

Public Policy (POL2023)

Module Convenor

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Lectures: Tuesdays, 11am-1pm (but typically shorter)
Seminars: Thursdays, 9-11am (only one hour per student)

Office hours: TBC

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Module Description

This module aims to introduce students to the process of public decision-making in modern democracies, and explains how decision-makers formulate and implement public decisions that have consequences for the everyday lives of citizens. The module is broadly structured according to what can be conceptualized as stages of the policy process. We begin with a focus on the preferences of voters, and then move on to consider the actions of politicians, bureaucrats, and judges. From there, we consider how policy-making in one jurisdiction or at one point in time may have political and policy consequences beyond its initial intent. Finally, we return to the question of where the preferences of voters actually come from by considering the importance of the media in forming political and policy attitudes.

On successful completion of this module students should have an understanding of:

- the basic features of the public policy process in ‘developed democracies’;
- the interplay between the different actors in the policy process;
- how political factors relate to the policy process;
- how to critically read and evaluate social scientific arguments and evidence.

Lectures and Seminars

Each week there will be an introductory lecture followed by a seminar. Both will last about one hour. The lectures will introduce students to many of the ideas and issues relating to the various topics. The seminars will provide a forum for more focussed discussion. In each seminar, you should expect to be ready to discuss all of the required readings. You are also very welcome to raise issues from the further readings.

Assessments and Deadlines

The course is assessed on the basis of a ‘policy brief’ assignment and a summer exam, where each counts for 50% of the overall mark. More details about the exam will be provided in due course — although you can get a sense of what to expect by visiting <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/digital-collections/collections/exam> and searching for ‘POLS6023’ (which is the code for this module for the past two years).

The Policy Brief Assignment

For this assignment, please follow these basic steps:

1. Select a policy reform that you would wish to propose for a particular country.
 - It should be something specific, e.g. a rise in the minimum wage, a drop in corporation tax, greater restrictions in immigration, co-payments in the NHS, a switch to a unicameral parliament, etc. Smaller, more specialist reforms may be easier to work with.
2. **Write an 800 word (strict limit!) paper/article advocating for this policy reform.**
 - Write appropriately for your chosen audience (i.e. so probably without highly complex language, citations, and footnotes, etc). However, be sure to write as a social scientist - i.e. backed by theory and evidence - not as someone simply spouting prejudices and unsubstantiated claims.
 - You have very limited words, so be sure to write concisely and convincingly.
3. **Write a 1,200 word (strict limit!) scholarly paper that provides the following two things.** I would expect the word balance to be around 800 words for part a) and 400 words for part b), but these aren’t hard limits.
 - (a) A clear indication of where, or by whom, you would wish to see your first paper/article published/disseminated, and why you think this choice would maximize the likelihood of making your policy reform happen. You should relate the latter explanation to theories of the policy making process that we study during the module.
 - Example outlets could be national broadsheets, national tabloids, think tanks, a trade publications, blogs, etc. The more specific you are about this, together with an explanation of this choice, the better.
 - (b) A scholarly discussion of the theoretical and empirical claims that you develop/use in your first paper/article. Cite the literature that you are using and, to the extent that there are conflicting findings in the literature, explain why you have sided one way or another on it for the purposes of the first paper/article.
4. The deadline for the assignment is **Monday 9th January 2017, 2pm.**

You will receive a combined mark for the two pieces of work, based on a 40/60 split between the two papers — i.e. reflecting the balance of the word limits.

I will mark the first paper on the extent to which it is likely to be successful at convincing the audience you have chosen to target of its position. This will include clarity, style, sophistication, rhetoric and the like.

I will mark the second paper on the basis of how well it makes use of the theoretical and empirical content of the module with respect to explaining policy choice, as well as how convincingly you demonstrate that there is a scholarly case for the policy reform that you are proposing. As per the suggested word count balance for this second paper, there will be considerably more weight placed on the discussion relating the first paper to theories of the policy process.

