
POU44372 POLITICS OF POLICY MAKING

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LEARNING AIMS

The main aims of the module are:

- To equip students with a critical understanding of the theoretical aspects of public policy making and the public policy cycle in an Irish context;
- To understand the aspects of the Irish policy-making process and the balance of power between the main actors in the process; and
- To articulate the main challenges facing the Irish public policy making process and the debates concerning its future reform.

CORE READINGS:

Readings will be assigned for each week, but useful texts include:

- Howlett, Michael and Michael Ramesh. *Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems*. Oxford University Press, (2009),
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. *The Oxford handbook of public policy*. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006.
- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegate Governance*, Institute of Public Administration (2011).
- Hardiman, Niamh (ed.), *Irish Governance In Crisis*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, (2012)

DESCRIPTION:

The financial crisis and the aftermath brought the Irish policy-making process into focus. Questions were asked about whether or not the policy-making process in Ireland was fit for purpose and what reforms, if any, were needed to address this. The purpose of this module is to equip students with an understanding of the theories used to explain policy-making and how they can be applied in the Irish case. This will include a focus on the conceptual stages of the policy making process – agenda setting, formulation, decision making, implementation and evaluation. The institutional framework for policy-making in Ireland is discussed as well as the main drivers of policy-making. Specifically, the roles of various actors in the process are explored, and the relative strength of actors in Ireland is compared with the theoretical frameworks explored in the literature.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this module, students will be able to do the following:

- Understand the policy cycle and how this applies in an Irish context;
- Understand the main actors involved in the Irish policy-making process;
- Discuss the future for the Irish policy-making process.

MODULE STRUCTURE:

The module will meet on 9 occasions. The module commences with two introductory lectures. For Topic 2 onwards, the class meeting will be a discussion seminar. Students are expected to have read the core readings before attending discussion seminars.

EVALUATION:

Assessment requirements comprise two assignments and the end of year exam

- **Assignment 1 (40%)** – A term paper is due by Sunday of Week 8(HT) (20th March).
 - Choose a particular Irish policy proposal introduced during the past twenty years (it can be a successful or unsuccessful measure) and:
 - Analyse its initiation, formation and implementation (or failure) using the policy cycle;
 - Identify and account for the most significant (governmental and non-governmental) actors involved in the process; and
 - Briefly assess the usefulness of the public policy cycle approach in explaining your chosen policy proposal.
 - Your chosen policy proposal is to be chosen by the end of teaching week 6 and agreed with the module lecturer. The paper is to be between 2,500 and 3,000 words and is to be submitted via turnitin.com.
- **Exam (60%)** – The exam will follow the traditional approach of essay-based questions.

NOTE ABOUT SUBMISSION:

Please note: All late work, unless excused in advance by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate or tutor's note, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of the second lecture term.

All coursework needs to be submitted via the plagiarism detector Turnitin; see www.turnitin.com. To be sure

that you are not inadvertently plagiarising, see the department's undergraduate handbook at: http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/undergraduate/module-outlines/UndergradHandbook.pdf

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Lecture	Date	Topic
HT1	28 January 2022	Studying the Public Policy Cycle in Ireland (lecture)
HT2	4 February 2022	Agenda-setting
HT3	11 February 2022	Formulation
HT4	18 February 2022	Decision-making
HT5	25 February 2022	Implementation
HT6	4 March 2022	Evaluation
HT7	11 March 2022	Reading week – no seminar
HT8	18 March 2022	Bank holiday – no seminar
HT9	25 March 2022	Ministers, the Oireachtas and the civil service
HT10	1 April 2022	Other actors in policymaking
HT11	8 April 2022	The Irish public policy-making system in comparative perspective
HT12	15 April 2022	Good Friday – no seminar

READING LIST

INTRODUCTION

HT1: STUDYING THE PUBLIC POLICY CYCLE IN IRELAND (LECTURE)

