Agenda Setting

J201 Introduction to Mass Communication
Sept 11 - 2015

Professor Hernando Rojas
hrojas@wisc.edu  @uatiff
201.journalism.wisc.edu
#sjmc201
① Quizzes start this week in section. They cover:
   - Lecture materials from the previous or current week.
   - Readings for the week the quiz is scheduled.
   - Major news stories (local, national or international) from the previous or current week.

② Extra credit opportunities.
Last class main points

① A media effect is a cognitive, affective, physiological, attitudinal or behavioral response to media content.

② Early studies found little support for magic bullet notions of media effects.

③ Early studies show some effects, but they tend to be contingent and limited.

④ This led to a limited effects view...
① Reality versus media reality.
② Original agenda setting study.
③ Experimental evidence of agenda setting.
④ Challenges to agenda setting in the new media environment.
“The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.”

Bernard C. Cohen
Public’s agenda

Your poll will show here

1. Install the app from pollev.com/app
2. Make sure you are in Slide Show mode

Still not working? Get help at pollev.com/app/help
or
Open poll in your web browser
Percentage of Americans Mentioning Economic Issues as the Nation's Most Important Problem

Selected trend -- January 2001-present

% NET mentions of the economy

GALLUP
Public's agenda (Gallup Polls)

### What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today? (OPEN-ENDED)

#### Recent Trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC PROBLEMS (NET)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy in general</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment/Jobs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal budget deficit/Federal debt</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gap between rich and poor</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of money</td>
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<td>Taxes</td>
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<td>High cost of living/inflation</td>
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<td>Corporate corruption</td>
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<td>Wage issues</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel/Oil prices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recession</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign trade/Trade deficit</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>NON-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS (NET)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Immigration/Illegal aliens</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Race relations/Racism</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Foreign policy/Foreign aid/Focus overseas</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Terrorism</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Situation in Iraq/ISIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment/Pollution</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics/Moral/Religious decline</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judicial system/Courts/Laws</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>National security</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of respect for each other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wars/War (non-specific), Fear of war</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Guns/Gun control</td>
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<td>Crime/Violence</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Welfare</td>
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<td>Gun rights issues</td>
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<td>International issues, problems</td>
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- **Economy 37%**
- **Gov dissatisfaction 13%**
- **Immigration 8%**
- **Health care 5%**
- **Education 5%**
- **Foreign policy 11%**
- **Environment 3%**
Media’s reality

- Politics
- Economy
- Science
- Society

‘Reality’

Agenda building
Agenda cutting

Selection by journalists
Political PR
Public affairs

‘Media Reality’

Media agenda

Direct impressions, discussions

Public perception of reality

Public agenda

Inter-media agenda setting

Source: www.mediatenor.com
Chapel Hill voters queried before 1968 presidential election to identify and rank issues of importance to them.

Content analysis of news (agenda).

Results – almost identical agendas for both public and news media.

Conclusion – Transfer of salience that sets the agenda.
Next major study conducted in a laboratory setting where researchers manipulated versions of newscasts presented to different groups of viewers.
Experimental manipulations of the public’s agenda (Iyengar & Kinder)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Before the Experiment</th>
<th>After the Experiment</th>
<th>Change: Pre- to Post-</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>20*</td>
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<td>Defense</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10*</td>
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<td>Defense</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>Inflation</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Arms control</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>06*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Civil rights</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>05*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>07*</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>05*</td>
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</table>

*p < .05

Source: Iyengar & Kinder, 1987
① Powerful political and social actors and their agents.

② Sociological factors related to news organizations.

③ Professional norms.

④ Ideological factors (owners and practitioners).
Limits to the agenda setting function of the news

1. Obtrusiveness of the issue.
2. Political conversation...
3. Personal goals and motivations.
4. Declining trust in news...
Americans' Trust in the Mass Media

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, TV, and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

% Great deal/Fair amount

Gallup trend since 1997

GALLUP
Potential challenges to the agenda setting function of the press

① New media environment including Twitter, Facebook, blogs & news aggregators, online news.

② Issue publics.
Potential challenges to the agenda setting function of the press

Partisanship.

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**Ideological Placement of Each Source's Audience**

*Average ideological placement on a 10-point scale of ideological consistency of those who got news from each source in the past week...*

- Daily Show
- The Guardian
- Al Jazeera America
- NPR
- Colbert Report
- New York Times
- New Yorker
- Slate
- MSNBC
- CNN
- Yahoo News
- Wall Street Journal
- Breitbart
- Rush Limbaugh Show
- The Blaze
- Sean Hannity Show
- Glenn Beck Program

AUDIENCE IS MORE CONSISTENTLY LIBERAL

AUDIENCE IS MORE CONSISTENTLY CONSERVATIVE

*List labeling multiple points are ordered from more consistently liberal on top to more consistently conservative on the bottom.*

American Trends Panel (wave 1). Survey conducted March 19-April 29, 2014. Q22. Based on all web respondents. Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see About the Survey for more details.) ThinkProgress, DailyKos, Mother Jones, and The Ed Schultz Show are not included in this graphic because audience sample sizes are too small to analyze.

*PEW RESEARCH CENTER*
1. Media focus attention signaling what is important.

2. Forces shaping media’s agenda include: powerful external actors, media routines and organization, professional norms and ideology.

3. Obtrusiveness of issues, political talk, personal interests and declining trust can limit agenda setting capabilities of media.

4. New communication environment, emergence of issue publics and partisanship, challenge media’s agenda setting role.
Have a good weekend.
See you Monday!