Agenda-Setting Dynamics

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Overview

• Thesis

Part 1:
• Informational Biases- Bennett
• Journalistic Perspectives- Hackett

Part 2:
• Issue Attributes & Agenda-Setting by Media- Soroka
• Conclusion/Activity
Thesis

The media is not the only party that can set an agenda, rather, agendas are set based on issue salience for different sections of the population.
News: The Politics of Illusion

- Four Informational Biases
  - Personalization
  - Dramatization
  - Fragmentation
  - Authority Disorder Bias
News: The Politics of Illusion

• Four Informational Biases
  • Personalization
  • Dramatization
  • Fragmentation
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News: The Politics of Illusion

• Four Informational Biases
  • Personalization
  • Dramatization
  • Fragmentation
  • Authority Disorder Bias
Personalization and Dramatization

- Personalization
  - The hook: human interest and individual actors
  - “Can’t-see-the-forest-for-the-trees”

- Dramatization
  - The hook: events that can be dramatized
Name that bias!
Name that bias!
Fragmentation

- When news is presented as a fractured picture
  - Emphasis of the individual actors
  - Framing: Episodic vs Thematic
Fragmentation

- When news is presented as a fractured picture
- Emphasis of the individual actors
- Framing: Episodic vs Thematic
What is this?
What is this?
It’s a Skateboard!
It’s a Skateboard!
Authority Disorder

- Changing perspectives on authority
  - Journalists portray authority as having no control over “mayhem” and “chaos”
Journalist’s Perspective

• The Issues
  • Lack of resources
  • Work routines
  • External Pressures
  • Internalized Pressures
Lack of Resources

- Lack of time, money, and news space
- Fewer journalists
Lack of Resources

- Lack of time, money, and news space
- Fewer journalists
- **Superficial News**
Work Routines

- Creatures of habit.....laziness?
- Pack journalism
Work Routines

- Creatures of habit.....laziness?
- Pack journalism
- Simplification (black and white)
External Pressures

- News Value
- Ownership
- Advertisers

*News Value: The degree to which news will draw in the audiences attention*
Internalized Pressures

- Don’t want to alienate sources
Internalized Pressures

- Don’t want to alienate sources
  - Self-Censorship
Internalized Pressures

- Don’t want to alienate sources
  - Self-Censorship
Issue Attributes and Agenda Setting
- Stuart N. Soroka

- Three agendas: Public, Policy, and Media
- Media’s role in the formation of public opinion and policy
Issue Attributes and Agenda Setting
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• Three agendas: Public, Policy, and Media

• Media’s role in the formation of public opinion and policy

The Bottom Up Approach:
Issue Attributes and Agenda Setting
- Stuart N. Soroka

- Three agendas: Public, Policy, and Media
- Media’s role in the formation of public opinion and policy

The Bottom Up Approach:
Shift in Approach

- Media
- Audience
- Real world Issues
Shift in Approach

Before

Media

Audience

Real world Issues
Shift in Approach

Before

Media

Audience

Real world Issues

Now

Tuesday, November 30, 2010
Issue attribute theories

- more obtrusive an issues …
- more likely experienced on an individual level
- Issues not experienced on an individual level
Issue attribute theories

- **Obtrusive**: Theory by Zucker (1978)
  - more obtrusive an issues …
  - more likely experienced on an individual level

- Issues not experienced on an individual level
Issue attribute theories

- **Obtrusive**: Theory by Zucker (1978)
  - more obtrusive an issues …
  - more likely experienced on an individual level

- **Unobtrusive**
  - Issues not experienced on an individual level
Dynamics of Influence

- Media Agenda
- Public Agenda
- Real World Issues
- Policy Agenda
Inflation Illustrated

Media Agenda

Inflation

Policy Agenda
Inflation Illustrated

Media Agenda

Inflation

Policy Agenda

Public Agenda
Environment
Demonstrated

- Environment
- Public Agenda
- Policy Agenda
Debt and Deficit

Media Agenda

Debt & Deficit

Public Agenda
Debt and Deficit

Media Agenda

Public Agenda

Debt & Deficit

Policy Agenda
Method

- Media Agenda: Seven different English speaking newspapers
- Public Agenda: Open ended question responses
- Policy Agenda: Questions period, Throne Speech, private members bills, governmental bills
Soroka’s Equations
Soroka’s Equations

\[
MD_t = \frac{MD_{t-k} + PB_{t-k} + QP_{t-k} + Cm_{t,t+1} + PMb_{t,t+1} + Gb_{t,t+1} + THSp_{t,t+1} + Ec_{t-1,t,t+1} + Bd_{t-1,t,t+1} + RW_{t-m}}{1}
\]

\[
PB_t = MD_{t-k} + PB_{t-k} + Ec_{t-1,t,t+1} + RW_{t-m}
\]

\[
QP_t = \frac{MD_{t-k} + PB_{t-k} + QP_{t-k} + Cm_{t,t+1} + PMb_{t,t+1} + Gb_{t,t+1} + THSp_{t,t+1} + Bd_{t-1,t,t+1} + RW_{t-m} + sit}{1}
\]
Soroka’s Equations

\[
MD_t = MD_{t-k} + PB_{t-k} + QP_{t-k} + Cm_{t,t+1} + PMb_{t,t+1} + Gb_{t,t+1} + THSp_{t,t+1} + Ec_{t-1,t,t+1} + Bd_{t-1,t,t+1} + RW_{t-m} 
\]

(1)

\[
PB_t = MD_{t-k} + PB_{t-k} + Ec_{t-1,t,t+1} + RW_{t-m} 
\]

(2)

\[
QP_t = MD_{t-k} + PB_{t-k} + QP_{t-k} + Cm_{t,t+1} + PMb_{t,t+1} + Gb_{t,t+1} + THSp_{t,t+1} + Bd_{t-1,t,t+1} + RW_{t-m} + sit, 
\]

(3)

MD- Media agenda
THSP- Throne Speech
PB- Public agenda
QP- Policy agenda

PMb- Private Member’s Bills
GB-Governmental Bills
RW-Real-World Agenda
Ec/Bd- dummy variables
# Granger Test

## Table 1: Granger exogeneity test results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Chi²</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Chi²</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Media</td>
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<td>(0.809)</td>
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<td>Public</td>
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<td>Public</td>
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<td>Policy</td>
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<td>(0.078)</td>
<td>Election</td>
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<td>1.36</td>
<td>(0.715)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Throne Speech</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>(0.909)</td>
<td>Real World</td>
<td>Real World</td>
<td>12.81</td>
<td>(0.012)</td>
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<td>Elections</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>Policy</td>
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<td>Budget</td>
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<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>15.06</td>
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<td>Real World</td>
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<td>(0.211)</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>(0.062)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Throne Speech</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>29.11</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Real World</td>
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<td>(0.112)</td>
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</table>
Figure 3 Impulse response functions
The Point

• Obtrusiveness of issues result in different agenda-setting dynamics among the media, public, and policy makers

• Media influence is restricted if certain issues are directly experienced by the public

• Policy makers have a hand in initiating issue salience
Final thoughts

Thesis: The media is not the only party that can set an agenda, rather, agendas are set based on issue salience for different sections of the population.

1. Informational biases result from pressures in the workplace

2. Soroka introduces real world issues as affecting agenda setting dynamics
Acknowledgements

