FEAR, AUTHORITY, AND JUSTICE: CRIME-RELATED TV VIEWING AND ENDORSEMENTS OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND GUN OWNERSHIP

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We focus on the relationships among three types of television viewing (news, police reality, and crime drama) and attitudes toward capital punishment and handguns, as well as the likelihood of actually owning a handgun. A host of exogenous variables are treated as predictors of television use, support for police authority, fear of crime, and our criterion variables. A series of direct and indirect relationships are assessed. Analysis suggests that viewing police reality shows is both directly and indirectly related to the endorsement of capital punishment and handgun ownership, while also directly predicting a greater likelihood of actual handgun ownership. In addition, TV news viewing predicts fear of crime in audience members, and this fear contributes to the endorsement of capital punishment and handgun ownership. Crime drama viewing is positively related to support for the death penalty.

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Television news, police reality shows, and crime dramas devote a significant portion of their content to criminal activity and law enforcement. Each of these types of television programming has received attention in the fields of mass communication, criminal justice, and psychology. Crime news has been studied at length both in terms of content- and effects-based research.[1] The same can be said of police reality programming.[2] In contrast, the effects of television crime dramas have received relatively little attention to date,[3] but several content analyses exist.[4]

Most of these studies focus on a single type of crime-related message, either public affairs or entertainment in nature. Few incorporate simultaneous or comparative analyses of multiple types of television programming involving crime and law enforcement.[5] In addition, the dominant criterion variables pertain to attitudes toward police or fear of crime, the latter mirroring early work testing Cultivation's Mean World

hypothesis.[6] This study conducts a simultaneous assessment of relationships among all three types of television programming (news, police reality, and crime drama) and three criterion variables (support for capital punishment and gun ownership, and likelihood of gun ownership) theorized as related to various forms of television use, support for police authority, and fear of crime.

Ordinary least squares regression path analysis was performed on 1999 and 2000 DDB Needham Life Style studies, large national sample data recently made available for academic use.[7] The use of multiple data sets allows for the direct assessment of the replicability of findings.[8] Adhering to the basic tenets of the O-S-O-R model of media influence, we assess multiple pre-media use orientations along with patterns of media use, while also identifying the specific relationships that exist among media, potential intervening variables, and a given set of criterion variables.[9] This approach has provided an understanding of the use of TV news and entertainment content in a variety of contexts, ranging from support for women's rights to pro-environmental behaviors.[10]

Literature Reivew

The three types of television use included in this study have been analyzed in relative isolation. Both qualitative and quantitative empirical methods, grounded in various epistemological traditions, have been employed to study the content and effects of these types of programming.

TV Viewing, Support for Police Authority, and Fear of Crime.
Television News. Several studies have found that news media use tends to lead individuals to think more negatively about those in law enforcement,[11] and this pattern matches findings from several content analyses that reveal that public affairs reporting consistently yields negative portrayals of police activities.[12] However, a recent survey conducted by Eschholz et al. finds that the use of news leads to more positive perceptions of police officers.[13] Despite the contrary finding by Eschholz et al., the preponderance of empirical evidence supports the following hypothesis:

> H1: TV news viewing is negatively related to support for police authority.

There is considerable evidence that news media coverage of crime generates greater fear of crime,[14] and content studies point to the over-reporting of crime by news organizations.[15] This distorted focus has been found to lead to the generation of fear among the viewing public.[16] As a result, we offer the following hypothesis:

> H2: TV news viewing is positively related to fear of crime.

Police Reality Shows. Police reality programs differ greatly from public affairs media accounts of law enforcement, with this type of show presenting a very positive image of police officers.[17] Participating police departments have full editorial control over the content being aired,[18]

and all of these programs are framed from a law enforcement perspective. Kooistra, Mahoney, and Westervelt find that violent crimes are over-represented by this program type,[19] and police are revealed to be much more effective in solving crimes on reality-based programs than in real life.[20] In short, police reality shows "exaggerate both violent crime and the extent to which police solve crimes."[21] Thus, we posit the following hypotheses:

> H3: Police reality viewing is positively related to support for police authority.

> H4: Police reality viewing is positively related to fear of crime.

Network Crime Dramas. The study of crime dramas has been sporadic and represents a set of inquiries that cannot be formed into a coherent whole. Content analyses find that this genre often reveals the moral struggles of those in law enforcement, portraying both ethical lapses and questionable tactics.[22] These negative media depictions of law enforcement may lead audience members to question how police officers conduct their professional duties, and may also raise further concerns about their ability to combat crime.

Grant finds that these types of programs call into question basic rules of law in a community, which could be related to greater fear in viewers.[23] However, Reith finds little empirical evidence linking the use of this type of programming to fear of crime.[24] Potter does find support for his hypothesis that those viewers who consider crime dramas to be more realistic portrayals are more likely to have a fear of crime after viewing this type of programming.[25] Similarly, O'Keefe finds that the perceived credibility of crime dramas has a larger influence than the actual viewing of this content.[26] More recently, Busselle's work on exemplar accessibility points to stronger perceptions of TV realism strengthening individuals' ability to retrieve common examples used in this medium to tell a story.[27] Busselle and Shrum have extended this work to analyze several crime- or law enforcement-related exemplars (e.g., drug bust, murder, courtroom trial), and conclude that media use leads to easier retrieval of exemplars that are common in media storytelling.[28]

Although several studies focusing on media variables associated with actual television use (e.g., perceived reality, exemplar accessibility) have achieved robust results, empirical evidence linking actual use of TV crime dramas with fear of crime remains mixed. Based on the extant literature, we posit the following hypothesis and research question regarding crime drama viewing:

> H5: Crime drama viewing is negatively related to support for police authority.

> RQ1: How is crime drama viewing related to fear of crime?

TV Viewing, Capital Punishment, and Gun Ownership.

Capital Punishment. The issue of capital punishment is commonly presented by American television news organizations,[29] and Fan, Keltner, and Wyatt find empirical support for a relationship between the type of news coverage (positive versus negative) of this issue and public support for the practice.[30] However, Niven makes a spiral of silence argument that most news accounts of the death penalty assume societal support for the practice and that this type of coverage forces opponents of capital punishment to feel they are in the minority.[31] Niven finds support for this spiral of silence claim, and Lipshultz and Hilt also discuss spiral of silence implications in this context after analyzing local news coverage of state executions.[32]

There is no systematic research devoted to a potential relationship between various forms of entertainment television use and attitudes toward capital punishment, despite this issue being raised repeatedly during initial arrests, police interrogations, internal legal deliberations, and formal court proceedings on programs such as *Law & Order* and *NYPD Blue*. In addition, it is important to assess whether the constant presentation of crime on police reality shows influences people's perceptions of this severe form of punishment. In short, there is mixed evidence concerning the role of TV news in this context and no systematic analysis of various forms of entertainment TV viewing as it relates to attitudes toward capital punishment. Thus, we offer the following research question:

> RQ2: How are TV news, police reality, and crime drama viewing related to attitudes toward capital punishment?

