HYBRID ACCOUNTS:
UNCOVERING THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF THE DISTORTION OF INFORMATION VIA NEWS PRESENTATION

BY

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Abstract

Ideally, democratic citizens enjoy equal opportunity to deliberate, vote, and express feedback, as well as equal voice enabling them to civically participate in order to further their projects and interests. To take full advantage of these equalities, journalism must serve as an effective mechanism to ensure that citizens are able to participate effectively. Many news stories feature personal and dramatic elements of events exclusively (narrow-context information), but those hoping to become informed and motivated require socially contextualized (broad-context) information as well. In this dissertation, I argue that the journalistic presentation of hybrid accounts consisting of narrow- and broad-context information best enables citizens to become informed about, and motivated to resolve, societal problems.

In chapter one, I argue that seeking resolution to social issues is best accomplished via deliberating, voting, and expressing feedback. Because of this, I argue that journalists should aim to produce informed citizens who are motivated to resolve social issues. To show how journalists can meet this aim, I describe narrow- and broad-context accounts, and demonstrate how journalists can weave such accounts together to form hybrid narratives. In chapter two, I examine the notion of journalistic objectivity, questioning its status as an ideal journalists should strive to attain. I argue that because framing decisions are grounded upon value-laden appraisals, constructing an objective, value-free account of an event is impossible. In chapter three, I argue by appeal to work in cognitive psychology that some types of framing inhibit citizens' ability to form contextually rich views of events. Doing so buttresses my claim that journalists should avoid framing stories in ways that feature narrow-context information exclusively, and

instead frame accounts that present both narrow- and broad-context information. In chapter four, I investigate the psychological ground of emotional arousal to show why both standalone narrow- and broad-context accounts fail to render citizens informed and motivated and why accounts must include both narrow- and broad context information. In chapter five, I examine empirical evidence that shows that citizens prefer consuming narrow-context accounts to hybrid narratives, and argue that this is because citizens lack confidence about their ability to acquire political knowledge, use that knowledge effectively, as well as the likelihood of seeing any governmental response due to their efforts. Citizens can gain such confidence by using information presented via hybrid accounts to participate effectively. Upon feeling empowered by such narratives, citizens will readily seek them out.

While it may appear obvious to some that presenting hybrid accounts is desirable, such is not what we see in the media today. I provide philosophical and psychological arguments in support of doing so. For instance, while some accounts providing support for contextualized reporting have addressed the pernicious effects of the presentation of narrow-context accounts, this work has failed to examine deep seated biases rooted in perceptual processing that make such accounts unattractive. While many have cast doubt on the possibility of achieving journalistic objectivity, no one has provided a philosophical account of why doing so is impossible. Thus, my dissertation seeks to bring normative and descriptive theory to clarify the epistemic responsibilities of journalists in a democratic society.

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Chapter One

Democracy and the Press: Journalists' Role within Democratic States

§_{1.1}   Introduction

Democratic deliberation, voting, and feedback function politically and epistemically to legitimize government. The political function of democracy legitimizes the use of force and coercion over citizens, which requires that individuals enjoy equal opportunity under the law to deliberate, vote, and express feedback. Policies enacted must preserve and enhance citizens' opportunities to achieve such equality. The epistemic function of democracy enables citizens to come to the right answers under the right conditions, which requires that individuals enjoy equal voice so that they can make full use of the opportunity to deliberate, vote, and express feedback in order to further their projects and interests[1]. To take advantage of these equalities, citizens must become informed about social issues in ways that enable them to reasonably understand problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. Remaining uninformed makes it likely that citizens will fail to make full use of the equal opportunity and equal voice they share, as doing so requires that citizens be well informed.

In modern democratic states, journalism can serve as an effective mechanism to ensure that citizens are able to deliberate, vote, and express feedback after becoming informed, rather than leaving them to participate civically while uninformed. To accomplish this, journalists must be free to disseminate whatever information they deem pertinent to their audience. While a free press that presents contextually rich information to democratic citizens is required for the latter to make full use of the equal opportunity

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[1] Throughout this dissertation, I consider the term 'concerns' to mean one's projects and interests and vice versa.

and equal voice they enjoy, only some journalistic methods are reliable generators of the type of narratives citizens require. Many stories produced by journalists come in the form of narratives that focus on an event's most dramatic elements about one or two individuals. While such stories often do a great job enticing new audience members (and retaining the attention of current ones), they do not encourage citizens to develop views that consist of anything more than an awareness of the personal and dramatic elements of events, which can be called a "narrow-context" view. This is problematic, as disseminating stories that present information through narrow-context accounts fails to encourage citizens to become informed. Informed citizens necessarily possess knowledge about the socio-economic and political causal foundation and significance of events[2], that is, they hold "broad-context" views. Throughout the course of this dissertation, the case will be made that journalists should present hybrid narrow- and broad-context accounts that relay the subjective experiences of individuals to the audience, as well as contextually rich information about the causal foundation and future significance of events.

§1.2   Citizen Responsibility

To best be able to resolve social issues through civic participation, citizens must first develop contextually rich views about societal problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. Second, citizens must develop responsiveness so that they will be properly motivated to resolve such issues. In this dissertation, I assume that citizens participating in a representative democracy should share the desire to positively

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[2] I consider socio-economic and political origination and significance as a conglomeration of societal, economic, and political factors said to give rise to a particular issue or problem. For instance, concerning the shooting at Virginia Tech, the shooter's social status, the economic hardships experienced by his parents, and the state of Virginia's privacy laws all served as contributing factors that led to the shooting (I recognize that there was a multitude of other contributing factors as well).

affect society and their government, as well as discover solutions to societal problems. Further, I assume that as democratic participants, citizens play an important role in decisions concerning public policy, the definition and shaping of issues, and elections. To perform this role effectively, it is necessary for citizens to be able to deliberate, vote, and express feedback. To best enable citizens to perform these functions, they must form contextually rich views about various issues they face both domestically and internationally.

While citizens could attempt to wield political influence as isolated, solitary entities in hopes of individually affecting governmental decisions, such efforts may frequently fail. A more effective means to influence government within democratic societies comes via collaborative efforts featuring deliberation, voting, and feedback. One need not look very far for examples (e.g., the Civil Rights movement, the American suffragist movement, etc.). In each of these cases, citizens first became informed about the issues with which they were passionate and then proceeded to participate civically collectively[3]. In these instances, citizens wielded political influence by engaging in debate with their peers, paving the way for them to cast informed votes and express feedback.

§1.3   Democracy and Press Freedom

The press enhances democracy by ensuring that citizens become informed and motivated to participate civically. Reflecting upon the nature of democracy and citizens' role within it will show why this is the case. *Dēmokratía* (δημοκρατία), a compound of *demos* (δῆμος) 'people' and *krátos* (κράτος) 'power', denotes 'people power'.

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[3] In this dissertation, I consider civic participation as the performance of three democratic functions: deliberation, voting, and feedback.

Democracies that afford citizens' direct control, or power, are known as *direct democracies*. Direct democracy involves the direct participation of citizens concerning the creation, shaping, and ratification of policy initiatives and laws. In addition, citizens are able to elect officials by popular vote, as opposed to having a representative body (e.g., an electoral college) that formally elects leaders, such as the president and vice-president.

The form of democracy that I am most interested in exploring, however, is *representative democracy*, as my investigation focuses upon how journalists can best enhance civic participation within the democratic arrangement existing at present in the United States of America. In representative democracies, citizens elect representatives that create, shape, and ratify policy initiatives and laws on behalf of the interests of those citizens they represent. In addition, in the case of the United States, an electoral college formally elects the president and vice-president. Rather than allowing citizens to directly elect such leaders via a popular vote, each state designates a certain number of Electoral College delegates who pledge to cast their votes according to the will of the people they represent. Constituents hold their representatives accountable for the latter's voting record on issues, as well as legislature they craft or sponsor, and the degree to which their efforts adequately embody the interests of those citizens residing in the district that they serve[4]. Within representative democracies, civic participation:

> [i]s intended to serve a number of functions: the protection of private
> interests, the selection of competent leaders, the expression of the public

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[4] Kakabadse, A., Kakabadse, N., Kouzmin, A., & Kalu, K. (2010). Calling on Jefferson: The 'Custodiary' as the fourth estate in the democratic project. *Contemporary Politics*, 16(3), 279-299, Fiorina; M.P., 1981. Retrospective voting in American national elections. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Manning, J., 1996. Voting records of members of Congress – CSR report for Congress. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress.

good, and the making and implementing of public policy (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, p. 40).

Representative democracies are arranged to facilitate civic participation so that citizens can further their projects and interests by selecting political representatives that best further those concerns through the policy initiatives they construct and enact.

A free press serves democratic states in the following three ways. One, it can serve as an unofficial "fourth estate", operating as a mechanism that enables citizens to learn about governmental operations, as well as actions taken by other citizens. Through this function, journalists serve as a safeguard against the tyranny of political representatives, as well as the majority of other citizens. Two, the press can provide a soundboard for citizen participation that enables the latter to make full use of the equalities afforded to them (i.e., equal opportunity and equal voice). Three, the press can make public dire conditions and inadequate governmental response, whether manmade or natural disasters, that cannot be ignored by government. For instance, press coverage of the devastation of New Orleans due to Hurricane Katrina and FEMA's subpar performance to resolve the issue prompted citizens and government officials to reflect upon those efforts and work to improve the handling of natural disasters in the future.

Some general remarks about the separation of powers as they exist in the United States will help situate an account of how the press serves as a fourth, unofficial estate. There are three official estates that comprise the U.S. government: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The writings of John Locke and Charles Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu played an integral role in the formation of the U.S. government's tripartite structure. In Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, he argues that the

executive and legislative branch must be separately operating bodies. Justifying his

insistence that the executive branch remain separate from the legislative, he claims:

> [t]hey [i.e., the executive branch] may exempt themselves from obedience
> to the laws they make, and suit the law, both in its making and execution,
> to their own private advantage (Locke, 2008, p. 88).

If the executive branch were to both make the laws and enforce them, it could create

exemptions for itself that might allow it to operate outside of the laws it created. It is

important to note that Locke considers the legislative branch as holding "supreme power"

over the executive estate because the former holds mere fiduciary power and best

embodies the collective will of the people. In other words, the legislature retains power

as a trust with citizens, creating laws that best suit their interests. Since it derives its

power via this trust, it does not hold supreme authority over the will of the people; the

legislature is a mere extension of authority that ultimately resides with citizens.

Montesquieu advocates a horizontal separation of powers that includes three

branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. While various configurations of

polypartite governments exist in modern liberal democracies, one central feature remains:

a system of checks and balances. For without such a configuration, one branch of

government (or two if joined in confederation) might become despotic and seize too

much control. As Montesquieu claims:

> [w]ere the executive power not to have a right of restraining the
> encroachments of the legislative body, the latter would become despotic;
> for as it might arrogate to itself what authority it pleased, it would soon
> destroy all the other powers (Montesquieu, 2004, p. 157).

An estate successful in its attempt to circumvent the authority of the others could see to

their elimination. To avoid this, Montesquieu proposes that governments be organized to

ensure that those who make laws do not enforce them and those who interpret whether

laws made accord to the principles inherent in the nation's constitution do not make nor enforce them.

As Kakabadse, et.al. note, the framers of the U.S. constitution agreed with Montesquieu and established clear lines of demarcation between the three newly created branches of the American government. As they claim:

> US Federalists, whose leaders included three men who helped develop the Constitution, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, and two national heroes whose support greatly aided the Federalists' cause, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, embraced Montesquieu's governing philosophy of the threefold division (Kakabadse, et.al., 2010, p. 281).

The framers' effort to establish a division of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches was aimed at reducing the possibility that one branch of government would gain too much power over the others to avoid the stronger from becoming despotic.

A free press helps bolster the effectiveness of this division of power, since journalists provide transparency to both citizens and political representatives by illuminating the activities of each estate. For instance, without information pertaining to the executive branch's decision to limit the enforcement of certain legislation, Congress would be ill equipped to understand if action is required to circumvent the executive branch's efforts. A tangible example of phenomena of this type is President George W. Bush's decision (along with many recent past presidents) to alter the enforcement of laws using line item vetoes. Without a free press to report such behavior publicly, Congress would be unable to take action in response. In this way, a free press provides a safeguard against abuses of power by allowing governmental branches to place checks upon one another.

The second way in which a free press can offer protection to citizens comes via its role as a safeguard against the tyranny of the majority. In a democratic society, the majority of citizens could wield despotic power over the minority. With regard to this fear, Kakabadse, et.al. comment that one of the reasons behind the insistence that governmental power be divided with a system of checks and balances, was so that "the rights of minority groups who might be oppressed from an overbearing majority" (Kakabadse, et.al., 2010, p. 281) could be secured. While this fear may hold greater strength in direct democracies since citizens have more control over policy initiatives and laws enacted within such states, this fear remains in representative democracies as well, because the legislative branch could create initiatives according to the will of mischievous factions. As James Madison argued in Federalist Paper No. 10, factions (whether such groups are comprised of the majority or minority) can, at times, amass a considerable amount of power that affords them the ability to override the general interest or rights of citizens outside their ranks. On factions, Madison claims:

> [b]y a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community (Madison, 2008, p. 49).

Put another way, a faction is a group of citizens with common projects and interests not shared with either one or more subsets of citizens, where such projects and interests are oppositional and contrary to those outside the faction. This represents a serious problem for democracy. In order to protect one or more subsets of citizens against factions whose concerns might pose hazardous opposition, a free press can publicly examine such concerns, exposing them to public scrutiny and castigation (if need be the case). For

instance, since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the American press has repeatedly investigated the projects and interests of factions dedicated to white racial supremacy, as well as expose the hostile nature of such groups' activities. With regard to gay rights, journalists' coverage of the killing of Matthew Shepard helped spark public outrage against homophobic violence that has led to the passage of laws against hate crimes. A free press operating as an investigative body of the destructive projects and pernicious interests of factions enables citizens to take action against factions whose activities might seek to cause undue harm to others.

It is worth considering whether informed citizens are more likely to factionalize than not. In my view, informed citizens would be less likely than uninformed ones to factionalize, since possessing contextually rich views would render them more likely than their uninformed peers to appreciate the experiences of others, as well as how their own projects and interests lie interconnected with those outside of their own personal experiential sphere. In other words, informed citizens would be more likely than uninformed ones to understand the projects and interests of people outside of their socio-economic and political spheres, and this would help foster a sense of intersubjective connectivity between the concerns of oneself and others.

§1.4   Why Democracy?

Perhaps one might argue that because citizens are ill-informed about policy proposals and their implications, hiring experts to solve citizens' problems would best serve their interests. To this end, a technocracy, or a state run by experts trained specifically to deal with societal problems, might be preferable to a democracy. In my view, however, endorsing such an argument would be ill advised. As Elizabeth Anderson

explains, democracy provides citizens the best opportunity to solve "problems of public interest, the efficient solution to which requires joint action by citizens, through the law" (Anderson, 2006, p. 9). To further her argument, Anderson examines three epistemic accounts of democracy: the Condorcet Jury Theorem (CJT), the Diversity Trumps Ability Theorem (DTAT), and John Dewey's experimentalist model of democracy. While she favors the latter over the former two models (as do I), I will discuss all three accounts, as doing so will buttress my above claim that democracy best enables citizens to solve societal problems effectively.

There are two types of criterial success for democratic states: internal (i.e., procedural) and external (i.e., pragmatic) (Anderson, 2006, p. 10). Internal criteria measure whether a democratic state affords citizens equal opportunity and equal voice, enabling them to deliberate, vote, and express feedback. External criteria measure success according to instrumental criteria such as whether citizens deem the consequences (whether intended or unintended) of a specific policy or group of policies acceptable. In other words, external criteria measure whether or not a particular solution (or set of solutions) works, pragmatically speaking. Both Anderson and I share the view that while both types of criterial success are important, external criterial success is more important than internal criterial success, since our work is motivated primarily by the desire to discover a way (via philosophical and political theory) to increase democratic citizens' success concerning the selection of effective solutions to societal problems.

There are three concerns related to citizens' ability to resolve social issues that are worth discussing before addressing the CJT, the DTAT, and Dewey's experimental model of democracy. First, diversity enhanced through voter enfranchisement and

inclusion helps ensure that information (that is typically distributed asymmetrically) is pooled together in ways that best allows citizens to discover and select successful solutions to problems. Second, deliberation enhanced through diversity affords citizens means to influence one another's perspectives concerning various problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. Regarding citizens' ability to influence one another, Helen Longino raises an interesting point about the nature of the peer review process within academia that has important implications for the topic of democratic deliberation. As she states:

> [t]he function of peer review is not just to check that the data seem right and the conclusions well-reasoned but to bring to bear another point of view on the phenomena, whose expression might lead the original author(s) to revise the way they think about and present their observations and conclusions. To put this another way, it is to make sure that ... the authors have interpreted the data in a way that is free of their subjective preferences (Longino, 2001, pp. 68-69).

Longino's insights are important, as they demonstrate how citizens can positively influence one another by providing a mechanism for motivating the revision of one's views. Exposing one's views to the criticism of others opens the door to gaining a new perspective in which to understand such views. More often than not, what citizens consider privately has been informed, in part, by their own epistemic commitments and idiosyncrasies. It is sometimes difficult for individuals to view their own ideas free from their subjective preferences. Public deliberation affords citizens the opportunity to discover how others interpret their views who may hold entirely different sets of subjective preferences. What is most beneficial here is the idea that opening one's views to others affords citizens the opportunity to revise their perspectives in light of criticisms that might be developed in opposition to them. Finally, feedback allows citizens to

engage in further deliberation after they have selected initial solutions in case such

solutions produced consequences deemed unacceptable.

Describing the CJT, Anderson states that this theorem claims:

> if voters face two options, vote independently of one another, vote their judgment of what the right solution to the problem should be (i.e., they do not vote strategically), and have, on average, a greater than 50% probability of being right, then, as the number of voters approaches infinity, the probability that the majority vote will yield the right answer approaches 1 (Anderson, 2006, p. 12).

In other words, plurality voting that involves pooling together an ever-increasing number

of responses increases the probability that voters will select a correct[5] solution to a

particular problem. This gives reason to claim that democracy is better suited than

technocracy (i.e., the rule of select experts), since it bests citizens' success rate

concerning their ability to select effective solutions to societal problems. The CJT,

however, ultimately fails to be exhaustive, as it cannot account for the importance of

ensuring epistemic diversity among voters. Epistemic diversity is important, as

> [m]ost of the problems democracies are asked to solve are complex, and have asymmetrically distributed effects on individuals according to their geographic location, social class, occupation, education, gender, age, race, and so forth. Since individuals are most familiar with the effects of problems and policies on themselves and those close to them, information about these effects is also asymmetrically distributed (Anderson, 2006, p. 15).

Discovering solutions to complex problems often requires a vast amount of information

from a variety of different sources. Since citizens are affected asymmetrically by societal

problems, and typically only possess information pertaining to their own projects and

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[5] Per the CJT, it is assumed that voters are operating under conditions where a "correct" solution is present as well as discoverable. By "correct", I mean "the choice which would have been made under conditions of full information" (Lau & Redlawsk, 1997, p. 586). Under real world conditions, there may be no one "correct" solution to a particular problem that is present and/or discoverable. If under conditions of full information, however, democracy cannot be shown to be a reliable mechanism to select successful solutions to societal problems, then one would have reason to claim that democracy is an inadequate political theory.

interests (as well as those of their close associates), it would be erroneous to assume that a set of voters possessing homogeneous views (as opposed to heterogeneous ones) could pool together enough information to select an effective solution to complex problems. For instance, imagine a group of citizens residing in West Chester, Pennsylvania attempting to hold a public forum for the expressed reason of improving Philadelphia inner city schools. In this case, the group residing in West Chester would most likely not possess information about what it is like to live in an impoverished community, let along attend school in one. Without the addition of information about the plight facing many Philadelphians residing within areas like Strawberry Mansion, Mantua, etc., this group would most likely fail to possess information germane to the proposed task. To ameliorate this problem, group members would find it necessary to include new members with information less homogenous than their own, as well as pertinent to the issue under consideration.

Since the CJT fails to provide a mechanism to ensure that voters possess heterogeneous views, it is an unattractive model of democracy. Moreover, while the theorem is true, it is only applicable to cases where there are just two options. Unfortunately, in real world scenarios, there are never just two options. The world does not come packaged as a neat set of problems and well defined possible outcomes. The future is "open" in that problems are often complex and individuals seldom (if ever) are able to define possible outcomes to the degree assumed under conditions where the CJT is applicable. Since the CJT assumes that only two voting options exist, it is inapplicable in the case of a complex, heterogeneous democracy. Additionally, the theorem assumes

that the problems are well defined in advance. Real world scenarios are seldom, if ever,

well defined in advance. In most instances, such cases are poorly defined at best.

Providing even more cause for concern is the fact that the CJT assumes that

citizens vote independently of one another (Anderson, 2006, 15). Put another way, the

CJT supposes that citizens do not influence one another to any significant degree. Since

Anderson holds that

> mutual influence prior to voting are constitutive, not incidental features of
> democracy[, … w]ithout access to public fora for sharing information and
> opinions based beyond their immediate knowledge, voters are often
> uninformed and helpless (Anderson, 2006, 16).

Stated simply, the CJT assumes that the people do not influence each other, but they

clearly do. This concern relates to Anderson's first problem with the CJT, as she

originally claimed that since social problems affect citizens differently, and since citizens

know primarily about their own projects and interests exclusively, it is necessary for them

to publicly discuss matters concerning the problems they collectively face. Such

deliberation is necessary so that citizens, who possess asymmetrically distributed

information, can pool together enough information to select an effective solution to

complex issues, as well as persuade one another to modify his or her views.

The Diversity Trumps Ability Model does account for the sort of heterogeneity

that Anderson argues a healthy democracy requires. As she explains, the DTAT

> [s]tates that if the problem is hard (no individual always gets it right), the
> problem solvers converge on a finite set of solutions, the problem solvers
> are epistemically diverse (they don't all converge on the same local
> optimum), and there are many problem solvers who work together in
> moderate sized groups, then a randomly selected collection of problem
> solvers outperforms a collection of the best problems solvers (Anderson,
> 2006, 18).

Put another way, in situations involving many voters assembled together in isolated groups who come together to solve complex problems wielding a finite list of possible solutions to such problems, a randomized selection of voters would select correct solutions at a rate higher than a group of experts. This is an important finding, as it provides evidence for my claim that democracy, rather than technocracy, can best wield solutions to societal problems, for this theorem shows that a diverse collection of non-experts does a better job selecting successful solutions to such problems than experts. While an improvement over the CJT, the DTAT fails to account for two features vital to the health of a democracy: universal inclusion and feedback.

First, the DTAT fails to stress "the noninstrumental importance of universal inclusion (i.e., equal opportunity and equal voice)", as well as feedback (Anderson, 2006, 21). Concerning the former, Anderson claims that while the DTAT recognizes the instrumental value of inclusive franchisement and free speech, it fails to recognize their noninstrumental value (and she posits that these aspects are especially valuable features of democracy). Equal opportunity and equal voice have instrumental value according to the DTAT because such equalities enhance voters' ability to pool together diverse information from individuals affected asymmetrically by societal problems.

It is worth noting is that the inclusion of these equalities satisfies the internal criterion of democratic decision-making. As stated above, this criterion demands

> that the decisions fairly represent everyone's concerns, and thereby
> represent an object of public concern (Anderson, 2006, 22).

The problem here is that equal opportunity and equal voice are valuable for more than their instrumental ability to allow citizens to gather a diversity of information before, during, and after voting. Their noninstrumental value comes from their ability to ensure

the fair representation of citizens' projects and interests, making them actually important

to the public at-large, and not just one sub-section of citizens.

In addition, these equalities make it possible for citizens to disseminate

information into the public sphere via feedback. Since voters are fallible, feedback about

the effectiveness and success of selected solutions is vital to the health of democracy, for

without such feedback, revisions to public policy initiatives would be quite difficult to

enact. On this point, Anderson claims that the DTAT

> does not model the epistemic functions of periodic elections and other
> feedback mechanisms designed to change the course of collective
> decisions in light of information about their consequences (Anderson,
> 2006, 23).

According to Anderson, John Dewey's experimentalist model of democracy

includes all three features noted above: deliberation, voting, and feedback. Anderson

explains that Dewey envisions

> [d]eliberation … [as] a kind of thought experiment, in which we rehearse
> proposed solutions to problems in imagination, trying to foresee the
> consequences of implementing them, including our favorable or
> unfavorable reactions to them. We then put the policies we decide upon to
> an actual test by acting in accordance with them and evaluating the results.
> Unfavorable results—failures to solve the problem for which the policy
> was adopted, or solving the problem but at the cost of generating worse
> problems—should be treated in a scientific spirit as disconfirmations of
> our policies. They give us reasons to revise our policies to make them do
> a better job solving our problems (Anderson, 2006, 24).

Dewey recommends that citizens seek out enough information to reasonably understand

problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. After such

information has been gathered, citizens form a hypothesis about which solution may be

best via deliberation, which occurs through venues such as public houses, town hall

meetings, social media platforms, etc. Citizens must then vote upon proposed solutions,

and since information is asymmetrically distributed among voters, diversity is essential, as it enables citizens to collect as much data as possible. Lastly, citizens must reflect upon the consequences from the adopted means enacted to solve a particular problem and provide feedback about the selected solution's success or failure by way of polling, elections, protests, etc. (Anderson, 2006, 25).

§$_{1.5}$ Journalists' Role within Democratic Societies

Journalists, as filters and disseminators of information, enable citizens to make choices about policy initiatives, laws, elections, etc. after becoming informed, rather than leaving individuals to make such decisions while uninformed. With regard to this role, the Center for Democracy and Governance's (CDG) 1999 report on the role of media in democracy states that journalists' information dissemination enables "citizens [to] make responsible, informed choices rather than acting out of ignorance or misinformation" (CDG, 1999, 3). By disseminating contextually rich information about the causal foundation and future significance of events to citizens, journalists enable the latter to become informed, and make decisions while so informed, rather than while ignorant or uninformed. In this capacity, the media offers citizens a civic forum.[6] As Pippa Norris claims:

> in their civic forum role, the free press can strengthen the public sphere,
> by mediating between citizens and the state, facilitating debate about the
> major issues of the day, and informing the public about their leaders
> (Norris, 2006, 5).

Journalists operate as filters of information and by doing so, they create a sphere of political interaction between citizens and their representatives that is vital for maintaining a healthy democracy.

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[6] By "civic forum", I do not intend "deliberative forum" alla Daniel Fouke.

In keeping with their tradition as filters, it is important to note that information flows in two directions. Journalists pass down information from governmental representatives to citizens, as well as pass up information from citizens to their elected officials. In this way, journalists provide "information about urgent social problems … thereby channeling citizens' concerns to decision-makers in government" (Norris, 2006, 6). Without this second directionality of information flow, it is unlikely that representatives will focus their time and efforts to adequately address those affairs about which the public is most concerned.

Journalists also render citizens aware of actions taken by their representatives, enabling citizens to become informed about such actions, thus enhancing citizens' ability to protest political moves they deem unacceptable. In addition, in multiparty democracies like the United States, citizens can hold their representatives accountable by choosing to vote members of opposing parties into office during elections. As Norris states:

> [i]n competitive multiparty democracies, voters can use information
> provided by the media to hold parties and leaders to account by 'kicking
> the rascals out' (Norris, 2006, 4).

Providing further commentary, the CDG claims:

> information serves a "checking function" by ensuring that elected
> representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out the wishes of
> those who elected them (CDG, 1999, 3).

Journalists, then, play a watchdog role. This role requires them to report the developments of social issues as they unfold, as well as accounts of governmental actions to ameliorate such problems. As Norris claims:

> [i]n their 'watchdog' role, the channels of the news media can function to
> promote government transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of

decision-makers in power, by highlighting policy failures, maladministration by public officials, corruption in the judiciary, and scandals in the corporate sector (Norris, 2006, 4).

By informing citizens of the actions of their representatives, as well as their fellow citizens, journalists provide individuals the best chance of making full use of the equal opportunity and equal voice they enjoy. Rather than taking away these equalities when citizens act while uninformed, journalists must provide individuals as much information as possible to best ensure that they are informed whenever they participate civically. As Thomas Jefferson claims:

> I know no safe depositary of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power (Thomas Jefferson to William C. Jarvis, 1820, ME 15:278).

Put another way, democracy is best served by expending more effort to educate citizens in hope that they become informed and make good decisions based upon that information. On occasion, citizens will err when participating civically. Since human beings are fallible, this is a very real possibility. Concerning the above claims, Jefferson states:

> I am persuaded that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. The people are the only censors of their governors, and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. To punish these errors too severely would be to suppress the only safeguard of the public liberty. The way to prevent these irregular interpositions of the people is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people (Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, 1787, ME 6:58).

Informed public opinion is democracy's best asset. Public censor of governmental representatives allows for changes that need not come as the result of bloodshed, for democratic citizens have the power to provoke change peacefully, without recourse to rebellion. As Jefferson notes:

> [t]his formidable censor of the public functionaries, by arraigning them at the tribunal of public opinion, produces reform peaceably, which must otherwise be done by revolution (Thomas Jefferson to A. Coray, 1823, ME 15:489).

