

ANTICORRUPTION POLICY IN CANADA AND KAZAKHSTAN: BOTTOM-UP VS. TOP-DOWN AGENDA SETTING

POLÍTICA ANTI-CORRUPCIÓN EN CANADÁ Y KAZAJISTÁN: TEORÍA DE LA FIJACIÓN DE LA AGENDA DE ABAJO-ARRIBA VS. DE ARRIBA-ABAJO

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Summary: I. INTRODUCTION. II. PROBLEM DIAGNOSIS, THEORIES AND METHODS. III. OUTSIDE-INITIATION MODEL AND ISSUE-ATTENTION CYCLE. IV. CONCLUSION.

Sumario: I. INTRODUCCIÓN. II. DIAGNÓSTICO DEL PROBLEMA, TEORÍAS Y MÉTODOS. III. MODELO DE *OUTSIDE-INITIATION* Y EL CICLO DE ATENCIÓN POLÍTICA. IV CONCLUSIÓN.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 17-th century Thomas Hobbes wrote about corruption: “impunity by force is a root from whence springeth at all the times and upon all temptations a contempt of all laws”² In this case, it is possible to compare corruption with a serious disease of the state which undermines credibility of citizens to public authorities and destroys system of state power.

It should be stressed that “not only poor states, but developed countries as well are subjected to corruption. In democratic countries with an effective market economy corruption eats from 2 to 12% of GDP. However, the most corrupt are countries with authoritarian forms of governance. In such countries the shadow “black economy” counts 50% from the total GDP”³.

In this paper, we will investigate the process of agenda setting in Canada and Kazakhstan with regard to anti-corruption policy. A comparative analysis of anti-

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² T. HOBBS, *Leviathan or the matter, form and power of a common wealth ecclesiastical and civil*. 1651, Part 2 Commonwealth. Chapter 27 of Crimes, Excuses and Extenuations. Ed. A.P. Martinich and B. Battiste, *Leviathan*, Part I and II, Toronto, 2011 (available: <http://books.google.nl/>).

³ E.KARIN, “Analytical approaches to studying corruption”, in *Corruption in Kazakhstan: methods of neutralization*, 2001, p.4 (own translation from Russian) in Central Asian Agency for Political Research, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Kazakhstan. Ed. D. Satbayev (available: <http://www.transparencykazakhstan.org/UserFiles/file/84.pdf>).

corruption policies in countries with absolutely different historical, political, economic and cultural traditions like developed liberal-democratic state Canada and young developing Central Asian Republic - Kazakhstan seems at the first view, bizarre and casual. However, taking into account the assumption of public policy analysts Jenson and Stark that “the policy making agenda is created out of the history, traditions, attitudes and beliefs...”⁴ present comparative cross-nation analysis allows not only to reveal similarities and divergences in anti-corruption initiatives and policies of both states, but to define and analyze how the agenda-setting behavior essentially differs in present countries, depending on type and nature of the political regime.

The research goal of the paper is to identify how does the political system of the country influence the agenda setting process? We will try to answer the following sub-questions in the paper as well:

- Who are the actors in the process of agenda setting?
- What were the elements influencing the issue’s movement to the formal agenda?
- What are the differences and similarities in the agenda setting process in these countries?

In this paper, we will review the article *Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process* by R. Cobb, J. K. Ross and M. Ross published in 1976 and *Up and Down with Ecology – the “issue-attention cycle”* by Anthony Downs published in 1972 as main theoretical literatures upon which we will analyze and test the models proposed by these authors using the anti-corruption policies in Canada and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, *Who or What Sets the Agenda? The case of rural issues in England’s local public service agreements* by Tom Entwistle and Gareth Enticott (2007) and *Studying Public Policy: Policy Circles and Policy Subsystems* by Michael H. Ramesh M. and Anthony P. were used to understand the policy cycle and particularly the agenda setting stage and to articulate on the models chosen for the purpose of analysis in the paper.

In order to describe the political and social processes occurred in Canada and Kazakhstan prior and during the agenda setting process, we used analytical reports by various think tanks and organizations, newspaper articles, as well as official reports and web-sites of relevant government structures in these two countries.

II. PROBLEM DIAGNOSIS, THEORIES AND METHODS

1. Problem Diagnosis

Canada

The first country of our analysis, Canada, is a parliamentary democracy and is one of the most developed countries in the world. It is ranked 6th from the top in the latest United Nation Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Index

⁴ JENSON, 1991; STARK, 1992 in M. HOWLETT M and M. RAMESH and A.PERL, “*Studying Public Policy Circles and Policy Subsystems*”, Oxford/NewYork: Oxford University Press. 2009, p. 98.

report⁵ Canada traditionally had a very good reputation for its efforts in peace-building and fight against inequality in the world. It actively participates in anti-corruption initiatives at organizations like the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and within the G8 group⁶ Canada was always a country that was set as a good example not only to developing countries, but to some developed ones as well. For instance, it was the first country to adopt multiculturalism as an official government policy, “affirming the value and dignity of its citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language, or their religious affiliation⁷”.

