Power and Power Relationships in the Public Policy Making Process

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Abstract: In the course of our lives, we are affected by an extensive array of public policies which have broad effects and consequences even for individuals not directly involved. Focusing on power in the policy making process is very crucial for comprehending the nature of public policy formation. The nature of agenda access can be described in terms of the locus of power in society. Who gains access to the agenda, within this framework, depends on where power is concentrated. This article discusses the main approaches to power and power relationships and uses this discussion as the basis for analyzing how public policy making is affected. More specifically, this study reviews the pluralist and elitist model and the basics of Gaventa’s approach to power and discusses how Kingdon conceives of interests and the role of interests in his analysis. Finally, this study applies Gaventa’s power typology to Kingdon’s policy process approach to determine what is left out in Kingdon’s work.

Key Words: Power, pluralism, elitism, agenda setting, policy making.

INTRODUCTION

Focusing on power in the policy process is very crucial for comprehending the nature of public policy formation. The reason that power should be focused upon in the policy process is due to its influence over the policy making process. Power is a great motivator for self interested individuals present in the policy process. If a researcher is able to show power as the correct cause of certain actions/outcomes of the policy process, the ability to explain the particular policy process is increased. If a certain piece of legislation is being analyzed, if questions arise as to why a certain clause was included or why certain caps are included, one should not only look at the sponsors of the particular piece of legislation, but the interest groups and private entities affected by the legislation.

In the course of our lives, we are affected by an extensive array of public policies which has broad effects and consequences even for individuals not directly involved. These policies are ubiquitous and can be defined “as a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern” (Anderson, 2003:4). Although policymaking is a set of processes and employs different categories and stages,
in his book titled “Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies”, Kingdon (2003:4) studies two major predecision processes: agenda setting and alternative specification. He first distinguishes between the government agenda and decision agenda and then questions why certain issues gain agenda status while others are neglected? and why particular alternatives receive serious attention while others don’t? These questions show us the role of power (with its many phases) and pluralist and elitist approaches in the policy making process. Accordingly, this study attempts to address these issues from the perspective of power and power relationships.

Power defines relationships and access in the public policy arena. In addition, determining the perception of power and complexities of relationships will assist in determining the variables involved in policy creation, implementation and enforcement. In this article, I will use Gaventa’s (1980) power typology, pluralist and elitist approach and discuss how Kingdon (2003) conceives of interests, the role of interests in his analysis and what he leaves out compared to Gaventa’s typology of three faces of power. I will first lay out the pluralist and elitist model and the basics of Gaventa’s approach to power and then apply this typology to Kingdon’s policy process approach to determine what is left out in Kingdon’s work.

**PLURALISM**

The nature of agenda access can be described in terms of the locus of power in society. Who gains access to the agenda, in this framework, depends on where power is concentrated (who participates). Putnam (1995) summarizes the debate between two rival scope of participation theories: pluralist and elite theory. The influence of pluralism has been considerable and pervasive in the writing and research of public policy and pluralism has also elicited intense debate. In the article of “Three Types of Pluralism”, Kelso (1995) analytically identifies three distinct varieties: laissez-faire, corporate, and public pluralism.

According to Kelso (1995), **laissez-faire pluralists** suggest a common theme: whether we look at the operations of local or the federal government, we see an open and self-regulating political system. The competitive nature of the political marketplace inhibits the rise of monopolistic power, while the openness of the polity in turn promotes the advancement of the individual freedom and rational policy making. This division of power among many groups curtails the ability of the government or a majority to infringe on individual liberties while enhancing the capability of the political system to identify and respond to pressing social issues.

invisible hand of political bargaining inevitably restrains the concentration of power, Lowi and McConnell see the fragmentation of the polity into a series of small, autonomous fiefdoms, all of which are independent of one another. Under a corporate form of pluralism, no single party has the ability to monopolize all decisions, but certain groups have been able to acquire controlling power within individual policy areas. According to corporate pluralists, interest groups capture government powers, and they also manage to exercise semi-monopoly power by narrowing down and isolating the decision-making process. Besides, in some circumstances, interests groups have sought to build monopolistic empires through tacit agreements and collusion.