For citizens to wield information effectively (e.g., holding representatives accountable for their actions via elections), they need full disclosure (or close to it – barring information that would lead to national security concerns) about their representatives' actions, as well as the actions undertaken by other citizens. The best means to avoid despotic tyrannical regimes, or citizen majorities, from seizing control is to disseminate as much information as can be presented, thus allowing the greatest number of citizens as possible to become informed. As Jefferson states:

> [t]he most effectual means of preventing [the perversion of power into tyranny is] to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts which history exhibits, that possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes (Thomas Jefferson: Diffusion of Knowledge Bill, 1779, FE 2:221, Papers 2:526).

Limiting press freedom runs the risk of citizens losing their freedom entirely, as they cannot provoke change in government effectively if they do not have the necessary information to make decisions under informed conditions. If they cannot perform the latter, then they cannot peacefully fight against the rule of despotic, tyrannical governments.

§_{1.6}   The Cost of Becoming Informed

That said, one could argue that becoming informed can sometimes cause citizens to incur unacceptable opportunity costs, making individuals' efforts to make decisions under informed conditions too burdensome. An opportunity cost is "the value of the next-best alternative that must be forgone in order to undertake the activity" (Frank & Bernanke, 2004, 6). Perhaps one might claim that becoming informed by frequently consuming hybrid accounts is not worth the expected payout that one might receive from policy initiatives created by representatives endorsed by a majority of citizens that comprise the voting public. This is known as the Downs paradox. As Anthony Downs states:

> [Any one citizen's vote] is not decisive: it is lost in a sea of other votes.
> Hence, whether [one] is well-informed has no perceptible impact on the
> benefits [one] gets. If all others express their true views, [one] gets the
> benefits of a well-informed electorate no matter how well-informed [one]
> is; if [one] is badly informed, [one] cannot produce these benefits
> [oneself]. ... Since all [citizens] do this, the election does not reflect the
> true consent of the governed" (Downs, 1957, 246).

Since any one citizen's vote will most likely not be decisive, the time and effort that it might take to become informed and motivated will outweigh the gain that one will receive no matter if they become so or not. There is little incentive to become informed and motivated when one can seemingly rest assured that the majority of voters will be, so whether one has taken the time to do so personally is rendered of little accord. One thing worth noting is that Downs assumes that "all others" are informed and vote accordingly. I find this assumption problematic. Why should one assume "all others" to be informed and motivated when one is not so inclined oneself? If this were the case, and "all others" are just as rational as oneself, it might be possible that everyone including oneself and

"all others" has rested on their laurels, expecting everyone else to become informed and

motivated and vote accordingly. If that were so, then perhaps no one would put forth the

effort to become informed and motivated and vote accordingly. Perhaps it would be best

if everyone assumed that no one else would put forth any effort, as doing so would ensure

that everyone has done so.

While I am willing to concede Downs's point to some degree, I am convinced that

there are tangible benefits of becoming informed and motivated that remain even after the

Downs paradox taken into account. To show why such benefits remain in the face of

Downs's *free rider* concern, James Fishkin asserts:

> I can be a "free rider" and save the costs of doing my share but still reap
> the benefits. … Why should I invest in acquiring political information to
> produce the benefits of a better public decision when those benefits, in all
> reasonable probability, will be provided–or not–regardless of my actions?
> But citizens in a civic community, one with high social capital, have many
> reasons to participate in politics together and to stay informed. They are
> part of a dense network of civic associations, both political and
> nonpolitical, which provides them lots of reasons to read newspapers, to
> stay informed, to participate in community activities. They internalize
> norms that motivate them to participate and to join with others–norms that
> give them satisfaction regardless of any calculation about the effects of
> their individual actions. And, as Tocqueville noted, these habits of
> association, the widespread acceptance of working together, make it far
> easier for each individual to participate, to combine with others for some
> cause of mutual interest (Fishkin, 1995, 148-149).

In other words, citizens who become informed and motivated within a public sphere can

cooperate and participate civically to achieve resolution to societal problems. Without

doing so, their efforts to discover solutions to the problems they face will prove difficult

(perhaps extremely so). Those who take the time to become informed and motivated

inculcate social habits that enable them to further socialize and participate civically for

their cooperative benefit. For these individuals, developing such habits makes working toward the attainment of mutual satisfaction easier.

Fishkin's assertions provide support for another problem facing Downs's claims. Downs theorized that citizens merely have a voice, and cannot influence one another. As Downs claims, one's vote "is lost in a sea of other votes" (Downs, 1957, 246). This claim is wrongheaded. One's vote is *not* lost in a sea of other votes, but one's contribution toward deliberation, as well as one's participation in feedback that occurs prior to yet another subsequent vote influences how others may come to understand problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. Deliberation prior to voting would have no import if Downs's assumption were found correct, for it would mean that citizens have no influence over the content of their views nor the selection of their votes. Diversity concerning the views of citizens would not hold much import either, because the significance of encouraging increased heterogeneity among views lies in the fact that by pooling together diverse information sets, the public would be better able to select successful solutions to problems as they would have more information to draw upon than they would have if every citizen held homogenous views. Put another way, pooling together diverse information sets is important since the more information citizens can gather about a problem, as well as the consequences of the means and ends in view, the higher the likelihood of successfully selecting an effective solution.

§1.7   Avenues of Civic Participation

One might also question my claim that in a representative democracy citizens are able to achieve resolution to societal problems via civic participation. One offering this criticism could note that at the national level in a representative democracy, citizens do

not have the power to provoke changes by direct popular vote or referendum. In my view, this claim is mistaken because citizens have the ability to influence government via "letters, phone calls, campaign donations, petitions, rallies, [etc.]" (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, 58). In addition, citizen participation and public opinion serve as both a litmus test as well as a catalyst of political pressure that various governmental estates rely upon whenever different branches seek to collaborate with one another. As Michael Carpini and Scott Keeter claim:

> [t]he battle between branches of government is increasingly fought through the mobilization of public pressure. Presidents use the media to rally public opinion and to put direct and indirect pressure on Congress. Presidential favorability ratings serve as indicators to Congress as to whether [the president] should be followed. Agendas are revised and policies succeed or fail depending on the ability to rally public support (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, 58).

The executive branch uses the force of public opinion to place political pressure upon legislative representatives whenever a president needs certain measures debated on the congressional floor, bills created, oversight committee action initiated, etc. At the same time, congressional leaders use public opinion as a litmus test to determine whether to follow a course of action a president seeks to put into motion.

Even after policy initiatives have been passed and enacted into law, public cooperation is necessary, and for such cooperation to be possible, citizens must become informed about the content, scope, and nature of such initiatives and motivated to participate civically (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, 58). With regard to the former, Carpini and Keeter claim that citizens must possess

> at least a modicum of public understanding of such matters as the relation between oil consumption and geopolitical conflict, between taxes and spending, between education and productivity, and between crime rates and the economy. A policy based on informed civic input is more likely

> to reflect the public interest. ... A citizen who understands the context surrounding a particular issue may be more likely to think in public, rather than purely private, terms. As a result, a citizen who participates in, or who simply follows, the development of national policy and who understands the logic of that policy is better able and, when appropriate, more willing to support the policy's implementation (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, 58).

Without informed citizens providing input via civic participation, policy initiatives are less likely to represent their interests, or serve as effective solutions to societal problems. Developing a comprehension of the causal foundation of events and their future significance will best enable citizens to think in a broad way (i.e., beyond the scope of their own private interests). Becoming informed about the policies set in place by their representatives will best encourage citizens to better understand the need for such policies and how to best promote their implementation.

At the local governmental level, citizens enjoy greater control. At public meetings (e.g., school board meetings, chamber of commerce meetings, local town hall meetings, etc.), citizens wield the ability to influence the creation and enactment of policy initiatives concerning "the public schools, zoning laws, and property taxes" (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, 59). While such direct involvement is not possible (or is at least impractical) at the national level, that does not mean that both citizens and representatives alike should underestimate the degree of influence that informed citizens can wield when they are motivated to do so.

§1.8   The Consequences of Uninformed Civic Participation

When uninformed citizens participate civically two particularly pernicious results may occur. One, uninformed citizens may vote differently than they would if they had become informed beforehand. Since uninformed citizens have trouble determining which

policy measure and candidate might best serve their best interests, they have difficulty

participating civically effectively. Because of this, citizens may fail to vote "correctly,"

that is, they may fail to make "the choice which would have been made under conditions

of full information" (Lau & Redlawsk, 1997, 586)[7]. In other words, if citizens remain

uninformed about a particular candidate or issue about which they are called upon to cast

a ballot, voters may fail to select the candidate or resolution that would best represent

their own personal projects and interests. As Carpini argues, uniformed voters have

difficulty discerning which candidates hold particular policy preferences. As he claims:

> when [citizens] participate — either directly through the vote or indirectly
> through opinion polls — low … levels of information lower the likelihood
> that this participation will accurately reflect the individual, group, and
> collective interests of the public (Carpini, 1999, 36).

Without citizens becoming informed about their representatives, the policy initiatives

those representatives favor, and the motivations behind creating and implementing such

initiatives, citizens' ability to select representatives that would best serve their interests is

limited. In voting scenarios, citizens must possess (at the very least) broad-context

perspectives about

> their own interests, with the articulated stands of the candidates and
> parties, and with their actual performance when in office (Carpini and
> Keeter, 1996, 55).

To select representatives that will best serve their interests via the policy initiatives they

create, citizens must become informed before voting. To place this idea in a real world

context, Carpini and Keeter rely upon the following example. They offer that

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[7] As noted above, the Condorcet Jury Theorem shows that if under ideal conditions of full information you
have voters faced with two options that vote "correctly" greater than 50% of the time (independently of one
another and not strategically), then increasing the number of voters in the set increases the chance (as a set)
that the group will select the "correct" solution (Anderson, 2006, p. 12).

> the more [a] citizen knows about [a] school bond issue, the clearer she will be on what her interests are ... and the more likely she will be to cast a vote consistent with those interests. ... [In addition, since] politics is an ongoing process, and new or more accurate information allows citizens to continually refine their political opinions and behaviors so that they better match their real interests (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, pp. 14-15).

No matter if a scenario concerns school bond issues or votes on sales tax increases, the more information a citizen knows about an issue, the better they are to make choices that best represent their concerns.

Becoming informed is important, as those citizens who are only able to recapitulate a sketchy version of events and political candidates that primarily features exciting and dramatic imagery of scenes on the campaign trail will have difficulty choosing the representative and policy measure that best serves their projects and interests. As Carpini and Keeter claim:

> how well citizens are able to discern and articulate their interests depends not only on the immediate information environment in which any issue is debated, but also on their ability to put this new information into a broader personal and political perspective (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, p. x).

While citizens seek contextual information about their concerns, doing so in some absolute sense is impossible.[8] Discussing this reality, William Connolly claims:

> [what we] aspire to, but do not expect to attain completely, is a choice between alternative experiences that is fully informed about the factors entering into those experiences and helping to make each what it is. ... One who chooses in the light of such self-awareness does not necessarily give [all of the bits of information received] full reign: He simply chooses after confronting these facts about himself and his setting. Since it is inevitable that no choice will ever be fully informed in this way, we must say that the most informed choice available to one in a particular context constitutes a judgment in serious pursuit of one's real interests (Connolly, 1983, pp. 68-69).

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[8] I address this problem at length in chapter two of this dissertation.

I agree with Connolly that attaining full information[9] is not possible. This realization, however, does not permit one license to forgo the process of becoming as informed as one can, keeping in mind that time constraints and opportunity costs must always be considered when determining how much effort can be expended upon becoming informed. The point here is that more information[10] results in a higher chance that one's choices will best represent one's projects and interests.

Another negative implication that results when uninformed citizens participate civically is that they will be at a disadvantage whenever their interests clash with the interests of informed political elites. As Carpini and Keeter claim:

> if more knowledgeable citizens are better equipped to articulate their interests and better able to reward and punish political leaders for their actions, then when interests clash, less informed citizens are at a decided disadvantage (Carpini and Keeter, 1996, p. 218).

Since informed citizens are better able to formulate and articulate their own projects and interests, they are better able to select representatives who will create and enact policy initiatives that would best serve their concerns. Since informed citizens can develop and express their concerns better than their uninformed counterparts, it is more likely that the former will have their projects and interests served at a significantly higher rate than the latter via civic participation.

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[9] I discuss what I consider having *full information* is at length in chapter two by examining Phillip Kitcher's treatment of the impossibility of attaining objective theories of everything, or put simply, conceptual schemas that include all of the true facts that could be possibly known about an event, idea, concept, etc.

[10] I recognize that *information* is complex notion. I will take up some of the issues complicating this concept at length in chapter three. For instance, for something to qualify as information, it needs to be relevant to and interpretable by the person needing information. As I will discuss later, journalists provide the relevance filter and make the evidence interpretable.

§$_{1.9}$ Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I argued that citizens in a democracy ideally enjoy equal opportunity under the law to deliberate, vote, and express feedback, as well as equal voice enabling them to participate civically in order to further their concerns. To take advantage of these equalities, journalists must present citizens hybrid accounts of events consisting of narrow- and broad-context information. In doing so, journalism can serve as an effective mechanism to ensure that citizens are best able to deliberate, vote, and express feedback effectively. Since many news stories feature personal and dramatic elements of events exclusively, they fail to encourage citizens to develop anything more than "narrow-context" views. Developing mere narrow-context views fails to render citizens informed and motivated, since the satisfying these conditions requires that citizens develop broad-context views as well.

In the next chapter, I will examine the notion of journalistic objectivity, questioning its status as an ideal journalists should strive to attain when constructing news narratives. Ultimately, I will argue that journalistic objectivity should be abandoned since, as I will demonstrate, constructing an objective, value-free account of an event is impossible, since framing requires the use of value-laden appraisals. This discussion will ground my aim in chapter three to investigate the journalistic practice of framing and the way different types of framing (e.g., episodic vs. thematic) affect citizens' information processing capabilities. In examining these effects, I will discuss several psychological theories of perception and learning to show how episodic framing inhibits citizens' ability to form contextually rich views of events, buttressing my claim

that journalists should avoid framing stories episodically, and instead frame accounts that present hybrid narrow- and broad-context information.

In chapter four, I will investigate the psychological ground of emotional arousal to show how hybrid narratives can encourage citizens to become informed and motivated to resolve societal problems. In particular, a noncognitive, process-centered view of emotional response grounded upon appraisal theory will be examined as doing so will show why *both* narrow- and broad-context information must be included within narratives, and why mere narrow-context nor mere broad-context information can satisfy four conditions[11] that render one informed and motivated. This examination will buttress my discussion about citizens' disinterest in consuming hybrid accounts in chapter five. As I will argue, citizens deem hybrid accounts uninteresting due to audience members' apathetic outlook toward social problems that is grounded upon a fatalistic attitude toward the manifestation of events. Lastly, I will show that citizens' interest in consuming hybrid accounts will rise if journalists present information to citizens that encourages them to become informed and motivated, as doing so will enable them to participate civically to further individuals' projects and interests. Upon feeling empowered by information presented via hybrid narratives, citizens will readily seek them out.

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[11] Elizabeth Anderson suggested these four conditions in: Anderson, E. (2007). Fair opportunity in education: A democratic equality perspective. *Ethics*, *117*(4), 595-622. They are as follows: (1) an awareness of societal problems; (2) a disposition to resolve social issues; (3) technical knowledge needed to resolve social issues; and (4) socio-cultural capital enabling citizens to cooperatively and respectfully interact with individuals across sectoral lines.

Chapter Two

Objectivity: Abandoning an Ideal

§2.1   Introduction

Journalists employ the term 'objectivity' quite loosely, using it to express ideas ranging from constraints on journalistic practice to emotive expression. In this chapter, I will argue that journalists should abandon objectivity as an ideal because it is not metaphysically possible to attain a context-independent perspective free from value-laden appraisals that inform our perspectives about our experiential environment. To show this, I will examine Phillip Kitcher's work in the philosophy of science because examining this view will allow me to argue that attempts to present hybrid narratives must not aim at encouraging citizens to attain some objective understanding via a single, unified framework, since such a framework can never be attained. Further, since the creation of narratives (in general) necessarily involves emphasizing certain bits of information and deemphasizing others, it is impossible for journalists to avoid the inclusion of *framing bias*, since framing requires the use of value-laden appraisals. In other words, narratives cannot exist as value-neutral, objective accounts entirely free from bias. Because of this, journalists should abandon objectivity as an ideal.

§2.2   The Origin and Rise of Journalistic Objectivity

Three major factors contributed to the emergence and rise of modern journalism's adherence to objectivity as an ideal: advances in communication technology, economic development, and social change. Journalistic objectivity's origins can be traced to mid-1800s "economic and social conditions surrounding the rise of mass-market news" (Bennett, 2006, p. 185). Modern journalistic practices now considered as promoting

objectivity originated before journalists used the term 'objectivity' to describe such practices. In other words, "what began as a technique became a value" (Cannon, 1977, p. 35). Each of the practices described below arose often independently of one another, and by the end of the 1800s, the foundations for all modern journalistic practices had become entrenched within the profession.

The label 'objective journalism' serves two functions. First, journalists use it as an ennobling claim to encourage citizens (as well as themselves) to view their occupation as a profession worthy of high esteem. Second, journalists evoke the phrase 'objective journalism' as a rhetorical appeal offered to an increasingly educated middle-class whose population began to value professionalism around the dawn of the 20th century.

The emergence of practices aimed toward the promotion of objectivity signified a marked shift in ideology from the early days of American journalism. The early American press (late-1700s – mid-1800s) presented coverage that was markedly politically biased, churning out content that was largely geared toward particular political parties and ideologies. As Robert McChesney claims:

> [d]uring the first two or three generations of the Republic [journalistic objectivity] for the press would have been nonsensical, even unthinkable. The point of journalism was to persuade as well as inform, and the press tended to be highly partisan" (McChesney, 2003, p. 300).

During this period, "reporting", meant providing a political analysis of events. Citizens habitually consumed news that projected the political slant that they favored the most. Many journalists and intellectuals alike believed at the time that encouraging citizens to consume information fueled by opposing political biases would enable them to debate differing viewpoints, which was deemed good for democracy. In fact, Jefferson favored this practice especially. So much in fact, that he collaborated with James Madison to

found one such newspaper: *The National Gazette*. Their aim was to counter the federalist sentiment furthered by a rival paper: *The Gazette of the United States*, which served as a mouthpiece for pro-Federalist ideology and hub for the writings of Alexander Hamilton and John Adams. Construing reporting as providing a political analysis of events, however, faded away from journalistic practice during the 1830s. As a result, political parties, who once took full advantage of small run newspapers eager to publish the party line, stopped funding such entities. This transition was in part motivated by strict reforms in campaigning practices that greatly limited politicians' ability to campaign publicly. Since most small run newspapers could no longer compete with large mass media news organizations once political parties rescinded their offers to subsidize funding, most small news outlets went under.

Significant changes in both the population and territorial size of the United States in the late 1800s sparked an economic transformation of the news industry. For instance, a large percentage of citizens moved to cities as industrialization emerged. Newly created residential sectors featured dense populations. This migration sparked the emergence of mass audience markets. The expansion of U.S. territory created a need for fast and large-scale news distribution. Recognizing this need, journalists took advantage of new technological advances in communication tools, enabling them to distribute news widely and quickly. For example, the telegraph allowed for the speedy transfer of information over vast distances. The transmittal of information by telegraph made stories shorter and simpler; thus, the simplified story format (i.e., documentary style reporting) was born. Documentary style reporting requires that the lead must contain information about the five following elements (the five Ws): who the subjects are; what the story is

about; when the event(s) occurred; where it occurred; and why it occurred. Another

technique, the inverted pyramid style of reporting (loosely related to documentary style

reporting), that requires that journalists place what they deem to be the most important

facts involved with an event first, followed by those they believe are less important,

originated in communiqués about the Civil War written by War Secretary Edwin Stanton

(Bennett, 2006, p. 185). Including information about the five Ws at the beginning of a

story allowed journalists to write compact stories that conveyed information in a concise,

economical manner. Readers of such stories received what journalists considered the

most important facts up front, with details assessed as being less important coming later.

Standardization, as a journalistic practice, emerged in 1848 via the formation of

the Associated Press (AP). The AP began the practice of pooling together reporters,

which allowed them to sell the same stories to thousands of subscribers. This enabled

news media outlets to dramatically increase their audience and marketability, thus

allowing news distribution to become quite profitable for the first time. The broad

marketability of news content demanded that journalists remove political bias. In

addition, during this period journalists adopted the story form, as the increased demand

for information, alongside the employment of a multitude of journalists with little to no

training, created an environment where news reports must be produced with minimal

effort. As William Sloan and Lisa Parcell claim:

> [t]he story form was ... used to tell simple stories without significant
> comment. News from the police courts was a mainstay of penny papers
> and cases were frequently written in story form. The stories usually
> contained some dialogue and the writing style included a liberal use of
> metaphors. Brief stories were also told to amuse readers—for example, a
> story might end with, "The spree has excited considerable merriment."
> (Sloan & Parcell, 2002, p. 299).

In other words, the story form capitalized on two extant realities: many journalists were unable to offer much insight about an event's broad-context perspective, and citizens wanted to be entertained by the news they consumed. Penny papers (i.e., the yellow press) provided avenues for publishers to exploit both of these realities. Since both the readers of penny papers and the journalists who wrote them had been privy to receiving at most, a minimal education, journalists were encouraged to be generalists, rather than specialists. It was cheaper for news outlets to not invest in extensive training required for journalists to become experts in a field when little to none of their audience desired to read in depth analyses of events. Typically, penny papers were tabloid-style newspapers that featured dramatic accounts of crimes and highly sensationalized gossip. Penny papers cost around a penny, thus making them affordable to the general public. Traditional newspapers generally cost quite a bit more and the majority of working class citizens deemed them an unaffordable luxury. Due to the association of penny papers with the lower class, many upper class citizens demanded that their news (which came via traditional media outlets) "not soil the breakfast cloth". In fact, The New York Times (NYT) adopted this slogan in its fight against yellow journalism. Another slogan the NYT made popular was: "all the news that's fit to print". The NYT adopted these slogans because upper class citizens (and rising middle class citizens) demanded that traditional newspapers uphold standards of good taste by not publishing material deemed obscene or inappropriate by members of high society. Further periods of economic prosperity brought many new faces to the ranks of the middle class. With this upward economic trend came the insistence that journalism continue to be conducted with the aforementioned aspects of professionalism in mind, trends that were mostly found within

the journalistic practices of traditional news outlets. The rise of the middle class

essentially destroyed any foothold that news outlets publishing penny papers had

established and most went under.

As a result of the efforts to make news reporting more objective, editorial review

boards were established at major news outlets to oversee journalistic practice.

Throughout the years, editorial review boards have come to play an integral role by

enforcing journalistic objectivity in the newsroom. Their primary role is to ensure that

journalists adopt the role of a politically neutral adversary; observe prevailing standards

of taste; adhere to documentary reporting practices; utilize a standardized format for

reporting (e.g., the story form); and are trained as generalists and not specialists (for the

most part).

It was after this period of standardization that journalists began searching for a

defining value that could describe how one should ideally practice their profession. In

the late 1800s, *realism* came to serve as the professional journalist's mantra. As Bill

Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel note:

> [realism] was the idea that if reporters simply dug out the facts and
> ordered them together, the truth would reveal itself rather naturally.
> Realism emerged at a time when journalism was separating from political
> parties and becoming more accurate. It coincided with the invention of
> what journalists call the inverted pyramid, in which a journalist lines the
> facts up from most important to least important, thinking it helps
> audiences understand things naturally, (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, p.
> 82).

By the 1920s, however, many journalists considered realism to be an exercise in sheer

naïveté. It was during this period that Walter Lippmann argued that objectivity should

replace realism as journalism's standard-bearer. Lippmann insisted that journalists

should adhere to rigorous methodological standards. In other words, Lippmann desired

to transform journalism into a science. Just as the peer review process in academia

requires that reviewers evaluate work anonymously, Lippmann insisted that journalists

must gather facts and present information in ways that protect against any biases that they

may hold. According to Lippmann, journalists must not impregnate stories with their

own irrational and heavily biased subjectivity so that what flows from their efforts is the

dissemination of disinterested facts. While Lippmann did not assume that by laying out

and ordering facts that truth would mysteriously present itself, he did believe that

removing one's subjectivity so that one is left with disinterested facts bests one chances

to relay objective narratives to the audience. As Lippmann claims in response to an

article that appeared in the New York Times covering the Russian revolution of 1917

(i.e., the Bolshevik revolution):

> [journalists must] remain clear and free of his irrational, his unexamined,
> his unacknowledged prejudgments in observing, understanding and
> presenting the news (Lippmann, 1919, as cited by Kovach & Rosenstiel,
> 2001, p. 73).

Lippmann's concern was that the journalists who covered the story did not employ

methods of gathering and presenting data that avoided bias. As he claims:

> the news about Russia is a case of seeing not what was, but what men
> wished to see" (Lippmann, 1920, p. 3).

His hope was that objectivity, as an ideal that captured the spirit of methodological

unification, as well as an adherence to rigorous standards of observation found within the

scientific community, would enable journalists to practice their craft with more

discipline. I share Lippmann's desire for journalists to adhere to rigorous methodological

standards to ensure that they do not frame stories in ways that present false or even partial

truths to citizens. I do not, however, believe that striving to remain objective is any less

naïve than attempting to adhere to realism, since I do not find it possible for journalists to

present context-independent accounts of events (or of anything for that matter). To

demonstrate this, I will now examine Phillip Kitcher's account of context dependency

and his claim that attempts to attain objective understanding via a single, unified

framework are misguided.

§2.3   Context-dependency

In the context of discussing scientific claims, Kitcher argues that it is impossible

to develop a context-independent view about our world that is free from value-laden

appraisals. Since there is often a gap between theory and evidence, scientists are forced

to rely upon value-laden appraisals when adopting views describing experiential

phenomena. Asserting that scientists are sometimes forced to make such assessments, he

claims:

> [a]ccording to the global underdetermination thesis, there is a way of
> developing the rejected rival(s) to obtain a theory (theories) that would be
> just as well supported by the new evidence—the evidence that allegedly puts
> an end to debate—as the doctrine that is actually accepted. Scientists thus
> make choices when there is no evidential basis for doing so (Kitcher, 2001,
> p. 31).

Further, he discusses the implications that come to bear concerning the global

underdetermination thesis by asserting that it

> claims there are alternative theories which are not simply equally well
> supported by any evidence we have but which would continue to be
> equally well supported given any amount of evidence we could ever
> collect[.] … [F]or any further results that might be garnered (i.e.,
> theoretical developments), there is always a way to extend each of the
> rivals to obtain theories which continue to be equally well supported
> (Kitcher, 2001, p. 35).

Put simply, it is problematic that in every case where one attempts to describe an event or

series of phenomena, one can develop a rival theory that has equal explanatory power as

any other because it is possible to augment each theory in different ways that give rise to different and contradictory theories, where each theory has just as much explanatory power as any other. In these cases, how do theorists decide which conception is best? Kitcher posits that theorists invoke the use of value-laden judgments. Concerning this point, he asks:

> [h]ow do they break the ties? … Since there are no objective standards for judging the victorious hypothesis to be superior, the decision in its favor must be based on values: scientists (tacitly or explicitly) arrive at their verdict by considering what fits best with their view of the good or the beautiful or what will bring them happiness (Kitcher, 2001, p. 35).

Whenever faced with no evidence that points one way or the other, theorists will favor the view that best serves their purposes, brings them the most utility, or is the most aesthetically pleasing to them.

Kitcher's findings are useful for my discussion of journalism because it helps me argue that news reports can be seen as offering competing theories about the causes of the events that are being covered. Because it is possible for different journalists to construct competing accounts of the same event, with each narrative having the same explanatory power as the other, journalists must make value-laden judgments to decide which account to present. For instance, since most journalists seek to present stories that news consumers will find interesting, when faced with the choice between two accounts with equal explanatory power, it follows from Kitcher's view that journalists will select the narrative that is the most intriguing or provocative.

Examining this phenomenon, Helen Longino discusses the case of context attribution surrounding the discovery of stone tools uncovered in various locales around the globe. Providing equally compelling theories of context attribution to the primitive

implements are two gender specific views: the gynecentric (woman-the-gatherer) and

androcentric (man-the-hunter) models. Both models attribute the source of the tools in

different, gender specific contexts. As she states:

> [m]an-the-hunter theorists ... describe the role of the chipped stones in the
> killing and preparation of other animals, using as their model the behavior
> of contemporary hunting peoples. Woman-the-gatherer theorists ...
> describe their role in the preparation of edible vegetation obtained while
> gathering, relying, for their part, on the model of gathering behavior
> among hunter/gatherers (Longino, 1990, p. 109).

Since theorists consider both views equally compelling, there is no prima facie way to

determine which theory best provides context attribution for the primitive tools. Longino

asserts that

> [n]one of the admissible data, thus, provides any sort of decisive or even
> unequivocal evidence for or against either of the two accounts. How the
> data are read depends on whether one is working within the framework of
> man-the-hunter or woman-the-gatherer (Longino, 1990, p. 109).

How can our social environment be transformed so that the possibility of reaching

objectivity obtains? Concerning a prescription for motivating such a move, she claims:

> four criteria [are] necessary for achieving the transformative dimension of
> critical discourse: (1) there must be recognized avenues for the criticism of
> evidence, of methods, and of assumptions and reasoning; (2) there must be
> shared standards that critics can invoke; (3) the community as a whole
> must be responsive to such criticism; (4) intellectual authority must be
> shared equally among qualified practitioners (Longino, 1990, p. 76).

