

Probing the Politics of Poverty

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Overview of the Session

- The value of political analysis of social issues**
- The many politics of poverty**
- Tools for analyzing the politics of policy development**

What Is the Value of Political Analysis?

- Seeing conflict and power as intrinsic elements of policy making and as determinants of governmental action and inaction**
- Understanding the origins and goals of policies and programs**
- Anticipating and diagnosing problems in policy implementation and performance**
- Considering how programs should be evaluated and refined over time**

Politics of Economic Inequality

- Taxation**
- Monetary and fiscal policy**
- Employment (incl. gender equity)**
- Foreign policy (guns vs. butter)**
- Immigration**
- Trade**
- Regulation**

Politics of Economic Inequality (cont.)

[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/06/01/
business/Biggest-Lobbying-
Spenders.html?ref=business](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/06/01/business/Biggest-Lobbying-Spenders.html?ref=business)

Politics of Economic Inequality (cont.)

What is the contemporary structure of “class warfare”?

- Rich vs. poor?**
- Middle class vs. rich?**
- Middle class vs. poor?**

Politics of Social Policy

- Political participation, electoral coalitions**
- Redistricting: polarization, marginalization**
- Cycles of public opinion**
- Ideological rationale for policies:**
 - **Universalism (Social Security, EITC, student loans)**
 - **Equality of opportunity (Head Start, school financing)**
 - **Safety net (SNAP, SSDI, Medicaid)**
 - **Poor (or even poor kids) as public goods?**

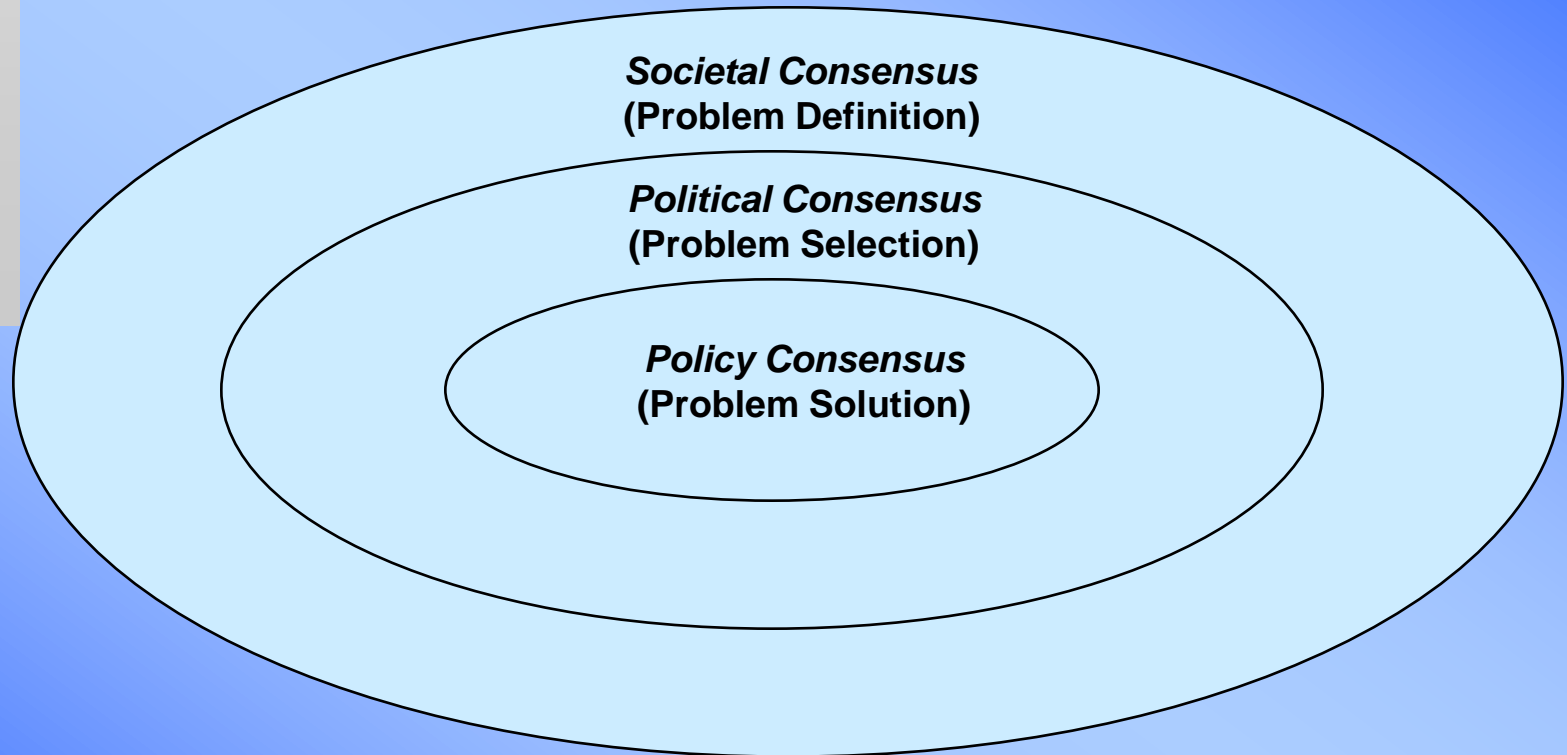
Politics of Social Policy (cont.)

