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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

INTERMEDIA AGENDA-SETTING IN THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: THE INFLUENCE OF CANDIDATES' WEBSITES ON TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

GYOTAE KU

Norman, Oklahoma

2002

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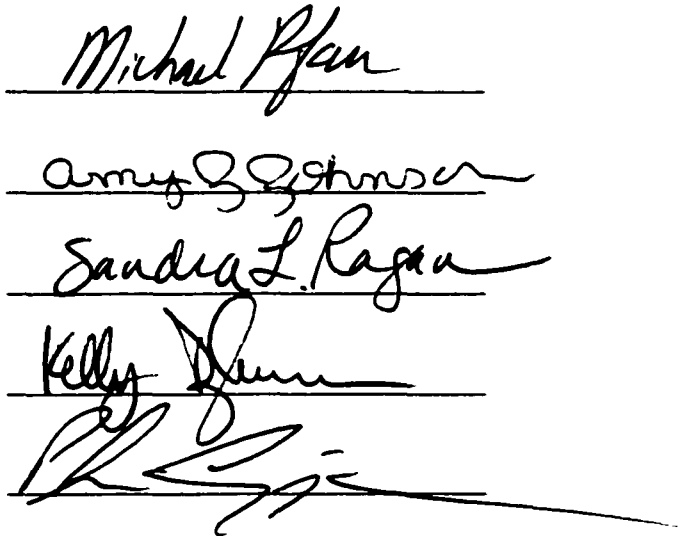
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INTERMEDIA AGENDA-SETTING IN THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: THE INFLUENCE OF CANDIDATES' WEBSITES ON TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

BY



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Abstract

The present study was designed to examine the impact of website campaigning as new media on the traditional news media agenda and the public opinion during the 2000 presidential election campaigning. Based on an intermedia agenda-setting approach, this study also investigated the issue of news consonance by focusing on news media's structural value scheme in setting agenda salience. In addition, the relationship between news consonance and news media's agenda-setting impact was explored. This study used diverse statistical techniques, such as Spearman's *rho* correlation, partial correlation, the Rozelle-Campbell baseline, path analysis, etc., to assess the hypothesis and questions.

The study had several implications of political candidate websites on political dialogue. First, this study revealed the website campaigning can be used as a useful tool for an effective PR, since the campaign agenda of candidate websites became the subsequent agenda of the traditional news media. Second, as website agenda are actively involved in the traditional media agenda, the website agenda is more likely to be associated with public agenda. As with the shaping of public opinion during the election campaign period, this study also revealed that the website agenda had

greater agenda-setting impact on the public than any other media examined in this study. Thus, another theoretical implication regarding agenda-setting function is that online users exposed to candidate websites are more likely to learn campaign agenda than traditional media users.

In addition, the two path models indicated that candidate website agenda in the campaign initial phase had some significant direct agenda-setting impact on the public's agenda, and the agenda-setting impact persisted throughout the 2000 presidential campaign period. This finding might indicate that a political candidate who wants to run a website needs to focus on direct website strategies to reach online users, as well as provide news releases for the traditional news media. Finally, the present study employing intermedia agenda-setting focus points out that today news media in a multi-channel communication environment still have a high content uniformity. Thus, this study might imply that the amount of political information increased by new technologies does not guarantee the quality of news content. However, the present study did not support the amount of news output as a predictor variable to examine the level of news consonance, and did not find any consistent relationship between the level of consonance and the level of agenda-setting function.

INTERMEDIA AGENDA-SETTING IN THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: THE INFLUENCE OF CANDIDATES' WEBSITES ON TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The intent of this analysis is to offer further insight into the processes associated with news selection among media organizations. In fields using agenda-setting research, the agenda of the news media recently has become a principal focus of attention in the agenda-setting process (Protess & McCombs, 1991). Especially, a key question of agenda-setting, "who sets the media's agenda?" has revived an interest in the flow of news stories and story ideas among the news media.

Since White's classic gatekeeper study (1949), there have been concerns about how the issues in institutional media systems are created (e.g., Cobb & Elder, 1971; Robert & McCombs 1994; Rogers, Dearing, & Bregman, 1993). The greatest attention has been paid to the relationship among media, the intermedia-agenda function. For example, based on the concept of an intermedia-agenda function, Roberts and McCombs (1994) found that the news agendas of different news organizations have some impact on each other. However, the inquiry into the intermedia-agenda function has been centered around the traditional media,

mainly newspapers and television. The current study recognizes a necessity to consider how new media incorporates new ways of information exchange in terms of intermedia agenda-setting function.

During election periods, political parties or candidates conduct their campaigns not only in the streets and on traditional media such as TV and newspapers, but also in cyberspace. The use of websites in election campaigns has been considered as an innovation in political practices. Since the 1996 political campaign, the political uses of the Internet have been examined as a significant means of political information exchange (Hacker, Howl, Scott, & Steiner, 1996; Whillock, 1997). To mobilize supporters through cyberspace, political candidates have begun to convey their voices "on the net." Today nearly all candidates have an online strategy. They have established a website where a variety of information concerning the party's candidates, manifesto and campaign can be obtained.

Internet networks can also influence the public's exposure to information (Bikson & Panis, 1996; Whillock, 1997). They can create opportunities for individuals and groups to affiliate and to participate in civic affairs and public life. Further, Internet users' active involvement in political campaigns has been reported

(Hacker et al., 1996; Whillock, 1997). For example, Whillock (1997) notes, "Internet users are active rather than passive information gatherers and online social networks they form reinforce the use of that information" (p. 1211). Given the growth of Internet campaigning as an alternative media channel and the role of online information user as an opinion leader, Internet campaigning should be considered very important as a channel of communication and source of information.

Nevertheless, cyberspace as a major information source over public and other media has been scarcely studied. Much has been said and written about the outlines of website and its own implication in social and political life (Bobbitt, 1995; Corrado, 1996; Tedesco, Miller, & Spiker, 1999). Not much has been said or written about specifically how the new technologies will affect the flow of information in relation to other media channels. This study of intermedia agenda-setting examines political campaign websites as a potential source shaping or interacting with the traditional news media's agenda.

Journalists are constantly looking for a news source to provide context. In the source-reporter relationship, being a major source might place the source in a strategic position to influence the agenda of the news media and, finally, the agenda of the public. Therefore, the election

campaigner will seek to persuade the mass media to cover those issues that work in his or her favor. It is public relations (PR) that often sets the agenda for the mass media (Cameron, Sallot, & Curtin, 1997; Gandy, 1991; Turk, 1991). Despite the considerable impact of news sources as PR, little attention has been given to the process of issue making in news media and organizational or ecological transactions amongst the news media. Knowing the predilection of editors for campaign news, communication strategists can build more effective media strategies to exercise their own political influence.

As the typical newsroom has increased Internet connections, journalists now use the Internet as frequently and as easily as they use the phone lines (Middleberg, 2001). According to the annual Middleberg/Ross study of the media in the wired world, reporters' and editors' use of the Internet to research stories, find new sources, receive press releases and information, update breaking news, interview sources, and engage in a dialogue with readers has reached record-levels for the past seven years (Middleberg, 2001). Thus, in terms of PR, the Internet could be an effective communication tool to impact news media promulgating and positioning a value.

It has been reported that bureaucratic, official sources of information, such as news releases and other

public information handouts, substantially influence news media stories (Fishman, 1980; Gandy, 1982; Jeffers, 1977; Turk, 1991). News sources, such as the President and state government agencies, which have been considered important in setting the tone of news content, have also been studied in terms of agenda-setting function (Gilberg, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1991; Turk, 1991). Therefore, this investigation focuses on news releases issued by each presidential candidate's website, assuming that web campaigning might serve as an important medium influencing the news agenda of different news organizations, such as newspapers and television news. In dealing with the intermedia agenda-setting function regarding the 2000 presidential campaign news coverage, the candidates' presidential campaign agendas established by their political websites are compared to traditional media agendas. That is, the present study, in terms of PR, examines the direction of influence or intermedia convergence of issue agendas during the 2000 presidential election campaign.

Of concern in the theory of agenda-setting is how the rise and fall of the coverage of issues in the mass media is related to the public agenda. To see how the intermedia agenda-setting process is related to the salience of public agenda, this study traces the path of the media agenda, as it matriculates to public agenda. Thus, this

analysis partially returns to the assumption proposed in the original agenda-setting hypothesis in examining the relationship between each media and the public. This approach should bring to the surface some of the implications of the Internet as a new source involved in the agenda-setting function.

According to Wanta (1997a), the topic of media difference in agenda-setting has also been discussed as to optimal time lag. Although there have been some considerations of optimal time lag for agenda-setting effects to occur (e.g., Wanta, 1997a, 1997b; Winter & Eyal, 1981), the precise time frame has not been determined. Nevertheless, agenda-setting studies, as Wanta (1997b) notes, rarely attempt to simultaneously examine differences in time lag for different mass media. Thus, this study seeks to determine the optimal time lag for agenda-setting for each media during the 2000 presidential campaign. Since the time frame of the website as a new agenda setter has never been studied, this research focus will be an exploratory trial.

Further, the issue of consonance is examined in this study. Given the daily cross-checking by different media organizations, we can expect that there might be a high degree of similarity between how one mass medium covers an issue and the amount of coverage given to the same issue agenda by other media. Since presidential campaigns do

receive the greatest amount of media coverage, political campaigners are concerned about the media's impact on the way their campaigns are run and covered. The advantage of each news media, mainly television and newspaper, has been documented. Berkman and Kitch's study (1986) show that the print media are more powerful in shaping campaign agenda while network news is directed at national audiences beyond audience selectivity.

However, the media function in shaping the nature and scope of campaign coverage should be considered to understand fully the power of the media in setting news agenda for the public. For example, if all newspapers highlight certain campaign news agendas and do not emphasize other agendas, the news agendas accentuated by the newspapers might show greater agenda-setting function for the public. In addition, the candidate who plays up the newspapers' agendas might build much more effective PR strategies in shaping public opinion than the other candidate having campaign agendas that are not congruent with media agendas. Thus, in terms of media effect, the present study argues that the uniformity or consonance of media contents should be examined to evaluate the impact of media over election campaign.

In sum, this study suggests several research areas to legitimize the study of intermedia agenda-setting among

new media and traditional media. First, a political entity working on the Internet has increased chances to reach voters and to interact with traditional news media; thus, the focus of new media as information source is mentioned in the concerns of agenda-setting function. In seeking to supply information and exert opinion influence, contemporary political candidates look to widen their reach by employing computer-assisted technologies, especially those that are Internet-based. The relationship between new media and traditional media deserves attention since much information travels widely throughout the Internet and World Wide Web, eventually breaking into the mainstream news media.

Second, the present investigation of new media's impact as an active creator of political reality focuses on how political agendas emerged into the news media during the 2000 presidential election campaigns. Instead of looking at media agenda as a given, this study examines the relationship among media in dealing with issue agendas, something called intermedia agenda-setting. Further, to trace patterns of media influence, this study is concerned with how differently each media impacts the public agenda. Monitoring the flow of political agendas from media to the public might help to understand the process of public opinion and how information networks established through media are highly conducive to the spread of information.

As the Internet campaigns become an important news source for those who track the development of issues, the analysis of the relationship between the political agenda in website and the public agenda might help researchers to understand the role of new media in shaping public opinion.

Third, because of its decentralized structure, the study of the impact of new media with techniques, which were used to measure traditional media, have posed great challenges to media scholars who are seeking precise usage figures for the Internet. Therefore, by focusing on the websites as an agenda setter over other media and public, the study of intermedia agenda-setting might help to fathom the impact of new media, directly or indirectly. As Grant (1996) notes, traditionally, most media effects studies have shared a common independent variable: a quantitative measure of exposure to a medium or message. However, scholars have difficulty measuring the amount of new media users' exposure. Therefore, research that focuses on the flow of new agenda might reveal the impact of the Internet by identifying the agenda setting function of new media over other media and public. This analysis might help PR practitioners develop more effective communication strategies in running political campaigns.

Finally, the research of intermedia agenda-setting is applied to examine the issue of media consonance. Since previous consonance researchers focusing on the

duplication of news stories ignored media consonance occurring in the frame of issue agendas, this study examines how each medium delivers news agendas and in what proportions. In terms of the original agenda-setting hypothesis, each medium is also compared to the public agenda to see the impact of media consonance.

In addition, the amount of media output is studied to predict the degree of media consonance. Market size and some constraints, such as time, space, journalistic norm, etc., have been used as triggering factors for media consonance. However, the factors are no longer applicable to the study of new media in this new information age since it is difficult to determine the market size of new media. In addition, some constraints contributing to media consonance are no longer applicable to all types of media.

This dissertation proceeds in the following manner. In Chapter 2, the significance of news in politics is explored in detail, followed by literature related to Internet campaigning. Chapter 3 examines the theory of agenda-setting, especially intermedia agenda-setting, exploring the impact of new media on traditional media to change their agenda building process. Further, the issue of consonance within each medium is reviewed in an effort to assess the impact of Internet campaigns on other news media and media difference in an agenda-setting function for public. Finally, research hypothesis and questions are

proposed. Chapter 4 details the method employed to assess intermedia agenda-setting and the degree of media consonance across media, Chapter 5 describes results, and Chapter 6 discusses implications of these results.

CHAPTER 2

Media and Democracy

In democracy, the public must be informed in order to fulfill the demands of self-governance. Mass media have been credited with delivering abundant information to the electorate, even though there are some negative arguments regarding the impact of media on politics, such as voter's low turnout, political indifference, etc. The emergence of mass media has transformed the language of politics and the logic of democracy. Mass media have not only changed public attitudes toward politics but also have fundamentally restructured the way politics is practiced and the way power is distributed (Berkman & Kitch, 1986).

Today, most political candidates rely on mass media to aid in their implementation of strategies in reaching voters. Scholars maintain that the mass media have served either as sources of social and political change or as causes of status quo maintenance (Bennet, 1988; Graber, 1993; Nimmo & Combs, 1988). In this sense, the media can be logically thought of as an institution that mediates between the state and society. As mass media play a significant role in the construction of political discourse, much of the research on political information has been concerned with developing more sophisticated campaign strategies and techniques. Berkman and Kitch (1986) describe three current general trends between media

and politics as follows:

> The media have gradually expanded their information-delivery function in all areas of social and political life. Political officials and political interests have become aware of the importance of the media in the political process and have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to manipulate them. Finally, political reality is defined for the citizen by what is covered by the news media. (p. 46)

In particular, the image of the candidate portrayed in the news media presentation has been shown to powerfully shape voters' perceptions of the candidate and eventually impact election results (Arterton, 1994). This focus is part of a branch of academic inquiry known as agenda-setting research. According to Kahan (1999), agenda-setting research demonstrates that the controllers of the media are seen as deciding the order of importance of issues and ideas in the public domain. In his perspective, mass media can be regarded as political actors involved in the day-to-day give and take of practical politics.

Understanding public opinion and how it is formed is crucial to public relations. Agenda-setting researchers have pointed out that the mass media are most influential in making people aware of an issue or topic (e.g., Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Wanta, 1997a, 1997b). As the agenda-setting

researchers suggest, if the media do shape what individuals consider important, it may also alter the basis of judgments about a presidential candidate. More specifically, by focusing on some issues, the news may influence the standards by which the candidate's performance is evaluated. Therefore, this chapter examines a relationship between the news and political arenas and looked at the implication of news media toward democracy.

Further, this chapter examines the current political phenomenon occurring through the Internet and explores the implications of web campaigning in relation to traditional news media. Since it gives media users more benefits, such as almost unlimited source access and more serious media exposure by user selection, new forms of media are partially taking over the role of traditional news channels in the flow of information. When the increasing number of "Netizens" is considered, the potential power of the Internet should be tremendous in all kinds of fields.

According to Morris (1999), "by early 1999, seventy-five million Americans over the age of sixteen were using the Internet, with 60 percent of them logging on every day" (p. 25). In the early 1996, more than 2,000 people had gone to Bob Dole's website to sign on as campaign volunteers (Meddis, 1996). According to Meddis (1996), the site recorded more than four million "hits" by Web

browsers. In his article, Dole's campaign press secretary Nelson Warfield notes, "the website has proven to be a very effective way for us to reach current and potential Dole supporters." The Pew Research Center's study (2000) also shows that 18% of all Americans and 28% of election voters went online for the 2000 campaign news. Today voters are freed from the old news channels (Morris, 1999) and, therefore, the Net will increase our capacity to participate in all levels of politics. Therefore, the focus of the computer-mediated communication might provide a wide range of views about the existence of new media power in the flow of information.

News and Politics

There is an intimate connection between news and politics (McQuail, Graber, & Norris, 1998). Media content can reinforce or undermine a political candidate's image while participating in his or her political campaign. "In politics and public policy, the principal form in which information flows is as news" (Manheim, 1998, p. 102). Through effective management of the news, constructed political reality can be shaped and influence achieved. So political campaigners might strive to advance their policy perspectives and preferences through the news media. As Berkman and Kitch (1986) indicate, the turning point in media coverage, from the point of view of the candidate,

comes when the major news media designate their beats and assign reporters to cover a specific candidate's campaign.

