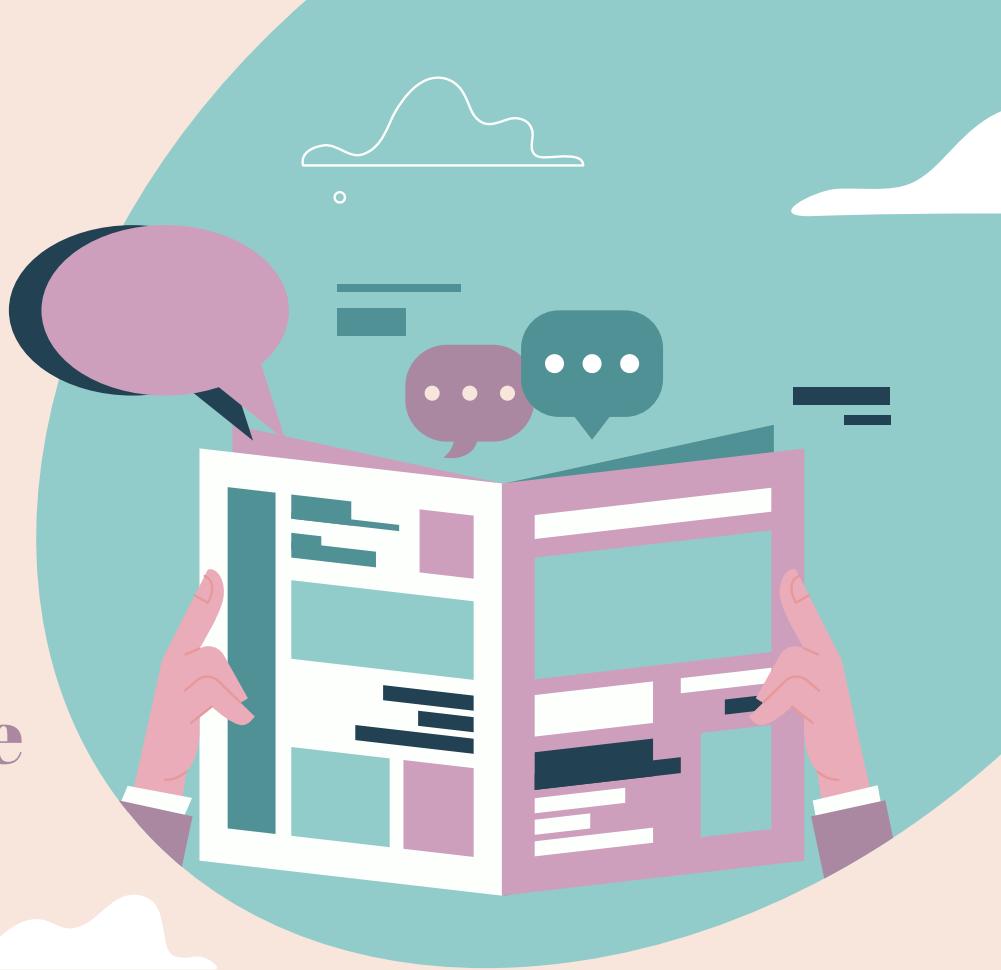


MEDIA & THE PUBLIC

Week 4
(Mass) Media influence

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McQuail's four phases model (2005)

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Strong/Powerful media effect *Limited media effect* *Revisit of strong media effect* *Negotiated/transactional media effect*





Paradigm shift: Revisit of strong media effect

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The agenda-setting function of mass media

ME **McCombs**, DL Shaw - Public opinion quarterly, 1972 - academic.oup.com

In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its ...

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Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann
(Spiral of Silence)

George Gerbner
(Cultivation;
the mean world syndrome)

David Shaw & Maxwell McCombs
(Agenda setting)

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What is agenda setting?

