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**Media Dependency and Political Perceptions  
in an Authoritarian Political System:  
The Case of Chile's Left**

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**MEDIA DEPENDENCY AND POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS IN  
AN AUTHORITARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM:  
THE CASE OF CHILE'S LEFT**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Most of the academic research on the notion that the media play a role in shaping political perceptions has been done in Europe and the United States in the context of democratic political systems. The extent to which these research findings can be generalized to other societies is not known, and only limited efforts have been made to understand the relation between political perceptions and media consumption patterns under authoritarian political systems. This study attempts to assess the relationship between media dependency and political perceptions in an ideologically monopolized media environment. Chile was considered an

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appropriate case study since the country was ruled by a right-wing military dictatorship between September 1973 and March 1990. During that period, various forms of censorship and repression of the media dominated the production of mass communications (Alisky, 1981).

When this study was being conducted, Chile was beginning a transition to a democratic political system. This was precipitated by a plebiscite in October 1988 in which General Augusto Pinochet was defeated after more than a decade of authoritarian rule. This transition involved two fundamental tasks: the election of a president in late 1989, for the first time since 1970, and the reconstruction of a democratic political system. Under these circumstances, assessing the relationship between mass media dependency and perceptions of political reality became particularly relevant. Of special interest was to explore this issue within a segment of society that had been marginalized from as well as attacked by the mass media during the dictatorship years: the Left. The Left played a major role throughout Chilean political history; thus it is not surprising that Chile became one of the few countries to elect a Marxist as president in a democratic election. However, after the military coup, the Left became the target of political persecution by the new government and was negatively portrayed in the mass media.

Although the mass media in Chile were significantly less state controlled during the data-gathering process than fifteen years ago (oppositional newspapers, news magazines, and radio stations were allowed to operate), and political persecution was rare (Marxist exiles were being allowed to return, Marxist leaders were being allowed to express

their views through part of the mass media, and the Left as a whole was again becoming active in the political scenario), the Left was generally subjected to negative treatment whenever it got coverage. This was particularly evident in television, the medium most tightly subjected to governmental control throughout the dictatorship.

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1979) provide a valuable theoretical framework in which to examine the relationship between media dependency and political perceptions within the Chilean Left with the Dependency Model of Mass Media Effects. This model proposes that the impact of media messages on audience perceptions will be a function of the degree of audience dependence on mass media sources for information. The strength of this general hypothesis under an authoritarian communication system that consistently provided a negative portrayal of a group was tested under nearly ideal circumstances in Chile. In a society where the official media had low credibility due to the existence of severe governmental controls, one would expect minimal impact on political perceptions, at least among the opposition segments of the audience. On the other hand, if the theoretical model applied, the media, regardless of their political orientation in an authoritarian political system, would have an impact on political perceptions, given the condition of dependency. In other words, a relationship would be found between political perceptions of the Left in Chile and mass media dependency patterns.

## I. The Impact of Media Dependency on Political Perceptions and Behavior

### The Theory

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) proposed that a key variable in understanding how, when, and why media messages influence an audience's beliefs, feelings, or behavior is the degree of audience dependence on mass media sources of information. Dependency within this framework has been defined as "a relationship in which the capacity of individuals to attain their goals is contingent upon the information resources of the media system--those resources being the capacities to (a) create and gather, (b) process, and (c) disseminate information" (Ball-Rokeach, 1985, p. 487).

The model proposes that some media information functions are more relevant than others, both for individuals as well as for society. For example, providing religious coverage to politically active groups is probably a less central function than providing them with political information. The absence of alternatives might also increase dependency on available information sources: "the more an individual comes to rely on a single communication channel, the greater is the predictability of the outcome of communication. The more functional alternatives available to an individual, in terms of both quantity and quality, the lesser is the dependency on and influence of a specific channel" (Rubin and Rubin, 1985, p. 39). Access to alternative communication channels can be a function of individuals' resources (financial, intellectual, etc.), societal constraints (available sources in media and media content), and/or choice.

Media dependency is not equally distributed among members of a given society. The social-structural location of individuals is a key factor in understanding differences in media dependency patterns. Structural location is determined by variables such as class, status, power, and the like (Ball-Rokeach, 1985). For example, the lack of financial resources can restrict access to certain media (e.g., expensive magazines); lack of education can limit individuals' ability to process information from print media.

Another condition under which dependency increases is when a relatively high degree of change and conflict is present in society. Social conflict and social change usually imply challenges to the establishment (i.e., institutions, beliefs, practices, etc.). When these challenges are effective, accepted frameworks become obsolete and people become highly dependent on media information resources for a redefinition of the new environment (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1979).

In explaining the relationship between media system dependency and the effects of media messages, the theory proposes three factors that intervene in the effects process: "the greater the media dependency, the greater the level of attention during exposure, the greater the level of affect toward the message and its senders, and the greater the likelihood of postexposure communication about the message--and thus, the greater the probability of message effects intended or unintended" (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984, p. 13).

Media system dependency theory is relatively new; thus, research that has been published using this model as a theoretical framework is relatively scarce. Unfortunately, scarcity has not been the only problem within this body of research. The complex notion of media dependency as developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur sometimes has been poorly conceptualized, the measurement of the variable has been inconsistent, and problems of construct validity have not been uncommon. This has led to conflictive findings and theoretical confusion.

### Empirical Evidence for the Dependency Model

The dependency theory received its first empirical test in 1979 (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984). A study was proposed to find out whether television could be employed to influence opinions regarding racism, sexism, and environmentalism. An elaborate experiment was designed and conducted in which thousands of individuals were exposed to a television program conceived to influence audiences on the above topics. It was hypothesized that people with strong television dependencies for social and self-understanding would be more likely to watch the program with a high level of commitment (i.e., attention, involvement) and consequently would be more likely to be affected by the program. Television dependency was measured through the following question: "How often do you use television to..." (several purposes were listed). A survey was conducted before and after the show was broadcast to assess attitudes and attitude changes on the issues explored. Levels of attention and involvement while watching were also assessed through the survey. It was concluded that among those segments of the audience highly dependent on television for orientation on issues of social relevance, the likelihood of watching the program



increased, and higher levels of attention and involvement while watching were observed. It was also found, as expected, that high television dependency audiences contributed more money for pro-environment, antiracism, and antisexism causes when later solicitations were made.

While the results of this research effort are indeed striking, can these findings be accounted for fully by the notion of media dependency? If so, we would have to accept that the single measure of television use captures the dimensions of the notion of dependency. Although use is a requirement for dependency it does not exhaust the complexities of the construct. Dependency also implies the absence of alternative information sources. At the same time, if media dependency is a goal-directed activity, some evidence of the importance of the goal for the individual is required. If we agree that media dependency cannot be measured exclusively by use, then it becomes somewhat problematic to construct a theoretical interpretation of the findings in this study.

After the Ball-Rokeach experiment, a series of studies were conducted, generally utilizing survey methods, in order to assess the impact of media dependency on political perceptions. Becker and Whitney (1980) assumed that individuals differ not only in terms of dependency on the media system as a whole, but also in terms of their dependence on specific media. They hypothesized that persons dependent on television news for public affairs information were more likely to have negative attitudes toward local government and leaders and to be less informed about governmental issues than those who were dependent on newspapers, because television news tends to be more negative and

conflictual than newspaper news, highlighting images and impressions at the expense of substantive data.

This study represents an improvement in the conceptualization and measurement of media dependency because it not only assessed subjects' sources of political information (use), but also the frequency of exposure to and attention levels for political information. The latter seems to be a useful measure to capture the relevance of the goal-directed activity under observation. Using a similar approach, McLeod and McDonald (1985) produced evidence confirming that television use as well as television dependence are negatively correlated with knowledge regarding economic news and political participation. The contrary occurred among those dependent on newspapers, after controlling for age, education, and income.