The news can be seen as "an arena of competition between interest groups of numerous kinds, for whom access to the news space on favorable terms is an important goal or a means to achieve their other organizational ends" (McQuail et al., 1998, p. 254). Thus, during election periods, rival political parties or candidates vie with each other to get journalists to make their issues the dominant themes of election coverage (Curran, 1996). According to the concepts of agenda-setting function and media priming, how news media handle these rival agendas can have a significant impact on the outcome of tight elections (Curran, 1996; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

As mentioned above, most successful contemporary campaigns need mass media inputs to influence candidate evaluations and highlight resonant issues. When campaign issues are carried through the media, the perceived impartiality of journalists also plays an important role in influencing the readers (Bland, Theaker, & Wragg, 1996). As to how people understand the news of politics, McQuail et al. (1998) describes as follows:

> The news media still have a unique value for politicians just because most voters perceive them as more independent and trustworthy sources than parties

> and their propaganda. In addition, there is plenty of evidence that voters look to the news media for guidance. (p. 253)

Given the impact of news media on politics, politicians need to gain news media's attention at almost any price in order to maximize audience exposure (Jamieson & Campbell, 1997). Especially, coupled with the decline in party identification as an explanation of voter candidate preferences, a rise in the importance of campaign issues has occurred (Joslyn, 1984; O'Keefe, 1975; West, 1997; Whillock, 1991). Politicians and news media channels have engaged in an uneasy game of tug-of-war, implicitly or explicitly, to determine who would maintain the most control over news content. The flow of campaign news agenda might serve as a clue to figure out who has the real power in a campaign. For example, if a candidate's issue agenda has some impact in leading the issue agendas of news media, the candidate might effectively organize the campaign discourse and promote citizens to vote on the basis of his or her issue preferences.

On the other hand, one of the most striking characteristics of national election coverage is the enormous agreement about what constitutes election news (Berkman & Kitch, 1986). The overall pattern of uniformity in campaign news has meant that Americans across the

country could be exposed to similar information. According to Berkman and Kitch (1986), the uniformity of election coverage shapes the perceived nature of the campaign and limits the range of discussion. Thus, given the impact of news uniformity over politics, scholars need to question why the media show content consonance, what impact the media might have in public's information processing, and how we can predict the degree of conformity.

New Media as Public Sphere

For mass media, news of politics has always been a crucial commodity. Democratic politics also needs a wide range of the news that is made available from diverse and antagonistic sources, even if not all news is good news for politicians (Curran, 1996; McQuail et al., 1998). According to Curran (1996), this claim was advanced in an assertive form based on the assumption that "truth would always triumph over error in an unrestricted debate" (p.97).

As we witness revolutionary changes in media technology, it is important to establish what kind of a democratic vision is associated with speculations about new media. A good starting-point for rethinking the democratic role of the new media is provided by Jurgen Habermas (1989), who offered a powerful and arresting vision of the role of the media in a democratic society.

His concept of public sphere has been widely referenced by scholars interested in the implications of our information age. Based on Habermas's thoughts, Curran (1996) defines a public sphere model as:

> ... a neutral zone where access to relevant information affecting the public good is widely available, where discussion is free of domination and where all those participating in public debate do so on an equal basis ... The media facilitates this process by providing an arena of public debate, and by reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion (pp. 82-83).

The most optimistic political perspective, according to Davis and Owen (1998), sees new media as a force in a democratic revolution, with media stimulating political interest and activism among citizens.

New media also allow politicians to bypass the traditional media and deliver their messages directly to the public. As new media provide a more informed citizenry, there will be a horizontal integration of individuals using computer networks that will facilitate discussions among citizens and between citizens and elites (Neuman, 1991). Based on openness and feedback between among citizens and between citizens and elites, interactive approaches to political communication might expand the

public sphere and shift the balance of power between them.

New communication technologies, especially those that are computer assisted, allow for the use of interactive means for delivering political information in interesting ways that can be rapidly changed as issue development demands. For example, since 1996, most presidential candidates' websites had several links, such as email, "Get Involved" for volunteers, and so forth, to increase interactivity between candidate and online user. Hacker (1996) says, "the more democratic a communication system, the more it will accommodate interactivity over mere connectivity" (p. 225). In turn, according to Hacker (1996), this interactivity between leaders and citizens regarding political issues enhances democracy by increasing political participation and improving citizens' political knowledge.

In terms of the importance of the amount of information carried by new media, O'Sullivan (1995) argues that computer-mediated communication has the potential to affect democratization through fast and inexpensive distribution of information. Net-based technologies also imply "an engagement or involvement in politics that refutes the notion of a passive consumption of 'top down' delivered political views, in favor of 'bottom up' discursive interaction in which the citizen not only

consumes but plays a part in the creation of politics" (Nixon & Johansson, 1999, p.135). As long as new media meet societal needs, they will continue to play indispensable roles in the sphere of political communication.

Mass media have been fundamental to the massive communications machinery for public relations (PR) (Blyskal & Blyskal, 1985). Thus, to make truly effective public relations programs, PR professionals are concerned with the media reports to monitor public opinion. Since news media is crucial to the rise and influence of all public relations (e.g., Blyskal & Blyskal, 1985; Cameron et al., 1997; Middleberg, 2001; Gandy, 1991; Turk, 1991), scholars have concentrated on identifying a dynamic relationship among media, in relation with the flow of information. The very fact that new media are available provides some legitimacy for this research to find a clear task in the democratic process. That is, as new modes of communication emerge, it would seem reasonable to speculate on their impact over the flow of information. Nevertheless, until recently, mass communication scholars have overlooked the entire field of computer-mediated communication as well as the Internet, mainly exploring traditional media (Morris & Ogan, 1996; Shaw & Hamm, 1997). As Morris and Ogan (1996) insist, this study also places the Internet as new medium within the context of other

mass media in a hope to develop and to refine the theory of agenda-setting.

Political Campaigns through Internet

Television's impact on elections has been immeasurable and is still the dominant medium for campaigns (Greenman & Miller, 1996; Pew Research Center, 2000). But the dependency on the traditional news media may change with the emergence of the Internet. According to the Pew Research Center (2000), Internet as primary sources for campaign news has been increased from 3%, 1996 to about 10%, 2000, while newspapers dramatically dropped 60% to 24%. Despite divergent claims about the existence of the impact of Internet campaigning, the Internet has been a part of a political phenomenon in which a huge amount of political information is exchanged between politicians and the general public or people specially interested in that information (Corrado, 1996; Hacker et al., 1996; Klotz, 1997; Whillock, 1997). Thus, as Whillock (1997) insists, the Internet has become a valuable source supplementing other traditional media such as newspapers and television in information dissemination and retrieval.

The year 1996 can be marked as the year of a new media politics in that political candidates began rushing to establish a presence "on the net" (Whillock, 1997). In the 1996 general elections, 50 of 68 senatorial candidates

had their own home pages (Klotz, 1997). The 1996 presidential election was also the first national context to recognize the power of the Internet as a mass medium. Since then, even all traditional media have made an effort to create elaborate online forums and archives to help voters track the campaign (Greenman & Miller, 1996).

Research on the Internet as a new medium capable of playing an important role in disseminating information to the electorate has attracted a great deal of attention. For example, measuring basic knowledge about politics by media difference people rely on, Davis and Owen's study (1998) shows that audiences for new media were more knowledgeable about political facts than the public overall. Their findings imply the use of new media channels may enhance the depth and breadth of political knowledge. It also seems to be worth paying attention to Greenman and Miller's statement (1996) of how candidates might use the website to deliver their political advertisements.

> More interactive than television commercials, more personalized than bulk mailing, more substantive than billboards, political websites are the wave of the future, customized spaces where office-seekers can outline their stand on important positions, expose the weaknesses of their opponents, and even collect campaign contributions. (pp. xii-xiii)

With the emergence of the Internet, candidates now have an additional means by which they can introduce themselves to voters. The Internet, as Takeshita (1997) suggests, is giving would-be communicators new opportunities to make their voices heard without depending on the traditional news media.

Candidates' political websites are also accessible news sources for the traditional news media. According to Whillock (1997), candidates in 1996 routinely sent press releases via their home pages and often directly to journalists' e-mail addresses in an effort to frame campaign issues to their advantage. According to the Pew Research Center (2000), while more than half of the 2000 election news consumers said they went to one of the major news organizations' websites, such as CNN, NBC, etc, about 20% relied on more specialized sources such as political websites, candidate site, issue-oriented sites, and local government sites. Since most major newspapers and television stations are connected to the Internet (Noble, 1996), members of the traditional media can also stop by a candidate's online campaign press gallery to pick up the daily briefing and the day's digital quality video and audio clips, or simply find out where the candidate is going to be.

An endeavor has been made to examine the outlines of

political campaign websites by systematically observing them (e.g., Bucy, D'Angelo, & Newhagen, 1999; Corrado, 1996; Magolis, Resnick, & Tu, 1997; Tedesco et al., 1999). Such studies, however, have been limited to the Internet itself as a medium. Little attention has been given to a dynamic relationship among media or the role of new media related to traditional media. The growth in the development of on-line campaign resources suggests that the Internet may serve as new source of information for the traditional news media, as well as for the public directly. Thus, the development of intermedia agenda-setting research associated with Internet communication could illuminate the changing role of both new media and traditional news media in a contemporary mass democracy. Based on this intermedia agenda-setting approach and the importance of political campaigning through the Internet, the present study examines whether there is an intermedia agenda-setting function for campaign news among three different media (Internet, television, and newspapers), and the impact of new media on the public's agenda.

Internet Campaign as Public Relations

The mass media set the agenda for public debate on every issue. But only a few studies provide an account of media reality in which a few objects and selected attributes are highlighted. Certain classes of sources

have been identified as being more preferred in news production than others. For example, some studies have revealed that bureaucratically supplied information comes to dominate mass media channels (Fishman, 1980; Nimmo, 1978; Sigal, 1973). That is, there is little doubt that the center of news generation is the link between reporter and official (Schudson, 1996).

Regarding journalists' acceptance of source material, scholars have studied the materials that sources produce (Abbott & Brassfield, 1989; Berkowitz, 1987; Cameron et al., 1997; Morton, 1986). According to these researchers, most news that journalists accept originated with routine channels, such as press conferences and press releases, although some contradictory findings occur. Based on literature reviews, Carmeron et al. (1997) suggest there are two prediction factors for use of information subsidies: source credibility (e.g., personal knowledge of the source, prestige of the source) and resource constraints (e.g. size of news staff, size of newshole). According to them, for instance, "the smaller the news staff and the larger the newshole, the more material tends to be used" (p. 137).

The studies of agenda-setting, on the other hand, have expanded an analysis of the relationship between journalists and their sources into an examination of the

effectiveness of public relations, based on the dependency of the news media on their sources. In her study of the impact of public information offices on the news content, Turk (1991) shows strong evidence for the agenda-setting function of government agencies' news releases on news media content. According to her study, news contents examined do reflect the agenda of the public information officers' news releases. Weaver and Elliott (1984), who were concerned with an agenda-building stage, also found that the news coverage generally reflected the agenda of city council. In addition, Hale's study (1978) supports the notion that the agendas of primary news sources and the media are congruent. According to him, the newspapers placed stress on the same types of decisions as the California Supreme court's own news release.

The President of the United States as a major source of national news has also been examined (Gilberg et al., 1991; Rutkus, 1976). Rutkus (1976) researched televised press conferences and direct televised addresses on the national agenda, while Gilberg et al. (1991) studied the State of Union address on the press agenda. Both studies found the President to be the nation's number one newsmaker.

On the other hand, in the period of presidential election campaigns, presidential candidates, mainly

Republican and Democratic candidates, could easily become one of the major sources in the daily flow of news. Each of the campaign stories of presidential elections is characterized by a rapid convergence of media attention, during which it seems that all media channels as well as conversations on the street are filled with the story. According to Gans's study (1979), even challenging presidential candidates sometimes obtain more space and time than incumbents.

In a world of PR, information is an important input in the production of influence. It is the goal of all PR sources to influence people's decisions by changing the stock of information. Today news media are primary means for the delivery of information with highly controlled access to target audiences. Although PR can generally influence public opinion without the blessings of the press, the news media is presently and increasingly lending its weight to PR. That is, today much of the news coming from newspapers and television is heavily influenced and slanted by public relations people (Blyskal & Blyskal, 1985; Cameron et al., 1997; Turk, 1991; Jamieson & Campbell, 1997).

Leon Sigal's study (1973) shows 58.2%, out of 1200 stories of two elite newspapers analyzed, were identified as coming through routine bureaucratic channels (official

proceedings, press releases and conferences, and nonspontaneous or planned event). According to Blayskal and Blyskal (1985), "overall, maybe half of a newspaper's contents, including hard news as well as softer feature news, is initiated by a press release or by a PR man giving a story tip to a journalist" (p. 28). It means news media is increasingly reliant on PR sources for news.

Today PR has also been influenced by a rapid growth of the Internet, manifesting new communication trends regarding speed and access and new rules of interaction. PR, in the political sphere, has grown into an enormous cyberspace persuasion machine that influences the issues people support, the politicians an electorate elect, and the sophisticated communications network connecting the most powerful elements of our society (Middleberg, 2001). The 2000 Middleberg/Ross study regarding journalists' cyberspace activities related to news making process reveals that journalists are using the Internet more than ever in the news making processes. According to the results, 76% of survey respondents use the Internet in finding new sources and experts, 73% in finding press releases, and 92% in article research (Middleberg, 2001). Thus, if public relations experts do not consider how to keep up with communicating via cyberspace, they will be neglecting a significant and possibly prominent means of

communicating with the media in the future.

During election periods, political candidates can build and keep awareness and momentum by releasing campaign news through their own websites. In addition, the wide and rapidly growing amount of information is kept in database, and accessible via search engine. The database might be important new sources of information for those who track the development of issues. When the archival power of the Internet is recognized, the website campaigns could be a valuable tool to make more efficient campaign strategies. By influencing news media, the candidate's web campaigning might create a favorable public opinion toward his or her campaign developments. Therefore, the current study examines the 2000 presidential campaign agenda conveyed through the Internet. Focusing on a bandwagon tendency among the media, this study explores how the news media converge on a campaign story. News releases through candidates' websites, in terms of the public relations to facilitate the work of journalists, are studied to examine how they impact campaign news in newspapers and broadcasts.

The degree of news media dependence on candidates' websites is the key variable in understanding the impact of website campaigning as public relations. Therefore, the greater the dependency, the greater the likelihood that website campaigns will have an effect on the flow of

national political campaign news. This study hypothesizes that the issue agendas presented in the news releases of candidates' websites turn up as the subsequent agenda of campaign activities and issues covered by other news media. That is, the more dependent news media are on having the election news of candidates' websites, the more influence the websites will have on other news media.

CHAPTER 3

Agenda-Setting in New Information Age

A strategic communicator begins by developing, testing, and refining issue positions (Manheim, 1998). Issue positions must be framed to maximize the chances of building a powerful alliance to enhance the likelihood of achieving the campaign's objectives. In terms of the purpose of political alliances, Manheim (1998) claims, "the most obvious is to enhance the likelihood of obtaining the overall objective by creating a large and powerful group of supporters for the desired outcome" (p. 102). To accomplish these ends, contemporary political campaigners attempt to control news coverage by securing media access since news media reach large audiences with a great speed (Berkman & Kitch, 1986; Jamieson & Campbell, 1997; Manheim, 1998).

New media created by revolutionary progress in information technology has facilitated political engagement, as they provide more information with online media users or information retrievers (Corrado, 1996; Whillock, 1997). New media also become the catalyst for an ongoing dialogue between campaigners and news media or politicians and citizens by stimulating political interest and activism among citizens. In addition, new media intensify media competition and destabilize established

media structures and relationships (McQuail et al., 1998). New media as a powerful information resource to public and other media deserve academic attention. Thus, this study examines how the new communication environment facilitated by new media involves in information processing of other traditional media and public.

The study of agenda-setting explores the ability of news media to help shape public thinking about the political process (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Ferguson, 2000). News media have been confirmed to have an agenda-setting function that helps direct the public's attention to specific issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Protess & McCombs, 1991). In particular, some scholars have suggested the importance of media's role involved in the agenda-setting function as a consensus-building device (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990; Shaw & Martin, 1992). According to Gurevitch and Blumler (1990), "democracy requires that the mass media engage in meaningful agenda setting, identifying the key issues of the day, including the forces that have formed and may solve them" (p. 270). As its importance in the democratic process has become increasingly clear, the study of agenda-setting function must expand to including the study of new media that has potential significance for the dynamic relationship between media, public, and

politicians.

First, this chapter offers a typology to understand recent agenda-setting research. Next, to see the flow of issue agendas among media, the study examines intermedia agenda-setting (Internet, television, and newspaper). Finally, the concept of media consonance is studied to understand the degree of content uniformity each medium had on the 2000 presidential campaign news and to see the relationship between the degree of consonance and the agenda-setting function.