Gun Ownership. There has been some work devoted to the influence of various crime-related forms of television programming on attitudes toward gun ownership or actual gun ownership. Price, Merrill, and Clause have conducted a detailed content analysis of the presentation of guns on prime-time television, finding that the characters who most often used guns were middle-aged, white, and male.[33] They also find that there are few negative consequences associated with those who use a gun on TV, concluding that, "Since defense was one of the most commonly displayed ways of using a gun, it may give a message to viewers that guns are an important part in protecting oneself and family."[34] Various critical assessments of television news depictions of handguns, however, argue that gun owners are marginalized as a result of skewed television depictions,[35] and that coverage of gun ownership is distorted by news media in favor of greater restrictions.[36]

Although Atkin, Jeffres, and Neuendorf find that heavy media exposure can lead to support for restrictions on gun ownership,[37] Nabi and Sullivan conclude that greater television viewing leads to an increased likelihood of seeking out various forms of personal protection.[38] Likewise, Reith uses 1976 ANES data to show a positive relationship between the viewing of crime dramas and handgun ownership for protection.[39] The content- and effects-based evidence collected to date on

the relationship between crime-related television viewing and individuals' proclivities for guns remains mixed. Thus, we offer a single research question:

> RQ3: How are TV news, police reality, and crime drama viewing related to attitudes toward and likelihood of gun ownership?

Police Authority, Fear of Crime, Capital Punishment, and Gun Ownership. There has been no formal research devoted to the relationship between support for police authority and gun ownership. However, it can be argued that just as individuals feel police should be given greater leeway in fighting crime, so too should citizens be granted the right to protect themselves, their families, and their belongings through the ownership of handguns. Thus, more support for police authority should be positively associated with the endorsement of gun ownership. Likewise, greater support of more pro-active law enforcement practices should coincide with more positive attitudes toward more severe measures of punishment (i.e., death penalty) theorized to act as a deterrent. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

> H6: Support for police authority is positively related to attitudes toward capital punishment.

> H7: Support for police authority is positively related to attitudes toward and likelihood of gun ownership.

Greater fear of crime should generate greater support for capital punishment. Rankin's analysis of NORC survey data finds that as crime becomes more of a public concern so too is there a corresponding increase in support for the death penalty.[40] There is also little question that as fear of crime increases so too will the desire for self-protection and presumably greater endorsement of gun ownership. As McDowall and Loftin conclude, "Increased salience of crime [will] increase individual insecurity and provide an incentive to purchase a gun."[41] Thus, we posit the following hypotheses:

> H8: Fear of crime is positively related to attitudes toward capital punishment.

> H9: Fear of crime is positively related to attitudes toward and likelihood of gun ownership.

The combination of hypotheses and research questions discussed above speaks to a set of potential indirect relationships between crime-related television viewing and our criterion variables. These forms of television viewing have the potential to work through two mediators, support for police authority and fear of crime. It is important that these potential indirect effects be analyzed to gain a better understanding of the true role of each form of television viewing as they relate to individu-

als' socio-political concerns about capital punishment and guns.[42] Thus, we offer the following:

> RQ4: What are the indirect relationships among TV news, police reality, crime drama viewing, and our criterion variables through support for police action or fear of crime?

Method

The data used in this study were collected as part of an annual mail survey, conducted by Market Facts and funded by DDB-Chicago, an international marketing communications company. In an effort to achieve a balanced final sample, a starting sample of approximately 5,000 mail panelists is adjusted within the subcategories of race, gender, and marital status to compensate for expected differences in return rates (1999, N=3,388, response rate = 67.8%; 2000, N = 3,122, response rate = 62.4%). Weights are then applied to each respondent to match the demographic make-up of the population.[43] This process allows the sample to approximate actual distributions within the Census for income, population density, age, and household size.[44] We extracted identical items from the 1999 and 2000 DDB Life Style data sets, allowing for greater adherence to the true nature of replication.[45]

Measures.

Exogenous Variables. A total of nine variables serve as exogenous predictors in the model. Each exogenous variable is important for establishing patterns of television viewing, and predicting attitudes toward law enforcement, fear of crime, and/or our three criterion variables concerning the death penalty and guns.

The standard set of four demographic variables were included in the study: Sex (female coded high), age, income, and education. Age is measured in years, and income on a 15-point scale (ranging from under $10,000 to $100,000 or more). Education is measured on a 6-point scale (ranging from less than high school to post-graduate school). We also included the additional dummy-coded variable of race (Caucasian coded high/other) given the well documented differentials between whites and minorities on issues concerning fear, authority, and justice.[46]

In addition, the contextual variable of population density was also included given the differentiation in crime rates in urban versus rural settings.[47] Population density was measured on a 4-point scale (ranging from less than 50,000 to 2 million or more). Individual-level political ideology can influence an individual's attitudes toward guns and the death penalty.[48] Ideology was measured on a 5-point scale (very conservative to very liberal). Religion has also been shown to influence individual-level concerns regarding guns and capital punishment, with an especially strong effect on the latter.[49] Religion is a single-item measure where respondents placed themselves on a 6-point scale (definitely disagree to definitely agree) in response to the following statement: "Religion is an important part of my life." Finally, we include a measure of individual-level hunting activity to account for the sportsman factor that plays a unique role, relative to protection from crime, in determining a proclivity for guns.[50] Hunting activity is a single, 7-point

measure gauging how much an individual went hunting during the past year, with possible responses ranging from none to 52+ times.

