

Global Policy Issues

Political Science 442
North Dakota State University

What is Public Policy?

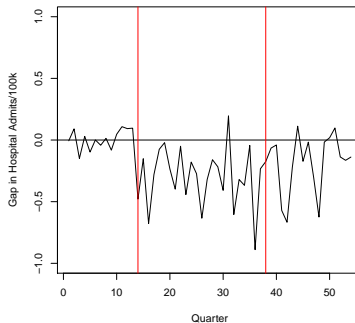
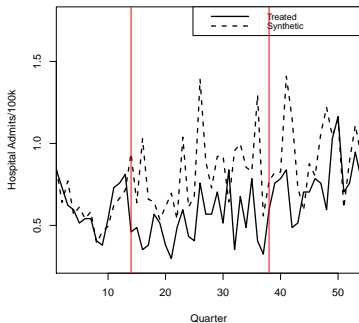
- "...whatever governments choose to do or not to do"
(Dye 1987)
 - Correct but vague
 - How different from political science, welfare economics, public administration?
- "...purposive course of action or inaction undertaken by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern" (Anderson 1994)
 - Goal oriented
 - Actors are public authorities
 - Patterns of action over time
 - Response to public demand (problem, pressure)
 - Positive or negative

Policy Studies

- Trans-disciplinary
- Addressing societal *problems*
- Assessing potential solutions
- Policy/program evaluation
 - Evaluate the consequences of governments' actions
 - Must define outcome(s) of interest
- Policy analysis
 - What should we do? Sometimes normative
 - Ideally relies on program evaluation
 - Must define goals, policy selection criteria (e.g. efficiency)
- Policy process research
 - Why focus on some problems?
 - When does policy change?
 - Who affects policy?
 - Where does policy come from?

Example: Program Evaluation

Question: Did the Los Angeles consent decree work?



Lasswell's (1951): Policy Sciences

- Problem oriented
- Multidisciplinary
- Methodologically “sophisticated”
- Theoretically “sophisticated”
- Value oriented

A Simple Game

Split into pairs and play 3 rounds of the following game:

- 1 Each secretly write “left” or “right” on a piece of paper
- 2 Compare papers and record the values on your score-sheet
- 3 Both players get one point if you wrote down the same word

Now, play 3 rounds of the following game:

- 1 Each secretly write “straight” or “swerve” on a piece of paper
- 2 Compare papers and record the values on your score-sheet
- 3 Award points as follows:
 - Neither player gets points if both swerve
 - If one swerves and the other goes straight:
 - The player who went straight gets 2 points
 - The player who swerved gets 0 points
 - Both players lose a point if both go straight

Institutions

Definition

Social institutions are sets of rules that structure social interactions. —Knight (1992)

Institutions:

- 1 Provide information about how people are expected to act in particular situations
- 2 Can be recognized by those who are members of the relevant group as the rules to which others conform in these situations
- 3 Structure the strategic choices of actors in such a way as to produce equilibrium outcomes

Types of Institutions

- Formal rules
 - Driving laws
 - Property rights
 - Geneva Convention
- Social norms
 - Walking on the right
 - Tit-for-tat
 - World Bank & IMF Heads
- Organizations
 - Congress
 - WTO
 - European Union

Strategic Behavior and Games

- Actors
- Strategies
- Payoffs

Example: Two villagers and a small forest

- Actors: Villager 1 and villager 2
- Strategies: Clear-cut or harvest responsibly
- Payoffs:
 - If either clear-cuts, they end up with no forest and the one who cuts gets some short-term gain
 - If neither clear-cuts, both secure a small, but long-term, income stream

Institutions, Incentives, and Policymaking

- Institutions set expectations about possible strategies
- These expectations set actors' incentive structures
- What's the role of policymakers?
- What's the role of the market?

(Political) Economic Development

Definition

Developed nations have institutions that structure individual incentives to promote the common good

Examples of such institutions?

- Enforceable contracts
- Clear property rights
- Populace-compatible electoral institutions