Typology of Agenda-Setting Research

News media environment with new technologies and a radical rethinking of the original agenda-setting concepts have diversified the area of agenda-setting research in terms of research focus, methodology, and so forth. In spite of the diversified agenda-setting research areas, there has been little attention on the field of agenda-setting research in a systematic frame. A scientific body of knowledge designed to describe things and to explain why events occur has produced a method of organizing and categorizing things called a typology (Reynolds, 1971). In addition, the typology might give a clear viewpoint of a researcher's focus by organizing and classifying a researcher's conceptual construct. Thus, this study offers a typology to provide clearer understanding of current

agenda-setting research.

As shown in Figure 1, previous agenda-setting studies can be categorized into four groups based on two factors: the focus of media channel (intermedia or intramedia) and the focus of measurement (media content or public reaction), although these four patterns sometimes complement and overlap with each other.

Agenda building. Agenda-building processes, introduced by Cobb and Elder (1971), "are concerned with how issues are created and why some controversies or incipient issues come to command the attention and concern of decision makers, while others fail" (p.905). In this process, as Scheufele (2000) notes, the agenda carried by news media is considered the dependent variable.

- Intermedia agenda-setting: The intermedia-focused study is concerned with how several mass media interact with each other in the process of news selection. The "gatekeeper" studies traditionally view news content as the result of an editor's subjective and individual action (Gandy, 1991). However, a reexamination of gate-keeping and news values in media could well reveal the agenda-setting function among the mass media at the structural level. More detailed discussions and research trends are reviewed in the following section.
- Intramedia agenda-setting: In these studies, the

focus of research is on single media channel or media as a general and abstract term. These studies are concerned with outlining some models of newsmaking, a way of looking at and depicting events. There have been diverse conceptualizations of the news process, such as the "mirror model" referring to a reflection of reality (Graber, 1989), the critical perspective which regards press as a reproductive means of ideology based on Marxian analysis (Horkheimer, 1972; Marx & Engels, 1947), and the social interactive perspective focusing on the relationship between source and journalist (Sigal, 1973; Tuchman, 1978), etc. These processes are related to the media's agenda building process and usually are limited to a single media channel or go beyond the relationship among news media.

Agenda-setting. This process explores the power of the media in shaping public thinking. The studies of agenda-setting function usually hypothesize a positive relationship between the media agendas, the independent variable, and the public agenda as the dependent variable.

- Multiple focused agenda-setting (media difference/aggregate): These studies examine sets of news agenda from a diverse media and public agenda. Since McCombs and Shaw's seminal study (1972), most agenda-setting researchers have focused on multiple news media in

which a measured and ranked public agenda was compared with contents from television, newspapers, and news magazines, etc. One dominant research trend used a mix of news media agenda (e.g., McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Rogers & Chang, 1991). The primary focus of the research has been television and newspapers because these are the dominant channels for news. However, other studies (e.g., Benton & Frazier, 1976; McClure and Patterson, 1976; Wanta, 1997a) report a different agenda-setting role for each medium. The technical aspects of mass media require further research attention to the role of each medium involved in agenda-setting. For example, television provides more visual aspects while newspaper is more of a text-oriented medium. Given the media differences in delivering information, researchers need to question how mental processing of information varies across media.

• Single focused agenda-setting: These studies examine news agenda from one medium with aggregate public agenda data (e.g., Funkhouser, 1973; Iyengar et al., 1982; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Winter & Eyal, 1981). For example, Funkhouser (1973) researched three weekly news magazines to relate news media coverage to public opinion. Even though it seems to be difficult to imagine one single media channel user, the research focus might reveal a more specified relationship between media coverage and public opinion. As Iyengar et al. (1982) showed, the single-

media-focused studies can be a valuable approach in an experimental study concentrating on social interaction in carefully controlled investigation, so that the theory of agenda-setting can be much stronger by providing more tests for the law-like statements.

Intermedia Agenda-Setting across Media

An effort to understand the implications of mediated reality is inherent in agenda-setting theory. Since McCombs and Shaw's seminal research (1972), their assumptions have been detailed in diverse research and conceptual patterns. In doing research, however, most agenda-setting studies have used a mix of media in figuring out issue agendas. Some scholars have indicated that any causal relationship between the media coverage and the salience of topics in the minds of individuals in the audience has been generally accepted in agenda-setting studies (Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1975; Dearing & Rogers, 1996). However, Lang and Lang (1991) point to some conceptual problems of agenda setting. They argue that, "the whole question of how issues originate is sidestepped, nor is there any recognition of the process through which agendas are built or through which an object that has caught public attention, by being big news, gives rise to a political issue" (p.278). When a researcher is comparing aggregate media and public agendas, as Winter (1981) notes,

the researcher's finding could lead to spurious conclusions. When one medium has an agenda-setting function and the other does not, the researcher using aggregate media data might argue that there is the agenda-setting function on public agenda.

Some of the works, on the other hand, have outlined distinct agenda setting roles for different media channels (McClure & Patterson, 1976; McCombs, 1977a; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; Wanta, 1997a). For example, Shaw and McCombs (1977) report that newspapers had a major agenda-setting role on political issues with TV playing a lesser role. Although their study focused on a relationship between specific media and the public, not among media themselves, the findings could imply that each medium might be uniquely involved in the "agenda building" process.

Each day news media systems must decide which items to pass on to the public and which to reject or ignore. An audience's salience measured in agenda-setting interests is related to media contents preferred or selected by the media. Before a news agenda emerges, there may be some structural mechanisms involved in the news process. For example, television, according to Cronkite (1998), frequently repeats a newspaper story. Nevertheless, agenda-setting researchers have verified an agenda-setting

function without specifying the nature of the relationship among the mass media agendas. As Rogers et al. (1993) insist, most agenda-setting research has widely accepted the media agenda just as a given. There are only a few studies focusing on the process by which media contents are constructed (e.g., Atwater, Fico, Pizante, 1987; Gandy, 1991; Reese & Danielian, 1991).

Some research of the media leadership exerted by some news organizations over others has found that newspapers tended to influence the broadcast agenda for some stories more than the reverse (Atwater et al., 1987; Reese & Danielian, 1991). In this view, the news media can be regarded as one of the intermediary structures involved in news processing of other media. Reese and Danielian's study (1991), focusing on news coverage of cocaine issues, found that the print media, especially *The New York Times*, set the agenda for the television networks. Atwater et al. (1987) also support the agenda-setting function of newspapers on the broadcast agenda for statehouse stories. Refined gatekeeping studies, following by White's classic 1949 "Mr. Gates" study of the news selection, have suggested that wire services set the news agenda for newspaper by suggesting proportions within news categories (Gold & Simmons, 1965; McCombs & Shaw, 1976; Snider, 1967; Stempel, 1964).

The focus in previous gatekeeping research, however, has been shifted from the characteristics of wire editors, such as attitudes and opinions in their decisions on story selection, to environmental influences that affect the selection of stories from the wire (Gandy, 1991). McCombs (1977a), who points out the importance of the media process in agenda-setting, also says that a reexamination of gate-keeping and news values in media could well reveal the agenda-setting process among the mass media both at the level of objects (issue agenda) and of attributes (issue frame). In referring to the constraints of individual journalists and editors, Gieber (1964) points out that "the news story is controlled by the frame of reference created by the bureaucratic structure of which the communicator is a member" (p.178). Paul Hirsh (1977), who pursues the structuralist view, also suggests that the requirements of the organization far outweigh any individual gatekeeper's preferences.

Intermedia relationship studies have been conducted to see how the campaign issues fluctuate across the media. For example, being concerned with how issue salience among media is created, Roberts and McCombs (1994) investigated the interrelationship between newspaper coverage, television coverage, and political advertising in terms of intermedia agenda-setting during the 1990 Texas

gubernatorial campaign. Their study confirms political advertising as an agenda setter for both television news and newspaper coverage of the issues.

As to the context of organizational or structural requirements between journalists and their sources, two general explanations have been provided: social and economic (Gandy, 1991). Some scholars focusing on social explanations argue that individual journalists' attitudes and group influences work together to create a significant social effect in terms of information transmission (Gans, 1979; Hess, 1981). Regarding social interactions between reporters and their sources, Goldenberg (1975) argues that even a regular social interaction may cause the reporters to separate from their readership as the primary targets of their writing.

As important as social explanations may seem to be, it is also possible to reduce them to their basic economic considerations (Gandy, 1991). For example, Gandy (1991) says, press releases, briefings, and press conferences are seen to be economically efficient because they limit the risk, cost, time, etc. spent in covering news. Media sociologists (Breed, 1980; Gans, 1979), who have looked at the relationship among the mass media, have also documented that looking to other media organizations for confirmation of news judgment is an institutionalized practice.

As the literature mentioned above suggests, certain media might exert a triggering effect to stimulate other media issue agendas. As Reese and Danielian (1991) insist, this explanation obviously requires that the newsworkers know what others are doing. The intermedia focus is concerned with how differently mass media interact with each other in a structural dimension.

In despite of a close relationship among media in news processing, considerable political debate, as Kaid and Sanders (1984) note, exists over the question of which medium serves as the primary news source for the public. Thus, this study seeks to examine the relationship among media in building the salience of topics that make up an agenda of issues as conveyed to the public. In terms of intermedia agenda-setting, the present study examines how different media formulated the issue salience of the 2000 presidential campaign news. In particular, the focus for the analysis is on the campaign news coming from the traditional news media (television/newspaper) and new media (candidates' websites).

Diversity and Consonance in News Media

The objects and attributes of news agendas might be generated by the media's news values exerted in the processes of news selection. The news value news media carried have been studied in terms of the issue of news

consonance and diversity (e.g., Atwater, 1986; Carroll & Tuggle, 1997; Davie & Lee, 1993; Larson, 2000). A consonance in news coverage has been regarded as an indication of common news values and procedures shared by news media in gathering and presenting news (Carroll & Tuggle, 1997).

As the study focus of consonance and diversity has been on duplicated stories, however, little attention has been given to media frame in setting news agenda salience as illustrative of a common news judgment. Thus, this study argues that the difference and similarity in setting news agenda salience between news media determine the degree of diversity and consonance. This study measures the proportions of issue salience each media carried during the 2000 presidential election campaigns. This research says that the greater the media consonance, the greater the cross-lagged correlation coefficients within each medium. In addition, if mass media manifest a consensus in the opinion on issue agendas, the agendas will be more influential across media and to the public. Therefore, it is also valuable to examine within-media level to understand agenda-setting functions.

In the 1980's, advocates of deregulation argued that the introduction of new television technologies naturally produced diversity, and as a result, some media policies, such as the fairness doctrine and station ownership, were

changed or removed (Davie & Lee, 1993). However, Davie and Lee's research (1993), focusing on some new production technologies, found that the new production technologies contributed more to media consonance.

In contrast to traditional media, the Internet as new media may help to develop a healthy democracy by providing easily accessible information. This new media has made it possible to access information and to communicate with others from virtually any place and at any time that is convenient (Corrado & Firestone, 1996). However, a qualitative analysis of the new communication environment brought by the emergence of new media has been rarely examined. Therefore, this study raised the question of whether new media has contributed to a homogenization of news values in terms of the proportions of issue salience selected from each medium.

Providing diverse ideas in a democratic society could be a crucial point for electorates because it provides information for reasonable decisions. Nevertheless, many studies have demonstrated that political news is most likely to be associated with message consonance (e.g., Atwater, 1986; Larson, 2000). It is clear that journalists and other gatekeepers benefit from the relationships they establish with their sources best able to meet their needs (Gandy, 1991). Yet, the issue of diversity, in contrast with the issue of consonance, suggests that the greater

the choice of media the greater the public benefit. For example, Neolle-Neumann (1973) points out that the way news is collected and disseminated could effectively restrict the breadth and depth of selection available to citizens. Therefore, this study examines the relationship of issue agendas within each medium to explore the issue of media consonance, as well as across different kinds of media to see the flow of information.

Research in consonance and diversity. Researchers have compared media outlets to see how news media deliver different news values. An enduring concern in the study of media reports on issues is the degree to which news is standardized (Whitney & Becker, 1991). Earlier studies of intermedia influence also looked at the standardization of news stories among newspapers (Hirsch, 1977; McCombs & Shaw, 1976). More recently, Reese and Danielian's study (1991) shows that, generally, "newspapers look to other newspapers, and television networks monitor each other, with certain 'bellwethers' being traced by all on specialized issues" (p. 241).

Even Rogers and Chang's research (1991), examining three newspapers and three television networks, indicate that the number of news stories about the Ethiopian famine carried by the six news media were strikingly similar over time. According to Dearing and Rogers (1996), this

supports the idea that the media agreed on the news value of the event reported, indicated by the relative number of news stories they devoted to the issue, although they do not report exactly the same details about the event.

There have been studies to examine the factors influencing media consonance (e.g., Davie & Lee, 1993; Hirsch, 1977; Levin, 1971; Tuchman, 1978; Whitney & Becker, 1991). One type of consonance study involves looking at media markets to see how a competition among media causes media consonance. For example, Levin (1971) argues that the fewer the stations in the market, the greater the likelihood of duplication. In related research to the previous studies of market size and diversity issues of traditional media, Davie and Lee (1993) also concluded that the larger the market, the more stories that were unique.

The other type of media consonance studies examines some constraining factors to trigger media consonance (Hirsh, 1977; Tuchman, 1978; Whitney & Becker, 1991). That is, the degree of constraints could reduce the quantity and quality of news. Based on literature reviews, Whitney and Becker (1991) address tangible, concrete, and relatively well documented constraints, such as time, "news hole," or space, money, standardized sources, organizational policy, and craft norms. In terms of constraint factors over media contents, Gans (1979) states

that, "staff and time being in short supply, journalists actively pursue only a small number of regular sources who have been available and suitable in the past, and are passive toward other possible news sources" (p. 116). According to Whitney and Becker (1991), these various constraints could reduce the variability of news available to audiences.

In the original agenda-setting study by McCombs and Shaw (1972), campaign issues covered by five newspapers, two magazines, and two television stations showed a high degree of agreement across those media. Media consonance in news content was also considered by Noelle-Neumann (1973) as evidence of powerful media effects. She identified three characteristics of the news media that produce a scarcity of diverse perspectives: a) ubiquity - the media are virtually everywhere as sources of information; b) cumulation - the various news media tend to repeat stories and perspectives across different programs or editions, across different media, and across time; c) consonance - the congruence or similarities of values held by newspeople impacts the news content. She urged further investigation of those concepts to determine how media repetition shapes public opinion.

Although there have been some differences across media in issue salience dealing with news agenda, news content within a certain kind of media have shown some

similarity. Newspapers have been examined and found to be similar in the topics covered and in how those topics were treated (Donohue & Glasser, 1978; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Network newscasts have been also found to be very similar (Altheide, 1982; Hester, 1978; Lemert, 1974; Weaver, Porter, & Evans, 1984).

The exposure to news media with greater uniformity might result in greater agenda-setting effects, since the media makes the issues salient by giving more media attention. After all, the uniformity of issue salience over time and among media would influence "what issues to think about," which the agenda-setting function indicates. Thus, it is important to examine news representations as democracy's ultimate decision makers.

Information as a predictor for consonance and diversity. Election campaign stories have been characterized by a rapid convergence of media attention. Although network news' similarity, as Robinson and Sheehan (1983) claim, is assumed to extend to presidential campaign coverage, election coverage comparisons are usually made across media rather than within media. For example, researchers have focused on the relationship between television content and newspapers' coverage (Johnson, 1993a, 1993b; Johnson, Boudrean, & Glowaki, 1996; Tedesco, McKinnon, & Kaid, 1996), or among

television, newspapers, and news magazines (Kerbel, 1997).

Research evidence regarding the issue of consonance and diversity sometimes shows somewhat contradictory results. Some studies reveal similarities in the networks' campaign coverage of issues (Rudd & Fish, 1989), tone (Just, 1997), and horse-race focus (Johnson, 1993a, 1993b). According to Johnson's study (1993b), the three networks and the two newspapers showed similarity in horse-race coverage in the 1988 presidential primaries, although there were structural differences among the news media, such as visual and dramatic elements. Others point to significant differences among network campaign coverage (Kaid, Tedesco, & McKinnon, 1996; Lowry & Shidler, 1995). For example, Lowry and Shidler (1995) found between-network discrepancies regarding political biases. Kaid et al. (1996) also reported network differences in adwatches related to the 1988 and 1992 presidential campaigns. As yet, though, no comparisons have been made of how uniformly media produce the salience of campaign news agendas during a campaign. This study examines media consonance of campaign news coverage by comparing the issue salience provided by each medium. If the salience of news media does not change over time and among media, the media coverage might severely reduce the audience's exposure to diverse perspectives. Thus, the research focus

is on the correlation of media attention on certain issues at the same time. The study explores the degree of isomorphism between the hierarchy of campaign agendas among news media versus the relative amount of news coverage of those issues.

The uniformity of election news can be created by many of the factors discussed above. The studies of media consonance suggest that the media facing greater constraints and less market competition might have a difficulty producing creative news making and an abundant amount of information. However, it is not easy to define the size of media market and the level of competition for newly developed communication technologies, because of "time-space compression." For example, the researcher studying media consonance has a difficulty differentiating a candidate's website based on the size of the media market. How can he or she determine whether the website is included in local or national markets?

