

Part III

The Public and Society

PROOF

PROOF

The “Daily Them”

Hybridity, Political Polarization and Presidential Leadership in a Digital Media Age

Matthew A. Baum and Dannagal G. Young

On Tuesday, March 27, 2018, after 21 years off the air, the ABC sitcom, *Roseanne*, featuring Roseanne Barr as the working-class matriarch Roseanne Connor, returned to television. In *Politico Magazine*, *Roseanne*'s executive producer, Bruce Helford explained that the show's return to television was intended to offer America an opportunity to bridge some of the partisan divides that had widened since the election: “There are lots of families that are divided. It's like a civil war ... What's really important to ‘*Roseanne*,’ and for all of us, is to put the whole discourse out in the open ... We're hoping we can bring a kind of dialogue back.”¹

Another executive producer, Whitney Cummings, explained that it seemed like, “a good time for that show to come back, when the election was happening, and the working class was clearly not being heard or represented on network television—and they spoke, and they spoke loudly.”²

By all accounts, the show seemed like an opportunity for the left and the right to laugh at one another and themselves, and perhaps to provide a respite from the toxic, affectively polarized political world of the moment. But then the real-life *Roseanne*, a vocal advocate for President Trump, publicly supported a right-wing conspiracy theory on Twitter.

It had been just six weeks since the shooting deaths of 17 students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and the subsequent formation of the pro-gun control #NeverAgain campaign, spearheaded by a group of Parkland students. Starting on *Achan* and Reddit, then spread through Twitter and by right-wing outlets like Brietbart and InfoWars, various conspiracy theories about Parkland students emerged. A YouTube video (which was later removed by the technology platform) purported to reveal the “truth” about “crisis actor” David Hogg, one of the Parkland students behind the #NeverAgain movement.³ InfoWars producer Alex Jones subsequently produced and aired his own videos questioning who Hogg “really was,” and suggesting he was a pawn of the elite left. Soon thereafter, InfoWars and others argued that during a speech delivered at the *March for our Lives*, a Washington DC rally organized by the Parkland students, David Hogg had performed a Nazi salute.

On the very day that the reboot of *Roseanne*'s show was set to air, Roseanne Barr, took to Twitter in response to a conspiracy theorist who had tagged David Hogg in a tweet, writing: "NAZI SALUTE."

The tweet was soon deleted, and the next day, Barr issued a retraction: "They doctored that picture. He was NOT giving the Nazi Salute!" But the damage was done. For many Americans, it became difficult to separate Roseanne Barr and her pro-Trump politics from her television namesake. Attitudes about the show broke down along starkly partisan lines. According to a poll by YouGov (4/5/18), Republicans had a more favorable view of Roseanne Barr than Democrats by 23 percentage points (53 vs. 30 percent), while viewers of the show were 12 percentage points more likely than non-viewers to approve of President Trump (50 vs. 38 percent). In the same poll, almost 40 percent of Republicans who watched the premier of *Roseanne* indicated that they did so because "the show supports President Trump."⁴

Prominent conservatives from the media to the White House expressed their glee regarding the show's success. *Fox News* host Greg Gutfeld referenced the show's ratings as evidence that Americans are "desperate for a real reflection of the political discussion minus the biased framing from Hollywood and the media."⁵ Conservative commentator Sean Hannity, in turn, tweeted: "The 'proud deplorable' SMASHES expectations." Donald Trump Jr. added: "Wow amazing. Congrats @therealroseanne ... If you're not too busy already maybe work in a late night show too ... seems there's some demand for an alternate viewpoint." President Trump also reveled in the show's success, calling Roseanne Barr to congratulate her and telling a group of union workers in Ohio: "Look at her ratings! Look at her ratings!"⁶ The story also proved irresistible to national press corps. Every major national news outlet, television and print, featured substantial reporting on the show's successful debut and President Trump's subsequent praise of the show's success. Even frequent Trump critics on late night talk shows were discussing it.

But less than two months later, on May 22, 2018, *ABC* unceremoniously canceled the fictional comedy *Roseanne*. The cancellation followed a seemingly racist tweet by the real-life Roseanne Barr, in which she attacked former Obama aid Valerie Jarrett, writing: "Muslim brotherhood & planet of the apes had a baby."

This anecdote illustrates a number of emerging patterns in the contemporary media environment, ranging from the blurring of entertainment and politics to the partisan politicizing of seemingly apolitical entertainment, to the ramifications of almost immediate mass distribution of information, including misinformation, made possible by social media, to the convergence of various media modalities in the digital age.

Our current fragmented media environment increasingly facilitates blending across media forms.⁷ That is, we increasingly observe the combining of categories—like news and entertainment—that were previously assumed to be distinct and fixed.⁸ Media producers experiment with hybridity; novel

combinations of politics and play, information and entertainment.⁹ Especially with the advent of digital technologies and social media, in turn, consumers pick and choose from à la carte menus of media content that to varying degrees combine journalism, entertainment, interpersonal communication, reality television, partisan spin, celebrity news, and interactive experience inviting user input and sharing. Each of these media experiences takes place through the same pipeline (the Internet), often on the same device (increasingly a smartphone), and frequently on the same platform (social media).

This blending of broadly consumed media content gives rise to a related phenomenon, which political communication scholars term “intertextuality.”¹⁰ This refers to the interactive effects of different forms of media content on media consumers. For instance, the ultimate influence of political satire on public opinion results from the manner in which consuming such content mediates consumers’ understanding of other types of content, like news.¹¹ Absent firm boundaries, content, genres, and audiences overlap and *interact* in ways that redefine the role of media in public opinion processes.

While the aforementioned blending and overlapping has characterized the past decade, we propose that so too has a unique historical circumstance in which four seemingly distinct types of political media coexist, competing against one another for the public’s attention while, paradoxically, reinforcing and sustaining each other.¹² These four types of media appeal to quite different audience types, ranging from apolitical entertainment seekers to highly partisan ideologues. They include the *legacy news media*, dominated by the major broadcast networks and national newspapers; the *partisan media*, primarily cable TV news and political talk radio—which one communication scholar¹³ recently termed the second and first generation of partisan media, respectively; *online digital media*, ranging from political blogs to social media to online versions of legacy media outlets; and the *political entertainment media*, consisting of daytime and late-night talk shows, as well as entertainment-oriented and tabloid news magazine outlets, satirical comedy shows, and original comedic or dramatic programming featuring contemporary political themes. The internal logics and audiences for these four media differ, but also overlap and interact in important ways, with profound implications for public opinion and democratic health. We discuss each in turn, including how they interact with one another and the consequences of these dynamics for public opinion and democratic health.

