

T01P03 / Advancing the Comparative Study of The Multiple Streams Framework

Topic : T01 / POLICY PROCESS THEORIES

Chair : Nikolaos Zahariadis (Rhodes College)

Second Chair : Annemieke van den Dool (Duke Kunshan University)

Third Chair : Evangelia Petridou (NTNU Social Research and Mid Sweden University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

General Objective: The panel seeks papers that advance the conceptualization of the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), or its particular elements (streams, policy window, policy entrepreneurs) by applying it to different fields, scopes, and settings (e.g., subnational, national, or supranational) and by using diverse methodologies (quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods designs). More specifically, the panel aims to:

1. Develop communities and provide networking opportunities for scholars sharing the MSF as common theoretical orientation.
2. Encourage dialogue among policy process theoretical orientations within a single conference setting.
3. Solicit contributions that conceptualize or apply MSF elements on their own as part of additional theoretical orientations to promote the generation of new research agendas.

Research Questions: How is policy made under conditions of ambiguity?

Scientific Relevance: The panel's objectives address the essence of the study of public policy. The MSF has emerged as a major framework which analysts use to explain the policy process. We want to further explore the relevance of its hypotheses, especially in developing countries, nondemocracies, sub-national or supranational settings, in order to ascertain its continued usefulness as a tool of policy analysis.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel focuses on papers which aim to advance conceptualization of the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), or its particular elements (streams, policy window, policy entrepreneurs), by applying it to different fields, scopes, and settings (e.g., subnational, national, or supranational) and by using diverse methodologies (quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods designs). Papers that include sound discussion of their propositions and of relations of MSF to other policy process frameworks are particularly welcome.

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Session 1 Health

Wednesday, June 28th 08:00 to 10:00 (KHS239)

Discussants

Nikolaos Zahariadis (Rhodes College)

'Emerging' policy sectors and the MSF: explaining the contrasting outcomes of the regulation of health databases in France (2004-2010; 2012-2016)

Chloé BERUT (University Ca' Foscari, Italy)

The aim of this paper is to contribute to Multiple Streams Framework (MSF, Kingdon 1984) studies by analysing how this theoretical framework may apply to 'emerging' policy sectors such as the regulation of health databases. More precisely, the paper compares two policy sequences which transformed the regulation of the access to French centralised health databases, which gather medical information about every French citizen. Initially used for administrative purposes (reimbursement), these health databases represent a huge potential for public health and pharmaceutical research. While during the 2000s the access to these health databases was possible for a wide number of actors (patients' representatives, health professionals, private insurances...), political decisions taken in 2016 reduced the number of categories of actors benefitting from this access.

To explore this puzzle, the paper is based on an extended version of the MSF, where the MSF's initial logic is applied to the various stages of the policy process (Howlett et al, 2015; Bérut 2022). This framework is used to understand how specific forms of agenda-setting affect the three streams during the subsequent policy formation stage. This research is based on a qualitative methodology, in which data are interpreted in a comparative way using MSF analytical categories. Data comes from about 20 semi-structured interviews conducted in 2022 with political elites and civil servants working on the regulation of health databases in France, and from a corpus of policy-related documents (laws, policy strategies, reports...).

Results show that the degree of 'autonomy' (Cairney and Weible 2015) of a policy sector or sub-sector (here, health data) regarding a broader policy sector (here, healthcare systems reforms) is crucial as it determines specific forms of agenda-setting (low-salience vs. politicised agenda-setting). Then, these two types of agenda-setting seem to structure the politics stream, the problem stream, and the solution stream in different ways during the policy formation stage. In particular, while the first decision-making sequence remained confined to a 'quiet' institutional sphere, the second decision-making process involved far more actors and was publicly visible, but nevertheless resulted in the adoption of more constraining access conditions to French health databases. To understand this paradox, the paper puts the results into perspective with what we know about 'quiet' policy-making and the role of business power (Culpepper 2010). In the end, the aim of this paper is to contribute to a better theoretical knowledge of MSF dynamics when applied to cases presenting various degrees of 'autonomy' regarding broader policy sectors, while discussing the implications of this knowledge for policy outcomes.

(Virtual) How the pandemic affected the governance of the healthcare workforce shortage: The public policy vs managerialism paradox

Lisa Asticher (University of Bern)

This paper asks how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the governance of the healthcare workforce shortage

in Switzerland.

