

Day 4: Systems Thinking

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Road map

- Systems Theory
- Discuss the policymaking environment
 - Structural, Social, Political, Economic

Making Sense of Policymaking

- We tend to be deductive (vs. inductive) thinkers in policy science.
- Theory \longrightarrow Hypotheses \longrightarrow Data \longrightarrow Repeat.
- Our goal is a generalizable theory of how policymaking works that explains outcomes more often than not.

Making Sense of Policymaking: Systems Theory

Inputs

Resources

Throughputs

Black Box (transforms inputs)

Outputs

Products or services (policy)

Feedback Loop

Adjust inputs for better outputs

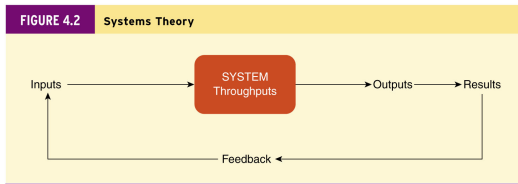
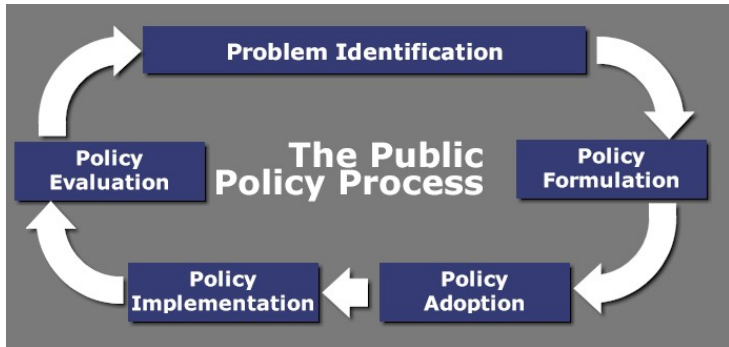


Figure: Kettl 2015

Making Sense of Policymaking

The Stages Model

Explains what's happening in the “black box.” A useful reductive model. Not perfect, but useful.



The Policymaking Environment

Policymaking inputs, process, and outputs are shaped by the macro-environment surrounding them

Four Components

- 1 Structural Environment
- 2 Social Environment
- 3 Political Environment
- 4 Economic Environment

Structural Environment

We'll talk about this in Chapter 3

- The Constitution
- Federalism
- Separation of Powers (Three Branches)
- Regulatory Process

Social Environment

Some Trends

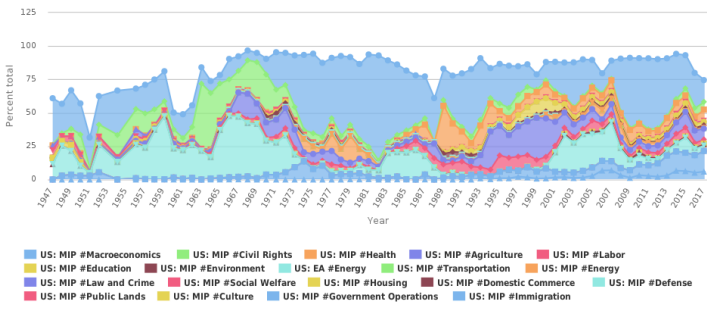
- Growing, but aging, population
- Increased female workforce participation
- Growth towards majority-minority population

What do these mean for demands on government and public policy?

Political Environment

Public Opinion/Mood

- Most Important Problem
- Right Track/Wrong Track
- Participation
- POTUS/Congress Approval



Economic Environment

How do you think the current economic environment shapes policymaking?

Systems Theory: Inputs

What inputs shape policymaking and how? Tangible examples are always helpful.

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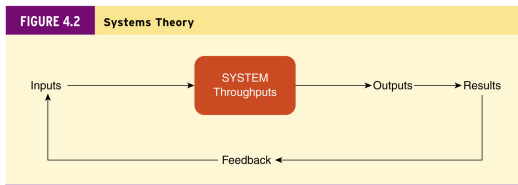


Figure: Kettl 2015

Systems Theory: Inputs

- Election Results
 - Electoral Mandate
 - Direct Democracy (Initiatives and Referenda)
- Public Opinion
- Direct Communications from Constituents
- Interest Group Activity
- News Media (Agenda Setting)

Systems Theory: Outputs

What types of outputs are produced by policymakers?
Who produces them? What effect to they have on the government and/or public?

Systems Theory: Outputs

Laws

- Statutes
- Regulations
- Case Law

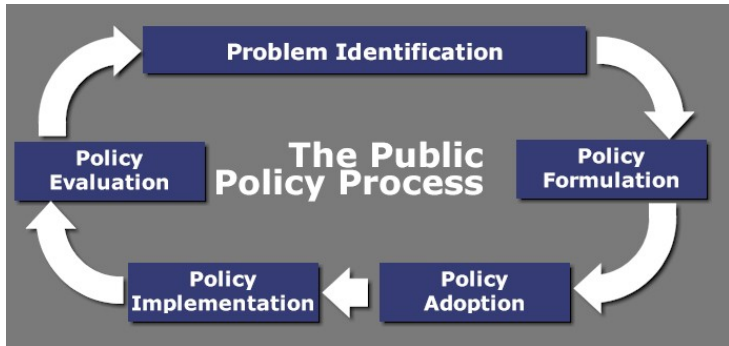
Implementation Monitoring

- Oversight (Congress)
- Evaluation (Many Sources)

Systems Theory: Throughputs

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Questions

What remains unclear about systems theory and how it applies to policymaking?