

# Rethinking public policies

**policy** /ˈpɒlɪsi/ **policies**

1 A **policy** is a set of ideas or plans that provide the basis for making decisions, especially in economics, or business. ...*the evolution of foreign policy under Thatcher. ...the decision-making body.*

2 An official organization's **policy** on a particular issue or towards a country is their official position regarding that issue or country. ...*the government's future policy towards South Africa. ...the government's policy on repatriation. ...the government's policy of forbidding building...*

Uroš Pinterič

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## **Foreword**

In modern world, there is enormous amount of literature on public policies and from this perspective this can be considered only as one more of same kind. Why then another book on public policies with same content. Because in years of work with students I found out that there is need for systematic description of policy processes that will at the same time provide also some additional information on certain aspects which are usually underestimated by the main stream public policy courses. In this manner I want to present most clearly few basic concepts that are used in policy analysis, their relations and at the same time I want to stress few things that are rarely explained as important.

First it is necessary to make clear what are differences between politics, policies and polity.

Second issue, that is usually underestimated is; understanding of the emergence of policy issues. Usually one is able to observe policy problems/issues only when they emerge on agenda. However little attention is paid to the indication of policy issues before they become defined as such.

Third issue that is often underestimated is role of evaluation. In many cases governments are keen to implement different policy solutions but at the same time they are often systematically ignoring evaluations which

are needed in order to understand outputs and especially outcomes of different policy measures.

Fourth topic which is often overlooked is relation between politics, policies and experts, which are trying to abuse lack of knowledge of politicians in order to fulfil their political ambitions or to gain some other positive effects. At the same time there is also reverse story when certain politicians present themselves as experts in order to gain support for their politically motivated arguments or proposals.

Last but not the least issue is one connected to the role of individual in public policies. When one is peaking in policy-making terms, classical analysis is mainly concerned with institutions and their legal roles while little attention is paid to the individuals in this sense.

With this book I want not only rewrite basics of public policies once again, but I want to elaborate few issues that are harder to be found in literature and which sometimes seem to be unimportant or ignored in context of public policies.

Author

April 2014

## **Policy versus politics in polity**

Political science deals with three main areas of research which are described in words polity, politics and policy. First one, polity describes so called political community/polis/politeia and represents normative-institutional frame of political (see Klimovský, 2008: 107).

Second aspect is described by politics and is process element of polity. It is developing in the frame of political community. Its main task is to balance different political powers among stakeholders as bearers of political ideas (Klimovský, 2008: 107-108). Basic political process, that is emerging in modern political systems with the task of change the balance of power is system of elections. Within the election procedures, political stakeholders (primary political parties) compete for the position of government (power). On the other hand, there are different civil society actors with their basic task is not to enter the competition for the position of power (government) but to enter political processes in order to carry out their own particular interests.

Third aspect of political is policy and it represents the field of political management of different substantial areas. In order to do so, relevant actors develop mutual relations in order to be able to regulate specific area of interest. In this case we speak about public policies as set of rules and measures as a result of policy processes.

Public policies are one of broad areas of political science research interest. In this frame, political science is interested in research of different aspects of solving social issues within public institutions. Dye (1976: 1) defines public policies as answer to the question what the government does, why it does exactly what it does and what

consequences this brings. In this context Parsons (2005: XV) warns form narrow understanding and suggests use of broad list of disciplines and approaches.

Policies are public in two main elements. First, it is about addressing the issue, which is of public and not private nature. Thus it concerns broader group of individuals within the social conditions of life. Second, public of policies is assumed via public addressing of the issue, in a sense that the solution is by definition under control of public and not private or tertiary sector. In this context public sector should adopt appropriate and adequate decisions, measures and legal acts in order to implement necessary measures or leave the implementation of measures to the private sector. In later case, competent decision-maker preserve its right to intervene into implementation process when necessary.

One can understand public policies as set of accepted activities or measures, which shall, provide these societal activities, which would result in what is expected to be public interest, according to the belief of public sector. However, Geyer and Rihani (2010: 27) point out that policy actors (who shall) never really represent the society. In this manner they refer to authors who, in 1972, called the policy making approach as "garbage can model", where policy issues are selected by randomly picked solutions, which were enacted and then observed if they work (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 27)..

Speaking of public policies, one should distinct between different approaches to understanding of the concept itself. In this manner policies can initially denominate certain field of activities within which policy measures are carried out as set for providing holistic solution in certain policy field (see Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 13-14). In this manner we



usually speak of education policy, economic policy, health care policy, military policy, foreign policy, etc. By this we address sets of governmental regulations in certain areas, which define and direct development of state activities in individual fields of state interest. Set of individual measures can be understood as another definition of public policy (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 6). Additionally, public policy can be defined as desired state-of-the-art in certain area or expressed desire of the government to follow certain way of development in specific area (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 14-15). Practically last case might be illustrated by government setting itself a goal to maintain low level of inflation and consequently all its activities and measures are synchronized in the direction to achieve this goal. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 15) understand public policy also in a sense of addressing governing institutions by other actors with their demands and propositions how to set certain area. However, this option can be understood also just as modification of first two possible definitions of public policies. In this manner, policy as act of government decision can be also understood just as modification of first two definitions. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 15) in the last case warn that public policy is in fact always more than just simple act of governing institutions decisions. After public policy is formally adopted / confirmed, gives legal power to competent institutions to implement certain activities. (Hoogwood, Gunn, 1984: 16). One of most important definitions of public policies and it is not often discussed, is definition of public policies via consequences of the measures. In this context public policies might be defined as direct (outputs) and indirect (outcomes) consequences of policy measures. Hoogwood and Gunn (1984: 16-17) see outputs and outcomes as two different approaches to the public policies' definition but on the other hand we prefer to understand these two concepts as consequence of implementation of policies and not as definitions.

Knoepfel et al (2011: 23) define public policy as a "power games in a specific institutional context played out between various public actors who make concerted effort to resolve a collective problem in collaboration or in opposition t para-state and private actors".

At the same time they remind that already by the 1980 there was more than 40 different definitions of public policies (Knoepfler et al, 2011: 23), which shows fast development of the filed and lack of any broader agreement among the scientists.

## **On outputs and outcomes**

As indicated before, there is difference between outputs and outcomes of public policies. Despite there is difference between both concepts, it is often blurred, mainly due to political interests overpowering policy arguments. One can argue that outputs (results) are usually direct, formal consequence of certain policies. It usually takes form of passing the law, accepting certain sub-legal act or issuing individual legal document such as decree. One should be aware that law in this sense can be primary legal ground of certain policy while individual legal act has the nature of implemented measure. Also official behaviour, based on the content of legal acts, can be considered as result of public policies. On the other hand outcomes (effects) can be understood as real life consequences of legal provisions or acts of public authorities. The difference between outputs (results) and outcomes (effects) can be better illustrated with the case.

Road safety policy (some scholars that road safety is not real policy due to its relatively limited influence over the society – compared to healthcare or labour) in Slovenia is based on curative/repressive measures. Instead of investing large sum of budgetary money for prevention of accidents and education of drivers, state prefers to fine different types of unsafe behaviour (using mobile phone while driving, driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medications, speeding, etc.). Due to relatively high number of car accidents with casualties, caused by speeding state increased fines for speeding up to 1000 EUR in 2009/ if paid in short period it is reduced by half. From the result point of view, legal act is clear and action of law enforcer (police in this case) expected. If one is speeding +30Km/h in the urban area, person can expect penalty points, and fine of at least 1000 EUR (possible to be

reduced to 500 if paid within two weeks. From the human perspective speeding in urban area is dangerous and stupid but it happens in the areas where road is broad, or when plate indicating the beginning or end of urban area is way before or after the actual residential area (such cases are known and rather common in Slovenia). Back to the case, outcomes are multiple. State declared expects systematic respect of the legal speed limits and reduction of severe accidents in populated areas. Silently state knows that, people will be still speeding and higher fines will at the same time increase the revenues of the budget, while possibly reducing budgetary health care expenses due to reduced numbers of injuries. However same measure will have also different outcome for those who will be caught speeding. Since average nett salary in Slovenia is around 1000 Euros it means that, being caught under circumstances as indicated before reduces family budget for one stereotypical salaries. However, 65% of Slovenian employees have salaries lower than average, which means that they will in fact loose more than one statistical nett salary. Since one usually has other monthly expenses such fine even if paid as half within 14 days will significantly influence financial position of the driver in question. There are two morals in this, first is that breaking the law is harming the law-breaker if one gets caught and second, those who have more than average salary have occasional permit breaking the law (not too often due to the fact that penalty points might cost one the driving licence – which might be more delicate than paying the money, especially if one is economically dependent on driving around).

Due to lack of connectivity of different public policies, state often faces need to correct one public policy because of negative side effects of other public policy. Mainly because state never anticipate negative effects of certain policy on other policies. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 21-22) add to this that one of main characteristics of public policies is lack of

predictability of their outcomes.

Finally, public policies can be understood also as theoretical model to assess possible activities of government and consequences of these activities while trying to include as many circumstances as possible.

Public policies are no individual decisions but they are also not systems of decisions. Hogwood and Gunn (1984:19-20) argue that they are much more than policy decision. However, they recognise the importance of policy decision-making from the policy process point of view. At the same time it is needed to say that public policies are closely related to public management, especially in the implementation stage. In the implementation, civil servants have higher or lower level of discretion to decide (deciding within the law but on their own will) and are able to develop different practices of policy implementation (see Hogwood and Gunn, 1984: 20). This causes that different implementation institutions carry out same legal act in different way and create different practices. In daily life, this means that police officer might decide if he just issue warning for minor traffic offences (such as low speeding at +5km/h) or decides for issuing the fine. By this we can indicate important gap in policy analysis, where authors often oversee or dismiss as unimportant the role of non-institutionalized individuals as bottom line policy actors, who create policies. On the other hand we argue (more detailed further in the book) that activities of non-institutionalized actors within the institutions can influence the institutional policy activities when individuals are not following the institutional norms and create their own practices which create unexpected policy outcomes.

By recognising this, such deviation asks for more research attention to the role of individuals within the system of understanding public policies. Additionally, Hogwood and Gunn (1984; 21) expose need for such

redirection of research interest by arguing that public policies consists also from knowledge/ behaviour/activity as well as dorm intentions, hidden behind certain activities. Hogwood and Gunn (ibidem) still bring in this idea from the institutional approach but when they demand understanding of institutional behaviour, they implicitly ask for understanding of the role of individuals as well, since institutions without people are non-functional.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 21) expose another important element of the policy decision-making which is often forgotten in the policy analysis. It is question of non-activity or non-decision which is conscious decision to leave thing as they are or not to take any action or decision in certain matter<sup>1</sup>. One should understand that non-activity is not just absence of activity as such but it is the consequence of one's decision that in certain situation bast strategy or response is not to react on certain request. In such situation Howlett and Ramesh (2003: 165) predict that any pro-active behaviour could result in high risk for unwanted outputs or outcomes. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 21) noted to this point that analysing public policies as the system of non-activities is much harder, since it offers much less research material and data than pro-active policy-making.