The analysis focuses on the measures implemented to counteract the shortage of the healthcare workforce in a subnational unit in a federal political system, i.e., the canton of Fribourg in Switzerland. The analysis combines the Multiple Stream Framework (MSF) with a neo-institutional path-dependency approach to better understand the apparent paradox between policy change and stability within the context of the pandemic.

There is a tension between change and stability in healthcare organization and financing since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of change, many researchers have found that the pandemic might “*have opened a “policy window” for the reform of health care financing*” (Béland et al., 2021, p. 146). However, in terms of stability, institutional and democratic structures, as well as managerial legacies, remain key factors for policy development (e.g. Bandelow et al., 2021; Engler et al., 2021). In Switzerland, people accepted a popular initiative for strong nursing care at the end of 2021. Nevertheless, in line with the neoliberal functioning of the healthcare system, a few months later, the public cantonal hospital of Fribourg announced radical staff reductions (Maradan, 2022).

While the MSF gives the tools to analyze change by looking at societal and political factors, as well as policy actors (Kingdon, 1984), the path dependency approach focuses on institutions by assuming their relative permanency (Pierson, 2000). Applied to the case of the workforce shortage, these combined approaches allow to understand which interventions were implemented, for how long, and furthermore who took action to tackle the issue. The latter is particularly relevant in a context where healthcare is not only a public responsibility, but also partially privatized and subject to the logics of market economy and competition.

This paper makes two contributions. First, it extends the use of the MSF by combining it with a neo-institutional approach in the context of healthcare reforms. Second, it provides interesting insights into the policy dynamics in a federal context, where change and permanency can conflict at the different levels.

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The Multiple Streams Framework in an Autocracy: China's Infectious Diseases Law

Annemieke van den Dool (Duke Kunshan University)

The Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) is one of the most frequently applied policy process theories. Originally developed to explain agenda change in the US federal system, the framework has since been used to examine why issues reach the policy agenda and how policy decisions are made in other countries. In response to calls for more systematic MSF research beyond the USA and Europe, this paper applies the framework to China. It does so through a longitudinal (1989-2022) case study of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases. This law was first passed in 1989 and amended in 2004 and 2013. It was again included in the official legislative agenda in 2020, in response to COVID-19. This study aims to identify the obstacles to and driving forces of the making and amendments of this law. It hypothesizes that focusing events are the primary driving force of the law's adoption and subsequent amendments. To test this hypothesis, the study relies on qualitative content analysis of a dataset comprising China Health Statistics, Chinese journal articles, news articles, World Health Organization Disease Outbreak News, legislative records, and policy documents. The study contributes to the MSF literature by applying the MSF to an autocracy and by taking a long-term approach.

When a global pandemic fails to open a policy window: the status quo of Canada's family reunification policy in the aftermath of Covid-19

Vathsala Illesinghe (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Sepali Guruge (Ryerson University)

The Covid-19 pandemic could have had the potential to open policy windows and find solutions to existing problems because of how deeply it garnered social and political attention. In the family reunification policy domain in Canada, the global pandemic had an impact on policymakers and politicians persuading them to relax restrictions on temporary travel to Canada in order to allow entry to family members of citizens and permanent residents in the short term. However, during the pandemic and its aftermath, there have been no changes or new policy solutions to improve the existing family reunification pathways.

The issues with the Canadian family reunification program have been known pre-pandemic [1]. Closed borders and overseas visa office shutdowns drew attention to pre-existing barriers and hardships faced by families, mostly women and children, separated from their spouses and partners.

In this paper, we apply the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) to examine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Canadian family reunification policy domain as a significant focusing event on agenda setting.

We also drew from other theories of the policy process such as the Punctuated Equilibrium theory (PET) and the Social Construction of Target groups (SCTG) to understand why advocates may not be able to push policy solutions onto the political agenda even when there is a focussing event large enough to potentially open a policy window.

Using data gathered from government and media reports, public opinion surveys, and interviews with bureaucrats, immigration lawyers, immigrants and separated family members in Canada and several source countries for immigrants to Canada, we examine the problem, policy, and political streams. The relevance of the MSF to the immigration policy domain and the significance of focussing events are described to critique the lack of policy responses despite laying bare the issues, identifying solutions to them, and having social and political attention needed to set the agenda.