There might be inherent structural bias in campaign coverage that stems from the ability of information-delivery of a given medium. The media having fewer election stories might have the greater chance to produce highly consonant news. That is, the media, having fewer news stories, may have the greater possibility of paying attention to generally accepted media agenda. This also means that the greater the number of news stories, the

greater the choice of programming. When more choice of programming produces more diversity of news content, it could bring greater democratic benefits (Levin, 1971; Litman, 1979; Owen 1977, 1978). Thus, based on the assumption in which the outputs by media could be used to predict the degree of diversity, the current study hypothesizes that the rank order coefficients of news agenda between media are associated with the number of news items published. The examination of the amount of news output to see the issue of consonance and diversity might give further insight into new information technologies that brought a deluge of information, and their impact on the public.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the present research seeks to examine the intermedia relationships in news processing. In terms of the flow of information, Internet campaigning via this new information technology is studied in relation to traditional news media, through an analysis of intermedia agenda-setting function.

Based on the 2000 presidential election campaign, this study assumes that the presidential candidates' websites influence some traditional news media in reporting campaign news. This focus might give an organizational insight into the process of news making in our new information age. The study also examines the possibility of website campaigning as a means of public

relations. This inquiry might help to figure out how useful the Internet will be to PR professionals in the future, and to map out how the web has changed journalists' work in researching and reporting news.

The media-public interface still remains an important area of agenda-setting theory. Thus, the research focus between media agenda and public agenda might help us to figure out how news coverage gives salience cues to the members of the public. Further, to see what degree the news media agreed on the news values during the 2000 presidential general election campaign, the issue of media consonance is studied and examined in relation to the issue salience to the public. Finally, this study utilizes the amount of media output to predict the degree of media consonance.

This study will posit one research hypothesis and four research questions. The hypothesis is based on the argument advanced above.

During presidential election campaigning, presidential candidates have become a primary news focus in the daily flow of news (e.g., Cronkite, 1998; Gans, 1979; Jamieson & Campbell, 1997). In particular, the candidates' websites have been identified as important news sources for the traditional news media (Middleberg, 2001; Whillock, 1997). Thus, this study predicts that the

news agenda in candidates' websites turns up as the subsequent agenda of campaign activities and issues covered by other news media.

H1: Candidate websites exert an intermedia agenda-setting influence with traditional media.

Researchers have acknowledged the importance of Internet campaigning in disseminating information to the electorate (e.g., Corrado, 1996; Corrado & Firestone, 1996; Hacker et al., 1996; Klotz, 1997). Nevertheless, none of them has studied how the campaign agendas make their way to the public and how they influence public opinion. As an explorative study, the research question (RQ) 1 traces the flow of campaign agenda to the public in relation to other news media, and examines the impact of news agendas on public opinion via agenda-setting study.

RQ1: How do each presidential candidates' websites influence the public agenda?

Although the studies of news consonance have criticized uniformity of the news values, their focus has been limited to the news story itself (e.g., Atwater, 1986; Carroll & Tuggle, 1997; Davie & Lee, 1993; Johnson, 1993a, 1993b; Larson, 2000). Since media consonance occurring at structural news scheme might also restrict the breadth and depth of information available to the public, I posit a question about media consonance through an analysis of the 2000 campaign issue agenda salience.

RQ2: What degree of consonance did each medium manifest in the 2000 presidential campaign coverage?

There has been an effort to explain and predict news media consonance (e.g., Atwater, 1984; Carmeron et al., 1997; Davie & Lee, 1993; Whitney & Becker, 1991). In this new information age, the previous factors that explained and predicted media consonance may be no longer relevant. The emergence of new information technologies has provided an optimistic view that abundant information will contribute to better informed-citizens by giving a diversity of ideas (e.g., Corrado, 1996; Meddis, 1996; Middleberg, 2000). Thus, this study explores the amount of news output as a predictor for media consonance.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between the amount of news output and the degree of media consonance?

The studies of agenda-setting function have identified several contingent variables influencing agenda-setting function (e.g., audience's orientation, knowledge, etc.). Previous researchers were not concerned with how media frame for setting issue salience impact public agenda. Thus, this study explores the possibility of media consonance involved in the agenda-setting function.

RQ4: Is there any relationship between the degree of media consonance and public's issue salience?

CHAPTER 4

Research Design

A content analysis, the most widely accepted tool in analyzing media content of political campaigns (Kaid, 1996), was conducted to determine the 2000 campaign news agendas of newspaper, television, and candidates' websites. Beside the media contents chosen, the Gallup poll data (www.gallup.com/election2000/issues.asp) was also used to find highly significant news agendas. To answer the four research questions and the one hypothesis, each media's agendas were rank ordered and compared with other media agendas and the polling data about the public's issue salience.

Sampling

The first research focus was on two prestigious national newspapers: *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. These newspapers were chosen due to their significant impact on the public opinion and the time and money spent in accessing the data. For example, researchers have shown *the New York Times* and *the Washington Post* are important in setting the media agenda for national issues (Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Gans, 1979; Reese & Danielian, 1991). Beside these elite newspapers, the other two newspapers in regional markets were selected

to see how differently the newspapers react to other media agenda and how market differences influence the flow of news media agenda. The chosen newspapers for the local market were *The Houston Chronicle* and *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, which have the greatest circulation of any newspaper in the states of Texas and Wisconsin, respectively. Besides the time and money in collecting the data, consistent news availability was also considered in choosing these local newspapers. To collect newspaper articles related to the 2000 election campaign, *The Lexis-Nexus Academic Universe* was used. The keywords to search for campaign news articles of each newspaper were "presidential campaign" or "election" with the candidates' names (Gore and Bush).

The evening newscasts from three networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) were analyzed to compute the campaign news agendas of TV. After locating the stories in the *Vanderbilt Television News Archive Abstracts*, the present study analyzed the campaign related newscasts by viewing videotaped copies of the actual news stories.

For the candidates' websites agendas, this study examined the news release directory in the official websites that were established by the two presidential candidates, Al Gore and George W. Bush. The news releases

at Time 1 and 2 were fully downloaded by identifying their unique http addresses (URL). Because of data availability after election, the news releases at Time 3 were gathered through the Internet Archive (www.archive.org/collections/e2k.html). The "news release directory" containing news releases was the only daily-based news source on the candidates' websites operated by the two candidates, so it seemed to be the best source to ascertain the presidential candidates' agendas.

In the current study, the agenda of each medium was investigated for two 4-week periods. Time 1 monitoring period was September 5 - October 6, 2000; Time 2 period was October 7 - November 7. In each case, 7 days out of the 32 days were sampled for each of the two monitoring periods. The question of the appropriate "time frame" for analysis has not been settled, as Winter and Eyal (1981) indicate, although the temporal variable would appear to be crucial. The varied selection of time period to compare campaign agendas among news media might help elaborate how temporal variable influences agenda-setting process among media or between media and public. To trace further intermedia relationship and an optimal time lag, this study also selected the third time period from the second monitoring period. A random number table was used to choose the first day for analysis, so that the news

samples comprised 7 consecutive days, excluding weekend days: Time 1 period - September, 20 to 28, except 23 and 24; Time 2 - October, 12 to 20, except 14, 15; Time 3 - October, 27 to November, 6, except October 28, 29 and November 4, 5. Since some television networks do not air their evening news on the weekend, the two days were excluded to compare intermedia function.

In addition, to see what impact news media coverage had on the public agenda, three public opinion polls corresponding to the three time periods chosen in this study were collected through "polls & surveys" in *The Lexis-Nexus Academic Universe*. The first two surveys were conducted by *the CBS News* and *the New York Times* during the following periods: respectively, 09/27 to 10/01, 10/18 to 10/21, 2000. The last survey was conducted by *the CBS News* during 10/29 to 10/31, 2000. Following is the question used to gather public opinion in those telephone surveys: "What do you think is the single most important problem for the government--that is, the President and Congress--to address in the coming year?" As Dearing and Rogers (1996) note, the public agenda has been usually measured by public opinion surveys in which the subjects are asked to respond to such an MIP (most important problem question). Thus, the question used in the

collected data might indicate the relative position of the 2000 election issues on the public agenda.

Categories of the Media Agenda

As to a selection of news items, McCombs and Shaw (1974) argue that only heavy media emphasis on certain issues may move these issues onto individual agendas; minor issues appearing in the media may not reach the threshold for individual agendas. If we apply this basic notion of agenda-setting to the study of intermedia agenda-setting, only the salient issues of one medium may be transferred to the other medium.

To determine the campaign issue agendas of news media, this research content analyzed the news media contents and reviewed the July, 2000, Gallup poll results. The July data were the closest available for the official campaign period that included the diverse number of issues needed for this study. According to Dearing and Rogers (1996), "an agenda is a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time" (p.2). They also indicate the number of news stories about an issue of study usually measures the relative salience of an issue of study on the media agenda. In addition, they point out that the aggregated responses to such a most important problem question are a best measure of the public agenda. Thus, the news agenda frequently mentioned in both public

opinion survey and the chosen news media were selected as the media agenda for this study. The news agendas regarding political ads, TV shows, fundraisers, minorities, and world affair issues were dismissed due to the small number of news stories. Based on the results, the current study picked ten salient media agendas regarding the 2000 presidential campaign. The ten media agendas selected were public education, national economy, health care, Social Security, federal tax, handling budget, environment, national defense, energy policy, and crime (see Appendix A for the ten agendas and their keywords).

Measurement

To figure out the media's issue salience, this study attempted to measure the amount of each news agenda. For agenda-setting studies that have adopted content analysis, media content is usually operationalized as the number of some countable unit for a particular period of time (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Following typical agenda setting research, this research counted the aired time (sec.) of campaign news on television as related to the ten chosen agenda. Each televised campaign news story was considered as the unit for coding. The researcher and one graduate student studying political communication coded the stories. The coders were asked to identify the media agenda associated with the story of each newscast after watching

the collected newscasts. Then the coders classified the story into the ten campaign news agenda. On a sample of 20% of the newscasts, their intercoder reliability produced a perfect score.

As for newspaper and websites news agendas, the MS Word software program was used to count keywords related to the ten media agendas. According to Kaid and Wadsworth (1989), manifest content and quantification have been crucial concepts in content analysis to increase a more accurate description of the data. To have an objective description by analyzing manifest content like word(s), the use of the program seems to be highly reasonable. Following Roberts and McCombs's study (1994), this study also used "hit" as a measurement unit defined as "the frequency of a specific issue word and/or related issue words" (p. 256). Thus, each keyword, out of the ten agendas and their issue words in Appendix A, was entered into the program's "Find" feature in "Edit" and manually counted. For example, if "economy" is put into "Find what" box, the researcher can count how many the word ("economy") the text has by clicking "Find Next" continuously. In addition to a word-by-word analysis, the researcher manually examined the program's results for accuracy and context.

In previous research that focused on news stories,

consonance has been defined as the percentage of stories duplicated by two or more media channels on the same news day (Atwater, 1986; Davie & Lee, 1993). However, the current study, which focused on a media frame in setting news agenda rather than a duplication of each story, defined media consonance as a similarity in rank order proportion for media agendas. For example, if newspaper A and B had the same priority in setting up campaign agenda, it can be regarded as high consonant media. The level of consonance was measured by a rank-order correlationship assigned to news agenda between media. The study implied that the greater the correlation coefficient between media, the greater the level of media consonance.

Statistical Analysis

In a descriptive level, the time of campaign news broadcasted via the three national networks and the frequency of each specific issue (the measurement unit, "hit") was reported to trace the rank of each agenda and the issue salience carried by each media. The aired time and the number of "hit" measure the relative salience of an issue agenda on the media agendas. This descriptive analysis might also give some information of how each media transformed the importance of campaign news agenda over time.

Each monitoring period was compared to examine the

impact of intermedia agenda-setting. Following the most frequent method in data analysis for agenda-setting function, this study rank ordered the ten media agendas for the 2000 presidential campaign and then examined the cross-lagged correlations between media at two points in time. To make cross-lagged comparisons, this study used rank-order correlations (Speaman's *rho*) that summarize the level of agreement between media agendas.

Further, the Rozelle-Campbell baseline statistic was computed to determine the significance of the cross-lagged correlation coefficients in terms of directionality (Pelz & Andrews, 1964; Robert & McCombs, 1994; Tipton, Roger, Haney, & Baseheart, 1975). They maintain that the baseline statistics can be used for causal analysis since it includes autocorrelations and synchronous correlations. According to Pelz and Andrews (1964), to be statistically significant, the cross-lagged correlation coefficients should be larger than simultaneous correlations (the correlation of variable X and Y at certain time, and the correlation of X and Y with certain time interval). In most time series data, one of the best predictors of any variable is also its value at an earlier point in time (Granger & Newbold, 1986; Robert & McCombs, 1994). Thus, the cross-lagged correlations can be inferred in terms of other correlation coefficients. This baseline statistics has been used to trace an agenda-setting process (Robert &

McCombs, 1994; Tipton et al., 1975). The formula for the baseline statistic proposed by researchers is:

$$\frac{X_1/Y_1+X_2/Y_2}{2} \qquad \frac{\sqrt{(X_1/X_2)^2+(Y_1/Y_2)^2}}{2}$$

This formula has two autocorrelation over time for each variable for variable X and Y (X_1/X_2 and Y_1/Y_2) as well as two synchronous correlations at each of the two points in time ($X_1/Y_1+X_2/Y_2$).

In addition, the partial correlation analyses were conducted to measure the strength of the association between two variables, controlling for other variable(s). According to Cohen and Cohen (1975), the partial correlation coefficient and its square determines multiple *R* (Pearson correlation computed between the Y and $\hat{Y}$ values) by describing each independent variable's participation. The key question of this analysis, as Roberts and McCombs (1994) indicate, is whether the second variable adds any predictive value.

CHAPTER 5

Results of Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted on the content analysis of the 2000 presidential campaign issues and the poll data to answer the research hypothesis and questions. First, the overview of the data is presented to identify the campaign agendas in each medium and their patterns over time. "Hit" and time were used as units of measurement for this purpose. Next, Pearson *r*, Spearman's *rho* correlation, partial correlation, the Rozelle-Campbell baseline, and path analysis were used to assess the hypothesis and questions.

Campaign Agenda in Media

In a descriptive level, the frequency of each specific issue ("hits") and the time of campaign news aired (seconds) are reported to see the salient 2000 presidential campaign agenda in news media. This data analysis also revealed the issue salience of each medium and the agenda pattern across time.

Websites' campaign agenda. A total of 280 news stories were identified and analyzed in the two official candidates' websites (Gore-139, Bush-141). Gore's website produced 6,524 hits related to the ten news agendas out of 109,737 words, while Bush's web had 3,415 hits out of 81,065 words. Gore's website had a larger text size and

more agenda relevant keywords than did Bush's website.

The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate that the most salient issue in Al Gore's site was "health care" (1,654 issue hits out of 7,112 hits or 25% of the total hits), followed by "budget handling" (1,178 hits, 18%), "Social Security" (819 hits, 13%), "taxes" (766 hits, 12%), and "economy" (587 hits, 9%). These five issues encompassed 77% of Gore's campaign issue agendas. In particular, "health care" was the most salient issue across three different time periods (25% of the total issue hits), while "defense" was the least salient issue in Gore's website (2% of the total hits). Al Gore's website also manifestly reduced the number of campaign issue words across time (2,397 hits to 3,453 and 1,900).

Table 1 also shows the pattern of issue salience across time. For example, the salience of "budget handling," "energy policy," and "defense" declined, whereas "economy," "education," and "environment" agendas increased over time. The campaign issues of "taxes," "Social Security," and "crime" were more emphasized at Time 2 (or in the middle of official campaign period) than at Time 1 and Time 3.

Generally, Bush's website had less total issue coverage over time (1,262, 1,226, and 927 hits,

respectively). As shown in Table 2, George W. Bush's website also had the most issue coverage on "healthcare" (748 hits out of 3,415 or 22% of the total hits). "Social Security," "budget handling," "education," and "taxes" followed (respectively, 602 hits or 18%, 538 hits or 16%, 431 hits or 13%, 425 hits or 12%). These five campaign issues covered 81% of the Bush campaign agenda appearing on his website. According to Table 2, the issue salience of "budget handling," "Social Security," and "defense" increased over time, while the percentage of "healthcare," "energy policy," and "environment" declined.

The data analysis of the two candidates' issue agendas indicated that each candidate manifested different issue priorities over time. For example, Gore's website placed less emphasis on "budget handling" and "defense" over time, but increased emphasis on "environment." Bush's website placed more emphasis on "budget handling" and "defense," but less focus on "environment." The issues the two candidates' websites showed the greatest differences in agenda proportions were "Social Security" (Gore-13% vs. Bush-18%), followed by "education" (Gore-9% vs. Bush-13%).