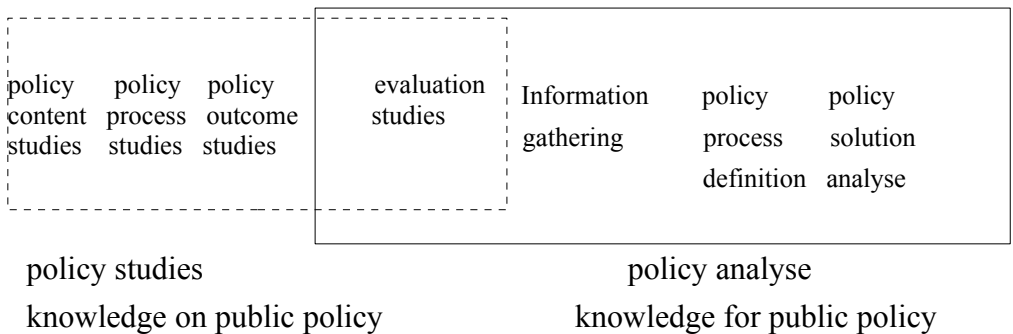
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<sup>1</sup> Non-deciding or non-acting influences as well the “common-sense” know it all attitude about policies (as well as about social sciences in general), when nobody assumes that some things are not changed due to some interest, even if they should be according to public perception. Lack of understanding of non-activity which reduce ability to predict certain outputs or outcomes of policy process.

## Analysing public policies

Public policies have different elements or perspectives that can or should be carefully analysed. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 26-29) in this manner define seven different types of analyses; policy content studies, policy process studies, policy outcomes studies, evaluation studies, information gathering for policy-making, policy process definition and policy solutions analyse. In first place, this list looks like repeating itself and partly disorganized. However, there are two different sets of types of analyses. First type of policy analyses is meant to gather knowledge on public policies, while another type gather knowledge for public policies. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 29) call system of knowledge on public policies, policy studies, while system of knowledge for public policies is called public policy analyse. First set of analyses (public policy studies) is predominantly academic research on certain type of social processes. Public policy analysis is on the other hand of more applicative nature and serves predominantly as basis for activities of policy-makers.

Scheme 1: approaches towards understanding of policy analyses



Source: Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 29

Policy content studies are predominantly content analysis of certain areas (e.g. healthcare, education, etc.) primarily it is a descriptive method, which can be carried out on a very abstract level and is predominantly meant for study. However, it can be as well used by policy-makers especially as a comparative study of policies in different countries.

Policy process studies deal with the development of policy processes. They analyse activities of involved actors. In this sense, one can use research methods, such as case study, comparative study, or, based on generalization, define patterns of behaviour of individual actors or general development of processes under certain conditions/ circumstances.

Policy outcomes studies research the changes and their general effects which were introduced by new or changed policies. For this, statistical data analysis is used, analysis of public expenditure redistribution and other methods which can be directly linked to data affected by policy change.

Evaluation studies are somehow the most profound analysis of public policies from different perspectives. They are not concentrated only on policy results but as well on direct and indirect outcomes, not only in the expected field of influence, but also broader (e.g. healthcare is not analysed only from the public health perspective, but also from public finances and economy perspective). Evaluation studies are somehow a border area of policy studies and policy analyses. From this position, an evaluation study is a descriptive method (describing the consequences of public policies) as well as prescriptive, since it is a basis for further policy suggestions for improvement of public policies in order to achieve better outcomes.



Policy information gathering is rather non-fancy name of what it in fact is. It is clearly policy analysis activity of data gathering which is needed as preparation phase for policy solutions development. It can be in a way systematic research of the field within the research institutions, but more often it is connected to the activities of political actors (political parties, parliamentary groups, etc.) in the phase of policy solution preparation. This activity is often interest motivated (when done by political actors) and they are more like search for verification of certain political idea than open search for optimal ideas.

Policy process definition is set of activities which are trying to influence the development of policy process – possibly in the direction of its rationalisation. However, such attempts of “rationalisation” often have also purpose, such as exclusion of certain policy actors form the process. Policy solution analyse, in exchange from policy process definition, concentrates on how certain policy issue should be regulated or solved. In this manner one talks about different possible solutions based on expert knowledge. The policy process should than define the best possible solution in this frame, Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 28) add some extra focus on different roles that are played by individuals participating in policy process. Especially this is valid for experts and politicians. Experts, for one reason or another, might become policy advocates (usually promoting their own solutions as the best). This makes them lose part of their expert credibility due to clearly taking sides among different options. On the other hand, certain politicians due to their strong interest to legalize certain solution become so called experts and they start to mix political ideology with expert knowledge and they try to present their political ideas as expert knowledge. It is impossible to prevent such events even if the consequences are usually rather serious since knowledge and reasoning becomes subordinated to politics and emotions.



## Policy design as research method

Policy design as research method for policy analysis was developed at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Grdešić (1995: 118-119) quotes different authors who define policy design as research process of causal links among policy issues and solutions, as map of planned activities, etc. However, for our purpose, the best definition of policy design is one by Bobrow and Dryzek (1987: 201) stating that policy design is detailed plan how to achieve defined outcomes in the context of different circumstances. This definition assumes that policy design is pro-active and not only analytical method. According to Grdešić (1995: 119) each policy design has three important factors; values, frame of circumstances in which design is prepared and selection of appropriate theoretical-methodological approach. Any policy design should follow certain values of the society in which it is shaped. It is necessary to take into the account the frame within which certain policy is to be developed. Understanding and respecting this policy frame (environment) is crucial for success of certain policy<sup>2</sup> (Grdešić, 1995: 120). Bobrow and Deyzek (1987: 202) additionally differ between internal and external environment of policies. External environment is one in which policy process takes place (e.g. demographics), while internal environment is represented by specifics within the policy process (e.g. power relations among participating actors). Grdešić(1995: 120) adds that in this manner timely feedback is crucial, especially in a sense of in front familiarization of decision-makers with the consequences of certain policy. This enable instant and constant optimization of policy design. As to selection of appropriate approach, it is clearly connected to previously mentioned values and environment and it defines how certain policy issue should be dealt with

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<sup>2</sup> One can be sure that in most cases public policies are only partially effective mainly due to the fact that policy-makers ignore the environment in which policy solutions are prepared.

in the optimal way. On the basis of understanding these elements one can start debate on appropriate policy instruments or their combination for expected policy outcomes. These instruments are policy measures.

McDonell (1988) in Grdešić (1995: 122) defines four basic sets of policy instruments, based on the motivation, and with which one should achieve desired outcomes. Even Grdešić (ibid) warns from the inconsistency of this definition, but still it gives us ground to define some basic sets of instruments based on their primary nature (ignoring the fact that majority of them is of legal origin after all).

Legal instruments: measures which are regulating legal relations among different subjects and have primary no other but legal nature (e.g.: provision of papers, definition of legal relations and consequences in different situations, etc.)

Economic instrument: set of activities that influence economic relations with economic measures (subventions, taxes, etc.)

Political instruments: measures based on defined interests and realization of principle of the strongest (often supported by legal instruments), usually public subject, who demands removal of individual rights for realization of collective good<sup>3</sup>.

Structural - organizational instruments: changes of organizational structure and activities in order to achieve policy outcomes (e.g. establishment of special agency competent for new set of tasks, etc.)

<sup>3</sup> Most common case is forced nationalization of individual by the state (state seizes property from rightful owner) for the purpose of building public structures such as roads etc. This measure is not only relict of communist past but it is understood as appropriate method in democratic countries, when state understand such activity of lower harm than changing its development plans.

Policy design is method that should be basis for any policy activity, because it provides insight into the situation, understanding of direction and goal of the changes, analyses the environment of future policy, chooses appropriate approach to policy-making and it is capable of recognising of most appropriate instruments that shall be used if one takes in the account all the named elements.

Development of policy design requests sound knowledge of the policy area in which changes are about to take place, of social situation and shape and behaviour of policy arena within which policy process will take place. At the same time one should have strong theoretical and methodological background that provides selection of appropriate approach to analysis. In general one can say that good policy design will use different methods in order to get full picture of the situation. Among most usual methods one can count study of primary and secondary sources combining them in focused synthesis, interviews with the experts in the field, interviews with expected stakeholders in policy process, selection of appropriate policy measures which should be at least theoretically tested (e.g. projection of effects of flat rate tax and its interpretation with in the context broader social effects and values). Due to such complexity policy design shall be prepared within bigger group of experts form different fields (not only economists and lawyers). Broader composition of expert group should bring to so called spill over effect, where knowledge from different fields produces extra value and brings to the best possible solutions (ideally). As in the case of policy-making, also in preparation of policy design experts should avoid ideological interests and act value-neutral as much as possible. If this is not possible, such elements should be exposed in order to separate facts from ideological statements.



## **Approaches to understand public policies**

Approaches to the understanding of public policies can be, according to John (2012), divided in five basic groups. First, there are institutionalist approaches, arguing that policies are outcome of institutional decision making. Second, there are groups and networks approaches, which pay most attention to the idea that policies are result of (predominantly informal) networks and connections among different involved actors. Exogenous approaches are third set, which pays more attention to external (policy environment) influences on policy outputs and outcomes. Fourth set is called rational actor approaches, and stresses that policy decisions are based on rational choice theory. Last set of approaches is "ideas-based" and develops the thesis that every policy issue produces first an idea of solving it that develops and matures before actual policy process starts (on different types of approaches see John, 2012).

On the other hand, Dye (2002: 11-12) defines eight different research approaches to understand public policies. Even if most of the attention will be paid to process model (in a special chapter) we will shortly mention also institutional, rational, incremental elitist group (interest) model, public choice theory and games theory model.

Institutional model understands public policies as effect of institutional activities. In this manner it pays most of the attention to understanding of institutional activities and their relations as key to understand the way of policy-making. However, it mainly ignores content of public policies (see Dye, 2002: 12-14).

Rationalist model bases understanding of the policy-making on Pareto optimum assumption, where nobody can benefit more without somebody

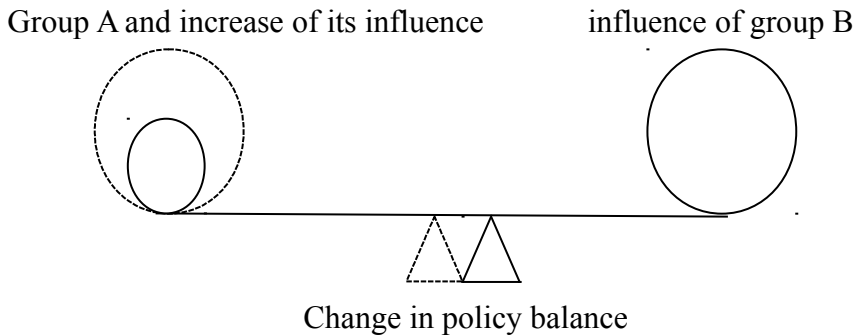
else start losing own benefits. However, rationality in policy-making shall be understood in limited extent since policy actors (due to the particular interests) do not have all relevant information. This makes each decision only limited rational (Dye, 2002: 16-19). One should be even more careful about issue of Pareto optimal solutions since theoretically definition is clear while in policy practice much less so. Usually we can see Pareto optimum issue in questions such as; to which extent taxes should be raised in order to maintain public financing of healthcare and reverse; when reducing public health care has less negative effects than increasing the taxes.