Long-held public notions about who deserves to be allowed into Canada (economic migrants over welfare-dependent family members) can drown out advocacy groups' calls to action and demands to find solutions to pressing issues. Even when these issues are brought to the public arena, as it was during the pandemic [2], background ideals can diminish the political leverage of a focusing event. The significance of the pandemic as a focusing event is discussed as it may be important not only for the issues that it brought to the forefront but also for those solutions that got pushed back into the primeval soup.

[1] The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. (2017). Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration: Family Reunification.

[2] Spousal Sponsorship Advocates. <https://www.facebook.com/PrioritizeFamilySponsorship/>

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Session 2 Institutions and Policies

Wednesday, June 28th 10:20 to 12:20 (KHS239)

Discussants

Chloé BERUT (University Ca' Foscari, Italy)

Dana Dolan (George Mason University, Schar School of Policy and Government)

(Virtual) Why does China lift the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Policy? Analysis based on the Multiple Streams Framework

Ruoyun WANG (The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology?Guangzhou?)

Corey XU

The outbreak of COVID-19 in December 2019 has become a public health emergency with global impacts. Countries worldwide have formulated corresponding policies to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 based on their national conditions. As the case fatality rate decreases and vaccination rates increase, countries worldwide are gradually lifting their epidemic control policies. Policy changes during the pandemic provide a new scenario for public policy research.

The driving force of policy changes has long been an important topic in public policy studies. Moreover, the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF hereafter) is regarded as one of the most useful tools when analyzing policy change. The framework offers a structure to understand why and how some issues can attract policymakers' attention and change. It has been widely used for analyzing the policy process of different domains since its establishment, proving its explanatory power in different contexts.

China has insisted on strict pandemic policies since the outbreak of COVID-19. Instead of lifting the related policies step by step, it suddenly changed the long-lasting strict pandemic policies. Why does the Chinese government suddenly lift the pandemic control policy? What are the driving forces of the policy change? This paper tries to answer these questions by adopting the MSF to provide insights into explaining the driving forces of the significant change in pandemic policies in China. We use a qualitative case study to understand the reasons behind the significant changes in Chinese pandemic policy. We first reviews Chinese COVID-19 pandemic policy changes from the beginning of COVID-19 to the end of the strict control policies. Then the adjusted MSF is adopted to explain the reasons for the policy change by using multiple data sources.

This paper contributes to the application of the MSF in non-democratic regimes and improves its applicability in China's context. Also, it helps to understand how the Chinese pandemic policy was made and what drove the sudden change. Furthermore, the finding of the research can be helpful for policy actors to identify and seize the opportunity of the policy window's opening.

The Introduction of Long-Term Care Policies in Turkey: How Non-Issues Turned into Policy Issues

Cansu Erdogan (Universität Bielefeld)

This paper examines the agenda-setting process for the introduction of long-term care (LTC) policies for

persons with disabilities and the elderly, which were introduced in Turkey in 2005 under the Disability Act. At first sight, it could be argued that the agenda-setting process was mainly shaped by the accession process to the European Union (EU) or the 'Europeanization' process that started in 2005, as indicated in various parliamentary debates in Turkey. Although the EU has played a crucial role in this process, the data surprisingly show that there had already been parliamentary debates and official reports on the rights of persons with disabilities and the elderly since the 1960s, and even a draft Disability Act was introduced in Turkey in 1996, but not enacted.

Against this background, two questions arise: why were LTC policies introduced in 2005 rather than earlier or later, and how was the agenda-setting process shaped by the interplay of both national and global social policy actors? To answer these questions, this paper utilizes the Multiple Streams Approach (MSA), which paves the way for reconciling events with national as well as global social policy actors in explaining a complex agenda-setting process that take part in different streams. By applying the MSA, this paper aims to comprehensively discuss how the agenda-setting process is not only a product of top-down influence of global social policy actors in emerging economies such as Turkey but also a result of a multiplicity of actors and events in different streams. This study uses qualitative content analysis of official government reports such as parliamentary debates and development reports between the 1960s and 2005 and is based on expert interviews conducted in Turkey in 2022.

