This study examines Clinton/Lewinsky scandal coverage from an agenda-setting perspective—while polls show morality is important to the public, why wasn't Clinton and Lewinsky's relationship? We argue that it was a case of compelling arguments, where the media's choice of attributes negatively affected the public's salience of the story. The "sex scandal/adultery" attribute was used most often, was of low relevance, and we speculate that because of its high use in the beginning, persisted in people's minds, influencing the way they viewed continuing coverage of the scandal. Finally, ramifications of Clinton/Lewinsky coverage on the 2000 presidential election are discussed.

The 2000 presidential election was a sensational story that captured the attention of the world. It will be remembered as one of the closest, most suspenseful, and unpredictable elections in U.S. history. Before the election, the outcome seemed clear. The country was riding a wave of economic prosperity and Al Gore was the vice president of a popular administration with high approval ratings. Most of the political science election models predicted that Gore would become the next president of the United States, and, in fact, he was leading in the early polls. It seemed a foregone conclusion that Gore would win the 2000 presidential election. As the election neared, Gore attempted to separate himself from that popular administration, choosing not to involve President Bill Clinton in the campaign. In the end, Gore won the popular vote by .51%, while Bush won the electoral vote and became president.1 What appeared to escape the prediction formulas of the political scientists—the distancing of Clinton—did not escape the attention of the public.

Polls prior to the 2000 campaign season highlighted the prominence of candidates' character and morality. A December 1999 survey sponsored by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard School of Public Health asked U.S. adults which issues would "be most important when you decide who to vote for" in the upcoming election.2 Candidates' character and moral values came in second, after candidates' stands on issues (and tied with leadership abilities). Almost one-fourth of the U.S. adult population surveyed found character and moral values to be a significant determinant in their election decision.

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Another study conducted by ABC News and the Washington Post in March and April 2000 asked U.S. adults how important "encouraging high moral standards and values" was to them in deciding how to vote in the 2000 presidential election. The result: 66% of those surveyed stated it was "very important" while 21% stated it was "somewhat important." In other words, for 87% of those surveyed, encouraging morality and values would factor in their voting decision for president. Finally, in a July 2000 Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard poll, when choosing from a list of seventeen prominent issues, 15% of respondents selected "moral values" as the issue "most important in deciding [their] vote for president" tying with social security and only surpassed by education (18%).

In light of the poll results demonstrating the importance of a presidential candidate's morality and character, one wonders about the public's disinterest in and dissatisfaction with the overwhelming earlier media coverage of the relationship between President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, and the Gore campaign decision to distance itself from Clinton.

Part of the explanation can be found in the interplay between the media's framing of issues and the public's perceptions of news coverage, which has been the focus of agenda-setting and framing research. Although the two have primarily been separate paths of inquiry, their convergence is a hotly debated topic among communication scholars. Advocates cite similarities in conceptualizations of frames and attributes, while others disagree and fear the rich detail of framing analysis will be lost in the aggregation of data that is utilized in many agenda-setting studies. This research incorporates agenda-setting theory in a study originally approached from a framing paradigm in order to make a compelling argument for the convergence of framing and attribute agenda setting.

**Framing.** While extensive literature on framing exists, the following, abridged clarification serves to conceptualize some of the fundamental aspects of framing, especially as they relate to agenda setting.

Conceptualizing framing is problematic in a number of ways. First, "frame" is a common term that has multiple definitions. The word "frame" can be a noun, the result of the framing process, or a verb, which implies an active role in the frame's creation. Second, a variety of conceptualizations exist within framing literature. The word "frame" can be used interchangeably with schema, script, or strip to refer to audience perception and processing. In addition to describing message processing, "frame" has also been used to describe message construction, both in terms of meaning and physical presentation, such as a newspaper article's layout or a camera frame. Lastly, framing studies have evolved from two academic areas of inquiry: psychology and sociology. The psychological approach involves changes in individuals' cognitive structures, while the sociological perspective "tends to focus on the use of story lines, symbols, and stereotypes in media presentations." A similar division has also been made between media
frames—how journalists organize and report the news—and individual frames—the collected knowledge a person possesses on a topic.10

In attempting to clarify the various conceptualizations of framing, Entman explains that framing deals with salience: constructing a news item so that it is more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to the audience11—a key concept in the creation of the media agenda. “Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation of the item described.”12

More recently, Reese synthesized multiple conceptualizations of framing into a single definition: “Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.”13

