoke, etc.)

08. RACE

(note: this primarily includes affirmative action, civil rights issues, racial profiling, and racial equality;
monetary assistance to minorities is primarily found in code 9)

09. SOCIAL WELFARE

(includes: population, poverty, homelessness, sweatshops, transportation, social security, child care, literacy, education, schools, traffic, the elderly, health care, health, mental health, immunizations, AIDS, disease, birth defects, human rights, safety, housing, poverty, unemployment, the disabled, sustainable development, 'welfare' etc.)

10. ELECTIONS

(includes: political campaigns, voting)

11. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING

(includes: sports, philanthropy, public events, celebrations, neighborhood associations, Rotary/Lions clubs, bake sales, food drives, general social improvement campaigns, [e.g., “United Way campaign”])

12. SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY

(includes: cloning, genetic engineering, genetically engineered food, human genome project, stem cell research, nanotechnology, computers, pharmaceuticals, etc.)

13. Other problems

14. IRAQ

15. IMMIGRATION

16. ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS

Appendix E

Telephone Script

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm conducting a survey sponsored by Brian Houston and Michael Pfau with the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma.

We are conducting a survey to find out what people think it means to be a democratic citizen. Your number was randomly selected for inclusion in our survey. I am instructed to interview an adult member of your household who is over 18-years-old. Your assistance in this survey is important and greatly appreciated. Are you and adult or is there someone else in your house I can speak to?

[If yes, then:]

Thank you. And just to confirm that I am speaking to an adult, are you 18 years of age or older?

[If no, then:]

We thank you for volunteering to participate. We are obligated to speak to someone who is at least 18-years-old or older. Is there someone else in your house who fits that description?

[If yes, then:]

We are required to tell you that participation is voluntary, that your individual responses are entirely anonymous, you are free to refuse to answer any question or withdraw at any time, and there are no foreseeable risks or benefits to your participation.

This survey will take approximately ten minutes.

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

[If yes, then:]

I appreciate your assistance in taking a few minutes to answer some questions. At the completion of the interview I will give you telephone numbers in case you have questions concerning the study or questions concerning your rights as a participant in the study.

Concluding remarks:

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. Would you like to have numbers to call regarding the conduct or content of this survey?

[If yes, then:]

If you have any question about the content of the survey, please contact OU Poll at 405.326.7655. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the University of Oklahoma Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405.325.8110.

Appendix F

Telephone survey

Citizen Survey Instrument

Knowledge

ROTATE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION FOR EACH SURVEY

Indicate the amount to which you agree with each statement.

1. Citizens should be knowledgeable about ALL political issues.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Citizens should pay attention to all political issues and only learn more about those that they think are very important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Citizens should live their own lives and only learn more about a political issue if something really important happens.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Citizens should elect government officials and then leave the political decision-making to the elected government leaders.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Actions

I'm going to list different types of activities that American citizens might take part in. Please indicate the amount to which you think that each activity represents something that American citizens should do.

5. Participate in a political demonstration or protest.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Publicly express political opinions

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Vote in elections

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Participate in community organizations

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Join a sports league or hobby club

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Buy goods or services

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Appear in court

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. Volunteer to work for a political campaign or a political organization

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Standards

ROTATE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION FOR EACH SURVEY

Indicate the amount to which you agree with each statement.

13. Citizens should consider their own interests or their families own interests above everything else when making political decisions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. Citizens should consider the good of their community or society above everything else when making political decisions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. When making political decisions, citizens should sometimes sacrifice their own interests for the good of the community or society

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Media use

Please indicate how often you use the following media:

16. National network television news programs (e.g., ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN)

Rarely use						Frequently use
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. Newspapers

Rarely use						Frequently use
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. Late night comedy talk shows (e.g., David Letterman, Jay Leno, Conan O'Brien)

Rarely use						Frequently use
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19. Late night comedy news shows (e.g., Daily Show with Jon Stewart, Colbert Report)

Rarely use						Frequently use
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20. Cable television news shows (e.g., The Bill O'Reilly Factor, Hannity & Colmes, Larry King)

Rarely use						Frequently use
---------------	--	--	--	--	--	----------------

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please indicate how much attention you pay to the following media:

21. National network television news programs (e.g., ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN)

Little attention							Close attention
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

22. Newspapers

Little attention							Close attention
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

23. Late night comedy talk shows (e.g., David Letterman, Jay Leno, Conan O'Brien)

Little attention							Close attention
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

24. Late night comedy news shows (e.g., Daily Show with Jon Stewart, Colbert Report)

Little attention							Close attention
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

25. Cable television news shows (e.g., The Bill O'Reilly Factor, Hannity & Colmes, Larry King)

Little attention							Close attention
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Political activity/interest

Please answer each question.

26. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How often would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?

Not at all	Hardly at all	Only now and then	Some of the time	A lot of the time	Most of the time	A great deal
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

27. In talking to people, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote in the last election because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. For the most recent election in November 2006, which of the following statements best describes you?

1. I did not vote (in the election in November)
2. I thought about voting this time - but didn't
3. I usually vote, but didn't this time
4. I am sure I voted

I did not vote	I thought about voting this time - but didn't	I usually vote, but didn't this time	I am sure I voted
1	2	3	4

28. Do you ever discuss politics with your family or friends?

(IF YES)

How often do you discuss politics with your family or friends -- every day, 3 or 4 times a week, once or twice a week, or less often than that?

Never/no	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	3 – 4 times per week	Every day
1	2	3	4	5

29. As you know, people are often asked to make a contribution to support political campaigns or social causes. During the past year did you give any money to an individual candidate, to a political party, or a social organization?

(IF YES)

During the past year, how many times have you made a contribution to a political campaign or social cause?

Never/no	Once	2-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times
1	2	3	4	5

30. Here is a list of some organizations people can belong to: There are labor unions, associations of people who do the same kinds of work, fraternal groups such as Lions or Kiwanis, hobby clubs or sports teams, groups working on political issues, community groups, and school groups. Of course there are lots of other types of organizations, too. Not counting membership in a local church or synagogue, are you a member of any of these kinds of organizations?

(IF YES)

How often do you attend events or meetings with these organizations?

Never/no	Less than once per month	Once per month	Twice per month	Once or twice a week
1	2	3	4	5

31. During the past twelve months, did you attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?

(IF YES)

How often do you attend meetings about community or school issues?

Never/no	Less than once per month	Once per month	Twice per month	Once or twice a week
1	2	3	4	5

32. Lots of things come up that keep people from attending religious services even if they want to. Thinking about your life these days, do you ever attend religious services, apart from occasional weddings, baptisms or funerals?

(IF YES)

How often do you attend religious services?

Never/no	Less than once per month	Once per month	Twice per month	Once or twice a week
1	2	3	4	5

33. During the past twelve months, did you attend a public political protest or demonstration?

(IF YES)

During the past year, how many times did you attend a public political protest or demonstration?

Never/no	Once	2-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times
1	2	3	4	5

34. What do you think has been the most important issue facing the United States over the last four years? _____

Sociodemographics

35. Sex: Determine without asking

Male	Female
1	2

33. What age were you on your last birthday? _____

34. What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you?

White	Black	Asian	Native American	Hispanic	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6

35. What is the highest degree that you have earned?

Grade school or less (0-8 grades)	Some high school	High school graduate	Some college (13 grades or more but no degree)	College graduate (BA, BS)	Advanced degree (Master's, MD, JD, PhD)
1	2	3	4	5	6

36. I am going to read you a list of income categories. Please tell me which category best describes the total income of all members of your family living in your house in 2005 before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income. Please stop me when I get to your family's income.

1. less than \$15,000
2. \$15,000 to \$29,999
3. \$30,000 to \$44,999
4. \$45,000 to \$59,999
5. \$60,000 to \$74,999
6. \$75,000 to \$89,999
7. \$90,000 to \$104,999
8. \$105,000 to \$119,999
9. \$120,000 to \$134,999
10. \$135,000 or more

37. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

(IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT)

Would you call yourself a strong (REP/DEM) or a not very strong (REP/DEM)?

(IF INDEPENDENT, OTHER, OR NO PREFERENCE)

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

1. Strong Democrat
2. Weak Democrat
3. Independent - Democrat
4. Independent - Independent
5. Independent - Republican
6. Weak Republican
7. Strong Republican
9. Don't know, apolitical, Other