Please note that this module is involved in a pilot system of online grading through the turnitin.com service. You should refer to the module Moodle page and in-class direction for further information. Other Political Science modules that you may be taking will almost certainly operate under the previous ('offline') system.

Reading for the Module

The list that follows is organised by lecture topic. You are not expected to read everything on the list, but you should be reading each week and you should come prepared to discuss what you have read with others in the class. To prepare for the class you should at least read the items listed in the 'required' readings. For many of the weeks/topics, I have added an extra 'popular readings' section for shorter, less academic, illustrations of some of the core points that arise from the required readings. I very much recommend that you look at these before class, as well. Of course, for your essay and exam preparation, you should pursue the 'further readings' for the respective topics, as well.

There are many general textbook treatments that provide an introduction to the study of public policy. Three that you may find useful to browse are:

- Parsons, Wayne (1995). *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*. Edward Elgar
- John, Peter (2012). *Analyzing Public Policy*. 2nd ed. Abingdon, UK: Routledge
- Sabatier, Paul A., ed. (2007). *Theories of the Policy Process*. 3rd ed. Westview Press.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/abvowfo>

The text by the Department's own Peter John (2012) is, of course, highly recommended. Sabatier (2007) is an edited volume that has chapters providing overviews of various approaches to studying public policy from leading advocates of those approaches.

- The reading list (below) includes full bibliographic references to each article, chapter, book, or other reading. As such, you should be able to use the library services to find them yourself.
- Most of the reading is available in the UCL library, although you may find only limited copies. The Senate House and LSE libraries may also be of use to you.
- Where available, I have also included the URL based on the DOI (standing for Digital Object Identifier) of the reading. This will link you to *one* place where the reading is published online.
- The DOI links will only provide you with access when you are connected to the UCL network. If you are off-campus, you should use the Library's off-campus facility by visiting <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources>.
- Note, however, that the DOI link may *not* be the place through which the UCL subscription provides access. (This is not in my control.) If this occurs, you will often find that <http://www.jstor.org/> will work for you, subject to you being on-campus or having explicitly signed-in to the Library's off-campus service.
- Again, where available, I have also tried to provide URLs for readings that are not constrained by off-campus and/or login restrictions. This is often via the web sites of the authors of the readings and will tend to be the easiest way of retrieving items.
- Some readings may be available as e-books via the UCL library. These are marked with the * symbol in the reading list.
- Some readings may only be available in hard copy. In these cases, I will endeavour to make them available as scanned PDFs via the module's Moodle site found via <http://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/>. These are marked with the ➡ symbol in the reading list.

- Some of the readings listed below are a little more challenging. I have marked these with the * symbol. They may be helpful to you for increasing your understanding of the intuition of arguments, but do not worry about difficulties that you may have understanding mathematical or statistical material in these papers.
- Some of the ‘readings’ may actually be podcasts or other types of audio or video. I have marked these with the “” symbol.

One potential downside to electronic journals is that they do not foster the browsing around issues and volumes that comes with the hard copies of journals. I very much encourage you to do this kind of browsing — via web sites or hard copies, as you prefer. This is likely to be particularly helpful when preparing for essays.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to the following for their help in preparing this course: Peter John, Lucas Leemann, and Albert Weale.

1 Introductions and “Streams”

This first week is split into two halves. The first — which is the focus of the lecture — provides an accessible overview of the module as a whole in terms of its aims and content. The second half — which is the focus of the seminars — is concerned with a discussion of one of the most prominent theories of public policy in the literature: the so-called “three streams” model proposed by Kingdon. The further readings are aimed at this second half, while the required readings provide more of mixture of introductory/general material.

