

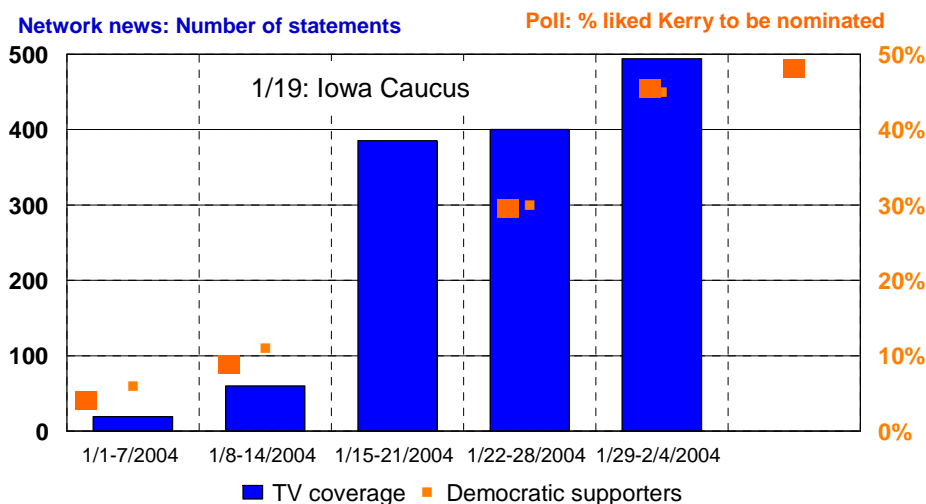
Replication of the Chapel Hill Study 2008

Presenter: Prof. Donald Shaw, University of Chapel Hill

Intellectual Merit. Since it was first developed as a theory of media influence during the 1968 presidential election (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the media’s “agenda setting” effect has been observed in hundreds of subsequent studies. During the 2008 presidential election, the original investigators and a team of colleagues from the fields of mass communication and political science will explore the applicability of this theory in today’s media environment and advance our understanding of how media influence voters’ political agendas. **Media Tenor** will support that project through its long-term experience in media monitoring and content analysis (Examples from this research are shown in chart 1 and 2).

The number and type of news sources available to voters have expanded dramatically since 1968 and the body of knowledge about media agenda setting has become multi-faceted. **Setting Political Agendas 2008: Voters and their News Media** will delve deeper to examine the relationships between the media agendas of the 2008 election cycle and the agendas of voters, by age, gender, race/ethnicity and other factors. The study will also test a model of agenda setting that considers voters’ selection of media in addition to the media’s influence on voters. The analyses will yield new instruments for measuring the agenda setting influence of the media on individual voters’ attitudes about presidential candidates and important issues in the campaign.

Chart 1: Media Coverage on John Kerry, 01/01-02/04/2004



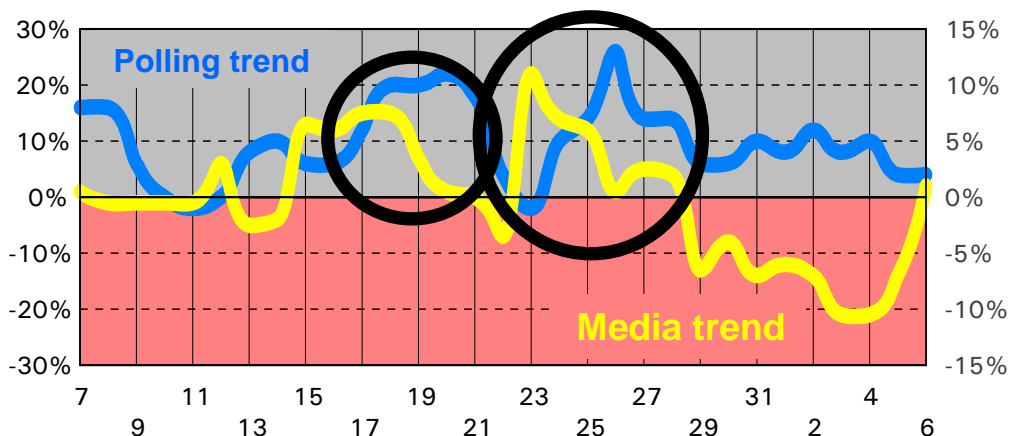
Basis: a total of 1,358 statements by or about Kerry in ABC, NBC and CBS news, 1/1-2/4/2004 – Princeton Survey Research (N: 383 registered Dem. Voters)

This project is well-conceived and thoughtfully organized around the following four key objectives:

- (1) To identify what media agendas about candidates and issues are available to, and accessed by, voters in 2008;
- (2) To assess what voters learn from these media agendas;
- (3) To assess the media's influence on voters' political judgments;
- (4) To identify how media agendas about the presidential elections are set.

It proposes a new model of the influence of the news media on voters' information gathering and political judgments and during the 2008 presidential election will test this model through news content analysis, a three-wave panel telephone survey, six focus groups with voters and in depth interviews with journalists .

Chart 2: Bush and Gore in TV news and opinion polls, Oct – Nov 2000



Positive Numbers Bush ahead of Gore/Negative Numbers Gore ahead of Bush
 Basis: Media Tenor/Gallup Poll – all statements on/by Bush and Gore in ABC, NBC and CBS News

The workshop will discuss the prerequisites of the replication of the Chapel Hill Study in a changed media environment:

- What are the major changes in media landscape and media usage in comparison to 40 years ago?
- How can Agenda Setting effects of diversified audiences with different media usages be tracked?
- How can impacts of different media agendas/genres be measured?