

The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion

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The power of the news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news – lead story on page one, other front page display, large headlines, etc. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience – the opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story, etc. These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms.

The principal outlines of this influence were sketched by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 classic, *Public Opinion*, which began with a chapter titled "The World Outside and the

Pictures in Our Heads.” As he noted, the news media are a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, a world that for most citizens is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind.”¹ What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us. More specifically, the result of this mediated view of the world is that the priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public. Elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind.

Social scientists examining this agenda-setting influence of the news media on the public usually have focused on public issues. The agenda of a news organization is found in its pattern of coverage on public issues over some period of time, a week, a month, an entire year. Over this period of time, whatever it might be, a few issues are emphasized, some receive light coverage, and many are seldom or never mentioned. It should be noted that the use of term “agenda” here is purely descriptive. There is no pejorative implication that a news organization “has an agenda” that it relentlessly pursues as a premeditated goal. The media agenda presented to the public results from countless day-to-day decisions by many different journalists and their supervisors about the news of the moment.

The public agenda – the focus of public attention – is commonly assessed by public opinion polls that ask some variation of the long-standing Gallup Poll question, “What is the most important problem facing this country today?”.

Comparisons of the media agenda in the weeks preceding these opinion polls measuring the public agenda yield significant evidence of the agenda-setting role of the news media. When Chapel Hill, North Carolina, voters were asked to name the most

important issues of the day – in the very first empirical study of this agenda-setting influence – their responses closely reflected the pattern of news coverage during the previous month in the mix of newspapers, network television news, and news magazines available to them.² Since that initial study during the 1968 U.S. presidential election, more than 300 hundred published studies worldwide have documented this influence of the news media. It should be noted that this evidence encompasses a wide variety of research designs, including numerous panel studies, time-series analyzes, and controlled laboratory experiments.

To summarize the extent of this influence – and to facilitate comparisons from one research setting to another – social scientists frequently calculate the correlation between the ranking of issues on the media agenda and the ranking accorded those same issues on the subsequent public agenda. This quantitative measure provides a substantial degree of precision for our comparisons, much as a thermometer's precise numbers are better than simply saying it seems cooler today than it was yesterday. The vast majority of comparisons between how issues are ranked on the media agenda and how the public ranks the importance of these same issues yield correlations of $+0.50$ or better.³ That reflects a substantial degree of influence.

The original study of the agenda-setting influence of the news media, which was conducted in Chapel Hill, examined a month during that 1968 U.S. presidential election. Subsequent studies have examined much longer periods of time – for example, a year-long, nine-wave panel study during the 1976 U.S. presidential election⁴ – and found similar evidence of strong agenda-setting effects among the public. A look at the entire decade of the 1960s found a substantial correlation ($+0.78$) between the patterns of

coverage in news magazines and the trends in public opinion reflected by responses to the Gallup Poll's question about the most important problem facing the country.⁵

Agenda-setting effects also have been found at the local level, and the evidence for both national and local effects is found in a wide variety of settings around the world. In Spain, unemployment and urban congestion were the major concerns of Pamplona, Spain, residents in the spring of 1995. Comparisons of all six major concerns on the public agenda with local news coverage in the preceding two weeks found a high degree of correspondence. The match with the dominant local daily newspaper was +.90; with the second Pamplona daily, +.72; and with television news, +.66.⁶

Agenda-setting at the community level also occurred in a 1986 Japanese mayoral election.⁷ Voters in Machida City, a municipality of 320,000 residents in the Tokyo metropolitan area, regarded welfare policies, urban facilities, and local taxes as the three most important issues in the election. Comparison of the public agenda, which had seven issues in all, with the coverage across a three-week period of the four major newspapers serving Machida City yielded a modest, but positive, correlation of +.39.

In Argentina, agenda-setting effects were found in the 1997 legislative elections in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area.⁸ Corruption was prominent on both the public and media agendas throughout the fall, always ranking first or second. But in September there was only modest overall agreement (+.43) between the public agenda and the combined issue agenda of five major Buenos Aires newspapers. However, as election day approached in October, the correspondence between the agendas soared to +.80, an increase that suggests considerable learning from the news media in the closing weeks of the election campaign.

Returning to the national level, in the U.K. during the final decade of the 20th century (1990-2000) there was significant correspondence (+.54) between public concern about international issues and the pattern of international coverage in *The Times*.⁹

In sum, the news media have a substantial influence on the content of the public agenda, and the phrase “setting the agenda” has become commonplace in discussions of journalism and public opinion.