- Intertwined politics of poverty, race, and ethnicity**
- Anti-poverty programs as social regulation**

Studying the Policy Process

- Whose interests and viewpoints are represented
- How responsive or accountable government is
- Why particular policies are selected over alternative possibilities
- How policies reshape politics

Levels of Consensus and their Functions in the Policy Making Process



Societal Level: What conditions warrant attention?

Political Level: What problems warrant attention?

Policy Level: What proposed solutions warrant attention?

The Translation of Social Conditions into Policy Issues

- Risk assessment**
- Locus of responsibility**
- Social construction of target populations**

Source: Oliver (2006)

Social Construction of Target Populations

<i>Power</i>	High	<i>Advantaged</i>	<i>Contenders</i>
	Low	<i>Dependents</i>	<i>Deviants</i>
		Positive	Negative

Social Construction

Source: Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram (1993)

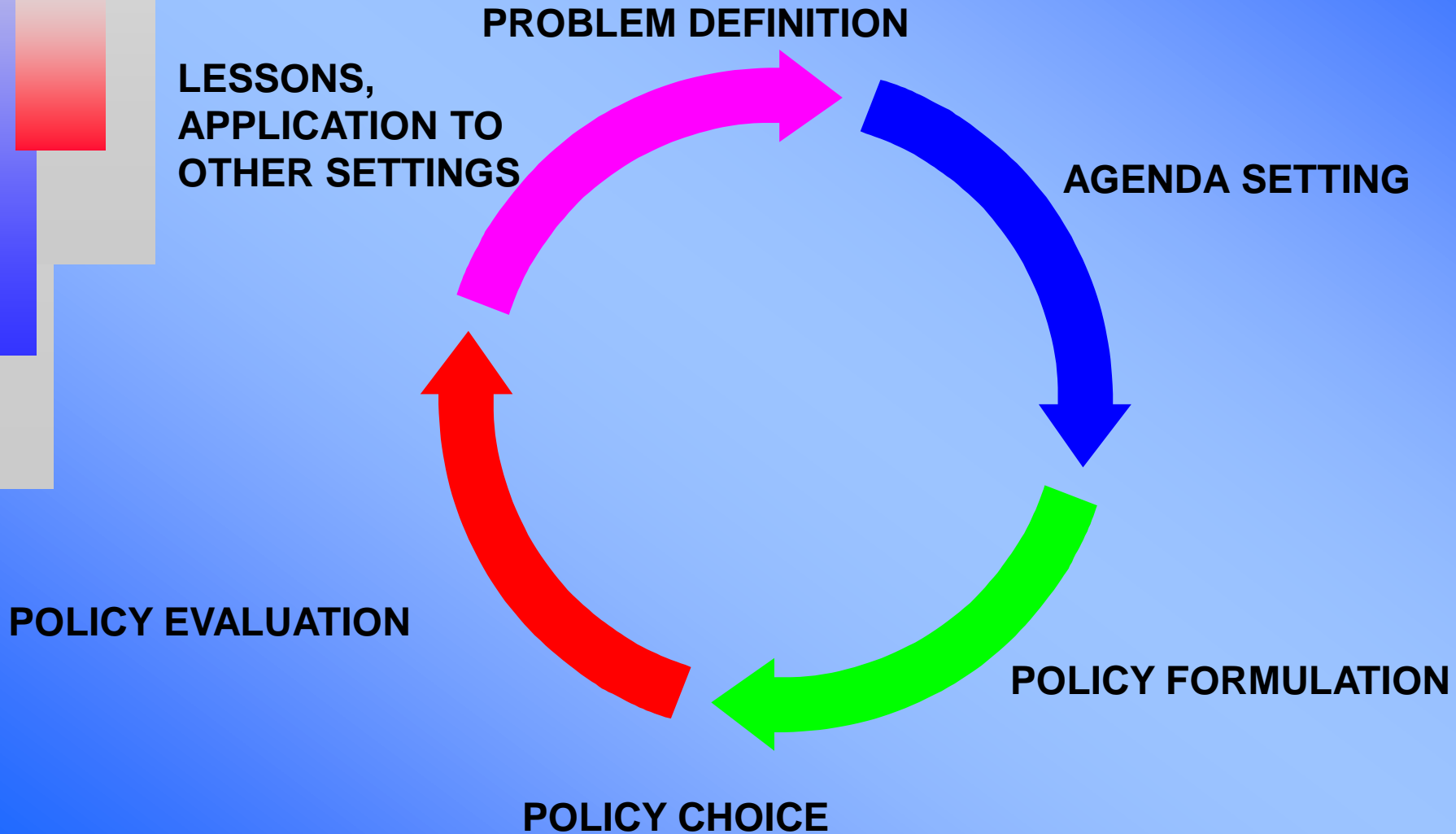
Who is Deserving of Subsidies for Income Support?

