Agenda Setting Theory: An Annotated Bibliography

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The purpose of this study was to examine the need for orientation because it is one of the key concepts in agenda setting theory. This study investigated the widely accepted conceptualization of the need for orientation introduced by Weaver in 1972, and a recently expanded conceptualization of need for orientation introduced by Matthus. The researchers expected that the new need for orientation scale and the traditional need for orientation scale would be positively correlated.

Participants were randomly assigned to three different conditions. Prior to the distribution of six news stories, participants’ completed questionnaires measuring their need for orientation toward each issue. The issues included crime, global warming, and drug abuse. This type of method was chosen because it capitalized on the ability of controlled experiments to test the constructs that make up the underlying theoretical model of agenda setting. The participants included a group of 119 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Regina. These participants were selected based on convenience to the researcher, but were randomly selected from a certain pool of people.

Data revealed an agenda setting effect only for the issue of drug abuse. The issue salience for drug abuse was significantly higher for the group that read three stories than for the groups that read two and one story about this issue. The hypothesis that the new need for orientation and the traditional need for orientation scale would be positively correlated was supported.
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between media salience of presidential candidate images, perceived candidate salience, and public attitude strength using media and public opinion data from six US presidential elections. Additionally, the researchers hoped to find a positive correlation between media salience of presidential candidates and the proportion of the public who held dispersed attitudes about these public figures. The researchers also sought to reveal a positive correlation between media salience of presidential candidates and the proportion of the public who held extreme attitudes about these public figures.

The method chosen by the researcher in this study was content analysis. Media coverage and public opinion of the following candidates were examined: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Walter Mondale, George H. W. Bush, Michael Dukakis, Bob Dole, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Al Gore, and John Kerry. The Lexis Nexis and Factiva databases were implemented to gauge media attention. The New York Times, Washington Post, U.S. News & World Report, and Newsweek were selected for analysis.

The results revealed that media salience is positively related to both public salience and attitude strength. The presidential candidate receiving the greatest amount of coverage was Ronald Reagan, while the candidate receiving the least attention was Michael Dukakis. The findings also uncovered slight evidence that suggested the sequence of influence among these variables entails media salience leading to stronger attitudes, which subsequently resulted in increased public salience. Future research should examine relationships with other objects in the news.
The purpose of this study was to better understand mass media’s role in national policymaking. The study examined the relationships among the citation bias of the New York Times, national level public opinion, and congressional policies from 1956 to 2004. The study also tested one important intervening variable of the relationships among the following three agendas: The media agenda, the public agenda, and the policy agenda. The researchers in this study sought to prove that media’s liberal (conservative) bias is revealed through citing liberal (conservative) think tanks and policy groups.

Media agenda was represented by the values of media bias scores proposed by Groseclose and Milyo in 2005. This measure was based on the average adjusted Americans for Democratic Action score of each Congress member. Higher scores stood for a higher level of liberalism. The researchers also did a content analysis of famous news outlets and searched the Lexis Nexis Academic database. They did so in order to calculate the instances where each new outlet cited the 200 think tanks and policy groups. Additionally, the researchers used a structural model and calculated the Americans for Democratic Action score for several news outlets.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Americans Civil Liberties Union were most frequently cited by the New York Times from 1952 to 2004. Additionally, it was revealed that legislatures who cited the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were very liberal. Those who cited Americans Civil Liberties Union were moderately conservative.
The purpose of this study was to unveil how agenda setting worked in a country like Egypt. Furthermore, the researchers in this study sought to bring attention to the dynamics of agenda setting in Third World countries. These countries are made up of different economic, social, and political contexts. Nine reasons were taken into consideration in conducting this study. The researches hoped to further identify the intricacies of agenda setting when applied to the quasi-democracies of some Third World countries.

Content analysis and questionnaire-based survey research was implemented. Two daily Egyptian newspapers, Al Ahram as a state newspaper, and Al-Wafd as an opposition newspaper were examined using content analysis. Newspapers were selected to examine because they are the prime movers in organizing the public agenda. Additionally, sample collection was based on data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics Census on the Cairo governorate. Gender, education, and income were analyzed in the survey method. The study included 400 participants that were selected at random. The survey method was considered the most suitable by the researchers because one of the main agendas was to determine the public’s agenda.

The results of this study revealed a positive correlation between media agendas and public agendas at the aggregate level. Additionally, the researchers found a significant correlation between the opposition newspaper’s agenda and that of its readers. Slight evidence was found to support a correlation between government newspaper’s agendas and that of its readers.

The purpose of this study was to examine the second level agenda setting process and the priming effects in the new media environment. The researchers utilized the online media agenda setting effects on five attributes of the global warming issue, and the effects’ influence on people shaping their own opinions on the issue. The researchers sought to determine if there are attribute agenda setting effects in the digital era, and if the attribute salience transfer affects the primary effects.

The researchers conducted an experiment to test their hypotheses. Furthermore, they exposed three groups of subjects to three online newspaper stimuli. The different groups were subject to high, medium, and no exposure. This experiment was conducted over a three-week period. Online newspapers were delivered to the different subjects depending on the group they belonged (high, medium, and no exposure). Thus, each subject had three online newspapers, through which they were guided to read the actual news stories. An essential feature of the experiment was the selection of news articles that accurately reflected five different attributes of the global warming issue. Over 100 undergraduate students from Southwestern University were selected to participate in this study. Participation in this study was voluntary.