However, there has recently been a slight decline in Canada’s reputation on international arena. For instance, in 2010 for the first time in its history Canada failed to win a seat at the United Nations Security Council⁸. Some critics argue that Canada is losing its good reputation due to inconsistency of its government’s foreign policy, and inability to effectively cope with some domestic issues, one of which is corruption. Indeed, recently there was a drastic drop in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) among Canadians. In just 5 years, between 2000 and 2005, Canada dropped from the 5th to 14th place in Transparency International CPI ranking⁹.

One of the main reasons for this was the corruption scandal that occurred in one of Canadian provinces – Quebec – that was considering separating from Canada and becoming an independent state. To prevent this, Government of Canada created a special programme to improve its reputation in the province by advertising at various cultural and sporting events. However, in 2004 the Auditor General of Canada, who is responsible to keep government accountable for the use of public funds, examined the programme and concluded that a lot of funds were used for the personal benefits of the Liberal party of Canada, which was then in power, as well as its members (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: 2004). A special commission was appointed to investigate the case, which soon confirmed the misuse of public funds by the members of Liberal Party. As a result, due to the lack of support government was forced to call an election where for the first time in 12 years Liberals did not get enough seats to stay in power¹⁰.

⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report 2011 Summary*, p. 17 (available: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Summary.pdf).

⁶ Department of Justice Canada. *Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act: A Guide*. 1999, p.1 (available: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/dept-min/pub/cfpoa-lcape/guide.pdf>. Retrieved on 21.08.2013).

⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Canadian Multiculturalism: An Inclusive Citizenship*, 2008 (available: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp>. Retrieved on 21.08.2013).

⁸ M. BLANCHFIELD, *Lost bid for Security Council seat a Tory failure, Liberals charge*. Toronto Star, October 18, 2010 (available: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/877227--lost-bid-for-security-council-seat-a-tory-failure-liberals-charge>).

⁹ Transparency International. *TI Corruption Perceptions Index 2000* (available: http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/previous_cpi/2000) and Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2005* (available: http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005).

¹⁰ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. *Indepth: sponsorship scandal*. CBC News Online, October 26, 2006 (available: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/groupaction/>).

After the incident took place, Canada was frequently criticized for allowing gaps in its anti-corruption policies and for not enforcing the existing anti-corruption legislation. In recent years Transparency International reports regularly put Canada at the bottom of the bribery-fighting rankings, in the category of countries with little or no enforcement of anti-bribery measures¹¹.

Kazakhstan

In comparison to Canada, Kazakhstan ranked 140 in the Corruption Perception Index of the Transparency International¹² The high level of corruption in Kazakhstani society is possible to explain by different factors.

During the 20-th century, for almost seventy years, country was a part of the Soviet Union characterized with centralized system of economy administration, strong amalgamation of executive power with economy. Since country gained its independence in 1991, efforts has been undertaken to overcome and eliminate the remnants of totalitarian past and to transit from planned to market economy system. However, till present time, the political system has been characterized with strong centralized executive power concentrated in the hands of the political leader and government officials. Ineffective mechanism of checks and balances among the branches of government, weak civil society participation, and absence of active political opposition: all indicated factors further contribute to flourishing of corruption in the country.

It should be stressed that Kazakhstan is a resource rich country. “Its economic performance has been driven largely by its natural resources sector – the oil and gas sectors”¹³ Several international organizations like Business Anti-corruption Portal noted that the scope for corruption in extractive industries is enormous.¹⁴ Due to problems of corruption, population cannot fully enjoy the social and economic benefits from living in natural resource rich country. Despite the fact, that “with a GDP growth rate around 10 % since 2000 the country is among the fastest growing economies of the world and outpaces all other Central Asian states by far.”¹⁵ however, the number of citizens who live below the poverty line in Kazakhstan is still high. According to the World Bank data for 2012 about 5.3% of population of Kazakhstan live in extreme

¹¹ J. SHER, *Canada ranked worst of G7 nations in fighting bribery, corruption*. The Globe and Mail, May 24, 2011 (available: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canada-ranked-worst-of-g7-nations-in-fighting-bribery-corruption/article592312/>).

¹² Transparency International. *The Corruption Perception Index 2013, Country Profile: Kazakhstan*. (available: <http://www.transparency.org/country#KAZ>).

¹³ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. *Competitiveness and Private Sector Development Competitiveness and Private Sector Development: Kazakhstan 2010*. OECD Publishing, 2011 (available: <http://www.oecd.org/countries/kazakhstan/kazakhstan-sectorcompetitivenessstrategy.htm>).

¹⁴ Business Anti-corruption Portal. *Kazakhstan: country profile*. 2012 (available: <http://www.business-anti-corruption.com/country-profiles/europe-central-asia/kazakhstan/corruption-levels/environment-natural-resources-and-extractive-industry/>).

¹⁵ International Information Centre of the Republic of Kazakhstan, KazakhstanLive.com. *Economy*, 2013. (available: <http://www.kazakhstanlive.com/4en.aspx>).

poverty.¹⁶ In addition, due to such negative aspects of the society like clan, tribalism, and patron-client practices corruption remains one of the most acute problems of contemporary Kazakhstan.

