CANDIDATE IMAGES IN SPANISH ELECTIONS: SECOND-LEVEL AGENDA-SETTING EFFECTS

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Traditional agenda-setting theory is about the influence of mass media on the public's focus of attention, who and what people are thinking about. The expanded theory of agenda setting tested here during the 1995 regional and municipal elections in Spain elaborates the influence of the mass media on how people think about persons and topics in the news. Combining content analysis and survey data, this study documents the influence of newspapers, TV news, and both TV and newspaper political advertising on Spanish voters' images of political candidates.

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        Walter Lippmann's enduring classic *Public Opinion* begins with a chapter titled "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads."[1] His eloquently argued thesis is that the news media are a primary source of the pictures in our heads about the vast external world of public affairs that is "out of reach, out of sight, out of mind."[2] Lippmann's intellectual offspring, agenda setting, is a detailed social science theory about the *transfer of salience* of the elements in the mass media's pictures of the world to the elements in the pictures in our heads. The core theoretical idea is that elements prominent in the media picture become prominent in the audience's picture. In the words of the agenda-setting metaphor, this is a causal assertion that the priorities of the media agenda influence the priorities of the public agenda.
        Over time, elements emphasized on the media agenda come to be regarded as important on the public agenda.[3] Theoretically, these agendas could be composed of any set of elements. In practice, virtually all of the hundreds of studies to date have examined an agenda composed of public issues.[4] For these studies, the core hypothesis is that the degree of emphasis placed on issues in the news influences the priority accorded these issues by the public. "Although agenda setting is concerned with the salience of issues rather than the distribution of pro and con opinions, which has been the traditional focus of public opinion research, the core domain is the same – the public issues of the moment. Walter Lippmann's quest in *Public Opinion* to link the world outside to the pictures in our heads via the news media was brought to quantitative, empirical fruition by agenda setting research."[5]
        When we consider the key term of this theoretical metaphor, the agenda, in totally abstract terms, the potential for expanding beyond an agenda of issues becomes clear. In the majority of studies to date, the unit of analysis on each agenda is an *object*, a public issue. However, public issues are not the only objects that can be studied from the agenda-setting perspective. Communication is a process. It can be about any set of objects – or even

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a single object – competing for attention among communicators and audiences.

Beyond the agenda of objects there also is another level of analysis to consider. Each of these objects has numerous *attributes*, those characteristics and properties that fill out the picture of each object. Just as objects vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object. Both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of attributes for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles. An important part of the news agenda and its set of objects are the perspectives and frames that journalists and, subsequently, members of the public employ to think about and talk about each object. These perspectives and frames draw attention to certain attributes and away from others.

One of the strengths of agenda-setting theory that has prompted its continuing growth has been its compatibility and complementarity with a variety of other social science concepts and theories, including gatekeeping, status conferral, and the spiral of silence. Discussion of a second level of agenda setting links the theory to another prominent contemporary concept, *framing*.

James Tankard et al. describe a media frame as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of *selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration*."[6] Specifically in terms of salience, Robert Entman said: "To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described."[7] To paraphrase Entman in the language of the second level of agenda setting, framing is the selection of a small number of attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed. In the context of election campaigns, which is the focus of attention in the new research reported here, Patterson has documented the increasing tendency of the American news media to frame political candidates in negative terms.[8] Of course, people also frame objects, placing varying degrees of emphasis on the attributes of these objects when they are thought about or talked about.

How news frames impact the public agenda is the emerging second level of agenda setting. The first level of agenda setting is, of course, the transmission of object salience. The second level of agenda setting is the transmission of attribute salience. As this new research frontier broadens our perspective on the agenda-setting role of the news media, Bernard Cohen's famous dictum about media influence must be revised. In a succinct summary statement that separated agenda setting from earlier research on the effects of mass communication, Cohen noted that while the media may not tell us *what to think*, the media are stunningly successful in telling us what to think *about*.[9] Explicit attention to the second level of agenda setting further suggests that the media also tell us *how to think* about some objects.

A quarter century of agenda-setting research has demonstrated the centrality of news coverage to the focus of public opinion, the agenda of issues considered paramount by the public. The expanded version of agenda setting presented here, which is grounded in an agenda of attributes defining the very way we perceive and think about public issues, political candidates or other topics in the news, assigns the media an even more powerful role in the political process. Understanding the dynamics of agenda setting is central to understanding the dynamics of elections in contemporary democ-

racies around the world.[10] This is a study of these election dynamics in local Spanish elections.