The conceptualization and measurement of dependency as a multidimensional construct seems a more valid research strategy for understanding the nature of the relationship between media dependency and media effects. However, improvements in the conceptualization and operationalization of this notion have not been steady. For example, Hirschburg et al. (1986) conducted a study to examine media dependency effects under a rare condition of ambiguity, in which past experience was of no help in understanding the situation: the eruption of Mount St. Helens. A survey found that the mass media were by far the most frequently used information sources (measure of dependency): on the day of the eruption, both radio and television were utilized by over 80 percent of the population, suggesting both dependency as well as an expectation that definitive information would come from the media sooner or later.

But in the days after the eruption, the use of interpersonal sources of information increased. Again, although this study restricted the measure of dependency to frequency of use, the results showed that the crisis increased the use of both mass media sources as well as interpersonal sources of information. The use of functional alternatives here is an indication of a decrease in the level of dependency on a given source, even if the frequency of use remains high.

Another group of researchers (Robinson, 1975; Miller et al., 1979; O'Keefe, 1980; Miller and Reese, 1982; McLeod et al., 1983; Faber et al., 1985) have dealt with the notion of media reliance. Unfortunately, there has been no detailed theoretical explication of this notion in the literature. For this reason, it is problematic to determine whether dependence and reliance are analogous constructs. The measures that have been utilized (media use or self-expressions of reliance on a medium for a certain purpose) do not clarify this issue.

Although the literature provides evidence suggesting a relationship between media dependency and political perceptions and behavior, inconsistencies in the measurement of the concept make comparability between studies problematic. Media use alone does not seem to capture fully the complexity of the construct as developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, although composite measures of media use plus attention represent an improvement. None of the studies has developed a measure to assess the presence and use of functional alternatives.

The basic theoretical challenge can be summarized as follows: if media dependency is defined as a relationship in which the capacity of individuals to attain their goals is contingent upon the information resources of a medium or a segment of the media, then any measure of dependency will need to capture at least the following: (a) media use or non-use for a specific purpose (i.e., to obtain political information), (b) the degree of importance of that purpose for the individual, (c) their use of functional alternatives (measure of exclusivity).

## **II. Dependency and Authoritarianism: Hypotheses and Research Questions**

Despite methodological problems, there is some evidence to suggest that media dependency might be a meaningful explanatory correlate to political perceptions in the context of a democratic political system. The contention is that the relationship between media dependency and political perceptions would also hold in an authoritarian political system, where the mass media are still the main sources of political information. Before presenting the hypothesis and research questions, we will consider how dependency would work under an authoritarian political system, and the functions that different types of information sources may play in this political context.

In terms of dependency theory, the media environment in an authoritarian political system is characterized by a lack of functional alternatives for political information. According to Siebert et al. (1956), in an authoritarian regime the media do nothing to undermine established

authority or disturb order; the media must be subordinate to authority; attacks on authority and deviations from official policy become unacceptable and often illegal; censorship is used to enforce these principles; and journalists and media professionals have no independence within their media organizations. Authoritarian regimes thus control the versions of reality that become available to the people and insure that these become functional to the authoritarian order.

It is proposed that the relation between individuals and information sources that people believe to be reliable--hence dependable--would essentially be the same in an authoritarian system as in a democratic one. The difference lies in the availability of unbiased mass media information sources, which become scarce in the former. Consistent with Ball-Rokeach's theory, it is proposed that the low credibility that usually characterizes authoritarian political systems will not necessarily diminish the impact of official media on the perceptions of political reality. As long as there are no functional alternatives, which develops dependency on available sources of information, the relationship between dependency and perceptions will hold.

It is believed that the impact of media dependency on political perceptions should also operate among groups that are being actively oppressed, marginalized from society, attacked systematically through the media, and therefore in opposition to the authoritarian rule. The Chilean case provides the elements to adequately test this proposition: the installation of a right-wing military dictatorship that overthrew a Marxist government; a ruler who defined as one of his main objectives the

extermination of what he referred to as the "Marxist cancer"; and a highly monopolized media environment, subjected to the censorship and repression that characterize authoritarian media systems. The following hypotheses have been proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: The greater the dependence of leftists on pro-government (official) mass media sources for political information, the more rightist their opinions on political issues.

H<sub>2</sub>: The greater the dependence of leftists on pro-government (official) mass media sources for political information, the more rightist their perceptions about the climate of opinion.

Despite the predominance of official media in authoritarian systems, a narrow space for "legal" oppositional media is usually allowed to provide some legitimation and credibility to the governmental media systems (Munizaga, 1984). In Chile these opposition media developed in the later years of the dictatorship. In part, they were conceived to maintain the democratic memory, offer a coherent and systematic critique of the authoritarian system, and help constitute a political alternative to the right-wing dictatorship (ibid.). However, these opposition media were restricted to elite magazines devoted to political analysis, and were usually not accessible to mass audiences due to economic as well as educational barriers. The following hypotheses have been proposed:

H<sub>3</sub>: The greater the dependence of leftists on opposition mass media sources for political information, the less rightist their opinions about political issues.

H<sub>4</sub>: The greater the dependence of leftists on opposition mass media sources for political information, the less rightist their perceptions about the climate of opinion.

Although the relation between individuals and the information sources on which they depend should be essentially the same in authoritarian contexts, one would expect that non-mass media or "illegal" sources would play an important role, particularly for those segments of the population located in the opposition and devalued by the official discourse. In this regard Bassets (1976) suggests that under authoritarian regimes, absolute suppression of the opposition is achieved only for very brief periods of time. Therefore, it is not adequate to study communications in this type of state without considering clandestine media. Clandestine communication is referred to here as "the totality of communicative activities carried out outside the law and with the identity of the protagonist concealed as far as possible" (p. 193). This might include press and radio, as well as interpersonal communication taking place within banned political organizations. Bassets' definition can be used to distinguish clandestine sources of political information from oppositional media: while the former reside outside the law, the latter operate under the legal structure of the authoritarian system.

In Chile, several clandestine newspapers were produced by banned leftist parties and neighborhood organizations during the authoritarian period. Dorfman (1977) reported that the monthly circulation of clandestine newspapers reached 100,000 readers in the capital city, Santiago. Since 1980, most of the social organizations in Chile had a "news bulletin." This allowed the formation of what was known as the "network of the popular press," which "made possible the coordination of collective action, and a more effective channel for the expression and communication of social organizations and grassroots movements" (anonymous testimony of one of the organizers of the popular press congress). According to Dorfman, this movement "served to break down the walls of fascist silence and its pretensions of an omnipotent reign" (p. 209).

The presence of alternative sources for political information in authoritarian regimes cannot be overlooked. They seem to play a role in maintaining non-official visions of the world in authoritarian systems. Consequently, the relation between dependency on non-mass media sources for political information and political perceptions has been explored in this study through the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between dependency on non-mass media sources for political information and rightism in opinions regarding political issues?
2. What is the relationship between dependency on non-mass media sources for political information and rightism in perceptions about the climate of opinion?



According to Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976), location in the social structure predicts media use and can explain differential effects of mass media. Structural location includes variables such as income, education, age, gender, and the like. In fact, education and income have been found to be predictor variables of media use (Gaziano, 1990; Ball-Rokeach, 1985). While income can limit access to certain media, education can limit an individual's ability to process information from the print media. The need to explore whether the relations linked to the hypotheses and research questions presented above hold after controlling for education, income, age, and gender appears central to understanding media dependency as it is related to political perceptions.