Incremental model of public policies is mainly adopted in budgeting and is understood as series of small changes (adjustments) of certain policy since any strong reform can bring undesired effects (Dye, 2002: 19-21). Incrementalism developed in 1950s as response to increasing complexity of the modern world that was not suited for rigid long term plans but demanded higher level of flexibility by adopting small scale adjustments of policies, that can be constantly evaluated and adjusted (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 27).

Group theory sees public policies as balance of interests and powers (resources) of different policy actors. Power is understood usually as human and financial resources and ability of individual actors to activate them in most efficient manner. Any change of public policy within this model is based on change in balance of powers (see picture 1).



Picture 1: group theory of public policies



Source: Dye, 2002: 22

In opposition to group model, elitist model understand policy-making as rather simple description of enactment (legalization) of desires and ideas of social/political/economic elites, since they have social power to do so. However, this is possible only in the conditions of political apathy of society which has no power nor interest to influence policy-making processes (see Dye, 2002: 23-25).

Public choice theory is economic analysis of policy-making, where public policies are understood as collective decision on individual interests. In this manner government is understood to perform certain functions in the cases when market principle fails. In this manner government provides public good and it reduces or removes different externalities. In this manner government/political system provides collective decision (as the state) which limits or directs individuals (as private subjects, companies or any other individual organization)<sup>4</sup> from causing harm to society. As in the case of rationalist approach, there is serious doubt about interests which are represented by state; is it society/public or is it elites and special pressure groups. Rational choice

<sup>4</sup> Even if one can see certain rule which is valid for mass of individuals, the rule usually address them individually and not as a community.

theory in a sense offers also the answer to the question, why political parties (or political candidates/politicians) are not able to provide appropriate policy alternatives. As Dye (2002: 26) noted, political parties and candidates are not interested in higher principles but they care only about winning the election. Their policy position is formed in a way to win the election and they do not win the election in order to create public policies.

Games theory basically puts rational choice theory into the conditions of competition (Dye, 2002: 27), in a sense that there is more possible solutions, based on chosen option of individual policy actors (it works similar to the prisoners' dilemma, where result in certain field is consequence of standpoints of individual actors). If in rational choice theory result is understood as “only logical” in games theory, result is understood as product of individual decisions culminating into logical compromise.

## **Policy process**

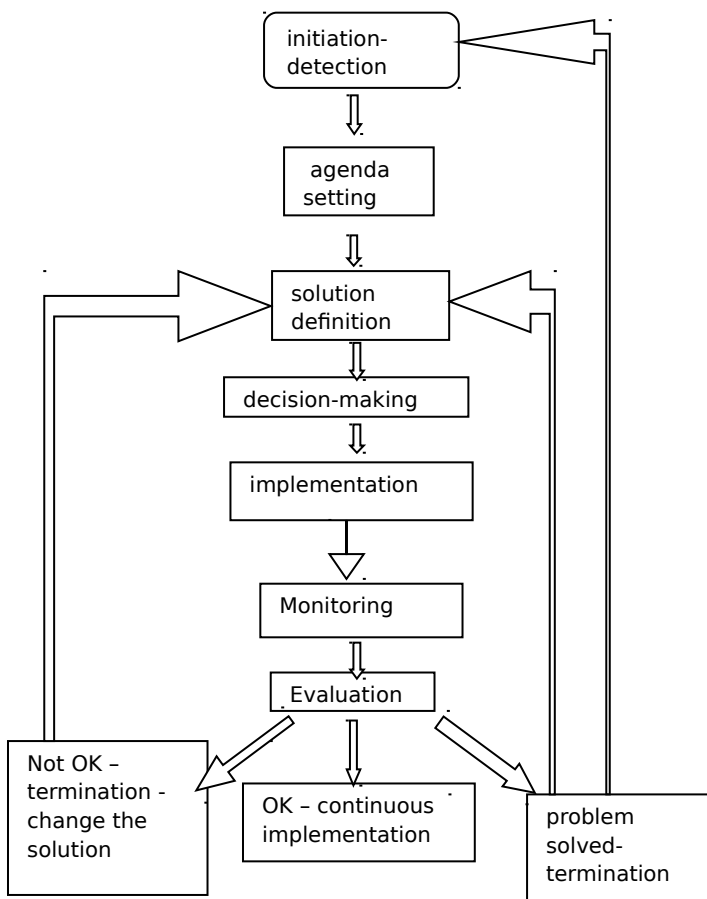
Public policy process as special approach in understanding public policies mainly describes how policy management of certain issue develops over the time. It enables us to understand all basic elements of policy-making since all public policies have their processional dimension. There is long list of different authors explaining how public policies develop in certain number of stages (varying from three to more than twenty). They might agree or disagree on certain stages but the fact is that even this text below is showing one possible interpretation, arguing that it might be the best or at least the most reasonable solution. The main verdict is that with fewer stages one is generalizing too much. For instance, with three stages we can identify creation of policy solutions, decision-making and implementation. This is not wrong nor untrue, but for sure we can say it is only superficial and insufficient. On the other hand if we count for more than 20 stages there will be such cases as call for policy proposals, or delivery of policy proposal from government to parliament. We can understand that call for policy proposals is important because it can determine who will participate and consequently the sole nature possible policy solutions. Also it is possible that mailing the policy solution to the parliament might be tricky and the documents can be lost. However, in none of cases above it is necessary to make specific stage for any of the named activities, because they are probably not concerned with the content of the process even if they are important parts of the procedure itself.

In this manner we are supporting idea about seven to eight phases, covering all the main procedural turn points.

First phase is problem recognition, where certain issue is understood as policy issue. Each policy issue is issue but not each issue is policy issue.

Second phase is so called agenda setting where policy issues are filtered. Not every policy issue will be equally important for politicians/politics to deal with it. Selected policy issues in third phase demand for possible solutions. Normal logic would be to find different possible solutions for each policy issue. However, this phase is usually blurred and one can mainly see it as preparation of some governmental proposition. Hence, this is already next phase; decision-making, which can be split into two sub-phases (governmental and parliamentary), where most suitable policy is adopted.

Scheme 2: policy process and policy cycle (based on Grdešić, 1995: 17)



Emergence or detection of the policy issue is first phase. It starts when somebody (possibly even on very personal level) feels certain discomfort, which should be removed and can be defined as an opportunity to improve certain condition (see Grdešić, 1995: 60). However, this state-of-art should fulfil at least two conditions in order to become policy issue. First it needs to influence general public or greater number of individuals (issue that affect individual or smaller group is considered in this sense still as personal issue). And second, the issue in question should be responsibility of the state, which shall be authorised that with series of different measures systematically interferes into different relations in the way to resolve the issue. Grdešić (1995: 61) in this sense defines sub-phase, which is important in the sense that it can give certain issue the recognition of being policy issue or not and if it will get necessary attention. It is called mobilisation of stakeholders, where later, with their active participation in co-definition of the issue, give to the certain issue necessary level of attention that it becomes important. If certain issue, does not get adequate attention, even if it fulfils the aforementioned criteria to become policy issue, such issue will never make it to the next phase and to its active solution. As example, even strong dissatisfaction with labour legislation and protection of workers cannot press the government to do something about it, if the workers do not organize themselves – possibly within workers' unions. So if workers' unions, as important stakeholder in labour policy, do not recognise certain question as important the only option for workers to achieve some results to organize general strike in extend that blocks the functionality of the government and economy. In any other case, such dissatisfaction will be seen just as some minor issue that demands no special policy attention.

Second phase is agenda setting. Indicated policy issue got enough attention to become important also for decision-makers. On daily basis, different policy issues are competing to get enough attention to be included in the agenda of decision-makers (government, parliament, ministries, sometimes even political parties). Basic interest of any issue is to get the highest rank on agenda as possible. By doing so, the issue secures itself higher priority in finding appropriate solution. Policies of higher importance are usually structural policies (economic policy, defence policy, fiscal policy) while other policies are given lower priority (e.g. wild life management policy). Development and definition of decision-makers' agenda defines also priorities of the whole society, based on value system of the society as well as on political power relations among participating actors. Due to this characteristic, Grdešić (1995: 61-62) calls agenda setting “political process of first order”. By doing so, he stresses that ability to enter agenda grants the issue possibility to be solved and failing to enter agenda block possibility that issue will be solved. In other words, issues that do not manage to get to agenda are virtually non-existent and are not given additional attention. In this manner sometimes main political struggle is not about what will be solution but if certain issue will manage to get to the agenda. Cobb and Elder (1972:85) differ between potential, content based agenda and formal/existing agenda. First one is composed from all issues that are considered as important in society and for which it is generally believed that political institutions are responsible to solve them. Formal agenda is composed of those issues that were recognised by political institutions as important and worthy of solving them. Cobb and Rossi (in Grdešić, 1995: 63-64) define three sub-models of agenda setting, based on source of initiative. In first case, initiative starts in from non-state actors or as it is usually referred to “bottom – up”. In this case general discontent gets slowly organized and press on state actors to accept appropriate measures

for improvement of the unsatisfactory condition. This model should be most common for democratic political systems. However, more correct is to say that this model appears most often in political systems that are considered to be democratic, but even in this case it is not prevailing model of policy initiative. Second sub-model of agenda setting can be understood as internal approach, where decision-makers prepare formal agenda on their own and develop policies according to their preferences. This approach is usually used in order to avoid or limit public debate and mobilization. This approach might be considered as undemocratic but can be marked also as elitist approach to agenda formation. In this model policies are often accepted under the mask of necessity from one or another reason<sup>5</sup>. Third way to form agenda is mainly known for hierarchical societies and it is partly similar to internal approach. In this case elites are forming agenda but they need certain level of public support, so they are not able to suppress public debate. This approach is usually called top-down, where decision-makers offer agenda into public discussion in their attempt to gain at least limited legitimacy of agenda as well as of policies (see Grdešić, 1995: 63-64).

Third phase of policy process is stage where solutions to the issues are formulated. These solutions should be prepared in the way that, when accepted, they would with high probability reduce or remove policy issues. In other words, we argue that most of the solutions are not absolute, and that there is always certain risk of failure. In this phase usually absolutely new circle of policy actor emerges; expert institutions are responsible to prepare well supported (from the position of solving

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<sup>5</sup> One of such examples was in the case of Slovenian support to Lisbon treaty, where National Assembly refused demand for referenda with the argument that the matter is too important to be left to citizens for decision. On the other hand, same institution allowed referenda on electoral system decade earlier, or in about same time referenda on conception with biomedical help (where one is of approximately same nature as Lisbon treaty, and another deals with the human rights).

the policy issue) solutions. As well as in other phases, also in this phase one of suggested options can be non-activity, which would not change present condition. When non-activity is proposed as solution it is usually due to the fact that experts agree that trying to change something might cause more damage (usually in some other policy areas) than solving the problem would improve general well-being. Proposed solutions may vary from broad and deep measures which influence the whole system of policies (we can say the state) to limited measures which just incrementally adjust certain policy. Proposed speed can also vary from fast and profound change (revolution) to constant small adjustments which have visible impact only on the long run (evolution). Phase of solution finding is somehow also only phase of policy process where content/matter and scientific argument is before form and interests (ideally-in reality this is not really the case). Policy network (this subject will be discussed in further chapters) in this phase has tendency to include new actors. On the other hand, previously active actors are trying to protect their position and interests and present them as most adequate solutions to the problem. In this attempt political policy actors are trying to press on knowledge groups to support their solutions/interests with appropriate arguments and incorporate them into the final solution.

