

Policy Process Frameworks (Re)Considered

Policy Process Frameworks

Understanding Agenda Setting and Policy Change

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POSC 315: Introduction to Public Policy

Week 3 - Lecture 3.2

Recap and Focus

- Review of Actor Interactions and Group Theories
- Introduction to Agenda Setting and Policy Change Dynamics

Three Key Frameworks in Policy Change

1. Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)

- Coalitions formed around shared beliefs and interests
- Compete to shape policy outcomes
- Policy change driven by coalition learning and external events

Example: Environmental groups influencing climate policy.

2. Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET)

- Long periods of stability punctuated by sudden, intense changes
- Role of policy image and venue shopping
- External shocks can disrupt the equilibrium

Example: Major policy changes following economic crises.

3. Multiple Streams Approach

- Problem, Policy, and Politics streams
- Policy windows: opportunities for change
- Role of policy entrepreneurs in advancing issues

Example: Healthcare reform efforts during political shifts.

Incrementalism and Its Critique

Incrementalism and Bounded Rationality

- Explains gradual policy changes and stability
- Actors operate under bounded rationality
- Policy changes through successive limited comparisons

Critique of Incrementalism

- Inadequate for explaining radical policy shifts
- Assumes a preference for small, incremental changes
- May overlook opportunities for significant reforms
- Doesn't stand up to a "Moonshot" challenge

Complexity of the Policy Process

- Interplay of multiple actors and institutions
- Difficulties in identifying clear causal relationships
- Importance of using multiple frameworks for comprehensive understanding

Discussion: How do various frameworks help in understanding complex policy environments?

Power Dynamics in Policy

- Three faces of power: Coercive, Blocking, Quiescence
- How these faces affect agenda-setting and policy change
- Examples of each face in action

Activity: Discuss student term paper policy topic issues and identify which of the the three faces of power were at play.

Critical Review of Frameworks

- Insights and limitations of each framework
- Complementary nature of different approaches
- Importance of a multifaceted view of policymaking

Takeaway: No single framework can fully capture the complexity of the policy process.

Wrap-Up and Discussion

Which framework do you find most compelling for understanding recent policy changes? Why?

Next Steps: Apply these frameworks to your term paper topics. We'll review proposals next week.

Questions?

Any final questions or thoughts?

Reminder

Term Paper Proposals are due on Saturday!