

ACCESS ATTITUDES:
MEASURING AND CONCEPTUALIZING SUPPORT FOR PRESS ACCESS TO
GOVERNMENT RECORDS

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of DAVID
CUILLIER find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.


Chair





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Abstract

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This study examines public attitudes toward press access to government records, providing a new scale for measuring support for press access, identifying factors related to support, and deriving a model predicting support.

Seven data sets are analyzed, including surveys of three college student samples, secondary analysis of three general-public phone surveys, and a probability-based national phone survey of 403 United States adults in spring 2006.

Regression analysis and structural equation modeling test whether support for press access is best explained by societal power, newspaper importance, or attitudes toward community engagement.

The findings indicate that support for press access is a political attitude such that the strongest predictors of support are attitudes toward community engagement and support for press rights, regardless of age, income, education, views toward newspaper reading, or other variables. A political model is tested through confirmatory factor

analysis structural regression modeling and path modeling, providing a good fit for the final telephone survey data. Upon replication, the model also fit another national survey data set.

In attempting to explain how people think about access, a good-fitting confirmatory factor analysis measurement model of the 12-item support for press access scale indicates that support for press access comprises four first-order factors (support for government operations records, privacy-oriented records, crime records, and public safety records), and a second-order factor (overall support for press access). The support for press access scale is reliable across studies and demonstrates convergent and divergent validity, applicable for use in paper and telephone surveys among different populations.

The study's implications are discussed, including explanation for why support for press access ebbs and flows during different times of societal community engagement. Also, the findings provide insights for helping journalists, scholars, politicians, and citizens build a stronger democracy based not on fear or secrecy, but on self-governance and knowledge.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my wife, Cheryl; my son, Paul; and my daughter, Lauren. Without their love and support, this would not be possible.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

*“The only thing that counts is the
right to know, to speak, to think ...
Otherwise it’s not America.”*

– Edward R. Murrow,
broadcast journalist (1954)

Democracy relies on political participation, aided through an informed electorate (Blasi, 1977; Meiklejohn, 1948). Citizens count on journalists to access information about government and to dispatch their reports to the public. Yet, in recent decades increased government secrecy has restricted press access to public records (Cassel, 2004; Chircop, 2003; Herson, 1996; Reporters Committee, 2005; Waxman, 2004). Less access to government records makes it more difficult for journalists to serve their watchdog role, which leaves government – and citizens – in the dark.

Some of the increased secrecy in the United States might be attributed to public concern over privacy invasion and national security (Blanchard, 2002; Cuillier, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005; Davis, 2003; U.S. GAO, 2003; Waxman, 2004). Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, public support for civil liberties decreased, and citizens were more accepting of government secrecy (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2003; First Amendment Center, 2004; Gallup, 2004; Huddy, Khatib, & Capelos, 2002; Roper, 2004; Scheufele, Nisbet, & Ostman, 2005; Snow, 2003).

Scholars have noted that for some reason people’s attitudes toward democratic principles change during times of societal strife (Blanchard, 1992, 2002; Ross, 2002; Smith, 2002; Siebert, 1952; Stone, 2004). Furthermore, research indicates that public

attitudes affect policy change (McGregor, 2006; Monroe, 1998; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Murray & Howard, 2002; Page & Shapiro, 1983, 1992), leading to legislation inhibiting or enhancing access to government documents. Yet, to date no research has effectively measured the public's attitudes toward freedom of information.

Today's threatened state of access to government information begs the questions: Who supports open government and access to public records? Who does not? Why or why not? How are those attitudes related to demographic variables, media use, or attitudes toward community engagement?

So far, scholars, journalists, and politicians have few answers. The scant empirical studies examining public attitudes toward access have provided inadequate findings because of unreliable or incomplete measures (Cuillier, 2004; Driscoll et al., 2000; Phelps & Bunker, 2001).

It is the goal of this study to bring fresh methodological and theoretical approaches to this subject, providing a new psychometrically valid scale to measure public attitudes toward press access and examining factors related to support for access, offering an explanatory model to predict support for access. Ultimately, the findings from this study's examination of seven survey data sets could potentially aid scholars, journalists, government officials, and citizens through increased understanding of how people think about access, and suggest ways of increasing public support for open government.

Importance of access to public records

Political philosophers have long asserted that a strong democracy requires citizen and press access to government records to serve as a check on political institutions

(Altschull, 1990; Blasi, 1977; Cross, 1953; Meiklejohn, 1948; Teeter, 1992). The concept of access to information emerged during the Enlightenment, evolving from the idea of free expression. John Milton, in his 1644 treatise *Areopagitica*, urged the British parliament to stop censoring ideas through publication licensing. Milton argued for a “marketplace of ideas,” where truth and falsehood grapple in the open so that truth can prevail.

The founders of the United States incorporated these ideals into democratic principles. James Madison, one of the framers of the Constitution, strongly expressed the need for the people’s ability to access government information: “A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.” (In letters to W. T. Barry, 1922; Padover, 1953)

While libertarians tout freedom of expression and information as natural rights necessary for the pursuit of truth, others have approached it from a more pragmatic perspective: It makes government work better. Self-government theory (Meiklejohn, 1948) and the closely related checking value theory (Blasi, 1977) are based on the premise that citizens need access to government information for a democracy to function adequately and for government to stay honest.

The ability for the press and public to access government records – even those with personal information – helps society when thoughtfully applied for providing citizens what they need to know (Maciejewski & Ozar, 2005; Richardson, 2004). Public records are paper or electronic documents held by government agencies that may or may not be available for public inspection, depending on statutory law or case law (Cross, 1953).

Under the federal Freedom of Information Act and state laws, government records are presumed open to the public unless statutorily exempt (Splichal, 2000).

A wide variety of public records are requested by journalists every day, including property tax records, birth certificates, city budgets, bridge inspection reports, and police reports. A content analysis of 3,192 front-page newspaper stories from 11 newspapers in 2001 found that about a third of the stories were based in part on open public records, meetings, or court proceedings (Society of Professional Journalists, 2001).

Despite the reliance by journalists on government records, the media comprise a small portion of those who request public records. An examination of 2,285 federal Freedom of Information Act records requests by the Center for Media and Public Policy found that most requests are filed by commercial users, some by nonprofit organizations and citizens, and just 5% by journalists (Tapscott & Taylor, 2001). In England, a study found that only 1 in 10 public records requests are submitted by journalists (Amos & Holsen, 2005).

Yet, journalists are often the most vocal proponents of government transparency, advocating for open records and meetings in editorials and suing agencies that illegally withhold public information. The Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics recognizes "a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection." (Society of Professional Journalists, 1996). In 2004, journalism organizations formed the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government to advocate for access (www.cjog.net).

Journalists' struggles over access are often very public and therefore made more salient to citizens. For example, the annual national "Sunshine Week" highlights the need

for access and is guided by 40 steering committee members, all representing media organizations (www.sunshineweek.org).

Although the “right to know” is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, a qualified right to know has been acknowledged by the U.S. Supreme Court as a necessary element of self-governance, particularly for the press’s right to gather government information that is of use to citizens (Sanford & Kirtley, 2005). For example, the right for the public and press to attend criminal trials was upheld in *Sheppard v. Maxwell* (1966) and pretrial hearings in *Richmond Newspapers v. Virginia* (1980).

In the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court case *Branzburg v. Hayes*, the court ruled that a reporter does not have an absolute right to refuse a subpoena, but the court acknowledged a First Amendment interest in information gathering. Justice Byron White, who wrote the opinion, stated, “...Without some (First Amendment) protection for seeking out the news, freedom of the press could be eviscerated” (p. 681). Justice William O. Douglas, dissenting, stated, “The right to know is crucial to the governing powers of the people” (p. 721).

In 1966, Congress passed the federal Freedom of Information Act, partially in response to press and public disdain for government secrecy during the Cold War (Uhm, 2005). Other access laws followed, including the Government in Sunshine Act of 1976 to make some federal board meetings public, and the Campus Security Act of 1990 to make campus crime data public.

Other countries have followed suit, with England adopting a freedom of information act in 2000 (Hasan, 2005) and a recent surge of access legislation in Asia (Coronel, 2001), particularly by countries interested in attracting foreign investment

(Relly, 2005) and supportive of civil liberties and a free press (Relly & Sabharwal, 2006; Relly, Sabharwal, & Campbell, 2006). However, while some efforts have been made to provide citizens and the press access to government information, opposing forces have succeeded in restricting access, particularly in the United States.

Increasing secrecy

Since the 1980s, U.S. government officials increasingly have closed records because of public and government concerns over privacy invasion and national security (Blanchard, 2002; Cassel, 2004; Cochran & Katz, 2003; Cuillier, 2005a; Davis, 2003; Eberhard, 2000; Halstuk, 1999; Hernon, 1996; Hoefges, Halstuk, & Chamberlin, 2003; Sharkey, 1992; Ross, 2002).

Congress has passed laws to make information secret, usually to protect privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Privacy Protection Act of 1980, Drivers Privacy Protection Act of 1994, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Government agencies often conduct business in secret online or through email (Ross, 1998; Ross, 2000) or by contracting out to private companies (Bunker, 2000). From 1998 to 2002, the use of privacy exemptions to deny federal Freedom of Information Act requests increased more than 600%, from 55,000 to 380,000 (LaFleur, 2004).

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed with some of the secrecy measures (Kirtley, 2003; Senat, 2003). For example, the right to know does not provide unrestricted press access to a prison (*Pell v. Procunier*, 1974), electronic rap sheets (*Department of Justice v. Reporters Committee*, 1989), mailing lists that could be used for direct marketing (*Los*

Angeles Police Department v. United Reporting, 1999), or autopsy photos of former President Bill Clinton’s lawyer, Vince Foster (*Office of Independent Counsel v. Favish*, 2004).

The courts are increasingly using secret juries (Chance, 2000; Reporters Committee, 2000); keeping detainees’ identity secret (Reporters Committee, 2002; Ross, 2001, 2004); and using secret dockets to hide cases (Reporters Committee, 2005). The Coalition of Journalists for Open Government studied the amount of information the federal government released through the Freedom of Information Act from 2000 to 2004 and found a 22% increase in the use of exemptions to keep information secret (Coalition, 2005).

As a result of the increased secrecy, journalists say they are unable to adequately monitor government or to expose societal problems in ways possible as recently as the mid-1990s (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2003; Barnett, 2001; Chircop, 2003; Reporters Committee, 2005; Kirtley, 1998; LaFleur, 2003; Lewis, 2002; Weitzel, 2004; Welsh, 2006). Sometimes information considered private by some people – such as date of birth, home address, and other key personal identifiers – is required by journalists to thoroughly examine the workings of government, particularly when analyzing information in computer databases (Cox, 2000; Garrison, 2001).

A study of 55 environmental journalists found three-quarters of them reporting significant delays in getting information, sometimes more than a year (Bluemink & Brush, 2005). Many of the journalists said they have stopped trying to request public records because of the difficulties and because of the “horror stories” they have heard from fellow journalists about trying to use the federal Freedom of Information Act.

While some journalists lament the increasing difficulty in getting public records, some express worry that the public does not notice – or care. Tom Curley, president of The Associated Press, told members of the National Freedom of Information Coalition that the press needs to do “a better job of persuading the public that freedom of information is not a media privilege but a key part of what keeps all other freedoms alive for everyone” (Curley, 2005).

Public attitudes toward access

In a democracy, where citizen participation is vital, public attitudes can shape government policy decisions (McGregor, 2006; Monroe, 1998; Murray & Howard, 2002; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Page & Shapiro, 1983; Paletz, 2002). James Madison and Alexander Hamilton argued that public opinion was the true sovereign in the United States, regardless of the laws. Public opinion, they said, gives expression to the General Will (Altschull, 1990).

Page and Shapiro (1983) examined public opinion and policy data from 1935 to 1979 and found that public opinion often affects government policy. They found that when there is significant opinion change, policy change occurs in the same direction 66% of the time.

The researchers found that the effect is strongest among issues of high public salience and interest. A more recent study reported similar findings. Monroe (1998) found that public opinion matched policy change for First Amendment and civil liberties issues about 55% of the time, and he found a congruence rate of 69% for highly salient issues.

If shifts in public policy are related to changes in public policy, then it is important to understand how people think about access and what affects their attitudes toward access. The public's support or opposition to access may affect the degree to which government operates openly (Monroe, 1998; Page & Shapiro, 1983).

For example, Washington state voters in 1972 overwhelmingly approved Initiative 276, which created the state open public record law. Following the initiative's passage, access proponents expressed alarm over efforts by government and corporations to repeal the law. Lee Sanders, a Common Cause leader and an initiative proponent, wrote after the election:

It is obvious that a well-financed campaign is underway to change public opinion in Washington. Misleading statements have been made by lobbyists and some legislators. ... The battle for the public mind continues although the election has passed. The special interests are uniformly aligned against 276. Virtually all their wealth and power are combined. ... If the efforts of the critics of 276 go unmatched, then it is reasonable to anticipate that public opinion will be reversed. Once the polls show a change in popular support, then the legislators will feel inclined to seriously alter or actually repeal 276. ... The capacity of the people to govern themselves hangs in the balance. (Unsoeld, 1973, p. 2)

While government officials base some of their decisions on public opinion, it is difficult to tell what citizens base their opinions on. Research and theory point to three potential influences: social power, media, and political attitudes.

Social power. Critical scholars suggest that free expression and First Amendment rights, such as access to public information, serve the wealthy and the dominant social class (Bollinger, 1986; McKinnon, 1987). Just as free expression has the potential of harming the disadvantaged through hate speech, so access to information has the potential of causing harm to the disadvantaged through privacy invasion or increased subjugation (Andsager & Cuillier, 2004; Cuillier, 2004). Those in power have little to fear from free expression or access to information, while those who have little power have more to fear.

Fear is relevant to support for press access because of increasing concern over privacy invasion. Privacy concerns have evolved in the United States since 1890, when Warren and Brandeis published their Harvard Law Review article arguing for the “right to be let alone.” Concern over the amount of information in government databases emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (McCormick, 1978), leading to closure of public records (Bunker, 2000; Bush & Chamberlin, 2000; LaFleur, 2004).

Even before identity theft and the proliferation of personal information on the Internet, Chester Bennett described the growing fear: “The keeping of records engulfs us. . . . Perhaps it is the impersonal nature of this programmed snooping which has generated the heat over privacy” (Bennett, 1967, p. 374). He also noticed the conflict with open communication: “The contemporary concern over privacy parallels a pervasive need to

communicate; the individual's right to secrecy is counterbalanced by the public's right to knowledge" (p. 374).

A national poll in 2001 for the Council for Excellence in Government showed that 49% of Americans are "extremely concerned" that the advent of government business being conducted online, such as paying for parking tickets, will lead to less personal privacy (Council for Excellence in Government, 2001). A national poll of 2,096 adults in 2001 for the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that 46% of Americans are "very concerned" about computer hacking into business networks, Web sites, and files, and 69% are very concerned about credit card theft (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2001).

Public fear regarding electronic identity theft has prompted government to close public records. In 2002, President George W. Bush announced his intention to seek tighter restrictions on records and more jail time for criminals who steal people's identities. His actions followed a Justice Department identity theft crackdown (Bush targets identity theft, 2002). Also in 2002, officials in Salt Lake County, Utah, intending to combat identity theft declared secret 10,000 public records about veterans, even though the records had not been known to lead to any cases of identity theft (S.L. County makes veterans' records private, 2002).

National security also is cited as a reason for keeping government records secret, particularly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Davis, 2003; Lewis, 2002; Ross, 2001, 2004; Waxman, 2004). The USA PATRIOT Act led to the closure of records regarding government infrastructure, such as the status of dams that might burst (Reporters Committee, 2005). According to a U.S. General Accounting Office study,

following the October 2001 memorandum by former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft supporting secrecy, about a quarter of federal officials began withholding more records from the public (U.S. GAO, 2003).

During times of strife and fear, Americans have demonstrated a pattern of willingly giving up their civil liberties, free expression, and access to government information (Blanchard, 1992, 2002; Davis, 2001; Erskine, 1970; Erskine & Siegel, 1975; Siebert, 1952; Smith, 2002). Following September 11, 2001, public opinion research showed that citizens were willing to give up their rights to civil liberties and shun free expression that opposed national policy (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2003; First Amendment Center, 2004; Gallup, 2004; Huddy, Khatib, & Capelos, 2002; Roper, 2004; Snow, 2002).

The First Amendment Center, which has measured public opinions regarding the First Amendment since 1997, found that in 2001 – before September 11 – about 29% of the public thought the First Amendment “goes too far in the rights it guarantees.” The following year that percentage jumped to 41% (First Amendment Center, 2004). Since September 11, 2001, poll after poll has found that roughly 50% to 60% of Americans approve the USA PATRIOT Act’s limits on civil liberties and increased government secrecy as tools in the war on terrorism (Gallup, 2004; Roper, 2004).

Media importance. While power and fear might be related to how people view access to information, other factors might be at play, such as media use. Media effects scholars would suggest that in light of cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1982) and agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), attitudes toward free expression, access, and political issues would be related to one’s use of newspapers

or television (Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Crotty & Jacobson, 1980). People who depend on newspapers for their news might demonstrate greater support for journalists' rights to gather information (Lambe, 2002; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; McLeod et al., 1991).

Under this thinking, as newspaper readership declines, then support for press rights, including access, would decline. However, such theories do not require media to affect support for access. Rather, media use may be tied closely to community engagement, so it may be that people who are interested in politics or community involvement may be more likely to use the media (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001, 2004; Tan, 1980).

Political attitudes. During the past 20 years, political scholars have noted the U.S. public becoming increasingly disengaged in government and politics (Crotty & Jacobson, 1980; Putnam, 2000). Putnam, in his 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, describes declining social capital –

or civic engagement – in politics, churches, informal social connections, volunteering, and philanthropy. If citizens continue to be less and less interested in their communities and government, and support for access declines, then it is possible that policymakers will increase secrecy and that the press's ability to access government information will be at risk. Democracy requires that people be informed and have access to information about the government if they are to participate in governance (Meiklejohn, 1948).

Despite these theories, researchers have yet to identify what factors are related to attitudes toward access, whether it be fear, media importance, community engagement, or something else. Few scholars have applied quantitative methods to examining public attitudes toward open government (Cuillier, 2004; Driscoll et al., 2000; Phelps & Bunker, 2001). Furthermore, those studies report only basic descriptive findings, are limited by

unreliable measures, and lack inclusion of relevant constructs for deeper statistical analysis. More research is needed.

Problem statement and need for research

Given the limited findings from the few preliminary studies conducted so far, more research is needed to better understand public attitudes toward access to government information. This study attempts to add to the body of knowledge through two objectives:

1. Develop a reliable scale to measure public support for press access to government records. Without a reliable instrument, it is difficult to measure public attitudes toward access consistently and accurately. A psychometrically valid support for press access scale would allow scholars to measure attitudes in different communities, professions, or nations. It also would allow for measuring attitudes over time to identify change.
2. Identify and explain demographic, psychographic, and political factors related to attitudes toward press access. Scholars do not know who supports access and who does not, or more important, why and what affects those attitudes. Do the media affect public attitudes toward access? Are attitudes influenced by socioeconomic factors, fear of privacy invasion, or terrorists? Or is it a political attitude – a function of civic engagement and political involvement?

This research can help journalists, librarians, scholars, public officials, and citizens interested in access to government better understand why the public favors or opposes government transparency, and perhaps they can take measures to increase support. In the

end, greater support for access could lead to a more open government, helping journalists and citizens to become better informed and strengthen democratic self-governance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation builds upon theories and empirical research in social psychology and political communication, particularly research regarding free expression, press rights, media effects, and civic engagement. Three proposed models to be tested in this study are each based on a different hypothesized explanation for the core factors potentially related to support for press access: socioeconomic power, perceived media importance, and attitudes toward community engagement.

Defining support for press access

Some scholars deem the study of attitudes as one of the most important areas of social psychology, explaining to some extent why people think – and perhaps act – the way they do (Allport, 1935; Gilbert, Fiske, & Lindsey, 1998; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Thurstone & Chave, 1929).

Eagly and Chaiken (1998) define an attitude as a “psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor.” (p. 269). They suggest there are three main types of attitudes: cognitive, also called “beliefs”; affective, such as feelings and emotions; and behavioral, or intentions to act.

Attitudes toward press access may encompass a strong cognitive element, as a belief, but also may be affective – influenced by feelings and emotions toward personal privacy or other feelings. Attitudes toward governmental policy, such as access to public records, are called “political attitudes” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998).

“Support for press access” is defined for this study as an attitude expressed with a degree of agreement or disagreement toward the news media’s ability to acquire public records. Public records can include any paper or electronic document held by local, state, or federal government agencies that is available for inspection by journalists or citizens.

The selection of *press* access as opposed to overall *public* access is intentional. The focus on the press’s right to access information is premised on third-person effect, that people view issues differently when the expression relates to other people, as compared with the person himself or herself (Davison, 1983, 1996; Perloff, 1993, 1999; Salwen, 1998; Salwen & Driscoll, 1997). For example, people are more likely to think negative political advertising unduly sways others’ abilities to reason and choose the best candidates, but believe that they themselves will not be swayed by the advertising. People may support restrictions on negative advertising – or press access – because of this perception that others are more easily influenced by it or harmed.

Previous studies have shown that support varies depending on who is accessing the information, with people demonstrating high support for their own access but low support for the press or others to access information (Cuillier, 2004; Driscoll et al., 2000; Phelps & Bunker, 2001). Support for personal access is often so high that little variance is accounted for in its measurement, weakening statistical analysis. Support for press access is lower and more varied, making it more suitable for research.

Another reason for focusing on the press is that much of the debate over access to government records is whether the press, not the individual, should be allowed to access information. Social responsibility theory (Siebert, 1963) dictates that the press has a duty

– a social responsibility – to acquire public records, distill them down, and present them to the public.

Access attitudes research

Few scholars have examined public attitudes toward open government, and the published research reports only basic descriptive findings, limited by unreliable measures and lacking relevant constructs for deeper statistical analysis (Cuillier, 2004; Driscoll et al., 2000; Phelps & Bunker, 2001).

One of these studies was based on a national phone survey of 403 adults in 1998 (Driscoll et al., 2000). The study found that support varies by type of record, by who is asking for the information (law enforcement 85%; journalists 49%; bankers 47%; credit card companies 21%), and by gender (men were slightly more supportive of access). The researchers also noted that people seemed concerned about the potential of privacy invasion caused by open government records.

However, the study suffered from an unreliable eight-item scale ($\alpha = .64$) that required use of single items to serve as measures for support for access. No subdimensions of access were examined, such as delineating support for access to records that involve personal privacy issues (e.g., driver's licenses) as opposed to records regarding government operations (e.g., city council minutes). Also, only basic demographic questions were included, such as age, education, race, gender, political orientation, and whether someone in the household works for government. Driscoll et al. (2000) wrote:

The results suggest that public attitudes toward access to government documents are complex phenomena. While public opinion regarding access seems exceptionally homogeneous across demographic and psychographic variables, various motives may underlie the preference for disclosure in some cases and restrictions in others. Additional research is needed to uncover the various factors that shape public attitudes toward access. (p. 34)

A similar study was conducted the same year, also providing limited findings. Phelps and Bunker (2001) included a dozen questions in a national omnibus telephone survey of 400 adults. The study found that people favored access to records for themselves more so than for marketers or journalists. Privacy invasion was a large concern among respondents. Again, independent variables were measured by single items, not scales, and no other information was reported regarding who favored access and who did not.

A third study was based on a 2002 telephone survey of 402 adults in Washington state (Cuillier, 2004). Respondents were asked to provide their support for access to five specific records by the press and by themselves individually. The internal reliability for the five press access questions was low ($\alpha = .60$) and for all 10 questions the Cronbach's alpha was just .68, unsuitable for research. Also, relatively few demographic or psychographic questions were included in the study.

Because of the scant empirical research and theoretical development in explaining attitudes toward access, this study is framed as exploratory in nature and looks to other research areas for theoretical guidance. In particular, public opinion research regarding

free expression, press rights, and political communication provides an empirical and theoretical basis for exploring attitudes toward press access.

Free expression, press rights, and political communication

For nearly half a century, political communication scholars have studied public attitudes toward free expression, First Amendment principles, and press rights (e.g., Andsager, Wyatt, & Martin, 2004; Cohen & Gleason, 1990; Stouffer, 1955; Wyatt, 1991). Findings in the support for free expression research seem to be similar to those in the few preliminary studies regarding support for access.

For example, a consistent finding is that the public strongly supports free expression in the abstract. But when asked about specific examples, support typically decreases (Chong, 1993; McClosky & Brill, 1983; Nunn, Crocket, & Williams (1978); Wyatt, 1991; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002; Zellman, 1975). People may overwhelmingly say they agree with the First Amendment, but they might not agree with offensive speech or a communist teaching at a university (Nunn, 1975; Stouffer, 1955). This has been found to be true across cultures, including in Hong Kong, Israel, and Russia (Andsager, Wyatt, & Martin, 2004).

Similarly, Driscoll et al. (2000) found in their national phone survey that people strongly support open government in the abstract. But when asked whether driver's licenses or other privacy-oriented records should be available to the public, respondents' support drops.

Support for expressive rights also depends on who is doing the expressing. People are more supportive of their own rights to free speech than of the press's rights (Miller,

Andsager, & Wyatt, 1992). The classic study of political tolerance by Stouffer (1955) examined people's views toward expressive rights in relation to communism and other "harmful" groups. Stouffer demonstrated how the threat of communism lowered the public's support for expression by communists and other disliked groups. Succeeding studies supported the Stouffer survey (Erskine, 1970; Prothro & Grigg, 1960).

Similarly, in the support for access research, Cuillier (2004) found that people more strongly support their own access to public records than journalists' right to access information. Also, Phelps and Bunker (2001) found that people more strongly support the right of marketers to access information than journalists.

Support for free expression also depends on the *type* of speech or action (Andsager, 1992; McLeod et al., 1991; Wyatt, 1991). For example, people are more favorable of speech critical of the government than speech designed to incite violence (Gibson & Bingham, 1982). This has been noted in studies regarding support for access, with support varying depending on the type of public record being requested. For example, in the Cuillier (2004) study, on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 designating greater support, the question of whether the press should have access to criminal records averaged 3.97 and the question of whether the press should have access to driver's licenses averaged 2.14.

Therefore, based on the similarities between support for free expression and support for press access, prior research in support for free expression provides guidance for what factors – particularly socioeconomic, media importance, or community engagement – may be related to support for press access.

Three theoretical perspectives

Socioeconomic power

It is possible that attitudes toward free expression, press rights, and access to public records are shaped by one's position in society. Those in power might see the benefits of expressive rights and feel less threatened by others' expression (Andsager, 2002; Andsager, Wyatt, & Martin, 2004; McLeod et al., 1991). Relationships with demographic variables provide support for this perspective.

Support for free expression has been found to be greatest among younger adults who are in their career prime (Andsager, 1992; Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale, 1978; Bobo & Licari, 1989; Lambe, 2000, 2004; Stouffer, 1955; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002). Support peaks in the 30s and 40s, during strong earning years and declines at about retirement (Andsager, 1992; Wyatt, 1991).

Gender has been found associated with support for free expression such that men are more supportive, depending on the issue (Andsager, 1992, 1995, 2002; Lambe, 2004; Montero, 1975; Nunn, 1975; Stouffer, 1955; Suedfeld, Steel, & Schmidt, 1994). Studies have shown that older women show the least support for expressive rights (Hansen & Moore, 1992; Stovall & Cotter, 1992); other studies have shown the correlation between older women and a sense of little power (Degelman, Owens, Reynolds, & Riggs, 1991).

Free expression is viewed more positively by those who are highly educated (Andsager, 1992, 2002; Gaugler & Zalkind, 1975; McLeod et al., 1998; Montero, 1975; Nunn, Crocket, & Williams (1978); Prothro & Grigg, 1960; Stouffer, 1955; Wilson,

1975; Wyatt, 1991; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002). Income also has been associated with support; the higher the income the greater the support (Andsager, 2002; Wyatt, 1991; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002).

These consistent findings provide support for the power expression protection hypothesis (Andsager, 2002), which suggests that demographic indicators (e.g., more education, male, more affluent), representing societal power play a role in attitudes. Andsager suggests that those who have the greatest social power are less threatened by expressive speech and the media, so they are more supportive of free expression.

Some research has supported this hypothesis. For example, people who perceive themselves to have power over their lives have been found to be more supportive of press rights (Andsager, 1994). Also, people who see themselves as self-reliant and flexible demonstrate greater support of civil liberties (Zalkind, Gaugler, & Schwartz, 1975).

This is similar to what McLeod et al. (1991) called the economic deprivation model, where confidence in one's own personal economic status is positively related to political tolerance. McLeod et al. (1998) developed a model for First Amendment support that assumes two distinct paths toward support for First Amendment rights: one that is positive and achieved through knowledge and reasoning and one that is negative and achieved through concern with control and negative affect.

McLeod's First Amendment model incorporates demographic variables – such as education, gender, age, and ideology – along with media use, materialism values, and current events knowledge. Here, First Amendment support is generally related to higher education, being male, liberal, and well-versed in current events knowledge. The

combination of factors in this model accounted for 55% of variance in First Amendment support.

The negative path toward First Amendment support has been the subject of some studies regarding fear. Protection motivation theory suggests that the perceived susceptibility to a hazard, the perceived severity of a hazard, and the negative aspects of that hazard continuing will negatively affect support (Shah, Faber, & Youn, 1999). Based on third-person effect (Davison, 1983, 1996; Perloff, 1993, 1999), protection motivation theory focuses on protecting others. One study showed that fear of agitators and violence or harm resulting from expression is related to lower support for expression (Gibson & Bingham, 1982). Perceived threat was found to be predictive of political tolerance, mediating most other demographic variables (Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1982).

Studies in social psychology show that the thought of one's own death causes changes in attitudes, including greater support for political leaders' policies to reduce civil liberties (Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Konty, Duell, & Joireman, 2004; Landau et al., 2004; Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003).

In relation to support for press access, fear of negative outcomes – such as privacy invasion or terrorist attacks – might affect attitudes. Cuillier (2004) found that fear of privacy invasion is negatively related to support for access, even when controlling for demographic variables.

Based on the research and the preliminary theoretical models and hypotheses in the literature, it is possible that socioeconomic power is positively related to support for press access to government records. Perhaps those who hold more societal power are less likely to be afraid of information dissemination because it is less likely to harm them. People

who are not in power or who are fearful might be less supportive of press access because of the chances that powerful institutions such as the press and government might hurt them further. This hypothesis needs to be tested.

Media importance

Communication scholars have long studied the importance of media in public attitudes toward such democratic ideals as free expression and First Amendment rights (Atkin, 1981; Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002; Ross & Andsager, 2000).

Cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1982) suggests that heavy television viewing converges views toward a moderate, mainstreaming attitude that is generally less supportive of expressive rights. This concept is similar to what communication scholars see as agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), a theory of limited media effects that suggests the news media transfer their news agendas to the public agenda. Journalists decide what is important and what may be ignored, and this affects public attitudes.

As a result, media critics blame television in particular for growing political disaffection. Heavy television viewing has been found to be related to lower support for others to express themselves (Morgan & Shanahan, 1991; McLeod et al., 1991). Superficial, image-oriented political campaign coverage has been blamed for political disaffection and voter apathy (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Crotty & Jacobson, 1980; Pinkleton & Austin, 2004).

Also, people who watch television are less knowledgeable politically and less likely to vote than those who read newspapers (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004; Becker &

Dunwoody, 1982; Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; Culbertson & Stempel, 1986; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Pfau, Moy, Holbert, Szabo, Lin, & Zhang, 1998). Putnam (2000) states in his book *Bowling Alone* that increased viewing of television could be one reason for a drop in civic engagement, perhaps accounting for as much as 25% of the decline. Television viewing also may be related to less support for press access because of diminished interest in public affairs (Cuillier, 2005b).

On the other hand, research suggests that newspaper reading is positively related to support for free expression and civil liberties (Lambe, 2002; McLeod et al., 1991; Scheufele, Nisbet, & Ostman, 2005). Public affairs news use in particular is usually associated with greater political knowledge and participation, including voting, than other forms of media use (Chaffee, Ward & Tipton, 1970; Kang & Kwak, 2003; Lee, Cappella, & Southwell, 2003; Norris, 1996; Pinkleton & Austin, 2004; Pinkleton, Austin, & Fortman, 1998; Stauffer, Frost, & Rybolt, 1981; Wilkins, 2000).