Legacy News Media

From the 1950s through the 1980s, network television created what can be termed an “information commons,” where a broad cross-section of Americans gathered to learn about the events of the day. They may not have agreed on solutions, but with mass exposure to a shared body of content, most Americans had a common understanding of the challenges facing the nation. No longer.

With the advent of cable technologies in the 1980s and the rise of digital media through the 2000s, media fragmentation (the explosion in the number of media outlets available) has effectively “broken up America” into tiny homogeneous niche audiences delineated by interests, psychographics, and political ideology.¹⁴

The combined audiences for the evening newscasts of the “big three” broadcast networks (*ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC*) have fallen from about 55 million in 1980 to 25 million in 2018. According to a 2018 survey,¹⁵ the percentage of Americans indicating that they often get their news from cable TV now exceeds the percentage who report often getting their news from network TV (by 28 to 26 percent). In 2017, 43 percent of the public indicated that they often get news from the Internet, only seven percentage points less than report doing so from television (50 percent). This represents a two-thirds reduction in the TV–Internet usage gap from the prior year (from a 21- to a 7-point TV advantage). The same surveys show that among Americans under 50 years of age, online outlets have already surpassed television as primary sources of news.

These trends hold profound implications for American politics, including for presidential leadership. Whereas network television once afforded presidents an ideal opportunity to communicate with a broad cross-section of the public, today whenever a president takes to the airwaves he must compete with myriad alternative media for the public’s attention. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s, when the president appeared on television, 50–60 million households routinely tuned in to hear what he had to say. In recent years, barely more than half as many Americans watch prime time presidential television appearances.¹⁶

According to data reported by Kernell and Rice, the partisan skew in audiences for presidential television addresses has also increased substantially over the past several decades.¹⁷ Across the 18 prime time presidential addresses they investigated between 1971 and 1995, the gap in audience between members of the president’s party and opposition partisans averaged 2.6 percent. Between 1996 and 2007, the average partisan gap across the 14 appearances for which data were available increased more than fourfold, to 11.8 percent. The partisan gap in audiences for President Trump’s 2018 State of the Union address was even larger, at 18 percentage points (42 percent vs. 25 percent of Republicans and Democrats, respectively). The corresponding gap for President Obama’s second State of the Union address, in 2010, was larger still, at 23 points, and predictably ran in the opposing direction (44 percent vs. 21 percent of Democrats and Republicans, respectively). In short, over time the audience for presidential addresses has increasingly come to be dominated by the president’s fellow partisans. This means that presidents are less able to utilize television appearances to reach out beyond their base.

The major television networks have also grown increasingly hesitant to surrender their airwaves for presidential communication. From the 1960s to the

1980s, whenever the president appeared on television, the major networks would implement the so-called “yellow flag rule,” whereby they would dutifully cover the president while, in effect, suspending competition with one another. Their ratings rarely suffered as a consequence. No longer. According to one report,¹⁸ network executives lost roughly \$30 million in advertising revenue in the first half of 2009 due to preemptions for Obama news conferences. This concern, in turn, prompted one of the “big four” networks (*Fox*) to decline the president’s request for airtime on April 29, 2009. *Fox*’s decision prompted one network executive to comment:

We will continue to make our decisions on White House requests on a case-by-case basis, but the *Fox* decision [to not broadcast Obama’s 4/29/09 press conference] gives us cover to reject a request if we feel that there is no urgent breaking news that is going to be discussed.¹⁹

What little remains of the informational commons has itself become contested partisan territory. Conservatives are significantly more likely to identify the major television networks as having a partisan bias.²⁰ Pew data from 2014 indicates that consistent conservatives—respondents who consistently express conservative political and policy viewpoints in survey questions—distrust 24 of the 36 national news outlets explored in the survey, while consistent liberals trust 28 of them. In fact, the data reveal that the only source that is “trusted” more than “distrusted” by both consistently liberal and consistently conservative Americans is *The Wall Street Journal*. Figure 11.1 presents the trend, from

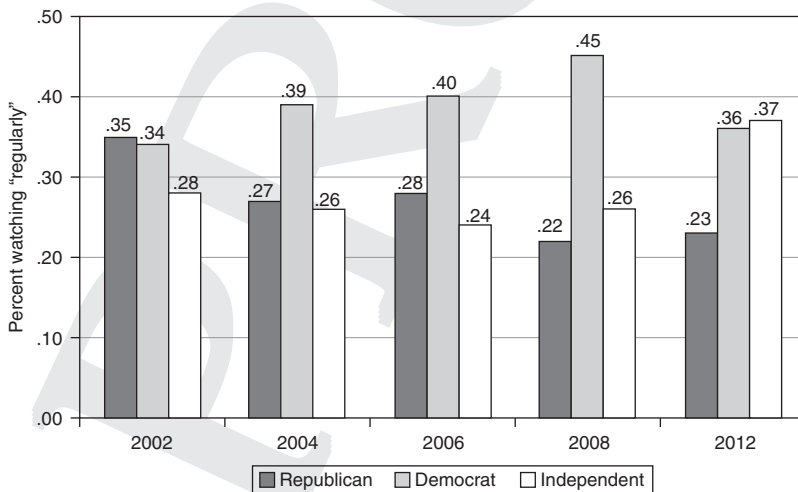


Figure 11.1 Partisan Trend in “Regular” Viewing of Network TV News

2002 to 2012, in partisan viewing of network news, based on self-reports in Pew Center surveys. According to these data, as recently as 2002, Republicans were 7 percentage points more likely than Democrats to describe themselves as regular viewers of network news (35 vs. 28 percent). By 2012 the self-described network audience was composed of over 50 percent more Democrats than Republicans (36 vs. 23 percent “regular” viewers). Interestingly, among Democrats this represents somewhat of a decline from 2008, mostly due to migration away from broadcast television and toward cable news (primarily *MSNBC*) and the Internet.