Television Viewing. Three two-item indices of television viewing were created from a total of six dichotomous items measuring the use of specific programs. Exploratory factor analyses (Principle Axis, OBLIMIN) conducted independently for each survey revealed three consistently articulated factors: reality-based cop show viewing (*Cops, America's Most Wanted*: 1999, $r = .481$, $p < .001$; 2000, $r = .472$, $p < .001$); crime drama viewing (*NYPD Blue, Law & Order*: 1999, $r = .371$, $p < .001$; 2000, $r = .380$, $p < .001$); television news viewing (national and local: 1999, $r = .395$, $p < .001$; 2000, $r = .412$, $p < .001$).[51]

Support for Police Authority and Fear of Crime. Support for police authority is a single-item measure gauging responses on a 6-point scale (ranging from definitely disagree to definitely agree), to the following statement: "Police should use whatever force is necessary to maintain law and order." Likewise, fear of crime is a single-item measure using the same scale in response to the following statement: "I worry a lot about myself or a family member becoming a victim of a crime."[52]

Dependent Variables. Attitude toward capital punishment is a single-item measure with responses to the following statement: "I am in favor of the death penalty." Possible responses ranged on a 6-point scale from definitely disagree to definitely agree. Attitude toward gun ownership is a single-item measure that uses the same scale. The statement used to assess this specific attitude reads as follows: "There should be a gun in every home." Finally, likelihood of actual gun ownership is measured from a combination of two questions asked of each respondent in the 1999 and 2000 studies. First, "Do you own a handgun?" Second, "Do you plan to purchase a handgun in the foreseeable future?" The first item was dummy coded (2 = own handgun, 0 = don't own handgun), and the same is true of the second item (1 = plan to buy handgun, 0 = don't plan to buy handgun). The two items were added together to form a single 4-point scale (ranging from own and plan to buy to don't own, don't plan to buy).

Analyses. Our analyses consist of three components. First, OLS regression path analysis is used to test an identical model for each year, 1999 and 2000. The nine exogenous variables were entered in a first block. The three forms of television viewing first serve as dependent variables. Following this, they are entered simultaneously in a second block, with support for police authority and fear of crime as respective dependent variables. Finally, attitude toward the death penalty, attitude toward gun ownership, and the likelihood of gun ownership are treated as dependent variables in distinct regression equations.

Second, we directly compare all 1999 and 2000 regression path coefficients for those relationships pertaining to the hypotheses and research questions. Replication allows for more definitive statements to be made about the particular area of study.[53]

Finally, we provide a broader discussion of the nature of potential indirect relationships that emanate from the various forms of TV viewing, travel through either police-attitudes or fear of crime, and have some connection with the three criterion variables in the models. A

formal empirical assessment of mediation is performed using the MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Hoffman distribution of products test,[54] which has been shown in a recent monte carlo simulation to outperform other product of coefficient tests in terms of both statistical power and Type I error rates.[55] This same test for mediation has been endorsed for the assessment of indirect relationships in the study of mass communication.[56]

The MacKinnon et al. distribution of products test involves the conversion of each parameter estimate that makes up a potential mediating relationship into a z-score by dividing the unstandardized path estimate by its respective standard error and then obtaining the product of the two z-scores that make up the specific indirect effect. We then reference a table of products of two random normally distributed variables to ascertain statistical significance.[57]

Results

Patterns of Television Viewing. It is important to gain an understanding of which individuals gravitate to the three types of television programs included in this study. Creating a typology for each form of television viewing will allow us to better place any potential media use relationships with our criterion variables in their proper context.

TV News Viewing. There are three consistently significant predictors of television news viewing: age, race, and religion (see Table 1). Age is by far the strongest predictor, with those in the eldest segments of society turning to this type of mediated public affairs experience. Caucasians are less likely to watch television news than the rest of the population, while those who are more religious tend to gravitate toward this source for public affairs information.

Police Reality Viewing. All of the demographic variables employed in this study are significant predictors of police reality viewing (see Table 1). Those who are older watch this type of programming less, and the same can be said of females. Individuals with higher levels of education and income do not tend to consume these programs, and this is true of Caucasians as well. Education is the strongest predictor of this type of television viewing. Frequency of hunting activity is also a predictor of this type of viewing.

Crime Drama Viewing. This study provides far less understanding of those who consume popular prime-time network crime dramas (see Table 1). The only consistent statistically significant predictors are age, which is positively related, and race, with Caucasians viewing this type of programming less.

Support for Police Authority and Fear of Crime. The first five hypotheses and our first research question concern the relationships among the various forms of television viewing, support for police authority, and fear of crime. Table 2 provides a complete listing of the predictive value of each independent variable for these dependent measures, but the text will remain focused on crime-related television viewing.

Support for Police. The relationship between TV news viewing and support for police fluctuates around zero. Police reality viewing is the

TABLE 1
Predictors of TV News, Police Realitiy, and Crime Drama Viewing

	TV News		Police Reality		Crime Drama	
	99	00	99	00	99	00
Exogenous Variables						
Age	.38***	.40***	-.10***	-.07***	.07***	.10***
Sex (F)	.01	-.01	-.04*	-.05**	.02	.02
Income	.00	-.01	-.11***	-.08***	.03	-.00
Education	.00	.02	-.19***	-.17***	-.02	.02
Race (C)	-.05**	-.05**	-.10***	-.12***	-.06**	-.06**
Population Density	-.05**	-.03	.02	-.01	.08***	.04
Ideology (L)	.01	.01	-.01	.00	.02	.06**
Religion	.07***	.04*	-.01	.01	-.01	-.01
Hunting	.00	.02	.04*	.05**	.01	-.01

Notes:
Coefficients are final standardized Beta's (β).
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.
TV News: 1999, R^2 (%) = 14.9***, N = 3,154; 2000, R^2 (%) = 15.9***, N = 2,872; Police Reality: 1999, R^2 (%) = 8.9***, N = 3,154; 2000, R^2 (%) = 7.4***, N = 2,872; Crime Drama: 1999, R^2 (%) = 1.6***, N = 3,154; 2000, R^2 (%) = 1.9***, N = 2,872.

only consistent TV use predictor of support for police authority (1999, β = .06, $p < .01$; 2000, β = .09, $p < .001$) (see Table 2).[58] As hypothesized, crime drama viewing is a weak negative predictor for 2000 (β = -.06, $p < .01$), but fails to achieve this status for 1999. Thus, we fail to reject the null for H1, find evidence to support H3, and have partial support for H5.

Fear of Crime. Two forms of television viewing, TV news and police reality, are consistently and positively related to greater levels of fear of crime (see Table 2). Police reality viewing is the strongest predictor among the media use items (1999, β = .12, $p < .001$; 2000, β = .09, $p < .001$), while the predictive value of TV news viewing is roughly half that of its reality-entertainment peer (1999, β = .04, $p < .05$; 2000, β = .06, $p < .01$). Crime drama viewing fails to have a significant association with this measure. Thus, we find support for H2 and H4, while RQ1 produced few findings worth reporting.