2. Theories and Methods

In this paper, we will comparatively analyze the process of agenda-setting in Canada and Kazakhstan with regard to anti-corruption policies using *Outside Initiation Model* proposed first time by R. Cobb, J.K. Ross and M. Ross in 1976 and *Issue-Attention Cycle* by Anthony Downs articulated first time in 1972.

In the article published in the *American Political Science Review*, Cobb, Ross and Ross argued that two types of agendas can be described: “the public agenda which consists of issues which have achieved a high level of public interest and visibility; and the formal agenda which is the list of items which decision makers have formally accepted for serious consideration”¹⁷.

The public agenda includes all issues that the society or particular community within the society demonstrate attention or at least awareness, as well as believed by some unit of government (ministry, municipality, local court and etc.) to be important concern. Formal agenda consist of issues that government and its bodies considers for review and it can be found in the forms like list of issues in parliament or court calendar. Although, it is imperative for every issue to be on the formal agenda before being addressed, not all issues that appear on the formal agenda receive significant attention from decision makers and very few indeed are addressed properly or in a way that correspond to interest of issue proponents.

Cobb, Ross and Ross suggest “three different models of agenda building varying depending on major characteristics of issue careers: initiation, specification, expansion, and entrance, stages that every issue goes through in order to transfer from public agenda to formal agenda”¹⁸ In this paper, we will apply only one of these models: outside initiation model, the model that is characterized with the process where issues arise in outside of the formal government structures (like NGOs, interest groups, various communities) and then reach first the public agenda and then the formal agenda. Every issue passes through four phases the models and brief description of these phases is portrayed below:

Initiation: In this stage a grievance is articulated by a group outside the formal governmental structure. Such groups may vary greatly in terms of visibility as distinct groups or the degree of unity around other issues.

Specification: Grievance is transformed into the specific demands which may or may not be executed by particular leader of that group. While various demands

¹⁶ The World Bank. Data. *Kazakhstan. Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population)*. 2012 (available: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kazakhstan>).

¹⁷ R. COBB, J.K ROSS and M. ROSS, “Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol 70, No. 1, 1976, p.126.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 127.

can be expressed by different members of the same group, various groups may articulate similar demands competing with each other.

Expansion: This is the stage when the outside group is attracting more attention to the issue by expanding it to bigger groups of population in order to influence decision makers and to push the issue to the formal agenda.

Entrance: Issue is progressed from public agenda to formal agenda where decision makers will seriously consider it. In a situation when issue will cause great opposition from some groups of society governments tend to stall or delay the entrance of issue to the formal agenda.

It should be stressed that the stages identified by these authors “are analytic and not necessarily temporal. For example, efforts to achieve entrance may in fact occur prior to expansion, although successful entrance usually requires that expansion take place before it”¹⁹ Another model that we will use trying to explain the agenda setting process in Canada and Kazakhstan is issue-attention cycle by Downs who argued that public attention rarely stays sharply focused on particular issue or problem. “Instead, each of these problems suddenly leaps into prominence, remains there for a short time, and then gradually fades from the center of public attention”²⁰ The cycle consist of five stages which almost always occurs in a following sequential order:

1. **The pre-problem-stage:** Although, a problem exists, only few interest groups and experts may be aware of it and/or be concerned about. General public has no or limited interest in the issue.
2. **Alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm:** Due to sudden and dramatic events and some other reasons, public became aware of the situation and the issue receives extensive public attention. Increasing public interest result in strong confidence that the problem can be solved and forces politicians to make optimistic promises.
3. **Realizing the cost of significant progress:** Public and various groups interested in the issue realize that the cost of solving the problem is significantly high. Such costs include not only financial and other material resources, but also important sacrifices that some groups of society or society as a whole sometimes have to undertake.
4. **Gradual decline of intense public interest:** With realization the cost of solving the issue, public attention to the issue declines gradually with some threatened by the solutions while others simply bored. Entrance of other issue in the stage two may also affect the fading interest in the current issue.
5. **The post-problem stage:** The issue loses the public interest and is replaced by a new issue that goes through stages of the cycle. Although, public attention fades away, the issue is still in the center of attention of institutions, programs, policies and think tanks that has been created during the second stage to solve the issue.

¹⁹ R. COBB, J.K ROSS and M. ROSS, “Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process”, *American Political Science Review*, 1976, Vol 70, No. 1, p.131.

²⁰ A. DOWNS, *Up and down with ecology-the "issue-attention cycle*. National Affairs № 28 – summer 1972, p.88 Available: Up and down with ecology-- the "issue-attention cycle".

III. OUTSIDE INITIATION MODEL AND ISSUE-ATTENTION CYCLE

1. Outside initiation model

Canada

Since Canada does not have a national anti-corruption strategy it may not be unexpected that cases like the 2006 sponsorship scandal occur from time to time. The Government of Canada was often criticized for allowing gaps in its legislation that created opportunities for illegal activities to remain unnoticed for extended periods of time due to the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms. The Criminal Code of Canada includes offences that prohibit bribery or possession of property obtained by “crime, fraud, laundering proceeds of crime and secret commissions,” but there is still a need to better integrate various federal statutes, administrative provisions and parliamentary rules²¹. Most of the existing anti-corruption measures in Canada were implemented as a result of its obligations to various international organizations, rather than as domestic initiatives. However, it is easy to understand why anti-corruption legislation rarely reached the Government’s agenda – corruption was simply not an issue in Canada in the past decade, at least not a visible one. It is a fact that corruption exists in every country in the world, but its scope is different across the globe. It was believed that the Federal Accountability Act that was adopted immediately after the sponsorship scandal took place in Canada would help to minimize the number of corruption cases in Canada.

