

The Policy Making Process

Heuristic Models for Analysis

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Normative Models

- Where should the ultimate source of authority and legitimacy lie in policy making?
- Civic Democracy
- Pluralism
- Administrative Rationalism (Experts)
- Elites
- Market

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Analytic Models

Why do policy decisions turn out the way they do?

- Stages Model
 - Rational model
 - Agenda Setting
 - Public Agenda
 - Government Agenda
- Policy Streams Model
 - Problem Framing
- Leadership Model
 - Elite Politics
- Bureaucratic Politics Model
- Organizational Politics Model
 - Organizational culture
 - SOPs
- Interest Group Politics
 - Pluralism

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Public Policy as Rational Problem Solving

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Rational Model

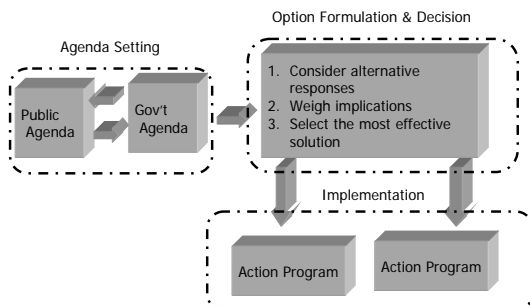
- The objective situation determines policy
- Neither decision-makers' personalities nor the institutional context of the decision matter
- Technical understanding of the problem triumphs
 - An equal understanding of the technical merits always produces the same result
- Government action faithfully follows decisions
- Priorities determined by scale and scope of needs of society

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Stages Model of Public Policy

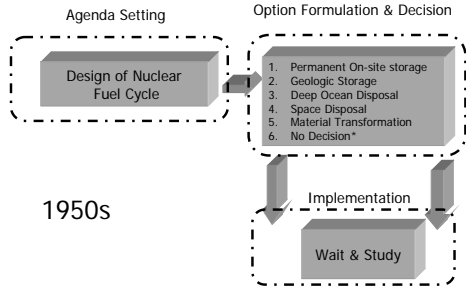


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Implications for How We Analyze Nuclear Waste Decisions



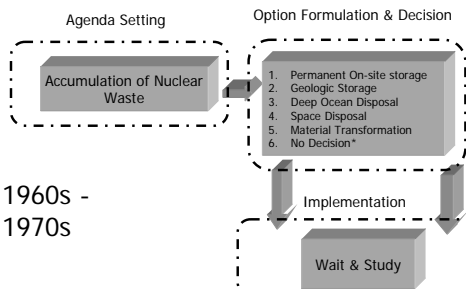
1950s

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Implications for How We Analyze Nuclear Waste Decisions



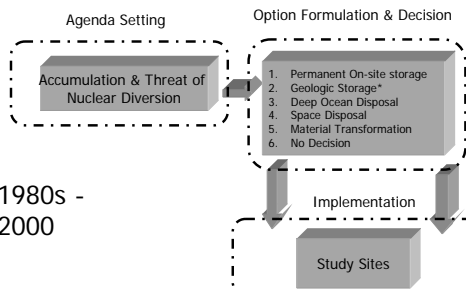
1960s -
1970s

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Implications for How We Analyze Nuclear Waste Decisions



1980s -
2000

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1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act

- Geological disposal of nuclear wastes
- Utility rate payers to fund nuclear storage
 - Surcharge on electricity
 - ~ \$16 billion to date
- DOE to take control of nuclear wastes by 1998

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1987 Amendments - NWPA

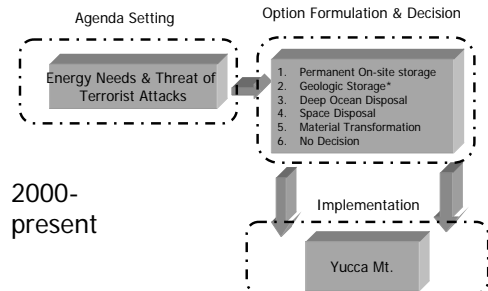
- Single Site Facility
 - Spent fuel and high level waste
 - Texas & Tennessee eliminated from consideration
 - DOE ordered to study Yucca Mt. only
- DOE can only conduct activities at Yucca Mt.
“...necessary for evaluation or licensing of the site or for NEPA purposes.”
- MRS facility cannot be built until HLW repository is licensed
 - Prevent DOE from operating MRS as HLW repository

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Implications for How We Analyze Nuclear Waste Decisions



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Unanswered Questions

- Why was this well-identified “problem” allowed to reach crisis proportions before the government acted?
- Why were some technically appealing solutions removed from consideration?
- Why hasn't the facility been opened?

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Broader Questions

- Why do some society-wide issues come to be seen as public problems, while others are not?
 - Why do some pressing public concerns get on the government agenda, while others do not?
 - Why do some serious problems on the government agenda never attract public concern?

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Broader Questions

- Why does government policy change when administrations change?
 - Or, when party control of legislatures change?
- Why doesn't government action always faithfully reflect government decisions?

