



This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

WILLINGNESS OF OPINION EXPRESSION

-An Alternative Explanation to
the Spiral of Silence Theory

presented by

Sei-Hill Kim

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in Advertising


Major professor

Date 7/28/97



PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
NOV 12 2002		
NOV 12 2002		
NOV 12 2002		

MSU Is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\air\date.due.prm3-p.1

**WILLINGNESS OF OPINION EXPRESSION: AN ALTERNATIVE
EXPLANATION TO THE SPIRAL OF SILENCE THEORY**

By

Sei-Hill Kim

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Advertising

1997

ABSTRACTS

WILLINGNESS OF OPINION EXPRESSION: AN ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION TO THE SPIRAL OF SILENCE THEORY

By

Sei-Hill Kim

The spiral of silence theory, which emphasizes the effect of opinion climate on individuals' willingness of opinion expression, was reexamined by considering simultaneously other possible factors as well as fear of isolation. The relative contributions of those factors were also compared across different settings of opinion expression. For these purposes, several approaches to path analysis were employed to analyze the data collected by surveying university students.

It was found that the relative importance of 'opinion congruency', one of the central elements of the theory, varied with the types of opinion expression and individual's levels of interest in a given issue in determining the willingness of express opinions. Furthermore, the opinion distribution in a numeric sense was not the only factor constituting the entire opinion climate. Several other factors such as 'issue benefit', 'efficacy', 'knowledge', and 'political interest' were also found to be influential on the willingness of opinion expression.

To Jesus and my family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not be possible without the sincere assistance and advice of many people whose names can not be all mentioned here. My adviser, Dr. Charles T. Salmon has always been supportive throughout my studies in East Lansing. Without his help and encouragement, it must have been impossible for me to start this study. Above all, he introduced me the study of public opinion which will be the main subject of my ongoing studies and research. I have owed everything I accomplished to him from the beginning to the present.

I greatly appreciate Dr. Gordon E. Miracle and Dr. Hairong Li for their invaluable advice and wisdom on the problems I could not find myself. In addition, I have to thank my classmates in our department for their encouraging my study. Especially, I would like to appreciate Jeong-Heon Chang and Jinhee Bae. Without them, it was impossible for me to complete this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION	
AND THE MOTIVES OF OPINION EXPRESSION	5
Public Opinion Process	5
Opinion Expression as a Collective Action	16
CHAPTER 2	
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE WILLINGNESS OF	
OPINION EXPRESSION (RESEARCH HYPOTHESES)	24
Issue Benefit (Social and Personal Benefit)	24
Expectation	28
Procedural Cost and Incentive	33
Efficacy	36
Relative Contribution of Factors on the Willingness of	
Opinion Expression	38
CHAPTER 3	
METHOD	41
Sampling	41
Issues	42
Measurement	44
CHAPTER 4	
RESULTS	48
Issue Benefit	48
Expectation	49
Opinion Congruency	52
Efficacy	52
Types of Opinion Expression	53
Issue Characteristics.....	54

DISCUSSION 63

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES IN ANALYSIS 72

APPENDIX B

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT (SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE) 74

LIST OF REFERENCES 83

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Comparison of Two Issues	43
Table 2. Comparison of Subjects' Opinion between Partner Benefit and Assisted Suicide Issues	44
Table 3. Comparison of Mean Values of the Variables between Supporting and Opposing Factions	56
Table 4. Summary of the Results	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Spiral of Silence Process	30
Figure 2. The Effect of Expectation on the Willingness of Opinion Expression	32
Figure 3. The Hypothetical Relations among Variables	37
Figure 4. Path Analysis on the Issue of Doctor-Assisted Suicide	50
Figure 5. Path Analysis on the Issue of Same-Sex Partner Benefit	51
Figure 6. Path Analysis on the Issue of Doctor-Assisted Suicide for the Respondents with High Interest (interest>4.58)	60
Figure 7. Path Analysis on the Issue of Doctor-Assisted Suicide for the Respondents with Low Interest (interest<4.58)	61

INTRODUCTION

The great importance of public opinion stems from its ability to influence policies as a type of common people's censor of government in our democratic system. Therefore, it does not make sense to limit discussing the concept of public opinion to the notion of mere majority public's sentiments. As Blumer (1948) noted, individual sentiments and opinions should be expressed in certain ways, and also need to be transformed into a consolidated social force to reach policy maker's attention.

As many studies (e.g., Mead, 1934) in social psychology have noted, an individual's social behavior is explained not only by his/her own attitude or perspective, but also by the relationship with other people - in a large sense, with a society he/she belongs to. It is obvious, in an ideal perspective of democracy, that public opinion should consist of the opinions of every individual in a society (Bryce, 1900; Gallup and Rae, 1940; Gallup, 1966). However, not all individual opinions become expressed, that is, become a part of the social discourse. Opinion expression, as a social behavior, is not solely determined by individual opinions. When we express our opinions, various structural and situational factors in our society encourage, discourage, and even distort our opinion expression.

What does it mean not to express one's opinion? As Alinsky noted, keeping silence does not mean a 'neutral' or 'no' opinion, but instead implies an acquiescence to an established social order or dominant majority opinion: "... throughout history, silence has

been regarded as assent - in this case assent to the system.” (1971, p. xix). In fact, silence of the public is always regarded as a ‘consent’ - sometimes, a coerced one.

Noelle-Neumann’s spiral of silence theory (1973, 1974, 1977, 1985, 1995) has paid attention to the notion of ‘fear of isolation’, and empirically tested its effect as one of the factors which determine the level of individual’s willingness to express opinion. Many previous studies (e.g., Taylor, 1982; Glynn and Mcleod, 1984; Donsbach and Stevenson, 1984; Neuwirth, 1988; Salmon and Neuwirth, 1990; Salmon and Oshagan, 1990; Lasorsa, 1991) have applied the theory to various cases, and tried to identify the effect of fear of isolation (or ‘opinion environment’) on the willingness of opinion expression. However, as Salmon and Glynn (1996, p.162) noted, most of findings showed limited supports for the theory:

Researchers have found what might be characterized as a ‘modest’ degree of reluctance, rather than a consuming fear, about publicly expressing a minority opinion on most issues. Indeed, it is very often the case that a plurality of those holding (or believing that they hold) the minority position are still willing to speak out, far more than the few hardcores that the model would predict.

These results seem to be attributed to the fact that the theory overestimates the negative sanction of fear of isolation in determining the level of willingness to express opinions, while ignoring other possible factors such as a certain benefit (or positive motive) of opinion expression (Taylor, 1982). In this context, several researchers (Donsbach and Stevenson, 1984; Lasorsa, 1991) suggested whatever possible factors be included in the consideration of the willingness of opinion expression. They also pointed the limited conditions in which the theory might be at work and some factors which seemed to operate against ‘fear of isolation’ in determining the level of willingness to express one’s opinion.

Taking this perspective, the present study investigates the influences of several possible factors (including fear of isolation) on the willingness of individual's opinion expression. The core assumption of this study is that the relative importance of those factors, in determining the level of willingness, will vary with the different settings of opinion expression. Here, the different settings of opinion expression are related to the characteristics of issues (according to 'issue status') and the types of opinion expression.

For this purpose, the present study begins with the discussion of the process of public opinion formation, relating the process to the characteristics of issues and their relevant public. Then, the motives of individual's opinion expression will be examined, paying attention to the nature of opinion expression as a social behavior, especially as a participation in a collective action. Finally, factors influencing individual's willingness of opinion expression will be introduced, and their influences on the willingness will be tested in different settings of opinion expression.

Noelle-Neumann (1995) defined public opinion as 'social control', contrasting the concept with 'rationality' which is based on the rational judgment and decision making of the public. In her definition of public opinion: "Public opinion is the opinion which can be voiced in public without fear of sanctions and upon which action in public can be based." (1974, p.44), an individual is recognized as a passive and irrational entity who conforms to the social pressure without resistance. This kind of behavior might seem to be irrational in societal level. However, the present study posits that the irrationality in a societal level can be explained as an unintended outcome of the pursuit of individual rationality. Therefore, an individual will be described as a rational entity, at least in an individual level, who consciously calculates the benefit and cost of his/her behavior when the individual decides

to behave. From this perspective, an opinion expression is also assumed as a result of the conscious and rational calculation of benefit and cost which are related with the opinion expression. Therefore, the factors discussed in this study are regarded as a benefit or cost which is conducive or deterrent to the social behavior, 'opinion expression'.

Chapter 1

THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION AND THE MOTIVES OF OPINION EXPRESSION

Public Opinion Process

About a century ago, Bryce (1900) recognized the formation of public opinion as a complex process rather than a mere aggregation of public sentiment responding to a given issue. According to him, public opinion is formed through several stages, in which a particular issue is presented to the public, discussed through the expressions of individual opinions, and under a certain type of public consent, the individual opinions are consolidated into a social force, 'public opinion', influencing relevant policies.

What we have to note is that this process of public opinion formation determines the being of an issue, gives the definition and meaning of the issue, and finally directs the way of resolution regarding the given issue (Blumer, 1971). Not all issues become accepted as an 'issue' - in a realistic sense - in a society unless they are legitimized as what is socially significant and required to be discussed in public. How an issue is discussed in the public discourse shapes the meaning and definition of the issue. Finally, the meaning or the definition of an issue which is recognized as a prevalent one in public determines what should be done about the issue - the fate of an issue.

Surrounding a given issue, there are relevant groups whose values and interests are closely associated with what is done about the issue. These groups actively participate in

the process of public opinion formation through giving their own opinions - how to define the issue, and accordingly how to deal with the issue - to the realm of public discussion. In the public discussion, these different opinions, representing conflicting values and interests of each group, compete with one another to gain a majority public's attention and support (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988) and, above all, the attention of policy makers (Blumer, 1948).

The discussion in the public discourse provides the public with interpretations and meanings for an issue, evolving and changing over the time in accordance with the phases of the competition and interaction among the relevant groups. Along with this public discourse, individuals bring their own life histories, social interactions, and psychological predisposition to their process of constructing meaning (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). From this meaning, individuals form their attitude and opinion toward the issue, and under certain conducive conditions, express their opinions in a certain way. These opinion expressions - approving or disapproving a particular issue - eventually become a part of public discourse. At a moment an opinion (or an opinion position) is supported by those opinion expressions which are significant in numbers and consolidated strongly enough to be recognized as a prevalent one, the opinion becomes a 'public' opinion which is supposed to be adopted as a policy in a democratic social system.

From this point of view, public opinion can be understood as a type of social resource which is mobilized by some groups to achieve their values and interests regarding a given issue. Since the fate of an issue, as noted above, is determined by the process of public opinion formation, the groups whose interests are closely related with the fate of the issue compete to mediate or modulate the phase of the process in the direction of maximizing their values and interests.

In this constructionist perspective, Crable and Vibbert (1985) classified public issues in terms of their status in a issue 'life cycle'. From an emergence to a certain resolution, an issue goes through various levels of status: 'potential', 'imminent', 'current', 'critical', and 'dormant'. Here, the status of an issue does not depend on the objective nature of the issue, but is characterized by the *salience* of the issue in the public discourse - that is, the extent to which an issue may prompt people to perceive personal concern (or interest) with the issue.

When some individuals or groups begin to have some interest or concern about an issue, the issue possesses a *potential* status to be arisen as a social issue. As more and more people begin to pay attention to the issue and the issue becomes legitimized as a topic of public conversation, the issue goes through the *imminent* and *current* status. The issue becomes *critical* as people begin to identify with one of the competing opinion positions, and the conflict among them intensifies. Finally, when the issue is resolved in a certain way, the issue becomes a *dormant* one, which is remote from the public concern.

What we have to note is that not all issues go through those status. When an issue fails to reach up to the next status, it falls - even without a certain resolution - to the dormant status which represents the public's apathy. It should be also noted that this life cycle of an issue continues perpetually. The dormancy of an issue does not mean the end of the issue. As Crable and Vibbert (1985) said, the dormancy of an issue, caused with a resolution or even without any resolution, might be agitated by some incident or new circumstance at a later time¹. When this occurs, the life cycle of an issue recurs to the

¹ Think about the issue of 'death penalty', for an example. Whenever there is a sentence of death, the issue re-arises as a significant one with the new setting and circumstance of the issue.

potential status and it may cause the change of public opinion on the issue in some cases.

The fact that an issue becomes salient in a society implies the issue is now expanding to the greater size of people, who begin to recognize the issue, understand the significant impact of the issue, form a resolute opinion, and talk about the issue. In terms of how an issue is expanded to the wide range of public concern, Cobb and Elder (1972) postulated several definitional dimensions which determine the issue characteristics: the degree of 'specificity' (how abstractly or concretely an issue is perceived), the scope of 'social significance' (perceived potential of an issue to impact on the great number of people), the extent of 'temporal relevance' (short term/temporal or persistent/fundamental relevance), the degree of 'complexity' (highly complex or simply understandable), and the degree of 'categorical precedence' (whether the issue is routine matter with precedents or extraordinary).

As noted earlier, issue characteristics are not an objective or intrinsic matter of an issue itself, but a matter of how the issue is defined and perceived in the perspective of those dimensions. When an issue is defined and perceived as being abstract, socially significant, persistent, easily understandable, and extraordinary, there is a high possibility that the issue becomes salient, and attracts a great concern of the public. Therefore, the characteristic of an issue can be understood as a product of competing efforts of relevant interest groups in the process of public opinion formation.

The following discussion will deal with the process of public opinion in detail, relating the process with the characteristics of issue (issue status) and relevant publics. As noted before, those characteristics are expected to have a relation with the relative importance of the factors in determining the level of willingness to express opinion about a

given issue.

Initiation of Issue. The formation of public opinion begins with a situation in which some individuals or groups recognize a significant discrepancy between their values or interests and a given *status quo* of a society. In the broad perspective, the *status quo* includes certain phenomena², behaviors of some individuals or groups, and social rules (such as policies) which are possibly associated with those phenomena and behaviors.

For those who perceive the discrepancy, the *status quo* is defined as a problematic condition or a 'social problem' which requires a certain action or change, in the direction of restoring their values and interests. That is to say, the given condition becomes an issue to the groups who are directly involved in the condition. In most cases, however, there is a disagreement among groups with conflicting values and interests in dealing with the condition. Some individuals or groups may want to maintain that condition while others claim a certain action toward or change of it. The disagreement may also arise among groups holding different opinions of how to change the condition. Some groups demand somewhat radical change *of* social system while others insist a certain partial change *inside* the social system.³

At this early stage of public opinion formation, the issue possesses the characteristics of 'potential' or 'imminent' status. Even though some individuals or groups

² Such as 'pollution', 'unemployment', 'economic depression', and so on

³ There can be various opinions in how to deal with a given issue, or in some cases, a consensus on the issue. However, there is a significant tendency that the opinions are dichotomized into dual opinion positions (e.g., 'pros' and 'cons'). Several scholars (Tuchman, 1978; Condit, 1994) attributed this tendency to the mass media's practice of issue coverage, which dichotomizes or polarizes the public debate under the norm of 'objectivity' and 'entertainment value'.

who are *directly* relevant (involved) to the issue, and some claim makers or opinion leaders may have concern about the issue, general publics are remote from the issue. They are less informed, have an ambiguous understanding of the impact of the issue to themselves or their society, and accordingly do not perceive any strong personal connection (or interest) with the issue. They are 'indifferent' public who do not have any preference to a specific opinion position (e.g., 'approving' or 'disapproving'; 'pros' or 'cons').