(Virtual) Crisis as a window of opportunity for digital governance transformation: the case of Greece during the Covid-19 pandemic

Vassilis Karokis-Mavrikos (University of Surrey)

As the Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging global policymaking since February 2020, scholarly insights have explained varying institutional reflexes and strategic responses among states and drawn implications for future crisis management. Nevertheless, as crises lie on the thin line between threat and opportunity, this paper zones in on the prospects of the Covid-19 pandemic facilitating lasting institutional change. In specific, it studies Greece's ongoing digital governance transformation (2020-2022) through a process-tracing Multiple Streams lens spanning the policy process – from formulation to implementation. The analysis focuses on digitization initiatives in four policy areas – health, education, administrative services, and the economy – and is informed by semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders (policymakers, experts, civil servants and professionals). The paper concludes that the Covid-19 pandemic was instrumental in inducing the most wide-scale governance transformation in Greece's modern history. Conditions of crisis generated unique facilitating mechanisms for the promotion and acceptance of a new digital governance paradigm through the continuous scrutinizing of resources and administrative capacity, the enhanced value acceptability of government innovation and the encouragement of cross-sectoral spill-overs during parallel processing. At the same time, they dictated that entrepreneurship could only emerge through the existing governance patterns and promoted the favouring of short-term institutional change, thus posing strains on the completion of structural policy change. The paper ends with implications and future research directions for the Multiple Streams Framework and the Digital Governance scholarship

(Virtual) Doughnut Economics, instrumental innovation and policy change in Amsterdam urban governance: a Policy Instrument Constituency approach

Hugo d'Assenza-David (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

The manuscript I would like to send to the **panel T01P03** by June 1st is the result of a research carried out in the city of Amsterdam in 2022. I would hopefully submit it to a Public Policy international peer-reviewed journal by July 2023. It may be of particular interest to the panel due to the **dialogue it proposes between the Policy Instrument Constituency (PIC) theory and the Multiple Stream Framework (MSF) to assess policy change through policy instrumentation**. While PIC advocates highlighted the compatibility between MSF and this new theory of the policy process, this research takes this twofold perspective seriously to study a **subnational policy process**, by highlighting how **a PIC and some 'instrumental entrepreneurs' structured the policy stream to impulse policy change** (in coherence with contextualised political and problem streams). Moreover, this contribution matches with the Panel's research question: by studying the instrumentation of the yet theoretical Doughnut Economics theory, I have notably identified **how the metaphor's ambiguity enabled the construction of a broad consensus towards its local adoption**.

The paper I am proposing is a piece of political sociology of public action, mobilising the PIC theory and putting it into perspective with the MSF to assess policy change. Building on a unique case, I assessed the policy process from Kate Raworth's post-growth Doughnut theory to an innovative instrument by the municipality of Amsterdam in 2020. How could the condensation process of the Doughnut theory be

explained by the advent and the action of a Policy Instrument Constituency in Amsterdam urban governance? If the identification of the PIC components was crucial starting point, it was of key interest to trace the evolutions of its strengths. Then, we eventually see how these evolutions shaped policy, problem and politics streams to establish a window of opportunity in favour of policy change.

Mobilising qualitative data and analytical methods, I identified policy change mechanisms and underlined the strengths and weaknesses of the Doughnut model's ambiguity. This paper suggests that the Amsterdam City Doughnut instrumentation triggered consensus-building enabled by differentiated appreciations of structural and instrumental promises, hence undermining the initial radicaless and innovative stance of the theory in its application.

Beyond offering an exploratory analysis of this urban policy process, this case study offers a PIC theory application to urban governance, highlighting the potential of mobilising this emerging approach to subnational contexts while putting forward a few avenues of clarification. The case studied suggests paying particular attention to the instrumental leadership played by certain actors, especially to strengthen the constituencies' collective action capacities.

We eventually put this theory into perspective with the MSF by highlighting how the PIC, being at the heart of the policy stream, interacts with other streams and influences the policy process. In this perspective, we have put forward the problem co-construction process enabled by the dialogue between the political and policy streams: solutions may chase problems, but political agencies are crucial to consider their contextual application.