The main changes introduced by the Federal Accountability Act were intended to make the work of government more transparent and provide protection for those pointing to government wrong-doing. Specific actions include introducing a new Conflict of Interest Act, reforming the financing scheme of political parties, strictening rules for lobbying activities, introducing a uniform process for the appointment of government officials to ensure that public appointments are based on merit, providing protection to whistleblowers who disclose government wrongdoing, and strengthening auditing and accountability within departments, as well as other initiatives²².

Among the actors that played a significant role in the adoption of the Federal Accountability Act in Canada, there is a need to highlight the importance of public, media, and civil society in the face of pressure groups and think tanks in placing the issue on the public agenda. At the same time, the Auditor General of Canada and the Gomery Commission played an important role in identifying the problem, while opposition parties helped to move it from the public to formal agenda.

It is important to analyze how the events that led to the adoption of the Federal Accountability Act in Canada fit with the theoretical models chosen for the purpose of this paper – firstly by focusing on the outside initiative model already described, which

²¹ Department of Justice Canada. *The Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act: A Guide*. 199, p.1. (available: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/dept-min/pub/cfpoa-lcape/guide.pdf>).

²² Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. *Federal Accountability Act, 2006* (available: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/faa-lfi/index-eng.asp>).

states that issues first arise in non-governmental groups and “are then expanded sufficiently to reach, first, the public agenda, and, finally, the formal agenda.”²³. The whole process has four stages: initiation, specification, expansion, and entrance.

Initiation: During the first stage, grievance is articulated by someone outside the formal government structure²⁴. In the case of Canada, this occurred when the Auditor General of Canada announced that some of the members of the Liberal Party of Canada, which was then in power, had been accused of misuse of public funds, and appointed a commission to investigate the case. At that point, Government of Canada faced a wave of protests across the country, with significant public dissatisfaction with the fact that taxpayer money had possibly been used for the personal benefit of the ruling political party and some of its members.

Specification: After the Gomery Commission produced its first report and uncovered more details of the sponsorship scandal, including the names of people engaged in corruption schemes, the public and various interest groups were able to articulate their demands more specifically. For instance, according to Hubbard & Paquet, “better accountability through more watchdogs with greater power” was one of the most popular demands²⁵. Immediate action was demanded from the government to resolve the problem and punish the guilty. This is exactly what the outside initiative model predicts under the second stage – specification, when grievances are translated into specific demands²⁶.

Expansion: During this step the issue gained prominence with new groups of the population. The media increased their coverage of the now-hot topic, and more Canadians became aware of the sponsorship scandal and its consequences. A number of civil society actors issued formal complaints to the Government and demanded an immediate resolution to the problem. Pressure groups like the Canadian Bar Association, a national association representing jurists, presented their demands and recommendations on how to “make government more accountable and transparent, and to reduce the risk of inappropriate influence over government decision-making”²⁷. Even the opposition party included anti-corruption legislation into its campaign as federal elections were approaching, making it one of their top 5 priorities²⁸.

²³ R. COBB, J.K ROSS and M. ROSS, “Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process”, *American Political Science Review*, 1976, Vol 70, No. 1, p.127.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 127.

²⁵ R. HUBBARD and G. PAQUET, “Gomery: Missed Opportunity or Blessing in Disguise?” *Journal of the Financial Management*, Institute of Canada, 17(3), 21-23, 2006, p. 21 (available: http://www.fmi.ca/uploads/1/hubbard-paquet_e.pdf).

²⁶ R. COBB, J.K ROSS and M. ROSS, “Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process”, *American Political Science Review*, 1976, Vol 70, No. 1, p.127.

²⁷ Canadian Bar Association. *Submission of Bill C2 - Federal Accountability Act*. June 2006, p.iii Available: <http://www.cba.org/cba/submissions/pdf/06-25-eng.pdf>. Retrieved on 21.08.2013).

²⁸ Conservative Party of Canada. *Stand Up For Canada: Conservative Party of Canada Federal Election Platform* 2006. (available: http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes2006/leadersparties/pdf/conservative_platform20060113.pdf).

Entrance: Finally, the last stage symbolizes the move from public agenda to formal agenda. In Canada, the issue moved to this stage when opposition parties raised the issue in Parliament. Parliamentary elections that were held soon led to the defeat of the Liberal Party by Conservatives and the election of a new Prime Minister, just three months after the Federal Accountability Act was adopted, in which the “Government of Canada brought forward specific measures to help strengthen accountability and increase transparency and oversight in government operations”²⁹.

It is important to note that in the case of Federal Accountability Act we consider elections to be a policy window that helped to put the issue into the formal agenda. According to Kingdon, openings in the policy window occur when problem, policy and political streams in society intersect or “are brought together by the activities of entrepreneurs linking problems, solutions, and opportunities”³⁰. In the case discussed above, corruption was the problem; anti-corruption legislation was a solution; and upcoming elections created an opportunity to resolve the problem.

