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## Where Do I Stand? The Interaction of Leader–Member Exchange and Performance Ratings

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# Conceptualizing Communication Capital for a Changing Environment

Leo Wayne Jeffres, Guowei Jian, & Sukki Yoon

*With rapidly evolving technologies, boundaries between traditional modes of communication have blurred, creating an environment that scholars still describe from viewpoints as researchers in interpersonal, organizational or mass communication. This manuscript looks at the social capital literature and argues for conceptualizing “communication capital” to help understand the impact of communication phenomena in a changing environment. The literature has treated interpersonal communication variables as components of social capital and mass communication variables as factors affecting social capital, but scholars long ago recognized their reinforcing nature, leading us to develop a concept of communication capital merging symbolic activity across domains in its potential for impacting civic engagement, defined as persistent communication patterns that facilitate social problem solving in the community. Analysis of survey data shows that 4 dimensions of communication capital explain variance in civic engagement beyond that accounted for by traditional measures of social capital, media use, neighborhood communication, and efficacy.*

*Keywords: Civic Engagement; Communication Capital; Communication Theory; Political Communication; Social Capital*

Although communication technologies are blurring boundaries between traditional channels and modes of communication, scholars still tend to describe from their viewpoint as researchers in interpersonal, organizational or mass communication. Politics and public life also are undergoing rapid changes, and this is captured, in part, by the concern over people’s civic engagement and what some view as

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a declining base of “social capital,” a concept used to refer to social structure features that facilitate action. The literature on communication and its place in the development of social capital has generally focused on mainstream concepts of media use and communication, but patterns of interpersonal and mass communication have received differential treatment, the former often treated as components of social capital, the latter as factors affecting social capital. This distinction arises from the concept’s origins in sociology. Yet communication scholars long ago recognized the reinforcing nature of interpersonal and mass communication patterns, leading us to consider the possibility of generating a concept of “communication capital” that merges symbolic activity across domains in its potential for civic engagement. As Babbie (1986) noted, concepts come into being when we make distinctions that capture reality.

With a rapidly changing communication environment, we believe that the “distinction” represented in the concept of communication capital is a useful approach to understanding phenomena across contexts. The goals here are to (a) develop a conceptualization that describes an enduring pattern of symbolic activity that impacts such socially relevant phenomena as civic engagement and (b) test its utility separate from social capital as an influence on engagement.

The concept of social capital has its origins in several places, but chief among them is Coleman (1988, p. 98), who used the concept to refer to social structure features that facilitate action, including systems of trust and obligations, social networks, norms accompanied by sanctioning systems, centralized authority structures arising through transfers of control, and some aspects of social organization. The focus on relationships and networks gives a logical prominence to interpersonal communication, but the two are not “equivalent.”

The social capital literature in communication has featured a natural interest in civic engagement at a time when Americans were thought to be less inclined to join organizations, a trend attributed to the influence of television and its claims on leisure time (Putnam, 1995, 1996a, 1996b). However, communication scholars have discovered that media and mediated communication behaviors can be positive influences on civic action, just as interpersonal communication can. Research shows that people’s use of newspapers impacts their integration into a community (Demers, 1996; Stamm, 1985, 2000; Stamm & Guest, 1991), but media vary in their impact on individual involvement (Hay, 2007; Stamm, Emig, & Hesse, 1997). Reading community newspapers is related to attending community forums, participating in local organizations, working for social change, and other measures of community integration that include interpersonal communication patterns (J. M. McLeod et al., 1996; Stamm, 2000). Integrating the empirical findings in interpersonal and mass communication research on social capital and civic engagement, this study proposes a concept of communication capital and offers an initial empirical test of its theoretical potential in explaining and predicting civic engagement.

A case must be made for our goal of developing a concept that crosses communication domains. First, concepts and theories should describe the changing communication environment where the boundaries between “channels” and

“domains” have blurred (see Jeffres & Atkin, 1996); today, individuals blog as “mass” communication; social media include interpersonal, group, and mass communication; cell phone apps link people to communities; and Internet services link through symbolic exchanges all forms of communication. Concepts that describe such communication phenomena are inadequate if limited to existing mass, interpersonal or organizational research traditions. We need to move upward in abstraction to concepts that are posed at a “general” communication level, but may be operationalized by reference to the interpersonal, mass, organizational, or mediated contexts. Thus, the impact of communication on political activity needs to take into account everything from blogging and texting, to interpersonal discussions that occur face-to-face, as well as in chat rooms, and Web sites of not only the traditional media, but also political interest groups. We need to develop “new” concepts and theories that capture communication processes that cross domains. Philosophers of science and theorists have long argued that our efforts to create generalized knowledge should strive for “parsimony” (e.g., Chaffee & Berger, 1987; Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 2003). Second, the development of “new” concepts occurs naturally in the process of theory building as we arrange concepts by levels of abstraction and sort out definitions; our effort to conceptualize communication capital fits in with such processes where communication is the focus of theory development, not sociology or “general social science” (Hage, 1972). Third, scholars in communication should strive to build the discipline, not just contribute to its fragmentation into a psychology of communication, a sociology of communication, a philosophy of communication, and the diverse other ways that we divide up the turf. Developing concepts with empirical validity and utility across domains would enhance that process. In their discussion of communication science, Berger and Chaffee (1987) noted that a “provincial” mindset where inquiry is segregated by context “runs counter to the spirit of general theory development” (pp. 18–19). Thus, a validated concept of communication capital would stimulate efforts to integrate research across communication contexts.

In addition, the concept could be a meaningful tool for civic activists interested in community problem solving. There also is a tendency to think of sociological phenomena, and psychological “traits,” as more permanent, consistent with the notion of “capital” as long-term, not perishable, whereas communication phenomena, by contrast, are malleable and changeable; however, the communication literature is filled with evidence that people’s communication patterns are slow to shift, particularly at higher levels.

### **The Concept of Social Capital and Its Utility**

The concept of social capital itself is a metaphor from economics, where capital resources are long-term investments that consequently produce other goods. In social terms, the concept introduced by Coleman (1988) and others identified patterns of relationships and organizational involvement as referents of the concept, with consequences for trust and social norms leading to collective action. Pitched at

a societal level, social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people, the trust, and shared values that bind people into networks and make cooperative action possible.

