Mass Media Effects and Uses

“...to find something comparable, you have to go back 500 years to the printing press, the birth of mass media ... Technology is shifting power away from the editors, the publishers, the establishment, the media elite. Now it’s the people who are taking control” - Rupert Murdoch, quoted in Wired, July 2006

Agenda setting

主讲教师：王积龙
Agenda setting theory

theory that the mass-news media have a large influence on audiences by their choice of what stories to consider newsworthy and how much prominence and space to give them. Agenda-setting theory’s central axiom is salience transfer, or the ability of the mass media to transfer importance of items on their mass agendas to the public agendas.
Agenda Setting

It 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.
Drug Problem (1985-1989) in the USA.

Figure 11.1 Percentage of respondents who said drugs are the most important problem facing the country today. Source: From J. Bare, “The War on Drugs: A Case Study in Opinion Formation,” The Public Perspective, November/December, 1990, p. 31. © The Public Perspective, a publication of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, Storrs. Reprinted by permission.
Drug Problem (1985-1989) in the USA.

Figure 11.1 Percentage of respondents who said drugs are the most important problem facing the country today. Source: From J. Bare, “The War on Drugs: A Case Study in Opinion Formation,” The Public Perspective, November/December, 1990, p. 31. © The Public Perspective, a publication of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, Storrs. Reprinted by permission.

The Chapel Hill Study

- **1968 presidential campaign, Carolina**
  McCombs & Shaw in 1972 studied the undecided voters in Chapel Hill. The findings supported an agenda-setting effect. The correlation between emphasis in the media on an issue and voter perception of that issue as important was .967. For minor items, the correlation was .979. As authors point out, these data suggest a very strong relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media and the judgments of voters as to the salience and importance of various campaign topics.
The Chapel Hill Study

- The Agenda-setting theory
- The War on Drugs
- McCombs & Shaw 1972
Report
Spotlights Iraq Rebuilding Blunders
By JAMES GLANZ and T. CHRISTIAN MILLER
An unpublished federal history of the U.S.-led reconstruction of Iraq
depicts the effort as crippled by poor planning, waste
and deception, leading to a
$100 billion failure.

• Document: ‘Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience’
• Troops to Stay Longer in Iraq as Support, U.S. Says

The Heist at Harry’s: Inspector Clouseau?
By DOREEN CARVAJAL
The thieves behind the spectacular heist earlier this
month of a Harry Winston jewelry store in Paris, above,
have been nicknamed the Pink Panthers, after the movie.

Ed Alcock for The New York Times

Opinion
Frank Rich: Two Cheers for Rod Blagojevich
The Illinois governor is a timely whipping boy for an era of corruption and lack of
accountability.

• Comments

Travel
Utopia by the Sea
The Sea Ranch homes in California are known for their
beauty, but there are no stores or restaurants.

Business
The Man Who Is Unwinding Lehman
Harvey R. Miller, a lion of the bankruptcy bar, has
been consumed by the largest corporate
Could Blago Cause Trouble for Daley?

By ERIC FERKENHOFF / CHICAGO

- Governor Gone Wild: The Blagojevich Scandal
- Jesse Jackson Jr.: The Trouble with Being Candidate 5
Stimulus Package to Tackle Routine Repairs

Most of the infrastructure spending in deal being readied by Obama, congressional Democrats is set for projects that have been on to-do lists for years.

- Alec MacGillis and Michael D. Shear

- How Stimulus Plan Compares to the New Deal
- Fed Could Remake Credit Card Regulations

A North-South Divide Emerges

Aid efforts for Big Three reveal long-held regional resentments between union, nonunion workers.

- Peter Whoriskey

burned woman invokes Islamic Retribution

Iranian woman attacked by a spurned suitor with sulfuric acid persuades court to punish him in a similar fashion. (Special to the Washington Post)
Agenda Setting in Media

Latest: Cabinet split over proposed Heathrow third runway

Hilary Benn breaks cabinet ranks to warn that expansion plans should be rejected unless pollution is dramatically cut
› Benn Jr joins the awkward squadron
› IN DEPTH: Meet the plane stoppers

UK may help find general’s killers

Major-General Faisal Avavi was murdered after threatening to expose Pakistani army generals who had made deals with the Taliban
› Pakistan closes ‘charity front for terrorists’
› West pays Taleban protection money

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN
Just £1 could help save a child’s life

YOU’RE UNIQUE.
Cabinet split over Heathrow runway

Hilary Benn breaks cabinet ranks to warn that expansion plans should be rejected unless pollution is dramatically cut

