

Public Policy Management:

W2. Fundamental Theories in Public Policy

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Sl. No	Main Topics	Key words
Week1	Introduction to Public Policy	Public policy, goals, decisions
Week2	Fundamental theories in public policy	Theories, Concepts, framework, model
Week3	The Policymaking Process	policy process, policy cycle
Week4	Agenda Setting & Framing	Defining the problem, brainstorming, lobbying
Week5	Paradoxes, Dilemmas, and Path-Dependence	coalition, advocacy
Week6	Policy Design	design, structure
Week7	Law Making and its Actors	Democracy, Parliament, Assembly, Congress

Recap of W1: Introduction to Public Policy Management

- What is Public Policy (PP)?
- Nature of PP
- Key attributes of PP
- Policy and goals
- Policies and decisions
- Categories of Policies
- Characteristics of PP making
- Growing importance of PP

Outline of Lecture W2: **Theoretical Foundations of PP**

- Few more aspects on the introduction to Public Policy, viz why study PP? scope and purpose of PP, etc
- Theoretical Foundations of Public Policy
- Seven theories: The Stages Heuristic, Institutional Rational Choice, Multiple-Streams, Punctuated-Equilibrium Framework, The Advocacy Coalition Framework, Policy Diffusion Framework & The Funnel of Causality and Other Frameworks in Large-N Comparative Studies

Why Public Policy Matters?

- Public policy plays a crucial role in forming the guidelines and principles of a society, so they're a necessary part of governing and politics.
- Since public policy is formed as a collective effort between governments, institutions, and citizens, it's an important and effective way to have people's voice heard.
- Since politicians and parties change every few years, so do the positions and views held by the majority or by those in office.
- Politicians can be voted out and removed from power, but the public policies they uphold are more difficult to remove.
- But public policies can outlast governments and politicians long after they're out of power, so it's important to use the power of vote carefully so that people support who want to influence the policies that matter to the majority of the people most

Why it is important?

- In an enduring democracy, people have both the opportunity and the responsibility to participate in civic affairs.
- As responsible citizens, we need *know-how*: the analytical, ethical, and practical skills necessary to effectively engage in public affairs.
- Furthermore, the world is continually changing to be more connected and complex.
- Therefore, it's now more important than ever to understand the impact of policies implemented by governing powers.
- Understanding their effect, and identifying where improvements can be made, can help to bring about more informed and effective policies, and therefore a more productive, better quality of life for the society governed by them.

Why Study Public Policy?

- Public policies in a modern, complex society are indeed ubiquitous.
- In our daily lives, we are affected, directly and indirectly, obviously and subtly, by an extensive array of public policies.
- They confer advantages and disadvantages, cause pleasure, irritation, and pain, and collectively have important consequences for societal well-being and happiness.
- They constitute a significant portion of our environment.
- This being so, we should know something about public policies, including how they are formed, budgeted, implemented, and evaluated.
- There are also scientific, professional, and political reasons for studying public policies and policymaking.

Why study Public Policy?

- The sheer extent, scope, and cost of the intervention of government in society, the economy, and world affairs makes the study of public policy essential for a participation to keep the culture of democracy vibrant.
- Similarly, the amount of spending by government at all levels makes this an important topic. As taxpayers, we have a stake in *effective* public policy and in the overall scope of the government in our lives.
- We also consume a vast and varied bundle of public services, many we may not recognize as such.
- Understanding policy analysis permits us to actualize solutions to practical problems which are brought to the agenda of government, or might be.
- These may be our own problems, those of our community, our profession, or problems to which we feel a special commitment.
- Knowing how public policy works can improve our ability to deal with these issues.

Why study Public Policy?

- Public policy analysis can become a professional role for students trained in political science, economics, law, environmental studies, business, and other disciplines.
- These fields constantly interface with government and have a direct stake in the quality and character of public policy.
- To the extent that analysts can understand how policy is made, what impacts are derived, and how policy can improve, more effective public policy might be formulated.
- Professionally, a person may pursue a career as a policy analyst or evaluator.
- Practitioners *of policy analysis*, which draws heavily upon economic theory and statistical and mathematical analytical techniques, have been growing in number in recent decades.

Why study public policy?

