

By David Weaver and Swanzy Nimley Elliott

Who Sets the Agenda for the Media? A Study of Local Agenda-Building

*A local newspaper "mirrors"
the agenda of the city
council.*

► Most media agenda-setting research carried out since McCombs' and Shaw's study of the 1968 U.S. presidential election has tested the assertion that media emphasis on certain issues results in increased public concern over these issues.¹ But there has been very little systematic study of the underlying assumption that the media set the public agenda of issues by filtering and shaping reality rather than by simply reflecting it. And yet, in some ways, this assumption is just as crucial to the idea of media agenda-

setting as the assumption that media emphasis is correlated with public salience. For even if there is a correlation between what the press emphasizes and what many people are most concerned about,² it is not quite accurate to speak of the press *setting* agendas if it is mainly passing on priorities set by other actors and institutions in the society.

There have been some attempts to test systematically the assumption of an active press that filters and shapes. A study by Sheldon Gilberg, Maxwell McCombs and colleagues shows that prior press coverage seemed to have more influence on President Carter's issue agenda in his second (1978) State of the Union address than this speech had on the subsequent press issue agenda.³ In a replication of this study using President Nixon's second State of the Union address in 1970, McCombs and his colleagues found that both prior press coverage and Nixon's State of the Union address were significant predictors of the subsequent press agenda, but the previous press agenda was the dominant predictor.⁴ From this study McCombs and his associates concluded that while the dominant influence on the press agenda is the ongoing stream of events shaped by the news values and practices of journalism, the President of the United States in a major policy address also can influence the subsequent media agenda.

In a year-long study of the 1976 U.S. presidential election, reported in *Media Agenda-Setting in a Presidential Election*, Weaver and others made some attempts to compare the issues that were being stressed

¹ For major reviews of these studies see David H. Weaver, Doris A. Graber, Maxwell E. McCombs and Chaim Eyal, *Media Agenda-Setting in A Presidential Election: Issues, Images, and Interest* (New York: Praeger, 1981); David Weaver, "Media Agenda-Setting and Public Opinion: Is There a Link?" in Robert Bostrom, ed., *Communication Yearbook 8* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1984); Maxwell McCombs, "The Agenda-Setting Approach," in Dan D. Nimmo and Keith R. Sanders, eds., *Handbook of Political Communication* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981); David Weaver, "Media Agenda-Setting and Media Manipulation," in D. Charles Whitney and Ellen Wartella, eds., *Mass Communication Review Yearbook, Volume 1* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982); and Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell McCombs, *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press* (St. Paul, Minn.: West, 1977).

² See Fay Lomax Cook et al., "Media and Agenda-Setting: Effects on the Public, Interest Group Leaders, Policy Makers, and Policy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47:16-35 (Spring 1983); Shanto Iyengar et al., "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs," in Ellen Wartella and D. Charles Whitney, eds., *Mass Communication Review Yearbook, Volume 4* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1983); Michael B. MacKuen and Steven L. Coombs, *More Than News: Media Power in Public Affairs* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981); and David Weaver, Doris Graber, Maxwell McCombs and Chaim Eyal, *op. cit.*

³ Sheldon Gilberg, Chaim Eyal, Maxwell McCombs and David Nicholas, "The State of the Union Address and the Press Agenda," *Journalism Quarterly*, 57:584-88 (Winter 1980).

⁴ Maxwell McCombs, Sheldon Gilbert and Chaim Eyal, "The State of the Union Address and the Press Agenda: A Replication," paper presented to the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Boston, May 1982.

► Swanzy Elliott, a native of Liberia, recently completed his master's degree at Indiana University where David Weaver is a professor of journalism and director of the Bureau of Media Research.

by political parties and frontrunning candidates with the issues that were being emphasized by newspapers and television.⁵ These comparisons were not very systematic, however, mainly because the main thrust of this study was to test the hypothesis that increased media emphasis on certain subjects over time results in increased salience of these subjects among the public. The study presented evidence that not all of the issues being emphasized by the Republican and Democratic candidates and parties were being emphasized by the newspapers and television networks studied.