BEST GREEN COMPANIES

Nominations for 2009 now open

Does your company have green credentials? Gain recognition by entering The Sunday Times Best Green Companies Awards 2009.
Agenda Setting in Media

the impact of growing crops for fuel in developing countries

Study on volcanic 'Champagne effect'
Earthquakes can set off volcanoes by shaking up molten rock like champagne in a bottle, says Oxford University study

Climate change 'hits poor hardest'
Sir David Attenborough and Archbishop Desmond Tutu call on leaders to do more to protect poor from effects of climate

'No garden safe' from march of killer diseases
Two deadly diseases will spread to plants in almost every garden in the UK within 20 years unless immediate action is taken

BUSINESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

British car makers win delay over carbon cuts
Environmentalists say hard-won Euro ruling that new cars won't have to meet targets until 2019 is 'depressing loophole'

Credit freeze bites as zoo tries to sell Knut
The polar bear, 2, is almost ready to mate - but Berlin Zoo is unable to raise the cash for a new compound

Supply fears hit wholesale electricity price
Fears of a supply shortfall saw the forward price of electricity hit highs of £133 per megawatt hour, up £10 in a week

Fashion recycling
Clothes swapping parties are good for the environment - and your wallet

Credit Crunched?
Our Credit Clinic has free help and advice

Business City Guides
Overseas contacts and local business information

Need to Know
Industry Sectors news at a glance

popular searches on times online
books | chess | chinese democracy | credit crunch | dating | fashion | football | formula 1 | mortgages | need to know | pensions |
Precursors of the Hypothesis

- **Norton Long (1958)**
  “In a sense, the newspaper is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda. It has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are, and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with”.

- **Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang (1959)**
  “The mass media force attention to certain issues. They built up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feeling about”.
A Change in Thinking

- Dis-satisfaction with the Limited-effects Model
  To some people, the idea that the mass media ordinary did not have any effect just did not seem very reasonable. Maybe the mass media had their effects on people’s perceptions—their views of the world—rather than on their attitudes.

  **Behaviorism and Cognitive Psychology (1950)**
  Behaviorism stressed the importance of reinforcement, rewards and punishment, and conditioning in shaping behavior, and attempted to use these concepts to explain even human thought and languages (Skinner, 1957).

  Cognitive psychology sees men and women as active seekers of knowledge who function in the world on the basis of this knowledge (Neiser, 1967).
The Media Agenda and Reality

- **G. Ray Funkhouser Experiment (1973)**
  - Focused his study on the 1960s, his question was "the most important problem facing America ".
  - He obtained his measures of media content by counting the number of articles on each issue appearing in three news magazines (*Times, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report*) for each year in the decades.
The Media Agenda and Reality

G. The Result of Ray Funkhouser Experiment (1973)

The relationship between media and public rating of issues and media content shows a strong correspondence. See Table 11.1.

Table 11.1  Amount of Coverage Given by National News Magazines to Various Issues During the 1960s, and Rank Scores of the Issues as “Most Important Problem Facing America” During That Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Number of Articles</th>
<th>Coverage Rank</th>
<th>Importance Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam War</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Relations (and Urban Riots)</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Unrest</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television and Mass Media</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and Pollution</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (Declining Morality)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Rights</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Society</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rank-order correlation between coverage and importance = .78 (p = .001).

*These items were never noted as “the most important problem” in the Gallup findings, so they are ranked equally below the items that did.

The Charlotte Study

Cross-lagged Correlation

The results are not as clear-cut as we might wish. For instance, the high correlation of .94 between the voters’ agenda at time 1 and the voters’ agenda at time 2 is troublesome. How can there be an agenda-setting effect when the public’s agenda essentially remains unchanged?

Furthermore, the cross-lagged correlation analysis for TV does not show the support for agenda setting that Figure 11.3 does for newspapers.

The result shows, however, it is likely that the media (or newspapers at least) do have a causal effect in shaping the public agenda, rather than vice versa.
The Charlotte Study

June

Newspaper\textsuperscript{1}

\begin{tabular}{c}
\hline \.46 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Voters\textsuperscript{2}

October

Newspaper\textsuperscript{1}

\begin{tabular}{c}
\hline \.10 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Voters\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{tabular}{c}
\hline \.94 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{c}
\hline \.43 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{c}
\hline \.19 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{c}
\hline \.51 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{1}Correlations are based on the “official” newspaper agenda.

\textsuperscript{2}Analysis is based on panel members who read only the Charlotte Observer (N = 178).