Although the popular image of science rests on dramatic discoveries, most social science research is better described as a continuing process in which the *implicit* gradually becomes *explicit*. This process of evolution is well illustrated by the emerging elaboration of the second level of agenda setting in a series of recent summary articles,[11] an elaboration that builds upon early generalizations about the wide range of agenda-setting effects.[12] Explicit focus on this idea of second-level agenda-setting effects has prompted a new look at the accumulated research literature, including several studies from the earliest years of agenda-setting research.

Two studies from the 1976 U.S. presidential election concisely illustrate the second level of agenda setting. Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal's[13] panel study of the 1976 presidential election found a striking degree of correspondence between the agenda of attributes in the *Chicago Tribune* and the agenda of attributes in Illinois voters' descriptions of Jimmy Carter and Jerry Ford. The median value of the cross-lagged Spearman's rho correlations between the media agenda and the subsequent public agenda was +.70. In the 1976 presidential primaries, Becker and McCombs[14] found considerable correspondence between the agenda of attributes in *Newsweek* and the agenda of attributes in New York Democrats' descriptions of the contenders for their party's presidential nomination. Especially compelling in this evidence is that the Spearman's rho correlations between the two agendas increased from +.64 in mid-February to +.83 in late March.

Neither of these studies of candidate images during the 1976 presidential election were originally conceptualized in terms of a second level of agenda setting. But they fit that conceptualization and offer significant evidence that the news media can influence the agenda of attributes that define the pictures of candidates in voters' minds.

Two other studies extend issue salience to the second level by examining the framing of issues. Benton and Frazier[15] presented a detailed analysis of a recurring major issue, the economy. Agenda-setting effects were found for newspapers, but not TV news, for two sets of attributes: the specific problems, causes, and proposed solutions associated with the general topic of the economy (Pearson's $r = +.81$); and the pro and con rationales for economic solutions (Pearson's $r = +.68$). Cohen[16] studied another complex issue in depth, examining six facets of a local environmental issue in Indiana. He found a strong level of correspondence (Spearman's rho $= +.71$) between the picture in people's minds and local newspaper coverage about the development of a large, man-made lake.

Although all four of these studies offer compelling evidence for significant agenda-setting effects on an agenda of attributes, they were not originally conceptualized as second-level agenda setting. But considerable new research has been launched and is beginning to appear. Takeshita and Mikami[17] found both first- and second-level agenda-setting effects among voters in the 1993 Japanese general election. The salience of electoral reform, the dominant issue in the news coverage of the election, increased with exposure to both newspapers and television news. Furthermore, at the second level, the salience of structural reforms, which were emphasized in the news coverage, increased with exposure to both newspapers and television news while the salience of regulatory reform, which was low on the media agenda, showed no correlation with level of exposure to the news.

In a setting akin to this study from Spain, King[18] examined the influence of three major newspapers on voters' images of the three candidates for mayor of Taipei in 1994. All six Spearman's rho correlations of the voters' images with the agenda of attributes in two major newspapers were significant. These six significant correlations (3 candidates x 2 newspapers) ranged from +.59 to +.75. The median value was +.68. None of the correlations with the smaller opposition newspaper were significant.

Outside the election tradition of agenda setting, Ghanem and Evatt[19] found that public concern among Texans about crime over a three-year period was strongly linked (Spearman's rho = +.70) to the pattern of news coverage in the state's major newspapers. There also was evidence that specific frames in the crime coverage prompted public concern about crime. For example, news stories depicting psychologically close situations – crimes occurring locally or situations in which the average person might feel endangered – produced effects equivalent in strength to traditional first-level agenda-setting effects based on total news coverage of crime.

Second-Level Hypotheses

The present study, conducted in the northern province of Navarra during the 1995 Spanish regional and municipal elections, focused directly on the second level of agenda setting, specifically the relationship between the images of the candidates presented in the mass media and the images of the candidates among voters in Pamplona, the capital city of Navarra. Just as a painter draws colors and forms from reality to create a representation that is no longer reality itself, but an *image* of it, the news media select attributes of candidates to construct images appropriate to news stories about the election while the political parties select attributes of the candidates to construct images in their political advertising aimed at winning votes.

These constructed images are a major source of learning about the candidates among voters, which is to say that the agenda-setting process at the second level is a key aspect of the electoral process. This new research on second-level agenda-setting effects is needed to broaden our understanding of the political process in modern democracies. It shows that the role played by the media is not restrained to the setting of social priorities (a first-level agenda of issues), but extends as well to the selection of the specific features (or attributes) of the candidates from which voters will shape their own opinions about those candidates. The media may not dictate to voters what their opinion will be about political candidates, but they may well direct, guide, or orient the content of what the public deems worthy of saying about them to a significant degree.

