

Policy Analysis and Decision Making

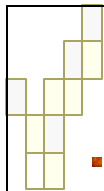
with Emphasis on Chronic Non-communicable Diseases

Bridgetown, Barbados

October 15-17, 2007

Agenda-Setting

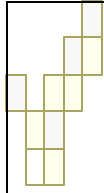
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What is Agenda Setting?

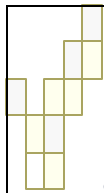
- Definition is elusive
- Agenda-setting is a political process, conflictive and competitive.
 - Contingent on
 - competing entries on policy agenda
 - ability to influence groups to action
 - positions & views of key policymakers
 - preferences of interest groups
 - preferences of decision maker
- There is an almost unlimited number of policy problems that could be awarded very high or the highest attention (reaching the top of the political agenda) by the government, the media, the public
- Very few problems make it, most will not
- Some policy solutions will be considered while others will not.





“The agenda setting process is an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites.”

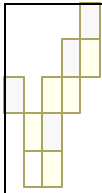
Dearing and Rogers, 1996



“The list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time ... the agenda setting process narrows [a] set of conceivable subjects to the set that actually becomes the focus of attention.”

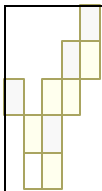
Kingdon's 1984:3





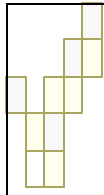
Types of agendas

- **Systemic or macro agendas:** include the widest range of potential issues that might be considered for action by the government and that might be placed on the public agenda.
- **Institutional or micro agendas** include those issues that are already for consideration of decision makers, legislatures or courts).



Currently, what issues would you consider to be the government agenda?





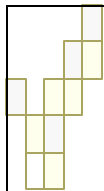
How do issues/themes become part of the agenda

- An event or crisis.
- Information/evidence from evaluations and existing programs reveals that a situation (because of severity, magnitude, number of people affected, etc.) requires attention.
- Values, beliefs or motivations can turn a condition or situation into a problem.
- Collective action of interest groups, protests, lobby, social movements around a particular topic.
- Role of the media.
- Political changes.
- Etc.



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Why do some issues not make it?

- **Problem Definition**
- **Crowded Out (by other issues)**
- **Problem not recognized as a relevant issue/problem**
- **Deemed not to be a legitimate state concern**
- **Non-decision-making**



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Kingdon: Theory of Multiple Streams

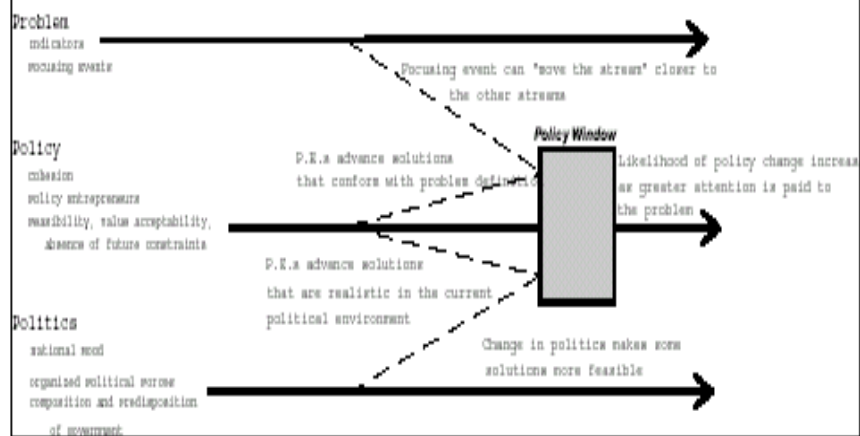
- Explains why some issues reach the agenda and are prominent and others are not.
- **Three streams**
 - **Problem stream:**
 - Represents information and events that may unchain a series of events related to placing or eliminating an issue from the agenda.
 - **Policy Stream:**
 - Refers to the knowledge or advice derived from researchers, advisors and analysts that offer alternatives or solutions that may or may not be considered or used by decision makers.
 - **Political Stream:**
 - The will of the political system and actors to place an issue on the agenda.



Kingdon, J. Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies. 1995.