The results indicated that the correlations between the stimuli and the subjects’ opinion on the elements after exposure to the stimuli supported the agenda setting effects of the online newspaper. Additionally, all three groups agreed that the ecosystem was the most important attribute of the global warming issue. Finally, there was no difference among the groups in their ranking of the relative importance of the different attributes.
The purpose of this study was to focus on intermedia agenda setting. Further, the influence that the news agendas of different news organizations have on each other was examined. Intermedia agenda was also expanded to include advertising. Advertising agendas were examined, as they also can influence the public agenda. The researchers in this study examined the direction of influence (intermedia coverage) of issue agendas. They hypothesized a strong correlation between intermedia coverage.

The issues from the 1990 Texas gubernatorial campaign were analyzed. Content analysis was chosen as the method of analysis in this study. The researchers utilized the issue agendas of newspaper coverage, television coverage, and political advertising. These three agendas were monitored over two three-week periods. The unit of analysis for the media was the news story regarding the gubernatorial campaign. The unit of analysis for the candidates’ political advertising was the individual commercial. Additionally, the coding instrument used in this study was adapted from instruments used in previous studies.

The researchers’ hypotheses were supported in this study. The results revealed a strong correlation between the newspaper agenda and the television agenda. The findings also revealed a strong correlation between the political advertising agenda and the newspaper agenda. Further analysis on several other intermedia sources should be conducted as a follow-up to this study. For example, future researchers should study the intermedia effects of magazine issues and television issues. Further, how the two are either positively or negatively correlated with one another in a particular content analysis of the two.

The purpose of this study was to compare the agenda setting effects of national and local media on public opinion for the issue of same-sex marriage. The researchers chose to study this topic because of its national significance in the 2004 presidential election. The study also compared the agenda setting effects in a time where the issue was both local and national. Depending on the location, the researchers anticipated different results.

This study utilized content analysis to determine the levels of media coverage on the issue of same-sex marriage both locally and nationally. Public salience of the issue was measured based on the number of online searches for the term *gay marriage*. Time series analysis was used to examine the relationships among the variables over time. The amount of national coverage on the issue of same-sex marriage was investigated by conducting a computerized content analysis of news coverage. The news coverage utilized multiple national and print broadcast news outlets.

The results of this study revealed strong correlations between public salience and national media coverage. The hypothesis that there would be less similarity between the national media agenda and the local media agenda in Atlanta, where the issue of same-sex marriage was both local and national, was supported. The hypothesis that the national media regarding same-sex marriage would be similar to the local media agenda for same-sex marriage in Chicago, where the issue was primarily national, was also supported. Finally, the results suggested that local issues can alter media coverage patterns.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether mass media issue dependency enhances agenda setting by the media. The researchers of this study wanted to understand why there was a considerable similarity in agenda of concern regarding topics among members of the mass media audience. They also sought to uncover the reasons behind the similarity. Further, they wondered why members of the public who attend to media show differences in their personal agenda of concern.

Content analysis and a survey method were implemented to determine the study’s results. The content analysis examined newspaper coverage and audience members’ priorities of environmental issues. Respondents of the survey were asked an open-ended question that asked where they received most of their information about the environment. When respondents indicated one or more mass media sources, they were classified as media-dependent. Those who did not identify any mass media sources were classified as non-media dependent.

The results of this study indicated that respondents who depended on mass media for information about the environments showed a greater relationship with the media’s agenda. Those who were nondependent on mass media for information revealed a weaker relationship between media agenda and that of the individual respondent. Further, the researchers found that people who engage in interpersonal communication about issues were less susceptible to mass media agenda setting. In regards to the researchers questions stated above, individuals will set their personal agenda in relation to their unique backgrounds of prior socialization, experience, and personal structure.
The purpose of this study was to examine how interpersonal communication interacts with media effects in shaping people’s views of their social environments. The researchers examined the issue of environment because evidence showed it was the type of issue with which most respondents had minimal experience. The researchers in this study expected the media to have a strong influence on the audience’s priority of issues. Furthermore, researchers predicted that when it came to information on issues people knew very little about, they would rely on the media.

A combination content analysis and survey research design was implemented. The three largest daily newspapers in Michigan were analyzed during a two-month period. The researchers obtained talk partners’ issue salience through a “snow-ball” technique. The researchers contacted respondents via telephone concerning seven issues. Participants were randomly selected from a Michigan phone directory.

The results contrasted the original hypothesis. A large portion of the audience may have also had direct experience with health issues which are likely to represent a shared topic of conversation. Furthermore, as the level of interpersonal communication increased, the relationship between the intrapersonal agenda and the media agenda decreased. Interpersonal communication did not appear to mediate the perceived media agenda. All respondents were fairly aware of what environmental issues were accentuated in the media. In addition, there were no significant differences in newspaper consumption. Future research should expand on the role of interpersonal communication.

The purpose of this study was to explore agenda setting effects in 11 countries worldwide. The researchers matched public agendas with media agendas to explore this notion. It also compared media agendas across countries to consider whether international intermedia influence existed. The researchers expected to find a positive correlation between the public agendas in the countries they studied. Additionally, they expected there would be positive international intermedia correlations among the agendas of the media outlet in the different countries.

A poll and content analysis method was utilized in this study. The BBC World Service Poll of 27 countries asked respondents about “the most significant global events.” The 27-nation study was coordinated by GlobeScan. The study included a total of 32,439 people. The researches selected seven English-as-official-language countries from the 27 surveyed for this study. Newspapers in three different languages were analyzed. The overall correlation between media and public agendas was examined.

The results of this study suggested a general pattern of the agenda setting function of mass media in the different countries. The study also revealed evidence of international intermedia influence and presented a new way to look at the intermedia agenda setting relationship. There was a high correlation found in 10 different countries. Thus, the hypotheses were supported. The highest significant correlation occurred between Canada and Argentina. The lowest significant correlation occurred between Argentina and Australia. Based on the gathered evidence, it was reasonable to expect international intermedia relationships.