The attributes forming the images of the candidates can be analyzed in terms of both a substantive dimension and an affective dimension. Specifically in terms of second-level agenda-setting effects, this study hypothesized:

> The agenda of substantive attributes of candidates (e.g., descriptions of their personality, their stands on issues, etc.) presented in the mass media influences the agenda of substantive attributes defining the images of the candidates among voters.

> The agenda of affective attributes of candidates (e.g., positive, negative, and neutral descriptions) presented in the mass media influences the agenda of affective attributes defining the images of the candidates among voters.

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No *genre* hypothesis is offered here about the relative influence of the news media and political advertising, but this question will be pursued in the analysis. Similarly, no *medium of communication* hypothesis is offered about the relative influence of newspapers and television news or the relative influence of the TV ads and the newspaper advertising. Again, this question will be pursued in the analysis.

Data Collection

To test these hypotheses, we examined the images of the candidates for mayor of Pamplona and leader of the Navarra parliament put forward by the five major political parties: UPN (Union of the Navarran People, which represents the right wing); CDN (Convergence of Navarran Democrats, a new political party which had just split off from UPN); PSN (Socialist Party of Navarra, an affiliate of PSOE, the Spanish Workers Socialist Party of former Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez); IU (the United Left, a coalition of the Spanish Communist Party and other minor left wing organizations, such as the Party of the Greens); and HB (Herri Batasuna, a Basque nationalist party with an extreme left-wing ideology).

Data on the candidates' images from a voter survey and from a content analysis of the mass media were organized according to two dimensions: (1) a substantive dimension defined by three categories, *the candidates' ideology and positions on public issues, their qualifications and experience*, and *their personal characteristics and personality*; and (2) an affective dimension where the candidates were described in *positive, negative, or neutral* terms.

Election day was 28 May 1995 and immediately afterward, 1-5 June, a telephone survey was conducted among voters in the city of Pamplona. A series of open-ended questions elicited descriptions for each of the five parties' candidates for mayor and leader of parliament: *"Imagine that you had a friend who didn't know anything about the candidates* (for the Parliament or for mayor). *What would you tell your friend about...* (the name of each candidate for the Parliament or for mayor)?" Interviews lasting around ten minutes were completed with 299 randomly selected Pamplona voters. The reponse rate for the survey was 60.8%. The balance, 39.2%, consists of refusals and persons not at home.[20]

To determine the images of the candidates presented by the mass media, a content analysis examined the two local daily newspapers, *Diario de Navarra* and *Diario de Noticias*, and the major regional television news program, *Telenavarra*, which is a program of TV 1, one of the two channels of Spanish national television. The content analysis also examined political advertising in the newspapers and on TV. Identical coding procedures were used for the news and political advertising content of the newspapers and television. As the campaign period was quite short, only fifteen days in all, followed by a "day of reflection" and then election day, the content analysis is based on all the relevant newspaper and television content from 12 May to 26 May. By positioning the voter survey after the full fifteen-day campaign period, the study can examine the full impact of the news and advertising in the mass media during this short campaign period.

Ten coders carried out the content analysis of the data. They were all familiar with the current political environment in Navarra, but none of them is a member, activist, or supporter of a specific political party or political position. Every news story appearing in the media under study during the entire campaign period whose headline made either a direct or indirect

reference to the candidates or the campaign was examined. All the political ads on TV and in the newspapers also were examined. The unit of analysis was the individual statement about the candidate.

The coders were familiar with the tone and language used by the voters in their descriptions of the candidates. Prior to the content analysis, each coder had reviewed all of the survey responses to the questions about the candidates' images. Each coder was provided with a list of possible expressions to be found in the description of each candidate, which had been compiled from analysis of the survey responses and a more general, abstract discussion of candidate images prior to any analysis of the data. This list contained detailed instructions on how to codifiy these expressions in terms of the three categories of the substantive dimension and the three categories of the affective dimension.

The substantive dimension referred to:

(1) *Ideology and issue positions.* This category includes all statements in which candidates were portrayed as "left-wing," "right-wing," or "center," and all the statements expressing the position of candidates on specific issues.

(2) *Qualifications and experience.* This category includes all statements about the competency of the candidates for office, their previous experience in government posts, and biographical details of the candidates.