Therefore, based on a media effects model, theoretically the importance one places on television entertainment should be negatively related with support for freedom of information and the press's right to access public records, while perceived newspaper importance should be positively associated with support for freedom of information (Cuillier, 2005b).

In media effects research, there is often an assumption that a relationship exists between media use, knowledge, attitude, and behavior (Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Crotty & Jacobson, 1980). In other words, a person reads or views a story or negative political advertisement in the media (gains knowledge), the message affects an attitude (increased or decreased cynicism), and the attitude affects behavior (more or less voting).

However, some scholars argue that media effects on political attitudes are weak (Lazarsfeld, 1948; Lee, 2005; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977). Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) argue that agenda-setting effects by the media depend on a variety of factors, including the type of issue, media outlet, and coverage type (e.g., specific explanatory investigative reporting has a larger impact on political actors and the public than ambiguous news coverage).

Some scholars suggest that involvement is key to providing more robust relationships and consistency between knowledge, attitude, and behavior (Chaffee & Roser, 1986). In other words, people need to get involved (motivated) before getting knowledge before they can change their attitudes and behavior. They must have a reason to tune in to politics before paying attention to the news, shaping attitudes, and then voting (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001, 2004).

Therefore, these two ways of looking at the media need to be tested: Do media affect attitudes toward access, or do certain attitudes toward access, or the people who hold those attitudes (the politically engaged), affect media use? Motivational factors – such as community engagement, not the media – may be at the root of these attitudes.

Community engagement

A growing body of work in political communication has in recent years focused on people's attitudes and behavior regarding political participation and civic engagement (Atkin, 1981; Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002; Putnam, 2000).

For example, researchers have found that those who hold liberal political views are more likely to support free expression (Andsager, 1993, 1994, 1995; Becker, Cobbey, &

Sobowale, 1978; Bobo & Licari, 1989; Lambe, 2002; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002). Also, tolerance and openness have been found to be positively correlated with support for free expression (Andsager, 1995; Lambe, 2004), and authoritarianism has been found to be negatively correlated (Lambe, 2004). It is possible that one's views toward access to government are related to personal values and community engagement, regardless of socioeconomic power or media importance.

Self-governance theory suggests that people need to be informed and have access to information about the government if they are to participate in governance (Meiklejohn, 1948). Based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), motivation is key to attitude change. The more relevant the subject, the stronger the person's attitudes toward the subject (Roser, 1990). Therefore, simply being engaged in community or political issues might provide the motivation to support freedom of government information.

Political involvement is a growing area of interest by scholars. Putnam (2000) describes declining civic participation – or social capital – in politics, churches, informal social connections, volunteering, and philanthropy. As scholars began to notice decreasing voter turnout rates and increased citizen apathy, new terms began to surface in the literature, such as “political disaffection” – defined as the lack of confidence in and a feeling of distrust toward the political system, including officials and institutions (Bandura, 1986).

Some scholars suggest that youth are more disengaged: less trusting of fellow citizens, less interested in public affairs, less knowledgeable about politics, less likely to read a newspaper, less likely to vote, and less likely to participate (Delli Carpini, 2000). The younger generation is less likely to use media for public affairs knowledge and

seldom engages in voting or contacting public officials (Bennett & Rademacher, 1997). Therefore, if community engagement is related to support for access, then older adults should exhibit greater support for press access (in contradiction with the power model).

“Political disaffection” may be affected by several different factors, including political efficacy and involvement. Efficacy is the feeling that one can make a difference (Bandura, 1986). The greater the efficacy, the more likely one will participate in politics and voting (Delli Carpini, 2000; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001).

“Political involvement” is the relevance and attention a person applies to politics (Roser, 1990). People who are involved in politics get information from the media that is useful to them, then their political efficacy increases, which increases participation (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001). In other words, people need to get involved (motivated) before getting knowledge (subscribing to a newspaper or supporting access to government records) before they can change their political behavior (voting).

Some scholars have defined political involvement as dispositional, either you have it or you do not – a psychological trait (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948). However, more recent research suggests otherwise: political involvement could be influenced by situational factors (Kanihan & Chaffee, 1996). The media might play a role, but some research indicates that media use provides political knowledge, then the knowledge affects attitudes and behavior (Becker & Dunwoody, 1982).

It is possible that people who are interested and engaged in their communities might be motivated to want access to information that can help their involvement. For the politically engaged, access might be relevant to their lives and therefore more important.

Hypotheses and research questions

Based on the literature in social psychology, free expression, and political communication, this study proposes the following research questions and hypotheses for examining factors related to support for press access, testing three models: power, media, and political attitudes.

Power model

The power expression protection hypothesis (Andsager, 2002) and the deprivation model (McLeod et al., 1991) suggest that socioeconomic factors are related to support for free expressive rights, perhaps including support for access to information (Andsager & Cuillier, 2004). Those who have greater societal power should express greater support for press access. Those who have less power should express less support.

Based on the previous research, “power” is represented by demographic variables that have been found to be related to support for free expression. Those high in power are those who are more educated, have higher income, are male, white, and middle-aged or younger. Also, those in power are less fearful and value power.

Education. Education has been found to be positively related to support for free expression (Andsager, 1992, 2002; Gaugler & Zalkind, 1975; McLeod et al., 1998; Montero, 1975; Prothro & Grigg, 1960; Wilson, 1975; Wyatt, 1991) and therefore it is hypothesized that it will be positively related to support for access.

H1a: Education will be positively related to support for press access.

Income. Income also has been found to be positively related to support for free expression (Andsager, 2002; Wyatt, 1991; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002).

H1b: Income will be positively related to support for press access.

Gender. Males have been found to be more supportive of free expression. One previous study (Driscoll et al., 2000) found men more supportive of access than women. The power model would predict that males, the dominant gender in U.S. society, would support access more so than females.

H1c: Gender will be related to support for press access such that men will demonstrate greater support than women.

Age. Age has been found to be negatively related to support for free expression, such that those who are older are less supportive than the young. In some studies (Andsager, 1992; Wyatt, 1991), support has been found to be greatest among middle-aged adults, who are in the height of their social status and power. Support then drops among the oldest, predicting a negative correlation with age and support for access.

H1d: Age will be negatively related to support for press access.

Race. Race has not been found to be related to support for free expression. However, as whites maintain the dominant social position in U.S. society, this variable will be included to test the power model.

H1e: Whites will be more supportive of press access than nonwhites.

Power values. Those who see themselves as powerful have been found to be more supportive of press rights (Andsager, 1994). Also, people who see themselves as self-reliant and flexible demonstrate greater support of civil liberties (Zalkind, Gaugler, & Schwartz, 1975). Therefore, those who value power should demonstrate greater support for press access.

H1f: Power values will be positively related to support for press access.

Fear. Fear of privacy invasion was found to be negatively related to support for press access in two pretests where that concept was measured (Cuillier, 2004). People who are more fearful of privacy invasion should be less supportive of the press's right to access information.

H1g: Fear of privacy invasion will be negatively related to support for press access.

Media model

Cultivation theory and the strong media effects model predict that the media affect attitudes, and, in some cases, behavior (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1982). In the literature, media use consistently has been found to be related to support for free expression, such that newspaper use is positively related (Lambe, 2002; McLeod et al., 1991) and television use negatively related (Morgan & Shanahan, 1991; McLeod et al., 1991).

Relationships for Internet use are inconsistent (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Katz, Rice, & Aspden, 2001; Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001; Uslaner, 2004). Therefore, the relationship between support for press access and how people view the Internet as an important news source will be posed as a research question.

Scholars, however, have identified problems with measuring media *use* by asking people to recall how many times they read the newspaper for the past week or how many hours they watch television in a day (Kosicki & McLeod, 1990; Price & Zaller, 1993; Slater, 2004; Zhao & Chaffee, 1995). Basic recall measures tend to produce weak results in studies (McLeod & McDonald, 1985).

Some scholars have had better success by measuring media satisfaction, attention, and reliance (Austin & Pinkleton, 1999; Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Martinelli & Chaffee, 1995; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Moy et al., 2004; Pfau et al., 1997; Schmierbach, Boyle, & McLeod, 2005), or a mixture of recall and attention (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Pinkleton & Austin, 2002). These measures recognize that just because someone is exposed to a media source does not mean they are paying attention to it. Therefore, based on difficulty in measuring actual media use, this study will focus on examining perceived media importance, which has been found to work in previous studies (e.g., Pinkleton et al., 2005; Pinkleton & Austin, 2004).

H2a: Newspapers, as an important news source, will be positively related to support for press access.

H2b: Television, as an important news source, will be negatively related to support for press access.

R1: How will Internet importance as a news source be related to support for press access?

Political model

Based on attitudinal research and theories (Bandura, 1986; Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), it is possible that people who see access to government information as relevant to their lives will more strongly support it than people who do not see access as relevant (Chaffee & Roser, 1986; Roser, 1990). People who are engaged in politics and their communities are motivated to value access to information.

Therefore, the political model predicts that political attitudes affect how one thinks about access to government information, regardless of societal power or perceived media importance.

Efficacy. Political efficacy is the extent that one feels he or she can make a difference in the political process (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954; Bandura, 1986; Morrell, 2003). Efficacy has been found to be positively related to confidence in finding information needed to be politically involved (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001, 2002).

H3a: Political efficacy will be positively related to support for press access.

Involvement. Political involvement relates to personal relevance and attention (Roser, 1990), as well as a level of interest in an outcome (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001). Involvement is perceived as a starting point for efficacy, information seeking, and political participation (Austin & Pinkleton, 1999; Chaffee & Roser, 1986; Roser, 1990). Once someone is involved, then political confidence, newspaper reading, and participation follow. Involvement has been measured by asking people how interested they are in election information (Pinkleton et al., 2005).

H3b: Political involvement will be positively related to support for press access.

Attitudes toward community engagement. The construct “attitudes toward community engagement” is the extent to which someone thinks political and community activities are important. Traditionally, scholars have measured people’s actual participation in politics, such as voting, participation in election campaigns, or signing community petitions (e.g., Bennett, 1998; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; Pinkleton & Austin, 1998; Robinson, Rusk, & Head, 1968).

For example, Matthews and Prothro (1966) measured political participation by asking respondents (yes/no) whether they have ever discussed politics, voted, helped a political candidate, held a political office, or belonged to a civic club. In another study, Sotirovic & McLeod (2001) asked respondents (yes/no) whether during the past few years they had attended a city council meeting, circulated a petition, contributed money to a political campaign, or worked with a group on local issues.

However, measures relying on self-report recall of voting or petition signing have been found to be weak because few people actually attend city council meetings or work on political campaigns. Many scholars are turning to new ways of defining and measuring political participation as encompassing broader civic or community engagement (Kwak et al., 2005; McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002).

Delli Carpini (2004), for example, defines “democratic engagement” as going beyond traditional political participation to include adhering to democratic norms, holding stable opinions on public issues, and engaging in behaviors designed to influence public life. Democratic engagement, Delli Carpini suggests, includes traditional political behavior and civic behavior, such as participation in community groups.

Some scholars have measured participation in community groups or volunteer work as “civic engagement” (Shah et al., 2001) or “community participation” (McLeod et al., 1991). Therefore, similar to the use of a media importance measure, the traditional recall-based measure of political participation instead will be measured by one’s importance placed on engaging in community and political functions – the value a person places on political activity, whether they actually participate or not. Respondents will be asked to

rate the level of importance they place on participating in certain activities, such as attending a public rally or volunteering for a community organization.

H3c: Attitudes toward community engagement will be positively related to support for press access.

Support for free expression. Previous research has indicated similarities between support for free expression and support for access (Andsager & Cuillier, 2004; Cuillier, 2004, 2005b; Driscoll et al., 2000). The two concepts should be related because they are both First Amendment rights.

H3d: Support for free expression will be positively related to support for press access.

Support for press rights. Press access to public records is a press right. Therefore, people who support press rights are likely to support the press's right to access information.

H3e: Support for press rights will be positively related to support for press access.

Political ideology. Political ideology has consistently been found to be related to support for free expression such that those who are more politically conservative are less supportive (Andsager, 1993, 1994, 1995; Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale, 1978; Bobo & Licari, 1989; Lambe, 2002; Thompson, 1995; Yalof & Dautrich, 2002; Zalkind, 1975).

H3f: Political conservatism will be negatively related to support for press access.

Model testing: regression analysis

Calculating simple correlations is helpful, but not entirely explanatory. For example, while studies might show income is related to support for press access, some unmeasured variable – such as the education level of the individual, not income – might be the main variable accounting for the relationship.

Therefore, regression analysis will be applied to the data to ascertain what variables truly predict support for press access and which variables do not. Multiple regression analysis allows for the controlling of other variables to prevent spurious relationships from clouding relationships among variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Regression will help indicate which model best explains support for press access.

Once zero-order correlations are calculated to test the hypotheses, the variables that are found to be significantly related to support for press access will be entered into a multiple regression equation. Variables that remain related to support for access, when controlling for the other variables, will then provide support for their respective models representing power, media importance, or community engagement.

R2: When controlling for all independent variables through multiple regression analysis, which variables will be related to support for press access?

Model testing: structural regression modeling

Finally, it is the goal of this study to develop a preliminary model that can explain factors related to support for press access, and to some extent predict support for press access. Following regression analysis of the data, three models will be tested using structural equation modeling: the power model, media model, and political model. Analysis with EQS software (version 8.5) will determine which structural regression

model and which path model best fit the data. The best fitting model can then be tested and replicated in future studies.

Structural regression models. Structural regression models rely on the concept of latent variables that are represented by several observed measures. For example, support for press access is a latent variable – a concept – that is represented by questions asking about specific government documents. Likewise, “attitudes toward community engagement” is a latent construct represented by several questions regarding different ways of being engaged in politics or the community.

Regression models can test causal relationships or indicate relations among latent constructs (Byrne, 1994; Hoyle, 1995; Loehlin, 2004; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000). Each latent construct should be represented by at least three observed measures (Byrne, 1994). Three models will be tested, all of which will contain latent constructs representing power, media (specifically newspaper importance), and attitudes toward community engagement.

Differences in the models arise from how the constructs are related to one another. For example, the power model predicts that social power is directly related to support for press access and demonstrates a stronger relationship than media importance or community engagement. The media importance model predicts a direct relationship (path) between media importance and support for press access. The political model predicts a strong relationship between community engagement and support for press access, mediating power and newspaper importance. The structural regression analyses will determine which model fits the data, if any.

Power model. The power model (Figure 2.1) should indicate a strong path between power and support for press access, and weaker paths between community engagement, newspaper importance, and support for press rights. Power – as represented by age, education, and other demographic variables – would not mediate community engagement or newspaper importance because it does not make sense that engagement affects one’s age. Therefore, to test this model, the strongest path of support for press access should be power. Support for press rights is expected to be related to perceived importance of newspapers as a news source.

Media model. The media model (Figure 2.2) predicts a path between newspaper importance and support for press access. Newspaper importance also is expected to predict community engagement such that those who value the media are more likely to get involved in their communities and government (strong media effects model). Power and support for press rights are expected to be related to newspaper importance.

Political model. The political model (Figure 2.3) indicates a path between attitudes toward community engagement and support for press access. This model relies on the premise of relevancy, so it is expected that people who support the press will be more likely to support press rights to access, so a direct path also is linked between support for press rights and support for press access. Newspaper importance is expected to be related to community engagement, and power to support for press rights.

R3: Which structural regression model best fits the data: the power model, media model, or the political model?

Figure 2.1

Hypothesized Structural Regression Power Model for Support for Press Access

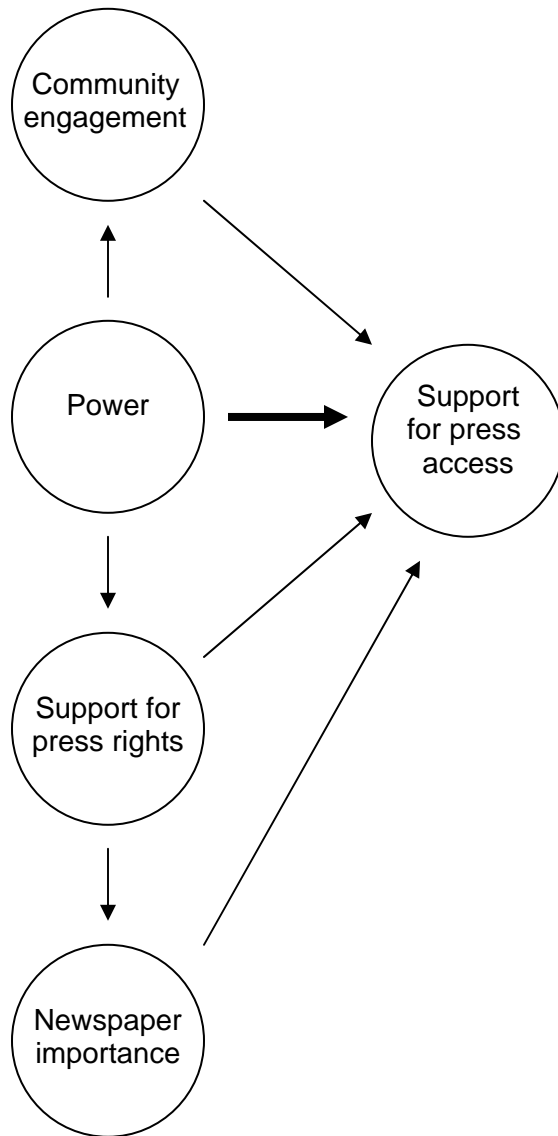


Figure 2.2

Hypothesized Structural Regression Media Model for Support for Press Access

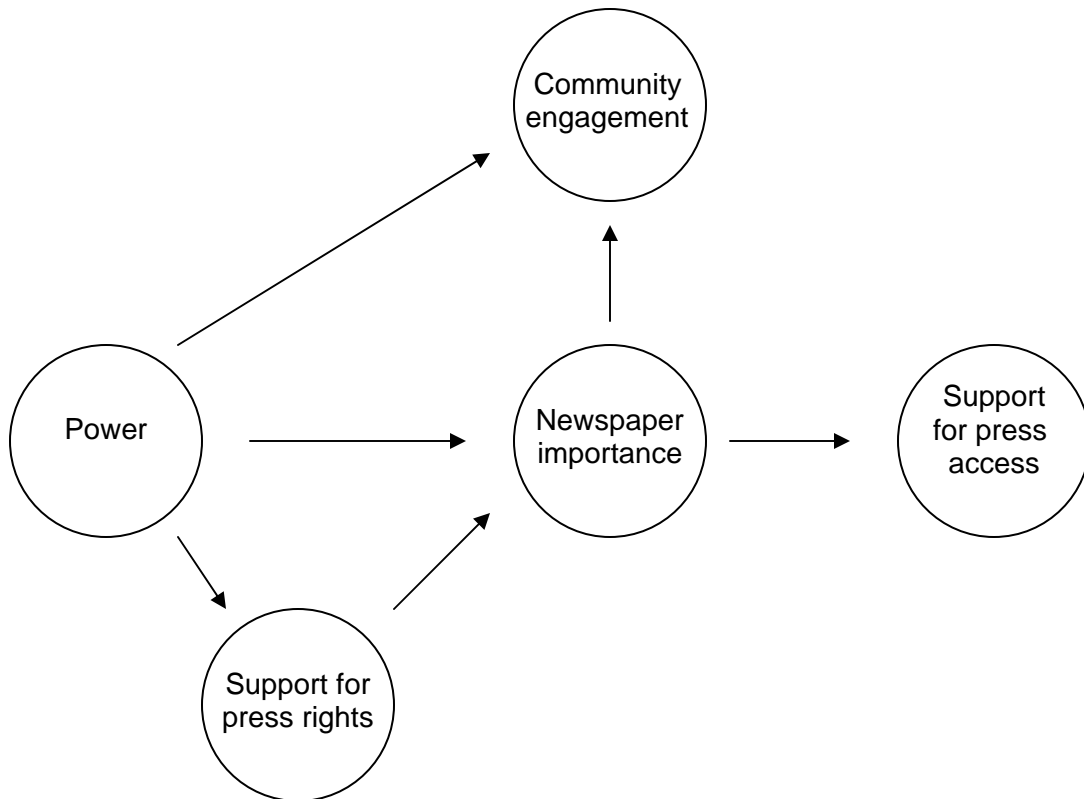
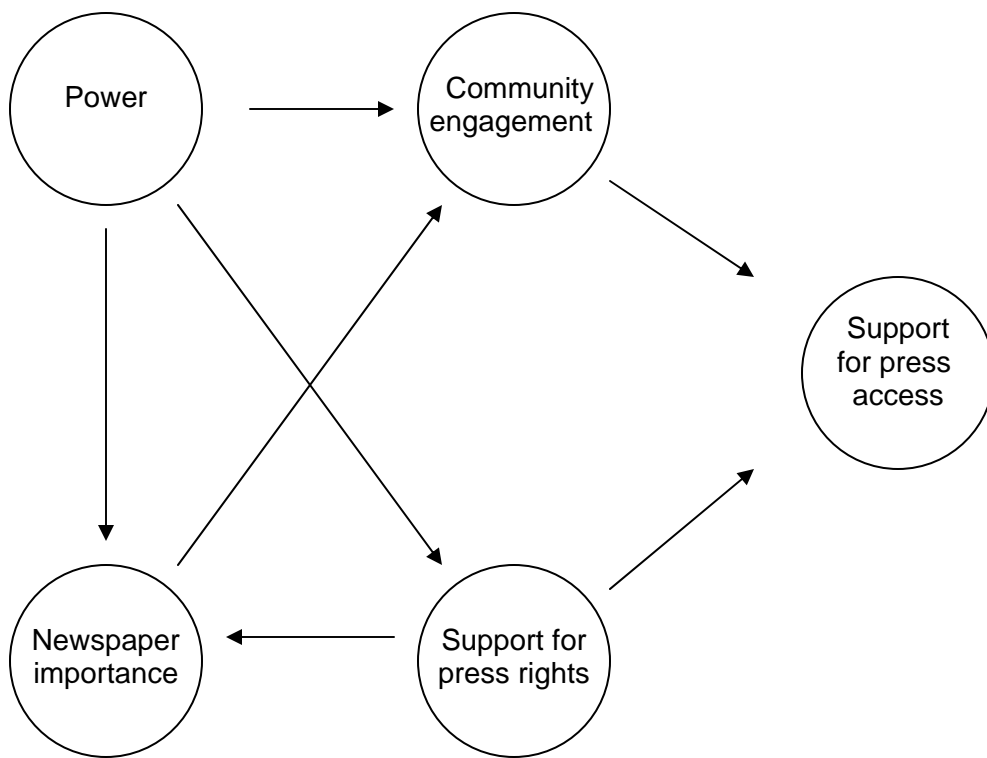


Figure 2.3

Hypothesized Structural Regression Political Model for Support for Press Access



Path models. In addition to structural regression modeling, analyzing path models can provide several benefits for this study. First, relationships among individual measured items (e.g., age, education, and political ideology) can be assessed and mapped to provide a visual representation of how the variables are related to one another.

While structural *regression* modeling focuses on latent variables – constructs represented by multiple measured items – structural *path* models include only the specific single measured items. Because path modeling relies on single measured variables instead of multi-item latent constructs, the path models can be more easily replicated on multiple data sets that include only single-item measures, or measures that are different but conceptually the same.

The path models initially will be based on the hypothesized structural regression models, but because more path relationships will be examined, paths will be added or deleted based on recommendations from the structural equation modeling software.

R4: What path model best fits the data: the power model, media model, or political model?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the seven studies used to develop a support for press access scale and for testing the three models. This chapter also describes the statistical methods used to test the hypotheses and research questions.

Justification for survey methodology

Quantitative surveying methodology, through self-administered paper questionnaires among college students and random-digit-dial telephone surveys of the general population, was the focus of this study for several reasons.

First, one of the study purposes is to be able to gauge what the average American thinks about press access – to go beyond college student samples. Therefore, the study should include the general population throughout the country. Internet or mail surveys reduce the chances that every American potentially could be included in the study (Dillman, 2000). Random-digit-dial telephone surveys are one of the best ways to reach citizens from all walks of life.

Second, part of the purpose of this study is to mirror how public attitudes toward access are currently measured by policymakers and the press. Politicians and media organizations rely on survey research to gauge how the public feels about these issues (McGregor, 2006; Monroe, 1998; Murray & Howard, 2002; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Page & Shapiro, 1983). For example, the American Society of Newspaper Editors commissioned a national phone survey in February 2006 to get a sense for public opinion

regarding access to public records (Open government, 2006). Washington state Attorney General Rob McKenna held a series of 13 public forums in 2005 regarding access laws, and he included paper questionnaires to measure citizen comments. The comments were used in drafting new model public records laws (Office of the Attorney General, 2006).

Qualitative interviews and other methods might be better at fleshing out the nuances of how people think about the issue, but the top-of-head responses from phone surveys are what policymakers are basing their decisions on for opening or closing records. Therefore, it is important to analyze the factors involved with attitudes that are measured in that way.

Third, it is necessary to be able to apply the scale and method by paper and telephone methods in order to eventually study access attitudes among different populations, including different professions (e.g., government officials and journalists) and cultures (e.g., Native American tribal members and international comparative studies). This scale could be of use to international organization seeking ways to measure a country's state of access, including how citizens view access (Coronel, 2001; How to measure openness, 2006).

Seven studies

Three data sets included paper questionnaires administered to college students within the Pacific Northwest and nationally in 2004 and 2005, approved by Washington State University for human subjects participation (approval forms provided in Appendix A, pp. 209-214).

Also, three data sets comprising the general population surveyed by telephone, were provided for secondary analysis. One of the studies, conducted by the author for AccessNorthwest in the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University, was based on a telephone survey of 402 adults in Washington state. The other two data sets were national telephone surveys with about 1,000 respondents each, conducted by the First Amendment Center in 2002 and the Scripps-Howard media organization in 2006. The final study was a national phone survey ($N = 403$) conducted by the author for AccessNorthwest in February 2006.

College student surveys

1. National college student survey (2004)

A purposive convenience sample of 614 college communication majors in 16 classes at six universities in different parts of the United States was surveyed in September 2004 and then again in December 2004 to assess attitudes toward press access to public records (414 women, 193 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 21$; 78.6% Caucasian). The self-administered paper survey was part of a larger study to assess attitudinal changes toward the First Amendment, press rights, and access, over the course of a semester in different communication courses.

To account for regional differences, the universities reflected a variety of public colleges from throughout the country, including large research universities and small regional universities, and from different parts of the nation including the West Coast, East, and South. Surveys were handed out to students in news reporting, media law, and media ethics courses. While completion of the survey was voluntary and did not result in

extra credit or incentives, when comparing the enrollment with completed surveys, 87% of the distributed surveys were completed.

The questionnaire included 38 questions and 14 demographic questions, including age, income of family, ethnicity, gender, political ideology, and religiosity (Appendix B, pp. 215-217, for main scale items). The questions were pretested in June 2004 on a sample of 66 communication law students to improve the measurement of constructs.

2. Washington State University college student survey (2005)

A self-administered paper questionnaire was given to 171 college psychology students at Washington State University in March 2005. The survey included questions regarding support for access, free expression, press rights, and demographics (Appendix C, pp. 218-220).

The students (101 women, 70 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 19$; 77.8% Caucasian) participated in groups ranging from 15 to 20 in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Questionnaires were administered by another graduate student for the experiment led by Dr. Jeff Joireman. Participants filled out all of the materials in a single packet and were debriefed upon completing the study.

The study was an experiment for another project where half the group was exposed to a mortality salience manipulation (they were asked to think about what it would feel like to die, based on terror management theory. See Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003) and the other half a control condition. The study manipulation, however, did not have an effect on the responses for support for access. The mean for the experimental condition for support for press access (8 items, $\alpha = .71$), on a scale of 1-7, was 3.65 ($SD = 1.09$) and the mean for the control condition was 3.50 ($SD = .86$). The difference was not

statistically significant $F(1,169) = 1.05, p = .31$). Therefore, all 171 cases were included in the analysis for scale development purposes.

3. Palouse college student survey (2005)

A self-report paper questionnaire was administered in August 2005 and then again in December 2005 for extra credit to 114 college communication majors enrolled in media law courses at the University of Idaho and Washington State University (no demographic questions included).

The 46-question survey included measures for support for press access (8 items, $\alpha = .78$), free expression (8 items, $\alpha = .78$), press rights (7 items, $\alpha = .76$), political involvement (4 items, $\alpha = .90$), and demographics (Appendix D, pp. 221-223, for main scale items).

General population studies

4. First Amendment Center national survey (2002)

The First Amendment Center commissioned a national survey of 1,012 adults in 2002 regarding support for First Amendment issues and included eight questions asking whether certain government records should be public (Appendix E, pp. 224-226). The study, conducted by the Center for Survey Research & Analysis at the University of Connecticut by professional interviewers, concluded that Americans overwhelmingly support their own access to health inspection records (96%), the names of sex offenders (94%), and transcripts from city council meetings (93%).

The random-digit-dial telephone study reported only basic percentage descriptions and provided no other analysis of the data. No response rate was provided. The survey included demographic information, but no psychographic variables. The data were

provided by the First Amendment Center with permission for secondary analysis in this study.

A scale was created by calculating the mean of the eight access items. Although two of the individual items were not normally distributed (e.g., kurtosis of 9), and the Cronbach's alpha was a marginal .68, the scale was satisfactory for preliminary analysis.

Also, the questions asked people how they felt about citizen access to public records, not press access. Previous research has found support to be higher for citizen access than for press access (Cuillier, 2004; Driscoll et al., 2000). However, the two concepts are still closely related. For example, Cuillier (2004) found a correlation of .42, significant at the .01 level, between support for personal access to records and support for press access to the same records.

5. AccessNorthwest Washington state survey (2002)

This survey of 402 adults in Washington state (192 women, 203 men; 82% Caucasian) was the first published study (Cuillier, 2003b, 2004) to begin examining psychographic factors related to support for access (Appendix F, pp. 227-229). For example, the study found that people who report a higher fear of privacy invasion (4 items, $\alpha = .75$) demonstrate lower support for press access to public records (significant Beta of $-.28$, controlling for education, gender, age, race, income, and media use).

The month-long, random-digit-dial survey was conducted by paid experienced undergraduate student interviewers and took about 10 minutes to complete. The phone number list was purchased from Survey Sampling International. Three different survey versions were administered to account for question-order effect.

The study was funded in part by AccessNorthwest, a research group within the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University, as well as the Washington Coalition for Open Government. The study was conducted by the author of this dissertation toward completion of a master's thesis.

While media use was gathered in the study with other demographic variables, it was not initially reported or analyzed in relation to support for access to public records. Also, aside from fear of privacy invasion, no other psychographic variables were gathered. Other limitations of the study included a low cooperation rate of 24% and a questionable scale reliability for support for access (alphas of .60 for the 5-item press scale and .68 for the 10-item total scale).

6. Scripps-Howard national survey (2006)

This national telephone survey of 1,007 adults was conducted in February 2006 for the American Society of Newspaper Editors by a Scripps-Howard grant, implemented by a Ohio University research center directed by Dr. Guido Stempel.

The survey included more than 100 questions, including questions regarding support for access to public records and the press (Appendix G, pp. 230-231). While the questions were different than those asked in the other pretest data, conceptually they were similar.

7. AccessNorthwest national phone survey (2006)

This survey, funded in part by AccessNorthwest at WSU, was perhaps the most important of the seven because it included all of the constructs in one survey. The other surveys included pieces, but not all together in one data set that could be analyzed as a whole. This is necessary for the modeling.

The survey questionnaire (Appendix J, pp. 241-250) comprised 86 items and ranged from 10 minutes to 45 minutes to complete, averaging 17 minutes. Ideally the survey would be shorter to facilitate completion rates, but it was necessary to include multiple items to measure the constructs well. Also, according to prior research, telephone surveys can go up to about 20 to 30 minutes without harming completion rates (Dillman, 1978).