- Policy analysis has an applied orientation and seeks to identify the most efficient alternative (i.e., the one that will yield the largest net social benefit) for dealing with a current problem, such as the control of air pollution or the disposal of household garbage.
- A variant of policy analysis is evaluation research, which assesses how well policies attain their goals and the other societal effects that they may have.
- Politically, many people want to engage in *policy advocacy*, using knowledge of public policy to formulate and promote "good" public policies that will have the "right" goals, that is, goals which serve their purposes.
- They may think of themselves as liberals, conservatives, libertarians, communitarians, or socialists and disagree greatly in their notions of what is good or just.
- The research efforts of policy advocates are frequently skewed by their wish to generate data and analysis in line with their preferences. In contrast, policy study is motivated by the intent to be impartial.

Why Study Public Policy?

- Scientifically the systematic and rigorous study of the origins, development, and implementation of public policies will enhance our knowledge of political behavior and governance, as well as of public policy per se.
- How is policymaking affected by federalism and the separation of powers?
- Were pressure groups or public opinion or the media influential in the adoption of a policy?
- Why did government cease to be concerned with a problem?
- Concern with questions of this sort are designated as *policy study*.
- Local governments have a direct impact on economic prosperity by enacting policies such as taxation, budgeting, and employment regulations.
- It is possible to create economic development that advances communities by collaborating effectively between governments and private sector leaders.

Scope and Purpose of Public Policy

- The scope and content of public policies will obviously vary from country to country, depending on the system of government and ideology in force in that country.
- Actually the scope of public policy is determined by the kind of role that the State adopts for itself in a society.
- In the classical capitalist society, State was assigned a limited role and it was expected that the State would merely act as a regulator of social and economic activity and not its promoter.
- With the advent of planned view of development, State began to be perceived as an active agent in promoting and shaping societies in its various activities.
- This was considered as a great change in the role of a State. This has been transforming over time – now across the globe the role of state being limited...
- Public policies expanded their scope from merely one of regulation to that of development.

Scope of Public Policy

- Expansion in scope led to several other consequences like many more government agencies and institutions came into being in order to formulate and implement policies.
- In most developing countries where so much is expected of government and where government actions transcend virtually all aspects of life of the citizens, the range of public policies is usually very broad and almost unlimited.
- To gain a better understanding of the different types of policies that govern us and why they're important to the functioning of society.
- The purpose of any policy is not only to effect change but also to educate the public.
- This educational function is important yet rarely discussed explicitly.

The growing importance of Public Policy

- It is clear from the above discussions that public policy is a purposive course of action in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern within a specific time frame.
- Here, we recapitulate the components of public policy.
- Policy is purposive and deliberately formulated.
- Policy must have a purpose or a goal; It does not emerge at random or by chance.
- Once a goal is decided the policy is devised in such a way that it determines the course of action needed to achieve that goal.
- A policy is well thought out and is not a series of discrete decisions.
- A policy is what is actually done and not what is intended or desired, a statement of goals does not constitute a policy.

The growing importance of Public Policy

- Policy also delineates a time frame in which its goals have to be achieved.
- Policy follows a defined course of action viz. formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- These days policy analysis is acquiring a lot of importance in the realm of the study of social sciences.
- This multi-disciplinary approach to public policy trend is observable all over the world. It is increasingly becoming specialized in areas of education, health, international relations, trade and tariff, climate policy, digitalization, etc.
- The success of policy formulation, execution and monitoring ultimately depends on the success of policy analysis.

Fundamental theories in PP

- Political and social scientists have developed many theories, models and approaches for analyzing policy-making.
- The theoretical approaches include elite theory, group theory, political systems theory and institutionalism, policy output analysis, incremental theory and rational-choice theory which are primarily concerned with public policy-making as a process.
- A good rule for the policy maker is to be eclectic and flexible, and to draw from theories that seem most useful for the satisfactory and fair-minded description and explanation of policies.
- The objective explanation of political behavior rather than the validation of one's preferred theoretical approach should be the goal of political inquiry.

Fundamental theories in PP

- Each of the theories discussed, if drawn upon skillfully and selectively, can contribute to a better understanding of policy-making.
- Although most of these approaches were not developed specifically for analyzing policy formation, they can readily be bent to that purpose.
- They are useful to the extent that they direct our attention to important political phenomena, help clarify and organize our thinking, and suggest explanations for political activity or, in our case, public policies.
- Limitations and criticisms are mentioned as the discussion proceeds.