This meeting provides an overview of the module in terms of its aims and its content. Among the things we discuss, we examine the rationale for studying public policy and the definitions of policy outputs versus policy outcomes. We look at some of the more prominent models of policy formation, including the public policy cycle approach and the “multiple streams” approach. We will look at the various processes involved in the policy-making process in Ireland as well as the actors that are involved in the process. This lecture is focused on setting the context for the individual meetings that will take place from Week 2 onwards

Reading:

- Michael, Howlett, and Michael Ramesh. "Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems." (2009), chapter 1
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. The Oxford handbook of public policy. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006. Chapter 1.
- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance." *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*, E. O'Malley & M. MacCarthaigh, eds., Institute of Public Administration (2011). – Chapters 1, 2
- Ferris, Tom. "Reflections on the public policy process in Ireland." (accessible at http://www.ipa.ie/pdf/Reflections_onthe_PublicPolicy_Process.pdf)
- McMahan, Niamh " Investigating Policy Processes and Practices in Ireland: Potential Ways Forward" (accessible at <http://publish.ucc.ie/ijpp/2012/01/McMahanNiamh/02/en>)

HT2: AGENDA-SETTING

For public policies to be enacted, agenda setting is important in determining what policies are enacted as well as the overall shape that they take. During this seminar, we will touch on the following questions:

- How do social, economic and political problems become policy proposals?
- What does the agenda setting process involve in Ireland?
- Who are the main actors in the agenda setting process? Who is the dominant actor?
- Who drives the agenda? Who controls access to the policy agenda?
- How fluid is the policy agenda?
- How does the policy agenda get influenced?

Readings:

- Michael Howlett, and Michael Ramesh. "Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems." (2009), chapter 4
- Kingdon, John W. (2010). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson, Chapter 8
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. *The Oxford handbook of public policy*. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006. Chapter 11.

HT3: FORMULATION

Policy formulation involves developing strategies for dealing with policy issues which have been placed on an agenda. Policy formulation takes both the effectiveness and the viability or acceptability of proposed actions into account, and requires resources from both inside and outside the apparatus of government. During this seminar, we will touch on the following questions:

- How are issues on the agenda translated into workable policies and policy alternatives?
- Who are the main actors during this phase of the process?
- How is evidence used?
- How are the implications of policy assessed?

Readings:

- Michael, Howlett, and Michael Ramesh. "Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems." (2009), chapter 5
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. *The Oxford handbook of public policy*. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006. Chapter 12.
- Ruane, F. 2012. 'Research evidence and policymaking in Ireland' *Administration*, 60 (2), pp.119-38

HT4: DECISION-MAKING

When policy formulation is complete, there is a stage in the policy process which focuses on what policy option should be implemented. During this seminar, we will discuss the following questions:

- How do the actors in this phase of the policy-making process differ from other phases?
- Is the scope for involvement in this phase too narrow?
- What is the role of evidence and research in this phase?
- How are policies judged? What criteria are used to choose particular policy option?

- What constraints exist for stakeholders as part of this phase?
- How are budgetary considerations taken into account

Readings:

- Michael, Howlett, and Michael Ramesh. "Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems." (2009), chapter 5
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. The Oxford handbook of public policy. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006. Chapter 13
- Suiter, Jane, and Eoin O'Malley. "Yes, minister: the impact of decision-making rules on geographically targeted particularistic spending." Parliamentary Affairs 67.4 (2014): 935-954.

HT5: IMPLEMENTATION

Once a policy option has been chosen, implementation of it is fundamental to its success. This phase represents the most visible manifestation of policy in the public eye. During this seminar, we will touch on the following questions:

- Who implements policy in Ireland? Has this changed over time? How?
- What form does policy implementation take?
- What determines the success of implementation?
- Is there adequate capacity for implementation in the responsible actors?
- How do previous phases in the policy process influence on the policy implementation phase?
- How is implementation monitored?