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Politics

Clash of values, interests, and visions

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Non-Technical Factors Matter Most

- Who “frames” the problem & who decides matters
 - Roles - Personal interests & ambitions
 - Personalities - Perceptions & psychology
 - Values & Ideologies
- Institutional Setting where decisions are made and implemented matters -- as does the distribution of policy making powers
 - Executive - Federal, state, local government
 - Legislature
 - Courts
- Who is interested & how much matters...
 - Stakeholders
 - Interest Groups
 - Public

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Agenda Setting & Problem Framing

Problem Framing – the causal story	Solution
Accumulating stocks, safety, and security of nuclear wastes are the problem	Build a single site geological storage facility
The risks posed by transporting and storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain is the problem	Begin a new set of studies, or, Shut down nuclear power plants
Congressional Politics and irrational public fear of nuclear energy is the problem	Give power to a technical body
Nuclear Energy is dangerous	Shut down nuclear power plants

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Leadership Politics

- President (Governor) as Single Executive
 - Personality
 - Personal values, beliefs, and interests
- Elite Politics
- Example: President could order DOE not to work on Yucca Mountain
 - Bush v. Kerry

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Bureaucratic Politics

- Decisions are compromise solutions
 - bargaining among key players in a “policy game”
- Individual Personal Beliefs, Values, Interests of players may eclipse substance of the problem
 - Roles matter
 - Partisan politics
- Example: Changes in Senate control
 - Deal with Sen. Reid of Nevada to change party control of the Senate

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Interest Group Politics

- Decisions are compromise solutions among competing interests
 - Version 1: Pluralism
- Decisions are the product of Special Interest Manipulation
 - Version 2: Special Interests (corruption)
 - Control money
 - Control information

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Why Don't Government Actions Always Faithfully Reflect Government Decisions Implementation

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Organizational Politics

- Problem Framing reflects Organizational Bias
 - DOE v EPA
- Implementation decisions are made remote from high policy decisions → slippage
- Organizational Culture
 - Sense of mission
 - Sense of self
 - Organizational View of "problem" & appropriate solutions
- SOPs
 - "We" have our way of doing things
- Example: Congress prohibits MRS work prior to HLW facility

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Unanswered Questions

- What explains the specific timing by which a problem moves from "agenda" to decision and, ultimately, implementation?
 - Why now? Why not sooner? Or, later?

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What explains the timing of policy decisions?

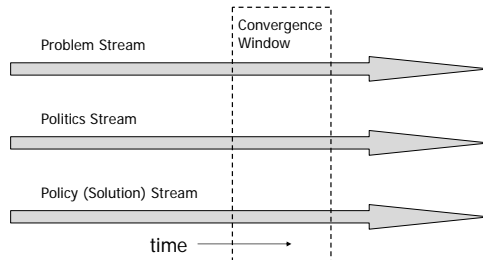
Why then? Why not some other time?

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Policy Streams Model of Agenda Setting



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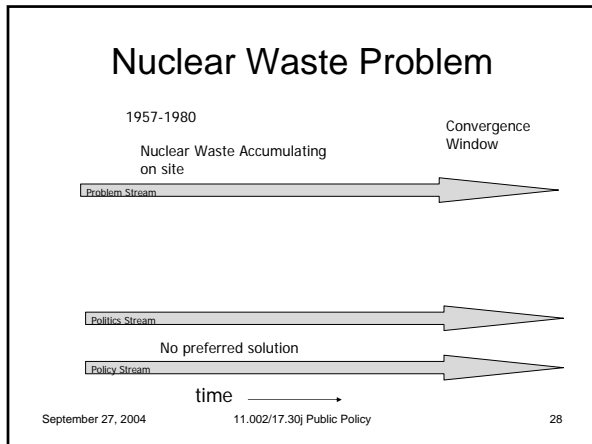
Policy Streams Model

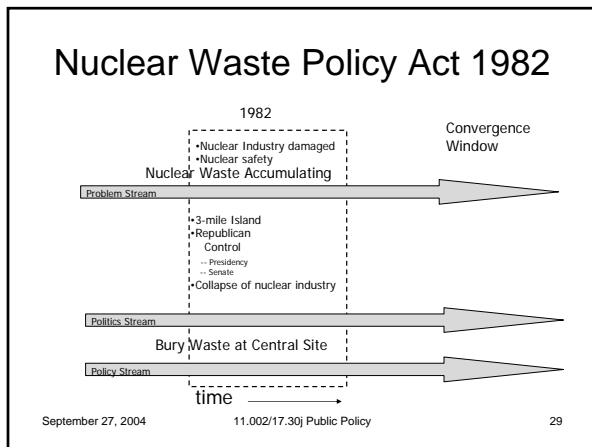
- Accounts for timing & for specific solution
- Problems do not get on the government agenda until
 - Politics legitimizes the “problem” as a public problem (i.e., it is useful)
 - A tractable solution is available, and
 - Politics finds the solution acceptable
- Problem Framing \leftrightarrow Politics + Problem + Solution
 - What’s the *right* causal story?
 - “problems” defined in terms of preferred solution

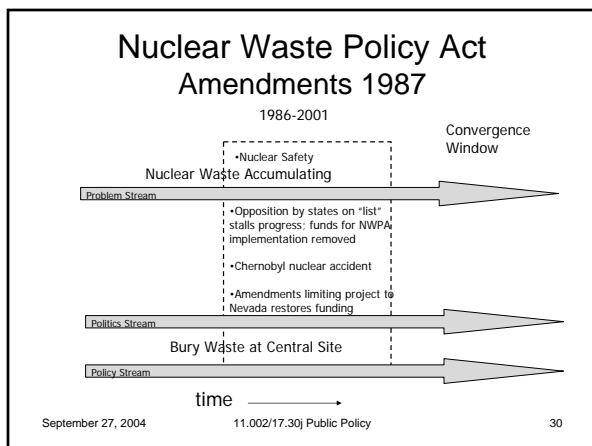
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Nuclear Waste at Yucca Flats

