



Media coverage, political identity and political corruption

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Abstract:

Media coverage of corruption has become a prominent issue in the political environment in Israel and setting corruption as an agenda has been a usual practice by the media. Political communication scholars have emphasized the role that the media play in shaping public opinion and the relationship between media coverage and public opinion. The media are the principal means for people to receive their information about policy issues. Much of the public's knowledge and information about public affairs is mediated through the media as people's opinions about political issues are shaped by the selection and presentation of information. The study uses the theory of agenda-setting as a basic framework for testing and delineating the relations between the political elite and agenda setting. It aims to understand the effectiveness of agenda setting in reporting political corruption and to contribute to the academic literature on the impact of the coverage of political corruption on the development of the political system in Israel. The research is looking at the way that the media influenced public opinions about the role of corruption in determining the future of Israel's politics by examining the changes in political ideology of four consecutive prime ministers – all which abandoned their ideological policies and adopted practical policies that were supported by their traditional political rivals and the mass media. The conclusion is that the change of their ideology was as a result of corruption charges that these leaders had to confront – as a practical means to influence public agenda in a way that is supported by the political elite and the media.

Key words: agenda setting, corruption, Israel, politics, ideology, culture