In another major year-long study of the 1976 election, Thomas Patterson found that the issues which the candidates stressed most prominently were *not* the same as those displayed most prominently in the news.⁶ Patterson found that in their campaign speeches and televised political advertising, the candidates talked most about "diffuse" issues—broad policy proposals such as the commitment to maintain a healthy economy. In contrast, the media stressed what Seymour-Ure has called "clear-cut" issues—those which neatly divide the candidates, provoke conflict and can be stated in simple terms, usually by reference to shorthand labels such as "busing" and "detente."⁷ One of Patterson's major conclusions is that the issue news reflected the interests of the press more than those of the candidates. This conclusion offers support for the assumption that the press is more likely to filter than to mirror reality. Still, more needs to be done to compare systematically the agendas of various news sources with the agendas of various media.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study of local newspaper coverage of a municipal legislative body (the Bloomington, Ind., City Council) is to provide some systematic evidence on the source-media relationship in a non-election agenda-setting context. This emphasis on the origin of issues covered by the media has been referred to by the Langs and some political scientists such as Cobb and Elder as an *agenda-building*

process, where the focus is on how the press interacts with other institutions in society to create issues of public concern.⁸ This agenda-building approach is more concerned with how issues originate, or how subjects of news coverage become issues, than with the media-audience relationship studied so often by agenda-setting researchers.

Using content analysis of the city council minutes and all of the *Herald-Telephone* coverage of city council meetings for 1982, this study explores the kind of relationship existing between the agenda of the daily newspaper and the city council, a prominent local news source. The study tests whether the issues most (or least) emphasized at council meetings are the issues most (or least) emphasized in subsequent press coverage (suggesting a kind of neutral *transmitter* role for the newspaper) or whether some of the issues heavily emphasized by the council are not stressed in the news coverage, or vice versa (suggesting a more active *filter* role for the newspaper). The study also seeks to discover on what kinds of issues the local newspaper is more likely to play a transmitter role or a filter role.

Methods

The year 1982 was chosen for this study because it was the only calendar year for which both minutes of full-fledged council meetings and of council committee meetings were available. Unlike minutes of council committee meetings, the minutes of full council meetings are required by law and go far back. The council meets as a committee of the whole prior to each full council meeting. It is at these committee

⁵ Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal, *op. cit.*

⁶ Thomas Patterson, *The Media Election: How Americans Choose Their President* (New York: Praeger 1980).

⁷ Colin Seymour-Ure, *The Political Impact of Mass Media* (Beverly Hills, Calif., and London: Sage, 1974).

⁸ Gladys Lang and Kurt Lang, "Watergate: An Exploration of the Agenda-Building Process," in G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Harold de Bock, eds., *Mass Communication Review Yearbook, Volume 2* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981); Roger W. Cobb and Charles Elder, *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda-Building* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972). See also Oscar Giandy, *Beyond Agenda Setting: Information Subsidies and Public Policy* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Company, 1982), for a detailed discussion of agenda-building by various institutional news sources.

meetings that the council first debates almost all of the matters coming before it. It disposes of such issues at subsequent council meetings.

The minutes and coverage items were coded into 19 topic categories described later. The rankings of these categories by the council and the newspaper were then compared to see on what kinds of topics the newspaper's agenda was more likely to mirror or filter the agenda of the council.

Records of the meetings of the council, available in the Office of the Bloomington City Council, were used in the conference room of the Municipal Building for the content analysis of the council minutes. The microfilm facility of the Indiana University Main Library was used for the content analysis of the *Herald-Telephone* coverage.

Two statistical tests were run: 1) Scott's Pi for inter-coder reliability,⁹ and 2) Spearman's rho for the correlation between the major items in the agendas of the council minutes and the newspaper coverage.¹⁰ To determine coder reliability, a doctoral student in the Indiana University School of Journalism coded 15 randomly selected council agenda items from those coded for this study. Of the 15 items, only two were categorized differently, producing a simple inter-coder reliability figure of 86%. The Scott's Pi figure, correcting for chance agreement, was 80%.