Longino's approach is to save objectivity by abandoning the view that it provides an

absolute theory of everything. Rather, she posits objectivity as involving a series of

procedures that make it possible that value-laden assessments are rendered transparent

and exposed to scrutiny issued by other members of the scientific community. Longino's

procedural objectivity is best viewed as a process wherein ideas are exposed to

intersubjective criticism in hope that they can be revised by way of screening out the

newly uncovered subjective preferences (i.e., value-laden assessments) in which they are

grounded. Describing her view of objectivity, she claims:

> objectivity has to do with modes of inquiry. In this sense to attribute
> objectivity to science is to claim that the view provided by science is one
> achieved by reliance upon nonarbitrary and nonsubjective criteria for
> developing, accepting, and rejecting the hypotheses and theories that make
> up the view (Longino, 1990, p. 62).

Here Longino is claiming that if ideas are evaluated using intersubjectively agreed upon

(and thereby nonsubjective) standards, then what would result are views that no longer

bear the mark of subjectivity, as the worry that they are grounded upon nothing more than

value-laden, subjective preferences holds little bite.

I agree with Longino's first three criteria (though not the fourth), as well as her

overall aim to create a schema designed to expose the value-laden assessments that

inform one's views via public scrutiny[12]. That said, I am not sympathetic toward her

refusal to abandon objectivity, even if the type she entertains seems more like

intersubjectivity than objectivity with a capital "O" (i.e., a theory from nowhere). As will

be discussed below, objectivity is a particularly troublesome notion in journalism and

much of the problems addressed in this dissertation have arisen out of journalists'

attempts to adhere to it as a guiding ideal. For reasons I will express in the latter part of

this chapter, I believe it would be best for journalism to abandon objectivity altogether.

Revisiting the fourth criterion she offers as a way of making objective appraisals

at the communal level possible will help expose further problems with Longino's view.

As she claims: "(4) intellectual authority must be shared equally among qualified

practitioners" (Longino, 1990, p. 76). While she is only speaking about ensuring that

segments of society are not denied equal opportunity and equal voice, the worry that

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[12] I discuss this point later in this chapter when considering deliberation's role within democracy.

some participants are not well-suited for such a responsibility remains. Within society at-large, ensuring that all participants are equally qualified, or equally able to deliberate, vote, and express feedback effectively, seems implausible. If we assumed that all citizens meet such a criterion, two problems would emerge. One, we would be wrong in assuming that civic participants possess equal intellectual ability, training, and motivation[13]. Clearly, they do not. Many citizens do not exhibit these qualities. Two, if we were to attempt to ensure that all civic participants express such traits, we might be tempted to ascribe civic agency only to those individuals deemed qualified to participate in civic life. Both of these assumptions are misguided and the latter would prove harmful since a large number of individuals would be excluded and not afforded equal opportunity and equal voice.

If journalists are to abandon objectivity as an ideal, Kitcher's view can serve as a viable replacement. He advocates that individuals should seek a piecemeal view of our world that involves the continual addition of bits of interconnected experience. The types of information that accumulate depend upon the sorts of projects and interests we hold. It is the particular concerns that are unique to each group of people that determine which pieces of information individuals deem epistemically significant.

Even though Kitcher's view features context-dependency, it also involves unification. Such unification, however, is context-dependent as it involves locally unified pieces of information that individuals hold as epistemically significant to practical interests instead of the universe-at-large. It is the particular projects and interests that are unique to each group of people that determine which pieces of information individuals deem epistemically significant. As Kitcher states:

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[13] I will address the problem of motivation at length in chapter four.

> [t]he most we can expect from a theory of explanation is some
> understanding of how these questions and interests shift our inquiries, and
> the complex environments in which they occur, evolve (Kitcher, 2001, p.
> 76).

Put simply, since the theories of explanation that are offered always involve locally unified pieces of information about citizens' concerns, we should not expect such theories to encompass the experiential environment of every being in the universe and their metaphysical commitments.

§2.4   Models of Journalistic Objectivity

Even though there are good reasons to abandon objectivity as an ideal, many journalists refuse to do so. Discussing how journalists interpret this ideal will further elucidate its unattractiveness. According to Robert Mindich, journalists believe that objectivity demands that they should remain value-neutral and detached from the facts presented within the stories (Mindich, 2000, p. 8). In other words, journalists should not insert their own opinions about the facts they are presenting and how those facts may interrelate. This means that journalists must allow facts to portray reality as it exists in itself, and not rely upon value-laden appraisals while expressing a view of this reality (Mindich, 2000, p. 8). Describing this belief, Stephen Ward claims that those who favor this version of journalistic objectivity hold that

> [there exists] a hard, clear line between news and opinion in the
> newspaper. … For objectivists, news [does] not differ from opinion by
> having less interpretation or comment—it [has] *no* interpretation or
> opinion ... only statements of facts. ... Interpretations [contain] value
> judgments—one person's subjective "opinion" (Ward, 2005, p. 217).

Michael Schudson labels journalists who construe objectivity in the above manner: "naïve empiricists", and by this he intends that they "believe ... that facts are not human statements about the world but aspects of the world itself" (Schudson, 1978, p. 6). Put

another way, these journalists believe that facts about the world lie independent of our

subjective beliefs. In this way, facts are mind independent externalities. As Schudson

states:

> the belief in objectivity is just this: the belief that one can separate facts
> from values. Facts, in this view, are assertions about the world open to
> independent validation. They stand beyond the distorting influences of
> any individual's personal preferences. Values, in this view, are an
> individual's conscious or unconscious preferences for what the world
> should be; they are seen as ultimately subjective and so without legitimate
> claim on other people. The belief in objectivity is a faith in "facts," a
> distrust of "values," and a commitment to their segregation (Schudson,
> 1978, pp. 5-6).

A commitment to journalistic objectivity amounts to the wholesale segregation of facts

and values. Objective reporting involves the presentation of facts about the world,

devoid of any values held by journalists. Without journalists' values intruding upon

facts, audience members and journalists alike believe that narratives present value-free

perspectives or views from nowhere. In a 2010 survey asking whether citizens prefer

news with no particular point of view, a majority of respondents answered affirmatively.

As researchers from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press claim:

> [a]bout six-in-ten (62%) say they prefer getting political news from
> sources that do not have a particular point of view (Americans Spending
> More Time, 2010, p. 47).

The claim made by proponents of this construal of objectivity, that journalists

should remain value-neutral and detached from the facts presented within news stories, is

misguided, as the call for detachment is mysterious, impossible to achieve, and can prove

harmful. What sort of detachment is required of journalists? This is quite mysterious

indeed. Perhaps, journalists should select which facts to include in a story at random. If

they did so, the accounts created would mostly be incoherent and not useful for citizens

hoping to become informed and motivated by consuming them.

Furthermore, seeking detachment by segregating facts from values is impossible

to achieve due to framing bias, which is the inevitable reliance upon normative, value-

laden assessments to select out certain features pertaining to an event, while allowing

those features to solely represent the case under description. Picking out significant

features of an event to present inevitably introduces bias because value-laden assessments

ground the selection of certain features and the suppression of others. Depending upon

the ideological commitments one holds, the features deemed the most salient change.

For instance, if a person without any knowledge of the Virginia Tech shooting

asks me to describe the incident, I may provide the following account. "On April 16,

2007, a mentally disturbed student with a documented history of displaying questionable

behavior, who had managed to legally procure firearms due to restrictions in the state of

Virginia's healthcare privacy laws, engaged in a killing spree on the campus of a rural

Virginia state university that left 33 dead and another 23 injured". Surely there are other

elements that someone else may deem important that I chose not to feature in the account

I offered. Perhaps another person may deem it salient to note that the killer believed

himself to be righting the wrongs of an unjust society. The point here is that whenever

one attempts to describe an event, one must select out certain elements as more salient

than others to provide an account of the incident being described. To accomplish this,

one must rely upon value-laden appraisals during the act of description. My decision to

frame the account as a mental health issue, rather than a revenge plot, demonstrates that I

assessed the killer's mental state as having more causal significance for the event than the

issue of revenge. I grounded my decision upon a normative, value-laden assessment of the causal significance of the phenomena described. In particular, I value citizens' ability to become informed and motivated by developing contextually rich views of events. To that end, I framed the above account in a way that stressed the interconnection between the 2007 shooting and mental health, state legislation, and gun ownership. I deemed it necessary for citizens to understand that each of these topics is important to the story, and more so, that these topics are interrelated in various ways, making this is highly complex issue.

If biases are detectable and owned up to, they are not pernicious. Framing bias is detrimental when it is hidden because hidden framing bias inhibits the audience's ability to understand what ideologies may be motivating journalists to frame stories in particular ways. If journalists are forthright about their ideological commitments and those values that might have influenced the framing of the narrative they are presenting, then citizens can reflect upon how the account was organized and attempt to uncover such values and understand how they helped shape the narrative. Moreover, citizens consuming news stories framed by different journalists can compare and contrast accounts presenting coverage of the same events, affording individuals the ability to come to appreciate these events from a variety of angles, which broadens the scope of citizens' views. Journalists who claim that they are able to segregate facts from values and that the stories they produce contain "just the facts", assume that they are presenting citizens eyewitness accounts where the only bias is the viewer's own. In reality, however, journalists are introducing a second perspective or bias: their own.

In some instances, framing bias proves harmful. In cases where journalists frame mere narrow-context information as salient and ignore broad-context information, audience members find it difficult to appreciate what led to the event and how it may influence future events. If I had framed my narrative to include information pertaining merely to the victims' suffering, the killer's blood lust, or the parents' terror in my description of the shooting, one would be hard pressed to figure out what caused this incident and how its occurrence may influence future events because of two problems. One, hidden framing bias disguised by a "just the facts" style causes citizens to ignore contextually rich information as evidenced in this example by its omission. Two, the framing in this case is shallow as no broad-context to put the event into perspective is provided. Only by discovering the event's interconnection with notions like healthcare privacy legislation, gun laws, early warning signs of mental illness, etc. can one understand what led to the shooting and how citizens could work toward preventing future incidents of this type.

In addition, if journalists provide more salience to broad-context information than narrow-context data, citizens would have the ability to make use of the former to help them judge for themselves whether journalists have provided the right information. With this judgment in hand, individuals could speak out whenever they believe that journalists are failing to present accounts that best enhance citizens' ability to hold deliberation, vote, and express feedback. Without journalists providing contextually rich information, citizens most likely would not even be aware that important elements were missing.

By providing information in a "just the facts" news style, journalists demonstrate that they assume that they are presenting facts without any normative, value-laden

assessment of which facts are more important than others, while allowing those facts to solely represent the case under description. This is not the case, as framing bias is inevitable, and at times harmful. Without broad-context information, citizens are unable to appreciate why journalists provided particular facts more salience than others. When journalists attempt to provide nothing but the facts, many times they resort to presenting narrow-context accounts packaged in short, isolated blips (whether video clips, sound bites, tag lines, etc.). In other words, journalists are often afraid that providing broad-context accounts would require them to provide a story with contextual richness that necessitates that they adopt a backdrop of partiality. To many journalists, providing contextual richness would require them to "fill in the gaps", which, many journalists believe would impose bias upon those facts. As David Hildebrand claims:

> one effect of neutrality is the minimization of context in news stories and thus the reduction of public understanding (Hildebrand, 2011, p. 6).

Put another way, the call for neutrality causes journalists to provide stories minimal context and this inhibits citizens from forming broad-context perspectives about events.

The call for journalistic detachment proves harmful in yet another way. Say a journalist is aware that citizens expect her to remain impartial when presenting a series of statements. It would be possible for her to take measures, by using slogans like "Fair & Balanced", to persuade citizens to believe that she is remaining impartial when presenting a view of events. Would she be required to remain impartial in actuality? No. I suspect that, in many cases, when citizens claim that journalists are disingenuous, peddlers of misinformation, this is the type of behavior they have in mind. Concerning this problem, Tom Rosenstiel and Bill Kovach state:

> this neutral voice, without a discipline of verification, creates a veneer
> covering something hollow. Journalists who select sources to express
> what is really their own point of view ... [and who] use the neutral voice to
> make it seem objective, are engaged in a form of deception. This damages
> the credibility of the whole profession by making it seem unprincipled,
> dishonest, and biased ... [at a time] when the standards of the press are so
> in doubt (Rosenstiel & Kovach, 2007, p. 83).

So without a way to verify claims made by journalists, there is no way to discern whether they are impartially presenting information or not. This lack of verification leads citizens to often doubt the press. This is a disturbing reality, as citizens require information suitable for enhancing their ability to deliberate, vote, and express feedback. If citizens frequently doubt journalists' ability to present such information, then citizens may turn a blind eye to the press, refusing to consume information they consider erroneous at best and purposely presented disingenuously at worst.

Moreover, the slogan "Fair & Balanced" indicates a second strategy for achieving objectivity, namely by presenting a "balanced" view consisting of more than one side of a story. This is usually achieved by presenting two sides of a story via a "he said/she said" approach. This is problematic because there are always more than two sides to a story. Pretending that presenting two sides of a story exhausts all possibilities is naïve, and also dangerous because it makes societal problems appear less complex than they actually are. Perhaps instead, offering a "balanced" view entails that some journalists frame narratives using ideological commitments that run counter to what is perceived as the norm in mainstream media. For instance, journalists on Fox News often argue that since most news outlets present information laden with liberal political bias, their news, which is driven with a conservative political bias, balances the scales, so to speak. Theoretically, I do not find this problematic. Citizens share a responsibility to seek information from a

variety of news outlets. This is not controversial considering Dewey's recommendation (as noted in $_{\S1.4}$) that citizens seek out enough information to reasonably understand problems and the possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. In this case, seeking out information requires that citizens consume news crafted by journalists espousing a variety of political ideologies.

Related to the above concern is the worry that citizens will self-select which stories they consume based upon the ideological perspectives individuals hold. For instance, a conservative-minded citizen might choose to rely upon Fox News or the Wall Street Journal exclusively to receive information about social issues and events. This happens frequently. Since citizens self-select which narratives they consume, individuals may fail to develop contextually rich views of societal problems framed from a variety of ideological perspectives. In response, I argue that to effectively solve problems via civic participation, citizens must seek out numerous sources of information from a diverse variety of ideological perspectives if individuals hope to reasonably understand problems. Failing to seek out numerous sources of information from a diverse variety of ideological perspectives will lessen the chance that citizens become informed and motivated to resolve social issues.

As I noted in chapter one, without a rich context in which to place the facts they receive, citizens are often unable to become informed and motivated. Meaningful context and background information concerning how the facts that journalists disseminate connect with citizens' projects and interests is the most important information presented by journalists. Providing such context requires that journalists present accounts that feature broad-context information because without this, it is improbable that citizens will

become informed. Also important is information conveying the personal and dramatic elements of the subjective experiences of others. Without the latter, it is unlikely that audience members will become motivated to resolve societal problems[14]. In the next section, I will examine narrow- and broad-context accounts themselves, taking care to demonstrate how both types can be integrated to form hybrid narratives.

§2.5   Narrow- and Broad-Context Accounts

Limiting citizens' ability to participate civically are certain unreliable methods journalists use to present information to audience members. One such unreliable method involves the presentation of narrow-context accounts. As explained in §1.1, narratives that provide mere awareness of the personal and dramatic elements of events are narrow-context accounts. This method is problematic, since disseminating stories that present information through narrow-context accounts fails to encourage citizens to become informed and motivated. Informed and motivated citizens necessarily possess knowledge about the socio-economic and political causal foundation and significance of events, that is, they hold "broad-context" views.

Presenting information in ways that encourage citizens to develop mere narrow-context views inhibits their efforts to make full use of discover effective solutions to the problems they face, as their understanding of such problems is extremely limited in scope, and solving complex problems often requires citizens to develop more theoretically and contextually sophisticated perspectives.

Take the following two examples as tokens of narratives that feature narrow- and broad-context accounts, respectively. Concerning a narrative presenting a narrow-context account, take the case of a story published on CNN.com about the shooting that

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[14] I discuss the importance of including narrow-context information at length in chapter four.

took place in April 2007 on the campus of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in

Blacksburg, Virginia (Students Describe Panic, CNN.com)[15].

Students describe panic and confusion after shooting

POSTED: 8:29 p.m. EDT, April 16, 2007

(CNN) -- A gunman shot and killed himself after opening fire in a dorm
and classroom at Virginia Tech on Monday, killing at least 32 others in the
deadliest shooting spree in U.S. history.

Students in Blacksburg, Virginia, described a chaotic scene as word of the
shootings spread by e-mail, word-of-mouth and the school's emergency
loudspeakers:

Tiffany Otey, Virginia Tech student: "At first we really weren't sure what
was going on. It sounded like construction. There's a lot of construction
going on always during our classes at that time. Then it was like a
continuous gunfire going off like every second or so there would be
another shot. There was approximately probably 50 shots total. ... At one
point we did hear screaming because people were running out of the
building and at this point, we were all kind of frightened as to wonder,
what happens to us? We're like sitting there, too, like, who knows if the
shooter was going to come up the next floor.

Maybe 10 minutes later we were in the room. The police came up. They
all had bulletproof vests on, machine guns. They were telling us to put our
hands above our head and if we didn't cooperate and put our hands above
our heads they would shoot. I guess they were afraid, like us, like the
shooter was going to be among one of us. So we were told to keep our
hands above our head and run out of the building. At one point, somebody
didn't have their hands above their head and one of the cops stated, you
know, put your hands above your head, like we're going to have to shoot"
(Students Describe Shooting).

Much of the data presented in this narrative comes via an eyewitness account that

gives the audience access to the subjective experiences of the victims. The story begins

by providing minimal contextually rich information by stating that the incident was "the

deadliest shooting spree in U.S. history" (Students Describe Panic, CNN.com), and the

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[15] CNN. (2007, April 16). Students describe panic and confusion after shooting. *CNN.com - Breaking
News, U.S., World, Weather, Entertainment & Video News*. Retrieved November 17, 2010, from
http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/04/16/students.witnesses/index.html

remainder of the piece offers a personal and dramatic account of the shooting. This

narrative fails to present the audience with anything more than a shallow awareness of the

incident and its immediate aftermath. Consuming this story leaves the audience unable to

assemble anything more than an anecdotal account of the gunshots, screams, and

confusion surrounding what transpired. Given this framing[16], it would be difficult for

citizens to assemble a view including any other events, or societal problems that could

have served as catalysts for the shooting. Further, citizens would be hard pressed to

understand how it may influence future events. Because of this, the shooting's contextual

significance may escape readers and instead, any intersubjective appreciation of it may be

limited to (a misconception about) how dangerous college campuses appear to be at

present.

As an example of a narrative presenting a broad-context account of events, take

the following story presented on the day of the shooting at Virginia Tech. On April 16,

the BBC News aired a report that presented contextually rich information about the

shooting (BBC News). Similar to other stories aired that day, the opening scenes portray

police officers hiding behind trees holding machine guns, as well as footage of

emergency vehicles taking various positions around the campus. What is significant

about this report is that the commentary supplied by the journalists who produced this

segment did not attempt to merely play into the trauma of the event. The segment's

producers chose to include a brief description of the time-line of events and to then

---

[16] I will discuss framing at length in chapter three. Broadly construed, framing denotes the act of "choosing a broad organizing theme for selecting, emphasizing, and linking the elements of a story" (Bennett, 2008, p. 37). Frames provide meaning to stories and convey information to citizens by connecting news content together thematically (Bennett, 2008, pp. 37-38). In some cases, journalists use framing to provide stories with personal and dramatic elements, while at other times journalists use it to describe an event's contextual surroundings.

engage the audience with a substantive discussion about school shootings and gun

control. Journalist Matt Fry, who provided the majority of information during the

segment, discussed various school shootings that have occurred at American schools in

recent years. He addressed the frequency of occurrence of such events, as well as their

magnitude. In addition, Fry discussed the relation between school shootings and the

debate about gun control in America by including a brief description of a summit that

took place after a shooting at an Amish school in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania in 2006.

He noted that no gun control measures that could affect the availability of guns were

created as a result of the discussions that took place during the summit. Most

importantly, he noted that it seems as though nothing is substantively accomplished in the

aftermath of school shootings. Generally, he claimed, all that manifests is another wave

of public outcry. As this example shows, it is possible to afford citizens an opportunity to

develop a comprehension of events deeper than what journalists offer through stories

featuring mere narrow-context information.

In addition to becoming informed, citizens must become motivated to resolve

societal problems[17]. Just because an individual holds a contextually rich understanding

of gun violence on college campuses, that does not mean that she will be motivated to

take action aimed at resolving this issue. Because of this, narrow-context information

that can entice citizens to become emotionally engaged with stories and feel connected to

the victims under description should be presented alongside broad-context information.

To be clear, to best enable citizens to become informed and motivated to select successful

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[17] The focus of chapter four will consist of an exploration of this claim. In particular, examining a noncognitive, process-centered view of emotional arousal that is grounded upon appraisal theory will show why personal and dramatic elements must be included alongside broad-context information to encourage citizens to become informed and motivated.

solutions to societal problems through deliberation, voting, and feedback, journalists

must present hybrid accounts featuring narrow- and broad-context information. This is

so for the following reasons. One, citizens must be presented information that is personal

and dramatic so that it encourages them to become aware of, and disposed to act

responsively toward the projects and interests of others, as well as to attain the ability to

cooperate with one another successfully (Anderson, 2007, p. 596). Two, attaining

contextually rich knowledge of societal problems requires abstract, impersonal

information about the causal foundation and future significance of events (Anderson,

2007, p. 596).

      The following excerpt from a story featured at *Reuters.com* demonstrates how

journalists can present information to citizens in ways that encourage individuals to

become informed, as well as disposed to resolve societal problems.

> English major blamed for Virginia Tech shooting
>
> BLACKSBURG, Virginia (Reuters) - The gunman who massacred 32
> people at Virginia Tech University was identified on Tuesday as a student
> from South Korea and a troubled loner whose behavior had sometimes
> alarmed those around him. As students and teachers grieved at a tearful
> memorial service led by President George W. Bush, police said Cho
> Seung-Hui, 23, acted alone on Monday in carrying out the deadliest
> shooting rampage in modern U.S. history. ...
>
> The shooting spree on a sprawling rural campus in southwestern Virginia
> renewed heated debate over gun control in the United States. It prompted
> foreign critics to rail against a "gun culture" protected by the Western
> world's most lenient gun-control laws. …
>
> Cho, who immigrated to the United States 15 years ago and was raised in
> suburban Washington, D.C., killed himself after opening fire in
> classrooms where he apparently chained doors to prevent escape before
> cutting down his victims one by one. He used two guns and stopped only
> to reload. …

Lucinda Roy, an English professor, told CNN she became concerned after Cho's creative writing instructor came to her about disturbing passages he had written.

She said she took his writings to university officials, who said nothing could be done, and referred him to the university's counseling services.

Neighbors and roommates described Cho as quiet and withdrawn, but one former classmate said he was not surprised when he found out the shooter's identity.

"Looking back, he fit the exact stereotype of what one would typically think of as a 'school shooter' -- a loner, obsessed with violence, and serious personal problems," former classmate Ian MacFarlane wrote on an AOL blog site.

Cho who was studying English literature, wrote profanity-laced plays and had characters talk of pedophilia and attack each other with chainsaws, said MacFarlane, now an AOL employee. …

The campus, where there are more than 25,000 full-time students, reeled with shock and grief.

For Tuesday's memorial ceremony, an overflow crowd of several thousand filled most of the field in the neighboring football arena on a sunny spring day.

Many students said they felt exhausted and numb. Some shook with sobs as the hymn "Amazing Grace" played.

"We're just trying to cope with everything," said Jack Nicholson, 21, of Leonardtown, Maryland. "It's just been crazy." …

White House spokeswoman Dana Perino acknowledged that "there is going to be and there has been an ongoing national discussion and debate about gun control policy," but said the focus for now was on grieving families and the school.

More than 30,000 people die from gunshot wounds every year in the United States and there are more guns in private hands than in any other country. A powerful gun lobby and grass-roots support for gun ownership rights have largely thwarted attempts to tighten controls[18] (English major blamed, Reuters.com).

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[18] The segments cut from this story were mere filler and I omitted them to save space.

The story above provides broad-context information alongside narrow-context data. Such testimony opens readers to the subjective experiences of others, while at the same time it provides information about the causal foundation and future significance of the shooting. Concerning the latter, the narrative features information that provides citizens knowledge about the severity of the attack in comparison to other school shootings; the debate over gun control in the United States; warning signs exhibited by troubled students; rates of incidence of gun deaths; gun ownership per capita in comparison to other countries; as well as failures to enact stricter gun controls domestically. This story serves as an example of how journalists can present information to citizens in ways that encourage them to develop an awareness of the problem at hand, a disposition to become responsive, a contextually rich understanding of how such a problem may be resolved, and the ability to successfully interact and cooperate with others. Put another way, it demonstrates the form stories should take if journalists hope to best facilitate citizens' efforts to deliberate, vote, and express feedback as such accounts best enable citizens to become informed about, and motivated toward resolving, societal problems. Luckily, as noted above, Kitcher's work provides a model that journalists could use to construct hybrid accounts, and he terms these models: significance graphs.

§2.6   Significance Graphs

Remember that when constructing accounts, Kitcher suggests that theorists abandon the hope of uncovering some context-independent view from nowhere, and instead focus upon evaluating relations of significance between interconnected items. Such items are an assortment of "questions, answers, hypotheses, apparatus, methods,

and so forth" (Kitcher, 2001, p. 78). These items can be viewed in two specific ways and presented in *significance graphs* (Kitcher, 2001, p. 78). One way that we can view items on a significance graph is by taking an *item-centered* perspective. This approach involves the observation of a particular item's significance. In item-centered significance graphs, the event in question is featured at the center of the graph and then one maps out elements connected to that event. Construing the aggregation of knowledge as a context-dependent activity rather than a search for the *ideal atlas* motivates intellectual work to accord with human practical interests. An ideal atlas is an objective, context-independent view from nowhere that is not dependent upon a particular perspective with specific projects and interests to help determine its shape. The specific features a map contains depend upon constantly evolving sets of conventions that are contextually dependent upon such projects and interests. Describing Kitcher's use of "ideal atlas", Antonio Diéguez claims that it denotes an: "ideal classification … of the world, or context-independent objective explanation" (Diéguez, 2012, p. 16). Concerning the possibility of formulating an ideal atlas, Kitcher claims:

> [l]ike maps, scientific theories—or, better, significance graphs—reflect the concerns of the age. There is no ideal atlas, no compendium of laws or "objective explanations" at which inquiry aims. Further, the challenges of the present, theoretical and practical, and even the world to be mapped or understood, are shaped by the decisions made in the past (Kitcher, 2001, p. 82).

Via significance graphs, we can plot out our current concerns through our understanding of their interrelation to past concerns, though not in a contextually independent manner. Our past concerns have influenced what present concerns we have now, as well as what concerns will have in the future (in addition to our present concerns' influence on these future concerns as well). In Kitcher's view (with which I agree), it is not conceivable to

believe that we can construct an objective, idealistic "Theory of Everything" (Kitcher, 2001, p. 61) when so much of that "everything" depends upon the continual evolution of our projects and interests.

Concerning journalistic practice, we can say that instead of embarking on a quest hoping to obtain an objective, context-independent understanding of our world, journalists' efforts should be spent mapping out past, present, and possible future events, taking care to show how those events are interconnected via relations of significance. Significance graphs can serve as models with which journalists can frame narratives that offer citizens hybrid accounts[19] of events. By utilizing an item-centered approach, journalists can elucidate events' casual foundation and future significance, as well as the subjective experiences of individuals' closely associated with such events. Considering the aggregation of knowledge as a context-dependent activity rather than a search for the ideal atlas would motivate journalists to construct news stories in ways that accord with citizens' projects and interests.

Public journalism[20] suggests that citizens' projects and interests should motivate how journalists present information. Rather than attempting to capture an unattainable level of journalistic objectivity, public journalism requires that journalists focus their efforts upon mapping out events' contextual surroundings in lieu of what projects and interests citizens hold. Since significance graphs enable individuals to plot the vast array

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[19] I purposely evoked the phrase 'hybrid accounts' here rather than 'broad-context accounts' to stress that I see no theoretical reason why the same graphs that chart out lines of broad-context significance between items and events cannot be used to do the same to plot out connections between personal and dramatic elements as well.

[20] Public journalism advocates that journalists should present information to audience members in light of a commitment to enhancing individuals' ability to engage in civic participation. I will discuss public journalism and the prescriptions it offers journalists at length in chapter five.

of interconnection between items (i.e., events), it is possible to utilize such graphs to plot out hybrid accounts of events dependent upon citizens' concerns.

For instance, concerning the Virginia Tech shooting that occurred in 2007, journalists could use significance graphs to plot out the interconnection between the shooter's clinically documented mental state, the state of Virginia's privacy laws concerning mental health confidentiality at the time of the incident, and his ability to legally purchase handguns. Before the shooting occurred, the state of Virginia did not have a system in place that enabled arms dealers to check mental health records to see if prospective buyers had ever been clinically diagnosed with disorders that might give sellers pause when considering to whom they should sell their weapons. A significance graph that plotted out such points of connectivity could be useful for journalists wishing to provide broad-context information concerning how the shooter was able to legally purchase firearms before the incident.

