Public Abstract

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This study theorized that a central element of Sandra Ball-Rokeach and colleagues' communication infrastructure theory - the concept of "storytelling community" and the "macro," "meso," and "micro" levels which engender a storytelling community - can be augmented to study political communication that is not solely focused on civic engagement and community well-being. Using a sample of Columbia, MO residents, the present study assessed how citizens use a variety of political information sources that encompass particular "political storytelling levels" within a study of news effects and democratic attitudes. Results demonstrated that not only are there several communicative modalities that constitute the national, regional/state, and local storytelling levels, but that these sources tend to be associated with normative democratic outcomes that focus on national, state, and local political concerns. This study concludes with a discussion on the nature of citizens' "political storytelling system," the effects of the political storytelling system on citizens' perceptions and attitudes of the American political process, and directions for future research.