Fundamental theories in public policy

- In the process of public policymaking, problems are conceptualized and brought to government for solution; governmental institutions formulate alternatives and select policy solutions; and those solutions get implemented, evaluated, and revised.
- **SIMPLIFYING A COMPLEX WORLD:**
- Policy process involves an extremely complex set of elements that interact over time:

Reasons to simplify the complex world

- **1. Multiple actors** - from interest groups, governmental agencies, legislatures at different levels of government, researchers, journalists, and judges involved in one or more aspects of the process.
- Each of these actors (either individual or corporate) has potentially different values/interests, perceptions of the situation, and policy preferences.
- **2. Time span involved in this process** – a decade or more, as that is the minimum duration of most policy cycles, from emergence of a problem through sufficient experience with implementation to render a reasonably fair evaluation of a program's impact
- Earlier studies suggest that periods of twenty to forty years may be required to obtain a reasonable understanding of the impact of a variety of socioeconomic conditions and to accumulate scientific knowledge about a problem.

Reasons to simplify the complex world

- 3. In any given policy domain, such as air pollution control or health policy, there are normally dozens of different programs involving multiple levels of government that are operating, or are being proposed for operation, in any given locale, such as the province of Morobe or the city of Lae in Papua New Guinea.
- Since these programs deal with interrelated subjects and involve many of the same actors, many scholars would argue that the appropriate unit of analysis should be the policy subsystem or domain, rather than a specific governmental program.

Reasons to simplify the complex world

- 4. Policy debates among actors in the course of litigation, proposed administrative regulations involve technical disputes over the severity of a problem, its causes, and the probable impacts of alternative policy solutions.
- Understanding the policy process requires attention to the role that such debates play in the overall process.
- 5. A final complicating factor in the policy process is that most disputes involve **deeply held values/interests**, large amounts of money, and, at some point, authoritative coercion.

Reasons to simplify the complex world

- Given these stakes, policy disputes seldom resemble polite academic debates.
- Instead, most actors face enormous temptations to present evidence selectively, to misrepresent the position of their opponents, to coerce and discredit opponents, and generally to distort the situation to their advantage.

Summing up the reasons

- In short, understanding the policy process requires knowledge of the goals and perceptions of multiple actors throughout the country involving possibly very technical scientific and legal issues over periods of a decade or more while most of those actors are actively seeking to propagate their specific “spin” on events.
- Given such complexity of the process, the analyst must find some way of simplifying the situation to have a better understanding.
- One simply cannot look for, and see, everything.

The clues to distil

- Work in the philosophy of science and social psychology has provided persuasive evidence that perceptions are almost always mediated by a set of presuppositions.
- These perform two critical mediating functions.
- First, they tell the observer what to look for; that is, what factors are likely to be critically important versus those that can be safely ignored.
- Second, they define the categories in which phenomena are to be grouped.

How to understand the policy process

- The institutional rational choice approaches tell the analyst:
- 1) to focus on the leaders of a few critical institutions with formal decision making authority,
- 2) to assume that these actors are pursuing their material self-interest (e.g., income, power, security), and
- 3) to group actors into a few institutional categories, for example, legislatures, administrative agencies, and interest groups.

How to understand the policy process

- But in contrast, the advocacy coalition framework tells the analyst to assume:
- 1) that belief systems are more important than institutional affiliation
- 2) that actors may be pursuing a wide variety of objectives, which must be measured empirically, and
- 3) that one must add researchers and journalists to the set of potentially important policy actors.
- Thus, analysts from these two different perspectives look at the same situation through quite different lenses and are likely to see quite different things, at least initially.

Strategies for Simplification

- Given that we have little choice but to look at the world through a lens consisting of a set of simplifying presuppositions, at least two quite different strategies exist for developing such a lens.
- One, the analyst can approach the world in an implicit, ad hoc fashion, using whatever categories and assumptions that have arisen from his or her experience. This is essentially the method of common sense.
- It may be reasonably accurate for situations important to the analyst's welfare in which she or he has considerable experience. In such situations, the analyst has both the incentive and the experience to eliminate clearly invalid propositions.

