

# The Emerging Papyrus Society:

How We Are Using Media to Monitor Civic Life, Find Personal Community, and Create Private Identity

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## **Abstract**

Across the world, leaders, and citizens are using both traditional and social media to redefine community. Nations confront challenges from collectives that are asserting their voices into national and regional issues. Why? Because—easier than at any time in history—citizens can use a variety of media to find each other, gain social support, and articulate alternative agendas. We will see that traditional media, such as television and newspapers, still provide the main national agenda. But that agenda is supplemented—in some cases challenged—by alternative agendas persistently offered via alternative media. We saw that in the Arab Spring. Therefore, social systems confront new challenges and opportunities, mainly our need to balance traditional national values with the need to allow a gradual social agenda to enrich and allow a national evolution that sensitizes and benefits national organizations. The result of this mixing is a balancing between the power of vertical, institutional society, represented by the Pyramid, and the ease and convenience of social media to convey information, such as Papyrus paper once allowed. This mixing of vertical power and horizontal challenge is creating a newer form of national organization, the emerging Papyrus society. This new society requires more tolerance between leaders and citizens than at any time in history. Communication plays a major role, but not the only one, in this evolution. Maybe even revolution.

## **Authors**

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# 1

## Agenda Communities

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to such a distinguished group of scholars and journalists. Regardless of national background, cultural or ethnic identity, all of us are interested in understanding how media serve society and how we can advise media, based on our scholarship, about ways to serve government and citizens even better.

We long have understood there is a relationship between what media say on a daily—or even minute-by-minute—basis and the conceptions of civic life absorbed by citizens. We assume that there is a relationship, that media tell us what to think about, as argued by American political scientist Bernard Cohen.<sup>1</sup> In the past four decades we have extended the observations that journalist Walter Lippmann made in his 1922 book, Public Opinion.<sup>2</sup> Lippmann pointed out that we necessarily depend on mediated communication to learn about modern, urban society. Lippmann likened press coverage to the spotlights on a stage, shifting from character to character, from event to event. Modern communication scholars have come to call that the agenda setting function of media. Like Lippmann, we have used content analysis to trace the changing topics, and like Cohen we have concluded that the press does not tell us what to think but does tell us what to think about. Even though media do not alter our deep-seated attitudes easily and certainly not our personal values, the press—now a wide range of media, including social media—do define civic life for us. Agenda setting studies have found that true for many national systems, cultures, and political systems.<sup>3</sup> There are more than 500 published studies of media agenda setting, a number of books, and thousands of excellent scholarly papers, including those done in Jordan.

But we are often surprised at the limits of media power. For example, my former colleague, the late Dr. Robert L. Stevenson, an international scholar, often pointed out to me that citizens living in East Germany before the Wall came down watched Western television and when freedom came still found it difficult to adjust to the values of the capitalist West. In fact, decades later Germany is still working on the transition of older citizens to new ways of living and working. Younger East Germans found it much easier, emphasizing that relating to media agendas is constantly changing and that as the media world reinvents itself, audiences are adjusting, but at very different speeds. The German example is a world example. Older generations everywhere are always like East Germans, dealing with a constantly evolving media world and therefore media agenda world. In this, the entire world is alike. In my limited travels around the world, I have always found that the journalists and professors I meet use the most advanced media similarly, even if there are great differences in media access by average citizens in different countries.

Once we thought that modernization could be accomplished by introducing modern media into different cultural contexts, with modern images of the dynamic economic, social, and

political activities going on around the world. An example of this is Daniel Lerner's The Passing of Traditional Society.<sup>4</sup> We thought that modernization could be accomplished within the minds of citizens in developing countries. But it proved more difficult, as in East Germany, and we can see that our media habits are learned as we become socialized into our own cultures; we stick to what we know. Robert Putnam's book on social capital is a fascinating look at our willingness to contribute to the social good. But what is striking about this book is a topic scarcely mentioned in the text, but evident in some tables.<sup>5</sup> We stick to our original media with some incremental change throughout our lives. The tables reveal media change across societies, and that is true, but really because older generations, with their use of a particular medium, are dying off. Societies are changing, but individuals are not particularly changing. This is very true in the United States with the decline in circulation—since the 1920s in the United States—of daily newspapers (and many print media generally). Every day members of daily newspaper audiences die and are not replaced by younger audience. In the United States, young people do not read newspapers...and few of them watch the evening television news programs any longer.<sup>6</sup>

We often attribute too much power to social media. In the 2010 Arab Spring, Mohamed Bouazizi, a frustrated merchant in Tunisia set-himself on fire, making a record of it. In Egypt, You Tube provided a way to illustrate the tragic death while Twitter enabled organizers to bring thousands of people to Tahrir Square in Cairo, and elsewhere in the region. There were also demonstrations in Jordan and other parts of the Middle East and Northern Africa. These communication modalities can be traced in the emerging spring so clearly that we forget that the social media of change would not have been possible without ongoing tension with then-president Hosni Mubarak and his government. Eventually, regular media were involved with news and comment about political and social change. Agendas of political change are not effective without emphasis by major media. Social media cannot influence change alone. In reality, though the leader changed the status quo persists in Egypt, while Libya is still in chaos.