Required Readings

- Sabatier, Paul A., ed. (2007). *Theories of the Policy Process*. 3rd ed. Westview Press.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/abvowfo>, Chapter 1
- Kingdon, John W. (2010). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson, Chapter 8
- Howlett, Michael, Allan McConnell, and Anthony Perl (2015). “Streams and stages: Reconciling Kingdon and policy process theory”. *European Journal of Political Research* 54(3), pp. 419–434.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12064>

Further Readings

- Cohen, Michael D., James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen (1972). “A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice”. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17(1), pp. 1–25.
URL: https://www.unc.edu/~fbaum/teaching/articles/Cohen_March_Olsen_1972.pdf
- ➡ Parsons, Wayne (1995). *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*. Edward Elgar, pp. 1–82
- * John, Peter (2012). *Analyzing Public Policy*. 2nd ed. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, Chapters 1 and 2
- Cairney, Paul and Michael D. Jones (2016). “Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Approach: What Is the Empirical Impact of this Universal Theory?” *Policy Studies Journal* 44(1), pp. 37–58.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/psj.12111>.
URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/psj.12111>
- Jones, Michael D. et al. (2016). “A River Runs Through It: A Multiple Streams Meta-Review”. *Policy Studies Journal* 44(1), pp. 13–36.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/psj.12115>
- Rawat, Pragati and John Charles Morris (2016). “Kingdon’s “Streams” Model at Thirty: Still Relevant in the 21st Century?” *Politics & Policy* 44(4), pp. 608–638.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/polp.12168>

2 Policy Preferences and Knowledge of the People

In a democracy, it seems reasonable to think that public policies will be made on the basis of the will of the people. Given that, a natural starting point for analysis of the policy process is whether and how this “will” can be seen to exist. Are citizens/voters ignorant or informed? Are they rational? Are they rationally ignorant? What are the policy preferences of the people?

Popular Readings

- Kellner, Peter (2014). “Immigration is key to Britons’ growing hostility to Europe”. *The Guardian*. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/03/immigration-key-britons-growing-hostility-europe> (Retrieved 12/18/2014)

Required Readings

- ➔ Zaller, John R. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 3
- * Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro (2010). *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans’ Policy Preferences*. University of Chicago Press, Pp. 15–17 and Chapter 2
- ➔ Caplan, Bryan (2011). *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Chapter 1

Further Readings

- Converse, Philip (1964). “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics”. In: *Ideology and Discontent*. Ed. by David Apter. New York, NY: Free Press.
URL: http://ftp.voteview.com/The_Nature_of_Belief_Systems_in_Mass_Publics_Converse_1964.pdf
- Delli Carpini, Michael and Scott Keeter (1996). *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press
- Lupia, Arthur and Mathew D. McCubbins (1998). *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Galston, William A. (2001). “Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 4(1), pp. 217–234.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217>
- Bartels, Larry M. (2005). “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind”. *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1), pp. 15–31.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592705050036>
- Lupia, Arthur, Adam Seth Levine, et al. (2007). “Were Bush Tax Cut Supporters ‘Simply Ignorant’? A Second Look at Conservatives and Liberals in ‘Homer Gets a Tax Cut’”. *Perspectives on Politics* 5(04), pp. 773–784.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707072210>
- Bartels, Larry M. (2007). “Homer Gets a Warm Hug: A Note on Ignorance and Extenuation”. *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4), pp. 785–790.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707072222>
- Zaller, John (2012). “What Nature and Origins Leaves Out”. *Critical Review* 24(4), pp. 569–642.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2012.807648> — and other articles from this special issue.

3 Information, the Media, and Popular Preferences

Is the news media a source of bias or truth? Does the media have any influence on popular political attitudes? One way of interpreting the latter question is as asking whether the former question actually matters. In the previous week, we studied models of how political attitudes are formed and then aggregated. This week, we focus more closely on information and its messengers. In the spirit of both seeking to understand an issue of contemporary importance and building on Caplan's idea of "antiforeign bias", the Schemer paper applies some of the ideas from this week to the issue of immigration politics.