**Figure 11.3** Cross-lagged correlation comparison of Charlotte voters and the contents of the Charlotte Observer in June and October, 1972. *Source: Reprinted by permission from page 91 of The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press* by D. L. Shaw and M. E. McCombs (eds.), Copyright © 1977 by West Publishing Company. All rights reserved.
Experimental Evidence

Research Ways of Yale University.
In general, their approach was to take videotapes of TV network newscasts and alter them by editing out some stories and replacing them with others. This allow them to manipulate the content of the news media in such a way that certain issues were played up and others were played down. Subjects in various experimental conditions were then exposed to these altered newscasts and were later questioned about their rankings of the importance of various issues, including those manipulated in the newscasts.
Newscasts were doctored to play up inflation for one group, while the control group saw no defense stories. The table shows an increase in the rating of importance of defense for those subjects exposed to the high defense condition, but a decrease in the rating of imortance for the control group.

Table 11.2 Adjusted Change Scores for Problem Importance in Experiment 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense*</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>-.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Addiction</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>-.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>-.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, one-tailed test.

Experimental Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Pollution</th>
<th>Inflation</th>
<th>Defense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>1.53**</td>
<td>-.71</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>.76*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Group one seeing the newscasts emphasizing pollution increased its rating of importance of pollution as an issue. Group two seeing defense similarly increased its ratings of importance of defense as an issue. Group three viewing inflation did not show effect. The researchers speculated the subjects were already so concerned about inflation that it was not really possible to increase this importance ratings.
Priming (铺垫)
Agenda Setting in Media

- Gatekeepers
- Influential media

Personal experience and interpersonal communication

Media agenda

Public agenda

Policy agenda

Real-world indicators of the importance of an agenda issue or event
Agenda Setting in Media

CBS News Investigates

FDA Chief: The Bruiser Nomination Fight
Three Names Keep Rising To The Top To Lead Agency That Oversees 25% Of U.S. Economy

- Wall Street Journal: Top Broker Accused Of $50 Billion Fraud
- Congressional Quarterly: VA Recovering Benefits From Widows
- Made In The U.S.A.: Teen Bombers
- CBS 3 Philadelphia: Desperate Job Seekers
- After Rescue, Bonuses Still Flow At AIG
- Big Three Spending Millions On Lobbying
- Chicago Tribune: Feds Taped Blagojevich
- Burress Reignites Issue Of Athletes & Guns
- India Warned Of Mumbai Attacks
- Police: Mumbai Gunmen Came From Pakistan
- Video Allegedly Shows India Terror Arrest
- How Online Gamblers Unmasked Cheaters
- Pension System A Runaway Train?
- On The Trail With The Nuke Hunters
Agenda Setting in Media
Agenda Setting in Media

Mavs Silence Thunder Behind Nowitzki
Dirk Nowitzki was hitting everything Saturday night, finishing with a season-high 46 points to propel the Mavs to a victory over the Thunder. Play 2:26
Box Score | Recap | Photos

Pistons Hold Off Bobcats' Furious Rally
The new-look Bobcats scored 17 straight points in the fourth quarter. But Rasheed Wallace's trey helped the Pistons escape with a 90-86 win. Play 2:13
Box Score | Recap | Pistons-Nuggets classic of 1983

Bulls Cut Down Nets Despite Carter's 39
The Bulls knew Vince Carter would come out firing after the worst shooting performance of his career, but Chicago beat New Jersey 113-104. Play 2:24
Box Score | Recap | Assist of the Night

The Rookie Report: Hazing is Part of the Game
Dave McMenamin touches on an old NBA tradition -- the hazing of rookies. See what the vets make the young guys do off the court. Read Full Story
Kevin Love's Blog

Fisher Makes Meaningful Assist
The Lakers' Derek Fisher, president of the NBPA,
Agenda Setting in Media

- Reality
  - Politics
  - Economy
  - Science
  - Society

- Direct impressions, discussions
- Selection by journalists
  - Political PR
  - Public affairs

- Agenda building
  - Agenda cutting
  - Inter-media agenda setting

- Media reality
  - Media agenda

- Public perception of reality
  - Public agenda
  - Public agenda setting

Strategic Media Intelligence
Agenda Setting in Media
Table 11.1  Amount of Coverage Given by National News Magazines to Various Issues During the 1960s, and Rank Scores of the Issues as “Most Important Problem Facing America” During That Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Number of Articles</th>
<th>Coverage Rank</th>
<th>Importance Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam War</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Relations (and Urban Riots)</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Unrest</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television and Mass Media</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and Pollution</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (Declining Morality)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Rights</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Society</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rank-order correlation between coverage and importance = .78 (p = .001).