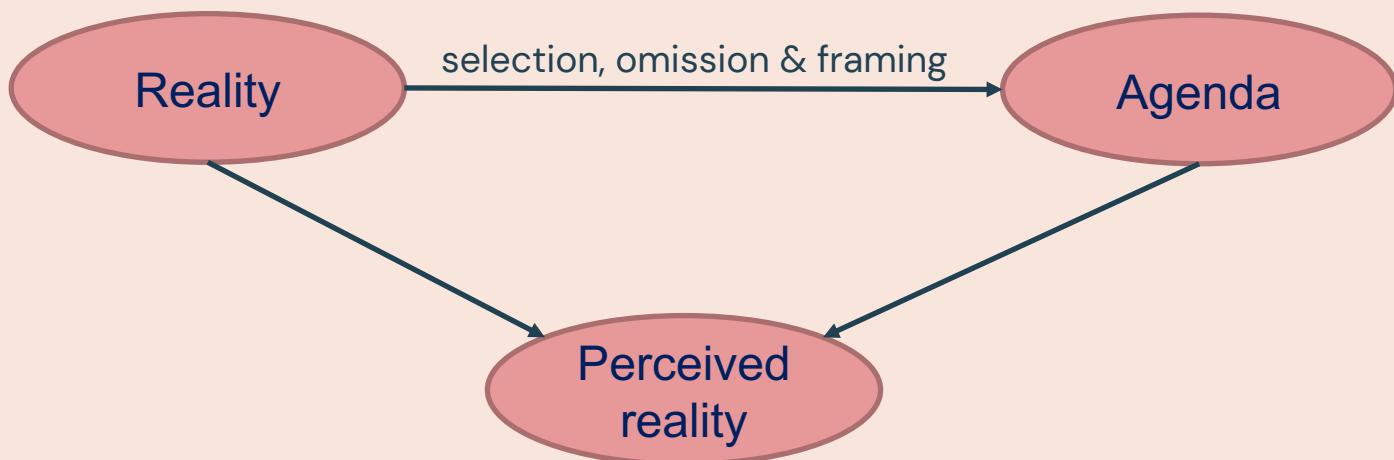




Agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)

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- *Agenda setting* refers to the ability of the mass media to signal to the public what is important
 - By virtue of providing differential levels of coverage to specific issues, the media are able to shape individuals' perceptions of the relative importance and salience of these issues





Agenda setting

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- Newspaper: Chapel Hill, North Carolina (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)
 - “Regardless of what politicians say, what are the two or three main things which you think the government should concentrate on doing something about?”
 - A strong rank-order correlation between citizens’ main concerns and the political issues covered by the plurality of news sources in Chapel Hill, which included local newspapers, the New York Times, and evening news broadcasts.
- Television: (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987)
 - Whether the issues that received prominent attention on the national news became the ones that the viewing public saw as the nation’s most important problems (e.g., defense, pollution, unemployment, civil rights)
- Online news: (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002)
 - Readers of the print version of the New York Times, after five days, systemically differed from online readers of the same newspaper in what they perceived to be the most important problems facing the country

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Moderators of agenda setting

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- Topicality: Unobtrusiveness
 - Agenda-setting effects are usually stronger for issues that are unobtrusive, or for those issues with which individuals have little or no direct experience ((Iyengar & Kinder, 1987))
- Individual: Needs for orientation
 - In general, the greater an individual's need for orientation, the more likely his or her perception of the issue agenda will reflect the media's agenda (Weaver, 1977)
- Interaction: Frequency of discussion
 - When both the media and interpersonal communication resonate, interpersonal communication about an issue can enhance agenda-setting effects