Required Readings

- Gilens, Martin (2001). "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences". *American Political Science Review* 95(02), pp. 379–396.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3118127>.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/zxefchv>
- Prior, Markus (2005). "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout". *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3), pp. 577–592.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00143.x>.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/mynjc3u>
- Ladd, Jonathan McDonald and Gabriel S. Lenz (2009). "Exploiting a Rare Communication Shift to Document the Persuasive Power of the News Media". *American Journal of Political Science* 53(2), pp. 394–410.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00377.x>.
URL: http://dl.dropbox.com/u/7536991/exploiting_rare_shift.pdf
- Schemer, Christian (2012). "The Influence of News Media on Stereotypic Attitudes Toward Immigrants in a Political Campaign". *Journal of Communication* 62(5), pp. 739–757.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01672.x>.
URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01672.x>

Further Readings

- Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder (1982). "Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-So-Minimal" Consequences of Television News Programs". *American Political Science Review* 76(4), pp. 848–858.
URL: http://www.uky.edu/~clthyn2/PS671/Iyengar_1982APSR.pdf
- Iyengar, Shanto (1991). *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Boomgaarden, Hajo G. and Rens Vliegenthart (2007). "Explaining the rise of anti-immigrant parties: The role of news media content". *Electoral Studies* 26(2), pp. 404–417.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2006.10.018>
- DellaVigna, Stefano and Ethan Kaplan (2007). "The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting". *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122(3), pp. 1187–1234.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/qjec.122.3.1187>
- Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox (2007). "Educated Preferences: Explaining Attitudes Toward Immigration in Europe". *International Organization* 61(02), pp. 399–442.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0020818307070142>.
URL: <http://web.stanford.edu/~jhain/Paper/I02007.pdf> (Retrieved 09/15/2016)

- * Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro (2010). *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. University of Chicago Press, Chapters 9 and 10
- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder (2010). *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Soroka, Stuart N. (2012). "The Gatekeeping Function: Distributions of Information in Media and the Real World". *Journal of Politics* 74 (2), pp. 514–528.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S002238161100171X>
- Druckman, James N., Jordan Fein, and Thomas J. Leeper (2012). "A Source of Bias in Public Opinion Stability". *American Political Science Review* 106(02), pp. 430–454.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000123>
- Soroka, Stuart N., Blake Andrew, et al. (2013). "Auntie Knows Best? Public Broadcasters and Current Affairs Knowledge". *British Journal of Political Science* 43(4), pp. 719–739.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000555>
- Barone, Guglielmo, Francesco D'Acunto, and Gaia Narciso (2015). "Telecracy: Testing for Channels of Persuasion". *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 7(2), pp. 30–60.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/pol.20130318>
- Arceneaux, Kevin et al. (2016). "The Influence of News Media on Political Elites: Investigating Strategic Responsiveness in Congress". *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1), pp. 5–29.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12171>

4 Politicians as Representatives of ‘the People’

‘The people’ elect politicians, at least partly on the expectation that they will make public policy on the basis of the preferences — where they exist — of those who voted for them. Is there good theoretical reason to think that politicians will do this? Is there empirical evidence to demonstrate that this responsiveness occurs?

Required Readings

- Downs, Anthony (1957). “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy”. *Journal of Political Economy* 65(2), 135–150.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1827369>
- Grofman, Bernard (2004). “Downs and Two-Party Convergence”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 7(1), pp. 25–46.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.012003.104711>.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/6hy72qw>
- Brooks, Clem and Jeff Manza (2006). “Social Policy Responsiveness in Developed Democracies”. *American Sociological Review* 71(3), pp. 474–494.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/30039000>
- Hakhverdian, Armèn (2010). “Political Representation and its Mechanisms: A Dynamic Left-Right Approach for the United Kingdom, 1976–2006”. *British Journal of Political Science* 40(4), pp. 835–856.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S000712341000013X>

