

INTRODUCING PUBLIC POLICY
FROM PRAXIS TO THEORY

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Session Overview

- Defining Public Policy
- Introducing Public Policy lexicon
- Understanding the Policy Cycle
- Influences on Public Policy
- Examining theoretical constructs
- From theory to praxis
- A framework for Public Managers

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What is Public Policy?

- Is it an outcome?
- Is it legislation? or...
- Simply an enabling announcement?
- Is it a skill?
- Is it a process?

Understanding Public Policy

- Essentially, a US academic construct
- Conceptually rooted in Political Science but uses Economics and Sociology increasingly
- Public Policy experts influence government functioning in most developed countries – in India, discipline in its academic form still in nascent stage
- Distinguishable from Public Management
- Should be multi-disciplinary, problem-solving and normative (Harold Lasswell)

Defining Public Policy

- *"A set of inter-related decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve."* (Jenkins 1978)
- *"A public policy is an action which employs governmental authority to commit resources in support of a preferred value."* (Considine 1994)



Or simply...

...the pattern of government decisions and actions intended to address a perceived public problem.

(Source: MIT)

NPA and NPM

- New Public Administration – explicitly abandons the notion that administration must be separated from politics. Its practitioners seek to influence the adoption and implementation of policies. (Weimer and Vining 1991)
- New Public Management – seeks to separate policymaking agencies from implementing agencies in order to boost administrative efficiency and effectiveness. (Wu *et al* 2010)
- IAS officers and the policy arena?