Almost all of the items were recorded on a 0-10 scale because it is easily understood, has enough scale points to measure attitudes with more precision, and provides a midpoint of “5” if the respondent does not agree or disagree with the statement (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). The number of scale points was increased from the pretest items for two reasons: to increase the refinement of potential answers from 7 points to 11, and to make it more intuitive for participants in a telephone survey setting. It is important to minimize cognitive load on participants in telephone surveys to increase accuracy and survey completion (Dillman, 2000).

The disadvantage of an 11-point polar-point scale, where only the endpoints are provided (“strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”) is that in telephone surveys people are more likely to choose the endpoints with polar-point scales (Christian, Dillman, & Smyth, 2006). Some people choose to respond in a yes/no fashion, so they will state “0” or “10.” Others will use all the numbers in between to express finer distinctions of their attitudes. This might produce higher standard deviations, but that was deemed acceptable in return for greater texture and variability of responses for identifying differences of support among variables and factors.

Having the items on the same scale also assists in structural equation model analysis, which requires items to be in the same scale. “No opinion” and “refused to answer” were available on the form for the surveyor to mark if the respondent voiced those options, but they were not offered by the surveyor.

The introduction included basic information, such as the purpose of the study, the sponsoring agency and its city and state, how the respondent’s name was selected, and a promise of anonymity. The first questions of the survey – regarding Social Security, the war in Iraq, and government wiretapping – were short, timely, and applied to everyone in order to entice people to begin the survey. The more sensitive demographic questions, such as race and income, were placed at the end of the questionnaire.

Human subjects approval was acquired prior to the survey (Appendix A). The questionnaires were pretested by undergraduate callers and the principal investigator one week before the survey.

The author also conducted four cognitive interviews, asking four volunteers to talk out loud about what they were thinking while they took the survey. Cognitive interviews are another method for identifying problems with questions and for understanding how people interpret the questions (Dillman, 2000). As a result of the pretesting, the initial introduction was shortened and some items were removed to keep the survey completion time under 20 minutes.

Measures

Most of the measures for this study are based on items used in previous research. The items and scales are provided in Appendix H (pp. 232-236) and the original questionnaire used for the survey is in Appendix J (pp. 241-250).

Support for press access. This was measured by 12 questions ($\alpha = .75$) derived from the scale development (Chapter 4) as a reliable self-report measurement instrument with identifiable subscales.

Support for free expression. This scale was created from eight often-used questions ($\alpha = .72$) that were used in several of this study's surveys and have been used in previous research regarding support for free expression (e.g., Wyatt, 1991). The scale consistently achieves alphas over .70.

Support for press rights. This scale is based on three questions ($\alpha = .70$) that were used in the college student surveys. Some of the questions (e.g., "Newspapers should be allowed to criticize public officials.") have been used routinely in press rights research (e.g., Yalof & Dautrich, 2002). It is the intent of the scale to measure people's overall attitudes toward press rights, particularly in criticizing government and publishing without censorship. None of the questions refers to the right for the press to access information.

Fear of privacy invasion. The questions measure concern for information privacy invasion, not privacy invasion at home. This construct ($\alpha = .84$) was measured by three questions that have consistently resulted in high internal reliability of more than .80. The questions, which refer to privacy on the Internet and to personal information contained in databases, were taken from their initial use in the survey of Washington state residents (Cuillier, 2004).

Political involvement. These four items ($\alpha = .83$), such as "I'm interested in election information," measure personal relevance and attention (Roser, 1990), as well as a level of interest in a political outcome (Pinkleton & Austin, 2001). Involvement is

perceived as a starting point for efficacy, information seeking, and political participation (Austin & Pinkleton, 1999; Chaffee & Roser, 1986; Roser, 1990).

Political efficacy. These three items ($\alpha = .71$), including “I have a real say in what the government does,” measure one’s “feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process.” (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954, p. 187). These questions have consistently been found to provide reliable measures (Morrell, 2003).

Power values. These four items ($\alpha = .73$) represent the value a person places on power. This construct was measured by a four-item scale from the Schwartz value survey (1992). Respondents were asked to rate four values (social power, wealth, authority, preserving my public image) as either opposed to their personal values or of supreme importance.

Attitudes toward community engagement. This is measured by asking people how important they deem six political and community activities: contributing to political candidates, attending public meetings, signing community petitions, contacting elected officials, giving blood, and volunteering for a community organization ($\alpha = .81$).

Researchers have used these subjects traditionally as measures of political participation (Robinson, Rusk, & Head, 1968; Matthews, & Prothro, 1966; Moy et al., 2004; Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001) or “community participation” (McLeod et al., 1991). Respondents typically are asked to recall the number of times they participated in each activity during the past year. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to accurately measure political participation because people tend to report a higher rate of participation than

actual behavior, or little variance is provided in the measures as few people have run for political office or circulated petitions.

This scale, therefore, attempts to measure the degree of importance, or attitudes toward, political and community participation. Those who are engaged should have the motivation and interest in access to government information, whether they personally access records or not. This construct is conceptually different from political participation or involvement in that it does not actually attempt to measure participation or involvement in government, just attitudes toward political and community engagement.

Also, the items include a mixture of purely traditional political concepts (e.g., political contributions), along with civic engagement items (e.g. giving blood, volunteering for a community organization). This was intended to reflect the changing dynamics of political participation in the United States. Fewer citizens are active in traditional political behaviors, such as doorbelling for political campaigns or writing letters to government officials (Putnam, 2000). By including more community engagement activities, and asking people to report their importance rather than actual times participated, the scale is likely to capture more variance.

Political ideology. This single item measured political orientation on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing “more liberal” and 10 representing “more conservative.”

Social desirability. Six questions were included to create a social desirability scale ($\alpha = .71$). The questions were taken from the 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

Newspaper importance. Newspaper importance is measured by asking people the level of importance they give newspapers and newspaper public affairs stories as news

and information sources. Questions also include television, radio, magazines, and the Internet, but the two items regarding newspapers will be combined ($\alpha = .70$; $r = .54$, $p < .01$). The measuring of media importance has been used by other scholars (e.g., Pinkleton & Austin, 2002) instead of asking people to recall how much media they consume.

Research indicates that trying to measure recalled media use is problematic (Kosicki & McLeod, 1990; Slater, 2004; Zhao & Chaffee, 1995). Some scholars have measured “media satisfaction” instead (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986). In a study of how immigrants learned about candidates, Martinelli and Chaffee (1995) found that measuring “attention” to news worked better than frequency of exposure, as did asking people to recall information regarding ads.

In another study, McLeod and McDonald (1985) did not find strong results based on traditional recall-based measures of television exposure. They also found weak effects when comparing newspaper and television use. The study, and others (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), seemed to indicate that measuring attention, rather than recalled amount of time watching television, might be more productive.

Sample

In order to generalize to the U.S. population, a phone list was purchased from Survey Sampling International. The sample consisted of 4,538 randomly generated phone numbers of listed and unlisted residential numbers from throughout the United States. The numbers were prescreened by Survey Sampling International for nonworking numbers. Despite the prescreening for nonworking numbers, 20%, or 886 of the numbers, were found to be disconnected, leaving 3,652 working numbers.

In general, the participating respondents appeared to represent the nation's demographics (Table 3.1). Respondents were 51% female and 49% male, equal to the overall national gender proportion. This was achieved without alternating requests for a specific gender or weighting. However the sample was more highly educated and had a higher percentage of Caucasian participants than the overall U.S. population, when compared with U.S. Census figures.

Table 3.1

AccessNorthwest National Phone Survey Sample Demographics

Demographic variable	<i>N</i>	%	U.S. Census ^a
Sex			
Male:	204	49%	49%
Female:	193	51%	51%
Unknown:	6	2%	
Age			
18-29	59	15%	12% ^b
30-39	64	16%	20%
40-49	90	22%	23%
50-59	89	22%	25%
60-69	46	11%	6%
70-79	33	8%	9%
80 or older	20	5%	5%
Refused	2	1%	
Education			
Some high school or less	17	4%	20%
High school	87	22%	29%
Some college	138	34%	21%
College four-year degree	76	19%	16%
Some graduate school	15	4%	---
Graduate school	70	17%	9%
Race ^c			
White	342	85%	75%
African American	28	7%	12%
Hispanic	21	5%	13%
Asian	6	2%	4%
Middle-Eastern	2	1%	---
Native American	19	5%	---
Pacific Islander	1	0%	---
Other	9	2%	6%

Continued on next page

Table 3.1 (continued from previous page)

National Phone Survey Sample Demographics

Demographic variable	<i>N</i>	%	U.S. Census
Income			
Under \$10,000	15	4%	10%
\$10,000-\$30,000	43	11%	19%
\$30,000-\$50,000	84	21%	29%
\$50,000-\$70,000	72	17%	20%
\$70,000-\$10,000	61	18%	10%
More than \$100,000	65	16%	12%
Refused	63	16%	
Marital status			
Married	241	60%	54%
Single	97	24%	27%
Divorced or separated	39	10%	10%
Widowed	25	6%	7%

^a National Census 2000 figures

^b The percentage represents percent for that age bracket for people 18 or older (children are removed).

^c Sums to more than 100 percent because respondents could designate multiple races

Method

The 14-day survey started Sunday, February 19, 2006, and ended Saturday, March 4, 2006. The two-week period was selected because it contained no major holidays or vacation periods, and prior research indicates that response rates are generally high January through April (Losch et al., 2002). Most of the surveys were conducted from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. for each of the nation's respective time zones, including Saturdays and Sundays. Also, in order to increase the chance of contacting people at home, surveying was conducted in mornings and afternoons on three weekdays and two Saturdays.

Each eligible phone number was called at least six times. The calling was conducted at the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication phone surveying lab, using paper questionnaires and pencils. No major national or world events occurred during the two-week survey period related to access to public records that might introduce response changes or artifacts.

The first week of surveying was conducted by trained undergraduate students who were provided extra credit for communication research methods and public relations courses. The second week of surveying was conducted by the most adept surveyors from the previous week, as well as other experienced survey callers, who were paid \$10 per hour. The author and two paid assistants monitored the surveying to answer caller and respondent questions and ensure quality control.

The total cost of the survey was \$5,700, most of which was paid for by a grant from AccessNorthwest within the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University, as provided for by the Knight Foundation through the National Freedom of Information Coalition. Overall results for the survey were

publicized during national Sunshine Week (March 12-19, 2006) in newspapers throughout the country (Appendix K, pp. 251-260).

Disposition and cooperation rate

Dillman's Total Design Method (1978; 2000) was employed to maximize respondent cooperation. The Total Design Method suggests a variety of strategies to maximize rewards, minimize cost, and build trust with respondents. For example, callers were instructed to convey appreciation for respondents' time; the survey began with short, compelling questions about topical issues; and sponsorship by a university was highlighted.

The final dispositions of each number are reported in Table 3.2. The cooperation rate was 24%, as calculated as cooperation rate 4 by the American Association of Public Opinion Research guidelines, including partials as completed surveys and excluding "other" dispositions.

Twenty years ago, cooperation rates typically averaged 50% to 70% (Collins et al., 1988) but today range from 25% to 35% (Hembroff et al., 2005), declining at about 1 percentage point a year (Curtin, Presser, & Singer, 2005). It is possible that a prenotification letter could have increased the cooperation rate to about 40% (Dillman, 2000), but the disadvantage of the letter would be the need for a sample that excluded unlisted phone numbers, which account for 35% of the nation's households, according to Survey Sampling International. Research has found that using prenotification letters in random-digit-dial studies biases samples to more heavily represent older and more affluent white respondents (Link & Mokdad, 2005). For this study, a low cooperation rate

was deemed preferable to inflating the coverage error by excluding a third of the population from the sample and biasing the sample toward the older and affluent.

Regardless, a substantial percentage of the U.S. population is not represented in the survey, increasing the opportunity for nonresponse error to bias the results (Dillman, 1978, 1980; Groves & Couper, 1998; Groves & Lyberg, 1988). The question is whether nonrespondents think substantially differently from people included in the study. It is possible that they would. People who do not want to complete surveys may exhibit greater mistrust in institutions, and therefore think differently about political participation, the press, and access to information.

However, some research indicates that low response rates do not harm studies (Curtin, Press, & Singer, 2000; Groves, Presser, & Dipko, 2004; McCarty, 2003; Merkle & Edelman, 2002; Smith, 2003). Keeter et al. (2000) administered a survey for the Pew Center that included 96 items measuring media use, demographic measures, electoral behavior measures, and 34 political and social opinion items, similar to support for access questions. A five-day survey that yielded a 30% response rate produced about the same results as a rigorous survey of the same questions and methodology that yielded a 60% response rate.

Also, despite the low cooperation rate, the respondents who completed the surveys demographically represent the population as compared to the U.S. Census population. The sample appears to reflect, as a whole, U.S. adults.

Surveys that were partially completed ($N = 29$) were removed from the sample because structural equation modeling requires relatively complete cases. Surveys were left in the sample if just a few of the questions were not answered by the respondent. That

left 403 surveys. The entered computer data were then compared with the original 403 paper questionnaires to catch data entry errors. In all, 183 data entry errors (.05% of all data points entered) were found and corrected in 51 (13%) different surveys.

Table 3.2

Dispositions of Calls in AccessNorthwest National Phone Survey

Disposition	Number	Percentage (N = 4,538)
Interviews		
Completed interviews	403	9%
Partially completed interviews	28	1%
Eligible households, no interview		
Refused	1,356	30%
Eligible households, non-contact		
Answering machine	501	11%
Call blocking	21	1%
Language barrier	124	3%
Call back, but not reached	44	1%
Not eligible households		
Nonworking number	886	20%
Business or government	343	8%
Fax/data line	245	5%
Other	42	1%
Unknown eligibility, no contact		
No answer	483	11%
Always a busy signal	62	1%

Data analysis

Data were entered into SPSS version 11.5 and imported into EQS version 8.5 structural equation modeling software. Each variable's data were plotted to examine distribution. Skewness and kurtosis were calculated for each variable. Variables that suffer from a severe lack of normal distribution were eliminated.

Because structural equation modeling requires each parameter to have the same number of entered data elements, pair-wise deletion will not be used for missing data. Also, listwise deletion would be a problem because it is likely that a relatively large percentage of respondents may refuse to answer at least one question. Therefore, mean replacement will be used for analysis. Data analysis will include the following:

Descriptive statistics. The means and standard deviations for each variable will be computed and reported.

Scale assessment. A Cronbach's alpha will be calculated and reported for each scale to make sure the items are related to one another and the scales are internally reliable. Alphas of .70 or greater will be required for analysis, particularly for the support for press access scale.

Zero-order correlations. Simple correlations will be calculated and reported between the key independent variables and the dependent variables. These will be compared among all the surveys.

Regression analysis for hypotheses. One of the study's purposes is to examine relationships among variables while controlling for demographics and other factors. Therefore, betas will be calculated using linear multiple regression.

Factor analysis. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses will be applied to the data to develop the scale. Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to simplify complex sets of data by calculating correlation coefficients among sets of variables (Kline, 2000). The coefficients span from -1 (indicating complete disagreement), to 0 (representing no relationship), to +1 (representing complete agreement). The analysis derives factors, which is a dimension or construct that represents a relationship between a set of variables – something that the variables have in common. A correlation, or factor loading, of .60 or higher generally is considered high and a loading of .30 or greater is considered moderate (Kline, 2000). Once factors are identified in SPSS for a set of questions (the scale items); it is up to the investigator to interpret what the commonalities might represent.

Structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling is a powerful analytic tool for nonexperimental data and for testing theories that are not well-developed (Byrne, 1994, 2006). The technique also is useful for the quantification and testing of theories by examining the presence of latent variables (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000).

The technique is similar to what scholars have done in the past through multiple regression by examining different regression equations and mapping out regression coefficients into path models (e.g., McLeod et al., 1991). However, the advantage of structural equation modeling is its ability to examine relationships of all variables in one equation, provide empirical suggestions for improved model fit, and account for correlated errors.

In structural regression modeling, measurements – such as the support for press access scale items – form the observed variables. They are entered into the program, and

the modeling helps examine the potential interrelationships among latent constructs as well as their relationships to the indicators or measures assessing them. Structural equation modeling takes into account potential errors of measurement in all variables and quickly identifies mediation of variables.

Three different structural equation modeling techniques will be used for this study. The first will be in calculating a confirmatory factor analysis measurement model for explaining the support for press access scale.

The second will be a structural regression model to identify the best-fitting model (power, media importance, or political).

The third will be path modeling to examine relationships of single observed measures and to replicate the best-fitting model on another data set. This study is approaching the modeling from an exploratory position. Three potential models are being tested to see if they fit the data. If a model, two models, or all three fit, then they can be tested again on another data set in a confirmatory fashion.

Robust Maximum Likelihood estimation will be used because this is still preliminary research in an area with little theory. Each observed variable measure will have to be examined to make sure it does not violate multivariate normality as Maximum Likelihood estimation is sensitive to skewness and kurtosis.

The sample of 403 should be large enough to provide sufficient power for analysis (Byrne, 1994). Analysis of the model will include the calculation of several fit indices, based on recommended parameters (Byrne, 1994, 2006; Hoyle, 1995; Loehlin, 2004; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000):

1. *Chi-square*. If the chi-square is less than the critical value, then one can conclude the model fits the data. However, chi-squares are sensitive to sample size, and, given the relatively large sample, small deviations will show up as statistically significant.

Therefore, other fit indices will be reported to provide a better indication of model fit.

2. *Goodness of fit index (GFI)*. This is the multivariate counterpart to an *R*-squared in regression. It ranges from 0 to 1. The hope is that the GFI will be .90 or greater. Given the large number of latent constructs and covariances, the GFI might be a little inflated, so the adjusted GFI (AGFI), which takes into account the model complexity, also will be reported. Ideally the AGFI should be at least .80, and it should not deviate from the GFI by no more than .10.

3. *Measures of incremental fit*. This measure compares the model with the null model. It is like the omnibus *F* test for a regression model, so the larger the better. The comparative fit index (CFI) should be at least .90.

4. *Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)*. Like a residual in regression, RMSEA is a measure of the mean discrepancy between a predicted value and an actual value. This calculation is insensitive to sample size. Ideally, this value should be no more than .06, or the model is not usable, even if the AGFI is acceptable. The confidence interval also will be reported. Also, the standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR) will be reported, and ideally it should be less than .05.

As this is exploratory research, after calculation of the fit indices, modifications may need to be applied to see if some parameters should be excluded or added. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, this is an acceptable way to rethink the model for applying data in the future to further test and refine. The two modification indices to be

applied will be the Lagrange Multiplier test (for what parameters should be added) and the Wald test (for what parameters should be removed).

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUPPORT FOR PRESS ACCESS SCALE

In order to examine factors related to people's attitudes toward press access, a psychometrically valid measurement instrument was developed over five studies in accordance with accepted psychometric methods, including item pool generation, testing, refining, then retesting (e.g., DeVellis, 2003; Embretson & Reise, 2000; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The goal was to develop a scale that is reliable and valid.

Scale criteria

To be acceptable for research, a scale should reflect several key properties (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994):

Item properties. First, the individual items should possess properties that enable their use in statistical analysis, such as normal distribution (avoiding skewness above 3 or kurtosis above 9).

Scale reliability. The measurement should have internal consistency such that items are related to one another (DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The Cronbach's alpha for the scales should be .70 or greater. The more internally consistent the scale, the lower the error and the greater the statistical power. Also, a scale should have test-retest reliability. In other words, it should be stable over time and in repeated tests, ideally over different study modes – such as telephone, Internet, or paper questionnaires – and populations.

Content validity. Third, a scale should demonstrate content validity, such that it is actually measuring the construct it intends to measure. Content validity is defined as “the degree to which elements of an assessment instrument are relevant to and representative of the targeted construct for a particular assessment purpose” (Haynes et al., 1995, p. 238). Having experts in the realm evaluate the items is one of the best ways to make sure the questions are measuring the attitude of interest.

Construct validity. Convergent construct validity is the extent to which a measure matches other well-established measures of the intended construct. Because no other support for press access scale exists, it is not possible to directly test convergent validity. However, conceptually similar variables, such as support for press rights and support for free expression, should be correlated to some extent with support for press access.

Divergent validity is the extent to which the measure is not measuring what it is not intended to measure. For example, a support for access scale should not really be measuring support for press rights, or be affected by social desirability bias, so correlations should be not be strong. Divergent validity could establish that the measure is truly measuring what it intended and not something else.

Factor identification. Finally, it is desirable to know whether the overall scale contains factors, or subscales, that better explain the construct or whether it is unidimensional. For example, support for access might include subscales of support for privacy-oriented records or support for general governmental records. These factors can be identified through factor analysis, ultimately testing a measurement model that explains dimensions of the attitude.

Item pool generation

An item pool of 60 questions was developed to glean the breadth of potential facets representing support for access, with some items coming from prior surveys (Driscoll et al., 2000; First Amendment Center, 2002). The pool included a variety of different kinds of public records that are commonly available and requested by the press and public, such as property tax records, crime reports, and public employee salaries (Appendix I, pp. 237-240).

To aid in identifying different kinds of public records that might be sought by the press, Web sites regarding freedom of information were examined, including The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (www.rcfp.org) and the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government (www.cjog.net). These sites provide news highlights for records sought by journalists. Also, some of the questions were included based on the author's personal experience as a newspaper political reporter, gathering records for 12 years from city, county, state, and federal agencies.

Define the construct. "Support for press access" is defined for this study as an attitude expressed with a degree of agreement or disagreement toward the news media's ability to acquire government records. The scale should encompass a variety of public records that may be requested by the media or citizens, such as property tax records, sex-offender registries, and government budgetary information.

Measurement scale. Because the scale is to be used for in-person paper questionnaire surveying, Internet surveys, and telephone surveys, the measurement scale should be simple and transferable to multi-mode studies (Dillman, 2000). Therefore, it was deemed that each question would be measured on a Likert-type scale of at least

seven points (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). The items for most of the surveys are on scales of 1 to 7, with labeled anchors of “strongly disagree” for 1 and “strongly agree” for 7, with non-labeled midpoints. One survey is based on an 11-point scale, from 0 to 10, also with just the polar ends labeled as “strongly disagree” or “strongly agree.”

While fully labeled scale points can increase scale reliability (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997), labeled polar endpoints were used to facilitate the scale’s use in telephone surveying (Dillman, 2000).

Content validity

Expert evaluation. Once the initial item pool was created, the questions were distributed to a dozen national freedom of information experts for their evaluation. The experts were asked to provide guidance for which items to include and which to exclude in order to measure the construct of interest. This is necessary to improve content validity, to make sure the questions measure what is intended to be measured (Haynes et al., 1995).

Six of the experts¹ provided detailed suggestions by e-mail and telephone discussions. The experts rated each item low, moderate, or high, for how well they thought the question measured the construct. Based on their suggestions, some items were eliminated from testing, including two that were double-barreled, six that appeared

¹ Dr. Charles Davis, director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition and access scholar from the University of Missouri at Columbia; Harry Hammitt, publisher of Access Reports, a periodical focusing on access issues; Pete Weitzel, director of the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government; Gary Bass, executive director of OMB Watch; Jeannine Relly, professor of journalism and access scholar from the University of Arizona; and Frank Garred, former director of the Washington Coalition for Open Government.

to measure other attitudes, and a dozen deemed too vague or potentially confusing (Appendix I, pp. 237-240).

Exploratory factor analysis: First Amendment Center national survey data

Initial analysis was conducted on a national data set ($N = 1,012$) provided by the First Amendment Center (2002) in order to examine the potential psychometric properties of access questions and a scale. The study, administered in 2002 by the Center for Survey Research & Analysis at the University of Connecticut, asked U.S. adults in a random-digit-dial phone survey how they felt about *citizen* access to seven public records (509 females, 468 males; 81% Caucasian). While not the same as support for press access, the two concepts are closely related (Cuillier, 2004; Driscoll et al., 2000).

Examination of the individual question means found that on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 demonstrating greater support for access, the items ranged from a low of 2.04 ($SD = 1.03$) for access to real estate records, to a high of 2.80 ($SD = .51$) for restaurant inspection records (Table 4.1). A few of the items were not normally distributed (e.g., kurtosis of 9.5 for restaurant records), and the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .68$) was unacceptable.

Table 4.1

Descriptives for Support for Access Questions in First Amendment Center Survey

“Now I’m going to read to you specific types of local government records that some citizens may seek access to. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that citizens should have access to such information...”	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Kur</i>	<i>Skew</i>	<i>Item-total</i>
The records of health inspections conducted at local restaurants.	974	2.80	0.51	9.50	2.91	0.32
The names of sex offenders that are registered with the sheriff’s office or police department.	972	2.72	0.66	7.31	2.73	0.36
Transcripts of city council meetings.	963	2.67	0.63	4.76	2.12	0.36
Records of local government officials’ expense accounts.	968	2.49	0.82	1.67	1.58	0.41
Police reports of crimes committed in the local community.	962	2.49	0.84	2.16	1.72	0.42
The names of persons arrested for committing crimes in the local community and the crimes for which they are being charged.	961	2.29	0.94	0.31	1.17	0.39
Employment records, including salary and benefits, of local school officials.	961	2.06	1.02	-0.60	1.02	0.37
Local real estate records, including the sale price, assessed value, and taxes paid on all residential homes.	963	2.04	1.03	-0.70	0.73	0.36

Scale 1-4 with 4 expressing greater support for access.
N = 1,012

Exploratory factor analysis utilizing principle component analysis with promax rotation indicated two factors with eigenvalues over 1 (Table 4.2). One factor was interpreted to indicate support for public safety-oriented records, such as police reports, sex offender registries, and restaurant health inspection records. The other factor was interpreted to include records that involved personal privacy, such as driver's licenses and property tax records. However, the factor also could represent overall government operations, given its association with expense accounts and government financial records. The eight items factored cleanly without cross loadings, providing a starting point for scale development.

Because of its low internal reliability, however, the scale from the First Amendment Center study is unsuitable for research.

Table 4.2

Exploratory Factor Analysis of 8 Support for Access Items in First Amendment Center National Survey

“Now I’m going to read to you specific types of local government records that some citizens may seek access to. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that citizens should have access to such information...”	Factor *	
	1 Public safety	2 Privacy/Government
Police reports of crimes committed in the local community.	.714	.277
The names of sex offenders that are registered with the sheriff’s office or police department.	.740	.168
The names of persons arrested for committing crimes in the local community and the crimes for which they are being charged.	.722	.219
The records of health inspections conducted at local restaurants.	.503	.316
Employment records, including salary and benefits, of local school officials.	.182	.737
Local real estate records, including the sale price, assessed value, and taxes paid on all residential homes.	.216	.659
Records of local government officials’ expense accounts.	.248	.724
Transcripts of city council meetings.	.380	.523

* Cronbach’s alpha for all seven items = .68; N = 1,012

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor 1: Support for public-safety records (4 items, alpha = .61; eigenvalue = 2.51)

Factor 2: Support for privacy-oriented records (4 items, alpha = .58; eigenvalue = 1.18)

Development tests

Questions from the item pool were tested in four developmental surveys to assess scale reliability, validity, and factor analysis.

The data were collected over a two-year period. Three of the data sets included paper questionnaires administered to college students: national college student survey ($N = 614$), Washington State University college student survey ($N = 171$), and the Palouse college student survey ($N = 114$). The fourth study was the national probability-based telephone survey of 403 U.S. adults interviewed in 2006 by random-digit-dial.

Development study 1: National college survey

Seventeen questions were chosen from the item pool for initial testing (Table 4.3). Items included questions from the First Amendment Center survey as well as questions intended to represent different types of public records, such as those involving personal privacy, national security, crime, and general government operations.

A purposive convenience sample of 614 college communication majors in 16 classes at six public universities in different parts of the United States were surveyed in fall 2004 to assess their attitudes toward press access to public records. Participants were in news reporting, media law, and media ethics courses (414 women, 193 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 21$; 78.6% Caucasian).

The data were analyzed in SPSS to assess corrected item-total correlations, means, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis (Table 4.3). On a scale from 1 to 7 with 1 indicating less support for access and 7 indicating greater support, the items ranged from a low of 2.36 ($SD = 1.57$) for records naming rape victims, to a high of 5.79 ($SD = 1.33$) for records involving the spending decisions of public officials.

Table 4.3

Descriptives for Support for Press Access Items in National College Survey

Item*	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Kurt	Item-total cor.
The spending decisions of high-level public officials should be made available to the press.	612	5.79	1.33	1.00	0.36
Court documents regarding lawsuits against companies should be made available to the press.	612	5.64	1.28	0.32	0.44
Public records explaining after the fact what went wrong in a war or U.S. military battle should not be made available to the press. (recoded)	613	5.55	1.59	0.19	0.29
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.	612	4.89	1.64	-0.41	0.48
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.	613	4.88	1.65	-0.61	0.44
The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.	611	4.84	1.87	-0.88	0.40
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.	612	4.68	1.99	-1.05	0.39
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.	613	4.50	1.93	-0.92	0.33
Names of people who die in car accidents should be available to the press.	609	4.25	1.75	-0.78	0.39
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.	613	3.91	1.78	-0.92	0.57
The names of victims in violent-crime cases should not be available to the press (recoded).	613	3.58	1.81	-0.98	0.21
Juvenile criminal records should be made available to the press.	613	3.46	1.75	-0.76	0.35
Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.	614	3.44	1.84	-0.80	0.50
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses should be made available to the press.	613	3.02	1.52	-0.17	0.48
It is OK to make some government records secret to minimize terrorism. (recoded)	613	3.00	1.60	-0.22	0.17
The press should not be allowed to publish rape victims' names (recoded).	610	2.48	1.71	0.21	0.30
The identity of rape victims should be made available to the press.	610	2.36	1.57	0.55	0.42

* Range 1 to 7, with 7 indicating greater support for access. *N* = 614.

Each question should have an item-total correlation of at least .30. Two items (terrorism and violent-crime victims) reported an adjusted item-total correlation of .21 or less, indicating that they were less related to the other items than they should be. None of the items suffered from excessive skewness or kurtosis. When combined, the 17 items had a strong Cronbach's alpha of .80, well above .70.

Loadings on initial 17-item bank. Defining factors is a matter of interpretation, examining the loadings common to items to figure out what they have in common, guided by theory or previous empirical research (Kline, 2000). Exploratory factor analysis indicated four factors with an eigenvalue above 1: support for privacy-oriented records, crime records, public safety records, and documents involving national security (Table 4.4).

Several cross loadings made intuitive sense. For example, court documents regarding lawsuits against companies loaded most strongly on factor 1, privacy invasion (.59), as a potential invasion of privacy against private enterprise. However, the item loaded relatively strongly (.46) on the public safety factor as well. So while people might consider the affairs of companies as the companies' own business, they also might see the benefits of disclosure for public safety, such as vehicle crash-test reports.

Loadings on 8-item scale. Part of the objective in the scale development is to derive the smallest scale possible that is still reliable because it might be used in situations that require brevity, such as national phone surveys. Therefore, further exploratory factor analysis derived a more parsimonious 8-item scale that produced two strong factors (privacy and safety) and no cross loadings (Table 4.5).

The 8-item scale had an alpha of .75, which was deemed suitable for research. The disadvantage of this scale is that it does not include the crime or war subscales identified in the 17-item factor analysis. Yet this scale would be useful for access survey research given its two clear subdimensions, internal reliability, and parsimony. However, more testing is needed to further explore subdimensions and demonstrate consistent reliability.