Influencing the pictures in our heads

The agenda-setting influence of the news media is not limited to this initial step of focusing public attention on a particular topic. The media also influence the next step in the communication process, our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news. If you think about the agenda in abstract terms, the potential for a broader view of media influence on public opinion becomes very clear. In the abstract, the items that define the agenda are *objects*. For all the agendas we have discussed, the objects are public issues, but they could be other items or topics, such as the agenda of political candidates during an election. The objects are the things on which the attention of the media and the public are focused.

In turn, each of these objects has numerous *attributes*, those characteristics and traits that describe the object. For each object there also is an agenda of attributes because when the media and the public think and talk about an object, some attributes are emphasized, others are given less attention, and many receive no attention at all. This agenda of attributes is another aspect of the agenda-setting role of the news media.

To borrow Walter Lippmann's phrase, "the pictures in our heads," the agenda of issues or other objects presented by the news media influence what the pictures in our heads are *about*. The agenda of attributes presented for each of these issues, public figures, or other objects literally influences the pictures themselves that we hold in mind.

Images held by the public of political candidates and other public figures are the most obvious examples of attribute agenda-setting by the news media. During the 1996 general election in Spain, the descriptions by voters in Navarra of the three major party leaders showed considerable correspondence with the media's presentation of these men.¹⁰ For the local newspapers, the median match with the local voters' descriptions was +.70; for the national newspapers, +.81; for national television, +.54.

Similar matches between the imagery of the news media and the images in the public mind have been found in U.S. national elections. Comparison of New York Democrats' descriptions of the contenders for their party's presidential nomination in 1976 with the agenda of attributes presented in *Newsweek's* early January sketches of these 11 men found significant evidence of media influence.¹¹ Especially compelling in this evidence is that the correspondence between the news agenda of attributes and the voter agenda of attributes increased from +.64 in mid-February to +.83 in late March. Voters not only learned the media's agenda, but with some additional exposure over the weeks of the primaries they learned it even better.

Turning to a very different political and cultural setting, the voters' images of the three candidates for mayor of Taipei were compared with the descriptions of these men by the local newspapers and TV stations.¹² The agenda of attributes included 12 categories representing a wide variety of personal and political attributes. Comparisons of the voters'

images with the agenda of attributes in the *China Times* and *United Daily News* ranged from +.59 to +.75. The median value of these six comparisons (3 candidates x 2 newspapers) was +.68. None of the comparisons with TV news were significant, no doubt because the voters were well aware that all three television stations at that time were under the direct domination of the government and long-ruling KMT political party. This is a specific evidence in support of the general observation that the appearance of agenda-setting effects requires the existence of reasonably free and open media and political systems.

There also are examples of attribute agenda-setting for public issues. The aspects of issues selected for attention by the media influence the public's perception of these issues. Nationally, during the 2000 presidential election in the U.S., the correspondence between the news media's presentation of social welfare and the way in which U.S. voters talked about this issue was +.60.¹³

For a very different set of issues, the environment, the results are very similar. For global environmental problems, there was a strong level of correspondence (+.78) between the presentation of this issue in Japanese newspapers and the way that Tokyo residents thought about eight aspects of this issue.¹⁴ For an environmental situation in the U.S., there was a similarly strong level of correspondence (+.71) between the pictures in people's minds and local newspaper coverage on six aspects of a project to develop a large man-made lake in central Indiana.¹⁵

Which aspects of an issue are covered in the news – and the relative emphasis on these various aspects of an issue -- makes a considerable difference in how people view that issue. From the pattern of the total news coverage, the public learns what journalists

consider the important issues are and who the prominent public figures of the day are. From the details of this coverage – the agenda of attributes presented by the news media – the public forms its images and perspective about these issues and public figures.

Influencing the focus of public attention is a powerful role, but, arguably, influencing the agenda of attributes for an issue or political figure is the epitome of political power. Determining the way that an issue is framed – setting the ground rules for deliberation, if you will – can significantly influence the ultimate outcome.