(3) *Personality.* This category includes all personal traits and features of the character of the candidates, including their moral standing, their charisma, their natural intelligence, their courage, ambition, independence, and so on.

All of these statements also were codified in terms of positive, neutral, or negative affect. Taking into account the difficulty of avoiding biases when undertaking the coding of affective attributes, we prepared a detailed set of instructions for this part of the content analysis. The first step was to define all those statements that can bluntly be regarded as positive or negative by the average person: for example, "honest" vs. "corrupt," or "supporter of the terrorists." Next were added some commonly used pejorative words. For example, in Spain "derechona" is a negative way of referring to the "derecha" (right-wing) and "sociata" carries a negative nuance about the socialists.

The coding also paid attention to the meaning of statements in accordance with their context. For example, the expression "he is a leftist" said by a political adversary has a negative meaning, while it can be considered neutral when found in factual information. Similarly, the expression "he is right-wing" abaout a candidate who has made a point of being "center" would be regarded as negative.

Coders were instructed not to interpret any possible underlying meaning in the statements found in the media. Any adjective or expression referring to a candidate that would not explicitly favor or harm the candidate was coded as neutral.

A trial run to measure the degree of correspondence among the coders in their analysis of the mass media material yielded a median Pearson's r of +.91.

Comparisons of the distributions of these substantive and affective attributes in the various mass media messages with the voters' survey responses will reveal how much the style of the voters' descriptions follows the style of the mass media in describing political candidates. Two sets of comparisons were carried out for each hypothesis, one set based on the images of the parliamentary candidates, the other based on images of the candidates for mayor. For the first hypothesis about the influence of the media agenda of substantive attributes on the public, each of these sets consisted of five comparisons: images among the public compared with (1) the television political ads, (2) political advertising in the newspaper, (3) TV news, and (4-5) news stories in two Pamplona newspapers.

For the second hypothesis about the influence of the media agenda of affective attributes on the public, each of the sets consisted of three comparisons: images among the public compared with (1) TV news and (2-3) news stories in two Pamplona newspapers. Political advertising was not included because there was no negative advertising about the candidates.

Correlation statistics will be calculated for each of the sixteen comparisons just described as tests of the two hypotheses. Because this is one of the first studies to explore second-level agenda-setting effects, the analyses here are limited to establishing the existence of significant correlations between the content of the mass media during the formal election campaign and the images held by voters at the end of the campaign. Obviously, this is not the total array of evidence needed to establish causality, but the existence of significant correlations between the media and public agendas of attributes is a necessary condition for the survival of the theory. Seeking corroboratory evidence of this necessary condition is the research strategy here. In the absence of any correlations, the theory would be falsified and rejected. The presence of significant correlations will lay the foundation for future research with more complex research designs.

Substantive and Affective Agendas

By way of preface, on every mass media agenda examined in the content analysis and on the public agenda determined by the voter survey, mentions of the candidates for the Navarra parliament are far more numerous than mentions of the candidates for mayor of Pamplona. In Table 1, the ratios favoring the parliamentary candidates over the mayoral candidates range from a low of 3 to 1 in television news to a high of 15 to 1 in the TV political ads. On the public agenda, the ratio is only about 1.5 to 1, but still the difference is substantial.

The first two agendas listed in Table 1 are those controlled by the parties themselves, the ads placed on television and the paid political ads run in the newspapers. In all of these ads the parties concentrated overwhelmingly on the parliamentary candidates. Only 6% of the ads in both schedules were about the mayoral candidates. Even when the ads mentioning candidates for both offices (23.8% of the newspaper ads, but none of the TV ads) are taken into account, less than a third of the party-produced newspaper ads focused on the race for mayor.

The ratios of attention are smaller on the agendas constructed by journalists, both for TV news and newspapers, but again the gap in attention is considerable, especially in the newspapers. This differential level of attention also is reflected on the public agenda, albeit to a lesser degree. The voter survey asked specifically about each of the five candidates for leader of

TABLE 1
Mentions of the Candidates for Parliament and Mayor
by the Media and Pamplona Voters

Agenda	Parliament	Mayor	Both
	%	%	%
TV Advertising (n=3058)	93.9	6.1	
Newspaper Advertising (n=104)	69.3	6.8	23.9
TV News (n=12,957)	76.8	23.2	
Newspaper Stories (n=354)	85.3	14.7	
Voter Survey (n=2054)	58.2	41.8	

