

The Convergence of Agenda Setting and Framing

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Abstract

Agenda setting dan framing tnerupakan dua konsep penting dalam ilmu komnnikasi baik sebagai sebuah teori atau pun sebagai metode. Sebagai teori dan metode keduanya memiliki titik pijak yang berdekatan ketika bagaimana isi media mengalami proses penonjolan dan seleksi. Tulisan ini diarahkan untuk mengetahui aspekapa saja kedua konsep tersebut saling berkomplemen baik secara teoritik atau pun secara metodologis.

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Introduction

It has been long time, we know that agenda setting concerns how to media make the priority, salience and selection to issues and events in which happens in society to be the news that is published on mass media. The core problem of agenda setting is still stable, one hand, to inquiry who control and manage the mechanism in the media practices and the other hand how to know some issues and events on media agenda are responded by people. The first aspect concerns to who are the most dominance position on mass media organization influencing the media policy and what is always an interesting question when we try to understand the the type of media content And the second focuses to people how they concieve the issues.

Agenda setting itself can be seen as a second form of media powerfull thoughts. It can be said like that, since this concieves that an audience is not passive. They consume the media content by implementing and supporting their life and daily activities. They watch their environment by consuming the mass media. Mass media give information, surveillance, control and provide a number of information materials where people can talk and do conversation based on the issues that was published.

According to Shoemaker (1992) content influence studies are interesting topic and have closely relationship to agenda setting. Shoemaker said that media content was influenced by some factors, from individuall to ideology. While, agenda setting assumed that media worker (journalists, editor and so on) selected and made priority to some issues. It is natural happened when an issue were covered for weeks, on the contrary, the others was just a day. Why could it happen ? This phenomena can be scrutinized through agenda setting. Concept suggested by Shoemaker has a similarity to concept of agenda setting especially some premises in explaining the role of media worker in influencing the content media. Media content stresses that messages on mass media are not objective. Each issue published on mass media is a product of selection. News is not objective. News is a product of some interests.

On the other hand, agenda setting focuses the mechanism how to media content is

philosophy of this term reflects one condition that news as a product of media practices is produced through selection.

In addition to agenda setting, this article tries to understand the framing. Concept of framing appeared to mass media studies is triggered by some concepts and definitions above. Framing explains that news can be noticed as a product of media policy. News is not merely the facts but it involves some interest from the media.

Framing, according to Robert Entmant (In McQuaill, 2002) is *to select some aspects of a perceived reality and malx than salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation for the item described*. From this point, we understand that agenda setting and framing has a close relation in concepts and propositions. However, we want to stress here that this article will focus to the convergence between agenda setting and framing. We wish that this article can provide some bases in understanding framing and agenda setting.

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting captures the idea so long cherished by social scientist that mass media have a significant impact on our focus of attention and what we think about (Nimmo and Sanders, 1981:121). This responds the critics that each individual has no specific character and unique. It is difficult to say that an audience has no filter to accept or reject information in which published by mass media. According to elaborated likelihood theory, it explains that we have ability to elaborate a number of informations. When some informations have relevance to our values and interests, we are to be sharper and making that information in consideration. On the other hand, if the information has low relevance or no relevance, we make that information ignoring and useless.

In early, basic concept of agenda setting derived from scientist's idea without emperical researchs as evidence. This condition was still prevailing until Mc Combs and Shaw published their study about the media role in presidential campaign of USA in 1968. In their study, Mc Combs and Shaw (1972) suggested that mass media created public agenda on presidential campaign issue. In the other word, media agenda produces public agenda. According to McCombs and Shaw, Agenda setting is conceptualized as a process. It is not only concerning to effect of mass media, but also it is about time. Then, agenda setting has been making in progress. One of writers who concerned to agenda setting in formalizing this concept to be better was Walter Lippman. He is known for his journalistic writing, speeches and social commentary (Littlejohn,