Agenda Setting. Similar to framing, agenda setting is based in psychology and sociology. The theory, first empirically tested by McCombs and Shaw, explores the transfer of salience from the media to the public.14 Much of agenda-setting research has focused on the transfer of issue salience; however, many other topics such as candidate images and corporations have been and could be explored.15 As a result, the concept of an agenda of “issues” has broadened into an agenda of “objects.” Agenda setting can be thought of as a form of social learning where the amount of media coverage an object receives helps audiences determine that object’s relative importance to society at large.16 Recently, agenda setting has taken on a new capacity—one that penetrates this relationship between audience and media even further. This new dimension has been termed second-level agenda setting.

There are two components of second-level agenda setting (see Figure 1): the transfer of attribute salience and compelling arguments

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FIGURE 1
Levels of Agenda Setting*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Agenda</th>
<th>Public Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>Salience of Objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Traditional agenda setting (First-level effects)
2 Attribute agenda setting (Second-level effects)
3 Compelling arguments (Attribute effects on object salience)

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(which will be discussed later). "Just as there is an agenda of objects, there also is an agenda of attributes for each object that can be organized according to the relative salience of the attributes."^17 McCombs and Ghanem^18 refer to an Iyengar and Simon^19 study, conducted prior to the explication of second-level agenda setting, to illustrate the relationship between the two levels. In Iyengar and Simon's study, the first level of agenda setting—the transmission of object salience—is present in respondents' classifications of the Gulf crisis as the most important problem facing the nation. The second level—the transmission of attribute salience—occurs when respondents describe the crisis in terms of diplomatic or military options. "Explicit attention to the second level, attribute agenda setting, further suggests that the media also tell us how to think about some objects. It is here that agenda setting and framing share common ground."^20

**Convergence.** Similarities between agenda setting and framing have been discussed by several researchers.^21 Both framing and agenda setting are psycho-social processes. Both deal with construction of media messages—how journalists organize and present news. The terminology used to define both concepts is similar and, at times, even interchangeable.^22 Two key components in Entman’s often-cited framing definition are selection and salience,^23 which are two key components of agenda setting as well. Media select certain aspects (substitute “frame” or “attribute” here) and highlight them through coverage, thus increasing their salience among audience members.

The topic of convergence—the union of framing and agenda setting—has been an issue receiving more explicit attention. "Framing research explores how the media frame an issue or a problem and how this affects people’s understanding of that issue."^24 Agenda setting also examines how media coverage affects what topics people think about and how they think about those topics. First-level agenda setting examines the amount of coverage an object receives, while second-level agenda setting examines how that object is presented. "It seems that attribute-agenda setting is a natural extension of the agenda-setting concept, but as a result, agenda-setting research and framing research are exploring almost the same problem—that of the reality-definition of the media."^25 Williams, Shapiro, and Cutbirth provide further insight into the necessity of a marriage between framing and agenda setting. They state that framing is a crucial variable in the agenda-setting process. "The reason why framing is potentially important to the understanding of the agenda-setting process is that often the media communicate issues relevant to a campaign, but do not give an implicit campaign frame...If the media do not provide a campaign frame, then the viewer-reader is left with ambiguities as to the campaign relevance of the story."^26 This example demonstrates not only how agenda setting and framing can work simultaneously, but also why their convergence may be an essential and inevitable advancement in framing and agenda-setting research.

**Clinton/Lewinsky and Compelling Arguments.** The circumstances and events of the Monica Lewinsky and Bill Clinton narrative have often times been referred to as a "scandal," rather than a simple story. Scandals
and corruption are related. However, corruption is ongoing and inherent to a system, whereas scandals are sporadic phenomena coming to light at specific points in history, in specific environments.\textsuperscript{27} Central to the idea of a "scandal" is the admission or revelation of illegal or unethical behavior.\textsuperscript{28} More important, public knowledge is required to elevate the status of a questionable event to a scandal.\textsuperscript{29} It has been argued that scandals are impossible without the intervention of mass media and "need to be treated, above all, as news events, as media stories unmasking formerly secret peccadilloes."\textsuperscript{30}