Items: An item, whether in the minutes or in the coverage, was defined as any single request for action which was brought

to the attention of the council as recorded in the minutes and/or as reported in the newspaper coverage. Eight types of items were included in this study: 1) an ordinance, 2) a resolution, 3) a message from a councilman, 4) a message from the mayor, 5) testimonies of invitees or concerned parties, 6) other communications to the council, 7) general contributions from observers on the floor, and 8) contributions of extra-council sources (outside council meetings) covered by the newspaper.

All items treated in the minutes and in the coverage were divided into two groups, *major* and *minor*, using word count. Major items are those to which 56 words or more were devoted in the council minutes, and minor items received 55 or fewer words. An unsystematic perusal of the sample items revealed more than half of all the items were coded as *minor*. A similar dividing point (60 words) was used for classifying newspaper stories as major or minor. While counting words is only one way to measure amount of emphasis on a topic, it is assumed to correlate positively with perceived importance of topics by both council members and journalists.

Several categorization schemes of news stories were consulted in drawing up the 19 topic categories used in this study.¹¹ The final category set included:

1) Election Campaigns and Politics: council elections, other elections involving councilmen and the mayor, partisan affairs such as meetings affecting the conduct of the affairs of the council, and the redistricting of council seats. (Example: The redrawing of districts in Bloomington, the election to Congress of former Mayor McCloskey, and election of officers of the council of 1982.)

2) Economic Investment and Industrial Development: the starting of new businesses, tax abatement and other incentives, as well as the issuance of economic development bonds. (Example: The issuance of economic development bonds to Kroger to help start another branch in the Jackson Creek area near the College Mall.)

3) Building Construction and Land Use: regulations on plumbing and electrical

⁹ William A. Scott, "Reliability of Content Analysis: The Case of Nominal Scale Coding," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 19:321-25 (Fall 1955). This measure goes beyond a simple percentage agreement by taking chance agreement into account.

¹⁰ This is a commonly used measure of association between two rankings which varies from -1.0 (a perfect negative correlation) to +1.0 (a perfect positive correlation). It is an estimate of the value of Pearson's *r*. See David Weaver, "Basic Statistical Tools," in Guido H. Stempel III and Bruce H. Westley, eds., *Research Methods in Mass Communication* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), pp. 71-73, for a discussion of Spearman's rho.

¹¹ Chilton R. Bush, "A System of Categories for General News Content," *Journalism Quarterly*, 37:206-10 (Spring 1960); Stempel and Westley, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-24 and 128-29; David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "Foreign News Coverage in Two U.S. Wire Services," *Journal of Communication*, Spring 1981, pp. 55-63; and Mathias Mogeckwu, "The Associated Press and the Flow of International News Into Indiana: A Study of Content and Editorial Practices," unpublished dissertation, Indiana University, 1982, pp. 52-59.

works, rezoning to allow for different types of housing units and businesses, and vacating of public alleys for housing construction. (Example: Ordinances allowing for planned condominiums, manufactured housing, and amusement machines only in some parts of the city.)

4) *Education*: relationship between the council and the City School Board and between the former and individual schools within the city. (Example: Councilmen gain one-day, in-class teaching experience in some local schools.)

5) *Corrections and Rehabilitation*: penal institutions. (Example: A council measure to find a site for a work release center in Bloomington.)

6) *Public Safety*: traffic signs, speed limit, parking and unloading zones, and general, non-financial police matters. (Example: Meter-free parking lot in the downtown area.)

7) *City Sanitation and Beautification*: PCBs' cleanup, cutting of weeds, and general clean-up campaigns. (Example: A voluntary clean-up campaign by a university fraternity.)

8) *Utilities*: general utilities such as water and sewer. (Example: New connection fees relative to waste water.)

9) *Historical Documents, Events and Civic Celebrations*: designation of Bloomington as an All-American City. (Example: Council minutes on swine control in the city dating back to the 1800s.)

10) *Finances*: budgets, expenditures, revenues, federal trust funds sharing, and other appropriations and budgetary transfers. (Example: Salaries and the purchase of supplies and equipment.)

11) *Animal Protection*: humane treatment of animals. (Example: Animal shelter.)