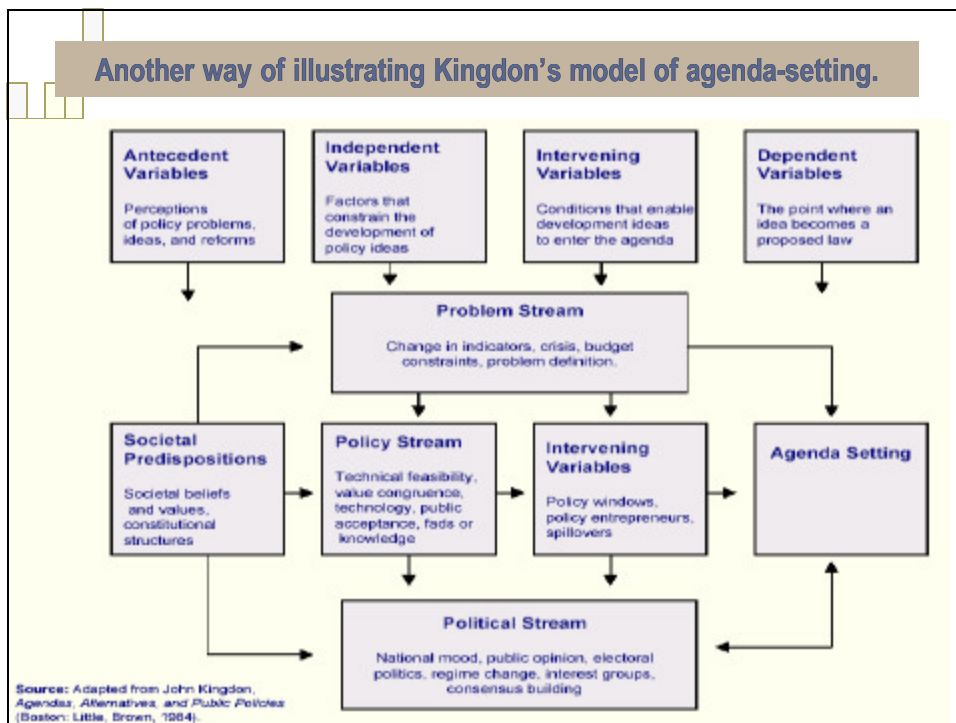
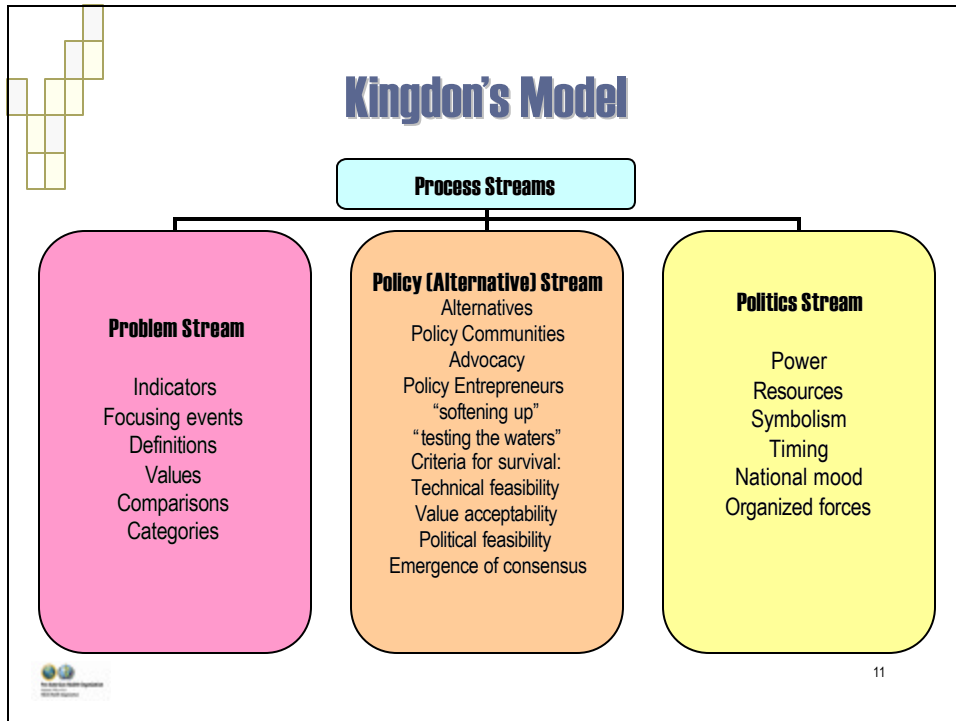
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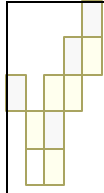
Figure 1
Kingdon's Streams Model



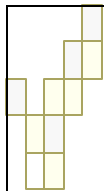
Bickland, Thomas. Toward A Theory of Focusing Events and Policy Change. Dissertation Proposal, University of Washington, April 1990.

