LEHRSTUHL FÜR STEUERUNG INNOVATIVER UND KOMPLEXER TECHNISCHER SYSTEME
DR. MARTIN WIRTZ

Seminar: From Plan to Practice in Public Policy

- Syllabus -

Education Programme WS17/18

Room:	F21/03.80
Time:	Wednesday, 16-18 h
Start:	18th of October 2017
Notes:	The seminar will be taught in English.
Registration:	Via FlexNow! From September 1st until November 5th, 2017 or during the first lesson.
Office hours:	Wednesday, 14-16 h and by arrangement
Mail:	martin.wirtz@uni-bamberg.de

Relevance and aims

Public policy is the response to the problems a society faces which cannot effectively or efficiently be addressed by individual citizens. Right? No. For given that we cannot address all problems at once, which ones will we prioritise? What phenomena should be considered as 'problematic' at all? How can we come to effective and efficient solutions, when so often it is difficult to know the effect of our measures? And even if we did – how could be sure that the right policies are adopted, rather than those serving powerful interests primarily? Last but not least, how can we make sure that our plan is carried out as intended – and actually works? These questions suggest, that the practice of public policy is often not as straightforward as one might think. In fact, these questions further refer to various stages of what is called the policy cycle and they indicate, that at each of these stages, specific challenges to a linear view of policy exist. What makes things even more complex is the fact that those stages are often not clearly separable, as what appears as a good and quick solution at an earlier stage, for example, might increase problems later.

In this seminar, we will learn about concepts theories that should help us, at the very least, to understand what happens in this often chaotic process of public policy. We will start by first considering the so-called 'policy cycle' (or stages heuristic) and its deficits for adequately capturing the full complexity of the public policy process. Nevertheless, we will use this concept as a 'heuristic' (a kind of cognitive short-cut) for structuring the rest of the course. This means, that we will talk about policy problems as the rationale for public policy, move on to the questions of how they end up on the agenda, how decisions are made given uncertainty and complexity on the one hand and the legacies of earlier decisions on the other hand, how these are put into practice ('implemented') and how the effectiveness and efficiency of a policy can or should eventually be evaluated. Along the way, we will learn some basics of complexity thinking and will look at the particular challenge of making and analysing public policy when complexity is increased by technology.

As a result, you will not only have an overview of the often whimsical reality of public policy in general, which will come in helpful for many other courses, but will further have some first impression of research and teaching at the Chair for the Governance of Innovative and Complex

Technological Systems. The particular substantive focus on technology, widely defined, does in fact not imply a restriction: In discussions and papers, the topics of the seminar can be linked to the most salient political debates of the day, from Dieselgate over Fake News and hate speech to the lack of broad band internet connections for the countryside.

Learning goals:
- To describe the core elements of policy processes
- To identify the difficulties in developing and implementing policies
- To get an idea of the complexity of public policy
- To analyse policy-making in relation to technology
- To solve problems, rather than reproducing texts in their original form
- To improve your command of the English language by actively participating in classroom discussions and writing an (academic) paper.

Teaching method and test

The course is built on a teaching method known as 'Problem-Based Learning' (PBL). Most importantly, this includes active participation in classroom discussions of the assigned readings focused on so-called 'Learning Goals' centred on a broader problem or puzzle. Hence, in order to pass this course, students will be asked to regularly and actively participate in the classroom discussions, and to take over the 'chairing' of one of the sessions (25% of the overall grade) rather than individually presenting the readings assigned. Students further have to conduct a small research project of their own and write a respective paper (5,000 words; 75% of the overall grades). There will be ample room for individual feedback during the research process. Further details on PBL will be provided in the introductory session as well as in the Rules of the Game provided on the Virtual Campus.

Course programme

October 18th 2017: Introduction

In this session, we will discuss some administrative details and the general 'rules of the game'. In addition, you will be provided with an overview of the seminar.

Readings
Optional:
Smith, K.B.; Larimer, C.W. (2009). Public Policy as a Concept or a Field (or Fields) of Study. In ibid.: *The public policy theory primer* (1-26). Boulder: Westview Press.

October 25th 2017: The policy cycle and its deficits

The policy cycle or stages model is a very classic way of thinking about public policy. There are, however, undeniable problems resulting from the 'incompressibilty' of public policy.