Fourth phase is decision-making. In this phase decision-makers (institutions with legal right to decide on policies) select most appropriate policy solution and confirm it as policy or as a policy measure. In the reality they most often just accept or reject one proposal which was developed in previous phase as the best option. In practice this usually means that certain idea gets the form of the law or sub-legal act and enters the legislative. Legislative procedure has two main stages (in parliamentary systems, logic of presidential system is different due to separation of legislative and executive powers); governmental and



parliamentarian phase. In Governmental phase legal draft will be first confirmed by minister and submitted to the government, government will then discuss the draft and send it back for improvements or confirm it. When government confirms the draft, it is submitted to the parliament, where it follows standard legislative procedure. When legal draft becomes law, it is demanded that, according to the legal provisions it is implemented.

Fifth phase is implementation of the policy decision (usually in the form of the law or sub-legal act). Legislator, based on the accepted law, demands from the executive power to implement the provisions of the law. In most cases implementation falls first on the competent ministry. Ministry in first phase needs to prepare so called implementation acts (sub-legal acts, defining the issues that stayed open for further clarification). Afterwards it starts with implementation or demand implementation by responsible institutions. In example, law on higher education is politically implemented by ministry competent for higher education, but real implementation of legal provisions is mainly matter that is to be carried out by universities.

Sixth phase is monitoring of the policy implementation monitoring is usually carried out on many levels form internal monitoring, to external monitoring; usually carried out by ministries, ministries' offices or government, inspectorates, court of accountancy (in case of public finances) or other empowered institutions. Monitoring does not deal with the outcomes of public policies but only if the outputs are in accordance with the accepted policy. In case of possible differences between demanded activities and real performance in this phase, synchronisation of performed activities with planned ones is demanded.

Seventh phase of policy process is assessment or evaluation. In science, evaluation studies are special study filed, which is not only concerned by performance, but it is assessing the implemented policies on the society and especially on the issue which initiated the process in the first place. Evaluation in this sense concentrates not only on outputs of certain policy but much more on outputs. Evaluation in this sense is also important indicator of success of decision-makers or governmental policy actors. If evaluation shows negative effects, this is clear signal to decision-makers first; that they failed with their solution and second; that they need to search for more appropriate solution. Similar can be noted also in the cases, when evaluation shows that policy or policy measure had no effect at all and was more self-serving, energy consuming activity financed form the budget. Here one should be aware that not every assessment called evaluation is real evaluation, since it demands high level of systematic and methodological approach with (self)critical analyse of subject in matter. Many times, states (on purpose) fail in evaluating public policies, especially in the sense of critical evaluation of policies' impact on society. States often prepare evaluation on the level of monitoring results with some additional commentary and suggestions how to improve (make more efficient) implementation.

Next to aforementioned seven phases, eight one can be added. It is called policy termination. In this phase, based on results of evaluation, policy can take different paths. If the evaluation shows that implemented policy is adequate and positive solution to the issue there is no termination but more continuation of accepted solution. Second option is that implemented policy managed to remove issue, which is not likely to re-emerge. In this case all activities within this policy are terminated. However, such case is extremely rare and unusual. Third option is that evaluation shows that implemented policy (measures) is (are) not solving

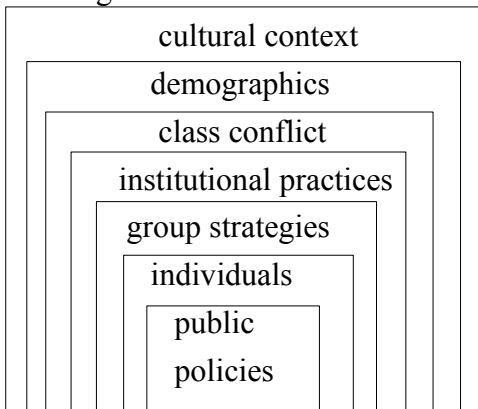
the problem. In this case policy activities are terminated and process is returning to third phase in order to search for better solutions. In this case one can speak about so called policy cycle, since policy process does the loop and returns to the phase which was carried out already before.



## Policy environment

Public policies do not develop in empty space just by different actors ideas how society should be organized. Sometimes policy issues as well as accepted solutions are strongly determined by different components of environment. Pal (1987: 117) in this sense defines six main categories of environmental characteristics, which increase the chances for issues to become policy issues and which also influence other phases of policy process.

Scheme 3: categories of environmental factory influencing policy process



Pal, 1987: 117

Based on the scheme above, each policy process is defined by general cultural context of society, where it takes place. e.g. in conservative societies there, issue of family policy will be solved in preserving traditional family (discriminating different alternative forms of family as well as question of abortion will be predominantly solved in “pro-life” way). Demographics as second type of environmental characteristic defines especially certain policies which are age, education or economy related. Societies with higher share of old people will be strongly

concerned in healthcare and retirement, while young population will more often address lack of jobs as main concern. Class conflict (since it sounds Marxist it can be called also social conflict) influences policy process in a sense that it emphasises the main biases in the society, it might be considered as political environment which promotes these issues that have stronger political impact (in a sense of electoral result). As example one can see that in Slovenia during the economic crisis 2008-2014, political parties especially form “anti-communist pole” prefer to discuss topics that polarized society than to address issues from the constructive position. One of the latest case was strong opposition to property tax and when the tax failed they criticised government for taking supplementary measures in order to cover 200 mio. Eur budgetary revenues' reduction.

Nest level of environment is about the institutional practices. They define. By formal and informal, their ability to act as policy actors. If certain institution has relatively loosened norms it can adapt to different situation much faster than institutions with hierarchical and formalized forms behaviour. Close to this is also group strategies, which still should not be mixed with institutional practices. If institutional practices predominantly shape internal rules of conduct of policy actors, group strategies mainly define their way of response to external impulses. Mainly this response can vary from ignorance of impulses, attempts to negotiate and compromise and to oppose. In this manner certain behaviours are less acceptable than others, but they strongly vary on the resources that are available to individual policy actors. In this manner one can agree that negotiating position of Greenpeace is relatively limited in negotiation as long as they do not base their activities on demonstration of the power by guerilla activities and protests. On the other hand governmental policy actors do not need to rely on such

activities since they rely on their (more or less legitimate) power to govern. Last outer cycle of environmental influences over public policies belongs to individuals, with their habits, characters and interests. Individuals in this manner act as representatives of different institutions and indirectly influence policies. In some cases certain individuals, due to their position or reputation, are able to influence policy-making on their own without any institution attached to them. They are usually different opinion leaders who previously occupied important positions but maintained their charisma and influence even after leaving their positions of formal power. Next to these six factors that Pal (1987) defines as crucial environmental influences on public policies we are adding one, which can be considered obvious but legislative practice constantly proves it wrong. It is system of public policies itself. Public policies influence public policies. This is most visible when decision-makers believe that this is not the case. And since they have power that their beliefs can be enacted, state usually faces laws contradicting each other. This can be for instance seen in social policy and economic policy, especially if country needs to merge market oriented economy with strong social state and has no adequate resources to do so.





## **Policy arena and actors**

In any writing on public policies there is no right space to deal with policy actors and arenas, since one needs to operate with these two concepts from the start but then again one has to explain some other basics first.

Main characteristic of policy actors and arenas is that any policy output and outcome is highly dependent on these two categories and their relations within the frame of individual public policies. At the same time, policy arenas are (as aggregate of individual actors and their environment) space in which individual public policies are developed.

Initially, policy actors (known also as players) can be divided in two main categories; governmental and non-governmental. Among governmental policy actors there are institutions of political representation (parliaments), institutions of executive branch (government, ministries, public agencies, etc.) public administration at different levels and political representation on sub-national level. Non-governmental actors are representatives of different interests (business and civil society groups), political parties /non-parliamentary parts of them), expert public (which usually plays role of competent knowledge that supports certain interests or suggests solutions) and mass media (see Pal, 1987: 107-115; Grdešić, 1995: 69-78 and Howlett and Ramesh, 2003: 52-84). Next to this, we are exposing also individual as policy actor, since there are individuals which are able, due to their social capital and other resources, to get involved into policy arenas as independent actors. Often they play role of moral and expert authority, which has certain level of influence over other actors or public. Individuals playing such role are often independent thinkers with long history of social activism or former influential politicians.

Aforementioned institutionalist definition of policy actors is one of most common ways to understand participation in policy processed, based on rules of participation and different interests. Rules of inclusion of policy actors are subordinated to the rules of certain policy process (how the policy process is developed) and to institutional rules of individual policy actor which participates (how certain actor can behave, what are its competences). Rationalism of policy processes adds up also the question of interests, which is to be understood as rationalized system of desires for maximisation of benefits or protection from loses for individual actor. Logic of rationalization leans towards the policy solutions where all or majority benefits or towards the solutions that everybody tries to avoid potential loses (of power, position or other resources). In case when such solution is not possible, involved actors try to at least minimize negative effects. What institutional-rational logic of policy analysis does not take into the account (or systematically underestimate) is question of irrationality of policy actors (as emotionality and as well as mental deprivation in logic). Irrationality can be consequence of lack of relevant information, irrationality of actors or of their absolute need to realize their idea at any cost sand consequences. Incomplete information causes that actors' decisions are only limited rational within the information that is available to them. This can be simplified via following example; actor A within certain process decides for solution X based on information Z and lacking the information S. If this actor would have, at the time of deciding both information Z+S, he would decide for solution Y which is more rational but unavailable due to lack of information. Example of protecting interests at any costs can be understood as actor A pursuing solution X even f loosing solution Y which is considered to be more beneficial on long run. Such behaviour is usually result of very particular interest which is of special importance (maybe being a mission or life goal) to that very actor even when everybody else see no value in

solution X. By this we approach third aspect of irrational behaviour of policy actors, which is mainly left aside by most of the policy studies approaches. With other words, policy studies often fail to recognise the difference between institutionalized actors and their personalized representatives (within the context of policy networks also van Warden, 1992:33, indicate need for awareness of this difference). Normative predictability of institutionalized actors provides comfort in understanding of basic development of certain process. At the same time it neglects individual specifics that often influence the policy solutions or development of the policy process. In the practice of policy-making, within the boundaries of normative context, focus is on communication of policy actors, which are, due to their personal psychological profiles, more or less compatible or attractive to one another (on interpersonal attractiveness see Forgas, 1987). These individuals with certain psychological profiles and social capital (as ability to enter and fruitfully participate in social relations) act on behalf of institutions. Missing this fact causes discrepancy between understanding the ideal processes, expected outcomes of public policies and reality. Consequences can be described by another case that can be applied to any goal oriented activity, not only in the field of policy processes.