### III. Method

A paper-and-pencil survey was conducted in Santiago, Chile, during November of 1989. This survey inquired about respondents' dependency on mass media and non-mass media for political information (independent variables) as well as opinions on political issues and perceptions about the climate of opinion (dependent variables).

#### Sample

A sampling frame of 1,500 possible subjects in the Santiago area was developed by using filed as well as non-filed information from organizations such as trade unions, community organizations, research institutes, political parties, and the like. The population of interest was defined as self-identified leftists with the right to vote, that is over 18

years old. Every element in the sampling frame received a number. Each potential respondent was selected by using a table of random numbers until the target sample (N=300) was reached. Forty-six of the selected respondents had to be replaced; 11 of this 46 were not self-identified as leftist.

### Dependent Variables

A Likert-type scale was developed through a pre-test in order to assess how "rightist" or "leftist" were individuals' opinions on political issues. In the final instrument, each subject was presented with a set of ten statements and asked whether he or she strongly agreed, agreed, did not know, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. The topics included the abolition of the authoritarian constitution; armed rebellion as a means to obtain social change; privatization of education; ownership of private companies that were privatized during the dictatorship; the proletariat dictatorship; the need for democratic elections in Nicaragua; the opening of the economy during the military regime; taxes on imported luxury items; viability of the social revolution in Chile; and the need for elections to improve the Nicaraguan political system (see appendix A). These ten topics were empirically selected from a total of fifty political issues drawn from the mass media. Leftist statements were drawn from editorials published by leftist media or from opinions given by leftist political leaders published by any medium. The same procedure was employed for rightist statements. The construction of the scale involved the following procedure:

- (a) A set of 50 "rightist" and "leftist" statements drawn from the media were pre-tested with 25 respondents.
- (b) Responses to the various items were scored such that a response of the most "rightist" type received the highest score.
- (c) Each individual's total score was computed by adding his or her item scores.
- (d) The responses were analyzed to determine the correlations between each item score and the total score across the 25 cases. Ten statements out of the 50 in the pre-test with the highest correlations were selected for the final instrument.
- (e) After the data were gathered from the actual sample, a reliability analysis was performed, where the highest Cronbach-Alpha reached was equal to 0.66, with ten items.

The same controversial political issues were used for the assessment of perceptions about the climate of opinion. According to Noelle-Neumann (1974), individuals develop a picture of the climate of opinion as the result of their observation of the environment through the media. The idea was to establish how leftist or rightist was the climate of opinion as perceived by each respondent. Each subject was asked to estimate proportions of the population that think in a certain way about a controversial political issue (see appendix B). The Cronbach-Alpha associated with this index reached 0.68.

### Independent Variables

The instrument also assessed dependency levels for political information on pro-governmental media, oppositional media, and non-mass media sources (i.e., family, friends, community publications, trade union publications, party publications, attendance at meetings and seminars, etc.). Each mass medium was classified as either governmental or oppositional according to its editorial line as well as its ownership structure (see appendix C).

The objective was to develop three indices for political information: a pro-government media dependency index, an oppositional media dependency index, and a non-mass media dependency index. Consistent with the proposed multidimensional nature of dependency, three types of information were accounted for in the construction of these indices:

- (a) Respondents were asked first how frequently they obtained political information from each of the media available in Chile (a measure of media use). A set of items listed all Chilean media, both oppositional as well as pro-government. In addition, several non-mass media sources were also included (see appendix D). Respondents were asked to indicate whether they obtained political information from each medium very frequently, frequently, sometimes, almost never, or never. The maximum score in the pro-government media use scale required obtaining political information from the pro-government sources with maximum frequency. The oppositional-media use scale and the non-mass media use scale operated in the same fashion.

(b) Using the data on media use, a functional alternatives scale (measure of exclusivity) for each of three types of media was derived to indicate how exclusive was the use of each in relation to the other two. The following general formula was utilized:

X: measure for use of pro-government media,

Y: measure for use of oppositional media,

Z: measure for use of non-mass media.

Pro-government media exclusivity scale =  $X - (Y+Z)$

Oppositional media exclusivity scale =  $Y - (X+Z)$

Non-mass media exclusivity scale =  $Z - (X+Y)$

The exclusivity or functional alternatives scales operated so that higher numerical scores indicated higher dependency on any given type of media. The measure of use was divided by the number of items in the corresponding type of media to take into account that the number of items for each of the three media use scales is unequal.

(c) The third type of information accounted for by the dependency indices was a measure of relevance of political information for each subject, expressed in terms of self-acknowledged interest as well as self-reported active seeking of political information (see appendix E).

#### Socioeconomic and Demographic Data

Appendix F presents the items used to gather information on education, income, age, and gender.

## IV. Results

### Hypothesis 1

It was proposed that the greater the dependence of leftists on pro-government mass media sources for political information, the more rightist will be their political perceptions. Table 1 shows that this hypothesis found support in the study. A positive linear correlation ( $r=0.13$ ,  $p=0.021$ ) was observed between media use and rightism in political opinions. More interesting, when the dimension of exclusivity was used as media dependency, a stronger positive linear correlation was reached ( $r=0.20$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The table also shows that in all situations, when partial correlations were computed controlling for age, gender, education, income, and all of them together, neither the direction nor the strength of the correlations varied significantly.

TABLE 1

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEDIA DEPENDENCY ON PRO-GOVERNMENT  
MEDIA AND RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS  
(N=249)

	CONTROLS					
	-----	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION	INCOME	ALL
USE	0.1285 P=0.021	0.1478 P=0.010	0.1274 P=0.022	0.1251 P=0.025	0.1313 P=0.019	0.1358 P=0.017
EXCLUSIVITY	0.1952 P=0.001	0.1866 P=0.002	0.2009 P=0.001	0.1939 P=0.001	0.2043 P=0.001	0.2045 P=0.001

When the dimension of interest in politics was added to the notion of media dependency, that is exclusive pro-government media use (see table 2), the coefficient of multiple determination did not indicate a statistically significant increase. When active seeking of political information was added, as well as both variables in interaction, no statistically significant increases were obtained.

TABLE 2

VARIATIONS IN THE COEFFICIENT OF MULTIPLE DETERMINATION ( $R^2$ )  
IN THE REGRESSION RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS VS.  
EXCLUSIVE PRO-GOVERNMENT MEDIA USE

	$R^2$ Change	Sig F Change
WHEN INTEREST WAS ADDED	0.00540	0.3989
WHEN INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0000	0.9871
WHEN THE INTERACTION OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION SEEKING WERE ADDED	0.0065	0.33

## Hypothesis 2

It was proposed that the greater the dependence of leftists on pro-government mass media sources for political information, the more rightist their perceptions about the climate of opinion. Some evidence was found for this. Although a non-statistically significant positive linear correlation was found between media dependency (as media use) and rightism in perceptions about the climate of opinion, when the dimension of exclusivity was introduced, a significant positive linear correlation ( $r= 0.17$ ,  $p= 0.004$ ) was reached. This correlation held when it was controlled for age, gender, education, income, and all of them together (see table 3).

TABLE 3

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEDIA DEPENDENCY ON PRO-GOVERNMENT  
MEDIA AND RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT  
THE CLIMATE OF OPINION  
(N=249)

	CONTROLS					
	-----	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION	INCOME	ALL
USE	0.0781 P=0.110	0.0946 P=0.069	0.0773 P=0.112	0.0695 P=0.138	0.0783 P=0.110	0.0716 P=0.132
EXCLUSIVITY	0.1677 P=0.004	0.1602 P=0.006	0.1726 P=0.003	0.1511 P=0.028	0.1641 P=0.003	0.1577 P=0.023



When the dimension of interest in politics was added to the notion of media dependency, that is exclusive pro-government media use, the coefficient of multiple determination did not indicate a statistically significant increase. When active seeking of political information was added, as well as both variables in interaction, no statistically significant increases were obtained (see table 4).