Readings
Mandatory:
Smith, K.B. & Larimer, C.W. (2009). Does Politics Cause Policy? Does Policy Cause Politics?. In ibid.: *The public policy theory primer* (27-48). Boulder: Westview Press.

Richardson, K.A.; Cilliers, P. & Lissack, M. (2007). Complexity Science: A 'Gray' Science for the 'Stuff in Between'. In P. Cilliers (Ed.): *Thinking Complexity: Complexity and Philosophy (Vol. 1)* (pp. 25-30). Mansfield, USA: ISCE Publishing.

November 1st 2017: Public holiday – no session!

November 8th 2017: Policy problems
Public policy generally addresses whatever a society perceives as problematic and in need of intervention. But some problems are more complex to address than others.

Readings
Mandatory:
Peters, G. (2015). *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy* (Ch. 2 Policy Problems, pp. 13-33). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Additional/optional:
Bijker, W.E. (2010). How is technology made?-That is the question! *Cambridge Journal of Economics 34*, 63-76.
Sismondo, S. (2010). The Social Construction of Scientific and Technical Realities. In: S. Sismondo, *An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies* (pp. 57-71). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

November 15th 2017: Thinking in systems and feedback loops
We have learned already that policy-making is not always a 'linear' process. Before we move on, therefore, it is time to generally get to know an alternative to linear thinking.

Readings
Mandatory:
Senge, P. (1990) A shift of mind. In: Senge, P. *The Fifth Discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization.* New York etc.: Double Day (mandatory);
Additional/optional:
Meadows, D. (2008). *Thinking in Systems – A primer* (Introduction & Ch. 1, pp. 11-34). Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing. Available also via https://books.google.de/books?id=JSgOSP1qklUC&pg=PA11&hl=de&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false .

November 22nd 2017: Agenda-setting
In this session, we will try to make sense of the ways in which policy problems end up high or low on the public agenda by referring to Punctuated Equilibrium Theory.

Readings
Mandatory:
John, P. (2015). Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, Agendas and Instability in American Politics. In S.J. Balla (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of classics in public policy and administration* (pp. 577-588). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Timmermans, A. & Scholten, P. (2006) The political flow of wisdom: science institutions as policy venues in The Netherlands, *Journal of European Public Policy 13* (7), pp.1104-1118.
Additional/optional:

Zahariadis, N. (2007). The Multiple Streams Framework: Structure, Limitations, Prospects. In P. Sabatier (Ed.): *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 65-92). Boulder: Westview Press.

November 29th 2017: Decision-making under uncertainty and complexity

At some point in the policy process, it will be necessary to decide in favour of one or the other solution. Ideally, the solution should be picked that addressed the problem best. But how can one find the best solution, if one does not know for sure what effects the various options will actually have – and if one does not even know all the options?

Readings
Mandatory:
M. Mintrom (2015). Herbert A. Simon, Administratitive Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization. In S.J. Balla (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of classics in public policy and administration* (pp. 12-21). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lindblom, C.E. (1959). The Science of "Muddling Through". *Public Administration Review 19* (2), pp. 79-88.
Jann, W. (2015). Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice". In S.J. Balla (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of classics in public policy and administration* (pp. 300-315). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Optional/additional:
Lindblom, C.E. (1979). Still Muddling, Not Yet Through. *Public Administration Review 39* (6), pp. 517-526.

December 6th 2017: Path dependence and lock-in; OR: decision-making in context

In reality, decision-makers rarely study all options. Even if they did, they would still not be totally free or unbiased in making their choice, given the complex dynamics earlier decisions have developed meanwhile.

Readings
Mandatory:
Pierson, P. (2000). Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics. *The American Political Science Review 94* (2), pp. 251-267.
Gerrits, L. (2012). Path Dependency And Lock-In. In ibid.: P*unching Clouds: An Introduction to the Complexity of Public Decision-Making* (pp. 89-92). Litchfield Park: Emergent Publications.

December 13th 2017: Decision-making and technology

When elected politicians have to make decisions in technology-related areas such as industry policy, they are faced with an unfortunate combination of lacking expertise on the matter and potentially far-reaching consequences. Let's see how this plays out.