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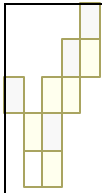
“Separate streams come together at critical times. A problem is recognized, a solution is developed and available in the policy community, a political change makes it the right time for policy change, and potential constraints are not severe ... these policy windows, the opportunities for action on given initiatives, present themselves and stay open for only short periods”



Policy windows

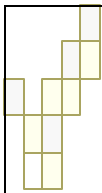
Can you identify some policy windows for NCDs in your country, or subregion?





Who are the stakeholders?

- Individuals, groups or entities that
 - Have an interest in the actions of another actor, in a particular issue and have the ability to exert power and influence
 - Affects or is affected by the actions of other actors with motivations, beliefs, positions or interests in the same issue.



Types of Stakeholders

Internal

Operate within the organizational confines, the agencies, the enterprise

External: (all others)

- Some provide inputs
- Others compete
- They have a special interest in how the actions of other actors affect their interests and objectives





Power players in health

- President and his/her cabinet
- Legislators
- National and local level politicians
- Bureaucrats/Technocrats??
- Physicians and other health professionals through their professional associations
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Medical technology companies
- Media
- Unions
- Consumer groups
- Patient groups
- Community organizations



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How opponents deny a problem or issue agenda status

- Deny that a problem exists
- The problem is not appropriate for government action
- Create fear about the consequences to society of proposed action
- The problem can be treated more effectively by non-governmental means
- Study it to death by appointing a commission to investigate it



Source:

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Simple stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder group	Nature of interest in policy decision	Potential impact on policy	Relative importance of interest	Importance of group	Influence/power of group
Primary stakeholders					
Secondary stakeholders					
Key stakeholders					

Check:

1. the relative power and interest of each stakeholder in policy decisions
2. the importance and influence stakeholders have
3. the multiple 'hats' stakeholders wear, and
4. the networks to which stakeholders belong and interrelate with others



Stakeholders that support

- Low threat
- High potential for cooperation
- Support goals and actions (of agency, program, etc.)
- Involving this stakeholder, success can be maximized

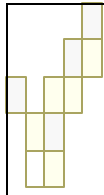
Stakeholders that do not support/oppose

- High threat
- Low potential for cooperation
- Worrisome
- Need to manage it with defensive strategies, and to shift his position if the benefits outweigh the risks

Marginal stakeholder

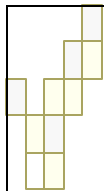
- It is not highly threatening or particularly supportive
- Unless decisions are truly important to achieve policy goals, or there is a palpable risk that it might become an opposing stakeholder, leave it alone.
- In cases where the position of the actor is not clear (can oppose or support) the threat is equally high.
- Manage this stakeholder through collaboration to shift position towards support.





Analysis of the Internal and External Environment

- Review your operation in terms of structure, governance, management, operations, organizational culture
- Identification of strengths (features that you do well, that increase competitiveness, etc.) and weaknesses (conditions that put you at a disadvantage)
- Identify those that are critical to advance policy
- Include a prospective analysis, since today's strengths may be irrelevant tomorrow.



Now, let's focus on political analysis





PolicyMaker

- Software developed by Prof. Michael Reich, Harvard School of Public Health
- Supports policy and political analysis.
- Includes five processes that analyze:
 - Actors
 - Consequences
 - Interests
 - Opportunities
 - Obstacles



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Polycymaker

Advantages

- Provides rigorous structure for policy analysis
- Adds discipline to interview process, analysis
- Challenges user to explore all aspects of policy
- Useful tool for strategy formulation

Limitations

- Designed for discrete, specific policy proposal
- Difficult to fully utilize functions when policy not yet finalized
- Relies on powerful assumptions by user (assessments of power, positions of stakeholders)



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Example from the experience of health care reform in the United States



