

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 402

CS 503 403

AUTHOR O'Keefe, Garrett J.
 TITLE The Changing Context of Interpersonal Communication
 in Political Campaigns.
 PUB DATE May 81
 NOTE 25p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
 International Communication Association (Minneapolis,
 MN, May 21-25, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer): *Communication
 Research: *Interpersonal Competence: *Mass Media:
 Models: Political Influences: Political Issues:
 Political Socialization: Public Opinion: *Social
 Influences

IDENTIFIERS Interpersonal Communication: *Media Role: *Political
 Campaigns

ABSTRACT

Critiques and studies have found the traditional two-step flow model of social influence inadequate to describe and explain relationships between interpersonal and mass communications during political campaigns. A study was undertaken to incorporate a wider range of variables pertinent to both kinds of political communication behaviors to redefine the key processes involved and their effects on political orientations. Data used in the study were derived from a larger study of influences in the 1972 presidential campaign in the United States, including personal interviews conducted with approximately 2,000 adults before the election and more than 200 voters after the election. The results suggested that it might be useful to consider a four-fold typology of political opinion giving and seeking, one that distinguishes among opinion givers, seekers, sharers, and nondiscussants. The findings showed that opinion sharers exhibited the highest levels of political interest and activity typically associated with opinion leaders, and that mass media served as important sources of information and influence over all of the groups. (FL)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED203402

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- || Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Garrett J. O'Keefe
Associate Professor
Department of Mass Communications
University of Denver
Denver, Colorado 80208
(303) 753-2166

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Garrett J. O'Keefe

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented to the Political Communication Division,
International Communication Association Annual
Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 1981.

C5583405



THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

The varying roles and influences of interpersonal and mass communication processes in political campaigns have come under increased scrutiny in recent years, in part a result of the realization that communication channels now have a heightened import in voter decision making. Along with this has been a substantial range of research challenging previously dominant "limited effects" models of mass media influence on voting. However, it is quite surprising to find so few empirical attempts at re-evaluating a cornerstone element of those models, the two-step flow hypothesis.

The lack of research does not reflect want of concern. The literature is rife with critiques of both the conceptual and methodological bases of the hypothesis, which essentially proposes that ideas presented in mass media do not reach (or influence) the public at large in equal numbers, but are likelier to flow first to "opinion leaders," who in turn pass them on to "less active" citizens, or "opinion followers." Leaders are assumed to be identifiable by their greater media usage, greater knowledge of their particular expertise areas, and informal personal access to their followers. Thus, opinion leaders serve in a sense as gatekeepers, presumably mitigating through personal discussions whatever direct influences media content may have on the public.

The propositions are most comprehensively presented in Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence (1955), but their implications for the role of mass media in public opinion processes were established several years earlier in the landmark election study summaries, The People's Choice (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1948) and Voting (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954). These works by the Columbia University group directed by Lazarsfeld relied upon the two-step flow hypothesis to help explain their apparent lack of data supporting direct media

influences on voter decision making. What emerged was a dominant view of social influence processes in those times based heavily upon strong, stable primary group relationships, with mass media acting as a relatively ineffectual agent functioning to reinforce existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, including political ones. This contrasted considerably with a previous behaviorist-based argument that media were fairly effective in propagandizing an "atomized" population of psychologically isolated individuals.

The two-step flow was attractive in its simplicity and in its implicit posture that human relationships remained the backbone of social and political organization. It may have particularly fit an era of high social and political stability and, by today's terms, a structurally limited and diversified mass media system. That several crucial components of the general hypothesis remained empirically untested seemed less a pressing matter than simply bothersome.