Readings
Mandatory:
Keliher, L. (1990). Core Executive Decision-Making on High Technology Issues: The Case of the Alvey Report. *Public Administration 68*, pp. 61-82.
Additional/optional:

van Asselt, M. B. A., & Vos, E. I. L. (2012). EU risk regulation and the uncertainty challenge. In R. Hillerbrand, P. Sandin, & M. Peterson (Eds.), *Handbook of risk theory epistemology, decision theory, ethics, and social implications of risk.* (pp. 1119-1136). Springer Verlag.

December 20th 2017: Implementation – an overview

Once a policy has been officially adopted, it then only needs to be carried out. Only?

Readings
Mandatory:
Knill, C. & Tosun, J. (2012). Implementation. In ibid. (Eds.): *Public policy: a new introduction* (Ch. 7). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Optional/additional:
Smith, K.B. & Larimer, C.W. (2009). How Does it Work? Policy Implementation. In ibid.: *The public policy theory primer* (Ch. 7, 148-173). Boulder: Westview Press.

December 23rd 2017 to January 7th 2018: Christmas break – No sessions!

Enjoy your holidays.

January 10th 2018: Implementation – case studies

In this session, we will consider three case studies to take up the topic of implementation again that we had a first glimpse at before the holidays.

Readings
Mandatory:
Ryan, N. (1996). Some Advantages of an Integrated Approach to Implementation Analysis: A Study on Australian Industry Policy. *Public Administration 74*, pp. 737-753.
Wegrich, K. (2015). Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron B. Wildavsky, Implementation. In S.J. Balla (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of classics in public policy and administration* (pp. 342-358). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Belabas, W. & Gerrits, L. (2017). Going the Extra Mile? How Street-level Bureaucrats Deal with the Integration of Immigrants. Social Policy & Administration 51 (10), pp. 133-150.
Additional/optional:
Gilson, L. (2015). Michael Lipsky, Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service. In S.J. Balla (Ed.): *The Oxford handbook of classics in public policy and administration* (pp. 383-40). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hill, M. & Varone, F. (2016). The policy process at the street level. In ibid. (Eds.): *The Public Policy Process* (Ch. 13). Abingdon: Routledge.
Natalini, A. & Stolfi, F. (2012). Mechanisms and Public Administration Reform: Italian Cases of Better Regulation and Digitalization. *Public Administration 90* (2), pp. 529–543.
Alexander, E.R. (1989). Improbable Implementation: The Pressman-Wildavsky Paradox Revisited. *Journal of Public Policy 9* (4), pp. 451-465.

January 17th 2018: Evaluation – an overview

Before we can do it better, we first have to know, how it went last time.

Readings
Mandatory:
Knill, C. & Tosun, J. (2012). Evaluation. In ibid. (Eds.): *Public policy: a new introduction* (Ch. 8). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

January 24th 2018: Evaluation and technology

Technology is complex. This should be reflected in the way we evaluate technology-related policy. But how?

Readings
Mandatory:
Marks, P. & Gerrits, L. (2017). Evaluating technological progress in public policies: the case of the high-speed railways in the Netherlands. *Complexity, Governance & Networks - Special Issue: Complexity, Innovation and Policy*, 48-62.
Additional/ optional:
Verweij, S. & Gerrits, L. (2012). Understanding and researching complexity with Qualitative Comparative Analysis: Evaluating transportation infrastructure projects. *Evaluation 19* (1), 40-55.

January 31st 2018: Complexity theory and public policy

There are many parallels between existing theories of public policy and complexity theory. This raises the question of the latter's added value.

Readings
Mandatory:
Cairney, P. (2012). Complexity Theory in Political Science and Public Policy. *Political Studies Review 10*, pp. 346-358.
Cairney, P., & Geyer, R. (2017). A critical Discussion of Complexity Theory: How does 'Complexity Thinking' improve our Understanding of Politics and Policymaking? *Complexity, Governance & Networks, 3*(2), 1–11. doi:10.20377/cgn-56

February 7th 2018: Feedback session

In this session, you will be given the opportunity to present your research project (i.e. your seminar paper) and receive feedback.

March 31st 2018: Deadline for Seminar papers

In the final paper, students should apply the concepts, theories and approaches learned during the course to a real-life issue of public policy in relation to technology and come to terms with the complexity of this particular case, as well as what can generally be learned from this case. The insights gained in the course should become tools, to be put to use in such a way that the issue in question is better understood than by mere (e.g. journalistic) description.

For more information, please refer to the "Rules of the Game".