

Policy Implementation and Evaluation

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Course Overview

	Morning Session (10:00 ~ 13:00)	Afternoon Session (14:00 ~ 16:00)
2 Aug 2024	Concept of Public Policy	Assignment & Task Division
9 Aug 2024	Research & Doing Policy Analysis	Hands on Using AI tools
16 Aug 2024	Policy Actors & Policy Process	Policy Simulation
23 Aug 2024	Power & Policy Agenda	Poster Preparation
30 Aug 2024	Policy Implementation	Policy Workshop

Day V: Session Overview

- Implementation Approach
- Principle Agent Theory
- Policy Implementation Critiques
- Policy Evaluation and Policy Cycle
- Rationalist vs interpretive Evaluation
- Utilitarianism in Policy Evaluation
- Theory of Change
- Policy Evaluation Challenges

Health Mandate in Avalon

Avalon is in the midst of a public health crisis due to rising rates of chronic diseases. In response, the Avalon Government enacts an extensive health policy aimed at reducing these rates by promoting healthier lifestyles. The policy mandates that all schools, workplaces, and public institutions must provide healthier food options, implement mandatory physical activity programs, and run educational campaigns about healthy living. To ensure uniformity, the central government sets strict guidelines for what qualifies as a "healthy" meal and the types of physical activities that must be offered. Local governments are instructed to implement these programs exactly as outlined, with no room for modification. National inspectors are dispatched to monitor compliance, and penalties are imposed on institutions that fail to meet the standards. Despite the well-intentioned efforts, local schools and workplaces struggle to implement the policy as designed. In some regions, the prescribed healthy foods are not locally available or culturally appropriate, leading to resistance from both students and employees. Nevertheless, the policy moves forward as planned, driven by the central government's commitment to reducing chronic disease rates.

- What might have been the benefits of this uniform policy? What challenges did it create at the local level?

Rentable Energy Program

Faced with growing concerns about energy sustainability, the Eden Government sets an ambitious goal to increase the country's reliance on renewable energy sources. Instead of imposing a uniform policy, the government offers grants to local governments and communities, encouraging them to develop their own renewable energy projects based on local resources and needs. In one coastal town, the local government uses the grant to build offshore wind farms, taking advantage of strong ocean winds. In a mountainous region, the community invests in small hydroelectric plants to harness the power of local rivers. Meanwhile, a desert community develops a large-scale solar farm, capitalizing on the abundant sunlight. Each project is designed, implemented, and managed by local stakeholders, with support and oversight from the national government.

- How does local control impact the success of these projects? What role should the Eden Government play in ensuring the overall goal is met?

Top down and Bottom up Approach

	Top down	Bottom up
Initial focus	Central government decision	Local communities and network
Policy process	Policy development at higher level and implementation at lower level	Interactive process between higher and lower level
Evaluation Criteria	Extent of attainment of formal objectives rather than recognition of unintended consequences	Much less clear, possibly that policy process takes into account of local Influences
Overall focus	Designing the system to achieve what central/top policy makers intend-focus on structure	Recognition of strategic interaction among multiple actors in a policy network focus on agency

Principal Agent Theory

- Explores the relationship between a principal (the party that delegates authority) and an agent (the party that carries out the delegated tasks).
- **Principal:** Often a policymaker or government body that sets goals and delegates task.
- **Agent:** Implementing agencies, local officials, or contractors who execute policies.
- **Asymmetric Information:** Agents typically have more information about the implementation process than principals.
- **Agency Problem:** Potential conflicts between the principal's goals and the agent's actions or interests (goal misalignment).
- **Consequences:** Moral hazard and adverse selection

Principal Agent Theory: Implementation Problem

- **Misalignment of Objectives:** Agents may pursue their own interests, which might diverge from the principal's policy goals.
- **Information Asymmetry:** Agents often have better knowledge of the implementation environment, which can lead to inefficiencies or lack of transparency.