Katz (1957) detailed some of these limitations, and subsequent authors have criticized not only the methodological underpinnings of the early research (Rogers, 1962, 1973; Troidahl and Van Dam, 1966; Wright and Cantor, 1967; Weiss, 1970; Chaffee, 1972; Sheingold, 1973; Lin, 1973; Robinson, 1976), but the appropriateness of its underlying assumptions in contemporary times (Sheingold, 1973; Lin, 1973; Rogers, 1973; O'Keefe, 1975; Robinson, 1976). However, the only recent comprehensive data-based reconsideration of the model in a political setting is that of Robinson (1976). He suggests significant revision of the original proposition in the sense of accounting for interactions among media, opinion givers and opinion receivers separately from whatever impact media may have upon inactive or "nondiscussant" members of the public.

The present report provides evidence pertinent to Robinson's proposal and to several other key issues presently confronting political applications of the two-step flow hypothesis. These include the following:

1. Are opinion leaders actually more media-oriented than other persons, and if so, in what manner? The previous research has dealt almost exclusively with exposure to media content as the dependent variable, with mixed results. The point is particularly at issue given the increased amount of political information available in media, particularly television, in recent years, and the presumably decreasing ability of even the most disinterested citizens to avoid at least cursory contact with politics in the media. Robinson found only marginal differences between opinion leaders and other audience members for politically relevant television exposure, but increased leader exposure for newspapers and particularly magazines. What remains to be investigated is whether differences exist between leaders and others in some of the more qualitative components of media orientation, such as relative dependence upon various media for political purposes, usage of media for actual vote decision making, and relative importance of each medium as a source of political information and influence.

2. What is the nature of communication between opinion leaders, and to what extent does it work against the "downward flow" of communication to followers? Do opinion leaders simply use media content for self-satisfaction and to serve as grist for conversation with others as informed as themselves? Findings going back to People's Choice show that most opinion givers also seek and receive opinions and advice from other persons. Robinson also found opinion givers less likely to be influenced by discussions with others, while persons receiving opinions from others perceived as more politically attentive than themselves were likelier to have their vote decisions influenced. Presumably, a clearer conceptualization of opinion leadership would result from distinguishing between those "leaders" who primarily give advice to others and those who both give and receive advice. Trolldahl and Van Dam (1966) have

labeled the latter communicants as "opinion sharers." Patterson (1980) reports that the most regular discussants of the 1976 presidential campaign were persons who also followed the news media closely, and similar inferences can be drawn from Andersen and Garrison (1978). To the extent that opinion leaders themselves may be influenced by the media, those not seeking advice from other persons would seem at least potentially more open to media effects. There is also evidence that early-deciding voters discuss the campaign more (O'Keefe and Mendelsohn, 1976; Lucas and Adams, 1978; Chaffee and Choe, 1980), and that they are likelier to be counted as opinion leaders (Andersen and Garrison, 1978). Moreover, increased discussion during the campaign has been found to lead to increased newspaper readership (Tan, 1980).

3. What useful distinctions can be made between "information" and "influence" in order to discover more precisely just what is flowing between the elements of the model? It is generally thought that opinion leaders are likely receiving something more akin to information directly from the media, and coloring that information with more evaluative components in presenting it to their followers, upon whom some form of influence will presumably be wielded. Adequately defining the two terms has been beyond the scope of previous work and is likewise so here, but steps can be taken in that direction by querying the actors as to whether they perceive themselves as being informed or influenced by various sources in differing situations.

4. What distinctions can be made between opinion followers (or seekers) and those citizens essentially inactive in interpersonal political communication processes? Robinson suggests that mass media may in some instances have more effect on these inactives, and has offered a revised flow hypothesis accounting for that.

5. More generally, what other aspects of the interpersonal communication situation have bearing on the opinion exchange process? Variables of interest here include frequency of political discussion overall; gratifications sought

from such discussions; dependence on personal sources relative to media sources; usefulness of discussions in vote decision making; agreement between discussion partners; and interpersonal information, as opposed to opinion, seeking and giving. Presumably, differences related to opinion leadership categories may occur within each of the above factors, and isolating these differences will provide a more interpersonally oriented perspective on the nature of opinion flow.