For the purpose of keeping balanced social policy in Slovenia, systematic negotiation of so called social partners (government/competent ministry, workers' unions and representatives of business) is needed. In theory it is known also as social tripartite negotiation. Result should be sound social policy, which influences economic development as well as social stability of the state and social welfare. However the discussion takes place among representatives of “social partners”, who are individual persons, which can be named in any given point of time and can be replaced (only taking into the account possibility of death), while

institutions are staying the same. In following description of personal characteristics and describing special scenario we will try to illustrate basic problem of ignorance of so called human factor in policy-making.

#### Scheme 4: Human factor in negotiating

person	main personal characteristic	relation to others and personal circumstances	result		
			expected	realized	
A	uncertain – following the orders of superior	negative relation to person C (interpersonal fight in the past)	Based on negotiation process of social partners the compromise should be achieved when everybody wins or at least nobody loses too much (depending on the economic situation in the state	Compromise achieved based on stronger position of person B, as result of his determination and simultaneous weakness of person C and due to lack of interest of person A to support person B due to the personal dispute with C	
B	determined and stubborn	getting divorced			
C	open for compromises, even when risking his own interests or interests that he/she represents	in 14 days will be promoted or changing working place			
D	uncertain – following the orders of superior	negative relation to person F (interpersonal fight in the past)		Based on negotiation process of social partners the compromise should be achieved when everybody wins or at least nobody loses too much (depending on the economic situation in the state	Compromise not achieved due to the fact that person F is not willing to compromise to the level that is threatening his interests. His position is additionally strengthened by the fact that D is supporting E just because of D's dispute with F in the past. F in this scenario blocks the possibility to finish negotiations with any positive result.
E	determined and stubborn	getting divorced			
F	<i>Not open for compromises, even when risking his own interests or interests that he/she represents</i>	in 14 days will be promoted or changing working place			

The scheme above is less than precise and accurate, but hopefully shows well enough how one single personal characteristics of those involved can influence the policy process as well as its output (and consequently outcome).

As we mentioned before, even if some researchers are aware of the issue concerning the human factor they are mainly avoiding this field of

research due to differentiation from accepted theoretical and empirical approaches in political science. Argument against recognising human factor as important part of policy actors activities is its complexity, unpredictable effect of its activity and demanding methodology of research. On the other hand, current approaches, even without taking into account human factor, still produce relatively robust and well supported understanding of policy activities. On the other side, argument for systematic research of human factor impact on public policies lies in the cases when apparently well prepared processes do not finish as they are planned according to the rules and reasons for such discrepancies should be fund. At the same time, research of human factor impact on public policies would shift understanding of public policies from institutionalist to more constructivist approach, enabling deeper understanding of the reality.

Despite general fact that more or less anyone can become policy actor, only some of them are able to take the position of relevant (those who are listened to) actors. This is especially the case in regard to non-governmental actors, which are limited in their access to the policy arena and to relevant policy relations by governmental actors. Colebatch (2004: 36, 44) calls such actors with limited access outsiders. Their main characteristic is that they have no access to policy community or policy arena – space where policy-making takes place. Policy arena is in this sense protected by so called institutional gate-keepers, who are limiting the possibility to become part of certain arena, and consequently they are limiting the ability to become relevant policy actor. Policy gatekeepers are often central policy actors. However, they can be understood as system of (in)formal demands and conditions that shall be fulfilled by certain actor in order to be includes in individual policy process.



## **Individuals as policy actors: between being me and representation**

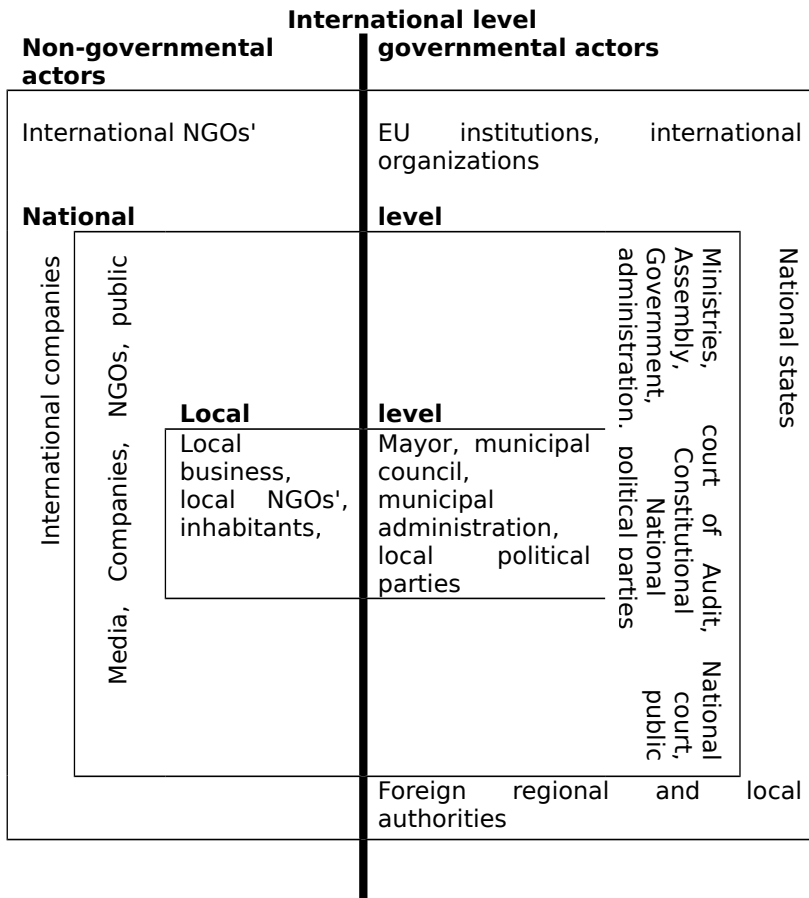
Public policies are given sets of activities accepted and executed in order to provide developmental directions of certain society or state. However, public policies do not happen just like this. They have to be negotiated, accepted and carried out by different subjects that are usually called policy actors, in certain conditions also decision-makers. However, Contemporary political science says almost nothing on sole nature of political actors. Authors such as Pal (1987) or Grdešić (1995) define different policy actors and group them in certain categories. According to the majority of public policy literature we can find two groups of policy actors; governmental and non-governmental. Some authors (e.g. Kotar), simplify governmental actors even further and argue that state as a whole can be understood as policy actor in relation to what can be called civil society actors. In order to understand the complexity of public policies or any given social activity in fact, one shall understand the internal and external complexity of actors. In this chapter we would like to develop discussion on what policy actors are in reality and how do they behave between classical theoretical models and real life policy/politics in polity.

### *Policy actors in theory*

As an example we will try to show classical policy arena that can emerge in the case of some local policy issue. One can see governmental and non-governmental actors as two mayor categories that are working on different policy/politics/polity levels. It is obvious that policy actors in this sense are mainly understood as relevant institutions that are involved into policy processes. However, from such picture we still have no idea about how certain policy network will emerge and develop over time. Who will be crucial actor, will be one or will there be many of them and finally what will be resource that will make certain actor eligible for

entrance into certain network or for taking over one of crucial positions.

Picture 2: policy arena in case of certain local policy issue



Institutionalist approach towards public policies is not concerned with real nature of policy actors, despite some authors (e.g. van Waarden, 1992) are warning from simplification of understanding of policy actors. However, when discussing public policies in academia, usually there is only limited space available for actor analysis that could give us more precise understanding of decision-making in general. Partly, this is the consequence of narrow research interest of political scientists, usually



interested in processes, institutions, policies, politics and they are not prepared to compromise their work with complex combination of understanding the situation.

In this manner, one who is mainly concerned about institutions, will in research stress the organization of institutions, their internal and external environment. All decisions will be logical consequences of institutional design and rules. Those interested in processes will focus on internal and external rules of procedures and general normative framework empowering different institutionalized actors for certain activities. Those interested in policies, will mainly add content to previously mentioned institutions and processes. Politics will question power relations and abilities of different institutionalized actors to subordinate others. They will in general forget about the role of individual if this individual has not instrumentalized/institutionalized position, such as president of republic or speaker of the parliament, giving him certain empowerments. Individual as person can be important in case of different moral authorities with access to communication channels, and such individuals are playing role of opinion makers, which is different form case to case. If opinion maker is person attached to certain institution he/she can be quickly recognised as voice of certain profession (mainly in case of academia or political commentators). It is very rare that some person become serious opinion maker without taking some formal power position first.

There is main question do we see trees or forest in case described above. If we say that each described part is tree than we can see trees, but forest is reserved for joining different approaches together. However, each of the approaches at the same time provides forest for all parts working in the system that are usually understood as irrelevant and they usually

attract no other attention than one, attached to the position they are occupying.

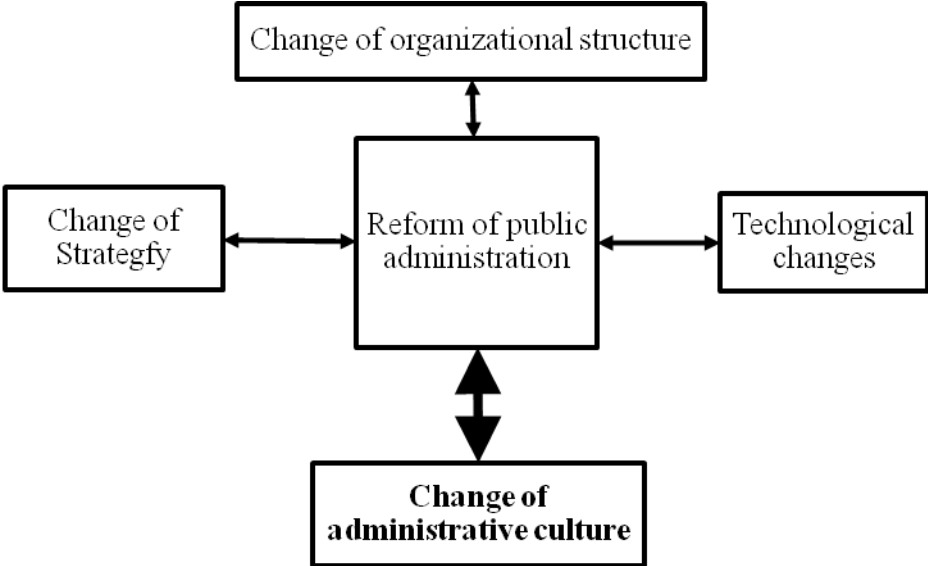
### *Administrative culture as human factor*

Administrative science is explaining activities in public administration with given rules that should be applied and at the same time with administrative culture. Administrative culture can be seen as general pattern of informal practices, and behaviour of individuals within the organization in a way that sum of these individual patterns create more or less coherent activities of organizational behaviour. Organizational behaviour is usually subordinated normatively demanded activities. However, it can influence style of acting or in some cases can even dispute normative demands and creates its own definition of expected behaviour. In such cases institutional actors become unpredictable for normativists, for policy reality they become independent actors that can change the power relations and their prescribed position in network, especially in cases when they have additional resources and interests to act against expectations. Due to this reason it is important to understand how administrative culture is developing and changing as we will see below.

