

Issue Selection, Media Competition, and Polarization of Saliency

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Abstract

In a political competition, political parties run their campaign communication to attract voters' attention to issues on which the parties have an advantage. Recently, several papers that analyze *issue selection strategies* with endogenous issue weights have emerged and revealed the effect of such strategies on political outcomes. However, as far as I know, there are no theoretical papers that consider both issue selection strategies and media outlets' behavior simultaneously, even though most voters receive parties' political communication through media reporting. In this paper, I develop an issue selection model that incorporates the profit-maximization behavior of media outlets. Through the analysis, I find that competition among media outlets combined with parties' strategic issue selection leads to polarization in voters' issue saliency weights. Additionally, I show that this polarization increases the winning probability of the party that has lower-quality policy proposals.

Keywords: Electoral competition; Campaign effort; Priming; Media bias

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