Overall, the present research attempts to examine the flow of social influence in contemporary times by suggesting an expansion of the typologies of persons involved in that flow, and by reconsidering the role of mass media in light of the issues noted above. Specific typologies derived here include: (1) "nondiscussants," who appear actively involved in neither opinion giving nor receiving, and indeed have minimal levels of political discussion; (2) opinion seekers, or those asking advice of others but not giving it; (3) opinion givers, whose advice may be sought by others without reciprocation; and (4) opinion sharers, who both seek and give advice. Conceptually and operationally, the latter two types can be classed as "opinion leaders" in the sense of the previous research. However, differences were expected between the two groups at least in terms of nature and import of interpersonal discussion vis-a-vis their political activity, and in the impact of mass media on them. Wider discrepancies were anticipated among the combined leadership groups, the seeker cohort, and the nondiscussants.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The analyses presented below were derived from a larger study of influences of the 1972 presidential election on voting behavior. Specific data used here result from personal interviews conducted during July 1972 with 1,966 adults selected into a multi-stage area probability sample representative of the population of Summit County, Ohio, including the city of Akron. The diverse demographic and social characteristics of the sample site are not unlike those of the U.S. as a whole. Also presented are data from a subset of 223 voters drawn from the July sample, who were interviewed following the November election.

Opinion giving was ascertained by using a slight modification of the opinion leadership screening item used in the 1948 Elmira study. Respondents were asked whether they were "more likely or less likely to be asked for their views about political matters." Contrarywise, opinion seeking was measured by asking respondents whether they were "more likely or less likely to ask other people about their views about political matters." Those answering "more likely" on the respective items were classified as either opinion givers or opinion seekers. Opinion sharers answered "more likely" to both items, and nondiscussants so responded to neither item.

Other aspects of interpersonal campaign communication tapped were respondents' perceived frequency of political discussion; their dependence on interpersonal communication sources in deciding for whom to vote; whether the function of (or gratification sought from) interpersonal political discussion was primarily "to be sociable," to learn others' views, or to express one's own views; whether relatives and/or friends disagreed with respondents' presidential choices; whether their parents had discussed politics with them during childhood; and how much freedom parents had given them in presenting

their own political views. Moreover, interpersonal information seeking and giving were measured by items similar to those for opinion exchange, but asking whether respondents were more likely or less likely than others to give or seek "factual information" about political matters. Respondents in the voting subsample were also asked how useful, or "helpful" conversations with respected persons had been in deciding whom to vote for; and whether other people or specific media had been their primary source of information, and primary source of influence, in making voting decisions.

Mass media-related attributes included exposure to television network news (viewing a network news program twice a week or more), and to newspaper news content (reading a newspaper mainly for news).

Credibility attached to newspapers and television was indexed by asking respondents whether they thought each medium was "fair" (or "unfair") in treatment of political subjects. Dependence on each medium was measured by items asking whether they counted on newspapers, television, magazines and radio for information to help in vote decision-making. Voters in November were asked how useful each medium had been in deciding upon a candidate, and which medium had been their primary source of information and of influence in

choosing a candidate. They were also asked whether each of a group of eleven events taking place over the campaign had influenced their vote choice. Respondents indicating that they had been influenced by six or more of the events were regarded as being "high" in reported influence over the campaign. They were also asked whether they had made their final choice of a candidate prior to or following the start of "formalized" campaigning at the close of the nominating conventions.

Political orientations were indexed by descriptive items reported in previous research (Mendelsohn and O'Keefe, 1976) reflecting the attributes listed below in Table 5. A range of demographic attributes described in Table 6 were also measured.

The analyses revealed several key distinctions among the four groups which are pertinent to contemporary social influence processes and the complementary role of mass media.

Nondiscussants, making up over half the sample, seem only slightly less oriented toward mass media than more opinion active persons (Table 1, 4). While their degree of dependence on media appears somewhat lower than that of opinion active groups, nondiscussants were nearly as exposed to newspaper and television news as the actives, and utilized those media over the campaign in close to the same proportions as actives. This, combined with nondiscussants' considerably lower showing in all aspects of personal political communications (Table 1), could render them much more prone to direct influences from the media, particularly television, as Robinson has suggested. In fact, they were relatively high in reporting having been influenced over the campaign, and likeliest to name television as the prime source of that influence (Table 3).