Despite only rarely directly addressed, administrative culture is one of most important elements in whole organisational structure. Rman and Lunder (2003: 108) state that administrative culture can be often one of most relevant factors of successful work in public administration. Administrative culture can be partly understood as so called “human factor” and it is strongly connected to the institutional socialization of each new employee. Saxena (1996: 706) defines administrative culture as pattern of values and expectations that are common to all members of some organisation. Expectations and values create rules (norms) that very

effectively create appropriate behaviour of individuals and groups in organisation. Older than administrative culture is, more values and norms are rooted and changes are harder to be carried out. Organisational culture is consequence of history of each organisation and its members who shaped it in the past. At the same time this is also the greatest barrier to changes in organisation (in our case in public administration). Saxena (1996: 705) presents special model with all elements that should be reformed in order to reform public administration (see picture 3)

Picture 3: Four key elements of changes in public administration



Source: Saxena, 1996: 705

Further on, Saxena (1996: 705) also explains direction of change. Despite initial model is explaining direction only for organisational structure, but we can argue that same direction of change is applicable also in the case of other three elements. In the case of change of administrative culture in practice it means shift from situation where client was almost non-existing for public administration and when lower civil servants mostly

served as executors of higher civil servants ideas to the situation where lower as well as higher civil servants will concentrate all their working efforts to servicing clients' needs and wishes.

Saxena (1996: 706) argues that bureaucratic rigidity, hierarchy and in some cases even autocracy are main reasons for bad solutions. As example it is exposed case when civil servants are strongly supporting value of paper documentation and archiving and who find use of electronic document too abstract for use in practice. Saxena (1996: 706) argues that despite technological innovations, such as e-mail, that can assure information not only just-in-time, but even ahead-of-time, in order to improve administrative procedures, are not easily and quickly introduced. The main reason for such situation is existing administrative culture that needs change in order to change of strategy of acting in order to introduce new technologies and finally also to adjust administrative structures as it was shown in picture 1.

In the context of administrative culture Klimovský (2008: 182-184) shows good example how within the formal hierarchical structure of organization is over driven by informal patterns of interpersonal communication that can disturb organizationally predefined communication flows. These patterns can form specific informal sub-organizational structures and are not necessary connected to institutional routines and can be even blocking them. Together with personal characteristics of individuals on different positions they create what can be called human factor. Due to this fact group of individualists with no external pressure on their work will be ineffective while group of team-oriented workers will be much more able to complete their task together. Within policy area such elements as administrative culture create uncertainty at outcomes as well as at outputs. Normative solutions

depend on interpretation by executive institutions and on discretion right of individual civil servants. By this they become strong individual policy actors, shaping policy reality and can influence changes in public policies, firstly in implementation and in second place, by good or bad performance at implementation, in corrections in public policies.

### *I, the actor*

Classical political actors in shape of different institutions or institutionalized positions, behaving according to normative demands are hiding behind individuals. When talking about the individuals we have to concentrate on two psychological components. Every individual has different needs that can be theoretically connected to Maslow hierarchy of needs. These needs define in what extend individual will activate himself in certain process. Needs of higher level (self-realization) can be further connected to the Milbarth set of political activities. On the other hand each individual plays different life-roles. These roles will define their activities in certain environment and at the same time these social roles will simultaneously influence each other.

Participation was already in the previous historical eras important element of political/public. Most well known example of political participation in history is model of Athenian democracy (see Arendt, 1996: 29-35). Involvement of public in the political sphere was not only right but also important daily activity of Athenian citizens<sup>6</sup>. In this manner Arendt (1996: 40-41) describes participation in public sphere as activity that gave human nature to human beings in Antics. Today's perception is directed to privacy of individual and based on Rousseau's romantic idea about value if intimate and private (Arendt, 1996: 41), when Antics defined private as not-free and unworthy of human We

<sup>6</sup> Athenian citizens were only free Athenian men of age and not also women, children and slaves.

cannot overlook the fact that model of political participation within Greek polis can only function with limited number of participants and any grater spreading of circle of participants in public affair is oriented towards more undemocratic models of government (representative democracy is less democratic than direct democracy) that provides easier management of political system.

Today's political participation can be expressed in different ways but basically is connected to the questions to be or not to be politically engaged, in which direction, how intense, and how long to act. According to type of activities we can distinguish following participation biases: transparent – hidden, autonomous – subordinated, sporadic – continuous, expressive – instrumental, verbal – nonverbal, social – unsocial (see Fink – Hafner, 2000: 3). Milbarth (1965: 16-22) in the context aforementioned combination for participation and its form defines hierarchy of political participation with five levels where each of the levels has specific list of activities characteristic for specific level. These activities are not present or conducted by participant on lower level (see table 1).

Milbarth in his hierarchy defines also two transitional activities in the passage to observation activities where individual starts to seek for political information and on the passage to gladiator activities when individual is trying to convince other to vote for “our” political party. We can see that there are no strictly defined forms of individuals' participation in administrative processes. This tells us that political participation is covering only half of citizen which is appearing in public sphere as politically engaged citizen, but his other half that is user of public services is excluded from political-administrative processes that are by definition reserved for administrative apparatus of state (citizen in this connection is only passive receiver of services).

Table 1: Milbarths' hierarchy of political participation

Level of participation	Activity
Political apathy	No political engagement or activity
Observance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active expose to political information</li> <li>- Participation at elections</li> <li>- Supporting political debate</li> <li>- Convincing others to vote for specific candidate or party</li> <li>- Wearing political badges, etc.</li> </ul>
Transitional activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact with political leaders</li> <li>- Financial donations to political parties</li> <li>- Participation at meetings</li> </ul>
Gladiator activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active participation in political party</li> <li>- Active membership in party</li> <li>- Participation at party forums' meetings</li> <li>- Collecting money for political party</li> <li>- Application for public/party positions</li> <li>- Holding public/party positions</li> </ul>
Politics as profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Career politician to whom politics is only source of survival</li> </ul>

Milbarth, 1965: 16-22.

However, each attempt to participate in politics or policies is usually motivated by different interests and in first place by needs of individuals. In this sense we can consult Maslows' idea (1954) on hierarchy of needs/values that individual has. Idea is that our needs are composed into pyramid of needs and each level is reserved for smaller number of individuals. First level are biological needs that we all share – we all need food and beverage in order to survive, also security is very crucial for almost everybody. However, love/belonging is already not so necessary to survive, despite it is also relatively common to majority of people. Respect is next step; many people do not care about respect. Only

very limited number of people has need for self-actualization and these people are usually taking most important positions in society, trying to systematically change or influence social reality. Last two groups of needs are driving people to become active and start activities within Milbarth (1965) hierarchy of political activities, or to become active in any other given field, where more than their own survival is at stake. In this sense we have to understand that all people act as individuals, according to Hobbes definition of man, we are selfish. This means that we will try to take care for us in the first place and only then we will help to others. Theory and practice of altruism can dispute this statement, but mainly on the level of general population in life-saving situations.

According to selfish nature, anyone at certain position will try to secure best position in the system. IN order to fulfil this interest, one will take all necessary activities to achieve appropriate position and power relations within own networks that will serve own interest. Moral standards and fear from sanctions of individual will limit such person in activities such as bribing, corruption, information filtration and generation. Higher the level of self-confidence is, more aggressive are methods to fulfil own interests. Typically such activities are present in political networks, business networks (typical cases are connected to the last economic crisis, where number of misleading financial reports was found in big corporations, showing different financial situation than it was in reality), etc. Such situation can be linked also to different associations with limited membership that serve mainly their own interest. Van Waarden (1992) in this manner starts talking about clientelism, statism, captured statism and other forms of policy networks where specific relation between state and private policy actors appear. He briefly (ibid) indicates that such things happen due to fluctuation of individuals between different power positions. However, since then, we

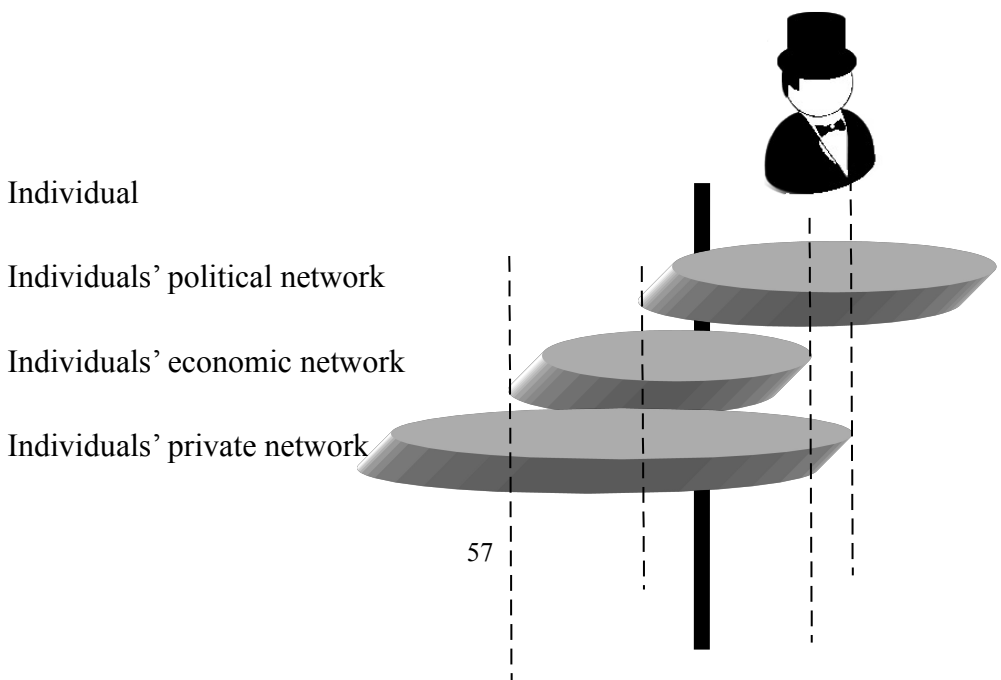


skip this part and just argue that actors have stronger or weaker power position. We are simply overlooking that in fact certain individuals are occupying these positions.

### *Consequences*

Understanding of individuals of political actors in manner shown above has numerous consequences for understanding reality and its complexity. Reductionism of individuals to institutionalised actors gives researches comfort of predictability of activities and enables them to logically explain the general picture and course of development. However, those interested in processes are rarely interested in output, and vice versa. When explaining illogical outcomes or atypical process development they will generally referee to noise in communication or as power relation result. Only rarely we will be able to see explanation of situation in the manner of societal complexity. If we introduce complex understanding of individuals' roles in a system we get real life mess that is partly revealed only in journalistic discovering different affairs and their assumptions why certain things happened or were blocked.