- Age?
- Parent of dependent children?
- Married?
- Full or part-time employment? Length of employment?
- Immigration status?

Unmarriage Penalty in Wisconsin's Policy on "Birth Cost Recovery"

- Single mother is enrolled in Medicaid for pre-natal care, delivery, and ongoing post-natal care and receives any income support she and the child are eligible for**
- Unmarried father, if successfully identified, is pursued for both repayment of hospital delivery costs and subsequent child support regardless of his income**
- Common outcome: father is absent and does not contribute financial, emotional, or child-rearing support to mother**

Models of the Policy Process: The Cycle of Policy Making



Sources of Incrementalism in Policy Making

- Multiple participants**
- Disagreement on root values**
- Bounded rationality**
- Political institutions**
- Fiscal constraints**
- Concentrated interests**

Projecting Political Feasibility

- Policy must survive “political test”**
 - **Little chance of adoption if not supported by officials, voters, or key stakeholders**
 - **Who are the individuals or groups usually concerned about this type of problem?**
 - **Who might be expected to become involved in the current problem?**
 - **Need to assess motives, resources, and strategic position of stakeholders**

Projecting Political Feasibility

- Concepts to consider for costs and benefits**
 - **Tangible vs. intangible**
 - **Direct vs. indirect**
 - **Opportunity cost**

- Costs and benefits to whom?**
 - **Society**
 - **Jurisdiction, group, institution**
 - **Individual**

Framework for Analysis of Policy Design and Political Feasibility*

Costs	Diffuse	Client Politics Politically Attractive	Majoritarian Politics
	Concentrated	Interest Group Politics	Entrepreneurial Politics Politically Infeasible
		Concentrated	Diffuse
		Benefits	

Concentrated Effects

- large in magnitude
- occur immediately
- direct, traceable impact
- identifiable group or geographic jurisdiction

Diffuse Effects

- small in magnitude
- occur over time
- indirect, less traceable impact
- broad, less identifiable target population