When there is a certain compromise or agreement among groups, the issue is resolved in a certain way, and accordingly does not evolve to a salient social issue. When the relevant groups cannot reach to an agreement, however, the conflict and competition among the groups become intensified, and the debates regarding the issue move to the realm of public discourse.

Legitimization of Issue. For those who do not want a given condition to be changed, it is undesirable for the condition to be revealed to or to be discussed by general public. However, as the conflict becomes intensified, the amount of knowledge about an issue increases in a society (Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, 1980; Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor, 1995). Owing to the increased knowledge about an issue, the public begins to recognize the significant impact of the issue, and increasing number of people perceive some personal connection to the issue. For the individuals, perceiving personal connection (or interest) with an issue means they recognize its possible impact on themselves or the

society they belong to.⁴ Finally, the issue becomes legitimized as a 'current' social issue at that moment.

From this moment, the groups, whose interests are directly related with the issue, compete actively to inform the public of their definitions and opinions to obtain wide public support and to make their opinions dominate the public discourse. Along with this competition, the social elite start to respond to the issue by providing the public discourse with their own definitions and opinions about the issue. Finally, the general public begins to talk about the issue, expressing a sentiment of approving or disapproving the given condition.

The mass media play an important role in this legitimization of an issue through their 'agenda-setting' or 'gate-keeping' function, which determines the standard or threshold level of legitimization (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien, 1972; Cobb and Elder, 1972; Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988). In addition to this function of legitimization, mass media elect and present the definitions and frames of the issue from the relevant groups and social elite, representing conflicting values and interests (Tuchman, 1978; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). The initial sentiments of the general public and the responses of officials are also reflected on the media coverage of the issue. In a realistic sense, therefore, mass media dominate the public discourse, and mediate the process of public opinion formation by indicating what issues we have to see, how we have to see the issue, and what the opinions of other people are.

Even though the issue became salient in the society, the initial opinions of general

⁴ However, it should be noted that the perception of a significant impact of an issue is not the only factor determining the level interest.

public are still somewhat diffuse and ambiguous at this moment of legitimization (the initial point of public debate). That means even though most people recognize the significant impact of the issue and perceive a personal connection with what will be done about the issue, they have not firmly decided which opinion position to support - 'an ambivalent situation'. In general, they have initial opinion or preference to an opinion position (e.g., 'pros' or 'cons'), but also perceive some attraction from other (or even opposite) opinion claims.⁵ Therefore, they do not have a resolute opinion of which position to support. In many cases, as a result, these unfocused, uncertain, and shapeless opinions are vulnerable to the following information and others' opinions about the issue, and accordingly confirmed, weakened, or sometimes changed through ongoing communication activities with mass media and other people (Bryce, 1900). General publics are 'ambivalent' to a given issue at this stage. They talk about the issue, and express their opinions, however, in non-articulated and uncertain ways.

Public Debate and Consolidation of Opinion. Public debate on an issue is advanced as the relevant groups, social elite, government officials, and the general public actively express their opinions on the issue. Individuals participate in the public discourse through various types of opinion expression, such as discussion with others, voting, public hearing, petition, and demonstration. From the public debate, individuals obtain more information (or knowledge) about the issue, thus gaining a more clear understanding

⁵ Think about a person who supports the 'anti-nuclear' energy opinion position. This person may also perceive some attraction from the advantages of nuclear energy such as 'low cost', 'pollution free' which are claimed by 'pro-nuclear' energy side.

(regardless of whether it is objectively true or not) of the possible impacts of the issue on their values and interests. They also test the acceptability or popularity of their opinion in the society by examining the direct and indirect responses of other people toward the individuals' own opinion (Bryce, 1900).

Through these communicative interactions, a previously ambiguous and ambivalent individual opinion is developed into a clear, stable, and resolute one supporting either side of opinion positions. Crable and Vibbert (1985) termed the status of the issue at this moment as a 'critical issue', in which more and more people identify with some side (one opinion position) of the issue. Bryce (1900, p.4) also described this process by stating:

The effect of controversy is to drive the partisans on either side from some of their arguments which are shown to be weak; to conform them in others, which they think strong; and to make them take up a definite position on one side.

This process in which a person develops his/her own resolute opinion position can be explained by the increased knowledge - that is, more clear understanding of which opinion position would be the most beneficial to the person's own values and interests. Especially, the 'selective exposure' to the information which is congruent with the individual's opinion can also expedite the process. As an individual finds out more and more information which supports his/her opinion position, the individual begins to hold a resolute opinion of which position to support.

The perception of others' opinions also influences the process. When an individual finds out that most of others have the same opinion as his/hers own, this popularity of the opinion position confirms the individual's opinion. However, in the opposite cases, the unpopularity of one's own opinion position weakens or changes the individual's opinion, or at least threatens the individual to conceal his/her opinion (Noelle-Neumann, 1973;

1974; 1977; 1985; 1995). Therefore, the degree of resolution in one's opinion is the function of information (or knowledge) which supports or discredits the opinion, and the perception of others' opinions which confirms or weakens one's own opinion. This high level of resolution is expected to encourage or expedite the expression of one's own opinion publicly.

Through the public debates, those opinion expressions are consolidated⁶ into an opinion of a group whose members have shared values and interest regarding an issue (McLeod, Pan, and Rucinski, 1995). When this occurs, the consolidated opinion becomes a social force which can influence relevant policies. In this context, an opinion expression in public opinion situation can be understood as a political participation.

Political participation takes place in various types which have different levels of impact on the social system (Verba and Nie, 1972). Therefore, different types of opinion expression, such as a discussion with others, public hearing, petition, demonstration, voting, vary in their visibility and impression on the public and policy makers and accordingly in their potential or effectiveness to prompt a system level response. In addition, each opinion expression has different level of impact, according to who expresses that opinion. As Blumer (1948) noted, public opinion is formed and expressed through the interaction of unequally powerful functional groups which vary in their ability to translate private interests into public policy. Therefore the conflicting opinions, expressed and supported by the individuals and groups with unequal prestige and social/political resources, possess different level of efficacy in achieving their intended

⁶ The consolidation of opinion expression means that the opinions are expressed in simultaneous, resolute, and articulated ways, rather than sporadic, inconstant, or obscure ways.

goal. In sum, the strength of an opinion, as a social force, is determined by its significance in the numbers of supporters, the level of cohesion (see footnote 6), how the opinion is expressed - the types of opinion expression, and who expresses the opinion. The more power an opinion has, the more possibility the opinion can be adopted as a policy.

Resolution of Issue. The outcome of competition and conflict, regarding a given issue, depends on the relative social power possessed by relevant groups. How much power the relevant groups possess determines the nature and the extent of change. Here, the power represents any types of social, political, and economic resources which can be mobilized by the groups, usually with disproportional manners.

The mobilization of resources means the supports from some powerful individuals and groups, established social institutions, and public opinion which are supposed to have potential to influence or control the members of a society. Even though public opinion is merely one of the resources which can be utilized by the relevant groups, interestingly enough, the usage of other resources is always rationalized as a democratic one, disguised as the name of public opinion. Therefore, most outcomes of issues and conflicts are depicted as 'the will of public'.

When a group widely and efficiently mobilizes social resources, a given issue is resolved in a way which maximizes the group's values and interests. In most cases, not all, social system has a tendency to uphold stable maintenance of established social order rather than radical social change⁷. That is because the most powerful group in a society, in

⁷ It should be also noted that the target of change, when it is inevitable, is mostly individual level rather than societal or system level. Individuals, as far as they are common people, are those who have the

general, does not want the change of established social order which is the very foundation of its dominant social power. In this point of view, it is noticeable that there are a few cases, in realistic sense, that an issue reaches to the stage of actual policy change, despite the countless number of issues and problems in a society.

On the other hand, when there is a balance of power among groups with conflicting opinion positions, an issue becomes prolonged without a certain resolution (McLeod, Pan, and Rucinski, 1995). Such issues as environment, gun control, atomic energy, and abortion represent the prolonged issues.

In both cases, the issue becomes remote from public concern. When there is a certain resolution, the issue falls into a 'dormant' status where "the issue lies quietly - not dead but sleeping - until the issue is given new life by people who see new problems in the new situation" (Crabbe and Vibbert, 1985, p.7). In the case of prolonged issue, the issue also vanishes from the concern and discussion of the public with the rise of new issues which attract more concern of people at a given time and situation.

Opinion Expression as a Collective Action

Even though there is no single definition of the concept 'public opinion' widely accepted, behavioral aspect of public opinion can be found in many definitions. Allport (1937, p.61) defined public opinion as an action rather than a sentiment, and emphasized the necessity of collective opinion expression in a large number:

The term public opinion is given its meaning with reference to a multi-individual situation in which individuals are expressing themselves, or can be called upon to express

themselves, as favoring or supporting (or else disfavoring or opposing) some definite condition, person, or proposal of widespread importance, in such a proportion of number, intensity, and constancy, as to give rise to the probability of affecting action, directly or indirectly, toward the object concerned.

Bernard (1926, p.559) emphasized the ‘uniformity’ as a fundamental aspect of public opinion: “Any fairly uniform collective expression of mental or inner behavior reactions... Sufficient uniformity to insure a unity of definition of the content of public opinion”. Best (1973) also noted that the concept, ‘public opinion’, possessed collective properties as a macro-level characteristic to be influential on system changes.

A single laborer’s default of his/her duty is a behavior to be punished. However, when enough number of other laborers participate in the same way, these collective behaviors are transformed into a powerful force, a ‘strike’, which can influence company’s policy. A voice (or opinion expression) of a single individual often does not mean anything (as far as he/she is a common person). When it is supported by enough number of others’ resonance and participation in a collective way, their voices are transformed into a social force, ‘public opinion’, which can translate their collective interest into public policy. Therefore, for an opinion to become a public opinion, the opinion ought to be expressed and voiced in a collective way, and consolidated into a social force which can influence relevant policy.

When we express our opinion in a public opinion situation, the opinion expression is neither a mere expression of our sentiments nor an answer to a question of what is right and wrong: “Public opinion which was a mere display, ... or which never came to the attention of those who have to act on public opinion would be impotent and meaningless as far as affecting the action or operation of society is concerned” (Blumer, 1948, p.73).

Instead, an opinion expression should be understood as a social behavior intended to achieve a specific goal, such as policy change, which may influence the interest of those who express the opinion. Here, the goal has a property of collective one which are expected to influence large number of people, and can not be achieved by a single individual's separated efforts. Therefore, opinion expression can be regarded as a type of collective behavior, which is initiated by specific groups (such as movement group, change agency, or political party), expecting others' (those who have the same opinion) resonance and participation in a collective way. Considering this property of collective action in opinion expression, previous studies on the collective action, especially on its motivations, seem to provide some implications in understanding the willingness of individuals' opinion expression.

Weber (1978, p.24-25) classified social behaviors in terms of their motivations:

Value-Rational Action, that is, determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, independently of its prospects of success.

Instrumentally Rational Action, that is, determined by expectations as to the behaviors of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as "conditions" or "means" for the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends.

Based on these two types of social actions, two conflicting factions in collective action studies have been developed. The studies (e.g., Scott, 1977), based on the 'value rational' perspective, focus on such motivations as 'grievance', 'injustice', 'moral mandate', or 'collective identity', and investigate how social and personal factors give rise to those motivations, encouraging the participation in collective action.

In many cases, an individual's participation in collective action can be explained by

‘moral mandate’. When we perceive a certain injustice from a given issue, we sometimes behave according to moral mandate regardless of any expected risk or damage. That is also the reason why many movements always try to frame their issue as a moral one. **‘Collective identity’** (group solidarity) also explains a large part of our behaviors. As a member of various social groups, we have particular ways of our behavior expected by other group members, which set the direction of our behavior under a given situation.

However, these value-rational explanations are criticized as they deal with collective action as if there will always be collective action where injustice exists. They cannot give a plausible explanation to the question of why so many historical efforts to mobilize oppressed publics into a collective action have been frustrated in changing their unjust social situations.

On the other hand, the studies based on the **‘instrumentally rational’** perspective, such as **‘Rational Choice’** theories (Olson, 1971), understand a participation in a collective action as a result of the calculation of desired benefit and expected cost regarding the participation. Other studies in this perspective, such as **‘Resource Mobilization’** theories (Zalt and Ash, 1966; Curtis and Zurcher, 1973; Gamson, 1975) emphasize the coalescence of factors such as **‘resource mobilization’**, **‘formalized organization’**, and **‘the role of professionals’**, which enables movement to successfully redefine a given situation.

These instrumentally rational explanations are also criticized because of their tendency to imply the impossibility of collective action as they presuppose narrow perspective of rationality, which ignores the role of grievance, moral mandate, or collective identity as a motivation of the participation in a collective action (Cohen 1985; Ferree, 1992). They fail to explain the behaviors of peasants and laborers who resist, like

warriors, against unjust authority despite any possible damage and risk, especially among groups with established group solidarity.

In many cases, those two types of rationality seem to be mutually complementary rather than exclusive in explaining collective action. Weber (1978, p.26) also noted this point: "It would be very unusual to find concrete cases of action, especially of social action, which were oriented *only* in one or another of these ways." Collective action is not solely explained by either of those rationalities. Instead, it seems to provide more proper explanation of collective action to consider those rationalities simultaneously. In this perspective, several scholars such as Gamson (1992), Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina (1982), Gamson and Modigliani (1987), Benford (1993), Taylor (1986), Pride (1995) have suggested a constructionist approach of collective action which focuses on how such factors as 'grievance', 'collective identity', and the 'benefit and cost' are socially defined and perceived in public discourse.

In the present study, the opinion expression - as a participation in a collective action - is assumed as a result of a rational calculation of benefit and cost related with the opinion expression. Here, the benefit means personal utility which is expected to be given to the individuals when their opinion achieves its goal such as policy change. The benefit also includes that of societal level such as restoring social justice and morality. However, the process in which those benefit factors (personal and societal) influence the willingness of opinion expression is also understood in the relation with the expected cost. The cost includes not only physical one such as money or time but also psychological one such as 'fear of isolation' which is perceived to be required in the process of opinion expression.

Calculation of Benefit and Cost. As a self-interested and instrumentally rational entity, individuals do not always behave for their collective interest. They consciously calculate the benefit and cost of participating in a collective action. Only when they recognize the benefit exceeding cost, do they participate in the collective action. This calculation of benefit and cost determines an individual's willingness to participate in a collective action. Therefore, we can also assume that individuals consider this calculation when they express their opinions in public opinion situations.

The cost of collective action means personal resource which is needed to participate in collective action. Participating in collective action is sometimes risky, and requires, at a minimum, personal resources and time which otherwise can be utilized for other more private and profitable purposes.