Table 4.4

Factor Analysis of 17 Support for Press Access Items in National College Survey

Item*	Factor			
	1 Privacy	2 Crime	3 Safety	4 War
The spending decisions of high-level public officials should be made available to the press.	0.59	-0.18	0.42	0.05
Court documents regarding lawsuits against companies should be made available to the press.	0.59	-0.01	0.46	0.05
The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.	0.65	0.00	0.19	0.11
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the press.	0.63	0.29	0.00	0.29
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.	0.62	0.03	0.36	0.06
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.	0.77	0.19	0.16	0.24
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.	0.67	0.32	0.06	-0.16
Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.	0.62	0.42	-0.02	0.18
The names of victims in violent-crime cases should not be available to the press (recoded).	0.03	0.66	0.06	-0.10
The identity of rape victims should be made available to the press.	0.21	0.83	0.04	0.11
Names of people who die in car accidents should be available to the press.	0.37	0.44	0.14	0.12
Juvenile criminal records should be made available to the press.	0.34	0.53	0.04	-0.19
The press should not be allowed to publish rape victims' names (recoded).	0.06	0.76	0.04	0.16
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.	0.23	0.08	0.76	0.14
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.	0.25	0.19	0.79	0.14
It is OK to make some government records secret to minimize terrorism. (recoded)	0.14	0.06	0.05	0.84
Public records explaining after the fact what went wrong in a war or U.S. military battle should not be made available to the press. (recoded)	0.25	-0.03	0.49	0.58

* Cronbach's alpha for all 17 items = .79; $N = 614$

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor 1: Privacy (8 items, alpha = .80; eigenvalue = 4.20)

Factor 2: Crime (5 items, alpha = .68; eigenvalue = 2.18)

Factor 3: Public safety (2 items, alpha = .66; eigenvalue = 1.46)

Factor 4: National security (2 items, alpha = .42; eigenvalue = 1.13)

Table 4.5

Factor Analysis of 8 Support for Press Access Items in National College Survey

Item*	Factor	
	1 Privacy	2 Safety
The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.	.629	.191
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the press.	.707	.162
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.	.603	.431
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.	.797	.254
Drivers license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.	.697	.136
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.	.671	.117
Public records explaining dam problems should be released.	.209	.846
Public records that identify the type, amount and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.	.222	.850

* Cronbach's alpha for all eight items = .75; $N = 614$

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor 1: Support for privacy-oriented records (6 items, alpha = .77; eigenvalue = 3.03)

Factor 2: Support for safety records (2 items, alpha = .66; eigenvalue = 1.32)

Development sample 2: WSU college student survey

For replication purposes, the same 17 items from the first development test were used in another survey of college students in spring 2005. The questions were administered to 171 undergraduate psychology college students at Washington State University. The students (101 women, 70 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 19$; 77.8% Caucasian) participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Results. On a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating less support for access and 7 indicating greater support, the item means ranged from a low of 2.26 ($SD = 1.48$) for divorce court files to a high of 4.88 ($SD = 1.72$) for records involving U.S. military mishaps (Table 4.6). The overall mean for the items ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.01$), was lower than the support for press access mean in the national college study ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.07$), and the difference was statistically significant, $t(170) = -12.32$, $p < .001$, which might be related to the type of student. The participants in this study were psychology majors. The first study comprised communication majors, who are likely to express greater support for press rights, as has been found in previous research (e.g., Shaw, 1972).

Table 4.6

Descriptives for Support for Press Access Items in WSU College Student Survey

Item*	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Kurt</i>	<i>Item-total</i>
Public records explaining after the fact what went wrong in a war or U.S. military battle should not be made available to the press. (recoded)	171	4.88	1.72	-0.74	0.52
The spending decisions of high-level public officials should be made available to the press.	171	4.70	1.82	-0.82	0.49
Court documents regarding lawsuits against companies should be made available to the press.	171	4.57	1.60	-0.32	0.45
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.	171	4.37	2.00	-1.15	0.53
The names of victims in violent-crime cases should not be available to the press (recoded).	170	4.13	1.75	-0.93	0.16
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.	170	3.98	1.75	-0.78	0.43
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.	171	3.95	1.71	-0.83	0.31
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.	171	3.74	1.95	-1.14	0.35
Juvenile criminal records should be made available to the press.	171	3.33	1.56	-0.71	0.43
The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.	171	3.27	2.07	-1.02	0.19
Names of people who die in car accidents should be available to the press.	171	3.18	1.61	-0.68	0.13
It is OK to make some government records secret to minimize terrorism. (recoded)	171	3.02	1.68	-0.34	0.21
The press should not be allowed to publish rape victims' names (recoded).	171	2.81	1.96	-0.34	0.32
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.	171	2.66	1.69	-0.46	0.32
The identity of rape victims should be made available to the press.	171	2.29	1.72	1.08	0.31
Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.	171	2.29	1.32	0.58	0.41
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the press.	169	2.26	1.48	0.34	0.33

* Range 1 to 7, with 7 indicating greater support for access. *N* = 171.

As in the previous study, the terrorism and violent-crime victim questions had low item-total correlations, which supported their removal from the scale. Also, in this study two other items (traffic victims and public officials' salaries) had correlations below .20. None of the items suffered from excessive skewness or kurtosis. When combined, the 17 items had a suitable Cronbach's alpha of .76.

Loadings on 17 items. Factor analysis indicated five factors with an eigenvalue over 1, one more factor than in the national college survey (Table 4.7). The loadings were more complicated than in the first study, indicating cross loadings and relationships more difficult to explain. In general, privacy, crime, and public safety still represented three factors. Two other factors related to crimes and war, however, were more difficult to interpret and the three items within each factor were not highly correlated with each other ($r = .23$ and $.35$).

Looking more closely at the first and second factors indicated a new dimension that was not apparent in the first study: governmental operations. The items loaded on the first factor were more operational than privacy-oriented (e.g., government spending decisions and public utility records). The second factor regarding crime could instead indicate privacy, particularly because of the loading with driver's licenses. Therefore, this analysis seems to indicate a potential new subdimension regarding governmental operations.

Loadings on 8-item scale. As in the national college study, for this data set a more parsimonious scale was derived through factor analysis (Table 4.8). An 8-item scale factored cleanly in the same manner, with two factors indicating privacy and safety, and the scale had an alpha of .71. This study replicated the first study's findings.

Table 4.7

Factor Analysis of 17 Support for Press Access Items in WSU College Student Survey

Item*	1 Privacy	2 Crime	3 Safety	4 Unkwn	5 Unkwn
The spending decisions of high-level public officials should be made available to the press.	0.64	-0.27	0.32	0.01	0.19
The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.	0.76	0.05	0.26	-0.07	0.35
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the press.	0.56	0.50	-0.07	0.22	0.30
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.	0.67	-0.05	0.24	0.30	0.30
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.	0.76	0.24	0.21	0.08	0.12
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.	0.43	0.10	0.38	0.42	0.40
Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.	0.44	0.48	0.02	-0.17	0.02
The identity of rape victims should be made available to the press.	0.15	0.81	0.08	0.26	0.06
The press should not be allowed to publish rape victims' names (recoded).	-0.11	0.71	-0.01	0.13	0.09
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.	0.32	0.06	0.77	-0.10	0.06
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.	0.16	0.06	0.75	0.20	0.28
Names of people who die in car accidents should be available to the press.	0.34	0.38	0.17	0.53	0.32
Juvenile criminal records should be available to the press.	0.14	0.23	0.07	0.68	0.02
It is OK to make some government records secret to minimize terrorism. (recoded)	0.30	0.13	0.27	-0.44	0.13
Public records explaining after the fact what went wrong in a war or U.S. military battle should not be made available to the press. (recoded)	0.34	-0.09	0.32	-0.20	0.70
Court documents regarding lawsuits against companies should be made available to the press.	0.49	-0.22	0.45	0.11	0.59
The names of victims in violent crime cases should not be available to the press (recoded).	-0.03	0.44	-0.25	0.28	0.60

* Cronbach's alpha for all 17 items = .76; $N = 171$

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor 1: Privacy (6 items, alpha = .75; eigenvalue = 3.84)

Factor 2: Crime (3 items, alpha = .58; eigenvalue = 2.22)

Factor 3: Public safety (2 items, alpha = .54; eigenvalue = 1.30)

Factor 4: Unknown (3 items, alpha = .23; eigenvalue = 1.23)

Factor 5: Unknown (3 items, alpha = .35; eigenvalue = 1.06)

Table 4.8

Factor Analysis of 8 Support for Press Access Items in WSU College Student Survey

Item*	Factor	
	1 Privacy	2 Safety
The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.	.713	.263
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the press.	.715	-.01
Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.	.651	.375
Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes, should be available to the press.	.772	.297
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.	.486	.397
Driver's license records, which include a person's name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.	.541	.030
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.	.154	.807
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.	.226	.782

* Cronbach's alpha for all eight items = .71; N = 171

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor 1: Support for privacy-oriented records (6 items, alpha = .73; eigenvalue = 2.77)

Factor 2: Support for infrastructure records (2 items, alpha = .54; eigenvalue = 1.26)

Development study 3: Palouse college student survey

More data were collected to further investigate the factors that underlie support for press access and provide evidence of scale reliability. Also, it was of interest to find out if the scale would differ if the focus were on *public* access instead of *press* access.

The third developmental test was administered as extra credit to 114 communication majors enrolled in media law classes at Washington State University and the University of Idaho in fall 2005. Thirteen access questions were included in this study. Questions from the first two studies regarding rape, victims of violent crime, juvenile records, and the military were left out because of their low item-total correlations. Questions involving problems with physicians, school teachers, and traffic intersections were added to see if they would load on a public safety or governmental operations factor.

Results. Overall, when applying the parsimonious support for access scales from the previous two studies, the mean support for *public* access in this third study of communication majors ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.06$) was less than the mean support for *press* access in the first national college study of communication majors ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.07$), but the difference was not statistically significant ($t(113) = -.86$, $p = .39$). Communication majors in the two studies did not demonstrate different support based on the type of person requesting the records.

However, support for access was higher for the public in the third study than in the second WSU college student survey of psychology majors ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.01$), and the difference was significant ($t(113) = 8.81$, $p < .001$). Therefore, it appears that support

might not vary significantly among communication majors whether access is for the public or press; however, among psychology majors it appears to make a difference – they more strongly support public access to records than press access, which is consistent with previous research comparing journalists' attitudes with the public's attitudes (Cuillier, 2004; Dillon, 1991; Dillon & Covil, 1998; Hansen & Moore, 1992; Phelps & Bunker, 2001), as well as for research regarding other types of press rights or free expression (Andsager & Miller, 1994).

Table 4.9

Descriptives for Support for Public Access Items in Palouse College Student Survey

Item*	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Kurt	Item-total cor
Records detailing dangerous traffic intersections should be made available to the public.	109	6.11	1.05	-0.23	0.45
Disciplinary records of school teachers accused of sexually assaulting students should be available to the public.	109	5.82	1.27	-0.36	0.43
Records detailing the condition of dams, including those prone to failure, should be open to the public.	108	5.56	1.62	0.93	0.52
Records detailing problems with medical physicians should be available to the public.	109	5.28	1.56	0.72	0.54
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the public.	110	5.05	1.72	-0.02	0.62
The public should have access to the annual salaries of government employees.	110	5.00	1.75	-0.39	0.57
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the public.	110	4.99	1.96	-0.72	0.55
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the public.	110	4.66	1.62	-0.47	0.42
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the public.	110	4.50	1.67	-0.71	0.67
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the public.	113	3.56	1.71	-0.63	0.35
Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the public.	110	2.95	1.70	-0.28	0.38
It is OK to make some government records secret to minimize threats from terrorism. (recoded)	109	2.87	1.45	0.79	0.18
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the public.	110	2.80	1.43	-0.06	0.35

* Range 1 to 7, with 7 indicating greater support for access. *N* = 114. Alpha = .82.

The relative ranking of records remained similar across the three studies (Table 4.9). For example, divorce records garnered the least support in the third survey ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.43$) and in the second survey ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.48$).

Loadings on 13 items in third survey. Three factors were identified in factor analysis: governmental records, public safety, and privacy (Table 4.10). A number of cross loadings make intuitive sense as well. For example, records tracking medical physicians can be viewed as a governmental operations record (loading .69), but also a public safety record (.46). Public utility records loaded on the governmental factor (.66), but also on the privacy factor (.59) because it might be deemed an invasion of personal privacy.

This data set provides stronger evidence of a general “governmental operations” factor that might sometimes encompass a privacy item or crime record. Further, all three subscales, including the 3-item privacy subscale, had internal reliabilities of more than .70 and the total 13-item scale has a strong alpha of .82.

Loadings on 8-item scale. In order to replicate the previous two studies, factor analysis was applied to the 8-item scale. Again two factors were identified, but they were slightly different from the previous development tests (Table 4.11).

In addition to a privacy component (divorce, property tax, and driver’s license records), some items loaded on a safety/government operations factor (criminal records, government salaries, public utility records, dam inspection, and hazardous-chemical records). The 8-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of .78. Internal reliability was good for the subscales as well ($\alpha = .72$ for privacy and $\alpha = .77$ for safety/governmental).

Table 4.10

Factor Analysis of 13 Support for Public Access Items in Palouse College Student Survey

Item*	Factor		
	1 Govt.	2 Safety	3 Privacy
Records detailing problems with medical physicians should be available to the public.	0.69	0.46	0.23
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the public.	0.58	0.26	0.25
Records detailing dangerous traffic intersections should be made available to the public.	0.75	0.30	0.07
Disciplinary records of school teachers accused of sexually assaulting students should be available to the public.	0.69	0.26	0.16
The public should have access to the annual salaries of government employees.	0.58	0.44	0.44
Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the public.	0.66	0.47	0.59
Records detailing the condition of dams, including those prone to failure, should be open to the public.	0.54	0.80	0.02
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the public.	0.53	0.87	0.17
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the public.	0.52	0.74	0.16
It is OK to make some government records secret to minimize threats from terrorism. (recoded)	-0.08	0.53	0.20
Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the public.	0.36	0.01	0.72
Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the public.	0.19	0.16	0.82
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the public.	0.11	0.19	0.80

* Cronbach's alpha for all 13 items = .82; N = 114

Factor 1: Governmental operations (6 items, alpha = .76; eigenvalue = 4.36)

Factor 2: Safety (4 items, alpha = .74; eigenvalue = 1.87)

Factor 3: Privacy (3 items, alpha = .72; eigenvalue = 1.22)

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 4.11

Factor Analysis of 8 Support for Public Access Items in Palouse College Student Survey

Item *	Factor	
	1 Safety/government	2 Privacy
Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the public.	.817	.149
Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the public.	.812	.117
Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the public.	.589	.235
The public should have access to the annual salaries of government employees.	.704	.428
Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the public.	.655	.605
Driver's license records, which include a person's name and address, should be made available to the public.	.267	.807
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the public.	.178	.786
Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes, should be made available to the public.	.236	.772

* Cronbach's alpha for all 8 items = .78; $N = 114$

Factor 1: Safety/governmental (5 items, alpha = .77; eigenvalue = 3.17)

Factor 2: Privacy (3 items, alpha = .72; eigenvalue = 1.56)

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Two items cross loaded on both factors: salaries of public employees and public utility records. It is conceivable that both records have a governmental operations or budgetary component, as well as an element of personal privacy. This analysis provides further evidence of a government operations component in attitudes toward access.

Final development study: AccessNorthwest national phone survey

The final data collection stage for this study was a probability-based random-digit-dial telephone survey of U.S. adults in spring 2006 to assess the scale's construct validity and apply confirmatory factor analysis structural equation modeling. A general-population phone survey was deemed the best method for the purposes of this study for several reasons.

First, one of the study's purposes is to be able to gauge what the average American thinks about press access, to go beyond college student samples. While random-digit-dial telephone surveys have their disadvantages, such as potentially elevated nonresponse error, they are still one of the best ways to reach citizens from all walks of life.

Second, it is necessary to be able to apply the scale by paper and telephone methods in order to eventually study access attitudes among different populations, including different professions (e.g., government officials and journalists) and cultures (e.g., Native American tribal members and international comparative studies).

Method

A national phone list of randomly generated numbers was purchased from Survey Sampling International. In general, the 403 participating respondents appeared to represent the nation's demographics. Respondents were 51% female and 49% male, equal

to the overall national gender proportion. The sample overrepresented people who have higher education and income.

The two-week survey was conducted from February 19 through March 4, 2006. Each eligible phone number was called at least six times by trained undergraduate students. The cooperation rate was 24%, using cooperation rate 4 by the American Association of Public Opinion Research guidelines. Cooperation rates typically range from 25% to 35% (Hembroff et al., 2005). Although undesirable, some research specific to measuring political attitudes indicates that low response rates do not harm study results (Curtin, Press, & Singer, 2000; Keeter et al., 2000).

Questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 86 items and took, on average, 17 minutes to complete. The items were recorded on a 0 to 10 scale because it is easily understood on the telephone, has enough scale points to measure attitudes more precisely, and provides a midpoint of “5” if respondents do not agree or disagree with the statements (Dillman, 2000).

Support for press access was measured initially by 14 questions ($\alpha = .77$), of which 8 were derived from the three development tests as the base scale to be tested. Additional questions were added to test potential new subdimensions, such as support for press access to crime records. Several scales (Appendix H) were included in the survey to provide the ability to test convergent and divergent validity for the access scale.

Support for press rights. This 3-item scale ($\alpha = .70$) is based on three questions that also were used in the developmental tests. The questions have been used routinely in press rights research (e.g., Yalof & Dautrich, 2002). It is the intent of the scale to

measure people's overall attitudes toward press rights, such as criticizing government or freedom from censorship.

Support for press access is similar conceptually to support for press rights. The constructs should be similar but not the same. Therefore, correlations between support for press access and press rights should range from .20 to .60, indicating that they share commonalities but are not the same ideas.

Support for free expression. Similar to support for press rights, support for free expression should be correlated moderately to support for press access as similar expressive rights. However, the correlations should not be strong. The support for free expression scale ($\alpha = .72$) was created from eight often-used questions that were used in the pretests and have been used in previous research regarding support for free expression (Andsager, Wyatt, & Martin, 2004; Wyatt, 1991).

Social desirability. Six questions were included to create a social desirability scale in order to test divergent validity ($\alpha = .71$). People's responses should not be affected by motivations to appear socially responsible. The questions were taken from the 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

Item descriptives

For the most part, the item attributes, including mean and standard deviation, were found to be within acceptable ranges (Table 4.12). The means ranged on the 0-10 scale from a low of 3.34 for press access to divorce court files up to 9.24 for press access to government records detailing dangerous traffic intersections. However, two items had a kurtosis of more than 9 (traffic intersections 9.41 and police reports 9.29). Therefore, these two items were excluded from further scale analysis, leaving 12 items.

Standard deviations for all of the remaining items were above 1.5, and for most above 2 or 3. The high standard deviations were likely a result of the large 11-point scale, from 0 to 10, being applied by telephone survey that labeled only the polar endpoints. Research indicates that people are more likely to choose the endpoints in telephone surveys, particularly when only the polar points are labeled (Christian, Dillman, & Smyth, 2006).

Table 4.12

Descriptives for Support for Press Access Items in AccessNorthwest National Survey

For the following types of government records, please indicate whether you think the press should be allowed access to them or not. Zero means you strongly disagree that the press should have access to them and 10 is that you strongly agree.	N	M	SD	Skew	Kur
Government records detailing dangerous traffic intersections.	403	9.24	1.61	-2.82	9.41
Police reports of crimes committed in your community.	403	9.23	1.61	-2.85	9.29
The names and addresses of registered sex offenders.	400	8.59	2.48	-2.08	3.80
Records of local government officials' expense accounts.	401	8.44	2.44	-1.89	3.37
Government records detailing problems with medical physicians.	400	8.22	2.54	-1.70	2.52
Government records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals.	400	7.93	3.06	-1.46	0.97
The annual salaries of public employees.	401	7.52	3.17	-1.14	0.12
Records detailing someone's criminal past.	395	6.90	2.94	-0.69	-0.41
Government records explaining vulnerabilities of dams.	388	6.78	3.44	-0.73	-0.81
Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation.	398	6.32	3.31	-0.49	-0.88
Local government officials' work e-mail.	394	6.10	3.44	-0.39	-1.09
Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes.	399	5.73	3.58	-0.30	1.24
Driver's license records, which include a person's name, address, height, and weight.	395	3.38	3.41	0.72	-0.75
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses.	400	3.34	3.01	0.66	-0.41
Mean of all 14 items	403	6.60	1.61	-0.38	0.04

Note. Mean responses are on an 11-point scale, with 0 as “strongly disagree” and 10 as “strongly agree.”

Confirmatory factor analysis

Loadings on 8-item scale

Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the 8-item scale again represented two factors, privacy and safety/government (Table 4.13). One difference between the factor analysis in this study and in the previous two tests was that criminal records were loaded on safety/government and privacy about equally, whereas in the other two tests it loaded more on privacy.

The Cronbach's alpha for the 8-item scale was .70. The subscales had lower internal reliability ($\alpha = .65$ for privacy and $\alpha = .58$ for safety/government).

While the 8-item scale demonstrated consistency across four studies in its reliability and factor identification, it has its limitations. Most of the items are privacy related, so that might skew the scale toward attitudes regarding privacy. Therefore, the 12 items in the final data were analyzed to determine whether a larger scale could improve the breadth and balance of subdimensions.

Loadings on 12 items. Principal component analysis with promax rotation identified four factors among the 12 items with an eigenvalue of more than 1: support for access to government operations records (salaries, expense reports, property taxes, and utility records), privacy-oriented records (e-mail, divorce, and driver's licenses), crime records (bad physicians, criminal backgrounds, and sex offenders), and public safety (vulnerable dams and hazardous chemicals) (Table 4.14). The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .75$).

Table 4.13

Factor Analysis of 8 Support for Press Access Items in AccessNorthwest National Survey

Item *	Factor	
	1 Privacy	2 Safety/government
Government records explaining vulnerabilities of dams.	.226	.800
Government records that identify the type, amount and location of hazardous chemicals.	.124	.807
Records detailing someone's criminal past.	.521	.534
The annual salaries of public employees.	.680	.082
Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation.	.580	.311
Driver's license records, which include a person's name, address, height, and weight.	.526	.313
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses.	.664	.160
Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes.	.729	.085

* Cronbach's alpha for all 8 items = .70; $N = 114$

Factor 1: Safety/governmental (5 items, alpha = .58; eigenvalue = 3.17)

Factor 2: Privacy (3 items, alpha = .65; eigenvalue = 1.56)

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 4.14

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for 12 Support for Press Access Items in AccessNorthwest National Access Survey

Item *	Factor			
	1 Government	2 Privacy	3 Safety	4 Crime
The annual salaries of public employees.	.785	.266	.071	.288
Records of local government officials' expense accounts.	.745	.045	.163	.259
Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes.	.639	.375	.147	.203
Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation.	.573	.300	.399	.037
Local government officials' work e-mail.	.421	.475	-.092	.359
Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses.	.331	.794	.078	.195
Driver's license records, which include a person's name, address, height, and weight.	.119	.796	.247	.113
Government records detailing problems with medical physicians.	.524	.169	.312	.603
Records detailing someone's criminal past.	.251	.520	.399	.679
The names and addresses of registered sex offenders.	.176	.077	.077	.811
Government records explaining vulnerabilities of dams.	.314	.120	.805	.230
Government records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals.	.072	.194	.801	.163

* Alpha = .75; N = 403

Factor 1: Government operations (4 items, alpha = .66; eigenvalue = 3.33)

Factor 2: Privacy (3 items, alpha = .57; eigenvalue = 1.35)

Factor 3: Safety (2 items, alpha = .59; eigenvalue = 1.29)

Factor 4: Crime (3 items, alpha = .57; eigenvalue = 1.07)

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

The items, when combined into their specific factors, created four subscales with different properties (Table 4.15). The crime subscale has the largest mean (7.90, $SD = 1.96$) and privacy the smallest mean (4.27, $SD = 2.45$). The reliability coefficients for each subscale are too weak, ranging from .57 to .66, for use as separate variables in analysis. By refining the questions, the Cronbach alphas for the subscales might be improved.

As shown in the factor analysis (Table 4.14), some of the items were cross loaded on several factors. For example, access to government officials' work e-mail loaded on the governmental operations factor and privacy. Records detailing someone's criminal past were deemed crime-oriented with a public safety element (e.g., wanting to know if the baby-sitter has a criminal record) and privacy (e.g., not wanting others to know one's own criminal background).

Confirmatory factor analysis measurement model

To further examine the properties of the 12-item scale, it is of interest to know whether the questions as a whole account for support for press access, or whether the scale is best described by four factors, or by four factors under the umbrella of a higher-order factor, support for press access. Three confirmatory factor analysis measurement models were analyzed in EQS version 8.5 to see if they produce adequate fits to the data.

Criteria for acceptable fitting models (Byrne, 1994; Raycov & Marcoulides, 2000) include the goodness of fit index (should be .90 or greater), adjusted GFI (at least .90), comparative fit index (should be .90 or higher), root mean squared error of approximation (less than .06), and standardized root mean square residual (less than .05).

Table 4.15

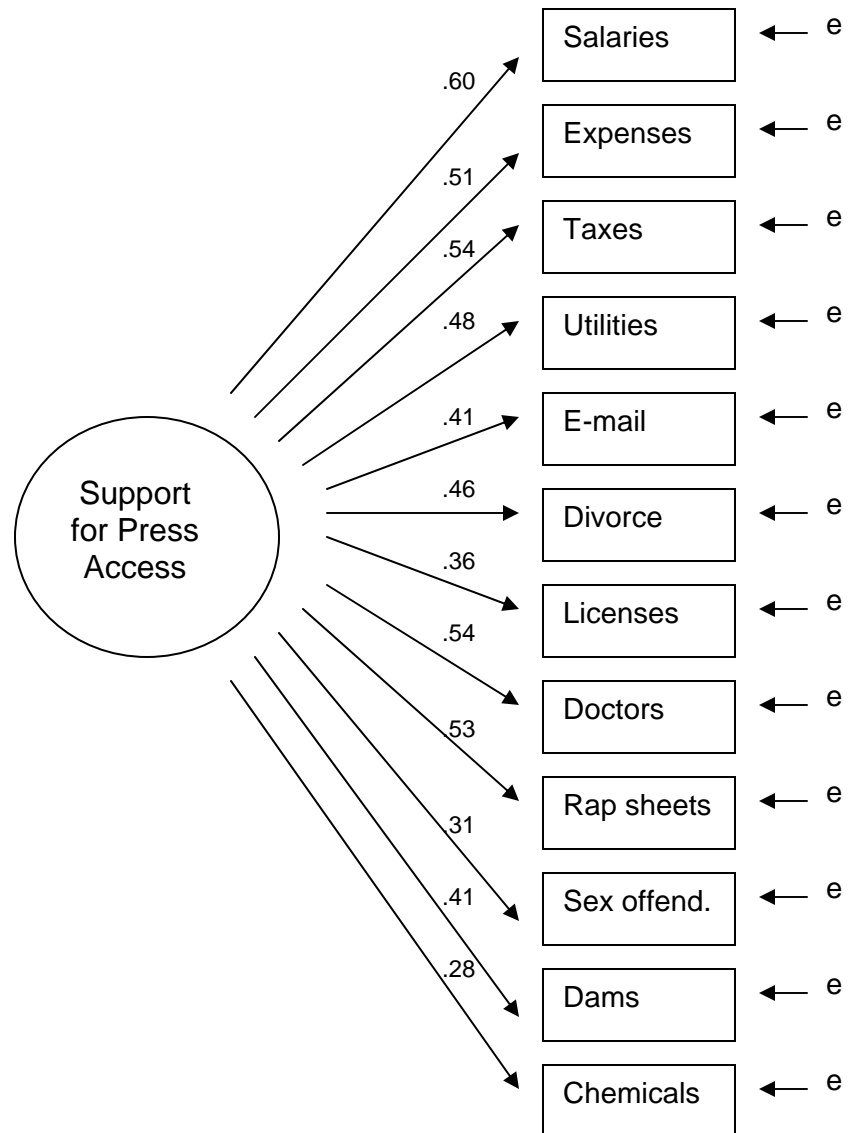
Four Subscales of Support for Press Access from AccessNorthwest National Survey

Subscale and Items	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Item-total Correlation	Alpha
Governmental Subscale	403	7.00	2.23		.66
Salaries	401	7.52	3.17	.52	
Expense reports	401	8.44	2.44	.42	
Property tax records	399	5.73	3.58	.47	
Public utility records	398	6.32	3.31	.39	
Privacy Subscale	403	4.27	2.45		.57
Officials' work e-mail	394	6.10	3.44	.29	
Divorce court records	400	3.34	3.01	.49	
Driver's licenses	395	3.38	3.41	.37	
Crime Subscale	402	7.90	1.96		.57
Problem physicians	400	8.22	2.54	.37	
Criminal background	395	6.90	2.94	.41	
Sex offender registries	400	8.59	2.48	.37	
Public Safety Subscale	402	7.37	2.76		.59
Vulnerabilities of dams	388	6.78	3.44	.42	
Hazardous chemicals	400	7.93	3.06	.42	
Total Support for Press Access	403	6.60	1.61		.75

A one-factor model was analyzed to see if the latent construct support for press access is a function of all 12 items individually (Figure 4.16). With 54 degrees of freedom, the robust CFI was .71, lower than the .90 deemed acceptable for a good-fitting model (Byrne, 1994). Also, the SRMR was .08, above the .05 limit, and the robust RMSEA was .09, above the acceptable limit of .06. Therefore, the one-factor model does not adequately fit.

Figure 4.16

One-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis Measurement Model for Support for Press Access



Fit indices: chi-square = 282, $p < .001$, 54 df; CFI = .71; AGFI = .83; SRMR = .08; RMSEA = .09.

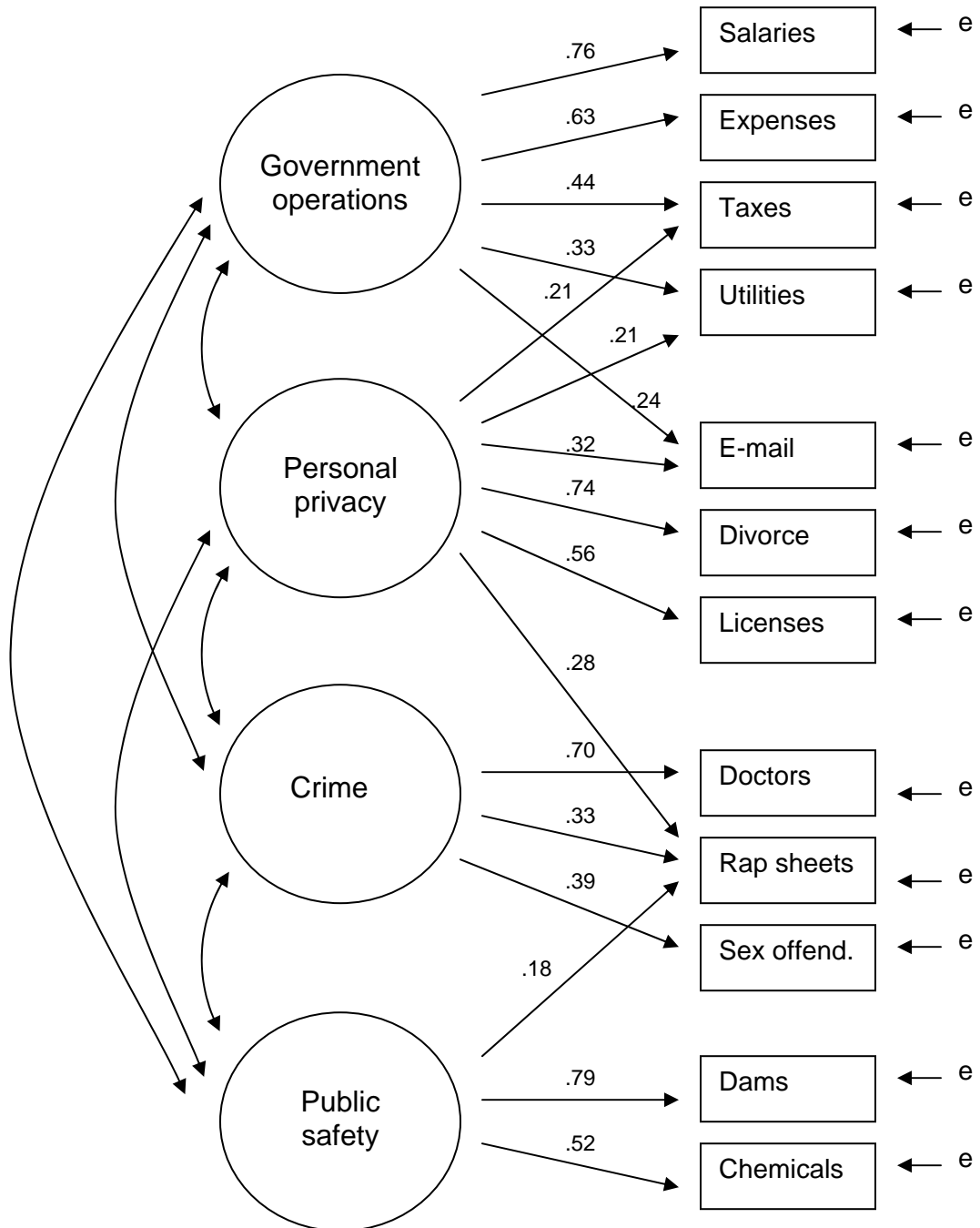
Next, a four-factor model was analyzed to see if the four first-order factors identified in the factor analysis adequately explain the construct (Figure 4.17). The four factors were government operations (salaries, expenses, property taxes, and utility records), personal privacy (email, divorce, and driver's licenses), crime (criminal records a.k.a. rap sheets, sex offenders, and bad physicians), and public safety (dams and chemicals).