After the critical review of the defects of both laissez-faire and corporate pluralism, Kelso (1995) proposes public pluralism as a reformed-oriented model of decision making for regulating the interplay of interests in society. Public pluralism relies heavily on central direction and management to insure that the competitive nature of the political arena remains intact. When the political marketplace is no longer self-correcting, the government should facilitate the process of group competition by playing three roles. First, the government can act as an advocate, defending and even organizing interests like the poor or consumers who presently lack political clout. Secondly, in order to prevent newly activated groups from being denied access to the bargaining table, the executive branch must also assume the role of political custodian, structuring and arranging the formulation of policy decisions so that interest groups are forced to compete with one another. Finally, besides fostering competition among different interests, elected officials must at the same time act as arbitrators, mediating disputes and choosing among the proposals of contending groups.

Kelso’s (1995) typology of pluralism provides not only a context but also an analytical insight to help us better understand the influence and debate of pluralism. Kelso makes a distinction between the laissez-faire pluralism and corporate pluralism, which will help us understand the lasting influence of pluralism on issue networks and policy typologies. A main argument of corporate pluralism is that some interest groups have been able to acquire controlling power within individual policy areas, although no single party has the ability to monopolize all decisions. This is highly relevant to the main assumption or argument of Gormley’s (1986) analysis of regulatory issue network and Lowi’s (1995) policy typologies. Gormley’s (1986) main argument is that regulatory politics varies systematically across issue areas, depending on levels of public salience and technical complexity. Lowi’s (1995) main argument is that different types of policies engender their own unique politics or sets of political relationships.
The most common objection to pluralism concerns the inequalities among groups. The outcome of competition among interests is often determined by relative financial resources; this dramatically limits the ability of some elements of society to effectively participate. Particular policy arenas are dominated by one or two powerful interests. Kelso (1995) acknowledges this in his critique of corporate pluralism and laissez-faire pluralism, and proposes an alternative model of public pluralism to mitigate the defects of an unregulated form of pluralistic government. But Kelso’s public pluralism model is essentially a prescriptive, rather than a descriptive model and he says that initiating such political changes is bound to be a complicated task. We haven’t known whether the visible hand of government regulation Kelso proposes can be successful in the actual practice of public policy process.

Elitism

Elitist theory proposes that public policy is not determined by the demands and actions of the people or groups as argued in the pluralist model, but rather by a ruling elite whose preferences are carried into effect by public officials and agencies (Anderson, 2003:21; Çevik and Demirci, 2008:143). In Schattschneider’s (1975) “managed” democracy, there is some place for the people. People still have a choice in this system though the choice is limited to the alternatives created by the ruling elite. In this regard, the competitive nature of the political system is important for the people to maintain its sovereignty and have a chance to somehow influence the political process. As Schattschneider (1975) notes that the people are powerless if the political enterprise is not competitive. It is the competition of political organizations that provides the people with the opportunity to make a choice. Without this opportunity, popular sovereignty amounts to nothing. In this regard, Schattschneider’s (1975) extensively discusses the importance of conflicts in “drawing” the people into the public affairs, and it is the “the nature of conflict” that determines “the nature of the public involvement.” Overall, Schattschneider’s elitist view of democracy that the people are involved in politics by the “contagion of conflict” is clearly opposite to the classical definition of democracy as “government by the people” when they participate in politics of their own free will.

In the elitist model, politicians try to involve a large number of people in politics, though in a limited way. In relation to this, Schattschneider’s (1975) theory seems to be more “democratic” than other theories of the elitist school. For instance, a number of other elitist scholars prefer not to emphasize the role of people and the competitive nature of the political system. One of these scholars is Domhoff (2002). In his study: “Who Rules America?”, he answers on his own question, saying it is clearly “corporate communities”- the American
governing (upper) class-based on the ownership and control of large corporations. Domhoff’s elite understanding of public policy very much resembles the Marxian theory of class domination. However, unlike Marx, Domhoff (2002) downplays the importance of class conflicts and states that class domination does not exist everywhere.