Note: The number of mentions for the TV ads and news stories is measured by the number of seconds devoted to descriptions of the candidates. Due to the extreme variability of the formats for the print ads and news stories, the number of mentions is based on the number of ads or news stories in which the candidates were mentioned.   For the voters, the number of mentions is based on the total number of descriptive statements made by respondents about the candidates.

parliament and each of the five candidates for mayor. Under this methodical questioning, 58.2% of all the responses are reasonably detailed descriptions of the parliamentary candidates. Only 41.8% of all the candidates descriptions are about the mayoral candidates. This is a higher percentage of mentions among the public than on any of the mass media agendas, most likely prompted by the very design of the questionnaire that gave equal weight to the candidates for both offices. Respondents may have felt compelled to say something about the mayoral candidates, but, nevertheless, like the mass media, they had less to say.

Turning to the specific style of these descriptions of the candidates, Table 2 displays the substantive attribute agendas for both the parliamentary and mayoral candidates in the various mass media and among Pamplona voters. Although the relative emphasis on qualifications, personality, and ideology differs substantially across the agendas, there are two distinct patterns.

One is a *medium of communication* pattern. The television advertising and television news stories are very similar in their heavy emphasis on the candidates' qualifications. This emphasis is true for both parliamentary and mayoral candidates. The newspapers differ from television in their emphasis, but within the newspapers both the advertising and the news stories are alike in their emphasis on ideology. This is true for both the parliamentary and mayoral candidates.

This consistency across the two genres, news and advertising, within a medium, but the difference between the two media, television and newspapers, means that there is no *genre* pattern. The substantive attribute agendas of television and newspaper advertising are different.   The substantive attribute agendas of newspaper and television journalism are different.

There also is a *voter* pattern in Table 2. The voters are highly consistent in the kinds of attributes emphasized in their descriptions of the parliamentary and mayoral candidates. They also differ substantially from all the mass media in their emphasis on personality.

TABLE 2

Emphasis on the Substantive Attributes of the Candidates for Parliament and Mayor by the Various Mass Media and Pamplona Voters

	Qualifications %	Personality %	Ideology %
TV Advertising			
Parliament (n=2,871)	55.3	0.1	44.5
Mayor (n=187)	98.4	1.6	
Newspaper Advertising			
Parliament (n=94)	41.5	9.6	48.9
Mayor (n=29)	20.7	31.0	48.3
TV News			
Parliament (n=8,616)	50.6	30.2	19.2
Mayor (n=2,601)	53.1	40.6	6.4
Newspaper Stories			
Parliament (n=302)	27.2	32.1	40.7
Mayor (n=52)	28.8	26.9	44.2
Pamplona Voters			
Parliament (n=1,195)	19.7	68.0	12.3
Mayor (n=859)	24.9	60.4	14.7

Note: The number of mentions for the TV ads and news stories is measured by the number of seconds devoted to substantive descriptions of the candidates. Due to the extreme variability of the formats for the print ads and news stories, the number of mentions is based on the number of ads or news stories in which substantive attributes of the candidates were mentioned.

Shifting to the affective dimension of the descriptions of the candidates, Table 3 shows that positive descriptions prevailed over negative descriptions in all the news coverage. This is especially the situation in television news. Although positive outweighs negative in the newspaper as well, more than a third of the candidate descriptions in newspaper stories were negative because the newspaper stories allowed the candidates to speak about each other. This negative attention primarily centered on the two conservative parties, UPN and CDN, which had recently split off from the UPN. These were also the parties most frequently mentioned in the newspaper, accounting for nearly three-fourths of the total coverage. For UPN, 45.8% of the coverage was negative. For CDN, 43.4% of the coverage was negative. For the other eight parties combined, about 10.0% of the coverage was negative. As previously noted, there were no negative descriptions in the political ads, and they are omitted from the table. There also is a high degree of consistency within each news medium in the way that parliamentary and mayoral candidates were described.

The relatively low percentage of negative information about candidates, compared to what could be expected in other democracies such as the United States or Great Britain, may well be due to the absence in the relatively young Spanish democracy of a tradition that would include negative political advertising. The coverage of the political campaign by the state-run TV channel adheres to an agreement of neutrality taken by all the political

TABLE 3
Emphasis on the Affective Attributes of the Candidates for Parliament and Mayor by the Various Mass Media and Pamplona Voters

	Positive %	Neutral %	Negative %
TV News			
Parliament (n=8,616)	71.2	27.5	1.3
Mayor (n=2,601)	98.2	1.8	
Newspaper Stories			
Parliament (n=302)	49.7	7.0	43.4
Mayor (n=52)	42.3	26.9	30.8
Pamplona Voters			
Parliament (n=1,195)	46.1	5.2	48.7
Mayor (n=859)	44.7	10.8	44.5

Note: The number of mentions for the TV news stories is measured by the number of seconds devoted to affective descriptions of the candidates. For the newspaper stories, the number of mentions is based on the number of stories in which affective attributes of the candidates were mentioned.

parties. Negative statements conveyed by the media typically originate in the political debate among the candidates as they criticize their rivals.