As indicated earlier by the factor analysis in SPSS, five items cross loaded on different factors. Property tax, officials' e-mail, and utility records cross loaded on governmental operations and privacy; and criminal background records cross loaded on crime, public safety, and privacy. These loadings conceptually made sense and also were recommended by the Lagrange Multiplier test in EQS.

With 43 degrees of freedom, the robust *CFI* was .92, the *AGFI* was .91, the *SRMR* .05, and the robust *RMSEA* .06, with a range of .04 to .07, making the model acceptable.

Figure 4.17

Four-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis Measurement Model for Support for Access

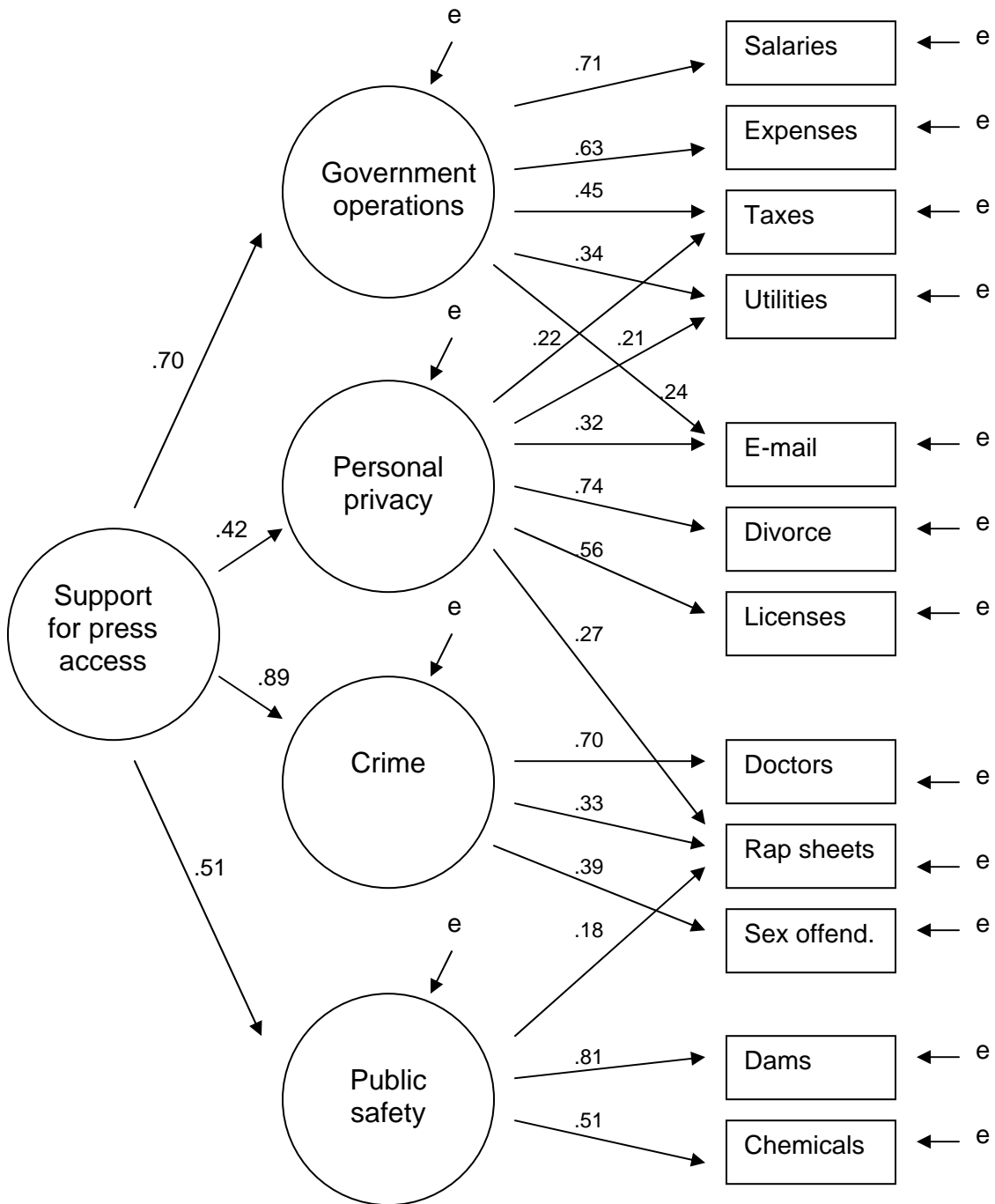


Fit indices: chi-square = 114, $p < .001$, 43 df; CFI = .92; AGFI = .91; SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .06.

The last model to be tested contained the initial four first-order factors and also included a higher second-order factor: support for press access (Figure 4.18). With 45 degrees of freedom, the robust CFI was .92, the AGFI was .92, the SRMR was .05, and the robust RMSEA was .05, with a range of .04 to .07. This model also fit well and was slightly better than the four-factor model.

Figure 4.18

Four-Factor with One Higher-Order Factor CFA Measurement Model



Fit indices: chi-square = 116, $p < .01$, 45 df; CFI = .92; AGFI = .92; SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .05.

When all three model fit indices are compared (Table 4.19), it is apparent that a one-factor model does not suitably explain support for press access. The two models that account for the four subdimensions fit the data well. The model that accounts for the four first-order factors and the higher-order overall support for access factor fits the best.

Table 4.19

Fit Indices for Three Confirmatory Factor Analysis Measurement Models for 12-Item Support for Press Access Scale

Model	df	χ^2	CFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA & interval
One-Factor	54	282***	.71	.83	.08	.09 (.08-.11)
Four-Factor	43	114***	.92	.91	.05	.06 (.04-.07)
Four-Factor w/Higher	45	116**	.92	.92	.05	.05 (.04-.07)

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

CFI = comparative fit index (should be at least .90)

AGFI = adjusted goodness of fit index (at least .90)

SRMR = standardized root mean square residual (.05 or less)

RMSEA = root mean squared error of approximation (less than .06)

Reliability analysis

Internal reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for the 8-item support for press access scale in the final study was .70. All of the scales from the four studies indicated consistent internal reliability for the 8-item scales, ranging from .70 to .78, exceeding the minimum .70 level (Table 4.20). Many of the subscales did not achieve alphas of at least .70, which limits their application as independent variables for analysis.

Table 4.20

Reliability Coefficients Across Four Scale Development Studies

Study/Scale/Subscale	Cronbach's alpha
National College Survey (N = 614)	
All 17 Items	.79
Privacy (8 items)	.80
Crime (5 items)	.68
Public safety (2 items)	.66
National security (2 items)	.42
8-Item Scale	.75
Privacy (6 items)	.77
Public safety (2 items)	.66
WSU College Survey (N = 171)	
All 17 Items	.79
Privacy (6 items)	.80
Crime (3 items)	.68
Public safety (2 items)	.66
8-item Scale	.71
Privacy (6 items)	.73
Public safety (2 items)	.54
Palouse College Survey (N = 114)	
All 13 Items	.82
Governmental operations (6 items)	.76
Public safety (4 items)	.74
Privacy (3 items)	.72
8-Item Scale	.78
Safety/governmental (5 items)	.77
Privacy (3 items)	.72
AccessNorthwest National Phone Survey (N = 403)	
All 13 Items	.75
Governmental operations (4 items)	.66
Public safety (2 items)	.59
Privacy (3 items)	.57
Crime (3 items)	.57
8-Item Scale	.70
Safety/governmental (5 items)	.58
Privacy (3 items)	.65

Test-retest reliability. To judge the scale's ability to measure support for access reliably and consistently, the questions were administered twice in the first and third studies, at the beginning and ends of the four-month semesters.

For the first survey, the national college student study, a mean score was calculated for the 8-item support for access scale. The individuals' pretest and posttest scores for support for access were correlated at .58 ($p < .01$), which demonstrates a reasonably strong correlation, particularly given the surveys were administered four months apart (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The overall mean increased for the communication majors from the beginning to the end of the semester from 4.35 to 4.63. A t test indicated the difference was statistically significant, $t(734) = -6.89, p < .001$. This likely reflected the course material regarding free expression, press rights, and access to government records. The strong correlation between the pretest and posttest indicates that while support changed during the semester, it increased relatively uniformly among the students.

In the third development survey, the 114 college communication majors in media law courses also were provided the survey at the beginning and the end of the four-month semester fall 2005. The individuals' pretest and posttest scores for the 8-item scale were correlated at .55 ($p < .01$), also indicating moderate test-retest reliability in the scale.

As in the national college study, support for access increased during the course of the semester, from an overall mean of 4.45 ($SD = 1.07$) to 4.98 ($SD = .98$). The difference was statistically significant, $t(113) = -5.30, p < .001$. Part of the semester entailed projects regarding access to public records, which might have increased support.

Convergent and divergent validity

In assessing convergent validity, support for press rights ($\alpha = .70$) was found to be moderately related to support for press access ($r = .20, p < .01$). Therefore, support for press access is related to support for press rights but not the same.

A support for free expression scale was created by calculating the mean for the eight free expression questions ($\alpha = .72$). In the final AccessNorthwest survey, the Pearson correlation between support for free expression and support for press access was relatively weak ($r = .13, p < .05$) but statistically significant. Correlations were much stronger for the other three studies ($r = .45, p < .01$; $r = .40, p < .01$; and $r = .38, p < .01$), as well as for the First Amendment Center national study ($r = .21, p < .01$).

When looking at all of the data sets, it appears support for press access is similar to support for free expression but different in key ways. Out of 16 variables presented in Table 4.21, a total of 11 are correlated in *opposite* directions. While the two attitudes share some similarities and are correlated, people appear to view them differently.

For example, while research in support for free expression demonstrates that age is negatively correlated with support, these studies indicate that age is positively correlated with support for press access. Apparently older people are less supportive than young people of one's right to burn the flag or sing offensive music lyrics, but more supportive of the press's right to access public records.

The scale should not be affected by social desirability bias such that people respond positively toward the questions in order to meet societal expectations of democratic principles. The six-item social desirability scale ($\alpha = .71$) was compared with the 12-item support for press access scale. The Pearson correlation demonstrated no relationship ($r =$

-.02, $p = .75$). Therefore, there was no evidence that attitudes toward support for press access are influenced by one's desire to appear more socially acceptable.

Table 4.21

Comparing Correlations of Support for Free Expression and Support for Press Access on Demographic Variables

Demographic	Support for Free Expression	Support for Press Access
Age	-.15**	.14**
Education	.32**	.09
Income	.16**	.13*
Race (white 1, nonwhite 0)	.08	.13**
Politics (conservatism high)	-.23**	.09
Religiosity	-.40**	.02
Gender (male 1, female 0)	.30**	-.02
Marital status (married 1, single 0)	-.08	.10
Power values	-.08	.10*
Support for press rights	.56**	.24**
Community engagement	-.07	.19**
Political efficacy	-.18**	.11*
Fear of privacy invasion	-.05	.11*
Social desirability	.11*	-.01
Newspaper use	-.01	.14*
Television use	-.26**	.07

* $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$

Summary

This study contributes to the political communication and media law fields through the development of a new psychometrically valid scale that reliably measures support for press access to public records. The 8-item scale demonstrated consistent reliability among college student populations and the general population, among different survey modes (paper and telephone), and among different scaling procedures (7-point and 11-point). The scale also demonstrated test-retest reliability on two samples.

If brevity is necessary, such as including questions in an omnibus national phone survey, the 8-item scale is useful. However, the 12-item scale identified in the final study is preferable because of the identification of four explanatory and item-balanced subdimensions. More testing of the 12-item scale would likely yield an instrument more reliable than the 8-item scale because of its ability to capture more facets of support for access.

On the main, the analyses indicated two overall factors of how people conceive access: privacy and governmental operations/safety. People are more supportive for press access to public records that provide a monitoring function of government, such as crime records, infrastructure records, and governmental financial records. People are less supportive of records that have an element of personal privacy (e.g., public officials' work email).

This is an important distinction in how people think about access. For example, people may support a certain amount of secrecy in crime records when it involves privacy, such as the identification of a rape victim. However, people would also strongly support the dissemination of those records if it could make the community safer, such as

alerting a neighborhood to a serial rapist. Therefore, people are most likely to support record dissemination policies that protect the community and provide a free exchange of information that can help them but also protect the privacy of themselves and others.

When looked at more closely, the final study provided further distinction among these factors, identifying four distinct subdimensions of support for access: governmental operations, privacy, crime, and public safety. The cross loadings reinforce these factors. For example, property tax records are deemed governmental operations, but also load on privacy because they contain the assessed value and taxes paid for one's own home.

Also, based on these studies, it appears that people are more supportive of the public's right to access public records than the press's right, which is consistent with previous research (Cuillier, 2004; Phelps & Bunker, 2001).

The five data sets in this study provide strong support for the psychometric validity of a new support for press access scale that scholars, journalists, government, or others can use for gauging attitudes toward freedom of information.

While more work is needed to continue refining the measurement, this instrument provides a solid starting point that can be used effectively for data gathering by paper questionnaire or telephone. Ultimately, this line of research might help scholars better understand people's attitudes toward press access, what affects those attitudes, and how to improve support for open government.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS: FACTORS RELATED TO SUPPORT FOR PRESS ACCESS

This chapter will present the findings to identify which, if any, of the three models – power, media, and political – best explain support for press access to government records.

The analysis begins with examining the zero-order correlations for the variables in each model across multiple data sets. Some surveys did not include all of the predictor variables, such as education or power values. Emphasis is given to the final study – the national phone survey – which was collected specifically to test all of the variables of interest in one survey.

Following correlational analysis, regression is applied to the final data set to determine which variables remain related to the criterion variable support for press access when controlling for other variables. Finally, structural regression modeling and path modeling are used to determine the best fitting model on the final data set, followed by replication of the best-fitting path model on a second national data set, the Scripps-Howard survey.

Correlations

For the following analyses, the criterion variable is support for press access, as measured in each study through scales. For some studies, the scales are comprised of 8 items, as delineated in Chapter 4. For the final phone survey, the scale is comprised of 12 items – the scale that modeled well with four subdimensions. Specific items for each

scale, as well as for the independent variables, are presented for each study in Appendices B through H.

Power model

The power expression protection hypothesis (Andsager, 2002) suggests that people who have societal power (e.g., more highly educated, higher income, middle-aged, and male) are more supportive of free expressive rights because their power makes them feel less threatened. Perhaps societal power makes people more supportive of press access to public records (Andsager & Cuillier, 2004).

To test this, eight variables that represent societal power are analyzed in relation to support for press access. Correlations are provided in Table 5.1. For further explanation, the mean is provided for each demographic variable for the final phone survey in Table 5.2.

Education. Hypothesis 1a predicted that education would be positively related to support for press access. For the national final study, the Pearson correlation for education was weak and statistically nonsignificant, $r = .09$, $p = .06$. The means of support for press access by education category show a steady increase – as education increases, so does support for access, from 6.27 ($SD = 1.59$) for some high school to 6.81 ($SD = 1.39$) for graduate school.

Correlations among all the studies were mixed. While some showed no correlations, two demonstrated moderate relationships of .19, both statistically significant (WSU college survey and First Amendment Center national survey). While it appears education might be positively related to support for access in some circumstances, the relationship is not strong enough across studies to support the hypothesis.

Income. Hypothesis 1b predicted that income will be positively related to support for press access. Similar to education, as income increases gradually, so does support for press access. Analysis showed a statistically significant positive correlation of $r = .13, p < .05$ for the final study, as well as three similar statistically significant correlations ranging from .12 to .14 among three other studies. Hypothesis 1b is supported.

Gender. Hypothesis 1c predicted that gender would be related to support for press access, such that men would demonstrate greater support than women. In the final study, mean support for press access is nearly the same for men ($M = 6.53, SD = 1.61$) and women ($M = 6.64, SD = 1.69$), and no significant correlation was found between support for access and gender ($r = -.02, p = .64$). The findings are consistent throughout the surveys, showing small, statistically insignificant correlations. The hypothesis is not supported.

Age. Hypothesis 1d predicted that age would be negatively related to support for press access. The opposite was true in the final survey and in all of the other studies. As age increases, so does support for press access. In the final study, respondents in the youngest age category, 18-29, reported the least support of access with a mean of 5.88 ($SD = 1.75$), while people in the second-oldest category, 70-79, were the most supportive of access ($M = 7.21, SD = 1.68$). The correlation between age and support for press access is statistically significant ($r = .14, p < .01$). Age also was positively related with statistical significance in two other studies, the national college survey and First Amendment Center survey. The hypothesis is not supported and the findings are directly counter to what the power expression hypothesis would predict.

Race. Hypothesis 1e predicted that whites would be more supportive of press access than nonwhites. For the final study, mean support for whites ($N = 342$) was 6.70 ($SD = 1.85$) and mean support for nonwhites ($N = 55$) was 6.10 ($SD = 1.87$). The difference was statistically significant, $t(397) = 2.62, p < .01$. Also, when whites are coded as “1” and nonwhites as “0,” the relationship with support for press access is statistically significant ($r = .13, p < .01$). One other survey, the First Amendment survey, found a statistically significant relationship ($r = .08, p < .05$), but the other surveys did not. The hypothesis is mildly supported.

Power values. Hypothesis 1f predicted that power values would be positively related to support for press access. The value a person places on power was measured by a four-item scale from the Schwartz value survey (1992). Respondents were asked to rate four values (social power, wealth, authority, preserving my public image) as either opposed to their personal values or of supreme importance (Cronbach’s alpha = .73).

The Pearson correlation between the power values scale and support for press access was mildly positive and statistically significant ($r = .10, p < .05$). Power values were measured in just one other survey, the WSU college student study, using the same scale. In that study a positive correlation also was found, although not statistically significant ($r = .08, p = .31$). The hypothesis is mildly supported.

Fear of privacy invasion. Hypothesis 1g predicted that fear of privacy invasion would be negatively related to support for press access. In the final survey, fear of privacy invasion was *positively* related to support for press access, $r = .11, p < .05$. This is directly counter to the hypothesis and to two of the other surveys. Two other studies

demonstrated negative relationships between fear and support for press access. The studies conflict. The hypothesis was not supported.

Power correlations summary. Of the seven hypotheses, only three were supported by the data, and only mildly so: income, race, and power values. Also, two of the findings, for age and fear of privacy invasion, were opposite the predicted outcomes. The simple correlations do not provide a strong argument for applying the power expression protection hypothesis to support for press rights.

Table 5.1

Support for Press Access Correlations with Socioeconomic Power Variables

	Development studies ^a						Final survey
	1 '04 College	2 '05 WSU	3 '05 Pal	4 '02 Wash.	5 '02 FA	6 '06 S-H	7 '06 national
Education	.03	.19*		.02	.19**	.03	.09
Income	-.02			.14**	.12**	.12**	.13*
Gender (male high)	-.04	.06		.02	-.04	.05	-.02
Age	.08*	.09		.02	.19**	.03	.14**
Race (white high)	-.04	.00		.08	.08*	.06	.13**
Power		.08					.10*
Fear of privacy inv.	-.08**	.05		-.28**			.11*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

^aStudies are:

1. National college student survey, 2004
2. WSU student survey, 2005
3. Palouse student survey, 2005
4. First Amendment Center national survey, 2002
5. AccessNorthwest Washington state survey, 2002
6. Scripps-Howard national survey, 2006
7. AccessNorthwest telephone survey, 2006

Table 5.2

Mean Support for Press Access by Socioeconomic Power Variables for AccessNorthwest National Survey

Demographic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Education			
Some high school or less	17	6.27	1.59
High school	87	6.36	1.71
Some college	138	6.56	1.76
College four-year degree	76	6.73	1.59
Graduate school or degree	85	6.81	1.39
Income			
Less than \$40,000	112	6.30	1.85
More than \$40,000	266	6.70	1.54
Under \$10,000	15	5.93	2.14
\$10,000-\$20,000	22	6.22	1.68
\$20,000-\$30,000	21	6.78	1.96
\$30,000-\$40,000	43	6.34	1.66
\$40,000-\$50,000	41	6.59	1.48
\$50,000-\$60,000	42	6.58	1.56
\$60,000-\$70,000	30	6.36	1.50
\$70,000-\$80,000	24	6.74	1.62
\$80,000-\$100,000	37	6.52	1.42
More than \$100,000	65	7.03	1.65
Gender			
Male	193	6.53	1.61
Female	204	6.64	1.69
Age			
18-29	59	5.88	1.75
30-39	64	6.56	1.44
40-49	90	6.33	1.41
50-59	89	7.08	1.65
60-69	46	6.49	1.69
70-79	33	7.21	1.68
80 or older	20	6.94	1.64

Table 5.2 (continued)

Mean Support for Press Access by Socioeconomic Power Variables

Demographic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Race/ethnicity^a			
White	342	6.70	1.85
Nonwhite or multiracial	55	6.10	1.87
African American	26	6.22	1.89
Hispanic	16	6.09	2.04
Asian	6	6.08	1.20
Native American	5	5.71	.78
Middle-Eastern	2	5.33	1.10
Marital status			
Married	241	6.77	1.55
Not married	161	6.41	1.66
Single	97	6.08	1.66
Divorced	39	6.61	1.68
Widowed	25	6.72	2.00

Note. Mean responses are on an 11-point scale, with 0 as strongly disagree and 10 as strongly agree.

^aRespondents could indicate multiple race categories. Not all categories add to 403 because of item nonresponse.

Media model

Cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1982) and the strong media effects model predict that the media affect attitudes. In the literature, media importance consistently has been found to be related to support for free expression, such that newspaper importance is positively related and television importance negatively related (Becker & Dunwoody, 1982; Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; Culbertson & Stempel, 1986; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Pfau, Moy, Holbert, Szabo, Lin, & Zhang, 1998).

Newspaper importance. Hypothesis 2a predicted that newspaper importance as a news source would be positively related to support for press access. In the final study, newspaper importance was positively related to support for press access, $r = .14, p < .05$. Similar statistically significant relationships, ranging from .14 to .24, also were found in three other studies. This hypothesis is supported (Table 5.3).

Television importance. Hypothesis 2b predicted that television importance as a news source would be negatively related to support for press access. This was found to be true in three of the studies, ranging from -.06 to -.14, but not the final study ($r = .07, p = .15$). Looking at all the studies in their entirety, the hypothesis is supported.

Internet importance. Research question 1 asked how Internet importance as a news source would be related to support for press access. In the final study, Internet importance had a statistically nonsignificant Pearson coefficient of .07. The other studies demonstrated inconsistent findings, both positive and negative, and mostly nonsignificant. No strong relationship was found.

Medial model correlations summary. The simple correlations indicate support for the media model as newspaper importance is positively associated with support for press access, and television importance is for the most part negatively associated. Regression analysis might provide stronger evidence as to whether newspaper and television importance are predictive of support for press access.

Table 5.3

Support for Press Access Correlations with Media Importance Variables

	Development tests						Final survey
	1 '04 College	2 '05 WSU	3 '05 Pal	4 '02 Wash.	5 '02 FA	6 '06 S-H	7 '06 national
Newspaper	.14**		.24**	.15**		.05	.14*
Television	-.14**		-.06	-.11*		-.07*	.07
Internet	.13**		.07	-.07			.07

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

^a Studies are:

1. National college student survey, 2004
2. WSU student survey, 2005
3. Palouse student survey, 2005
4. First Amendment Center national survey, 2002
5. AccessNorthwest Washington state survey, 2002
6. Scripps-Howard national survey, 2006
7. AccessNorthwest telephone survey, 2006

Political model

The political model predicts that political attitudes are related to how one thinks about access to government information, regardless of societal power or media importance (Chaffee & Roser, 1986; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001; Roser, 1990).

Political efficacy. Hypothesis 3a predicted that political efficacy would be positively related to support for press access. For the final study, the Pearson coefficient was positively related to support for press access, $r = .11, p < .05$, at about the same level as the Scripps-Howard national survey. The hypothesis is supported (Table 5.4).

Political involvement. Hypothesis 3b predicted that political involvement would be positively related to support for press access. Involvement was found to be positively related to support for press access, $r = .18, p < .01$ in the final study, and in the other study that included the construct (Palouse college survey) the relationship was even stronger ($r = .31, p < .01$). The hypothesis is supported.

Attitudes toward community engagement. Hypothesis 3c predicted that attitudes toward community engagement would be positively related to support for press access. In the final study, attitudes toward community engagement were positively related to support for press access, $r = .19, p < .01$. This also was found to be true in the Scripps-Howard national survey that included a measure of engagement ($r = .11, p < .01$). The hypothesis is supported.

Support for free expression. Hypothesis 3d predicted that support for free expression would be positively related to support for press access. For the final study, the Pearson coefficient was positively related and statistically significant, $r = .13, p < .01$. Furthermore, the correlations are even stronger in four of the other studies, as high as .45

in the national college survey, and all statistically significant. The hypothesis is supported.

Support for press rights. Hypothesis 3e predicted that support for press rights would be positively related to support for press access. In the final study, the two constructs were positively related, $r = .24$, $p < .01$, supporting the hypothesis and replicating five of the other studies. The college student surveys in particular demonstrated strong relationships ranging from .45 to .48, all statistically significant. The hypothesis is supported.

Political ideology. Hypothesis 3f predicted that political conservatism would be negatively related to support for press access. For the final study, the Pearson coefficient was .09 and nonsignificant. Yet, in five other studies negative relationships were found, four of them statistically significant. Despite the lack of a finding in the final study, the weight of the evidence across studies suggests conservatism is negatively related to support for press access. Those who are politically liberal are more supportive of press access, and those who are conservative are less supportive. Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

Political model correlations summary. All six of the hypotheses were supported by the data for the political model. Overall, these findings provide the strongest support for a model explaining support for press access, more so than for the power or media models. However, regression analysis will provide more insight into what variables remain related when controlling for other factors.

Table 5.4

Support for Press Access Correlations with Political Variables

	Development tests						Final survey
	1 '04 College	2 '05 WSU	3 '05 Pal	4 '02 Wash.	5 '02 FF	6 '06 S-H	7 '06 national
Political efficacy			.12			.08**	.11*
Political involvement			.31**				.18**
Community engagement						.11**	.19**
Free expression	.45**	.38**	.40**		.21**		.13**
Press support	.48**	.48**	.45**		.20**	.11**	.24**
Politics (conserv. high)	-.12**	-.23**	-.31**		-.02	-.28**	.09

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

^a Studies are:

1. National college student survey, 2004
2. WSU student survey, 2005
3. Palouse student survey, 2005
4. First Amendment Center national survey, 2002
5. AccessNorthwest Washington state survey, 2002
6. Scripps-Howard national survey, 2006
7. AccessNorthwest national telephone survey, 2006

Regression analysis

Research question 2 asked what predictor variables would remain related to support for press access when controlling for other variables. Applying an enter-method linear regression analysis with the variables that were found to be statistically significant with support for press access in the final study resulted in most variables becoming unrelated to support for access.

The first block contained the demographic power variables that were found to be correlated to support for press access (education, income, race, and power values). The second block contained the newspaper importance and television importance variables. The third block contained the six political variables that were correlated with support for press access (efficacy, involvement, support for free expression, engagement, political ideology, and support for press rights).

However, some variables – the political variables – maintained their relationships even when controlling for media importance and demographics (Table 5.5). When accounting for political ideology, attitudes toward community engagement, and support for press rights, no other relationships among any other tested variables remain significant. The equation accounts for an adjusted R -squared of .12, accounting for 12 percent of the variance.

Attitudes toward the press was the strongest predictor, $B = .26, p < .001$, and community engagement was the next strongest predictor, $B = .16, p < .01$. Political ideology was the third, $B = .12, p < .05$.

Table 5.5

*Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Support for Press Access in
AccessNorthwest National Survey*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Education	.00	.03	.01
Income	.02	.04	.03
Race	.22	.24	.05
Power values	.04	.05	.05
Newspaper importance	.03	.04	.05
Television importance	.02	.03	.04
Political efficacy	.05	.04	.08
Political involvement	.01	.05	.02
Support for free expression	.06	.06	.06
Political ideology	.07	.03	.12*
Community engagement	.12	.05	.16**
Support for press rights	.16	.04	.26***

* Significant at the .05 level.

** Significant at the .01 level.

*** Significant at the .001 level.

A similar regression equation was calculated for the Scripps-Howard data and derived similar results (Table 5.6). The variables are measured by different questions, and in some cases single items, but they are conceptually similar to the variables in the main national survey.

With the exception of education, demographic and media importance variables no longer remained related to support for press access when accounting for the political variables. The relationship with community engagement was not statistically significant at the .05 level, but it was close ($p = .08$). The two analyses, in concert, provide evidence that political attitudes are meaningful variables for support for press access, even when controlling for demographics and media importance. To answer the second research question, the political model is supported.

Table 5.6

Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Support for Press Access in Scripps-Howard National Survey

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Education	.08	.04	.10*
Income	.00	.02	.00
Newspaper importance	.03	.09	.04
Television importance	-.01	.09	-.01
Political ideology	-.24	.04	-.24***
Community engagement	.10	.06	.08 ($p = .08$)
Support for press rights	.10	.03	.14**

* Significant at the .05 level.
 ** Significant at the .01 level.
 *** Significant at the .001 level.

Structural equation modeling

Structural equation modeling provides a way to analyze a number of variables together in one visual path model, indicating the strength of relationships among all variables in one calculation (Byrne, 1994; Hoyle, 1995; Loehlin, 2004; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000).

Robust Maximum Likelihood estimation was used because some of the measures were not normally distributed. All of the chi-squares in the analyses were statistically significant, which would indicate poor-fitting models. However, because the chi-square is sensitive to sample size, better fit indices that are more representative of the true nature of the model strength will be the focus of analysis (Byrne, 1994).

The analyses will rely on goodness of fit indices. Byrne (1994) recommends that a good-fitting model reports a comparative fit index (CFI) of at least .90, a standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR) less than .05, and a root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) of less than .06.

Key variables representing power, media importance, and political attitudes were included in a structural regression model analysis to test which factors have the most influence on support for press access. It is best to have at least three observed variables per latent construct, yet having all 12 individual access questions to represent support for press access would demand a larger sample.

Therefore, to represent the latent construct support for press access, in accordance with item-parceling (Byrne, 2006; Little et al., 2002) the 12 individual access items were collapsed into four variables, or subscales, based on the four subdimensions identified in factor analysis and scale development (government operations, privacy, crime, and public

safety). Before assessing the fit indices of the three hypothesized models, the four subscales were analyzed as a confirmatory factor analysis measurement model to see if they adequately explain support for access (Byrne, 2006). The fit for the support for access subscale measurement model was strong ($df = 2$; $\chi^2 = 7.4$; CFI = .98; AGFI = .95; SRMR = .03; RMSEA = .06 (.00 - .13)).

Therefore, with a good-fitting measurement model for the dependent variable (support for press access), the analysis can proceed to test the fit of the three structural regression models (power, media, and political).

Comparing structural regression models

Research question 3 asked which of the three structural regression models – power, media, or political – would best fit the data. Three structural regression models were tested against the data in the final survey, which was the only data set that included all the variables in one survey. Individual items for each construct are listed in Appendix H.

Political ideology was excluded from the model because of the odd finding in this data set. In this main survey data, political conservatism was found to be *positively* related to support for press access, but in other data sets it was negatively related. While political ideology in two data sets remained related to support for press access after controlling for demographic and media importance variables, the relationship was positive in one data set and negative in the other.

After excluding political ideology, the other key variables identified in correlational and regression analyses were incorporated in the regression models, including support for press rights, attitudes toward community engagement, power variables (age, income,

education), and newspaper importance. Each model included the same variables. The difference in the models was the designated path relationships.

Power model. The power model (Figure 5.8) hypothesized that the strongest path relationship with support for press access should be from power, not community engagement or newspaper importance.