Picture 4: I in social networks

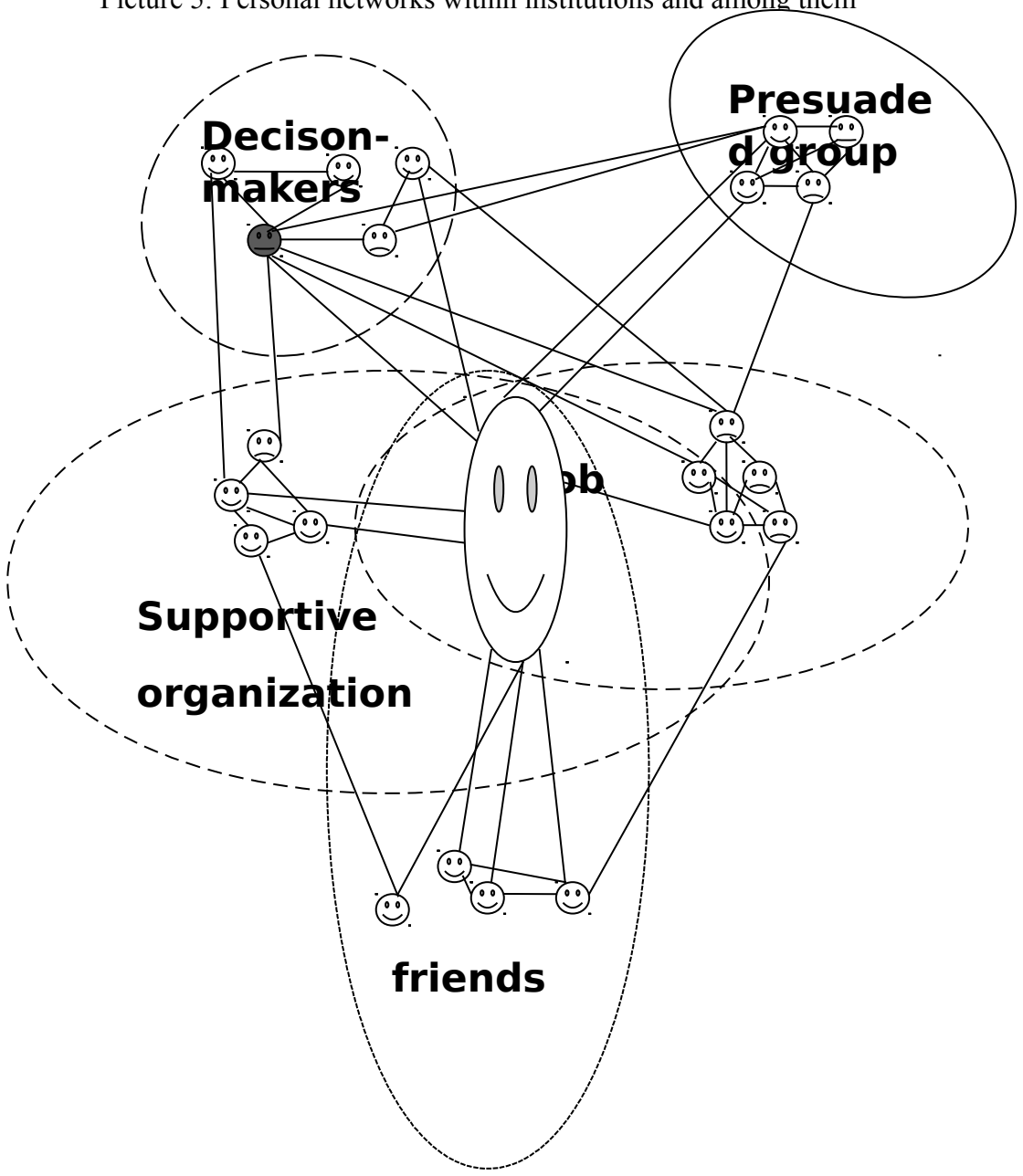


Picture 4 tries to symbolize how individual belongs to different networks at the same time. Certainly one could add additional networks, such as friends, association membership etc. the fact is that belonging to certain networks will influence on one hand activities of certain person as well as his activities will due to membership in different social networks influence his behaviour in other networks as well. Size of networks is shown by size of ellipses, position of ellipses shows how different networks are overlapping. It is obvious that he has part of private network which is separated from economic and even larger part separated from political network, part of his private network is also part of political network but it is not part of his economic network. Part of his network is overlapping on all three indicated areas and we can assume that this part is his strongest factor of influence. Commonly this can be group of co-workers with same political affiliation that spends also private time together as friends. If individual is opposing certain political idea there is much stronger possibility that respective political group will be able to convince him by asking his closest group to talk to him, compared to other relevant persons within political network. And on the other hand, individual will be able to bring in new idea much easier within this connected group of people than by explaining idea to the boss who is part of his economic network but with whom individual is not connected within any other social network. Picture above is again simplification – we shall draw series of nets with different patterns allowing that certain person fails to be also part of individuals' private network. In this sense our model is not exact as picture but we are not assuming that all members of economic network are members of private network as well.

In practice, only people who are using this method of understanding policy/politics mix are journalist. Who are usually accused of lack of credibility and especially lack of scientific approach. However, their way

seems to be right one to completely understand complexity of networks and individuals roles within it.

Picture 5: Personal networks within institutions and among them



Picture 5 shows complexity of individuals' network and can be helpful at understanding of what is going in solution finding for certain problem, situation or interest. Expression on the face represents connection with our individual (big face), who is playing three roles (friend, worker, member of organization). From circles we can understand how he is included in different organisations, while lines among individuals show personal ties. We can understand meaning of group of friends, job organization, decision-maker institution. For better explanation supportive organizations are usually associations – stronger (Rotary or Lions club) or weaker (NGO). Pressured group (not pressure group) is, in our case, institutionalized player that shall do something.

Classical institutionalist/normative/process approach will explain situation where group of friends wants to change something as such. Number of individuals is trying to change situation, they form specific group of the same interest, trying to engage another groups, get issue on the agenda. Decision maker and their supportive institutions will accept decision on if and how the issue will be regulated or changed. What we are usually missing is; understanding how this will really happen.

1. Friends will define certain issue and seek the best way to solve it. They will try to use different channels to get to the decision-makers and make them to accept appropriate solution.
2. Our “big face” will talk to his colleague at job and ask him about the solution. Unfortunately this colleague is talking to other co-workers, who are mainly not keen on the idea, and one of them has good relationship with the institutionalized player that will be affected and even worse, with one who is against the idea on issue. Luckily that colleague of “big face” is talking also to positively oriented co-worker who has direct contact to main

decision-maker.

3. “big face” will try to neutralize damage in effected institution by explaining situation to his colleagues there and they will try to settle thing down at least for a while.
4. In meantime of act 3. “big face” and one of his friends represent the issue at the supportive organization, big face as member and other friend as relative of one of other members.
5. “big face” meets main decision-maker by accident (or his co-worker arranged meeting for him), and he has opportunity to explain the thing. However, decision-maker has also different opinions on the issue and he sees issue as not generally relevant. However two of supporting staff are in favour of idea. In general he has five positive opinions and three negative. But he owes a favour to one of his advisers who is against the proposed solution of the issue and he has friend in “supportive group” of our “big face” who is against as well.
6. Decision maker in this case is smart and decides to stay neutral. But according to the number of our emotions, her ignored demand of majority in order not to harm relations with those with whom he has some common interest.

And that is the part of complexity in political science that is systematically overlooked or translated on the level of elites, where main finding is usually that interests of elites are usually different (reverse) than those form general population. However, for understanding public policies in reality we will have to pay more attention to personal networks within institutionalized decision-making.



## **Policy networks**

Policy networks are considered to be specific field of policy analysis. It tries to explain and define different types (patterns) of relations between policy actors, who cooperate in policy-making, based on their co-dependency (Kickert, Kljin, Koppejan, 1997: 6). From the perspective that we paid special attention to policy actors before, in this chapter we are merging them together in the net of their relations. Despite today there are many approaches to understand policy networks, their conceptual base originates in van Waardens' article (1992) "Dimensions and types of policy networks". Due to methodological importance of this article we will mainly just add few commentaries to summary of aforementioned article. First remark goes to the point that even if van Waarden (1992: 29) mainly analyse relations between political-administrative structure and economy, it is possible to use the article in theoretical dimension for relations among all policy actors.

All different relations which can be called networks between two or more policy actors have certain characteristics that can be present in different degrees, measurable and they define the nature of network itself. According to van Waarden (1992: 32) these characteristics of networks are:

- actors
- functions
- structure
- institutionalization
- rules of management
- power relations
- strategies of individual actors.

Each of aforementioned characteristics can have more elements or dimensions which define nature of certain characteristic and of network itself.

Number of actors defines the size and character of network. Later is as well influenced by type of involved actors. Actors in this sense are primary institutions and on executive level, their representatives. For policy networks it is characteristic that they consist of state administrative and political institutions and civil society institutions (such as interest groups, associations, etc.). Actors who want to enter the network, need to have certain predispositions such as interests, demands, structure, sources, certain degree of professionalism (providing institution with well trained representatives) and mandate that allows representatives to represent the institution. These predispositions enable them protection or realization of their interests (van Waarden, 1992: 33).

Networks are, in reality, communication channels among actors. They have functions adjusted to the needs, intentions, resource, and strategies of individual participating actors. By the degree of intensity of communication/relation within networks, most common functions are managing the access to policy-making, consultancy and information exchange, negotiations and mobilization of resources, coordination of individual activities, cooperation in policy making, implementation and legitimation of policies (see van Waarden 1992: 33). Within bigger picture, aforementioned has the role of establishing common position of different actors and understanding for differences among them at the same time. Function of policy networks is often dependent on the sole nature of the relations. In this manner negotiations assume conflict or competition of ideas. Van Waarden (1992: 34) as one of the functions of policy networks exposes also lobbying and combination of coordination



and discussion as a way to synchronise different approaches. This function he names “concertation” since the product should be synchronised concert of interests. Lobbying differs from joint activities of participating actors in a sense that it does not tend to directly participate in the probes but rather it tries to influence its development as well as its content. However, one should note that the difference between participating as part of the network and lobbying is thin one and not well specified (van Waarden, 1992: 34).

Structure of policy networks defines patterns of relations among different actors. Patterns of relations can be observed via following categories (see van Waarden, 1992: 34-35):

- number of participating actors
- openness of the network for new member and ability of actors to move between networks
- membership type (compulsory or voluntary)
- pattern of relations (chaotic or organized)
- power of relations (measured as frequency and duration of interactions)
- density (number of different relations of individual actor within network)
- symmetry or reciprocity of relations
- grouping and differentiation (creation of sub-networks on networks within network)
- pattern of connection or type of coordination (hierarchical authority, horizontal negotiation, fluctuation of membership, common leadership, often fluctuation of membership)
- centrality (does not exist, multi-centric (common committees) or central unit (main policy actor in the network))
- extend of dispersion of decision-making competences to central units

- type of the relations (conflict, cooperation, competition)
- stability.