TABLE 4

VARIATIONS IN THE COEFFICIENT OF MULTIPLE DETERMINATION ( $R^2$ )  
 IN THE REGRESSION RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT  
 THE CLIMATE OF OPINION VS. EXCLUSIVE  
 PRO-GOVERNMENT MEDIA USE

	$R^2$ Change	Sig F Change
WHEN INTEREST WAS ADDED	0.00126	0.5456
WHEN INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.00010	0.8636
WHEN THE INTERACTION OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0019	0.60

### Hypothesis 3

It was proposed that the greater the dependence of leftists on oppositional mass media sources for political information, the less rightist their political perceptions. Evidence was not found to support this hypotheses. The linear correlations observed are not statistically significant (see table 5). When the dimension of interest in politics was added, no statistically significant increases were observed in the coefficient of multiple determination. However, when the information seeking variable was considered, its contribution approached statistical significance (see table 6).

TABLE 5

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEDIA DEPENDENCY ON OPPOSITIONAL  
MEDIA AND RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS  
(N=255)

	CONTROLS					
	-----	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION	INCOME	ALL
USE	-0.0816 P=0.097	-0.0697 P=0.134	-0.0856 P=0.087	-0.0649 P=0.151	-0.0989 P=0.061	-0.0744 P=0.120
EXCLUSIVITY	-0.0596 P=0.172	-0.0476 P=0.225	-0.0601 P=0.170	-0.0603 P=0.169	-0.0545 P=0.194	-0.0482 P=0.224

TABLE 6

VARIATIONS IN THE COEFFICIENT OF MULTIPLE DETERMINATION ( $R^2$ )  
 IN THE REGRESSION RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS  
 VS. EXCLUSIVE OPPOSITIONAL MEDIA USE

	$R^2$ Change	Sig F Change
WHEN INTEREST WAS ADDED	0.0001	0.591
WHEN INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.01318	0.055
WHEN THE INTERACTION OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0168	0.12

#### Hypothesis 4

It was proposed that the greater the dependence of leftists on oppositional sources for political information, the less rightist their perceptions of the climate of opinion. Support was not found for this hypothesis. The linear correlations observed were not statistically significant (see table 7). When the dimension of interest in politics was added, no statistically significant increases were observed in the coefficient of multiple determination. However, again, the information seeking contribution approached statistical significance (see table 8).

TABLE 7

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEDIA DEPENDENCY ON OPPOSITIONAL  
 MEDIA AND RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT  
 THE CLIMATE OF OPINION  
 (N=256)

	CONTROLS					
	-----	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION	INCOME	ALL
USE	-0.0929 P=0.081	-0.0828 P=0.107	-0.0963 P=0.074	-0.0521 P=0.217	-0.0964 P=0.074	-0.0602 P=0.185
EXCLUSIVITY	-0.0344 P=0.291	-0.0506 P=0.209	-0.0343 P=0.292	-0.0275 P=0.330	-0.0344 P=0.291	-0.0362 P=0.282

TABLE 8

VARIATIONS IN THE COEFFICIENT OF MULTIPLE DETERMINATION ( $R^2$ )  
 IN THE REGRESSION RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE  
 CLIMATE OF OPINION VS. EXCLUSIVE  
 OPPOSITIONAL MEDIA USE

	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Sig F Change
WHEN INTEREST WAS ADDED	0.0017	0.478
WHEN INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0126	0.058
WHEN THE INTERACTION OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.013	0.18

### Research Questions

Media dependency theory and research have not dealt with the role that non-mass media sources of information might play in shaping perceptions about reality. It is argued, at least in the context of an authoritarian media environment, that the use of alternative sources of information will have a significant impact on dependency and on political perceptions within oppositional segments of society. The following research questions begin to explore this issue.

1. What is the relationship between dependency on non-mass media sources for political information and rightism in opinions about political issues?

A negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) was observed between dependency (as use) on non-mass media sources for political information and rightism in political opinions. That is, the higher the dependence on non-mass media sources, the less rightist the political opinions. When dependency was treated as exclusivity of use, the strength of the negative correlation held ( $r = -0.13$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ). The direction and strength of these correlations did not change substantially when controlling for age, gender, education, income, and all of the above (see table 9).

TABLE 9

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEPENDENCY ON NON-MASS MEDIA  
SOURCES AND RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS  
(N=251)

	CONTROLS					
	-----	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION	INCOME	ALL
USE.....	-0.1436 P=0.011	-0.1279 P=0.022	-0.1467 P=0.010	-0.1263 P=0.023	-0.1535 P=0.003	-0.1319 P=0.028
EXCLUSIVITY	-0.1312 P=0.019	-0.1341 P=0.017	-0.1312 P=0.019	-0.1254 P=0.024	-0.1326 P=0.018	-0.1214 P=0.028

When the dimension of interest in politics was added, no statistically significant increases were observed in the coefficient of multiple determination. However, the information seeking contribution approached significance (see table 10).

TABLE 10

VARIATIONS IN THE COEFFICIENT OF MULTIPLE DETERMINATION ( $R^2$ ) IN  
THE REGRESSION RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS  
VS. EXCLUSIVE NON-MASS MEDIA USE

	$R^2$ Change	Sig F Change
WHEN INTEREST WAS ADDED	0.0000	0.993
WHEN INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0114	0.069
WHEN THE INTERACTION OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.016	0.13

2. What is the relationship between dependency on non-mass media sources for political information and rightism in perceptions about the climate of opinion?

A negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) was observed between dependency (as use) on non-mass media sources for political information and rightism in perceptions about the climate of opinion. That is, the higher the dependency on non-mass media sources for political information the less rightist the perceptions about the climate of opinion. When exclusivity was analyzed, again, a negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.13$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ) was found. The direction and strength of these correlations did not change substantially for exclusivity when controlling for age, gender, education, income, and all of the above (see table 11).

TABLE 11

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEPENDENCY ON NON-MASS MEDIA  
SOURCES AND RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT  
THE CLIMATE OF OPINION  
(N=251)

	CONTROLS					
	-----	AGE	GENDER	EDUCATION	INCOME	ALL
USE.....	-0.1395 P=0.014	-0.1312 P=0.019	-0.1354 P=0.016	-0.1313 P=0.017	-0.1465 P=0.010	-0.1326 P=0.018
EXCLUSIVITY	-0.1257 P=0.023	-0.1308 P=0.019	-0.1287 P=0.021	-0.1260 P=0.023	-0.1243 P=0.025	-0.1211 P=0.029

When the dimension of interest in politics and active seeking of political information was added, no statistically significant increases were observed in the coefficient of multiple determination (see table 12).



TABLE 12

VARIATIONS IN THE COEFFICIENT OF MULTIPLE DETERMINATION ( $R^2$ ) IN  
 THE REGRESSION RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT  
 THE CLIMATE OF OPINION VS. EXCLUSIVE  
 NON-MASS MEDIA USE

	$R^2$ Change	Sig F Change
WHEN INTEREST WAS ADDED	0.0008	0.640
WHEN INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0103	0.087
WHEN THE INTERACTION OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION SEEKING WAS ADDED	0.0113	0.21

### CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the dictatorship, the Left in Chile was negatively portrayed in governmental media. It is possible to assume that, for this segment of Chilean society, official media should have been perceived as biased and therefore not credible. However, at least at one point in time, a relationship was found in this group between dependency on official media and political opinions and perceptions of the political climate. Political perceptions of the Left correlated with the versions of political reality

promoted by the official media, which systematically antagonized this segment of society throughout seventeen years of dictatorship. The notion of dependency becomes crucial in understanding this paradox. Regardless of the nature of the political context, it seems that if individuals depend on a media system for information, their perceptions of political reality will reflect it.