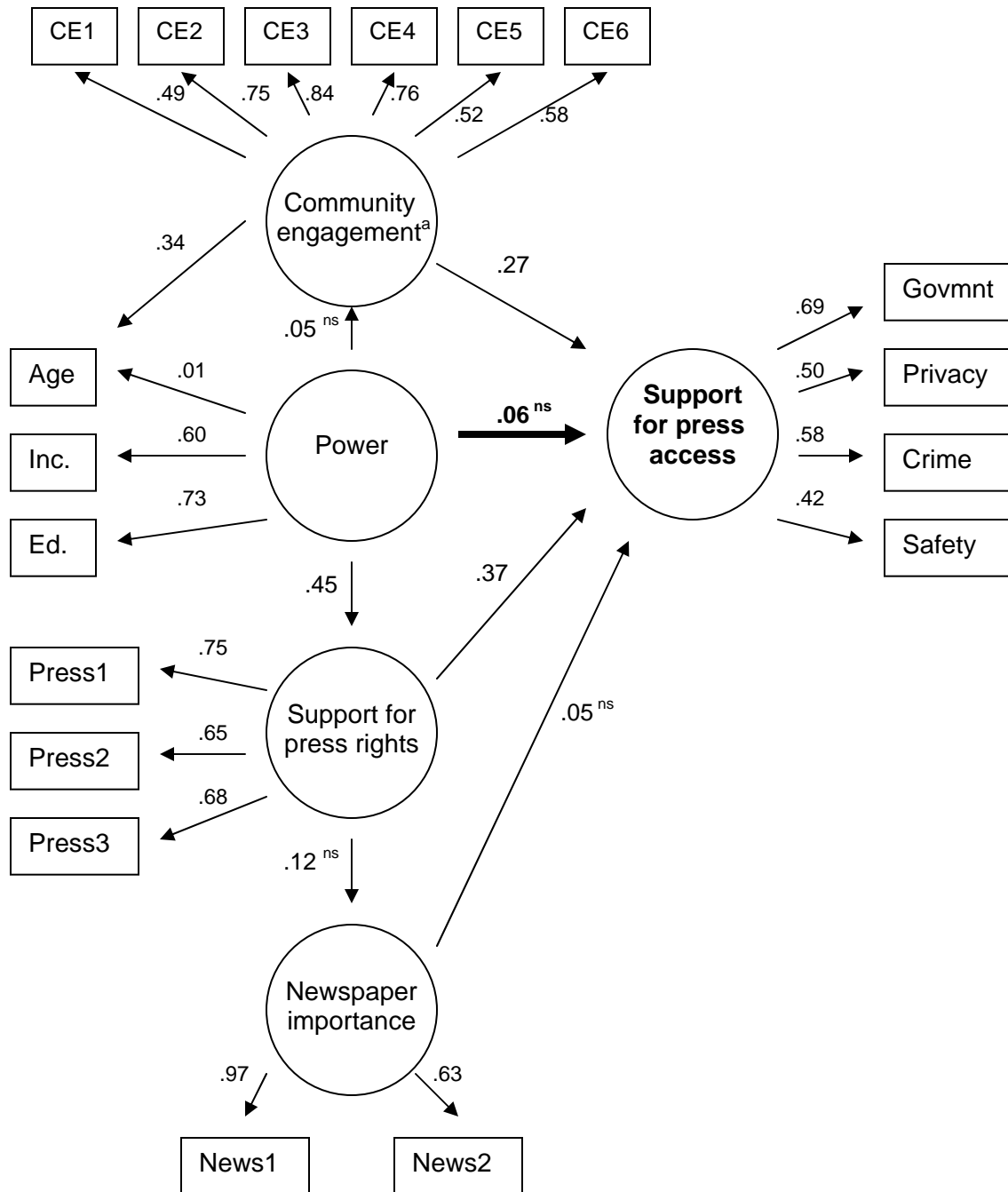
Analysis indicated that the path between power and support for press access was weak (.06) and nonsignificant. The path between newspaper importance and support for press access also was weak and nonsignificant. The loading between community engagement and support for press access was strong, at .27, and the loading between support for press rights and support for press access was the strongest, .37, lending support to the political model.

In addition to the loading analysis, the overall fit of the power model was unsatisfactory (Table 5.7). All of the reported figures failed to meet the recommended levels of acceptance (Byrne, 1994).

While the *R*-squared was .24, accounting for 24 percent of the variance in support for press access, most of that was accounted for by community engagement and press support, not power. Structural regression modeling does not support the power model.

Figure 5.7

Structural Regression Power Model for Support for Press Access



^{ns} Statistically nonsignificant path. All other paths are significant.

Fit indices: $df = 126$; $\chi^2 = 352$, $p < .001$; CFI = .86; AGFI = .86; SRMR = .10; RMSEA = .07 (.06-.08).

^aThe six political community engagement items, as well as the press and news items, are in Appendix H.

Table 5.8

Comparison of Structural Regression Models for the Power, Media, and Political Models

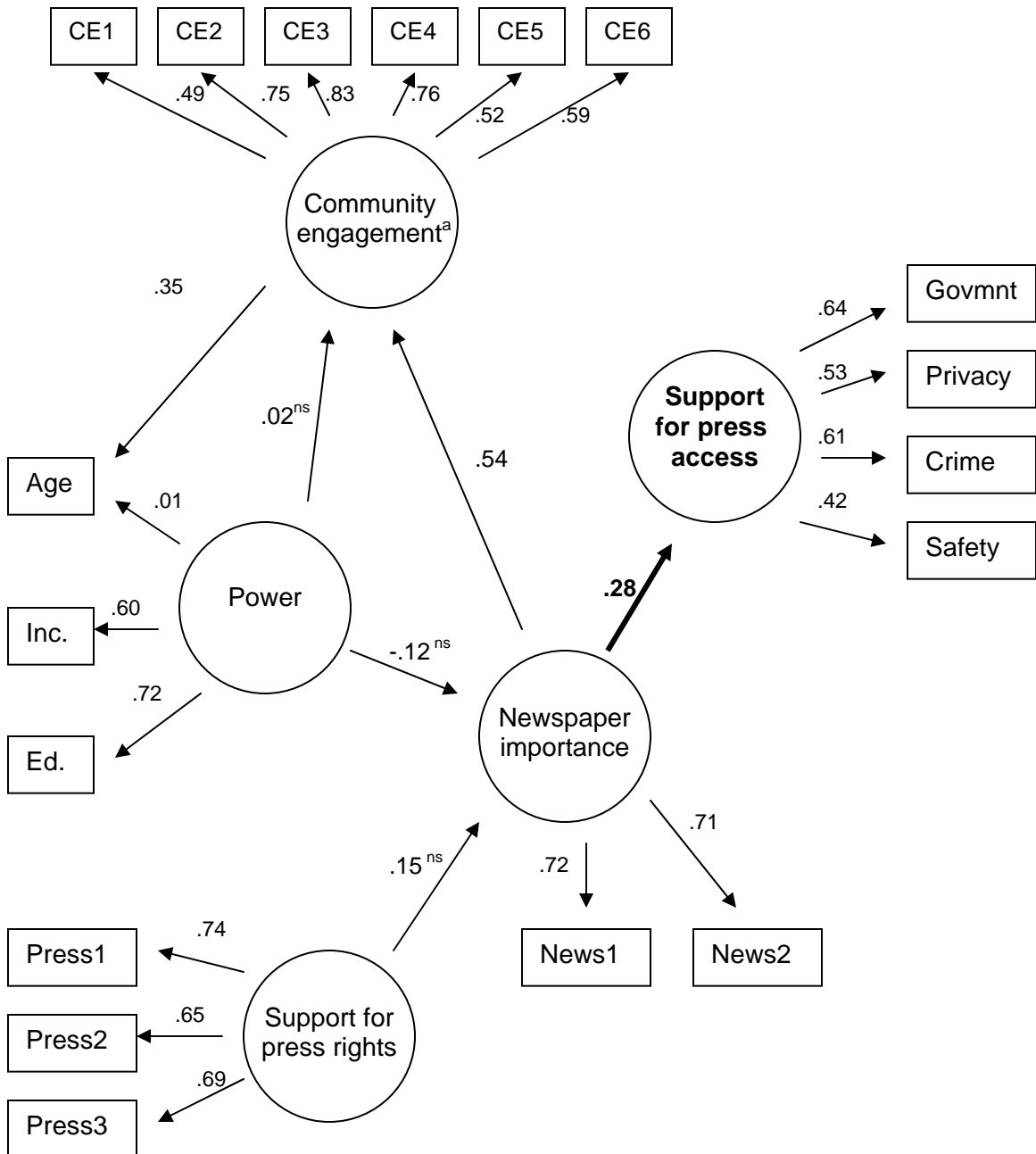
Model	df	χ^2	CFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA & interval	R^2 for access
Power Model	126	352***	.86	.86	.10	.07 (.06-.08)	.24
Media Model	128	311***	.89	.87	.07	.06 (.05-.07)	.08
Political Model	129	284***	.91	.88	.06	.05 (.04-.06)	.25

*** Significant at $p < .001$

Media model. The media model (Figure 5.9) hypothesized that newspaper importance would play an important role in support for press access. In the previous power model, the loading between newspaper importance and support for press access was weak (.05) and statistically nonsignificant. When only newspaper importance is predicted to support for press access, the loading is .28. The model, however, does not have a satisfactory fit (Table 5.7), reports an *R*-squared of only .08, and the Lagrange Multiplier test suggests path additions between community engagement and press support and support for press access. Therefore, the media model does not satisfactorily explain support for press access.

Figure 5.9

Structural Regression Media Model for Support for Press Access



^{ns} Statistically nonsignificant path. All other paths are significant.

Fit indices: $df = 128$; $\chi^2 = 311$, $p < .001$; CFI = .89; AGFI = .87; SRMR = .07; RMSEA = .06 (.05-.07).

^aThe six political community engagement items, as well as the press and news items, are in Appendix H.

Political model. The political model (Figure 5.10) hypothesized that support for press access is best explained by community engagement and press support. The fit indices indicate an acceptable fit. The comparative fit index (CFI) of .91 is above the desired .90 level, and the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .05 is below .06, which is desired. Also, the *R*-squared for predicting press support for access is .25, accounting for 25 percent of the variance.

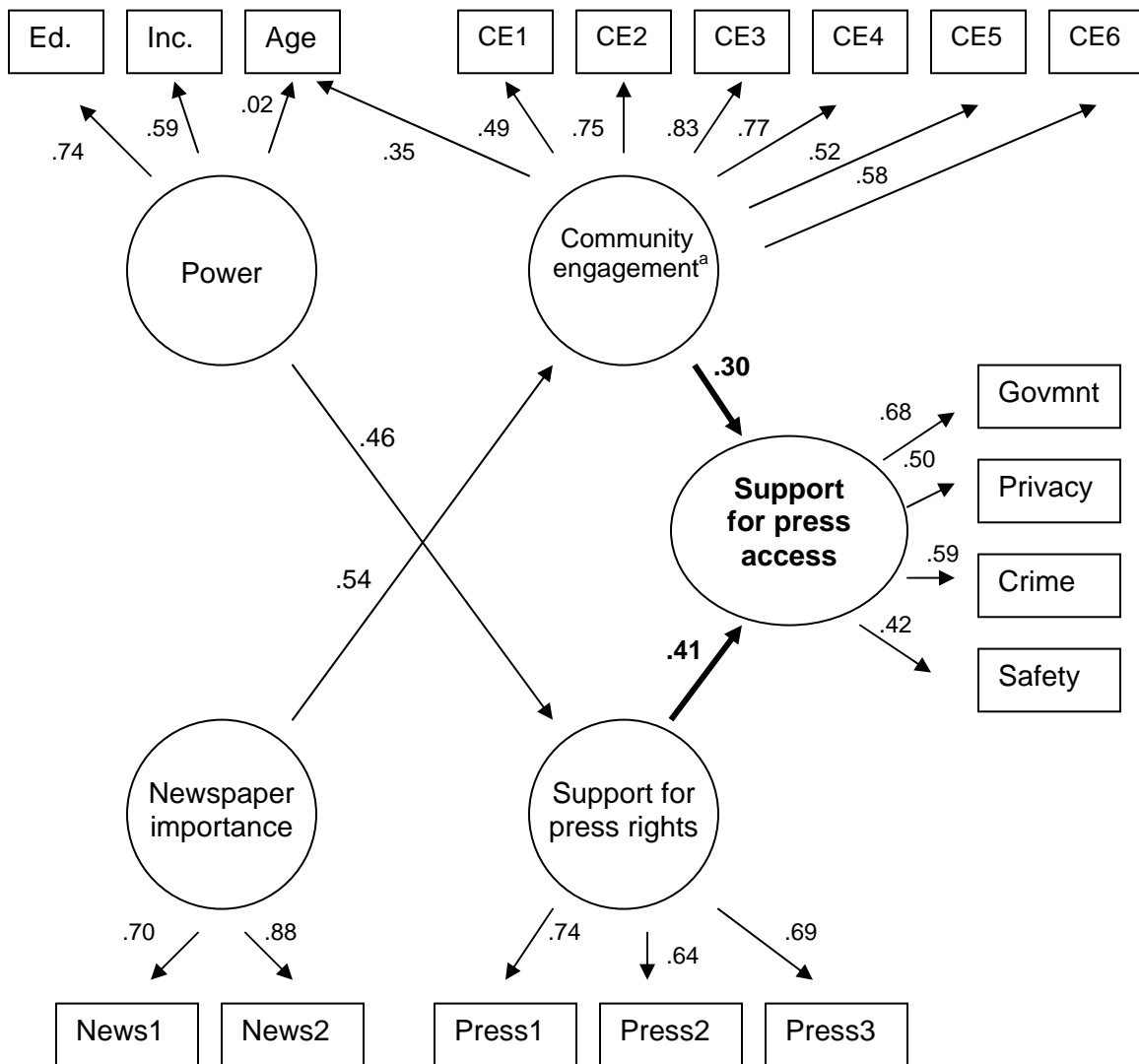
The Lagrange Multiplier test indicated some paths could be changed to improve the fit, but in order to provide the most parsimonious model, the path additions were excluded. The intention was to compare all three models as the same, without separate modification. One path model addition that was added in all three cases was between community engagement and age, indicating that older people are more politically engaged than younger people.

In the fitting political model, strong paths lead from community engagement and support for press rights to support for press access. Also, paths indicate strong relationships between power and support for press rights, and between newspaper importance and community engagement. No statistically significant path was apparent between power and community engagement, or between support for press rights and newspaper importance.

Therefore, to answer the third research question, the political model best explains support for press access.

Figure 5.10

Structural Regression Political Model for Support for Press Access



Fit indices: $df = 129$; $\chi^2 = 284$, $p < .001$; CFI = .91; AGFI = .88; SRMR = .06; RMSEA = .05 (.04-.06).

^aThe six political community engagement items, as well as the press and news items, are in Appendix H.

Comparing path models

In addition to the structural regression modeling, application of path models can provide two benefits for this particular study. First, relationships among individual measured items can be visually explained, such as between age and newspaper use, or age and political participation. Second, because path modeling relies on single measured variables instead of multi-item latent constructs, the path models can be tested for replication purposes on another national data set, the 2006 Scripps-Howard national phone survey, which included only single-item measures.

Research question 4 asked which path model would best fit the data: the power, media, or political model.

Power model

The power model relies on direct paths from power variables, such as age, income, and education, to support for press access. Other variables, such as attitudes toward community engagement, newspaper importance, and support for press rights are connected to the power variables consistent with typical relationships (e.g., news use is predicted by age such that older people rely on newspapers more than younger people). The political and news use variables, however, do not have paths to support for access.

The fit indices are inadequate: the robust CFI .89 is below the desired .90, the AGFI is .90, the SRMR is .06 and the robust RMSEA is .10 (confidence interval .07-.14), where an RMSEA of no more than .06 is desired.

Furthermore, the Lagrange Multiplier test recommends removing the path between support for press access and education, which would be contrary to the power hypothesis. No other path modifications substantially improve the fit. The *R*-squared for support for

press access was .04, or 4 percent of variance accounted for. Given the poor fit indices, the power model does not adequately explain this data.

Media model

In this model, newspaper importance is linked directly to support for press access. Some variables predict news importance, such as age, education, and support for press rights.

With 15 degrees of freedom, the chi-square is 65 and it is statistically significant, which would indicate a poor model. However, we look to the fit indices to get a better explanation: the robust CFI is .84, the AGFI is .90, SRMR is .07 and the robust RMSEA is .10 (confidence interval .07-.12). The path loading between newspaper importance and support for press access is only .17, explaining just 3 percent of variance. No other path modifications substantially improve the fit. Therefore, the media model does not fit this data.

Political model

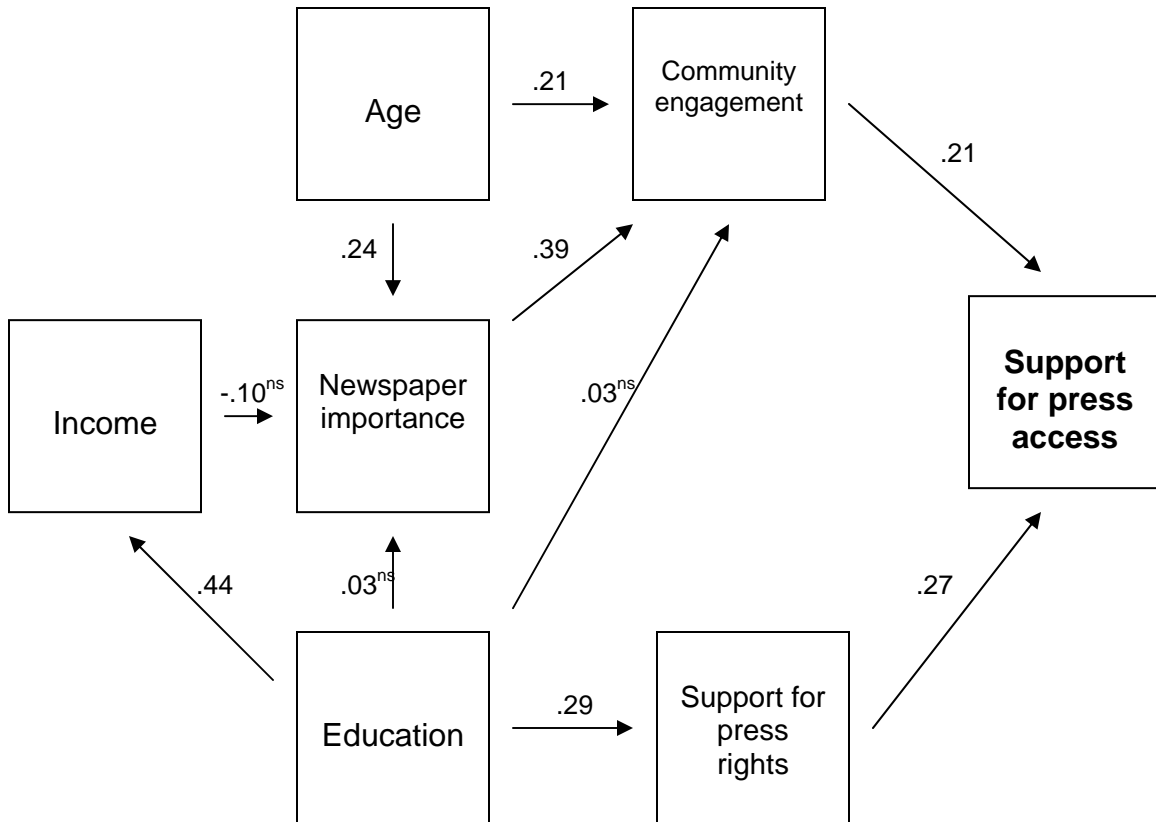
For this model (Figure 5.11), direct paths are provided between support for press access and community engagement and support for press rights. The power and newspaper use variables are mediated by the political variables.

Following minor path modifications based on the Lagrange Multiplier test and Wald test, the fit statistics with 11 degrees of freedom result in a chi-square of 20 that is statistically significant (Table 5.13). The fit indices are good, with a robust CFI of .96, an AGFI of .96, an SRMR of .04 and a robust RMSEA of .05 (range .01-.08). It accounts for 12 percent of variance for support for press access. This is a good fitting path model.

The strength of the model is in the loadings between support for press access and community engagement (.21) and support for press rights (.27). The model indicates that newspaper importance is strongly related to community engagement (.39), but engagement mediates the relationship between news importance and support for press access. Also, newspaper importance does not predict support for press rights.

Figure 5.11

Political Path Model for AccessNorthwest National Access Survey



^{ns} Statistically nonsignificant path. All other paths are significant.

Fit indices: $df = 11$; $\chi^2 = 20$, $p < .05$; CFI = .96; AGFI = .96; SRMR = .04; RMSEA = .05 (.01-.08).

Replication of political model

Replication with another sample and different measures provides more confidence that the model has explanatory power.

Structural path modeling demonstrated that the political model was the only model that fit satisfactorily, so it will be fitted to another data set: the 2006 national Scripps-Howard survey.

Both data share some similarities. The Scripps-Howard survey ($N = 1,007$) was conducted, coincidentally, the same two weeks as the main survey, eliminating the possibility of historical artifacts confounding results. Both samples are of U.S. adults, selected through random digit dialing. Both surveys were conducted by trained undergraduate students, calling from public universities.

The measures, however, are very different. The Scripps-Howard survey questions are measured on a scale of 1 to 3, as disagree, neutral, agree, while the other data are measured on 11-points scales. Also, while the main data set includes psychometrically tested, multi-item scales, the Scripps-Howard data rely primarily on single-item measures. However, while the items are not the same, they are conceptually similar. With those limitations in mind, the political model will be tested to see if it fits the Scripps-Howard data as well (Figure 5.12).

With 11 degrees of freedom, the model's chi-square is 33 and is statistically significant. The fit indices demonstrate an adequate fit: robust CFI = .92, AGFI = .97, SRMR = .04, robust RMSEA = .05 (confidence interval .02-.08). The R square for support for press access is .04, accounting for 4 percent of variance. Therefore, the model appears to be able to work on different data, which strengthens its validity and usability.

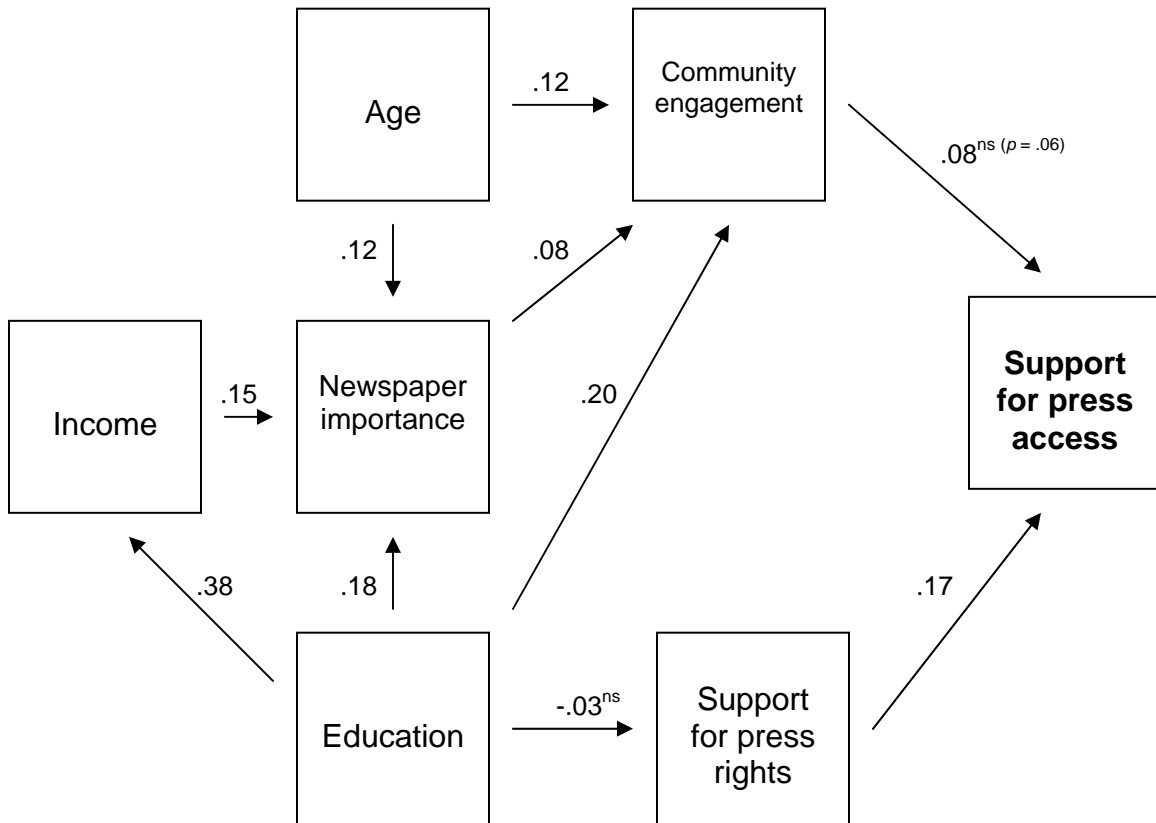
When looking at the fit indices from all the path models (Table 5.13), only the two political models fit the data.

However, some key variable relationships must be noted that need further investigation with future research. For example, the main AccessNorthwest data indicate no relationship between education and newspaper importance, which is counterintuitive, as well as a negative relationship between income and newspaper use. The Scripps-Howard data indicate no relationship between education and support for press rights.

It is possible that anomalies in the study or data would make the model unstable or unable to replicate in future studies. Despite the few odd relationships, it appears the model still serves well with a good fit as shown by the Scripps-Howard data, which demonstrated path loadings that one would expect. The path modeling further reinforces the viability of the political model.

Figure 5.12

Political Path Model for Scripps-Howard National Survey



^{ns} Statistically nonsignificant path. All other paths are significant.

Table 5.13

Comparison of Fit Indices for Power, Media, and Political Path Models

Model	df	χ^2	CFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA & interval	R ² for access
Power Model	8	39***	.89	.90	.06	.10 (.07-.14)	.04
Media Model	15	65***	.84	.90	.07	.10 (.07-.12)	.03
Political Model							
Main survey data	11	20*	.96	.96	.04	.05 (.01-.08)	.12
Scripps-Howard data	11	33*	.92	.97	.04	.05 (.02-.08)	.04

** Significant at p < .01

*** Significant at p < .001

Summary

Based on the correlation analysis, regression analysis, and the structural equation modeling, the political model best explains support for press access. While some variables are related in their predicted directions in the power and media models, they do not hold up once controlling for community engagement and attitudes toward the press.

Structural regression modeling and path modeling also provide strong arguments for the political model, particularly upon replication on another national data set.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the study's implications for communication theory, the press, and society. It also outlines some of the limitations of the research and offers suggestions for future research.

Discussion

These research findings provide methodological, theoretical, and empirical contributions to the political communication and freedom of information literature. Specifically, this study provides a new psychometrically valid measurement instrument, tests three theoretical models, and begins to explain the political nature of attitudes toward press access to government records.

Scale development

This study provides a psychometrically valid scale that reliably measures support for access to public records. The 8-item scale demonstrated consistent reliability among college student populations and the general population, among different survey modes (paper and telephone), and among different scaling procedures (7-point and 11-point). The scale also demonstrated test-retest reliability on two samples, as well as construct validity.

If brevity is necessary, such as including questions in an omnibus national phone survey, the 8-item scale is useful. However, the 12-item scale identified in the final study is preferable because of the identification of four subdimensions. The 8-item scale is

weighted heavily toward privacy-related records, which could limit its application. The 12-item scale encompasses more subdimensions of support for press access. More testing of the 12-item scale would likely yield subscales that would have strong enough internal reliability for analysis on their own.

Several scale factors were identified through the studies. In general, the surveys indicated two overall subdimensions for how people conceive access: public safety and privacy-oriented records. People are more supportive for press access to public records that provide a monitoring function of government and the community, such as crime records, infrastructure records, and government financial records. People are less supportive of records that have an element of personal privacy, whether that privacy is related to them or to a government official (e.g., officials' work e-mail).

This is an important distinction in how people think about access. For example, people may support a certain amount of secrecy in crime records when it involves a privacy element, such as the identification of a rape victim. However, people would also strongly support the dissemination of those records if they could make the community safer, such as alerting a neighborhood to a serial rapist. Therefore, this study suggests that people are most likely to support record dissemination policies that protect the community and provide a free exchange of information that can help them, but also protect the personal privacy of themselves and others.

When looked at more finely, the final survey provided further distinction among these factors, identifying four distinct subdimensions of support for access: governmental operations, privacy, crime, and public safety. The cross loadings further reinforce these concepts. For example, property tax records are deemed a governmental operations

record, but also load on privacy because they contain the assessed value and taxes paid for one's own home. Criminal background checks loaded on three factors: criminal records, public safety (e.g., finding out the background of one's babysitter), and privacy (e.g., others finding out about one's own criminal background).

Further refinement is needed on the subscales to improve internal reliability if they are to be used in future research for individual analyses. The Cronbach's alphas of .57 to .66 are not strong enough. By developing and testing more questions, as well as adding one or two more questions to each subscale, the reliability can be raised. Then researchers can compare, for example, factors related to people's support for privacy-oriented records as compared with public safety or governmental records.

This might be valuable in the debate about identify theft and personal privacy. While people might hesitate to support open driver's license records because of the privacy element, they may strongly support open disciplinary records against physicians for patient protection. Different kinds of people might be more sensitive to privacy records than other people.

Based on the studies, it appears that the scale produces similar correlational results with other variables regardless of whether people are asked about the press's access to public records or their own access. However, the focus on the press is the best approach to avoid kurtosis and skewness, and to ensure more variance in responses. In general, the data suggest that support is higher across items for individual access to information, which causes responses to cluster at the upper end of agreement.

Researchers interested in assessing the levels of access and public attitudes toward access (freedominfo.org, 2005) can adapt these questions to fit their study needs, either by paper questionnaire or phone survey.

Model testing

The data supported the political model in predicting support for press access, providing insight into the nature of the attitude construct. This study indicates that support for access is a political attitude, tied to one's engagement in the community and politics rather than perceived media importance or the power one holds.

Power model. The power expression protection hypothesis (Andsager, 2002) did not hold for this type of attitude. While on the surface some power values, such as income and power, are positively correlated with support for press access, other variables directly contradicted the hypothesis. Gender demonstrated no relationship to support for access. In the main survey data, not one of the eight power variables was related to support for press access when controlling for press support and attitudes toward community engagement. The data indicate that one's engagement in the community matters most, regardless of income or gender. It appears that community engagement mediates demographic variables.

A long line of research in free expression and First Amendment rights has demonstrated over and over the relationships between attitudes and demographics, but this study suggests that simple correlations are inadequate for getting to the heart of the matter. True, on the surface, income, education, and other indicators of power are related to support for press access, but contrary to the power expression protection hypothesis, they are confounding variables, not causal variables.

Despite the lack of evidence supporting the power model, these results do not suggest the power expression hypothesis is invalid. The hypothesis might hold true for other attitudes – such as support for free expression, from which the hypothesis was originally derived. As the data suggest, support for press access and support for free expression are similar in some ways but very different in others. For example, older people are less supportive than younger people of free expression but more supportive of access. Religiosity is strongly tied to support for free expression but not support for access.

Perhaps support for free expression involves one's willingness to let others be offensive and speak out in ways sometimes contrary to societal norms, such as through crude music lyrics, nude art, or flag burning. This tolerance-based attitude might be tied to emotional and morality issues, which might explain the strong correlations between political conservatism and religiosity with free expression (Andsager, 1995; Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale, 1978; Bobo & Licari, 1989; Lambe, 2004; Zalkind, Gaugler, & Schwartz, 1975).

Support for access, on the other hand, is not as closely tied to morality and emotional issues; it appears to be more representative of one's cognitive, analytic attitudes toward the press and government. Those who are more supportive and involved in the democratic process are more supportive of ways of continuing that participation through accessing information.

This illustrates the danger in applying broad generalities, or stereotypes, of demographics toward attitudes, particularly based on simple correlations found either through survey research or day-to-day encounters and anecdotes. The rich and powerful

might not support press access. An educated, wealthy businessman interested in politics only for monetary gain and influence might oppose a reporter's acquisition of corporate lawsuit documents. Meanwhile, the poor and uneducated might support access. An uneducated, struggling single mother might strongly support access to industrial toxic emission records if it affects the safety of her neighborhood.