Yet, scandals as salient media events may not influence the public agenda. Although we do not have hard evidence on the amount of news hole devoted to coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, most people would agree that it was pervasive. March 10, 1999, was the first day in more than a 365-day time span that the \textit{New York Times} did not mention Lewinsky's name in any of its articles.\textsuperscript{31} This story, however, was not equally salient to the public. A September 1998, \textit{Time/CNN} poll found that 73\% of respondents thought the media paid "too much attention to this story."\textsuperscript{32} In another survey, 80\% found the coverage to be excessive; 66\% found it disappointing; and 57\% described it as disgusting.\textsuperscript{33} When asked about which aspects of the scandal bothered them most, respondents in several polls identified media coverage, second only to Clinton's lying and/or obstructing justice.\textsuperscript{34}

Despite copious coverage of the scandal, and the public's concern over the president's alleged lying and obstruction of justice, Clinton's approval ratings were not negatively affected. When asked "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president?" the majority of respondents indicated approval at several time periods throughout the year (see Table 1).\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
\hline
Approve & 66\% & 62\% & 71\% \\
Disapprove & 30\% & 34\% & 27\% \\
Source & ABC News & ABC News & Pew Research Center \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Clinton Approval Ratings}
\end{table}

As David Brinkley wrote, "Television can keep a story alive but it cannot ensure that the public will continue to believe in it. The year or more during which the news media was obsessed with the Monica Lewinsky scandal, for example, saw a significant rise in President Clinton's public approval ratings and a significant decline in the media's."\textsuperscript{36}

Observing this contradiction between media and public priorities, some have described the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal as a classic case of the media failing to set the public agenda on the first level. Simply
looking at Clinton’s approval ratings and the public’s disappointment with media coverage might support this claim. However, we consider the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal to be a classic case of compelling arguments.

Recall that there are two components of second-level agenda setting, attribute salience transfer and compelling arguments. How media cover objects—that is, which attributes the media choose and use—can impact public perceptions of that object. The concept of compelling arguments involves attribute influences on object salience. Audience members may find some attributes more pertinent than others; these attributes “may resonate with the public in such a way that they become especially compelling arguments” that affect the salience of the overall object—the issue, person, topic or, in this case, scandal—under consideration.

Although conducted prior to the explication of the second level of agenda setting, Schoenbach and Semetko allude to the idea of compelling arguments in their study of the first German national election following unification. Despite a large number of articles dealing with the situation in the former GDR, salience for this issue decreased from wave one to wave two. The authors theorized that the “tone” of the coverage, which focused on “successful and rapid change,” weakened the importance of the issue, leading fewer readers to perceive the situation in the former GDR as a problem. They termed this effect agenda-deflating.

While Schoenbach and Semetko refer to the “tone” of the articles, “attribute” may be a more appropriate and inclusive concept. Both agenda-deflating and compelling arguments essentially describe an effect in which public perception of an issue’s overall importance is influenced by the way media describe that issue. Just as the German study revealed that numerous articles may actually diminish public salience, it seems that in the case of Clinton/Lewinsky, the media’s attributes and heightened coverage negatively affected public salience.

In the context of agenda-setting theory, this failure to influence the public can be explained by the concept of need for orientation. Apparently, the public did not find the scandal relevant to governance and Clinton’s role as president. This explanation would be strengthened if the attribute agenda of the media emphasized the sexual nature of the scandal rather than the implications for the presidency. In light of the public’s response, we hypothesize the following:

H1: News coverage emphasized the sexual scandal aspects of Clinton/Lewinsky, overshadowing other attributes of this story.

**Method**

This study examined newspaper coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal through a content analysis of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Using a stratified list with a random starting point, we selected 70 articles from each newspaper evenly distributed across three points in time. Each time period in 1998 centered around major developments in the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal: (1) 16 January-30 January, Special
Prosecutor Kenneth Starr receives authorization to expand his investigation into Clinton's relationship with Lewinsky; (2) 1 September-15 September, Starr delivers his report to House leaders; and (3) 9 December-23 December, House Judiciary Committee proceedings and the House Impeachment votes occur. The articles were content analyzed for placement/presentation, frames/attributes and sources.

For our definition of a frame, we utilized a concept prominent in framing literature—a central organizing idea or theme "that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration." Using the "list of frames" approach, we began by reviewing scandal coverage in newspapers, excluding the publications from which we drew our sample. Coding categories were created from a list of themes that regularly appeared in scandal coverage. Coders selected the dominant frame by determining the single theme that was most emphasized throughout a story, paying particular attention to headlines, subheads, and lead paragraphs. Despite explicit coding instructions, training, and refinement of the code categories, multiple frames were present in the articles, making it problematic to pinpoint a single frame that captured the focus of the story (Holsti coder reliability = .61). One of the reasons for this difficulty was that, at times, headlines, subheads, and lead paragraphs highlighted several themes or ideas discussed in the article rather than focusing on one.