Although limited in its social pervasiveness, the military allowed some oppositional media in Chile. Apparently, this was not a mistake from the perspective of the dictatorship. It provided some degree of legitimacy to the system for some people, although access to these media was limited by financial as well as educational barriers. In short, oppositional media did not provide functional alternatives for political information for large segments of the population. Further, another paradox emerged in that a relationship between dependency on oppositional media and political perceptions among the Left was not found, at least when this study was conducted. While dependency on official media was associated more with rightist political perceptions, dependency on oppositional media was not associated with less rightist political perceptions, contrary to what was originally expected.

The explanation for this apparent inconsistency might lie in the nature of the political discourse of oppositional media. Is it possible for oppositional media--defined as media operating under the legal structure of the authoritarian system--to articulate an alternative discourse? According to Munizaga (1984), the answer is no. She proposes that oppositional media construct a discourse within the parameters imposed

by officialdom. They share the authoritarian agenda. Although they provide a critical stand against official information, they hardly widen the "communicative spectrum" through an alternative discourse. In short, oppositional media are seen to "echo the authoritarian society."

The content of oppositional media under authoritarianism can be regarded as the product of compromise and negotiation between "legality" and "alternativism" and are not enough to provide alternative versions of reality to groups at the margins of the system. The results of this study suggest that oppositional media did not provide the Left with information that could support and maintain their vision of the world. Where, then, did this group find that support?

It was expected that non-mass media or clandestine sources of information would play an important role, particularly for those segments of the population opposing the system. The findings did show that dependency on non-mass media was related to less rightist political perceptions among leftists. Pro-government media dependency was related to more rightist political perceptions and oppositional media dependency was unrelated to political perceptions; only non-mass media sources were found to be related to less rightist political perceptions. These results highlight the importance of this type of communication in providing alternative versions of political reality under authoritarian rule. These media are probably the only message systems not constrained by the authoritarian structure. The results suggest that it would be inadequate to study media impact on political perceptions, at least in an

authoritarian political system, without considering non-mass media sources of political information.

One of the objectives of this study has been to provide a better conceptualization of the notion of media dependency by capturing its multidimensional nature. For this reason, media dependency was treated not only as media use, as in previous studies, but also as the absence or presence of functional alternative sources for political information conceptualized as the degree of exclusiveness of the use of any given type of medium. The absence or presence of functional alternatives was found to be, at least in some cases, a meaningful dimension of the notion of media dependency. These findings suggest that the exclusivity dimension of media dependency should receive attention in understanding media effects, regardless of the context. The lack of functional alternatives inherent in authoritarian systems makes media dependency, as measured in terms of exclusivity, a crucial notion for understanding media effects in dictatorial contexts.

It is also critical to note that in assessing the impact of exclusive political information seeking patterns (i.e., some mode of dependency), non-mass media sources for political information should be considered. The stronger correlations reached when the exclusive use measures that captured non-mass media political information seeking patterns were utilized support this suggestion. This should be seen as an extension or further specification of the complexities of the influence of dependency.

Surprisingly, one of the variables of interest--self-acknowledged interest in politics--did not account for substantial variation in political perceptions. It is believed that this was due to the lack of variability observed in the sample for this variable. However, self-reported seeking of political information, a different expression of political interest, tended to contribute more in accounting for political opinions. This dimension of the model requires further exploration.

The issue of causality has been a structural problem in the study of media effects. Apparently, there are no trivial methodological solutions to help us demonstrate causal relations between media dependency and perceptions about reality. The most problematic challenge that we face in obtaining empirical evidence for causality is the exclusion of external or intervening variables that can also explain any given correlation. Researchers utilizing experimental designs have attempted to provide causal evidence of media effects. However, the extent to which findings obtained in a laboratory setting can also be verified in real-life situations remains as a critical question that needs to be explored. This study has not solved this problem. Although demographics were utilized as control variables, there is no way to exclude other potential intervening variables that could explain the correlations that were obtained. However, our ability to predict media effects has been improved by going beyond simple measures of media use. Media dependency provided the theoretical bases for a seemingly more meaningful way of conceptualizing and predicting media effects in authoritarian political systems.

## APPENDIX A

## ITEMS FOR RIGHTISM IN POLITICAL OPINIONS

The following are a series of statements. Please indicate with a circle the alternative SA if you strongly agree with the statement, the alternative A if you agree, the alternative DN if you don't know, the alternative DS if you disagree, or the alternative SD if you strongly disagree. Only one alternative per statement.

The export policy of the government has contributed to the economic development of the country.	SA	A	DN	DS	SD
The 1980s constitution should be completely abolished.	SA	A	DN	DS	SD
Most of the industries that were privatized during Pinochet's government should become state property again during the next administration.	SA	A	DN	DS	SD
Elections are the best way to improve the Chilean political system.	SA	A	DN	DS	SD
Armed rebellion is a justified means to achieve social change.	SA	A	DN	DS	SD

## APPENDIX A

*(continued)*

The Sandinistas in Nicaragua should call for a democratic election as soon as possible.

SA A DN DS SD

Reconciliation among Chileans is a priority for the next government.

SA A DN DS SD

I believe in the proletariat dictatorship.

SA A DN DS SD

Imported goods such as color TVs, VCRs, stereo systems, and the like should be subject to high taxes.

SA A DN DS SD

In Chile there should be no place for private schools.

SA A DN DS SD

*APPENDIX B*  
ITEMS FOR RIGHTISM IN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE  
POLITICAL CLIMATE

Approximately how many people in Chile think that the industries that were privatized during Pinochet's regime should go back to state property during the next administration?

- (1) All Chileans
- (2) More than half
- (3) Half
- (4) Less than half
- (5) Nobody

Approximately how many people in Chile think that the 1980s constitution should be completely abolished?

Approximately how many people in Chile think that armed rebellion is a justified means to achieve social changes?

Approximately how many people in Chile think that elections are the best way to improve the Chilean political system?

Approximately how many people in Chile think that the exports policy of the government has contributed to the economic development of the country?



*APPENDIX B**(continued)*

Approximately how many people in Chile think that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua should call for a democratic election as soon as possible?

Approximately how many people in Chile think that reconciliation among Chileans is a priority for the next government?

Approximately how many people in Chile believe in the proletariat dictatorship?

Approximately how many people in Chile think that imported goods such as TV sets, VCRs, stereo systems, and the like, should pay high taxes?

Approximately how many people think that there should be no place for private schools in Chile?