As far as individuals have the same interest in a group objective, and believe they would all be better off by achieving the objective, they can expect benefit from participating in collective action. In general cases, this group interest is something too huge to be achieved by separated individual efforts. Under this situation, it seems to be rational for individuals to participate in collective action. However, this situation does not credit individual's active participation in collective action. That is because of 'the problem of free rider' which stems from the characteristic of 'public good' in group interest. It should be noted that the benefit of collective action has a characteristic of public good, especially that non-participants cannot be efficiently excluded from the utility of the benefit. Olson (1971, p.21) noted this notion:

Though all of the members of the group have a common interest in obtaining this

collective benefit, they have no common interest in paying the cost of providing that collective good. Each would prefer that others pay the entire cost, and ordinarily would get any benefit provided whether he had borne part of the cost or not.

If this is the fundamental nature of self-interested and rational behavior, achieving collective interest seems to be always impossible because everybody wants to be a free rider. If everybody wants to be a free rider, the consequence is the failure in the creation of public good, that is a group irrationality resulted by the pursuit of individual rationality.

Then, is collective action always impossible among those self-interested and instrumentally rational individuals? As Elster (1985, p.347) said that "I define (positive) class consciousness as *the ability to overcome the free-rider problem in realizing class interest.*", the problem of free rider can be overcome if we assume value-rational behavior. However, in other situation where we cannot expect any moral mandate or strong group solidarity, how can the free rider problem be overcome?

Olson (1971, p.2) emphasized the necessity of selective incentive such as 'coercion' or 'positive reward' as a device to overcome free rider problem: "... unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests." Even though everybody wants to be a free rider, it is possible to mobilize free riders into a collective action when there is a certain positive reward that is given to participants exclusively, or some coercion that is imposed to non-participants. The selective incentive means a utility produced from the process of participating in a collective action, regardless of any outcome of the collective action.

This explanation might be seen as an extremely utilitarian one. In public opinion

situation, however, selective incentive can explain a motivation of opinion expression. For instance, if the only reason a person participates in a demonstration is because the feeling of alienation from his/her colleagues (or reference group) is greater than the expected risk of being arrested by police, the person solves the problem of public good through selective incentive, 'not being alienated from colleagues'. Selective incentive not only explains a motivation of opinion expression, but also implies the possibility that individuals might express an opinion, which has nothing to do with their own understanding or opinion of a given issue, because of others' direct or tacit coercion.

Elster (1985) suggested that free rider problem can be overcome through 'conditional solidarity'. When the efforts to produce public good (collective benefit) fail repeatedly because of the free rider problem, individuals come to recognize that "We would better cooperate than be a free rider". At this situation, if a condition is fulfilled, the individuals would participate in collective action. The condition means confidence that others will also participate in the collective action, and finally succeed in achieving their collective goal. Therefore, when individuals recognize that cooperation is better than being a free rider, and have a confidence that others will also cooperate, participation is a more rational choice than abstain.⁸

⁸ See details in Elster (1985, p.318-371).

Chapter 2

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE WILLINGNESS OF OPINION EXPRESSION (RESEARCH HYPOTHESES)

Issue Benefit (Social and Personal Benefit)

As noted earlier, opinion expression as a social behavior is not simply answering which opinion (or opinion position) is right or wrong. When individuals express their opinion, they expect their opinion to be adopted as a policy, which is believed to have impact on their values and interests. Therefore, when the individuals expect a significant impact (benefit or damage) on themselves or their society from the consequence of an issue, they are supposed to actively express their opinions of approving or disapproving: “The greater the impact, the more people who will be seeking active engagement in the decision making” (Gergen, 1968, p.193).

Issue Benefit, in this study, represents the amount of benefit or utility which is perceived to be given to the individuals or their society when their opinion claim is adopted as a policy and successfully achieves its goal, such as ‘pollution-free environment’, ‘employment’, ‘adequate health care’, ‘social justice and morality’.

Noelle-Neumann emphasizes that the determinant of the level of willingness to express one’s opinion is a negative sanction of ‘fear of isolation’ rather than a benefit (positive sanction) achieved by opinion expression: “To the individuals, not isolating himself is more important than his own judgment” (1974, p.43). She also noted that “But

positive sanctions would not suffice to make most members of a community (that is all of them, leaving aside the outsiders, the marginal groups) strive for conformity. Only ambitious persons can be motivated by positive sanctions (1985, p.70-71).

This statement implies that she also accepts the possibility that issue benefit influences individual's opinion expression. However, her point is that most of people do not expect the significant amount of benefit to overwhelm negative sanction of isolation, and, as a result, their opinion expressions are solely determined by the examination of whether their opinions are congruent with majority opinion. It might be true in many cases. However, the most serious problem is that she excludes any possible influence of other factors, such as issue benefit, from her discussion of individual's willingness of opinion expression, ignoring various settings of opinion expression such as issue characteristics and the types of opinion expression.⁹

Our question, here, is that "Do most individuals expect really nothing from public issue?" In many cases of public issues, especially which are solely morality-loaded, the consequences of them do not have a direct or immediate impact on individual's personal interest. Instead they have impact on our family, friends, or country, represented by social benefit, justice, or morality. If these kinds of 'social benefits' have nothing to do with individual's motivation of opinion expression, why do people enthusiastically talk about such issues as 'O.J. Simpson case' or 'abortion' which do not have any direct impact on

⁹ In a recent article (1995), Noelle-Neumann stated that "The concept of public opinion as social control is not concerned with the quality of the argument. The decisive factor is which of the two camps in a certain controversy is strong enough to threaten the opposing camp with isolation, rejection, and ostracism. Many writers have intuitively recognized that victory or defeat in the process of public opinion does not depend on what is right or wrong" (p.43-44).

their personal interests? Therefore, we need to include the influence of 'social benefit' in the consideration of the willingness of opinion expression. It should be also noted that individuals become highly involved in those kinds of social benefit in a particular situation. When we witness police brutality toward minorities, or hear about the government's plan to built a disposal facility for nuclear-material in our town, the benefit such as 'racial equality' or 'the world free from nuclear risk', which has been remote from our concern, becomes urgent, significant, and direct one which requires a certain political decision, and attracts people's active participation in the process of the decision making.

In the cases of issues which are not highly morality-loaded, such as election, taxation, public welfare, Medicare, employment, there is a high possibility that many people perceive 'personal benefit' which is directly related with individual's personal interest. This personal benefit is also supposed to increase individual's willingness of opinion expression especially in those kinds of issues.

Even though the issue benefit (social and personal) is somewhat subjective matter across individuals, its amount seems to be related with the status of a given issue (or issue characteristic). When an issue is a 'potential' or 'imminent' one (the early stage of public opinion process), the public is not much informed about the issue, and do not have clear understanding of the issue's impact on themselves and their society. Therefore, in the cases of issues which are not socially salient, it is possible that individual's willingness of opinion expression is highly influenced by other factors such as 'other's opinion'. That is to say, individuals simply follow the majority opinion because they do not know much about the issue, and do not have any particular reason or incentive to support an opinion.

Even in the stage of 'current' issue, the actual amount of perceived issue benefit is not significant. Even though individuals recognize the possible impact of an issue, and have higher interest in the issue, their opinions are still somewhat ambivalent at this stage of public opinion formation. That is, they perceive benefits from both sides of opinion position. A person may think like that "I think both sides of opinion position have their own rationales, so I can't firmly decide which to support." In this cases, he/she perceives relatively little significant issue benefit from one side of opinion position because achieving one goal means losing the other which is also beneficial (zero-sum situation). Accordingly, the actual amount of issue benefit from the individual's opinion position is offset by the issue benefit of the opposite one.

In the stage of 'critical' issue, publics are divided into two groups of partisans who support either side of opinion positions. As individuals become to have a clear understanding (knowledge) of the consequence of an issue, they perceive a significant impact of the issue - that is, a great amount of issue benefit, and hold a resolute opinion (not ambivalent) of which opinion position would be the most beneficial in terms of their values and interests. From this perspective, we can assume a positive relation between the level of knowledge and the amount of issue benefit.

In addition to the level of knowledge, others' opinions also seem to influence the amount of issue benefit. When individuals find other people also have the same opinion, they come to a resolute belief that their opinion position would be the most beneficial toward themselves or their society. Therefore, we can also assume a positive relation between opinion congruency with others and the amount of perceived issue benefit.

When individuals perceive a great issue benefit, the benefit is supposed to be related with the increased willingness of opinion expression. Furthermore, when they perceive the great amount of issue benefit, and hold a resolute opinion of which position to support, there is a possibility they would express their opinion in spite of an unfavorable opinion climate (such as majority's opposition to their opinion). In other words, in the stage of critical issue status, more and more people become 'hardcores' who publicly express their opinion regardless of other's opposition. From the above discussion, following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Greater issue benefit perceived by individuals will be associated with the increased willingness of opinion expression.

H2: The amount of issue benefit will be positively related with the level of knowledge about a given issue.

H3: The amount of issue benefit will be positively related with the opinion congruency with others.

Expectation

'Expectation', in this study, represents an individual's perceived possibility (or confidence) that the opinion position, he/she supports, would be adopted by policy makers and successfully achieve its goal. In the case of election, for example, this expectation means the 'confidence of victory'. The expectation (or confidence) is formed when an individual recognizes that his/her opinion is shared by the majority of others. That means individuals become confident when they recognize most of others support their opinions. However, the perception of majority's support does not always lead to a strong confidence. For example, if an individual perceives that policy makers strongly oppose to his/her opinion, the individual will lose the confidence despite the perception of majority's

support.¹⁰ On the other hand, if an individual has a previous experience, similar with current issue, in which minority opinion successfully achieved its goal, the individual would have relatively high confidence despite the perception of his/her opinion's minority position.

Especially, at the early stage of public opinion formation, where there are not many opinion expressions which are visible in public, those other factors (attitude of policy makers or previous experience of similar situation) are more likely to determine an individual's expectation than the perception of opinion distribution. It is also possible that an individual's subjective judgment of opinion distribution (Fields and Schuman, 1976), such as 'pluralistic ignorance' or 'projection effect' determines the level of expectation or confidence under an uncertain perception of opinion distribution in the early stage.

For whatever reason, when the confidences of opposite factions become unbalanced, a faction with high confidence speaks up its voice while the other faction with low confidence keeps silence due to 'fear of isolation'. This difference in willingness of opinion expression, in turn, influences individuals' perception of opinion distribution, and this perception influences the level of confidence. This explains Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence process. (see Figure 1)

¹⁰ This is an important difference between voting and other general public opinion situations. In general public opinion situation, there is no strong promise that a group's consolidated opinion be adopted by policy makers. In voting process, however, there is constitutional promise that a group's opinion be adopted by policy makers as far as the opinion is the majority merely in terms of numbers.

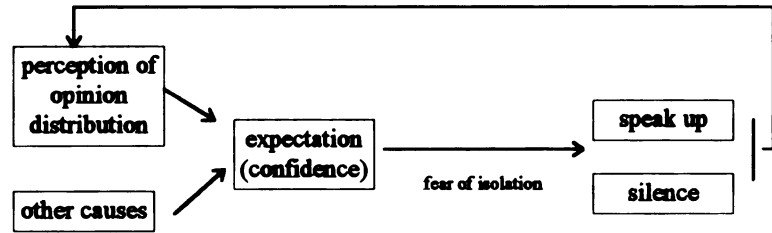


Figure 1. Spiral of Silence Process

What we have to note here is that it is confidence (expectation), not the perception of opinion distribution, which determines willingness of opinion expression. Even though there is a positive correlation between the perception of opinion distribution (other's opinion) and confidence, because the perception of opinion distribution is not the only determinant of confidence, an individual can express his/her opinion even under the perception of minority position as far as some other reasons cause strong confidence.

Noelle-Neumann (1974, p.45) also noted this fact:

There is a positive correlation between the present and the future assessment (expectation): If an opinion is considered to be the prevailing one, it is likely to be considered the future one also (and vice versa), but to varying degrees. The weaker the correlation, the more public opinion is going through a process of change.

The other causes of confidence are, as noted above, policy makers' attitude, experience of similar situation, some outbreak event¹¹, the effort of movement, or whatever. In some cases, these causes can increase minorities' confidence even under the majority's opposition, accordingly make them express their opinions. If this occurs, it is

¹¹ Think about the event such as 'Watergate' or 'the death of Rock Hudson' for the case of AIDS issue.

the starting point of public opinion change.

For Noelle-Neumann, the function of confidence (expectation) is to determine the level of fear of isolation: "... when does one isolate oneself? ... by assessing the distribution of opinion for and against his ideas, but above all by evaluating the strength (commitment), the urgency, and the chance of success of certain proposals and viewpoint" (1974, p.44). It implies if a person has strong confidence, despite the perception of antagonistic opinion climate, the person feels not much fear of isolation: "If he is conceived that the trend of opinion is moving his way, the risk of isolation is of little significant." (1974, p.45).

Here, Noelle-Neumann explains the contribution of confidence toward the increased willingness of opinion expression by decreased fear of isolation. However, the present study understands the expectation (confidence) as another incentive which can overcome the fear of isolation imposed to an individual who holds minority opinion position. Then, how does the confidence work as an incentive which can increase the willingness of opinion expression?

As discussed earlier in Elster's explanation, individuals - as an entity with self-interested nature - do not participate in a collective action without strong confidence of success since they do not want to pay the cost for a benefit which is uncertain. However, it is more rational for them to participate than to abstain, especially when there is a high possibility of success, because the amount of collective benefit is perceived to be much larger than the cost they have to pay. Therefore, we can assume positive relation between expectation and the willingness of opinion expression. In addition, the expectation can be assumed to be related with the amount of issue benefit. That is attributed to the notion

that no matter how attractive a benefit is, the benefit is meaningless if there is no possibility of success. Therefore, we can assume that individuals perceive the greater issue benefit when they perceive the issue benefit as more achievable.

When there is a high level of expectation, this confidence seems to function as an incentive which can overcome the fear of isolation (a cost) caused by the perception of minority position in current opinion distribution. Furthermore, this confidence seems to increase the amount of issue benefit which also can encourage an individual's willingness of opinion expression. Figure 2 summarizes the function of expectation on the willingness of opinion expression.

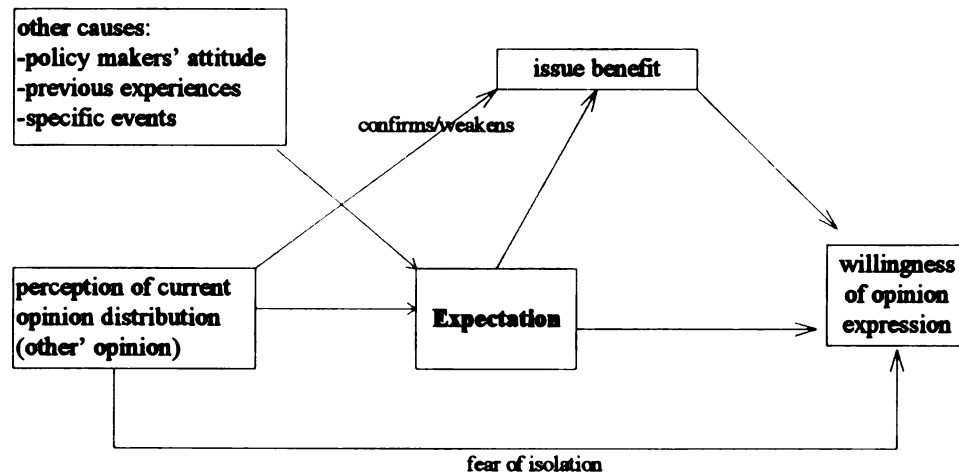


Figure 2. The Effects of Expectation on the Willingness of Opinion Expression

From these discussions, several hypotheses about the expectation were developed:

H4: Greater expectation of success of an opinion claim will be associated with the increased willingness of opinion expression.