Capital Punishment, Handgun Attitudes, and Handgun Ownership. RQ2 and RQ3 and H6 through H9 concern the potential relationships among the three forms of television viewing and all subsequent variables in the models. Table 3 provides a complete listing of final beta weights for each variable in the regression equations, but the text will remain focused on crime-related television viewing, support for police authority, and fear of crime.

Capital Punishment. Two types of television viewing, police reality and crime drama, have a significant direct relationship with attitudes

TABLE 2
Predictors of Police Authority and Fear of Crime

	Police Authority		Fear of Crime	
	99	00	99	00
Exogenous Variables				
Age	.10***	.17***	-.18***	-.15***
Sex (F)	-.04*	-.06**	.03	-.02
Income	.00	.04	-.07***	-.06**
Education	-.03	-.04*	-.12***	-.11***
Race (C)	.09***	.13***	-.10***	-.12***
Population Density	.02	-.02	.09***	.05**
Ideology (L)	-.16***	-.14***	.00	-.04*
Religion	.02	.03	.04*	.06**
Hunting	.00	.02	.00	.01
Television Viewing Variables				
TV News	.01	-.01	.04*	.06**
Police Reality	.06**	.09***	.12***	.09***
Crime Drama	-.03	-.06**	-.00	.02

Notes:
Coefficients are final standardized Beta's (β).
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.
Police authority: 1999, R^2 (%) = 5.7*** for Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 0.4** for Block 2, N = 3,120; 2000, R^2 (%) = 8.2*** for Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 0.9*** for Block 2, N = 2,848; Fear of Crime: 1999, R^2 (%) = 8.5*** for Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 1.6*** for Block 2, N = 3,141; 2000, R^2 (%) = 6.9*** for Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 1.2*** for Block 2, N = 2,862.

toward capital punishment (see Table 3). Police reality show viewing is the stronger predictor of the two (1999, β = .05, $p < .01$; 2000, β = .06, $p < .01$), but the use of crime dramas is also positively associated with this attitudinal measure (1999, β = .04, $p < .05$; 2000, β = .04, $p < .05$). The viewing of television news is negatively related to the endorsement of the practice of capital punishment in 1999 (β = -.04, $p < .05$), but this relationship weakens to statistical insignificance in 2000.

Support for police authority and fear of crime are significant positive predictors of attitudes toward the death penalty (see Table 3). In fact, the greater endorsement of police action is the single strongest independent variable in the attitudes toward death penalty regression equations (1999, β = .20, $p < .001$; 2000, β = .19, $p < .001$). Fear retains some predictive value, but not nearly as strong as that of police-attitudes (1999, = .08, $p < .001$; 2000, = .05, $p < .05$). These results provide support for H6 and H8.

Handguns. Only one form of television viewing, police reality, has a statistically significant relationship with either attitudes toward gun ownership or the likelihood of actual handgun ownership (see Table 3),

TABLE 3

Predictors of Capital Punishment, Guns-Attitudes, and Handgun Ownership

	Capital Punishment		Gun-Attitudes		Gun Ownership	
	99	00	99	00	99	00
Exogenous Variables						
Age	-.02	-.03	.00	.00	-.01	.03
Sex (F)	-.07***	-.11***	-.14***	-.16***	-.06**	-.07***
Income	.09***	.02	.01	.02	.09***	.15***
Education	-.03	-.02	-.07***	-.06**	-.02	-.04
Race (C)	.13***	.11***	.03	.03	-.02	.02
Population Density	.00	.04	-.11***	-.12***	-.11***	-.11***
Ideology (L)	-.09***	-.07***	-.10***	-.08***	-.06**	-.08***
Religion	-.11***	-.18***	-.04*	-.06**	-.02	-.06*
Hunting	.06**	.03	.20***	.21***	.22***	.22***
Television Viewing Variables						
TV News	-.04*	-.03	.01	-.04*	-.01	-.03
Police Reality	.05**	.06**	.09***	.09***	.09***	.11***
Crime Drama	.04*	.04*	.02	.01	.04	.01
Traditional Outcome Variables						
Police Authority	.20***	.19***	.10***	.12***	.04	.04
Fear of Crime	.08***	.05*	.10***	.04*	.04	.02

Notes:
Coefficients are final standardized Beta's (β).
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.
Capital Punishment: 1999, R^2 (%) = 7.3*** Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 0.7*** Block 2, ΔR^2 (%) = 4.6*** Block 3, N = 3,105; 2000, ΔR^2(%) = 7.9*** Block 1, ΔR^2 (%) = 0.7*** Block 2, ΔR^2 (%) = 3.4*** Block 3, N = 2,802; Gun-attitudes: 1999, ΔR^2 (%) = 12.9*** Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 1.2*** Block 2, ΔR^2 (%) = 2.0*** Block 3, N = 3,118; 2000, R^2 (%) = 14.6*** Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 1.0*** Block 2, ΔR^2(%) = 1.5*** Block 3, N = 2,837; Gun Ownership: 1999, R^2 (%) = 9.5*** Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 1.1*** Block 2, ΔR^2 (%) = 0.3* Block 3, N = 2,303; 2000, R^2 (%) = 11.9*** Block 1; ΔR^2 (%) = 1.3*** Block 2, ΔR^2 (%) = 0.2* Block 3, N = 2,160.

pointing toward greater endorsement of gun ownership (1999, β = .09, $p < .001$; 2000, β = .09, $p < .001$) and the likelihood of gun ownership (1999, β = .09, $p < .001$; 2000, β = .11, $p < .001$). The other two forms of TV viewing fail to predict attitudes toward or likelihood of gun ownership. Television news is a slight negative predictor of gun-attitudes for 2000 (β = -.04, $p < .05$), but this relationship fails to achieve statistical significance for the previous year.

Support for police authority and fear of crime are consistent positive predictors of attitudes toward gun ownership (Police-attitudes: 1999, β = .10, $p < .001$; 2000, β = .12, $p < .001$; Fear of crime: 1999, β = .10, $p < .001$; 2000, β = .04, $p < .05$), but the same cannot be said for their

influence on actual handgun ownership (see Table 3). These results provide partial support for H7 and H9. Overall, the relationship of these variables to citizens' attachments with guns does not appear to translate from attitudes to actual behaviors.