Examples

- **Centralized Policy Implementation:** A national government sets regulations (principal) and relies on local agencies (agents) for enforcement.
- **Contracted Services:** A government contracts private firms to deliver public services, with contracts specifying performance criteria and monitoring processes.

The Green Roof Mandate

- The national government decides to tackle urban heat islands and improve city sustainability by mandating that all new buildings in metropolitan areas must have green roofs. The policy is crafted by central planners, with detailed guidelines and strict compliance requirements sent to local municipal authorities. This policy is expected to significantly reduce urban temperatures and enhance city green spaces. In one city, local officials are frustrated by the rigid requirements and deadlines. They believe the national guidelines do not fully account for the city's unique urban layout and existing land use. As a result, some projects are either delayed or altered to fit local priorities rather than the national vision. Additionally, local officials are tempted to divert some of the funds to other, more urgent projects that are not aligned with the policy goals.
- What are the problems here?

Community Health Program

- A national public health department launches a Community Health Improvement Program, designed to address local health disparities by allowing individual communities to develop their own health interventions. The program provides grants and general guidelines but leaves the details of implementation to local health departments and community groups. In one community, local leaders prioritize a wellness program for youth, based on their assessment of local needs. However, the program unintentionally overlooks a growing issue of elderly health in the area. Meanwhile, another community use the grant to fund a large health fair, but the resources are not effectively utilize, leading to lower-than-expected health outcomes. The local initiatives are so rampant that national public health department is uncertain that if the Community Health Programs align with national public health act.
- What is the problem here?

Why Top-Down Approaches Leave Gaps

- **Centralized Control:** Policymakers (principals) at the top set broad goals, but implementing agents at the local level may lack motivation or resources.
- **Information Asymmetry:** Top-level principals may not fully understand local conditions, leading to poor implementation strategies by agents.
- **Goal Misalignment:** Agents may prioritize their own objectives (e.g., minimizing effort) over the policy goals, leading to suboptimal outcomes.
- **Moral Hazard:** Agents may implement policies in a way that serves their own interest rather than principal's goals.
- **Agency Cost:** The principal needs to invest in oversight mechanism to ensure agencies compliance.

Why Bottom-up Approaches Leave Gaps

- **Decentralized Decision-Making:** Agents at the local level have more discretion, which can lead to varied implementation strategies that may not fully align with the principal's intentions.
- **Diverse Objectives:** Local agents may have different priorities, creating inconsistencies in how policies are executed across different areas.
- **Monitoring Challenges:** Principals may find it difficult to monitor numerous local agents, leading to varied interpretations and outcomes.

Balancing Top down and Bottom up Approach

- Shared Goals
- Collaborative Planning
- Clear Directives
- Feedback Loops
- Performance based reward and penalties
- Develop transparent performance indicators
- Adoptive management
- Layered Oversight
- Capacity Development
- Team Building