Since the concept's inception, social capital has captured the imaginations of scholars working in a variety of contexts, where the metaphor is applied within organizations (O'Shea, 2003) and social networks that include churches (Brown & Brown, 2003), youth groups (Yuen, Pedlar, & Mannell, 2005), community garden groups (Glover, Parry, & Shinew, 2005), volunteer associations (Warde, Tampubolon, & Savage, 2005), self-help groups (Cheung, Mok, & Cheung, 2005), and families (Perreira & Chapman, 2006), as well as individuals in the health context (Dutta-Bergman, 2004; Thorson & Beaudoin, 2004) and at the societal level (Norris, 2002). In this process, the original metaphor has morphed to refer to many interests that go beyond the concept's original boundaries (Rohe, 2004). The operative ingredients of social capital are network of connections or relationships and shared values, but the operationalization has generally occurred at the individual level (i.e., people's involvement in organizations and social networks; Portes & Landolt, 1996), and scholarship has stretched across many disciplines and contexts.<sup>1</sup>

The utility of social capital lies in its potential for *collective action*, often called civic engagement and focused on political involvement, deemed particularly important in a democracy. At the individual level, collective action has been viewed as volunteering (Fleming, Thorson, & Pen, 2005), political participation (Scheufele, Nisbet, Brossard, & Nisbet, 2004), voting (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004), and citizen participation in communities (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). Ultimately, the attention social capital has garnered stems from its suspected association with such important social goals as social action, or civic engagement, which also is bound up with both mass and interpersonal communication in the literature.

### *Relationship Between Interpersonal Communication and Social Capital*

Several streams of research link interpersonal communication to involvement in organizations and social trust. Coleman (1988) and others thought that engaging in face-to-face exchanges would lead to interpersonal trust and subsequent civic involvement.

*Empirical research generally has supported the proposition that involvement in organizations or social networks is correlated with interpersonal communication variables.* Kadushin (2006) noted that the interpersonal sphere and larger social network connections have been loosely termed social capital. Perreira and Chapman (2006) view family connections along with other forms of social capital and several scholars have identified leisure activities providing a common ground for relationship building (Glover et al., 2005; Warde et al., 2005; Yuen et al., 2005). Fleming et al. (2005) found that interpersonal communication positively predicted associational membership. Results show associational membership mediated the effects of interpersonal communication on volunteering. Considerable work has been done linking communication patterns to goals within the organization (Hafen,

2004; Hartman & Lenk, 2001) There also is empirical evidence supporting the link between participating in community at work and participation in such political activities as voting and campaigning in the larger community; thus, involvement in decisions at work may cultivate certain communication patterns that spillover workplace boundaries and lead to greater involvement in civic activities (Jian & Jeffres, 2007).

*Organizational membership itself has been linked to social trust.* Looking at both group membership and face-to-face contact within organizations, Wollebaek and Selle (2002) found that both were important for generating social trust but belonging to several associations, regardless of the level of interpersonal contact, had the strongest impact on social trust. They also found no difference between active and passive members, leading them to challenge the notion that active participation is necessary. Thus, we clearly need to separate out interpersonal communication patterns from group affiliation as sources of influence.

*Frequency of interpersonal communication also has been directly linked to civic engagement.* For example, Scheufele et al. (2004) found that the frequency with which one talked about political issues with people in community or volunteer groups was directly related to political participation.

Clearly, organizations themselves are opportunities for people to develop trust in working with others, but that trust may not extend to working toward collective actions in the civic arena but be limited to pursuing more narrow group interests (e.g., working toward religious goals or pursuing a hobby). Furthermore, to what extent is it membership itself, involvement in organizational activities, or aspects of interaction while being involved that affect civic action? In addition, people's interpersonal networks independent of organizational membership may influence civic engagement. Only by separating out the concepts and variables can we make empirical tests, rather than make assumptions. The literature examined here suggests that it is not just "frequency of interaction" or the more people with whom one interacts that is key, but the "pertinence" of the interaction to the social outcome. In our case, the content of the interaction should address the goal-seeking activity of civic engagement (e.g., discussing political issues in the community; Scheufele et al., 2004). For example, although gossiping at the water cooler may lead to interpersonal trust, an established pattern of discussing political issues would represent communication capital. When a community is threatened with a crisis, the former network pattern might offer little hope for those individuals to become engaged in the situation, but the latter would bode well for their involvement. Thus, a concept of communication capital should not be restricted to the frequency of interaction but also take into account the content of the messages exchanged in interpersonal communication.

### *Relationship Between Mass Communication and Social Capital*

Like interpersonal communication, mass communication can influence the key indicators of social capital—membership in organizations and networks—and social trust, as well as social action.

*Media use can affect involvement in organizations and networks.* Although interpersonal communication was seen as enhancing social capital, Putnam (1995) and others saw mass communication, particularly television, as threatening this social capacity to engage citizens because it displaced time spent in organizations. However, Moy, Scheufele, and Holbert (1999) found that time spent with television did not affect civic engagement through perceptions of time pressure. That study and Fleming et al. (2005) found that local newspaper use actually enhanced engagement.

*Media use also affects social trust.* Lee, Cappella, and Southwell (2003) looked at the effects of news and entertainment on interpersonal trust in an analysis of four data sets, finding newspaper readership a consistent predictor of trusting attitudes and behavior. Political talk radio listening and elite electronic news use are also linked to trust. Thus, some aspects of mass media use are examined in relationship to trust as an indicator of social capital.

In addition to media frequency measures, the uses and gratifications that sustain behaviors have been linked to social trust. Shah, McLeod, and Yoon (2001) found that informational uses of mass media were positively related to interpersonal trust. Uses and gratifications are particularly appropriate for inclusion in a study of communication capital because they are seen as more enduring, cross-situational measures of people's communication behaviors, sustaining media use patterns across instances of one's media use (e.g., see McDonald & Glynn, 1984; Jeffres, 1994, pp. 241–256).

Uses and gratifications provide a way to focus on the nature of messages—their pertinence to social action—while allowing for the functional equivalence of those messages to be determined by the individual. Thus, a concept of communication capital should not be restricted to the frequency of media behaviors, but also take into account the content or pertinence of the messages for social action.

*Media use influences social action and civic engagement.* Many studies deal with the rich mix of concepts in civic engagement and look at how media influence civic actions (Newton, 1999), and these studies point to the aspects of mediated communication that should be integrated into measures of communication capital. The Shah et al. (2001) study found that informational uses of mass media were positively related to civic participation distinguishing between indicators of social networks (neighborliness and organizational membership), social trust (interpersonal and community trust), and prosocial behaviors (voting and volunteering). Beaudoin and Thorson (2004) found media effects differ by medium and by community type.