Replication. A formal assessment of the replicability of the television viewing, police support, and fear of crime as independent variables paths was performed using Cohen and Cohen's equation for the comparison of regression coefficients obtained via distinct samples.[59] A total of 21 relationships was analyzed (see Tables 2-3). The z-scores obtained from this analysis reveal that only one of these relationships fails to replicate: fear of crime to attitudes toward guns ($z = 2.28$).[60] All other *z*-scores fall short of statistical significance, indicating replication.

Indirect Relationships among Television Viewing, Capital Punishment, and Handguns. Our final research question concerns any potential indirect relationships among the various forms of television viewing and our three criterion variables. Police reality show viewing has a direct positive relationship with both support for police authority and fear of crime, and the viewing of television news also points to an increase in fear of crime. In addition, support for police and fear of crime are significant positive predictors of attitudes toward both the death penalty and gun ownership. These combinations create a series of potential indirect relationships among multiple forms of television viewing and two of our three criterion variables.

The indirect relationship between police reality show viewing through support for police as it leads to the endorsement of capital punishment is found to be statistically significant in both surveys (1999, z score product [P] = 37.22, $p < .001$; 2000, P = 45.76, $p < .001$), and the same can be said for the indirect path that travels through fear of crime to this same dependent variable (1999, P = 29.88, $p < .001$; 2000, P = 11.12, $p < .001$). This same pattern emerges for the indirect association between this type of TV use and attitudes toward gun ownership (support for police: 1999, P = 19.36, $p < .001$; 2000, P = 30.59, $p < .001$; fear of crime: 1999, P = 38.35, $p < .001$; 2000, P = 10.58, $p < .001$). All of these positive indirect relationships serve to enhance the overall associations between this type of television viewing and our attitudinal criterion variables. In short, the overall relationship (direct + indirect) between police reality show viewing and attitudes toward the death penalty and gun ownership are stronger than what a simple test of direct relationships would imply.

The indirect relationships between TV news viewing and attitudes toward both capital punishment and gun ownership are statistically significant across years (death penalty: 1999, P = 9.90, $p < .001$; 2000, P = 6.91, $p < .001$; gun-attitudes: 1999, P = 12.71, $p < .001$; 2000, P = 6.57, $p < .001$). These indirect relationships, although important and statistically significant, are noticeably smaller than those stemming from police reality viewing. However, finding significant indirect relationships does reveal that TV news has an influence in this context, whereas a strict test only of direct effects would reveal no consistent statistically significant relationships with any of this study's criterion variables.

A general pattern emerges when comparing the regression coefficients for the three television viewing variables across surveys. The strongest TV viewing relationships point to (a) more positive attitudes toward capital punishment, (b) viewing gun ownership more favorably, and (c) a greater likelihood of actually owning a gun. Any direct media associations with the criterion variables that point in the opposite direction are fairly consistent in terms of effect size, but are far weaker and sporadic in terms of achieving statistical significance. In short, the only truly substantive media relationships observed in this study point to the generation of fear, greater support for police authority, and the endorsement of punitive justice and protective measures.

Police reality show viewing retains strong and consistent direct relationships with all subsequent variables in the model. In addition, this type of TV viewing generates dual indirect associations with attitudes toward capital punishment and guns, respectively. These indirect relationships serve to enhance the already strong direct ties that exist between police reality show viewing and our criterion variables.

Television news and crime drama viewing are comparatively weaker in predictive value than police reality shows. The relationships found for TV news viewing are indirect and lead to the two attitudinal criterion variables. Public affairs viewing is associated with greater fear of crime, and this fear leads to the endorsement of capital punishment and gun ownership. By contrast, the one consistent relationship stemming from crime drama viewing found in this study is direct with attitudes toward capital punishment. Crime dramas often bring up the death penalty issue, and viewing this type of programming seems to lead to the endorsement of the practice. It will be important for future content analytic studies to identify how this form of punishment is presented in this type of programming in order to better understand this relationship.

Further, our study also suggests that there may be some important differences among various types of entertainment television programs. Nonfictional entertainment programming (i.e., police reality shows) tends to have much stronger and more consistent relationships with the criterion variables than the purely fictional crime dramas. Presumably, TV audiences may interpret these programs differently with respect to their perceived realism. Previous research by Potter and O'Keefe led to the conclusion that perceived realism is an important construct in this area,[61] and recent work by Busselle and Shrum would point to the need to study exemplar accessibility.[62] In addition, it will be important to better understand how these various types of crime-related television programming can lead to audience retrieval of crime-related examples that stem from television and/or real-world experiences. Busselle and Shrum's research points to television having the potential to prime within individuals their own true life experiences as well as the examples commonly used in this medium.

Future content analyses of the three television genres should identify their common or distinct crime-related exemplars. Then effects-based research can begin to better understand whether the unique relationships found in this study across different types of crime-related

television viewing stem from exposure to distinct exemplars. This type of research would be particularly important for the study of police reality shows given that this type of media use generated the strongest relationships in this work.

The relative strength of results concerning entertainment versus public affairs programming in this socio-political context speaks to the importance of the study of entertainment television in political communication. Mutz states that individual audience members receive a great deal of political information from a variety of television sources, and concludes "the traditional distinctions between news and entertainment content are no longer very helpful."[63] Shah has made a similar argument concerning the importance of looking at the diversity of political messages being supplied by this complex form of mass communication.[64] Williams and Delli Carpini go so far as to argue that "the political relevance of a cartoon character like Lisa Simpson is as important as the professional norms of Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, or Peter Jennings."[65] In short, it is important that political communication scholarship acknowledges and systematically analyzes the influence of a wide range of messages that can have a potential set of individual-level political consequences.

This study and others like it that analyze a broad range of television viewing patterns as they relate to various individual-level socio-political attitudes and behaviors speak to the potential influence of media on the establishment of a political consciousness. Political consciousness creates within citizens "a general awareness of the need to order the affairs of [a] community rationally."[66] Gamson distinguishes among categories of television content and contends that entertainment television may be particularly influential in constructing and maintaining political attitudes, which can lead to the formation of a political consciousness.[67] The presentation of what Gamson defines as "life-world" content engages the audience on an emotional level, bases truth claims on experiential knowledge, and treats the audience as being physically present within the program. It is important that entertainment television continue to be analyzed relative to the formation of socio-political attitudes that constitute an individual's political consciousness. Combining these insights with recent work by Busselle and Shrum, we contend that there is considerable potential in a theory of media effects emphasizing "exemplification" when studying television news and entertainment.