Strategies for Simplification

- But it has limited scope, likely to be affected by internal inconsistencies, ambiguities, erroneous assumptions, and invalid propositions, because the strategy does not contain any explicit methods of error correction.
- Since its assumptions and propositions remain implicit and largely unknown, they are unlikely to be subjected to serious scrutiny.
- The analyst simply assumes they are, by and large, correct—insofar as he or she is even cognizant of their content.

Strategies for Simplification

- Alternative strategy is that of science. Its fundamental ontological assumption is that a smaller set of critical relationships underlies the bewildering complexity of phenomena.
- For example, a century ago Darwin provided a relatively simple explanation—summarized under the processes of natural selection—for the thousands of species he encountered on his voyages.
- The critical characteristics of science are that
- 1) its methods of data acquisition and analysis should be presented in a sufficiently public manner that they can be replicated by others;

Strategies for Simplification

- 2) its concepts and propositions should be clearly defined and logically consistent and should give rise to empirically falsifiable hypotheses;
- 3) those propositions should be as general as possible and should explicitly address relevant uncertainties; and
- 4) both the methods and concepts should be self consciously subjected to criticism and evaluation by experts in that field.

Strategies for Simplification

- The overriding strategy can be summarized in the injunction:
- **Be clear enough to be proven wrong.**
- Unlike “common sense,” science is designed to be self-consciously error seeking, and thus self-correcting.
- A critical component of that strategy—derived from principles 2–4 above—is that scientists should develop clear and logically interrelated sets of propositions, some of them empirically falsifiable, to explain fairly general sets of phenomena.
- Such coherent sets of propositions have traditionally been termed theories.

Useful distinctions among three different sets of propositions

- Elinor Ostrom develops these propositions:(see Chapter 2 of this volume).
- 1) **“conceptual framework”** identifies a set of variables and the relationships among them that presumably account for a set of phenomena. The framework can provide anything from a modest set of variables to something as extensive as a paradigm. It need not identify directions among relationships, although more developed frameworks will certainly specify some hypotheses.
- 2) A **“theory”** provides a denser and more logically coherent set of relationships. It applies values to some of the variables and usually specifies how relationships may vary depending upon the values of critical variables. Numerous theories may be consistent with the same conceptual framework.

What is Theory?

- A theory is a comprehensive, systematic, consistent and reliable explanation and prediction of relationship among specific variables
- A theory is a representation of a reality. It can scientifically be proved.
- Dye (1995) said that certain theoretical approaches and models have been introduced in studying public policy.
- There are no comprehensive theories on policy making and analysis. Distinguished scholars have remarked that policies are jelly like in nature (Moharir,1986) and must be thought of as seashells.
- Further, Hanekom(1987) remarked that all public policies are future oriented and aimed at the general promotional of the social welfare of the society.

Useful distinctions among three different sets of propositions

- 3) A “**model**” is a representation of a specific situation.
- It is usually much narrower in scope, and more precise in its assumptions, than the underlying theory. Ideally, it is mathematical.
- Thus, *frameworks, theories, and models* can be conceptualized as operating along a continuum involving increasing logical interconnectedness and specificity but decreasing scope.
- However; Scientists should be aware of, and capable of applying, several different theoretical perspectives—not just a single one.

Why several different theoretical perspectives ?

- First, knowledge of several different perspectives forces the analyst to clarify differences in assumptions across frameworks, rather than implicitly assuming a given set.
- Second, multiple perspectives encourage the development of competing hypotheses that should ideally lead to “**strong inference**”, or at least to the accumulation of evidence in favor of one perspective over another.
- Third, knowledge and application of multiple perspectives should gradually clarify the conditions under which one perspective is more useful than another.

Why several different theoretical perspectives ?

- Finally, multiple perspectives encourage a comparative approach: Rather than asking if theory X produces statistically significant results, one asks whether theory X explains more than theory Y.
- Consistent with this multiple-lens strategy, here we discuss seven conceptual frameworks.
- A few of them—notably, institutional rational choice—have given rise to one or more theories, and virtually all have spawned a variety of models seeking to explain specific situations.

Theoretical Frameworks

- **The Stages Heuristic:**
- Until the mid-1980s, the most influential framework for understanding the policy process—particularly among American scholars—was the “stages heuristic,” or what Nakamura (1987) termed the “textbook approach.”
- Many policy analysts developed [Lasswell (1956), Jones (1970), Anderson (1975), and Brewer and deLeon (1983)];
- It divided the policy process into a series of stages:-
- agenda setting; policy formulation and legitimation,
- implementation, and
- Evaluation and discussed some of the factors affecting the process within each stage.