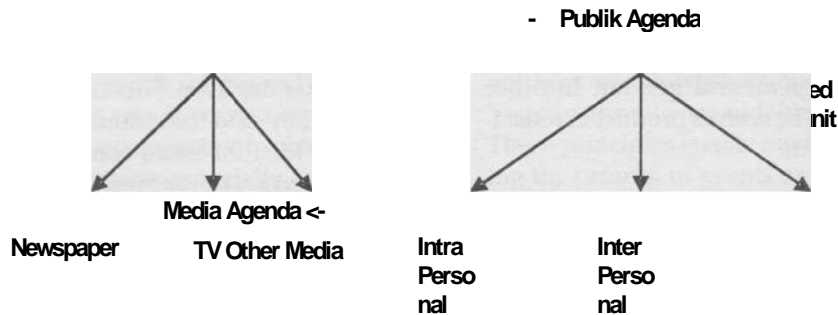
² Staf Pengajar Jurusan Ilmu Komunikasi FISIP UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta placed in front of the page, for instance, small coloumn and size or even is eliminated. Media worker who is responsible to select and salience the issues is frequently called the gatekeepers. The

2000: 345). One important point of Lippman's idea stated that public responds not to actual events in the environment but to the pictures in our heads. He said: *we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage with it* (Littlejohn, 2000:345)

Based on explanation above, Littlejohn (2000:346) resumed agenda setting has three part linear functions. First, media agenda must be set. Second, media agenda effects or interacts with what the public thinks and finally, public agenda effects or interacts in some way with what policymakers consider important.

Traditionally, agenda setting consists of three parts of important function. Those are: media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda. The previous concept suggested by McCombs, he had not considered the policy agenda yet. The reason why policy agenda appeared in agenda setting concept in later, it is direct implication when we connect media agenda to public agenda. To find out schema agenda setting created by McCombs can be seen in the below:

Agenda Setting



Sumber: (McCombs:1981:127)

That schema above explains to us that media agenda can derive some sources like television, newspaper and other media. Through mass media, issues and events are published. We always observe that some principles about priority, salience and selection are implemented in media practices. All activities concerning the mechanism the priority, salience and selection in the media organization to determine the issue and event that will be published, reflect media agenda. On the contrary, some ways audience conceive the issue and even in published by mass media reflect public agenda practices. The way audience conceive media agenda has three forms possibility: intrapersonal, interpersonal and perceived community.

In the reality, mass media are not merely one factor effecting public agenda. Social processes also contribute to an audience how they make and judge the priority the issues that was published on mass media. It means that public agenda is not linear created, but it is affected by social and psychological factors. These statements is consistent to McCleod's result. In his study, he said that content of mass media has bigger impact to a person who involve in conversation about issue on media agenda.

Therefore, public reaction to content of media agenda must be different each other.

One important step that directs to understand why each person has different issue on media agenda is caused by the need orientation of audience. The orientation need will push the level of exposure. It works fluctuality. The level of exposure depends on the quality of the orientation need. It runs high, exposure of media agenda will be high and conversely.

To understand concept of agenda setting better, it should be, we understand what is the meaning of agenda. Agenda is meant as the ordering list of an issue or an event in accordance with the priority principles that done by mass media or an audience. Shaw then (1977) articulated the concept of an issue and an event. According to Shaw, an issue is translated as the widely involvement of accumulated news about a set of events unified by general category. And an event is articulated as an event (reality and happened) that is limited by time and space. The conclusion is that an event is a spesific component of issues. Sometimes, two concept of an event and an issue are overriding and overlapped. It frequently occurs confusing.

The Convergence of Agenda Setting

As mentioned above, this article has a purpose to identify the convergency of agenda setting and framing. The similarity agenda setting and framing take place in the principles of selection and salience. Both share in concept of selection and salience each other. Media agenda principles explain that gatekeepers determine the priority and selection of an issue or an event. They (media workers) have authority to determine, use or eliminate an issue or an event to be news or not. It means that they have a perspective to determine it. But all decisions taken by media workers are influenced some factors including political affiliation, sociological environment, psychological, and gender. In other word, news can be seen as product in reflecting some interests.