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Policy Lexicon

Policy Entrepreneur

Policy Event

Policy Analysis

Actors

Market Failure

Alternative Specification

Policy Window

Policy Response

Policy Evaluation

Policy Outcome

Actor Certification

Path Dependency

Bounded Rationality

Policy Transfer

Programme

Agenda Setting

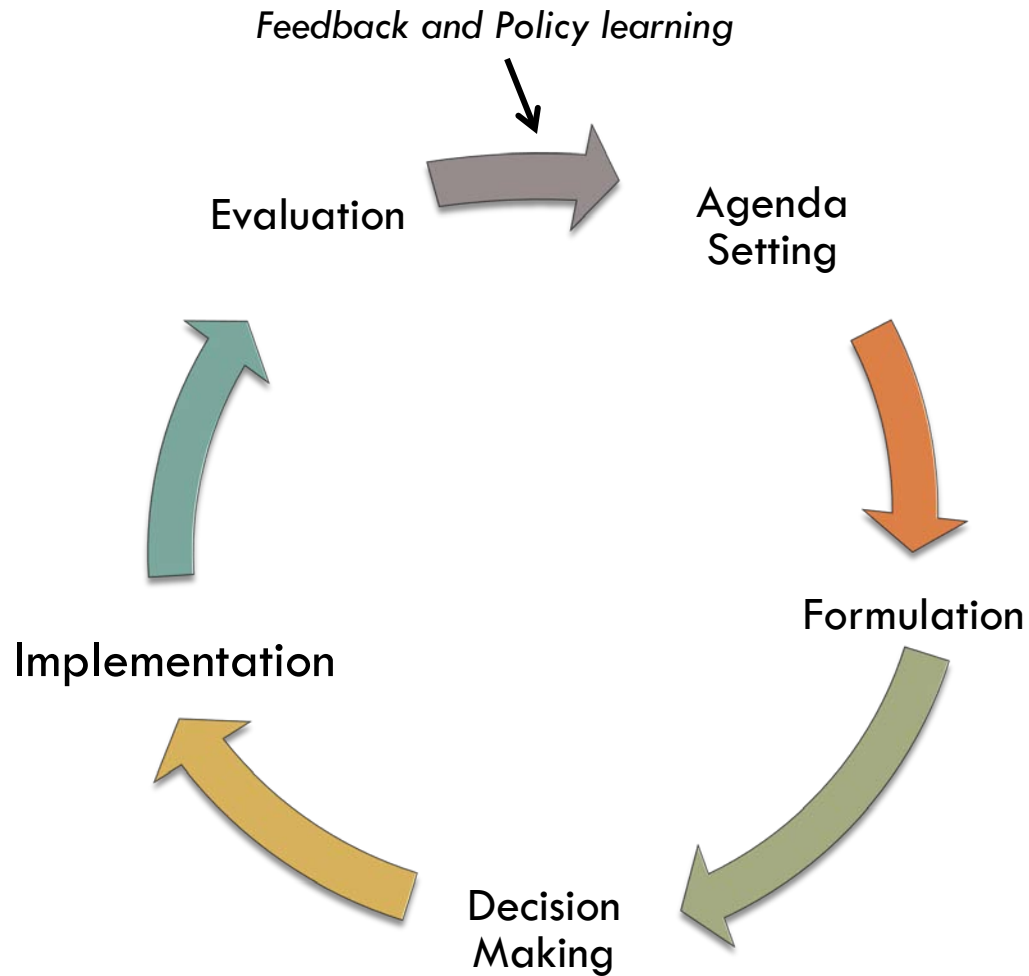
Efficiency

Distributional Justice

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Policy Cycle



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Influences on Policy

- Policymaking an interplay of
 - ▣ Ideas, institutions, networks, interest-groups & rational actors
- Private interest
- Public interest
 - ▣ Widely shared values & ideas, and interests – overcome some elements of self-interest
- Politics – clash of opposing visions of which '*shared values, ideas, and collective interests*' should define policy and appropriate role of government

Decision-making Models

- *Rational Choice Model* – rooted in policy analysis and ex-ante statement of consequences
- *Incrementalist Model* – supports ‘incremental’ instead of ‘maximizing’ strategies
- *Garbage Can Model* - based on ‘*satisficing*’ principle; problems and solutions often get coupled due to chance

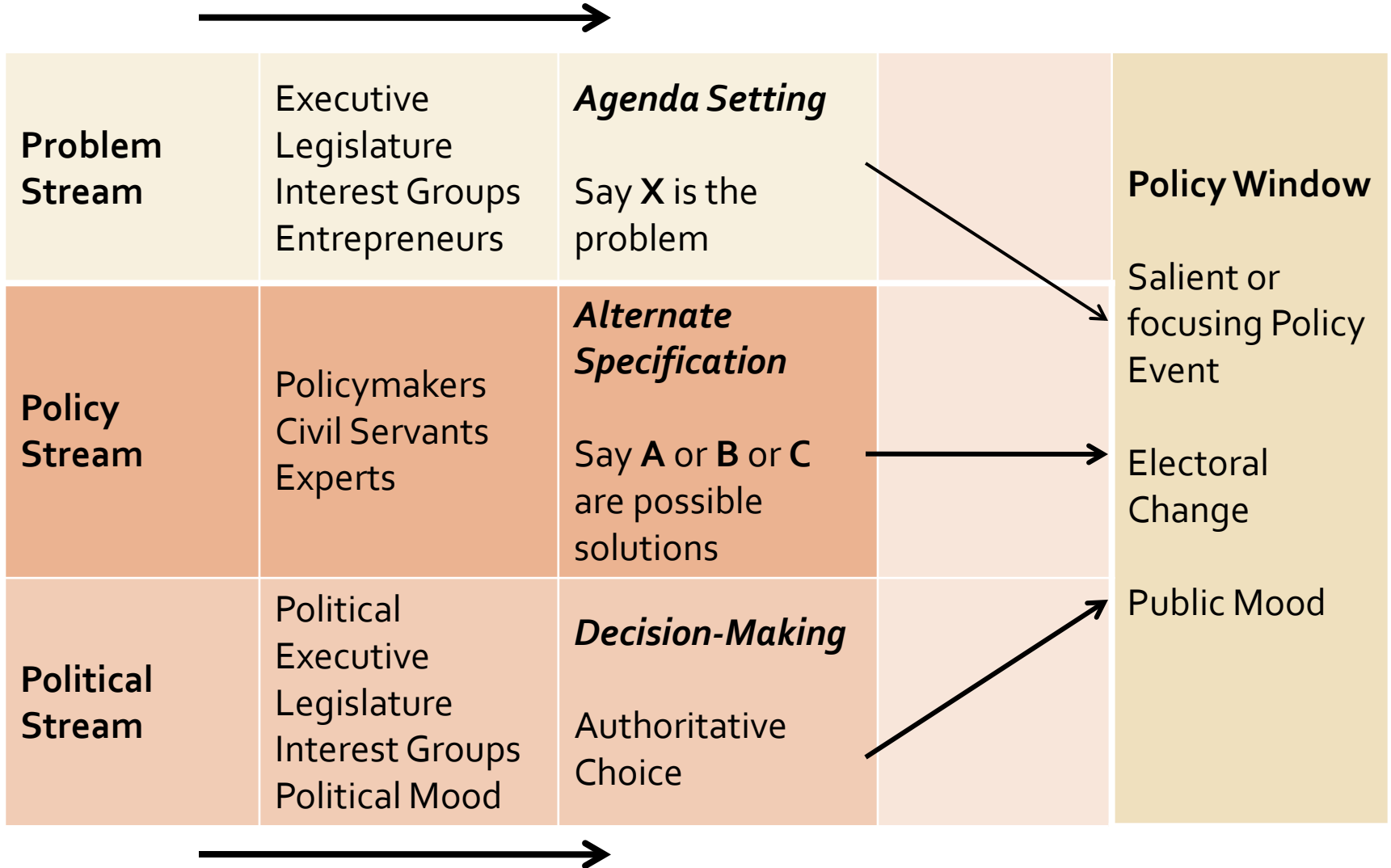
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Multiple Streams Model - 1