Nondiscussants predictably followed a pattern of low political involvement coupled with a certain degree of malaise (Table 5). Although over half of them voted in the 1972 general election and they were as likely to be party affiliates as the opinion actives, they exhibited considerably less interest in and knowledge about matters politic. They were more inclined to see themselves as politically powerless and alienated, and as a group expressed greater distrust of politicians. Their infrequent political discussions with others were sought out much more for social purposes than for information or opinion exchange, and they were the group least likely to be aware of political disagreements with relatives or friends.

Nondiscussants were well distributed over all age categories, with a tendency toward greater middle age and older representation (Table 6). The elderly were considerably more likely to be inactive. Nearly 40 percent of the nondiscussants had not completed high school, and under 10 percent were college graduates.

Opinion seekers looked much like the opinion follower prototype established by the Columbia researchers, with two main exceptions: (1) Opinion seekers compose but 20 percent of the sample, a much smaller figure than

implied previously; and (2) While they made greater use of personal sources and appeared affected by them, opinion seekers were also the group highest in dependence on newspapers and television, and they were likeliest to name television as their main source of information and influence vis-a-vis voting decisions. It should be emphasized that personal contacts were second to television—albeit distantly so—as the most named influence source, leaving open speculation as to whether personal influence might have played a more prominent role in the pre-television era.

Opinion seekers seem most characterized by active reliance on all sources of communication available to them. They emphasized learning as the main purpose of political discussions, and saw themselves as information seekers rather than givers. In terms of their childhood backgrounds, political discussions were less frequent than for the other active groups, but on the other hand freedom of discussion was high.

Apart from interpersonal orientations, opinion seekers had much in common with nondiscussants, but they also differed from them—having reported less political disaffection and in having a substantially higher proportion of younger citizens in their ranks.

The combination of relatively low education and political knowledge and concern, coupled with a high sense of political efficacy and perhaps optimism as well as duty to participate, may interact to produce a citizen type not quite confident in political activity and consequently seeking personal contacts to bolster their sense of political competence. Consider also the substantial use of broadcast versus print media among opinion-seeking voters, and their decided preference for television as their major source for information and to a lesser extent for influence. Personal contacts could well be sought for purposes of amplifying, evaluating or interpreting what opinion seekers have

picked up from broadcast content, which typically lacks the substance of print. They were relatively low in reporting having been influenced by events over the campaign, yet they tended to decide on candidates later in the campaign. Perhaps interpersonal sources were used more for opinion-based advice than information-based substantiation.

While only 11 percent of the seekers counted other people as their main information source, 21 percent counted people as their main source of influence. This could be particularly true for the sizeable younger segment of this group, the first "TV generation." Although women considerably outnumber men here, this difference substantially diminished within the under age 35 cohort, suggesting the impact of changing cultural norms upon sex roles politically.

Of the two cohorts falling under the traditional "opinion leader" rubric, opinion givers at first blush have fewer of the characteristics originally attributed to true leaders than do opinion sharers. Opinion givers were slightly less politically interested and concerned than sharers, and reported a greater sense of political powerlessness and alienation, and they also thought politicians less altruistic. While more college graduates were counted in their numbers than in any other group, nearly a third of them had not completed high school, particularly among the substantial subset of them aged 50 and over. More in keeping with the traditional pattern were findings that fewer than a third of them were under age 35 and that 65 percent of them were male.

As for their communication behaviors, they depended less upon all mass media--with the exception of magazines--than did opinion sharers. They also reported less usage of newspapers and television over the campaign than did sharers, but slightly greater use of magazines. However, they tended to downplay magazines as their main source of information or influence, and were actually somewhat higher than opinion sharers in naming interpersonal sources as the primary influence source. Apparently, while they clearly saw their role as one of disseminators of opinions and information, and did not appear as dependent upon other persons, they received something in the way of interpersonal advice in return.