The O-S-O-R approach utilized in this study to better understand a process of media influence is common to political communication,[68] and should remain a foundational element to further studies in this area. This study provides an understanding of what types of individuals gravitate to different forms of crime-related television content. In addition, we gain insight on how television viewing is related to traditional outcome variables (e.g., police authority, fear of crime) and our criterion variables. This approach also allows for a better understanding of how potential intervening variables like support for police authority and fear of crime function in the relationship between media and our criterion variables.

It is important that we outline the limitations of this study. First, we must acknowledge some general weaknesses in the measures used in this secondary analysis. The individual television use measures employed for this study are dichotomous, and the effects of these variables are likely suppressed due to the weaknesses of this type of measurement.[69] Also, several of our endogenous variables are single-item measures, but are relatively complex and should be better explicated and operationalized. For example, Ogles and Sparks have devoted a significant amount of time and attention to creating a valid and reliable multiple-item measure for fear of crime.[70] Future primary analyses should seek to incorporate these advanced operationalizations. In addition, special attention must be paid to inferring causation from cross-sectional data.[71] Thus, we only present a series of relationships in this study, rather than making direct causal claims. A panel design would allow us to be more resolute in our discussion of clear causal distinctions. Finally, it is important to study not just the influence of television use, but also other types of media-related measures like perceived credibility or exemplar accessibility that more directly test an individual-level process of media influence.[72] This study should be viewed in coordination with existing works linking the viewing of various types of television programming with numerous socio-political areas.[73] There are several additional areas where similar analyses should be conducted (e.g., gay rights, health, social assistance).

NOTES

1. e.g., Gregg Barak, "Mass-Mediated Regimes of Truth: Race, Gender, and Class in Crime 'News' Thematics," in *Race, Gender, and Class in Criminology*, ed. Martin D. Schwartz and Dragan Milovanovic (NY: Garland, 1996), 105-123; Steven M. Chermack, *Victims in the News: Crime and the American News Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995); Ted Chiricos, Sarah Eschholz, and Marc Gertz, "Crime, News, and Fear of Crime: Toward an Identification of Audience Effects," *Social Problems* 44 (August 1997): 342-57, Ted Chiricos, Kathy Padgett, and Marc Gertz, "Fear, TV News, and the Reality of Crime," *Criminology* 38 (August 2000): 755-86; Dennis T. Lowry, Tarn Ching, Josephine Nio, and Dennis W. Leitner, "Setting the Public Fear Agenda: A Longitudinal Analysis of Network TV Crime Reporting, Public Perceptions of Crime, and FBI Crime Statistics," *Journal of Communication* 53 (March 2003): 61-73.

2. e.g., Mia Consalvo, "Hegemony, Domestic Violence, and Cops: A Critique of Concordance," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 26 (summer 1998): 62-70; Sarah Eschholz, Brenda Sims Blackwell, Marc Gertz, and Ted Chiricos, "Race and Attitudes Toward the Police: Assessing the Effects of Watching 'Reality' Police Programs," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30 (July/August 2002): 327-41; Mary Beth Oliver, "Portrayals of Crime, Race, and Aggression in 'Reality-Based' Police Shows: A Content Analysis," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (spring 1994): 179-92.

3. cf. Garrett J. O'Keefe, "Television Exposure, Credibility, and Public Views on Crime," in *Communication Yearbook 8*, ed. Robert N.

Bostrom (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1984), 513-36; Margaret Reith, "Viewing of Crime Drama and Authoritarian Aggression: An Investigation of the Relationship between Crime Viewing, Fear, and Aggression," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 43 (spring 1999): 211-21.

4. e.g., Judith Grant, "Prime Time Crime: Television Portrayals of Law Enforcement," *Journal of American Culture* 15 (spring 1992): 57-68; James A. Inciardi and Juliet L. Dee, "From Keystone Cops to Miami Vice: Images of Policing in American Popular Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture* 21 (fall 1987): 84-102; Dana E. Mastro and Amanda L. Robinson, "Cops and Crooks: Images of Minorities on Primetime Television," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 28 (September/October 2000): 385-96.

5. cf. Eschholz et al., "Race and Attitudes"; O'Keefe, "Television Exposure, Credibility, and Public Views."

6. James Shanahan and Michael Morgan, *Television and Its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). It is important to note that researchers have raised concerns as to whether many past empirical studies in this area are actually measuring fear of crime (see Robert M. Ogles and Glenn G. Sparks, "Question Specificity and Perceived Probability of Criminal Victimization," *Mass Comm Review* 20 [1/2, 1993]: 51-61; Glenn G. Sparks and Robert M. Ogles, "The Difference between Fear of Victimization and the Probability of Being Victimized: Implications for Cultivation," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 34 [summer 1990]: 351-58). Given that we argue for our operationalization to be in the spirit of the Ogles and Sparks conceptualiztion of fear of crime (see note 52) and that it is the dominant label used in past research (albeit potentially incorrectly for some measures), we will use this term throughout the manuscript to bring greater coherence to the work as a whole.

7. Dietram A. Scheufele and Dhavan V. Shah, "Personality Strength and Social Capital: The Role of Dispositional and Informational Variables in the Production of Civic Participation," *Communication Research* 27 (April 2000): 107-131; Dhavan V. Shah, Jack M. McLeod, and S-H Yoon, "Communication, Context, and Community: An Exploration of Print, Broadcast, and Internet Influences," *Communication Research* 28 (August 2001): 464-506.

8. Robert Rosenthal, "Replication in Behavioral Research," in *Replication Research in the Social Sciences*, ed. James W. Neuliep (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991), 1-30.

9. Jack M. McLeod, Gerald M. Kosicki, and Zhongdang Pan, "On Understanding and Misunderstanding Media Effects," in *Mass Media and Society*, ed. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, 2d ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1996), 235-66.

10. e.g., R. Lance Holbert, Nojin Kwak, and Dhavan V. Shah, "Environmental Concern, Patterns of Television Viewing, and Pro-Environmental Behaviors: Integrating Models of Media Consumption and Effects," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 47 (June 2003): 177-96; R. Lance Holbert, Dhavan V. Shah, and Nojin Kwak, "Political Implications of Prime-Time Drama and Sitcom Use: Genres of Representation and Opinions Concerning Women's Rights," *Journal of Communication* 53 (March 2003): 45-60.

11. Mary H. Baker, Barbara C. Neinstedt, Ronald S. Everett, and Richard McCleary, "The Impact of a Crime Wave: Perceptions, Fear, and Confidence in Police," *Law and Society Review* 17 (2, 1983): 319-35; Steven A. Tuch and Ronald Weitzer, "Trends: Racial Differences in Attitudes Toward the Police," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61 (winter 1997): 642-63.