While maps must be accurate, it would be incorrect to assume that we could construct maps in ways that would display our world in an ideal or absolute fashion. This lesson holds for journalists constructing news stories as well. This is important as it shows that when speaking about broad-context views, I do not consider such views as ideal or objective. In my view, broad-context views should be accurate, but it would be erroneous to assume that one could formulate a perspective of an event that features every bit of experience associated with it. In like turn, it would be misguided for journalists to seek out context-independent frameworks when considering what information to include within news stories. As stated above, the approach Kitcher advocates that one follow is piecemeal. In other words, one must continually add

information to her cache as she performs various actions that are motivated by her context-dependent concerns (or in the case of journalists working under the public journalism model, citizens' context-dependent concerns). As Kitcher claims, "[i]instead of a single system within which all "objective" explanations are subsumed, we proceed piecemeal" (Kitcher, 2001, p. 72). Journalists, too, should follow his advice. Under Kitcher's view, scientists should seek to provide explanations for the causal processes at work for phenomena that present themselves as candidates in need of explanation (Kitcher, 2001, p. 72). What presents itself as in need of explanation is dependent upon the projects and interests that scientists hold. In other words, the phenomena of interest are contingent and contextually dependent, so a view explaining the causal processes at work behind such phenomena is necessarily context-dependent as well. Because of this, such a view would not be an objective, context-independent one. Similarly, the phenomena that journalists must provide causal explication of are contextually dependent upon the projects and interests of citizens that manifest the events featured in news narratives. Therefore, journalists, like scientists, would be ill advised to seek causal explanations of the phenomena that comprise events according to some absolute, objective perspective because it is impossible to construct (let alone present) context-independent accounts.

§2.7   Journalists as Cartographers

Constructing news stories is like the process of map making. When constructing maps, cartographers organize information according to two concerns: the cartographer's own projects and interests, as well as those of the potential users of the maps under construction. As Kitcher claims:

> maps [are] designed for different purposes [and] pick out different entities within a region or depict those entities rather differently. … What counts as an omission or an inaccurate spatial representation depends on the conventions associated with the kinds of maps, and, in their turn, those conventions are in place because of the needs of the potential users (Kitcher, 2001, p. 56).

Revisiting a claim discussed earlier, it is in part[21], the projects and interests of the potential users of maps that dictate not only what features each map will contain, but also what type of map it is. For instance, an oil prospector needs an entirely different sort of map than a police officer. The features belonging to both maps might differ entirely. Similarly, when considering how to construct news stories, journalists should consider the projects and interests of citizens. For instance, a democratic citizen seeking information about an upcoming election would be concerned with consuming stories that explicate the political platforms of the candidates running for office. That same citizen might not, however, be concerned with consuming stories that feature the White House dinner menu from the previous week. While it is important to note that the elements that comprise maps and news stories are chosen because of the concerns of their designers and those that they are designed for, it will be helpful to say more about why certain concerns hold bearing. As Kitcher explains:

> the full story of why one set of conventions is chosen must include the past choices of mapmakers and the projects their maps made possible, for those maps and projects influence the desires of later map-users, the resources available to them, and even the character of the terrain that they will explore (Kitcher, 2001, p. 61).

The selection of a set of conventions for one particular map (e.g., map 3) depends upon one or more sets of conventions selected for, and featured on, past maps (e.g., maps 1 and 2), as well as the projects and interests that such past maps helped evolve or create during

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[21] I say in part, because as I stated above, the cartographer's own projects and interests also motivate what items are featured on maps.

the lapse of history between the creation of maps 1 and 3. It is now easier to see why forming an ideal atlas is an impossible endeavor, since much of what cartographers feature on a map (and the type of map in general) depends upon ever-evolving sets of conventions that are contextually dependent upon the projects and interests of citizens.

Reformulating Kitcher's directly preceding statement to fit within my discussion of journalistic practice, one might say that the reason that certain features of news stories are selected during framing is due to journalists' editorial decisions, which were influenced by their own projects and interests, as well as the concerns of citizens. Journalists' selection of particular information presented within past stories influenced citizens' past concerns, which affected past decisions made. These past decisions and concerns have affected the formation of citizens' (and journalists') current concerns, which will in turn affect their future projects, interests, and decisions.

Another interesting point contained in the last excerpt offered by Kitcher is the idea that cartographers' choices partly determine map users' experiential environment. There is a lesson here for journalists, as their decisions to include certain bits of information in stories (as well as acts of omission) affect the way citizens interact with their environment. Put simply, past and present narratives serve catalysts for future events; whereby, those future events serve as catalysts for news stories yet to be framed.

While the following story was most likely not framed using a significance graph, it does serve as an example of what a story produced by utilizing such a method looks like. The story begins by describing the scenario that residents of Dara Adam Khel (a Pakistani town) face daily: increasing socio-political restraints, threats of bodily harm (including death), and feelings of despair and terror. The piece opens with a statement

from a local weapons dealer explicating his fear about Taliban execution: "[b]efore they

kill you, they sharpen the knife in front of you. They are worse than butchers" (Gardi,

2007, p. 1). While eyewitness statements like these indicate the presence of narrow-

context information, the rest of the narrative provides enough broad-context information

that the socio-economic and political context of these accounts is elucidated. For

instance, throughout the narrative, the following elements are described: how many U.S.

and NATO troops are stationed throughout the region; why these troops are stationed

there and why not elsewhere. In addition, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's role in

U.S. led measures to neutralize the Taliban in the region was discussed, and in particular,

doubt cast upon his effectiveness and allegiance. The narrative also addresses the

political crisis facing Musharraf concerning his suspension of Pakistan's Supreme Court

Chief Justice. As explained, Musharraf's political turmoil came to a head when he

ordered Pakistani police officers to raid a television station providing coverage of the

protests held outside Pakistan's Supreme Court building. Further, the story provides

information about Musharraf's political power base, noting that since he has lost so much

support with moderates, he might be forced to rely upon fundamentalists Taliban-

supporting fundamentalists to further his political aspirations. The article also notes that

if protests against the president continue, he might be tempted to crack down even less on

Taliban extremists and their actions. These conjectures are important, as it demonstrates

that the journalist who framed this story is attempting to present the interconnection

between past and present events to future occurrences. Continuing this theme of linking

past events with present incidents, the piece begins to discuss distant events that led to the

present socio-economic and political climate. For instance, the author claims:

the territory at the heart of Talibanistan ... has never fully submitted to the rule of any country. The colonial British were unable to conquer the region's Pashtun tribes and allowed them to run their own affairs according to local custom. In exchange, the tribesmen protected the subcontinental empire from northern invaders. Following independence in 1947, Pakistan continued the arrangement (Gardi, 2007, p. 1).

The remainder of the story provides narrow- and broad-context information by presenting eyewitness accounts interlaced with information about the socio-political pressures facing both the residents of Talibanistan, local and national political leaders, as well as the former head of the Pakistani intelligence agency: Inter-Services Intelligence. For example, the story explains that

[t]ribal leaders interviewed by TIME say they do not support the aims of the jihadists. But the Taliban's campaign of fear has worn down local resistance. Malik Sher Muhammad Khan, a tribal elder from Wana, says, "The Taliban walk through the streets shouting that children shouldn't go to school because they are learning modern subjects like math and science. But we want to be modern. It's not just the girls. In my village, not a single person can even sign his name." Khan estimates that only 5% of the inhabitants of Waziristan actively support the militants. Others benefit financially by providing services and renting land for training camps. The rest, he says, acquiesce out of fear. A few months ago, militants stormed his compound in retaliation for his outspoken criticism of their presence in the area. During the melee, a grenade killed his wife. "If I had weapons, maybe I could have saved her," he says. "We have no way to make them leave" (Gardi, 2007, p. 2).

What results from this particular presentation of information is an awareness of the events described that is both riveting and informative. It contains a good balance of personal and dramatic elements as well as contextually rich information woven together so that readers are enticed to read further, becoming more informed and motivated as they do so.

§$_{2.8}$ An Information Threshold

Perhaps one might claim that there is a threshold concerning how much information it is advisable to seek when attempting to become informed and motivated. Because of this concern, it might not be advisable for citizens to continually consume as much news as possible. This claim holds merit, and the amount of information it is advisable to seek varies depending upon the type of decision or problem one faces. There is a point where seeking more information becomes disadvantageous for citizens, as they would incur unbearable opportunity costs. For instance, it would be possible for one to devote one hundred hours per week for fifteen years to study the effects of a city ordinance that banned the use of riding lawnmowers in the town in which she resides. While she might find this exercise fascinating, it would not be prudent for her to spend so much time and energy investigating the issue. Doing so would cause her to be less able to participate civically regarding issues not related to the particular city ordinance she has been studying because if she were consuming nothing but narratives associated with such a ban, she would mostly likely not know much about current candidates running for office (whether local, state, or national), the evolution of the debate over social issues (e.g., same sex marriage), or international affairs (e.g., tensions between North and South Korea). A lack of such information would leave her ill equipped to deliberate with her peers about these topics, cast an informed vote, or provide feedback via protest. Perhaps examining the matter for a short time, and then moving on to other, more pressing issues would be a better use of her time. The lesson here is that citizens should attempt to gather as much information as they can up until the point where gathering more information would cause them to incur opportunity costs too great to bear.

Perhaps her over-zealous efforts to become informed as possible about her city's

ban on the use of riding lawnmowers were motivated by her desire to discover an optimal

solution to this problem. Instead of searching for an optimal solution, however, she

should have sought a satisficing solution. In "Rational Choice and the Structure of the

Environment", Herbert Simon explains that within environments that are open-ended,

agents would do better to gather as much information as one needs to develop a good

enough, or "satisficing," solution to a problem at hand, rather than attempt (needlessly) to

discover an optimal solution. As Simon claims:

> [b]ecause real-world optimization ... is impossible, the real economic actor
> is in fact a satisficer, a person who accepts "good enough" alternatives, not
> because less is preferred to more, but because there is no choice (Simon,
> 1996, pp. 28-29).

Because we cannot construct an ideal atlas that would allow us to have enough

information to develop an optimal solution to particular problems, we select actions that

bring about outcomes with which we are satisfied. Simon argues that the human

condition is epistemologically constrained in such a way that we can never discover an

idealized understanding of a problem that contains all possible bits of information

pertinent to achieving optimal resolution. There usually is, however, enough information

available to allow agents to achieve satisfactory resolution, even if that information is not

complete. As he states:

> [s]ince the organism … has neither the senses nor the wits to discover an
> "optimal" path … we are concerned only with finding a choice mechanism
> that will lead it to pursue a "satisficing" path, a path that will permit
> satisfaction at some specified level of all of its needs (Simon, 1956, p.
> 136).

Since we cannot formulate an objective conception of a problem in our environment, at

some point we must decide to act using the information we have available with the hope

that as incomplete as our information set is, it is sufficient to accomplish our goal, leading us to satisfactory results. In this case, what counts as sufficient would be relative to the context within which our goal lies.

One might object by claiming that satisficing is epistemically inadequate because that there is no guarantee that we will ever reach satisficing solutions to the problems we face. While I admit that this concern is genuine, as I explained in chapter one, diversity enhances citizens' efforts to select successful solutions to societal problems in two ways. First, via the enfranchisement and inclusion of as many voters as possible, information (that is typically distributed asymmetrically) can be gathered in ways that provide a high degree of probability that enough data is collected so that a satisficing solution is discovered. Second, deliberation occurring before and after voting is enhanced through diversity, and this can enable citizens to influence one another's perspectives concerning problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. This second manner of influence further increases the probability of a successful solution's selection, as it enhances the cooperative efforts of citizens. The point here is that while it might be true to say that certainty concerning citizens' ability to discover a satisficing solution to a problem is never guaranteed, diversity fueled by providing citizens equal opportunity and equal voice greatly increases the chances that satisfactory resolution is achieved.

A second worry related to time and opportunity costs concerns the possibility of a problematic regress that occurs when one considers how much information one needs to reach optimality. If one attempts to develop her information set optimally, she would need to know the cost of gathering each bit of new information. To do this, she would need to know the value of the information that she might attempt to acquire. To know

this, she would need to know the optimal amount of information needed to calculate the cost of acquiring the new information. A continuation of this pattern leads to a regress, and ultimately, indecision. Therefore, in order to avoid incurring unbearable opportunity costs, one should seek information to the level of satisficing, instead of optimality. There is no way to establish how much information one would need to reach a satisficing solution before a decision has been made. Only after individuals have made a decision and implemented a plan can citizens identify whether the information level reached was satisficing. Chapter one included talk of three democratic functions that comprise civic participation: deliberation, voting, and feedback. As my discussion noted, feedback allows citizens to present disfavor whenever a solution they have ratified and implemented fails to resolve the particular social problem for which they selected it. Feedback allows citizens, upon gathering new information about the effects of the solution chosen to fix the problem, to deliberate further in hope that they can vote upon and implement a new solution if the first brings about unacceptable consequences.

§2.9   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I first argued that journalists must not aim at encouraging citizens to attain some objective understanding via a single, unified framework. Arguing for this, I made use of Phillip Kitcher's claim that it is impossible to develop a context-independent view of our world that is free from value-laden appraisals that inform our perspectives about our experiential environment. I also argued that since the creation of narratives (in general) necessarily involves emphasizing certain bits of information and deemphasizing others, it is impossible for journalists to avoid the inclusion of framing

bias, as framing requires the use of value-laden appraisals. Since narratives will always come laden with framing bias, journalists should abandon objectivity as an ideal.

In the next chapter, I will take an in depth look at framing and show how framing information in different ways affects news consumers' information processing. In addition, I will examine how economic pressures influence journalists to present stories that feature mere dramatic depictions of the personal experiences of individuals instead of contextually rich information about the causal foundation and future significance of events. Because of this, such narratives make events appear episodic and isolated from their contextual environment. Lastly, I will discuss a framing method (i.e., the public health model) devised to overcome the weaknesses of episodic framing. The public health model features thematic framing, which requires journalists to present contextually rich information such as rates of incidence, prevention tips, patterns of incidence, etc. As will be shown, thematic framing avoids invoking the problematic effects upon citizens' information processing that episodic framing causes.

Chapter Three

Constructing Narratives: Framing and Its Effects

§3.1   Introduction

How news consumers interpret events depends upon what bits of information are given salience, the theme or interpretative script chosen to connect those elements that have been provided salience, as well as what aspects are deemphasized or ignored entirely. Because of this, framing serves two functions. On the one hand, journalists frame narratives to elucidate points of interconnection between experiential elements in order to introduce a general theme or interpretive script. On the other, journalists' framing decisions cause bits of information deemed impertinent to the general theme or interpretive script they are constructing to be deemphasized (or ignored entirely). A discussion of the psychological underpinnings grounding the connection between framing and information processing will elucidate how certain types of framing (e.g., episodic and thematic framing) affect such processing.

Further, through the process of selective attention, we focus our perceptual awareness upon certain experiential elements while ignoring others. Since framing is a process that inevitably results in certain bits of experience being disregarded in favor of others deemed more important, I will argue that it mimics selective attention. This means that information contained within news stories is shaped via a double filtration process. First, selective attention filters out elements outside of journalists and news consumers' respective centers of attention, and second, framing filters out even more bits of information as well. Journalists and news consumers alike should keep an awareness of this fact ready at hand, as this implies that framing doubles the chance that information

about their environment will be fragmented and difficult to assemble into a coherent structure upon reflection. This is problematic, as citizens hoping to gain a contextually rich understanding of events from news stories will inevitably have difficultly doing so.

Exercising selective attention causes humans to remain unaware of elements of experience outside of our focal point of attention. Such unawareness is not problematic in and of itself, though it can become problematic if the aspects we fail to become aware of prove valuable to our attempts to deliberate, vote, and express feedback, since making full use of these capacities requires that citizens be informed, as well as motivated to resolve social issues.

§3.2   Framing

Deliberating, voting, and expressing feedback as a means of furthering citizens' projects and interests requires that they become informed and motivated about social issues in ways that enable them to reasonably understand problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs, as well as disposed to resolve such problems. Since unreliable framing methods cause citizens to make false inferences from the inevitably partial presentation of information, journalists must understand how framing negatively affects citizens' information processing capabilities.

Framing requires that journalists first determine which bits of information are most important for citizens to consume. After selecting particular elements and ranking them in terms of most important to least, journalists proceed to organize that information in various ways and present it to citizens via narratives. Fortunately, journalists can use citizens' projects and interests to guide their efforts to frame stories in ways that

emphasize the most significant bits of information relative to such concerns. As Matthew

J. Brown states:

> most truth is banal and insignificant … [therefore,] we need to understand
> how our questions and interests, both practical and theoretical, work to
> pick out certain things as significant (Brown, 2010, p. 9).

What journalists must uncover is the importance information holds to the projects and

interests of citizens.

The mere identification of salience, however, is only half of the story. Next,

journalists must organize information into narratives consumable by citizens.

Information disseminated through news stories is organized via framing (Bennett, 2008;

Coleman & Thorson, 2002; Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1994). In general, framing is the act

of "choosing a broad organizing theme for selecting, emphasizing, and linking the

elements of a story" (Bennett, 2008, p. 37). Frames provide meaning to stories and

convey information to citizens by connecting news content together thematically

(Bennett, 2008, pp. 37-38). In some cases, journalists use framing to provide stories with

personal and dramatic elements, while at other times they use framing to describe an

event's contextual surroundings. Robert Entman claims that

> [f]raming essentially involves *selection* and *salience.* To frame is to *select
> some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a
> communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem
> definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment
> recommendation* for the item described [emphasis in original] (Entman,
> 1993, p. 52).

To accomplish this, journalists frame narratives in ways that make the significance of

experiential elements that comprise events, perspicuous. Mirroring Entman's view, W.

Lance Bennett claims that through framing, journalists communicate the significance of

events, as they perceive it, to the audience (Entman, 1993; Bennett, 2008). Entman continues, claiming that framing provides salience by

> making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences … by highlight[ing] some bits of information about an item … thereby elevating them in salience (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

How news consumers interpret events depends upon what bits of information are given salience, the theme or interpretative script chosen to connect those elements that have been provided salience, as well as what aspects are deemphasized or ignored entirely. Because of this, framing serves two functions. One the one hand, framing is used to identify experiential elements journalists consider salient as well as elucidate points of interconnection between such elements so that a general theme or interpretive script is introduced. On the other, framing causes experiential elements and interconnections between such elements not deemed pertinent to the general theme or interpretive script being constructed to be deemphasized (or ignored entirely). A discussion of the psychological underpinnings grounding the connection between framing and information processing will elucidate how certain types of framing affect such processing.

§$_{3.3}$ Framing and Selective Attention

William James claims that our senses, based upon delineations of space and time, combine, separate, emphasize, and ignore certain aspects of experience (James, 1967, pp. 21-74). He posits that

> [t]he phenomen[on] of selective attention [is an] … example … of this choosing activity … Accentuation and Emphasis are present in every perception we have[,] … [b]ut we do far more than emphasize things, and unite some, and keep others apart. We actually *ignore* most of the things before us [italics and capitalization in original] (James, 1967, p. 70).

Through the process of selective attention, we focus our perceptual awareness upon certain elements while ignoring others. Until the point of selection, our world appears as "an indistinguishable, swarming *continuum*, devoid of distinction or emphasis" [italics in original] (James, 1967, p. 70). Even though selective attention is a naturally occurring phenomenon, there is no guarantee that we will utilize this capacity effectively. Humans (journalists included) have the tendency to fail to emphasize elements of experience that should not be ignored. Quite frequently, individuals concentrate upon certain elements so exclusively that they fail to acknowledge other aspects of experience that may also prove valuable to furthering their projects and interests.

Like all observers, journalists must sort through information and organize it on a continual basis and this requires them to prioritize some elements while ignoring others. Since framing is a process that involves the organization of information by way of placing emphasis upon certain elements while disregarding others, I argue that it mimics selective attention[22]. Journalists operate within the same pluralistic universe that James describes. To develop narratives out of a world comprised of a vast entanglement of elements, journalists must select a very limited number of those elements, which they organize in a manner they deem digestible by citizens.

Since framing, like selective attention, acts as a filter whereby certain elements of experience are emphasized at the expense of others, information contained within news stories is shaped via a double filtration process. Journalists should keep an awareness of this fact ready-at-hand, as this implies that framing doubles the chance that information about our environment will be fragmented and difficult to assemble into a coherent

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[22] Selective attention concerns internally situated processing that is automatic and unconscious. Framing concerns externally situated processing that involves the conscious choosing of information and emphasis performed by journalists. Due to this difference, selective attention and framing are not identical.

structure upon reflection. This is problematic, as citizens hoping to gain a contextually rich understanding of events from news stories are often inhibited from doing so when such narratives are episodically framed.

§3.4   Inattentional Unawareness

Exercising selective attention causes humans to remain unaware of elements of experience outside of our focal point of attention. On selective attention's role in the creation of inattentional unawareness, James states:

> attention … out of all the sensations [in our perceptual space] … picks out certain ones worthy of its notice and suppresses all the rest (James, 1967, p. 70).

As Arien Mack and Irvin Rock acknowledge, Aristotle was the first to provide explication concerning inattentional unawareness (Mack and Rock, 2000, p. 250). On inattentional unawareness, Aristotle states:

> [a]ssuming, as is natural, that of two movements the stronger always tends to exclude the weaker, is it possible or not that one should be able to perceive two objects simultaneously in the same individual time? The above assumption explains why persons do not perceive what is brought before their eyes, if they are at the time in deep thought, or in a fright, or listening to some loud noise (Aristotle, 447a11-14).

Which elements enter and which exit our attentional locus varies in different instances. However, at any one time, there are always bits of experience lying outside of our center of attention. Inattentional unawareness is not problematic in and of itself, though it can become problematic if the aspects we fail to become aware of prove valuable to our attempts to deliberate, vote, and express feedback, since making full use of these capacities requires that citizens be informed, as well as motivated to resolve social issues.

For instance, a newsreader may pay very little attention to the fact that the local newspaper she had been reading presented information about an escaped convict last seen

in her neighborhood. Because she became engrossed in a conversation with her

coworkers, she stopped reading the paper, failing to recognize this information. The

woman may seriously consider securing her doors and windows upon returning home if

she had perceived information about an escaped convict on the run near her residence.

Humans (thereby journalists as well) have the tendency to fail to emphasize

elements of experience that should not be ignored. Quite frequently, individuals

concentrate upon certain experiential elements so exclusively that they fail to

acknowledge other aspects of experience that may also hold significance to their projects

and interests. It is important to remember that framing also structures bits of information

together in ways that provide themes or interpretive scripts to the collection of data

available about events. A discussion of schema theory that examines how humans learn

new schemas, as well as modify currently existing ones, will elucidate yet another way

that framing affects information processing.

§3.5   Schemas

Concerning the above case, since the woman never perceived information about

the escaped convict, after work she would most likely go through her normal nightly

routine, which would probably not involve ensuring that there were no escaped convicts

hiding on her property. This is because the *schema*[23] that she was using on this occasion

did not include information about escaped convicts on the run near her home. Richard

Anderson theorizes that individuals rely upon schemas that enable them to make sense of

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[23] As stated here, *schema* is an intentionally broad term and in what follows I will introduce and explicate the notion of schema-subtypes. Jean Piaget first introduced the concept of schemas in: Piaget, J. (1926). *The language and thought of the child*. London: Routledge. In psychological learning theory, schemas represent information frameworks that aid individuals' information processing capabilities. My discussion of schemas and schema modification is intended to show how framing affects citizens' ability to process information.

their experiential environment (Anderson, 1977). People develop schemas that help them make sense of external stimuli entering their perceptual faculties (e.g., sight, hearing, taste, etc.). In addition, schemas enable individuals to make predictions about what external stimuli they might encounter depending upon the particular schema they are operating within at any given moment (Widmayer, 2004, p. 1). Richard Harris claims that the term

> schema refers to knowledge structures or frameworks that organize an individual's memory for people and events. A schema is a general mental construct or model about some knowledge domain. A person holds mental schemas based on past experiences; for example, our schemas about Latinos, schizophrenics, or the Iraq War (Harris, 2009, p. 40).

For instance, when a person consumes a news story she has a particular schema (i.e., a news consuming schema) that helps her make sense of her experience. For example, when watching a local TV news segment, she might expect to be offered a description of a particular event that occurred in her local community. Individuals develop schemas through interactions with external stimuli in their experiential environment. Schemas serve as frameworks within their environment that enable them to organize information streaming in through their sense organs, increasing their fluidity concerning their interaction with both inanimate objects and other actors in their environment.

Since schemas help individuals interpret information as it streams into their perceptual faculties, information that does not fit the particular schema currently in use might not be understood properly or be ignored entirely via selective attention. As Widmayer claims: "[i]nformation that does not fit into these schema may not be comprehended, or may not be comprehended correctly" (Widmayer, 2004, p. 1). Revisiting the example of watching a local TV news segment, if a journalist suddenly

informs a viewer that aliens have invaded and taken over city hall, the viewer might ask a person watching the segment with her whether she had heard the journalist correctly, as surely he could not have made such an outlandish claim. In other cases, she might ignore information entirely, or become quite bewildered and not know how to interpret data she was presented. Imagine another case involving a doctor visit where a patient seeks treatment for a laceration on her finger only to have the doctor tell her that he believes that instead of a wounded finger, he surmises that she has testicular cancer. This example is absurd, for as a biological female, she does not have the right bodily configuration to suffer from such a disease. This type of diagnosis, being nonsensical in this case, would lie outside of the woman's schema for the types of information that her doctor might present to her during a medical exam. As a result, she would most likely not be able to fully comprehend what the doctor was telling her. Widmayer continues by claiming:

> readers have a difficult time comprehending a text on a subject they are not familiar with even if the person comprehends the meaning of the individual words in the passage (Widmayer, 2004, p. 1).

Even though the woman would have the ability to comprehend what having this type of cancer entails, she lacks the affected body parts vulnerable to this disease, so she would most likely not be able to understand how to interpret the diagnosis.

Individuals have many context-specific schemas through which they operate. For instance, a person operating a motor vehicle employs a "driving schema". Upon arriving at her intended destination: a store, she utilizes a "shopping schema". After visiting the store, she might need to attend a night class at a local community college. While in class, she relies upon a "class schema". Afterward, she might need to study at a library, so she uses a "library schema". Each schema allows her to adapt to new information presented

within whichever contextual environment she finds herself immersed. Along with the ability to efficiently process and interpret information, she also encounters particular expectations about her behavior within each environment. For instance, while operating according to her "class schema", she would know that singing along to her radio would not be acceptable behavior, though in her "driving schema" this would be perfectly fine. At times, schemas overlap. For example, texting is unacceptable behavior in both her "driving schema" and her "class schema", though perhaps not, in her "shopping schema". The point here is that schemas should not be considered objective, context-independent scripts, but instead, should be considered contextual frameworks that serve as mechanisms that guide individuals within their experiential environment.

§3.6   Schema Modification

Individuals continuously develop currently existing schemas, as well as learn new ones through the introduction of new information streaming in through their perceptual faculties. Widmayer asserts that: "the learner in schema theory actively builds schema and revises them in light of new information" (Widmayer, 2004, p. 1). Revisiting the local TV news segment example, the first time that the woman watches local TV news, she actively builds a schema for all future viewings. The more she views such segments, the more complete her scripts become, and the better she is at predicting what might take place. For instance, upon repeated viewings of local TV news segments, one might form a schema that tells her that early on in the broadcast, a meteorologist will present a short segment containing information about the weather for the next few days, promising a more detailed analysis later on in the broadcast.

There are three specific ways that individuals process new information while already in possession of schematic frameworks regarding scenarios within which they are embedded. Since individuals are constantly paying close attention to new information that they might be able to use to modify their current context-specific schemas, schema modification is a continual process (Goffman, 1974 as cited by Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 405). The first type of modification is *accretation*. Accretation involves receiving new information and assimilating it within one's current schema (Widmayer, 2004, p. 2). The second type: *tuning*, involves the process of changing existing schema to fit newly acquired information because this information has exposed an inadequacy with that schema (Widmayer, 2004, p. 2). The last type: *restructuring*, involves the process of developing an entirely new schema by way of comparing an old schema with the newly created one, being sure to attend to the discrepancies between newly acquired information and her now defunct prior schema (Widmayer, 2004, p. 2). Schema modification via accretation, tuning, and restructuring occurs unintentionally, without agentially controlled activation. What experiential elements we perceive dictates how existing schemas will be created, as well as modified. If we fail to perceive bits of information germane to our ever-evolving projects and interests, then we may discover that our existing schemas related to such concerns are in need of modification.

§3.7   The Relationship between Schema Modification and Framing

Explicating the relationship between schemas and framing will demonstrate that the way journalists frame information influences how (and whether) citizens learn new schemas or modify currently existing ones. Journalists use framing to disseminate information to citizens that resonates with their context-specific schemas (Scheufele &

Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). Once citizens perceive information, they experience accretation, tuning, or restructuring in response, which occurs as internally situated processing that is automatic and unconscious.

Schema modification involves three specific schema subtypes: memory objects, cognitive fields, and mental models. Memory objects pertain to preconceptions individuals use to interpret phenomena detected within their experiential environment (Derry, 1996, p. 169). Concerning their source, Sharon Derry claims:

> various types of representations (e.g., pictorial, declarative, procedural, auditory, emotional, etc.) can be combined to form a single memory object (Derry, 1996, p. 167).

Derry continues by claiming that memory objects can be

> associated with ... the kinds of social situations [individuals] experience (e.g., attending weddings, dining in restaurants (Derry, 1996, p. 167).

So, for example, our local TV news viewer might form memory objects concerning graphics used to depict weather patterns, the anchor's tie, sounds indicating breaking action news, etc. In addition, people form memory objects about the types of practices they engage in. For instance, a police officer might form memory objects based upon the specific duties she must perform (e.g., traffic stops, subduing assailants, etc.) (Derry, 1996, p. 167).