Finally, Gaventa (1980) and Hill and Klamer (2002) discuss the ways the “rulers” maintain the “quiescence” of the “powerless” people. According to Gaventa (1980), the ruling elite exercises its power through superior bargaining resources which are crucial for defeating any rebellion on the part of “powerless”; mobilization of bias which is used to create barriers to exclude people from “decision-making arenas”; and, influencing or shaping the consciousness of the ruled with an aim to root the sense of powerlessness in their minds.

Hill and Klamer (2002), in their study, consider the question of how economic elite power might exercise its political power. Their research is based on the study of “system of 1896” which established the foundations of the modern American political system. They tested and confirmed the proposition that “the system of 1896” was established as a result of reaction of economic elite to the populist and progressive movements to ensure their own control of public policy by pursuing various “political” reforms. This elitism leads to demobilization of the lower classes, the virtual elimination of party competition at the state level, and oligarchic control of political affairs. From this study, we can conclude that economic elite is able to achieve its goals through a notable influence over agenda setting as well as over the policy adoption process.

As we can see, the elitist approach contradicts the pluralist approach. The elitists argue that pluralists overestimate the influence of “interest groups,” public opinion and elections on public policy, and increasing dependence of “policy experts” on the ruling elite. However, in my view, the elitists unjustifiably downplay the role of massive social and economic movements have played in shaping public policy making. Finally, the position of a ruling elite in the long run is not stable, especially taking into account the dynamic nature of the social, economic and cultural trends in the society (e.g. demographic changes, technological developments, globalization, economic crises, etc.) which may lead (and in some countries leads) to the creation of the alternative (counter-elite) powers in a society.

POWER

Bachrach and Baratz (1962) propose that there are two views of power, the elitist and pluralist. We examined these two views of power in detail above. Basically, the elitist view suggests that power is highly centralized whereas the pluralist view suggests that power is widely diffused. Several propositions that
are upheld by the elitist view have been sharply criticized by the pluralists. Unlike the elitists, the pluralists contend that nothing can be assumed about power, power is tied to issues and issues can be fleeting or persistent with the interest among citizens ranging from momentary to semi-permanent. Finally, the pluralists criticize the elitists for focusing on presumed power as opposed to actual power.

For the pluralist, power is defined as participation in decision making. In studying power, the pluralist is concerned with the selection of a few key political decisions, the identification of those individuals involved in the decision making process, obtaining an account of their actual behavior during the resolution of the conflict and determining and analyzing the specific outcome of the conflict (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962:948).

While the pluralist approach may have certain advantages over the elitist approach, the pluralist approach does not take into account the possible exertion of power over a group or individual through non-decision making. Additionally, the model does not provide any criteria for differentiating from important and unimportant issues. While the pluralist approach may take more factors into account both the elitist and pluralist approaches are flawed (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962:215).

Utilizing the pluralist approach and the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and Lukes (1974), Gaventa (1980) expands the concept of power by identifying three dimensions of power: the first face of power, second face of power, and finally the third face of power. The first face of power is A exercise power over B and makes him do even B doesn’t want to do. In other words, it is a direct and observable power. As the pluralists like Dahl (1961) and Polsby (1980) claim, it is an open system (referring to pluralism), where anyone can easily and freely make their voice heard, or participate in. Therefore, non-participation, or non-issue is not a political problem at all. In one sense, this version blames the participant (or the victim).