Utilizing the same list of frames, coders more easily coded for the mere presence of these themes within a story, without regard to a theme's function as "the central organizing idea" (Holsti coder reliability = .86). This variable was originally called "secondary frames." However, recent writing on convergence has revealed that the concept of an "attribute" may be a better fit. McCombs and Ghanem cite several studies in which frames have been operationalized differently—as central organizing ideas in some cases, and in others as sub-themes, or aspects that provide additional context and meaning for the reader. They suggest that this distinction between central themes and aspects should be applied to clarify the difference between frames and attributes. "The distinction found in the current vocabulary of the literature between the generic concept of attributes and frames that are aspects is a distinction without difference. The important distinction is between descriptive attributes that appear here and there and a descriptive attribute (or set of attributes) defining the central theme."^45

In terms of presentation, stories appeared on page A-1 20% of the time. As hypothesized, the "sex scandal/adultery" attribute was dominant and appeared in 55% of the articles.

This study's attribute categories of "sex scandal," "politically motivated," "performance/poll," "impact on others" and "past scandal" were respectively the five that were most utilized by the papers in this study (see Table 2). With the exception of "impact on others," it is plausible that each of these attributes served as compelling arguments to decrease public salience for the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal. Our opera-
These attributes most likely minimized the scandal’s impact on the public. For example, comparing the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal to Watergate diminished the impact of this scandal because most people believed that Watergate was a more serious issue. In a poll conducted in late January 1998, 54% of respondents believed that the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal was not as bad as Watergate.

In the case of “performance/poll,” many of the stories included approval and job-performance ratings that remained favorable to Clinton throughout the scandal (see Table 1). Similarly, for “politically motivated/partisan battle,” characterizations of the scandal shifted the focus to Republican motivations and explored rationales such as then First Lady Hillary Clinton’s charge of a “right-wing conspiracy.”

The most widely-used attribute, “sex scandal/adultery,” may have influenced public perception in several ways. First, the simple act of labeling the story a “sex scandal” may have had a minimizing effect. Lang and Lang theorized that early and persistent references to the Watergate break-in, such as “Watergate caper,” belittled the story.

Second, our data indicated that the “sex scandal/adultery” attribute was most prominent in the first time period of our study, during the early stages of the scandal (see Table 4). Summarizing Gitlin’s work, Tankard et al. note that “media themes are persistent: the initial frame tends to determine how the issue will be presented in the future.” While the “sex scandal/adultery” attribute did decline to some degree, it remained present in nearly one-third of all stories—even eleven months
TABLE 3
Operational Definitions of Attributes

- **Sex Scandal/Adultery:** Discussing the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal in terms of sexual aspects; concentration on the sexual relationship; adultery—looking at the (sexual) relationship through a Christian/Biblical perspective; American preoccupation with sex; cheating.

- **Politically Motivated/Partisan Battle:** Republicans vs. Democrats; scandal viewed as the result of Clinton’s opponents out to get the president; voting based on party lines.

- **Performance/Poll:** Public opinion, ratings on job performance, ability to govern in wake of scandal. How will the president be remembered?

- **Comparison to Past Scandals:** Comparing Clinton’s affair with Lewinsky, the impeachment, the perjury or any other aspects of the presidency during the scandal to other events/situations in U.S. history.

into the news cycle. We believe that initial attributes are not only persistent in presentation, but also in people’s minds.

Third, describing the scandal in terms of adultery may have contributed to the large proportion of the public that classified this as a private matter, thus decreasing its public salience. When asked whether they viewed the situation more as a “private matter” or a “public matter,” 61% of respondents believed it was “a private matter having to do with Bill Clinton’s personal life.”

Lastly, need for orientation, another concept from agenda setting, might also explain the public’s lack of interest in the scandal. The first component of need for orientation is relevance. In light of the previously cited poll, it is easy to see why most members of the public would not find a presidential sex scandal relevant. Low relevance flows into a low need for orientation and thus a lower susceptibility to agenda-setting effects. To summarize, the “sex scandal/adultery” attribute was used most often, was of low relevance and because of its high use in the beginning, we believe, it persisted in people’s minds and influenced the way they viewed the continuing coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal.