H5: The amount of issue benefit will be positively related with the individual's perception of expectation.

H6: The level of expectation will be positively related with the opinion congruency with others.

H7: The level of expectation will be positively related with the opinion congruency with policy makers.

Procedural Cost and Incentive

Issue benefit is related with issue itself, and influences any members in a society only when an opinion claim is adopted as a policy. However, following factors, procedural ‘costs’ and ‘incentives’, are related with the process of opinion expression, and imposed to only the individuals who actually express their opinions, regardless of whether the opinion claim succeeds or not.

To express our opinion, we have to go to a voting booth, or sometimes, donate some money for a group or cause. That is, opinion expression costs our time and resource which can be utilized for other purposes. In addition to these physical costs,¹² sometimes, opinion expression requires a certain psychological cost. For example, we have to expect a risk to be arrested to participate in a demonstration. Noelle-Neuman’s basic concept, ‘fear of isolation’, can be also understood as a psychological cost imposed to the individuals who express unpopular (minority) opinion. When we perceive most people oppose to our opinion, the risk (a psychological cost) to be isolated may deter our opinion expression.

On the other hand, the opinion congruency with others can be understood as an incentive to express our opinions. Due to any kind of cost, an individual may not want to express his/her opinion. However, as noted earlier in Olson’ discussion, if there is a

¹² In many cases, this physical costs are too small to be considered. However, we can witness that the entire voting rate, in general, is relatively low on rainy day of election.

selective incentive (coercion or reward), the individual can participate in the opinion expression. For example, think about a person who does not want to participate in a demonstration due to the risk to be arrested. If the person finds out other people also have the same opinion as his/hers own, this opinion congruency can function as an incentive to express opinion. That is, he/she can avoid being alienated from others (coercion), or show his/her identity as a member of a group (reward) by expressing the congruent opinion. From this perspective, we can assume a positive relation between opinion congruency with others and the willingness of opinion expression.

Here, the problem is what the 'others' refer to. Do they represent general and anonymous public in a broad level or intimate reference group such as family or friends? Because it is possible that there is a difference between the opinions of general public and reference group¹³, we need to distinguish the opinion congruency in terms of congruency with general public and reference group: "... individuals are influenced by a number of opinion climates rather than a single one, ranging from the national climate portrayed in the national media to more localized climate with which individuals have more direct and personal contact" (Salmon and Neuwirth, 1990, p.568).

We can assume a situation in which an individual has an opinion which is supported by his/her intimate reference group, but opposed by other majority public. In this case, Salmon and Kline (1985) emphasized the role of opinion congruency with reference group, which can overcome the fear of isolation caused by unfavorable opinion climate of

¹³ Salmon and Oshagan (1990) have shown that individuals were capable of estimating differences in multiple opinion climates.

general public.¹⁴ However, Noelle-Neumann (1985, p.72) argued:

The pressure to conform that comes from public opinion is exerted in the name of moral or aesthetic values rather than in the name of a cognitive judgment. What is at issue is not 'correct' or 'not correct' but the good or bad. It is the fact that public opinion is morally loaded that makes it so powerful in pressing for conformity. Thus it would not be enough for normal people to find just one or two others of a like minded in order to lose their fear of isolation and their fear of appearing contemptible to others."

Does this kind of incentive (opinion congruency with reference group) have the potential to overcome the fear of isolation even amid the hostile majority public? Olson (1971) noted that it is much easier to impose selective incentive ('coercion' and 'reward') in a small group than in a large one because individual behavior is easily detected by others in a small group. Regardless of what benefit an individual expects from remaining in the position of reference group, it is obvious that the response from the reference group is more frequent and immediate, and the individual's opinion expression has higher possibility to be exposed to reference group than amorphous general public.

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) also pointed it was close and intimate group, not amorphous general public, that influences voters' decision making. They noted that yielding to personal influence gives an immediate and direct reward than yielding to a radio broadcast or newspaper editorial which brings only anonymous praise or punishment.

From this perspective, the influence of opinion congruency on the willingness of opinion expression was hypothesized in terms of two kinds of opinion climates:

¹⁴ Salmon and Kline (1985, p.8) pointed that "support for one's position -even if the support comes from only one other person- apparently makes an individual confident enough to express his or her own opinion despite overwhelming opposition from the majority."

H8: Greater opinion congruency with general public will be associated with increased willingness of opinion expression.

H9: Greater opinion congruency with reference group will be associated with increased willingness of opinion expression.

Efficacy

‘Efficacy’ of opinion expression refers to a perceived importance or necessity of one’s opinion expression for achieving desired goals, such as policy change. The efficacy is related to a confidence in one’s capability or competence to influence a political decision.

As Blumer (1948) noted, individuals are different in the ability to translate their opinion into public policy. That is, they have unequal prestige and social/political power in terms of their contribution to political decision. When a person perceives his/her opinion expression as being very important in the process of policy decision, this efficacy can be supposed to function as a motivating factor of opinion expression. Therefore, the efficacy of opinion expression was assumed to influence the level of opinion expression:

H10: Greater perception of efficacy of individual’s opinion expression will be associated with increased willingness of opinion expression.

The ‘efficacy’ of opinion expression can be understood in terms of a person’s ‘self-esteem’ which is usually related to such demographic factors as level of education, age, and occupation. Therefore, the efficacy can be regarded as a highly personal matter. However, certain situational factors can also influence the level of efficacy. When a person expects little possibility that his/her opinion can be adopted as a policy, his/her opinion expression is perceived as being meaningless and impotent. On the other hand, if he/she

perceives a possibility of success, the importance of his/her opinion expression increases. Therefore, the relation between individual's expectation of success and the level of efficacy was hypothesized:

H11: The level of efficacy will be positively related with individual's perception of expectation.

Figure 3 summarizes the relations among factors (independent variables) and influences of those factors on the willingness of opinion expression (dependent variable) hypothesized in this study.

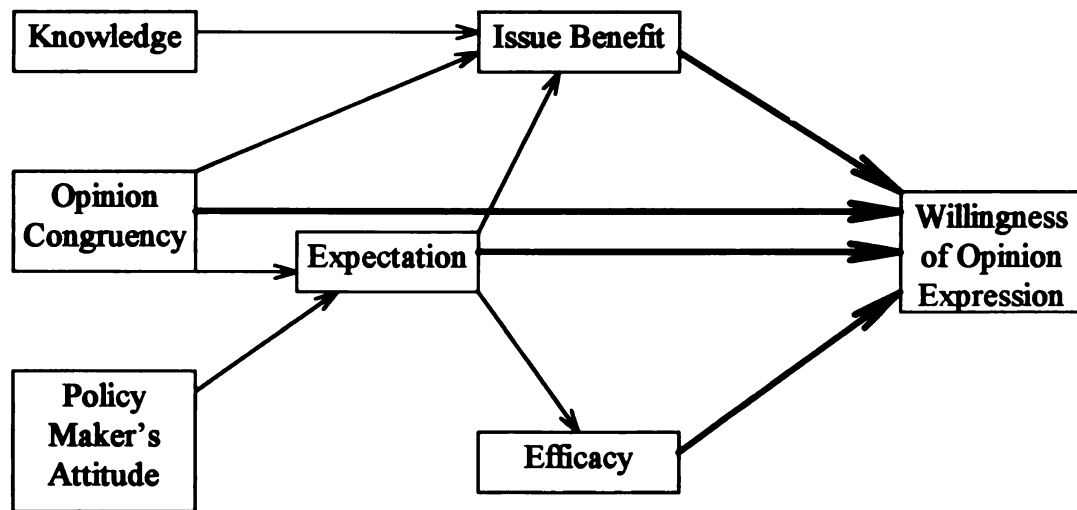


Figure 3. The Hypothetical Relations among Variables

Relative Contribution of Factors on the Willingness of Opinion Expression

Issue Characteristics. As noted earlier, when an issue is highly salient in a society, the public perceives the great amount of issue benefit (a significant impact of an issue), and holds a resolute opinion position. In this case, the influence of opinion congruency with others is expected not to be significant. That is, individuals would express their opinion regardless of other's opinion because they have a clear reason or incentive (issue benefits) to express their opinion, and hold a resolute opinion of which position to support. On the other hand, if individuals do not expect much benefit (or significant impact) from a given issue, or hold an ambivalent opinion position, they are expected to be very sensitive to others' opinions.

Noelle-Neumann (1973) has noted that an issue should be morally loaded and controversial for her model to work well. When an issue is morally loaded, there is a possibility that individuals do not expect significant and direct impacts on their personal interest - less personal benefit. The fact that an issue is very controversial also implies that individuals are likely to have somewhat ambivalent opinion. Therefore, in both cases, we can expect high influence of opinion congruency.

H12: The effect of opinion congruency on the willingness of opinion expression will be more significant for the issues which are not salient in a society than for the salient issues. (relative contribution of opinion congruency)

The relative contribution of issue benefit on the willingness of opinion expression is expected to vary according to the level of interest (or concern). For example, consider a

smoker who already knows much about the health risk regarding smoking. Even though he/she knows about the risk, the perception of risk does not influence his/her smoking in a normal situation. However, imagine the smoker hears about a death of his/her friend due to lung cancer. In this situation, the smoker may perceive an actual personal connection with the risk of smoking. Thus, there is a high possibility that the risk can actually influence the smoker's behavior (e.g., quitting smoking). We can also find the similar cases in public opinion situations. For example, imagine that an accident of nuclear generator occurs. In this situation, people may have the great interest in the issue of nuclear energy, and perceive strong and actual connection with the benefit of 'a world free from the risk of nuclear energy' which was previously remote from their concern. Therefore the benefit, which previously could not influence people's behavior, becomes to have a great impact on their behaviors (e.g., opinion expression). In this point of view, we can assume the contribution of issue benefit will be more significant when there is a high level of interest (concern) in a given issue - that is, more salient issue.

H13: The effect of issue benefit on the willingness of opinion expression will be greater for the salient issues than the issues which are not salient in a society. (relative contribution of issue benefit)

Types of Opinion Expression. The different types of opinion expression can be distinguished by their confidentiality. For example, while such opinion expression as TV interview has a great possibility to be revealed to others, opinion expression in a voting booth is a highly confidential situation. If an opinion expression can be made in a very confidential way, there is little reason to worry about fear of isolation. Therefore, we can assume the effect of opinion congruency will be more significant in more public type of

opinion expression.

**H14: The effect of opinion congruency will be greater in a situation of more public types of opinion expressions than in confidential types.
(relative contribution of opinion congruency)**

Chapter 3

METHOD

Sampling

On April 21, 1997, one hundred and seventy one university students were surveyed regarding their willingness of opinion expression on two public issues, 'doctor assisted suicide' and 'same-sex partner benefit'. The student subjects were recruited from an introductory advertising class at the Michigan State University. In the class, the subjects were informed about the purpose of the survey and the extra credit which would be given to the participants. It was also ensured that the participation in the survey would be completely anonymous and voluntary. Then, the survey questionnaires (see appendix B) were distributed to the subjects, and their responses were collected. Among the responses, fifteen were excluded as incomplete or unreliable responses, and finally one hundred and fifty six responses were used for data analysis.

Previous studies (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Salmon and Neuwirth, 1990; Lasorsa, 1991) have found that several demographic factors, especially 'age' and 'education' (or 'occupation'), influence the willingness of opinion expression. Therefore, when we understand the effects of the factors tested in this study on the willingness, it should be kept in mind that the student sample does not perfectly represent general population. However, the results regarding the comparison of relative contributions of those factors

on the willingness in different setting - the main concern of this study - can be generalized in an ordinal perspective without great limitation.

Issues

Two issues, 'doctor-assisted suicide' and 'same-sex partner benefit'¹⁵ were selected to compare the relative contribution of opinion congruency and issue benefit on the willingness of opinion expression according to the different levels of issue 'salience'. As shown in the Table 1, the subjects' interest was significantly greater for the issue of 'doctor-assisted suicide' than for the 'same-sex partner benefit'. The level of knowledge and the amount of issue benefit was also higher for the 'doctor-assisted suicide' than for the 'same-sex partner benefit'. However, the difference of social benefit between two issues was not statistically significant.

As we can see in the Table 2, when the subjects were asked their opinions regarding the two issues, more subjects answered the opinion of 'support' or 'oppose' for the issue of assisted suicide than for the partner benefit. On the other hand, for the partner benefit issue, more subjects showed their ambivalent opinion - 'neutral' than for the assisted suicide issue. Therefore, subjects seemed to hold more resolute opinion for the assisted suicide than for the partner benefit. From these results, therefore, it was accepted that the 'assisted suicide' represented a more salient issue than the 'partner benefit'.

¹⁵ Since 1992, the MSU Gay and Lesbian Faculty and Staff Association (GLFSA) has advocated that the 'partner benefit' program, run by MSU for faculty and staff members, should provide the same health insurance and other benefits to same-sex couples as legally married couples currently can get. This issue was relatively new and not much informed to the students subjects. This issue was also considered not to have significant impact on the subjects' interest because the partner benefit program was applicable to only staff and faculty members.

Table 1. Comparison of Two Issues

Variable	Assisted Suicide (n=156) mean (st. dev.)	Partner Benefit (n=156) mean (st. dev.)	t
interest ^a	4.58 (1.21)	3.25 (1.49)	-8.69 ^{**}
knowledge	5.28 (1.26)	4.01 (1.35)	-8.52 ^{**}
social benefit	1.54 (1.03)	1.44 (1.13)	- .84
personal benefit	0.85 (1.06)	0.60 (1.01)	-2.15 [*]
efficacy	4.36 (1.15)	3.83 (1.32)	-3.82 ^{**}
expectation	4.35 (1.34)	3.96 (1.38)	-2.50 [*]
Michigan	4.18 (1.17)	4.16 (1.33)	-.14
MSU	4.44 (1.18)	4.22 (1.19)	-1.62
family	4.87 (1.59)	4.94 (1.75)	.34
friends	5.03 (1.27)	5.10 (1.52)	.40
policy maker	3.73 (1.09)	3.75 (1.42)	.12
demonstration	3.91 (1.79)	3.69 (1.86)	-1.09
discussion	4.98 (1.58)	4.61 (1.74)	-1.98 [*]
TV interview	4.43 (1.69)	3.96 (1.87)	-2.32 [*]

^{**} P < .01; ^{*} P < .05

^a The level of interest was measured by asking whether the subjects had great concern (interest) about the given issue on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The measurement of other variables are explained in the following 'measurement' part (see next page).

Table 2. Comparison of Subjects' Opinion between Partner Benefit and Assisted Suicide Issues.