An easy way to visualize this is by reference to vertical and horizontal media. Those media that aim to reach large numbers of people, regardless of their economic or social status, are vertical. Daily newspapers and local and network television, for example, are vertical in that they reach down, as if shouting from the top of one of the great Egyptian pyramids at Giza. That is the way many of us think of the power of media. By contract, in the village of Giza merchants illustrate the way ancient Papyrus Paper was created by slicing off the thick green skins of the Papyrus plants, then creating thin strips of the pulpy white interiors that can be woven, Scotch-plaid like, into roles of absorbent "paper." Such paper was transportable when rolled up on scrolls. Papyrus paper emphasized messages on flat surfaces for those with special interests.

Social media are the horizontal media of our day. The period of vertical media is in decline worldwide. In fact, in the United States, weekly, then daily newspapers (vertical), dominated civic community from roughly 1700 to 1880, followed by magazines (horizontal, as there were magazines for every interest), then followed by radio and television (vertical, for the entire nation). Since roughly 1980, email, the web, and a plethora of social media have connected us as individuals around the world (horizontal). All these mean that we confront a variety of media agendas. Recent research suggests that we as individuals mix and meld agendas from both vertical and horizontal agendas in ways we find comfortable. There has been a challenge to the power of vertical media and the entities (government, big businesses, and religious groups) media cover. There has been an increase in the power of horizontal media to set agendas for the public and the groups media reach. This is the outcome of technological change

in media development and the enabling of audiences to create personal agenda communities. One important point from all this is: The media do not merely cover communities; the media are communities. When we collectively left our villages for life in cities and urban life, we enter a society so diverse and complex that we must rely on many mediated to understand it. Walter Lippmann was certainly right in his observations nearly a century ago.

# 2

## Monitoring Civic Life

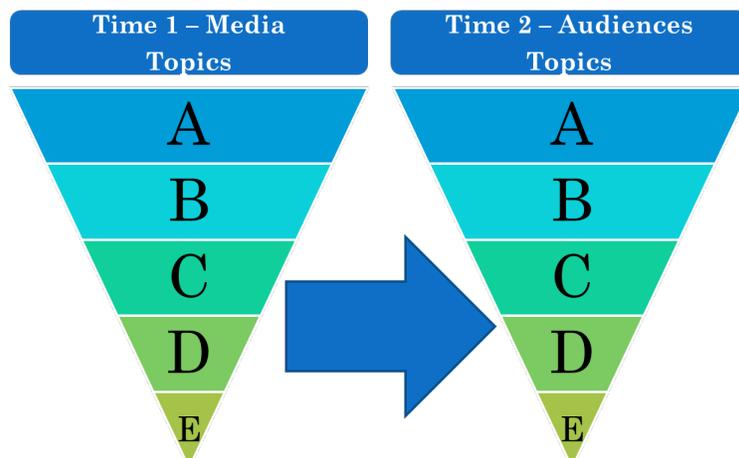
Newspapers, television, radio, and other traditional media perform a vital role in all developed societies. Editors and journalists frame public life with their selection of topics. In more regulated Western society, the market plays a distinct role, and in more monitored and regulated nations, the government may influence selections, as in China, for example. Whatever the circumstances, journalists make selections to frame public life, leaving citizens with the very logical choice of reading/watching these traditional media to gain an understanding of the collective values of that society. Obviously government and journalists are never unaware of citizen interests and so the daily news agenda is the result of significant segments of a society melding interests into a daily agenda of key public issues —sometimes vital; sometimes not.

Many studies, as we have mentioned, have documented the relationship between media issues and public awareness. Most of us use the term “issues” to label this evolving arranging and rearranging of news about events, issues, and personalities. U.S. scholar Maxwell McCombs, a pioneer in agenda setting scholarship, has called these issues “objects,” a more neutral social scientific conception. Agenda setting studies usually combine two research methods, content analysis and public opinion polling. Scholars determine what the objects are in the studied media with content analysis. Then, a bit later, they measure the objects mentioned by the civic community during public opinion polling. The presumption is that, if the media cover an array of objects, the civic community will list an array of those same objects after citizens have had time to view/hear/see/absorb them. The presumption has held up in many situations, as McCombs has documented in his recent updated text on agenda setting.<sup>7</sup> Figure 1 is a simple illustration of major objects in the media at Time 1 (publication) with the major objects cited by audiences at Time 2 (after publication).

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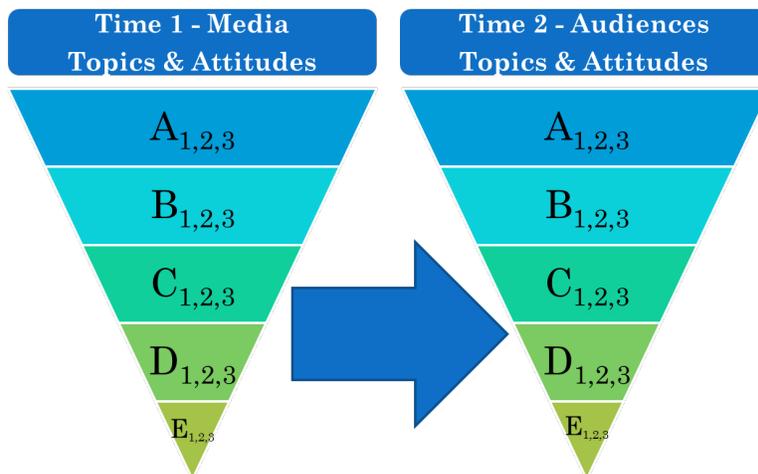
FIGURE 1: Agenda Setting, Level 1