One limitation of framing has been its inability to operationalize effects on audience perceptions. This has not gone unnoticed by framing scholars. Framing studies’ primary methodology is content analysis, which does not assess the impact of framed messages on an audience. Agenda setting, however, does allow for this component. In the first level of agenda setting, the audience detects the amount of coverage and uses that cue to judge the relative importance or salience of the object—the scandal, in this case. Second-level agenda setting expands on audience perceptions by including their observations of how the object is covered.

Discussion

Revisiting the Clinton/Lewinsky Scandal
TABLE 4
Articles with Sex Scandal/Adultery Attribute by Time Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles (%)</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2=18.95$, $p < .001$

The following discussion explores the audience factor by incorporating public opinion poll data, for it is when we place the media's most frequently used attributes within the context of agenda setting that we may draw some conclusions about the relationship between the public and media agendas.

**Morality and Public Opinion.** Recalling that the attribute which focused on Clinton's performance or poll data was utilized in nearly 30% of the stories, in combination with the sustained high approval ratings, it would seem that continued reporting of positive polls influenced public opinion on job approval and helped to maintain the high approval ratings.

However, when examining the issue of morality, researchers of public opinion may still find these results perplexing, because morality has traditionally been an important issue on the public agenda in electing the president. Presidential election years from 1980 through 2000 were searched using the Roper Center index of polls available online through Lexis-Nexis. For open-ended questions asking respondents to name "the most important problem facing this country," the percentage naming moral values/moral decline varied from 3% to 11% within election years. These are relatively moderate response rates for open-ended questions since answers other than "don't know/didn't respond," rarely reach double digits. Even in 1992, when the economy was a very salient topic, 67% of respondents believed that during the presidential campaign "too little attention" had been paid to moral standards, specifically that the country's were not high enough. In 1996, when asked which was more important, moral or economic problems, 52% chose economic problems while 42% chose moral problems—a relatively small difference when considering the historic importance of pocketbook issues.

In addition to investigating public opinion on moral issues, past survey research has also asked respondents questions regarding the morality of specific candidates. In the wake of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, morality has been evaluated in terms of its explicit effects on people's voting decisions. ABC News/Washington Post poll respondents reported that "moral values" was the single most important issue in deciding whom to support in the 2000 presidential primary. Thirty-three percent of those surveyed identified moral values as the single most important issue, when choosing from the following: taxes (18%), social security and Medicare (15%), education (14%), world affairs (11%), abortion (5%), and campaign finance reform (1%).

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As the opinion poll data indicates, morality has been a primary issue on the public's mind. The logical question then is, why did Clinton approval ratings remain high in spite of copious coverage of a presidential scandal involving adultery and lying—behaviors usually categorized as immoral and unethical. It was not that morality suddenly dropped off the public's radar. Even in the midst of the scandal, morality was important to voters. A Washington Post poll conducted 18-22 December 1998, shortly after the impeachment hearings, found that 16% of respondents identified "the candidate's personal morals and ethics" as most important to them in choosing the next president. This ranked second only to "the candidate's stand on the issues" (37%) but higher than the candidate's experience (10%) and the broad principles and values on which the candidate campaigns (10%).

Perhaps the public does not view adultery, or did not view Clinton's affair, as immoral. However, considering our country's strong Judeo-Christian background, it seems more likely that we have a second case of compelling arguments.

The common thread among polling data on morality was that it was tied to an election. A Williams, Shapiro, and Cutbirth study divided the agenda of issues into two groups: those with explicit links to the campaign—the campaign agenda—and those without explicit links—the general agenda. The public agenda was strongly correlated to the campaign agenda, but not to the general agenda. Thus stories containing a morality attribute may need an explicit link to an election to be salient to the public.

**Ramifications of Clinton/Lewinsky in the 2000 Election.** Before the 2000 campaign was in full swing there were signs of trouble for Al Gore. A CNN/USA Today poll in May 1999, found that 44% of respondents felt that Al Gore "went too far in defending Clinton during the Monica Lewinsky controversy." Of those 44%, 70% said that because of this they would be "less likely to vote for Al Gore for president in 2000." Ten months later in March 2000, a Pew Research Center poll indicated that 41% of those surveyed would be "less likely" to vote for Gore because "Gore has been part of a scandal-ridden Clinton Administration."