The public and the media

Although the influence of the media agenda can be substantial, it alone does not determine the public agenda. Information and cues about object and attribute salience provided by the news media are far from the only determinants of the public agenda. This substantial influence of the news media has no way overturned or nullified the basic assumption of democracy that the people at large have sufficient wisdom to determine the course of their nation, their state, and their local communities. In particular, the people are quite able to determine the basic relevance – to themselves and to the larger public arena – of the topics and attributes advanced by the news media. The media set the agenda only when citizens perceive their news stories as relevant.

The spectacular failure in the U.S. of the intensive news coverage on the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal to set the public agenda and sway public opinion, an effort that failed despite gargantuan and persistent coverage frequently described as “All Monica, all the time,” speaks in a loud voice about the limits of media influence. Overwhelmingly, the

U.S. public rejected the relevance of that scandal as the basis of their opinion about the president's success or failure in governance.

The presence – or absence – of agenda-setting effects by the news media can be explained by a basic psychological trait, our need for orientation. Innate within each one of us is the need to understand the environment around us. Whenever we find ourselves in a new situation, there is an uncomfortable psychological feeling until we explore and mentally grasp at least the outlines of that setting. Recall, for example, your initial feeling upon visiting a foreign city. This innate need for orientation also exists in the civic arena, especially in those elections where citizens are faced with unfamiliar candidates or referendum questions on which they are less than fully knowledgeable. In all these situations, and many more, people experience a need for orientation.

Because it is a psychological trait, the degree of need for orientation varies greatly from one individual to another. For some individuals in any situation, there is a high need for orientation. For other individuals, there is little or no need for orientation at all. They just aren't interested. Need for orientation is defined by two components: relevance and uncertainty. Relevance is the initial defining condition that determines the level of need for orientation for each individual. If a topic is perceived as irrelevant – or very low in relevance – then the need for orientation is low. Individuals in this situation pay little or no attention to news media reports and, at most, demonstrate weak agenda-setting effects.

For individuals among whom the relevance of a topic is high, their degree of uncertainty about the topic determines the level of need for orientation. If this uncertainty is low, that is, they feel that they basically understand the topic, then the need for orientation is moderate. These individuals – for whom a situation has high relevance and

low uncertainty – will monitor the media for new developments and perhaps occasionally dip into a bit of additional background information. But they are not likely to be avid consumers of news reports about the topic. Agenda-setting effects among this group are moderate.

Finally, among individuals for whom both the relevance and their uncertainty about a situation are high, need for orientation is high. These individuals typically are avid consumers of the news, and strong agenda-setting effects typically are found among these individuals.

Table One illustrates two patterns that vary according to individuals’ levels of need for orientation: attention to the news and agenda-setting effects. Both frequent use of the news media to follow an election and the agenda-setting effects of the news media on the perceived importance of the issues steadily increase with the level of need for orientation among members of the public.¹⁶

Table One: Need for Orientation Effects

	Level of Need for Orientation		
	Low	Moderate	High
Frequent users of newspapers, TV and news magazines for political information	54%	63%	74%
Agenda-setting effect of TV (Issue agenda)	+.05	+.41	+.55
Agenda-setting effect of newspapers (Issue agenda)	+.29	+.59	+.68

When the news media do provide information that citizens find relevant and useful in coming to a decision about how to cast their ballots, there is a substantial audience – and there is substantial media influence on the priorities that citizens assign to the issues of the day.

Consequences of Agenda-Setting

Attitudes and behavior are usually governed by cognitions – what a person knows, thinks, believes. Hence, the agenda-setting function of the mass media implies a potentially massive influence whose full dimensions and consequences have yet to be investigated and appreciated.¹⁷

To begin at the beginning, the salience of objects in the mass media is linked to the formation of opinions by the audience. With the increasing salience of public figures in the news, for example, more people move away from a neutral position and form an opinion about these persons. An examination of US presidential candidates in all five elections between 1980 and 1996 found exceedingly strong correlations between the pattern of media emphasis, which varied widely across these elections, and the number of citizens who expressed ambivalent opinions about the candidates by checking the mid-point of various rating scales.¹⁸ Twenty of the 24 comparisons between media salience and opinions about a candidate as measured in the National Election Study were significant with a median value of -.90. Note that these correlations are negative because high salience for a candidate in the media was associated with a low number of people selecting the neutral mid-point on the rating scales.