- Posited by John W. Kingdon (1984) in his seminal work *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*
- Policy formulation is an outcome of interaction of three processes or streams
 - ▣ *Problem Stream* – public matters requiring government attention
 - ▣ *Policy Stream* – proposals for change championed by policy entrepreneurs
 - ▣ *Political Stream* – factor election results, voter swings, etc
- Existence of a Policy Window allows an idea to move from policy to political stream and allows for coupling of streams
- Policy Window may be opened by the “appearance of compelling problems or by happenings in the political stream”

Kingdon Model



Multiple Streams Model - 2

“Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come.” – Victor Hugo

- Multiple Streams model of Kingdon essentially demonstrates how certain ideas are successfully mainstreamed into the policy agenda
- This leads to coherent policymaking

Punctuated Equilibrium Model

- Presented by Frank Baumgartner & Bryan Jones (1993) in their book *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*
- Theorises about episodes of change within general stability in policymaking
- Long-term stability is on account of “bounded rationality” of policymakers
- Stable periods are often punctuated by policy activism
- Positive feedback for agenda and its expansion causes instability and accelerates process of change
- Partial equilibrium is thus “punctuated”

Beyond Rational Choice...

- Most public policies based on what is often termed as **rational choice theory**. Treat man as *homo economicus*.
 - Theory of rational choice says that individuals' utility (or well-being) depends on their own self-interest and that, in making decision as to how to behave, they will try to maximize that utility in a consistent way, independently of irrelevant factors.
- Ideas being challenged by behavioural economics – Nudge's '*libertarian paternalism*' - changing the choice architecture so as to 'nudge' behaviour in the right direction, while retaining freedom of choice