Cognitive fields refer to preconceptions that will be activated whenever individuals are engaged in mental modeling (Derry, 1996, p. 169). Specifically, cognitive fields are

> distributed pattern[s] of memory activation that occur in response to a particular event (such as a problem posed, a classroom demonstration, a discussion, etc.) that makes certain memory objects more available for use than others (Derry, 1996, p. 168).

Cognitive fields prepare memory objects for activation during the process of mental modeling. Different cognitive fields are triggered depending upon the type of event one is experiencing and in turn, different memory objects are activated for retrieval. Depending upon the cognitive field triggered, one would be disposed to acknowledge certain experiential elements as relevant, and others, irrelevant. For instance, if a cognitive field related to driving were triggered, then a red light within one's field of vision would most likely grab one's attention immediately, whereas if a cognitive field related to visiting an arcade were triggered, the same red light might not register as salient.

The last schema subtype: mental modeling, involves the process of forming points of connection between memory objects so that an individual can interpret a specific event or phenomenon. As Derry claims:

> [m]ental modeling can be viewed as a process of constructing, testing, and adjusting a mental representation of a complex problem or situation. The goal of mental modeling is to construct an understanding of a phenomenon (Derry, 1996, p. 168).

Mental modeling is responsible for accretation, tuning, and restructuring, which enable schema modification. Much like narratives, it would be incorrect to consider mental models as context-independent, objective views. They are context-dependent, as all schemas are. Concerning this point, Derry observes:

> mental models represent situational understandings that are context dependent and do not exist outside the situation being modeled (Derry, 1996, p. 168).

Framing and mental modeling function similarly, since both processes involve the organization and structuring of information to provide meaning to narratives (in the case of framing) or schemas (in the case of mental modeling) by connecting information

together thematically. Framing and mental modeling should not be considered as synonymous, as the latter involves internal processing, while the former involves external processing. In other words, mental modeling occurs within one's own brain and is directed inward, while framing involves other-directed information dissemination.

This difference is not disconcerting, as the idea that framing concerns a two-level process: both internal and external, is commonly accepted. Political communication theorists typically refer to mental models (i.e., schemas) as *individual frames*, while news stories are termed *media frames*. Reflecting upon comments made by Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese in *Mediating the Message* (1996), Scheufele and Tewksbury claim:

> [as an externally directed construct] ''framing'' refers to modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience. … [And as an internally-directed construct] framing describes how people use information and presentation features regarding issues as they form impressions (2007, p. 12).

Media frames are information packages that journalists present to citizens and journalists develop them by organizing information in ways that offer a particular interpretation or perspective. William Gamson and Andre Modigliani consider a media frame to be

> a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The [media] frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143).

When most who are familiar with the term speak about framing, they are referring to media frames.

Individual frames, however, are not the same as media frames. Individual frames are mental models that help individuals interpret information within their experiential environment. Entman recognizes individual frames as: "schemata ... [that] connote

mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information"

(Entman, 1993, p. 53). Drawing out the difference between individual frames and media

frames, Donald Kinder and Lynn Sanders state:

> frames lead a double life: they are internal structures of the mind that help
> individuals to order and give meaning to the dizzying parade of events
> they witness as political history unfolds; they are also devices embedded
> in political discourse (Kinder & Sanders, 1990, p. 74).

The operational similarity between media frames and individual frames is important

because examining this similarity allows theorists to better understand how types of

framing (e.g., episodic vs. thematic frames) influence citizens' individual framing, by

examining the outcome of media frames upon individual frames. Describing episodic

framing, Shanto Iyengar suggests:

> episodic news fram[ing] takes the form of a case study or event-oriented
> report and depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances (for
> example, the plight of a homeless person or a teenage drug user, the
> bombing of an airline, or an attempted murder) (Iyengar, 1994, p. 14).

Episodic news frames make events appear as isolated incidents, occurring at random, and

since episodic framing does not provide the audience with any broad-context information,

citizens have difficulty understanding how the phenomena presented lies connected with

other issues or events. Commenting on the content and frequency of episodic framing,

Renita Coleman and David Perlmutter claim:

> [r]esearch on the content and style of mass media suggest an overall bias
> toward individual or atomistic coverage: the focus is on the car crash or
> the body under the tarpaulin rather than greater contexts or social policy
> debates (Coleman & Perlmutter, 2005, p. 27).

Focusing on individual cases and discussing them particularistically by failing to include

information about their socio-economic and political context makes it difficult for

citizens to understand what, besides the individual agents featured, might be at fault for

the existence of the phenomena under description. Commenting on the particularistic

focus of episodic frames, Kimberly Gross states:

> [e]pisodic frames present an issue by offering a specific example, case
> study, or event oriented report (e.g., covering unemployment by
> presenting a story on the plight of a particular unemployed person) (Gross,
> 2008, p. 171).

For instance, an episodically framed narrative may provide an eyewitness account of a

gang-related murder, and fail to provide more contextually rich information such as:

current crime trends within the neighborhood in which the event occurred, or any citizen

or governmental action plans to curb violence. The problem with episodic framing in

cases like this would be that community residents may come to believe that the incident

in question was an isolated event and would most likely not influence future events.

Iyengar recognizes this problem and refers to episodic framing as disseminating

information "morsels" or bits of data that are often viewed as random happenings

(Iyengar, 1994, p. 136). Commenting further on this idea, Gross states:

> [c]itizens exposed to a steady stream of episodic frames fail to see the
> connections between problems such as poverty, racial discrimination, and
> crime when they are presented as discrete and unconnected (Gross, 2008,
> p. 171).

This is unfortunate, as such problems are often interconnected, and achieving resolution

concerning one problem requires an understanding of other issues.

In addition, as I addressed in chapter two, since episodic framing features a "just

the facts" news style, citizens are led to assume that the journalist responsible for the

story did not have an opportunity to introduce bias into the narrative. This assumption is

false and also problematic because it leaves citizens unwittingly exposed to the negative

effects of framing bias. Framing bias is inevitable, and its presence makes it impossible for journalists to offer value-neutral accounts of events.

Another concern related to episodic framing is the fact that upon consuming narratives framed episodically, citizens often encounter problems concerning blame attribution. Commenting on how framing can influence citizens' claims of blame attribution, Renita Coleman and Esther Thorson assert: "how a message is framed can have an effect on how people attribute responsibility or place blame" (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 406). Shanto Iyengar has conducted numerous studies concerning the effects of framing to deduce the following. Does citizens' attribution of blame change depending upon the type of media frame journalists present them? His work suggests a resounding "yes" and shows that episodic framing directs claims of blame attribution toward individuals instead of complex social issues, governmental institutions, and policies (Iyengar, 1994). Further compounding this problem is Iyengar's acknowledgment that

> people typically exaggerate the role of individuals' motives and intentions and simultaneously discount the role of contextual factors when attributing responsibility for individuals' actions (Iyengar, 1994, pp. 32-33).

Perhaps citizens do this because they typically lack knowledge about many of the contextual, societal factors that are often at work behind individuals' actions, while people are already familiar with common, less complex reasons for why people act the way they do.

In his research, Iyengar found that when confronted with information focused solely upon the subjective experiences of a small number of individuals, citizens are more likely to blame individuals featured in the story, rather than attribute responsibility to

much more complex issues like: unemployment, lack of healthcare, poorly managed

governmental assistance programs, etc. (Iyengar, 1994). Presenting news stories with an

> unswerving focus on specific episodes, individual perpetrators, victims, or
> other actors at the expense of more general, thematic information inhibits
> the attribution of political responsibility to societal factors (Iyengar, 1994,
> p. 5).

He also notes that

> following exposure to episodic framing, Americans describe chronic
> problems such as poverty and crime not in terms of deep-seated social or
> economic conditions, but as mere idiosyncratic outcomes (Iyengar, 1994,
> p. 137).

Iyengar's findings are troubling when citizens' ability to deliberate, vote, and

express feedback is considered, since these functions are geared toward addressing

problems at the societal level, rather than the individual one. It would be naïve, for

instance, to posit that violence is simply an individualistic phenomenon, with no bearing

on society at all (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). One ramification concerning the shift in

blame attribution is that audience members call the wrong entities into question and this

means that citizens' deliberation, voting, and feedback would involve the wrong targets.

For instance, if it is true that the most significant factor motivating violence is collective

in nature and not individualistic, then to have citizens deliberating, voting upon, and

expressing feedback about a cause that is not to blame (or at least not so much) is

counterproductive. Consider further the recent growth in both NRA membership and gun

ownership. It is plausible to suggest that many who have joined the ranks of these groups

have done so in the spirit of libertarianism. If so, this might indicate that these persons

have adopted an individualistic attitude toward social issues. Concerning this

phenomenon, Coleman and Thorson claim:

> [a]n emphasis on collective solutions runs counter to Western society's basic liberal values as well as to journalists' conventions … [and] people in Western cultures typically exaggerate the role of individuals' motives and intentions while downplaying the role of contextual or societal factors (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, pp. 405-406).

Citing Edward Jones, Coleman and Thorson note that the tendency to believe that individuals' motives play a larger role than societal factors in motivating action is known as the *fundamental attribution error* (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 406; Jones, 1979). This is no surprise considering what Iyengar's work demonstrates. Episodic framing causes consumers to lose sight of ways collective efforts can effectively solve societal problems since "who citizens hold accountable for social problems can determine the kinds of solutions they choose" (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 406). It is no wonder that many of these same consumers come to believe that solving such problems can only be accomplished individualistically, which drives them toward means that can literally put power in their own hands (i.e., guns). The problem remains, however, that more often than not the most effective solutions to societal problems comes through community-based or governmental initiatives and programs. For citizens to compartmentalize societal problems into individualistic issues demonstrates a real concern, as successful solutions will most likely be frequently be overlooked.

§3.8   Information Bias

Earlier I argued that many journalists believe that relying upon presenting news via a "just the facts" style serves as a way they can remain value-neutral (since objectivity demands it) and that believing this causes journalists to frame news episodically. Due to economic pressures motivating news production, when adopting a "just the facts" style, journalists choose to report elements of experience best able to

attract the attention of potential audience members, as well as captivate current news

consumers, thereby increasing the rate of news consumption. Market forces and a

concern for profit, above all else, dominate today's newsrooms. No longer do corporate

executives treat news divisions as separate entities within corporate structures as they did

in the past, and now news divisions are held as fiscally accountable as all other media

divisions. On this phenomenon Bennett states:

> [t]oday, the news must perform like the entertainment divisions, with
> profit pressures cutting away at staff and other resources (Bennett, 2008,
> p. 77).

Commenting on the primary motivations that influence journalistic decisions, David

Levy claims:

> [w]hile journalism operates as a business in many western countries its
> wider significance resides fundamentally in its relationship with
> democracy. This is not to suggest that concerns for democracy motivate
> most news organisations most of the time. Far from it. Most are
> motivated by a mix of the search for profit sometimes combined with,
> sometimes offset by a search for less tangible reputational benefits. For
> the journalists, the latter tend to be focused on their peers elsewhere in the
> profession, through the perceived quality of their work or their popularity
> among readers. For some proprietors commercial success is all (Levy,
> 2010, p. 4).

This phenomenon has led other theorists like Gerald Baldasty to claim:

> [w]hen commercial considerations dictate the general news process, the
> press will serve democracy only when such service is financially
> profitable" (Baldasty, 1992, p. 9).

When economic concerns dictate how journalists operate, democracy will only be aided

by such operation indirectly, and as a byproduct of journalists' efforts to enhance

profitability. Commenting further, Bennett asserts:

> [t]he signs increasingly point to the influence of profit motives and market
> forces. … Today's byword is *freedom of the market*, which means profits
> over social responsibility" [emphasis in original] (Bennett, 2008, p. 83).

This is unfortunate, as journalists will resort to organizing and presenting information in

ways that will attract future audience members (and retain current ones), thereby boosting

their program's ratings and market share in an effort to increase the profitability of their

product. Commenting on this trend, Bennett observes that journalists frame narratives

> increasingly with costs, efficiency, and viewer or reader reactions in
> mind" (Bennett, 2008, p. 101).

In fact, media executives encourage such behavior. As Iver Peterson claims in relation to

print media:

> [p]ublishers are showing a growing unanimity about marketing …
> campaigns aimed at getting their reporters and editors to accept the
> [economic] realities of the newspaper business these days (Peterson, 1997,
> NYT).

Economic pressures prove problematic when journalists prioritize their economic role

over their democratic responsibility, as this causes them to frame stories in ways that

exclusively feature personal and dramatic elements (i.e., narrow-context information).

By doing so, journalists fail to provide audiences with narratives that encourage citizens

to be informed and motivated to act collectively.

Bennett addresses three tendencies that journalists rely upon when providing

framing to stories. These tendencies, known as information biases, interfere with the

audience's ability to develop broad-context views of events. Bennett argues that

journalists rely on information biases when they act upon the tendency to organize

information contained within stories in ways that encourage the audience to develop only

narrow-context views of events. In addition, he notes that journalists are less apt to

present broad-context accounts of events since stories laden with information biases

comport easily to the economic demands influencing journalists' framing decisions

(Bennett, 2008, p. 38).

Personalization bias is the tendency to organize information contained within

news stories in a manner that focuses attention upon the subjective experiences of

specific individuals involved with an event (Bennett, 2008, pp. 40-41; pp. 48-52). This

bias neglects the

> social, economic, or political picture in favor of the human trials,
> tragedies, and triumphs that sit at the surface of events (Bennett, 2008, p.
> 40).

Ann Kaplan claims that news stories often focus upon the specific individuals of an event

and fail to deliver any information about the event's social significance (Kaplan, 2005, p.

99). In *Trauma Culture*, she posits:

> [As a result of news coverage focused upon delivering a personal account
> of events, we are] encouraged to identify with specific people, to enter into
> their experiences rather than to think about what we are looking at, or to
> engage on any larger intellectual or analytical level (Kaplan, 2005, p. 99).

A news story framed while relying upon personalization bias may emphasize a perilous

situation that a particular individual faces while ignoring the event's broad-context

significance.

Dramatization bias denotes the tendency to organize information contained within

a story in a manner that emphasizes those aspects of experience that invoke the greatest

degree of excitement in the audience (Bennett, 2008, pp. 41-42). As demonstrated in the

excerpt from CNN.com about the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech, the organization

provided to the information disseminated focuses upon the presentation of the victims'

terror and confusion. The story presents imagery of police holding machine guns and

donning bulletproof vests in an attempt to provide an account of the fear and chaotic

uncertainty of the event. Through careful and purposeful framing, journalists attempted to invoke a strong emotional response in the audience.

Of the three information biases, fragmentation bias is the most obstructive to the audience's ability to develop a broad-context view of events. Fragmentation bias is the tendency to organize information contained within a story in a manner that isolates events from one another and their broad-context environment (Bennett, 2008, p. 42). As a result, "information in the news becomes fragmented and hard to assemble" (Bennett, 2008, p. 42). Fragmented news is characterized by short, episodic segments of information that appear disconnected from other aspects of experience, or as Bennett claims, fragmented news serves to "turn events into self-contained, isolated happenings" (Bennett, 2008, p. 42). Stories become fragmented when journalists frame stories in ways that emphasize mere personal and dramatic elements (Bennett, 2008, p. 47). Stories laden with fragmentation bias cause media frames to be episodic, in that fragmentation bias makes events appear as isolated, random occurrences.

Bennett argues that while the audience often acknowledges the presence of personalization and dramatization bias, most news consumers do not recognize the connection between those biases and the consequent manifestation of fragmentation bias (Bennett, 2008, pp. 36-73). On this causal relationship between personalization bias, dramatization bias, and fragmentation bias, Bennett states that

> [t]he very elements that [make] for a great personalized and dramatic news story, however, also [contribute] to its fragmentation (Bennett, 2008, p. 47).

In other words, news stories produced by journalists who rely upon personalization and dramatization bias during the news production process frequently contain information that appears fragmentary to the audience. On this phenomenon, Bennett states that

> news generally comes to us in sketchy, dramatic capsules that make it difficult to see the causes of problems, their historical significance, or their connections across issues (Bennett, 2008, p. 43).

To be clear, journalists adopt a "just the facts" style in an attempt to remain objective and value-neutral. Since journalists are pressured by media executives to present the most riveting information they have available as a means of attracting and retaining news consumers, when adopting a "just the facts" style, journalists present narratives laden with personalization and dramatization biases. Doing so causes stories to be laden with fragmentation bias, which manifests episodic framing. For reasons addressed earlier, episodic framing inhibits citizens' efforts to develop an understanding of the causal foundation of events and their future significance. Because of this, citizens are ill equipped to participate civically in order to further their projects and interests. Deliberation requires that citizens conceptualize some end that they hope to bring about, as well as some possible means to that end. Discourse without such information amounts to the exchange of a lot of hot air. Further, such deliberation requires that citizens theorize about the potential consequences of possible means and end(s). Without discovering the origin and significance of events, one is ill equipped to understand the consequences of such means and end(s). As a remedy, episodic framing should be avoided in favor of thematic framing, as the latter enables journalists to frame narratives in ways that include contextually rich interpretive scripts citizens can use to better understand the causal foundation and future significance of events.

§3.9   Thematic Framing

Thematic framing draws upon perceived connections between issues and events

and attempts to provide the audience with broad-context information such as: rates of

incidence, standing public policy, proposed public policy, current governmental

initiatives, etc. Commenting on thematic framing, Iyengar claims:

> thematic fram[ing] … depicts political issues more broadly and abstractly
> [than episodic framing] by placing [events] in some appropriate context-
> historical, geographical, or otherwise. A thematic report on poverty might
> present information about recent trends in the rate of poverty and the areas
> with the greatest concentration of poor people (Iyengar, 1996, p. 62).

There are different ways to thematically frame information. One such way is the public

health model proposed by Lori Dorfman, Katie Wodruf, Vivian Chavez, Lawrence

Wallack, and Jane Stevens (Dorfman, et al., 1997; Stevens, 1994, 1998). The researchers

hold the assumption that journalists

> have an obligation to their readers and the communities they serve to
> present information in a way that can be used by community members to
> solve a problem such as violence (Dorfman, et al., 2001, p. 416).

The public health model proposes that journalists frame narratives thematically in the

hope that citizens will be encouraged to gain an understanding of the many societal

factors behind incidents of violence within communities. As these theorists claim:

> [c]rime news framed from a public health perspective would include
> information that connected incidents of violence to the larger social and
> environmental context, exposed its risk factors, and included information
> about prevention (Dorfman, et al., 2001, p. 405).

Providing further explication of the public health model of framing, the theorists offer

three conditions that news must meet to follow this model's framework

> approaching violence as a public health issue emphasizes (1) preventing
> violence before it occurs, (2) using science and surveillance to identify
> effective policies and programs, and (3) drawing on the efforts of diverse

disciplines and communities in a collaborative approach (Dorfman, et al., 1997, p. 1311).

All three aspects of the public heath model encourage the journalistic exploration of broad-context perspectives related to the various incidents about which they report. For instance, to satisfy condition (1), journalists could discuss warning signs pertaining to specific types of violence (e.g., gang-related, domestic, etc.). To satisfy condition (2), journalists could examine public policies and community-based action programs designed to assuage violence and report whether such initiatives are proving effective. Last, concerning condition (3), journalists could advertise the specific collaborative efforts currently under way in various communities and inform citizens how they could participate in such endeavors.

The results of the researchers' study demonstrated that journalists present most news about violence episodically, rather than thematically. As the authors claim:

> television news rarely includes contributing factors in stories on violence. In 84% of the stories examined, the context in which violence occurred was ignored or deemphasized. … [and] Violence was rarely depicted as a public health issue (Dorfman, et al., 1997, pp. 1314-1315).

Depicting violence as a public health issue requires the type of broad-context information indicative of thematic framing. In order to increase the incidence of news reports featuring a public health frame, the authors offer the following recommendations. One, journalists must provide data about rates of incidence of violence in order to contextualize narratives (Dorfman, et al., 1997, p. 1315). The type of data pertinent here might relate to the following: how many perpetrators are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and whether victims typically know their assailants[24] (Dorfman, et al., 1997, p. 1315). Two, journalists must present violence risk factors must also be presented to

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[24] I recognize that other factors might be pertinent as well depending upon the situation and social issue.

better educate the public about violence prevention (Dorfman, et al., 1997, p. 1315). For instance, journalists could present information about whether alcohol or other drugs had a connection to the victims and alleged suspects; whether the individuals had a pattern of violence; and what measures (whether by the victim or community officials) had been implemented to prevent this violence from occurring (Dorfman, et al., 1997, p. 1315).

§3.10   Thematic Framing Implementation

Since the publication of their 1997 study, Dorfman, Thorson, and Stevens worked together in a collaborate effort to encourage journalists to adopt a public health model of framing. Their project included the publication of a handbook journalists could rely upon when framing stories on violence, as well as conducting workshops where journalists could receive training and issue feedback to the researchers. The researchers stressed the fact that journalists often fail to report about incidence trends or other broad-context information necessary to publish stories using the public health framing model. To ameliorate this concern, the researchers disseminated

> information about national data sets available to the paper through the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR), the FBI, the CDC, and other local, state, and national sources (Dorfman, et al., 2001, p. 412).

Further, they entertained the possibility that this information was not available to journalists in some cases. As they state:

> journalists report "what's available": if facts about risk factors are not available—whether the victim or perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol, for example—then that information is not reported (Dorfman, et al., 2001, p. 411).

While it may be true that journalists often do not have this information at the ready, in many cases they can acquire such information via external sources (e.g., police officials,

medical researchers, etc.). As part of their educational initiative, the researchers

contacted external sources and arranged for them to meet with journalists so that both

groups could develop a working relationship that journalists could utilize while framing

future stories. It was made apparent, however, that in some cases, particularly

concerning local police and health departments, that rates of incidence were quite

difficult to ascertain, as some organizations simply did not have enough personnel to

enable them to keep such records. As the researchers claim:

> [l]ocal data are the most important to reporters and the most difficult to
> obtain. This can be a barrier as sources of data—health departments and
> law enforcement—are often reluctant to give data to reporters, especially
> on tight deadlines (Dorfman, et al., 2001, pp. 414-415).

Their research suggests that daily reporters at small-run, local news outlets may have

difficulty ascertaining such data, though the negative impact stemming from this problem

could be lessened by presenting thematic news segments on a weekly or monthly basis

that include such information. In addition, this type of information is suitable for

distribution on news outlets' websites where journalists could add information as soon as

it is available. Based upon their investigation concerning the availability of data, the

researchers claim that in moderate to large communities, journalists should not have a

particularly difficult time gathering broad-context information. In smaller communities,

the problem might remain. This does not imply, however, that journalists in such

environments should not start demanding access to such data. As they state:

> [i]n cities where health departments have adequate surveillance on
> intentional injury and violence, newspapers should be given access to data,
> with identifiers purged, so they can begin to build their own databases for
> future stories and to add context to breaking news. In those locales with
> inadequate data sources, we hope newspapers will take the lead in
> demanding better data collection and appropriate access (Dorfman, et al.,
> 2001, pp. 414-417).

§3.11   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I argued that news consumers interpret events differently depending upon what experiential elements are given salience and which are ignored during framing. I also argued that framing serves functions. On the one hand, journalists use framing to elucidate points of interconnection between experiential elements in order to introduce a general theme or interpretive script. On the other, framing causes some elements to be deemphasized or ignored entirely. Due to selective attention, individuals inevitably select out experiential elements and ignore others. This results in individuals remaining attentionally unaware of some aspects of experience. Since framing also involves selection and de-emphasis, it mimics selective attention. Because of this, information featured in narratives passes through a double filtration process where journalists' and individuals' selective attention first filter out some bits of information while highlighting others. Afterward, framing filters out even more aspects of experience. As a result, the risk of narratives being difficult to understand contextually is greatly increased. This is problematic, since to best be able to participate civically, citizens must attain a contextually rich understanding of events from news stories.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the psychological ground of emotional arousal to show emotional arousal is necessary for becoming motivated. I will argue that since mere broad-context accounts fail to emotionally arouse citizens, they cannot encourage citizens to become motivated. Because of this, I will argue that accounts must include narrow-context information, as such information encourages audience members to undergo emotional arousal, thereby opening the door to becoming motivated.

Chapter Four

Emotional Arousal: Affect's Role in Becoming Motivated

§ 4.1   Introduction

Investigating the psychological ground of emotional arousal will show how hybrid narratives featuring narrow- and broad-context information can encourage citizens to become informed and motivated to resolve societal problems. In particular, I will examine a noncognitive, process-centered view of emotional response grounded upon appraisal theory. Investigating this view will show that Elizabeth Anderson is right to claim that narratives must include first- and second-person knowledge[25] about the subjective experiences of others and the normative claims they issue since audience members are not likely to become motivated without gaining such knowledge. As I will also argue, Anderson is wrong to assume that impersonal, third-person knowledge[26] is not necessary for becoming both informed and motivated.

To be clear, I will argue that since becoming motivated requires that citizens experience emotional arousal, and because emotional arousal is grounded upon affective appraisals, the most effective way to encourage citizens to become motivated would be for journalists to construct stories that encourage audience members to undergo affective appraisal processing. Further, I will argue that stories that feature personal and dramatic elements that convey the subjective experiences of others are well suited for encouraging citizens to undergo affective appraisal processing. As I will also argue, since reason's role in emotional arousal (while important) comes only after one has undergone affective

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[25] Since first- and second-person knowledge is comprised of information merely concerning the subjective experiences of others and the normative claims they issue, both types are narrow-context in scope.

[26] Since third-person knowledge is comprised of impersonal, abstract, contextual information, it is broad-context in scope.

appraisal processing, news stories that fail to include personal and dramatic elements do little to encourage citizens to become motivated to resolve societal problems.

§4.2   Anderson's Case against Mere Broad-context Accounts

In "Fair Opportunity in Education: A Democratic Equality Perspective", Elizabeth Anderson argues that democratic elites must exhibit "responsiveness to and effective service of the interests of people from all sectors of society" (Anderson, 2007, p. 596). Responsiveness requires that elites gain awareness of the problems of the disadvantaged, as well as a disposition to ameliorate such concerns (Anderson, 2007, p. 596). Effective service requires that elites attain technical knowledge about the disadvantaged's problems and the ability to interact respectfully with people from all sectors in a cooperative manner (Anderson, 2007, p. 596). Becoming informed about problems requires that citizens become aware of such problems, become able to appreciate them in a contextually rich way, as well as attain knowledge that enables one to respectfully interact with others in a cooperative manner (i.e., socio-cultural capital). I consider Anderson's awareness condition, technical knowledge condition, and social-capital condition as three components comprising what it means to be informed. Further, I deem developing a disposition to be responsive (i.e., the disposition condition) as what it means to be motivated.

In order to educate democratic elites so that they become informed and motivated, Anderson argues that their training should primarily feature *first-* and *second-person* knowledge, and only secondarily feature *third-person* knowledge as a means to attain technical knowledge required for becoming informed[27]. In her view, third-person knowledge is insufficient to educate elites adequately as it cannot help them overcome

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[27] The terms *first-*, *second-*, and *third-person knowledge* are Elizabeth Anderson's.

cognitive deficiencies that arise via stereotypes. Instead, first- and second-person knowledge is better suited than third-person knowledge to help elites overcome cognitive deficiencies that limit their ability to become informed, as well as motivated to seek resolution of the disadvantaged's problems (Anderson, 2007, p. 610).

In cases where first-hand first- and second-person knowledge is unavailable, Anderson claims that an abundance of second-hand first- and second-person knowledge disseminated via mediators (e.g., educators) could encourage citizens to become informed and motivated. I, however, believe that it would be a mistake to assume that accounts comprised of *mere* first- and second-person knowledge, no matter if they are first- or second-hand, could inform and motivate citizens. This is so due to the problems I addressed in chapter three concerning episodic framing and the fact that accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge are by definition, episodically framed. Such accounts fail to include contextually rich information about the causal foundation and future significance of events since they are comprised of mere eyewitness accounts often featuring normative claims issued by the individuals featured. As a result, accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge cause events to appear isolated, without connection to larger social issues or concerns; hence, such accounts appear episodic.

I agree with Anderson's claim that first- and second-person knowledge about the subjective experiences of others *can* encourage citizens to become informed and motivated. I take issue, however, with her failure to acknowledge that such information cannot be transmitted via accounts comprised of *mere* first- and second-person knowledge (either from personal contact—first-hand, or via a mediator—second-hand)

without subjecting elites to problems associated with episodic framing. A further concern I have with Anderson's view is that even though she concedes that third-person knowledge is required to satisfy the technical knowledge condition, she fails to acknowledge that third-person knowledge is required to also satisfy the socio-cultural capital and disposition conditions. This is unfortunate since, in my view, the only condition that accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge can sufficiently satisfy is the awareness condition. All three remaining conditions require third-person knowledge.

Anderson's case against the presentation of mere third-person knowledge is as follows. Narratives comprised of mere third-person knowledge sufficiently satisfy the technical knowledge and awareness conditions, though she notes that first- and second-person knowledge better satisfies the awareness condition than third-person knowledge (Anderson, 2007, pp. 606-607). In her view, accounts comprised of mere third-person knowledge do not sufficiently satisfy the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions, nor are they necessary to do so. Rather, according to Anderson, accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge sufficiently satisfy the disposition and social and cultural-capital conditions and are necessary to do so.

