

Public Policy (and Animals)

“The field of policy analysis is dominated by economics and its model of society as a market. A market, as conceived in microeconomics, is a collection of atomized individuals who have no community life. They have independent preferences and their relationships consist entirely of trading with one another to maximize their individual well-being. Like many social scientists, I don't find the market model a convincing description of the world I know or, for that matter, any world I would want to live in. I wanted a kind of analysis that starts with a model of community, where individuals live in a web of associations, dependencies and loyalties, and where they envision and fight for a public interest as well as their individual public interests. This kind of analysis could not take individual preferences as 'given', as most economists do, but would instead have to account for where people get their images of the world and how those images shape their desires and their visions.” —Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*

Key terms and related ideas: the/a **public interest**, electoral systems and **electoral reform**, positive and **negative externalities**, **social capital** (and trust and the **prisoner's dilemma**, from **game theory**), **social movements**

How would you define public policy? (There are many options here)

- is it “how politicians make a difference”? Is it “whatever a government chooses to do or not to do”? Is it more than this? Less than this? Is it really closer to “public morals”?

The **policy** cycle (can be phrased many ways, but generally looks something like this): agenda setting, formulation, implementation, budgeting, evaluation [a similar shorthand to this is **DFIE**: define or describe the problem, formulate a proposal to solve the problem, implement the proposed solution, and evaluate the solution]

- What are the benefits of such an approach? The dangers?

The language of **public choice**: the self-interested rational actor ('homo economicus'), the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)—what are the pros and cons of the 'marketization' of pretty much everything?

“**Traditional Analyses of the ESA**”:

- Five lenses: pluralism, policy sciences, policy specialism, and public choice theory, and critical theory
 - Does your 'preferred model' of policymaking fit into one of these definitions? If not, what is it?
- Under pluralism, “the logic of the legislative process assumes that if there is a valid interest, then someone will rise up to advocate it's position.” What might be problematic about this statement?
- Critical theory and communicative, as against instrumental, rationality

Stone, “**Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas**” [see chart on 285]

- Literature to date on agenda setting: studying the nature of the actors, the nature of the problem, and the nature of the language/symbols used. How is Stone's typology distinct?
- What does it mean when Stone says she's a **social constructionist**? (282)
- **Causal stories** as “fights about the possibility of control and the assignment of responsibility” (283)
 - Example of **inadvertent cause**: (two versions of) 'blaming the victim' (286)
 - Example of **mechanical cause**: the concept of 'planned obsolescence'
 - Example of **accidental cause**: nature (how might this typology be changing?)
 - Example of **intentional cause**: either positive or negative...
- Three models to explain policy problems
 - **Complex systems**
 - **Institutional**
 - **Historical/structural** (see, for example, C. Wright Mill's *The Power Elite*)
- The two constraining social influences of **law** and **science**. Can you think of others?
- What are some of the 'causal strategies' Stone lays out? (the cases of Detroit, hookworm, and abortion...)
- MADD and the question of *who* or *what* to blame (296-7)
- “People with pet solutions often march around looking for problems that need their solutions.” (298)
- But all of this is only the *first* (or in some cases the '0th') step of the policy cycle...

Introducing Thursday's special pbworks upload on animal advocacy (and related) NGOs