Framing: Concept and Measurement

Concept of framing has become increasingly attractive in media research within the last several years. It gets finding its way a number of related yields including communication, sociology and political science. Definition of framing refers to the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by media, media professionals and their audience. According to sociologist Erving Goffman (in Resse, 2001:7) framing is the important approach to know how issues are constructed, discourse structured and meaning developed. In the progress later, framing has been particularly usefull in understanding the media role especially in political life. This concept has been more interesting when it is viewed as the interplay of media practices, culture, audiences and producers.

As it usually happens, when we try to catch up the definiton of a tiling, we face the reality that the definiton of framing has multiperspectives. We see that Entman's definiton is different from Ghanem's et.all definiton. They have also a different from Gamson's definiton. According to Entman, framing is an exercise to frame. Activity to frame it is to select some aspects of a percieved reality and make them more salient

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in communicating text. It has some purposes to promote a particular problem definiton, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation. It is clearly that framing is not merely to select and make the priority. Selection and salient processes emphasize to the social functions for instances: stressing the problem definiton, making causal interpretation, moral evaluation and giving recommendation. It is different from agenda setting fundamentally. Framing is not only representing but also making it for social functions

Another definiton of framing suggested by Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss and Ghanem. They said that framing is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis exclusion and elaboration (in Resee, 2001:10). This view explains us that framing focuses three aspects. Those are: (a) organizing idea for news content; (b) selection process based on the context and (c) the principles of exclusion and elaboration.

All definitons mentioned above are not final. Some experts still remain left. The definitons above are used to describe that framing has a number of definitons. Hie main purpose is to identify the basic element of definition in illustrating its the core concept. We then understand that framing has specific focus in its study. But, it is important we have to know about the mechanism the media workers in organizing the news. Why ? Because it relates to the important question available concerning how successful is a frame in accounting for social reality it tries to explain. This question discloses two important way how media workers organize the media content. Two major ways of thinking about this can be identified: cognitively and culturally. What is it meant with cognitively organizing and culturally organizing on the framing?

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Cognitively organizing frames invite us to think about social phenomena in a certain way, often appealing to basic psychological biases. This type may be limited to casting a problem in terms of either saving lives or certain deaths (Resse, 2001:12). While, culturally organizing frames don't stop with organizing one story, but invite us to a cultural understanding and keep on doing so beyond the immediate information. This perspective gives us a way to look after media content broader in accounting the social reality. Framings which many scholars have made attempts to articulate (Pan and Kosicki, 2001: 38)

After we know the basic conceptualization of agenda setting and framing, we then understand that agenda setting and framing are two important area in communication theories. Both give a perspective to observe closely the media practices especially a way media worker determine news and define the social reality. Although, both are different from in operationalization and measurement, point of view of agenda setting and framing have the same concept. Agenda setting and framing begin their conceptualization from selection and salience processes. Of course there are a lot of things that can be summarized about differences between agenda setting and framing. Here we want to stress that agenda setting and framing compete each other in conceptualization, proporsition and metodologically. Therefore, as a perspective it is more usefull if this article explains the convergency of agenda setting and framing. The purpose in exploring the convergency of agenda setting and framing is to provide bases in point of view between agenda setting and framing. This step makes easier for the readers (lecturer, student and social scientist) taking conclusion from agenda setting and framing. How they can find out the differences and similarities, and even operate it to the research. Without understanding agenda setting and framing as whole and sistematically, it is difficult to them for operating the concept and proporsiton in the research. At the least, they have intellectual in-

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teracted to agenda setting and framing when they read article like this.