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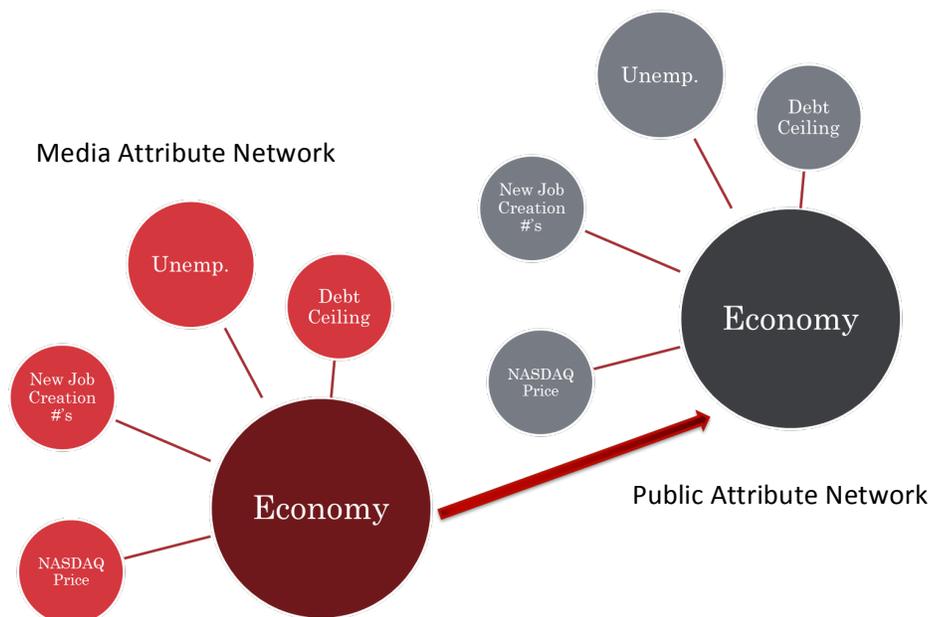
Recent research also has shown that citizens not only reflect the media objects, or issues, but details about the issues in the way the media present them. Scholars have called this agenda setting level 2. McCombs uses “attributes” as a more scientific way to describe how the process works as illustrated in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: Agenda Setting, Level 2



Within the past five years, scholars have applied network analysis to agenda setting scholarship. This provides a way to see the actual relationship of objects and/or attributes within a medium’s message—the objects/attributes related to each other like a small constellation in space. This research is closing in on actual brain and mental functioning as well as cognition in the human understanding of symbolic meaning. Scholars call this agenda letting, level 3. See Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: Agenda Setting, Level 3



Many have reviewed the body of agenda setting scholarship and have concluded that it is evidence of media power, as it most certainly is. But one can argue just as strongly that it represents a sensible effort on the part of citizens who want to monitor civic life—and certainly that is advisable for all of us—to monitor traditional media as well as political and cultural systems. Within any social system, major media provide frames of the issues of any society. Thousands used to line up to read Izvestia, a USSR Communist Party paper, when it was posted on walls. Surely no one assumes Soviet citizens were seeing news as much as they were seeking key values and saliences. Citizens are the key to agenda setting. If there is no audience for a medium, there is no agenda setting.

# 3

## Finding Personal Community

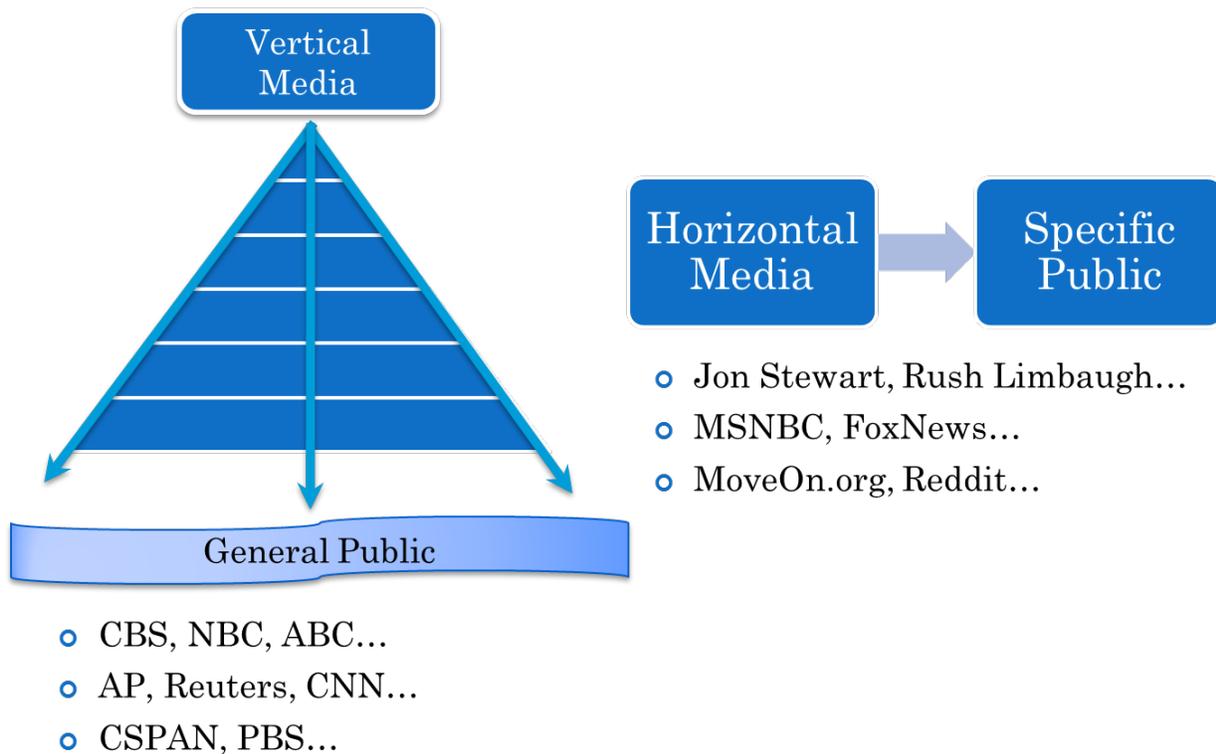
If we are more influenced by media when we have more interest in the agendas of valued communities, it can be argued that our individuality will surface in the way we mix, or meld, agendas. Of course, we implicitly argue that media agendas are more than a collection of news stories. Media agendas represent the saliences of value in terms of topics (and attributes) of the communities served by those media. The objects represented by a medium reflect a community. Because most societies are urban and complex, as Lippmann argued, we have no other way to obtain a comprehensive view of a particular community. Therefore, we argue agenda communities are communities. We could drive around Amman all day, stopping to talk to dozens of people, but we would not obtain a representative picture of all the activities of Amman. We would obtain no doubt fascinating personal views, but it would be limited by the individual observations of ourselves. We would find the same result in Paris, London, Cairo, New Delhi, and Toronto. Only a more generalized and systematic gathering of news, such as that of professional journalists, would come closer to a comprehensive assessment of major community issues, which will always be beyond our grasp. We would not even know how to define a view of the complete community. That is why we accept media agendas as a representation of community. Indeed—as we argued—THE community.