The number of respondents who answered ... on a question, "regarding this issue, what is your opinion ?"		
	"support" or "oppose" (n=231)	"neutral" (n=78)
Partner Benefit (n=154)	101	53
Assisted Suicide (n=155)	130	25
$X^2=13.69$, $df=1$, $P<.001$		

Measurement

Willingness of Opinion Expression (Dependent Variable). One of the core assumptions of this study was that the relative contribution of opinion congruency with others on opinion expression would be different according to the types of opinion expression. Therefore, the subjects' willingness of opinion expression was measured in three different types of opinion expression, 'participation in a demonstration', 'acceptance of TV interview', and 'participation in discussion'. Subjects were asked how likely they would: (a) participate in a demonstration with others who have the same opinion; (b) be interviewed by TV reporter; and (c) participate in a discussion on the given issue. The willingness of opinion expression was scored on a scales of 1 (not likely at all) to 7 (very likely).

Those three types of opinion expression can be distinguished conceptually in terms of their confidentiality and the probability of hostile feedback. Expressing an opinion to a TV interview can be considered as the most public form of opinion expression (low

confidentiality). On the other hands, participating in a demonstration can be regarded as one which may result in the most hostile feedback from others. Participating in a discussion can be thought as a type of relatively high confidentiality and low probability of hostile feedback.

Issue Benefit. Issue benefit was measured in two types, ‘social’ and ‘personal’ benefit. Respondents were asked whether they believe legalization of assisted suicide (for doctor-assisted suicide issue) and allowing partner benefit to same sex couples (for same-sex partner benefit issue) would be a benefit or loss (damage) to their society (social benefit) and themselves (personal benefit). The issue benefit was scored on a 7-point scale in which each ends anchored ‘a great benefit’ and ‘a serious loss’ (damage), and ‘neutral’ located on center. A ‘0’ was given to the respondents who answered ‘neutral’, while a ‘3’ was given those who answered ‘a great benefit’ or ‘a great loss’ (damage). Therefore, higher score means the respondents perceive the greater amount of issue benefit from ‘legalizing (allowing)’ or ‘banning (disallowing)’ assisted suicide (partner benefit), while lower score represents the less amount of issue benefit.

Opinion Congruency. Opinion congruency was measured in terms of four different opinion climates: (a) people in the state of Michigan; (b) people in Michigan State University; (c) family members; and (d) friends. The people in Michigan and MSU represent anonymous general public while family members and friends represent reference group. Respondents were asked whether they agreed most of those others had the same opinion as themselves. Then, the responses were scored on a 7-point scale in which ‘1’

means “strongly disagree”, and ‘7’ means “strongly agree”. Therefore, the higher score, the more opinion congruency with others.

Expectation. Respondents were asked whether they agreed their opinion position (supporting or opposing the legalization of assisted suicide and allowing same-sex partner benefit) would be adopted by the state of Michigan (for assisted suicide) and MSU (for partner benefit) in the end. Then, the responses were scored on a 7-point scale in which ‘1’ means “strongly disagree”, and ‘7’ means “strongly agree”. Therefore, higher score represents the higher expectation of success.

Efficacy. The level of efficacy was also measured by asking respondents whether they agreed their opinion expression on the given issue was very important if their opinion position to be adopted by the state of Michigan (for assisted suicide) and MSU (for partner benefit) on a 7-point scale.

Knowledge. The measurement of knowledge did not intend to examine the accuracy of respondents’ knowledge. Instead, in this study, the level of knowledge was considered as a highly subjective matter. The knowledge could be also highly biased one which had been selectively collected in accordance with respondent’s opinion position. Therefore, the level of knowledge was measure by simply asking respondents whether they agreed they had clear understanding (knowledge) of the given issues.

Policy Makers Attitude. Policy makers attitude was measured in the same manner as opinion congruency. Respondents were asked whether they agreed the policy makers of the state of Michigan (for assisted suicide issue) and MSU policy makers (for partner benefit issue) had the same opinion as themselves. Then, the responses were scored on a 7-point scale in which '1' means "strongly disagree", and '7' means "strongly agree". Therefore, the higher score represents more favorable attitude of policy makers toward the respondents' opinion.

Personal Characteristics. In addition to above hypothesized variables, several personal variables ('age', 'gender' and 'political interest') were also measured. A '1' was given to male subjects, while a '2' was given to female subjects. Subjects' political interest was measured by asking how interested the subjects were in social affairs, such as public issues. Then, the answers were scored on a 7-point scale where '1' represents "very little", and '7' represents "very much".

Several factors, hypothesized to influence the willingness of opinion expression, were expected to be themselves interrelated. Furthermore, the present study intended to compare the relative contribution of those factors according to issue status and type of opinion expression. Therefore, to test the hypotheses, several approaches to path analysis using Multiple Regression were employed.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Issue Benefit

The first hypothesis, which assumed a positive relation between issue benefit and opinion expression, was supported in the issue of doctor-assisted suicide. The significant influence of social benefit on the willingness to participate in a discussion ($\beta=.21$, $p<.01$) and that of personal benefit on the willingness to participate in a demonstration ($\beta=.19$, $p<.01$) were found (see the Figure 4). On the other hand, a counter hypothetical result was found in the issue of same-sex partner benefit. As shown in Figure 5, there was a negative relation between personal benefit and the willingness to participate in a discussion ($\beta=-.23$, $p<.01$). This result will be discussed in detail in the later part of this chapter.

The second hypothesis, regarding positive relation between the level of knowledge and the amount of issue benefit, was supported in the issue of partner benefit. There was a significant relation between knowledge and social benefit ($\beta=.26$, $p<.01$). However, the hypothesis was not supported in the issue of doctor-assisted suicide.

It was found that the opinion congruency with others was also positively related with the amount of issue benefit - hypothesis 3. In the assisted suicide issue, there was a positive relation between opinion congruency with family members and the social benefit ($\beta=.24$, $p<.01$). In the partner benefit issue, several positive relations were also found:

family and personal benefit ($\beta=.15$, $p<.05$); friends and social benefit ($\beta=.25$, $p<.01$); friends and personal benefit ($\beta=.17$, $p<.05$).

Expectation

The positive influence of expectation on the opinion expression, postulated by hypothesis 4, was not supported in any three types of opinion expression and both issues. Instead, the effect of expectation on the opinion expression seemed to work indirectly through the positive relation with social benefit ($\beta=.18$, $p<.05$ for assisted suicide) - hypothesis 5. However, this hypothesis was not supported in the issue of partner benefit. As expected in the sixth hypothesis, opinion congruency with others was positively related with the level of expectation in the assisted suicide issue. Especially, the opinion congruency with Michigan residents (general public) showed significant effect on the level of expectation ($\beta=.36$, $p<.01$). The seventh hypothesis, which posited the positive relation between policy makers' attitude and the level of expectation, was also supported in both assisted suicide ($\beta=.15$, $p<.05$) and partner benefit issue ($\beta=.27$, $p<.01$). Therefore, the subjects showed the expectation of success that their opinion position would be accepted as a policy when they perceived their opinions were shared by policy makers and general public (rather than reference group).

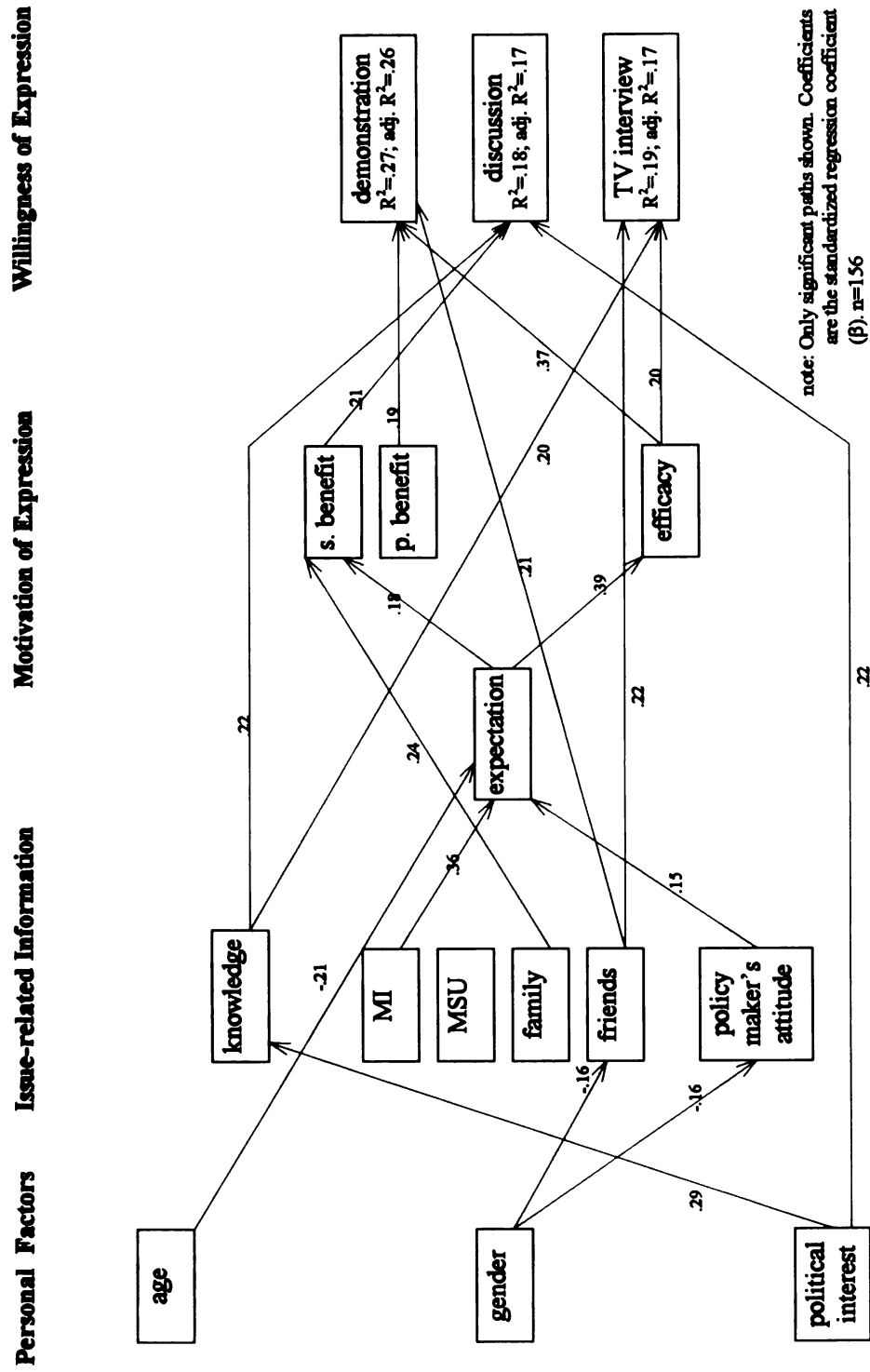


Figure 4. Path Analysis on the Issue of Doctor-Assisted Suicide

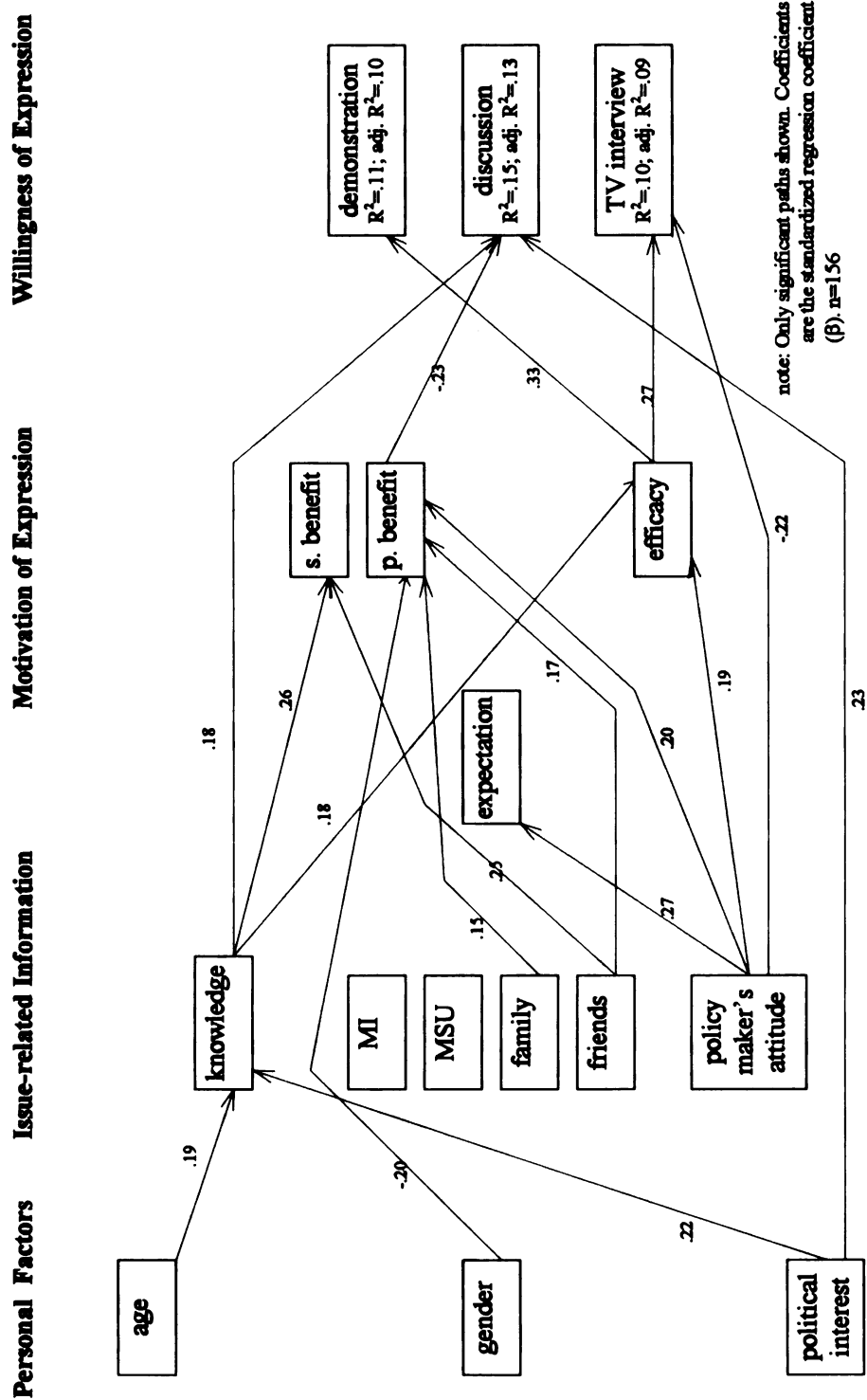


Figure 5. Path Analysis on the Issue of Same-Sex Partner Benefit

Opinion Congruency

One of the central elements of Noelle-Neumann's model - the positive relation between opinion congruency and the willingness of opinion expression (hypothesis 8 and 9) was supported only in the assisted suicide issue and especially in the case of opinion congruency with friends. Subjects were more likely to engage in demonstration ($\beta=.21$, $p<.01$) and TV interview ($\beta=.22$, $p<.01$) when they believed their friends had the same opinion as their own. Therefore, subjects seemed to be more sensitive to the opinion of the reference group (especially friends) than the general public's opinion in determining their willingness of opinion expression.