The stages heuristic

- Served a useful purpose in the 1970s and early 1980s by dividing the very complex policy process into discrete stages and by stimulating some excellent research within specific stages—particularly agenda setting and policy implementation.
- Beginning in the late 1980s, however, the stages heuristic was subjected to some criticisms.

The stages heuristic: criticism

- 1. It is not really a causal theory since it never identifies a set of causal drivers that govern the policy process within and across stages.
- Instead, work within each stage has tended to develop on its own, almost totally without reference to research in other stages.
- In addition, without causal drivers there can be no coherent set of hypotheses within and across stages.
- 2. The proposed sequence of stages is often descriptively inaccurate. For example, evaluations of existing programs affect agenda setting, and policy formulation/legitimation occurs as bureaucrats attempt to implement vague legislation.

The stages heuristic: criticism

- 3. The stages heuristic has a very legalistic, top-down bias in which the focus is typically on the passage and implementation of a major piece of legislation.
- This focus neglects the interaction of the implementation and evaluation of numerous pieces of legislation—none of them preeminent—within a given policy domain.
- 4. The assumption that there is a single policy cycle focused on a major piece of legislation oversimplifies the usual process of multiple, interacting cycles involving numerous policy proposals and statutes at multiple levels of government.

More Promising Theoretical Frameworks

- The stages heuristic has outlived its usefulness and needs to be replaced with better theoretical frameworks.
- Over the decades a number of new theoretical frameworks of the policy process have been either developed or extensively modified.
- Following are the criteria utilized in selecting the frameworks to be discussed.
- 1. Each framework must do a reasonably good job of meeting the criteria of a scientific theory; that is, its concepts and propositions must be clear and internally consistent, it must identify clear causal drivers, it must give rise to falsifiable hypotheses, and it must be fairly broad in scope (i.e., apply to most of the policy process in a variety of political systems).

More Promising Theoretical Frameworks

- 2. Each framework must be the subject of a fair amount of recent conceptual development and/or empirical testing. A number of currently active policy scholars must view it as a viable way of understanding the policy process.
- 3. Each framework must be a positive theory seeking to explain much of the policy process. The theoretical framework may also contain some explicitly normative elements, but these are not required.
- 4. Each framework must address the broad sets of factors that political scientists looking at different aspects of public policymaking have traditionally deemed important: conflicting values and interests, information flows, institutional arrangements, and variation in the socioeconomic environment.

Selected seven frameworks

- By means of these criteria, seven frameworks were selected for analysis.
- The Stages Heuristic: Although there are doubts that the stages heuristic meets the first and second criteria above, there is certainly room for disagreement on whether it meets the second.
- In particular, implementation studies appeared to undergo a revival in the late 1990s.
- Even were that not the case, Paul Sabatier spent much time criticizing the stages heuristic so that provide a forum for its defense.

2. Institutional Rational Choice:

- It is a family of frameworks focusing on how institutional rules alter the behavior of intended rational individuals motivated by material self-interest.
- Although much of the literature on institutional rational choice focuses on rather specific sets of institutions, such as the relationships between Congress and administrative agencies, the general framework is extremely broad in scope and has been applied to important policy problems.

2a. Institutional theory

- Public policy is determined by government institutions, which give policy legitimacy.
- Government universally applies policy to all citizens of society and monopolizes the use of force in applying policy.
- The legislature, executive and judicial branches of government are examples of institutions that give policy legitimacy.
- Considers policy as an institutional output (Institutions refers to government institutions).

2a. Institutional theory

- Government institutions have long been a central focus of political science. Traditionally political science is the study of government institutions such as the state, municipalities etc.
- Public policy is authoritatively determined, implemented and enforced by these institutions.
- The relationship between public policy and government institution is close because a public policy can not become a public policy until it is opted, implemented and enforced by some government institutions.