*These items were never noted as “the most important problem” in the Gallup findings, so they are ranked equally below the items that did.

Funkhouser (1973b) has suggested a list of five mechanisms in addition to the flow of actual events that operate to influence the amount of media attention an issue might receive:

1. *Adaptation of the media to a stream of events.* As the same pattern of events persists, it may be perceived as “just more of the same” and cease to be considered news.

2. *Overreporting of significant but unusual events.* Some events, such as the Santa Barbara oil spill, are important but receive exaggerated coverage because of their unusualness or sensationalism.

3. *Selective reporting of the newsworthy aspects of otherwise nonnewsworthy situations.* For instance, one well-known study has shown that television coverage of a parade honoring General Douglas MacArthur, by selecting certain details, made the event seem more exciting than it was (K. Lang and G. E. Lang, 1972).

4. *Pseudoevents, or the manufacturing of newsworthy events.* Protest marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and publicity stunts are examples of pseudoevents that might help to move issues onto the press agenda.

5. *Event summaries, or situations that portray nonnewsworthy events in a newsworthy way.* An example is the release in 1964 of the surgeon general’s report showing a relationship between smoking and lung cancer.
1. *Influences from individual media workers.* Among these influences are communication workers' characteristics, personal and professional backgrounds, personal attitudes, and professional roles.

2. *Influences of media routines.* What gets into the mass media is influenced by the day-to-day practices of communicators, including deadlines and other time constraints, space requirements in a publication, the inverted pyramid structure for writing a news story, news values, the standard of objectivity, and the reliance of reporters on official sources.

3. *Organizational influences on content.* Media organizations have goals, with making money being one of the most widely shared. These goals of the media organization can have an impact on content in numerous ways.

4. *Influences on content from outside of media organizations.* These influences include interest groups lobbying for (or against) certain kinds of content, people creating pseudoevents in order to get media coverage, and government, which regulates content directly through libel and obscenity laws.

5. *The influence of ideology.* Ideology represents a society-level phenomenon. Fundamental to ideology in the United States is "a belief in the value of the capitalist economic system, private ownership, pursuit of profit by self-interested entrepreneurs, and free markets" (p. 184). This all-encompassing ideology probably influences the content of the mass media in many ways.
Box 11.1 An Agenda of Issues at the First Level of Agenda Setting

These were issues in the presidential election of 1968:

1. Foreign policy
2. Law and order
3. Civil rights
4. Fiscal policy
5. Public welfare

Source: Adapted from McCombs and Shaw (1972).

Box 11.2 An Agenda of Attributes at the Second Level of Agenda Setting

In this case, the attributes are subissues under the issue of economics:

1. Income tax reform
2. Balancing the budget
3. Reducing the national debt
4. Interest rates
5. Federal banking regulations
Box 11.3 An Agenda of Attributes at the Second Level of Agenda Setting

In this case, the attributes are personal characteristics of candidates in an election:

1. Integrity and virtues
2. Personality
3. Appearance
4. Speaking ability
5. Education and family
6. Intelligence

Source: Adapted from King (1997).
Figure 11.4 The first and second levels of agenda setting, plus the “compelling arguments” hypothesis.
Agenda Setting in Media

**Foundation**

The Media Agenda is the set of issues addressed by media sources and the public agenda which are issues the public consider important (Miller, 2005). Agenda-setting theory was introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their groundbreaking study of the role of the media in 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The theory explains the correlation between the rate at which media cover a story and the extent that people think that this story is important. This correlation has been shown to occur repeatedly.
Agenda Setting in Media

**Foundation**

In the dissatisfaction of the magic bullet theory, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw introduced agenda-setting theory in the Public Opinion Quarterly. The theory was derived from their study that took place in Chapel Hill, NC, where the researchers surveyed 100 undecided voters during the 1968 presidential campaign on what they thought were key issues and measured that against the actual media content. The ranking of issues was almost identical. The conclusions matched their hypothesis: The mass media positioned the agenda for public opinion by emphasizing specific topics (Hamm, 1998). Subsequent research on agenda-setting theory provided evidence for the cause-and-effect chain of influence being debated by critics in the field. One particular study made leaps to prove the cause-effect relationship. The study was conducted by Yale researchers, Shanto Iyengar, Mark Peters, and Donald Kinder. The researchers had three groups of subjects fill out questionnaires about their own concerns and then each group watched different evening news programs, each of which emphasized a different issue. After watching the news for four days, the subjects again filled out questionnaires and the issues that they rated as most important matched the issues they viewed on the evening news (Griffin, 2005). The study demonstrated a cause-and-effect relationship between media agenda and public agenda. Since the theory’s conception, more than 350 studies have been performed to test the theory. The theory has evolved beyond the media’s influence on the public’s perceptions of issue salience to political candidates and corporate reputation (Carroll & McCombs, 2003).
Agenda Setting in Media