Degree of institutionalization is specific characteristic of policy networks that defines formality and stability of individual network. Tendencies towards institutionalization are increased in the case of closed networks with compulsory membership, organized and intense relations among actors with high level of connectivity and reciprocity. More institutionalized networks also tend to have connected leaderships of different participating actors and overlapping membership. On the other hand there are ad hoc, informal policy networks and in between there is set of different types of networks with different level of institutionalization (van Waarden, 1992: 35).

Policy networks are defined also by the agreement on communication among actors and on principles of work. These agreements are based on perception, interests, social and intellectual education of individual participating actors. Rules of conduct within the network are in broader, indirect, sense based on political and administrative culture. Institutionalized networks have bigger potential to develop their own rules of conduct than ad hoc networks. Actors can usually develop following biased forms of behaviour within the network:

- readiness of negotiations over mutually recognised conflict of interests with expectation that opportunism is part of the normal process vs. search for consensus, adjustments and reconciliation
- general understanding for public interest and welfare vs. pursuing narrow particular interests
- secrecy vs openness
- politicking vs common agreement on the need that subject in matter should be depoliticised

- rational pragmatism vs. ideological conflicts (van Waarden, 1992: 36).

Power relations are typical element of policy networks and are connected to the dispersion of sources and needs among participating actors, as well as they are part of common organizational structure of the network. According to van Waarden (1992: 36) relations between state and business can exist in four different types of domination:

- overtake (control) of state by business – clientelism.
- state autonomy in relation to organized interests
- institutionalization/ overtake of pf private sector by the state – state corporatism
- cohabitation or relative balance of power within relatively intense relation.

These divisions of power are not only significantly influencing the networks themselves but are also one of the main causes for structural changes in society (see van Waarden, 1992: 36).

Strategies of policy actors are carried out on the level of individual actor within the network as well as between the actors within the network. Policy actors create and use networks for fulfilling their now needs interests and goals while using strategies of interdependency and relation management (van Waarden, 1992: 37).

All the previously mentioned dimensions are interconnected and in different combinations of characteristics create so called typology of policy networks. Based on this van Waarden (1992: 38) tries to organize networks created between state and organized interests according to differences in characteristics. According to his study and findings of other authors van Waarden (1992: 39-41) defines eleven basic types of policy networks that emerge between state and business actors:

- statism (pantouflage)
- captured statism
- clientelism
- pressure pluralism
- sector corporatism
- macro corporatism
- state corporatism
- sponsored pluralism
- parantele
- iron triangle
- issue networks.

Main characteristic of statism is that there are none or only limited relations between state institutions and organized interests. These relations, if existing, are mainly attempts to exclude organized social interest groups from policy networks and decision-making. statism can have two different sub-types, based on the amount of state's meddling into business. In the first case, state tries to stay out of economic activities and leaves the economy to free market principles, since it (state) believes that *laissez faire* economy answers economic problems better than state interventionism. Second sub-type is etatism and behaves as system of intense state interventions in economy without option that later would cooperate in the process (we can best see it in Soviet model of plan economy). Only option that private/business interests can have certain influence over economic policy which is actively run by the state is pantouflage. The main characteristic of this type of network is that part of civil servants leave their positions for positions in private sector. They still keep their contacts with their previous institutions and they still identify by them (see van Waarden, 1992:42) and for sure they have no

problem to ask old co-workers for some help. From the moral point of view, this type of networks is questionable, since civil servant is able to take over the company that s/he followed it before as part of public administration within previous duties. This opens opportunity for corruption as it is obvious from the explanation.

Captured statism, reverse to pantoufflage, enables former business interests to take over the state by occupying high positions as members of public administration. Historically such case can be Canada or USA during the second world war time. Both countries hired businessmen to run countries' crisis economies and reform public administration which was not able to respond to crisis. At the same time those businessmen kept their contacts with private sector and were able to help their business friends by different state interventions (see van Waarden, 1992: 42-43).

Clientelism is the type of network relations where certain pressure group takes central position in individual issue according to belief of governmental actors. Such virtual monopole enables that overestimated interest group capture the state actors, since they completely depend on their information and they are not able to confront different organized interests if they exist. It in certain field there is truly only one interest organization, it will suppress all other attempts of interest organization and will try to present itself as general interest perspective within the field in question. If state agrees to recognise such interest as general it will face dissatisfaction within the public. In the case of clientelism, state agencies are still policy decision-makers, but under strong influence of certain organized interests. Clientelism has tendency to develop into iron triangles (van Waarden, 1992, 43-44).

Pressure pluralism create policy networks which are mainly influenced by different interest groups, which are trying to enter into the network and later to gain influence over it. Interest groups in this sense compete among themselves for the attention of state actors and are relatively free to move in and out networks. High level of politicking and weak institutionalisations of such networks are their main characteristics. State actors often have only the role of coordinator who is trying to settle different interest and translate them from the level of particularity to the level of generality (van Waarden, 1992: 44-45).

Parantele is form of policy network with predominant role of certain political party. If other interest groups want to have their interests fulfilled they need to gain legitimacy from that certain party which should recognise these interests as important before they are able to reach their goals. In this manner party membership is more important than the nature of the interests and arguments. This type of policy networks is often present in single party system or in systems with predominant party (van Waarden, 1992: 45).

Iron triangle is modified parantele. It is based on active participation of political parties or individual members, who play role as mediators between different interests groups and state actors. However, in this case party is not dominant as in the case of parantele. Iron triangle is usually understood as upgrade of clientelism since it often copy the characteristics of the later. In this manner iron triangle has relatively closed borders of the network, relations are highly intensified, certain interests are usually represented by monopolistic interest groups. Within such network there are strong tendencies towards cooperation and consensus based on complementary interests (van Waarden, 1992: 45-46).

Issue networks strongly differ from most of the aforementioned types of policy networks in at least three key aspects. First, they have extremely open boundaries (enabling free movement of actors in and out of the network), second, they can accept virtually unlimited number of participating actors and third, representatives of the interests tend to be also representatives of different expert opinions and they serve as well as channels of communication and influence in policy processes. In such situation van Waarden (1992: 46) argues that is hard to define the real decision-maker, since resources and powers are strongly dispersed.

Corporatism differs from clientelism or pluralism especially because it includes interest groups not only or primarily into the negotiation processes but also into implementation stage. This gives interest groups certain level of state authority in the implementation phase. In exchange for participating in implementation, state gives these groups certain privileges. In this manner certain private interests gain part of state sovereignty, additionally state awards them privileged access to state actors and monopoly over representation of certain interests

At the same time, monopoly over representation of certain interest is precondition for sectoral corporatism. Previously mentioned co-implementation of public policies by interest groups creates higher level of codependency of state and interest groups that can lead towards symmetric relations and can lead towards clientelism. Corporatist networks are relatively stable and have rather institutionalised relations with (often) compulsory membership, they are centralized, oriented towards searching for consensus and avoiding politicking of issues (see van Waarden, 1992:46-47).

Macro-corporatism or concentrated corporatism has more than one main

interest group, with antagonistic demands. These different interests manage their conflicts and try to synchronise them with the system needs of national economy. The conflict of participating interests does not necessarily follow the cleavage between capital and work, but it can also be between producers and consumers, sellers and producers, etc. In these relations also state can actively interfere with the institutions, which, however, are not connected to the conflict as part of the sector but they play their functional role. Occasionally, these state actors can be even the initiator of the conflict when they manage market relations in order to protect public interest. Networks of corporatist concentration try to resolve societal conflicts, which influences the communication processes within such network itself. Due to constant search of consensus and compromise, which demands aggregation of interests, negotiation and discussion, relations in such networks are highly complex and relatively highly institutionalized. Representative bodies of the state are often understood as mediators between conflict interests, which increases their autonomy in relation to competing interests. Concentrated corporatism builds its position on assumption that bureaucracy is autonomous form different interests. However if this is the case, it is more the consequence than the precondition of existence of such network (van Waarden, 1992: 47-48).

State corporatism, compared to other types of corporatism assumes strong role of the state. Main purpose of such network is not to include private interests into policy implementation, but more to control these interests by the state. State corporatism is often a product of authoritarian state and in this manner predominantly known in fascism. Structure of the network is highly formalized, with clear and closed boundaries, with compulsory membership and often overlapping leaderships (high civil servants are at the same time also representatives of interest groups),



issues are depoliticised, delegation of co-development and co-implementation is limited, legitimacy of the network and representation is highly questionable (van Waarden, 1992: 48).

Sponsored pluralism is policy network type with participation of many different actors. State actors support such plurality due to different reasons. Often in their own attempt to increase relative power of state actors. If the amount of interest groups is limited, they are relatively stronger in relation to the state actors, but when their number increases, they lose the power due to internal differences among different interests. On the other hand, it is possible that in certain field there is no predominant actor (or smaller number of actors) which leaves state with inability to have predominant interest group actor as partner in negotiation. Sponsored pluralism has many similarities with pressure pluralism but in opposition to the later it is much more unstable since state tries to reduce the number of corresponding actors over time (van Waarden, 1992: 48-49).

Van Waarden (1992:50) creates general overview of networks in table as presented below, with two main dimensions, number and type of the actors versus their function and relations.

Table 2: Overview of policy networks

		number and type of actors within the network				
		predominantly state agencies	one predominant social group	two main social groups in conflict	parliamentary committees and parties included	many or unlimited number of social groups
<b>network power relations and function in</b>	Access to the network only	statism /pantouflage	statism	pressure pluralism	parantele	issue networks
		captured statism	clientelism	pressure pluralism	iron triangle	issue networks
	Access to the network and execution of state authority		(Sector) corporatism	state corporatism	Parantele	sponsored pluralism
			(Sector) corporatism	corporatist concentration		

Van Waarden, 1992: 50.

## Conclusion

Despite the present book looks like just one more monograph on public policies it tries concentrate on those elements of public policies that are often underestimated in predominant policy literature. In this manner the publication is trying to change the scope from the process towards the actor and especially to the individual as a policy actor or its representative. Policy studies are often dealing with evaluation or understanding of policy processes. For such approach actor is only an element (not necessary unimportant), which plays its role. However, we try to gather more arguments in favour that policy actors are in fact crucial and decisive elements of any policy process. They not only make decisions by deciding, but sometimes merely by appearing in policy networks that develop during the process. When understanding public policies' development, one should be aware that policy actors are institutionalized but in practice they are individuals after all. In this manner policy results are increasingly unpredictable and random than it is suggested by the theory. This can be simply illustrated that institutional frame of an actor demands form its personalized representative to act not considering his personal feelings on the day when activities should take place. In the situation when critical decision has to take place on "bad day" and with no security pin of rationality (e.g. all decisions equally possible and acceptable), it is possible that result will be under-optimal if not even destructive. Such instant malfunctioning decisions can be only avoided by security mechanism as double-check of scenarios and even more by prolongation of the process. Since any social development leans towards normality on the long run, time assures decision-makers necessary manoeuvring space to adjust decisions that are more sound (in this sense incremental changes are usually consequence of sound long run development). By arguing this we automatically also assume that any fast change in any field is not really policy change but more political one since it is less rational, less elaborated, approved too quick and with lack of debate and thought on the possible effects (their size and shape).

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