

Chapter 7: The Mass Media and the Political Agenda

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Trace the development of the mass media and the way in which presidents have used the media in different periods of our history.
2. Analyze the impact that investigative journalism has had on public cynicism and negativism about politics.
3. Ascertain the major sources that people rely on for their information about politics.
4. Determine how journalists define what is newsworthy, where they get their information, and how they present it.
5. Explain the role that the profit motive plays in decisions by the mass media on how to report the news.
6. Examine and analyze the charge that the media have a liberal bias.
7. Identify factors that would explain why the news is typically characterized by political *neutrality*.
8. Determine methods used by political activists to get their ideas placed high on the governmental agenda.
9. Clarify how the media act as *key linkage institutions* between the people and the policymakers.
10. Explain how functions of the media may help to keep government small.
11. Identify functions of the media that may encourage the growth of government.
12. Describe how the rise of television broadcasting has encouraged individualism in the American political system.
13. Explain why the rise of the "information society" has not brought about a corresponding rise of an "informed society."
14. Summarize how the news and its presentation are important influences in shaping public opinion on political issues.