Readings:

- Michael, Howlett, and Michael Ramesh. "Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems." (2009), chapter 7
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. The Oxford handbook of public policy. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006. Chapter 14
- Johnston, Helen 'All Vision but No Change? Determinants of Implementation: The Case of Ireland and Mental Health Policy' 2014 Institute of Public Administration Chapters 2 and 5

HT6: EVALUATION

This phase of the policy-making process is often regarded as one of the most important though least observed phases of the process. The link between evidence and policy-making is one of the most discussed aspects of the Irish policy-making process. During this seminar, we will touch on the following questions:

- Is there a link between evidence and policy-making in Ireland?
- What is the role of evaluation in policy-making in Ireland?
- How is policy evaluated in Ireland?
- What explanations are there for the lack of an evaluation culture in Ireland?
- What are the obstacles to an evaluation culture in Ireland?
- How can policy evaluation feed back into the policy cycle?

Readings:

- Michael, Howlett, and Michael Ramesh. "Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems." (2009), chapter 8
- Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin, eds. The Oxford handbook of public policy. Vol. 3. Oxford Handbooks of Political, 2006. Chapter 15
- Boyle, Richard "The state of policy evaluation in Ireland." Institute of Public Administration Research

- FitzGerald, J. (2012) 'Restoring credibility in policy-making in Ireland', Public Money & Management, 32 (1), 27-34
- Hearne, Ed and Watt, Robert. 2011. 'Research and policy-making – strengthening the link'. Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, 40, pp152-166.
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HT7: READING WEEK

No seminar

HT8: BANK HOLIDAY

No seminar

HT9: MINISTERS, THE OIREACHTAS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE

Ministers can play an important role in the policy process. However, the Department of Finance and the Department of the Taoiseach can impact upon this role.

The Taoiseach and the Government are selected from the membership of the Oireachtas (primarily the Dail). However, the Oireachtas is often considered to be a redundant part of the policy-making process. This is not necessarily the case since the 2016 general election. During this seminar, we will touch on the following questions:

- What role do ministers play in the policy process? How does this align with the civil service?
- How does this operate within a system of cabinet government?
- How significant a role does the Department of Finance play?
- How significant a role does the Department of the Taoiseach play?
- What role does the Oireachtas play?
- What tools does it have available to it?
- Are there other actors or entities that can engage in monitoring?

Readings:

- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance." *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*, E. O'Malley & M. MacCarthaigh, eds., Institute of Public Administration (2011):
 - 3 The Apex of Government: Cabinet and Taoiseach in Operation
 - 4 Ministers and their Departments: Inside the 'Black Box' of the Public Policy Process
 - 5 The Department of Finance
 - 6 The Core Executive: the Department of the Taoiseach and the Challenge of Policy Coordination
 (NB: Worth re-reading chapter 2 for a refresher on the Irish system of government.)
- Hunt, Brian "Role of the Houses of the Oireachtas in the Scrutiny of Legislation" *Houses of the Oireachtas* (2010), chapters 9 and 10 (accessible at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/main/documentation/House-of-Oireachtas-Report-for-Web.pdf>)
- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance." *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*, E. O'Malley & M. MacCarthaigh, eds., Institute of Public Administration (2011):
 - 8 Monitoring Irish Government

- MacCarthaigh, M. 2010. 'Parliamentary Scrutiny of Departments and Agencies' in MacCarthaigh, M. and M. Manning (eds) The Houses of the Oireachtas: Parliament in Ireland. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, pp.358-76.
- Oireachtas Library and Research Service (2016) Parliamentary scrutiny of government performance (accessible at <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/housesoftheoireachtas/libraryresearch/spotlights/20160128/SpotlightParliamentaryscrutinyofgovernmentperformancefinal.pdf>)

(NB: worth perusing this [report](#) to look at suggested reforms since 2016.)

HT10: OTHER ACTORS IN POLICYMAKING

Interest groups are any organization of people with policy goals who work within the political process to promote such goals. Groups attempt to influence policy in various ways. During this seminar, we will explore how this plays out in the Irish process by looking at the following themes:

- How does the policy agenda get influenced?
- What do Irish interest groups look like?
- How does the government's relationship with the media influence the policy cycle?
- What influence does membership of the European Union have on the policy cycle?