Covergency of Agenda Setting and Framing

The word of covergency is not intended to cover all of the differences and similarites agenda setting and framing. Convergency is used to inform that there is crucial existing in a perspective between agenda setting and framing. Once more, convergency is used to provide understanding that agenda setting and framing have competed each other in conceptualization.

The previous explanation has given us some premises either agenda setting concept or framing Concept. That explanation points out how media workers operated their job based on the salience and selection principles. These principles enable media worker making the priority of events or issues. It seems looking resemblance in principles between agenda setting and framing. But, when it tries to identify, we will find out the basic principles between agenda setting and framing has fundamentally differences. However, one important thing we have to do is to categorize the convergency of agenda setting and framing. To do that, we need knowing some arguments and conducted researchs about agenda setting and framing. By observing finding facts, we can understand better. We begin with Walter Lippman's idea.

Early this century Walter Lippman (1922) observed that much of the behavior underlying public opinion is a response to mental image of events. This mental image of events can be said as an imagined pseudoenvironment that is treated as if it were the real environment. Many experts then believe that those mental images are a key site where agenda setting and framing converge. One result of continuing explication of agenda setting theory over recent decades is that these two research traditions now share considerable common ground (Ghanem and McCombs, 2001:67)

In Lippman's perspective, agenda setting is a theory about transfer of salience from mass media's picture of the world to those in

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our heads. This perspective illustrates that elements prominent in the media's picture become prominent in audience's picture. In other word, media's agenda determines public's agenda. Fact findings about this idea are supported by 200 studies over or more the past 25 years.

Based on McCombs and Ghanem's suggestions (2001:68), they told that agenda setting research has grown beyond this particular point of origin to encompass a wide range of communication situation including the way media worker shapes media agenda. For McCombs and Ghanem, agenda setting tends focusing or has more attention to the impact of media. Agenda setting is less attention to the various of influences shaping the media agenda. When it is compared to framing, framing tends focusing the frames found in the media and is less attention to impact of media. But still for McCombs and Ghanem, (2001: 68) the convergence of two research traditions will yield a greater unity in our knowledge of how media's pictures of the world are constructed and, in turn, how the public responds to those pictures. One opinion concerning relationship between agenda setting and framing derived from Kosicki. His study focused to impact of mass media. His opinion about agenda setting and framing shared to McCombs and Ghanem's ideas. Kosicki noted that agenda setting approach to the issues, emphasizing the salience of topics. It misses a real focus on the essence of the issues. In short, according to Kosicki, agenda setting can not capture the a "Teat deal of valuable contextual information.

Two research traditions will produce the important understanding about media practices especially how to know the origins of news sources and aggregation of interests.

Actually, at various views, agenda setting has incorporated or converged with other mass communication subfields. Some examples to show these incorporated concept are alike status conferral, perceived importance of audiences and spiral of silence

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theory at public opininon. To understand the convergency of agenda setting and framing, we should come back to framing definition. According Tankard et.all, (1991) the}' described a media frame as the central organizing idea for news content the supports a context and suggests what the issues is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration. This definiton clarifies the connection between agenda setting to framing. What explanations given by scholars about framing indicates that framing is the contruction of agenda with restricted number of thematically related attributes in order to create a coherence picture of particular issues or events.

The term of framing is debatable. Many believe that this term (framing) origins from photography or cinematography. Term of framing refers to camera angles and perspectives in fashioning of a visual message. Framing, viewed as a technical perspective also occurs on printed media practices. This technical operates the a certain framing mecahnisms in printed media such as page placements, story format, design of coloumn and so on. Therefore, framing arises the big question whether it is an emerging paradigm or only a phase of agenda setting. Through Kosicki (1993) , Maher restated that framing should not be viewed as an extention of agenda setting, because framing begins from an explicit cognitive perspective, while agenda setting does not. Another question make us confusing when we are asked to make decision whether framing is theory or not. As long as we know, theory gives formulations in concepts and proposition as wells as metodology. Theory provides heuristic, predictive, and communicative functions. Can framing be functioned in line with the pre required functions of theory so framing can be categorized as theory. Theory as scientific knowledge, needs sufficient basis on ontological, epistemological and axiological explanations. Finally, we all must understand where the position of framing in communication studies and research realm are.

