**AGENDA SETTING IN PUBLIC POLICY**

**A WORK DONE BY GROUP TWO**

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Agenda setting is the process by which problems and alternative solutions, gain or loose public or elite attention. Group completion to set AGENDA is fierce because no society or political institutions have the capacity to address all agenda, or possible alternatives for possible problems that may arise within a society (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988).

It is essential to understand the term “agenda" in order to understand what agenda setting is all about. AGENDA can be defined as a collection of problems, understanding of causes, symbols, solutions and other elements of public problems that may come to the attention of the members of the public and their government officials.

Agendas exist in levels of government. Every community and every government body have a collection of problems that are available for discussion or that are being actively considered.

The largest level in agenda setting is the agenda universe, which contains all ideas that could possibly be brought up or discussed at a political or social system.

**POLITICAL POWER IN AGENDA SETTING**

The ability of groups to-do whether acting collectively in a coalition with other groups, or acting individually- to influence a policy is not simply a function of who makes the most persuasive argument either from a rhetorical or empirical perspective.

It is a well known fact that some groups or more influential than other other groups. In the sense that they are able to influence the outcome of policy debates. When we think of power, We might initially think of how people, groups, government in a society can compel people to do things, often against their will.

In a classic article The American Political Science Review; Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, argue that this sort of power-the ability of actor A to cause actor B to do things- is one of two faces of power. The first is the ability of keeping a person from doing what he/ she wants to do, instead of a coercive power. The second face is known as blocking power.

All forms of Political organization have a bias in favour of exploitation of some kinds of conflict and suppression of others because “organization is the mobilisation of bias". So me issues are organised into politics while others are organised out (Schattshneider, 1960/1975). In other words, some issues are likely to reach agenda because of the bias of Political organization that allow them to be raised, while others do not reach the agenda because they are considered unfit to be raised or discussed.

In the first face of power, A participates in the making of decisions that will affect participant B, even if does not like the decision or its consequences. This is the classic sort of power that we see in an authoritative or totalitarian system of government. But this sort if government can also been seen in the United States and other democracies, because there are many groups that have little power to influence the decisions made or their behalf or even against their interest.

In the second face of power, A prevents B's issues from getting to the agenda or becoming a policy, even when actor B really wants the issue to be raised. For instance, environmentalism was not particularly an important issue, until the late 1960s and early 1970s. And groups that discussed environmentalism found that their issue was not raised or even reached the agenda, because such issues were in no way of interest to the economic and political forces that dominated decision making.

It wasn’t until the emergence of high profile environmental issues such as the revelation is the problems with pesticides DDT or the Santa Barbara Oil spill of 1969, were these problems coupled with broad-based group mobilisation, and elevated to the point that mainstream actors paid attention to it.

Even then, one can argue that actor A which is representing the business and industrial sector bent but did not break because of the environmental issue and is still trying to prevent actor B which is representing environmentalism from advancing broader ideas that could have a profound impact on the environment.

Scholars have conceived of a third face of power, which differs substantially from the second face of power in that large groups of people who claim that they are at a disadvantage remain inactive, and fail to exert their influence, however small on policy making and politics (John Gaventa, 1980).

**SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

Problems can be defined and depicted in many different ways, depending o the goal of the proponent of the depiction of a particular problem and the nature of the problem and the political debate.

SOCIAL construction refers to the ways in which we as a society and the different conflicts of interest within the structure and tell stories of how problems cone to be the way they are. A group that can creat a depiction of a problem have an advantage over what, if anything, will be done about a problem.

The way a problem is defined is essential part in the persuasive process and us important in the choice of solutions. The social construction of a problem is linked to the social, political and ideological structures at the time. Americans value individual initiative and responsibility, therefore making Sri king and driving a matter of personal and social responsibility.

The sane values of self reliance and individual initiative is behind many public policies, dealing with free enterprise, welfare and o The economic policies. These values differentiate one nation's culture from the cultures of other nations where the community or the state takes on important role. In those countries, problems are likely to be constructed differently and the different policies are the result.

**MEASURING AGENDA STATUS OF ISSUES**

There is a level if importance to understanding how to measure and analyse the status of issues in agenda. It can be done both qualitatively and quantitatively. And the approach to the analysis is clearly dependent and influenced by the questions asked. The two basic categories if questions are; What is in the agenda? What is the agenda status?.

It is easier to measure issues on the national institutional agenda , because the Congress and executive branch have kept good record and because these records have been put into databases that are easy to search.

The study if agenda setting is a fruitful way to begin to understand how groups, power and the agenda interact to set the boundaries of Political policy debates. AGENDA SETTING love all policy process does not occur in a vacuum. The likelihood that an issue will rise on the agenda is the function of the issue itself, the actors that get involved, institutional relationships, and often random social and political factors that can be explained but not replicated or predicted.

However, theories of agenda setting are enabling researchers understand why and under what circumstance that policy change is likely to occur.