Efficacy

The effect of efficacy on opinion expression, postulated by hypothesis 10, was supported in both issues. The efficacy was positively related with the willingness of demonstration ($\beta=.37$, $p<.01$ for assisted suicide; $\beta=.33$, $p<.01$ for partner benefit) and TV interview ($\beta=.20$, $p<.01$ for assisted suicide; $\beta=.27$, $p<.01$ for partner benefit). Therefore, subjects were more likely to engage in demonstration and TV interview when they believed their opinion expressions were really important to a policy decision. As expected in the eleventh hypothesis, the level of efficacy was positively related with that of expectation ($\beta=.39$, $p<.01$) in the issue of assisted suicide.

Types of Opinion Expression

In both issues, subjects showed the highest willingness for participating in discussion ($m=4.98$ for assisted suicide; $m=4.61$ for partner benefit), medium willingness for accepting TV interview ($m=4.43$ for assisted suicide; $m=3.96$ for partner benefit), and the lowest willingness for participating in demonstration ($m=3.91$ for assisted suicide; $m=3.69$ for partner benefit). The mean differences among those three types of opinion expression were statistically significant except for the demonstration and TV interview for the partner benefit issue. These results may suggest that different types of opinion expression are distinguishable in terms of their attractiveness to people. The level of attractiveness can be explained, as noted earlier, by the confidentiality and the possibility of hostile response which are relevant to fear of isolation. In addition, several other factors such as 'risk' to be arrested for demonstration, physical cost such as money for donation or time for voting or demonstration seem to explain the level of attractiveness of a given type of opinion expression.

As we can see in the Figure 4, the opinion congruency with friends was related to the willingness to participate in demonstration and to accept TV interview which are public types of opinion expression. On the other hand, participating in a discussion, considered the most confidential one among the three types of opinion expression, was related with the opinion congruency with friends in a positive direction ($\beta=.08$), but with no statistical significance. This result supported the hypothesis 14 which postulated the difference in the relative contribution of opinion congruency according to the types of opinion expression.

Even though it was not hypothesized, the level of knowledge showed direct effects

on the willingness to participate in discussion ($\beta=.22$, $p<.01$ for assisted suicide; $\beta=.18$, $p<.05$ for partner benefit) and to accept TV interview ($\beta=.20$, $p<.05$ for assisted suicide). However, the willingness to participate in a demonstration, which requires not much knowledge, was not significantly related with the level of knowledge.

In both issues, the effect of efficacy was limited only to the opinion expression through demonstration and TV interview. These two types of opinion expression can be considered as those which are more likely to reach policy makers attention, that is, more influential on policy decision than opinion expression in a discussion with others. As a personal characteristic, political interest was also positively related with the willingness to participate in a discussion for both issue ($\beta=.22$, $p<.01$ for assisted suicide; $\beta=.23$, $p<.01$ for partner benefit). However, the effect was significant for simply participating in a discussion, but not much related with other types of opinion expression - demonstration and TV interview.

Issue Characteristics

Several counter hypothetical results were found in comparing two issues. In comparing the relative contribution of issue benefit between two issues, a negative relation between personal benefit and the willingness of opinion expression (discussion) was found in the partner benefit issue. (see Figure 5) This result was opposite direction to what was expected in the hypothesis 1, and made it impossible to compare the relative contributions of issue benefit between two issues (hypothesis 13). In addition, even though the assisted

suicide was regarded as a more salient issue than the partner benefit, the effects of opinion congruency (especially with friends) was significant only for the assisted suicide issue. This result was also opposite direction to the hypothesis 12 which posited less significant effect of opinion congruency for the salient issues. To find out a possible explanation for these results, the responses were reexamined by dividing supporting and opposing factions of each issue. The respondents who answered “support” to the question asking their opinions were regarded as ‘supporting faction’, while those who answered “oppose” to the question were regarded as ‘opposing faction’.

Same-Sex Partner Benefit Issue. As we can see from the Table 3, it was found that the opposing faction to partner benefit showed less willingness for three types of opinion expression than the supporting faction (statistically insignificant mean difference in TV interview).

Even though opposing faction perceived significantly greater amount of issue benefits ($m=2.20$ for social benefit; $m=1.24$ for personal benefit) than supporting faction ($m=1.62$ for social benefit; $m=0.19$ for personal benefit), the respondents in the opposing faction showed the lower willingness of opinion expression than those in the supporting faction.

Table 3. Comparison of Mean Values of the Variables between Supporting and Opposing Factions

variables	Assisted Suicide		t	Partner Benefit		t
	supporting faction(n=98)	opposing faction(n=32)		supporting faction(n=52)	opposing faction(n=49)	
demonstration	4.05	3.88	.48	4.17	3.24	2.39*
discussion	5.02	5.00	.06	5.17	4.22	2.69**
TV interview	4.59	4.25	.92	4.40	3.83	1.51
interest ^a	4.74	4.69	.23	3.48	3.59	-.37
knowledge	5.53	4.97	2.33*	4.15	4.32	-.64
social benefit	1.55	2.06	-2.66**	1.62	2.20	-3.03**
personal benefit	0.95	0.94	.05	0.19	1.24	-5.77**
efficacy	4.36	4.53	-.72	3.88	4.16	-1.02
expectation	4.49	4.22	.94	4.32	3.71	2.02*
Michigan	4.06	4.32	-.65	3.62	4.92	-5.21**
MSU	4.61	3.97	2.66**	4.13	4.59	-1.99*
family	4.83	5.44	-1.90	4.15	6.02	-6.24**
friends	5.15	4.81	1.28	4.48	5.90	-5.04**
policy maker	3.63	4.23	-2.61*	3.33	4.39	-3.66**

** P < .01; * P < .05

It can be a possible explanation for these results that there was an unfavorable opinion climate which forced the opposing faction to keep silent, overwhelming the faction's greater amount of issue benefit. The respondents' perception of this opinion climate was reflected on the difference in the level of expectation between supporting and opposing factions. The expectation of success for supporting ($m=4.32$) faction was significantly higher than the opposing faction ($m=3.71$). Interestingly enough, however, the opposing faction perceived the greater opinion congruency with Michigan, MSU, family, and friends than the supporting faction (see Table 3). Therefore, these results suggested that the opinion climate which was unfavorable to the opposing faction did not come from the perception of unbalanced opinion distribution (opinion congruency).

This unfavorable opinion climate against opposing faction seems to strongly keep opposing faction from expressing its opinion publicly, overwhelming the faction's greater expectation of issue benefits and the perception of opinion congruency than supporting faction (see Table 3). The existence of this opinion climate seems to result in the negative relation between issue benefit and opinion expression (a counter hypothetical result for hypothesis 1), and the insignificant effect of opinion congruency (a counter hypothetical result for hypothesis 12) for partner benefit issue which was regarded not to be salient.

Doctor-Assisted Suicide Issue. Because of the existence of an opinion climate, which did not come from the perception of unbalanced opinion distribution, as well as the negative relationship between issue benefit and opinion expression in the partner benefit issue, it was impossible to compare the relative contributions of issue benefit and opinion congruency between the two issues (hypothesis 12 and 13). Therefore, instead of

comparing the two issues, the respondents on the assisted suicide issue were divided into two groups with high and low interest on the issue.¹⁶ The group with higher interest was assumed to possess the characteristic of public in the cases of salient issue while the group with lower interest was assumed to possess that of public in the opposite case. It was found that the respondents with low interest expected the less amount of issue benefit, and showed the lower level of knowledge than those with high interest. ($t=4.38$, $p<.01$ for social benefit; $t=3.65$, $p<.01$ for personal benefit; $t=5.01$, $p<.01$ for knowledge). Several path analyses were conducted to compare the relative contribution of issue benefit and opinion congruency on the willingness of opinion expression according to the different levels of the public's interest (concern) on the assisted suicide issue.

As shown in the Figure 6, the effect of issue benefit on the willingness of opinion expression was significant in the group with high interest. ($\beta=.40$, $p<.01$ for social benefit and discussion; $\beta=.38$, $p<.01$ for social benefit and TV interview; $\beta=.31$, $p<.01$ for personal benefit and demonstration) However, among the respondents with low interest, greater expectation of issue benefit was not related with increased willingness to express their opinion (see Figure 7). These results supported indirectly the hypothesis 13 which assumed the greater effect of issue benefit for the cases of salient issues - among those with higher level of interest. Therefore, the effect of issue benefit seemed to work when the subjects recognized actual personal connection (interest) with the given issue.

Instead of the effect of issue benefit, opinion congruency with friends ($\beta=.31$, $p<.01$

¹⁶ The mean value of whole respondents' interest was 4.58 for assisted suicide issue. The respondents were divided by this mean value.

for demonstration; $\beta=.33$, $p<.01$ for TV interview) was the most powerful determinant of the willingness of opinion expression for respondents with low interest. (see Figure 7) This result supported indirectly the hypothesis 12 which posited the greater influence of opinion congruency for the issue which is not salient. The following Table 4 summarizes the hypotheses and the results found in this study.

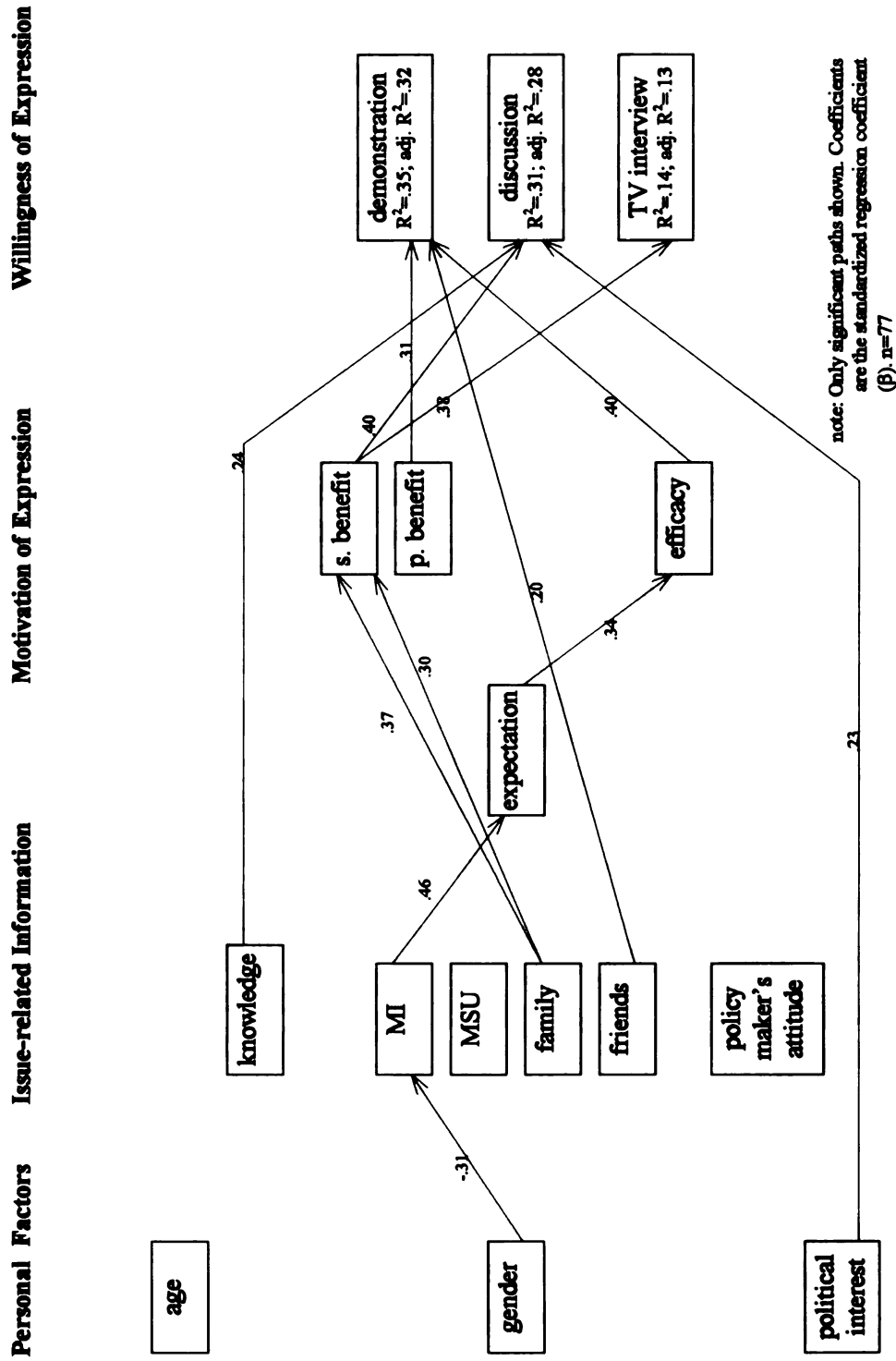


Figure 6. Path Analysis on the Issue of Doctor-Assisted Suicide for the Respondents with High Interest (interest > 4.58)

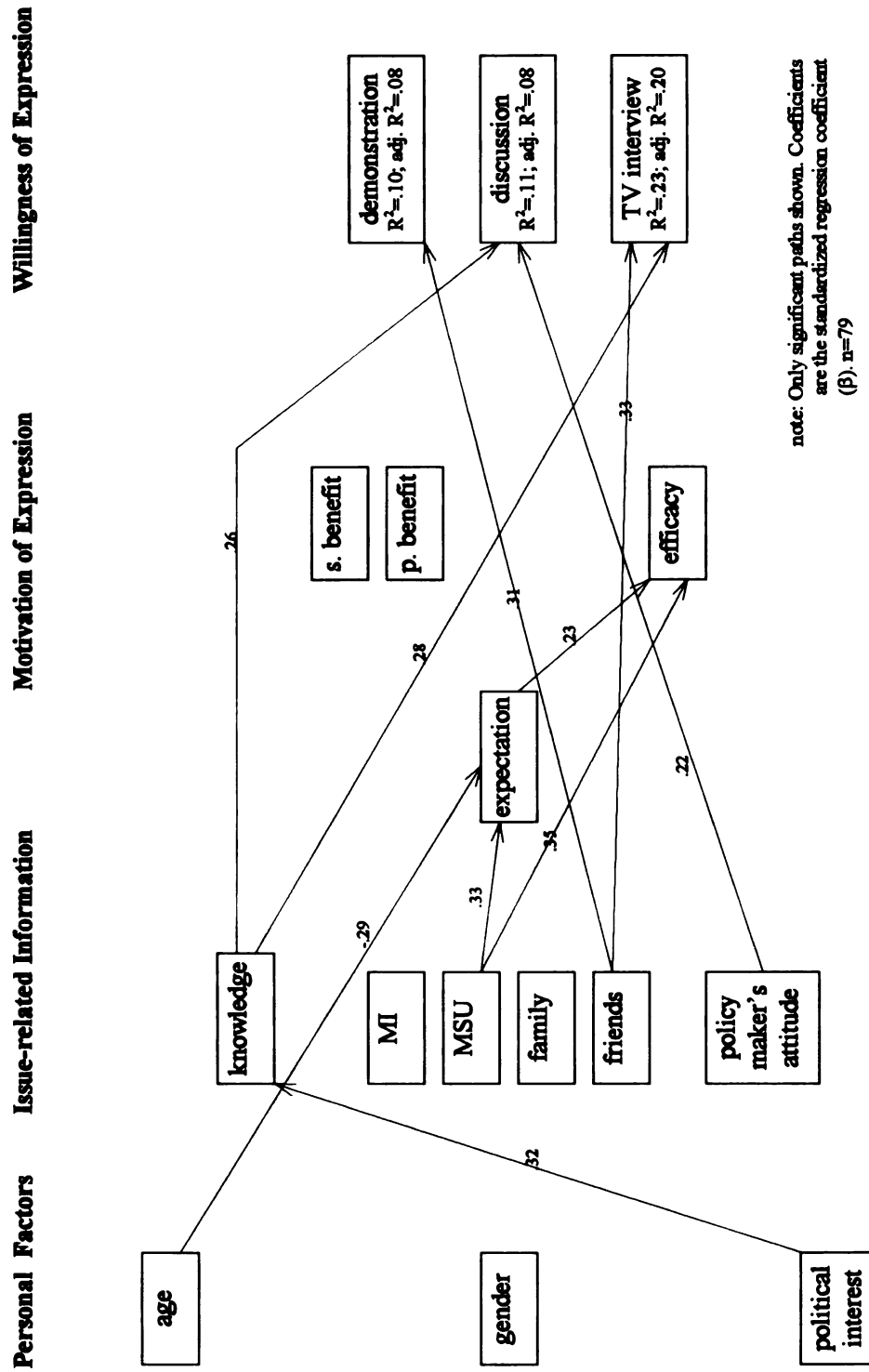


Figure 7. Path Analysis on the Issue of Doctor-Assisted Suicide for the Respondents with Low Interest (interest < 4.58)