During the campaign, polls indicated lingering effects of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal. Even after the party conventions—when candidates were addressing specific issues and avoiding explicit mentions of "Lewinsky"—1% stated the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal in response to an open-ended question asking "What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?" This response rate surpassed issues such as AIDS, world hunger, and teen pregnancy and tied with several issues including campaign finance reform, national security, and family values. Al Gore, perhaps anticipating or, perhaps reacting to the poll numbers, attempted to distance himself from Clinton. Gore criticized Clinton for his actions during the scandal. Additionally, for a popular incumbent president, Clinton was curiously absent from the campaign trail, a strategic decision by the Gore campaign.

We argue that the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal resulted in both direct and indirect effects upon the outcome of the 2000 election. The direct effect: Media coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal primed
public perception of the candidates. The indirect effect: In anticipating or reacting to this alteration in public perception, Gore chose to distance himself from the administration and limit Clinton’s campaign activities.

One of the difficulties of this research project was timing. We designed this study after Clinton/Lewinsky coverage had peaked, making it impossible to conduct our own survey with questions created to test our interpretation. However, combining existing public opinion data with our content analysis and a second-level agenda-setting approach, we feel we were able to make a compelling case for our conclusion that Gore may have been the one most affected by coverage of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal.

NOTES


2. All poll data, except where noted, were obtained from the Roper Center archive through Lexis-Nexis. To access the data, enter the accession number in the keyword field and expand the date range (the default is set to “previous six months”). Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard School of Public Health (3-13 December 1999), accession number 0350864; question 008.


5. For more on this, see James W. Tankard, Jr., Laura Hendrickson, Jackie Silberman, Kris Bliss, and Salma Ghanem, “Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement” (paper presented at the annual meeting of AEJMC, Boston, August 1991).


11. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm."


23. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm."


32. Time and CNN (16-17 September 1998) accession number 0310143, question 034.

33. All of these were part of a Freedom Forum Media Studies Center (30 January-4 February 1998) survey; accession numbers 0293016, question 037 ("excessive"); 0293013, question 034 ("disappointing"); 0293015, question 036 ("disgusting").


40. See Maxwell E. McCombs and David H. Weaver, "Voters' Need for Orientation and Use of Mass Communication" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Montreal, Canada, 1973); and David H. Weaver, "Political Issues and Voter Need for Orientation," in Agenda Setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking, ed. David L. Protess and Maxwell McCombs

41. Tankard et al., "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement," 5.

42. Tankard et al., "Media Frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement.”

43. McCombs and Ghanem, “The Convergence of Agenda Setting and Framing.”

44. This conceptualization of “aspects” can be found in McCombs, “Chapter 6: Framing and Compelling Arguments.”


46. The impact on others attribute was a more general category. It included stories dealing with the effects of the scandal on a wide variety of parties both directly and indirectly involved. Because of its broad nature we excluded it from our compelling arguments analysis.

47. *Time* and CNN (28-29 January 1998), accession number 0292185, question 032.


50. CBS News (30 March-1 April 1998), accession number 0294940, question 007.

51. See McCombs and Weaver, “Voters’ Need for Orientation and Use of Mass Communication,” and Weaver, “Political Issues and Voter Need for Orientation.”

52. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.”

53. Using the question field, we searched election years for the phrase “most important problem.” The following series (one per year) was selected based upon similar question wording, methodology, and time period. The response rates of 3% to 11% were from the following polls: Gallup (10-13 October 1980), accession number 0029458, question 032; ABC News and *Washington Post* (7-11 September 1984), accession number 0005249, question 001; ABC News (30 August-1 September 1988), accession number 0000288, question 001; CNN and Knight Ridder (28 August-2 September 1992), accession number 0216150, question 009; CBS News and *New York Times* (16-18 August 1996), accession number 0262666, question 015; and Gallup (6-9 October 2000), accession number 0385053, question 011.


55. CNN and *USA Today* (9-10 April 1996), accession number 0257233, question 024.

56. ABC News and *Washington Post* (3-6 February 2000), accession number 0351091, question 069. Additional supporting poll data was cited in the introduction.

58. Williams, Shapiro, and Cutbirth, "The Impact of Campaign Agendas on Perceptions of Issues."
59. CNN and USA Today (23-24 May 1999), accession number 0328298, question 021.
60. Pew Research Center (15-19 March 2000), accession number 0354910, question 005.
61. Harris Interactive (8-17 September 2000), accession number 0369728, question 008.