**Functions of Theory**

- The agenda-setting function has multiple components
- 1. Media Agenda - issues discussed in the media (newspapers, television, radio)
- 2. Public Agenda - issues discussed and personally relevant to members of the public
- 3. Policy Agenda - issues that policy makers consider important (legislators)
- 4. Corporate Agenda - issues that big business and corporations consider important (corporate)

These four agendas are interrelated. Two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) The press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.
Agenda Setting in Media

- **Characteristics**
  - Characteristics: research has focused on characteristics of audience, the issues, and the media that might predict variations in the agenda setting effect.
  - Need for Orientation: Research done by Weaver in 1977 suggested that individuals vary on their need for orientation. Need for orientation is a combination of the individual’s interest in the topic and uncertainty about the issue. The higher levels of interest and uncertainty produce higher levels of need for orientation. So the individual would be considerably likely to be influenced by the media stories (psychological aspect of theory) (Miller, 2005).

- **Issue Obtrusiveness**: Research performed by Zucker (1978) suggested that an issue is obtrusive if most members of the public have had direct contact with it, and less obtrusive if audience members have not had direct experience. This means that agenda setting results should be strongest for unobtrusive issues because audience members must rely on media for information on these topics (Miller, 2005).
Agenda Setting in Media

- **Various Levels of Agenda Setting**
  - First-level agenda setting: This is the level that is most traditionally studied by researchers. In this level, the media use objects or issues to influence the public. In this level, the media suggest what the public should think about (amount of coverage).
  - Second-level agenda setting: In this level, the media focuses on the characteristics of the objects or issues. In this level, the media suggest how the people should think about the issue. There are two types of attributes: cognitive (substantative, or topics) and affective (evaluative, or positive, negative, neutral).
  - Intermedia agenda setting (媒介的议程设置)

(Coleman and Banning 2006; Lee 2005; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).
Agenda Setting in Media

- **Important Concepts**

- **Gatekeeping** -- Control over the selection of content discussed in the media; what the public know and care about at any given time is mostly a product of media gatekeeping.

- **Priming** -- Effects of particular, prior context on retrieval and interpretation of information. The media's content will provide a lot of time and space to certain issues, making these issues more accessible and vivid in the public's mind (Miller, 2005).

- **Framing** -- Framing is a process of selective control over media content or public communication. Framing defines how a certain piece of media content is packaged so it will influence particular interpretations. This is accomplished through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. This is central to second-level agenda setting.
Agenda Setting in Media

Usage of Theory

- political advertising
- political campaigns and debates
- business news and corporate reputation (Carroll & McCombs, 2003)
- business influence on federal policy (Berger, 2001)
- legal systems, trials (Ramsey & McGuire, 2000)
- role of groups, audience control, public opinion
- public relations (Carroll & McCombs, 2003)
Agenda Setting in Media

**Strengths of Theory**

- It has explanatory power because it explains why most people prioritize the same issues as important.
- It has predictive power because it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they will feel the same issues are important.
- It can be proven false. If people aren’t exposed to the same media, they won’t feel the same issues are important.
- Its meta-theoretical assumptions are balanced on the scientific side.
- It lays groundwork for further research.
- It has organizing power because it helps organize existing knowledge of media effects.
Agenda Setting in Media

**Usage of Theory**

- political advertising
- political campaigns and debates
- business news and corporate reputation (Carroll & McCombs, 2003)
- business influence on federal policy (Berger, 2001)
- legal systems, trials (Ramsey & McGuire, 2000)
- role of groups, audience control, public opinion
- public relations (Carroll & McCombs, 2003)
Agenda Setting in Media

Limitations

- Media users may not be as ideal as the theory assumes. People may not be well-informed, deeply engaged in public affairs, thoughtful and skeptical. Instead, they may pay only casual and intermittent attention to public affairs and remain ignorant of the details.
- For people who have made up their minds, the effect is weakened.
- News media cannot create or conceal problems, they may only alter the awareness, priorities and salience people attached to a set of problems.
- Research has largely been inconclusive in establishing a causal relationship between public salience and media coverage.
Agenda Setting in Media

Core Assumptions and Statements
Core: Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media (for example on political communication systems).
Statement: Bernard Cohen (1963) stated: “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.”