12. Jeffrey I. Ross, *Making News of Police Violence: A Comparative Study of Toronto and New York City* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000). See Valerie P. Hans and Juliet L. Dee, "Media Coverage of Law," *American Behavioral Scientist* 35 (November 1991): 136-48.

13. e.g., Eschholz et al., "Race and Attitudes."

14. Garret J. O'Keefe and Kathleen Reid-Nash, "Crime News and Real-World Blues: The Effects of the Media on Social Reality," *Communication Research* 14 (April 1987): 147-63.

15. e.g., George E. Antunes and Patricia A. Hurley, "The Representation of Criminal Events in Houston's Two Daily Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 54 (winter 1977): 756-60; Chiricos, Eschholz, and Gertz, "Crime, News, and Fear"; Doris A. Graber, *Crime News and the Public* (NY: Praeger, 1980); Joseph F. Sheley and Cindy D. Ashkins, "Crime, Crime News, and Crime Views," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45 (winter 1981): 492-506.

16. e.g., Margaret T. Gordon and Linda Heath, "The News Business, Crime and Fear," in *Agenda Setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policy Making*, ed. David L. Protess and Maxwell McCombs (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991), 71-74.

17. Aaron Doyle, "'Cops': Television Policing and Policing Reality," in *Entertaining Crime*, ed. Mark Fishman and Gray Cavender (NY: Aldine DeGuynter, 1998), 96-116.

18. D. Seagal, "Tales From the Cutting-Room Floor: The Reality of 'Reality-Based' Television," *Harper's Magazine*, November 1993, 50.

19. Paul G. Kooistra, John S. Mahoney, and Saundra D. Westervelt, "The World of Crime According to 'Cops'," in *Entertaining Crime*, ed. Fishman and Cavender, 141-58.

20. Oliver, "Portrayals of Crime."

21. Eschholz et al., "Race and Attitudes," 331.

22. Philip J. Lane, "The Existential Condition of Television Crime Drama," *Journal of Popular Culture* 34 (spring 2001): 137-51.

23. Grant, "Prime Time Crime."

24. Reith, "Viewing of Crime Drama"; see also O'Keefe and Reid-Nash, "Crime News and Real-World Blues."

25. W. James Potter, "Perceived Reality and the Cultivation Hypothesis," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 30 (spring 1986): 159-74.

26. O'Keefe, "Television Exposure, Credibility, and Public Views."

27. Rick W. Busselle, "Television Exposure, Perceived Realism, and Exemplar Accessibility in the Social Judgment Process," *Media Psychology* 3 (1/2 2001): 43-67. Interestingly, Busselle reports that there are distinctions in the relationships between individuals' perceived reality of crime/emergency programs and gun shooting exemplars and the perceived reality of news and these same exemplars, indicating some distinctions in audience members' associations with entertainment versus public affairs programming.

28. Rick W. Busselle and L. J. Shrum, "Media Exposure and Exemplar Accessibility," *Media Psychology* 5 (3, 2003): 255-82.

29. William C. Bailey, "Murder, Capital Punishment, and Television: Execution Publicity and Homicide Rates," *American Sociological Review* 55 (October 1990): 628-33.

30. David P. Fan, Kathy A. Keltner, and Robert O. Wyatt, "A Matter of Guilt or Innocence: How News Reports Affect Support for the Death Penalty in the United States," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 14 (winter 2002): 439-52.

31. David Niven, "Bolstering an Illusory Majority: The Effects of the Media's Portrayal of Death Penalty Support," *Social Science Quarterly* 83 (summer 2002): 671-90.

32. Jeremy H. Lipschultz and Michael L. Hilt, "Mass Media and the Death Penalty: Social Construction of Three Nebraska Executions," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 43 (spring 1999): 236-53.

33. James H. Price, Elaine A. Merrill, and Michael E. Clause, "The Depiction of Guns on Prime Time Television," *Journal of Social Health* 62 (January 1992): 15-18.

34. Price, Merrill, and Clause, "The Depiction of Guns," 16.

35. Douglass Downs, "Representing Gun Owners: Framer Identification as Social Responsibility in News Media," *Written Communication* 19 (January 2002): 44-75.

36. Richard Poe, *The Seven Myths of Gun Control: Reclaiming the Truth About Guns, Crime, and the Second Amendment,* 2d ed. (Roseville, CA: Forum, 2003).

37. David Atkin, Leo Jeffres, and Kim Neuendorf, "Cultivation and Public Support for Government Restrictions on Constitutional Freedoms," *Mass Comm Review* 24 (1/2, 1997): 106-124.

38. Robin L. Nabi and John L. Sullivan, "Does Television Viewing Relate to Engagement in Protective Action Against Crime? A Cultivation Analysis from a Theory of Reasoned Action Perspective," *Communication Research* 28 (December 2001): 802-825.

39. Reith, "Viewing of Crime Drama."

40. Joseph H. Rankin, "Changing Attitudes toward Capital Punishment," *Social Forces* 58 (September 1979): 194-211.

41. David McDowall and Colin Loftin, "Collective Security and the Demand for Legal Handguns," *American Journal of Sociology* 88 (May 1983): 1146-1161, 1157.

42. Tenko Raykov and George A. Marcoulides, "A Method for Comparing Completely Standardized Solutions in Multiple Groups," *Structural Equation Modeling* 7 (2, 2000): 292-308.

43. Robert D. Putnam and Steven J. Yonish, "How Important Are Random Samples? Some Surprising New Evidence," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Public Opinion Research, St. Petersburg, FL, 1999).

44. Sid Groeneman, "Multi-Purpose Household Panels and General Samples: How Similar and How Different? (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Public Opinion Research, Danvers, MA, 1994).

45. Rosenthal, "Replication in Behavioral Research."

46. Michael D. Reiseg and Roger B. Parks, "Experience, Quality of Life, and Neighborhood Context: A Hierarchical Analysis of Satistifaction with Police," *Justice Quarterly* 17 (September 2000): 607-630.