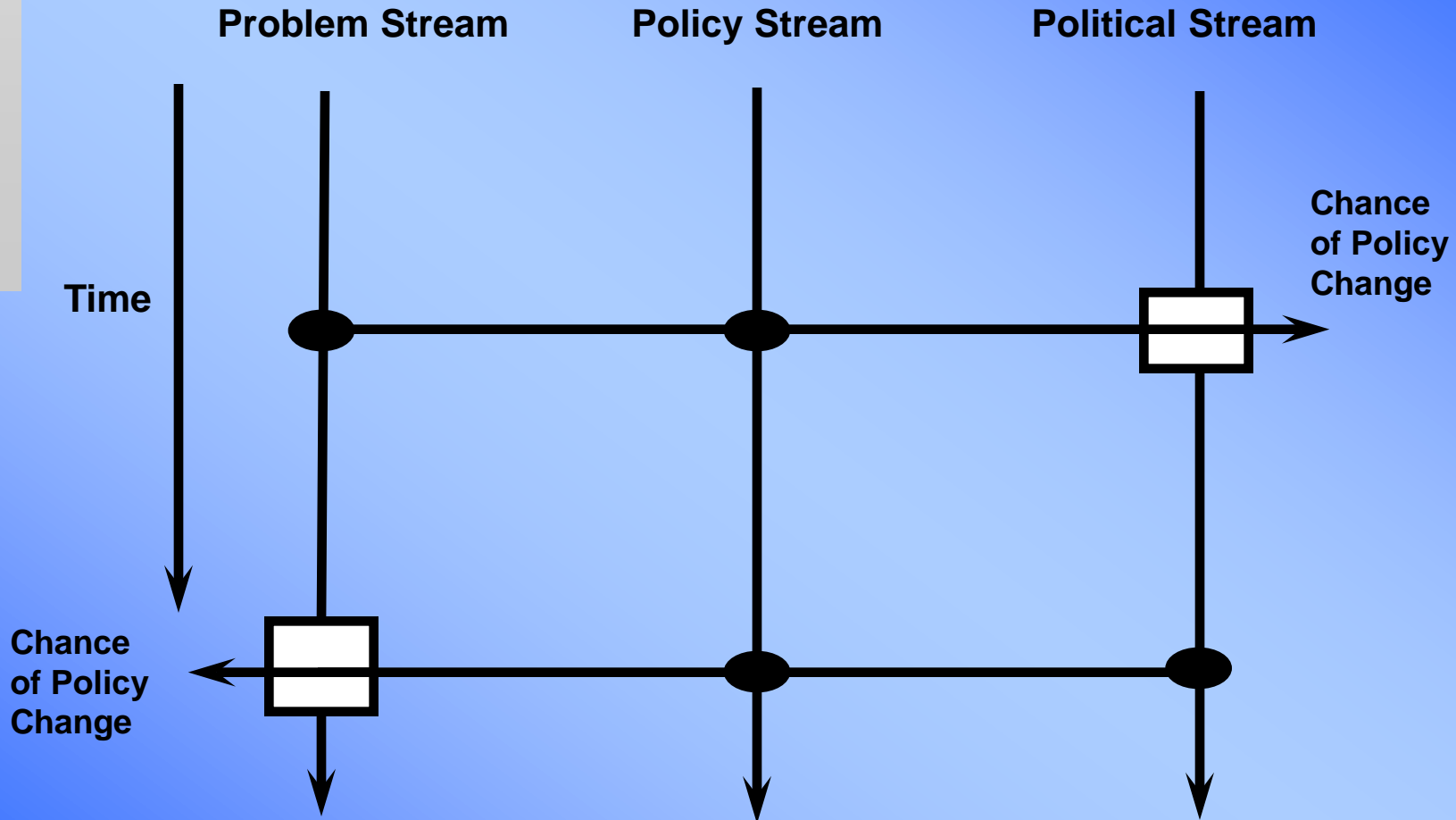
* This framework is based on typologies suggested by James Q. Wilson (1973; 1980; 1989) and R. Douglas Arnold (1990). See Oliver (1996); Oliver and Paul-Shaheen (1997).

Sources of Innovation in Policy Making

- Critical junctures in policy development**
- Political opportunities and leadership**
- Policy entrepreneurs and investors**
- Linkage of multiple venues in reform**

Source: Oliver (2006)

Multiple Streams Model of Agenda Setting and Policy Change (John Kingdon)



Suggested Readings

- Jacob Hacker. 2006. *The Great Risk Shift*. New York: Oxford University Press.**
- Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson. 2010. *Winner-Take-All Politics*. New York: Simon and Schuster.**
- Jacob Hacker, Suzanne Mettler, and Joe Soss. 2007. The New Politics of Inequality: A Policy-Centered Perspective.” In Joe Soss, Jacob Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler, eds. *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**
- Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers. 2011. *American Society: How It Really Works*. New York: W. W. Norton. Ch. 17, “Elections and Voting;” Ch. 18, “Taxation and the Attack on the Affirmative State”; Ch. 19, “Corporate Control of the Media.”**

Suggested Readings

- Andrea Campbell. 2007. “Universalism, Targeting, and Participation.” In Joe Soss, Jacob Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler, eds. *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**
- Lawrence Mead. 1992. *The New Politics of Poverty*. New York: Basic Books. Esp. Ch. 10, “The Wider Meaning of Dependency,” and Ch. 11, “The Prospect.”**
- Frances Fox Piven. 2002. “Welfare Policy and American Politics.” In Frances Fox Piven, et al., eds. *Work, Welfare and Politics*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Press.**
- Mary Jo Bane. 2009. “Poverty Politics and Policy.” In Mary Cancian and Sheldon Danziger, eds. *Changing Poverty, Changing Policy*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**

Suggested Readings

- Frances Fox Piven. 2007. “Institutions and Agents in the Politics of Welfare Cutbacks.” In Joe Soss, Jacob Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler, eds. *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**
- Helen Ingram. 2007. “Poverty, Policy, and the Social Construction of Target Groups.” In Joe Soss, Jacob Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler, eds. *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**
- Jennifer Hochschild and Vesla Weaver. 2007. “Policies of Racial Classification and the Politics of Racial Inequality.” In Joe Soss, Jacob Hacker, and Suzanne Mettler, eds. *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.**

Suggested Readings

- Vanessa Gamble and Deborah Stone. 2006. “U.S. Policy on Health Inequities: The Interplay of Politics and Research.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 31(1): 93-126.**
- Thomas A. Birkland. 2011. *An Introduction to the Policy Process*, 3rd ed. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe. Ch. 6, “Agenda Setting, Power, and Interest Groups”; Ch. 7, “Policies and Policy Types.”**