Shifting Between Decentralization and Centralization: The Swedish Fire and Rescue Services Organization, 2003-2023

Evangelia Petridou (NTNU Social Research and Mid Sweden University)

Roine Johansson (Mid-Sweden University)

Kerstin Eriksson

Gertrud Alirani (department of social science)

As policy problems become increasingly more complex, policy makers privilege expert knowledge to increase the legitimacy of potential policy solutions. This is especially true in the Swedish policy making system, which is consensus and problem-solving oriented dominated by the demand for expertise. In this paper, we trace the travel of the idea of system command in the bureaucratic organization of the Swedish fire and rescue services based on the concept of distance between the 'world of ideas' and the 'world of policy and practice' advanced by Williams (2021). Based on content analysis of documentary material between 2003 and 2023 as well as elite interviews, we identify the experts acting as policy entrepreneurs and the strategies they employed to move in the distance spanning ideas and policy and practice. Additionally, we map the shift of the concept of system command until from an abstract theoretical idea to its uptake as an instrumental bureaucratic solution. In order to highlight this development, we follow Fowler (2022), who modeled implementation process in the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) and showed interdependence between policy adoption and policy implementation, finding that effects of politics on the outputs of policy adoption are conditional on existing policies and problems and that these effects are correlated with each other.

Reference

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(Virtual) Policy change in non-democratic setting: Civil society as policy entrepreneur and the influencing role of their rhetorical strategies

Yay Chann (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Pobsook Chamchong (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

In non-democratic countries, the influence of civil society on a policy change is somehow limited. This paper aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of civil society organizations in shaping public policy in this non-democratic setting. Specifically, while understanding the civil society organizations as policy

entrepreneurs, this article identifies the strategies they employ to influence a policy change. The study focuses on the case of the suspension of the Myitsone Dam in Myanmar, where the military-backed government suspended the dam's construction in response to public concerns. Recognizing that the international community acknowledged the efforts of civil society organizations as key contributors in shaping this policy decision, the paper aims to understand why the policy decision was made, and how civil society groups were able to influence this policy change in a non-democratic context. In this study, public policymaking is understood through a social construction lens, where problems and solutions are discursively constructed. The research employs a case study approach and qualitative-interpretive methods, including interviews and document analysis, with the use of thematic analysis to analyse the data. In a non-democratic context, the article claims that policy change occurred through the convergence of the three streams, but the use of the rhetorical strategies could help the policy entrepreneurs in influencing the policy change.

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Session 3 Theoretical Refinements

Thursday, June 29th 08:00 to 10:00 (KHS239)

Discussants

Vassilis Karokis-Mavrikos (University of Surrey)

Annemieke van den Dool (Duke Kunshan University)

(Virtual) Coupling Streams or Punctuating Friction in Lobbying Transparency in Germany? Combining Insights for Unexpected Policy Change via Congruence Analysis of Multiple Streams Framework and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

Maximilian Schiffers (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

Sandra Plümer (Bielefeld University)

After a 16-year-long debate Germany introduced a lobbying register in spring 2021. This reform is an example of unexpected policy change. For a long time, policy makers were firmly against stricter policy measures and even experienced political commentators did not expect any advancement in the field despite numerous scandals. These dynamics are remarkable since policy making reality is usually characterised by a high degree of policy stability. While we know a lot about reinforcing patterns from rival policy theories, we lack knowledge when it comes to explaining the details of concrete policy change.

This paper seeks to overcome the shortcomings of “theoretical silos” (Weible, 2018, p. 367) by focusing on a combination of different factors of stability and change in a congruence analysis research design (CON, Blatter and Haverland, 2012) that we find in the overlap of Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET). Presenting an in-depth study of the German debate on transparency, we answer the following research question: Which theoretical factors of MSF and PET are suited in explaining the introduction of the German lobbying register? Analytically, the case is divided into four episodes based on different variations of stability, ambiguity and change. We examine diverse material covering legislation, position papers and media reports by means of interpretative process tracing and qualitative content analysis. For interpretation of the empirical results, CON creates a set of confirmations and contradictions (match/mismatch) between theoretically derived expectations and empirical case-based observations regarding policy stability and change.