The news values of legacy journalism, in turn, make it a distinctly difficult environment for political communication. In particular, the perceived newsworthiness of negativity and novelty strongly skew news coverage of politics. For instance, in the former case, Patterson reports, in a study of the 2016 US election,²¹ that from August to November 2016 (the period of the general election) fully 71 percent of news coverage of the Democratic and Republican candidates was negative. This represents a three-fold increase over 1960. In his examination of press coverage of the first 100 days of the Trump Presidency,²² Patterson concludes, “Trump’s coverage during his first 100 days set a new standard for negativity.” Results from the Shorenstein Center analysis showed that fully 4 out of every 5 news stories about President Trump were negative, compared to only 2 out of every 5 in the case of Obama during a comparable time frame from his presidency.²³

Part of the negativity bias is attributable to the shifting *style* of news coverage of the president, with the politicians’ own words increasingly supplanted by the interpretations of journalists. For instance, the average presidential soundbite on the evening news—that is, a president speaking in his own words—declined from about 40 seconds in 1968 to 7.8 seconds in 2004.²⁴ This means that journalists’ relatively negative coverage of the presidency increasingly dominates news broadcasts.

With respect to novelty, Patterson finds that horserace coverage—reporting on the latest polls, who is up and who is down, etc.—dominated the 2016 campaign. He reports that 42 percent of all coverage of the post-convention campaign featured the horserace, compared to 10 percent focused on the candidates’ policy positions.²⁵ Journalists report on the horserace because, while candidates’ policy positions typically remain constant over the course of a campaign—and have been covered at length by the time the fall campaign is under way—a candidate’s status in public opinion polls can change on a daily basis, thus remaining novel.

This combination of audiences smaller in size and narrower in breadth, along with generally skeptical treatment by reporters of nearly any presidential statement or policy proposal, means that legacy news outlets have lost much of their utility to presidents as vehicles for reaching out beyond their political bases to form broad support coalitions.

Partisan Media

Partisan media, by which we refer primarily to cable news networks (the second generation of partisan media) and political talk radio (the first generation), differ in important ways from their traditional media cousins.²⁶ For instance, on cable television, especially *Fox News* and *MSNBC*, hosts of various news “analysis” programs self-consciously seek to appeal to relatively narrow niches of the public. Rather than seeking to be all things to all people—as the major networks did during their heyday—partisan media try to provide content that more closely fits the preferences of particular subgroups of the public. In news and politics, the primary dimension upon which they have differentiated themselves is ideology.

Over the last 50 years, stemming from social and cultural shifts in the 1960s, the Democratic and Republican parties have moved farther apart from each other ideologically and on matters of public policy.²⁷ This trend toward ideological polarization has accelerated over the last 20 years. The Pew Research Center has documented how the ideological positioning of the average Democrat has moved left while that of the average Republican has moved to the right, contributing to an ever-shrinking political center.²⁸ Perhaps even more troublesome is the rise of “affective polarization”²⁹ (see Chapter 4 of this volume). That is, partisans of both parties rate members of the opposing party less favorably now than in the past. Affective polarization, in turn, gives rise to a socially motivated form of “tribalism” in which party identification is reframed as social identity rather than a consequence of issue positions.

Reflecting the polarized electorate, American cable news programming includes channels aimed primarily at liberals (*MSNBC*), conservatives (*Fox*), and moderates (*CNN*). Political talk radio, perhaps due to its long tradition dating back to the Great Depression—of favoring anti-government, populist themes—disproportionately leans to the right.³⁰ In 2016, for instance, the five most highly-rated political talk shows on the radio were all hosted by conservatives. Collectively, conservative hosts accounted for 89 percent of the political talk radio audience in 2017.³¹

In news content analysis, in turn, Baum and Groeling³² found substantial, and sometimes dramatic, differences in the ideological skew of news content from left- and right-leaning cable news outlets. For instance, a news content analysis indicated that between 2004 and 2007 *Fox News* presented substantially less critical coverage of Iraq than *CNN* or the broadcast networks.

According to Pew data from 2014, in spite of conservatives’ low trust in mainstream news organizations, 88 percent of consistent conservatives reported trusting *Fox News*.³³ Interestingly, *MSNBC* (the liberal cable counterpart to *Fox*) does not play a symmetrical role for liberals. Instead, liberals include *NPR*, *PBS* and the *BBC* among their most trusted news sources.³⁴ The role played

by *Fox News* for conservatives is unique and consequential. With low trust of just about every other news outlet, *Fox News* is *the* trusted news source for conservatives. This “special relationship”³⁵ between *Fox News* and its audience has become especially important during the presidency of Donald Trump, in which an increasingly apparent feedback loop exists between the content of *Fox News* programming (especially from the morning show, *Fox and Friends*, and the opinion show, *Hannity*) and the agenda and rhetoric of the President (mostly expressed through Twitter).³⁶

Consumers, in turn, are not passive recipients of whatever messages a given media outlet presents. Rather, they evaluate the credibility, and hence persuasiveness, of media messages, in part by assessing the credibility of the messenger (the speaker) and the media outlet, as well as the costliness of the message to the speaker. In an experiment,³⁷ Baum and Groeling found that typical individuals exposed to the identical praise or criticism of the president’s handling of national security issues by members of Congress differed systematically in their assessments of the information’s reliability, depending on the party of the speaker, the speaker’s perceived incentives vis-à-vis the message (that is, whether praise or criticism of the president was, for that messenger, self-serving or costly), and the perceived ideological orientation of the media outlet. While media outlet reputations are perhaps most stark on cable TV, increasing numbers of consumers—primarily, albeit not exclusively, Republicans and Independents—also view the *legacy* news media as ideologically biased (in a liberal direction), thereby allowing them to more easily discount information inconsistent with their prior beliefs.

As the range of options available to consumers seeking political information has expanded, making available media environments that closely match their personal political preferences, audiences have increasingly self-selected into ideologically friendly political news outlets. For instance, according to data from Scarborough research,³⁸ graphically illustrated in Figure 11.2, in 2000 the differential between Republican and Democratic viewers of *CNN*, *Fox*, and *MSNBC* were 4, 8, and 2 percentage points, respectively. By 2009, these gaps had expanded to 30, 20, and 27 percentage points, respectively, with Democrats all but abandoning *Fox* in favor of *CNN* and *MSNBC* and Republicans moving in the opposite direction.