On the other hand, Gore and Bush's websites showed some similar patterns in "energy policy," "crime," and

"taxes." For example, the "energy policy" declined on both websites, whereas "crime" and "taxes" gained greater emphasis at Time 2 compared to either Time 1 or Time 3. Both candidates emphasized "healthcare" among the ten issues featured (Gore-25%, Bush-22%). But, in Gore's website, "healthcare" was predominant in terms of the number of hits across three different time periods, whereas "healthcare" in Bush's website declined over time (27% to 24% and 12%, respectively).

The similarity measures of issue proportions across time, as shown in Table 3, revealed that Gore's website had more similarity in setting agenda salience across time than Bush's website. In terms of agenda salience, Bush's website manifested dissimilarity between Time 1 and Time 2. As the presidential Election Day neared, however, each website revealed greater similarity than at other time periods (respectively, Gore - .848, Bush - .716).

Table 4 reveals how the two presidential candidates' websites addressed the ten campaign agendas in each time period. As Table 4 reveals, "healthcare" had the most issue salience in each time period, but the coverage proportion of "healthcare" decreased over time. On the other hand, the agenda proportion of "Social Security" and "economy" increased over time. In particular, "Social

Security" dramatically changed from position 7 at Time 1 to position 2 at Time 2 and Time 3 in terms of agenda rank order. Generally, "crime," "environment," and "defense" received less emphasis than other issues in the 2000 presidential campaign periods.

National newspapers' campaign agenda. The greatest issue coverage in national newspapers, as shown in Table 5, was given to "healthcare" (1,123 issue hits out of 6,923 or 16% of the total hits), followed by "education" (1,117 hits, 16%), "economy" (879 hits, 13%), and "budget handling" (794 hits, 12%). In particular, the "education" issue was ranked as the most salient agenda at Time 3 (670 hits out of 2,640 hits at Time 3 or 25% of the total hits). The most dramatic change in rank order over time was of "energy policy" (1 at Time 1 to 10 at Time 2 and Time 3).

Like the "healthcare" issue in the websites mentioned previously, national newspapers reduced the coverage of "healthcare" over time, although the issue was the most salient issue overall. As with candidate websites, the proportion of "Social Security" emphasis in national newspaper's coverage increased over time (3% of the total hits at Time 1 to 12% at Time 3). In contrast with the "economy" issue in candidate websites, newspaper coverage of "economy" dramatically decreased over time (19% of the

total hits at Time 1 to 8% at Time 3). The "crime," "environment," and "defense" issues were also the least emphasized in the national newspapers.

Local newspapers' campaign agenda. As Table 6 reveals, local newspapers also had the greatest emphasis on "healthcare" compared to other issues (350 hits out of 2,485 total hits or 14% of total hits). Like "education" coverage in national newspapers, the "education" issue in the local newspapers was also rank ordered as the second in emphasis. Both national and local newspapers placed more emphasis on the "education" issue than the candidates' websites.

Compared to "energy policy" emphasis in national newspapers and candidate websites, local newspapers placed more attention on the "energy policy" (12% out of total hits). But the "Social Security" issue, which was ranked as 8th in the total agenda salience, received less attention in the local newspapers than in candidate websites or national newspapers.

Televisions' campaign agenda. As shown in Table 7, television networks placed the greatest issue coverage on "energy policy" (1,170 seconds out of 9,120 or 19% of the total campaign newscasts), followed by "economy" (1,551 seconds, 17%) and "budget handling" (1,448 seconds, 16%).

But the television news media also showed different issue priorities over time. For example, the "energy policy" issue was the predominant issue at Time 1, "education" was the most salient issue at Time 2, "Social Security" was most emphasized at Time 3 (respectively, 45%, 38%, 35%).

"Defense," "crime," and "environment" were the least-covered campaign issues by the three networks. The number of issues covered via television was increasingly diversified as the Election Day drew near. Only the "economy" and "education" were covered by the networks in all three time periods chosen in this study. The coverage proportion of the "economy" issue declined over time, while the "budget handling," "taxes," "Social Security," and "environment" increased over time.

According to the similarity measures of the campaign agendas across time, the websites had the more similar agenda salience across time than other news medias. In particular, the campaign agenda salience of the websites between Time 2 and Time 3 showed the greatest similarity (r = .89). The campaign agendas for television were found to have the most dissimilarity across time. The fact that the Euclidean value for dissimilarity measure between Time 1 and Time 3 was greatest indicated the networks dramatically changed the salience of campaign agenda across the election campaign periods.

Intermedia Agenda-Setting: Website vs. Traditional News Media

Hypothesis 1 examined the intermedia agenda-setting impact of candidate websites on the traditional news media. It predicted that candidate websites exert an intermedia agenda-setting influence with traditional media. To address this hypothesis, this study examined the relationship between each candidate's website and the traditional news media, national newspapers and television, and the websites as new media and the traditional news media.

Each candidate website vs. Traditional news media. Each candidate website was compared to the traditional news media to assess its impact in setting the media's 2000 campaign issue agendas. This analysis was examined by using Spearman correlations and Rozelle-Campbell baseline statistics.

As shown in Figure 2, the correlation coefficients between Gore's website at Time 1 or Time 2 and the traditional news media revealed some statistical significance with national newspaper coverage at Time 2 (+.58) and at Time 3 (+.73). However, since the cross-lagged correlation between national newspaper coverage at Time 2 and Gore's website at Time 3 showed some statistical significance, both Gore's website and national

newspaper coverage at Time 2 and Time 3 were reciprocal. In addition, the Spearman's *rho* between national newspaper coverage at Time 2 and Gore's website at Time 3 revealed greater statistical significance than the cross-lagged correlation between Gore's website at Time 2 and national newspaper at Time 3. Thus, the impact of Gore's website at Time 2 on national newspaper coverage at Time 3 was not clear as much as the relationship between Gore's website at Time 1 and national newspaper coverage at Time 2.

Further, because the correlation coefficient between Gore's website at Time 1 and newspaper agenda at Time 2 (+.58) exceeded the baseline (+.20), and the coefficient between Gore's website at Time 1 and newspapers at Time 3 (+.48) went greater than the baseline of +.28, it is concluded that Gore's website at Time 1 showed significant intermedia agenda-setting impact on national newspapers at Time 1 and Time 3.

The correlations between Gore's website and television coverage also revealed that Gore's website at Time 2 had statistical significance on the television agenda at Time 3 (+.89). The Rozelle-Campbell baseline between Gore's website and the television further supported the relationship between Gore's website at Time 2 and the television at Time 3. In addition, the baseline

between Gore's website at Time 1 and television at Time 3 (+.33) indicated that since the correlation coefficient of +.39 surpassed the baseline, there was a significant relationship between Gore's website at Time 1 and television coverage at Time 3.

The cross-lagged correlations between Bush's website and the traditional news media, as shown in Figure 3, showed that Bush's website at Time 2 had significant intermedia agenda-setting impact on the national newspaper and the television at Time 3 (respectively, +.66, +.85). The Rozelle-Campbell baseline not only supported the relationship between Bush's website at Time 2 and the national newspaper and television at Time 3, but also revealed that Bush's website at Time 1 had statistical significance on the national newspaper and the television at Time 2 and Time 3, since the correlation coefficient (respectively, +.53, +.47, +.41, +.44) exceeded the baseline (respectively, +.27, +.23, +.13, +.33).

Beside elite newspapers, the present study examined two local newspapers to see how differently the newspaper agenda in different market react to each candidate website. The cross-lagged comparisons between the local newspaper agenda and each candidate's website agenda were accomplished, and the correlation coefficients were evaluated in relation to the Rozelle-Campbell baseline.

The cross-lagged correlation between Gore's website at Time 1 and the local newspaper at Time 2 (+.40) exceeded the baseline statistic (+.24), while the correlation coefficients between Bush's website at Time 1 and the local newspaper at Time 2 and Time 3 (respectively, +.74, +.29) exceeded the baseline statistic (respectively, +.29, +.21). Thus, the relationship between candidate websites and the local newspaper coverage also revealed that Bush's website agenda had more significant intermedia agenda-setting impact on the local newspapers across time than Gore's website did.

Overall, Gore's website had some significant intermedia agenda-setting impact in the following relationship: Gore's website at Time 1 and the national newspaper at Time 2 and Time 3, Gore's website at Time 1 and the television at Time 3, and Gore's website at Time 2 and the television at Time 3. However, there were no significant intermedia agenda-setting impact between Gore's website at Time 1 and the television at Time 2, and between Gore's website at Time 2 and the national newspaper at Time 3. Therefore, Bush's website showed statistically more significant impact on the traditional news media across all the time periods that Gore's website; except the relationship between Bush's website at

Time 2 and the local newspaper coverage at Time 3 (reciprocal relationship). That is, the results examined revealed that Bush's website had greater intermedia agenda-setting impact on the traditional news media than Gore's website.

Website as new media vs. Traditional news media. According to the cross-lagged correlations between the websites and the televisions across time, as shown in Figure 4, the websites at Time 2 had a significant relationship with the television and national newspaper coverage at Time 3 (respectively, Spearman r = +.88, +.67). However, since there was a significant relationship between the national newspapers at Time 2 and candidate websites at Time 3 (+.76), the media agendas between the websites and the national newspapers at Time 2 and Time 3 were found to be reciprocal. Since the correlation coefficient between the national newspapers at Time 2 and the websites at Time 3 was greater than the coefficient between the websites at Time 2 and the newspapers at Time 3, the intermedia impact of the websites on the national newspapers was not supported in this study. Thus, the cross-lagged correlations only revealed the impact of website at Time 2 on the television campaign coverage at Time 3.

However, as shown in Figure 4, use of the Rozelle-

Campbell baseline statistic to determine significance further supported Hypothesis 1 that the issue emphasis in the presidential candidates' websites had some intermedia agenda-setting impact on the traditional news media coverage. According to Figure 4, since the Spearman correlation coefficient between the website agendas at Time 1 and the television agenda at Time 3 (+.35), and the coefficients between the website at Time 1 and the national newspaper agenda at Time 2 and Time 3 (respectively, +.53, +.39) exceeded the baseline statistic value (respectively, +.32, +21, +.27), additional website impact on the traditional media was supported.

On the other hand, the cross-lagged comparisons and the Rozelle-Campbell baseline between the website agenda and the local newspaper agenda revealed that as the cross-lagged correlation between the websites at Time 1 and the local newspaper at Time 2 (+.52) exceeded the baseline (+.24), only candidate website at Time 1 exerted intermedia agenda-setting impact on the local newspaper coverage at Time 2. Compared to the relationship between candidate website and the national newspapers, there was less intermedia agenda-setting relationship between candidate website and the local newspapers.

The data analyses described above using Spearman correlations and Rozelle-Campbell baseline statistics were further analyzed by partial correlations. Each entry A in

Table 8 shows the previously reported outcome of the cross-lagged correlations between independent and dependent variable. The earlier values of the dependent variable as a predictor of the dependent variable at Time 2 were considered at entry Bs in Table 8. Entry Bs indicate how much the predictive power of the independent variables at Time 1 will be diminished by controlling for the dependent variables at Time 1. In entry Cs, the relationship between independent and dependent variable is examined with the impact of another major predictor removed. In entry Ds, the effects of both the dependent variable at Time 1 and the other predictor are controlled simultaneously to see the impact of the independent variable on the dependent.

Entry B, C, and D in II, III, IV, and V, as shown in Table 8, revealed that the first-order and second-order partials were even larger than the original zero-order correlation coefficients. The results indicate that there is evidence of the impact of candidate websites even when other major predictor of the dependent variable is controlled for. Even with the introduction of additional controls, there were still significant website effects in the followings: website at Time 1 and national newspaper coverage at Time 2 and Time 3, website at Time 1 and television coverage at Time 3, and website at Time 2 and television coverage at Time 3. Thus, the results of

partial correlations were identical with the results analyzed by Spearman correlations and Rozell-Campbell baseline statistics.

As all the cross-lagged correlations in II, III, IV, and V (zero-order, first-order partials, second-order partials) exceeded the Rozelle-Campbell baselines, the findings of the cross-lagged correlation analyses were supported. Overall, the website campaigning as new media had some significant intermedia agenda-setting on the traditional news media, newspaper and television coverage, although two out of six cross-lagged comparisons did not show a clear-cut intermdia agenda-setting function.

Further, the cross-lagged comparisons revealed that the candidate's website agenda at Time 1 had some statistical significance with both the television and newspaper agenda at Time 3. In the other time periods, candidate websites exerted modest impact, thus partially supporting the prediction posited in this study. In this research, the time lag between Time 1 and Time 3 was the longest, followed by the time lag between Time 1 and Time 2 and the time lag between Time 2 and Time 3. Therefore, this result might imply the candidate websites' intermedia agenda-setting impact on the traditional news media might be greater with the longer time lag.

Agenda-Setting of Internet Campaigning

This study also examined the impact of the websites on the public's agenda in assessing how they influenced the public opinion. The following research question explored the agenda-setting function of candidate websites: How do the presidential candidates' websites influence the public agenda?

First, to see whether media agenda significantly set the public agenda, each media agenda at Time 1 and Time 2 were cross-lagged with public agenda at Time 2 and Time 3. Based on the Spearman correlations, the present research investigated the size of agenda-setting impact of news media on the public. Figure 5 indicates the presidential candidates' websites had some significant agenda-setting function on the public in the following time periods: the website agenda at Time 1 on the public's agenda at Time 2 (+.60); website at Time 2 on the public's agenda at Time 3 (+.76). In particular, the websites' agenda-setting function was greater than the national newspapers and the television, in both time periods chosen in this study.

As shown in Figure 5, the television agenda did not have any agenda-setting impact on the public's agenda. But newspaper coverage at Time 2 showed a significant agenda-setting impact on the public (+.67). Generally, the correlation coefficients between each media and the public

were higher in the last time period of election campaigns than in the initial election campaign period.

To see the path of media impact on the public's agenda, the present study regressed the public's agenda on three news media (websites, national newspaper, and television) at each time period. To begin with, Model #1 in Figure 6 revealed that candidate website at Time 1 was significantly related to the public's agenda at Time 2 (+.85). However, there was no significant relationship between the television and newspaper coverage at Time 1 and the public at Time 2. Model #2 in Figure 6 also revealed that the website exerted some significant direct impact on the public's agenda at Time 3 (+.83). However, the coefficient for national newspaper at Time 1 and Time 2, and television coverage at Time 1 and Time 2 were not statistically significant.

On the other hand, there was a warning sign that multicollinearity exists when television agenda at Time 2 was regressed with television, website, and national newspaper agenda at Time 1. Since the coefficients cause dubious interpretations when multicollinearity exists, following Agresti and Finlay's remedial actions (1997), this study chose an important subset of the explanatory variables, removing those variables that explain a small portion of the remaining unexplained variation in Y. The

tolerance statistic and variance inflation factor (VIF) in regression analysis can be used to determine how much independent variable are linearly related to one another. A variable with very low tolerance contributes little information to a model, and can cause computational problems. As the VIF increases, so does the variance of the regression coefficient, making it an unstable estimate. That is, large VIF values are an indicator of multicollinearity. After removing national newspaper agenda at Time 1 which had large VIF value and low tolerance value, the researcher regressed television agenda at Time 2 with website and television agenda at Time 1.

Overall, the two path models shown in Figure 6 indicated that candidate website agenda in the campaign initial phase had some significant direct agenda-setting impact on the public's agenda, and the agenda-setting impact persisted throughout the 2000 presidential campaign period.

Media Consonance by Agenda-Setting Analysis

The second research question examined media consonance during the 2000 presidential election campaigns. It asked, what degree of consonance did each medium manifest in the 2000 presidential campaign coverage?

Overall, all news media were very consonant in

setting the campaign agendas in each time period. In particular, as Table 9 illustrates, the websites and the national newspapers showed significant media consonance across all the three time periods. However, local newspapers did not show any significant consonance at Time 2. All the media analyzed had a high media consonance in reporting campaign agendas at Time 1. Television networks showed very high agenda similarity at Time 1 and Time 2. At Time 3, however, the salience of campaign agendas was not similar among networks; except between NBC and CBS.

Research question 3 examined the possibility that the amount of news output predicts media consonance. Thus, the present research assumed the media having fewer number of news stories may have the greater possibility of a media consonance. Table 10 revealed the relationship between the level of media consonance and the amount of news output. In the websites, as shown in Table 4, the amount of news outputs was the greatest at Time 1 (3,659 words), followed by the campaign news at Time 2 (3,453 words) and Time 3 (2,827 words). Although the website's consonance at Time 3, which had fewest news output, was greater than the consonance level at Time 1, the website's consonance at Time 2 had the greatest consonance value. Therefore, the website's media consonance by the correlation coefficients did not reveal a regular pattern with the amount of news

output.

In addition, national newspapers and television revealed the opposite pattern to the present assumption. The national newspaper agendas at Time 3, which had the greatest amount of news outputs, showed the greatest consonance value (+.915). The television news agendas at Time 1, having the greatest amount of news information, were more consonant than the television agendas at Time 2 and Time 3. On the other hand, the local newspapers followed the assumption that the smaller amount of news outputs might trigger greater media consonance. At Time 1, which had the smallest news outputs, the local newspapers showed the greatest media consonance (+.790). Therefore, the present study did not find any significant relationship between the level of consonance and the amount of news output.