Table 4. Summary of The Results

Hypotheses	Results	
	Assisted Suicide	Partner Benefit
1. Issue Benefit- Opinion Expression	Social Benefit-Discussion ($\beta=.21;p<.01$) Personal Benefit-Demonstration ($\beta=.19;p<.01$)	not supported
2. Knowledge-Issue Benefit	not supported	Knowledge-Social Benefit ($\beta=.26;p<.01$)
3. Opinion Congruency-Issue Benefit	Family-Social Benefit ($\beta=.24;p<.01$)	Family-Personal Benefit ($\beta=.15;p<.05$) Friends-Social Benefit ($\beta=.25;p<.01$) Friends-Personal Benefit ($\beta=.17;p<.05$)
4. Expectation- Opinion Expression	not supported	not supported
5. Expectation-Issue Benefit	Expectation-Social Benefit ($\beta=.18;p<.05$)	not supported
6. Opinion Congruency-Expectation	Michigan Residents-Expectation ($\beta=.36;p<.01$)	not supported
7. Policy Maker's Attitude-Expectation	$\beta=.15;p<.05$	$\beta=.27;p<.01$
8. Opinion Congruency with General Public- Opinion Expression	not supported	not supported
9. Opinion Congruency with Reference Group- Opinion Expression	Friends-Demonstration ($\beta=.21;p<.01$) Friends-TV Interview ($\beta=.22;p<.01$)	not supported
10. Efficacy- Opinion Expression	Efficacy-Demonstration ($\beta=.37;p<.01$) Efficacy-TV Interview ($\beta=.20;p<.01$)	Efficacy-Demonstration ($\beta=.33;p<.01$) Efficacy-TV Interview ($\beta=.27;p<.01$)
11. Expectation-Efficacy	$\beta=.39;p<.01$	not supported
12 Relative Contribution of Opinion Congruency According to Issue Characteristics	Greater effect of opinion congruency (with friends) on the willingness of opinion expression for the subjects with low interest in a given issue ($\beta=.31, p<.01$ for demonstration; $\beta=.33, p<.01$ for TV interview) than for those with high interest ($\beta=.20, p<.05$) - tested in assisted suicide issue only	
13 Relative Contribution of Issue Benefit According to Issue Characteristics	Significant effect of issue benefit on the willingness of opinion expression for the subjects with high interest in a given issue ($\beta=.40, p<.01$ for social benefit and discussion; $\beta=.38, p<.01$ for social benefit and TV interview; $\beta=.31, p<.01$ for personal benefit and demonstration); Insignificant effect of issue benefit for those with low interest - tested in assisted suicide issue only	
14 Relative Contribution of Opinion Congruency According to the Types of Opinion Expression	Significant effect of opinion congruency with friends on the willingness to participate in demonstration and to accept TV interview; Insignificant effect of opinion congruency on the willingness to participate in discussion (assisted suicide issue)	

DISCUSSION

Noelle-Neumann's theory of spiral of silence, which emphasizes the effect of opinion climate on individuals' willingness to express their opinions, was reexamined by considering simultaneously other possible factors as well as fear of isolation. The relative contributions of those factors in influencing the willingness of opinion expression were also compared across different settings (issue status and types of opinion expression) of opinion expression.

The effect of opinion congruency, one of the central elements of the theory, was found to be more influential when the type of opinion expression is a public one in which an individual's opinion expression is likely to be easily exposed to other people, or to cause hostile response from others. When an issue is not salient, we found that individuals do not perceive the great impact (or 'issue benefit') of the issue on their values and interest, or do not hold a resolute opinion of which opinion position to support. Among those who lack for any reason to support a particular opinion, or hold ambivalent opinion, was the effect of opinion congruency more influential. That is, without apparent expectation of benefit regarding a policy decision on an issue, they simply follow majority opinion to avoid fear of isolation.

It was also found that the fear of isolation, which conceals minority opinion, came from intimate reference group rather than anonymous general public. The effect of opinion

congruency with *general* public on opinion expression, emphasized by Noelle-Neumann, seemed to work indirectly through influencing the level of expectation and consequently the level of efficacy (as examined in hypothesis 6 and 11), rather than influencing directly the opinion expression. However, what should be kept in mind is that these results should not exclude the possibility that various groups of age can be distinguishable in terms of their sensitivity to the opinion congruency with each group of other people (e.g., family, friends, anonymous general public). That is, the significant effect of opinion congruency with friends can be limited to the student sample used in this study. There is still a possibility older people will be more sensitive to the opinion of anonymous general public.

It was found in partner benefit issue that an opinion climate, which was favorable to an opinion but unfavorable to the other, did not come from the perception of opinion distribution. This result may suggest that an unbalanced opinion distribution in a simply numeric sense is not the only factor which constitutes entire opinion climate. In some cases, therefore, even though a person believes most of others have the same opinion as his/hers own, this perception of opinion congruency does not always lead the person to express his/her opinion comfortably and publicly.

Then, what factors, other than unbalanced opinion distribution, constitute the opinion climate which is favorable or unfavorable to expressing a specific opinion? In some societies, the will of dictator or the opinion of social elite can be a possible factor which constitutes an opinion climate. That is, if a person has an opinion which opposes to that of dictator or social elite, the fear of political or economic punishments can threaten the person's opinion expression. In many cases, however, these punishments seem to be more plausible in explaining the journalistic process of gate-keeping rather than individual

level of opinion expression. Public discourse can be dominated by the opinion of dictator or social elite when those punishments are at work manifestly or, in most cases, tacitly.

The effort of movement groups can be a possible factor of opinion climate. The groups' active or sometimes aggressive participation in public debates can cause a fear of confrontation to a person who opposes to the groups' opinions even though the person believes his/her opinion is majority one. Therefore, when the fear of confrontation is perceived to be more unpleasant than the fear of isolation from majority, the minority opinion of a movement group can dominate the public discourse.

A specific social norm, tradition, or condition in a society can be the factors which constitute an opinion climate. For example, in a society with high density of population, expressing the opinion of 'pro-life' (for abortion issue) can cause the fear of being awkward or deviant. A specific event can also work as a factor of opinion climate at a particular moment. For example, when an accident of nuclear power plant occurs, expressing the advantages of nuclear energy can cause those fears of being awkward and deviant at least at that moment. Therefore, those norms and tradition emphasized strongly in a society, and a specific condition or out-breaking event can preclude the expression of a particular opinion, regardless of actual opinion distribution among the public.

As Noelle-Neumann noted, the strong influence of opinion climate on individuals can be explained by ubiquitous and consonant nature of mass media contents. However, what people monitor from the mass media contents seems not to be limited to the judgment of which opinion is majority one. Instead, the individuals are informed what the

dictator's or elite's opinion is, what punishments are imposed to the people who oppose to the authority¹⁷, how unpleasant the confrontation will be if an opinion is expressed publicly, and how an opinion is congruent with a specific social norm, tradition, or a certain situation of a society.

An opinion climate, which determines the acceptability of a specific opinion in public discourse, seems to be constituted as a compound of those factors, rather than to be simply determined according to an unbalanced opinion distribution.¹⁸ Therefore, it is not always the case in which an opinion dominating public discourse is believed to be a majority one by the public (Moscovici, 1991). Even though an opinion is prominent in public discourse for whatever reasons discussed above, it is possible that public do not believe the opinion is majority one among themselves. Instead, their perception of opinion distribution can be what is formed through interpersonal communication or subjective judgment of opinion distribution ('looking glass' or 'conservative bias': Fields and Schuman, 1976). Therefore, it is possible the individuals who hold - or believe to hold - majority opinion may not publicly or comfortably express their opinion as we found in

¹⁷ Think about the media coverage of demonstration. When we witness brutal suppression of police on demonstrators, it tells us how much cost we have to pay to participate in the demonstration even though it sometimes incites our indignation.

¹⁸ Noelle-Neumann already noted that the perception of opinion distribution is not the determinant factor of willingness of opinion expression. Instead, she continuously emphasized a confidence or an opinion trend (future assessment of opinion distribution) as a determinant factor: "... when does one isolate oneself? ... by assessing the distribution of opinion for and against his ideas, but above all by evaluating the strength (commitment), the urgency, and the chance of success of certain proposals and viewpoint" (1974, p.44). Unfortunately, she seems to persist in the effect of fear of isolation: "If he is conceived that the trend of opinion is moving his way, the risk of isolation is of little significant." (1974, p.45). However, it must be more plausible explanation that the opinion climate is constituted not only by the opinion distribution but also by other factors discussed above, and the influence of opinion climate can be exerted through the fear of punishment, confrontation, or being awkward or deviant as well as fear of isolation.

partner benefit issue. Future study should pay attention to the possible factors (other than opinion distribution) which constitute entire opinion climate, and how the opinion climate is reflected and constructed in mass media contents, informing the acceptability of an opinion expression in a society, in other words, how much cost we have to pay to express our opinions.

Among various opinions regarding an issue, which opinion is regarded as a public opinion does not always depend on a numeric distribution of opinion among the public, except for the case which conducts voting process. In a realistic sense, an opinion which dominates public discourse, in other words, successfully threatens opponent opinions to be concealed is always regarded as a public opinion because it is highly visible in public discourse, and accordingly reaches easily to the attention of policy makers. From this perspective, an opinion which has been concealed under a currently unfavorable opinion climate should be expressed in public discourse to change the current public opinion. When this occurs, it is a starting point of public opinion change. Then, how can an opinion, concealed under an unfavorable opinion climate, be expressed publicly? There should be certain incentives regarding expressing the opinion to overcome the fears (or costs) imposed to the individuals who want to, but cannot express the opinion under the unfavorable opinion climate.

First of all, the present study paid attention to a certain benefit (or damage) an individual may expect from the possible consequences of the policy decision on public issues. It must be true that individuals, in many cases, may not expect significant amount of direct and immediate impact on their personal interest from what is done about public issues. Furthermore, in many cases, individuals have somewhat ambivalent opinion, that is,

cannot decide which opinion to support. In these cases, the opinion climate rather than individual's own understanding of an issue is more likely to determine the individual's willingness of opinion expression. However, when an issue is highly salient, the public perceives increased amount of issue benefit from the issue. The increased amount of issue benefit was found to be associated with the increased willingness of opinion expression. Especially, it was found that the social benefit, which is not directly relevant to personal interest but associated with such benefits as restoring social justice or morality in societal level, was also able to function as a motivating factor of opinion expression. This finding can be a rationale of movement groups or public relation practitioners for their framing public issues in the context of social morality or justice.

There are countless number of public issues in our society. However it is only a handful number of issues that are actually salient in public discourse. Many of them usually fail to attract the great concern of the public. It should be also noted that even without any policy decision, do previously salient issues vanish from the public concern with the arise of other new (or renewed) prominent issues. We usually know much about possible (mostly significant) impact of the issues on ourselves. However, those issues do not attract the great public concern without certain incidental factors which make the public perceive strong and actual connection with the issues' impacts. Those incidental factors can be 'drama' and 'novelty' of an issue, discussed in the 'selection principles of public arena'¹⁹ by Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), which can attract or refresh the public's concern toward

¹⁹ Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) suggested 'drama', 'novelty and saturation', 'the rhythm of organizational life', and 'cultural and political preoccupation' as the principles for an issue to be selected as a social agenda in public arena (public discourse).

an issue. Especially, a certain outbreak event²⁰, which gives a novelty and dramatic value to an issue, seems to be able to make the public perceive strong connection with the issue's impact which is thought to be significant but has been remote from the public concern. In a realistic sense, therefore, it seems that the significant impact of an issue for itself cannot always attract the great concern of public because there are so many issues which are, at least superficially, very significant. Instead, when those incidental factors enable an issue to be perceived as the most urgent one in a society, the public becomes concerned with the impact of the issue.

It was found that the issue benefit can function as a motivating factor of opinion expression only when individuals perceive actual personal connection with a given issue. In other words, no matter how significant an issue's impact (or issue benefit) is, the impact does not influence on an individual's behavior unless the individual is actually interested in it. Therefore, for the issue benefit to actually function as a motivating factor of opinion expression, it is required to construct an issue as an urgent one, and to give continuously a novelty and dramatic value to the issue. This may explain why social activists and public relation practitioners have to create a certain event to attract the public's attention to their issues.

In both issues, assisted suicide and partner benefit, it was supported that the level of efficacy was positively associated with the willingness of opinion expression. Therefore, it is required to convince people of how important and efficacious their opinion expressions are in changing a problematic or unjust situation in order to prompt an active opinion

²⁰ Such as TMI accident for nuclear energy issue and the death of Rock Hudson for AIDS issue

expressions of those who want to conceal their opinion under an unfavorable opinion climate. Individuals' confidence of success was found to be positively related with the level of efficacy. This result may suggest that people think their opinion expressions are meaningless (impotent) when they expect little possibility of success. When we remind the positive relation between opinion congruency with general public and the level of expectation, the result can be also interpreted in a way that individuals think their opinion expressions do not have any impact on a policy decision when there are few supporters of their opinions while they perceive more importance (strong impact) of their opinion expressions as they find more and more supporters.

The level of knowledge about a given issue was also found to be influential on the willingness of opinion expression. When a person lacks for knowledge, he/she may fear for appearing ignorant, or sometimes has to undergo being humiliated as he/she cannot logically rebut opponent's retort in a debate. On the other hand, a person with a high level of knowledge may expect such incentive as feeling of self-esteem or appearing politically efficacious by demonstrating his/her knowledge about public issues. Therefore, the knowledge can be also regarded as a procedural cost or incentive which is given only to the person who expresses an opinion, discouraging or encouraging his/her opinion expression.

In the present study, individuals were described as rational entities who consciously calculate the benefit and cost of their behaviors when they decide to behave. As a structural influence, an unfavorable opinion climate on the individuals can be explained as a cost (with the name of fear of isolation, punishment, confrontation, being awkward, and whatever) imposed to those who express an unpopular opinion in a public discourse.