*Technology and mediated communication.* Technology has always been a two-edged sword, providing an opportunity for people to communicate point to point or as receivers of mass media messages while being mobile, but also carrying a potential for reducing face-to-face interaction and creating some isolation (Henderson, Taylor, & Thomson, 2002; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Katz, Rice, Acord, Dasgupta, & David, 2004; Pruijt, 2002). Dutta-Bergman (2005) noted that social capital researchers have focused on the influence of the Internet on community life. Shah, Kwak, and Holbert

(2001) found that informational uses of the Internet are positively related to individual differences in civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and life contentment. Looking at the long-networked community of Blacksburg, Virginia. Kavanaugh, Reese, Carroll, and Rosson (2005) found that the Internet enhanced social relations and their impact as opportunities for interpersonal communication. Wellman, Witte, and Hampton (2001) found that people's interaction online supplemented their face-to-face and telephone communication. Shah et al. (2001) found that use of the Internet for information exchange among young adults more strongly influences trust in people and civic participation. Thus, Internet use and interaction using the newer technologies are candidates for communication capital that also are related to civic engagement.

*Media use influences on interpersonal discussion.* Finally, we must note the mutual influence of different modes of communication. D. M. McLeod, Kosicki, and McLeod (2002) summarized the literature focusing on media effects and political participation, concluding that media use stimulates interpersonal discussion about campaigns, and both are related to voting and political activities (Chaffee, 1972; Pfau, Diedrich, Larson, & Van Winkle, 1995).

### **Communication Capital**

Communication capital is defined as *persistent communication patterns that facilitate social problem solving in the community*. Communication is defined as symbolic activity (Cronkhite, 1986) involving both meaning construction and message processing across contexts that include face-to-face and interpersonal communication, the exchange of messages within organizations, mass communication, and other forms of mediated communication. This definition attempts to separate out the more enduring patterns that are consistent with the notion of capital—more long-term goods or investments, rather than short-term consumables—from the transitory spikes in one aspect of communication or another that occur with critical events or crises. The concept of “capital” suggests one has an investment to draw on when the need arises.

Our definition of communication capital does not include all aspects of one's communication pattern (e.g., it excludes general concepts of media use, involvement in organizations, or the frequency of one's contacts with others). It also sets boundaries that exclude specific communication behaviors that are instrumental in helping individuals deal with their personal, family, or work problems. Instead, the concept focuses on civic engagement, which is the subject of much of the literature and was the intent of sociologists at the outset.<sup>2</sup> The greater interest in social capital lies in people joining together with others to solve common problems, and, thus, we place similar boundaries on the concept of communication capital.

Relevant dimensions of communication capital include learning about problems from the media and accompanying background information for dealing with them, as well as personal conversations that focus on community problems and issues and civic programs and organizations trying to alleviate community problems (see also Requena, 2003). Because the focus is on community problem solving, it is the content



of messages that is relevant. Talking with a lot of people but never discussing public issues or concerns would not be a firm foundation for such discussion should a crisis arise. And, watching only entertainment television, rather than news programming, would not lay a foundation for studying such messages in the same crisis situation. Thus, paying attention to social issues in the media or discussing such issues with people at work or in other contexts would provide a cognitive basis for actual involvement in solving problems, but watching a situation comedy featuring interaction among friends at play would not. Also, attending to what journalists characterize as “hard news” would provide background for civic engagement. Belonging to a social group with interaction may build trust among people with similar leisure goals, but it is outside the boundaries of the concept being defined; talking with those associates about social problems would be relevant.

Operationally, the uses and gratifications perspective in mass communication (Dimmick, McCain, & Bolton, 1979; Dobos & Dimmick, 1988) is helpful, allowing us to ask to what extent people use various media to ascertain the dimensions to social problems and programs targeting them. In this manner, we allow the individual to conclude what content in the media is relevant for social purposes. Similarly, using the same functional model, we can ask the extent to which one discusses social problems across the broad range of personal and organizational contexts that represent personal networks. Uses and gratifications provide the “pertinence” link between media use patterns and messages relevant to civic engagement.

Psychologists have come up with a social capital scale in a defined context, and we propose to follow that example, specifying aspects of communication that are relevant, focusing our efforts on communication variables facilitating civic action in the community, the original focus of those concerned with a declining social capital. Although this is an early attempt, explication by others will not only validate our measures, but further specify boundaries of the concept.

Our initial task is to test the reliability of our measures of communication capital, including their internal relationships. Our concept of *communication capital* includes the following dimensions:

- Interpersonal discussion of social problems and programs across contexts that include family and friends, the workplace, the neighborhood, and community.
- Discussion of social problems and programs in the non-work organizational context.
- Attention to public issues and business in the media.
- Using media for civic engagement.

The first dimension captures people’s informal discussion of issues that are likely to be at the center of actions generally thought of as civic engagement. These may occur at home or in the homes of friends, at work, or in public settings in the neighborhood or community. The second dimension reflects the same aspect of interpersonal communication in the voluntary, non-work organizational context; separating this out from associational membership allows us to separate two differential sources of influence, actual membership in organizations (social capital)

and pertinent communication within that context as an ingredient of communication capital. People who are involved in civic actions tend to be more knowledgeable about civic issues, and the media are the most likely source of information; this is captured by the third dimension. The final dimension is based on uses and gratifications theory, which allows people to determine what content is relevant but seeks to ascertain the importance of particular functions fulfilled by engaging in media behaviors; in this case, we are talking about use of the various media for keeping informed about public issues and learning about others' opinions. We examine relationships among these dimensions.

Second, we examine the ability of communication capital to predict operational measures of civic engagement found in the literature reviewed earlier, with a focus on the community context where social action occurs. Much of the literature examined relates communication to civic engagement. If measures of our concept, communication capital, are related to known operationalizations of civic engagement, we have additional support for the validity of our concept. Thus, we offer the following hypothesis:

*H1: Communication capital will be positively related to civic engagement, operationalized here as political involvement (political activities, perceived personal leadership, and perceived personal involvement).*

Given the literature relating social capital to factors that are here conceptualized as communication capital, it is reasonable to offer the following hypothesis:

*H2: Communication capital will be positively related to social capital.*

Third, numerous other variables in the literature have been related to political involvement, including other aspects of people's communication patterns and efficacy. Each of these has been related to some of the ingredients conceptualized as components of either social capital or communication capital (see Jian & Jeffres, 2007). Political efficacy refers to one's perception or belief that she or he can make a difference and have an impact in the political arena. Numerous studies in political science document the relationship between political efficacy, conceptualized as a more permanent, trait concept, and involvement in different political activities (Cole, Zucker, & Ostrove, 1998; Stenner-Day & Fischle, 1992; Watanabe & Milburn, 1988; Wollman & Stouder, 1991). The relationship between media use and political efficacy is a complex one, with studies showing both positive and negative relationships (Hofstetter, Zuniga, & Dozier, 2001; Lin & Lim, 2002; Pinkleton, Weintrub, & Fortman, 1998). Political efficacy may be contingent on personal "trust" because those most disaffected and distrustful are also less likely to feel efficacious in the political arena; thus, the variable needs to be taken into account in examining the impact of social capital on actual civic engagement. We offer the following hypotheses:

*H3: Communication capital will be positively related to other aspects of one's communication patterns (media use and neighborhood communication).*

*H4: Communication capital will be positively related to political efficacy.*

Fourth, we see whether communication capital explains variability in civic engagement separate from that accounted for by indicators of social capital. This is a test of the utility of communication capital as a concept. In doing so, we also take into account a broader range of measures than typically are used in social capital studies, but all have been used in prior social capital research. The following research question is posed:

*RQ1: Does communication capital explain variance in political involvement independent of other aspects of people's communication patterns, traditional measures of social capital (membership in organizations, metro quality of life, community attachment, and trust in neighbors) and efficacy?*

## **Method**

A survey was conducted in October through November, 2006 in a Midwest metropolitan area, using a computer-aided telephone system to interview a probability sample of adults that yielded a total of 277 respondents. The survey included 82 items and was presented as a general public survey conducted by a university research center. The response rate of about 30% is reasonable for a survey of this length today. The survey was conducted the 2 weeks prior to the Fall election and included a few questions about the state-wide contests, but the remainder of the interview schedule focused on items that operationalized our concept of communication capital and also measured civic engagement, social capital, general communication activity, political "traits," and social categories. The sample consisted of 45% men and 55% women; 69% were White, 20% were African American, and the rest were "other" ethnic/racial backgrounds; 16% were under age 30, 18% were in their 30s, 18% were in their 40s, 20% were in their 50s, 12% were in their 60s, and 16% were older than that. Education level was broken down as follows: 5% had some high school or less, 18% were high school graduates, 32% had some college, 32% were college graduates, and 13% had advanced degrees. The median household income was \$40,001 to \$50,000. These measures reflect the metropolitan area being surveyed. Operationalizations of concepts closely followed those commonly found in the empirical literature.

### *Operationalizing Communication Capital*

*Interpersonal discussion of social problems and programs.* Three items were used to find out how often people discussed social problems or programs in their community. As phrased, this would include whether they or others initiated the topics in conversations. The same wording was used across three important contexts: (a) with family or friends, (b) with colleagues at work, and (c) in neighborhood or community conversations: "How often do you discuss social problems or programs that would help fight such things as crime, poverty, ethnic relations, a poor job market, or similar issues with family or friends—every day, a couple times a week, once a week, every couple weeks, less often than that, or almost never?" An item asking people if they worked outside the home was used as a filter for ascertaining discussion in that context. An additional item

was asked for the workplace: “When friends or coworkers bring up social issues or topics in conversations, would you say you are enthusiastic about joining the discussion, somewhat pleased, somewhat reluctant, or very displeased with the prospect of talking about such things?” Those not working outside the home were assigned 0 on those items, and a scale was constructed across all four items ( $M=11.90$ ,  $S=4.90$ ,  $n=245$ ,  $\alpha=.62$ ).<sup>3</sup> This is similar to measures used by Scheufele et al. (2004).

*Discussion of social problems and programs in the organizational context.* Respondents were asked if they belonged to each of 10 organizations, plus an “other organizational” category. If they said yes to any item, they then were asked how often they discussed social problems or programs using language parallel to the other interpersonal contexts. The organizations were: business or civic groups like Kiwanis or Rotary; religious organizations; charity or volunteer organizations; ethnic/racial organizations, Parent–Teacher Association (PTA<sup>®</sup>), or other school-related groups; political clubs or organizations; social clubs such as card playing, music, hobbies, book clubs, and so forth; youth groups, like scouts or children’s sports; professional or work-related organizations; neighborhood associations, such as block clubs; and other organizations. In the following is the language for both items using one category; the item tapping communication for each type of organization was asked only if respondents said they belonged to the particular organization. Also, this set of items followed the three questions asking whether respondents discussed social problems or programs with family, friends, neighbors, or coworkers, so respondents were familiar with the meaning, and respondents did not have to repeat the lengthier language:

Do you belong to any [type of group, e.g., political] clubs or organizations? (yes or no)  
How often would you say you discuss social problems or programs such as those mentioned earlier, at every meeting, now and then, seldom, almost never?

For the communication measure, those not belonging to an organization were assigned a 0, whereas members received scores from 1 (*almost never*) to 4 (*at every meeting*). Responses then were summed across all 11 items for an index ( $M=6.70$ ,  $S=5.70$ ,  $n=267$ , Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 reliability coefficient [KR-20] = .60).

*Attention to public issues and business in the media.* Five items were used to ascertain whether respondents paid attention to content in the media that would alert them to public issues and actions by their political representatives. Respondents were told the following:

I’m going to list a few items that appear in the media—either in newspapers or magazines, on the radio, television, or the Internet—and ask how much attention you pay to each one using a 0–10 scale, where 0 means you pay no attention at all, 5 is neutral and 10 means you spend very much attention.

The five areas were as follows:

1. News about the local economy.
2. News about crime or crime-fighting programs.

3. News about redevelopment programs.
4. Reports of city council meetings.
5. News about actions of the state legislature.

Responses were standardized and a scale constructed ( $M = 27.60$ ,  $S = 10.50$ ,  $n = 244$ ,  $\alpha = .78$ ).

