

Introduction to Public Policy

Week 5

Public Policy-Making Process: Different Theories

Theodolou & Kofinis, 2004: 80-96.

Public Policy-Making Process: Different Theories

- How to understand the policy process?
 - The way policy develops, changes, executed, evaluated & terminated
- Different theoretical perspectives & models
 - Competition instead of universal acceptance
 - Only a prism/lens to understand reality

Role of Theory

- To help us better understand the complexity of PP-making
 - Simplification/ Clarification
 - Abstraction
 - Provide a base for Evaluation
 - Application to problems and examples
- Illuminate the elements and dynamics of the process
 - Explanation

Problems of Theory

- No theory is the perfect illustration of a phenomenon/reality
 - Each has different strengths & weaknesses of explanation
 - Each has a set of assumptions that may not hold true
- The challenge is to derive value from each theory
 - Different analytical values of different theories

Theory-1: Stages Heuristic (Policy Cycle) Approach

- Originated by: [Harold Lasswell](#)



- Decision process as an interrelated series of stages
 - Dominant in the literature
 - Assumes an evolutionary process with a beginning & an end
- Stages can be further grouped as:
 - Predecision, decision & postdecision

1: Stages Heuristic (Policy Cycle) Approach

STRENGTHS

- Dominant in the literature
- Fluid cycle of stages in evolution
- Simplification of complexity
- Looks at the whole processes

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of empirical validation
 - No causal assumptions
- Descriptive inaccuracy in real life examples
 - The real process does not follow the step-by-step approach

Theory-2: Rational Choice Approach

- Assumptions of
 - Rationality of individuals & groups
 - The impact of context on rationality
- Types of Rational Choice Approach
 - Institutional Rational Choice
 - Public Choice
 - Game Theory
 - Expected Utility

2.1. Institutional Rational Choice

- Focuses on **actor-centered** institutionalism
 - Policy process as an interaction between rational individuals & groups
 - Institutional rules affect rational behavior
 - Example: Effect of institutions in forest use
- 3 tiers of decisions:
 - Constitutional
 - Collective choice
 - Operational

• Institutional rules affect rational behavior

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YÖNETMELİK

Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlıđından:

MERA YÖNETMELİĐİNDE DEĐİŐİKLİK YAPILMASINA DAİR YÖNETMELİK

MADDE 1 – 31/7/1998 tarihli ve 23419 sayılı Resmî Gazete’de yayımlanan Mera Yönetmeliđinin 8 inci maddesinin beşinci fıkrasının (a) bendine aőađıdaki alt bent eklenmiőtir.

“10) Bakanlar Kurulunca kentsel dönüőüm ve gelişim proje alanı olarak ilan edilen alanlardan Kanun kapsamındaki mera, yaylak ve kışlak olarak tahsis edilmiş olan veya kadimden beri bu amaçla kullanılan arazilerin tahsis amacı deđişiklik işlemleri Kanununun 14 üncü maddesi ve bu Yönetmeliđin 8 inci maddesi genel hükümlerine tabidir. Durumu ve sınıfı çok iyi veya iyi olan mera, yaylak ve kışlaklarda tahsis amacı deđişikliđi yapılamadıđından, Bakanlar Kurulu kararı alınmadan önce oluşabilecek kamu zararını önlemek için öncelikle kentsel dönüőüm ve gelişim proje alanı olarak ilan edilmesi düşünölen alanın 1/5000 ölçekli haritası ile Mera Komisyonuna başvurularak uygun görüő alınmalıdır.

Tahsis amacı deđişiklikleri müraaatlarında, Bakanlar Kurulu kararı ve ilgili kentsel dönüőüm ve gelişim alanı krokisi, belediye meclis kararı, kentsel dönüőüm ve gelişim alanı içerisinde kalan Kanun kapsamındaki taşınmazların, çevre parsellerini de gösterir kadastro tekniđine uygun 1/5000 ölçekli haritası ile komisyonca talep edilen diđer bilgi ve belgeler müraaat dosyasına eklenir.

Tahsis amacının valilikçe deđiőtirilmesini müteakip yirmi yıllık ot gelirinin yatırılması sađlanır. Ot bedeli yatırıldıktan sonra iki yıllık süre zarfında kesinleşmiş uygulama imar planının komisyona sunulması gerekmektedir. Bu süre zarfında söz konusu planların sunulmaması durumunda tahsis amacı deđişikliđi iptal edilir. İmar planlarının tahsis amacı deđişikliđine uygun olarak kesinleşmesi durumunda söz konusu yerlerin tescilleri Hazine adına, vakıf meralarının tescilleri ise vakıf adına yaptırılır.”