Policy Evaluation

Ex-Ante Evaluation

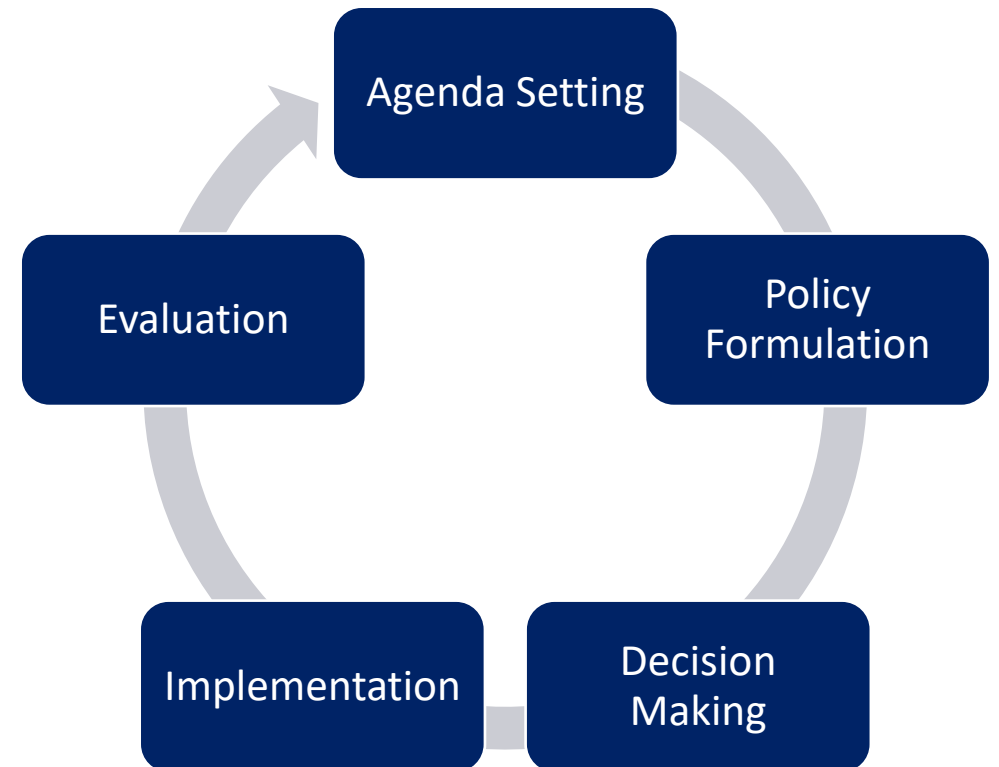
- Conducted before policy implementation to predict potential impacts and feasibility.
- Helps identify potential problems, refine policy design, and allocate resources efficiently.
- Examples: Cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment.

Ex-Post Evaluation

- Conducted after policy implementation to assess actual outcomes and effectiveness.
- Provides evidence for policy adjustments, informs future policymaking, and improves accountability.
- Examples: Outcome evaluation, impact assessment.

Policy Evaluation and Policy Cycle

- Sits at the end of the cycle but influences every stage by providing feedback and data (feedback loop)
- Identifies emerging issues and assesses the effectiveness of past policies.
- Ensures that policy actions are continually refined and improved over time.
- Provides evidence and forecasts to guide policy choices.
- Monitors ongoing activities, ensuring that the policy is on track to meet its goals.



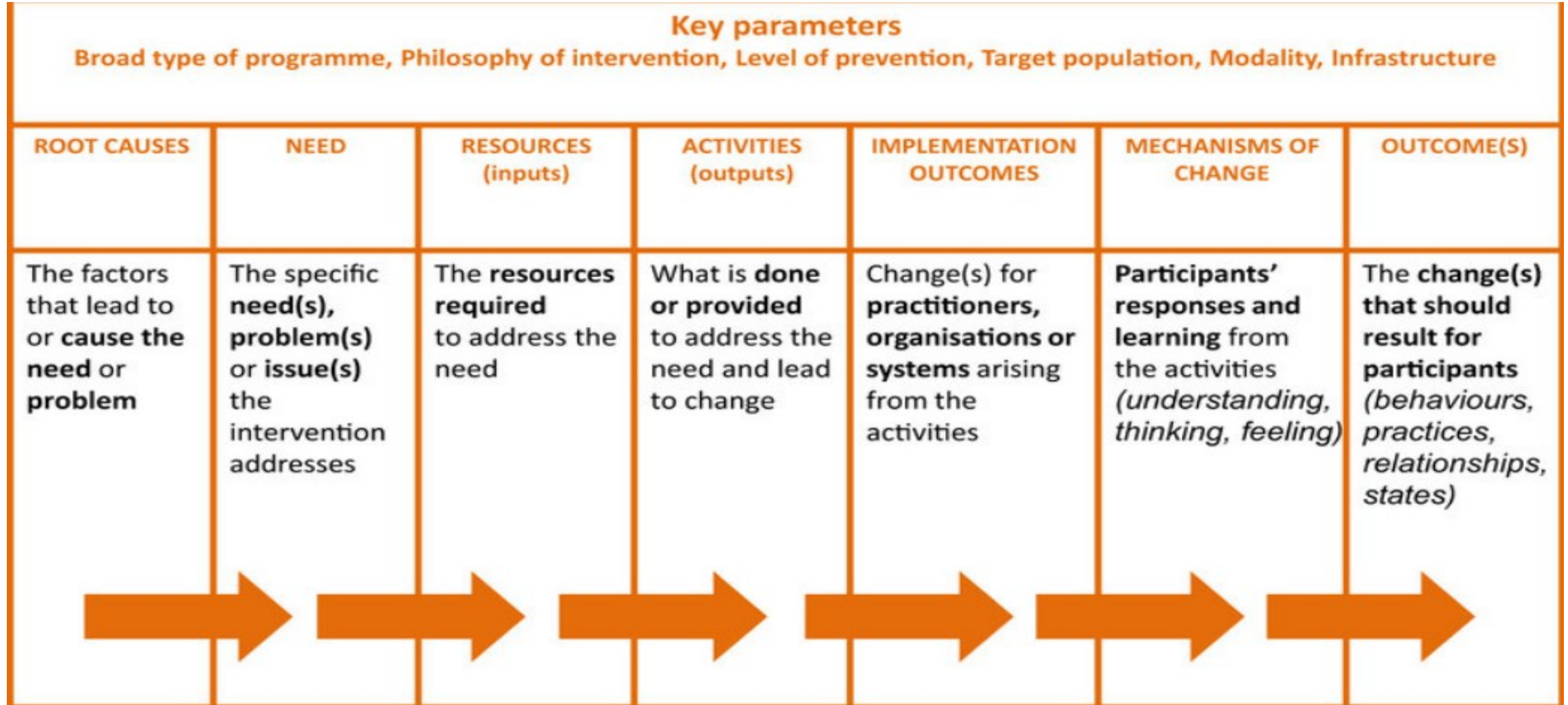
Policy Evaluation: Rationalist vs Interpretive