12) *Awards, Honors and Commendation*: honoring of city personnel and other persons. (Example: Commendation for an outgoing administrative assistant to the mayor and for the public works director.)

13) *Public Transportation Corporation*: setting up and running of a public transportation corporation. (Example: A coun-

cil measure to establish a public transportation corporation for the city.)

14) *Nuclear Freeze*: halting the nuclear arms race. (Example: A resolution of the council calling for an immediate and verifiable nuclear freeze between the Soviet Union and the United States.)

15) *Arts, Entertainment and Recreation*: cultural life of the city. (Example: Arts exhibition in the council chambers and the running of the golf course in the city.)

16) *Urban Development and Renewal*: reviving the downtown area through such efforts as the renovation of old buildings. (Example: The renovation of the Princess Theatre.)

17) *Public Works*: work done by the Department of Public Works. (Example: Street repairs.)

18) *Area Annexation*: extension of the authority of the council to nearby areas. (Example: Council measures annexing nearby communities.)

19) *Administrative Actions*: senior personnel appointments, new positions and the conduct of the affairs of the council's administrative boards such as planning and utilities. (Example: The appointments of downtown development director and city information officer, and the report of the Sunset Board to the council.)

Findings

City Council Meetings. Fifteen committee meetings of the Bloomington City Council were recorded for the calendar year 1982. This number does not include executive committee sessions which are closed to the public. A total of 84 agenda items were analyzed from the 1982 committee minutes; of this number, 57 were major and 27 were minor.

In 1982, there were 29 full council meetings, 24 regular sessions and five special sessions. A total of 321 agenda items were recorded in the minutes. There were 120 major items and 201 minor items. In regular sessions, 112 major items and 196 minor ones were considered while eight major and five minor items were dealt with in special sessions (see Table 1).

Newspaper Coverage. A total of 162 full

TABLE I

All Major and Minor Items Coded from 1982 Full Council
and Committee Minutes and from Newspaper Coverage

All Items in City Council Minutes

	Major	Minor	Total
FULL COUNCIL	120	201	321
COMMITTEE	57	27	84
TOTAL	177	228	405

Newspaper Coverage of All Items

	Major	Minor	Total
FULL COUNCIL	43	119	162
COMMITTEE	26	50	76
TOTAL	69	169	238

council items were reported in the newspaper, including 43 major issues and 119 minor ones. The minutes of full council meetings contained 120 major items and 201 minor items, a total of 321. Thus, this study found a marked difference in the total number of items discussed by the full council and the number reported by the *Herald-Telephone*. The full council dealt with nearly twice as many items as were reported in the newspaper. The full council also discussed about three times as many major topics as were covered, and the newspaper coverage contained 82 fewer minor items than did the full council minutes.

Comparison of just the number of items covered in the local newspaper with the number mentioned in the council and committee minutes suggests that the newspaper was not simply a mirror reflecting the reality of the council and committee meetings. There was obviously a substantial amount of selection in the newspaper reporting of these meetings, as indicated in Table I. Only 59% of all items contained in the minutes were reported in the newspaper, and only half of the full council items were reported. The selection in reporting was more pronounced for major items (only 39% reported) than for minor items (74% reported), and for the full Council meetings than for the committee meetings.

Comparison of Council and Newspaper Agendas. Turning to the ranking of topic areas by the council and by the local

newspaper, Table 2 indicates a strong overall correlation of .84 (Spearman's rho), suggesting that for 1982 the local newspaper emphasis on topics closely reflected the priorities of the city council on major items. This overall correlation suggests more support for a transmitter than a filter role for the newspaper and offers little support for an independent agenda-setting function of the newspaper, at least with regard to coverage of all city council topics considered together.

But a closer look at the differences between individual topic rankings in Table 2 shows that the newspaper coverage did not closely reflect the council rankings of arts and entertainment, nuclear freeze, utilities, animal protection, election campaigns and politics, awards and honors, urban development and renewal. On four of these topics (arts and entertainment, nuclear freeze, utilities, and elections) the newspaper's ranking was substantially higher than the council's; on the other three topics (animal protection, awards and urban development) just the reverse was true. Thus on seven of the 19 topics, the newspaper played more of an active filter role; on the other 12 topics it played more of a neutral transmitter role, passing on the agenda of the city council largely intact.