Digital News Media

Of course, some, perhaps many, consumers seek out online news from across the ideological spectrum. Indeed, evidence³⁹ suggests they do so to a greater extent on the Internet than on cable. While some additional research⁴⁰ suggests that broad news-gathering strategies are primarily limited to political sophisticates, the “high-choice media environment” facilitated through digital technologies is nonetheless particularly amenable to ideological self-selection. For instance, according to an October 2014 Pew Center study,

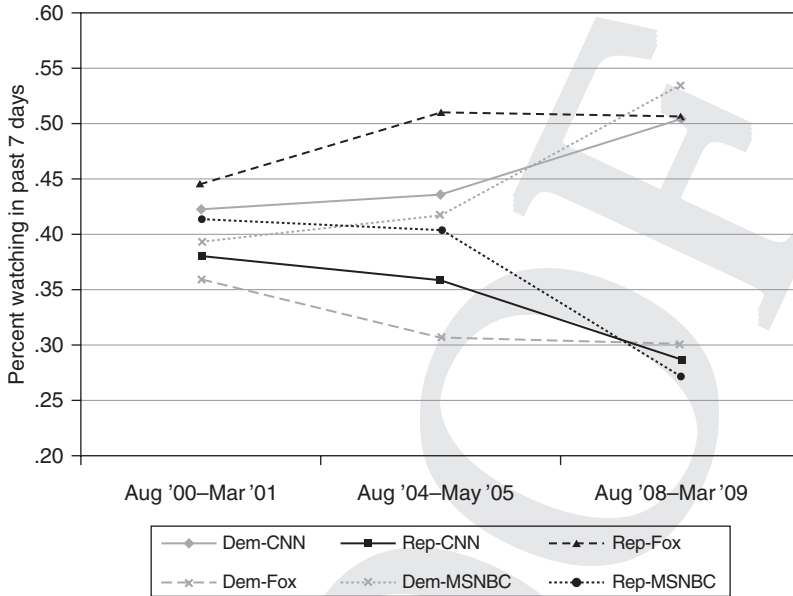


Figure 11.2 Trend in Partisan Viewing of CNN, Fox, and MSNBC

59 percent of readers of the left-leaning HuffingtonPost.com blogsite defined themselves as consistently or mostly liberal, compared to only 17 percent who defined themselves as consistently or mostly conservative. On the right, 79 percent of Breitbart.com’s readers defined themselves as consistently or mostly conservative, compared to 8 percent defining themselves as consistently or mostly liberal.

Digital media clearly lower the costs of entering like-minded news echo chambers. Yet, some recent evidence calls into question the prevalence of so-called “filter bubbles.”⁴¹ This research suggests that in spite of the homogeneity of some individual program audiences, “news audience duplication” (overlapping of audiences across diverse outlets) may be relatively more widespread than previously assumed.⁴² For instance, contrary to the assumption that audience fragmentation is especially prevalent online, Fletcher and Nielsen⁴³ find evidence that audience fragmentation is comparable on- and offline. What this research has not established to date, however, is the underlying motivations of individuals consuming political information from across partisan lines (e.g., a liberal watching *Fox News* or a conservative watching *MSNBC*). It is, for instance, unclear whether such an individual is engaging in “news grazing” (that is, sampling stories from a variety of sources) or “opposition research” (that is, reinforcing their preexisting negative beliefs about the “other side”).

Perhaps most importantly, despite the fact that individuals increasingly encounter isolated political stories through searches and incidentally through social media, legacy news organizations remain the dominant players online.⁴⁴

It seems that the broadly networked logic of social media could potentially complicate some of these trends toward audience political segmentation. After all, typical social networks on the most popular social media sites, like Twitter and Facebook, are not organized around political partisanship or ideology. In theory, Facebook might expose a typical user to a diverse range of political views, depending on the interests and leanings of members of their social network. To the extent a Facebook user chooses his or her “friends” at least in part based upon non-political considerations, the resulting network ought to include *at least some* ideological diversity. For instance, according to Bakshy et al.’s study of the ideological heterogeneity of Facebook friend networks, around 20 percent of the friend networks of people who report *their own* ideologies in their personal profiles as being liberal, moderate, or conservative consist of individuals who hold opposing ideologies (e.g., a liberal having conservative friends, or vice versa).⁴⁵ Survey data support this conjecture even more strongly. In a 2012 Pew Center survey, 73 percent of social media users whose friends post political content indicated that they “only sometimes” or “never” agree with their friends’ political postings, compared to only 25 percent who “always” or “mostly” agree with their friends’ political postings.⁴⁶ Recent work in this area indicates that “incidental exposure” to opposing political points of view through social media is widespread, especially among younger and less politically interested users.⁴⁷ Additional research has found that use of social media and search engines are actually associated with *more*, not less, exposure to information from opposing political points of view.⁴⁸

However, upon further scrutiny, it is unclear whether, or to what extent, social media do actually change the dynamics of self-selection in the hyper-fragmented media marketplace. For instance, in the same 2012 Pew survey described above, fully two-thirds of the aforementioned social media users indicated that when they disagree with others’ political posts, they ignore them. Moreover, on Twitter, political discourse appears to be disproportionately shaped by ideological extremes. One study⁴⁹ found that members of Congress were more likely to adopt Twitter as they became increasingly ideologically extreme (to the left or right). The same study found that ideological extremists had more Twitter followers than their less-extreme counterparts. These findings suggest that social media are subject to the same sorts of niche appeals as other media, while the Pew survey results suggest that typical SNS users do not check their capacity to discount what they perceive as non-credible information at the social network site door. Rather, they appear to be employing the same credibility assessment strategies within social network sites as they do in the traditional news media.

Meanwhile, some evidence points to the potential for social media to facilitate the reevaluation of users’ issue positions and political beliefs—even in

cross-partisan contexts.⁵⁰ Data indicate that one out of every five social media users report modifying their stance on an issue due to something they saw online. Seventeen percent of social media users reported having changed their views on a candidate due to information shared through social media. Additional experimental research finds similar patterns for cable news.⁵¹

Of course, whether these reconsiderations of opinion are normatively good or bad depends on the nature and credibility of the information that shaped them. Unfortunately, in a social media context, information from various sources (sometimes of dubious credibility) is shared among friends, family, and colleagues without consideration for the journalistic integrity of that content. Without the formal “gate-keepers” (editors, producers, and fact-checkers) that filter out misinformation from legacy media content, social media are akin to the Wild West of the political information environment.⁵² As the 2016 presidential election demonstrated, extreme partisan messages—some of which constitute misinformation—are widely distributed on social media sites.⁵³ Social media platforms employ complex algorithms, based on a variety of factors, to determine which stories an individual user is likely to encounter on their news feed. These algorithms can be manipulated by partisans or fake news purveyors in a variety of ways to increase the odds that typical individuals will encounter and consume partisan messages, even if they are not ideologically predisposed to accept them.⁵⁴ For instance, one study asked survey respondents if they were familiar with a set of fake news stories from the 2016 campaign. Between 10 and 22 percent of respondents indicated that they had seen or read the fake news stories. Moreover, 70–80 percent of those who saw the stories believed them to be true.⁵⁵

The effects of incidental exposure to such partisan news via social media may be greatest among a crucial segment of voters: non-partisans. Recent research⁵⁶ shows that people who prefer entertainment over political news are more strongly influenced by partisan news than their news-preferring counterparts. Given that most stories—including partisan news—appearing on an individual’s news feed have been shared by that individual’s friends (Facebook) or followers (Twitter), users are more likely to view them as credible than had they emanated from unknown sources. Consequently, partisan news, including fake news, delivered via social media, can have a disproportionate influence on consumers’ attitudes and behavior, especially among non-partisans.