The second face of power is, A exercises power over B, and gets him/her do even B doesn’t want to do. But, different than the first face of power, in the second face of power there is an indirect use of power. Gaventa (1980) refers to Bachrach and Baratz (1962), who base their theory on Schattschneider’s expression of every organization is a “mobilization of bias”. Moreover, who sets the game decides the players, as well (Schattshneider, 1975:69). In this theory, non-participation or non-issue is a political problem. I believe that the system (elites) is to be blamed rather than the participants.

The main point of Bachrach and Baratz’s study is that both the elite understandings of power and the pluralist understandings of power are incomplete in that they fail to fully incorporate the second faces of power. The
decisions that are not made, or the issues that are prevented from being discussed, are as important to understanding power as the examination of the actual decision-making processes and outcomes that do occur (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962:50).

Finally, in the *third face of power*, Gaventa (1980) says that A not only exercise power over B to make him/her do what B doesn’t want to do, but also determines and shapes his/her very wants as well. He is inspired by Lukes’ (1974) study. This way it is the best and insidious way to handle the conflict at the beginning. This invisible dimension refers to the processes of socialization and culture such as schooling, the media, religion etc, which shape how people see themselves and their place in the world.

Another approach to the consideration of power is explicated by Domhoff (2002). In his conceptualization of power, Domhoff suggests that in America the powerful and powerless are divided by lines of social class. Despite the reticence of the American people to admit the existence of social class, Domhoff identifies two dimensions. The first dimension refers to the "economic and power relationship between two or more groups of people who have specific roles in the economic system." The second dimension refers to "class as a category of social institutions, relationship and lifestyles" (Domhoff, 2002:4). In addition, he contends that power is both "the overall capacity of a group be effective and productive" and "the ability of a group to be successful in conflicts with other groups" (Domhoff, 2002:9).

While the elitist and pluralist approaches may have inherent weaknesses in their description and identification of power, Domhoff (2002:10) identifies three indicators of power: (1) Who benefits? (2) Who governs? and (3) Who wins? Although the values of these indicators can vary from society, he suggests that if a group is powerful at least some of the indicators of this power should be present.

Incorporating his discussion of social class with his discussion of power, Domhoff (2002) contends that social class and policy planning networks are heavily intertwined. He suggests that policy planning begins in corporate board rooms and social clubs, entities which are typically restricted to individuals in the upper levels of the social class hierarchy. The restriction of participants and secondly issues that will be brought before the decision making arena is perhaps a real world manifestation of the second or third faces/dimensions of power.

**AGENDA SETTING**

In order to understand how Kingdon (2003) conceives of interests and the role of interests in his study, we should follow him through the steps in his book. Since each of actors or set of actors-called participants-may involve in
each of the important policymaking processes and those participants and processes can act as an impetus or as a constraint. Kingdon (2003) first distinguishes between participants and processes.

Some of the answers to his questions concentrate on participants because he looks at who affects agendas and alternatives, why, and how they do it. Because he also believes that “whoever decides what the game is about also decides who gets in the game” (Schattschneider, 1975:169). All those participants have certain incentives, motives and interests. He discusses the governmental and non-governmental participants, and the importance of each actor in setting the agenda and deciding which alternatives are considered. The participants located within the government are as follows: the administration, which includes the president, the president’s staff, and those appointed by the president; those working within the bureaucracy, or career civil servants; and the Congress, which includes congressional members and their staff. Kingdon (2003) shows that the administration is typically important when it comes to setting the agenda, civil servants have the most importance in specifying alternatives, and Congress is viewed as having importance in both agenda setting and alternative specification.

When looking at participants outside of government, the common actors are: interest groups; academics, researchers, and consultants; the media; elections participants, which would include campaigners and political parties; and public opinion (Kingdon, 2003:199). Interest groups are seen as the most important of the non-governmental group because of their ability to block issues from making it onto the agenda (Kapani, 2005:208; Ergin, 2003:334). Academics, researchers, and consultants will normally have the most effect on alternatives rather than the agenda. As for elections participants and public opinion, both are viewed as being important in when it comes to setting the agenda. Elections participants and public opinion “set general themes, thus affecting agendas, but are not specific enough to feed much into the debate over alternatives” (Kingdon, 2003:200). Although the governmental and non-governmental actors can be distinguished, this does not suggest that the two groups of participants do not interact in the processes of agenda setting and alternative specification. Both governmental and non-governmental participants are “extraordinarily open, and ideas and information float about through these channels in the whole issue network of involved people, somewhat independent of their formal positions” (Kingdon, 2003:199).