Finding that the news media emphasized the positive suggests a *genre* pattern for journalism. But emphasis on the striking differences between television news and newspaper stories in the overall distribution of positive and negative descriptions suggests a *medium of communication* pattern.

Table 3 also describes the voters' agendas of affective attributes for the parliamentary and mayoral candidates. The tone of voters' descriptions was very evenly balanced between positive and negative, and, repeating the pattern found for substantive attributes, Pamplona voters' descriptions of the parliamentary and mayoral candidates were highly similar. The style of the voters' descriptions most closely resembles the style of the newspaper stories about the parliamentary candidates.

Matching the Agendas

To test the hypothesized influence of the news media on how the public pictures the parliamentary and mayoral candidates, the analysis pursued two paths: the correspondence of various news and political advertising agendas with voters' substantive descriptions of the candidates; and the correspondence of various news agendas with voters' affective descriptions of the candidates. Because this study explores largely uncharted waters and because the small number of categories for the descriptions constrains the size of the empirical correlations, the level of significance for the correlations was set at .10 or less. Three levels of significance are noted in the data reported in Table 4: <.10, < .05 and <.01.

There is evidence of seven second-level agenda setting effects in Table 4. In support of the two hypotheses, three of these involve substantive descriptions; and four, affective descriptions. Furthermore, there is a strong interaction between the medium of communication and the office sought by the candidates.

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TABLE 4

Correlations between Various Media Attribute Agendas and Pamplona Voters' Descriptions of the Candidates for Parliament and Mayor

Media Substantive Agendas	Parliament	Mayor
TV Advertising	- .33	- .02
Newspaper Advertising	+ .42 *	- .29
TV News	+ .12	+ .41 *
News Stories		
Diario de Navarra	+ .57 **	- .05
Diario de Noticias	+ .27	+ .18
Media Affective Agendas		
TV News	+ .18	+ .59 **
News Stories		
Diario de Navarra	+ .66 ***	+ .34
Diario de Noticias	+ .88 ***	+ .44 *

* < .10   ** < .05   *** < .01

Specifically, all four of the significant matches with the voters' images of the parliamentary candidates are with print-based news or advertising. Across the substantive and affective dimensions, four of the five correlations between voters' images of the parliamentary candidates and these print media agendas are significant. Only one of the matches between the voters' images of the mayoral candidates and any print agenda is significant. On the affective dimension the match between *Diario de Noticias* and voters' mayoral images is significant, but even here the match with television news is stronger +.59 vs. +.44). For the mayoral candidates, the other two significant matches are with television news. One involves the substantive level; the other, the affective level. None of the correlations between voters' images of the parliamentary candidates and any television agenda is significant.

In sum, it is print x parliamentary candidates (all four significant correlations for the parliamentary candidates involve print) and TV x mayoral candidates (two of the three significant correlations for mayoral candidates involve TV). Although this interaction was not anticipated in the original statement of the hypotheses, it is presaged at several points in the descriptive tables. The strongest hint of this outcome is found in Table 3 where the style of the voters' affective descriptions of the parliamentary candidates very closely resembles the style of the newspaper stories. Also recall that Table 1 shows that TV news paid more attention to the lesser known mayoral candidates than did the newspaper advertising or news coverage of the election.

The presence of this interaction does offer an answer to the question raised immediately after the statement of the hypotheses about a *medium of communication* pattern. At the same time, it renders moot the question raised there about *genre* differences. Here it is the medium of communication, television or newspapers, not the genre of expression, news or advertising, which makes a significant difference in the outcomes. Furthermore, the overall influence of the newspaper is greater than the influence of television.

TABLE 5

Agreement with the Statement that the Regional Elections Are a "Trial Run" for the Upcoming National Elections by Exposure to Political Information in the Newspaper and on Television

Level of Exposure:	Agree completely/up to a point %	Disagree somewhat/completely %
Newspapers		
All or Most (*n* = 133)	61.7	38.3
Some or None (*n* = 78)	48.7	51.3

Chi square = 3.35, 1 d.f., *p*=.067

Level of Exposure:

Television		
All or Most (*n* = 119)	57.1	42.9
Some or None (*n* = 75)	58.7	41.3

Chi square: n.s.