*APPENDIX C*  
**MEDIA TYPOLOGY**

<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>POLITICAL ORIENTATION</u>
Canal 13	Television	Pro-government
Canal 7	Television	Pro-government
Canal 11	Television	Pro-government
Canal 9	Television	Pro-government
Canal 5	Television	Pro-government
Qué Pasa?	Magazine	Pro-government
Ercilla	Magazine	Pro-government
Cosas	Magazine	Pro-government
Caras	Magazine	Pro-government
Estrategia	Magazine	Pro-government
Economía y Sociedad	Magazine	Pro-government
La Tercera	Newspaper	Pro-government
El Mercurio	Newspaper	Pro-government
La Cuarta	Newspaper	Pro-government
La Nación	Newspaper	Pro-government
Las Ultimas Noticias	Newspaper	Pro-government
La Segunda	Newspaper	Pro-government
El Diario Financiero	Newspaper	Pro-government
Portales	Radio	Pro-government
Minería	Radio	Pro-government
Gigante	Radio	Pro-government
Agricultura	Radio	Pro-government
Hoy	Magazine	Oppositional

## APPENDIX C

*(continued)*

<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>POLITICAL ORIENTATION</u>
Apsi	Magazine	Oppositional
Análisis	Magazine	Oppositional
Cauce	Magazine	Oppositional
Mensaje	Magazine	Oppositional
Política y Espíritu	Magazine	Oppositional
Solidaridad	Magazine	Oppositional
Pluma y Pincel	Magazine	Oppositional
La Epoca	Newspaper	Oppositional
Fortín Mapocho	Newspaper	Oppositional
Cooperativa	Radio	Oppositional
Chilena	Radio	Oppositional
Nuevo Mundo	Radio	Oppositional

## APPENDIX D

## ITEMS FOR NON-MASS MEDIA SOURCES

In the following section indicate with what frequency you obtain political information from the listed sources. If you obtain political information very frequently from the indicated source, circle VF. If you obtain political information frequently, circle F. If you obtain political information sometimes, circle S. If you almost never obtain political information from the listed source, circle AN. If you never obtain political information from the listed source, circle N. Please only one answer per information source.

Family	VF	F	S	AN	N
Friends	VF	F	S	AN	N
Party Publications	VF	F	S	AN	N
Seminars/Conferences	VF	F	S	AN	N
Neighbors	VF	F	S	AN	N
Work or Study Place	VF	F	S	AN	N
Community Organizations	VF	F	S	AN	N
Labor Unions	VF	F	S	AN	N
Church-Related Groups	VF	F	S	AN	N
Other Organizations	VF	F	S	AN	N
Other Sources	VF	F	S	AN	N

*APPENDIX E*

## MEASURES OF INTEREST IN POLITICAL INFORMATION

How interested are you in politics?

- (a) Very interested
- (b) Interested
- (c) Uninterested
- (d) Very uninterested

How frequently do you try to obtain information regarding politics?

- (a) Never
- (b) Sometimes
- (c) Frequently
- (d) Very frequently

*APPENDIX F*

## ITEMS FOR SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Indicate the highest level of education that you have reached among the following alternatives.

- (a) Primary or Basic education incomplete
- (b) Primary or Basic education complete
- (c) Secondary education incomplete
- (d) Secondary education complete
- (e) Technical education incomplete
- (f) Technical education complete
- (g) University education incomplete
- (h) University education complete

What is your monthly income in pesos?

Indicate your age.

Indicate your sex.

Male

Female

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I especially complement Dr. Halpern for his focus on exclusivity. The idea of what types of information systems are available, especially under totalitarian conditions, is a significant way of touching the environment of the individual. This is one of the things that the Dependency Model of Mass Media Effects is trying to do. Social scientists are used to thinking of individuals as having attributes that inform us about how susceptible they are to the media. So we think, for example, that the less educated you are, the more susceptible you are to media influence. I do not agree with that, by the way. Women, at times, have been considered to be more susceptible; people with lower cognitive complexity have been considered to be more susceptible; and so on.

That is not the way the theory looks at people. It moves away from the idea of individuals having characteristics that make them more or less susceptible to looking at a relational analysis. I would suggest Dr. Halpern came closest to a relational analysis here when he used exclusivity as his variable. That is why I think it produced the best results. Exclusivity does touch upon a relationship between individuals and their information environment--how many alternative sources they have available to them. So, it is not really a characteristic of the individual; it is a characteristic of the individual's relationship with an information environment.

I do regret that I used the word dependency in this context. Political scientists and economists are used to thinking of dependency relations, such as economic dependency. But, psychologists and many sociologists think of dependency as a characteristic of the individual; that there are particularly dependent individuals and that dependence makes them more susceptible. That is not the way that I meant the word, and I am suffering from that double meaning in most people's attempts to employ the framework. I am presently writing a paper in which I discuss the other major approach, which is called "uses and gratifications." It is very much a psychological approach, while I am more of a sociologist in my approach. I am comparing these two frameworks and hope to put this confusion to rest.

Dr. Halpern's measure of dependency relations with non-mass media sources is really more of a low-tech media relationship, because it involves people in political parties, and trade unions, and some of the organs of those organizations, like newsletters. There are three different types of media. There is the dominant media system, which is legal, obviously. There is the oppositional media system, which in many cases including the Chilean case, is legal. I fully agree with his interpretation that legal oppositional media must operate within the frame of discourse set by the dominant media. It is difficult for them to escape that frame and even come up with a mode of discourse that is not distorted by the dominant media systems' way of characterizing events and people and issues. I question whether the third is or is not a non-mass media resource. The clandestine media--what I call in the case of Central Europe, subcultural

media--grow out of the informal and more community-based organizations and networks of association. Here we have the best case of where interpersonal communication and very low-tech mass communication, happen together. They are not separated systems. They come together.

I suspect this is why, for example, in his findings the only time there is not a significant difference between the use measure and the exclusivity measure (exclusivity routinely doing better than just use, but in this case, they essentially do the same work) is because use signifies membership in those communications networks. Therefore, use is a far more potent variable there because it does not really tell you about media use per se. It says, I am a member of these communications networks; I am a member of this community and as such, that is where I place credibility and credence. That is where I construct my conception of rightism of the environment and the rightism of political opinions, my own.

I agree with Dr. Halpern that, if one can show that relationships with oppositional media do not counter dominant media, then this is an important theoretical point, because it is consistent with the theory; but it is also an important policy point--an important point for social movements and for agents of change or resistance. It suggests that one should not try to develop oppositional media that become distorted in order to become legal, that give the appearance of opposition, but in fact are not an effective opposition. In this case, the effective opposition is in these trade union organizations, community organizations, political parties, and so on that are clandestine. I suspect that is the case in Central Europe as well.

Why is it that there is so much subcultural conflict, not only in Central Europe, but also obviously in the former USSR and the former Yugoslavia, and so on? Does social theory allow us to explain that? I do not think it does. Most social theory would suggest that, when you have such totalitarian control over the media system, over the educational system, and the like, you should be able to control belief. In the same way that Dr. Halpern finds effective opposition in these low-tech, private sector institutions, not public sector institutions, I am arguing that in Central Europe subcultural media emerged in the private sector and that it was the subcultural media that carried religious, ethnic, and racial identity through this period, not the oppositional media that were in the public sector.

So, in a way, we are reaching the same conclusion in different areas and around somewhat different issues. The vitality of carriage of opposition, of independent perceptions, non-distorted communications in Dr. Halpern's case, did happen in the private sector. In my case, the carrying of subcultures occurred also in the private sector, but it was highly distorted as well, because with those subcultures was also carried the ethnocentrism and prejudice that subsequently leads to subcultural conflict after totalitarian control is removed.

## DISCUSSION

GEORGE LISTER (Senior Policy Adviser, Human Rights Bureau, Department of State): There were many forms of opposition in Chile. There were outspoken members of the Catholic Church who were thoroughly democratic and opposed to the Pinochet dictatorship. That would influence a person, especially a Catholic. There was opposition in the Communist Party, which was Leninist and stood for one party dictatorship. That would certainly influence other people, especially Communists or even Catholics and anti-Communists.

PABLO HALPERN: You are not distinguishing between mass media and opposition voices. Yes, there was a Communist Party, but there were not Communist media.