*Use of media for civic engagement.* Four items in the uses and gratifications tradition were used to link media content to purposes reflecting civic engagement. In each case, respondents were asked to use a 0 to 10 scale ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), to 10 (*completely agree*). This format allowed us to include the traditional surveillance function for information to be informed and to find out others' opinions. Two of the items allowed us to ascertain the significance of the Internet as a medium and blogs, a fairly recent innovation for civic engagement. The four items are as follows:

1. I read the newspaper closely because I want to feel informed about civic issues. ( $M = 6.20$ ,  $S = 3.30$ ,  $n = 244$ )
2. I listen to talk radio to find out what other people are thinking. ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $S = 3.60$ ,  $n = 246$ )
3. I enjoy looking at people's blogs to find out their opinions on public issues. ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $S = 2.90$ ,  $n = 238$ )
4. I find myself using the Internet to keep up with politics and civic issues. ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $S = 3.50$ ,  $n = 243$ )

Because of differences in media use and Internet access, the four items do not scale (use of media for civic engagement:  $M = 17.10$ ,  $S = 8.50$ ,  $n = 237$ ,  $\alpha = .50$ ), although they are all correlated, with one exception: Those who read the newspaper closely to feel informed about civic issues are not more likely to say they enjoy looking at people's blogs to find out their opinions on public issues. The low alpha supports the notion that specific uses sustain some media behaviors, but not others (e.g., looking at blogs for public issues, but listening to the radio for distraction). Thus, the resulting "scale" is similar to a time use index across media, where the final sum is an accurate representation of time spent, but the amount devoted to specific media varies dramatically.

### *Operationalizing Social Capital*

Although membership in organizations and social trust are the primary measures of social capital, the literature also taps satisfaction with the quality of one's life (see Jeffres & Atkin, 1996; Kavanaugh, Reese, Carroll, & Rosson, 2005; Lochner, Kawachi, & Kennedy, 1999; Peng, 2004), trust (e.g., Lee et al., 2003; Shah et al., 2001), and attachment (Schmierbach, Boyle, & McLeod, 2005). Our interview schedule included measures of each of these following additional concepts.

*Membership in organizations.* As noted earlier, respondents were asked if they belonged to each of 10 types of organizations, plus an "other organization" category. An index was summed across the 11 types of organizations: business or civic groups

like Kiwanis or Rotary; religious organizations; charity or volunteer organizations; ethnic/racial organizations; PTA or other school related groups; political clubs or organizations; social clubs such as card playing, music, hobbies, book club, and so on; youth groups like scouts or children's sports; professional or work-related organizations; neighborhood associations such as block clubs; and other types of organizations not mentioned ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $S = 2.20$ ,  $n = 254$ ,  $KR-20 = 0.57$ ).

*Trust in neighbors.* We measured people's trust in neighbors by asking them to use the same 0 to 10 scale to indicate how much they agreed with the following statement: "I generally believe I can trust my neighbors" ( $M = 7.50$ ,  $S = 2.80$ ,  $n = 246$ ). See Peng (2004) for measures of trust in neighbors.

*Satisfaction with quality of community life.* A standard measure from the quality-of-life literature was used to assess people's satisfaction with the quality of life in the community where they live. Respondents were told the following:

Now we're going to switch to some items about the community. How would you rate the overall quality of life available in the [metro area] today on a 0–10 scale, where 0 is the worst possible and 10 is the best possible? [ $M = 5.30$ ,  $S = 2.30$ ,  $n = 253$ ].

*Community attachment.* Respondents were asked to use a 0 to 10 scale ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), to 10 (*completely agree*) to indicate how much they agreed with the following statement: "I feel quite attached to the [metro area]" ( $M = 6.90$ ,  $S = 3.30$ ,  $n = 247$ ).

### *Political Involvement*

Political involvement measures have ranged from voting to involvement in various political activities. We included these and other measures that attempt to capture respondents' perceptions of their involvement.

*Political activities.* Items that operationalize Milbrath's (1965) ladder of involvement were used to ascertain political activity. Respondents were told, "Now, I'm going to list a variety of different ways people get involved in their community, government or politics." Then, they were asked if they had done each of several activities in the past couple years: attended meetings of their town or city council, attended a political meeting, been active in a political party, worked with others in their community to solve some community problems, or been involved with groups or organizations that try to solve local problems. Because the survey was conducted in the weeks just prior to the election, respondents also were asked if they were registered voters. These items were summed together for an index (political involvement:  $M = 2.80$ ,  $S = 1.70$ ,  $KR-20 = 0.69$ ).

*Perceived personal leadership.* Respondents were asked for a self-perception of their leadership in the community with the following item, which asked them to indicate how much they agreed with the statement using a 0 to 10 scale ranging

from 0 (*completely disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), to 10 (*completely agree*): “I exercise leadership and try to take charge of programs to improve things in my community” ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $S = 2.89$ ,  $n = 245$ ).

*Perceived personal involvement.* Respondents were asked how much they agreed with the following statement on their civic involvement using a 0 to 10 scale ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), to 10 (*completely agree*): “I am actively involved in helping better my community” ( $M = 4.87$ ,  $S = 3.10$ ,  $n = 248$ ).

### *Operationalizing Efficacy*

Political efficacy, sometimes called personal efficacy, is an enduring trait that has been related to political activity in the literature. Four items used in other studies to measure political efficacy were employed to measure political efficacy. Respondents were asked to use a 0 to 10 scale ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), to 10 (*completely agree*) to tell how much they agreed or disagreed with each one of the following statements: “I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics,” “I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country,” “I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people,” and “I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people” Responses were standardized and summed for a scale ( $M = 23.40$ ,  $S = 9.80$ ,  $n = 242$ ,  $\alpha = .82$ ).

### *Operationalizing Social Categories*

The traditional measures of lifecycle (age), ascriptive factors (ethnicity and gender), and achievement-oriented factors (formal education, household income<sup>4</sup>, and whether one worked outside the home) were included.

### *Other Measures of Communication*

In addition, we included other measures of mass and interpersonal communication, including the traditional exposure measures for media use and items tapping community and neighborhood communication. Traditional measures of media use were used, including the number of hours one watched television yesterday ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $S = 2.20$ ), the number of hours one listened to the radio yesterday ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $S = 2.40$ ), the number of days one read a newspaper last week ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $S = 2.70$ ), the number of magazines read regularly (on a scale using raw numbers for 1–5, 6 = 6–10, 7 = 11–20, and 8 = 21 or more;  $M = 2.20$ ,  $S = 1.70$ ), how often one watches news on television—on a scale ranging from 5 (*several times a day*) to 0 (*less often than once a day*) ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $S = 1.70$ ), and how often one goes on the Internet at home or at work—on a scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 8 (*several times each day*) ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $S = 3.00$ ).

The extent to which one was involved in a neighborhood communication network was assessed using two items, where respondents were asked to use a 0 to 10 scale ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), to 10 (*completely agree*) in response

to these statements: “I often talk with neighbors on the street or while I’m in my yard” ( $M=6.10$ ,  $S=3.40$ ), and “I spend more time talking with my neighbors than most people do” ( $M=4.60$ ,  $S=3.10$ ). Responses to the two items are highly correlated ( $r=.64$ ,  $p<.001$ ); they were standardized and summed up for an index.