Readings:

- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance." *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*, E. O'Malley & M. MacCarthaigh, eds., Institute of Public Administration (2011):
 - 7 From Agencification to De-agencification: The Changing Bureaucratic Model
- MacCarthaigh, M. (2013). *The Changing Structure of Irish sub-national Governance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance." *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*, E. O'Malley & M. MacCarthaigh, eds., Institute of Public Administration (2011):
 - 9 The Exercise and Impact of Social Partnership
- Murphy, G. (2017). Lobbying regulation in Ireland: Fool's errand or finest hour? *Administration*, 65(2), pp. 127-144.
- Murphy, G. (2017). Ireland. In A. Bitonti & P. Harris (Eds), *Lobbying in Europe: Public affairs and the lobbying industry in 28 EU countries* (pp. 195-206). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Murphy, G. (2010b). Access and expectation: Interest groups in Ireland. In J. Hogan, P. F. Donnelly & B. K. O'Rourke (Eds), *Irish business and society: Governing, participating and transforming in the twentieth-first century* (pp. 489-504). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- McGrath, C. (2009). The lobbyist with 'balls of iron and a spine of steel': Why Ireland needs lobbying reform. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 9, 256-71.
- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance." *Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*, E. O'Malley & M. MacCarthaigh, eds., Institute of Public Administration (2011):
 - 12 Government and the Media
- Rafter, K. (2010), 'Reporting the Oireachtas: Irish political and parliamentary journalism since 1922', in M. MacCarthaigh and M. Manning (eds), *The Houses of the Oireachtas: Parliament in Ireland*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, pp. 400-14
- O'Brien, Mark and Donnacha Ó Beachain "Political Communication in the Republic of Ireland":
 - 12 Social media and political communication

HT11: THE IRISH PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING SYSTEM IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The political and public reaction to the financial crisis in 2008/9 brought elements and perceived weaknesses of the Irish policy process into focus. These gaps and weaknesses spanned all elements of the process from the initial phases to how outcomes were achieved. During this session, we will explore the following questions:

- What are the major criticisms of the Irish public policy process?
 - Corruption
 - Quality
 - Localism
 - Short-term focus
 - Others
- What are the explanations for the causes of these shortcomings?
- What are the different and new approaches to policy-making in Ireland that draw on or take an alternative approach to phases of the process?
 - Deliberative democracy
 - The effectiveness of reforms to the Irish public policy process
 - The future direction of the Irish public policy process

Readings:

- Niamh Hardiman (Ed.). (2012) *Irish Governance in Crisis*. Manchester: Manchester University Press: chapter 1
- McDaid, Shaun. "The crisis in Ireland: where did it all go wrong?." *Political Studies Review* 14.2 (2016):189-198.
- Byrne, Elaine A. *Political Corruption in Ireland 1922-2010: A Crooked Harp?*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012. Chapter 8
- Barry, Frank 'Politicians, the bureaucracy and economic policymaking over two crises: the 1950s and today'. - Dublin: Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, Vol. XLII, 2012-13, pp81-88
- McMenamin, Iain. "Business Financing of Politics in Ireland: Theory, Evidence and Reform." *Irish Political Studies* 28.1 (2013): 20-38.
- O'Malley, Eoin, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. "Governing Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance.", Institute of Public Administration (2011).
 - 13 Conclusions: Reforming Government
- Suiter, Jane, David M. Farrell, and Eoin O'Malley. "When do deliberative citizens change their opinions? Evidence from the Irish Citizens' Assembly." *International Political Science Review* 37.2 (2016): 198-212.
- Niamh Hardiman (Ed.). (2012) *Irish Governance in Crisis*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, chapter 10 (Komito)
- Forde, Catherine. "Participatory democracy or pseudo-participation? Local government reform in Ireland." *Local Government Studies* 31.2 (2005): 137-148.

HT12: NO SEMINAR