Kingdon (2003:199) also “explores the processes through which these participants affect agenda and alternatives”. Somewhat more important than the participants in agenda setting and alternatives are the processes. Kingdon mentions three fundamental approaches about the origins of policy initiatives:
rational comprehensive decision making, incrementalism, and garbage can model.

**Comprehensive rational decision making** model assumes that “people first define their goals clearly and set the levels of achievement of those goals that would satisfy them”. Then they focus on some alternatives in order to achieve these goals. But this is not a realistic approach because in the real world it is not always easy for people to find many alternatives and compare them systematically (Kingdon, 2003:78).

**Incrementalism** does not require a complete changing instead, small and marginal regulations on current policies always preferable for decision makers within the government. By doing so, decision makers do not spend enormous amount of time for defining their goals and finding new alternatives in order to initiate complete chances (Çevik and Demirci, 2008:167). For example, budget regulations generally are being done regarding the principals of incrementalism. In a governmental department which works according to principals of incrementalism, policy changes step by step and slowly. As we see Kingdon’s (2003) interviews most of the governmental bodies prefer this kind of philosophy about policy changes.

As we have seen in Anderson (2003:129), two of the most common approaches to discuss the process that any given policy goes through are the rational-comprehensive and incrementalism decision making models. Kingdon (2003:78) argues that both models are incomplete. Although sometimes participants make decisions quite comprehensively and rationally, Kingdon argues that “the larger process [rational comprehensive] is less tidy” and this model does not portray the reality precisely. On the other hand, he says that incrementalism portrays the slow process of generating alternatives but does not describe agenda change well which appears quite nonincremental (Kingdon, 2003:79).

Kingdon (2003:84) adapted the generic organizational garbage can model and applied it to agenda setting and formulation. Cohen, March, and Olsen's (1972) “Garbage Can Model” states that decision making is not orderly or rational. Under conditions of problematic preferences, unclear technology, and fluid participation, decision making within organizations behaved like “organized anarchy”. The four streams: problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities, were all thrown together (placed in the garbage can) to interact with little rationality. Moreover, Kingdon (2003:84) re-shapes the Cohen, March, and Olsen’s (1972) garbage can model based on his observations and argues that there are three streams of activity in agenda setting: problems stream, policy stream and the politics stream, “which occasionally converge,
opening a policy window, and permitting some matters to reach a governmental agenda” (Anderson, 2003:96).

The problems stream consists of the differences of a condition and a problem. Indicators, focusing events, crises, symbols, and feedback are the mechanisms to discover and be aware of the changes in conditions, which transform them to the problems. When any condition violates the important values, or when any condition is compared to another relevant unit, or when any condition is classified into one category rather than another, the condition is defined as a problem because Kingdon (2003:110) argues that all problems are simply conditions unless they are defined as problems. Once a particular issue is defined as a problem, the most important thing is how the problem is defined because it affects outcomes significantly. However, there are variety of conditions to define something as a problem such as nature of the problem, nature of the solution, and the characteristics of the target population (Rochfort and Cobb, 1993). Further, Wildavsky (1979) argues that solutions are the determinants of how the problems will be defined as well as whether problems can be defined as problems based on the availability of the solutions for them. Thus, Kingdon (2003:113) emphasizes that problems not only rise to the agenda, but also drop from agenda (concerns over budgetary costs).