2a. Institutional theory

- Government institutions give public policy Legitimacy, Legal obligation that command loyalty of the citizens, Universality i.e
- Only government policies extend to all people in the society and Coercion/Force i.e the Government can legitimately imprison violators of public policy
- It is precisely this ability of government to command the loyalty of its citizens, to enact policies governing the whole society, and to monopolize the legitimate use of force that encourages individuals and groups to work for enactment of their preferences into policy

2b. Rational choice theory

- The rational-choice theory, which is sometimes called social-choice, public-choice, or formal theory, originated with economists and involves applying the principles of micro-economic theory to the analysis and explanation of political behaviour (or nonmarket decision-making). It has now gained quite a few adherents among political scientists (Anderson, 1997).
- According to Hanekom(1987), rational comprehensive model has its roots in the rational comprehensive decision making and implies that the policy maker has a full range of policy options to choose from.
- Rational theory is one that achieves maximum social gain/benefit i.e. Government should choose policies resulting in gains to society that exceed costs by greatest amount

2b. Rational choice theory

- The concept of maximum social gains means no policy should be adopted if its costs exceed its benefits and among policy alternatives, decision makers should choose the policy that produces the greatest benefits over costs.
- So a policy is rational when the difference between the values it achieves and the values it gets is positive and greater than any other policy alternatives.
- Rationalism involves the calculation of all social political and economic values sacrificed or achieved by a public policy.
- Not just those that can be measured in terms of money

2b. Rational choice theory

- In rationalism to select a policy maker must be able to know all the society value preferences their relative weight, Know all the policy alternatives available, Know all the consequences of each policy alternatives, Calculate the ratio of benefits to costs for each policy.
- process for making logically sound decisions in policy making in the public sector, although the model is also widely used in private corporations.
- Herbert A. Simon, the father of rational models, describes rationality as “a style of behavior that is appropriate to the achievement of given goals, within the limits imposed by given conditions and constraints.

3. Multiple-Streams

- The multiple-streams framework was developed by John Kingdon (1984) based upon the “garbage can” model of organizational behavior.
- **The Garbage-Can Model emerged as a critique to the Rational Model saying that organizations do not function as computers in solving optimization problems.**
- **This Theory advocates that organizations function like garbage cans into which a mix of problems and possible solutions are poured, with the precise mix determining the decision outcome.**

3. Multiple-Streams

- It views the policy process as composed of three streams of actors and processes:
- a problem stream consisting of data about various problems and the proponents of various problem definitions;
- a policy stream involving the proponents of solutions to policy problems; and
- a politics stream consisting of elections and elected officials.

3. Multiple-Streams

- In Kingdon's view, the streams normally operate independently of each other, except when a "window of opportunity" permits policy entrepreneurs to couple the various streams.
- If the entrepreneurs are successful, the result is major policy change.
- Although the multiple-streams framework is not always as clear and internally consistent as one might like, it appears to be applicable to a wide variety of policy arenas and was cited about eighty times annually in the Social Science Citation Index.

4. Punctuated-Equilibrium Framework:

- Originally developed by Baumgartner and Jones (1993), the punctuated-equilibrium (PE) framework argues that policymaking is characterized by long periods of incremental change punctuated by brief periods of major policy change.
- The latter come about when opponents manage to fashion new “policy images” and exploit the multiple policy venues characteristic.
- Originally developed to explain changes in legislation, this framework has been expanded to include some very sophisticated analyses of long-term changes in the budgets of the union/federal government (Jones, Baumgartner, and True 1998).
- The PE framework clearly meets all four criteria, at least for systems with multiple policy venues.

5. The Advocacy Coalition Framework:

- Developed by Sabatier and Jenkins Smith (1988, 1993), the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) focuses on the interaction of advocacy coalitions—each consisting of actors from a variety of institutions who share a set of policy beliefs—within a policy subsystem.
- Policy change is a function of both competition within the subsystem and events outside the subsystem.
- The framework spends a lot of time mapping the belief systems of policy elites and analyzing the conditions under which policy-oriented learning across coalitions can occur.

5.The Advocacy Coalition Framework:

- It has stimulated considerable interest throughout the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—including some very constructive criticism (Schlager 1995).
- The frameworks discussed thus far have all focused on explaining policy change within a given political system or set of institutional arrangements (including efforts to change those arrangements).
- The next two frameworks seek to provide explanations of variation across a large number of political systems.