But as citizens, we can access a wide variety of media agendas and commonly do so on a daily basis. As we have pointed out, the audiences for traditional media, such as newspapers and television, have been in decline in many countries over the past decades, while the agendas of social media have expanded. But we use social media differently. We seek particular agendas of interest, even though many social media carry news, opinions, and information also available in traditional media. We are selective in our monitoring of personal media, picking out topics of known interest, ignoring topics in which we are (at the moment) not interested. You might, like me, have friends who “read” the New York Times daily via their cell phones or computers. They do not leaf through the entire newspaper, monitoring the news about the police in Brooklyn or the environmental stories from Long Island. They read the news about Wall Street or the commentaries. Even the crossword. In other words, they convert a vertical media of New York City into a horizontal medium of personal interest. The vertical medium is converted into a horizontal, personalized magazine. You may be surprised how little your friend reading the Times that way really knows about New York. This trend of converting community-wide community agendas into personal community agendas is strong and worldwide. Larger community contexts in the communities in which we have our schools, playgrounds, schools, hospitals, and so forth are still well covered in vertical media, if you are willing to extend your search to the communities that nourish them. As we pointed out earlier, the audiences for daily

newspapers and network broadcast stations in the United States have been in decline for decades, close to a century for daily newspapers.

We are interested in the civic community, and we are interested in more personal community. There is evidence that we attend to various media community agendas, then meld them into a more compatible community. In a replication of the 1968 Chapel Hill agenda setting study in 2008, we tested the idea that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—three major U.S. voter blocs—would meld agendas alike within a party, and differently from the other parties (an independent bloc). In 2008, we content-analyzed the major event network news programs of key networks.

FIGURE 4: The Voter, Vertical and Horizontal



We argue that voters might well mix vertical agendas, which tend to be oriented to news and facts, with horizontal agendas, which tend to be oriented to opinions as values. Political party preferences should make a difference.

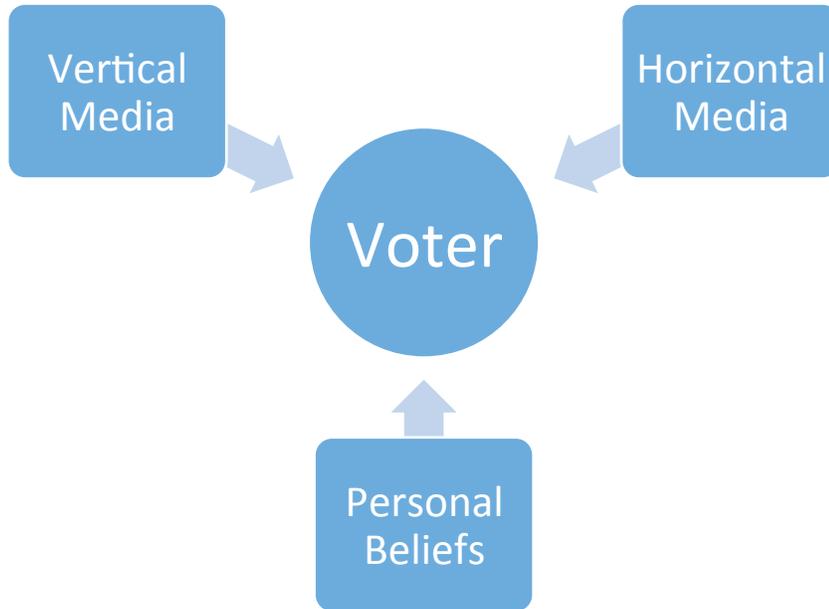
Voters who are interested in elections, scholar David Weaver has found, are more likely to seek information from media. Weaver found that if there is high interest in an election, but low information about that election, voters have—as he put it—a high need for orientation.<sup>8</sup> These voters are more likely to use media and absorb the media agenda than voters with either low interest or high information. Agenda setting, therefore, starts with people and their needs and interests.