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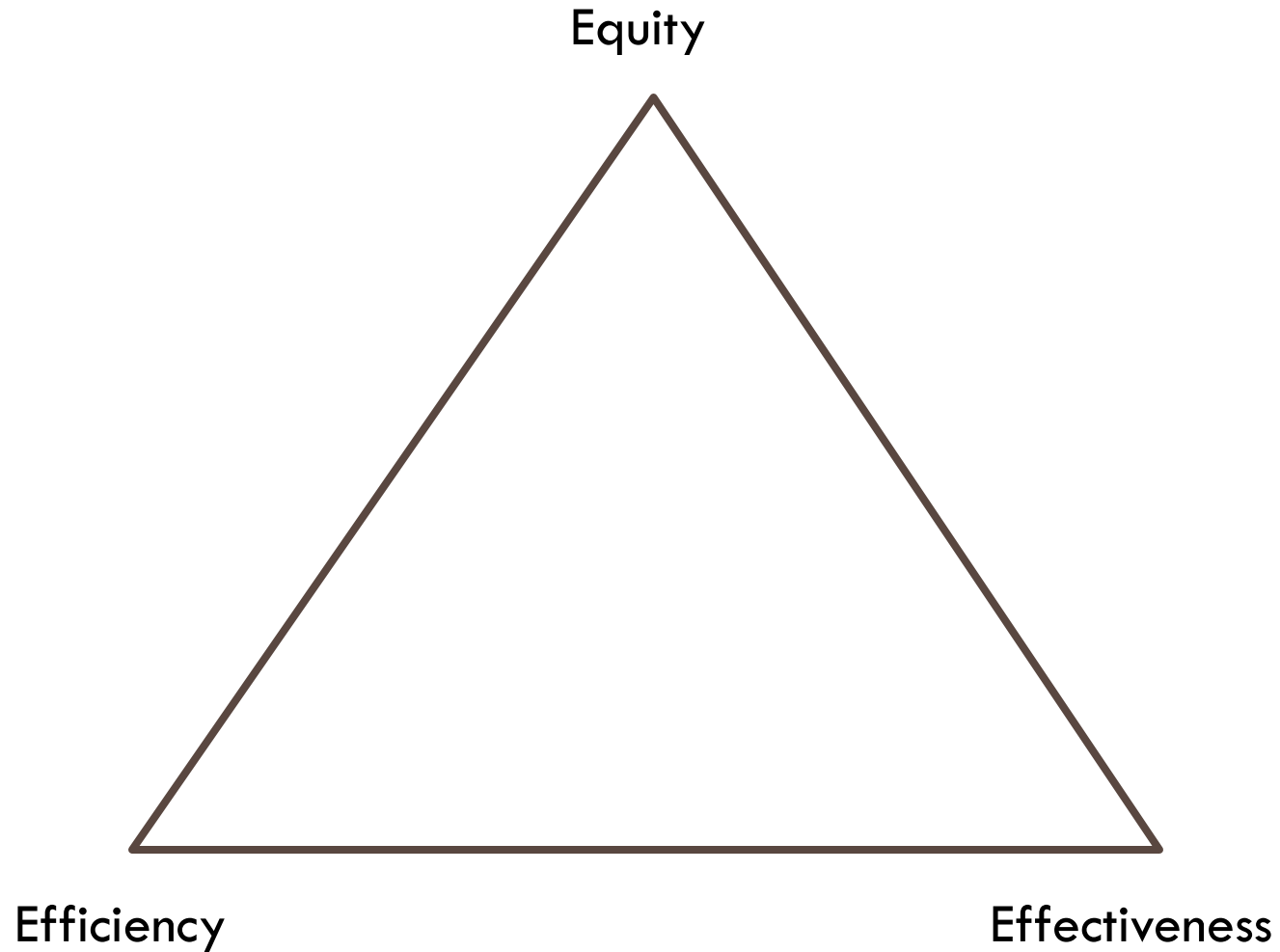
From theory to praxis

- Case of Land Acquisition Amendment Bill
- Let us identify
 - ▣ Problem Stream
 - ▣ Policy Stream
 - ▣ Political Stream
 - ▣ Policy Window
 - ▣ Policy Entrepreneur
 - ▣ Agenda Setting

