The Policy Making Process
Heuristic Models for Analysis

Normative Models
• Where should the ultimate source of authority and legitimacy lie in policy making?
• Civic Democracy
• Pluralism
• Administrative Rationalism (Experts)
• Elites
• Market

Analytic Models
Why do policy decisions turn out the way they do?
• Stages Model
  – Rational model
  – Agenda Setting
  – Public Agenda
  – Government Agenda
• Policy Streams Model
  – Problem Framing
• Leadership Model
  – Elite Politics
• Bureaucratic Politics Model
• Organizational Politics Model
  – Organizational culture
  – SOPs
• Interest Group Politics
  – Pluralism
Public Policy as Rational Problem Solving

Rational Model

- The objective situation determines policy
- Neither decision-makers’ personalities nor the institutional context of the decision matter
- Technical understanding of the problem triumphs
  - An equal understanding of the technical merits always produces the same result
- Government action faithfully follows decisions
- Priorities determined by scale and scope of needs of society

Stages Model of Public Policy

1. Consider alternative responses
2. Weigh implications
3. Select the most effective solution
1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act

- Geological disposal of nuclear wastes
- Utility rate payers to fund nuclear storage
  - Surcharge on electricity
  - ~ $16 billion to date
- DOE to take control of nuclear wastes by 1998

1987 Amendments - NWPA

- Single Site Facility
  - Spent fuel and high level waste
  - Texas & Tennessee eliminated from consideration
  - DOE ordered to study Yucca Mt. only
- DOE can only conduct activities at Yucca Mt.
  "...necessary for evaluation or licensing of the site or for NEPA purposes."
- MRS facility cannot be built until HLW repository is licensed
  - Prevent DOE from operating MRS as HLW repository

Implications for How We Analyze Nuclear Waste Decisions

- Agenda Setting
  - Energy Needs & Threat of Terrorist Attacks
- Option Formulation & Decision
  - Permanent On-site storage
  - Geologic Storage
  - Deep Ocean Disposal
  - Space Disposal
  - Material Transformation
  - No Decision
- Implementation
  - Yucca Mt.

2000-present
Unanswered Questions

- Why was this well-identified “problem” allowed to reach crisis proportions before the government acted?
- Why were some technically appealing solutions removed from consideration?
- Why hasn’t the facility been opened?

Broader Questions

- Why do some society-wide issues come to be seen as public problems, while others are not?
  - Why do some pressing public concerns get on the government agenda, while others do not?
  - Why do some serious problems on the government agenda never attract public concern?

Broader Questions

- Why does government policy change when administrations change?
  - Or, when party control of legislatures change?
- Why doesn’t government action always faithfully reflect government decisions?
Politics

Clash of values, interests, and visions

Non-Technical Factors Matter Most

• Who “frames” the problem & who decides matters
  - Roles
  - Personalities
  - Values & Ideologies
• Institutional Setting where decisions are made and implemented matters — as does the distribution of policy making powers
  - Executive
  - Legislature
  - Courts
• Who is interested & how much matters…
  - Stakeholders
  - Interest Groups
  - Public

Agenda Setting & Problem Framing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Framing – the causal story</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accumulating stocks, safety, and security of nuclear wastes are the problem</td>
<td>Build a single site geological storage facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The risks posed by transporting and storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain is the problem</td>
<td>Begin a new set of studies, or, Shut down nuclear power plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Politics and irrational public fear of nuclear energy is the problem</td>
<td>Give power to a technical body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Energy is dangerous</td>
<td>Shut down nuclear power plants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership Politics

• President (Governor) as Single Executive
  – Personality
  – Personal values, beliefs, and interests
• Elite Politics
  • Example: President could order DOE not to work on Yucca Mountain
    – Bush v. Kerry

Bureaucratic Politics

• Decisions are compromise solutions
  – bargaining among key players in a “policy game”
• Individual Personal Beliefs, Values, Interests of players may eclipse substance of the problem
  – Roles matter
    • Partisan politics
  • Example: Changes in Senate control
    – Deal with Sen. Reid of Nevada to change party control of the Senate

Interest Group Politics

• Decisions are compromise solutions among competing interests
  – Version 1: Pluralism
• Decisions are the product of Special Interest Manipulation
  – Version 2: Special Interests (corruption)
    • Control money
    • Control information
Why Don’t Government Actions Always Faithfully Reflect Government Decisions

Implementation

Organizational Politics

• Problem Framing reflects Organizational Bias
  – DOE v EPA
• Implementation decisions are made remote from high policy decisions → slippage
• Organizational Culture
  – Sense of mission
  – Sense of self
  – Organizational View of “problem” & appropriate solutions
• SOPs
  – “We” have our way of doing things
• Example: Congress prohibits MRS work prior to HLW facility

Unanswered Questions

• What explains the specific timing by which a problem moves from “agenda” to decision and, ultimately, implementation?
  – Why now? Why not sooner? Or, later?
What explains the timing of policy decisions?

Why then? Why not some other time?

Policy Streams Model of Agenda Setting

- Problem Stream
- Politics Stream
- Policy (Solution) Stream

Convergence Window

Policy Streams Model

- Accounts for timing & for specific solution
- Problems do not get on the government agenda until
  - Politics legitimizes the “problem” as a public problem (i.e., it is useful)
  - A tractable solution is available, and
  - Politics finds the solution acceptable
- Problem Framing ↔ Politics + Problem + Solution
  - What’s the right causal story?
  - “problems” defined in terms of preferred solution
Nuclear Waste Problem
1957-1980
Nuclear Waste Accumulating on site
Problem Stream

Politics Stream
No preferred solution
Policy Stream

Convergence Window

September 27, 2004
11:00 AM
Public Policy 28

Nuclear Waste Policy Act 1982
1982
Nuclear Waste Accumulating
Problem Stream

Politics Stream
Nuclear Industry damaged
Nuclear safety

Policy Stream
3-mile Island
Republican
Control
Collapse of nuclear industry

Bury Waste at Central Site

Convergence Window

September 27, 2004
11:00 AM
Public Policy 29

Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendments 1987
1986-2001
Nuclear Waste Accumulating
Problem Stream

Politics Stream
Opposition by states on “list”
Dials progress; funds for WIPP Implementation removed
Chernobyl nuclear accident
Amendments limiting project to Nevada restored funding

Policy Stream
Bury Waste at Central Site

Convergence Window

September 27, 2004
11:00 AM
Public Policy 30
Nuclear Waste at Yucca Flats

2001
- Nuclear Waste Accumulating

2002
- Public Reaction to 9/11
- New Interest in Nuclear Energy
- Republican regain Senate control

Convergence Window
- Nuclear Safety & Security

Bury Waste at Central Site