GEORGE LISTER: The Communist Party was holding meetings from time to time, small meetings, underground. There you got the party line from Moscow and Havana.

PABLO HALPERN: But that is not the media.

GEORGE LISTER: Then I did not understand your definition of media, which I thought included mouth to mouth. A final question then is to please identify the value of your paper.

PABLO HALPERN: The study is valuable at least at two levels. We assume that the media have an impact on the way we construct reality, particularly political reality, but I do not think we understand yet what they do and how they work on the theoretical level. On the more practical level, this study says that oppositional media, defined as media working under the legal structure of an authoritarian regime, are not providing an alternative discourse for opposition. Non-mass media sources and the low-technology media sources operating outside the system might be more effective in providing an alternative perspective to what is going on within an authoritarian regime.

JOSEPH TULCHIN: There are a number of Chilean specialists in the room who may not be media specialists. Please give us some Chilean examples of mass media under control of the authoritarian regime; mass media operating, as you put it, within the legal system attempting to be in opposition; and then examples of what would be either low-tech or non-legal, non-official media, non-mass media.

PABLO HALPERN: Toward the later phases of the dictatorship, many magazines were allowed to operate that were considered opposition. They were against the regime. Basically, these were magazines restricted to narrower segments of the population by economic factors or educational barriers, but they existed. According to the study, we did not find a relationship between dependency, readership or using those media, and political perceptions. Non-mass media, as I call them, or clandestine media, were vehicles through which labor unions and parties outside the legal system constructed an alternative or a real oppositional discourse

that apparently provided a valid or legitimate source of information for the Left.

THEODORE MESMER (Friends of the Alliance for Progress): Santiago is really a large metropolitan area, which is what made it possible for a dictator to control the country as he did for so many years. But it is also a geographic context in which people are in close proximity; they travel across this metropolitan area daily. Whether their information comes through a government-controlled press or a government-controlled opposition press or low-tech media, certainly they have a capacity to know what is going on that would be difficult in a different geographic context.

It would seem to me that the fact of social economic geography would blur the results of your statistical correlations--cause them to be less significant or less valid. In the Santiago context, a great many people find out what is going on simply through rumor and gossip, and information passes from one person to another very readily.

PABLO HALPERN: How do you know that? Is that an impression or did you read an article about it?

THEODORE MESMER: It certainly is an impression.

PABLO HALPERN: Is it your impression that people were informed through interpersonal sources?



THEODORE MESMER: Yes. We are not talking about people dispersed over the plains of Nebraska. We are talking about people within a highly confined, urban setting in which information moves readily through print, through reading between the lines in print, through trade union associations, through just passing people on the street. So, the state of the dictatorship, its weaknesses, its strengths--that information moved around pretty quickly.

PABLO HALPERN: It is hard for me to visualize an authoritarian context in which a city of six million inhabitants like Santiago would freely exchange information. That is not what would occur under a dictatorship.

THEODORE MESMER: Information is not exchanged freely, but the information may be exchanged. Maybe experiences in Eastern Europe could shed some light on this.

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: I agree with you in terms of the importance of social geography. One of the things I am trying to distinguish in my own work is that oppositional media are usually located in urban contexts and they tend to be cosmopolitan in their orientation and cross ethnic lines, and so on, whereas, subcultural media tend to be rural in their context.

I am not sure that I agree with you, however, that geography is enough to insure that non-distorted communication will be created. One of the things that I argue is that even if one does not trust the dominant media system, it will still have effects upon the way one thinks to the

extent that one has goals that require information that only that system can give. We are facing an election tomorrow. There are certain pieces of information that we can only obtain in quick fashion from the dominant media, because the oppositional media tend to be slower unless you are connected, let's say, to pirate radio or something of that sort.

Those systems do not have the same amount of information resources. They cannot undertake polls and process those poll data as quickly. So, if we are trying to predict right now who is going to win the election tomorrow and we are going to make some decisions on that basis, we would rely to a certain extent upon the mass media. I think that we have to respect that certain kinds of information resources are in the dominant media even if we hate that system, as, for example, I imagine the opposition in Chile would. Still there is a dependency relationship with that system.

How does interpersonal communication get going, for example, in Santiago? A lot of it entails decoding or reading between the lines of the dominant media, to be sure. But it is only the lines created by the dominant media that you can read between. You cannot create your own lines. In that way, what Pablo is arguing is that you cannot create your own context for discussion. That is created by the dominant media system. What you can do is read out of that context. That is not unimportant. It is just not an independent, oppositional mode of discourse.

SHEPARD KRECH III (Fellow, The Woodrow Wilson Center): Could you explain what you mean by independent, oppositional mode of discourse?

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: Oppositional media are developed in opposition, usually to a government, and are attempting in one way or another to oppose that government.

JOHN NEWHAGEN (Professor, College of Journalism, the University of Maryland, College Park): I was a correspondent for United Press International through most of the 1980s in Central America. So, while I do not have much direct experience of the problems that Chile had, I have a certain exposure to authoritarian military regimes, in El Salvador and Guatemala in particular. I found your study interesting in the sense that you are trying to map an important communication theory into another political and cultural milieu. It raised for me some questions that I had not asked of Dr. Ball-Rokeach's work in the past.

I think it is still important that we be clear about our level of analysis. Is this an individual level story--are we telling stories about the way individuals use media--or are we telling stories on the cultural level about how institutions interact? I think it is important to disengage the two.

There was a clandestine radio station in Salvador called Venceremos. It became popular not for its political content, but because it was giving news, giving information about events that was not available elsewhere. In a way, I think that almost addresses the point that you were trying to make. When you say we should think up a different word besides

dependency, I agree, but people can use media differently and for different reasons.

At an informational level, I noticed that supporters of a military regime might go to the dominant channels for political-cultural kind of information, but to the English-language version of the Miami Herald to find out what was going on; or they would listen to the guerrilla radio station, to the degree that it was actually transmitting information about breaking news.

Another Latin American example of marginalized, oppositional media would be Mexico. Through control of print news the PRI has been able to marginalize and trivialize the left-wing group.

My general comment is that you must be careful about what level of analysis you are working at. I think you have discovered something about what I might call back-channel information sources that is truly fascinating in the Latin American context.

MARGARET ZELLNER (Student, Center for Latin American Studies, New York University): First, was the media environment in 1989 a good friend from, let's say, 1986--especially after the campaign and access to television in the last month for the plebiscite? If so, how do you think that changed the results of your study? And second, it seems that your focus was looking at how media affected beliefs. I was curious about what you thought about the variable. It seems to me that people's beliefs would also condition what kind of media they pay attention to, taking into account

your mention of how the dominant media affects us regardless of what our beliefs are. It seems to me that people who were on the Left or were in opposition would tend to seek out independent sources of information. People who were more apolitical or more in favor of the regime would feel comfortable about paying attention to dominant sources.

PABLO HALPERN: Those are both good questions. Regarding the first, the environment definitely was changing. Pinochet was there and I think most of the traits of authoritarian media were there. But obviously after the plebiscite things started to open up. In fact, I do not think I would have been able to conduct this study before the plebiscite.

Regarding your second question, you have a valid point and I think I mentioned it towards the end of my presentation when I addressed the problem of causality. My population was leftist, so I would not call it a control, because within the Left, you have different leftists. The problem is that my dependent variable is what you are calling beliefs, which is difficult to control for. So, I am trapped there. That is why I made a claim in regard to causality toward the end of the presentation. I think it is a very valid point.

ENRIQUE LERDAU (Friends of the Alliance for Progress): Since Dr. Halpern has done a survey and the rest of us have not, obviously he has a considerable advantage over us. We can only ask questions and put forward hypotheses or suggestions, but we do not have the data that he does to back them up.