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The best efforts to understand that problem are to try and examine the conceptual history and internal logic of both approaches. This step is not merely academic taxonomy, but it specifies to aspects of communication studies and research realm. Through these efforts, we then will understand what the unique of framing or enrich our knowledge at communication studies.

Historically, framing and agenda setting have had opposite trajectories. In the early period, agenda setting started with valuable approaches to measurement, but lacked conceptual and theoretical depth in explanation. Inversely, framing began with roots deep in cognitive psychology, but it is an elusive concept to measure. Agenda setting did not initially conceptualize why media agenda influence or set public agenda. This explanation exists later where Shaw and McCombs (1977) reaffirmed that the core of agenda setting can be seen at issue salience from transferring processes. Recently, they point out that agenda of attributes subsumes framing. They called it as second dimension of agenda setting.

We actually can see the differences between agenda setting and framing through systems theory. Systems theory can help distinguish framing from agenda setting. Agenda setting theorists applied terms such as objects and attributes as important part in agenda setting. While, attributes and objects are terms in using to systems theory. Both are identical to terms used by systems theorists. In systems theory, objects and attributes are considered to be two of four basic elements of all systems. Systems consists of four elements: object, attributes, relationship among objects and environment. Two elements of systems-relationships and environment are a key concept in framing and not in agenda setting.

As we mentioned above, framing is related to how the messages are organized. Thus, framing implies relationships among elements in a message because those elements have been organized by media workers or a communicator. However, framing theorists always consistent to

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postulate that framing investigates the problem of sender-organized relationships among elements in a message. Therefore, framing always sees environment and other factors influencing the media content. This phenomena can be used to determine how media do structuring the reality. Framing constructs media reality. Agenda setting limits issues and events being salience. While framing does not only limit to salience or process selection, but also focuses issues and events in reflecting how media policy has taken place. That's why Entman suggested that framing has four important functions in social activities: defining the problems, diagnosis causes, making moral judgments and suggesting remedies. It's so far, agenda setting has shown us that it is less interest in media portrayals of how social problems are caused.

Differences also occur when researchers conceptualize the source of frame in the studied communication content. Framing researchers see the constructed nature of media message and often examines the media portrayals of issues and events as engagement to media worker's framing decisions. In spite of agenda setting emphasizes a frame as an attribute of object. The tradition usually focuses to correlation between the media's attribute agenda and public understanding.

The complexity of engagement between agenda setting and framing inform us that we understand and find out the existing some differences and similarities in a wide range such as theory, methodology, and measurements. Based on those facts, we then know that agenda setting is appropriately focusing the quantitative nature, while framing is qualitative. For developing the communication studies, this gives an available enrichment the perspective in communication studies especially in media studies.

Conclusion

All arguments about the convergency between agenda setting and framing mentioned above indicate the reality that a theory can share to other theory. Beside it

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enriches the perspective on communication studies, it also is functioned as control and heuristic in the research. Therefore, convergency agenda setting and framing is only an effort to identify what kind of aspects the convergency occurs. The ultimate goal this article is not intended to map those convergencies. This article is adhered to find out some aspects and theoretically of agenda setting and framing what the same aspects can be used together, and what aspects can not be implemented in the same way.

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Finally, we understand that this article is lacking of references and data concerning how agenda setting and framing can be implemented in the same way in the research. All references used here does not inform us how agenda setting and framing can be implemented together. We only describe many factors in which the differences and similarities occur. More than ever failed to be done. But we wish that this article can raise the inspiration to others to investigate in more interesting and comprehensive.

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