Further Readings

- Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro (1983). “Effects of Public Opinion on Policy”. *American Political Science Review* 77 (01), pp. 175–190.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1956018>
- * Stimson, James A., Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson (1995). “Dynamic Representation”. *American Political Science Review* 89(3), 543–565.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2082973>
- Burstein, Paul (1998). “Bringing the Public Back in: Should Sociologists Consider the Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy?” *Social Forces* 77(1), pp. 27–62.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3006009>
- Burstein, Paul (2006). “Why Estimates of the Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy are Too High: Empirical and Theoretical Implications”. *Social Forces* 84(4), pp. 2273–2289.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0083>
- * Soroka, Stuart N. and Christopher Wlezien (2009). *Degrees of Democracy: Politics, Public Opinion, and Policy*. Cambridge University Press.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CB09780511804908>, Especially chapter 7
- Miller, Michael K. (2015). “Elections, Information, and Policy Responsiveness in Autocratic Regimes”. *Comparative Political Studies* 48(6), pp. 691–727.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0010414014555443>

5 Politicians as Partisans

Politicians may respond to the will of ‘people’, but which people are they, exactly? This week, we discuss theory and evidence relating to this question. Müller and Strøm (1999) analyse the competing pressures on political leaders in this regard. E. Huber and Stephens (2000) provide an example of the “partisanship” literature, whereby politicians are held to respond more to their party base, rather than the median voter. Rueda (2005) provides a more nuanced argument in this regard. Finally, Gilens (2005) provides evidence of an alternative view — that politicians disproportionately respond to the preferences of the rich.

Popular Readings

- “” Corn, David (2012). *SECRET VIDEO: Romney Tells Millionaire Donors What He REALLY Thinks of Obama Voters*.
URL: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/09/secret-video-romney-private-fundraiser> (Retrieved 12/18/2014)

Required Readings

- ➔ Müller, Wolfgang C. and Kaare Strøm, eds. (1999). *Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties Make Hard Choices*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1
- Huber, Evelyne and John D. Stephens (2000). “Partisan Governance, Women’s Employment, and the Social Democratic Service State”. *American Sociological Review* 65(3), pp. 323–342.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2657460>.
URL: <http://www.unc.edu/~jdsteph/documents/common/articles/ASR%202000.pdf>
- Rueda, David (2005). “Insider–Outsider Politics in Industrialized Democracies: The Challenge to Social Democratic Parties”. *American Political Science Review* 99(1), pp. 61–74.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S000305540505149X>
- Gilens, Martin (2005). “Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness”. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(5), pp. 778–796.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfi058>

Further Readings

- * Strøm, Kaare (1990). “A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties”. *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2), pp. 565–598.
URL: <http://notecrom.com/content/files/718/file.pdf>
- Allan, James P. and Lyle Scruggs (2004). “Political Partisanship and Welfare State Reform in Advanced Industrial Societies”. *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3), pp. 496–512.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00083.x>
- * Iversen, Torben and David Soskice (2006). “Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More Than Others”. *American Political Science Review* 100(2), pp. 165–181.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055406062083>.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/k6eeb6h>
- Giger, Nathalie, Jan Rosset, and Julian Bernauer (2012). “The Poor Political Representation of the Poor in a Comparative Perspective”. *Representation* 48(1), pp. 47–61.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2012.653238>

- Rosset, Jan, Nathalie Giger, and Julian Bernauer (2013). “More Money, Fewer Problems? Cross-Level Effects of Economic Deprivation on Political Representation”. *West European Politics* 36(4), pp. 817–835.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2013.783353>
- Carnes, Nicholas (2013). *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making*. Chicago Studies in American Politics. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Gilens, Martin and Benjamin I. Page (2014). “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens”. *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (03), pp. 564–581.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714001595>
- ➡ Bartels, Larry M. (2016). *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Chapter 8

6 Legislative Politics and Institutions

The previous week implicitly assumed a rather simple model of political decision making: essentially that the ‘winning’ politician or party was able to implement a policy of their own or their electorate’s choosing. But many policies are decided by votes in legislatures, rather than the decision of a single elected person. How do such collective decisions occur? Can we explain or even predict the outcomes of legislative policy-making?