Kazakhstan

In comparison to Canada, actors that are involved in policy agenda building in Kazakhstan are limited. The President and government officials are the main actors involved in the agenda-setting process. The role of other internal actors, like media, political parties and civil society in agenda-setting in Kazakhstan is very limited or even nonexistent. Since there is no strong political opposition in the parliament (the majority of seats in parliament are held by the ruling party “Nur-Otan”), media is regulated by the government, and civil society participation in political life is limited, we can consider the political leader and the bureaucracy to be the main actors involved in the agenda setting process. However, some questions arise: why were these actors interested in the appearance of the anti-corruption issue on the agenda, and when did the government start paying attention to this issue?

There is no doubt that independent of the nature of the political regime, the government of any state is interested in fighting corruption. “If corruption spreads into all institutions and levels of government, the public image of the government will be damaged, this will lead in its turn to a loss of public support for authority”³¹.

Kazakhstan authorities are not interested in a decline of their legitimacy and loss of public support. However, this is not the only reason why the government has stressed the importance of the anti-corruption issue. In spite of the fact that Kazakhstan was one of the first countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the first

²⁹ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. *Federal Accountability Act. 2006* (available: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/faa-lfi/index-eng.asp>. Retrieved on 21.08.2013).

³⁰ M. HOWLETT, M.RAMESH and A.PERL, “*Studying Public Policy Circles and Policy Subsystems*”, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 104.

³¹ H. ZENGKE, *Corruption and anti-corruption in reform China*, China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics, 36 Xixiejie Xidan, Beijing, PR China. 2000, p. 260 (available: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/gpa/wang_files/Corruption.pdf).

CIS member to pass a special Anti-corruption Law in 1998³², the real attention of the government to the anti-corruption issue increased only during the recent years.

“During the recent years much emphasis was put in Kazakhstan at the highest government level on the issues of combating corruption. The goal of preventing and fighting corruption was mentioned in many state policy documents, including Annual Addresses of the President, Strategic Development Plan of Kazakhstan till 2020”³³. Such developments as the ratification of the UN Conventions Against Corruption (2008), adoption of the Action Plan Against Corruption for 2011-2015 (March 2011), as well as increased frequency in recent years in President’s speeches on the importance of anti-corruption policies could serve evidences that anti-corruption policy is on the agenda in Kazakhstan. But why? What event could be considered as a starting point or “policy window” that furthers the appearance of this issue on the agenda in Kazakhstan? One driver of increased focus on anti-corruption programs can be explained by the role and influence of external actors, specifically of international organizations like the UN, the OSCE, the OECD and international NGOs like Transparency International. These organizations significantly influenced the appearance of the anti-corruption issue on the agenda in Kazakhstan.

In 2006, Kazakhstan began to express its interest in assuming the chairmanship of such respected regional security organization as the OSCE. “Astana had considered it symbolically important that Kazakhstan be the first of the former Soviet republics to lead the 56-country organization. The Kazakh government has for years told its people that holding the OSCE chairmanship would show that the international community was taking notice of Kazakhstan's growing importance in the world community”³⁴. However, OSCE officials emphasized the problems facing Kazakhstan in the field of human rights and strongly advised Kazakhstan authorities to improve national legislation in conformity with international standards – and, in particular, to improve anticorruption legislation and to ratify the UN Conventions Against Corruption. The visiting US ambassador to the OSCE, Stephan Minikes told journalist (in Almaty, Kazakhstan) that: “corruption is a cancer eating the country. As long as that corruption prevails, the full fruits of democracy and the full fruits of market economy will never come to the people of Kazakhstan”³⁵.

³² Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, International Conference “Creating Conditions for Sustainable Economic and Social Development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Fighting Corruption and Promoting Good Governance”, 16-18 September, 2009, Astana, Kazakhstan, p. 8 (available: <http://www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/istanbulactionplan/44620426.pdf>).

³³ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, *Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan, Second Round of Monitoring, Kazakhstan, Monitoring Report*. 2011, p. 4 (available: <http://www.oecd.org/countries/kazakhstan/48908325.pdf>).

³⁴ B. PANNIER, *Kazakhstan to Assume OSCE Chairmanship in 2010*. Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, Madrid (01.12. 2007) (available : <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079221.html>).

³⁵ Integrated Regional Information Networks. *Corruption remains a major cause of concern*. Humanitarian news and analysis, a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Kazakhstan (available: <http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=24355>).

It is now possible to analyze whether or not the four stages of the outside initiative model are applicable to Kazakhstan.

Initiation: If in Canada the anti-corruption issue appeared on the agenda due to initiation from outside the formal government structure (specifically by the Auditor General of Canada) in Kazakhstan the opposite holds true, where the initiation source is the political leader - the President. A model where initiation is first suggested and announced by the political leader rather than by representatives of the civil society is mostly widely spread in hierarchic political systems.