Discussing a noncognitive, process-centered view of emotional response will show that Anderson is correct in claiming that presenting mere third-person knowledge fails to sufficiently satisfy the disposition condition. This is because presenting abstract, impersonal information about social issues is unlikely to invoke emotional arousal in citizens that could ground a disposition to provide aid in cases where one is unlikely to have had personal experience with said issues or those affected by them. Anderson notes

this fact, but fails to provide a complete account concerning why this is the case. Such an account can be developed via an understanding of emotional response at its most basic level, which will come in §4.8-4.10. In addition, examining this particular view of emotional arousal will show why hybrid accounts comprised of first-, second-, and third-person knowledge sufficiently satisfy all four conditions required for becoming informed and motivated and are necessary to do so.

§4.3   Democratic Elites

According to Anderson, democratic elites are powerful individuals

who occupy positions of responsibility and leadership in society [such as:] managers, consultants, professionals, politicians, and policy makers (Anderson, 2007, p. 596).

As noted in §4.2, Anderson holds that democratic elites must become informed and motivated so that they can help resolve societal problems and effectively serve "the interests of people from all sectors of society" (Anderson, 2007, p. 596). Ideally, elites would become motivated only after becoming informed. This, however, is often not the case. While elites become motivated, they often do so while remaining merely aware of societal problems without possessing technical knowledge of them. When this occurs, elites can be said to hold narrow-context views of events comprised of a mere awareness of social problems and affected parties, without possessing any contextually rich information about the causal foundation or future significance of events. Because of this, elites' ameliorative efforts often end in failure. For instance, say a group of elites attempts to improve the conditions of a failing school district in Detroit. While the elites in this case are impassioned about the cause they are fighting for, they fail to understand the complexity of the issue, and do not have much experience with the type of problems

facing this school district in question. By taking action, the elites do little to solve the problem at hand, and in the end, make matters worse for the students and teachers affected. Anderson also recognizes this concern and notes that many elites display incompetence about how to address the problems of the disadvantaged (Anderson, 2007, p. 596).

Since, in this dissertation, I am concerned with demonstrating how journalists can encourage *every* citizen to become informed and motivated, I find it unhelpful to dichotomize *elites* and *the disadvantaged* as Anderson does. Anderson's view creates the worry that elites will be become less motivated than they might if they begin to view all citizens as responsible for the amelioration of societal issues. This follows, since if elites were to assume that they alone are responsible to fix societal problems, many may begin to feel that they are being unfairly treated. I see no reason why, however, Anderson's model (with certain modifications) for educating democratic elites cannot serve as a guide for journalists in their role of informing and motivating all citizens. I consider our underlying aim to be the same: inform and motivate voters. Perhaps, though, we disagree on the scope of voters that should be informed and motivated, as well as the type of information necessary to satisfy the conditions for becoming motivated and informed.

While the nature of the problems that elites and the disadvantaged face may differ in some cases, both groups share a common set of societal concerns (e.g., economic recession and depression, elections, legislative and judicial issues, foreign policy, etc.). How these issues affect citizens across sectoral lines may differ, but the disadvantaged and elites are in many ways interconnected through the problems they share. To best resolve social issues, all citizens must recognize the interconnectivity between people

from all sectors and should strive to become informed and motivated. Anderson's work

can help *all* citizens conceptualize how to accomplish this. For these reasons, in what

follows, I will ignore the dichotomy between elites and the disadvantaged.

§4.4   Knowledge

According to Anderson, third-person knowledge is academic knowledge and is

"conscious, articulate, impersonal propositional knowledge" (Anderson, 2007, pp. 606-

607). According to Anderson, mere third-person knowledge is insufficient to encourage

citizens to become informed and motivated. As she states:

> [i[n terms of the four qualifications needed by an elite in a democratic
> society— awareness, responsiveness, technical knowledge, and
> competence in respectful intergroup interaction[28]—academic knowledge
> covers only technical knowledge and, to a lesser extent, awareness of the
> problems and circumstances of people from different walks of life
> (Anderson, 2007, pp. 606-607).

Anderson believes that presenting mere third-person knowledge is insufficient for several

reasons. First, in many cases, mere third-person knowledge does not contain information

about the subjective experiences of individuals closely associated with particular events

(i.e., first-person knowledge)[29]. She posits that without assistance, citizens are unable to

understand what it is like to live like individuals across sectoral lines (Anderson, 2007,

pp. 608-614). Abstract, impersonal information does not sufficiently encourage citizens

to understand the concerns of others operating within different socio-economic and

political sectors. Second, since mere third-person knowledge does not contain data about

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[28] In this dissertation I refer to this condition the socio-cultural capital condition.

[29] She finds this to be so in cases "when the knowledge needed concerns individuals' interpretations of and responses to what they see as the meanings of different actions and events" (Anderson, 2007, pp. 609-610). In such instances, she claims: "there is no substitute for taking up the first-person point of view" (Anderson, 2007, p. 610).

normative claims issued in response to events (i.e., second-person knowledge), it fails to encourage citizens to reflect upon the data presented to them in a normative light. Mere third-person knowledge's failure in these two respects is problematic as developing a disposition toward helping others requires that individuals be emotionally aroused, and in her view, the presentation of subjective experiences and normative claims is required for emotional arousal to occur (Anderson, 2007, pp. 608-614). Third, in cases where mere third-person knowledge is presented, cognitive biases manifest and it is difficult for citizens to become informed and motivated. As Anderson explains, stereotypes are to blame for the manifestation of cognitive biases. These biases cause incompetence in citizens because it causes them to hold distorted views of the behaviors and problems of individuals from socio-economic and political sectors different from their own (Anderson, 2007, p. 605). Such incompetence makes it difficult for citizens to satisfy each of the four conditions necessary to becoming informed and motivated. Explicating this point, she discusses how stereotypes generate incompetence in citizens and how this puts others at a disadvantage. Anderson construes a stereotype as

> a schema for making inferences about the nature of a particular object
> once it has been recognized as a member of a class with an associated
> schema. Stereotypes are crude, typically unconsciously held heuristics
> that enable people to economize on information processing and react
> quickly to situations involving the object (Anderson, 2007, p. 604).

As she claims, stereotypes create cognitive biases that render citizens unable to become aware of the problems of others (Anderson, 2007, p. 604). Without satisfying the awareness condition, satisfaction of the three remaining conditions is impossible; thus, citizens remain uninformed and unmotivated.

Anderson recognizes five cognitive biases created by stereotypes that render citizens incompetent. Since three of these biases relate to my discussion of the merit of third-person knowledge, it is worth addressing them. One, stereotypes distort our perception of new evidence "making stereotype-confirming evidence highly salient, … leading [us] to overlook stereotype-disconfirming evidence" (Anderson, 2007, p. 604). For instance, imagine a case where a bigoted individual, who believes that most Mexican Americans are violent criminals, views a news story depicting a Mexican American male as a murderer. According to Anderson's claim (with which I agree), this story would resonate with this particular viewer more strongly and for a longer period than a narrative depicting a Mexican American as a good samaritan. In my view, to combat this cognitive bias, alongside first- and second-person knowledge, broad-context data featuring rates of incidence of violent crimes broken down by race might put this story into perspective and demonstrate that most Mexican Americans are not violent criminals. Two, stereotypes exaggerate the homogeneity of members of some class while simultaneously exaggerating differences between members of different classes (Anderson, 2007, p. 604). For example, our bigoted viewer might decide after consuming the above narrative that since all Mexican Americans are the same, they are all violent criminals, because the story portrayed one Mexican American as a violent criminal. To counter this bias, hybrid accounts elucidating the diversity of Mexican American citizens could demonstrate that it is wrong to assume that all Mexican Americans display similar behavior. Further, such information could demonstrate the similarities between citizens of all ethnicities, taking care to highlight the shared projects and interests of all Americans. Three, stereotypes bias causal explanations of behavior of members of a class. As she claims:

> [w]hen an object's behavior conforms to the stereotype, those who hold the stereotype tend to attribute the behavior to the object's internal characteristics. When the object's behavior contradicts or fails to conform to the stereotype, those who hold the stereotype tend to attribute the behavior to circumstances external to the object (Anderson, 2007, p. 604).

For instance, upon viewing that same story, our bigoted viewer might attribute the subject's alleged criminal behavior to internal characteristics rather than believe that the subject's social environment influenced the choices the subject made quite considerably. Presenting hybrid accounts that illuminate the societal structures that influence behavior, rather than treating the individual's behavior as an episodic event, can help viewers avoid this bias's influence.

Anderson fails to suggest that hybrid accounts that intertwine first- and second-person knowledge with third-person knowledge (i.e., hybrid narrow- and broad-context accounts) are necessary to combat cognitive biases. Instead, she argues that first-hand first- and second-person knowledge, coming directly from personal interactions between members across sectional lines, is required. The problem with this suggestion is that direct contact between individuals across sectoral lines is not possible in many cases. Granted, there are some localities that could manage the task on a grand scale (e.g., Philadelphia, Chicago, etc.). For others, however, mere tokenism would be possible (e.g., various locales in Kansas, Alaska, etc.). Small-scale direct contact would prove counterintuitive, as such tokenism could result in a reinforcement of cognitive biases perpetuated by stereotypes; a point which Anderson recognizes (Anderson, 2007, p. 617).

This presents a difficulty. How can citizens be educated in conditions where the only degree of contact possible would be deemed a token effort? It is possible, and for it to work, journalists must present citizens information pertaining to the subjective

experiences of others and the normative claims they issue as well as contextually rich

data about the causal foundation and future significance of events. To avoid the

distortive influence of cognitive biases, citizens must be exposed to the subjective

experiences of others and the normative claims they make in ways that encourage news

consumers to see what it is like to live like others across sectoral lines. In addition,

journalists must present citizens impersonal, broad-context information allowing them to

appreciate others' subjective experiences and normative claims in a contextually rich

manner.

That said, Anderson, ultimately favors the presentation of first- and second-person

accounts above all else, because such narratives

> [represent] the world from the perspective of a particular agent[;] ... what
> it is like – for that agent, as the agent sees [the world] (Anderson, 2007, p.
> 607).

To address the concern about tokenism that I mentioned above, she claims that when

meaningful direct personal contact is not possible, mediators can present such narratives

indirectly. As she states:

> [t]he first-person point of view is immediately experienced by the agent,
> but it may also be communicated to others through testimony. For others
> to get access to the first-person point of view of another, they typically
> need personal contact, communicative competence, and rapport with the
> other, or else they need someone else with such social and cultural capital
> to mediate between the other and oneself (Anderson, 2007, p. 607).

In addition, testimony must be

> salient ... whenever it is normatively relevant to resolving the practical
> question at stake in deliberation and ... arouse, or be clothed in, some
> motivationally engaged feelings (Anderson, 2007, p. 608).

To encourage citizens to become informed and motivated, knowledge must be shown to

be relative to societal problems and invoke an emotional response in audience members

(Anderson, 2007, p. 608). As noted above, in addition to first-person knowledge, Anderson believes that second-person knowledge is required as it provides information about normative demands individuals issue upon others. As Anderson states:

> [second-person c]laims are demands for responsiveness to another's interests and evaluations[.] … They are embodied in normative judgments that purport to offer authoritative claims on others' actions and feelings (Anderson, 2007, p. 607).

Such claims are important because they can motivate citizens to develop a disposition to resolve social issues.

In my view, however, even though accounts comprised of first- and second-person knowledge can contain information salient to the amelioration of societal problems, by themselves, such accounts only encourage citizens to develop mere narrow-context views. As a result, first- and second-person accounts (whether first- or second-hand) fail to encourage citizens to develop broad-context views because no matter if information about societal problems is presented through personal contact or mediators, without abstract, impersonal knowledge, citizens will not be able to the grasp the significance that such information holds for the interests of *all* citizens. Attaining such an understanding is only possible if citizens come to comprehend the causal foundation and future significance of events. Further, without developing broad-context views, citizens will fail to comprehend the interconnection between themselves, their peers, and the problems they share, and such a comprehension is necessary for them to become informed and motivated.

§4.5   Accounts Comprised of Mere First- and Second-Person Knowledge

Anderson stipulates: "adequate responsiveness requires that knowledge be salient" (Anderson, 2007, p. 609); a view with which I agree. If citizens fail to

understand how an event is important to a particular problem, it is unlikely that they will discover an effective solution. As I explained in chapter three, journalists can give the wrong bits of information salience in some narratives. As a result, citizens will be encouraged to focus their attention on trivial aspects, rather than the larger difficulties they face. While focusing their attention on the trivialities of social issues may satisfy the awareness condition, doing so fails to satisfy the remaining three conditions.

As I addressed in chapters two and three, episodic framing interferes with citizens' ability to develop broad-context views. As demonstrated in the following excerpt about a series of storms that hit North Carolina in April 2011, the framing provided focuses primarily upon the victims' subjective experiences rife with terror and confusion. Because all accounts offering mere first- and second-person knowledge fail to present anything more than the personal experiences of individuals and the normative claims they issue, they are episodically framed and leave citizens ill equipped to develop an understanding of the interconnectivity between the narrative's subjects, as well as their problems.

> Poor Who Lost All in NC Tornadoes Face Hard Future
>
> Kimberly Smith cried and prayed with her children as they huddled inside her trailer when a weekend tornado roared through eastern North Carolina.
>
> About 130 miles away and three hours earlier, Cecilia Zuvic cowered in the bathroom of her two-story Raleigh home, said similar prayers and shed similar tears as parts of her roof blew away. The two women had similar losses: Smith's mobile home is in tatters and Zuvic's house is unlivable for now. In the storm's aftermath, however, their experiences diverged.
>
> Zuvic was on the phone with her insurance agent within an hour of being pulled from her home and is set up for a rental until repairs on her house can be finished in several months. Smith lost almost everything, including $300 in groceries bought with the disability check from her fiancé, the

sole breadwinner in their home. If she can't afford repairs, she wonders if her family will end up living in a tent beside her wrecked home.

Saturday's tornadoes in North Carolina struck one of the state's richest counties and a few of its poorest, leaving well-to-do professionals in the capital city and poor tobacco farmers down east scrambling for their lives. But days after the common experience, their lives again bear few similarities. Those with insurance and money are ready to rebound (Poor Who Lost All, 2011).[30]

While this story offers a glimpse of the interconnectivity between citizens, it is superficial and fails to provide enough information for audience members to develop more than mere narrow-context views of the problems facing the story's victims (before and after their ordeal). While citizens can gain a sense of the emotions these victims experienced, reading narratives framed in this way does not encourage news consumers to gain an understanding of the situation that could satisfy more than the awareness condition. The story did briefly note that the wealthy individual had the advantage of having insurance while showing the disadvantage of not. The journalist who constructed the narrative, however, could have encouraged citizens to develop an even greater contextual understanding by providing information about how to procure both rental and home owners insurance; steps for emergency preparedness; how to apply for aid from organizations like the Red Cross, etc.

Further still, citizens may simply disregard such problems, as they feel psychologically detached from them. If individuals believe themselves to be closely connected with victims, they may be more disposed and able to lend them aid. Episodically framed stories like the one above, cause citizens to feel less connected to the experiences of others. This decreases the probability that they will develop a disposition

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[30] Much of the remainder of the story provided eyewitness accounts of the storms without supplying audience members any broad-context information such as what might be done to alleviate the victims' problems.

toward ameliorating societal problems, or attain the socio-cultural capital necessary for interacting with others respectfully. In other words, learning about the plight of others via accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge means that citizens will be presented with narratives that focus merely upon subjective experiences and normative claims issued by featured individuals. Because of this, citizens may come to believe that their own problems are quite different and disconnected from the problems of others, and as a result, not become disposed to help those in need or have the socio-cultural capital necessary to do so. In addition, even if citizens are disposed to help and possess such socio-cultural capital, they still might not have the technical knowledge necessary to understand how to solve victims' problems effectively.

To provide clarity, I offer the following assessment of the ability of accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge (whether first- or second-hand) to satisfy Anderson's four educational conditions. Concerning awareness, accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge bring citizens' attention to societal problems quite well. Further, such accounts invoke emotional arousal in citizens. This is important, as emotional arousal is necessary (but not sufficient) for satisfying the disposition condition. In addition, accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge encourage citizens to become emotionally aroused and this renders audience members capable of sympathizing with others across sectoral lines. This is important, as developing sympathetic feelings is required for attaining socio-cultural capital; thus, accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge are necessary to satisfy the socio-cultural capital condition, but do not sufficiently do so. To sufficiently satisfy

both the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions, journalists must also present citizens third-person knowledge about societal problems and those affected by them.

For instance, say a wealthy individual living in a high-income Detroit suburb consumes a TV news report comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge about a pregnant teen living in a low-income, inner city Detroit neighborhood. Such an account would contain mere narrow-context information and be episodically framed. By consuming this narrative, the affluent individual might become emotionally aroused as well as develop sympathetic feelings toward the pregnant teen featured in the story. Since, in this example, no broad-context information was provided and the pregnant teen lives in a socio-economic sphere separate from the wealthy viewer's, the news consumer might fail to have enough familiarity with individuals living in the teen's neighborhood to know that teen pregnancy is on the rise in that locale and is reaching record levels. In this particular case, there is a lack of sex education in the teen's neighborhood and this is partly to blame for the rise in teen pregnancy. The lack of sexual education in her neighborhood is due to recent budget cuts at the local governmental level that led to a reduction of social services programs available to the public. As addressed in chapter three, due to problems associated with episodic framing, the wealthy news consumer would be more apt to attribute responsibility to the teen featured in the story than the neighborhood or local infrastructure within which the teen resides. In this case, the affluent news consumer might be less apt to place political pressure upon local officials to improve conditions. In addition, since citizens would direct the majority of the blame toward the wrong target (i.e., the teen), teen pregnancy rates would most likely not decrease.

Further, since accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge necessarily present mere narrow-context information, they do not afford citizens contextually rich, technical knowledge of societal problems. For instance, say citizens were called upon to vote whether their city should abandon efforts to relocate the city's homeless shelter away from its current downtown location. In this case, citizens would need to understand how the current shelter's location impacts the downtown area, what its departure might do to residents and the local community, the cost of relocation, relocation's effect on the newly proposed site and surrounding area, etc. These concerns are complex, and a story featuring a personalized human-interest piece featuring a homeless resident making moral claims about what the city should do would not provide enough broad-context information necessary to make an informed decision about the proposed move.

§4.6   Accounts Comprised of Mere Third-person Knowledge

Accounts comprised of mere third-person knowledge, which necessarily feature mere broad-context information, fair no better at motivating citizens than accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge. As noted earlier, becoming informed is only half the battle. In addition, citizens must also become motivated to resolve societal issues before they can do so. Citizens would do well to become informed before acting upon their motivation to resolve social issues since they would be better able to do so. The following discussion will first examine how accounts comprised of mere third-person knowledge fare when it comes to informing citizens, and second, address whether such accounts can render citizens motivated.

Accounts comprised of mere third-person knowledge sufficiently satisfy the awareness and technical knowledge conditions since these accounts encourage citizens to develop contextually rich views of societal problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. Such accounts are also necessary for satisfying these conditions. For example, imagine that back in March 2003, a group of citizens was considering whether to express negative feedback to their political representatives about the U.S.'s decision to invade Iraq. To understand the circumstances surrounding this event and whether they should express dissent, they would need to first become aware of what led to the decision to invade, as well as attain a complex understanding of U.S. international relations, the socio-economic and political climate in the Middle East, how the invasion may affect the U.S.'s standing around the globe, etc. The presentation of contextually rich, third-person knowledge demonstrating the causal foundation and future significance of events would enable these citizens to become aware of the phenomena in question as well as develop a nuanced understanding of what led to the decision to invade Iraq and how citizens could influence governmental decisions by expressing feedback.

Contra Anderson, third-person knowledge is necessary to satisfy the socio-cultural capital condition, even though accounts' comprised of mere third-person knowledge do not sufficiently do so. Satisfying the socio-cultural condition requires that citizens appreciate the subjective experiences of others outside of their own socio-economic and political environment *and* form an understanding of the contextual backdrop lying behind others' experiences, where such understanding is necessary to

appreciate the social traditions and practices of others[31]. For instance, understanding why certain words and ideas are stereotypically associated with certain ethnicities enables one to better understand why such stereotypes should be avoided. This point is worth exploring.

Earlier, I noted that Anderson believes that third-person knowledge does little to erase harms posed by cognitive biases created by stereotypes. I find this notion problematic. Rather, broad-context information can help alleviate this concern, as it can diffuse stereotypes. For example, during the time of slavery in the United States, there were certain food items that became associated with African Americans. Since this time, some individuals, as means of oppression, have stereotyped African Americans as being associated with these food items, which is reprehensible. Some offenders might not be aware of the history of these particular stereotypes. While it is true that accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge could effectively present the anger and frustration felt by African Americans whenever such stereotypes are invoked, these accounts fail to inform citizens about the connection between slavery and such stereotypes, as well as why invoking them is oppressive. To accomplish the latter, third-person knowledge is required.

§4.7   Hybrid Accounts Comprised of First-, Second-, and Third-person Knowledge

Citizens' education must come via hybrid accounts featuring first-, second-, and third-person knowledge (i.e., hybrid narrow- and broad-context accounts). This is so for the following reasons. One, Anderson is right to point out that accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge encourage citizens to understand the subjective

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[31] As I noted earlier, to satisfy the socio-cultural capital condition, citizens must also develop sympathy toward others across sectoral lines, and to do so, individuals must undergo emotional arousal. Because of this, first- and second-person knowledge about the subjective experiences of others is required.

experiences of others, which is sufficient but not necessary for gaining awareness of societal problems, and necessary but not sufficient for developing a disposition to be responsive, as well as attaining socio-cultural capital. Two, Anderson is right to claim that attaining technical knowledge of societal problems requires abstract, third-person knowledge because doing so demands that citizens understand the causal foundation of events as well as their future significance. Thus, accounts comprised of mere third-person knowledge sufficiently satisfy the technical knowledge condition and are necessary to do so. She is also right to note that mere third-person knowledge fails to sufficiently satisfy the disposition and socio-cultural conditions. She is wrong, however, to deny that such knowledge is necessary to satisfy these conditions. Without the ability to recognize the interconnection between elements of shared experience between citizens, individuals are unlikely to recognize that many other citizens hold similar interests and face like problems as well. Recognizing this interconnection is necessary because without this realization, citizens will be less likely to view the problems of others as similar to their own, rendering individuals less apt to care about them.

For instance, imagine a case involving an American consuming a news story documenting the horrific conditions that children endure while working in Indonesian sweatshops. That person might wonder why those children (and their families) would not leave the area in which they live. Without contextual knowledge of the socio-economic and political conditions in Indonesia, the news consumer would not have the technical knowledge necessary to understand the problem from a non-individualistic perspective, a phenomenon I noted in chapter three. Because of this, they might be more apt to blame individual families for not removing their children from situations like this. Such

proposals are naïve and far too simplistic. Also noted in chapter three is the idea that

adopting an individualistic perspective leaves citizens less disposed to help others, since

audience members attribute responsibility to the individuals, rather than the greater socio-

economic and political conditions grounding the issue in question. Because of this,

instead of perceiving child laborers and their family as victims, our news consumer might

view them mostly to blame for their troubles. Impersonal, third-person knowledge could

help our news consumer begin to view the situation from a broader social perspective

where he could contextually appreciate the interconnection between his product

purchasing habits and sweatshop labor. Further, information about the normative claims

issued by child laborers and their families could supplement this broad-context

information to encourage him to undergo emotional arousal; thereby, our news consumer

may begin to feel connected to the story's featured subjects. By feeling connected to the

story's subjects, he will be more likely than not to become motivated to take ameliorative

action. Hybrid accounts comprised of first-, second-, and third-person knowledge offer

both insight into the subjective experiences of others and the normative claims they

make, as well as broad-context information, which taken together, sufficiently satisfies all

four of Anderson's conditions required to become informed and motivated and is

necessary to do so.

　　　　The following excerpt from a story featured in *The Washington Post* demonstrates

how journalists can present information in ways that can render citizens emotionally

aroused, while at the same time, providing audience members enough contextual

information that would encourage them to develop broad-context views.

> These days, 24-year-old Delonta Spriggs spends much of his time cooped
> up in his mother's one-bedroom apartment in Southwest Washington, the

TV blaring soap operas hour after hour, trying to stay out of the streets and out of trouble, held captive by the economy. As a young black man, Spriggs belongs to a group that has been hit much harder than any other by unemployment.

Joblessness for 16-to-24-year-old black men has reached Great Depression proportions -- 34.5 percent in October, more than three times the rate for the general U.S. population. And last Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that unemployment in the District, home to many young black men, rose to 11.9 percent from 11.4 percent, even as it stayed relatively stable in Virginia and Maryland.

His work history, Spriggs says, has consisted of dead-end jobs. About a year ago, he lost his job moving office furniture, and he hasn't been able to find steady work since. This summer he completed a construction apprenticeship program, he says, seeking a career so he could avoid repeating the mistake of selling drugs to support his 3-year-old daughter. So far the most the training program has yielded was a temporary flagger job that lasted a few days.

…

Victoria Kirby, 22, has been among that number. In the summer of 2008, a D.C. publishing company where Kirby was interning offered her a job that would start upon her graduation in May 2009 from Howard University. But the company withdrew the offer in the fall of 2008 when the economy collapsed.

Kirby said she applied for administrative jobs on Capitol Hill but was told she was overqualified. She sought a teaching position in the D.C. public schools through the Teach for America program but said she was rejected because of a flood of four times the usual number of applicants.

Finally, she went back to school, enrolling in a master's of public policy program at Howard. "I decided to stay in school two more years and wait out the recession," Kirby said (Blacks Hit Hard by Economy's Punch).[32]

Since the story above provides third-person knowledge alongside first- and second-

person knowledge, it serves as a hybrid narrow- and broad-context account of the type

featured in earlier chapters of this dissertation. This narrative opens citizens to the

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[32] Much of the remainder of the story included contextual information pertaining to the current economic outlook around the country as well as efforts by the federal government to achieve resolution to the problems of both the disadvantaged and elites alike.

subjective experiences of others and the normative claims they make, while at the same

time presenting broad-context information about the struggles of individuals across

sectoral lines. In other words, the story provides audience members both a personal and

impersonal perspective about the projects and interests of citizens operating within

various socio-economic and political conditions. Because of this, the story encourages

citizens to satisfy all four conditions required to becoming informed and motivated. To

elucidate the psychological foundation of how hybrid accounts inform and motivate

citizens, I will now discuss the psychological underpinnings of emotional arousal by

examining a noncognitive, process-centered appraisal theory of emotion. Doing so will

show why first- and second-person knowledge must be packaged alongside third-person

knowledge in order to satisfy all four conditions required to becoming informed and

motivated.

§ 4.8   Appraisal Theory

Concerning appraisals, such talk first entered the psychological literature on

emotion via Magda Arnold's *Emotion and Personality*. In her book, she describes

appraisals as the

> felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good [for me], or
> away from anything intuitively appraised as bad for me (Arnold, 1960, p.
> 171).

We issue positive or negative appraisals of objects and events based upon their perceived

potentiality to positively or negatively affect our own subjective well-being. It is

important to note that while Arnold generally considers appraisals as cognitive in

character, others (Ekman 2003; Zajonc 1980, 1984) view appraisals as unreflective,

automatic, noncognitive assessments. As Ekman claims:

[t]he appraisal process … is usually automatic. We are not conscious of our appraising (Ekman, 2003, p. 234).

Concurring with the view that noncognitive appraisals occur automatically and unreflectively, Paul Ekman claims:

[t]here must be an appraiser mechanism which selectively attends to those stimuli (external or internal) which are the occasion for activating the affect programme. … Since the interval between stimulus and emotional response is sometimes extraordinarily short, the appraisal mechanism must be capable of operating with great speed. Often the appraisal is not only quick but it happens without awareness, so I must postulate that the appraisal mechanism is able to operate automatically. It must be constructed so that it quickly attends to some stimuli, determining not only that they pertain to emotion, but to which emotion, and then activating the appropriate part of the affect programme (Ekman, 1977, p. 58).

Experiments conducted by Robert Zajonc provide evidence for Ekman's view. In "Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences", Zajonc discusses studies he conducted years earlier that led him to conclude that *affective reactions*[33] are "virtually inescapable" (Zajonc, 1980, p. 156). The following excerpt from the above essay elucidates how affective reactions[34] operate. Zajonc claims that

[a]ffect is the first link in the evolution of complex adaptive functions that eventually differentiated animals from plants. And unlike language or cognition, affective responsiveness is universal among the animal species. A rabbit confronted by a snake has no time to consider all the perceivable attributes of the snake in the hope that he might be able to infer from them the likelihood of the snake's attack, the timing of the attack, or its direction. The rabbit cannot stop to contemplate the length of the snake's fangs or the geometry of its markings. If the rabbit is to escape, the action must be undertaken long before the completion of even a simple cognitive process—before, in fact, the rabbit has fully established and verified that a nearby movement might reveal a snake in all its coiled glory. The

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[33] The label *affective reaction* is Zajonc's and he intends this phrase to denote noncognitive appraisals that lie in contrast with cognitive appraisals, as the latter involves cognitive reflection while the former does not (Zajonc, 1980, p. 154).

[34] I construe noncognitive appraisals and affective reactions as the same phenomena. While one might object that an appraisal is of a different category than a reaction, I believe that, in this context, such a view is mistaken. Noncognitive appraisals do not involve higher order cognitive reflection that one might normally consider necessary for something to be considered an appraisal, since they involve mere lower order processing.

decision to run must be made on the basis of minimal cognitive
engagement (Zajonc, 1980, p. 156).