Yet, even among partisans, the effects of exposure to information through social media can be profound as well. The capacity of individuals to discriminate between credible and non-credible information, based on perceptions of shared political interests, makes social media ideally suited for political mobilization and “get out the vote” efforts. By providing “red meat to the base,” presidents, parties, and interest groups can rally supporters to organize in their communities to support policy proposals, as well as to turn out at elections. More effective local organizing of core supporters can also, indirectly, enhance leaders’ capacities to broaden their support coalitions, by transforming their

core supporters into messengers charged with reaching out beyond the base. For instance, in 2009, former President Barack Obama launched an aggressive email campaign in support of the Affordable Care Act, primarily aimed at inspiring core supporters to become active advocates of his healthcare reform policy in their communities.⁵⁷

Political Entertainment

Regular consumers of overtly political news, online or offline, continue to constitute a surprising small proportion of the American public. According to the Pew Research Center,⁵⁸ in 2017, only 26 percent of Americans report getting news from network television “often.” The percentages of respondents who report “often” getting news from other sources include 28 percent from cable television, 37 percent from local television, 25 percent from radio, and 18 percent from print. While the rates of news consumption from online sources are increasing, as of 2017, still only 43 percent of Americans reported receiving news “often” from online sources. Narrowing our focus to sources for *political* news, The Pew Research Center⁵⁹ reports that 78 percent of survey local respondents reported learning about the 2016 presidential election from television, including 57 percent from local TV news, 54 percent from cable TV news, 49 percent from broadcast network newscasts, and 25 percent from late-night comedy shows. The corresponding percentage from digital media included 48 percent from news websites or apps and 44 percent from social networking sites. For print newspapers and radio, in turn, the percentages were 44 and 36, respectively.

As Markus Prior’s work illustrates,⁶⁰ when the media environment becomes more fragmented, people with little interest in political information have an increased opportunity to avoid political content altogether, opting instead for entertainment programming. Yet, the many millions of Americans who eschew most legacy news outlets—those who rarely read news online, watch cable news, or encounter political content through social media—are nonetheless exposed to at least *some* political information via political entertainment programming. Political entertainment programming includes content designed chiefly as entertainment, but that includes political themes, issues, and people. Such content includes daytime and late-night talk shows, entertainment-oriented news outlets and tabloids, satirical and parody-oriented comedy shows and Internet sites, as well as political dramas or sitcoms with political themes.

According to Pew, in 2016, 25 percent of Americans reported learning about the presidential election from late-night comedy programs.⁶¹ In 2018, network late-night comedy shows, hosted by Stephen Colbert on CBS’s *Late Show*, Jimmy Fallon on NBC’s *Tonight Show*, and Jimmy Kimmel on ABC’s *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, boasted 4 million, 2.8 million, and 2.2 million nightly viewers, respectively.⁶² With opening monologues crafted from the political headlines of the day, and occasional interviews with political guests, the late-night shows have become part of the American political diet.

Given the ability for major portions of the electorate to avoid legacy journalism, partisan news, and digital news media,⁶³ it is unsurprising that politicians use entertainment media—especially talk shows—to reach out beyond their bases. After all, as described by Sam Popkin, politicians are “crowd-seeking missiles.”⁶⁴ In addition to reaching large audiences, entertainment-oriented talk show interviews tend to present candidates in a more favorable light than traditional political interview shows.⁶⁵ When then-candidate, Donald Trump, appeared as a guest on *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon in September 2016, he was able to avoid controversial topics altogether, instead getting to reminisce about his childhood home and getting his hair playfully “mussed” by the host.⁶⁶ Moreover, compared to the typical audience for traditional political interview shows such as ABC’s *This Week*, the audiences for entertainment-oriented talk shows are *less* politically engaged, *less* ideologically extreme and *less* partisan.⁶⁷ Consequently, a political message is *more* likely to persuade viewers of entertainment-oriented talk shows than the relatively more partisan and ideologically extreme audiences of typical traditional news venues.⁶⁸ In short, appearances on daytime and late-night entertainment-oriented talk shows, or other similar programs, afford politicians one of their best opportunities to reach a large group of potentially persuadable voters in a relatively sympathetic venue.

A similar phenomenon has occurred online. For instance, on March 11, 2014, President Obama appeared on an online interview program hosted by the comedy website *Funny or Die* in an effort to promote the healthcare.gov website. The interview, which appeared on the program “Between Two Ferns with Zach Galifianakis,” was a huge hit, attracting over three million views in the first few hours and driving a 40 percent increase in traffic to healthcare.gov, as well as a 33 percent spike in online enrollments in the ACA.⁶⁹

Of course, not all late-night comedy programs are alike. Existing alongside the lighter, often pop-culture and celebrity-oriented network comedy shows and daytime talk shows is a parallel niche of political satire-oriented talk shows, like *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* on Comedy Central, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* on HBO, and *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* on TBS. These shows cater to more politically sophisticated and ideological viewers and concentrate exclusively on political issues and matters of public policy. Their in-depth treatment of low-salience issues renders them particularly well positioned to cultivate knowledge and opinion on some less familiar topics. Research on the influence of John Oliver’s satirical coverage of the Net Neutrality debate in 2014, for example, points to higher rates of knowledge regarding this complex technological issue following exposure.⁷⁰ Additional research indicates that exposure to Oliver’s program was a central predictor of familiarity with the issue of Net Neutrality and of support for Net Neutrality protections.⁷¹ Such findings have led scholars to encourage the conceptualization of satirists as “information subsidizers,”⁷² who are “... controlling the availability and interpretation of information about issues.”⁷³

Additionally, scholars are increasingly investigating political narratives as yet another subcategory of political entertainment. From films⁷⁴ to dramatic television series,⁷⁵ to popular documentaries,⁷⁶ dramatic narrative is emerging as an important component in shaping how people understand their political and social worlds. Because of narrative's ability to ignite empathy for protagonists and "transport" viewers into fictional worlds,⁷⁷ entertainment programs that feature political and social issues, like Netflix' *Orange is the New Black* or Amazon's *Transparent*, are viable avenues for political understanding and belief formation.