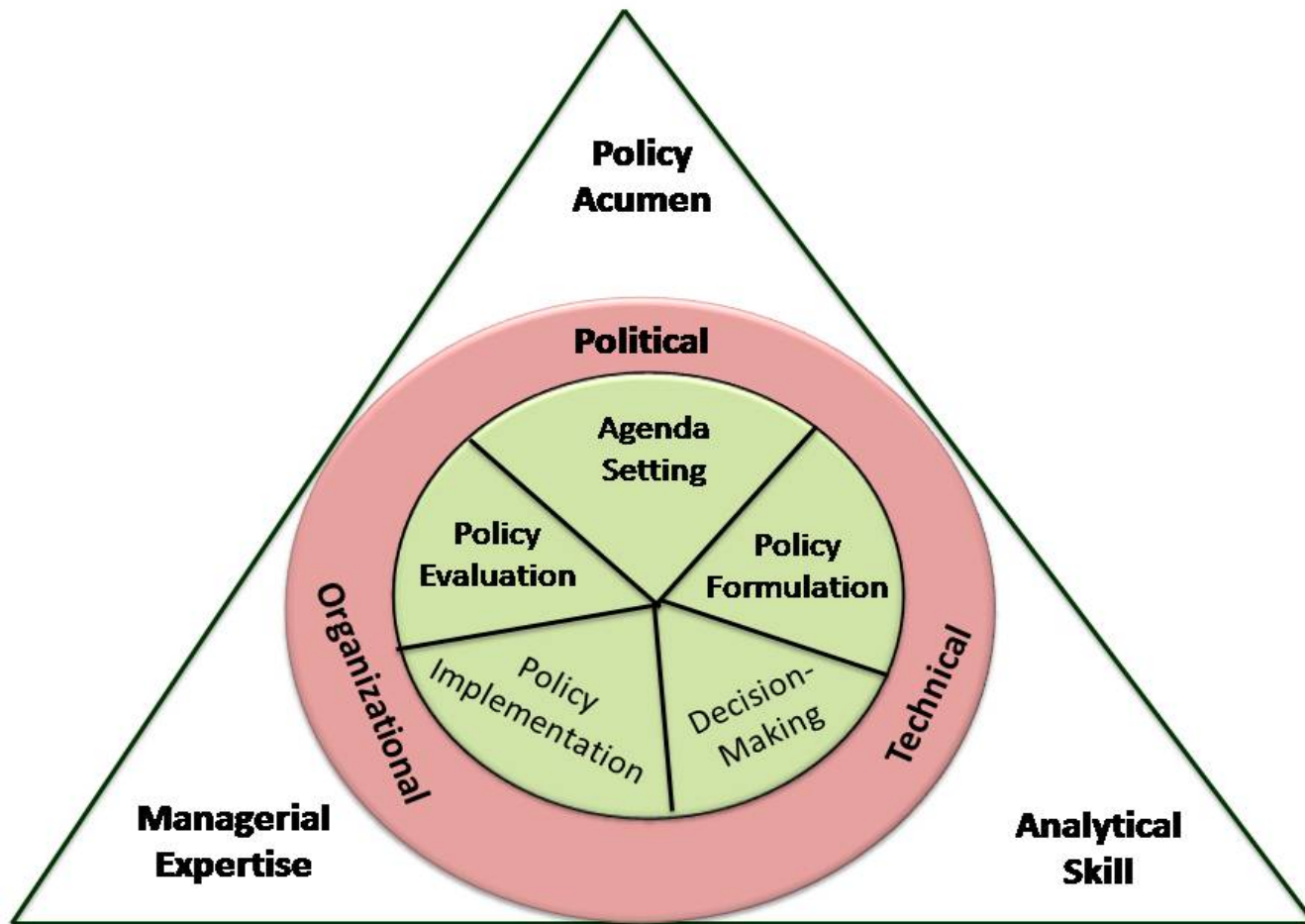
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Iron Triangle



Framework for Public Managers



Source: Wu *et al* (2010)

Summing up...

- Public Policy involves complex interplay of problems, ideas and politics – not always a sedate process
- *Window of opportunity* may allow *coupling* of the three *streams* to enable policymaking
- From a New Public Administration perspective, IAS officers should be armed with well thought-out policy proposals to be piloted whenever the *window of opportunity* opens
- Will ensure that choices are more “rational” and less “garbage can”

Thank You