Voters/citizens also have a large selection of media, both vertical media that concentrate on facts, and horizontal media that concentrate on perspectives. Voters/citizens also have their own interests, opinion, and voting history. One can visualize these three elements in Figure 5.

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FIGURE 5: The Voter, Beliefs, Vertical Media and Horizontal Media

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Voters, we theorized in our 2008 replication study, would obtain most of their information from vertical media (here we report on evening television news) and at least some of their information from horizontal media (here we use opinion makers), fitting these two news agendas into the web of their own personal preferences and histories. Here is one important point: There is no other way to obtain information about the election, or—we argue— any other public issues. All information must come from other people, direct experience, or a mediated source. And this is a closed system. If we can account for the influence of the vertical media, then we can actually estimate the influence of horizontal media and personal experience. The sum of the total experiences equals a unity of 1.

How? We devised a formula to predict how individuals might gather into more personalized agenda communities, and then we illustrate it with actual 2008 data. The formula is:

$$\text{ACA (Agenda Community Attraction)} = 1 - [ (AS1)^2 + (1-AS1)^2 ]$$

Therefore, if the correlation between vertical media and voters was .80, then the residual, unaccounted for correlation would be 1-.80, or .20. These values need to be squared. Therefore,

$ACA = 1 - (.64 + .04)$ , or  $ACA = .32$  Vertical and horizontal media account for about two-thirds of voter choice, but the voters account for the remaining third. One might note that if the ASI correlation were 1.00, the  $ACA = 1 - 0$  or 0. In other words, you could predict voter issues completely by reference to the media agenda. Horizontal media or personal preferences would play no role. Can you imagine such a society? Yet many people still assume that vertical media have such massive power.

Because it was a panel study with distinctly different types of voters—those registering as Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—we could match the fit between these party groups with both vertical media (evening television news) and horizontal media (opinion makers). We argue that voters have three ways to obtain information: vertical media, horizontal media (including talking to other people), social media sources, and many other media sources of information, or from direct experience, from voting their voting history, values, and preferences. How else can you obtain political (indeed, any public) information about the civic community?

We included NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN, and FOX (we also content-analyzed other media, not included in this analysis.) We focused on topics/objects, not attributes. At the same time we content analyzed a samples of news commentary from several major opinion makers in the United States, including Rush Limbaugh, Stephanie Miller, Jon Stewart, and others. Some are considered liberal and some conservative. None are neutral in perspective. We used content analysis to determine the topics over the nine-week during summer 2008 just about the time, at the end, when the Republican and Democratic conventions ratified their national candidates, John McCain and Barack Obama, who by then had secured their places via primary voters. We interviewed a panel of Democratic, Republican, and Independent voters (selected from official voter roles of those voting in the North Carolina primary on May 6, 2008). Interviews over the same nine-week period of time ran to an hour or more. We sought to find the major issues mentioned by voters, along with their media preferences. Strictly speaking, an agenda setting study first records media content then, later, matches voter issues mentioned in a survey, while this study conducted both content analysis and interviews during the same period of time. But results of the 1968 and 2008 studies demonstrated that major vertical media still pack power. The 1968 study, as we mentioned, produced media-audience correlations of .97, while the 2008 correlational match-up was .87, still high.

In our test, we found that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents did mix and meld agendas into different communities. Democrats related more to vertical and less to horizontal media. Republicans related more strongly to horizontal media than did Democrats and Independents, but did relate to vertical media. Independents were somewhat in the middle. This is from the actual data. If we had only used the formula to predict the horizontal values as an estimate, the data show that there would have been little difference. Our test did find evidence that all voters potentially are exposed similarly to all media—here television and opinion makers—but that these voters melded agenda community differently. The process seems to be something in human cognition and is so intrinsic that we combine “agenda melding” into a single word, *agendamelding*, to illustrate the force of cognitive processing.

### **National Stability**

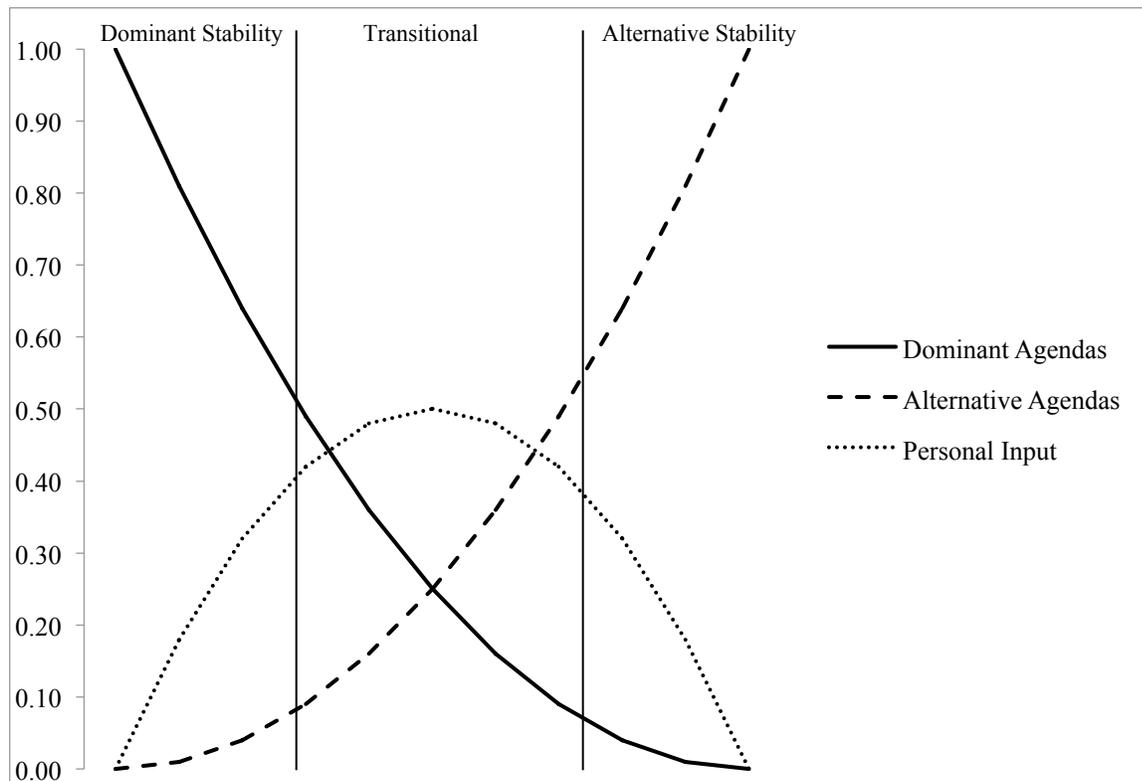
We can extend our thinking about agenda setting to social systems using the same formula. If the connection between citizens and government (via vertical media) is reasonably