MADDE 2 – Bu Yönetmelik yayımı tarihinde yürürlüđe girer.

MADDE 3 – Bu Yönetmelik hükümlerini Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanı yürütür.

Kentsel Dönüőüm Alanlarında Mera varsa, ot bedeli ödenerek dönüőüm alanına dahil edilecek

2.2. Public Choice

- Studies the collective decisions of self interest-maximizing individuals
 - Incentives and disincentives may predict individual actions
- Decisions between high-cost and low-cost alternatives
 - Decisions based on limited or imperfect information
 - Individuals may not make best or moral decisions

2.2. Public Choice

- Collective consequences of individual decisions
 - What to do when individual benefits cause collective costs?
- Tragedy of the commons
 - Example: Individual benefit-maximization in fisheries have collective negative consequences for the society
 - Solution: Government regulation and rule-making

Seat Belt Example

- Will drivers buckle their seat belts?
 - Perceived benefits
 - Reduced risk of injury
 - Costs
 - Time spent buckling
 - Discomfort
 - Fines?

2.3. Game Theory

- Theory of interdependent decisions of two or more rational actors jointly determine the outcome of a situation
 - Objective: Determining strategies & outcomes of interactions
- Example: Prisoner's Dilemma
 - Collective negative consequences may occur if individuals pursue self-interests
 - Rationality assumption does not guarantee good choices
 - Especially with limited information and poorly-defined goals

Prisoner's Dilemma

	Confess A	Stay quiet A
Confess B	6 6	10 0
Stay quiet B	0 10	2 2

Prisoner's Dilemma: Lessons Learned

- Collective negative consequences may occur if individuals pursue self-interests
 - Societal consequences of lack of cooperation
 - When people only pursue self interest, they can get hurt collectively
- Rationality assumption does not guarantee good choices
 - Especially with limited information, poorly-defined goals & poor analysis

2.4. Expected Utility

- Individuals are driven by the desire to maximize the expected utility versus the costs
 - What is **original** here is the **dimension of time: Expected**

2: Rational Choice Approach

STRENGTHS

- Provides a logical basis for analysis
 - Shows how rational actors affect decision-making

WEAKNESSES

- Assumptions of rationality do not always hold
 - Assumptions of perfect information, well-defined goals...
- High level of simplicity

Theory-3: Advocacy Coal Framework Approach



- Originated by: Paul Sabatier
 - Objective: Better explain the complexity of the policy process than the stages approach
- Main concepts:
 - Policy Subsystems
 - Systems developing around various policy issues
 - Advocacy Coalitions
 - Policy actors that interact within and among these systems, who share common beliefs and perform coordinated activities
 - Pursue strategies to change the decisions and outcomes of governing agencies

3: Advocacy Coalition Framework Approach

- 3 levels of beliefs in advocacy coalitions:
 - **Deep core beliefs** (critical **normative** beliefs)
 - Example: All people are equal.
 - **Policy core beliefs** (fundamental **glue** of coalitions)
 - Example: Man-dominated institutions don't treat man & woman as equal.
 - **Secondary beliefs** (may **not extend** the sub-system)
 - Equal pay for equal work between man and woman

Gun Control Example (Advocacy Coalition Framework)

- Deep core beliefs (critical normative beliefs)
 - Freedom of choice
- Policy core beliefs (fundamental glue of coalitions)
 - Freedom to own a gun
- Secondary beliefs (may not extend the sub-system)
 - Guns ensure personal and societal safety

3: Advocacy Coalition Framework Approach

- Elements that affect policy subsystems
 - Internal Elements
 - External elements
 - **Stable external** (difficult to change over time):
 - Constitutional structure, socio-cultural values, natural resources of the country
 - **Dynamic external** (change over time):
 - Elections, public opinion, socio-economic changes

3: Advocacy Coalition Framework Approach

STRENGTHS

- Shows the importance of information and beliefs in the policy process
- New concepts of policy subsystems and advocacy coalitions

WEAKNESSES

- Too abstract & unrealistic
- Theoretically inaccurate
 - For example, how to differentiate different levels of beliefs?

Theory-4: Incrementalism

- Originated by: Charles Lindblom
 - An alternative to the rational model
- We don't/can't make rational decisions because:
 - We have limited capacity for comprehensive analysis.
 - Our values and objectives are poorly-defined.



Theory-4: Incrementalism

- Marginal or incremental change from the status-quo is preferred to dramatic change.
- Test of a good policy is level of agreement among analysts.

Theory-4: Incrementalism

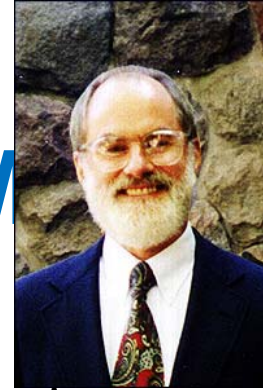
STRENGTHS

- Realities/true nature of the policy process?
- Explains why dramatic policy change is rare

WEAKNESSES

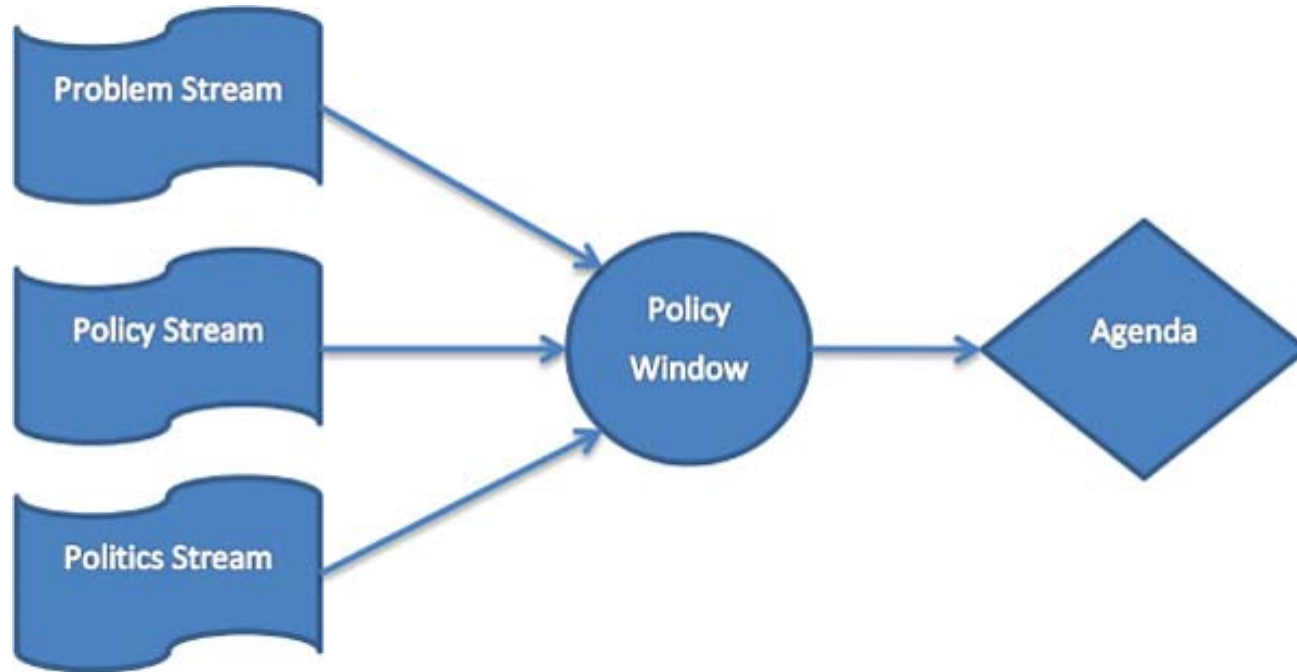
- Is agreement among analysts enough for good policy-making?
 - Or agreement among other policy actors as well?
- Dramatic policy changes happen (when political conditions justify them)
 - Example: Airline security measures after September 11

Theory-5: Multiple Streams M



- Originated by: [John Kingdon](#)
 - Explains how issues enter the agenda and how policies are made
- Policy [windows of opportunity](#) open when three streams merge in a unique moment
 - Problem stream
 - Awareness of problems by decision-makers
 - Policies stream
 - Solution proposals generated by policy communities and specialists
 - Politics stream
 - The context/culture where policy and solutions interact

5: Multiple Streams Model



Nahide Opuz Example (Multiple Streams Model)

- Windows of opportunity open when three streams merge
 - **Problem stream**: Awareness of problems by decision-makers
 - Nahide Opuz was murdered: Domestic violence
 - **Policies stream**: Solution proposals generated by policy communities and specialists
 - Women's organizations were lobbying for harsher penalties for domestic violence & better protection of women and children.
 - **Politics stream**: The context/culture where policy and solutions interact
 - Politicians were responsive.
 - **OUTCOME**: Law Number 6284 was enacted in 2012.

5: Multiple Streams Model

STRENGTHS

- Helps better understand the chaotic nature of the policy process

WEAKNESSES

- It is not clear whether the streams are independent or interdependent.
- How do the streams explain implementation and evaluation?

Theory-6: Punctuated Equilibrium Model

- Originated by: Frank Baumgartner & Bryan Jones
 - Explains how dramatic changes can occur
 - Mobilization of resources to change the status-quo
- Dissatisfaction with the status-quo fuels mobilization
 - What causes dissatisfaction & mobilization?
 - Changing policy images and redefinition of the issue by new information
 - Example: Evaluation of national budgets

Aydan Bebek Example (Punctuated Equilibrium Model)

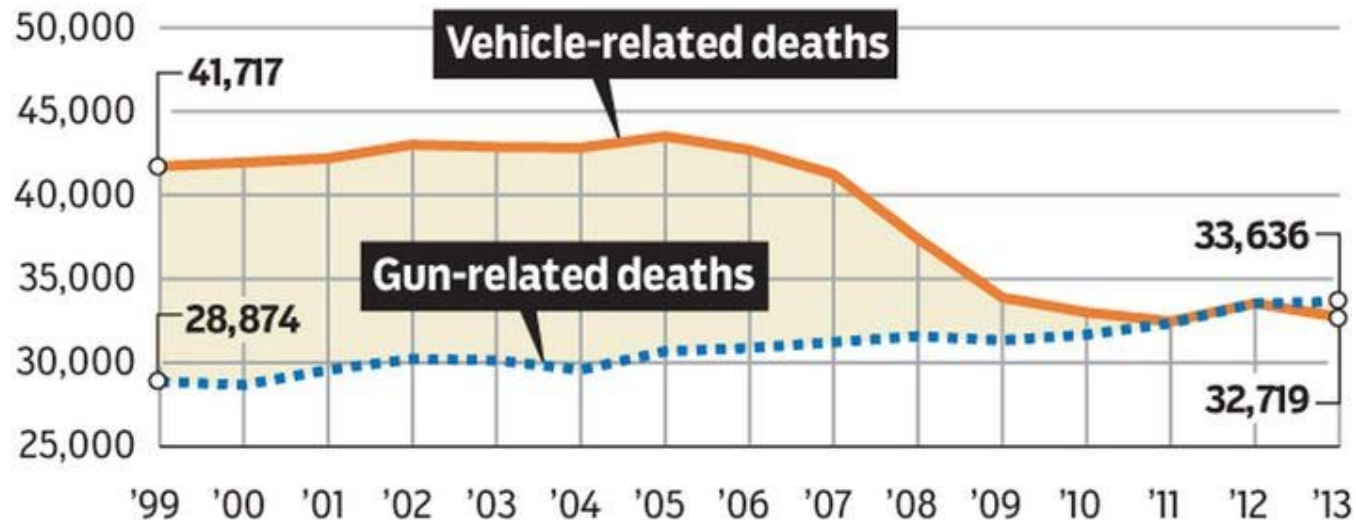


- What caused **dissatisfaction** with the status-quo in emigration policies that **fueled mobilization**?
 - Changing policy images
 - Redefinition of the issue by new information

Gun Control Example: New Information

Gun and vehicle deaths

While deaths in firearm- and vehicle-related incidents were roughly equal in 2013, the trend for each differs. Vehicle-related deaths in the United States have steadily fallen over the past decade, while deaths caused by guns are increasing.



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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6: Punctuated Equilibrium Model

STRENGTHS

- Useful extension of classic incrementalism

WEAKNESSES

- Does not answer what happens after policy adoption.

General Evaluation: Stages of the Policy Process & Theories (T & K 2004: 95)

Theories & Models	Stages of Policy Process						
	PRE DECISION PHASE			DECISION PHASE		POST DECISION PHASE	
	Problem Identification	Agenda Setting	Policy Formation	Policy Adoption	Policy Implementation	Policy Evaluation	Termination or Change
Stages-Heuristic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rational Choice Approach		*	*	*			*
Multiple Streams Model	*	*	*	*			
Incremental Approach	*	*	*	*	*		*
Punctuated Equilibrium Model	*	*	*	*			
Advocacy Coalition Framework	*	*	*	*	*		*

Conclusions: Theories of the Policy Process

- There is **no one «perfect» theory** to explain the PP process.
- **All approaches are useful** in understanding different parts and/or actors of the process.
- The **stages approach** seems to be the **most comprehensive** and widely used.
 - It will be used in later chapters/weeks in this class.