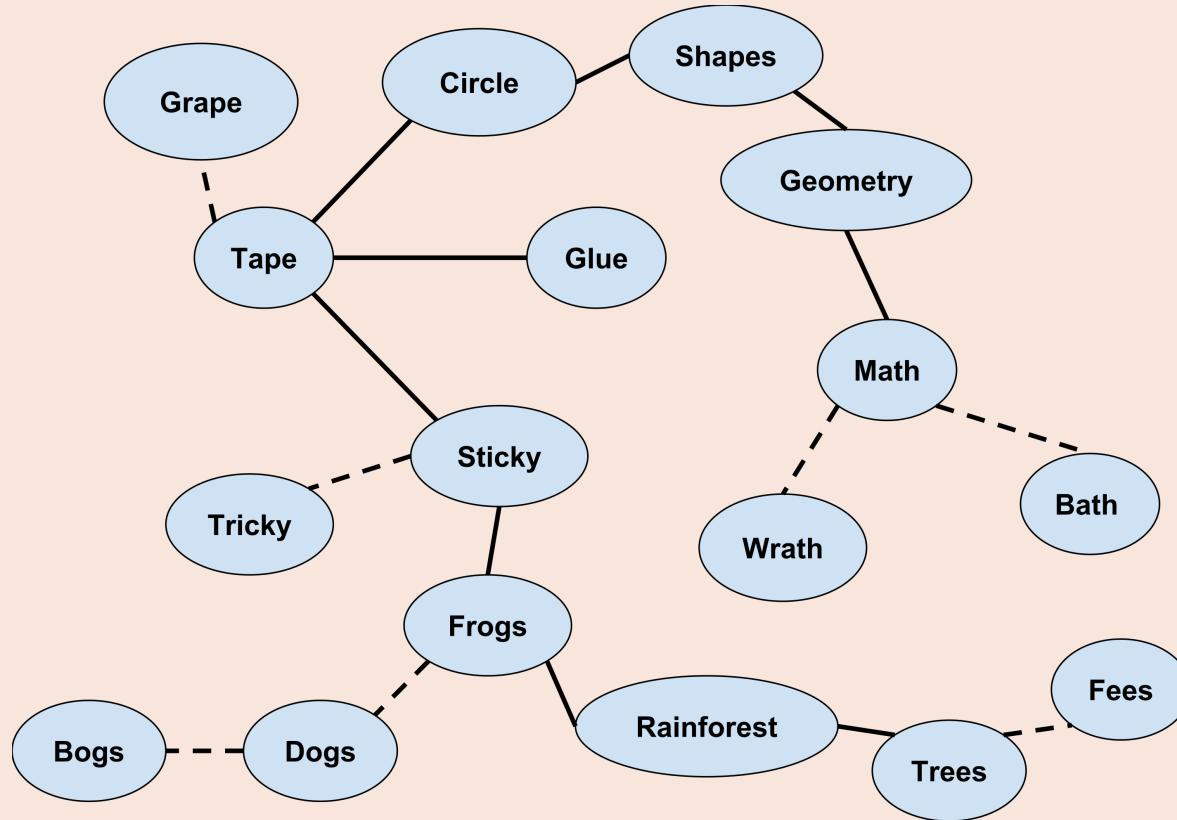
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PRIMING EFFECT



