

# POLI 359

# Public Policy Making

## Session 10-Policy Change

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# What is Policy Change?

- Policy change refers to adjustments whether minor or major to policies already in place in existing policy fields
- Policy change can be categorized into two groups:
  - Normal policy change
  - Atypical policy change
- The normal change involves relatively minor tinkering with policies and programs already in existing policy regimes
- Atypical change involves shifts in basic sets of policy ideas.

# Policy Processes that Inhibit Change

- Agenda denial
- Closed networks
- Negative decisions
- Limited resources
- Non-learning



# Policy Processes that Inhibit Change

- Agenda denial results in non-decisions
- Non-decisions culminate in policy stability
- Non-decision results in policy stability because:
- It creates situations in which public policy debates promote the status quo
- This is because alternatives are simply not considered. Examples of such instances include:
  - Failure to deal with issues important to the urban poor
  - Failure to deal with women issues

# Policy Processes that Inhibit Change

- Closed networks also result in policy stability because all sub-systems tend to create monopolies.
- In these monopolies the interpretation and general approach to a subject is more or less fixed.
- Existing members prevent new members from entering the network.
- Thus new members do not participate in debates and discussions
- This occur ||heÿ go|’t refuse to appoint prominent critics to advisory boards, there no funding for hearings, etc.

# Policy Paradigm

- The term policy paradigm is closely related to the traditional philosophical notions of ideologies, discourses or frames.
- It captures the idea that the established beliefs, values, and attitudes behind understandings of public problems and notions of the feasibility of the proposed solutions are significant determinants of policy content.
- Policy paradigms are only one of a number of distinct idea sets that go into public policy making.
- Others are program ideas, symbolic frames, sentiments.

# Policy Paradigm ; Do You'd?

- Symbolic frames and public sentiments tend to affect perception of the legitimacy or correctness of certain courses of action.
- Policy paradigm in contrast represents a set of cognitive background assumptions that constrain action.
- It does this by limiting the range of alternatives that policy making elites are likely to perceive as useful and worth considering.
- Program ideas are the selection of specific solutions from among the set designed as acceptable by a paradigm.

# Policy Paradigm ; Do-Yet's d?

- Individuals in a policy subsystem hold deep structure of basic values and beliefs.
- These values inhibit anything but marginal changes to program ideas and policy content.
- The deep structure generates a strong inertia to:
  - Prevent the system from generating alternatives outside its boundaries
  - Pull any deviation that do occur back into line
- According this logic, the deep structure must first be dismantled.



# Policy Paradigm ; Do You Know?

- The dismantling leaves the system temporarily disorganized.
- This is necessary for any fundamental change to be accomplished.
- A policy paradigm does inform and holds in place a set of ideas held by relevant subsystem members.
- This subsystem is a doctrine or school of thought such as Keynesianism or monetarism in the case of economic policy.
- These long-term dominant ideas shape policy content.

# Policy Style

- Policy style refers to the interaction between:
  - The government's approach to problem solving
  - The relationship between government and other actors in the policy process
- The term policy style has been used by actors in the policy process tended to take on, over a period of time, a distinctive style which affects...policy decisions, i.e. they develop tradition and history which constrains and refines their actions and outcomes (Simmons et al, 1974: 461).

# Political Systems; Do They Matter?

- The first such studies argued that public policy outcomes varied according to the nature of the political system found in each country (Peters et al, 1978).
- Empirical evidence of substantial differences in patterns of outcomes was discovered in empirical test of this hypothesis.
- Nevertheless, it was soon suggested that the concept could be more fruitfully applied not to outcomes but to the policy process that obtained in a country.

# Policy Style ; Doÿt'd?

- Each country or jurisdiction was said to have its own pattern of policy making.
- This pattern characterized its policy processes and affected the policies resulting from it.
- Several studies developed the concept of a national policy style and applied it to the policy making in various nations.
- However, it was soon found that national generalizations were difficult to make.
- Instead it found the concept more accurately described the realities of meso or sectoral level policy making.

# Public Policy ; Do You Know?

- Richardson et al (1982: 13) who developed the concept of public policy distinguished between  
- authoritative/authoritative as the two general approaches to problem solving by government
- They also said the relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors can be divided into two:
  - Consensus
  - Imposition
- According to this model for example, the German policy style is anticipatory and based on consensus.

# Policy Style ; Do You?

- While the British style was reactive, though also based on consensus
- The French policy style on the other hand, was anticipatory, but effected through imposition rather than consensus
- In contrast, the Dutch policy style was said to be both reactive and impositional
- Similarly, the Ghanaian policy style would be both reactive and impositional
- Some work on policy style still focuses at the national level.

# Public Administration ; Do it' d?

- For example, Knill (1999) considers the existence of ratio administrativa stiles. He suggests these are of critical importance in:
  - Understanding the development and reform of systems of public administration.
  - The role these systems play in the public policy process
- While useful, however, other scholars found that:
  - Few governments were consistently active or reactive.
  - They also found that government do not always work through either consensus or imposition.