6. Policy Diffusion Framework:

- The policy diffusion framework was developed by Berry and Berry (1990, 1992) to explain variation in the adoption of specific policy innovations, such as a lottery, across a large number of states (or localities).
- It argues that adoption is a function of both the characteristics of the specific political systems and a variety of diffusion processes. Recently, this framework is integrated with the literature on policy networks.
- The diffusion framework has thus far been utilized almost exclusively in the United States.
- It should, however, apply to variation among countries or regions within the European Union, the OECD, or any other set of political systems.

7.The Funnel of Causality and Other Frameworks in Large-N Comparative Studies:

- Finally, we turn to a variety of frameworks that were extremely important in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s in explaining variation in policy outcomes (usually budgetary expenditures) across large numbers of states and localities .
- These began as very simple frameworks seeking to apportion the variance among background socioeconomic conditions, public opinion, and political institutions—although they became somewhat more sophisticated over time.
- Although interest in this approach has declined somewhat in the United States, it is still popular in OECD countries, particularly for explaining variation in social welfare programs.
- The “black box” features of this framework and to seek to integrate it with other literatures, particularly institutional rational choice.

To sum up

- These models are not competitive but rather complementary as they focus on different aspects of political life, and hence help us to understand separate characteristics of public policies.
- The main implication of these models is that they make different assumption about the importance of the actors involved – institutions, politicians, bureaucrats, interest groups, and the public – and their rationality.
- If we conceive of policy makers as entirely rational actors that search for maximizing solutions to policy problems, our analytical focus would rather be on the quality of available information, decision procedures, etc.
- If we, however, model policymakers as imperfectly rational actors, the research interest should rather shift to the role to other aspects, such as mechanisms of finding compromises.

Theories as Critical Thinking Tools

- Multiple theories foster critical thinking. A wide range of definitions and interpretations of critical thinking exist.
- Adapting Wade's (1995) strategies for critical thinking to illustrate the benefits of knowing multiple theories, as shown in Table below.
- This table outlines how strategies for critical thinking links with learning multiple theories, which includes broadening understandings, increasing tolerance and questioning, and avoiding over simplifications.

Sl No.	Strategies for Critical Thinking	Corresponding benefits of multiple theories
1.	Ask questions, be willing to wonder	Provide different perspectives that prompt several questions
2.	Define terms	Build from concepts that require definitions
3.	Examine evidence	Prompt questions about appropriate approaches for methods of description, explanation and prediction
4.	Analyse assumptions and biases	Prompt questions about assumptions made implicitly or explicitly; raise questions about the role of biases in research
5.	Avoid dogmatic reasoning: “if I think this way, it must be true”	Mitigate threats of ‘theory tenacity’ (thinking one theory is always right) and theory confirmation (seeking support of a particular way of thinking)

SI No.	Strategies for Critical Thinking	Corresponding benefits of multiple theories
6.	Don't oversimplify	Stress limitations and warn against simplification from any one theory
7.	Consider other interpretations	Provide different lenses and thus, interpretations of policy processes
8.	Tolerate uncertainty	Instil humility of our mental faculties

Guideline for analysing theories

- **Scope** refers to the type of questions or objectives that a theory helps answer or achieve. It also refers to phenomena or settings that the theory most likely applies.
- ***What were the original knowledge deficits or source materials?*** All theories emerge from prior understandings and perceived knowledge deficits about policy processes. To understand a theory, pay attention to its original inspiration and foundations. Ask what inspired its creation? This helps tie the theory to the historical development of the field and to the broader literature as well as to give insights about its purpose.
- ***What are the assumptions?*** All theories take something in the world for granted, declare aspects of the world as given, or promote (or demote) the importance of something in the world.

Guideline for analysing theories

- What are the key concepts?
- How are the concepts interrelated?
- What are the sources of empirical support?
- What are the current research deficits and future research ideas?
- What are some implications for practice?

To conclude

- It further reveals that one cannot authoritatively see which of these theoretical approaches is the best or the most satisfactory as each approach focuses on different aspects of policy-making, and this seems more useful for understanding some situations or events than others.
- Regardless of how we approach policy processes as a science;
- Need to strive to maintain awareness of the innate human tendency to gravitate towards simplified and singular understandings and, instead,
- *Embrace the multiplicity of policy processes, which includes its uncertainty, ambiguity, and uncontrollability.*

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What next?

- Policy making process