

European Union Public Policy

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 5

**Policy formulation 1: the policy
communities and policy
networks models**

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

Additional source:

Michalowitz, I. (2007) 'What determines influence? Assessing conditions for decision-making influence of interest groups in the E.U.', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14:1, pp.132-151.

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

1. Policy communities model;
2. Policy networks model.

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE CONTEXT

- a) The development of the E.U. public policy process is still at a *relatively* early stage;
- b) As a result, attempts to develop theoretical models describing that process will not capture ‘whole picture’ – only a few aspects of it.

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

- Models allow us to look at the ‘bigger picture’ (to identify the wider factors influencing policy formulation)
- not just the ‘interests’ of individuals and groups
 - BUT*** also to see the role of:
 - *ideas*;
 - *knowledge*;
 - *expertise*.

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

- Policy communities model and Policy networks model both focus on sets of '*actors*' (groups and individuals) who are seen as '*stakeholders*' in the policy process.
- These '*actors*'/'*stakeholders*' are influenced in their policy formulation preferences by 'ideas', 'knowledge' and their 'private interests'

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

- E.U. public policy process not a '*straight-line journey*'
 - it is a *multi-level, multi-arena 'game'*.
 - lots of processes and factors at work at different institutional and non-institutional levels, and at differing periods in time

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY COMMUNITIES MODEL

- ‘community’ = ‘joint ownership of goods, identity of character, fellowship ... (of interest)
- groups and individuals sharing a common interest – a common policy interest

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY COMMUNITIES MODEL

- Describes long-term and stable relationships (in discussing and developing policy) between groups and institutions in particular policy sectors (i.e. education, health).
- These groups and representatives are fairly tightly defined in their interests

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY COMMUNITIES MODEL

- So, it means '*stakeholders*' in particular policy areas discussing, debating and developing policy arguments and policies relevant to them and their interests
- It suggests a *more consensual style* of policy formulation overall

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY NETWORKS MODEL

- policy networks '*much more loosely integrated*' than policy communities.
- A (public) policy network is a collection/cluster of groups, institutions, individuals that share a common (public) policy area interest;
- share a common (public) policy area issue;
- share a common knowledge of that issue and (public) policy area

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY NETWORKS MODEL

- Members of policy networks share a common understanding of how knowledge is gained about a (public) policy area
 - and of how problems are identified in that area and in formulating a policy

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY NETWORKS MODEL

- Public policy networks are basically groups of various representative bodies and agencies in particular public and social sectors of society (and can also include individual experts/academics in the particular public policy area)

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY NETWORKS MODEL

For example:

- a) the education sector
 - university representative bodies;
 - lecturers' trade unions and representative bodies;
 - student representative bodies;
 - teachers' unions
 - parents' associations (at schools) and representative bodies;
 - and increasingly now, employers representative bodies
 - education experts

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

THE POLICY NETWORKS MODEL

For example:

b) the health and social security sectors

- medical associations;
- doctors' associations and representative bodies;
- hospital management bodies;
- nurses and health workers' trade unions and representative bodies;
- social services agencies;
- social services workers' trade unions and representative bodies;
- social security workers' trade unions and representative bodies;
- health and social security experts and academics
- and increasingly, food company representative bodies,
pharmaceutical industry representatives

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

- Take policy networks framework, examine each network/policy area, and ask a series of research questions:
 1. Who has an interest in this public policy problem?
 2. How are they mobilised and organised?
 3. What is the timing and nature of their involvement in the public policy process?
 4. How are their preferences determined?

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

5. Are those preferences really fixed (or fluid)?
6. Do the groups and agencies in the policy network develop stable relationships with each other?
7. Who is likely to gain from different policy outcomes?
8. Who is likely to lose from different policy outcomes?

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

INTERACTION BETWEEN:

STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

(Institution

- E.U. Commission)

(stakeholders groups

in policy networks)

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

- E.U. Commission attempts to ensure that relationship between ‘stakeholders’ groups and agencies in policy networks is based on:
 1. recognition of each other as legitimate ‘stakeholders’ in the policy area/issue;

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

2. Recognition between
‘stakeholders’ groups and agencies
that collaboration is the best means
of gaining mutual advantage and
acceptable outcome in policy
formulation

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 5

3. (ensure) that the ‘stakeholders’ groups and agencies desire negotiated and stable policy environments in preference to continued conflict, instability and uncertainty