# Policy Styles ; Don't d

- TheLJ didn't thiŶk of poliĐLJ stLJles as edŶistiŶg at the national level.
- Rather they argued that a focus on the sectoral level would be more accurate and more productive.
- Yet describing the policy styles at the sectoral level is more difficult since policy sectors are far more numerous.
- One way to conceptualize such sectoral styles is to draw on the insights into the work of each stage of the policy cycle.



# Policy Style ; Doÿt'd?

- The stages model allows for the identification of a small number of variables responsible for typical processes found at each stage of the cycle
- Combining the styles found at each stage thus generates a useful description of the overall policy style found in a sector
- At the agenda setting stage two critical factors are:
  - The level and extent of public participation in an issue
  - The response and pre-response of the state in directing, mediating and accommodating this activity.

# Policy Style ; Do You?

- The resulting agenda setting styles were outside initiation, mobilization, inside initiation, and consolidation
- Policy formulation styles are also significantly affected by the kinds of actors interacting to develop and refine policy options for government
- At the agenda setting stage the public is often actively involved
- At the policy formulation stage, however, participants are

restricted to:

-Those who have an opinion on a subject

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# Policy Stale ;DoYt'd?

- Those who have some minimal level of expertise in it
- In this view, the likely results of policy formulation are contingent on:
  - The nature and configuration of the interest networks
  - The discourse coalitions that comprise a sectoral policy subsystem:
- Together these two factors affect the willingness and ability to propose and accommodate new policy ideas and actors

# Policy Style ;DoYt'd?

The four policy formulation styles identified by Howlett and Ramesh (2003) are:

- Policy tinkering, in which closed subsystems would consider only options involving instrument components
- Policy experimentation, in which resistant subsystems would also consider changes in instrument types
- Program reform, in which contested subsystems would also review changes in program specifications
- Policy renewal, in which open subsystems would also consider options involving changes in policy goals

# Policy Styles ; Do they differ?

- The decision making stage too is characterized by four different styles
- These different styles are influenced by:
  - The nature of the actors present at this stage
  - The nature of the time, information, and resource constraints under which actors operate
  - The complexity of the policy subsystem involved in and affected by the decision
  - The severity of the constraints under which decision makers are operating

# Political Style ; Do You?

- The four decision making styles identified by Howlett and Ramesh (2003) are:
  - Incremental
  - Optimizing adjustment
  - Satisficing
  - Rational searches

# Policy Implementation: Do They?

- At the implementation a combination of instruments are used to put policy into effect.
- Some scholars argue that many nations and sectors combined various kinds of instruments into more or less coherent implementation styles (Hawkins and Thomas, 1989; Kagan and Axelrad, 1997).
- These and other studies emphasized the degree to which choices of instruments were affected by:
  - The nature of the policy targets
  - The resources governments devote to implementation

# Policy Implementation Styles

- Four basic implementation styles have been identified by Howlett and Ramesh (2003):
  - Institutionalized voluntarism
  - Representative legislation
  - Directed subsidization
  - Public provision with oversight



# Policy Stages ; Do they matter?

- The evaluation stage suggests that what is significant is:
- Not so much the ultimate success of policy outcomes
- Not so much the ultimate failure of policy outcomes
- But rather whether or not policy actors and the organizations and institutions they represent can:
  - Learn from the formal evaluation of policies in which they are engaged
  - Learn from the informal evaluation of policies in which they are engaged.

# PoliĐLJ StLJle ;ĐoŶt'd

- Factors affecting the propensity to learn are:
  - The absorptive capacity of government
  - The kind of boundary-spinning links that exist between governments and their publics
- The basic evaluation styles identified by Howlett and Ramesh (2003) are:
  - Social learning
  - Limited learning
  - Poor learning
  - Non-learning

# Policy Style ;ĐoŶt'd?

- At each stage a large number of potential policy styles can:
  - Result from the combination of the possible styles found at each stage
- The type of style that emerges is affected by:
  - The nature of the policy subsystem
  - Various aspects of the capacity of the administrative system involved
- Whatever styles exist is likely to be relatively long-lasting

# PoliĐLJ StLJle ;ĐoŶt'd

- Thus, the concept of a sectoral policy style is useful in:
  - Helping to describe typical policy processes.
  - Capturing an important aspect of policy dynamics
- These dynamics are the relatively enduring nature of these arrangements.

# Policy Regime

- The combination of policy paradigms with policy styles into a single construct is referred to as a policy regime.
- The policy regime is different from, and should not be confused with:
  - Political regime
  - International regime
  - Implementation regime
  - Regime of accumulation
- The idea of a policy regime helps to capture the more or less permanent nature of both policy process and content.