Although it is difficult to categorize the topics, it does seem that the local newspaper played a more active filtering or agenda-setting role with regard to recreational and social topics than with regard

TABLE 2

Categorization and Rank Ordering of All Major Items
as Arranged by Minutes and Coverage

Issue Category	All Major Items of Minutes Rank Value ^b	All Major Items of Coverage Rank Value
Area Annexation ^a	1.5	2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1.5	5.5
Education	4	2
Nuclear Freeze ^a	4	9
Public Works	4	5.5
Utilities	6.5	11
Animal Protection	6.5	2
Election Campaigns and Politics	8.5	12.5
Historical Documents, Events and Civic Celebrations	8.5	5.5
Awards, Honors and Commendation	10	5.5
Corrections and Rehabilitation	11.5	9
Public Transportation Corporation	11.5	15
City Sanitation and Beautification	13.5	12.5
Urban Development and Renewal	13.5	9
Economic Investment and Industrial Development	15	17
Administrative Actions	16	15
Public Safety	17	15
Building Construction and Land Use	18	19
Finances	19	18

Spearman's rho between the two sets of rankings equals .84.

^a"Sporadic" issues (not likely to be considered over most of the year of study).

^b"Rank Value" means the relative amount of discussion or coverage devoted to each topic on a 19-topic scale. A rank value is based on a "Item Score" which refers to the frequency of major items in a given topic category. The greater the rank value, the more attention paid to the issue category. Thus area annexation was least discussed by the council and finances most discussed.

to more economic topics such as finances, building construction, and economic investment and industrial development. On these latter economic topics, the newspaper's relative ranking was nearly identical to the council's. It should also be noted that these were the topics most heavily stressed by the council.

This cooperative role of the newspaper in passing along the priorities of the council on the more economic topics largely

unchanged appears to be due to several factors, including the reliance by the newspaper on council sources and the absence of extra-council sources in covering legislative issues before the council, deadline pressures on reporters who must write stories of city council actions for the next day's paper, the journalistic norm of objectivity which encourages news stories that reflect source priorities, and the news values of journalists that emphasize con-

flict and controversy. In general, the agenda items with the least change in ranking from council meetings to newspaper coverage were also the most likely to involve conflict. And several previous agenda-setting studies have suggested that increased drama or conflict associated with an issue contributes to increasing the salience of that issue among members of the public.¹²

Conclusions

What residents of the Bloomington area received as the agenda of city council economic issues in the *Herald-Telephone* in 1982 was likely to reflect the relative emphasis on these issues by the council itself, not an agenda set independently by the newspaper. This is, of course, no surprise to those who regard the proper role of the reporter as a neutral information transmitter or a chronicler rather than an analyzer or interpreter.¹³ But it is somewhat surprising that on nearly one third of the topics (mostly recreational and social), the newspaper's ranking differed substantially from the council's, suggesting that some independent news judgments were made about the relative importance of these topics. And it is noteworthy that only 59% of all items contained in the council and committee minutes were reported in the local newspaper, further supporting some active filtering role of the newspaper.

In an observational study of city and county government reporting in a small California city, Fishman¹⁴ concluded that

on the city hall and county government beats the key activities reported were the formal legislative dispositions of issues, which usually meant the results of voting in meetings. He also argued that on every formal agenda for city and county government meetings there are items of business which reporters know in advance are potentially newsworthy policy matters, while other agenda items are known in advance to be administrative matters on the agenda for technical reasons and therefore not considered very newsworthy.¹⁵ If reporters do tend to consider policy matters (political decisions) more newsworthy than administrative matters (technical decisions), this may help to explain why the local newspaper in this present study gave the more economic topics (those with greater policy implications) about the same emphasis as did the city council, but did not closely reflect the council priorities with regard to recreational and social topics where administrative matters were likely to be more prevalent.