Analogous links have been found between issue salience and people's attitudes. In the German state of Baden-Wurttemberg, the personal salience of two major issues, the reunification of East and West Germany and East German migrants, was strongly linked to both the strength and direction of personal opinions.¹⁹ For the strength of opinion on both issues, personal salience was a far stronger predictor than media exposure or demographic characteristics. For the direction of opinion, personal salience was a slightly stronger predictor than age for German reunification and only slightly weaker predictor than education (and equal to the use of television) for East German migrants.

Priming Public Opinion

By far the best documented consequence of object and issue salience is the priming of perspectives that subsequently guide the public's opinions about public figures.

By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news [as well as the other news media] influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged.²⁰

The psychological basis of priming is the selective attention of the public. People do not, indeed, can not, pay attention to everything. Moreover, in making judgments – whether in casting a ballot on election day or simply in responding to a pollster's question – people use simple rules of thumb and intuitive shortcuts.²¹ Rather than engaging in a comprehensive analysis based on their total store of information, citizens routinely draw upon those bits of information that are particularly salient at the time judgment must be rendered.²² In other words, citizens rely upon the agenda of salient objects and attributes in their minds, the agenda that is shaped to a considerable degree by the mass media.

An extensive series of agenda-setting experiments conducted by Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder produced significant evidence of a priming effect by television news on people's opinions about the president's overall performance in office.²³ Among subjects exposed to extensive news coverage on one or more of five different issues – defense, inflation, arms control, civil rights, and unemployment -- their ratings of presidential performance on the issue or issues receiving heavy news coverage influenced their overall opinion about the president's performance more than among persons not exposed to this news coverage. This influence existed whether or not the news story implied a substantial degree of presidential responsibility for the issue. In subsequent experiments where the degree of presidential responsibility for an issue was explicitly manipulated, the impact of problem performance ratings on opinions about the president's overall performance was greater when the news stories emphasized presidential responsibility.

Turning to a very different setting, public opinion about Hong Kong's last British governor was strongly influenced by news coverage on his proposals to broaden public participation in the election of the Legislative Council.²⁴ Tracked in 52 consecutive weekly polls from the fall of 1992 when the governor made his initial policy speech, public opinion about his overall performance was significantly primed by the pattern of news coverage on his reform proposals in Hong Kong's three leading newspapers.

Both the distinction and link between traditional agenda-setting effects and priming as a consequence of these effects is illustrated by American public opinion regarding the Persian Gulf War.²⁵ Extensive television coverage resulted in the high salience of the war on the public agenda as the most important problem facing the country, a traditional first-level agenda-setting effect. Analyses of public opinion about President Bush from 1988

to 1991 further indicated a shift in the basis of his popularity from economics to foreign policy, a priming effect. And demonstrating the effects of attribute agenda-setting on opinions, members of the public who reported higher levels of exposure to television news, which emphasized military options in its framing of the war, favored a military rather than a diplomatic solution in the Persian Gulf.

This priming effect also occurs for political parties. Among German voters, political party preference during 1986 was influenced by the television news agenda.²⁶ Preference for the Christian Democrats was substantially influenced by news coverage of two issues, the energy supply and East German situation. Preference for the SPD was influenced by three issues, East-West relations, environmental protection, and pensions. Similar patterns were observed in the weekly opinion polls for other political parties. Although the overall pattern is one in which issues on the television news agenda resonated in unique ways with political partisanship, the general finding is that salient issues on the media agenda were strongly linked with shifts in political partisanship during the year.

Attribute Agenda-Setting and Tone

Mass communication effects can result from the sheer volume of exposure. First level agenda-setting effects demonstrate that phenomenon. But as both attribute agenda-setting and priming demonstrate, closer attention to the specific content of mass media messages – including the tone of those messages – provides a more detailed understanding of the pictures in our heads and of subsequent attitudes and opinions grounded in those pictures.

In Germany, the tone of the news about Helmut Kohl in news magazines and major newspapers influenced public opinion between 1975 and 1984 about his political

performance, first, as leader of the opposition and, later, as chancellor.²⁷ Shifting patterns of positive and negative tone in the media, summed across six attributes of Kohl, prompted significant shifts in his level of approval among the German public. The median correlation between the affective tone of six news media's attribute agendas and subsequent public opinion with a lag time of six months was +.48.

In the US, a day-by-day observation of the final three months in the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections found that the tone of television news coverage about key campaign events influenced voters' preference for the candidates.²⁸ Favorable coverage of Republican campaign events on four national television networks increased support for the Republican candidate. Conversely, favorable coverage of Democrat campaign events decreased support for the Republican candidate. The strength of these media effects on voters' opinions was similar in the two years.