Granted, some people might argue that those in power have more access to information for a variety of reasons, such as knowing where to get records and having the confidence and money to do so, which is probably true (e.g., digital divide). However, people's *attitudes* toward access appear beyond the scope of class stratification.

Media model. The media model, based on cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1982), also did not predict support for press access well. While newspaper importance was found to be positively related to support for press access across four studies, and television importance negatively related across four studies, when controlling for community engagement and other variables the relationships disappear. This study indicates that just because someone finds the newspaper an important source of news does not mean he or she supports press access, or even supports the press at all.

This study supports the limited media effects model (Lazarsfeld, 1948; Lee, 2005; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977) rather than a strong media effects model, at least for this attitudinal construct. While media importance might have noticeable effects on mean world syndrome, smoking, body image, etc., it appears not to influence support for press access.

As in the power model, it is difficult to apply a broad brush when it comes to support for access and media importance. Newspaper reading or value as a news source does not appear to be related to support for open government. Also, television does not appear to be negatively related to support for press access.

However, it is possible the media to play a role, even if indirectly. Once motivated to become politically engaged, people may seek out media for more information (Chaffee & Roser, 1986; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001, 2004). It appears that people who are more involved in their communities, and therefore more supportive of press access, also find the newspaper more important as a news source, perhaps to get information about their communities. However, someone who finds the newspaper important as a news source but is not involved in the community might not support press access.

Political model. The political model provided the best explanation for how people think about press access and is consistent with attitudinal theories (Bandura, 1986; Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Motivation and relevancy are key elements of attitudes, particularly political attitudes (Chaffee & Roser, 1986; Roser, 1990). People who are more engaged in their communities and politics are more likely to see access to government information as relevant and useful for their lives.

Also, people who support the press's right to report independently of government – regardless of whether they think newspapers or television are important news sources – are more likely to support the press's right to access information. Six studies found strong relationships between support for press rights and support for press access. The political model fit the data well through structural equation modeling. Support for access was

predicted by those who were more active in their communities and supportive of the press.

Political involvement and efficacy both were found to be positively related to support for press access, but when controlling for community engagement the relationship disappeared. Attitudes toward community engagement appear to mediate involvement and efficacy. Those who say they are interested in politics, but do not think it is important, are not supportive of access. These findings are consistent with previous research that has found political motivations tied to attitudes toward free expression and political tolerance (e.g., McLeod et al., 1991).

The fact that the political model could be replicated on two different data sets with two different sets of measures is encouraging and strengthens the argument for its application. More research is needed to continue developing the best predictive model. This one provides a good place to start.

Access attitudes

Based on the analysis of seven data sets, the scale development, and the model testing, we can make some conclusions about how people think about press access to government records:

1. Support for press access is a political attitude, affected by the motivation to be aware of what government is doing in order to better participate in politics and community. Those who are engaged in their communities want the press to have access to government information. Motivation is tied closely to behavior (Bandura, 1986) and attitudes (Roser, 1990). This survey research only can assert correlational relationships, not causal relationships.

2. Support for press access is tied to how people *think* about the press but not necessarily how they *use* the press. Those who support the press also support journalists' right to access information. Press support, however, is not reliant on whether a person finds the media as important news sources. People may support or not support the press regardless of whether they subscribe to a newspaper or watch television.
3. Support for press access is an attitude that crosses racial, gender, economic, and class boundaries. While it appears – based on simple correlations – that older, educated whites might, in general, be more supportive of access than young, uneducated racial minorities, it is important to note that it is not the age, education, or ethnicity that is the cause of that relationship. The data indicate that in general, older, educated whites tend to be more politically engaged, which accounts for the higher level of support for access. Indeed, there are young, uneducated minorities engaged in their communities who are more supportive of access than the old, educated whites who are disengaged in their communities. Researchers should go beyond demographic relationships and examine more closely people's psychological motivations.
4. Support for press access contains several subdimensions that help explain the seemingly contradictory positions of the public. Scholars and journalists are puzzled when they see polls suggesting that Americans strongly support access in the abstract but also support the closing of records for privacy issues or national security (Driscoll, et al., 2000; First Amendment Center, 2002). In general, people tend to support access to records that make them and their

communities safe, but oppose the dissemination of information that invades someone's privacy. This becomes problematic when dealing with records that engender both competing components, such as criminal background records.

Implications

This study raises implications for politicians, the press, scholars, and society.

First, with the development of a reliable and psychometrically valid scale that can measure attitudes toward access, scholars can explore new avenues of research in how people view the press, government, and democratic rights. Furthermore, this measurement instrument can be applied in paper or by telephone, among different groups and cultures, or longitudinally to see how attitudes change over time.

This study also provides a theoretical framework to explain why the public's support for access has fluctuated over time, and potentially predict its level in the future. According to the political model, community engagement is related to support for press access. This study, based on relational data, can not determine that for sure, but it opens a door that deserves further research because of the potential implications.

If, as Putnam (2000) and others predict, civic engagement and political participation continue to decline, then support for access also might decline. This makes research into civic engagement even more important because declining community engagement could lead to greater apathy and increased secrecy, a threat to democratic self-governance.

However, according to the political model, as press support and engagement increase, so might support for access. As people are more concerned about government

actions restricting freedoms, the more supportive they are of checks on government, such as access to public records. This could explain attitude shifts in history and predict support in the future.

During the early 1950s, following increased government secrecy because of World War II and the Cold War, journalists and others called for more open government, leading to the beginning of the freedom of information movement by publication of “The Right to Know” by Harold Cross (1953). The book’s preface began strongly: “Public business is the public’s business. The people have a right to know. Freedom of information is their just heritage. Without that the citizens of a democracy have but changed their kings.” (p. 1)

Gradually, a swell of public sentiment toward government accountability peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s, caused in large part because of Vietnam, Cold War secrecy, the civil rights movement, and Watergate (McKay, 2004; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977; Uhm, 2005). Citizens were interested in what their government was doing and were supportive of the press (e.g., Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein), so public support for open government was high, leading to the adoption of the federal Freedom of Information Act in 1966 and a host of state public records laws into the early 1970s (see Citizen Access Project, www.citizenaccess.org).

However, political upheaval and interest declined. Since the early 1980s, researchers have noted a steady decrease in civic engagement (Putnam, 2000), a spike following September 11, 2001, and then a decline back to lower rates (Schmierbach, Boyle, & McLeod, 2005). National election studies show that overall interest and trust in government and politics have dropped steadily since the 1970s (Bartels, 2002), and the

way people see their own communities and neighborhoods changed (Jeffres, 2002). During that time, scholars noticed Congress and legislatures adopting privacy laws and policies reducing or gutting the public records laws they passed 25 years earlier (Blanchard, 2002; Chance, 2000; Halstuk, 1999; Ross, 2001, 2004).

It is possible, however, that the interest in governmental affairs might be increasing again since the U.S. war in Iraq began in 2003. Polls show two-thirds of the public are unhappy with the federal government and the war (Roper, 2006). Voter turnout in the 2004 election, 59.6%, was the highest since 1968. A Pew Center poll reported that 84% of Americans followed the 2004 election returns on election night, and more than half of those stayed up past midnight (Pew, 2004). Polls and research show that while anger toward the government is rising (Chanley et al., 2000), people's attitudes toward the press remain the same (Pew, 2005).

With this surge of interest in political affairs has come bolstered freedom of information activism. In 2004 U.S. journalism organizations formed the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government to advocate for access. In 2005 media organizations began national Sunshine Week to highlight the issue (<http://www.sunshineweek.org>).

Countries from around the world, including England and Mexico, have adopted freedom of information laws, and the access movement is spreading to Asia and other parts of the world (Coronel, 2001; Hasan, 2005; Relly, 2005; also see www.freedominfo.org). In 2005, a new academic electronic journal, *Open Government: A Journal on Freedom of Information*, was launched (www.opengovjournal.org).

If people become more engaged in their government and communities – perhaps out of anger or concern – and remain supportive of the press, then based on the political model from this study, support for access might increase.

Increasing support for access

Results from this study also can be used by librarians, journalists, politicians, and citizens who are interested in fostering democratic principles and freedom of information.

One of the underlying objectives of attitudinal research is to better understand how attitudes are changed through persuasion. Different constituencies often battle for citizen approval, attempting to sway public opinion toward their purpose. This is true in any political context, including access to government records. Some people want them closed, and others want them open.

Based on attitudinal research and theories (Bohner & Wanke, 2002; Cialdini, 2001; Kunda, 1999; Petty & Wegener, 1998; Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001), different persuasive messages are more effective than others, depending in part on the attitude construct. The elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) suggests that attitude change occurs through one of two ways: the emotion-based peripheral route, or the cognitive central route.

This study found that support for access is conceived in both of those ways: through a fear-based factor focused on privacy invasion and a cognitive-based factor focused on governmental operations and public safety.

If someone is uninvolved in an issue, such as access to government records, then they are more likely to rely on peripheral cues for how they think, such as rules of thumb and credibility of the source. Their attitudes are more easily swayed by authority figures

raising dangers of open records, such as identity theft or terrorism. Some research (Fiske, 1980; Meffert et al., 2006) indicates that negative messages (e.g., “access could lead to identity theft”) are more persuasive than positive messages (“access is good for democracy”).

Cognitive arguments by First Amendment proponents and the media are ineffective for unmotivated people who are not paying close attention to the issue. Instead, the peripheral route demands messages that are quick, simple, visual, and emotional. Television public service announcements highlighting lives saved because of public records might be effective.

On the other hand, people who are more involved in an issue because it is more relevant to their lives, are more likely to hold more strongly to their attitudes and think about the subject analytically (Petty & Wegener, 1998). Therefore, under the elaboration likelihood model, people who find access to government information more relevant to their lives, such as those who are more engaged in their communities and politics, are less likely to be swayed by emotional factors in their attitudes toward access to public records. Also, their attitudes toward access are more likely to be stronger and long-lasting compared with people who do not find access to records relevant to their lives.

For these types of people, effective messages regarding access should be cognitive and analytical, such as providing a check on government, keeping citizens in the know, public safety, and allowing journalists the ability to uncover societal ills. Attitudes that are based on logic, through the central route, are more likely to endure and be stronger. The goal for access proponents would be to get people to think analytically about the issue.

The best way to get people all people – engaged or not engaged in community – to think analytically is through relevancy, which has been found to be more effective than repetition (McElroy & Seta, 2003). Therefore, messages describing how access to public records is relevant to the average citizen are likely to cause people to think about access, agree with its importance analytically, and maintain that support.

Some examples might include describing real-life people helped by access to information, such as in checking out about a neighborhood before buying a house, researching family history, or identifying unsafe traffic intersections in the community. Cognitive messages are most effective in print, such as newspaper stories.

If journalists, politicians, educators, or others want to increase support for open government, then it appears that increasing community engagement is essential, potentially through civics education (Andsager & Ross, 1999; Bowles, 1989; Murphy, 2004) and better quality public affairs journalism (Entman, 1989; Graber, 1988). Based on this study, the media's direct effect on support for access is tenuous, but increasing community engagement, such as efforts promoted through civic journalism, might help (McLeod, Koskicki, & McLeod, 2002; Rosen, 1999).

Limitations

Attitudes are difficult to measure and can change depending on question wording, who asks the questions, and how they are asked. Because of the limited budget, inexperienced undergraduate students conducted the bulk of the surveying for extra credit. Despite training and monitoring, it is likely measurement error was introduced by

a lack of consistency or other problems. Difficulty in having callers show up when scheduled led to extending the survey from one week to two.

That might explain a few of the puzzling findings in the final AccessNorthwest survey, regarding political ideology and fear of privacy invasion. Fear of privacy invasion was found in the final study to be positively related to support for press access, which was counter to two of the other surveys, which had found negative relationships. Those who are fearful of privacy invasion should be less supportive of access (Cuillier, 2004).

One potential explanation is question-order effect. The social desirability questions directly preceded the fear of privacy questions, which might have influenced responses. Surveys regarding political subjects are particularly vulnerable to question-order effect and context (Bishop et al., 1982).

Or, perhaps those most supportive of access – those who are more involved in their communities and politics –also are more likely to be aware of identity theft issues and privacy invasion than those who are not involved in their communities. Their increased awareness of this growing problem perhaps has caused them to be more fearful of privacy invasion but still supportive of access to government. The reason for the discrepant finding is unknown.

The fact that in the final survey political conservatives were found to be more supportive of access than liberals also was puzzling, because across five studies those who were more *liberal* were more supportive of press access. Also, the modeling of the Scripps-Howard data indicated that liberals were more supportive of access, contrary to the main data set.

The political ideology measure in the main survey might have been influenced by question-order effect. For example, given the heavy political nature of the survey – more so than the other surveys – some respondents might have been influenced by the urge to be evenhanded (Dillman, 2000). For example, conservatives might have wanted to downplay the impression that their previous answers were based on their political ideology, so they might have provided a more liberal score when answering the political ideology question.

Another explanation might be that political ideology is not a central factor for predicting support for access. Liberal or conservative, what might matter most is one's attitudes toward the press and politics. Indeed, access proponents include liberals, who see open government as a check on power, as well as conservatives, who see access as a check on big government. Support for access might cross ideological borders.

Another limitation of the methodology is the low cooperation rate on the telephone surveys (24% in the 2002 Washington survey and 24% in the 2006 national survey). This introduces the possibility that people who would answer much differently did not participate in the study, limiting its generalizability to Americans who choose to do phone surveys, not the U.S. public overall. Some research indicates that low response rates should not cause significant differences in answers (Curtin, Press, & Singer, 2000; Keeter et al., 2000; Smith, 2003), but it is disconcerting nonetheless.

It would have been ideal to include more questions to measure more constructs in relation to support for press access, such as locus of control, need for cognition, authoritarianism, political apathy, and trust in government. Those and other variables will need to be included in future studies. Also, more questions should have been included to

measure some of the key constructs, such as age, education, income, and media use, in order to utilize the full power of structural equation modeling through latent constructs, rather than relying on single items for path models.

Future research

Much more research is needed to fully test the support for access scale and the political model, and to examine what causes support for access to increase or decrease.

First, the study should be replicated to improve the scale. More items should be added and some questions refined to improve the internal reliability of the subscales and to build a larger item pool from which to choose questions. With better subscales, researchers can closely examine factors related to support for access to privacy-related records compared with public safety records.

More factors need to be examined in relation to support for press access to increase variance accounted for by the political model. For example, perhaps trust in government is closely related to support for press access.

Also, multiple indicators should be added to the studies for the model constructs. This would enable analysis to go beyond path modeling and include the power of a complete structural equation modeling analysis with latent variables.

More studies are needed to examine the relationship between support for access and political variables, such as efficacy, involvement, participation, apathy, cynicism, and complacency.

Experiments might help provide insight into what causes support for access to increase or decrease. Related to this is examining what kinds of media coverage increase

or decrease support for access. This study did not find news importance related to attitudes, but maybe particular kinds of coverage are related. Perhaps political investigative stories uncovering corruption – or just a simple city council story that makes an issue relevant to the reader – would increase support for press access, while stories about identity theft or personal privacy would decrease support.

In addition to survey research and experimental research, qualitative studies would enhance understanding of how people think about access to public information. Focus groups, textual analysis, and interviews provide more context for creating better surveys, asking better research questions, and understanding the nuances of how people think about democratic principles and press rights (Chong, 1993; Dillon, 1991; Immerwahr & Doble, 1982). Qualitative research would provide insight into how political motivations relate to support for access.

Finally, support for access should be studied across professions and cultures. Perhaps politicians think differently about the issue. Are citizens in nations where government is particularly salient (e.g., Iraq) more supportive of access to information? Or are there cultural differences that make the political model meaningless in other cultures? These are questions that must be answered by comparative international studies.

Conclusion

This study suggests that more than anything – including societal power or media importance – Americans' attitudes toward open government are related to their engagement in government and their communities. Journalists and other freedom of

information advocates who lament increasing government secrecy and public apathy toward access will not find simple solutions.

Researchers can use the support for press access scale to examine attitudes toward freedom of information over time and among different communities, professions, and nations. This preliminary research opens doors to new avenues of scholarly inquiry for examining how people think about the media, government, and democratic principles. Also, this study provides direction for journalists and open-government advocates for increasing support for access through persuasive messages.

Even more substantial than persuasion, though, based on this research the press may consider pursuing two paths for fostering support for access: 1) building the public's trust in the media, and 2) enhancing community engagement. The media might fulfill their social responsibility of engendering community engagement through civic journalism and political news coverage that inspires citizens, not drives them away.

These are not new ideas. Nearly 50 years ago Edward R. Murrow, a broadcast journalist and information director for John F. Kennedy, realized the responsibility the media owed the public to foster democratic self-governance. As a speaker at the 1958 Radio-Television News Directors Association convention, Murrow urged the crowd of network executives to apply some of the power of television to furthering community engagement and citizen knowledge.

“This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire,” he said. “But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise it is merely wires and lights in a box. There is a great and perhaps decisive battle to be fought against ignorance, intolerance, and indifference.”

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APPENDIX A
HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORMS

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Cullier
Communication, WSU Pullman (2520)

FROM: Malathi Jandhyala (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3140) MJ

DATE: 14 February 2006

SUBJECT: Approved Human Subjects Protocol - New Protocol

Your Human Subjects Review Summary Form and additional information provided for the proposal titled "Access Attitudes: National Phone Survey of Public Opinions Toward Press Access to Government Records," IRB File Number 8965-a was reviewed for the protection of the subjects participating in the study. Based on the information received from you, the WSU-IRB **approved** your human subjects protocol on **14 February 2006**.

IRB approval indicates that the study protocol as presented in the Human Subjects Form by the investigator, is designed to adequately protect the subjects participating in the study. This approval does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to ethical considerations involved in the utilization of human subjects participating in the study.

This approval expires on 13 February 2007. If any significant changes are made to the study protocol you must notify the IRB before implementation. Request for modification forms are available online at <http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/Forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this approval letter and a copy of the approved protocol must be kept with any copies of signed consent forms by the principal investigator for THREE years after completion of the project.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Research Compliance Office (Campus Zip 3140), faxed to (509) 335-1676, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: NEW
Review Category: XMT
Date Received: 1 February 2006

OGRD No.: NF
Agency: NA

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Cuillier
Communication, WSU Pullman (2520)

FROM: Malathi Jandhyala (for) Cindy Corbett, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3140) *MC*

DATE: 25 August 2005

SUBJECT: Approved Human Subjects Protocol - New Protocol

Your Human Subjects Review Summary Form and additional information provided for the proposal titled "Effectiveness of Access Mini-Audit Projects in Journalism Courses," IRB File Number **8677-a** was reviewed for the protection of the subjects participating in the study. Based on the information received from you, the WSU-IRB **approved** your human subjects protocol on **25 August 2005**.

IRB approval indicates that the study protocol as presented in the Human Subjects Form by the investigator, is designed to adequately protect the subjects participating in the study. This approval does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to ethical considerations involved in the utilization of human subjects participating in the study.

This approval expires on 24 August 2006. If any significant changes are made to the study protocol you must notify the IRB before implementation. Request for modification forms are available online at <http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/Forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this approval letter and a copy of the approved protocol must be kept with any copies of signed consent forms by the principal investigator for THREE years after completion of the project.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.


If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Research Compliance Office (Campus Zip 3140), faxed to (509) 335-1676, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: NEW
Review Category: XMT
Date Received: 2 August 2005

OGRD No.: NF
Agency: NA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeff Joireman and Mark Konty
Psychology, WSU Pullman (4820)

FROM: Malathi Jandhyala (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3140) 

DATE: 28 March 2005

SUBJECT: Approved Human Subjects Protocol - New Protocol

Your Human Subjects Review Summary Form and additional information provided for the proposal titled "*Fear and Values in the Age of Terrorism*," IRB File Number **8461-a** was reviewed for the protection of the subjects participating in the study. Based on the information received from you, the WSU-IRB **approved** your human subjects protocol on **28 March 2005**.

IRB approval indicates that the study protocol as presented in the Human Subjects Form by the investigator, is designed to adequately protect the subjects participating in the study. This approval does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to ethical considerations involved in the utilization of human subjects participating in the study.

This approval expires on 27 March 2006. If any significant changes are made to the study protocol you must notify the IRB before implementation. Request for modification forms are available online at <http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/Forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this approval letter and a copy of the approved protocol must be kept with any copies of signed consent forms by the principal investigator for THREE years after completion of the project.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Research Compliance Office (Campus Zip 3140), faxed to (509) 335-1676, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: NEW
Review Category: FB
Date Received: 11 March 2005

OGRD No.: NF
Agency: NA

4020

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Cuillier
Communication, WSU Pullman (2520)

FROM: Malathi Jandhyala (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3140) MJ

DATE: 3 May 2004

SUBJECT: Approved Human Subjects Protocol - New Protocol

Your Human Subjects Review Summary Form and additional information provided for the proposal titled "Effect of Media Law Classes on Student Attitudes toward Press Rights," IRB File Number 7027-a was reviewed for the protection of the subjects participating in the study. Based on the information received from you, the WSU-IRB **approved** your human subjects protocol on **3 May 2004**.

IRB approval indicates that the study protocol as presented in the Human Subjects Form by the investigator, is designed to adequately protect the subjects participating in the study. This approval does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to ethical considerations involved in the utilization of human subjects participating in the study.

This approval expires on 2 May 2005. If any significant changes are made to the study protocol you must notify the IRB before implementation. Request for modification forms are available online at <http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/Forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this approval letter and a copy of the approved protocol must be kept with any copies of signed consent forms by the principal investigator for THREE years after completion of the project.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Research Compliance Office (Campus Zip 3140), faxed to (509) 335-1676, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: NEW
Review Category: XMT
Date Received: 27 April 2004

OGRD No.: NF
Agency: NA

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Guillier
Communication, WSU Pullman (2520)

FROM: Misty Cato (for) Michael Hendryx, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3140)

DATE: 14 October 2002

SUBJECT: Approved Human Subjects Protocol

Your Human Subjects Review Summary Form and additional information provided for the proposal titled "Public support for press access to public records and its relation to concern for privacy," IRB File Number 5252-a was reviewed for the protection of the subjects participating in the study. Based on the information received from you, the WSU-IRB **approved** your human subjects protocol on **14 October 2002**.

IRB approval indicates that the study protocol as presented in the Human Subjects Form by the investigator, is designed to adequately protect the subjects participating in the study. This approval does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to ethical considerations involved in the utilization of human subjects participating in the study.

This approval expires on 13 October 2003. If any significant changes are made to the study protocol you must notify the IRB before implementation. Request for modification forms are available online at <http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/Forms.asp>.

In accordance with federal regulations, this approval letter and a copy of the approved protocol must be kept with any copies of signed consent forms by the principal investigator for THREE years after completion of the project.

This institution has a Human Subjects Assurance Number M1344 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections. WSU's Assurance of Compliance with the Department of Health and Human Services Regulations Regarding the Use of Human Subjects can be reviewed on OGRD's homepage (<http://www.ogrd.wsu.edu/>) under "Electronic Forms," OGRD Memorandum #6.

If you have questions, please contact Misty Cato at OGRD (509) 335-9661. Any revised materials can be mailed to OGRD (Campus Zip 3140), faxed to (509) 335-1676, or in some cases by electronic mail, to ogrd@mail.wsu.edu. If materials are sent by email attachment, please make sure they are in a standard file type, (i.e., ASCII text [.txt], or Rich Text Format [.rtf])

Review Type: NEW
Review Category: XMT
Date Received: 8 October 2002

OGRD No.: NF
Agency: NA

APPENDIX B
NATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY ITEMS (2004)

National college student survey items (2004)

$N = 614$

(R) = Recoded

1-7 scale, with 1 indicating less support and 7 indicating greater support

Support for press access (8 items, $\alpha = .75$)

1. The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.
2. Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be made available to the press.
3. Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.
4. Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.
5. Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.
6. Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.
7. Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.
8. Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.

Support for free expression (8 items, $\alpha = .76$)

1. The First Amendment goes too far. (R)
2. People should be prohibited from expressing unpopular opinions. (R)
3. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.
4. People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement.
5. People should be allowed to put on their Web sites instructions for how to make simple bombs.
6. People should be prohibited from saying things that are offensive to religious groups. (R)
7. People should be able to criticize the government's war on terrorism.
8. People should be allowed to display in a public place art that has content that might be offensive to others.

Support for press rights (7 items, $\alpha = .71$)

1. Newspapers should be allowed to criticize public officials.
2. Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval.
3. Newspapers should be allowed to freely criticize the U.S. military about its strategy and performance.
4. I respect news reporters at The New York Times.
5. Newspapers should be allowed to print obscene words, such as the F--- word.
6. The press plays a crucial role in society.
7. The press has too much freedom to publish whatever it wants. (R)

Fear of privacy invasion (5 items, alpha = .88)

1. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me on the Internet.
2. I am concerned about the information about me that is held in computer databases by marketing companies.
3. I am concerned that access to public information increases my risk of someone charging purchases on credit cards in my name.
4. I am concerned about my privacy being invaded.
5. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me that is available to the press through public records.

Media importance

On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important, please rate how important each medium is to you as a source of news and information.

Radio

Television

Newspaper

Magazine

Internet

Education (class standing)

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate student

Political ideology

Regarding your political orientation, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being more liberal and 7 being more conservative, please circle a number that corresponds with your political ideology.

Religiosity

Regarding your attitude toward religion, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not religious and 7 being very religious, please circle a number that corresponds with how religious you feel you are.

APPENDIX C

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SURVEY ITEMS (2005)

Washington State University college student survey items (2005)

$N = 171$

(R) = Recoded

1-7 scale, with 1 indicating less support and 7 indicating greater support

Support for press access (8 items, $\alpha = .71$)

1. The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.
2. Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be made available to the press.
3. Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.
4. Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the press.
5. Driver's license records, which include name, address, height, and weight, should be made available to the press.
6. Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the press.
7. Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.
8. Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.

Support for free expression (8 items, $\alpha = .76$)

1. The First Amendment goes too far. (R)
2. People should be prohibited from expressing unpopular opinions. (R)
3. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.
4. People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement.
5. People should be allowed to put on their Web sites instructions for how to make simple bombs.
6. People should be prohibited from saying things that are offensive to religious groups. (R)
7. People should be able to criticize the government's war on terrorism.
8. People should be allowed to display in a public place art that has content that might be offensive to others.

Support for press rights (7 items, $\alpha = .71$)

1. Newspapers should be allowed to criticize public officials.
2. Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval.
3. Newspapers should be allowed to freely criticize the U.S. military about its strategy and performance.
4. I respect news reporters at The New York Times.
5. Newspapers should be allowed to print obscene words, such as the F--- word.
6. The press plays a crucial role in society.
7. The press has too much freedom to publish whatever it wants. (R)

Fear of privacy invasion (5 items, alpha = .88)

1. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me on the Internet.
2. I am concerned about the information about me that is held in computer databases by marketing companies.
3. I am concerned that access to public information increases my risk of someone charging purchases on credit cards in my name.
4. I am concerned about my privacy being invaded.
5. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me that is available to the press through public records.

Media importance

(Not included)

Education (class standing)

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate student

Political ideology

Regarding your political orientation, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being more liberal and 7 being more conservative, please circle a number that corresponds with your political ideology.

Religiosity

Regarding your attitude toward religion, on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being not religious and 7 being very religious, please circle a number that corresponds with how religious you feel you are.

APPENDIX D

PALOUSE COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY ITEMS (2005)

Palouse college student survey items (2005)

$N = 114$

(R) = Recoded

1-7 scale, with 1 indicating less support and 7 indicating greater support

Support for press access (8 items, $\alpha = .78$)

1. The public should have access to the annual salaries of government employees.
2. Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the public.
3. Public utility records, which include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the public.
4. Property tax records, including a home's value and property taxes assessed, should be made available to the public.
5. Driver's license records, which include name and address, should be made available to the public.
6. Records detailing someone's criminal past should be made available to the public.
7. Public records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the public.
8. Public records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the public.

Support for free expression (8 items, $\alpha = .78$)

1. The First Amendment goes too far. (R)
2. People should be prohibited from expressing unpopular opinions. (R)
3. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.
4. People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement.
5. People should be allowed to put on their Web sites instructions for how to make simple bombs.
6. People should be prohibited from saying things that are offensive to religious groups. (R)
7. People should be able to criticize the government's war on terrorism.
8. People should be allowed to display in a public place art that has content that might be offensive to others.

Support for press rights (7 items, $\alpha = .76$)

1. Newspapers should be allowed to criticize public officials.
2. Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval.
3. Newspapers should be allowed to freely criticize the U.S. military about its strategy and performance.
4. I respect news reporters at The New York Times.
5. Newspapers should be allowed to print obscene words, such as the F--- word.
6. The press plays a crucial role in society.
7. The press has too much freedom to publish whatever it wants. (R)

Political involvement (4 items, alpha = .90)

1. I like to stay informed about the elections.
2. I'm interested in election information.
3. I actively seek out information concerning the elections.
4. I pay attention to election information

Political efficacy (single item)

1. I have a real say in what the government does.

Media importance

On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important, please rate how important each medium is to you as a source of news and information.

Radio

Television

Newspaper

Magazine

Internet

Political ideology

Regarding your political orientation, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being more liberal and 7 being more conservative, please circle a number that corresponds with your political ideology.

Religiosity

Regarding your attitude toward religion, on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being not religious and 7 being very religious, please circle a number that corresponds with how religious you feel you are.

APPENDIX E

FIRST AMENDMENT CENTER NATIONAL SURVEY ITEMS (2002)

First Amendment Center national survey items (2002)

$N = 1,000$

(R) = Recoded

1-4 scale, with 1 indicating less support and 4 indicating greater support

Support for press access (8 items, alpha = .68)

“Now I’m going to read to you specific types of local government records that some citizens may seek access to. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that citizens should have access to such information...”

1. The records of health inspections conducted at local restaurants.
2. The names of sex offenders that are registered with the sheriff’s office or police department.
3. Transcripts of city council meetings.
4. Records of local government officials’ expense accounts.
5. Police reports of crimes committed in the local community.
6. The names of persons arrested for committing crimes in the local community, and the crimes for which they are being charged.
7. Employment records, including salary and benefits, of local school officials.
8. Local real estate records, including the sale price, assessed value, and taxes paid on all residential homes.

Support for free expression (11 items, alpha = .81)

“The U.S. Constitution protects certain rights, but not everyone considers each right important. I am going to read you some rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. For each, please tell me how important it is that you have that right...”

1. The right to assemble, march, protest or petition the government?
2. The right to speak freely about whatever you want?
3. The right to practice the religion of your choice?
4. The right to practice no religion?

“Now I’m going to read you some ways that people might exercise their First Amendment right of free speech.”

5. People should be allowed to express unpopular opinions.
6. People should be allowed to say things in public that might be offensive to religious groups.
7. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.
8. People should be allowed to say things in public that might be offensive to racial groups.
9. People should be allowed to display in a public place art that has content that might be offensive to others.

“Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.”

10. Any group that wants to should be allowed to hold a rally for a cause or issue even if it may be offensive to others in the community.
11. Muslims should be allowed to hold a rally for a cause or issue even if it may be offensive to others in the community.

Support for press rights (2 items, alpha = .61)

1. Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of a story.
2. Newspapers should be allowed to freely criticize the U.S. military about its strategy and performance.

APPENDIX F

ACCESSNORTHWEST WASHINGTON STATE SURVEY ITEMS (2002)

AccessNorthwest Washington State survey items (2002)

$N = 402$

(R) = Recoded

1-4 scale, with 1 indicating less support and 4 indicating greater support

Support for press access (5 items, alpha = .60)

“Now I will ask some questions about media access to public information. I’m going to read you a list of specific types of government records that the press may access. For each, please tell me whether you strongly agree, mildly agree, mildly disagree, or strongly disagree that the press should have access to such information. First...”

1. Local real estate records, including the address, sale price, assessed value, and taxes paid on homes.
2. Driver’s license records that contain names, addresses, dates of birth, and weight.
3. Names of people arrested for committing crimes in the local area and the crimes for which they are being charged.
4. Records of public utilities that provide water, electricity and other services that contain customer names, addresses and amount of water or power used.
5. Traffic accident reports prepared by police officers that include names of people involved, date, location, and extent of injuries.