Feature	Rationalist Approach	Interpretive Approach
Focus	Outcomes and efficiency	Meanings and experiences
Evaluation Questions	Did the policy achieve its goals?	How did the policy impact stakeholders?
Data Collection	Quantitative data	Qualitative data
Analysis Methods	Statistical analysis, cost-benefit analysis	Discourse analysis, thematic analysis
Strengths	Rigorous, data driven	In-depth understanding of policy context
Weaknesses	Oversimplifies reality, neglects context	Time-consuming, subjective
Suitability	Evaluating program effectiveness	Understanding policy implementation processes

Utilitarianism in Policy Evaluation

- Concept: A policy is considered good if it maximizes overall happiness or utility. “The greatest good for the greatest number.”
- Strength: Focuses on measurable outcomes. Aims for policies that benefit the majority.
- Limitation: May overlook the needs of minorities or marginalized groups.
- Examples: Utility Analysis, Cost Benefit Analysis and Distributive Impacts

Theory of Change



Policy Evaluation Methods

- Quantitative Methods
 - Statistical Analysis: Using data to measure outcomes.
 - Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs): Comparing treated vs. control groups.
- Qualitative Methods
 - Case Studies: In-depth exploration of specific policy implementations.
 - Interviews & Focus Groups: Gathering insights from stakeholders.
- Mixed Methods
 - Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches for a comprehensive evaluation.

Evaluation Challenge: Attribution

- Difficulty in determining the true causes of observed changes (isolating policy effect from other confounders)
 - Did a job training program increase employment rates, or was it due to an improving economy?
- Sources of problem: Confounders, policy interaction and spillover
- Mitigating measures
 - Use control or comparison groups to isolate the effect of the policy.
 - Track outcomes over time to better attribute changes to the policy.
 - There are method specific approaches

Political and Ethical Aspects of Evaluation

- **Political Interference:** Pressure to produce favorable results or suppress negative findings.
- Evaluation findings can be influenced by political interests or biases.
- **Ethical Dilemmas:** Balancing the need for rigorous evaluation with protecting participant privacy and well-being.
- Problem of randomization due to political (e.g. blanket approach policy or ad hoc implementation) and ethical reasons

Thank You !