high, then one can assume that the government must be doing things right in terms of citizen perspective. If the agenda setting correlation for objects is .70, for example, accounting for .49 of the variance, then the “missing” .30 accounts for .30, or .09 of the variance. This leaves  $(1 - [.49 + .09])$  .42 of the variance about objects/issues in the hands of citizens. There is a balance between government (represented by vertical media) and citizens, with alternative agenda communities represented by .09. This means, we argue, that there is a strong link between government/vertical media and citizens, but also some reasonable challenge by alternative agenda perspectives. The English philosopher John Milson in his 1644 *Areopagitica* called for a diversity of information within a social system.<sup>9</sup>

If the agreement between government and citizens falls to .50, then the alternative values also equal .50, each squared to .25, with the citizens holding the dominant position in a social/political system. See Figure 5.

One would expect that audiences would meld vertical and horizontal agendas with their own experiences differently across groups and over time. Figure 5 demonstrates the hypothetical dynamics as the correlations decline with vertical media in a given social system. It represents agendamelding and civic balance at any point in time, the balance among vertical and horizontal media and personal preferences. As vertical media agendas go up and down, so do horizontal media and personal inputs. The system is self-contained. For example, if there is an increase in the attraction of alternative community agendas there is a decline in vertical media influence.

FIGURE 6: The Dynamics of Agendamelding and Civic Balance



As the media decline in their reach, personal preferences become more important. The figure suggests there is a dynamic at work and that political/social systems are constantly in transition. On the left side of the model, we argue that systems with correlations that are reasonably high with vertical media suggest a relatively stable social system. But as the power of alternative community agendas rise, there is a transition period of instability. Protecting these alternative community agendas is what the U.S. First Amendment is about. If the correlation falls below .50, then the alternative agenda community is on the way to dominance. One name for this is evolution; another name is revolution. Of course, this model remains to be tested with agenda setting data across national states.

# 4

## Creating Private Identity

### Finding Vertical and Horizontal Media Communities

We all know that there has been an explosion of media technologies in recent years, and there has been a decline in traditional media such as national television and daily newspapers, media which aim for large audiences, as if shouting again from the top of that Egyptian pyramid. In the United States, in retrospect, we can see that the period in which daily newspaper achieved their greatest market reach in terms of numbers of newspapers per citizen was in the 1920s when there were nearly 1.4 daily newspapers per citizen. Obviously, many citizens read more than one daily newspapers. That was the decade, the 1920s, in which network radio was born, growing into the dominant national news medium within a decade.<sup>10</sup> Since the 1920s, U.S. daily newspapers have declined steadily to about 1,400 today from a high of about 3,000 around the time of World War I.