While there is little evidence here that opinion givers are more generally media-oriented than the other active groups, they could well be more privy to more specialized media content, such as that found in magazines. That, combined with their heavier exposure to newspaper news and their greater number of organizational memberships, could give them an advantage in access to more substantive and interpretative forms of political information. Holding such information would thus increase their value as advisors to others within the community. The quality of their communications may override simple quantity. Moreover, as Katz and Lazarsfeld found, the greater political experience associated with older age may make them particularly appealing in an advisory role, and at the same time less willing (or able) to seek out advice from others perceived as less experienced.

Opinion sharers impress as the most politically and communicatively involved of all the groups. They combine the strongest elements of depending upon and using a wide range of media for political purposes. And, while heavily involved in both the give and take of frequent political discussions, they categorized learning from others as their main goal in such interactions. However, when media inputs were compared against interpersonal ones insofar as dependence, usage and sources of information and influence were concerned, newspapers and television were the strong favorites. They were decidedly more likely to report having been influenced by campaign events.

As with opinion seekers, sharers contained in their ranks a high proportion of younger citizens, with nearly half under age 35. Sharers also contained a higher percentage of persons recalling greater and more open discussions with parents about politics.

All in all, opinion sharers and givers form two distinct cohorts within the opinion leadership domain. What is not available from the data set presented here is to what extent and under what conditions the two groups

interact with opinion seekers. Tentative speculation suggests several possible paths of interaction. One is that the age similarity between seekers and sharers would work in favor of increased social contact, and that to the extent such contact occurs sharers may provide political advice to seekers. Sharers could presumably offer seekers whatever advantages the former's higher educational levels may provide, plus inputs from their greater print media orientation. Concurrently, one would expect high interaction between sharers themselves, probably more toward the end of sharpening and clarifying already existing knowledge and opinions. Opinion givers could be in service of both sharers and seekers, providing advantages of greater political experience and contributions from more specialized print media.

DISCUSSION

These results suggest a far greater role for the mass media in social influence processes than a limited effects model would allow. While the measures of media usage and influence utilized here are far from comprehensive and put the burden on the respondent to self-define such terms as media "helpfulness" and "influence," the fact that significant numbers of respondents perceived the media as acting upon them at least in terms of the everyday meanings of the concepts is noteworthy. Whether "influence" was defined by the respondents as implying "reinforcement" or "justification" of decisions already reached, or perhaps as connoting crystallization or even conversion, the results are revealing. A more comprehensive previous study of voter decision making involving similar items strongly suggested that voters' self-definitions of being influenced could include any of the possibilities mentioned above, the operative one being dependent upon the stage in the decision process in which particular voters found themselves (Mendelsohn and O'Keefe, 1976).

Nonetheless, mass media orientations played important roles for respondents regardless of their opinion exchange group classifications. Moreover, as Robinson suggests, nondiscussants, given their relative isolation from interpersonal political contacts, may be particularly "open" to media impacts. However, personal exchange does appear critical to having stronger political orientations and perhaps more positive values concerning the political system. The lack of interpersonal political exchange among discussants would seem to be as contributory to the greater proportions of politically disaffected individuals within that group as would be their sizeable dependence on television, as Michael Robinson (1976) has contended.