47. The 2000 statistical abstract of the United States compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau states that large metropolitan areas have a crime rate of 4,975 per 100,000, while rural areas have a rate of 1,998 per 100,000 (see Table 330). Available: http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract-us.html. Recent work has attempted to address the "urban bias" in the study of crime (see Matthew R. Lee, Michael O. Maume, and Graham C. Ousey, "Social Isolation and Lethal Violence Across the Metra/Nonmetro Divide: The Effects of Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Poverty Concentration on Homicide," *Rural Sociology* 68 [March 2003]: 107-131, 107; Matthew R. Lee and Graham C. Ousey, "Size Matters: Examining the Link Between Small Manufacturing, Socioeconomic Deprivation and Crime Rates in Non-Metropolitan Communities," *The Sociological Quarterly* 42 [December 2001]: 581-602), finding similarities in the socioeconic factors affecting crime rates in both types of communities. However, the Census Bureau statistics still show a gap in urban versus rural crime rates, and there is still much work devoted to trying to better understand this disparity (e.g., Edward L. Glaeser and Bruce Sacerdote, "Why Is There More Crime in Cities?" *Journal of Political Economy* 107 [December Supplement 1999]: S225-S258).

48. Sylvia Tesh, "In Support of 'Single-Issue' Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 99 (spring 1984): 27-44.

49. Ted G. Jelen, "The Political Consequences of Religious Group Attitudes," *The Journal of Politics* 55 (December 1993): 178-90.

50. Alan J. Lizotte and David J. Bordua, "Firearms Ownership for Sport and Protection: Two Divergent Models," *American Sociological Review* 45 (April 1980): 229-44.

51. An eigenvalue of 1.0 was used to identify an articulated factor. All loadings fell between .59 and .74 with no significant cross-loaders. Eigenvalues with percentage of variance accounted for as follows: *Police Reality viewing*: 1999, 1.72 (28.64); 2000, 1.72 (28.61); *Television News viewing*: 1.34 (22.27); 2000, 1.35 (22.46); *Crime Drama Viewing*: 1999, 1.21 (20.10); 2000, 1.21 (20.19). Given the adverse influence of a low number of items on Cronbach's alpha, we report the inter-item r for all TV use indices. See Edward G. Carmines and Richard A. Zeller, *Reliability and Validity Assessment* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1979).

52. Ogles and Sparks state that "fear-of-crime measures should include a reference to the negative emotional state of fear or of being afraid" ("Question Specificity," 52). We believe the reference to being "worried a lot" in our operationalization is adequate to spark this negative affect. In addition, these same authors cite Ferraro and LaGrange in stating that the negative affect should be directly linked to the issue of crime (Kenneth F. Ferraro and Randy LaGrange, "The Measurement of Fear of Crime," *Sociological Inquiry* 57 [winter 1987]: 70-101). For example, Ferraro and LaGrange argue that the following traditional personal-safety item used in Cultivation research is not a measure of fear of crime because there is no explicit mention of crime: "Is there any area within a mile of where you live that you'd be afraid to walk in at night?" Our single-item

measure is explicit in asking if the worry felt by the respondent is due to crime. The weakness of our measure is that we do not have a multiple-item index that makes specific reference to different types of criminal acts (see five-item Fear-of-Crime scale in Ogles and Sparks, "Question Specificity," 57-58).

53. Robert Rosenthal, *Meta-Analytic Procedures for Social Research* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1989).

54. David P. MacKinnon, Chondra M. Lockwood, and Jeanne M. Hoffman, "A New Method to Test for Mediation" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Prevention Research, Park City, UT, 1998).

55. David P. MacKinnon, Chondra M. Lockwood, Jeanne M. Hoffman, Stephen G. West, and Virgil Sheets, "A Comparison of Methods to Test Mediation and Other Intervening Variable Effects," *Psychological Methods* 7 (March 2002): 83-104; the MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Hoffman (1998) alternative (see note 54) was created due to traditional product of coefficient tests producing non-normally distributed product terms with reduced statistical power.

56. R. Lance Holbert and Michael T. Stephenson, "The Importance of Analyzing Indirect Effects in Media Effects Research: Testing for Mediation in Structural Equation Modeling," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 47 (December 2003): 553-69.

57. See Cecil C. Craig, " On the Frequency Function of *xy*," *Annals of Mathematical Statistics* 7 (March 1936): 1-15; William Q. Meeker, Jr., Larry W. Cornwell, and Leo A. Aroian, *Selected Tables in Mathematical Statistics, Volume VII: The Product of Two Normally Distributed Random Variables* (Proividence, RI: American Mathematical Society, 1981).

58. This and all subsequent significant endogenous beta weights were also tested by placing the independent variable in an additional final block of the respective regression equations and assessing the Incremental R-square statistic. The statistical significance of all the Incremental R-squares matches the p-values ascertained from the individual betas in the original equations.

59. Jacob Cohen and Patricia Cohen, *Applied Multiple Regression/ Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 2d ed. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1983), 111.

60. Given that we are assessing roughly 20 replications, we would expect at least one statistically significant result at the $p < .05$ level due simply to chance.

61. Potter, "Perceived Reality"; O'Keefe, "Television Exposure, Credibility, and Public Views."

62. Busselle and Shrum, "Media Exposure."

63. Diana C. Mutz, "The Future of Political Communication Research: Reflections on the Occasion of Steve Chaffee's Retirement from Stanford University," *Political Communication* 18 (April/June 2001): 231-36.

64. Dhavan V. Shah, " Civic Engagement, Interpersonal Trust, and Television Use: An Individual-Level Assessment of Social Capital," *Political Psychology* 19 (June 1998): 469-96.

65. Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini,

"Heeeeeeeeeeeeere's Democracy!" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 April 2002, sec. B, p. 15.

66. James F. Lea, *Political Consciousness and American Democracy* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1982).

67. William A. Gamson, "Policy Discourse and the Language of the Life-World," in *Eigenwilligkeit und Rationalitat Sozialer Prozesse,* ed. J. Gehards and R. Hitzler (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1999), 127-44.

68. Douglas M. McLeod, Gerald M. Kosicki, and Jack M. McLeod, "Resurveying the Boundaries of Political Communication Effects," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, ed. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann, 2d ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 215-68.

69. Cohen and Cohen, *Applied Multiple Regression.*

70. Ogles and Sparks, "Question Specificity."

71. Norman Cliff, "Some Cautions Concerning the Application of Causal Modeling Methods," *Multivariate Behavioral Research* 18 (January 1983): 115-26.

72. Busselle and Shrum, "Media Exposure"; O'Keefe, "Television Exposure, Credibility, and Public Views."

73. Holbert, Kwak, and Shah, "Environmental Concern"; Holbert, Shah, and Kwak, "Political Implications."