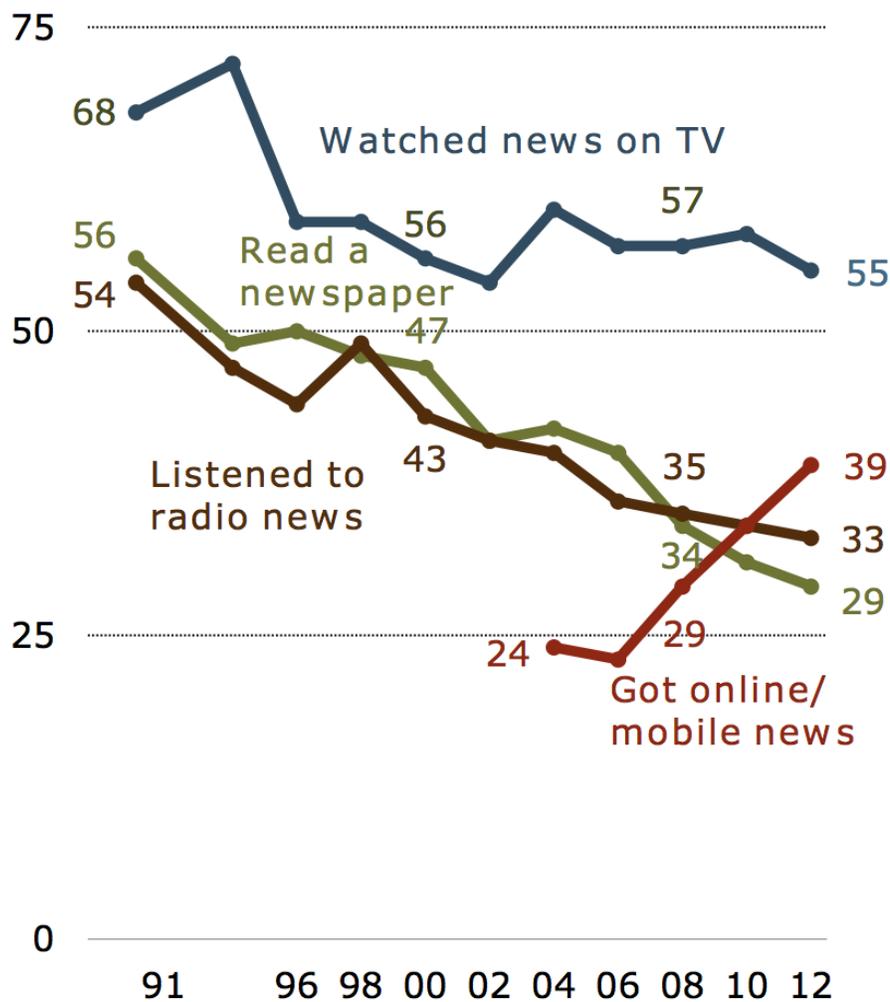
Network television, delayed by World War II, emerged by the end of the 1940s and early 1950s, displacing the dominant network radio. Within a decade or less, radio had reinvented itself into more specialized stations to concentrate on sports, news, entertainment, western music, jazz, or other more focused offerings of specialized audiences. In the history of mass media, the pattern has been clear for a long time: Mass (vertical) media rise, then decline in terms of mass audiences, transforming themselves into specialized (horizontal) media. If they do not transform themselves, they disappear. For example, silent films are not the same as sound films. Silent films required a distinct type of acting, with simple stories. Sound films displaced silent films within about five years in the United States after the 1927 “Jazz Singer.” Silent films disappeared as a profitable medium. How many of us use typewriters except as a cherished relic in our offices?

Of course magazines, long a specialized horizontal media, remain, but those mass magazines that aimed for large mass audiences—in the United States, Life, Look, Saturday Evening Post, Collier’s, and many others—have been gone for decades. Newsweek is attempting a comeback after closing; U.S. News and World Report is gone; Time Magazine often struggles for circulation. U.S. magazines with large circulation, e.g. People (which has recently confronted challenges), are usually horizontal in appeal. People concentrates on some news events, especially if they involve celebrities. In other words, People is horizontal.

Other horizontal, for the most part, media include Twitter, Snapshots, Tumblr, You Tube, Facebook Google<sup>+</sup> and AreebaAreeba. These media all carry major news from time to time, but usually these media reflect major events as they occur in vertical media. All of us can think of events that emerged first on these media, then evolved to major vertical media, but, in general,

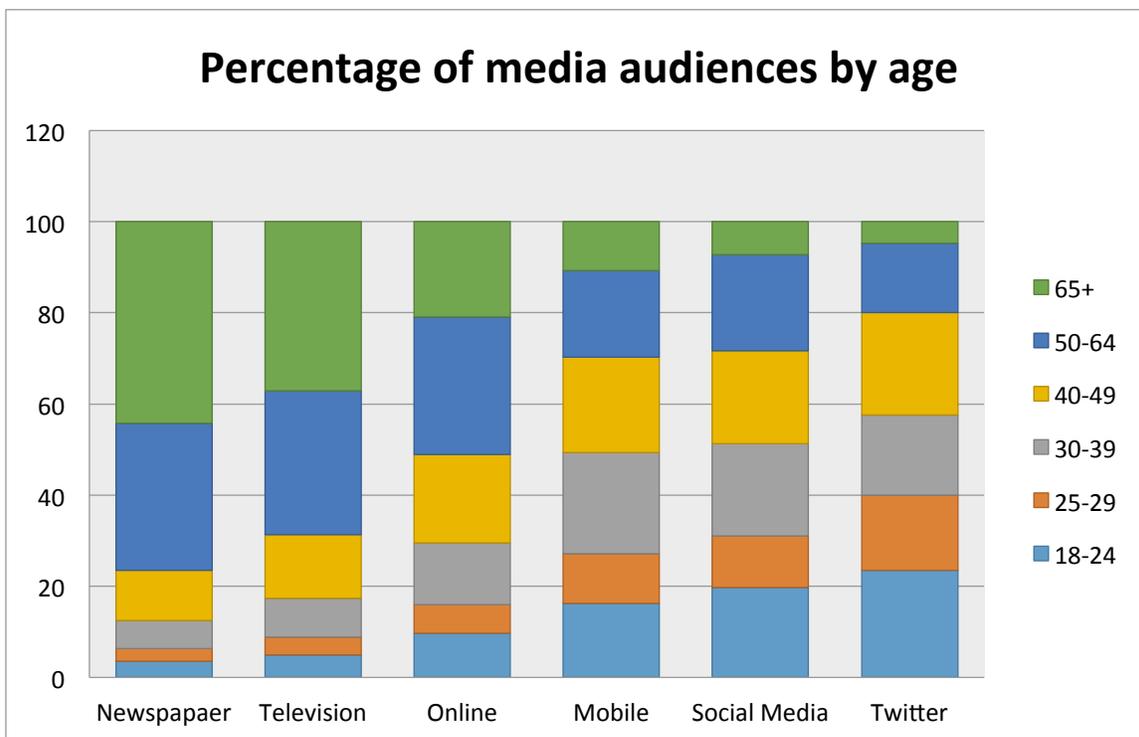
the exceptions prove the rule. Vertical media, operated by professionals who orient their stories to national government, events, and audiences still set agendas, although—in one recent study (2008)—there is just a hint that the ability of the vertical media may be in decline. The 1972 Chapel Hill, N.C., agenda setting study found that the correlation between media and audience on the presidential election issues to be .97, almost a perfect fit. A Chapel Hill replication of that study in 2008, forty years later, found the connection to be .87, still high. But would that slight decline result from sampling error or some other methodical issue, or is there some general decline at work between the major vertical media and national audiences? For example, see Coleman and McCombs’ article, *The young and agenda-less? Exploring age-related differences in agenda setting on the youngest generation, baby boomers, and the civic generation.*<sup>11</sup> Time will tell. Meanwhile, Pew has examined the decline in vertical media audiences and also charted the use of various kinds of media by audiences differentiated by age. See Figures 6 and 7.