Socialization factors may have as much consequence for political communication behavior as for political activity overall. Opinion leaders recalled having more political discussions in their homes as children, and opinion seeking behavior appeared linked to the amount of freedom respondents felt as children in discussing political issues in the home. Subsequent research needs to address extent to which these findings are related to general syndromes of political interest transmitted from parents to children, and the degree to which parent-child communication behavior per se may have influence. Parental communication has been found more important than media use as a determinant of likelihood of voting among first-time eligible citizens (O'Keefe and

This paper has not addressed the operational problem of using respondent self-report measures as indicators of opinion exchange activity. Such measures take no account of respondents' perceptual biases vis-a-vis their communication activities. While there is little reason to suspect that self-reports of communication behavior are any less valid than such reports of other kinds of political and social behaviors, the interactive nature of the variables investigated here could well benefit from closer inspection of the social network processes between individuals. Greater use of the "snowball"

sampling techniques devised for some of the earlier Columbia research on marketing communication and more emphasis on the dyad as the minimum unit of analysis would doubtless clarify many of the relationships pointed to here (cf. Sheingold, 1973). Moreover, focus upon the dyad, or on even more complex communication networks, would allow interjection of the kinds of variables associated with coorientation models, including agreement between interactants, accuracy of assessment of one another's views, and perceived agreement levels between interactants.

Also needing exploration is the extent to which changes in the social and political makeup of the society, as well as in the mass media environment, have modified social influence processes. Both Sheingold (1973) and Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) have suggested that during periods of greater political change and conflict, the more immediate kinds of information gained by voters during political campaigns may have greater import upon decision making than do more traditional ideological considerations. Sheingold specifically hypothesizes that the social structural and socio-psychological "filtering processes" delineated in the Columbia research would figure less prominently during such times, leaving social influence processes more focused upon campaign stimuli and in greater flux. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur argue that media effects would be heightened.

How increased political conflict and change impact upon the interactions between interpersonal and media orientations to effect change in social influence processes remains largely an open issue. However, in contemporary times the media appear to have become an increasingly important conveyor of political information and influence, both for citizens actively engaged in opinion exchange activities and for those in more passive roles.

REFERENCES

- Andersen, P. A. and Garrison, J. P. Media consumption and population characteristics of political opinion leaders. Communication Quarterly, 1978, 26, 40-48.
- Ball-Rokeach, S. and DeFleur, M. A dependency model of mass-media effects. Communication Research, 1976, 3, 3-21.
- Berelson, B., Lazarsfeld, P. F., and McPhee, W. Voting. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1954.
- Chaffee, S. H. The interpersonal context of mass communication. In F. Kline and P. J. Tichenor (Eds.), Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972.
- Chaffee, S. H. and Choe, S. Y. Time of decision and media use during the Ford-Carter campaign. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1980, 44, 53-69.
- Katz, E. The two-step flow of communication: an up-to-date report on a hypothesis. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1957, 21, 61-78.
- Katz, E. and Lazarsfeld, P.F. Personal Influence. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.
- Lazarsfeld, F., Berelson, B., and Gaudet, H. The People's Choice. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.
- Lin, Nan. The Study of Human Communication. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973.
- Lucas, W. A. and Adams, W. C. Talking, television, and voter indecision. Journal of Communication, 1978, 28, 120-131.
- Mendelsohn, H. and O'Keefe, G. J. The People Choose a President. New York: Praeger, 1976.

- O'Keefe, G. J. Political campaigns and mass communication research. In S. H. Chaffee (Ed.), Political Communication, Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1975.
- O'Keefe, G. J. and Liu, J. First-time voters: Do media matter? Journal of Communication, 1980, 30, 122-129.
- Patterson, T. E. The Mass Media Election: How Americans Choose Their President. New York: Praeger, 1980.
- Robinson, J. P. Interpersonal influence in election campaigns: Two step flow hypotheses. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1976, 40, 304-319.
- Robinson, M. J. Public affairs television and the growth of political malaise: The case of 'The Selling of the Pentagon'. American Political Science Review, 1976, 70, 409-431.
- Rogers, E. The Diffusion of Innovations. New York: Free Press, 1962.
- Rogers, E. Mass media and interpersonal communication. In De Sola Pool and W. Schramm (Eds.), Handbook of Communication. Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1973.
- Sheingold, A. Social networks and voting: The resurrection of a research agenda. American Sociological Review, 1973, 38, 712-720.
- Tan, A.S. Mass media issue knowledge and political involvement. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1980, 44, 241-248.
- Troldahl, V. and Van Dam, R. Face-to-face communications about major topics in the news. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1965-66, 29, 626-634.
- Weiss, W. Effects of the mass media of communication. In G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (Eds.), Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol. 5. Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1970.
- Wright, C. and Cantor, M. The opinion seeker and avoider: steps beyond the opinion leader concept. Pacific Sociological Review, 1967, 10, 33-43.