Results show that the breakthrough in Germany’s transparency policy was only possible through the combination of factors within the explaining power of the match/mismatch of MSF and PET. Both theories agree on the prominent role of (1) a growing issue network (with key policy entrepreneurs) that favoured stricter regulations, (2) an increasing public validation through accumulated scandals and (3) a subsequently waived denial to put the issue on the parliamentary agenda. Our data shows the complementary features of MSF and PET: Following a scandal about conflicts of interests of MPs, (4) MSF can explain why the lobbying register was selected as policy solution (coupling of problem and policy stream) which cannot be addressed by PET. In turn, (5) PET can explain the absence of a policy entrepreneur in the final episode following the scandal – which MSF fails to do – as the decision to end the blockade was made by the Chancellor Angela Merkel herself (high levels of institutional friction punctuating the policy equilibrium). With this specific combination of factors from the match/mismatch from congruence analysis our paper aims to strengthen the dialogue between different policy process theories to account for a deeper understanding of policy change and stability beyond the “theoretical silos”.

My co-author is Maximilian Schiffers, University of Duisburg-Essen (maximilian.schiffers@uni-due.de), who

doesn't have an IPPA account yet.

(Virtual) Agency, agents and their interrelations in multiple windows of opportunity, multiple streams and industry trajectories: Creating a market for zero-emission vehicles in the United Kingdom

Ural Arslangulov (University of Sunderland in London)

Rob Ackrill (Nottingham Trent University)

In this paper, we present an initial analysis of work that seeks to understand, through a novel combination of concepts, the processes that are driving the United Kingdom's decarbonisation strategy for the automotive sector. As part of this work, we undertook extensive fieldwork interviews and documentary analyses that allowed us to explore the interlinkages in a context where policymakers seek to create a significant and sustainable new market (i.e., cars with zero tailpipe emissions) via policy incentives and where the basic technology exists (e.g., batteries), but where investment in technological development must come from the private sector, especially from several related industries within the automotive ecosystem. Moreover, these private sector actors have considerable self-interest in the shape of those policy incentives. For this work, we draw on the multiple streams framework and the multilevel perspective to understand how technology, market and policy factors have jointly worked to put the British automotive industry on a specific trajectory. By adopting a grounded theory approach, we find that this trajectory has come about through the interplay between technology innovators and bricoleurs, with the former performing different entrepreneurial activities in different types of windows of opportunity – technology, problem, policy and market – to achieve the ultimate goal of a functioning market for electric vehicles. This paper aims to answer three interrelated research questions. What is the relationship between technological, policy, problem and market windows of opportunity and multiple industry trajectories and multiple streams? Who are the key agents at play inside each window? What does this mean for the relevant actors and their interrelations within a particular window?

To visualise the complex interactions of the different agents and their activities in multiple windows of opportunity, an interactive 3D model was developed. We thus found that there is a sequence in the opening of windows of opportunity. First, technological development in one of the related industries opens the technological window of opportunity for complementary technologies, which can be used by technological innovators to create a viable technological solution to an anticipated problem. In case of success, the role of technological innovators after this stage is to couple multiple industry trajectories with the problem stream in the problem window of opportunity, which can be considered a problem brokerage activity. The coupling of multiple industry trajectories increases the chance of a technological solution being accepted by bricoleurs while they are preparing policy proposals for policymakers. Our study found that technological innovators can couple industry trajectories with the problem stream within the problem window of opportunity but that this not always leads to the coupling of the policy and politics streams. If a technological innovator's problem frame and the technological solution are included in a bricoleur's policy proposals then the problem window of opportunity can be seen as a policy window of opportunity where industry trajectories are coupled with the politics, problem and policy streams. The subsequent inclusion policy ideas in a policy paper suggests that technological innovators can be viewed as policy entrepreneurs. The following policy change and the change in industry trajectories can open the market window of opportunity for the specific technological solution and help it to become a mainstream product.

(Virtual) Supreme Court as a venue-shopping avenue for policy entrepreneurs: Studying formal political institutions within multiple streams

Harsh Mittal (Birla Institute of Technology and Science)

Rama Mohana Turaga (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

MSF was developed in the American setting to explain agenda-setting in domains such as health, education and transportation in the 1980s. The framework since then has experienced considerable success in explaining the drivers of policy change in numerous contexts across global north and the global south. In this process, the framework has also been adapted to examine legislative agenda-setting and decision-making in parliamentary democracies (Herweg, Huß, and Zohlnhöfer 2015), and has developed to provide a more focused attention to the role of formal political institutions in the policy process (Zohlnhöfer, Herweg, and Huß 2015). Although MSF does not preclude analysing judiciary as a formal institution influencing the three streams and the nature of policy entrepreneurship, few empirical studies globally, to our knowledge, explicitly examine its role. An early contribution to this line of inquiry is the work of Barclay and Birkland (1998), who critiqued policy scholarship for keeping law and politics separate rather than

entwined as part of the policy process. Despite this sharp critique, quite surprisingly, policy process scholarship has not yet explored to any significant extent the role of higher judiciary in ushering new agendas as well as the adoption of policy decisions.

