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**MEDIA  
&  
THE PUBLIC**

**Week 3**  
**Media coverage of  
politics**

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# Why does (mass) media cover politics?





# The function of (mass) media

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- A linkage institution between government and people
  - People → Government
    - Muckraking/Watchdog/Investigative journalism (e.g., Watergate)
  - Government → People
    - "Fireside chats"
  - Gatekeeping
    - Agenda-setting

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# What does (mass) media cover in term of politics?



# News coverage of political issues (Aalberg, 2014)

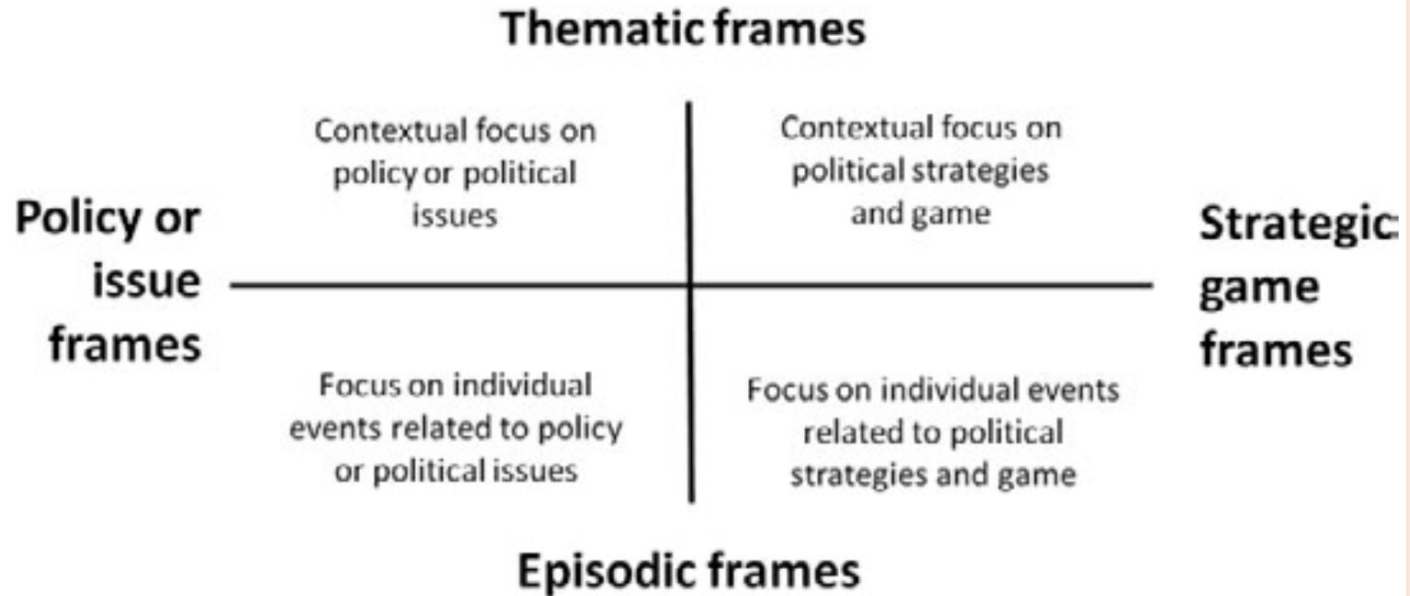
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- Four distinct genres of presentation:
  - Thematic news frame:
    - It places the public issue in a general context and usually takes the form of an in-depth “background” report.
  - Episodic news frame:
    - It depicts issues in terms of individual instances or specific events.
  - Issues and policy news frame:
    - It focus on real-life conditions with relevance for issue positions
  - Strategic game news frame:
    - It focus on questions related to who is winning and losing, the performances of politicians and parties, and on campaign strategies and tactics.

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# News coverage of political issues (Aalberg, 2014)



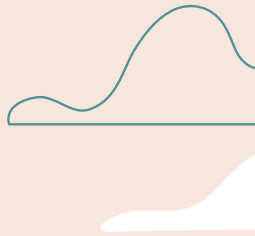
Political coverage classified according to four main types of generic frames.

# What types of (mass) media?





# Typology of media outlet (Humprecht & Esser, 2016)



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- Private broadcasters
  - corporate-owned, strongly commercialized
- Public broadcasters
  - financed by fees, public or state funds with a primary public service mission, and a low degree of commercialization
- Corporate newspapers
  - owned by chain or stock exchange-listed company, strongly commercialized
- Independent newspapers
  - alternative ownership form, moderate degree of commercialization
- Popular newspapers
  - tabloid-style mass market, strongly commercialized
- Made-for-Web news providers
  - either online-only pure player or – where nonexistent – online news provider with an independent profile and organizational structure

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**What news are we reading?—**

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# Algorithmic news/journalism

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- Machine-generated news
  - Natural language generation (Example: the Guardian)
- Machine-driven news (Feezell et al., 2021)
  - User-driven algorithms
    - based on past selections and assumed preferences of the individual user and has no known social network-related input
  - Socially driven algorithms
    - news contents based on both the user as well as their network.

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# Algorithmic news/journalism

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- Machine-driven news (Feezell et al., 2021)
  - User-driven algorithms: emphasizes the personal attributes and biases of citizens rather than their ties to other citizens (e.g. YouTube).
    - Users more likely to see news that's seemingly popular, homogeneous across outlets, eschews public affairs, emphasizes national and business news, opinion pieces.
    - Users see much narrower set of topics and perspectives.
    - Expose users to increasingly negative and opinion-reinforcing information.
  - Socially driven algorithms: it takes into account user's activities on SNS, and their ties to others in their network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
    - Depends on the ideological characteristics of user's networks.
    - Online network grows, information diversifies.
    - Potential echo chamber? (still under debate)
    - May lead to additional information seeking, mitigate polarization.

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