This interpretation is largely supported by an interview with the reporter who covered the city council during 1982. After being shown the results of this present study, this reporter agreed with Fishman's distinction between policy and administrative matters and said that he consciously "boiled down" the subjects of education, animal protection, honors and awards, and historical documents and events because they were not controversial and did not lend themselves to "a story," but tended instead to be more technical in nature. The reporter said he likes subjects that involve controversy, debates and several actors because these characteristics make for a better story, rather than just "a listing" of events.

He also said he was glad to see that awards and honors were ranked substantially lower on the newspaper's agenda than on the city council's, because he didn't want to be regarded as "a candy reporter who is sucking up to the administration." And he explained that although urban development appeared to be downplayed in the newspaper as compared to

¹² Taik Sup Auh, "Issue Conflict and Mass Media Agenda-Setting During the 1974 Indiana Senatorial Campaign," unpublished dissertation, Indiana University, 1977; Michael MacKeun and Steven Coombs, *op. cit.*

¹³ For discussions of the roles of journalists, see John W.C. Johnstone et al., "The Professional Values of American Newsmen," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:522-40 (Winter 1972-73); Morris Janowitz, "Professional Models in Journalism: The Gatekeeper and the Advocate," *Journalism Quarterly*, 52:618-26 (Winter 1975); Delmer D. Dunn, *Public Officials and the Press* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969); Leon V. Sigal, *Reporters and Officials* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1973); and Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (New York: Random House, 1979).

¹⁴ Mark Fishman, "News and Nonevents: Making the Visible Invisible," in James S. Ettema and D. Charles Whitney, eds., *Individuals in Mass Media Organizations: Creativity and Constraint* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982), p. 229.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.

its relative emphasis by the council, this was because it was covered in other places in the newspaper such as the business pages and the progress section.

In short, the reporter whose news coverage was studied here agreed that he, in consultation with the editors, consciously downplayed and emphasized some subjects because of their ideas of what a good news story should contain, particularly the amount of conflict and the number of actors. He also noted that he liked the term "filtering" more than "agenda-setting," because agenda-setting implied that the newspaper was creating issues whereas filtering conveyed the idea that the reporter, in consultation with editors, was trying to reflect what various news sources were doing and saying, but at the same time was making judgments about newsworthiness through amount of coverage and display of that coverage in the newspaper.

With regard to media agenda-building, then, this limited study of news source and media agendas suggests that a prominent news source can have a major influence on the subsequent media agenda, but the

selective processes and news judgments of journalists also play a significant part in shaping this agenda. It is possible that news values and selective processes have an even more important role to play in the specific reporting and framing of each individual issue, but that question is beyond the scope of this study. Compared to the earlier studies of presidential agenda-setting by Gilbert and McCombs,¹⁶ this present study of local agenda-building suggests more influence by a prominent local news source on the local press agenda than those earlier studies found at the national level. And this present study offers some support for the so-called "mirror approach" to the newsgathering proposed by Gans¹⁷ and discussed by Shoemaker and Mayfield.¹⁸

¹⁶ See footnotes 3 and 4 for complete citations of these studies.

¹⁷ Gans, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Pamela J. Shoemaker and Elizabeth Kay Mayfield, "Mass Media Content as a Dependent Variable: Five Media Sociology Theories," paper presented to the Communication Theory and Methodology Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, Florida, August 1984.

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of the small story sample sizes tested. More fundamentally, the concepts of activity and effectiveness used here may be quite narrow compared to the possibilities in the real political world. Legislative leaders, chairmen and even ordinary members may be crucial catalysts for the activity of others. Lawmakers who do "nothing" themselves may determine outcomes indirectly as gatekeepers over a flow of legislation originating elsewhere. Reporters familiar with the particular institutional and political scene no doubt come to recognize these individuals and give

them corresponding attention.

Further studies should certainly focus at least as much on these political actors as on the news reporters covering their activities. The legislative leaders, chairmen and ordinary lawmakers relied upon by reporters for information are crucial to the quality of the news transmitted to the public. Indeed, news coverage of political institutions may well be more affected by differences in the institutions in which these actors function than by differences in news organizations watching over their activities.