For both the substantive dimension and the affective dimension, the number of significant newspaper correlations exceed the number of significant TV correlations, and for both dimensions the newspaper correlations are stronger than the TV correlations.

Beyond these patterns based on medium of communication, there is an intriguing difference in the level of support for the two hypotheses. There is more evidence of second-level agenda-setting effects on the affective dimension than on the substantive dimension. This is apparent both in the magnitude of the correlations and in the proportion of significant correlations (a third of those concerning the substantive dimension and two-thirds of those concerning the affective dimension).

Framing Effects

Another possibility of exploring second-level agenda-setting effects arose from the fact that much of the news coverage on the 1995 regional elections in Spain, especially in the newspapers, framed these elections as a "trial run" for the national elections to be held the next year. To test for this second-level agenda-setting effect, the survey asked voters: *Some people have said that these elections are a trial run for the coming general election. I'd like to know whether you: (a) agree completely; (b) agree up to a point; (c) do not really agree; (d) completely disagree.*

Table 5 details a significant relationship between voters' views on the 1995 regional elections as a "trial run" for the upcoming national election and their exposure to political information in the newspaper. Six out of 10 persons who read most or all of the political coverage in the newspaper agreed, at least up to a point, with the media's framing of the election. Less than half of those who read only some or none of the political coverage in the newspaper accepted this framing of the regional elections. Parallel analysis

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of the relationship between exposure to political information on television and framing of the regional elections failed to find a significant relationship.

This link between levels of exposure and agreement with the media's framing of political affairs replicates, at least in a preliminary way for newspapers, the findings reviewed earlier of Takeshita and Mikami in the 1993 Japanese general election. The failure to find a significant TV effect in Pamplona is not totally surprising. In Table 4 the correlations for newspapers are more numerous and generally stronger than those for television.

Conclusion

A vast accumulation of research during the past twenty-five years has confirmed the influence of news coverage on the salience of issues and other topics on the public agenda, an influence now called the first level of agenda setting. Some of these studies, as well as early theoretical speculation, also suggested the possibility of widening the scope of agenda-setting theory to include the transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda of the attributes and frames that describe topics on the agenda. Recent theoretical focus on attributes and frames has elaborated the second level of agenda setting. This study of the 1995 regional and municipal elections in Spain is an important opening gambit in the empirical explication of these second-level agenda-setting effects.

Although a number of studies on second-level agenda-setting effects have been carried out in the past two years,[21] this is one of the few to appear to date in an English-language publication. Interestingly, among those published are a study of electoral reform in Japan and a study of mayoral candidate images in Taiwan. With the publication of this study from Spain, there is now a foundation of diverse international evidence supporting the expanded version of agenda-setting theory.

Of course, traditional agenda-setting theory and the transfer of issue salience from the media to the public has been documented in numerous countries in Asia, Europe, and North America. Despite the major cultural differences in their settings, these widespread geographic replications at both the first and second levels of agenda setting appear to be grounded in the similarities of their political and media systems. All the research sites are reasonably open democratic political systems with reasonably unfettered news media. Testing the theory in different countries and diverse cultures is important for identifying the common ground in communication research. Theories should be general, though this is not equivalent to saying that they are independent of context. The consistent findings of numerous studies in many places at many points in time establishes the general plausibility of the agenda-setting theory, whereas differences in the particulars of the findings are dependent on media-system, political culture, and social system variables.[22]

Significant correspondence was found between various news and political advertising agendas and the pictures of the parliamentary and mayoral candidates in Spanish voters' minds. The interaction found here between media and political office (print x parliament and TV x mayor) may well be particular to this election or to the prevailing political and media situation in Pamplona, Spain. But two general findings demand attention. First, there was evidence of second-level agenda-setting effects on both the substantive and affective dimensions of voters' candidate descriptions. This invites further inquiry into the transfer of attribute salience from the media agenda to the public agenda. Second, it is intriguing that the strongest effects

are on the affective dimension. Perhaps these affective correlations, especially the +.88 between *Diario de Noticias'* coverage and voters' affective descriptions of the parliamentary candidates, are indicative only of a high degree of selective exposure, a point to be pursued in subsequent research. But there is a special irony here if these correlations do measure agenda setting. It was the failure of early communication research to find effects on attitudes and opinions that stimulated research on cognitive outcomes of media exposure, such as the salience of public issues in agenda-setting research. We may have returned to this older affective venue, but with new theoretical guidance on when such effects on attitudes and opinions might occur.