In the case of Kazakhstan, by taking into consideration the insistent recommendations of the UN, the OSCE, and the OECD – as well as international NGOs like Transparency International – on the necessity of further improvement of national anti-corruption legislation, Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazarbayev began to stress more frequently in his Annual Addresses to the Nation of Kazakhstan that the fight against corruption had to become the top priority in Kazakhstan. "An uncompromising fight against corruption is under way... This work will continue without any compromise"³⁶. However, the issue was not initiated by the outside group, but rather was brought to the formal agenda by an announcement from the political leader.

Specification: In this next stage, when the grievance is translated into specific demands, the political leader – the President – stressed the importance of changing behaviors and the necessity to eradicate such negative phenomenon in Kazakhstani society as tribalism, clans, and patron-client relations. These assertions were included in his Annual Address to the Nation as well as in interviews to foreign and national media. "It is necessary to ensure an intolerable perception of corruption in society. So that even the idea to take or accept a bribe should be immediately dismissed by every single citizen. This is the most difficult task as it involves a higher level of respect of rule of law in the society. We have to educate people from early age. In these noble efforts our government should act hand in hand with the civil society– parties, nongovernment organizations, and mass media."³⁷ The President also gave specific instructions to the government and relevant state bodies, and the government adopted a new strategic Action Plan to fight against corruption 2011-2015 (March 2011). The specific demand was not put forward by the group that initiated the issue as was mentioned in the model, but rather proposed by the political leader.

Expansion: In this stage, according to the model, the issue should expand to the broader public in order for decision makers to seriously consider it. However, in the case of Kazakhstan the issue had already been moved to the formal agenda by the

³⁶ N. NAZARBAYEV, *Building the Future Together. Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the People of Kazakhstan*. (January 28, 2011) (available: http://akorda.kz/en/page/address-of-the-president-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-nursultan-nazarbayev-to-the-people-of-kazakhstan-january-28-2011_1341926571).

³⁷ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, International Conference, *Creating Conditions for Sustainable Economic and Social Development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Fighting Corruption and Promoting Good Governance* (16-18 September, 2009 Astana, Kazakhstan), pp. 9-10 (available: <http://www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/istanbulactionplan/44620426.pdf>).

political leader's announcement. Consequently, after the President stressed the importance of anti-corruption policies and the government adopted a new Action Plan to fight corruption, the media actively started a number of anti-corruption propaganda campaigns targeting the population, presenting efforts and projects of the government to fight against corruption. "The government placed informational billboards and banners in public places promoting trust hotlines "144". Each person can claim about corruption or bribe"³⁸. Additionally, the government, through the media, started to introduce the "electronic government" program. "Each Ministry and agency of the government has established their own web-site as well as blogs for the top officials, where individuals and legal entities can make requests"³⁹.

Entrance: In the final stage, the model suggests that the issue is transferred to the formal agenda concluding the agenda setting. However, as was mentioned previously, the issue entered the formal agenda in Kazakhstan in the first stage when it was announced by the president and first initiated. Therefore, contrary to the model, the anti-corruption issue moved from the formal to the public agenda: the general public of Kazakhstan accepted positively the actions or at least the efforts of the government to fight corruption. Such conclusions are possible by taking into account the increased number of individuals who utilized the online "electronic government" system or trust hotlines, claiming experiences of corruption. "In 2009 the Financial Police Chairman's blog collected and processed 795 requests and 191 requests in the first quarter of 2010"⁴⁰.

Summary

The outside initiation model explains the agenda setting process in Canada, where public pressure played major role in raising the issue, while the events that took place in Kazakhstan do not fit the model. This can be explained by the top-down character of the process in Kazakhstan, as opposed to the bottom-up process in Canada. Such kind of top-down model of agenda setting process is possible to explain using the mobilization mode, which is another model by these authors, rather than the outside initiated, which also consists of four stages: initiation, specification, expansion, and entrance⁴¹.

³⁸ Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in USA, Washington DC, *Brief Summary of Kazakhstan's law enforcement efforts on fighting corruption and drug trafficking*, News Bulletin No. 35. 2010 (available: http://www.kazakhembus.com/archived_article/news-bulletin-no-35.)

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ R. COBB, J.K ROSS and M. ROSS, "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process", in *The American Political Science Review*, 1976, Vol 70, No. 1, p. 132.

2. Issue Attention Cycle

Canada

In this part, we will try to explain the agenda setting in these countries applying Anthony Downs' Issue-Attention Cycle theory. As it was mentioned earlier, he claimed that "public attention rarely remains sharply focused upon any one domestic issue for very long"⁴² Downs argued that rather than systematically moving up to the formal agenda, issues often reach it due to some fast changes in public attitudes identifying five stages of this cycle that almost always follow the same sequence.

During the *pre-problem stage* when the problem already exists, but only a few individuals or groups of people are aware of it, and the issue has not captured public attention, the Auditor General of Canada discovered some signs of fraud and appointed the Gomery Commission to investigate the case. Because not many details of the case were known at this point the reaction from public and other interest groups was not significant.

However, after Gomery Commission produced its report and confirmed the fact of corruption, the reaction from public and other interest groups brought the issue into the public agenda. Sponsorship scandal was widely discussed in media, opposition parties started to build their electoral campaigns on anti-corruption. For instance, Conservative party of Canada claimed fighting corruption is one of their top 5 priorities⁴³. These events fit properly with the second stage of Downs' issue-attention cycle theory, which is *alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm*.