At this point, we see the role of interests in the definition of problems. Each interest group, or issues network, tries to put what is their best of interest in the definition of the problem so that they can rip benefits from the policy. So, we see first and second faces of power as direct winners and losers at the end of the problem definition stage. Winners shape how the problems would look like and prevent other ideas from gaining agenda status by creating constraints such as invoking of mobilization of bias. For instance, Kingdon (2003:112) gives the example of lack of transportation for the handicapped people. He says that the problem can be defined from many perspectives. If the problem is defined from a civil rights perspective, then every car or transportation vehicle should be manufactured in a way that handicapped people can use them. However, we see that it is not the case because the problem was defined as a transportation problem because it is the less costly alternative.

The policy stream, on the other hand, comprises possible policy alternatives. Kingdon called the selection process of these policy alternatives the policy primeval soup which “many ideas float around, bumping into one another, encountering new ideas, and forming combinations and recombinations” (Kingdon, 2003:200). According to Kingdon (2003), the origins are somewhat disorganized but the selection is not, because the selection is influenced by political concerns and different interests. Each policy alternative, solutions, has something to favor certain interests. So, the selection of the policy will be contingent upon the power and interest relations. Although Kingdon treats these
three streams as separate, policies are not independent from the politics stream for politicians come with specific policies based on their ideologies and interests. As a result, we again see the role of second face of power here.

The political stream is influenced by the factors such “as swings of national mood, election results, changes of administration, change of ideological or partisan distribution in Congress, and interest group pressure campaign” (Kingdon, 2003:162). Compared to organized interests, Kingdon says, the combination of national mood and elections has more powerful impact as agenda setter. This combination can force some items high on the agenda, and also make it virtually impossible for some others. But for sure, according to Kingdon (2003:164), having impact on agenda “is different from control over the alternative and the outcomes”. Therefore, in political stream, we notice the impact of interest groups and issue networks to be one of the determinants of alternatives and the outcomes. They push politicians to pass certain type of policies and favor some over others. However, politicians also have their own interests such as reelection and gaining more power. As a result, the interaction of issue networks and politics is more likely to yield second face of power, which gives way to some policies while blocking others through mobilization of bias.

According to Kingdon (2003), the problems stream, the political stream, and the policy stream flows independently according to their own schedules, dynamics and rules but there are times when these three streams converge and at that critical point a window opens. In each streams, interests help us explain and understand how they can play a key role in defining the problems or shaping the solutions. There are policy windows and problems windows which are “an opportunity for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions or to push attention to their special problems” (Kingdon, 2003:165). Sometimes windows open predictably but sometimes do not (as when a disaster comes). Windows do not stay open long and when they are closed, the solutions await the window to be opened again.

A key aspect of the notion of coupling is the part played by what is called the policy entrepreneur. Policy entrepreneurs are “advocates who are willing to invest their resources-time, energy, reputation, money-to promote a position in return for anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive, or solitary benefits” (Kingdon, 2003:179). Entrepreneurs are motivated by one or more of the following: a sincere concern for a particular problem, receiving self-serving benefits, to instill his or her policy values, or gaining personal satisfaction just from participating in the process. Entrepreneurs must have some type of expertise, political connections, and they have to be persistent. An entrepreneur must develop these skills early in order to be ready for the opening of a policy window (Kingdon, 2003). Policy windows are chances for entrepreneurs to take
action on a given policy. However, these windows of opportunity are not open for extended periods of time, which is why entrepreneurs must always be ready for one. Policy windows will open because of either changes in the problem or political streams. An entrepreneurs’ best chance of moving their proposal to the top of the agenda is when a window opens and the entrepreneur is able to couple all three streams (Kingdon, 2003:181).