This examination of two broad sets of attributes, the substantive and the affective, opens a window of opportunity for research on the second level of agenda setting that could parallel what has already been achieved at the first level. Formal tests of the hypotheses about these two dimensions at the second level are complemented here with the exploratory analysis of the framing of the 1995 election as a "trial run" for the 1996 general election. Again, there was correspondence between the newspaper agenda and how the public thinks about politics.

Both the expanded theory of agenda setting encompassing the transfer of attribute salience and the empirical findings generated in this study underscore the importance of explicating the public's response to political coverage in the mass media. Lippmann's thesis about the influence of the news media on the pictures in our heads takes on a deeper political meaning, and Bernard Cohen's famous summary statement must be expanded to state that the news media not only tell us what to think about, they also tell us how to think about it.

NOTES

1. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

2. Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, 29.

3. Maxwell McCombs, "News Influence on Our Pictures of the World," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, ed. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994), 1-16.

4. Everett Rogers, James Dearing, and Dorine Bregman, "The Anatomy of Agenda Setting Research," *Journal of Communication* 43 (spring 1993): 68-84.

5. Maxwell McCombs, "Explorers and Surveyors: Expanding Strategies for Agenda-Setting Research," *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (winter 1992): 815.

6. James Tankard, Laura Hendrickson, Jackie Silberman, Kriss Bliss, and Salma Ghanem, "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement" (paper presented at the annual meeting of AEJMC, Boston, 1991), 3, emphasis added.

7. Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43 (summer 1993): 52, italics in original.

8. Thomas Patterson, *Out of Order* (New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1994).

9. Bernard Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 13.

10. Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw, and David Weaver, eds., *Communication and Democracy* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997).

11. Maxwell McCombs, "The Future Agenda for Agenda Setting Re-

search," *Journal of Mass Communication Studies* 45 (July 1994): 171-81 (Japan); Maxwell McCombs and Dixie Evatt, "Los Temas y los Aspectos: Explorando una Nueva Dimension de la Agenda Setting," *Comunicacion y Sociedad* 8 (1, 1995): 7-32 (Spain); Maxwell McCombs and Tamara Bell, "The Agenda Setting Role of Mass Communication" in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Michael Salwen and Donald Stacks (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996).

12. Maxwell McCombs and Henry Schulte, "Expanding the Domain of the Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Communication" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the World Association for Public Opinion Research, Montreaux, Switzerland, 1975); Maxwell McCombs and Lynne Masel-Walters, "Agenda-Setting: A New Perspective on Mass Communication," *Mass Comm Review* 3 (spring 1976): 3-7.

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14. Lee Becker and Maxwell McCombs, "The Role of the Press in Determining Voter Reactions to Presidential Primaries," *Human Communication Research* 4 (summer 1978): 301-307.

15. Marc Benton and P. Jean Frazier, "The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media at Three Levels of Information Holding," *Communication Research* 3 (July 1976): 261-74.

16. David Cohen, "A Report on a Non-election Agenda Setting Study" (paper presented to the annual meeting of AEJMC, Ottawa, Canada, 1975).

17. Toshio Takeshita and Shunji Mikami, "How Did Mass Media Influence the Voters' Choice in the 1993 General Election in Japan?: A Study of Agenda Setting," *Keio Communication Review* 17 (1995): 27-41.

18. Pu-tsung King, "The Press, Candidate Images, and Voter Perceptions" in *Communication and Democracy*, ed. McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 29-40.

19. Salma Ghanem and Dixie Evatt, "Media Coverage and Public Concern About Crime: An Exploration of the Second Level of Agenda Setting" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the World Association for Public Opinion Research, The Hague, The Netherlands, 1995). Also see Salma Ghanem, "Media Coverage of Crime and Public Opinion: An Exploration of the Second Level of Agenda Setting" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1996).

20. Telephone penetration in Pamplona at the time of the survey was 94.25%.

21. Maxwell McCombs, "New Frontiers in Agenda Setting: Agendas of Attributes and Frames" (paper presented at the annual meeting of AEJMC, Chicago, 1997).

22. See, for example, Holli Semetko, Jay Blumler, Michael Gurevitch, and David Weaver, *The Formation of Campaign Agendas* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991).