Popular Readings

- Waugh, Paul (2015). “Tax Credit Cuts U-Turn From George Osborne Just Weeks After Lords Forced Him To Retreat On £4.4bn Plan”. *The Huffington Post UK*.
URL: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/25/story_n_8646322.html (Retrieved 11/30/2015)

Required Readings

- Riker, William H. (1980). “Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions”. *American Political Science Review* 74(2), 432–446.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1960638>
- Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Barry R. Weingast (1981). “Structure-induced equilibrium and legislative choice”. *Public Choice* 37(3), pp. 503–519.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF00133748>
- Tsebelis, George (1999). “Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis”. *American Political Science Review* 93(3), pp. 591–608

Further Readings

- Krehbiel, Keith (1988). “Spatial Models of Legislative Choice”. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 13(3), pp. 259–319.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/439787>.
URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/439787>
- Scharpf, Fritz W. (1988). “The Joint-Decision Trap: Lessons from German Federalism and European Integration”. *Public Administration* 66(3), 239–278.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1988.tb00694.x>
- Immergut, Ellen M. (1992). *Health Politics: Interests and Institutions in Western Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/ojrk8ca>
- Steinmo, Sven and Jon Watts (1995). “It’s the institutions, stupid! Why comprehensive national health insurance always fails in America”. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 20(2), pp. 329–372.
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/pkx7rer>
- Hacker, Jacob S. (1998). “The Historical Logic of National Health Insurance: Structure and Sequence in the Development of British, Canadian, and U.S. Medical Policy”. *Studies in American Political Development* 12(1), pp. 57–130.
DOI-URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X98001308>
- Tsebelis, George (2002). *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

7 Agenda Dynamics & Punctuated Equilibrium

This week, we step back from our stage-based sequencing of topics, taking the opportunity to draw together several analytical concerns into one theoretical framework. The readings are concerned with how the public policy agenda changes through time, and why. Downs (1972) provides a classic model/argument for the “issue attention cycle”. The bulk of the rest of the week’s readings are concerned with theoretical and empirical variants of the so-called “punctuated equilibrium” model, developed by Baumgartner and B. D. Jones.

Required Readings

- Downs, Anthony (1972). “Up and Down with Ecology: The ‘Issue Attention Cycle’”. *Public Interest* 28(1), pp. 38–50
- Baumgartner, Frank R. and Bryan D. Jones (1991). “Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems”. *Journal of Politics* 53(4), 1044–1074.
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8 Politicians as Decision-Makers

The previous two weeks largely treated politicians as (sometimes reliable) followers of the preferences of others — or at least as holding fairly clear policy preferences of their own or of their major constituencies. However, policy-making is complicated. What if voter preferences over policy choices are uncertain? What if voter preferences over policy outcomes are uncertain? What if the outcomes of policy choices are uncertain? How can we make sense of the decision-making process that politicians-as-policy-makers face?

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9 Bureaucracy and Delegation

Policy has been chosen by the appropriate political leaders; now what? Policy must be implemented, and that implementation is usually pursued by a bureaucracy. Is implementation trivial? Can politicians successfully monitor what bureaucrats are doing? What if the bureaucracy has policy preferences of its own, and they are distinct from those of political leaders?

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10 Policy Learning and Feedback

Policy has been made and it has been implemented. Isn't there scope for policy-makers to learn from the outcomes? Can policies be reformed on the basis of evidence from earlier experiences? How does policy learning of this sort happen? Does it only occur within countries, or is there diffusion of policies between countries? How can we be sure that such policy diffusion is based on 'learning', rather than some other mechanism?

Moreover, is there scope for policies themselves to feedback and influence 'the people'? Most basically, if they do not observe how policy has changed, how can they be said to have meaningful policy preferences at all? Perhaps more intriguingly, are there feedback effects such that earlier policy choices actually shape the preferences of the people in later periods? What are the political implications of such processes?

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