Media Consonance and Agenda-Setting

To examine the relationship between the media consonance and agenda-setting, the research question was raised as follows: Is there any relationship between the degree of media consonance and the public's issue salience?

As shown in Table 9, the website media consonance at Time 2 was greater than at Time 1. Figure 5 revealed that the correlation coefficient between the website at Time 2

and the public at Time 3, which manifested the magnitude of agenda-setting impact, was also greater than the coefficient between the website at Time 1 and the public at Time 2 or Time 3. The results indicated that the greater the consonance in the website, the greater the level of agenda-setting function on the public. However, in other media, newspapers and television, this assumption was not supported, as the media with the higher media consonance showed the lower agenda-setting function. Therefore, the present study did not find any consistent relationship between the level of consonance and the level of agenda-setting function.

CHAPTER 6

Discussions

This chapter presents a discussion of the major findings of the present study, focusing on theoretical and pragmatic implications for agenda-setting research in a new information age. The findings of this study are discussed in the light of other relevant research. Several limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also discussed in this chapter.

The present study was designed to elucidate the information-gathering processes. It sought to determine how media and people respond to news agendas. Through a content analysis of three different media agenda and the poll data, the study tried to understand how new media influences the flow of the traditional news media agendas, and how people react to media agendas.

The studies of agenda-setting have addressed the ability of news media to shape public thinking about the political process (e.g., Dearing & Rogers, 1996; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). More recently, scholars have claimed a necessity to reexamine "agenda building" processes, instead of using a mix of media agenda (e.g., Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Lang & Lang, 1991; Rogers et al., 1993). A few researchers have tried to uncover a complicated path of information flow among media in terms of intermedia agenda-setting (e.g., Atwater et

al., 1987; Gandy, 1991; Reese & Danielian, 1991; Robert & McCombs, 1994). However, they did not consider an emergence of new media created by revolutionary progress in information technology.

Since the 1996 presidential election campaign, political uses of the Internet have increased dramatically (e.g., Corrado, 1996; Tedesco et al., 1999; Whillock, 1997). Some studies have revealed that the online networks influence the public's exposure to campaign information as well as becoming news sources for the traditional news media (e.g., Bikson & Panis, 1996; Hacker et al., 1996; Noble, 1996; Whillock, 1997). In this context, this study was presented as an exploratory study that sought to understand agenda-setting processes in relation to other media agendas and the public's agenda in this new information age.

Further, an agenda-setting focus was expanded to include the question of media consonance to see how new communication phenomena influence media content and people's communication activities. Earlier studies of intermedia influence looked at the standardization of news stories among media (e.g., Hirsch, 1977; McCombs & Shaw, 1976; Reese & Danielian, 1991; Whitney & Becker, 1991). In particular, some studies identified that political news is most likely to be associated with message consonance (e.g.,

Atwater, 1986; Larson, 2000). Given the impact of news media on politics, as described previously, news uniformity might undermine healthy democratic processes by limiting the free market of ideas.

Thus, the present study examined the similarity in campaign news agendas that new media and traditional news media carried out during the 2000 presidential election campaign. In particular, this study in order to examine the issue of consonance and diversity focused on a media frame setting issue salience as illustrative of news media's news values.

In contrast with the research focus on factors influencing media consonance, such as media resources and market size (e.g., Davie & Lee, 1993; Hirsch, 1977; Levin, 1971; Tuchman, 1978; Whitney & Becker, 1991), the present study predicted that the media, having fewer election stories, might produce highly consonant agenda salience. Finally, this study assumed that the exposure to the news media, having greater consonance, might result in greater agenda-setting effects. Thus, the present study also examined the relationship between media consonance and agenda-setting function.

Internet Campaigning

In a world of public relations (PR), information is an important tool to achieve public recognition. Since

news media is important to all public relations, scholars have concentrated on identifying a dynamic relationship among media in relation to the flow of information (e.g., Blyskal & Blyskal, 1985; Gandy, 1991; Middleberg, 2001; Turk, 1991). In particular, the studies of agenda-setting have expanded from an analysis of the relationship between journalists and their sources to an examination of the effectiveness of PR by studying the reliance of the news media on their sources (e.g., Rutkus, 1976; Turk, 1991; Weaver & Elliott, 1984).

By employing an intermedia agenda-setting focus between each candidate website and the traditional news media agenda, this study evaluated the impact of each presidential candidate's website on the traditional news media coverage as a major news source. The data analyses revealed that there was a significantly different intermedia agenda-setting function in the relationship between each candidate's website, carrying out news releases, and the traditional news media, television and newspaper. For example, George W. Bush's website had more significant intermedia agenda-setting impact than Al Gore's website. Nevertheless, the research findings indicated that, overall, each candidate's website was very successful in setting the campaign agenda of the traditional news media.

In contemporary politics, most successful campaigns need mass media coverage to influence candidate evaluations and highlight resonant issues. Each candidate's general website impact on the traditional news media might imply that, in the future, political candidates can be increasingly confident of their website campaigning, since each website might dictate campaign agenda by influencing mass media. Further, in terms of agenda-setting, candidate website campaigning can be considered as one of the major routes leading to the various audiences by influencing the flow of the campaign agenda among news media. The political candidate who does not run his or her website might have less of a chance to reach the desired audience and to attain campaign objectives. Therefore, given the impact of campaign news on voters (e.g., Joslyn, 1984; O'Keefe, 1975; West, 1997), the importance of website campaigning in setting news agendas will be increased during election campaigns.

As candidates' websites play a significant role in the construction of political discourse, this study partially supports scholars' claims that the current political phenomena occurring through the Internet are taking over the role of traditional news media in the flow of information. Today, an intimate connection between news and politics that McQuail et al. (1998) previously

described should be considered in relation to website campaign agendas.

Intermedia Agenda-Setting

Computer mediated communication (CMC) has made the communication process faster, cheaper, and easier for both a sender and a receiver (Hacker, 1996; O'Sullivan, 1995). The CMC might add one other development that is changing mass communication as much as anything else: serving as an information source for the traditional news media. Thus, the study of candidate websites regarding the flow of information might help us understand the role of emerging communication technologies.

The present study was designed to examine the impact of website campaigning as new media on the traditional news media agenda. The study's results revealed some significant website impact on newspapers and television in influencing the traditional news media's campaign agenda. As this study implies, agenda-setting researchers need to be concerned about the new media roles involved in traditional media information processing. That is, tracing media agenda-building processes during the election campaign period, future agenda-setting scholars might need to consider candidate website agenda.

As with the shaping of public opinion during the election campaign period, this study also revealed that

the website agenda had greater agenda-setting impact on the public than any other media examined in this study. The study findings imply that the new technologies in our new information age might play important roles in our political life by producing an informed and interested public. If the essence of democratic education and practice, as Grossman (1995) says, is transmitted through an intermediating sea of news, information, and infotainment, today the Internet-based communication activities play a crucial role in shaping the sphere.

In addition, previous researchers have noted media differences involved in setting the public agenda (e.g., McClure & Patterson, 1976; Tipton et al., 1975; Wanta, 1997b). According to these scholars, generally, newspapers correlate better than television with voter agendas, although others found several significant conditional variables for agenda-setting function such as abstract vs. concrete (Yagade & Dozier, 1990) and time lag (McCombs, 1977b). The present study revealed that there was a significant agenda-setting function between the national newspaper at Time 2 and the public agenda at Time 3, while the television did not have any agenda-setting function. Thus, this study supports the previous research findings that newspapers exert a more significant agenda-setting function than television, although much stronger agenda-setting effects were evident for candidate websites.

The agenda-setting function of the newspaper and the website on the public agenda was more evident in the later phase of the presidential campaign period. That is, the two media, website and newspaper, raised the public salience of political agenda as the 2000 presidential campaign progressed. This result might have several implications on the agenda-setting function. First, as the election day neared, the public might recognize the importance of the event. Thus, to understand the temporal dynamics of the agenda-setting process, time series during campaign period might be considered as a "real-world indicator," which has been defined as "a variable that measures more or less objectively the degree of severity or risk of a social problem" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 7). Next, the agenda-setting function shown in the later phase of the campaign was accomplished in a relatively shorter time compared to that of the initial phase. This might imply that the optimal time frame between media and public for the agenda-setting function is shortened. In particular, as new communication technologies accelerate a symbolic exchange, an immediate life and death of meaning might change the time frame involved in the agenda-setting function.

Finally, the path analysis regarding the website impact on the public agenda revealed that candidate

websites had only direct agenda-setting impact on the public. This finding might indicate that a political candidate who wants to run a website needs to focus on direct website strategies to reach online users, as well as provide news releases for the traditional news media.

Media Consonance

In contemporary political arenas, democratic politics needs a wide range of information for an unrestricted political debate (Curran, 1996; McQuail et al, 1998). However, this study revealed that there was some significant consonance within news media in setting issue priorities during the 2000 presidential election campaign. This implies that today, news media manifests a high uniformity in setting campaign issue salience that has an agenda-setting impact on the public exposed to that information. That is, increasingly in America, what is a significant news agenda might be determined by issues for which the media has consensus. In terms of an agenda-setting function on the public, if an issue's priority is controversial among media, it might not influence public opinion.

As with the role of news media for massive information delivering in a democratic society, Habermas (1989) refers to the concept of public sphere where discussion is free of domination. The concept also implies

the form of pluralistic discourse that does not have a structural law of values. In this sense, an excessive media consonance in setting campaign agenda might restrict the range of political discussion, so that it might be detrimental to a healthy democracy.

Being concerned about the impact of news uniformity over politics, this study also tried to answer how we predict the level of media consonance. This study assumed that the media, having fewer news outputs, might show the greater possibility of media consonance. However, there was no significant relationship between the amount of news output and the level of consonance in setting media agenda. That is, the study results did not support the amount of information as a predictor for media consonance.

As new technologies increase channels for political communication, there has been an optimistic view toward a healthy democracy (e.g., Curran, 1996; Grossman, 1995, Habermas, 1989). The perspective might ignore how abundant information produced by multi-channels is structured and circulated. As the study results revealed great consonance among media in setting news value priorities, this study implies that citizens might need changes in the quality of political communication, not just in its quantity. That is, the present study indicates that the amount of political information increased by multi-channels might not guarantee the improvement of content uniformity among

media. The high level of consonance might project a skeptical democratic view by prohibiting the free market of ideas to highlight diverse information exchange between politicians and voters.

The final research question in this study investigated the relationship between consonance and agenda-setting function. The present study did not find any significantly consistent relationship between the level of media consonance and agenda-setting function. The fact each media showed different results regarding the relationship between consonance and agenda-setting might imply that based on the media they use, people utilize a different type of information processing.

Research Limitations

This study can be regarded as an exploratory study to see the new media impact on the traditional news media with an intermedia agenda-setting focus, and investigate the issue of consonance with an intramedia agenda-setting focus. As with any research study, this study had several limitations that must be noted when considering its findings.

First, due to data availability of candidate websites, this study used different sources to gather the websites' news releases. The two websites' data at Time 1 and Time 2 were gathered by identifying their unique URL addresses,

while the data at Time 3 were downloaded by *The Internet Archive* (*www.archive.org*). As the different sources for candidate websites might contaminate the data set sampled, the results of the data analysis might damage external validity. Nevertheless, like the data thoroughly identified at Time 1 and Time 2, *The Internet Archive* still has high probability to represent the universe of the candidates' websites news releases at Time 3. The archive says, for "The Election 2000 Collection, rapidly changing sites were archived daily or even twice and three times in a day in an attempt to capture the dynamic nature of internet content" (http:/web.archive.org/collections/e2k/press_release.html). The project of the Internet archive has also received an excellent reputation for providing a remarkably comprehensive look at the web (e.g., Cohen, 2001; Colker, 2001; Jesdanun, 2001). Further, the archive is the only source to view the Election 2000 Collection with the Wayback Machine, and has a large-scale collection of date-searchable Websites archived and made available online, although there is still no way to confirm they stored all website data.

This study utilized the abstracts in *The Vanderbilt Television News Archive* to screen out the presidential

campaign news before watching the campaign newscasts. As the abstracts provide brief summary, there is some chance of missing campaign coverage in each news story; thus, the sampled data might not represent the universe of the campaign news coverage during the 2000 presidential election campaign. However, the news abstracts in the archive have been highly recommended for a content analysis to ascertain television agenda, and widely used with a significant research validity for the study of agenda-setting in previous studies (e.g., Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Gilberg et al., 1991; Palmgreen & Clarke, 1977; Riffe et al., 1998). Further, given the time and money for the study, the archive could be a useful tool to look at the newscasts generally.

Another limitation is the coding instrument. First, when using categories to identify the coverage of each issue, there is always the risk of missing issue related keywords. This fact might influence the issue priorities of media agenda examined and measured in this study, so that it might not reflect true differences among campaign issues. However, to compensate for this limitation, this study browsed the national newspaper coverage and the websites at Time 1, although this procedure might not cover all media content.

A variety of computer programs, such as *Diction* and

KWIC, have been developed and validated for use in categorizing verbal and written communication (Riffe et al., 1998). Nevertheless, this study initially used the MS Word program for a content analysis. Thus, some might argue the validity of measurement, which is questioning that the measuring instrument is actually measuring the concept in question and that concept is being measured accurately (Bailey, 1982). Used carefully, however, computer word counting is a very useful method. In particular, the MS Word program might be a suitable tool to search a derivative of the word entered in the program's "Find" feature.

This approach can be criticized because other content forms such as semantic meaning cannot be considered by focusing on manifest content. In particular, critics of quantitative content analysis could argue that the present study put too much emphasis on comparative frequency of issue-related key words. This study measurement might ignore what is latent within a message beyond manifest content. However, a latent meaning analysis could come at an individual interpretative stage, resulting in the contamination of the research findings (Riffe et al., 1998). Some scholars have also claimed the requirements of scientific objectivity in which coding would be restricted to manifest content (e.g., Holsti, 1969; Riffe et al.,

1998). Thus, the study's focus on manifest content would be useful in the quantitative content analysis applied to this study.

Given a short period of an official presidential election campaign, selecting three time periods to track the flow of media agenda might be suitable. However, limiting to three time periods might also restrict diverse agenda-setting analyses and research interpretations, resulting in overlooking the temporal dynamics of the agenda-setting process. In particular, it might be undesirable in finding an appropriate time frame for agenda-setting functions among media, and between media and public.

Suggestion for Future Studies

The present study suggests several additional investigations to enrich the study of agenda-setting function and media consonance. Future scholarship might assess various types of time periods to monitor candidate website agenda. That is, future analyses might focus on multiple time frames beyond three time periods chosen in this study. As Wanta's study (1997b) investigated the relationship between media agenda and people's issue memory decay from 1 day to 180 days to see agenda-setting effects, multiple time frames might help researchers to understand the whole process of agenda-building and

agenda-setting thoroughly. Besides multiple time frames, the sample size for each time period should be considered to improve research validity.

Studies in the future could also look into media differences bringing up different forms of content. For example, television media tend to have more coverage on visual scenes, such as candidates' campaign trails and poll results. In this study, these aspects were not considered, and not included in campaign issue categories. Thus, researchers might examine the characteristics in each news media such as a visual aspect, message style, and location of issues. As there have been media effect studies based on media differences (e.g., Berkman & Kitch, 1986; McClure & Patterson, 1976), future scholars can investigate how the nature of the news presented in each media might influence people's information processing.

Frame analyses can be added to future studies to ascertain intermedia impact and to understand people's information processes. The appearance or non-appearance of campaign issues might not be important in agenda-setting theory constructing social reality, however the researcher cannot ignore the appearance or non-appearance of an issue. Rather, such characteristics like negative or positive and episodic or thematic need to be added to the agenda setting theorization.

Framing, according to Iyengar (1991, p.11), is "the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue" by the media to make them more important and thus to emphasize a particular cause of some phenomenon. That is, frames are one means through which a particular meaning is given to an issue. Further, those aspects that are made more available in the media have a higher probability of being used by the audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Thus, to see significant media influence on the public's issue agendas, framing analyses can be added to future studies.

Running candidate websites for political advertisements has become a common occurrence in political campaigns. Candidates' website agenda in different election levels can be also compared to other news media agenda. For example, candidate websites in gubernatorial elections can be examined with local media campaign coverage. In addition to utilizing this study in conjunction with effects studies, future scholars might also examine various types of website operations, such as web designs and writing style, to increase the impact on other media and public.

The present study utilized the poll data provided by *The Lexis-Nexus* to determine the public agenda. However, future studies might consider different research methods such as an experimental technique and survey. For

example, a survey technique having various variables would be suitable to see more accurate website impact on the public agenda. Through the process of "triangulation," future scholars might enrich agenda-setting theory.

Conclusion

As we enter a new information age characterized by computer-mediated communication, some speak of a communication revolution. The implications of this new technology have shed light on new communication processes occurring at an information sender and receiver. Focusing on the emerging website campaigning, this study has revealed a new sense of communication revolution manifested in media information processing and audiences' communication activities.