PolicyMaker

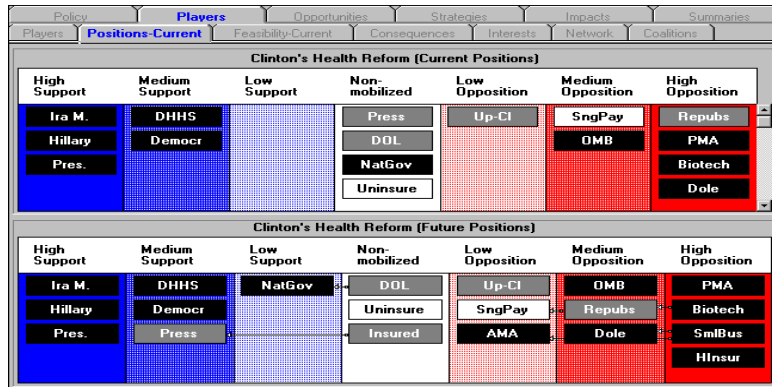
Analyzing Players

Policy	Players	Opportunities	Strategies	Impacts	Summaries	
Players	Positions-Current	Feasibility-Current	Consequences	Interests	Network	Coalitions
Player name	Type	Position	Power	Sector	Nt.	
American Medical Association	Organization	High Oppos.	High	Commercial		
Biotechnology Industry	Organization	High Oppos.	High	Commercial		
Clinton, Bill (President)	Individual	High Support	High	Political		
Clinton, Hillary (First Lady)	Individual	High Support	High	Political		
Consumers, insured	Social Group	Non-mobiliz.	Medium	Social		
Consumers, uninsured	Social Group	Non-mobiliz.	Low	Social		
Consumers, upper-class	Social Group	Low Oppos.	Medium	Social		
Democrats in Congress	Social Group	Med. Support	High	Political		
DOL (Dept of Labor)	Organization	Non-mobiliz.	Medium	Governmental		
Dole, Bob (Senator)	Individual	High Oppos.	High	Political		

Once you have defined your policy, *PolicyMaker* asks you to define who the critical players are. By evaluating the positions, power, and other attributes of the players with *PolicyMaker*, you can construct a working model of your political landscape.

Polycymaker

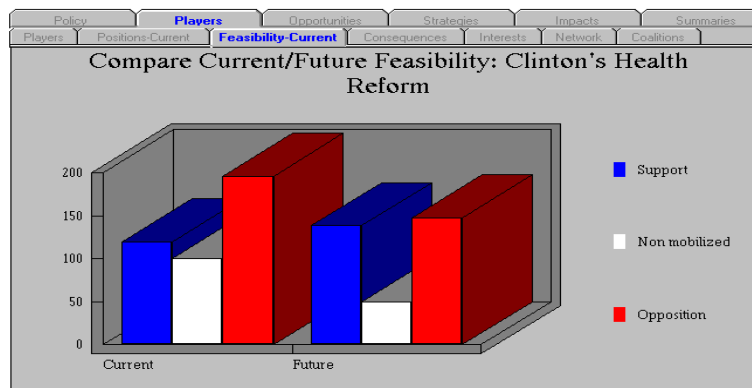
Evaluating Players' Positions



Once you have entered information on the players' positions, The Position Map shows you how the players are positioned in a color-coded table, with your supporters on the left, and your opponents on the right and with power coded in black, gray, and white.

Polycymaker

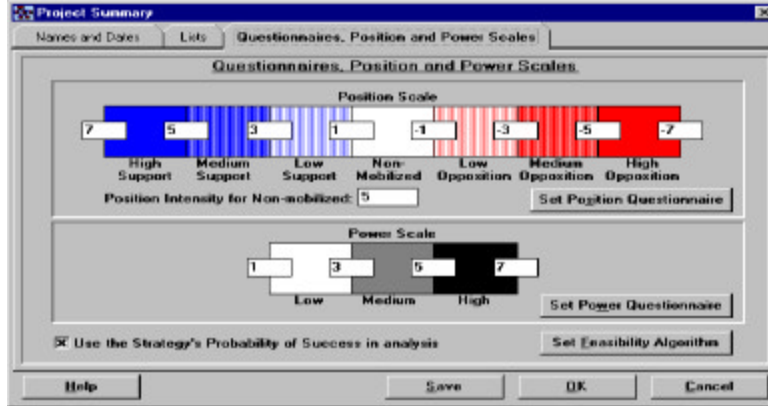
Feasibility Graph



The Feasibility Graph displays a quantitative assessment of the relative strength of all supporters versus all opponents, and the potential to mobilize players currently in the non-mobilized category. The assessment is based on the assumption that political feasibility is determined by three main factors: - the strength of the position a player takes (low, medium, or high support or opposition), - the power of a player (high, medium, or low power), and - the number of players who are mobilized to support or oppose a policy. The Feasibility Graph displays either a bar chart or a pie chart.