Effects of tone are not limited to attitudes and opinions about political leaders. Negative newspaper headlines about the economy influence the public's perceptions about the health of the economy.²⁹ In turn, these opinions become self-fulfilling prophecies as people adjust their behavior to fit their beliefs. Comparisons of economic headlines in the *New York Times*, monthly measures of consumer sentiment about the health of the economy, and major monthly statistical indicators of the actual economy from 1980 through 1993 found a series of significant effects.

Media Coverage and Behavior

The salience of issues and other topics on the media agenda also influences observable behavior. Extensive news coverage of crime and violence, including a murder and rapes,

on the University of Pennsylvania campus a few years ago contributed to a significant drop in applications by potential first-year students, according to the university's dean of admissions.³⁰ This decline occurred predominantly among women. Moreover, other comparable universities experienced an increase in applications during the same period. Another example of media influence on the behavior of young adults is Harvard University's successful use of entertainment television programming to spread the idea of "the designated driver," that member of a party group who abstains from drinking in order to safely drive his or her friends home afterward.³¹

A 1988 Indiana Poll brought together all these aspects of agenda-setting and its consequences.³² Replicating a familiar pattern, the salience among the public of a major issue of that time, the US federal budget deficit, was significantly correlated with the frequency of exposure to both newspapers and television news. In turn, issue salience in conjunction with use of both newspapers and television news predicted public opinion about a possible solution to the problem as well as what people knew about the issue. Further, issue salience in conjunction with use of a single medium, television news, predicted the strength of people's opinions while issue salience in combination with newspaper reading predicted actual behavior, such as writing a letter or attending a meeting. Here in a single setting is evidence of significant relationships between media exposure and issue salience and of subsequent effects by both on knowledge, opinions and observable behavior.

Summing Up

The pictures in people's minds about the outside world are significantly influenced by the mass media, both what those pictures are about and what those pictures are. The agenda-setting effects of the mass media also have significant implications beyond the pictures created in people's heads. In the original, traditional domain of agenda-setting, the salience of public issues, there is considerable evidence that the shifting salience of issues on the media agenda often are the basis for public opinion about the overall performance in office of a public leader. In turn, the salience of a leader in the news also is linked with whether an individual holds any opinion at all. At the second level of agenda-setting, the salience of affective attributes intertwined with the public's cognitive pictures of these leaders represents the convergence of attribute agenda-setting with opinion formation and change. Beyond attitudes and opinions, the pictures of reality created by the mass media have implications for personal behaviors, ranging from college applications to voting on election day.

NOTES

¹ Walter Lippmann, *Public opinion*. New York: Macmillan, 1922, p.29.

² Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, The agenda-setting function of mass media, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 1972, 176-187.

³ Wayne Wanta and Salma Ghanem, Effects of agenda-setting. In *Meta-analyses of media effects*, Jennings Bryant and Rodney Carveth, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum: forthcoming.

⁴ David Weaver, Doris Graber, Maxwell McCombs and Chaim Eyal, *Media Agenda Setting in a Presidential Election: Issues, Images and Interest* Greenwood, Westport, CT, 1981).

⁵ Ray Funkhouser, The issues of the sixties, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37, 1973, 62-75.

⁶ Maria Jose Canel, Juan Pablo Llamas, and Federico Rey, Federico, 'El primer nivel del efecto agenda setting en la informacion local: Los 'problemas mas importantes" de la ciudad de Pamplona'. ['The first level agenda setting effect on local information: The 'most important problems' of the city of Pamplona'.] *Comunicacion y Sociedad*, 9, 1&2 (1996), pp.17-38.

⁷ Toshio Takeshita, 'Agenda-setting effects of the press in a Japanese local election', *Studies of Broadcasting*, 29 (1993), pp.193-216.

⁸ Federico Rey Lennon, 'Argentina: 1997 elecciones. Los diarios nacionales y la campana electoral.' ['The 1997 Argentina election. The national dailies and the electoral campaign'.] Report by The Freedom Forum and Austral University, 1998.

⁹ Stuart N. Soroka, 'Media, public opinion, and foreign policy'. Paper presented to the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 2001.

¹⁰ Maxwell McCombs, Esteban Lopez-Escobar and Juan Pablo Llamas, Setting the agenda of attributes in the 1996 Spanish general election, *Journal of Communication*, 50 (2), 2000, 77-92.