To illustrate the importance of the policy entrepreneur, Schneider and Teske (1992) examine the role of the entrepreneur in greater detail than Kingdon does. Schneider and Teske believe that by using a more economic based approach, and by observing entrepreneurs at the local level, that they can further our understanding of how and why entrepreneurs emerge. The authors look to show quantitative evidence that entrepreneurs will emerge in particular local environments. The theory is that entrepreneurs will emerge in local areas that will allow them to maximize their pursuit of their pet policies, and areas with a greater possibility of collective action in order to be able to convince citizens that a particular policy is best for them (Schneider and Teske, 1992). In some aspects, this idea that entrepreneurs will emerge in certain community situations is much like Kingdon’s idea of policy windows. With the integration of a more testable method and the wider variety of studies available at the local level, we may reach a greater understanding of the role of the entrepreneur in public policy (Schneider and Teske, 1992).

In a similar vein, Cobb and Elder (1983) focus on the importance of policy entrepreneurs in agenda setting. In an extension of this approach, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that the outcome of political debates can vary with the federal system of the United States presents so many alternative venues, policy entrepreneurs can maximize their likelihood of success by carefully shopping around for the most favorable available venue. As a result, agenda setting and alternative specification gives us a better understanding of how policy is created. With further advancements from Kingdon (2003), and new methods like those of Schneider and Teske (1992), our comprehension of the policy process may become clearer.

CONCLUSION

Agenda-setting of public policy should raise the notion of distribution of political powers in society, including how to define and give priority to an issue or problem. According to traditional/classical theory of democracy, power flows from the people to the political leaders, and public policy should result from extensive, informed public debate in order to meet the demands of the people. Elitist model totally disagrees with this simple notion of government by the people and argues that public policy reflects not the demand of masses but the interests of the elite. In other words, elite theory suggests that the policies
reflect the interest and values of the upper ruling class. On the other hand, pluralist model goes between classical theory of democracy and elitist model. According to pluralist model, political power is highly fragmented and widely dispersed over different actors and different types of policy, and public policy results from a competition or compromise of interest groups. People who are not represented by a group can not affect the policy making process effectively. In their study, Göksu and Bilgiç (2003) conclude that the interest groups who are powerful and use appropriate methods have great effects on decision mechanisms.

I believe that interests are important in Kingdon’s framework but they do not have the sole explanatory power when I think of the role of ideas and values in shaping policies. When applying the power typology of Gaventa (1980) to Kingdon’s (2003) study, I can see that the first face and third face of power does not fit that well. Further, even if we can use some examples for the first face of power, I did not find any evidence for the third face of power. Rather, I see elements of second face of power in that study. Non-participation or non-issue is a problem in the second face power. Similarly, Kingdon implies that several issues (or conditions) are not to be defined as problems (whereas some others do), or ideas not to manage to come on agenda (whereas some others do) is a problem.

What Kingdon (2003:146) does not touch is the mechanism of the change in the national mood. He explains the mechanism of couplings and the window of opportunity with dramatic changes, elections, and changes in national mood and he treats all these issues as exogenous variables. However, I suspect that elites, policy entrepreneurs, or those who hold the political power might have the ability and the capacity to influence and even shape the national mood “through myths, information control, ideologies, etc” to be able to couple the streams and open the window of opportunity. As Domhoff (2002) explains, elites are those who hold three powers. He says that elites have the money because they are the CEOs or the businessmen in the market. Elites are also those who are the heads of the think-tank institutions. Elites are also those who have the political power because they are high bureaucrats, politicians, senators, representatives, etc. Domhoff concludes that real elite has these powers.

In conclusion, I think that elites have the ability to shape and control the national mood through the news media, propaganda, and acts to change the national agenda. If they have this capacity, then they can make people want what is the best interest to the elites, which is what Gaventa (1980) defines as third face of power. I think Kingdon (2003) leaves out the third face of power in his analysis because he thinks that national mood is an independent and exogenous variable, but I think not. I believe that national mood is an endogenous variable which is affected and influenced by the power holders.
Hence, I believe that he intentionally left the explanation of the mechanisms of the change of national mood because if we accept that national mood is also influenced by the elites, or power holders whoever they are, all these three streams approach would be useless. Consequently, all these three streams would be dependent upon each other as those who hold the power would be the ones who decide what will happen next.

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