# Policy Regime ;ĐoŶt'd

- The term policy regime attempts to capture how:
  - Policy instruments
  - Policy actors
  - Policy ideas
- Tend to congeal into relatively long-term, institutionalized patterns of policy interaction.
- These patterns and interaction combine to keep policy contents and processes more or less constant in each sector.

# PoliĐLJ Regiŵe ;ĐoŶt'd

- Specific institutional arrangements are adopted by societies in the pursuit of work and welfare.
- A given organization of state-economy relations is associated with a particular social policy logic (Rein et al, 1987).
- Some scholars argued that such regimes were linked to:
  - Larger national patterns of state-economic relations
  - The organization of state and market-based institutions.

# Policy Regime ;ĐoŸt'd

- Harris and Milkis (1989: 25) defined a policy regime as a constellation of:
  - Ideas justifying government activity
  - Institutions that structure policy making
  - A set of policies
- Similarly, Eisner (1994) defined a regime as a:  
Historically specific configuration of policies and institutions which establishes certain broad goals that transcend the problems specific to particular sectors
- Regimes could be found in different policy sectors



# Policy Regime ;ĐoŶt'd

The sectoral regimes include:

- Labour market regime
- Pension regime
- Distribution regime
- Employment regime
- A policy regime can be thought of as combining:
  - A common set of policy ideas (a policy paradigm)
  - A common or typical policy process (a policy style)
- Thus, it is a useful term for describing long term patterns

# Policy Regime ;DoYt'd?

- These long term patterns are found in both the substance and process of public policy making in a particular sector
- The general idea is that sectoral policy making tends to develop in such a way that the same:
  - Actors
  - Institutions
  - Instruments
  - Governing ideas
- Tend to dominate sectoral policy making for extended periods of time

# Policy Regime ; Do It'd

- This arrangement infuses a policy sector with:
  - A consistent content
  - A set of typical policy processes or procedures
- Understanding how:
  - styles, paradigms and regimes form
  - they are maintained
  - they change
- Therefore is an important aspect of the study of public policy.

# Policy Feedback

- Policy feedback refers to information stakeholders of the policy making process return to the policy environment regarding how policy has behaved on the ground.
- New policies create new policies (Schattschneider, 1935).
- That is, the events and occurrences in a policy making process tend to feedback into the policy making environment.
- This alters important aspects of that environment.
- The aspects of the environment it alters include:
  - Institutional rules and operations

# Policy Feedback ;DoYt'd?

- The distribution of wealth and power in society
- The nature of the ideas and interests relevant to policies and programs
- This feedback process can easily affect:
  - The distribution and interpretation of policy problems
  - Assessments of the feasibility of potential solutions
  - Judgment of the nature of, and responses from, target groups
- These factors together alter the conditions under which policies are developed and implemented.

# Policy Feedback ; Do It' d?

- Policies can create new spoils for policy actors to argue over
- They can also result in the mobilization or counter-mobilization of actors who feel they have not benefited from an existing policy or program
- Hence, it is not unusual at all, in fact it is very typical, for policy making to reiterate the policy process
- It reiterates the process based on the outcomes of the evaluation stage
- Subsequent rounds of policy making build on earlier ones.

# Policy Feedback ; Do It'd?

- Although dramatic shifts may occur but a more typical pattern is for only fairly minor aspects of earlier policies to be altered.
- This is because the general overall configuration of the major elements of the policy process will not have been altered.
- These elements that will not have changed include subsystem membership and state capacity.
- Typical feedback processes from evaluation underscore and explain the path dependent nature of policy making.

# Policy Termination

- Policy termination means ending a policy or program.
- Policy termination envisions a complete cessation of the policy cycle at a very near point in the future
- Thus, policy termination is different from other policy changes like minor adjustment to existing policies or simply maintaining the status quo.
- Decision makers are usually reluctant to adopt the termination option.
- This is because of the inherent difficulties of arriving at an agreement on what constitutes policy success or failure.



# Policy Termination ; Do it'd?

- Other reasons why policy termination is a rare option are:
  - Existing policies and programs would have established beneficiaries
  - The programs would have become so institutionalized and hence so expensive to end
  - Their cessation would be costly in legal, bureaucratic and political terms
- The literature emphasizes the need to develop political coalitions and circumstances allowing these costs to be overcome.

# Policy Termination ; Do it'd?

- These all underscore the extent to which termination represents, in effect, an effort to overcome:
  - Path dependencies in the policy making process
  - Policy legacies in the policy making process
- Achieving policy termination is very difficult.
- It requires an ideological shift in government and society
- Such shifts allow for uniform judgments of success or failure required for uncontested termination to be made.
- A successful termination in the short run does not guarantee a similar long term result.

# Policy Termination ; Do it'd?

- Thus, if a perception of a problem persists, a termination will feedback into:
  - A reconceptualization of problems
  - A reconceptualization of policy alternatives
- If no other suitable alternative emerges in this deliberation this can result in:
  - The reversal of a termination
  - The reinstatement of a terminated policy or program.