¹¹ Lee Becker and Maxwell McCombs, The role of the press in determining voter reactions to presidential primaries, *Human Communication Research*, 4 (1978), pp.301-307.

¹² Pu-tsung King, The press, candidate images, and voter perceptions in *Communication and Democracy*, eds. Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw and David Weaver. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997, pp.29-40.

¹⁴ Shunji Mikami, Toshio Takeshita, Makoto Nakada and Miki Kawabata, 'The media coverage and public awareness of environmental issues in Japan'. Paper presented to the International Association for Mass Communication Research. Seoul, Korea, 1994.

¹⁵ David Cohen, 'A report on a non-election agenda setting study'. Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism. Ottawa, Canada, 1975.

¹⁶ David Weaver, Political issues and voter need for orientation. In *The emergence of American political issues*, Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs, eds. St. Paul, MN: West, 1977. Pp.107-119.

¹⁷ Eugene F. Shaw, 'Agenda-setting and mass communication theory', *Gazette*, 25, 2 (1979), p.101.

¹⁸ Spiro Kiouisis, 'Beyond salience: Exploring the linkages between the agenda setting role of mass media and mass persuasion'. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2000.

¹⁹ Patrick Rossler and Michael Schenk, 'Cognitive bonding and the German reunification: Agenda-setting and persuasion effects of mass media', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 12, 1 (2000), pp.29-47.

²⁰ Iyengar and Kinder, *News That Matters*, p.63. Although the evidence reported in this book concerns only television news, the bracketed words "and the other news media" was inserted because there is substantial evidence that all the news media can prime judgments of public performance.

²¹ Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*.

²² A classic presentation of heuristic information processing is Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, 'Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability', *Cognitive Psychology*, 5 (1973), pp.207-232.

²³ Iyengar and Kinder, *News That Matters*, Chapters 7-11.

²⁴ Lars Willnat and Jian-Hua Zhu, 'Newspaper coverage and public opinion in Hong Kong: A time-series analysis of media priming', *Political Communication*, 13 (1996), pp.231-246.

²⁵ Shanto Iyengar and Adam Simon, 'News coverage of the Gulf crisis and public opinion: A study of agenda-setting, priming and framing' in *Do the media govern? Politicians, voters, and reporters in America*, eds., Shanto Iyengar and Richard Reeves (Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1997), pp.248-257.

²⁶ Hans-Bernd Brosius and Hans Mathias Kepplinger, 'Beyond agenda setting: The influence of partianship and television reporting on the electorate's voting intentions', *Journalism Quarterly*, 69 (1992), pp.893-901.

²⁷ Hans Mathias Kepplinger, Wolfgang Donsbach, Hans Bernd Brosius and Joachim Friedrich Staab, 'Media tone and public opinion: A longitudinal study of media coverage and public opinion on Chancellor Kohl', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 1 (1989), pp.326-342.

²⁸ Daron Shaw, 'The impact of news media favorability and candidate events in presidential campaigns', *Political Communication*, 16 (1999), pp,183-202.

²⁹ Deborah J. Blood and Peter C.B. Phillips, 'Economic headline news on the agenda: New approaches to understanding causes and effects' in *Communication and Democracy*, eds. McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, pp.97-114.

³⁰ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 27, 1996, pp.A1&18.

³¹ *New York Times*, January 17, 1989, p.22.

³² David Weaver, 'Issue salience and public opinion: Are there consequences of agenda-setting?', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 3 (1991), pp.53-68.

media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms. The principal outlines of this influence were sketched by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 book *Public Opinion*. Influencing the pictures in our heads. The agenda-setting influence of the news media is not limited to this initial step of focusing public attention on a particular topic. The media also influence the next step in the communication process, our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news. If you think about the agenda in abstract terms, the potential for a broader view of media influence on public opinion becomes very clear. In the abstract, the items that define the agenda. The media can shape public opinion by publicizing certain stories or stressing certain aspects of stories. A major theme of mass media is that the most salient details of a story are seen as being the most important. For example, two media outlets could each run a story on the state of the economy. One might emphasize the current administration's regulatory policies, and the other might focus on interest rates. The influence of media on society has been growing fast renewals in the community. Renewal of the intangible changes nothing and there are negative toward the positive direction. Media influence is related to other aspects such as the nature of a communicator, the content information from the media itself, as well as responses from the community.