Hybridity

We have separated these four distinct media forms for the purposes of analytic clarity, as discussed at the outset. Yet, above all, today's media environment is characterized by overlapping and intermingling content, genres, and audiences. Fueled by the horizontal, many-to-many networked nature of the digital world, legacy, partisan, digital, and entertainment media interact and blend in ways that make their unique influences difficult (perhaps impossible) to isolate. Take, for example, one individual late-night comedy joke. As a late-night host makes jokes about news headlines from that day, audience members bring various attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge to that monologue. Depending on their exposure to related stories through legacy or cable news, and based on their interactions with related content online, the meaning, appreciation, and impact of that one joke might vary dramatically.

Then, there is the subsequent impact of that joke on the broader, splintered information environment. When Colbert or Kimmel make a particularly aggressive joke targeting the Trump administration, it often *becomes* news through what scholars call media "meta-coverage."⁷⁸ Celebrities and public officials might interact with that story online, after which *those* communications become fodder for yet *more stories* through legacy and partisan media outlets. These kinds of exchanges, fueled by tribal loyalties, tend to deepen the already existing cleavages between the left and the right.

This very dynamic played out on May 30, 2018 when comedian Samantha Bee, host of the TBS network's liberal satire program, *Full Frontal*, referred to President Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, as a "feckless c*nt" during a segment about immigrant parents being separated from their children per the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" immigration policy. From legacy news programs to partisan cable opinion shows, media hosts weighed in on the appropriateness of Bee's line. Even President Trump chimed in on Twitter, "Why aren't they firing no talent Samantha Bee for the horrible language used on her low ratings show?" *NBC Nightly News* covered the Bee/Trump exchange, including Bee's apology and subsequent statements about the broader issue of immigrant family separation. The report even quoted Bee as saying, "We spent the day wrestling with the repercussions of one bad word, when we all should

have spent the day incensed that as a nation we are wrenching children from their parents and treating people legally seeking asylum as criminals.”⁷⁹

In the blended media environment, real world events quickly transform from factual occurrences to socially constructed symbols that are borrowed, digested, and reframed. From an NFL player “taking a knee” to protest police brutality against people of color to LeBron James announcing that neither the Golden State Warriors nor the Cleveland Cavaliers would accept an invitation to the White House if they won the NBA Championship, these mediated “moments” become partisan symbols that signal political meaning for our ever-polarized left and right. When mediated moments become partisan signals, the information that is communicated is secondary to the source communicating it. So, in addition to processes of selective exposure to ideologically consonant political information, a concept dating back to Campbell and colleagues’⁸⁰ 1960 work, the public also engages in ideologically driven assessments of source credibility.

Contemporary citizens possess, arguably to a greater extent than their predecessors, the means to engage in a multipronged dissonance-avoidance strategy. Selective exposure—avoiding dissonant information altogether—presumably represents the first such prong. However, even when this first defense mechanism fails and individuals are exposed to ideologically hostile news—which some of the aforementioned research suggests remains fairly common both on- and offline—they increasingly possess the means to systematically discount it by assigning ideological reputations to individual sources and media outlets. In other words, as previously discussed research by Baum and Groeling⁸¹ suggests, consumers appear also to selectively accept or reject information to which they are exposed based on its perceived credibility.⁸² Credibility assessments, in turn, depend on the perceived ideological leaning of the outlet presenting the information, as well as on the content of the information itself (e.g., its perceived costliness).

At the heart of these cognitive processes is the concept of ideology as social identity—that is, political belief systems that are tied to “who we are” rather than just “what we believe.” These highly ego-involved considerations affect media selection behaviors as well as informational processing goals. Slater has sought to capture these dynamics through his “reinforcing spirals model” (RSM) in which social cognitive mechanisms that guide media selection and processing help individuals maintain and reinforce (rather than change) preexisting attitudes.⁸³ In Slater’s model, threats to social identity (e.g., during election campaigns, when opposing ideologies are ascendant, or in times of economic or social crisis) increase typical individuals’ tendency to seek out attitude- and identity-consistent information. As such threats recede, so too does the motivation for such selective attention.⁸⁴

Given the centrality of political ideology in the current American political context, according to the RSM, these polarizing processes fueled by media selectivity ought to be at their peak. Against this hybrid media backdrop,

whether you see Roseanne Barr as a hero or a villain, whether you believe that Parkland shooting survivor David Hogg is a “crisis actor” (he isn’t) or a student activist, and whether you feel that liberals are trying to abolish the 2nd Amendment or work for common-sense gun laws, all of these beliefs converge and are reinforced through identity-affirming media exposure. All of these beliefs then shape how individuals receive and process subsequent information and how they assess credibility, thereby driving the left and right even farther apart from one another.

Conclusion

The information commons, and the common civic space for public affairs dialogue it created, has not entirely disappeared, nor has the capacity of presidents to use the media as a tool for building broader support constituencies. That said, current trends toward ever more polarization, consumer self-selection and increasingly sophisticated information filtering and media targeting of consumer preferences all appear to portend a trend toward greater audience fragmentation and hence continued shrinking of the media commons. With political ideology and identity so closely linked in this political moment, processes of self-selection and avoidance coupled with selective perception and credibility assessments will almost certainly fuel more polarizing media spirals.⁸⁵ The end result may be what Cass Sunstein terms “cyberbalkanization,” where the media commons is largely supplanted by a “daily me” in which consumers encounter only the news and information they want, most of which tends to confirm rather than challenge their preexisting attitudes.⁸⁶ Or worse, as media outlets chase their increasingly polarized audiences, Sunstein’s “daily me” may be replaced by a “daily them” in which consumers encounter finger-pointing content that they use to construct, maintain, and reinforce divisions and out-groups.

Regardless, as the developments we review in this chapter make clear, traditional communications channels are increasingly foreclosed, even as new ones emerge. Different channels, in turn, reach different audiences, and so privilege different communication strategies, different forms of leadership, and ultimately different policies. Given the enormity and speed of the changes in this marketplace, the potential consequences for democratic participation and the strategic landscape for politicians, the evolution of the communication environment within which our politics are contested seems likely to play a central role in shaping the future course of American democracy.

Notes

- 1 Weiss, J. (2018). How Trump inspired the ‘Roseanne’ reboot. *Politico*. March 26, www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/03/26/roseanne-reboot-trump-voters-217711.