## Results

First, we examined the relationship among our measures of the four dimensions of communication capital and the summary scale. All the relationships are positive and statistically significant. Scores on the scales tapping the four dimensions were standardized and summed for a summary scale of communication capital ( $\alpha=.66$ ). The social categories are related to communication capital much as we expected, with both measures of social status (education and household income) positively related to all of the dimensions of communication capital, and a mixed pattern is found for age (negatively related to discussing civic problems and programs across different contexts, but positively related to paying attention to public affairs topics in the media). Women are lower on the Communication Capital scale ( $r=.16$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and are less likely to discuss civic problems and programs across the interpersonal contexts ( $r=-.18$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and in organizations ( $r=-.15$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

Second, we examined relationships between communication capital and political involvement to test our hypotheses. As Table 1 shows, we find that the Communication Capital summary scale and all four dimensions are positively correlated with the index of political activities, perceived personal leadership, and perceived personal involvement. Controlling for social categories (age, education level, household income, gender, and ethnicity) has only a minor impact on the relationships.

H2 predicted that communication capital would be related to social capital. Analysis shows that the summary measure of communication capital is related to three of the four measures of social capital, and controlling for social categories

**Table 1** Relationships Between Communication Capital and Political Involvement

Variable	Summary measure of communication capital	Interpersonal discussion of social problems	Media attention to problems	Civic media uses	Discussing problems in organizations
Political activities	.45***	.26**	.32***	.15**	.36***
	.39***	.21**	.25***	.02	.30***
Perceived personal leadership	.46***	.24***	.36***	.38***	.36***
	.36***	.19**	.23***	.24***	.31***
Perceived personal involvement	.52***	.24***	.45***	.40***	.38***
	.47***	.21**	.37***	.31***	.33***

*Note.* The top value in each cell is the bivariate correlation; while the second is a partial correlation controlling for age, education, household income, gender and ethnicity.

\* $p<.05$ . \*\* $p<.01$ . \*\*\* $p<.001$ .



(age, education, household income, gender, and ethnicity) has little impact. The following are the bivariate correlations and partials with controls: organizational membership ( $r = .53, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .47, p < .001$ ), trust in neighbors ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ; partial  $r = .14, p < .05$ ), perceived quality of life ( $r = .07, ns$ ; partial  $r = .01, ns$ ), and community attachment ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .35, p < .001$ ). Thus, there is a strong pattern of support for the relationship. The exception is the assessment of quality of life, which reflects a judgment of the external environment, rather than one's relationship with the community.

*H3* said that communication capital would be positively related to other aspects of one's communication patterns. With one exception, communication capital is positively related to media use even with controls for social categories. The exception is the time spent watching television, where the relationship is negative ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ; partial  $r = -.16, p < .05$ ). Positive relationships are found for communication capital relationships with watching television news ( $r = .20, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .22, p < .001$ ), frequency of newspaper readership ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .46, p < .001$ ), time spent listening to the radio ( $r = .11, p < .01$ ; partial  $r = .14, p < .05$ ), the number of magazines read ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .26, p < .001$ ), and the frequency with which one goes on the Internet at home or work ( $r = .36, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .32, p < .001$ ). We also find that communication capital has a strong relationship with involvement in one's neighborhood communication network ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ; partial  $r = .28, p < .001$ ).

*H4* said that communication capital would be positively related to political efficacy. The bivariate correlation is  $.57 (p < .001)$ , and controlling for social categories only reduces the magnitude slightly (partial  $r = .46, p < .001$ ).

Finally, *RQ1* is an opportunity to test the utility of communication capital as a concept separated out from other aspects of one's communication pattern and social capital. There is a strong pattern of interrelationships among the different sets of variables. Given the support for our hypotheses, we also inspected the bivariate correlations showing that social capital variables are related to political involvement.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, political efficacy and several of the other communication variables (general media use and neighborhood communication) are correlated with political involvement measures.<sup>6</sup> We also find that political efficacy is correlated with social capital measures.<sup>7</sup> Other communication measures—media use<sup>8</sup> and neighborhood communication—are related to social capital measures as expected.<sup>9</sup>

We used hierarchical regressions with political involvement measures as the criterion variables to answer *RQ1*. The four social capital variables were entered in the first block, followed by political efficacy—included as a separate item because the pattern of relationships was so strong, then the other communication variables (media use and neighborhood communication), and finally, the Communication Capital summary scale. As Table 2 shows, the Communication Capital scale accounts for variance in predicting political activities, perceived personal leadership, and personal involvement beyond that accounted for by social capital, political efficacy, media use, and neighborhood communication. Each of the political involvement variables was standardized and summed up for a summary scale. The alpha for the

**Table 2** Predicting Political Involvement

Variable	$R^2$ change	$F$ change	Significant betas
Predicting political activities <sup>a</sup>			
Social capital variables	.17	13.20, $p < .001$	Organization membership index, $\beta = 0.36^{***}$ ; community attachment, $\beta = 0.14^*$
Political efficacy	.02	7.30, $p < .01$	Political Efficacy, $\beta = 0.16^{**}$
Media use & neighborhood communication	.01	0.70, <i>ns</i>	
Communication capital	.01	4.30, $p < .04$	Summary scale, $\beta = 0.16^*$
Predicting perceived personal leadership <sup>b</sup>			
Social capital variables	.15	11.10, $p < .001$	Organization membership index, $\beta = 0.22^{***}$ ; trust in neighbors, $\beta = 0.19^{***}$ ; community attachment, $\beta = 0.12^*$
Political efficacy	.09	31.00, $p < .001$	Political efficacy, $\beta = 0.31^{***}$
Media use & neighborhood communication	.05	3.00, $p < .01$	Magazine readership, $\beta = 0.14^*$ ; neighborhood communication, $0.17^{**}$
Communication capital	.02	8.50, $p < .004$	Summary scale, $\beta = 0.22^{**}$
Predicting personal involvement <sup>c</sup>			
Social capital variables	.15	11.60, $p < .001$	Organization membership, $\beta = 0.23^{***}$ ; community attachment, $\beta = 0.23^{***}$ ; trust in neighbors, $\beta = 0.12^*$
Political efficacy	.04	12.30, $p < .001$	Political efficacy, $\beta = 0.20^{**}$
Media use & neighborhood communication	.05	2.60, $p < .02$	Neighborhood communication, $\beta = 0.17^{**}$ ; newspaper readership, $\beta = 0.12^*$
Communication capital	.06	21.50, $p < .001$	Summary scale, $\beta = 0.35^{***}$
Predicting political involvement scale <sup>d</sup>			
Social capital variables	.25	21.90, $p < .001$	Organization membership, $\beta = 0.36^{***}$ ; community attachment, $\beta = 0.20^{***}$ ; trust in neighbors, $\beta = 0.17^{**}$
Political efficacy	.08	30.60, $p < .001$	Political efficacy, $\beta = 0.29^{***}$
Media use & neighborhood communication	.05	3.26, $p < .004$	Newspaper readership, $\beta = 0.11^*$ ; neighborhood communication, $\beta = 0.16^{**}$
Communication capital	.05	22.40, $p < .001$	Summary scale, $\beta = 0.32^{***}$