FIGURE 6: Decline of Television and Newspaper Audiences



PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2012 News Consumption Survey.

FIGURE 7: Media Use by Age



PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2012 NEWS CONSUMPTION SURVEY

How we use and meld media agenda communities depends on our interests and opportunities. These differ across time and space. They differ across generations. Don't expect your children to create and value the same communities as you do. They may; they may not. Indeed, they may live in private communities.

# 5

## The Emerging Papyrus Society

Around the world, we are evolving toward social systems in which historical power arrangements are less and less pertinent and predictive of social order. Once we looked to the top of the pyramid for guidance, whether it be for government, industry, education, or any other of our activities. These positions remain important, but it is possible for all the stones, metaphorically speaking, in the pyramid to find and communicate with others like themselves. Social media, for example, make it possible to find other perspectives as we found in the Arab Spring. More importantly than information, for which there is no longer any shortage, newer media allow us as individuals to find others like ourselves, individually via email, or in groups as with Twitter, You Tube, and Facebook, among others. The historical direction of media as always been similar to that of human growth. Media—such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and now a large number of new media—are born, grow to maturity, and then decline.

In the United States, daily newspapers dominated public rhetoric until approximately the 1880, when magazines displaced daily newspapers to reign until about 1930 when radio and television, the media of mass society, assumed dominance.<sup>12</sup> Now newer media dominate. One has always assumed that media, once established, would never die, only grow older and assume a more mature role. If so, where is silent film? Where are the mass magazines, such as Life and Look, which disappeared 40 years ago? What happened to the traditional television network audiences, now shrunken to a shadow of their former selves? All this is true even though we still spend about the same amount, or even a little more, on media. We do not spend it on old media, so we necessarily spend it on new media. U.S. scholar Max McCombs long ago documented that we spend a relatively fixed amount of time with all media; therefore, time with new media comes at the expense of time with older media.

Wikipedia has largely replaced Encyclopaedia Britannica, which is now online, as a principal source of authority. MOOC courses from Harvard and other leading institutions seems to be creating new opportunities' and displacing older traditional educational institutions. Leaders, from presidents to colonels to professors, now work in a competitive informational environments. All of us live in agenda community competition, and all of us must be able to argue our personal agendas with the needs of our audiences in mind. Our audiences have alternatives. If presidents ignore this, they will need very large armies. If professors do this, they will find their students transferring to online courses.

We will need to remind ourselves that social change nearly always comes from alternative agenda communities. In the United States, the rights of African-Americans, women, the poor, immigrants, and many other were first advocated by alternative media, such as small newspapers or broadcast outlets, and then—in some cases—these small horizontal voices made their way to, and up, the vertical media ladder. In the United States, the major vertical media did

not play a significant role in human or civil rights until, in agenda setting terms, forced to do so by alternative media communities. Then vertical media did what they do best, reinforce dominant (evolving) values.

We are living in a society in which dominant media for the society as a whole have to share space with horizontal media around which we organize and create personal community. With media expanding across the world, shared by elites in all nations, we are learning to use a mix of media to meld communities that fit our preferences and to reach further to create purely personal identities in which we live, work, and play. We cannot stop this evolution; we only hope that we learn to use media responsibly so that evolution does not slip into revolution, or even worse, chaos. There are several nations now that seem to be slipping into chaos right now. It is our responsibility to understand the role of media and to help both responsible governments and citizens understand these challenges. From an historical point of view, we are in a period of paradigm shift, and not for the first time in human history.

As media evolve, we are just doing what humans always have. We seek others who share our views and values. In the United States, the phrase is: Birds of a feather flock together. This sentiment is expressed one way or another in all countries. We must learn to live with it. There really are no other options.

We all live in a richly mediated world, and we naturally assume that everyone is sharing a common agenda, which is true, but our access to the agenda very much depends on the media agendas we select to frame our civic, and personal, worlds. It turns out we have much more power than we realize...and many national leaders realize. Those who visualize a clear institutional world represented by the magnificently rising pyramids, have trouble realizing the world is moving toward a more personalized mix of personal messages, the ones more easily transportable by papyrus paper. What media produce will have ramifications political and cultural leaders can only speculate on...and maybe even fear.

On behalf of Richard Cole, Chris Vargo, and Milad Minooie, thank you for the opportunity to speak to such a distinguished group of journalists and scholars.

## Notes

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