- 2 Gray, E. (2018). “Roseanne” & Whitney Cummings: How the Penn grad helped bring ABC’s long-ago hit back to TV. Philly.com. March 26, www2.philly.com/philly/entertainment/television/roseanne-whitney-cummings-abc-penn-20180326.html.
- 3 Graham, J. (2018). “Crisis actors” YouTube video removed after it tops “trending” videos. *USA Today*. February 21, www.usatoday.com/story/tech/talkingtech/2018/02/21/crisis-actors-youtube-david-hogg-video-removed-after-tops-trending-video/360107002/.
- 4 <https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2018/04/05/roseanne-back-does-her-comedy-trump-politics>.
- 5 www.lipstickalley.com/threads/donald-trump-calls-roseanne-to-congratulate-her-on-ratings-success.1510391/.
- 6 www.politico.com/story/2018/03/29/trump-roseanne-praise-ratings-492267.
- 7 Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. NYU Press, New York; Chadwick, A. (2017). *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- 8 Baym, G. (2017). Journalism and the hybrid condition: Long-form television drama at the intersections of news and narrative. *Journalism*, 18(1), 11–26.
- 9 Baym, G. (2010). *From Cronkite to Colbert: The Evolution of Broadcast News* (p. 5). Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, CO; Williams, B. A. & Carpini, M. X. D. (2011). *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 10 Gray, J. (2006). *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, Parody, and Intertextuality*. Routledge, New York.
- 11 Brewer, P. R., Young, D. G., & Morreale, M. (2013). The impact of real news about “fake news”: Intertextual processes and political satire. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 25(3), 323–343; Brewer, P. R., Young, D. G., Lambe, J. L., Hoffman, L. H., & Collier, J. (2018). “Seize your moment, my lovely trolls”: News, satire, and public opinion about net neutrality. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 23.
- 12 We employ this four-category division for convenience. Depending on how one parses these different media, this number could be higher or lower.
- 13 Hemmer, N. (2016). *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA.
- 14 Turow, J. (2007). *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL.
- 15 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2018). Fewer Americans rely on TV news: What type they watch varies by who they are. January 5, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/05/fewer-americans-rely-on-tv-news-what-type-they-watch-varies-by-who-they-are/.
- 16 Kernell, S. & Rice, L. L. (2011). Cable and the partisan polarization of the president’s audience. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 41(4), 693–711.
- 17 Kernell, S. & Rice, L. L. (2011). Cable and the partisan polarization of the president’s audience. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 41(4), 693–711. See also Baum, M. and Kernell, S. (2006). How cable ended the golden age of presidential television: 1969–2006, in S. Kernell and S. S. Smith, eds., *The Principles and Practice of American Politics*, Congressional Quarterly Press, Washington DC.
- 18 John Consoli, Obama drama: Nets take a stand against primetime pre-emptions, *The Hollywood Reporter*. May 7, 2009, www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/obama-drama-83575 (Accessed 10/30/14).

- 19 Consoli, Obama drama.
- 20 Pew Research Center (2014). Political polarization and media habits, www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/
- 21 Patterson, Thomas E. (2016). Media coverage of the 2016 Election. Report available at: <https://shorensteincenter.org/research-media-coverage-2016-election/>.
- 22 Patterson, Thomas E. (2017). News coverage of Donald Trump's first 100 days. Report available at: <https://shorensteincenter.org/news-coverage-donald-trumps-first-100-days/>.
- 23 Patterson, Thomas E. (2017). News coverage of Donald Trump's first 100 days. Report available at: <https://shorensteincenter.org/news-coverage-donald-trumps-first-100-days/>.
- 24 Daniel Hallin (1994). *We Keep America on Top of the World: Television Journalism and the Public Sphere*. Routledge, London.
- 25 Patterson (2016). Media Coverage of the 2016 Election.
- 26 We are not including here the print media, which certainly includes partisan print media—newspapers and magazines. We would argue that TV and radio (as well as online) play more central roles in the contemporary partisan media milieu. For instance, according to a 2014 Pew Center survey, only 3 percent of so-called “consistent conservatives” cited newspapers as sources of political news, and all of these referred to “local newspapers” (some of which may be overtly partisan). The only other mention of print media was *The New York Times*, among “consistent liberals,” www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/.
- 27 Carmines, E. G. & Stimson, J. A. (1989). *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ; Layman, G. C., Carsey, T. M., & Horowitz, J. M. (2006). Party polarization in American politics: Characteristics, causes, and consequences. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 9, 83–110, p. 86.
- 28 Pew Research Center (2014). Political polarization in the American public. June 12, www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/.
- 29 Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, not ideology: A social identity perspective on polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 76(3), 405–431.
- 30 Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right*.
- 31 Source: Arbitron ratings.
- 32 Baum, Matthew A. and Tim Groeling (2008). New media and the polarization of American political discourse. *Political Communication*, 25: 345–365.
- 33 Pew Research Center. (2014). Political polarization and media habits, www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/.
- 34 Pew Research Center. (2014). Political polarization and media habits, www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/.
- 35 Turow, J. (2007). *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- 36 Nuzzi, O. (2018). Donald Trump and Sean Hannity like to talk before bedtime. *New York Magazine*. May 13, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/05/sean-hannity-donald-trump-late-night-calls.html>; Sherman, G. (2018). “A safe space for Trump:” Inside the feedback loop between the President and Fox News. *Vanity Fair*. January 11, www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/01/inside-the-feedback-loop-between-the-president-and-fox-news.
- 37 Baum and Groeling, *War Stories*.