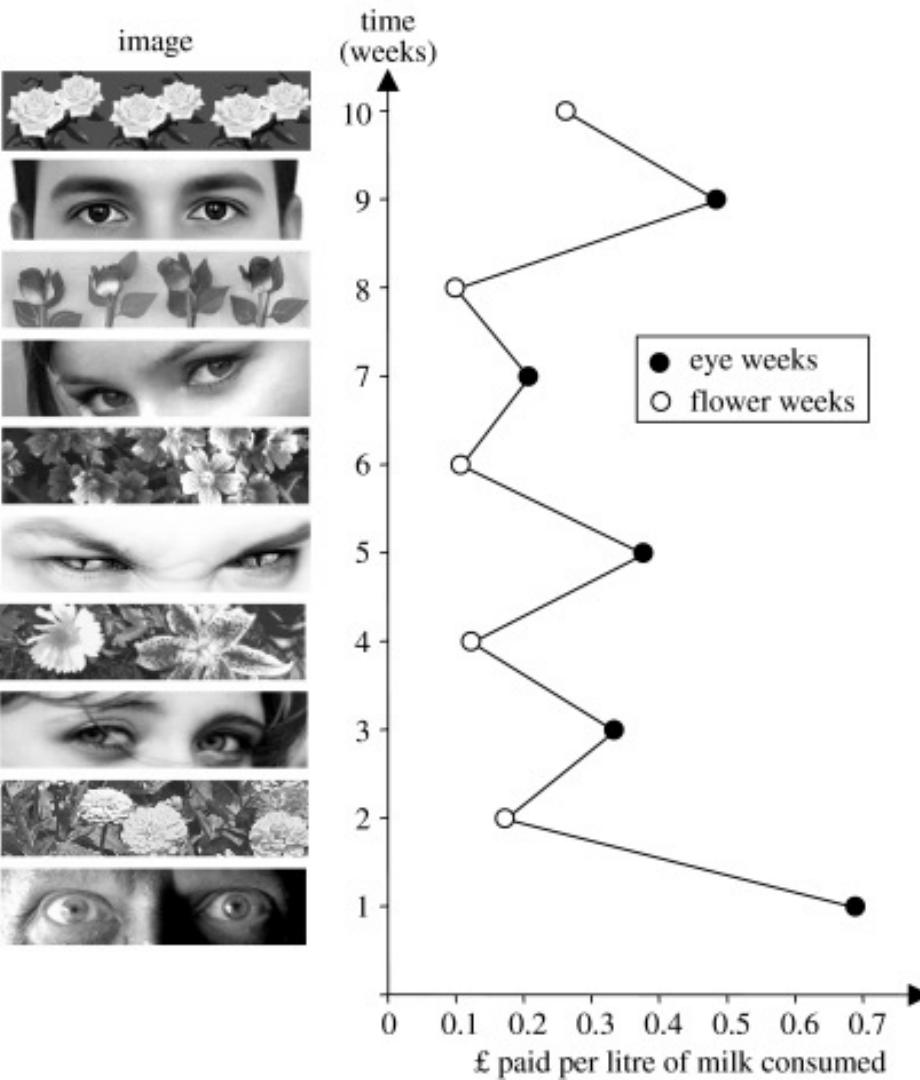


Psychological network model of memory



Dotted lines indicate morpheme primes
Straight lines indicate semantic primes

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Source: Bateson et al. (2006)



(Media) Priming (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987)

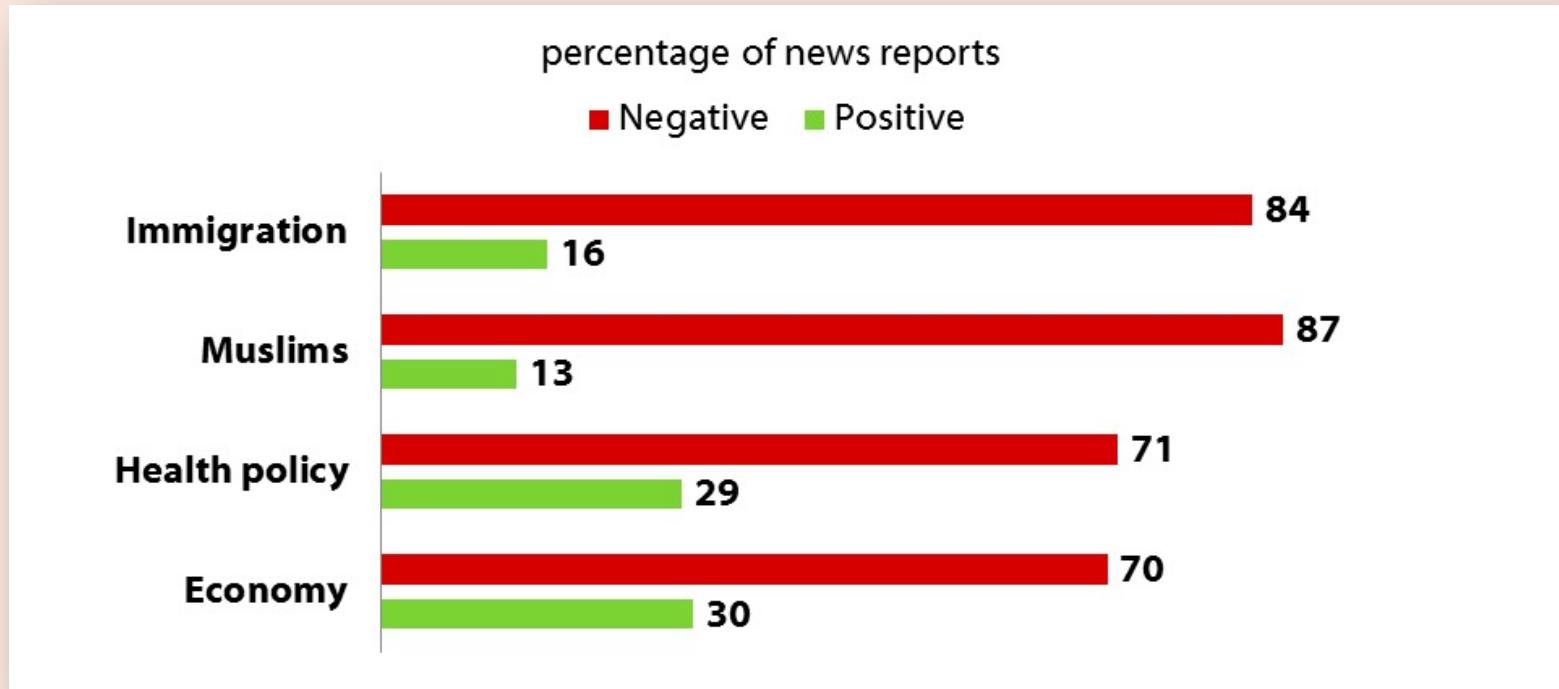
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- *(Media) Priming* explains how media uses this psychological characteristic for influencing people without even letting them know and affect their decisions
 1. Information received through a media channel (i.e., the “media prime”) activates preexisting associated knowledge in the mind of the receiver
 2. The receiver applies the primed, now more accessible concept to a target stimulus when s/he would not otherwise have done this.
- Iyengar, Peters and Kinder (1982)
 - Making certain political topics salient through prime-time media, such as defense or spending, would could viewers to evaluate President Carter based on said topics.