<sup>a</sup> $R = .47$ ,  $R^2 = .22$ ;  $F(12, 254) = 5.87$ ,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>b</sup> $R = .56$ ,  $R^2 = .31$ ;  $F(12, 254) = 9.50$ ,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>c</sup> $R = .54$ ,  $R^2 = .30$ ;  $F(12, 254) = 8.90$ ,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>d</sup> $R = .65$ ,  $R^2 = .43$ ;  $F(12, 254) = 15.80$ ,  $p < .001$ .

final scale was .58. This Political Involvement Scale was entered in another regression using the same set of blocks, with similar results. Three social capital variables are significant predictors (organizational membership, community attachment, and trust in neighbors), as is political efficacy, newspaper readership, and neighborhood communication, and the summary scale for communication capital. The answer to *RQ1* is positive that communication capital explains additional variance beyond the traditional social capital measures.

A set of companion regressions with social categories included as the first block did not alter the results very much. Only in the equation predicting political activities was there a change in the impact of communication capital, where the statistical significance drops below the acceptable cutoff level ( $\alpha = 0.15$ ,  $p < .07$ ). No significant differences are found in predicting perceived personal leadership, personal involvement, or the final political involvement scale with social categories in the equation; all of the predictors retain their importance.

## **Discussion**

Communication scholars can contribute to the dialogue on social capital and political involvement by examining the contributions of people's symbolic activity across domains. Here, we conceptualized communication capital as symbolic activity across interpersonal, mass, and organizational communication contexts in its potential for civic engagement. Following a literature review, communication capital was defined as "communication patterns that facilitate social problem solving in the community."

In our survey, the concept was operationalized with four dimensions that captured symbolic activity for civic engagement across communication channels and contexts:

1. Interpersonal discussion of social problems and programs among family and friends, in the workplace, and in the neighborhood and community.
2. Discussion of social problems and programs in the non-work organizational context.
3. Attention to public issues and business in the media.
4. Using media for civic engagement.

Although this was the first attempt to measure such a concept, our measures were reasonably reliable and demonstrated predictive and internal validity. However, their use in additional studies and in other communities will be needed. Furthermore, researchers with different goals and populations might advance alternative measures that help us map the boundaries of this concept. Since conducting this study, we have become aware of another research team focusing on communication capital as a concept (Matsaganis, 2007) influencing health literacy. Their evidence supports the utility of the concept and, together with this study, expands the range of variables influenced by communication capital.

*H1* predicted a positive relationship between communication capital and political involvement. Results showing the Communication Capital summary scale and all four dimensions related to political involvement measures provide strong support

for our hypothesis, and controlling for social categories has little impact on the relationships. Additional hypotheses supported by analysis link communication capital to the central notions of social capital, as well as other communication measures (mass and interpersonal) and efficacy. With a strong pattern of interrelationships among our variables, the test of our concept's utility is found in the results addressing *RQ1*. And, the answer is quite convincing, as communication capital explains variance in all measures of political involvement beyond that accounted for by traditional measures of social capital (membership in organizations, perceived quality of life in the area, community attachment, and trust in neighbors), other aspects of people's communication (media use and neighborhood communication), and efficacy. Results providing a positive answer to this question add further support for the concept and, again, controlling for social categories has little impact.

The additional predictive power also provides an argument that the "capital" in communication patterns is not merely relationships, joining organizations, or interpersonal trust, but a core of symbolic activity characterized by content and purpose that can be measured along some continuum of frequency or volume and extending across the domains of life where people act out their interests and values.

These results are consistent with the long-standing literature that shows mutual influence between particular media behaviors and measures of interpersonal interaction (e.g., J. M. McLeod, Bybee, & Durall, 1979). Those influences are manifest in common patterns of symbolic activity that have consequences for behaviors in other contexts. Here, the guiding goal directed that symbolic activity toward political involvement, but there clearly could be other threads that tie mass, interpersonal, and organizational communication into common patterns. When sociologists, psychologists, and researchers from other disciplines entertain the significance of communication for their interests, we should not expect them to see the forest for the trees, but communication scholars should venture into waters too seldom entered, looking for the commonalities that strengthen communication as a discipline.

Our proposal of the concept communication capital also echoes the sentiment for fundamental changes in conceptualizing mass communication and its effects in light of the transformative power of new media in connecting individuals and disseminating information in unprecedented ways. It is on the platform of these new media, transcending boundaries between interpersonal and mass communication that a growing array of important symbolic activities occurs. Chaffee and Metzger (2001) argued that the term *mass* communication should be replaced with *media* communication because mass communication increasing becomes inadequate to capture many emerging communication processes and effects. Within this new media environment, Bennett and Manheim (2006) contended that "the underlying relations between individuals, society, sources, and messages are, indeed, changing in ways that suggest the need to formulate a new communication paradigm (p. 217; also cited in Benoit & Holbert, 2009, p. 444). We believe that communication capital, as conceptualized in this article, contributes to the formulation of such a new paradigm, attempting to capture and highlight the formative role of symbolic activities in producing social change.

With additional validation of our concept of communication capital, we can consider the potential for “communication interventions” (see Jeffres, 2007). Although overall patterns of communication persist across time, we can intervene in the community with the development of Web sites that focus on community problems, social media, and mobile platforms that stimulate neighborhood discussion, and support for neighborhood groups that strengthen interaction across social boundaries. At a time when technology is changing the communication landscape, there are opportunities to experiment with community initiatives, rather than leave it to the “communication marketplace” and expect sociological or economic “capital” to provide the energy for change.