As described above, avoiding serious injury or death necessitates that rabbits hold an

ability to react to stimuli noncognitively, free from any constraint requiring that they

undergo cognitive processing.

§4.9   Noncognitive Appraisal

In "The Emotions in Art", Jenefer Robinson offers an account of emotion by

claiming that an emotional response is comprised of a series of processes (Robinson,

2004, pp. 175-178). While her view ultimately differs from my own, I will address those

features of her account pertinent to my argument that becoming informed and motivated

is grounded upon noncognitive appraisals. According to Robinson, when one perceives

an object, one's attention selects out some particular stimulus within her environment and

assesses that element's potential to influence one's well-being (Robinson, 2004, p. 176).

For instance, if an image of an individual holding a gun were to flash before one's eyes,

she would immediately undergo noncognitive appraisal, whereby her attention would

first select out some particular stimulus (e.g., the individual holding a gun) and then

evaluate whether that object poses a potential threat to well-being. This appraisal is

noncognitive because it occurs without the assistance of any cortical mechanisms related

to cognitive reflection. As Robinson states in *Deeper than Reason*:

> [noncognitive appraisals] occur without conscious deliberation or
> awareness, and that they do not involve any complex information
> processing (Robinson, 2005, p. 43).

The information about stimuli garnered via one's sense organs travels directly (and

unconsciously) to the amygdala; bypassing the neocortex [where complex information

processing occurs] (Robinson, 2004, p. 177).

A series of experiments conducted by Zajonc tested whether individuals could use sense perception to detect stimuli within their experiential environment under conditions of mere (i.e., subliminal) exposure. His tests confirmed that subjects could unconsciously garner information about stimuli within their surroundings. Further, he discovered that upon unconsciously perceiving such objects, subjects appraise such data, producing valenced assessments about the stimuli in question. Offering a summary of Zajonc's findings, Robinson claims:

> [i]n the mere exposure experiments, subjects [were] differentially exposed to a variety of stimuli, such as nonsense syllables, and then asked to give a liking rating. It was discovered that subjects gave a higher liking rating to those syllables they were exposed to more often. In some experiments, the stimuli are presented too fast for recognition, and the mere exposure effect still obtains (Robinson, 1995, p. 60).

In other words, in Zajonc's experiments, subjects formed noncognitive, valenced appraisals of stimuli researchers introduced them to in windows of time too small for information about such stimuli to register cognitively in the subjects' complex information processing centers.

The second stage of the noncognitive appraisal process involves the assignment of *valence markers*[35] to stimuli appraised as holding salience in stage one. The label *valence marker* denotes both the positive and negative indicators one attributes to stimuli that elicit certain potentialities. Stimuli assessed as having the potential to influence our well-being in a positive manner, we consider to have positive valence. Thus, we feel attraction toward them. Conversely, stimuli assessed as having the potential to influence our well-being in a negative manner, we consider to have negative valence. Thus, we feel aversion to such entities (Prinz, 2004, p. 163). For instance, take the emotion: fear.

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[35] The label *valence marker* was offered by Jesse Prinz in *Gut Reactions* (Prinz, 2004, p. 163).

Fear is valence-laden and furthermore, negatively charged. Imagine a case where a person is walking through a wooded area. Not paying much attention to his surroundings, he happens to step upon what he thought was a stick. Take further, that upon stepping on the object, he discovers that what he had perceived as a stick was actually a poisonous snake. Upon assessing the snake as salient to his well-being, he would appraise it as having negative valence and experience fear, thus rendering the noncognitive appraisal process complete.

§4.10   Cognitive Reappraisal

As Robinson claims, it is possible for one to experience a cognitive reappraisal, or *cognitive monitoring*[36], of a noncognitive appraisal (Robinson, 2004, p. 177). Cognitive monitoring is important as it allows one to cognitively reflect upon noncognitive appraisals. Discussing the prioritization in succession that noncognitive appraisals have in relation to cognitive reappraisals, Zajonc claims:

> if the most recent version of homo sapiens specifies that affective
> reactions are mediated by prior cognitive processes—as contemporary
> cognitive views would have it—then at some point in the course of
> evolution, affect must have lost its autonomy and acquired an intermediary
> in the form of cold cognition. This scenario seems most unlikely. When
> nature has a direct and autonomous mechanism that functions
> efficiently—and there is no reason to suppose that the affective system
> was anything else—it does not make it indirect and entirely dependent on
> a newly evolved function. It is rather more likely that the affective system
> retained its autonomy, relinquishing its exclusive control over behavior
> slowly and grudgingly. At most, the formerly sovereign affective system
> may have accepted an alliance with the newly evolved system to carry out
> some adaptive functions jointly. These conjectures make a two-system
> view more plausible than one that relegates affect to a secondary role
> mediated and dominated by cognition (Zajonc, 1980, p. 170).

Since noncognitive appraisal serves as an effective mechanism that allows humans to navigate their experiential environment, there would be no recognizable justification for

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[36] Robinson considers cognitive monitoring and cognitive reappraisals to denote the same phenomenon.

the claim that natural selection has reversed the order of occurrence between noncognitive appraisals and cognitive reappraisals.

The cognitive reappraisal process relies upon memory retrieval activation that can recall both prior noncognitive appraisals and cognitive reappraisals; therefore, cognitive monitoring can elicit emotional responses in subjects by way of cognitive inference in some cases. For example, take the case of a person who finds a box on her doorstep. She has never seen the box before and has no idea who placed it there. Upon inspection, she sees several green and red wires protruding from the top. In addition, she hears a ticking noise emanating from inside the box. Via cognitive inference, she begins to believe that the box is an explosive device, thus, she begins to feel fear. In this case, her inference that the object is a bomb appears to cause her fear. During this process, she assigns negative valence markers to the object, thus, causing a desire to avoid contact with the box. Her emotion is intentional, in that her fear is directed toward the box, as well as action-directed, in that she begins to desire to flee. For one to assume that this account is exhaustive, and that it is cognitive inference that grounded her elicitation of fear, one would be erring twice.

According to the account of emotional response that I am arguing for, one would claim that the woman has assuredly encountered prior to her current predicament, through either virtual or actual means (i.e., via some third-person visual or audio medium, or in a first-person real-time environment, respectively), the destructive nature of explosions. In addition, the woman has experienced (again either virtually or actually) the conjunction between wires and explosives, and audible ticking sounds and explosives. Based upon such prior experience, the cognitive inference she undergoes involves

associative processing that makes what the interconnection of such experiential elements indicates apparent to her. She reaches the conclusion that she has come in close contact with a bomb, and it poses danger. She becomes frightened and immediately desires to avoid the object.

Associative processing is important, as without it, one cannot draw cognitive inferences of the type described above. In "Toward Delivering on the Promise of Appraisal Theory", Craig Smith and Leslie Kirby claim:

> [a]ssociative processing is a fast, automatic, memory-based mode of
> processing (Smith & Kirby, 2001, p. 130).

Revisiting the above case, upon visually perceiving the box, the wires, and the audible ticking, she immediately undergoes a cognitive reappraisal, whereby memory activation occurs, accessing a vast cache of information accumulated prior to her experience with the box. Such elements may include: any experiences with the effects of explosions, bomb making, bomb components, the feeling of physical pain, psychological trauma, etc. Upon undergoing a cognitive inference, whereby she comes to identify the possible bomb with the potential harm that such an object may cause, she begins to experience fear toward the object, thereby causing her to desire to avoid it.

Concerning the cache of information that associative processing can access during cognitive inference, Smith and Kirby claim that such an array can be

> anything that can be represented in memory, ranging from concrete
> representations of physical sensations, sounds, smells, tastes, and images
> up to representations of highly abstract concepts … That is, cues that can
> activate memories and their associated appraisal meanings include not
> only concrete stimuli, such as sensations, images, and sounds, but also
> highly conceptual stimuli, such as abstract ideas or the appraisal meanings
> themselves. … [In addition] appraisal meanings associated with prior
> experiences can be activated very quickly and automatically. Thus[,] …

emotional reactions can be elicited almost instantaneously (Smith & Kirby, 2001, p. 131).

Cognitive processing involves the associative regurgitation of various elements including sensations and images, as well as abstract ideas formulated via mere cognition. In addition (and most importantly), associative processing allows cognitive processing to operate upon prior appraisals (both cognitive and noncognitive). For some, the quickness with which associative processing operates seems to suggest that the woman's fear manifests because of mere cognition concerning the case at hand.

For instance, theorists holding a cognitive view of affect might claim that in the scenario described above, all that would be needed for fear to manifest in the woman would be cognitive inference concerning the following claims:

(1)   bombs are often contained inside boxes
(2)   bombs typically are built using wires
(3)   bombs typically are built using ticking clocks
(4)   bombs cause explosions
(5)   explosions can harm individuals
(6)   harm is undesirable

According to cognitive theorists, if the woman cognized about these claims, she would undergo a fearful emotional response and be motivated to seek cover. This picture is incomplete, however, because if she had no prior experience with bombs or any of the elements contained within the above claims, then it would be impossible for her to infer that bombs are something toward which one should feel fear. In my view, for cognitive inference to lead her to the conclusion that she should fear the box, she would have to undergo a cognitive reappraisal of some prior noncognitive appraisal. Necessarily, in this case, her cognitive reappraisal (involving cognitive inference) would be based upon contingent a posteriori evidence that wires and ticking noises indicate the presence of a

bomb, explosions cause pain, pain is harmful to well-being, etc. Because of this, mere cognitive inference will not produce fear, as associative processing must provide linkage between perceptual information gained prior (as well as any attendant noncognitive appraisals produced from such information), and the stimuli she perceives at present for cognitive inference to induce a fearful response.

Cognitive monitoring plays a highly important role through its ability to allow us to rationally reflect upon prior affective appraisal processing, thus allowing us to adjust the strength of our felt emotional response. As I noted earlier, according to Anderson (and I agree), it is necessary to undergo an emotional response to satisfy the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions. Because of cognitive monitoring's ability to adjust the strength of our felt emotional response, through it we are able to also adjust the level of motivation we experience in relation to social issues. This is important since developing too strong of a motivation to help others in cases where we can do little is counterproductive. Likewise, in cases where there is much that we can do, developing too weak of a motivation to help others will inhibit our efforts to resolve the problem. To enhance cognitive monitoring's ability to fine-tune the strength of our motivation to fit the demands of the particular societal problem we are facing, narratives must include contextually rich, broad-context information so that we are best able to reasonably understand problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. Without attaining such an understanding, our motivational strength may rest at a level inappropriate for the given situation.

§4.11   What Considering Emotional Arousal as Noncognitively Grounded Demonstrates

From the above discussion of the psychological ground of emotional arousal we can glean that without prior acquaintance with experiential elements related to others across sectoral lines and their projects and interests, consuming accounts comprised of mere third-person knowledge will not encourage citizens to undergo emotional arousal, whereby the latter is necessary for satisfying the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions. Without having formed prior noncognitive appraisals based upon experiential stimuli related to such individuals and concerns, cognitive monitoring alone cannot render one emotionally aroused in response to receiving such information. Anderson is right to recognize this point and claim that to satisfy the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions, first- and second-person knowledge is necessary.

For instance, take the case of a TV news viewer who consumes a story about forced female excision in Ghana. Before viewing the news story, she has never had experience with excision and knows nothing about the practice. While consuming this narrative, she perceives a series of graphic images and videos depicting individuals undergoing excision and its aftermath. In addition, she also hears testimony from individuals who have undergone the procedure, which includes normative claims issued about the practice. Via cognitive inference, she begins to believe that excision is horrific, as well as feel sadness for the victims. In this example, the TV news viewer has assuredly encountered prior to her current news consumption experience, the physical and emotional pain caused by lacerations. In addition, the woman has experienced the conjunction between bloody knives, screams, tears, and suffering. Upon visually perceiving such elements in conjunction with viewing an excision being performed, she

immediately undergoes a cognitive reappraisal, whereby memory activation occurs, accessing a vast cache of information accumulated prior to her news consumption experience. Such elements may include: any experiences with the effects of lacerations, blood, the sharpness of knives, the feeling of physical pain, psychological trauma, etc. Upon undergoing a cognitive inference, our viewer identifies the practice of excision with the harm that it causes. Because of this, she experiences sympathy toward the victims depicted in the news story. In sum, she has become emotionally engaged and begun to form a disposition to be motivated to prevent excisions from occurring in the future, as well as insight about what it might be like to live in the victims' shoes, which is necessary for developing socio-cultural capital.

This is only half the battle, though, as even though she is emotionally engaged, without a contextually rich understanding of excision and the socio-economic and political conditions in which it is practiced, she will not become fully motivated to resolve this issue. Further, she will not be able to attain socio-cultural capital that could aid her attempts to achieve such resolution. Therefore, third-person knowledge is necessary to satisfy the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions. If the above narrative included mere first- and second-person knowledge, she would fail to appreciate contextual elements necessary to understand how she might help ameliorate the victims' concerns. Thus, her disposition to provide assistance might fail to blossom as fully as it may if she formed an idea of how she could take action to prevent future cases of excision[37]. Further, if this narrative featured mere first- and second-person knowledge,

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[37] I will discuss this problem in chapter five at length by examining how providing mere first- and second-person knowledge (i.e., mere narrow-context information) causes news consumers to adopt a fatalistic attitude about their ability to influence events. By consuming mere narrow-context information citizens fail to become motivated since they tend to believe that there is little they can do to resolve societal problems.

consuming it would inhibit her ability to attain socio-cultural capital that would enable her to respectfully interact with others in a cooperative manner. The latter is important since individuals often view excision as entrenched in cultural tradition, and such tradition is foreign to our viewer, as she had no knowledge of excision's existence before viewing the news story in question. Due to these problems, third-person knowledge is necessary as well. As a result of the problems discussed throughout this chapter associated with accounts comprised of mere first- and second-person knowledge on the one hand, and mere third-person knowledge on the other, hybrid accounts comprised of first-, second-, and third-person knowledge are necessary to satisfy all four conditions rendering one informed and motivated, as well as sufficiently do so.

§4.12   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I argued that rendering citizens informed and motivated is best accomplished by presenting accounts comprised of first-, second-, and third-person knowledge (i.e., hybrid narrow- and broad-context accounts) that communicate the subjective experiences of others and the normative claims they issue, as well as contextually rich information about the causal foundation and future significance of events. By consuming such accounts, citizens can gain an understanding of the socio-economic and political origination and significance of events, as well as undergo emotional arousal, and gaining such an understanding and undergoing such arousal is necessary to becoming informed and motivated. To demonstrate why the inclusion of first- and second-person knowledge on the one hand, as well as third-person knowledge on the other, is important, I discussed a noncognitive, process-centered view of emotional response grounded upon appraisal theory. By explicating this view I demonstrated how

hybrid narratives consisting of both narrow- and broad-context information can encourage audience members to become informed and motivated about societal problems, thus providing further support in favor of the presentation of hybrid views. Lastly, explaining this particular view of emotional response allowed me to show that Anderson is wrong to assume that impersonal, third-person knowledge is not necessary for becoming informed and motivated.

To be clear, I argued that since emotional response is grounded upon affective appraisals, the most effective way to encourage citizens to become motivated to resolve societal problems would be for journalists to construct stories that feature dramatic elements that convey the subjective experiences of others because those elements are best able to trigger our affective appraisal processing. Undergoing emotional arousal is necessary for satisfying the disposition and socio-cultural capital conditions, and cognitive monitoring alone cannot render one emotionally aroused in response to receiving such information. Via cognitive monitoring, we rationally reflect upon the prior affective appraisal processing that we have experienced, thus allowing us to adjust the strength of our felt emotional response. Because of cognitive monitoring's ability to adjust the strength of our felt emotional response, through it we are able to also adjust the level of motivation we experience in relation to social issues. To help accomplish this, narratives must include contextually rich, broad-context information so that cognitive monitoring is best able to fine-tune our motivation to fit the needs of the particular societal problems we are facing. Since reason's role (while important) comes only after one has undergone affective appraisal, news stories that fail to include personal and dramatic elements do little to encourage citizens to become motivated to resolve societal

problems because they fail to elicit emotional arousal in audience members. Lastly, I argued that without third-person knowledge (i.e., broad-context information), the likelihood that citizens will become informed is low since they will be unable to construct an understanding of the causal foundation and future significance of events, which is necessary for satisfying the disposition, socio-cultural capital, and technical knowledge conditions.

In the next and final chapter, I will examine a problem concerning hybrid accounts' ability to attract and retain news consumers. Renita Coleman and Esther Thorson's work shows that citizens gain little enjoyment by consuming hybrid accounts and this causes them to seek out narrow-context accounts as they enjoy consuming these more so. This is problematic, because recent work completed by researchers affiliated with the Program on International Policy Attitudes shows that by consuming narrow-context accounts, consumers often gain misperceptions about events and their contextual environment. Further, as I will argue, news consumers fail to enjoy consuming hybrid accounts because they are apathetic toward learning about social issues and how they might be resolved because citizens assume that events occur at random and there is little individuals can do to influence their manifestation. To combat this problem, I will argue that citizens must be encouraged to believe that they can influence government and society, as well as gain confidence in their ability to do so. Journalists can accomplish this by presenting hybrid accounts to citizens. Lastly, I will argue that if citizens gain such confidence, they will be more likely than not to become enticed (and remain so) by consuming hybrid accounts. This will enable journalists to satisfy the economic

pressures they face demanding that they attract future news consumers as well as retain

current ones.

Chapter Five

Affective Enticement: The Remedial Effects of Hybrid Accounts

§5.1   Introduction

A serious issue surrounds hybrid accounts' ability to attract and retain news consumers. As discussed in chapter four, accounts comprised of mere broad-context information do little to entice news consumers to become motivated to resolve social issues (Anderson, 2007; Dorfman, et al., 1997; Stevens, 1994, 1998). An even greater concern has emerged from research conducted by Renita Coleman and Esther Thorson, as their work suggests that even when broad-context information comes packaged with narrow-context data via hybrid accounts, citizens gain little enjoyment, leading audience members to prefer narratives that feature mere narrow-context information (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, pp. 414-415). Contributing to this preference is a fatalistic attitude that events occur deterministically and citizens can do little to influence their rates of incidence (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 407). This fatalistic attitude causes citizens to become apathetic toward politics and societal problems, whereby citizens' interest level regarding the consumption of information about social issues remains low. To increase citizens' news consumption interest, journalists must raise audience members' satisfaction with news stories, and in particular, narratives' ability to enhance citizens' civic participation. To do this, journalists must encourage citizens to consume contextually rich information about social issues, as this could increase citizens' *epistemic political efficacy*, or

> confidence in one's own ability to achieve a reasonable threshold of certainty about the factual aspects of politics (Pingree, 2011, p. 26).

Gaining confidence in their epistemic political efficacy could encourage audience members to experience higher levels of *political efficacy*, which is "a disposition towards politics, a feeling of effectiveness and capacity in the political sphere" (Easton & Dennis, 1967, p. 26). There are three types of political efficacy: epistemic, internal, and external. I have already addressed epistemic political efficacy above. Internal political efficacy refers to one's confidence "about one's own competence to … participate effectively in politics" (Niemi, et al., 1991, p. 1407), and external political efficacy denotes one's confidence "about the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions to citizen demands" (Niemi, et. al., 1991, p. 1408).

To clarify the relation between each type of political efficacy, I offer the following. Citizens gain confidence in their ability to attain a contextually rich understanding of politics and societal problems, which is known as their epistemic political efficacy (Pingree, 2011, p. 26). Experiencing high epistemic political efficacy enhances individuals' confidence in their ability to wield power effectively via civic participation, which is know as their internal political efficacy (Niemi, et al., 1991, p. 1407). Further, the more citizens believe that they are able to acquire political knowledge and use that knowledge to influence politics via civic participation, the more satisfaction they will gain from consuming news stories. Successfully influencing politics through civic participation causes citizens to feel empowered by the information that enabled them to do so. Because of this, citizens perceive information contained within narratives as useful to satisfying their concerns, thus, individuals view such stories favorably. As a result, individuals gain confidence that government is responsive to their civic participation and that they can influence events, which is known as their external political

efficacy (Niemi, et. al., 1991, p. 1408). Because citizens experience increased satisfaction with the process of attaining information and using it to produce change, individuals will be more likely than not to become enticed (and remain so) by consuming hybrid accounts, thus enabling journalists to attract future news consumers as well as retain current ones.

Citizens' preference for narrow-context accounts to hybrid narratives is problematic because consuming the former often causes audience members to hold misperceptions about events. Numerous studies surveying citizens' knowledge about current events as well as the sources of information they consume[38] provide evidence for this claim. In one such study conducted by researchers associated with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), investigators found that the more citizens consume episodic, narrow-context accounts, the more misperceptions about societal problems they hold (Misperceptions, 2003, pp. 16-17). Individuals consuming narrow-context accounts often fail to appreciate elements of experience necessary to forming a contextually rich understanding of events. By developing mere narrow-context views, many individuals acquire caricaturistic perspectives of societal problems that contain misperceptions of the type discussed in PIPA's research (e.g., that Iraq possessed WMDs prior to the U.S. led 2003 invasion, that Saddam Hussein worked closely with al-Qaeda, etc.) (Misperceptions, 2003, p. 1). To remedy this problem, journalists must encourage citizens to develop broad-context views of events. Only then will citizens be able to eradicate misperceptions that inhibit their ability to become informed and motivated.

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[38] Later in this chapter I review all pertinent evidence supporting this claim.

§5.2   The Unattractiveness of Hybrid Accounts

As noted above (and also in chapter four), broad-context accounts fail to encourage citizens to become emotionally aroused, thereby also failing to encourage individuals to develop a disposition to become motivated to resolve societal problems, as well as able to cooperate successfully with others via respectful interaction. Because of this, and the failure of narrow-context accounts as above noted in §5.1, I have argued that hybrid accounts including both narrow- and broad-context information are best able to inform citizens about social issues and motivate them to resolve such problems. A recent study[39] suggests, however, that hybrid accounts fail to entice citizens and consuming these narratives causes audience members to seek out narrow-context accounts instead. The following discussion of Renita Coleman and Esther Thorson's work investigating the effects of consuming hybrid accounts that focus on crime and violence illustrates this failure.

In "The Effects of News Stories That Put Crime and Violence into Context", Coleman and Thorson examine whether readers find

> base-rate information[,] … offered along with exemplars in the public
> health stories, … more interesting, relevant, believable, important, and
> informative than [data presented via episodically framed] stories (Coleman
> & Thorson, 2002, p. 407).

Base-rate information is contextually rich data about the causal foundation of events and their future significance, while exemplars consist of personal and dramatic elements lying at the surface of events (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 404). As such, accounts comprised of mere base-rate information are best construed as broad-context accounts,

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[39] Coleman, R., & Thorson, E. (2002). The effects of news stories that put crime and violence into context: Testing the public health model of reporting. *Journal of Health Communication*, *7*(5), 401-425. doi: 10.1080/10810730290001783.

while narratives comprised of mere exemplars are best viewed as episodically framed, narrow-context accounts. As claimed:

> [e]xemplars are defined as case studies about individuals whose circumstances illustrate the phenomenon in question, involve only limited individual cases, and are chosen mainly for their entertaining qualities rather than the accuracy of their representation of the topic in the report … [while base-rate accounts] give details of the number or proportion of people or things involved in a given social issue (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 404; Brosius & Bathelt, 1994; Gibson & Zillmann, 1994, 1998).

Exemplars need not be considered complete narratives, however. In other words, it is possible to package base-rate information alongside exemplars. In doing so, journalists create hybrid narrow- and broad-context accounts. By testing the effect of news stories containing base-rate information packaged alongside exemplars, Coleman and Thorson's study focused upon hybrid accounts' ability to present information in ways that could encourage citizens to become informed and motivated, as well as to entice news consumers to elicit a desire to consume more narratives of like kind.

The results of their study suggest several things. One, hybrid accounts cause news consumers to be more apt to attribute responsibility to societal factors rather than individuals featured in such accounts[40]. Coleman and Thorson claim that hybrid accounts

> appear to help shift people's attitudes so they become more critical of society's role in crime and violence. … Readers of [hybrid] stories are more likely to lay responsibility at the feet of society … [and consuming such stories] decreases attribution of responsibility toward individuals (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 410).

Two, and especially interesting, was the authors' finding that subjects who consume episodically framed accounts espouse a fatalistic view of events[41]. As Coleman and Thorson claim, subjects who consume episodic accounts view

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[40] I discussed this phenomenon at length in chapter three.

things as random, with no logical cause or reason … [and] see social change as impossible, so any attempts to better the world are futile (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 411).

For instance, concerning natural disasters, research conducted by John McClure, Michael Allen, and Frank Walkey shows that citizens are more likely to view damage caused by earthquakes as fatalistically determined and that there is nothing individuals can do to prevent it (McClure, et al., 2001, p. 109). As they state:

the fatalistic view that earthquake damage is uncontrollable implies that the damage is attributed to the power of the earthquake. The damage[, however,] could be attributed alternatively to the design of the damaged structures (McClure, et al., 2001, p. 109).

Put another way, citizens overlook the fact that how well individuals construct buildings partly determines how much damage they incur during an earthquake. Gaining awareness of this fact would allow citizens to view earthquake damage as not something entirely out of their control, thereby increasing the likelihood that individuals will take proactive measures to reduce the amount of damage earthquakes cause. McClure notes one problematic concern that stems from audience members' adoption of a fatalistic attitude regarding earthquake damage by claiming:

[i]f people attribute earthquake damage wholly to uncontrollable causes, they are less likely to prepare for earthquakes. In contrast, if people attribute damage to controllable causes, such as the design of a building that fails to meet building regulations, their attribution implies that action such as strengthening the building might prevent the damage (McClure, et al., 2001, p. 110).

With regard to matters that citizens have more control over (i.e., gun violence, teen pregnancy, drug addiction, etc.), audience members still have the tendency to adopt a

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[41] The fact that subjects who consume episodically framed accounts adopt a fatalistic view of events, by itself, might not be enough to establish a causal link between consuming such accounts and holding such an attitude. It could be possible that the subjects in question held a fatalistic attitude prior to consuming episodically framed accounts.

fatalistic attitude when presented information about such social concerns (Coleman &

Thorson, 2002). Coleman and Thorson speculate[42] that the fact that citizens exhibit a

fatalistic attitude grounds the notion, commonly held by those advocating public

journalism and proponents of the public health framing model alike, that episodic

framing creates "apathetic citizenry" (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 411). Their study

suggests that we need not be resigned to news consumers' fatalism, but rather that such

attitudes can be reduced through the journalistic presentation of hybrid narratives.

Commenting on news consumers' fatalism, Coleman and Perlmutter claim:

> [b]y giving only episodic information about [societal problems], the media
> give cues that there is nothing citizens can do, thus ignoring research to
> the contrary, increasing the public's fear, and reinforcing the dominant
> ideology of blaming the individual with only vague references to greater
> social causes (Coleman & Perlmutter, 2005, p. 27).

On the other hand, subjects consuming hybrid accounts

> tend to see … the world as structured, predictable, and explicable … [and]
> want information and are confident they can make sense out of that
> information (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 411).

Put another way, audience members consuming hybrid accounts are less apathetic,

believe that events are predictable, and are confident that they can make such predictions.

Because of this, instead of being apathetic, consumers of hybrid narratives actively seek

out information in hope of discovering solutions to social issues.

A third finding important to my discussion of hybrid accounts concerns citizens'

expressed dissatisfaction with such narratives. To test whether news consumers "liked"

hybrid accounts, Coleman and Thorson employed a factor analysis to examine how

subjects preference rank episodically framed stories in comparison to hybrid narratives.

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[42] I agree with this speculation, though with caution. Episodically framed news stories may indeed
contribute to the problem of "apathetic citizenry", though such stories may not serve as the causal ground
of this problem.

To accomplish this, the researchers examined whether subjects found narratives indicative of each style of framing: "interesting, believable, relevant, informative, and important" (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 414). The authors dubbed the collective set of these factors: "liking". Their work shows that subjects favor episodically framed stories over hybrid accounts across the board. As Coleman and Thorson state:

> adding base rate information to the exemplars in an attempt to add context actually decreases readers' liking for the stories. In all cases, readers of … [hybrid accounts] found them to be significantly less interesting and/or relevant, believable, informative, and important than did readers of … [episodically framed] stories that relied on exemplars and did not present base rate information. … [Hybrid] stories were evaluated more negatively … [and w]ithout the feature of ``liking'' for stories, readers are obviously less likely to read, and lack of this most basic motivation is troubling (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 415, p. 419).

This finding is problematic, because if citizens favor consuming episodically framed stories over hybrid accounts, when given the choice between the two, it seems that audience members will choose to consume the former over the latter.

As discussed in chapter three, journalists often decide to present mere personal and dramatic elements of events as a means to entice future news consumers and retain current ones due to economic pressures journalists face. To ensure economic vitality, journalists must produce a product that receives high ratings and captures the largest percentage of the market share that it can. Coleman and Thorson's research partly vindicates the journalistic practice of presenting narrow-context accounts since it seems that news consumers prefer these types of narratives to hybrid stories. Since, in this dissertation, I am most concerned with the epistemic and political considerations associated with journalistic methods (rather than economic concerns), it will be important to examine one final problem that results when journalists succumb to economic

pressures and attempt to frame narratives in ways that can best entice audience members.