I would ask, nevertheless, to what extent the conclusions from his survey can be generalized for authoritarian regimes in general? It seems to me an authoritarian regime is not a homogeneous category at all as far as control of the media is concerned. You have a wide spectrum going from the extreme restrictive control, say, of the Nazi or Stalinist type, to much less restrictive but still distinctly authoritarian regimes, like the Mexican one, and even within one country over time, as has been the case in Chile itself.

If you look at the Brazilian military regime, in twenty years, there were distinct variations over time in the degree to which the media were controlled. The rules within which the opposition media were given to operate were quite different over time. It does seem to me that that could make a major difference in the degree to which opposition media have or do not have an impact on political perceptions of populations.

Over the last couple of years I have had an opportunity to travel in a number of countries of the former Soviet Bloc. I had the impression in talking to people that media control had little impact on values and attitudes and a strong impact on factual information, or rather the lack of factual information; that is, a strong impact on distorted views of factual questions and really very little on values.

I do not know whether something similar can be read out of the data of Dr. Halpern or not. Maybe he has some additional comments on that.

PABLO HALPERN: First, this is a case study and, as such, I would not feel confident in making generalizations to other authoritarian systems. In fact, empirical data on media use patterns and effects on authoritarian systems is so scarce that I would not even have the basis to compare my study against what has been done before, because really nothing has been done before. Regarding your second question, I do not think that I can make those distinctions with my data.

I would like to react to John Newhagen's comment. One of the things that troubled me before, and I am more troubled now after listening to Professor Ball-Rokeach, is the level of analysis that the theory is suggesting. I thought that I was working at the individual level. That was the intention and the standpoint that the study takes. Dr. Ball-Rokeach's writings on media dependence refer to effect, dependency, and attention, which are basically psychological behavior; that is on the individual level. But one of the main articles that is proposing the theory in communications research makes one believe that the theory is addressing structural problems.

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: Both are correct. The theory is what I call an ecological theory in the sense that you cannot understand an individual's relationships with media systems unless you understand how those media systems are connected with the political institution, economics, et cetera. These higher level relationships constrain the relationships that individuals can develop. So, when talking about the difference between values and factual information, I suspect that your observation will prove to be correct; that in fact, once the dominant media

systems are really hand-maidens of the state, that is the nature of the relationship there. Then only certain kinds of relationships with that media are available to individuals.

If, for example, someone is from Tajikistan or a similar place, one will not or cannot go to the state-dominated media to look for one's values and certainly not for one's ethnic identity. Those values were not supposed to exist under communist ideology. That is why I think it is these--low-tech may be a bad word--private domains, which are not part of the state, not part of the public discourse, so to speak, but grow up from the traditional organizations of the people that are likely to carry the values and the ethnic identity.

On the point about relations with the state and structural problems affecting the individual, your case of guerrilla radio, for example, is a good one. Once there is guerrilla radio available, and it is available because of all things that the individual does not have any control over, then you can develop relations with that guerrilla medium for certain types of things; not for everything, only for what that guerrilla medium actually covers. That would usually be political opposition, not subcultural, for example.

JOHN NEWHAGEN: My experience is in Guatemala, which I am sure rivaled any level of oppression that existed in Chile. The goal of the military government was not just to marginalize the opposition but to exclude it from existence, exclude it entirely from the consciousness of the population. At that point, graffiti, the spray-painted symbol of a political party on a wall, became important information.



SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: That is what I mean by low-tech-- newsletters, handbills, posters. In Iran, the mimeograph machine was the major mechanism of creating revolution, done through established, traditional organizations, in that case, religious.

DAVID BLACK (Representative, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture): An event happened in Chile one morning that was unfavorable to the government. People at a certain socioeconomic level, not only in Chile but people connected to Chile here in Washington, knew about it before it ever came out in the newspaper, if it came out in the paper at all. Is this an example of what you call the subcultural media, where, at a certain level, everybody knows what is going on whether the government wants you to or not?

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: Let me answer in two ways. I do not mean by subcultural sub rosa. By subcultural I mean things like your ethnic identification, your religious and racial identification, and so on. But it works precisely through the relatively informal, community-based organizations that are less visible. Therefore, the state has less reach over those organizations. I think that is why they can, under oppressive conditions, develop ways of communicating that go beyond the ways they communicated before the repression, like graffiti, handbills, and so on.

DAVID BLACK: Dr. Halpern, in the transition from the last year of the Pinochet regime, through the plebiscite to the elections, did polls exist in Chile, and, if so, what impact do you think they had on the vote in Chile?

PABLO HALPERN: Between the plebiscite and the presidential elections, there were a lot of polls. Only one of them predicted the outcome, the election, reasonably. About the impact they had, it is hard to say. I do not think anybody is following that. It is not a debate there yet, so it is hard for me to say.

MURIEL CANTOR (Professor, Department of Sociology, American University): Dr. Ball-Rokeach, what concept would you use instead of dependency, since you have had the chance to rewrite the theory?

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: I think I would simply call it something like media relations. That is the variable. It is the nature of the media relation, and I would not put an adjective on it.

MURIEL CANTOR: That probably would not attract attention, though.

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: I was coming out of a tradition that talked about power dependence, the idea that, to the extent I have power over you, it is because I control resources that you need to get where you want to go, and vice-versa. That is what I mean by the dependency relation and that is why I picked that word. It is certainly a common economic theoretical orientation.

Given the fact that most people in communications, particularly in the media effects area, are coming out of psychological traditions, it was a poor choice. I have not really found a better word. Maybe someone here could suggest one.

MURIEL CANTOR: I noticed that the word class has not been mentioned. I know you had demographic variables, and you say that none of them made any difference. But you do not really have a class measure unless you use just income as a class measure.

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: Income and education.

MURIEL CANTOR: You think that it does not make any difference and you really did not get any findings at all?

PABLO HALPERN: No, I did not.

SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH: By the way, that is consistent with my research, that we do not find dependency relations being highly correlated with socioeconomic indicators at all.

JOSEPH TULCHIN: I would like to come back to something with which George Lister began the exchange. Prior to the plebiscite, there was a variety of non-official oppositional voices; among them, he singled out the Church. Beginning about 1984-1985, the Christian Humanism Council began to publish things that, because of its imprimatur, were allowed, but it curiously attracted not just Catholics, but a lot of non-Catholics as well who were being protected by the Church's imprimatur. Is there any way of measuring the relative value or impact of publications, say, by the Council of Christian Humanism on the one hand, or a labor union pamphlet on the other?

PABLO HALPERN: It was particularly those sources of information that had an impact on political perceptions, as opposed to oppositional media.

JOSEPH TULCHIN: Yes, but is there any way of distinguishing the impact of one over the other? The assumption is, by those of us who use anecdotal evidence, that in walking the streets of Santiago, there is powerful impressionistic, non-systematic, non-survey evidence that certain kinds of media have one impact as against another. You are offering us systematic data, but you have created this great lumpen category; we are trying to disaggregate it. Can you help us disaggregate that category of low-tech media or non-official, opposition media?

PABLO HALPERN: I have to look back into the data, but I think it is possible to explore.

JOSEPH TULCHIN: It seems to get back to the arrow going in both directions that you referred to as the dilemma of causality: are my values determining whether I read the union broadside or the church publication? Is it my class, my predisposition that lead me to pick up certain things and not others? We have to disaggregate. We have another study here that Pablo will have to finish; then we can have Dr. Ball-Rokeach come back and serve as, if not the commentator, as the first provocative questioner.