- 38 Reported in Kernell and Rice, *Cable and Partisan Polarization*; and Feltus, Will (2009). Cable news bias? Audiences say “yes.” *National Media Research, Planning, and Placement*.
- 39 Matthew Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro, Ideological segregation online and offline, NBER Working Paper 15916 (April 2010), www.nber.org/papers/w15916.pdf.
- 40 Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. *How Partisan Media Polarize America*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- 41 See Zuiderveen Borgesius, F., Trilling, D., Moeller, J., Bodó, B., de Vreese, C. H., & Helberger, N. (2016). Should we worry about filter bubbles? *Internet Policy Review* 5(1); Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 298–320; Fletcher, R. & Nielsen, R. K. (2017). Are news audiences increasingly fragmented? A cross-national comparative analysis of cross-platform news audience fragmentation and duplication. *Journal of Communication*, 67(4), 476–498.
- 42 Fletcher, R. & Nielsen, R. K. (2017). Are news audiences increasingly fragmented? A cross-national comparative analysis of cross-platform news audience fragmentation and duplication. *Journal of Communication*, 67(4), 476–498.
- 43 Fletcher & Nielsen (2017).
- 44 Baum, M. A. & Potter, P. B. (2015). *War and Democratic Constraint: How the Public Influences Foreign Policy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ; Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 298–320.
- 45 Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348 (6239), 1130–1132.
- 46 Ranie, L. & Smith, A. (2012). Social networking and politics. *Pew Research Center*. March 12, www.pewinternet.org/2012/03/12/social-networking-sites-and-politics/.
- 47 Fletcher, R. & Nielsen, R. K. (2017). Are people incidentally exposed to news on social media? A comparative analysis. *New Media & Society*, 1461444817724170.
- 48 Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 298–320.
- 49 Hong, Sounman. 2011. Who benefits from Twitter? Social media and political competition in the U.S. House of Representatives. Typescript. Harvard Kennedy School.
- 50 Pew Research Center (2016), www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/07/social-media-causes-some-users-to-rethink-their-views-on-an-issue/.
- 51 De Benedictis-Kessner, J., M. A. Baum, A. Berinsky, and T. Yamamoto, 2018. Persuading the enemy: Estimating the persuasive effects of partisan media with the preference-incorporating choice and assignment design. Unpublished manuscript, Harvard and MIT.
- 52 Young, D. G. (2017). The return of the gatekeepers. *Neiman Journalism Lab*, www.niemanlab.org/2016/12/the-return-of-the-gatekeepers/.
- 53 Vosoughi, S., D. Roy, and S. Aral. 2018. The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, www.americanvoiceforfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/The-spread-of-true-and-false-news-online.pdf.
- 54 Lazer, D. M., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F., ... & Schudson, M. (2018). The science of fake news. *Science*, 359(6380), 1094–1096, <http://science.sciencemag.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/content/359/6380/1094.full>.

- 55 Nyhan, Brendan. 2017. Conference presentation at “Combatting Fake News: An Agenda for Research and Action,” Cambridge University, February 17, 2017.
- 56 de Benedictis-Kessner et al. (2018).
- 57 Barack Obama, e-mail to supporters, September 9, 2009.
- 58 Bialik, K. & Matsa, K. E. (2017). Key trends in social and digital news media. *Pew Research Center*. October 4, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/10/04/key-trends-in-social-and-digital-news-media/.
- 59 Pew Research Center (2016). The 2016 Presidential Campaign—a news event that’s hard to miss, February, www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/02/PJ_2016.02.04_election-news_FINAL.pdf.
- 60 Prior, M. (2007). *Post-broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- 61 Pew Research Center (2016), www.journalism.org/2016/02/04/the-2016-presidential-campaign-a-news-event-thats-hard-to-miss/.
- 62 www.vulture.com/2018/04/late-night-ratings-early-2018-cobert-fallon.html.
- 63 Prior, *Post-broadcast Democracy*.
- 64 Popkin, S. L. (2006). Changing media, changing politics. *Perspectives on Politics*, 4(2), 327–341.
- 65 Baum, M. A. (2005). Talking the vote: Why presidential candidates hit the talk show circuit. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 213–234.
- 66 Rubin, R. (2017). Jimmy Fallon opens up about that Trump hair ruffle. *Variety*. May 17, <https://variety.com/2017/tv/news/fallon-trump-hair-c-1202430621/>.
- 67 Matthew A. Baum, *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2003.
- 68 Matthew A. Baum, “Talking the vote: Why presidential candidates hit the talk show circuit,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (April 2005): 213–234.
- 69 Blake, A. (2014). ‘Between Two Ferns’ video leads to 40 percent more visits to HealthCare.gov. *The Washington Post*. March 12, www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/03/12/between-two-ferns-video-leads-to-40-percent-more-visits-to-healthcare-gov/?utm_term=.cb0ed4777c2e.
- 70 Becker, A. B. & Bode, L. (2017). Satire as a source for learning? The differential impact of news versus satire exposure on net neutrality knowledge gain. *Information, Communication & Society*. Advance online publication, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1301517>.
- 71 Brewer, P. R., Young, D. G., Lambe, J. L., Hoffman, L. H., & Collier, J. (2018). “Seize your moment, my lovely trolls”: News, satire, and public opinion about net neutrality. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 23.
- 72 Gandy, O. H., Jr. (1980). Information in health: Subsidised news? *Media, Culture and Society*, 2(2), 101–115.
- 73 Gandy (1980), p. 104.
- 74 Igartua, J. J. & Barrios, I. (2012). Changing real-world beliefs with controversial movies: Processes and mechanisms of narrative persuasion. *Journal of Communication*, 62(3), 514–531.
- 75 Slater, M. D., Rouner, D., & Long, M. (2006). Television dramas and support for controversial public policies: Effects and mechanisms. *Journal of Communication*, 56(2), 235–252.

- 76 Borum Chattoo, C. & Feldman, L. (2017). Storytelling for social change: Leveraging documentary and comedy for public engagement in global poverty. *Journal of Communication*, 67(5), 678–701.
- 77 Green, M. C. & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(5), 701.
- 78 Esser, F. & D'Angelo, P. (2003). Framing the press and the publicity process: A content analysis of meta-coverage in Campaign 2000 network news. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 46(5), 617–641; Young, D. G. (2011). Political entertainment and the press' construction of Sarah Feylin. *Popular Communication*, 9(4), 251–265.
- 79 War of words: Why Samantha Bee survived controversy and Roseanne didn't. (2018). *NBC Nightly News* with Lester Holt. June 1, www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/war-of-words-why-samantha-bee-survived-controversy-and-roseanne-didn-t-1246641219530.
- 80 Lazarsfeld, P., Berelson, B., and Gaudet, H. (1948). *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- 81 Baum and Groeling, *War Stories*.
- 82 Baum and Groeling, *War Stories*.
- 83 Slater, M. D. (2015). Reinforcing spirals model: Conceptualizing the relationship between media content exposure and the development and maintenance of attitudes. *Media Psychology*, 18(3), 370–395.
- 84 Slater, M. D. (2015). Reinforcing spirals model: Conceptualizing the relationship between media content exposure and the development and maintenance of attitudes. *Media Psychology*, 18(3), 370–395. P. 373.
- 85 Slater, M. D. (2015). Reinforcing spirals model: Conceptualizing the relationship between media content exposure and the development and maintenance of attitudes. *Media Psychology*, 18(3), 370–395.
- 86 Sunstein, C. (2001). *Republic.com*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.