According to the model, once the real costs of solving the problem are realized there should be a slight decline in the support of the program. However, in the Case of Canada the only important costs were the financial costs and thus this decline did not happen. In other agenda settings, there is some kind of trade off when a certain policy is implemented, where one group wins something and the other group loses. But in the case of anti-corruption, no significant costs other than financial were identified, so there was no decline in the support of the program at this stage.

The third stage should lead to a *gradual decline in intense public interest* due to the realization of how difficult it is to find and implement a solution to the problem. Some people may simply become bored of the issue and shift their attention to some other arising problem. In Canada, this stage occurred after the election, once Conservative party was able to form the government. Since adopting some sort of anti-corruption legislature was one of their main electoral promises, public was confident in the successful resolution of the problem and interest in the issue started to decline,

⁴² A. DOWNS, *Up and down with ecology-the "issue-attention cycle* in National Affairs № 28 – 1972, p.98, SUMMER (available: http://cstpr.colorado.edu/students/envs_5720/downs_1972.pdf).

⁴³ Conservative Party of Canada. *Stand Up For Canada: Conservative Party of Canada Federal Election Platform* 2006. (available: http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes2006/leadersparties/pdf/conservative_platform20060113.pdf).

accompanied with decrease in media attention. Some interest and lobby groups continued to consult government on the areas of their specific interest.

Finally, the last step in Downs' model is the *post-problem stage*, where the issues is replaced by another one and is no longer at the center of public concern. As soon as new government adopted the Federal Accountability Act it shifted its focus to other arising on the agenda issues. Anti-corruption was no longer discussed as widely as before, while issues like job creation, environment, health care, and the elimination of budget deficit arose to the discussion table⁴⁴.

Kazakhstan

In case of Kazakhstan, in the pre-problem stage, the study does not show any obvious evidences that the government has been tried to put anti-corruption issue on the formal agenda. However, external actors: international organizations like the OSCE, the OECD giving recommendations to the government are trying to bring the issue to the forefront of discussions. Sergey Zlotnikov, the Executive Director of Transparency International in Kazakhstan stressed in one of the interviews: "The government of Kazakhstan strongly oppose ratifying the UN Conventions against corruption, because it imposes certain obligations. However the authorities would not be able to ignore international covenants as they do with domestic laws if the former were ratified"⁴⁵.

On the second *alarm discovery* stage, it is possible to observe that only after the external "pressure", following recommendations of international organizations like the OSCE on necessity to adopt and to implement new anti-corruption strategies, the Head of the state started to stress in media anti-corruption policy to be a top priority for further development of the country. "The Kazakhstani authorities recently launched a well-publicized anti-corruption campaign. The campaign appears to have the full support of President Nazarbayev, who has repeatedly called on the government and the ruling Nur Otan party to battle this "most serious evil"⁴⁶.

Following recommendations of external actors, the government finally ratified the UN Conventions against corruption and adopted a new Action Plan to fight against corruption for 2011-2015. As it was already mentioned above, on the third stage "realization of costs for the society" the theory predicts that after the issue moved from formal to public agenda, public discussions on pro and contras of particular reforms should started. In case of Kazakhstan, we do not see any direct evidences that the society or some particular groups within the society are oppose or strongly disagree with the adoption of new anti-corruption Action plan. Population positively accepted

⁴⁴ Conservative Party of Canada. (2011). *Platform*. (available: http://www.conservative.ca/?page_id=40).

⁴⁵ Integrated Regional Information Networks. *Corruption remains a major cause of concern*. Humanitarian news and analysis, a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Kazakhstan, 2004 (available: <http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=24355>).

⁴⁶ R. HOAGLAND, *Kazakhstan's anti-corruption campaign* US embassy cables. 29 November 2010, Available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/203528>.

reforms and is in general, satisfied with the fact that finally some serious changes in present direction have started.

At fourth and fifth stages, the theory predicts gradual decline of public interest to the issue, however, in case of Kazakhstan, since anti-corruption Action plan was adopted relatively recently, in March of 2011, the interest of public to the issue remains significantly high up today. An increased number of requests and addresses of population claiming on cases of corruption via “e-government” web-portal and trust hotlines, as well as public debates on television related to effectiveness of the new anti-corruption campaign could serve acknowledgement of this.

Summary

As the outside initiation model, the issue-attention cycle successfully describes the agenda setting process in Canada due to increased accountability of the government and extensive public pressure over the agenda building. However, in Kazakhstan, where the main initiator of the issue was the government and particularly, the President, the model fails to explain the chain of events that led to the issue’s movement to the agenda.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on our findings as a result of the research, we can argue that while the anti-corruption entered the formal agenda in Canada as a result of significant public pressure following by corruption scandal, it appeared on the formal agenda in Kazakhstan after the political leader announced new program on anti-corruption. In the case of Canada, think tanks, media and particularly opposition played significant role in expanding the issue to broader public almost forcing decision makers seriously to consider and ultimately adopt new policy on the issue. On the contrary, in Kazakhstan, public pressure and opposition had limited influence over the agenda setting process, leaving the prominent political leader – the President and very narrow circle around him the only decision makers in this process.