Support for free expression (1 items)

1. Does the First Amendment go too far? (R)

Fear of privacy invasion (4 items, alpha = .75)

“Now I’m going to ask a few questions about your perceptions about privacy. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree.”

1. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me that is available to the public and the press through public records.
2. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me on the Internet.
3. I am concerned about the information about me that is held in computer databases by marketing companies.
4. I am concerned that access to public information increases my risk of being a victim of identity theft, such as someone charging purchases on credit cards in my name.

Media use

On average, about how many hours do you spend watching television every day?

- None
- 1 to 2
- 3 to 4
- 5 to 6
- 7 or more

Do you subscribe to a daily newspaper?

Yes _____

No _____

If so, how many days a week do you read the news within it? _____

What is your primary news source?

Newspaper

Television

Radio

Internet

Friends/relatives

Other _____

APPENDIX G

SCRIPPS-HOWARD NATIONAL SURVEY ITEMS (2006)

Scripps-Howard National Survey Items (2006)

$N = 1,007$

(R) = Recoded

1-3 scale, with 1 indicating less support and 3 indicating greater support

Support for press access (2 items, alpha = .34)

1. How important is public access to government records?
2. Should government records be public or protected?

Support for free expression (1 item)

Does the First Amendment go too far? (R)

Support for press rights (1 item)

1. Should cameras be allowed during court trials?

Attitudes toward community engagement (2 items, alpha = .84)

(3-point scale)

1. How interested are you in local and state government?
2. How interested are you in federal government?

Media use

How do you get information about state and local government?

- Newspaper (coded 1)
- Television (coded 0)

Political ideology (5-point scale, with 5 denoting conservatism)

Are you conservative or liberal?

- Very conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Middle-of-the-road
- Somewhat liberal
- Very liberal

APPENDIX H

ACCESSNORTHWEST NATIONAL ACCESS SURVEY ITEMS (2006)

AccessNorthwest national access survey items (2006)

$N = 403$

(R) = Recoded

0-10 scale, with 0 indicating less support and 10 indicating greater support

Support for press access (12-item scale, $\alpha = .75$)

“For the following types of government records, please indicate whether you think the press should be allowed access to them or not. Zero means you strongly disagree that the press should have access to them and 10 is that you strongly agree.”

1. The names and addresses of registered sex offenders.
2. Records of local government officials' expense accounts.
3. Government records detailing problems with medical physicians.
4. Government records that identify the type, amount, and location of hazardous chemicals.
5. The annual salaries of public employees.
6. Records detailing someone's criminal past.
7. Government records explaining vulnerabilities of dams.
8. Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation.
9. Local government officials' work e-mail.
10. Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes.
11. Driver's license records, which include a person's name, address, height, and weight.
12. Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses.

Support for free expression (8 items, $\alpha = .72$)

1. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.
2. People should be able to criticize the government's war on terrorism.
3. People should be allowed to display in a public place art that has content that might be offensive.
4. People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement.
5. People should be prohibited from saying things in public that might be offensive to religious groups. (R)
6. People should be allowed to put on their Web sites instructions for how to make simple bombs.
7. The First Amendment goes too far. (R)
8. People should be prohibited from expressing unpopular opinions. (R)

Support for press rights (3 items, alpha = .70)

1. Newspapers should be allowed to criticize public officials. (Press1)
2. Newspapers should be allowed to freely publish stories without government approval. (Press2)
3. Newspapers should be allowed to freely criticize the U.S. military for its performance. (Press3)

Fear of privacy invasion (3 items, alpha = .84)

1. I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me on the Internet.
2. I am concerned about the information about me that is held in databases by marketing companies.
3. I am concerned about my privacy being invaded.

Political involvement (4 items, alpha = .83)

1. I'm interested in election information.
2. I pay attention to election information.
3. I actively seek out information concerning the elections.
4. I like to stay informed about the elections.

Attitudes toward community engagement (6 items, alpha = .81)

“On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not important at all and 10 being very important, the level of importance the following activities have in your life.”

1. Giving blood. (CE1)
2. Signing community petitions. (CE2)
3. Attending public meetings, rallies, or speeches. (CE3)
4. Contacting and talking to elected officials. (CE4)
5. Contributing money to a political or public interest campaign. (CE5)
6. Volunteering for a community organization. (CE6)

Political efficacy (3 items, alpha = .71)

1. Voting gives people an effective way to influence what the government does.
2. I can make a difference if I participate in the election process.
3. I have a real say in what the government does.

Schwartz Power Value Items (4 items, alpha = .73)

“Next I will read a number of things that people might value. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being opposed to your values and 10 being of supreme importance to your values, please rate the extent to which each value is important to you.”

1. Social power
2. Wealth
3. Authority
4. Preserving my public image

Social desirability (6 items, alpha = .71)

1. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
3. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
4. I like to gossip at times.
5. I can remember playing sick to get out of something.
6. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.

Media importance

“On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not at all important and 10 being very important, state the number for each of the following media for how important they are to you as a news and information source.”

1. Radio
2. Television
3. Newspaper (News1)
4. Magazine
5. Internet

“On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not at all important and 10 being very important, how much would you say you read newspapers for public affairs stories?” (News2)

“On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not at all important and 10 being very important, how much would you say you watch television for entertainment?”

Demographics

Sex (circle one) Male Female

Age (in years) _____

Race

How would you describe your race or ethnic background? (circle one or more)

Caucasian

African American

Asian

Hispanic

Middle Eastern

Native American

Pacific Islander

Other _____

Political ideology

Regarding your political orientation, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being more liberal and 10 being more conservative, please state a number that corresponds with your political ideology.

Religiosity

Regarding your attitude toward religion, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not religious and 10 being very religious, please circle a number that corresponds with how religious you feel you are.

Education

What was the last grade of school you completed?

- Some high school or less
- High school
- Some college
- College four-year degree
- Some graduate school
- Graduate school

Income

For classification purposes only, is the total yearly income of all the members of your family now living at home more than \$40,000 or less than \$40,000?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$40,000 |
| IF LESS THAN \$40,000 | IF MORE THAN \$40,000 |
| Under \$10,000 | \$40,000 to \$50,000 |
| \$10,000 to \$20,000 | \$50,000 to \$60,000 |
| \$20,000 to \$30,000 | \$60,000 to \$70,000 |
| \$30,000 to \$40,000 | \$70,000 to \$100,000 |
| | \$100,000 or more |

Do you or anyone in your household work for government?

Yes/no

APPENDIX I
ORIGINAL ACCESS SCALE ITEM POOL

Original Support for Press Access Item Pool

Abstract access support

- AA1. It is important that government records be made freely available to the press.
- AA2. Laws such as the federal Freedom of Information Act should be protected at all cost. (Removed: FOI unknown to many people)
- AA3. It is OK for government to keep records secret if it deems necessary.
- AA4. Making government records available to the press keeps the government honest.
- AA5. Democracy requires that government operates openly.
- AA6. People should have a right to receive copies of government records that specifically mention them by name.* (Removed: “Them” vague)
- AA7. Journalists conducting news stories need to have access to government records to do their jobs.*
- AA8. In our democracy, it is important for the government to give the press all the details on national security threats.***
- AA9. The government has a right to withhold information from the press when it comes down to protecting the public from national security threats.***
- AA10. The government has the right to withhold information from the press no matter what the reason.
- AA11. National security concerns trump the press’s right to know.

Access to privacy-oriented records

- AP1. The press should have access to the annual salaries of public employees.
- AP2. Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation, should be made available to the press.
- AP3. Property tax records, including the value of a person’s home and how much was paid in property taxes, should be available to the press.
- AP4. Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses, should be available to the press.
- AP5. Records detailing someone’s criminal past should be made available to the press.
- AP6. Drivers license records, which include a person’s name, address, height and weight, should be made available to the press.
- AP7. Names of people who donate to political campaigns should be made available to the press.
- AP8. Records detailing the criminal background of people should be made available to the press.
- AP9. Names of juveniles charged with crimes should be available to the press.
- AP10. Adoption records should be made available to the press.
- AP11. Names of people who serve on juries should be made available to the press.
- AP12. Journalists should be able to check police records to find names and addresses of people arrested for drunken driving.**

- AP13. Journalists should be able to check motor vehicle records for names and addresses of people who own a specific make and model of car.
(Removed: Make and model not well-known)
- AP14. Pet license records that include owner addresses and name should be made available to the press.
- AP15. Journalists should be able to get copies of autopsy photos.
- AP16. Public employees' pension records should be made available to the press.
- AP17. Performance evaluations of school superintendents should be made available to the press.
- AP18. Journalists should be able to get copies of disciplinary records of public employees.
- AP19. Journalists should be able to get records of the names and details of college students who have been disciplined by universities.
- AP20. Crime scene photos in murder cases should be made available to the press.
- AP21. The names of juveniles killed in a traffic accident should be made available to the press.
- AP22. Court records regarding priest sex abuse cases should be made available to the press.
- AP23. Journalists should be able to get copies of 9-1-1 tapes.
- AP24. The names of rape victims should be made available to the press.
- AP25. Public employee overtime pay records should be made available to the press.

Access to safety records

- AS1. Government records explaining vulnerabilities of dams should be made available to the press.
- AS2. Government records that identify the type, amount and location of hazardous chemicals should be made available to the press.
- AS3. Government records detailing dangerous traffic intersections should be made available to the press.
- AS4. Government records detailing problems with medical physicians should be available to the press.
- AS5. The names and addresses of registered sex offenders should be available to the press.
- AS6. Police reports of crimes committed in the community should be made available to the press.
- AS7. Record of product liability lawsuits should be made available to the press.
(Removed: Unknown to many people).
- AS8. The records of health inspections conducted at local restaurants should be made available to the press.
- AP14. Court records detailing fraud of a company should be made available to journalists.
- AP15. Journalists should be able to get inspection reports detailing problems in bridges.
- AP16. Journalists should be able to get the names of high school teachers who have sexual relationships with their students.

Access to general governmental records

AG1. Transcripts of city council meetings should be made available to the press.

AG2. School district budgets should be made available to the press.

AG3. Local government officials' expense accounts should be made available to the press.

AG4. The names of detainees held by the U.S. military at Guantanamo Bay should be made available to the press.

AG5. Public employees' work email should be made available to the press.

AG6. A state governor's work memos and letters should be made available to the press.

AG7. Journalists should be able to get copies of jail logs that list who is in jail.
(Removed: Awkward wording)

* From Driscoll et al., 1998 access survey

** From Phelps & Bunker 1998 access survey

*** From Relly 2006 proposed survey

APPENDIX J
NATIONAL ACCESS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Political and press attitudes survey

Washington State University

Surveyor name _____

Date _____

Time _____

Hello! My name is _____ and I am part of a research group from Washington State University. We are not selling anything. We are conducting a confidential, voluntary survey for scientific research. May I please speak to someone there who is 18 years of age or older?

(IF THEY CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE, ATTEMPT A REFUSAL CONVERSION. IF IT IS A BAD TIME FOR THEM, OFFER TO CALL BACK AT ANOTHER TIME THAT IS MORE CONVENIENT FOR THEM. IF THEY STILL REFUSE, THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME IN AN APPRECIATIVE MANNER.)

Thank you so much. This national study is finding out what people think about the government, media, and war. This project has been reviewed and approved for human subject participation by the Washington State University Institutional Review Board. Almost all of the questions in this study are answered on a scale from zero to 10, with zero meaning you very strongly DISAGREE with the statement, and 10 meaning you very strongly AGREE with the statement. You can use any numbers in between. Every answer is important for the success of the study, but know that you do not have to answer a question if you do not want to. There are no right or wrong opinions. We respect what you have to say.

On a scale from zero to 10, please choose a number that reflects your feelings about the following statements regarding the government, elections, and current events.

Z1	I am CONCERNED about the future of the Social Security system. (REMIND THEM IF THEY NEED IT, THAT ZERO MEANS STRONGLY DISAGREE, 10 MEANS STRONGLY AGREE, AND THEY CAN USE NUMBERS IN BETWEEN)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
Z2	All in all, it was worth sending U.S. troops into Iraq.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
Z3	The government should be allowed to secretly record telephone conversations -- without court warrants -- of Americans who are communicating with suspected terrorists.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F2	People should be able to criticize the government's war on terrorism.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
I4	I like to stay informed about elections.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PE4	I have a REAL say in what the government does.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
D1	Only people who are WELL INFORMED about political issues should be allowed to vote.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PI1	I am interested in election information.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PE2	I can make a difference if I participate in the election process.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PE1	Voting gives people an effective way to influence what the government does.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PI2	I pay attention to election information.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
D2	In elections involving tax issues, only TAXPAYERS should be allowed to vote.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PI3	I actively seek out information concerning the elections.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
D3	If a communist were elected governor of my state, the people should not allow that person to take office.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
D4	A radical Muslim should not be allowed to run for mayor of my city.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
D6	Unions, corporations and other groups should be limited to how much money they can contribute to political campaigns.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF

Next, we are interested in what you think about First Amendment rights and free expression. On a scale from zero to 10, how do you feel about the following statements...

F8	The First Amendment goes TOO FAR.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F9	People should be PROHIBITED from expressing unpopular opinions.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F1	Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
N2	Newspapers should be ALLOWED to freely publish stories without government approval.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
N4	The press has TOO MUCH freedom to publish whatever it wants.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F5	People should be PROHIBITED from saying things in public that might be offensive to religious groups.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
N1	NEWSPAPERS should be allowed to criticize public officials.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F7	People should be ALLOWED to put instructions on their web sites for how to make simple bombs.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F3	People should be ALLOWED to display offensive art in public.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
N3	Newspapers should be allowed to freely criticize the U.S. military for its performance.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
N5	The press plays a CRUCIAL role in society.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
D5	A person should be allowed to make a speech in the community supporting Osama bin Laden.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
F4	People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF

Next, we are talking about public access to government information.

AB5	Democracy requires that government operates openly.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AB3	It is OK for the government to keep records secret if it deems necessary.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AB4	Open public records and meetings keep government officials honest.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AI1	The President should make some public records secret if it might help in the war on terrorism.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF

The next questions are about the PRESS'S ability to access specific types of government information. For the following types of government records, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the press's right to access these records.

AS5	The names and addresses of registered sex offenders.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP3	Property tax records, including the value of a person's home and how much was paid in property taxes.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AS1	Government records explaining vulnerabilities of dams.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP5	Records detailing someone's criminal past.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP1	The annual salaries of public employees.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AS4	Government records detailing problems with medical physicians.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP7	Records of local government officials' expense accounts.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AS3	Government records detailing dangerous traffic intersections.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP2	Public utility records, which could include how much water people use for their lawns and irrigation.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AS6	Police reports of crimes committed in your community.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP8	Local government officials' work email.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP4	Divorce court files, which may include family assets and allegations between spouses.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AP6	Drivers license records, which include a person's name, address, height and weight.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
AS2	Government records that identify the type, amount and location of hazardous chemicals.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF

	On a scale from zero to 10, with zero being NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and 10 being VERY IMPORTANT, please give the number for each of the following media for how important they are to you as a NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCE.												
M1	...Radio	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
M2	...Television	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
M3	...the Newspaper	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
M4	...Magazines	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
M5	...the Internet	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
M6	...Newspaper PUBLIC AFFAIRS STORIES, such as stories about elections and other government issues	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
M7	...Television ENTERTAINMENT, such as comedies, dramas, and movies.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF

Now we are interested in knowing your opinion on community involvement....

	On a scale of zero to 10, with zero being NOT important at all and 10 being VERY important, the level of importance the following activities have in your life.												
PP1	Giving blood.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP2	Signing community petitions.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP3	Attending public meetings, rallies, or speeches.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP4	Contacting and talking to elected officials.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP5	Contributing money to a political or public interest campaign.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP6	Voting in an election.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP7	Volunteering for a community organization.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF
PP8	Displaying an American flag.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RF

	Next I will read a number of values that people might hold dearly or not hold dearly. On a scale of zero to 10, with zero being OPPOSED to your values and 10 being of SUPREME IMPORTANCE to your values, please rate the extent to which each value IS important to you or NOT important to you.													
VP3	Social power, such as control over others and dominance.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
VP12	Wealth, such as material possessions, or money.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
VP27	Authority, such as the right to lead or command.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
VP46	Preserving your public image.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF

Now, asking a little more about how you feel about life in these times, please answer with a number ranging from 0 to 10 with 0 meaning strongly DISAGREE and 10 meaning strongly AGREE.

SD1	On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
SD2	I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
SD3	IF I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
SD4	I like to gossip at times.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
SD5	I can remember playing sick to get out of something.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
SD6	There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
F3	I am concerned about my privacy being invaded.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
F2	I am concerned about the amount of information about me in databases held by marketing companies.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF
F1	I am concerned about the amount of personal information about me on the Internet.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		RF

I have a few demographic questions just for our statistical categorization. Again, all of this is confidential.

D1. What is your marital status? (READ FOUR CATEGORIES AND MARK WHAT THEY SELECT)

- (1) MARRIED
- (2) SINGLE OR ENGAGED
- (3) DIVORCED OR SEPARATED
- (4) WIDOWED

D2. Regarding your political orientation, on a scale of zero to 10, with zero being more LIBERAL and 10 being more CONSERVATIVE, please state a number that corresponds with your political ideology. Zero more LIBERAL, 10 more CONSERVATIVE.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

D3. Regarding your attitude toward religion, on a scale of zero to 10, with zero being NOT religious at all, and 10 being VERY religious, please state a number that corresponds with how religious you feel you are. Zero NOT religious, 10 VERY religious.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

D4. To what extent do you believe in the certainty of a pleasant afterlife when you die? Answer on a scale of zero to 10 with zero meaning NOT AT ALL and 10 meaning you VERY MUCH believe in a pleasant afterlife.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

D5. Yes or no, do you or anyone in your household work for government now or in the past? Yes or no?

(CIRCLE ONE) (1) YES (2) NO (3) DON'T KNOW

D6. What was the last grade of school you have completed?

- (1) SOME HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS
- (2) HIGH SCHOOL OR G.E.D.
- (3) SOME COLLEGE
- (4) COLLEGE FOUR-YEAR DEGREE
- (5) SOME GRADUATE SCHOOL
- (6) GRADUATE DEGREE

D7. Which of the following groups describe your age as of your last birthday?

- (1) 18-29
- (2) 30-39
- (3) 40-49
- (4) 50-59
- (5) 60-69
- (6) 70-79
- (7) 80 OR OLDER

D8. How would you describe your race or ethnic background? You may indicate more than one description that I will list (circle one or more)

- (1) WHITE/CAUCASIAN
- (2) AFRICAN-AMERICAN
- (3) ASIAN
- (4) HISPANIC
- (5) MIDDLE EASTERN
- (6) NATIVE AMERICAN
- (7) PACIFIC ISLANDER
- (8) OTHER _____

D9. And finally, for classification purposes only, is the total yearly income of all the members of your family now living at home more than \$40,000 or less than \$40,000?

(1) LESS THAN \$40,000

(2) MORE THAN \$40,000

(D10. If less than \$40,000)

And is that...

(1) UNDER \$10,000

(2) \$10,000 to \$20,000

(3) \$20,000 to \$30,000

(4) \$30,000 to \$40,000

(D10. If more than \$40,000)

And is that...

(5) \$40,000 to \$50,000

(6) \$50,000 to \$60,000

(7) \$60,000 to \$70,000

(8) \$70,000 to \$80,000

(9) \$80,000 to \$100,000

(10) MORE THAN \$100,000

Enter, do not ask: D10. Sex of respondent

(1) MALE (2) FEMALE

Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any questions or comments regarding this study? If so, you can contact researcher David Cuillier at 509-335-2979. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant you can contact WSU IRB at 509-335-9661 or irb@wsu.edu. We truly appreciate your cooperation in our research!

FILL IN CALL SHEET CAREFULLY (DISPOSITION CODE). ALSO, JOT DOWN ANY PROBLEMS YOU ENCOUNTERED.

APPENDIX K

NEWS COVERAGE OF ACCESSNORTHWEST NATIONAL SURVEY (2006)

Washington State University News Service Press Release

<http://www.wsutoday.wsu.edu/completestory.asp?StoryID=2732>

March 10, 2006

National poll finds broad support for access

Americans strongly support open government and the press's ability to access public records, and that support seems to be increasing, according to a national poll completed March 4 by researchers at WSU's Edward R. Murrow School of Communication.

Some eight in 10 Americans agree democracy requires government to operate openly, according to the telephone survey of 403 randomly selected adults from throughout the country, conducted Feb. 19 through March 4.

Two-thirds of survey respondents agreed that open records and meetings keep government officials honest. A majority of Americans said the press should have access to a dozen different types of public records, including traffic accident reports, government officials' expense accounts and email, and property tax records.

The public's support for open government appears to have increased during the past four years. Significantly more people support press access to police records, public utility records and traffic accident reports on this poll than in a similar WSU poll of Washington state residents in 2002.

"This is good news for those of us who believe open government is the foundation of true democracy," said Susan Dente Ross, director of AccessNorthwest, the WSU research group that conducted the study.

When it comes to privacy and national security, the study found that Americans remain hesitant to give unrestrained support. About two-thirds of Americans said they did not believe the press should have access to driver's license records or divorce court files. Indeed, two-thirds of Americans said they are concerned about their privacy being invaded and the amount of personal information about them on the Internet.

Also, people seem willing to allow some government secrecy if it might protect national security. About three-quarters of Americans said the president should keep some public records secret to help wage the war on terrorism.

"Clearly, it is very difficult for us to judge when the release of government information will truly endanger the nation or our soldiers," Ross said. "The American public has always been more willing to endorse government secrecy during times of war. Today, in spite of revelations about Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, about Enron and Ken Lay,

the public clearly wants to defer to the government to decide a great deal of what we should see. This is a natural human tendency, perhaps, but it has serious implications for our access to fundamental information about our government when the current war on terrorism may last indefinitely, even forever.”

The study found that support for access to public records is relatively uniform among Americans. Liberals and conservatives, people who have worked for government or not and people from different education levels expressed the same level of support for openness in government. The people most supportive of open government tend to be older newspaper readers and politically active.

The AccessNorthwest study, which has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percent, was paid for in part by a \$5,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation through the National Freedom of Information Coalition.

Established in 1950, the Knight Foundation supports journalism education and the arts. The study was conducted by graduate research assistant David Cuillier, who will further analyze the results to examine other factors related toward attitudes toward open government.

“We have a lot more to learn about how people think about open government and public records,” Cuillier said. “This study puts us another step closer, particularly by looking at who supports access and who doesn’t, as well as providing affirmation that Americans still support open government.

“Ultimately, we would like to better know what factors affect attitudes toward access, particularly when it comes to fear of privacy invasion and terrorism.”

AccessNorthwest is a non-partisan Edward R. Murrow School of Communication work group dedicated to research, education and outreach that increase citizen access to and use of government information, particularly by disenfranchised populations, with the objective of enhancing civic engagement and building a more informed electorate for a stronger democracy.

The questions and results of the survey can be found online at www.wsu.edu/~accessnw/news/surveyresults.htm.

The Associated Press

http://www.ap.org/FOI/foi_031206d.html

03/12/06

Two polls find public worries about government secrecy – and when it goes too far

By The Associated Press

Two new polls gauging Americans' views on government openness found a majority believe the federal government leans more toward secrecy than openness, while eight in 10 are convinced that an open government is necessary for an effective democracy. The polls released Sunday also found, however, that the public believed government should keep some information private, particularly if it was necessary to combat terrorism.

One poll, by the Scripps Survey Research Center at Ohio University, found that 64 percent of respondents thought the federal government is somewhat or very secretive, while more than a third think their local and state governments lean more toward secrecy. Fifty-five percent said state and local governments were somewhat or very open.

But Americans were more closely divided on when government information should be made public, according to the telephone poll of 1,007 adults.

Forty-six percent said government records should be considered public and their release should only be blocked when it "would do harm"; 42 percent said the government should protect its information and only release it if there is a "sound legal case" for it to be public.

A separate poll released Sunday found respondents were supportive of open government and access to public records – though solid majorities also said that government officials should keep records secret if "necessary", or to help in the war on terrorism.

The poll by the AccessNorthwest research and outreach project at the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University in Pullman found that 81 percent said democracy requires government to operate openly.

Nearly seven in 10, or 69 percent, told researchers that open public records and meetings keep government honest. Nearly as many, 63 percent, said it was OK for government officials to keep records secret if they deem it necessary, and almost three-quarters, 73 percent, believe the president should "make some public records secret if it might help with the war on terrorism."

The Scripps poll was conducted from Feb. 19 to March 3. There is a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

The Washington State University poll, conducted from Feb. 19 through March 4, surveyed 403 adults nationwide. It has an error margin of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

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On the Net:

<http://www.sunshineweek.org/>

The Associated Press

Published in *The Seattle Times*

<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/teaxis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=sunshine12&date=20060312&query=AccessNorthwest>

March 12, 2006

Less information access since 9/11, AP study says

By Robert Tanner
The Associated Press

States have steadily limited the public's access to government information since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, a new Associated Press analysis of laws in all 50 states has found.

Legislatures have passed more than 1,000 laws changing access to information, approving more than twice as many measures that restrict information as laws that open government books.

Federal agencies responded to the terrorist attacks by shutting down Web sites, pulling telephone directories and rethinking everything from dam blueprints to historical records.

In statehouse battles, the issue has pitted advocates of government openness — including journalists and civil-liberties groups — against lawmakers and others who worry public information could be misused, whether it's by terrorists or by computer hackers hoping to use your credit cards. Security concerns typically won out.

The analysis discovered a trend since the Sept. 11 attacks in legislative work that ended last year: States passed 616 laws that restricted access — to government records, databases, meetings and more — and 284 laws that loosened access. An additional 123 laws had either a neutral or a mixed effect, the review found.

AP reporters in every state, often with help from their local press associations, tracked the government-access bills introduced since terrorists brought down the World Trade Center towers, damaged the Pentagon and killed 40 people in a field in Pennsylvania when four planes were hijacked and used as missiles.

Reporters then assessed the impact of each new measure that passed and rated it as loosening existing limits on public access to government information, restricting the limits, or neutral.

While fear of another terrorist attack drove many new proposals, it wasn't the only motivator. Concerns about identity theft, medical privacy and the vulnerability of computerized records have sparked many pieces of legislation, too.

Lawmakers say they are recalibrating the balance between information that could be used against society and what society needs to know.

The give-and-take of a legislature usually forces changes to open-government bills, such as a measure proposed last year in Oklahoma, where state Sen. Charles Wyrick, a Democrat, sought to exempt the state's new Department of Homeland Security from the Open Meetings Act and Open Records Act.

"I don't know why all of a sudden the Holy Grail of security and safety is now closing records," Mark Thomas, head of the Oklahoma Press Association, said after the bill was introduced. "It seems to me we would be more secure if we knew what was going on around us."

Negotiations brought a compromise. The law that passed allowed the department to keep communications between the agency and the federal government confidential, along with security plans for private businesses.

Still, the data show which side got more out of negotiations overall: The AP analysis of 1,023 new laws dealing with public access to government information found that more than 60 percent closed access. Just over a quarter created new avenues of access. The rest had a neutral effect, often through technical changes to existing laws.

Lately, privacy worries are starting to trump security fears.

This month, Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty announced a new governmentwide effort to target identity theft, barring access to driver's licenses, phone records and Social Security numbers. No longer, the governor said, should there be a presumption that government information is public. "That's backward," he said.

Open-government advocates disagree. The way they see it, if Pawlenty is successful, information that used to be public in Minnesota will soon be unnecessarily locked away.

Meanwhile, two new polls gauging Americans' views on government openness found a majority think the federal government leans more toward secrecy than openness, while eight in 10 are convinced open government is necessary for an effective democracy.

The polls also found, however, that the public believed government should keep some information private, particularly if it is necessary to combat terrorism.

One poll, by the Scripps Survey Research Center at Ohio University, found that 64 percent of respondents thought the federal government is somewhat or very secretive, while more than a third think local and state governments lean more toward secrecy.

Forty-six percent said government records should be considered public and their release should only be blocked when it “would do harm.”

A separate poll found respondents supportive of open government and access to public records.

The poll by the AccessNorthwest research and outreach project at the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University in Pullman found that 81 percent said democracy requires government to operate openly.

Nearly seven in 10, or 69 percent, told researchers open public records and meetings keep government honest. Nearly as many, 63 percent, said it was OK for government officials to keep records secret if they deem it necessary.

The Scripps poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

The Washington State University poll has an error margin of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

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The Associated Press, Idaho Boise bureau

In Idaho newspapers, including The Idaho Statesman:

<http://www.idahostatesman.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060312/NEWS01/603120312>

Idaho follows trend on release of information laws

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By Christopher Smith

The Idaho Legislature followed a national trend over the past five years toward increasing secrecy of government records, passing twice as many laws restricting release of information as measures that increased access to documents, according to an Associated Press analysis.

Of the 60 bills affecting public records disclosure that were proposed by state lawmakers from 2001 through 2005, 33 passed. Of those, 22 created new or additional laws limiting the public's ability to view records created by state or local governments and 11 created more openness in government records or meetings.

Only one of the new Idaho laws was in direct response to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, an event generally considered to be the starting point of a period of increased secrecy in government activities. Most of the other measures restricting access to Idaho public records were driven by an increased desire to protect privacy by restricting release of information on individuals that had been available in the public domain.

Those new privacy laws included classifying as confidential information on crime victims receiving compensation, some sex offender records, and basic information on voter registration cards, such as addresses and phone numbers.

That shift also reflected tendencies nationally.

“After 9/11, people were taking all sorts of government records off the Web and trying to close off public records, but that has died off over the past few years,” says David Cuillier, who teaches media law and public affairs reporting at the University of Idaho and who recently conducted a national survey on public records secrecy for Access Northwest, a nonpartisan research group at Washington State University’s Murrow School of Communication.

“Privacy invasion has been an increasing issue in citizens’ minds and probably legislators’ minds, even though the federal data on identity theft shows the crime doesn’t typically start with taking information from public records, it begins with a stolen wallet or mail.”

The Access Northwest survey completed March 4 asked 403 randomly selected adults

from across the country questions on their attitudes toward openness in government and public records. Eight in 10 said democracy requires government to operate in the open and two-thirds said openness keeps government officials honest. Most respondents said the press should have access to several types of public records, from property tax rolls and elected officials' expense accounts and e-mail to police reports and public utility records.

But in matters of homeland security, Cuillier said people he surveyed supported government curbs on press access to records that potentially could be used by terrorists.

“My study showed while people strongly support the idea of open government, the majority think it’s OK for government to close records if it’s going to protect us from terrorism,” he said. “A majority said we should leave it up to the government to decide what to leave open and what not to leave open.”

The pros and cons of that sentiment played out in the Idaho Legislature in the 2002 session that began three months after the Sept. 11 attacks. Then-Idaho Attorney General Al Lance asked lawmakers to approve a package of “anti-terrorism” bills, including one that would have let judges shut down any public record if state agencies argued the release of the information could threaten public or individual safety.

“There was a huge hysteria after 9/11 about how the terrorists were coming to get us and there was this rush to close everything down,” said Debora Kristensen, a Boise attorney who lobbied for the Idaho Press Club in the 2002 session. “The Press Club was saying no, no, no, this was bad policy, but there was a strong sentiment in favor of closing off all kinds of information.”

The measure passed the House but it was killed on a 6-3 vote in a Senate committee after some lawmakers questioned the need for such an open-ended opportunity for state agencies to close records. In its place, a compromise bill was adopted that prevents disclosure of documents related to public agency buildings or operational plans “when the disclosure of such information would jeopardize the safety of persons or the public safety.”

“The first attempt was so overly broad as to preclude release of anything,” said Roy Eiguren, a Boise attorney who represented the Allied Daily Newspapers in the 2002 Legislature. “After that was blocked in committee we were able to work with the attorney general to come up with something that wasn't so all-encompassing.”

The battle between the Idaho press and lawmakers over open records in 2002 has since morphed into a fight over open meetings. In 2003, Republican majority lawmakers held six meetings of standing legislative committees in secret, claiming security issues and the Legislature’s inherent right to close a committee meeting to the public at any time.

The Idaho Press Club sued, arguing that the state constitution specifies the Legislature’s business must be conducted “openly, and not in secret session.”