This study found several implications of political candidate websites on political dialogue. First, this study revealed the website campaigning can be used as a useful tool for an effective PR, since the campaign agenda of candidate websites became the subsequent agenda of the traditional news media. Second, as website agenda are actively involved in the traditional media agenda, the website agenda is more likely to be associated with public agenda. Another theoretical implication regarding agenda-setting function is that online users exposed to candidate websites are more likely to learn campaign agenda than

traditional media users. Finally, the present study employing intermedia agenda-setting focus revealed that today news media in a multi-channel communication environment still have a high content uniformity.

According to the study findings, the Internet-based communication has established powerful new links between politicians and voters and great impacts on the information flow of the traditional news media. In particular, the great potential of the Internet as a means of communicating with electorates is a noteworthy implication this study revealed. A website on the Internet will give political candidates more opportunity to speak on their issues. As computer networks are expected to grow dramatically, electronic forms of communication will close the gap between citizens and politicians, and encourage the development of more informed citizens. Thus, individual voters might increase the capacity to identify issues of common interest, so that they would enhance civic participation toward more healthy democracy. On the other hand, scholars' hope for democratic improvement might be diminished, as today media do not facilitate extensive discussion of issues by producing a general consensus of campaign agenda.

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Table 1

Campaign News Agenda in Al Gore's Website

	Gore's website			Total
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	
Health care	717 (30)	457 (21)	480 (25)	1654 (25)
Budget handling	483 (20)	369 (17)	326 (17)	1178 (18)
Energy policy	287 (12)	44 (2)	26 (1)	357 (6)
Taxes	229 (10)	319 (14)	218 (12)	766 (12)
Economy	200 (8)	172 (8)	215 (11)	587 (9)
Education	178 (7)	159 (7)	233 (12)	570 (9)
Social Security	159 (7)	388 (17)	272 (14)	819 (13)
Defense	77 (3)	17 (1)	27 (1)	121 (2)
Environment	45 (2)	89 (4)	95 (5)	229 (4)
Crime	22 (1)	213 (10)	8 (0)	243 (4)
Total	2397 (100)	2227 (100)	1900 (100)	6524 (100)

Note. The values represent the frequency of the campaign agenda-related key words in Gore's website. The values in the parentheses show the percentage of the agenda values within each time period. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 2

Campaign News Agenda in George W. Bush's Website

	Bush's website			Total
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	
Health care	340 (27)	297 (24)	111 (12)	748 (22)
Education	202 (16)	102 (8)	127 (14)	431 (13)
Budget handling	166 (13)	195 (16)	177 (19)	538 (16)
Energy policy	152 (12)	18 (2)	11 (1)	181 (5)
Social Security	124 (10)	208 (17)	270 (29)	602 (18)
Economy	88 (7)	64 (5)	72 (8)	224 (7)
Taxes	76 (6)	226 (18)	123 (13)	425 (12)
Crime	60 (5)	69 (6)	10 (1)	139 (4)
Environment	33 (3)	34 (3)	9 (1)	76 (2)
Defense	21 (2)	13 (1)	17 (2)	51 (2)
Total	1262 (100)	1226 (100)	927 (100)	3415 (100)

Note. The values represent the frequency of the campaign agenda-related key words in Bush's website. The values in the parentheses show the percentage of the agenda-related values within each time period. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 3

Proximity Matrix of Campaign Issue Salience between Candidates' Websites

Correlation between vectors of values			
Gore1-Gore2	.678	Bush1-Bush2	.651
Gore2-Gore3	.848	Bush2-Bush3	.716
Gore1-Gore3	.809	Bush1-Bush3	.372

Note. The values represent similarity values for issue distances across time.

Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 4

Campaign News Agenda in Candidates' Websites

	Websites			Total
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	
Health care	1057 (29)	754 (22)	591 (21)	2402 (24)
Budget handling	649 (18)	564 (16)	503 (18)	1716 (17)
Social Security	283 (8)	596 (17)	542 (19)	1421 (14)
Taxes	305 (8)	545 (16)	341 (12)	1191 (12)
Education	380 (10)	261 (8)	360 (13)	1001 (10)
Economy	288 (8)	236 (7)	287 (10)	811 (9)
Energy policy	439 (12)	62 (2)	37 (1)	538 (5)
Crime	82 (2)	282 (8)	18 (1)	382 (4)
Environment	78 (2)	123 (4)	104 (4)	305 (3)
Defense	98 (3)	30 (1)	44 (2)	172 (2)
Total	3659 (100)	3453 (100)	2827 (100)	9939 (100)

Note. The values represent the frequency of the campaign agenda-related key words in Bush and Gore's Websites. The values in the parentheses show the percentage of the agenda values within each time period.

Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 5

Campaign News Agenda in National Newspaper

	National newspapers			Total
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	
Energy policy	491 (21)	28 (1)	64 (2)	583 (8)
Economy	442 (19)	310 (16)	221 (8)	879 (13)
Health care	399 (17)	321 (16)	403 (15)	1123 (16)
Education	257 (11)	190 (10)	670 (25)	1117 (16)
Crime	173 (8)	151 (8)	148 (6)	472 (7)
Budget handling	148 (6)	327 (17)	319 (12)	794 (12)
Defense	147 (6)	69 (4)	71 (3)	287 (4)
Taxes	130 (6)	256 (13)	266 (10)	652 (9)
Social Security	70 (3)	225 (11)	303 (12)	598 (9)
Environment	42 (2)	107 (5)	175 (7)	324 (5)
Total	2299 (100)	1984 (100)	2640 (100)	6923 (100)

Note. The values represent the frequency of the campaign agenda-related key words in the two national newspapers. The values in the parentheses show the percentage of the agenda values within each time period. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 6

Campaign News Agenda in Local Newspaper

	Local newspapers			Total
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	
Energy policy	229 (28)	49 (7)	19 (2)	297 (12)
Health care	180 (22)	96 (13)	74 (8)	350 (14)
Economy	91 (11)	86 (11)	114 (13)	291 (12)
Taxes	74 (9)	86 (11)	122 (13)	282 (11)
Education	72 (9)	104 (14)	153 (17)	329 (13)
Budget handling	59 (7)	87 (12)	121 (13)	267 (11)
Crime	39 (5)	73 (10)	132 (15)	244 (10)
Environment	31 (4)	26 (3)	63 (7)	120 (5)
Social Security	27 (3)	110 (15)	97 (11)	234 (9)
Defense	21 (3)	37 (5)	13 (1)	71 (3)
Total	823 (100)	754 (100)	908 (100)	2485 (100)

Note. The values represent the frequency of the campaign agenda-related key words in the two regional newspapers. The values in the parentheses show the percentage of the agenda values within each time period. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 7

Campaign News Agenda in Television

	Televisions			Total
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	
Energy policy	1770 (45)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1770 (19)
Health care	904 (23)	0 (0)	250 (9)	1154 (13)
Economy	884 (23)	420 (19)	247 (9)	1551 (17)
Education	310 (8)	893 (38)	148 (5)	1351 (15)
Defense	30 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	30 (0)
Crime	0 (0)	152 (7)	36 (1)	188 (2)
Budget handling	0 (0)	572 (24)	876 (31)	1448 (16)
Taxes	0 (0)	0 (0)	282 (10)	282 (3)
Social Security	0 (0)	318 (14)	1006 (35)	1324 (15)
Environment	0 (0)	0 (0)	22 (1)	22 (0)
Total	3898 (100)	2355 (100)	2867 (100)	9120 (100)

Note. The values represent the time (sec.) of the campaign issue agenda aired through the three televisions. The values in the parentheses show the percentage of the agenda values within each time period. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6.

Table 8

Additional Analysis of Correlations between Website and Traditional News Media across Time

I.	Website <Time 1> Television <Time 2> Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.13	
	A. Cross-lag correlation (zero-order):	+.16
	B. First-order partial correlation controlling for the dependent variable, television news, at Time 1:	+.27
	C. First-order partial correlation controlling for the other major influence identified in this study, national newspaper's news, at Time 1:	+.09
	D. Second-order partial correlation controlling for both television and national newspaper's news at Time 1:	+.15
II.	Website <Time 1> NP <Time 2> Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.21	
	A. Cross-lag correlation (zero-order):	+.53
	B. First-order partial correlation controlling for the dependent variable, national newspaper's news, at Time 1:	+.61
	C. First-order partial correlation controlling for the other major influence identified in this study, television news, at Time 1:	+.71
	D. Second-order partial correlation controlling for both national newspaper and television news at Time 1:	+.68
III.	Website <Time 1> Television <Time 3> Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.32	
	A. Cross-lag correlation (zero-order):	+.35
	B. First-order partial correlation controlling for the dependent variable, television news, at Time 1:	+.72
	C. First-order partial correlation controlling for the other major influence identified in this study, national newspaper's news, at Time 1:	+.63
	D. Second-order partial correlation controlling for both television and national newspaper's news at Time 1:	+.71
IV.	Website <Time 1> NP <Time 3> Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.21	
	A. Cross-lag correlation (zero-order):	+.39
	B. First-order partial correlation controlling for the dependent variable, national newspaper's news, at Time 1:	+.43
	C. First-order partial correlation controlling for the other major influence identified in this study, television news, at Time 1:	+.47
	D. Second-order partial correlation controlling for both national newspaper and television news at Time 1:	+.45

V.	Website <Time 2> Television <Time 3>		Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.33
	A.	Cross-lag correlation (zero-order):	+.88
	B.	First-order partial correlation controlling for the dependent variable, television news, at Time 2:	+.88
	C.	First-order partial correlation controlling for the other major influence identified in this study, national newspaper's news, at Time 2:	+.65
	D.	Second-order partial correlation controlling for both television and newspaper's news at Time 2:	+.69
VI.	Website <Time 2> NP <Time 3>		Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.66
	A.	Cross-lag correlation (zero-order):	+.67
	B.	First-order partial correlation controlling for the dependent variable, national newspaper news, at Time 2:	-.22
	C.	First-order partial correlation controlling for the other major influence identified in this study, television news, at Time 2:	+.65
	D.	Second-order partial correlation controlling for both national newspaper and television news at Time 2:	-.22

Note. The values represent the zero-order and partial correlation coefficients between two variables and between two variables after controlling other variable(s).

Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NP = national newspaper.

Table 9

Analysis of Correlations for Media Consonance in the 2000 Campaign News Agendas

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Website (Gore's-Bush's)	.758**	.927***	.794**
National Newspaper (NYT-WP)	.778**	.685*	.915***
Local Newspaper (HC-MJS)	.790**	.139	.620*
TV (ABC-NBC)	.996***	.658*	.308
TV (NBC-CBS)	.921***	.750**	.787**
TV (ABC-CBS)	.903***	.626*	.460

Note. The values represent the rank-order correlation coefficients within media by the three time periods.

Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NYT = *The News York Times*; WP = *The Washington Post*; HC = *The Houston Chronicle*; MJS = *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.*

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table 10

Analysis of Correlations for Media Consonance by the Amount of Campaign News

	Amount of news		
	Large	Medium	Small
Website (Gore's website - Bush's website)	.758** (1)	.927*** (2)	.794** (3)
National newspaper (NYT-WP)	.915*** (3)	.778** (1)	.685* (2)
Local newspaper (HC-MJS)	.139 (2)	.620* (3)	.790** (1)
TV (ABC-NBC)	.996*** (1)	.308 (3)	.658* (2)
TV (NBC-CBS)	.921*** (1)	.787** (3)	.750** (2)
TV (ABC-CBS)	.903*** (1)	.460 (3)	.626* (2)

Note. The values represent the rank-order correlation coefficients within media by the amount of campaign news. The values in the parentheses show the time period for the amount of news.

Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NYT: *the News York Times*; WP: *the Washington Post*; HC: *the Houston Chronicle*; MJS: *the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.*

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Focus of media channel	Focus of measurement: Agenda building (Media content)	Focus of measurement: Agenda-setting (Public reaction)
Intermedia	Intermedia agenda-setting	Multiple media focused agenda-setting
Intramedia	Intramedia agenda-setting	Single media focused agenda-setting

Figure 1. Agenda-setting typology based on measurement of agenda-setting and the focus of media channel.

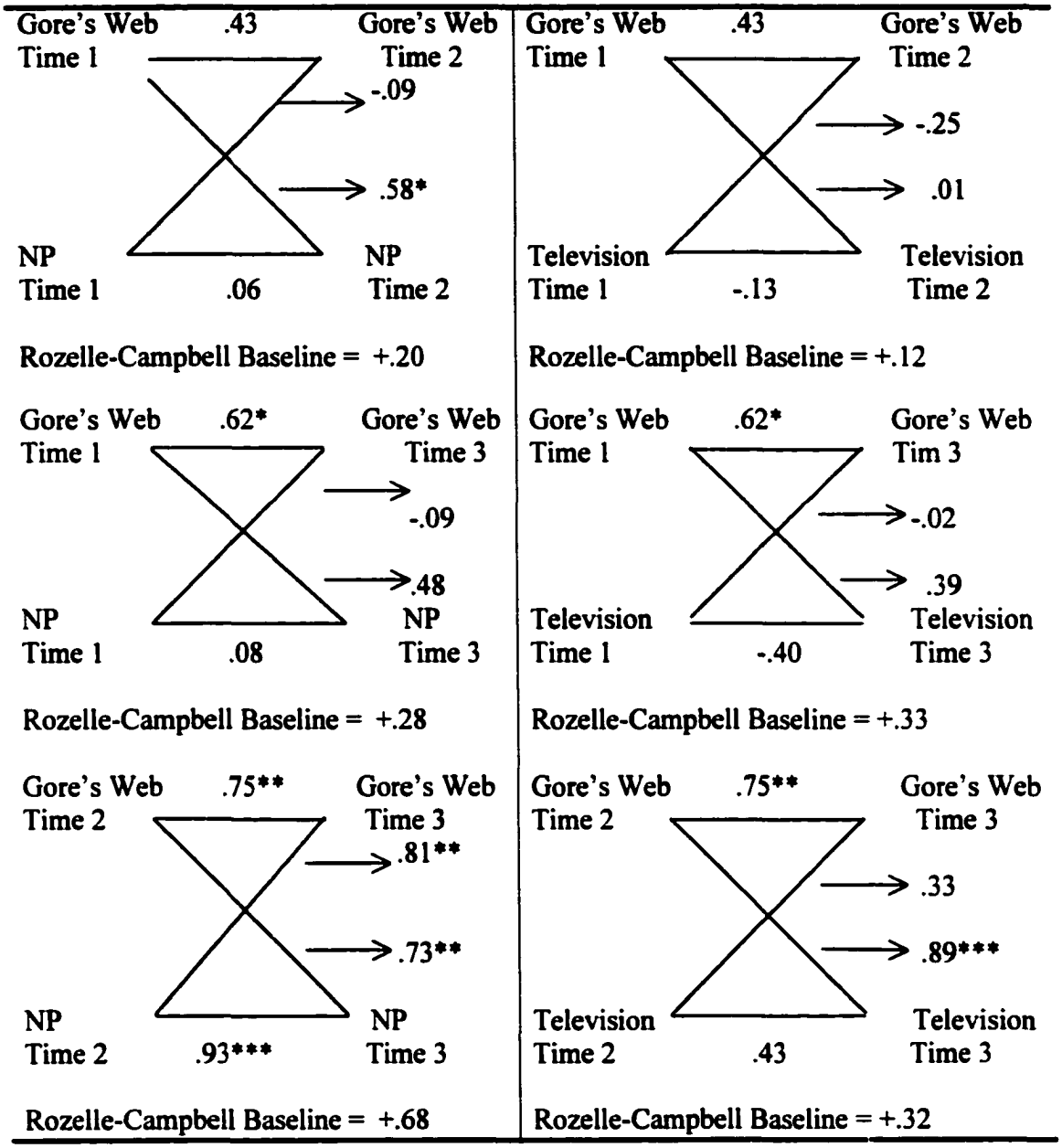


Figure 2. Results of cross-lagged comparison between Gore's website and the traditional media agendas. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NP = national newspaper.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