In short, journalists' efforts to entice news consumers often lead citizens to form

misperceptions about events and societal problems. In what follows, I offer an

examination of this phenomenon as well as a possible remedy.

§5.3   How Little Americans Know

In March 2011, the PEW Research Center for the People and the Press (PRCPP)

released the results of a study examining the political knowledge of citizens in the United

States. Their findings are quite troubling. What follows are key figures resulting from

their investigation.

> [O]nly about four-in-ten (43%) are able to correctly identify John Boehner
> as House speaker; 19% say incorrectly that Nancy Pelosi is still speaker of
> the House … [and r]oughly three-in-ten (29%) correctly say that the
> federal government spends more on Medicare than on scientific research,
> education or on interest on the national debt. Slightly more (36%) say that
> interest on the debt is the greater government expenditure (PEW, 2011).

Complicating the problem of how little Americans know is the fact that journalists

present citizens an increasingly higher amount of information than ever before. Findings

from another study conducted by the PRCPP entitled: *What Americans Know: 1989-*

2007, shows that

> [s]ince the late 1980s, the emergence of 24-hour cable news as a dominant
> news source and the explosive growth of the internet have led to major
> changes in the American public's news habits. But a new nationwide
> survey finds that the coaxial and digital revolutions and attendant changes
> in news audience behaviors have had little impact on how much
> Americans know about national and international affairs (PEW, 2007, pp.
> 1-4).

Put simply, even though the news industry has experienced rapid technological

advancements since the late 1980's, the average American citizen's understanding of

domestic and foreign affairs has experienced little to no growth (What Americans Know,

2007, pp. 1-4). Taken together, these studies suggest that enhancing the accessibility as

well as increasing the quantity of information available to citizens does little to encourage

them to become informed. One might think that the more citizens consume news stories,

the more knowledgeable they would become. This, however, is not the case, as the

average citizen's public knowledge has remained the same in most categories, and is even

lower in some (What Americans Know, 2007, pp. 1-4). As the researchers claim:

> Americans didn't do as well in 2007 compared with how similarly-
> educated Americans performed in 1989. Across the board, scores declined
> significantly among college graduates, those with some college as well as
> for those with a high school education or less. … [S]omewhat fewer
> [citizens are] able to name their governor, the vice president, and the
> president of Russia (What Americans Know, 2007, p. 8, p. 1).

This finding seems strange because the availability of information via news media has

increased dramatically during this period. One could attribute this phenomenon to

declining rates of news consumption. Assuming this, however, would be incorrect.

Additional research conducted by the PRCPP demonstrates that it is not the case that

citizens are spending less time consuming news narratives and that

> [t]here are many more ways to get the news these days, and as a
> consequence Americans are spending more time with the news than over
> much of the past decade. Digital platforms are playing a larger role in
> news consumption, and they seem to be more than making up for modest
> declines in the audience for traditional platforms. As a result, the average
> time Americans spend with the news on a given day is as high as it was in
> the mid-1990s, when audiences for traditional news sources were much
> larger (Americans Spending More Time, 2010, p. 1).

Another recent study concurs with the above finding and suggests that citizens'

failure to accrue civic knowledge, even in an age where information is available around

the clock from a multitude of sources, does not come from citizens' lack of news

consumption (Misperceptions, 2003, pp. 16-17). The latter study demonstrates an even

more alarming problem. Concerning domestic and foreign affairs, researchers found that

the quantity of news consumption leads directly to a rise in the number of misperceptions

held by viewers (Misperceptions, 2003, pp. 16-17). As the researchers who conducted

the study claim:

> a substantial portion of the public had a number of misperceptions that
> were demonstrably false, or were at odds with the dominant view in the
> intelligence community (Misperceptions, 2003, p. 1).

In particular, the study demonstrated that subjects erroneously believed Iraq supported al-

Qaeda's efforts concerning 9/11 and that Iraq played a significant role in the attacks. On

this, the researchers assert that a significant portion of Americans

> believed that Iraq played an important role in 9/11 and that a minority
> even expressed the belief that they had seen "conclusive evidence" of such
> involvement. The US intelligence community has said that there is not
> evidence to support the view that Iraq was directly involved in September
> 11 and there has clearly never been any observable "conclusive evidence."
> … [Further, a] majority did believe that Iraq had given substantial support
> to al-Qaeda (Misperceptions, 2003, p. 1).

When asked after the war whether they believed that Iraq had possessed WMDs prior to

the start of it, a significant number of Americans answered affirmatively. Commenting

on this finding, the researchers note:

> [o]ne of the most striking developments in the postwar period was that
> once US forces arrived in Iraq, they failed to find the weapons of mass
> destruction that had been a major rationale for going to war with Iraq.
> Nonetheless, in PIPA/KN polls conducted May through September, a
> substantial minority of the public said they believed that weapons of mass
> destruction had been found. A substantial minority even believed that Iraq
> had used weapons of mass destruction in the war (Misperceptions, 2003,
> p. 1).

Lastly, a significant number of Americans believed that a majority of nations around the

globe supported the U.S.'s decision to go to war against Iraq in 2003. On this, the

authors state:

> [i]n polls conducted throughout the world before and during the war, a
> very clear majority of world public opinion opposed the US going to war
> with Iraq without UN approval. However, PIPA/KN found in polls
> conducted during and after the war that only a minority of Americans were
> aware of this. A significant minority even believed that a majority of
> people in the world favored the US going to war with Iraq
> (Misperceptions, 2003, p. 1).

While only a minority of Americans held all three misperceptions, 60% of citizens held at least one misperception (Misperceptions, 2003, p. 7). Ideally, informed citizens should not hold any misperceptions about events, and since the authors' research shows that consuming more news media means that audience members will hold more misperceptions, modifications concerning the quality of narratives are in order. Further, since our experiential environment is continually evolving, it is important for consumers to keep abreast of events' recent developments if they hope to avoid misperceptions and keep their view of events from becoming distorted. Developing broad-context views of public affairs free from misperceptions requires diligence on behalf of news consumers. For example, concerning the misperceptions noted above, citizens need contextually rich information demonstrating: the lack of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; the lack of a link between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaeda; and the lack of widespread diplomatic support for actions undertaken within Iraq by the United States (Misperceptions, 2003, pp. 2-7). Accounts presenting mere narrow-context information about these topics might do a great job enticing viewers to tune in (and remain so), but such stories do a poor job providing contextual clues that might prevent one from misperceiving phenomena. For instance, contextual information (rather than mere personal and dramatic imagery) about the reactions that diplomatic leaders from around the world exhibited when the U.S. expressed interest in invading Iraq could help citizens

avoid assuming that most other nations agreed with the Bush administration's views on the matter.

Avoiding the development of information sets riddled with misperceptions seems daunting when one considers that journalists present narrow-context narratives more often than hybrid accounts because citizens prefer the former to the latter. By consuming narrow-context stories, viewers fail to keep abreast of the reasons why events occur as they do, as well as how those events might influence future incidents. This failure accounts for the misperceptions news consumers hold. To be clear, I am claiming that the more citizens consume news presented via narrow-context accounts, the more misperceptions they hold.

§5.4   A Solution to the Problem of Misperception Accrual

As stated above, journalists include personal and dramatic elements within news stories as a means to generate audience interest. Journalists include these elements to attract the attention of potential audience members, as well as captivate current consumers, thereby increasing the rate of news consumption. Merely providing personal and dramatic elements produces episodically framed narratives, as such accounts make events appear isolated and random. To solve this problem, journalists could interlace personal and dramatic elements along with information about the causal foundation and future significance of events. I find no problem with the inclusion of personal and dramatic elements in news stories whose framing also provides broad-context information, as stories that include the latter are not episodic. If narrow-context information is included within a story that also provides contextual information about the featured event, then the audience can still develop broad-context views. The problem

remains, however, that hybrid accounts fail to entice news consumers as readily as narrow-context accounts. To combat this failure, citizens' beliefs about their epistemic political efficacy, internal political efficacy, and external political efficacy must be improved. In other words, they must begin to feel that they have the ability to attain a contextually rich understanding of societal problems and that they can use that knowledge effectively when given opportunities to discuss, vote, and express dissent in a system that is responsive to their efforts to produce change.

To be clear, I am arguing that citizens who primarily consume mere narrow-context accounts do not perform well on political knowledge indicators and find deliberating with their peers difficult. This poor civic participation performance causes individuals to experience low levels of confidence about their ability to be fairly certain about the factual aspects of politics (or low epistemic political efficacy). Having low epistemic political efficacy contributes to news consumers' failure to develop confidence in their ability to participate civically to produce changes within government and society (or low internal political efficacy). Without confidence in their ability to civically participate effectively, many audience members believe that government and society is unresponsive to citizens' efforts to transform politics or resolve societal problems. Citizens have low external political efficacy since they believe that their actions are performed in vain because they feel that they are unable to influence change since they also believe that government and society are not responsive to citizens' efforts. Without confidence in their ability to transform society and government, as well as resolve social issues, individuals will continue to hold a fatalistic attitude toward societal problems and events since citizens continue to feel discouraged as well as believe that their efforts to

learn more about societal problems and events are futile. Citizens who adopt a fatalistic attitude toward societal problems and events become apathetic, and apathetic citizens do not care about resolving societal problems. Not caring about resolving societal problems causes citizens' interest in receiving contextually rich information that could help them resolve such problems to remain low, which causes them seek out mere narrow-context accounts full of dramatic and personal elements of events. Journalists present information via mere narrow-context accounts brimming with personal and dramatic elements to entice apathetic citizens to pay attention to the news. Doing so, however, exacerbates the problem and by consuming mere narrow-context information, citizens experience a downward slide in confidence levels that contributed to the adoption of fatalistic attitudes that rendered them apathetic toward politics and societal problems. This process is cyclical and to escape it, journalists must present accounts comprised of personal and dramatic elements, as well as contextually rich information about events. In particular, journalists must show how citizens' efforts to civically participate can influence future events, as well as society at large in hope that citizens will become less apathetic toward social issues and become informed and motivated.

Perhaps, however, one might claim that to encourage citizens to increase their confidence about their ability to understand information and retain it, use it effectively via civic participation, and do so in such a way that government and society respond to their efforts, journalists need to do more than merely present hybrid accounts. Rather, journalists need to present hybrid accounts in just the right way. As discussed briefly in chapter two, public journalism advocates argue that journalists must actively to strive to enhance citizens' ability to deliberate, vote, and express feedback by assuming the role of

civic engagers when presenting new stories. Such a role requires that journalists

demonstrate *why*, as democratic participants, citizens should care about events being

reported, as well as *how* audience members can make full use of the equal opportunity

and equal voice they enjoy.

§5.5   Public Journalism

In "Beyond Objectivity," Jay Rosen posits that journalists must present

information with a common object in mind: the health of democracy. Rosen calls for

journalists to abandon an idealistic construal of objectivity (as the title of his article

suggests). Rather than clinging to "a very bad, unworkable philosophy" (Rosen, 1993, p.

51), he claims that journalists should be concerned instead, with "reengaging citizens in

public life"[43] (Rosen, 1993, p. 51). Journalists must be reminded that

> [t]here is no such thing as context with a capital C. There's no such thing
> as interpretation with a capital I. You can't supply these things in some
> simple, straightforward way. You can only supply them from a certain
> perspective. You need a view of the world. That's your added value
> (Rosen, 1993, p. 50).

To accomplish this, Rosen argues that journalists must become informed and motivated

about the projects and interests of citizens. Doing so will enable them to present

information in ways that enables citizens to participate civically in hope that successful

solutions to social problems will be selected. Rosen deems this approach "public

journalism" (Rosen, 1993, p. 51). Public journalism's aim is to best enhance citizens'

ability to take advantage of the equal opportunity and equal voice they enjoy by

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[43] The only issue I take with Rosen's and Merritt's statements is with their use of the term 'reengagement'.
It seems to me that citizens are not born engaged. If this is the case, then citizens will need to be
encouraged to become "engaged" rather than "reengaged", unless already engaged citizens somehow
became unengaged.

presenting them with information germane to their projects and interests. Furthering this

view, David "Buzz" Merritt claims that journalists must practice

> in ways that are calculated to help public life go well by *reengaging*[44]
> *people in it*. Public life "going well" means … that democracy succeeds
> in answering the core question: What shall we do? The answer, in a
> democracy, should be found by informed and engaged citizens. Public
> journalism does not attempt to forge *its own* answer to the question.
> Rather, it actively seeks to help citizens arrive at *their* answer [emphasis in
> original] (Merritt, 1996, p. 179).

I agree with both Rosen's and Merritt's claims. Primarily, it is democratic citizens who

are responsible for the selection of successful resolutions, not journalists. On this point,

Merritt claims that "[p]ublic journalism is not aimed at solving problems; it is aimed at

reengaging citizens in solving problems" (Merritt, 1996, p. 180). The lesson for

journalists here is that they must present information in ways that engage citizens with

the public life and the political process, which will enhance audience members' civic

participation. If citizens were better able to understand how events affected their own

projects and interests, then they might put forth great effort to become informed and

motivated about issues related to such events. Rosen believes that journalists can

demonstrate why citizens should care about events presented in news stories and how

such information holds significance to citizens' concerns.

> The PEW Center for Civic Journalism[45] (PCCJ), construes public journalism as

> both a philosophy and a set of values supported by some evolving
> techniques to reflect both of those in … journalism. At its heart is a belief
> that journalism has an obligation to public life - an obligation that goes
> beyond just telling the news or unloading lots of facts. The way we do our
> journalism affects the way public life goes. Journalism can help empower
> a community or it can help disable it (PCCJ).

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[44] The same point applies as made in the previous footnote.

[45] Often times, theorists use the terms *public journalism* and *civic journalism* interchangeably. To avoid
confusion, I will uniformly use the phrase "public journalism" throughout the entirety of this dissertation.

Public journalism involves the commitment to make good on journalists' obligation to

enrich public life by helping citizens' enhance their civic participation. Public journalists

recognize that their craft does not involve the mere dissemination of cold, impartial facts.

Instead, they believe that they must present information to citizens in ways that

demonstrate how individuals can entrench themselves in the democratic process so that

citizens can work cooperatively toward selecting successful resolutions to societal

problems. In an interview with Jeffery Dvorkin, an ombudsman for NPR, Merritt echoes

PCCJ's construal of public journalism. As Merritt claims:

> [p]ublic journalism is a set of values about the craft that recognizes and
> acts upon the interdependence between journalism and democracy. It
> values the concerns of citizens over the needs of the media and political
> actors, and conceives of citizens as stakeholders in the democratic process
> rather than as merely victims, spectators or inevitable adversaries. As
> inherent participants in the process, we should do our work in ways that
> aid in the resolution of public problems by fostering broad citizen
> engagement (Merritt and Dvorkin, 2001).

Commenting further on "the interdependence between journalism and democracy"

(Merritt and Dvorkin, 2001), the charter declaration of the Public Journalism Network

claims:

> journalism and democracy work best when news, information and ideas
> flow freely; when news fairly portrays the full range and variety of life
> and culture of all communities; when public deliberation is encouraged
> and amplified; and when news helps people function as political actors
> and not just as political consumers (PJN).

Both series of statements reinforce the notion that journalists must, as professionals

representing the unofficial fourth estate in democracy, actively encourage citizens to

participate civically and resist the temptation to remain passive consumers of

information. Without citizen participation expressed through deliberation, voting, and

feedback, there can be no "broad citizen engagement" (Merritt & Dvorkin, 2001), and as a result, resolving social issues will be difficult to achieve.

Perhaps one might question the need for professional journalists as mediators of information when ultimately it is the public that must become informed and motivated. Instead of relying upon middlepersons to get the job done, citizens should serve as news gathers and presenters. This model of journalism is known as participatory or citizen journalism. As Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis write on *We Media*, a web log commissioned by the Media Center at the American Press Institute, participatory journalism can be described as

> [t]he act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires (Bowman & Willis, 2003).

The problem with this model consists in the fact that many citizens possess little training, resources, knowledge, or credibility needed to assume roles normally reserved for professional journalists. Most citizens are less than capable "of collecting, reporting, analyzing[,] and disseminating news and information" (Bowman & Willis, 2003). If citizens were naturally skilled in these areas, journalism, as a profession, would most likely not have risen to the altitude that it enjoyed for some time (i.e., 1960s-1970s). This ties in with a point made by Helen Longino that I discussed in chapter one that expresses the view that not just anyone should have standing to criticize scientific theories. In other words, being able to engage in "peer review" requires that all parties are in fact, "peers", and holding such standing requires that individuals have expert credentials as certified by the academic community.

Of course, one might wonder about the sort of training and expert credentials journalists have that the public at-large does not. In other words, what skills, knowledge base, or ability do journalists possess that many citizens lack? First, journalists are trained to write well. Their work can be verbose and sometimes technical, yet still reasonably easy to understand. They are mostly generalists, though some (e.g., Christiane Amanpour) represent themselves as specialists. Specialists often limit their reporting to a geographic area, industry, or socio-economic or political issue, while generalists do not delimit their practice within specific boundaries and instead, report on matters as varied as the Occupy movement to the Iran Contra affair. Lastly, journalists are critical thinkers. Like philosophers, they are trained to gather information, question assumptions, discover better ways of framing problems, and weigh possible solutions to such problems. In other words, journalists are professional skeptics.

Further, in order to be considered a professional journalist, one must operate in ways that fall within the stated aims of various journalistic codes of ethics and practices, as well as meet the following criteria as offered by Leonard Pitts Jr. (with my own modifications attached as shown below). Being a professional journalist requires that one possess: (1) resources enabling one to travel to locales, often on short notice, that can prove quite dangerous and difficult to reach[46]; (2) credibility necessary for citizens to take one seriously; (3) an extensive knowledge base one could utilize while creating contextually rich narratives; (4) training necessary for understanding how to construct such narratives; (5) and a desire to present information to citizens in ways that render individuals informed and motivated. Attempting to elucidate why citizen journalists are

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[46] This is not to say that journalists cannot practice in their own neighborhood or city, but they need to possess the ability to gain access to areas to which non-journalists typically do not have access.

not well suited to serve as news practitioners, Pitts asks: "[w]ill [citizen journalists] have

the resources, the credibility, the knowledge, the training or even the desire to do so?"

(Pitts, 2012). He replies simply: "[n]o" (Pitts, 2012). Statements like: "[e]very citizen

can be a reporter" (Palin, 2012) misconstrue the notion of what it means to be a

professional journalist.

Concerning the first criterion of professional journalism, Pitts claims:

> my Miami Herald colleague, Elinor J. Brecher, was one of the reporters
> who rushed toward the destruction in New York City on 9/11. Another
> colleague, Jacqueline Charles, spends weeks at a time on the ground,
> reporting the devastation in Haiti. Nicholas Kristof of the New York
> Times slips into dangerous places to cover genocide and sex slavery.
> Carolyn Cole and Brian van der Brug of the Los Angeles Times send back
> stunning images of the tragedies in Japan. And everyday, thousands of
> their colleagues attend the council meetings, pore over the budgets,
> decipher the court rulings that help the rest of us understand our cities,
> nation and world (Pitts, 2012).

Implied by Pitts's anecdotal account describing the work of his colleagues is the idea that

journalists must have mobility quite different from the average citizen. Journalists must

be able to operate close to the scene within dangerous conditions whenever and wherever

events occur.

Concerning the second qualification: credibility, it would be difficult for ordinary

citizens to build such credibility, as most likely they would remain quite unknown. One

might argue that citizen journalists could gain credibility by continually reporting news,

but the way many news outlets enable citizen journalists to operate makes it quite

difficult to do so. For instance, CNN's iReport offers citizens a website to post stories

pertaining to a wide array of topics. The problem with this approach is that only on an

infrequent basis do individual citizen journalists receive much recognition for their work.

Without gaining such recognition, citizen journalists will remain unlikely to build

credibility, and this is problematic because without it, citizens-at-large are less likely to consume information citizen journalists provide. This concern is practical and implies nothing about the quality of accounts that such journalists might provide.

Concerning the third criterion: an extensive knowledge base one could utilize while creating contextually rich narratives, it should be noted that ordinary citizens are often hard pressed to remember the candidates running for local office, let alone at the state and national levels. I addressed this unfortunate reality earlier in this chapter when I discussed the lack of knowledge possessed by most citizens about domestic and international affairs.

The fourth criterion listed above is: training necessary for understanding how to construct contextually rich narratives. Without formal education in the art of collecting information, searching for contextual significance, creating coherent narratives of events, and presenting one's work in a professional manner, most citizen journalists lack the training necessary to become proficient journalists. To be fair, some media companies do provide such training, though on a small scale. One such example is the Twin Cities Media Alliance (TCMA), a non-profit organization that operates the Twin Cities Daily Planet[47]. The TCMA offers courses in citizen journalism to interested parties. Another organization offering similar courses is: The Oakland Press Institute for Citizen Journalism. The problem remains, however, that organizations like these do not have the capacity to offer training as intensive as what is offered through undergraduate degree programs in journalism (and certainly not graduate programs). Furthermore, the number of students able to undergo such training pales in comparison to the throngs of students

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[47] Jeremy Iggers, Executive Director of the Twin Cities Media Alliance, made me aware of his organization's existence via a conversation I had with him in 2009.

that traditional journalism schools can educate. The last qualification requires a desire to present information to citizens in ways that encourage them to become informed and motivated. I have no doubt that many aspiring citizen journalists share this desire with professional journalists. Merely satisfying one of these criteria, however, fails to demonstrate that citizen journalists are suited for the task of enhancing citizens' ability to participate civically.

§5.6   Holding Journalists Accountable

Perhaps some might claim that journalists do not have a duty to embrace public journalism or present information to citizens in ways that best enhances individuals' ability to participate civically effectively. In response to this assertion, I offer that throughout this dissertation, I have not prescribed that journalists must do anything other than what most have already agreed to do. In §5.5, I noted that professional journalists operate according to various codes of ethics and practices. One such code (and perhaps the most popular) is the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics. Among other aims, the society strives to: "promote the flow of information; stimulate high standards and ethical behavior in the practice of journalism; [and] foster excellence among journalists" (SPJ, 1996). To achieve these goals, the SPJ cites the following in their code of ethics: "seek truth and report it" (SPJ, 1996). Under this stated aim, the SPJ Code of Ethics asserts that journalists "should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context" (SPJ, 1996). Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that journalists often oversimplify events and highlight phenomena out of context (and in many cases fail to provide any broad context at all). If journalists truly desire to "seek truth and report it" (SPJ, 1996), then they should heed my advice for I have shown them a better way to accomplish this stated aim (i.e., the presentation of information via hybrid accounts). Two other stated aims are: "minimize harm [and] be accountable" (SPJ, 1996). To accomplish these goals, journalists must avoid

framing stories episodically because doing so inhibits citizens' ability to civically participate in order to further their projects and interests. If episodically framed narratives inhibit citizens' ability to make informed decisions, then to minimize harm, journalists must hold themselves accountable for such harm and avoid framing news episodically. Lastly, under the stated aim: "be accountable" (SPJ, 1996), is the following charge: "clarify and explain news coverage" (SPJ, 1996). This mantra reinforces the need to present thematically framed stories rather than episodic narratives, because presenting the latter amounts to a failure to provide contextually rich information that would be enable news consumers to understand the significance that events hold to other socio-economic and political phenomena. To be clear, the charges as expressed in this section are journalists' own. In this dissertation, in no place did I introduce duties that lay outside the scope of these stated aims. What I have offered herein are simply recommendations that would enable journalists to better achieve these goals.

§5.7   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I addressed a serious issue that surrounds hybrid accounts' ability to attract and retain news consumers. Recent research work suggests that even when broad-context information comes packaged with narrow-context data via hybrid accounts, citizens gain little enjoyment, leading them to prefer narratives featuring mere narrow-context information to hybrid stories (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, pp. 414-415). Contributing to this preference is a fatalistic attitude that events occur deterministically and citizens can do little to influence their rates of incidence (Coleman & Thorson, 2002, p. 407). This fatalistic attitude causes citizens to become apathetic; whereby, citizens' interest regarding the consumption of information about societal problems remains low.

To increase citizens' interest in consuming hybrid accounts, journalists must raise news consumers' satisfaction about such accounts' ability to enhance audience members' ability to civically participate effectively. With an increase in contextually rich news consumption comes an increase in citizens' epistemic political efficacy.

Citizens must begin to feel confident that they are able to attain a contextually rich understanding of politics and societal problems (thus raising their epistemic political efficacy), as doing so will enhance individuals' confidence in their ability to wield power effectively via civic participation (thus raising their internal political efficacy). Further, the more citizens believe that they are able to acquire political knowledge and use that knowledge to influence politics via civic participation, the more satisfied they will begin to feel by consuming hybrid narratives. Citizens will then gain confidence that government and society is responsive to their civic participation and that they can influence events (thus raising their external political efficacy). Because of this increased satisfaction with the process of gaining information and using it to effect change, citizens will be more likely than not to become enticed (and remain so) by consuming hybrid accounts, thus enabling journalists to attract future news consumers as well as retain current ones.

In addition to the problems associated with the consumption of episodic accounts addressed in earlier chapters lays one final issue buttressing my concern with citizens expressing preference for narrow-context accounts over hybrid ones. A recent study conducted by researchers associated with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) found that the more citizens consume episodic accounts, the more misperceptions about societal problems they hold (Misperceptions, 2003, pp. 16-17). This is due to the

problems addressed earlier concerning episodically framed narratives. In brief, citizens consuming mere episodic accounts often fail to appreciate elements of experience necessary to forming a broad-context view of events. By developing mere narrow-context views, many individuals acquire caricaturistic perspectives of societal problems that contain misperceptions of the type discussed in PIPA's research (e.g., that Iraq possessed WMDs). To remedy this problem, journalists must encourage citizens to develop broad-context views of events. Only then will citizens be able to eradicate misperceptions that inhibit their ability to become informed and motivated.

The discussion of public journalism in this chapter brings together ideas presented throughout the entirety of this dissertation. To best understand how journalists should present information to American citizens, they must understand that citizens in the United States are afforded the opportunity to shape government in real ways via civic participation. Because of this, citizens need information presented to them that they can use to work together to solve problems through their cooperative labors. More is at stake than ratings shares and market values. What is at stake is citizens' ability to attain knowledge and use it to work with one another to resolve social issues. Understanding how journalists frame information and how various types of framing affect citizens is fundamental to the task I have undertaken in this work. That task has been to employ philosophical methodology to better understand why citizens sometimes fail to civically participate effectively, what (or if any) responsibility journalists have, and how journalism can serve as a mechanism through which citizens are made better able to deliberate, vote, and express feedback.

In particular, the discussion of democracy in chapter one identified the avenues of civic participation (i.e., deliberation, voting, and feedback) that citizens share because of the equalities they enjoy: that of opportunity and voice. To lay the groundwork necessary for showing how some journalistic methods fail to best enable citizens to participate civically effectively, in chapter two, I examined the ideality of journalistic objectivity to demonstrate two things. One, since all accounts are context-dependent, no account can ever present a view of reality in any context-independent way. Two, rather than presenting news via standalone narrow- or broad-context accounts, each type can be intertwined to form hybrid narratives, and the latter are better suited to inform and motivate citizens than standalone narrow- or broad-context stories. To elucidate how narratives are constructed, I discussed framing in chapter three, taking care to show how episodic framing exposes audience members unwittingly to framing bias. In addition, I argued that episodic framing causes citizens to be more apt to attribute responsibility for societal problems to individuals even in cases that clearly involve complex, intertwined social phenomena. This is a problem since the deliberations citizens might hold, the voting decisions they might make, and the feedback they might express would be directed toward the wrong targets (i.e., individuals rather than social phenomena). To combat these problems, I argued that journalists must present audience members contextually rich information conveying to audience members the causal foundation and future significance of events so that citizens come to reasonably understand problems and possible solutions, their consequences, and their costs. This requires that journalists present information thematically, rather than episodically, and as a result, citizens are best able to become informed. Becoming informed, however, is only half the battle, as

individuals must also become motivated if they hope to resolve societal problems effectively. To show how journalists can help motivate citizens, in chapter four I discussed a noncognitive view of emotional arousal to stress the need for journalists to include personal and dramatic elements that convey the subjective experiences of others. Since I consider emotional arousal as grounded upon affect and not cognition, narratives must include elements that encourage audience members to undergo affective appraisal processing in order to motivate citizens to resolve social issues. Since reason's role in emotional arousal is to provide necessary adjustment of our affective response, to do this properly, individuals need contextually rich information about the stimuli that triggered our affective appraisal processing. By demonstrating the need for both narrow- and broad-context information, I further bolstered my call for journalists to present hybrid accounts to news consumers. Lastly, in chapter five, I examined the serious concern that audience members do not enjoy consuming hybrid accounts, and instead, individuals would rather journalists present narrow-context narratives. To handle this concern, I argued that citizens do not enjoy consuming hybrid accounts because audience members hold fatalistic attitudes about events, rendering citizens apathetic because individuals lack confidence in their ability to be fairly certain about the factual aspects of politics, or to participate civically to produce changes within government and society. Many audience members believe that government and society is unresponsive to citizens' efforts to transform politics or resolve societal problems. Since audience members do not believe that they can do much about societal problems given this lack of confidence, they would rather journalists present entertaining narratives rather than boring drivel citizens believe to be useless. To combat such apathy, I argued that journalists must present hybrid

accounts in ways that reinforce *why* citizens should participate civically, as well as *how* they can do so, rather than just disseminate information disinterestedly under the guise of journalistic objectivity. In short, journalists should embrace public journalism since the movement seeks to transform apathetic individuals into a civically engaged citizenry.

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