Several other factors than opinion climate were also found to be influential on the willingness of opinion expression. When those factors function as a benefit (or incentive) regarding an opinion expression, and the benefit is perceived to exceed the expected cost, it is possible for the individuals to express their opinion even under the currently unfavorable opinion climate, that is, to overcome passive conformation to the structural constraint. When this happens, those opinion expressions must be a momentum which makes it possible to change current opinion climate, and consequently to fluctuate public opinion.

However, as Mueller (1992) said, it should be also noted that the calculation of benefit and cost is not an objective matter. Instead, in a large scale, how much benefit we can get from an opinion expression and how much cost we have to pay to express the opinion seem to be socially constructed especially through the contents of mass media. Therefore, it is indispensable to investigate the effect of the mass media on opinion expression in terms of how mass media create the meaning of a social behavior, expressing a particular opinion, in addition to their functions of issue selecting (or agenda setting) and issue framing.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES IN ANALYSIS

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Range</u>		<u>Mean</u>		<u>Standard Deviation</u>	
Personal Characteristics						
Age	18-25		19.89		1.49	
Gender	1 (male)-2 (female)		1.5		0.50	
Political Interest	1-7		4.78		1.17	
	Assisted Suicide	Partner Benefit	Assisted Suicide	Partner Benefit	Assisted Suicide	Partner Benefit
Issue-Related Information						
Knowledge	1-7	1-7	5.28	4.01	1.26	1.35
Policy Maker's Attitude	1-7	1-7	3.73	3.75	1.09	1.42
Opinion Congruency						
(MI)	1-7	1-7	4.18	4.16	1.17	1.33
(MSU)	1-7	1-7	4.44	4.22	1.18	1.19
(Family)	1-7	1-7	4.87	4.94	1.59	1.75
(Friends)	1-7	1-7	4.03	5.10	1.27	1.52
Motivation of Expression						
Expectation	1-7	1-7	4.35	3.96	1.34	1.38
Efficacy	1-7	1-7	4.36	3.83	1.15	1.32
Issue Benefit						
(Social)	0-3	0-3	1.54	1.44	1.03	1.13
(Personal)	0-3	0-3	0.85	0.60	1.06	1.01
Willingness of Expression						
Demonstration	1-7	1-7	3.91	3.69	1.79	1.86

			73			
Discussion	1-7	1-7	4.98	4,61	1.58	1.74
TV Interview	1-7	1-7	4.43	3.96	1.69	1.87
Personal Concern (interest) about the Issue	1-7	1-7	4.58	3.25	1.21	1.49
Opinion*						
		Assisted Suicide		Partner Benefit		
“Support”		98		52		
“Oppose”		32		49		
“Neutral”		25		53		
(missing)		1		2		

* Number of respondents

Total N=156

APPENDIX B

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT (SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE)

☛ Please read carefully following statement.

This questionnaire is a part of a study designed to understand people's opinions about some public issues. Your participation in this study is completely anonymous and voluntary. So, do not put your name on this questionnaire. Participants will be given extra credit for their participation in this survey. But you can refuse to answer some questions or discontinue completing questionnaire without any penalty whenever you feel uncomfortable with answering those questions. This survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Your completion of this questionnaire will indicate your voluntary consent to the participation.

You may not find an answer which fits perfectly with your opinion. However, please don't leave a question blank. Instead, please choose one answer which is the closest to your opinion. You may also find several answers which fit equally well with your opinion, but please choose just one answer which fits the best.

☛ Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates "very little", 4 indicates "neutral", and 7 indicates "very much".

1. In general, how interested are you in social affairs, such as public issues?

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
very little			neutral			very much

2. Imagine you are in a situation in which you need to express your opinion about an issue in front of strangers, and you believe most of them hold the opposite opinion to yours. In this case, how much would it be a bad experience for you?

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
very little			neutral			very much

1() 2() 3() 4() 5() 6() 7()

not likely at all neutral very likely

6. Imagine a situation in which you are asked to be interviewed by a TV reporter, and to give your opinion about this issue. How likely is it that you would accept the interview?

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
not likely at all			neutral			very likely

7. Imagine a situation in which you are asked to participate in a discussion about this issue. How likely is it that you would participate in the discussion, and express your opinion?

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
not likely at all			neutral			very likely

☛ The following two questions ask your belief about the consequences which are expected if MSU allows the benefit program to provide same partner benefits to same-sex couples. Please answer as frankly as possible.

8. You believe that allowing the 'partner benefits' to same-sex couples would be a ...

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
serious loss (or damage) to <u>our society</u>			neutral			great benefit to <u>our society</u>

9. You believe that allowing the 'partner benefits' to same-sex couples would be a ...

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
serious loss (or damage) to <u>yourself</u>			neutral			great benefit to <u>yourself</u>

☛ Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "strongly disagree", 4 means "neutral", and 7 means "strongly agree".

24. You believe that legalizing the 'assisted suicide' would be a ...

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
serious loss (or damage) to <u>yourself</u>		neutral		great benefit to <u>yourself</u>		

➤ Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "strongly disagree", 4 means "neutral", and 7 means "strongly agree".

25. You have clear understanding (knowledge) of the details of this issue.

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree		

26. You have great personal concern (interest) about this issue.

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree		

27. You believe your opinion position (supporting or opposing the legalization of the assisted suicide) would be adopted by the State of Michigan in the end.

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree		

28. You believe your opinion expression on this issue is very important if your opinion position (supporting or opposing the legalization of the assisted suicide) is to be adopted by the state of Michigan.

1()	2()	3()	4()	5()	6()	7()
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree		

16. You think most of your family members have the same opinion as yours.

1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 ()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

17. You think most of your friends have the same opinion as yours.

1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 ()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

18. You think most MSU policy makers have the same opinion as yours.

1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 ()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

19. Regarding this issue, what is your opinion?

 I support MSU's offering the same partner benefits to same-sex couples.

 I oppose MSU's offering the same partner benefits to same-sex couples.

 I neither support nor oppose MSU's offering the same partner benefits to same-sex couples.

➡ Please read carefully following statement.

Lately, the issue of “Doctor Assisted Suicide” has attracted great public attention. Those who support assisted suicide claim that it is a rational way to avoid the excruciating pain and suffering of patients who are typically seriously ill to the point where there is little, if any, hope that they could enjoy a meaningful lifestyle again.

On the other hand, those who oppose assisted suicide believe that it is nothing more than murder. They hold life as sacred and thus consider it immoral to take, no matter what the circumstance is.

Regarding this issue, the Michigan Supreme Court is now reviewing the state law which currently bans the assisted suicide.

The following questions ask your opinion on this issue.

1() 2() 3() 4() 5() 6() 7()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

1() 2() 3() 4() 5() 6() 7()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

1() 2() 3() 4() 5() 6() 7()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

1() 2() 3() 4() 5() 6() 7()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 () 6 () 7 ()

strongly disagree neutral strongly agree

34. Regarding this issue, what is your opinion?

 I support the legalization of 'assisted suicide'.

 I oppose the legalization of 'assisted suicide'.

 I neither support nor oppose the legalization of 'assisted suicide'.

☛ The following questions ask some demographic information. Please answer as frankly as possible.

35. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female

36. How old were you on your last birthday? _____ (Please write.)

37. What best describes your race or ethnic group?

☐ White ☐ African-American ☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

Other: _____ (Please specify.)

If you wish to comment on any questions, please use this space.

☛ If you have any questions regarding your participation in this survey, please feel free to contact Sei-Hill Kim at (517) 336-8002.

Thanks for your participation!!!

LIST OF REFERENCES

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Alinsky, Saul D. (1971), Rules for Radicals - a Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals, New York: Random House.
- Allport, Floyd H. (1937), "Toward a Science of Public Opinion", Public Opinion Quarterly, 1: 7-23.
- Benford, Robert D. (1993), "You Could Be the Hundredth Monkey: Collective Action Frames and Vocabularies of Motive within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement", The Sociological Quarterly, 34(2): 195-216.
- Bernard, L. L. (1926), An Introduction to Social Psychology, New York: Holt and Company.
- Best, J. J. (1973), Public Opinion: Micro and Macro, Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Blumer, Herbert (1948), "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling", American Sociological Review, 13: 542-554.
- Blumer, Herbert (1971), "Social Problems as Collective Behavior", Social Problems, 18: 298-306.
- Bryce, James (1900), The American Common Wealth II, New York: Macmillan.
- Cobb, Roger W. and Charles D. Elder (1972), Participation in American Politics-The Dynamics of Agenda-Building, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Cohen, Jean L. (1985), "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movement", Social Research, 52: 663- 716.
- Condit, C. M. (1994), "Two Sides to Every Question: The Impact of News Formulas on Abortion Policy Options", Argumentation, 8:327-336.
- Crable, Richard E. and Steven L. Vibbert (1985), "Managing Issues and Influencing Public Policy", Public Relations Review, Summer: 3-16.

- Curtis, Russell and Louis Zurcher (1973), "Stable Resources of Protest Movements: the Multi-Organizational Field", Social Forces, 52:53-61.
- Donohue, G. A., Tichenor, P. J., and Olien, C. N. (1972), "Gatekeeping: Mass Media Systems and Information Control", In F. Kline and P. Tichenor (Eds.), Current Perspective in Mass Communication Research, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Donsbach, Wolfgang and Robert Stevenson (1984), "Challenges, Problems and Empirical Evidence of the Theory of the Spiral of Silence", paper presented at the International Communication Association, San Francisco.
- Elster, Jon (1985), Making Sense of Marx, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferree, Myra Max (1992), "The Political Context of Rationality: Rational Choice Theory and Resource Mobilization", p.29-52 in Frontiers in Social Movement Theory, edited by Aldon D. Morris and Carol McChurg Mueller, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fields, J. and Schuman, H. (1976), "Public Beliefs about the Beliefs of the Public", Public Opinion Quarterly, 40:427-448.
- Gallup, G. and Rae, S. F. (1940), The Pulse of Democracy: The Public-Opinion Poll and How It Works, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Gallup, G. (1966), "Poll and the Political Process - Past, Present and Future", Public Opinion Quarterly, 29: 544-549.
- Gamson, William (1975), The Strategy of Social Protest, Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.
- Gamson, William, Bruce Fireman, and Steven Rytina (1982), Encounters with Unjust Authority, Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.
- Gamson, William A. and Modigliani, Andre (1987), "The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action", Research in Political Sociology, 3:137-177.
- Gamson, William A. and Modigliani, Andre (1989), "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach", American Journal of Sociology, 95: 1-37.
- Gamson, William (1992), Talking Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gergen, Kenneth (1968), "Assessing the Leverage Points in the process of Policy formation" in Raymond Bauer and Kenneth Gergen (eds.), The Study of Policy Formation, New York: Free Press.
- Glynn, Carroll J. and Mcleod, Jack M. (1984), "Public Opinion du Jour: An Examination of the Spiral of Silence", Public Opinion Quarterly, 48: 731-740.
- Hilgartner, Stephen and Bosk, Charles L. (1988), "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: a Public Arena Model", American Journal of Sociology, 94: 53-78.
- Lasorsa, Dominic L. (1991), "Political Outspokenness: Factors Working against the Spiral of Silence", Journalism Quarterly, 68(1/2): 131-140.
- McLeod, Jack, Zhongdang Pan, and Dianne Rucinski (1995), "Levels of Analysis on Public Opinion Research", p.55-85 in Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent, edited by Theodore L. Glasser and Charles T. Salmon, New York: Guilford Press.
- McCombs, M. and Shaw, D. (1972), "The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media", Public Opinion Quarterly, 36:176-187.
- Mead, George Herbert (1934), Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Moscovici, Serge (1991), "Silent Majorities and Loud Minorities", p.298-308 in Communication Year Book, 14, edited by James A. Anderson, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Mueller, Carol McClurg (1992), "Building Social Movement Theory", p.3-25 in Frontiers in Social Movement Theory, edited by Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Neuwirth, Kurt (1988), "Noelle-Neumann and Spiral of Affect and Behavioral Intention", Paper presented at the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, Chicago, IL, November.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elizabeth (1973), "Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media", Studies of Broadcasting, 9: 68-105.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth (1974), "The Spiral of Silence: a Theory of Public Opinion", Journal of Communication, 24(2): 43-51.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth (1977), "Turbulence in the Climate of Opinion: Methodological Application of the Spiral of Silence Theory", Public Opinion Quarterly, 41: 143-158.

- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth (1985), "The Spiral of Silence: a Response", In D. Nimmo, L.L Kaid and K. Sanders(Eds.), Political Communication Yearbook 1984 (p.66-94), Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth (1995), "Public Opinion and Rationality", p.33-54 in Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent, edited by Theodore L. Glasser and Charles T. Salmon, New York: Guilford Press.
- Olien, C. N., Donohue, G. A., and Tichenor, P. J. (1995), "Conflict, Consensus, and Public Opinion", p.301-322 in Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent, edited by Theodore L. Glasser and Charles T. Salmon, New York: Guilford Press.
- Olson, Mancur (1971), The Logic of Collective Action, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pride, Richard A. (1995), "How Activist and Media Frame Social Problems: Critical Events Versus Performance Trends for Schools", Political Communication, 12:5-26.
- Salmon, Charles T. and Kline, F.G. (1985), "The Spiral of Silence Ten Years Later: an Examination and Evaluation", In D. Nimmo, L.L. Kaid and K. Sanders(Eds.), Political Communication Yearbook 1984 (p.66-94), Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Salmon, Charles T. (1989), "Campaign for Social Improvement: an Overview of Values, Rationales, and Impacts", p.19-53 in Information Campaign: Balancing Social Values and Social Change, edited by Charles T Salmon, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Salmon, Charles T. and Kurt Neuwirth (1990), "Perceptions of Opinion Climates and Willingness to Discuss the Issue of Abortion", Journalism Quarterly, 67(3): 567-577.
- Salmon, Charles T. and Oshagan, H. (1990), "Communication Size, Perception of Majority Opinion and Opinion Expression", Public Relations Research Annual, 2:157-171.
- Salmon, Charles T. (1990), "God Understands When the Cause Is Noble", Gannett Center Journal, 4(2): 23-34
- Salmon, Charles T. and Carroll J. Glynn (1996), "The Spiral of Silence: Communication and Public Opinion as Social Control", in M. Salwen and D. Stakcs(Eds.), Integrating Theory and Research in Communication, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Scott, James (1977), "Peasant Revolution: a Dismal Science", Comparative Politics, 9:231-248.
- Taylor, D. Garth (1982), "Pluralistic Ignorance and the Spiral of Silence: a Formal Analysis", Public Opinion Quarterly, 46: 311-355.
- Taylor, D. Garth (1986), Public Opinion and Collective Action, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Tichenor, P. J., Donohue, G. A., and Olien, C. N. (1980), Community Conflict and the Press, Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Tuchman, Gaye (1978), Making News - A Study in the Construction of Reality, New York: The Free Press.
- Verba, S. and Nie, N. H. (1972), Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality, New York: Harper and Row.
- Wallack, Lawrence, Lori Dorfman, David Jernigan, Makani Themba (1993), Media Advocacy and Public Health, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Weber, Max (1978), Economy and Society, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Zald, M. N. and Ash, R. (1966), "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay, and Change", Social Forces, 44: 327-341.