This paper seeks to advance this trajectory further by examining the agency of higher judiciary in the adoption of environmental policy changes in India. Our arguments proceed by first elaborating the background on the working of Indian higher judiciary with respect to a unique instrument, the Public Interest Litigation (PIL). We will then reanalyze a very popular case where Indian Supreme Court's intervention led to widely-resisted imposition of compressed natural gas for all public vehicles in Delhi. By combining the detailed analysis of this case with other environmental conflicts related to policy matters, we conceptualize the entrepreneurial strategies that have exploited the unique institutional setting of PIL to secure policy change. Our preliminary analysis suggests that the institutionalization of PIL as a juridical process extending to policy matters has made higher judiciary as an important venue-shopping avenue for policy entrepreneurs pursuing techno-legal solutions to environmental conflicts.

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- Herweg, Nicole, Christian Huß, and Reimut Zohlnhöfer. 2015. "Straightening the Three Streams: Theorising Extensions of the Multiple Streams Framework." *European Journal of Political Research* 54 (3): 435–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12089>.
- Zohlnhöfer, Reimut, Nicole Herweg, and Christian Huß. 2015. "Bringing Formal Political Institutions into the Multiple Streams Framework: An Analytical Proposal for Comparative Policy Analysis." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 18 (3): 243–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2015.1095428>.

Reconsidering the Concepts of Load and Overload in the MSF

Dana Dolan (George Mason University, Schar School of Policy and Government)

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Recent scholarship has advanced a more sophisticated approach to the 'Multiple Streams' policy process theory, with scholars such as Herweg, Zahariadis, and Zohlnhöfer (2018) calling on the community to refine testable hypotheses and develop more precise operationalizations of core concepts. Yet prior to tackling these important tasks, researchers must first understand the essential meaning of a concept. Without this foundation, they may rely on metaphorical descriptions, e.g., Kingdon's well-known mixed metaphor of 'coupling' three 'streams' during 'open windows' (but see Dolan and Blum, forthcoming) or vague descriptions, e.g., Kingdon's notion of policy communities and issue networks (but see Herweg, 2016). Alternatively, scholars may neglect murky notions, e.g., Kingdon's notion of 'partial couplings' (but see Dolan, 2021). In line with these recent examples of conceptual development, this paper aims to clarify a pair of related MSF notions: Kingdon's (1995) notion of "Overload" during an open policy window, and Zahariadis' (2003) notion of "Load" in the problem stream. While scholars sometimes mention these notions in ways that confirm their relevance for analyzing agenda change, they rarely if ever employ them in empirical studies. By drawing on a close reading of the MSF's foundational texts and more recent scholarship, this paper identifies the origins and empirical use of these two related concepts. It then develops systematized concepts that capture the meaning of each, reveals their possible connections, and considers the potential benefits and drawbacks of synthesizing the two. As a result, this project opens new avenues for furthering conceptual and theoretical development of the MSF.

(Virtual) China's Policy Process in the Lens of Multiple Streams Framework (MSF): A Meta-Analysis of 99 Applications of MSF in the Chinese Context

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While the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) has been widely used to research policy process across many countries around the world differing in political systems and institutional settings, key assumptions underlying MSF have rarely been critically examined. For example, under an authoritarian political system, China's policy process differs considerably from those found in Western democracies, and the interaction among policy actors are governed by very different set of rules. Based on review of 99 applications of MSF published in Chinese journals from 2005 to 2021, our paper show that underlay conditions for applications of MSF have been rarely assessed in these studies. More important, while arguing that MSF "fits" well in understanding policy process in China, most of studies do not go beyond justifying the official policies or

defending existing institutional arrangements. Our study points to potential avenues for better understanding of China's policy process by challenging assumptions made in mainstream theories developed in Western democracy, and potential opportunities in advancing MSF.

Keywords: Multiple Streams Framework, China's policy process