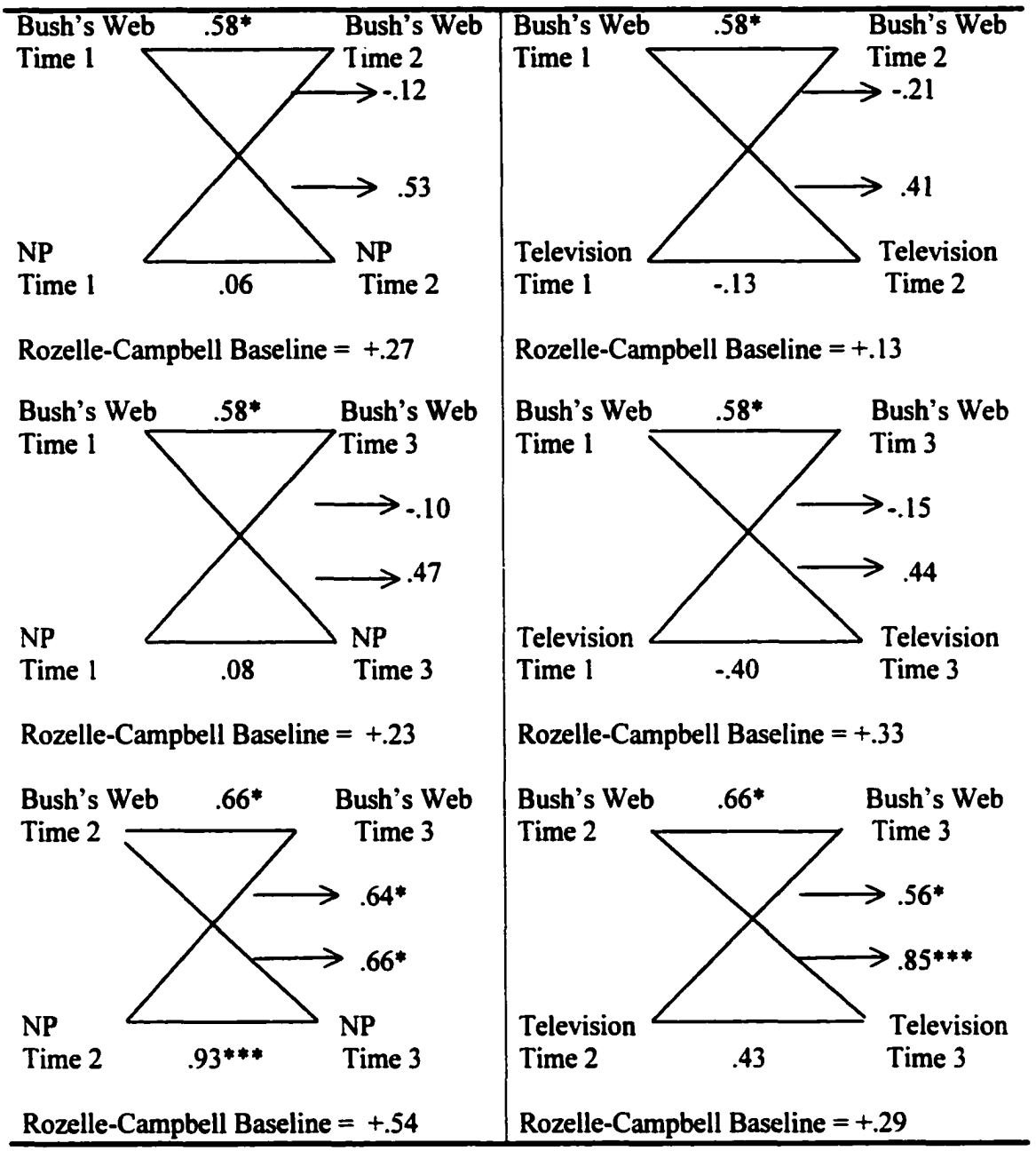


Figure 3. Results of cross-lagged comparison between Bush's website and the traditional media agendas. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NP = national newspaper.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

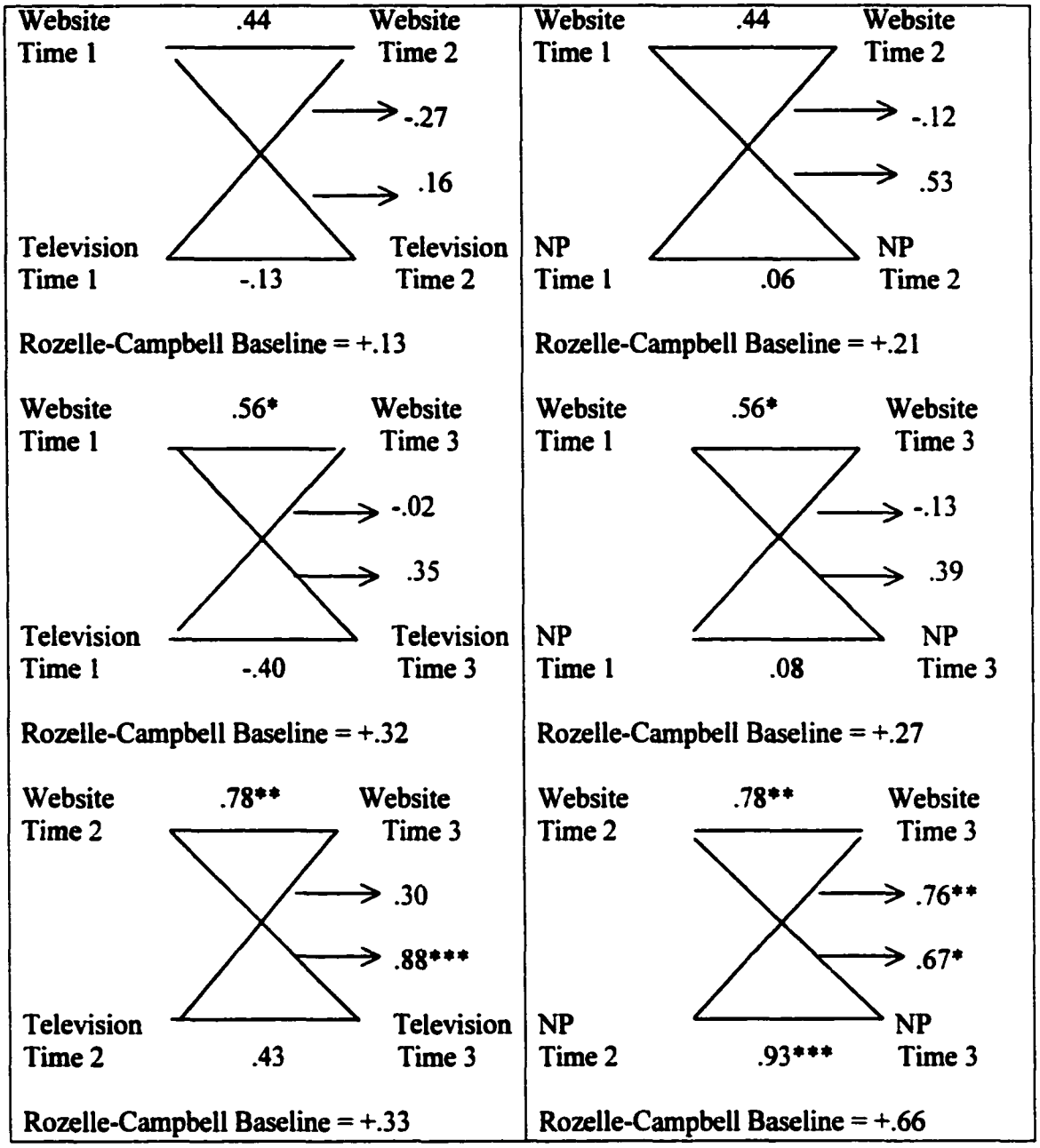


Figure 4. Results of cross-lagged correlation coefficients and the Rozelle-Campbell baseline between website and traditional news media across time.

Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NP = national newspaper. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

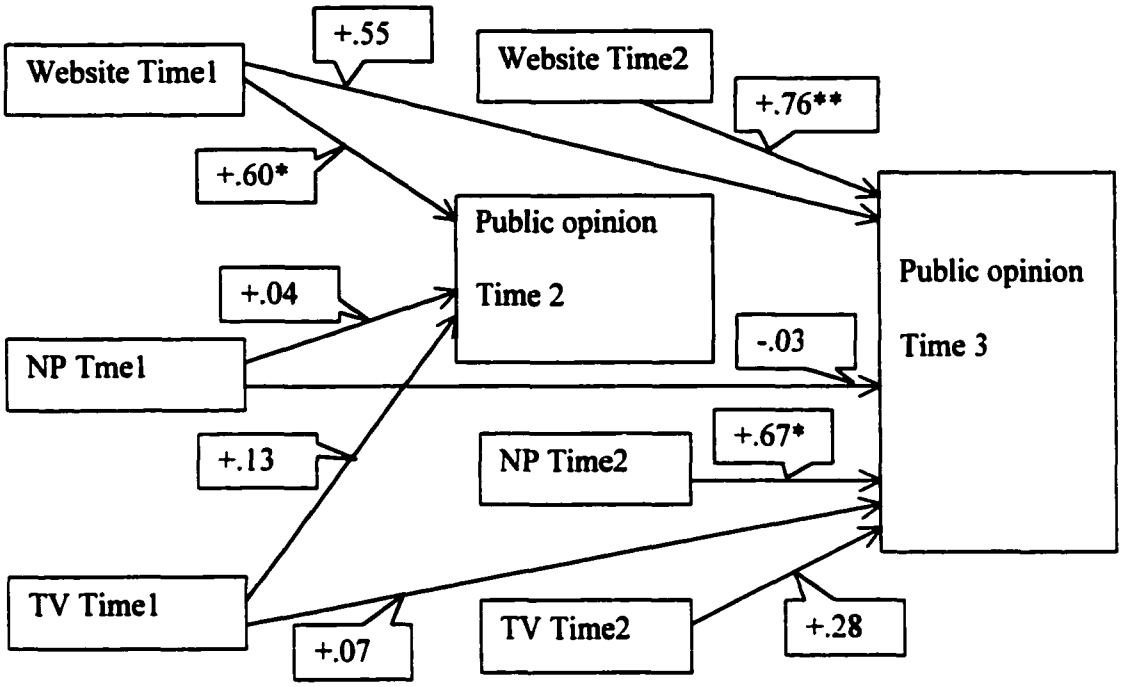


Figure 5. Agenda-setting function of news media on public opinion across time. The values represent the Spearman correlation coefficients between media and public across time. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NP = national newspaper. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

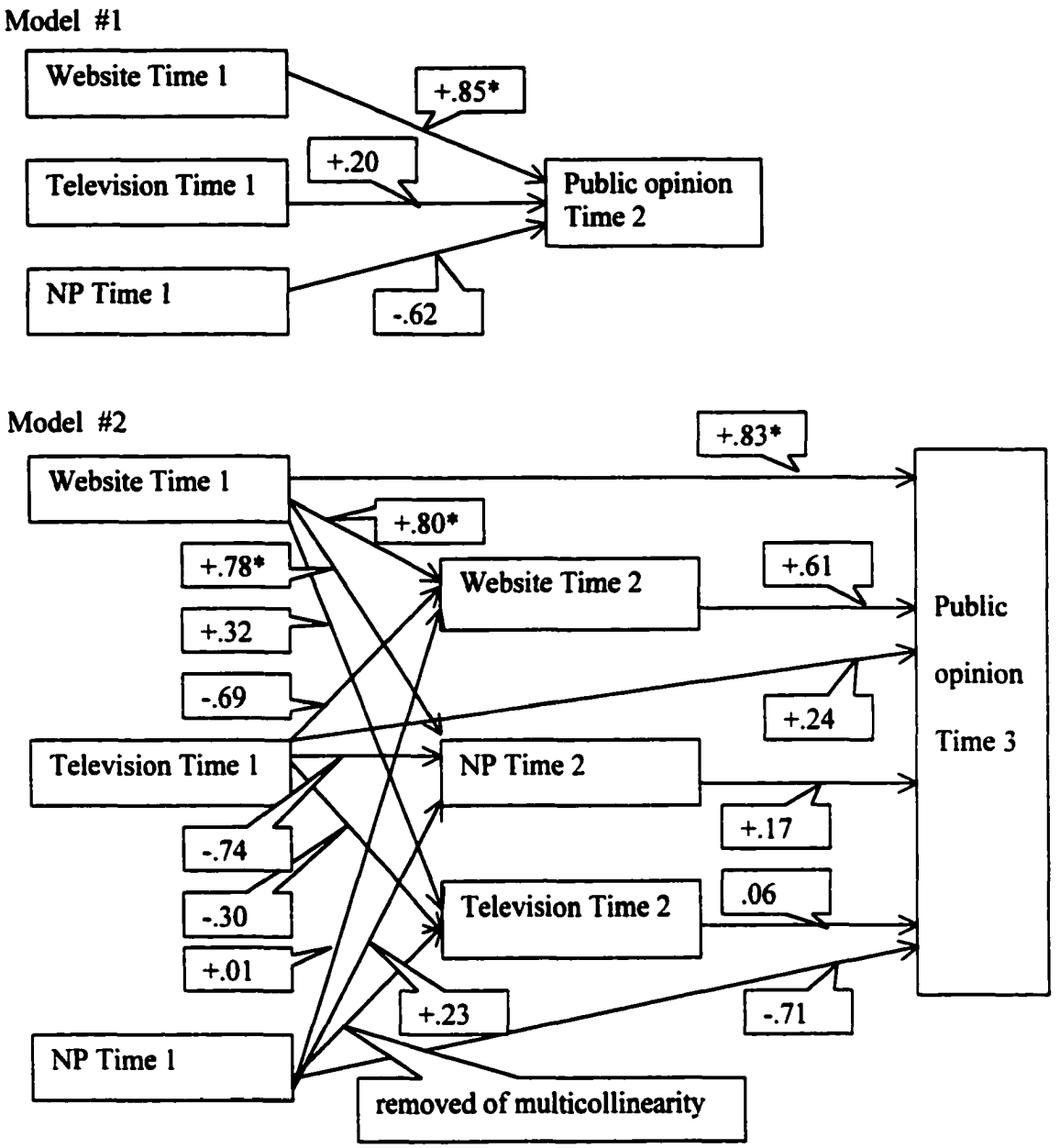


Figure 6. Path diagram depicting agenda-setting function of news media on public opinion across time.

The values represent standardized path coefficients between media and public across time. Time 1 = September 20 to 28; Time 2 = October 12 to 20; Time 3 = October 27 to November 6. NP = national newspaper. *$p < .05$.

Appendix A

Media Agenda (Media issue and issue related words)

* Each word might include other related words, covering single, plural, and derivative. If letters 'pharmac' is entered into 'Find in Edit' function of MS Words, the program searches for all connected words such as **pharmacy**, **pharmaceutics**, **pharmaciest**, etc.

* Other keywords were checked through one newspaper and one website at one time period. When the words did not have over five hits, the words were excluded in the analysis.

· Healthcare: health care, drug, prescription, medicine, doctor, medicare, medicaid, medication, pharmacy, H.M.O (HMO(s)), insurance, patient, disease, CHIP.

· Social Security: Social Security, benefits, beneficiary, retirement, welfare.

· Energy policy: OPEC, oil, gas, petroleum, gasoline, energy, fuel, crude.

· Education: education, school, student, enrollment, tuition, college, university.

· Economy: business, economy, industry, market, invest, company, job, interest rates, R & D (research and development).

· Tax: tax, marriage penalty.

· Environment: environment, pollute, air.

· National Defense: security, defense, military, army.

· Handling budget: budget, spending, fund, surplus, debt, deficit, solvent.

· Crime: crime, criminal, violence, gun, police, law enforcement.

Appendix B

Spearman's *rho* Correlations

	WEB1	WEB2	WEB3	PAPER1	PAPER2	PAPER3	TV1	TV2	TV3	LOCAL1	LOCAL2	LOCAL3	POLL1	POLL2	POLL3
WEB1	1.000	.442	.564*	.576*	.527	.394	.524	.162	.353	.709*	.523	.103	.703*	.603*	.546
WEB2	.442	1.000	.782**	-.115	.782**	.673*	-.265	.252	.875**	.127	.778**	.442	.667*	.714*	.755**
WEB3	.564*	.782**	1.000	-.127	.758**	.758**	-.019	.304	.802**	.103	.815**	.176	.869**	.917**	.926**
PAPER1	.576*	-.115	-.127	1.000	.055	.079	.847**	.162	-.249	.782**	.103	.042	.153	.043	-.031
PAPER2	.527	.782**	.758**	.055	1.000	.927**	-.136	.433	.839**	.248	.644*	.442	.624*	.677*	.669*
PAPER3	.394	.673*	.758**	.079	.927**	1.000	-.006	.420	.778**	.248	.626*	.309	.599*	.659*	.669*
TV1	.524	-.265	-.019	.847**	-.136	-.006	1.000	-.131	-.396	.692*	.013	-.343	.241	.125	.072
TV2	.162	.252	.304	.162	.433	.420	-.131	1.000	.434	-.071	.610*	.666*	.274	.361	.281
TV3	.353	.875**	.802**	-.249	.839**	.778**	-.396	.434	1.000	.012	.793**	.462	.644*	.691*	.745**
LOCAL1	.709*	.127	.103	.782**	.248	.248	.692*	-.071	.012	1.000	.146	.103	.343	.166	.129
LOCAL2	.523	.778**	.815**	.103	.644*	.626*	.013	.610*	.793**	.146	1.000	.517	.850**	.880**	.880**
LOCAL3	.103	.442	.176	.042	.442	.309	-.343	.666*	.462	.103	.517	1.000	.312	.332	.276
POLL1	.703*	.667*	.869**	.153	.624*	.599*	.241	.274	.644*	.343	.850**	.312	1.000	.972**	.960**
POLL2	.603*	.714*	.917**	.043	.677*	.659*	.125	.361	.691*	.166	.880**	.332	.972**	1.000	.984**
POLL3	.546	.755**	.926**	-.031	.669*	.669*	.072	.281	.745**	.129	.880**	.276	.960**	.984**	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed).