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Public policy concepts for public policies study

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content

- Why should we study public policy?
- What is public policy?
- Why is so difficult to find consensus?
- How to understand public policy?

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Warm up

- Is Public Policy about opinions or about facts?
- Each policy has pros and cons
  - Do you agree?

- Example: alcohol prohibition
  - Yes… why…
  - No… why..

Why do we study public policy?

– We want to know why particular decisions are made
  – Why did governments privatize their industries?
  – Why so many governments introduced major tobacco control policies?
– We study PP because we recognize that there are many different answers
– We can focus on
  – Individual policymakers
  – Institutions
  – Socio-economic context
  – Identify powerful groups
– ….. There is no single unifying theory in public policy

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Why should anyone be interested in public policy?

– Regardless of your will…public policy outcomes always affect your life

Will be health care provided for free?

What is a crime and when can you be arrested?

What taxes do you have to pay?

Can you drink beer in public park?

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Why should economist study a public policy?

- Any political decision has an economic impact
    - To build something, to destroy something, to change something… = investment expenditure
    - To convince somebody, to inform,…. = expenditure on marketing/communication tools
    - To support somebody, to solve some problem = non-investment expenditure
- Any policy failure means loss of resources (financial, human, time…)
- Any change in currently implemented policy induces new costs

- As economists we know that resources are scarce

- Labour, land, financial capital… time
- Financial resources (from the state point of view) may be gather though taxes or debts (ignore printing of money….inflation or other monetary reform)
- Modern social states are in debts and with high taxes…

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What can we tell about public policy?

There are

– Many definitions

– Many approaches to study

– Many theories –positive and normative

– Many practical implications

  – Many contradictory implication

– Many questions

– Why? Because public policy is real

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Example of definitions

– Public Policy – the sum total of government action, from signals of intent to the final outcomes (Cairney, p.5)

– Anything a government chooses to do or not to do (Dye – quot. acc. Howlett, Ramesh p.5)

– Policy is a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actor concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specific situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve (Jenkins – quot. acc. Howlett, Ramesh p.6)

What about you and public policy?

– Who has been talking about policy/politics today?

– What is the topic of the day in..
  – World
  – Your country…

– …add some economic consequences of previously mentioned issues
  – … soon you realize that a single aim can be achieved through different policy tools (with different costs)…. i.e. Theory of instrument choice

– Q: Policy versus politics – what is the difference?

Public policy as science

…provide explanations, find answers, give advice

Lasswell argued that the science of policy had three distinct characteristics that set it apart

from other disciplines: **it would/should be:**

- **multi-disciplinary**
- **problem solving**
- **normative**

Disciplines and topics related to public policy

Sociology	understanding society as a whole, class social structure, social status, social problems, social interests, social exclusion
Economics	instrumental rationality, institutional economics, cost-benefit analysis, political economics, economic policy
Political science	political processes, political institutions and actors
Public administration	role of bureaucracy in shaping policy and in decision implementation
Jurisprudence	law as normative and regulatory framework
Control theory	decision-making processes and decision realisation
Philosophy	logic, values and ethics, theory of justice

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Roots of public policy - Values

– Why is so difficult to find a consensus about government policies?
  – We do not share the same values or we perceive their importance differently
– **Freedom** versus **equal opportunities** (equality)
  – What is more important?
    For a single person x **for society**?
  – Is it ok to cut a little peace of freedom to enable "huge" equal opportunities?
  – Is it ok to slightly reduce equal opportunities to create a free society, to respect a person's free will?
– Is it possible to achieve them both?
  – YES – egalitarians
  – NO – liberals, libertarians

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Freedom versus equal opportunities

- How it works?
- The way into slavery or the way to better society?
- Is there any "optimum"?

Freedom

Equal opportunities

Examples

– Should state:
  – Provide a free basic education?
      Shoud it be obligatory?
  – Provide a free basic health care?
  – Set a speed limits on motorways?
  – Insist on involuntary vaccination against dangerous diseases? (e.g. Infantile paralysis)
  – Ban smoking in restaurants?
  – Set a nutrition limits of fat and sugar in your food?
  – Check your private communication to find a terrorist?
  – Decide who deserves a subsidies and who not?
  – Subsidize NGOs?
  – Support young families?
  – Ban some books and movies?
  – ………

  – The answer to each of these questions is also an answer to freedom x equality dispute

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Examples of other values

– Human rights
  – Civil
  – Political
  – Social
  – Cultural
– Quality of life and sustainability

– Justice
– Moral and ethical values

GROUP WORK - Economists and values

– Economic barriers may force us (government) to make a decision which is unethical or unfair

– Suggest a situation where state should do something (according ethics or moral values) but a lack of resources makes an obstacle

– Example? GROUP WORK 10min

– … see one of possible solution in appendix
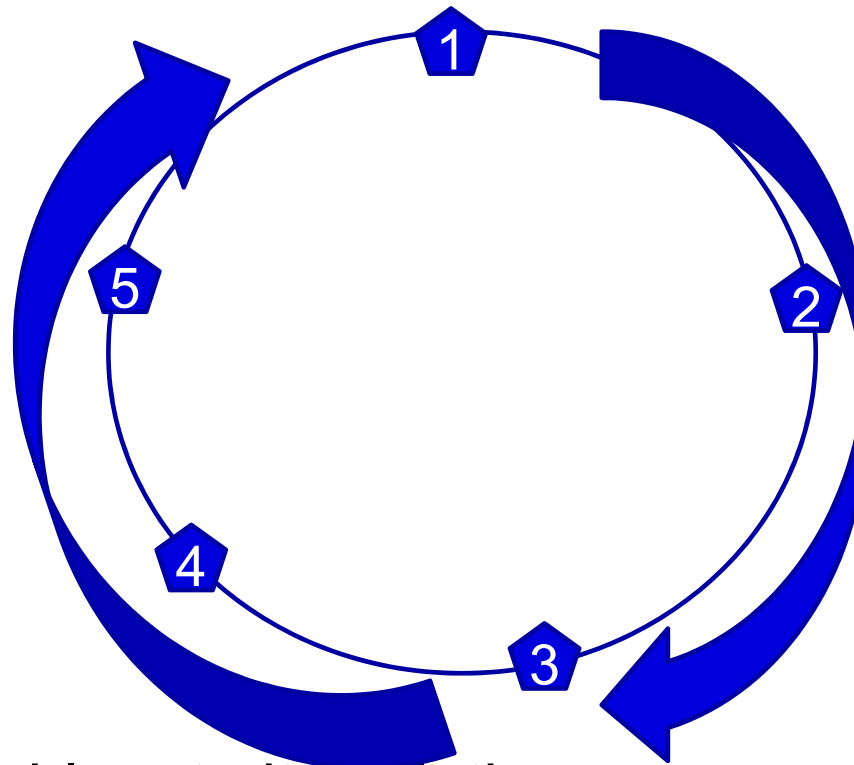
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Two main ways to manage the study of policy making

– The concept of policy cycle / phase models
– The comprehensive rationality in which policymaker has a perfect ability to produce, research and introduce his/her preferences

– To provide basic explanation we use
  – Concept of policy cycle / phase models
  – Policy network / networking models, interest groups theory

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The concept of the policy cycle / phase models

1. Initiation
2. Estimation
3. Selection
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

From recognition of problem to its solution

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Stages of applied problem-solving and stages in policy cycle

Stages in applied problem-solving

1. problem recognition

2. proposal of solution

3. choice of solution

4. putting solution into effect

5. monitoring outcomes

Stages in policy cycle

1. agenda-setting

2. policy design

3. decision-making

4. policy implementation

5. policy evaluation

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The policy network / networking models, interest groups theory

– Why some problems are not solved? Why policy aims are not fulfilled?

– … because the role actors' interest

– … because policymakers (elected) may be replaced
  – Who is in charge today who will be tomorrow?

– … therefore it is more important to put a focus on actors (interest groups)

– These theories examine how are networks among actors established, how it works, how powerful are these groups ...

– Explain past and predict a future through analysis of networks and interest

Summary

- Either you will or not a public policy is a part of your life
- There is no single unifying or all explaining theory in Public Policy
- There is a value dispute
- There is no clear optimal point
- There are a lot of analytical methods

- ….but we should study it ☺

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Literature

- Optional
    - Howlett, Ramesh – Studying Public Policy. Policy cycles and policy subsystems
        - Chapter 1
    - Cairney – Understanding Public Policy. Theories and Issues
        - Chapter 1,2
- Alternative
    - Study text uploaded in study materials

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– Thank you for your attention

Example - Cancer treatment

– Sometimes is a chance to live too small and cost for treatment too high…that someone has to make a decision to stop a treatment (and switch a treatment to a paliative care).

Chance to live, cost of treatment

Costs of treatment

Economic barrier

Chance to live

Stadium of illness, time