Opinion Exchange Groups

	Non-discussants	Opinion Seekers	Opinion Givers	Opinion Sharers
High Political Discussion	15%	26%	47%	51%
Interpersonal Dependence	22	41	30	39
Disc. Function				
Sociability	43	16	25	10
Learning	26	58	34	47
Expression	9	6	18	12
High Information Seeking	6	83	16	89
High Information Giving	3	7	66	75
Relatives Disagree	20	26	33	37
Friends Disagree	15	24	29	34
Parent's Discussion	16	15	24	29
Parent's Freedom	44	53	45	59
(N)	(1055)	(335)	(161)	(237)

Table 2. July Mass Media Orientations of Opinion Exchange Groups

	Non-discussants	Opinion Seekers	Opinion Givers	Opinion Sharers
TV News Exposure	51%	47%	56%	59%
Newspaper News Exposure	84	85	92	86
TV Credible	52	53	53	48
Newspaper Credible	40	31	39	35
TV Dependence	45	61	54	59
Newspaper Dependence	54	70	60	68
Magazine Dependence	13	24	31	27
Radio Dependence	17	21	24	32
(N)	(1055)	(335)	(161)	(237)

Table 3. Reported Influence and Time of Decision of
Opinion Exchange Groups

	Non- discussants	Opinion Seekers	Opinion Givers	Opinion Sharers
Hi. Reported Influence	29%	12%	16%	44%
Pre-campaign Deciders	77	67	75	76
(N)	(128)	(47)	(23)	(25)

Table 4. November Mass Media Orientations of Opinion Exchange Groups

	Non- discussants	Opinion Seekers	Opinion Givers	Opinion Sharers
<u>Medium Used for Vote Decision</u>				
TV Used	82%	85%	87%	92%
N.P. Used	79	68	87	92
Mag. Used	26	38	49	44
Radio Used	53	74	52	48
People Used	37	66	61	60
<u>Primary Information Source</u>				
TV	55%	60%	52%	44%
N.P.	32	21	35	40
Mag.	5	4	4	12
Radio	5	2	9	0
People	3	11	0	4
<u>Primary Influence Source</u>				
TV	59%	53%	43%	52%
N.P.	27	17	24	32
Mag.	6	4	4	12
Radio	3	4	9	0
People	5	21	17	4
(N)	(128)	(47)	(23)	(25)

Table 5. Political Orientations of Opinion Exchange Groups

	Non- discussants	Opinion Seekers	Opinion Givers	Opinion Sharers
High Political Interest	20%	27%	52%	54%
High Campaign Interest	34	47	66	68
High Political Knowledge	16	25	57	66
High Voting Concern	58	74	81	83
Party-Affiliated	70	69	73	71
Strong Party Affiliation	28	30	40	34
Voted in '72	51	57	60	60
High Political Powerlessness	42	28	34	29
High Altruism of Politicians	60	61	52	62
High Efficacy of Voting	82	89	89	90
High Political Trust	34	44	42	45
High Political Alienation	43	30	35	28
(N)	(1055)	(335)	(161)	(237)

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of Opinion Exchange Groups

	Non- discussants	Opinion Seekers	Opinion Givers	Opinion Sharers
Age 18-34	35%	55%	32%	48%
Male	47	37	65	60
Attended College	25	30	47	45
\$15,000 + Income	18	22	27	30
Organizational Membership (3+)	10	15	21	18
Length at Residence (5 yr.+)	69	67	70	67
Household Size (3+)	64	80	65	71
(N)	(1055)	(335)	(161)	(237)