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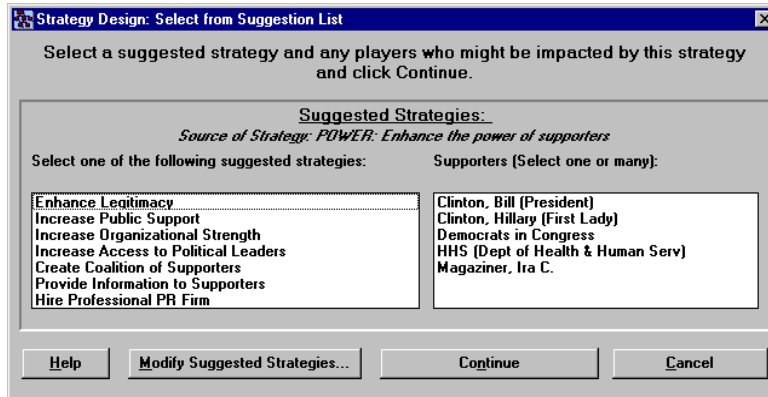
Customization



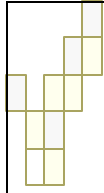
PolicyMaker allows you to adapt the software to meet your specific preferences or ideas. For example, you can modify the algorithm that the software uses to calculate a quantitative estimate of the feasibility of your policy. You can create your own questionnaires to help assess the power and position of critical players. And (as pictured below) you can set the numeric values on the scales used to rate power and position.

Polycymaker

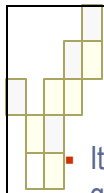
Strategies



After *PolicyMaker* has guided you through several analytic steps (to identify how players are allied, estimate your policy's most important consequences, and assess opportunities in the overall political environment), you are ready to formulate strategies to increase your policy's chance of success. *PolicyMaker* helps you design your strategies by providing a series of expert suggestions, which you can customize.



Last but not least



Social Construction of Target Populations

- It refers to the cultural characteristics of the popular images of a group that will be the subject/target of a particular policy.
- Social constructions are based on values, symbols and images of the group that “other” sustain.
- Some groups are considered to merit more or less than others, or that they are more honest, intelligent, and so on. (stereotypes)
- These social constructions are instrumental in the determination of the policy agenda and the final policy design.
- These symbols and images remain “encrusted” in the public policy and are transmitted as messages that citizens absorbed daily.
- Policy communicates to all who are the citizens that merit what and what type of information and participation is warranted/appropriate.



Source: Helen Ingram and Ann Schneider

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Suggested Reading(s)

- Dahl, R. (1991) *Modern Political Analysis*. Fifth Edition. Prentice Hall: Englewood Press. Pp. 1-12. <http://faculty.smu.edu/jhollifi/Modern%20Political%20Analysis.pdf>
- Kingdon, John. A model of agenda-setting with applications. *Law Review*. (2001) 331-337. http://www.law.msu.edu/lawrev/2001-2/Panel_4_Kingdon.pdf
- Meltsner, Arnold. Political feasibility and policy analysis. *Public Administration Review*. November/December 1972. pp. 859-867. (Handout)
- Roberts, M. J y Reich M. R. Ethical analysis in public health. *The Lancet* 359: 1055-59 (March 23, 2002).
- Schneider, A. and H. Ingram. (June 1993) Social construction of target populations: implications for politics and policy. *The American Political Science Review*. 87 (2): 334-347.
- Stone, D. (2001) *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-making*. Revised Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., pp. 1-33 (Introduction and Chapter 1). (Handout)
- World Health Organization. Fifty -Sixth World Health Assembly WHA56.1. Agenda item 13, 21 May 2003: *WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*. (See also World Health Organization. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Geneva, Switzerland World Health Organization 2003, updated reprint 2004, 2005.) www.who.int/tobacco/framework/en/ ; http://www.who.int/tobacco/fctc/text/en/fctc_en.pdf



Source: Helen Ingram and Ann Schneider

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