Moreover, the movement of the issue to the formal agenda was motivated by increasing public pressure and loosing potential votes in upcoming elections in Canada. Political actors interested in gaining more seats in the parliament were trying to satisfy demands of their voters. In Kazakhstan, however, essential influence of the process came externally from international institutions and organizations such as OSCE, OECD, UN and Transparency International. While elections played the role of important political window in Canada, the OSCE Chairmanship and international pressure coming accompanied with such opportunity was defining point for Kazakhstani leadership to bring the issue into the agenda.

Along with actors participating in the agenda setting and factors influencing the process, another main difference between cases in two countries is that the character of the adopted policy in order to address the issue. In Canada, the policy was innovative –

developed for the first time, while in Kazakhstan the government modified previous program expanding its time for another five years.

Two models that we employed in the paper successfully explain the process that took place in Canada. In the case of Downs model, the issue caught public attention by dramatic event – scandal and moved along the five stages of the issue-attention cycle forcing the decision makers to seriously consider the problem. The outside initiation model explains the process by introducing Auditor General and special investigation to the scandal as grievance articulation within the outside group. The issue was expanded further to broader public by media and opposition and resulted in decision makers consideration of the issue and ultimately in adoption of the new policy.

However, both models failed to properly explain the agenda setting process in Kazakhstan where public attention and pressure played very limited role in the course of events. The issue did not moved up to the stages of issue-attention cycle as mentioned by Downs, instead the problem was moved to the official agenda and to the public attention at the same time by the government. As often stressed by number of scholars, Down's issue-attention cycle has limited application to democratic societies where government is held accountable by citizens and its decisions are significantly affected by public opinion. In the case of the outside initiation model, the issue was not initiated by outside group, which is one of the main conditions of the model and it was brought to the formal agenda by the political leader – president's announcement. We are again confident that the model does not fit to provide rationale for agenda building in authoritarian regimes as mentioned by Cobb, Ross and Ross themselves.

After conducting comparable analysis of the agenda setting process in Canada and Kazakhstan, liberal democracy and authoritarian (semi-democratic) regime, we can conclude that the political system -significant impact in the process of agenda setting. It particularly affects the number and character of actors participating in the process: while in democracy public, opposition and civil society plays an important role in influencing official agenda, under authoritarian regime activities of such actors has very limited effect on the process and agenda setting is limited to narrow circle of political elite. Moreover, political systems has major impact on the character of the agenda setting defining it as bottom-up in democracies with accountable governments and top-down in countries with authoritarian system which provides no or less mechanisms or opportunities for its citizens to participate in policy making.

ANTICORRUPTION POLICY IN CANADA AND KAZAKHSTAN: BOTTOM-UP VS. TOP-DOWN AGENDA SETTING

Abstract: In this paper, we will investigate the process of agenda setting in Canada and Kazakhstan with regard to anti-corruption policy. A comparative analysis of anti-corruption policies in countries with absolutely different historical, political, economic and cultural traditions like developed liberal-democratic state Canada and young developing Central Asian Republic - Kazakhstan seems at the first view, bizarre and casual. However, taking into account the assumption of public policy analysts Jenson and Stark that “the policy making agenda is created out of the history, traditions, attitudes and beliefs...”⁴⁷ present comparative cross-nation analysis allows not only to reveal similarities and divergences in anti-corruption initiatives and policies of both states, but to define and analyze how the agenda-setting behavior essentially differs in present countries, depending on type and nature of the political regime.

Keywords: agenda-setting, Canada, Kazakhstan, anti-corruption

POLÍTICA ANTI-CORRUPCIÓN EN CANADÁ Y KAZAJISTÁN: TEORÍA DE LA FIJACIÓN DE LA AGENDA DE ABAJO-ARRIBA VS. DE ARRIBA-ABAJO

Resumen: En este artículo investigaremos el proceso y el establecimiento de la agenda tanto en Canadá como en Kazakstán con respeto a la política de anticorrupción. Un análisis comparativo de anticorrupción en países con diferencias tan polarizadas; históricamente, políticamente, económicamente hablando y con tradiciones culturales de un estado desarrollado liberal-democrático como Canadá y un país joven y en transición de desarrollo en la república de Asia Central – Kazakstán puede a primera vista parecer extraño e casual. Sin embargo, si tenemos en cuenta la suposición de los analistas de políticas públicas, Jenson y Stark “the policy making agenda is created out of the history, traditions, attitudes and beliefs...”⁴⁸ nos presentan similitudes y divergencias en iniciativas y políticas de anticorrupción en ambos países a través de análisis comparativos entre naciones. Asimismo, nos definen y analizan las discrepancias y conductas del proceso y del establecimiento de la agenda en los países actuales, que depende tanto del tipo como de la naturaleza del régimen político.

Palabras clave: de la agenda, Canadá, Kazakstán, anticorrupción

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⁴⁷ JENSON, 1991; STARK, 1992 in M. HOWLETT M and M. RAMESH and A.PERL, “Studying Public Policy Circles and Policy Subsystems”, Oxford/NewYork: Oxford University Press. 2009, p. 98

⁴⁸ Ibid.