Here, we have focused on political involvement and the civic engagement literature, but the concept of communication capital also could be operationalized for other domains. The health arena quickly comes to mind, with people accessing health information online, communicating with their health providers through e-mail, attending to health messages in mass and specialized media, as well as personal discussions that change with the lifecycle and personal networks. Rather than limit ourselves to civic engagement, we might look at how personal problem solving (where efficacy has a different meaning) is connected to people’s communication resources that cross domains and might be assisted through professional interventions.

Although the focus here has occurred at the individual level, we also could elevate the concept of communication capital to higher levels of analysis, examining the resources available at the community level. The literature in mass communication has long demonstrated the significance of having a newspaper for community life. Although sociologists and urban scholars can point to the significance of social norms for social control of such behaviors as delinquency, we should consider the significance of interpersonal networks and communication resources for similar purposes. Putnam (1995) asked if people are “bowling alone.” We should ask how our symbolic exchanges enable people to cope and negotiate change in an uncertain future.

## Notes

- [1] Certainly, other aspects from a variety of disciplines have been brought into the discussion of social capital, including culture and the arts (Dubinsky, 2006; Jeannotte, 2006), personality (Scheufele & Shah, 2000), access to expertise (Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004), community organizing (Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Greeley, 1997; Henderson, Taylor, & Thomson, 2002), economic development (Mencken, Bader, & Polson, 2006), ethnic groups (Steury, Spencer, & Parkinson, 2004), and the importance of social capital for society (Gozzi, 2003–2004).
- [2] Putnam (1995) identified social capital as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (p. 67). Thus, the focus is on collective action and consequences for the whole, not the individual. We are not saying that application of the concept within organizations of personal contexts are not useful or legitimate efforts to extend the concept and built theory, but we narrow the focus to concentrate on communication.
- [3] Alpha measures the extent to which all items measure the same thing, but our scale is more like a summary index, measuring the build up of such discussion, rather than the extent to which it occurs across all contexts. Thus, the somewhat low level is reasonable.

- [4] Age was coded into the following categories: 1 = 18–20, 2 = 21–30, 3 = 31–40, 4 = 41–50, 5 = 51–60, 6 = 61–70, and 7 = 71 or older ( $M=4.39$ ,  $S=1.70$ ,  $n=244$ ). Ethnic/racial background was coded into the following categories: Black or African American, White or Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, “mixed,” and “other.” Formal education was coded into the following categories: 1 = *completed grade school* (8 years or less), 2 = *some some high school*, 3 = *high school graduate*, 4 = *some college*, 5 = *college graduate*, and 6 = *advanced college degree* ( $M=4.27$ ,  $S=1.12$ ,  $n=246$ ). Annual household income was coded into the following categories: \$10,000 or less; \$10,001 to \$20,000; \$20,001 to \$30,000; \$30,001 to \$40,000; \$40,001 to \$50,000; \$50,001 to \$75,000; \$75,001 to \$100,000; \$100,001 to \$150,000; and more than \$150,000 ( $M=4.86$ ,  $S=2.14$ ,  $n=212$ ).
- [5] The organizational membership index is positively related to three of the four measures of political involvement (political activities,  $r=.38$ ,  $p<.001$ ; perceived personal leadership,  $r=.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ; and perceived personal involvement,  $r=.28$ ,  $p<.001$ ), the metro quality of life measure is related to two (perceived personal leadership,  $r=.18$ ,  $p<.002$ ; perceived personal political involvement,  $r=.12$ ,  $p<.03$ ), and community attachment is correlated with three of the four measures of political involvement (political activities,  $r=.19$ ,  $p<.001$ ; perceived personal leadership,  $r=.20$ ,  $p<.001$ ; and perceived personal involvement,  $r=.28$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The item measuring trust in neighbors is correlated with all three: political activities ( $r=.11$ ,  $p<.05$ ), perceived personal leadership ( $r=.26$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and perceived personal involvement ( $r=.18$ ,  $p<.002$ ).
- [6] Political efficacy is related to all measures of political involvement (political activities,  $r=.24$ ,  $p<.001$ ; perceived personal leadership,  $r=.39$ ,  $p<.001$ ; and perceived personal involvement,  $r=.28$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The strength of one’s neighborhood communication is correlated with two measures of political involvement (perceived personal leadership,  $r=.29$ ,  $p<.001$ ; and perceived personal involvement,  $r=.28$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Several of the media use variables are related to political involvement. Those who go on the Internet more often engage in more political activities ( $r=.12$ ,  $p<.04$ ) and do not think that government bodies collaborate to solve problems ( $r=-.12$ ,  $p<.04$ ). Watching the news on television more frequently is related to perceived personal leadership ( $r=.11$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and perceived personal involvement ( $r=.11$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and the correlation with engaging in political activities approaches statistical significance ( $r=.10$ ,  $p<.06$ ). Listening to the radio is not related to any political involvement measures, but reading the newspaper more frequently is correlated with all three of them (political activities,  $r=.22$ ,  $p<.001$ ; perceived personal leadership,  $r=.25$ ,  $p<.001$ ; and perceived personal involvement,  $r=.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The more magazines one reads, the higher one’s perceived personal leadership ( $r=.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and perceived personal involvement ( $r=.21$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- [7] Political efficacy is related to all four measures of social capital (organizational membership index,  $r=.13$ ,  $p<.02$ ; perceived metro quality of life,  $r=.13$ ,  $p<.02$ ; community attachment,  $r=.16$ ,  $p<.01$ ; and trust in neighbors,  $r=.15$ ,  $p<.01$ ).
- [8] Involvement in the neighborhood communication network is correlated with three of the four social capital measures (organizational membership,  $r=.10$ ,  $p<.05$ ; trust in neighbors,  $r=.30$ ,  $p<.001$ ; and community attachment,  $r=.23$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- [9] Those who go on the Internet more frequently are higher on all social capital measures. Correlations with the former are organizational membership ( $r=.11$ ,  $p<.05$ ), metro quality of life ( $r=.13$ ,  $p<.05$ ), trust in neighbors ( $r=.20$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and community attachment ( $r=.15$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Time spent watching television is related to only one social capital measure, and that is a negative correlation with organizational membership ( $r=-.14$ ,  $p<.02$ ). Watching television news more often is related to only one social capital measure, trust in neighbors ( $r=.15$ ,  $p<.02$ ). Time spent listening to the radio is negatively related to perceived metro quality of life ( $r=-.12$ ,  $p<.03$ ). Reading the newspaper more frequently is correlated with three of the four social capital measures (organizational

membership,  $r = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ; trust in neighbors,  $r = .12$ ,  $p < .03$ ; and community attachment,  $r = .13$ ,  $p < .02$ ).

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