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(Media) Priming (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987)



Tone of Coverage of Selected Topics, 2010–2016

Source: [Media Tenor](#). Based on news reports on CBS and NBC evening newscasts. Excludes neutral stories.



(Media) Priming (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987)

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- Connection with Agenda setting:
 - Both are grounded in mnemonic models of information-processing
 - Priming is seen as an outgrowth of the media effects process initiated by agenda-setting (Brosius, 1994)
 - Agenda-setting: Media make some issues more salient in people's minds
 - Priming: media can shape the considerations that people take into account when making judgments about political candidates or other issues
- Other moderators:
 - Political involvement
 - Cognitive style
 - Political attitude
 - etc.

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What is framing?



(Media) Framing (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993)

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 - Framing suggests that how something is presented to the audience influences the choices people make about how to process that information.
 - A frame is a concept that summarizes the basic characteristics of a topic, which could be a phrase, image, analogy, or metaphor
 - “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.” (Entman, 1993)
 - Framing process (Scheufele, 1999)
 - *Frame-building* refers to the development of frames and their inclusion in news stories.
 - *Frame-setting* describes audience consumption of news with frames and audience members' consequent adoption of frames as ways to understand issues and problems



(Media) Framing (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993)

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 - Comparison with *Priming*:
 - Priming focuses on what information is presented (audience)
 - Framing focuses on how information is presented (content provider)
 - These elements overlap in actual communication practices, which is still under debate

The importance (and power) of using specific terms

death tax **vs.** estate tax

undocumented worker **vs.** illegal alien

pro-choice **vs.** pro-abortion

accuser **vs.** victim

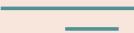
homosexual marriage **vs.** gay marriage

irate **vs.** concerned

special rights **vs.** equal rights

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- “A local citizen advocating for ‘illegal aliens’ was ‘irate’ at city hall Tuesday, demanding ‘special rights.’”
- “A local citizen advocating for ‘undocumented workers’ was at city hall Tuesday ‘voicing concern’ over the lack of ‘equal rights.’”



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Source:
Time Magazine's response