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A FRAMEWORK FOR CONCATENATED EVENT
ANALYSIS^x

by

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A FRAMEWORK FOR
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Abstract

This paper presents a framework for analyzing national policy-making. After pointing out shortcomings in aggregated input-output models, elite incumbency investigations, and governmental institution analysis, we describe an event-structured approach that connects consequential organizational actors with a set of temporally arrayed events. An expert evaluation criterion is suggested for combining related events into scenarios, and a typology is derived by compounding self-limiting standard decision cycles into more complex structures. A set of hypotheses is presented about the relationship between type of event, scenario and basic elements of the policy process.

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A FRAMEWORK FOR CONCATENATED EVENT ANALYSIS

Research on national policy making falls under three general rubrics: aggregated input-output modeling, elite incumbency investigation, and governmental institution analysis. Each approach contributes important insights into how policy debates are framed, developed, resolved, and implemented. But each perspective, for reasons discussed below, overlooks an important consideration: the structural complex relating organizational actors to temporally arrayed policy events. This paper lays out the analytic elements essential to understanding national policy making from this framework. Subsequent reports will apply the proposed framework to data collected on policy networks in two national domains, energy and health. A technical Appendix to this paper describes empirical procedures used in the project.

THREE POLICY MAKING MODELS

Perhaps the most statistically sophisticated models of national policy are time series analyses that relate annual values of the national economy, polity, and sociodemographic structure to such consequences as budgetary expenditures, election outcomes, and income redistributions (e.g., Hibbs, 1977; Tufte, 1978; Knoke and Macke, 1979; Griffin et al., 1982). Consciously mimicking renowned econometric models, and using much the same estimation methods, these systems of linear equations give a highly compressed view of the policymaking processes. For example, Hibbs (1977) showed that when control of the national government in Britain and in the United States passes to the conservative party, aggregate unemployment soon increases, presumably to

reduce inflationary pressures that adversely affect affluent supporters of the party. Although such political business cycle effects undeniably occur, the fine-grained detail by which employment policy is created in the relevant public and private institutions is lost in such gross annual aggregated measures. The political process is largely a black box in such models and the process by which inputs (political demands, macrosocial conditions) are transformed into outputs (policy impacts) remains shrouded in mystery.

A second generic approach to national policy takes a directly contrasting stance: the key to explaining policy decisions lies in the personalities of incumbents of the national command positions. A substantial portion of the power structure research has been devoted to detailed analysis of the social origins and career patterns of legislators, federal agency executives, higher public servants, and private foundation and business directors on the apparent assumption that demography is destiny in national policy making (e.g., Mills, 1956; Domhoff, 1967, 1970, 1979; Milbrath, 1963; Dye, 1976; Mocre, 1979; Knoke, 1981). As a result, substantial information is now available on the family backgrounds, schooling, marriages, club memberships, and corporate board interlocks of the top position holders in key institutions.

But the translation of social origins, personality attributes, and intra-elite ties into actual policy decisions remains largely undemonstrated. The more vulgarly Marxist treatments simply assume a transparent connection between social class position and policy preferences, without considering that institutional and organizational imperatives may constrain and override individual factors. The more sophisticated students of elite social organization, such as Useem (1978, 1979), and Allen (1974, 1978), seem to recognize an inherent limit to incumbent attributes as an explanation of policy outcomes

and thus confine their analyses to describing the social structure within which the unobserved policy negotiations presumably take place. In large measure, the limitations of the elite incumbency approach stem from researchers' inevitable exclusion from corporate boardrooms and country club lunchrooms where the real action allegedly takes place.

The third approach to national policy, which has predominated for generations among political scientists, emphasizes the role played by the proximate decision makers: the courts, the bureaucracies, the presidency, and especially the Congress. Treatments range from factual discussions of "how a bill becomes law" (e.g., Oleszek, 1978), to analyses of the constituent and party cues that impinge upon hurried legislators (e.g., Kingdon, 1973; Fiorina, 1974, 1977; Kuklinski, 1978), to investigations of regulatory agency "capture" by groups supposedly to be regulated (e.g., McConnell, 1967; Lowi, 1969), to studies of the complex and extra-constitutional relationships between branches of the government (e.g., Wildavsky, 1974; Ripley and Franklin, 1980), to research on the history of specific bills and programs (e.g., Marmor, 1970; Bauer et al., 1963; Pierce, 1971; Burstein and Freudenberg, 1978; Burstein and MacLeod, 1980).

Running through much of this literature is a conceptualization of policy making as an act carried out mainly by individuals in authority roles. Representatives, legislators, presidents, regulators, and judges possess the legal power to authorize new programs, fund on-going ones, reallocate valued goods and services, and punish transgressors. Thus, it is not surprising that the bulk of attention has focused on the actual moment at which the binding decision is rendered, for example, on roll call votes cast on the House and Senate floor (e.g., MacRae, 1970; Jackson, 1974). Lost from this proximate

view of the outcome is the antecedent portion of the policy process, in which issues must be recognized, latent interests mobilized, and options offered and winnowed long before a definitive selection can be reached (Knoke and Laumann, 1982).

A smaller, but significant, portion of governmental institution research has attended to this more distal end of the policy process. The growing literature on pressure groups and the lobbying process (e.g., Truman, 1951; Salisbury, 1970; McFarland, 1976; Berry, 1977; Greenwald, 1977; Ornstein and Elder, 1978) has improved our understanding of how interests become translated into demands upon the authorities to change policy. Much of this research, however, is descriptive and anecdotal and is confined to analyses of either an individual interest group or the progress of a single issue through the long legislative or regulatory process. Aside from a few general frameworks that concede nonpublic organizations some role in the agenda-setting procedure (Cobb and Elder, 1972), little systematic comparative research has been conducted on the relationship of such actors to the authorities.

In summary, the preceding brief overview of three basic approaches to national policy making highlighted their unique contributions and their shortcomings. The major neglect that we see in all three is their inattention to details of how the groundwork is laid for the policy debate, a component of the process that we believe must be placed within the context of a full set of on-going policy events to be properly understood.

AN EVENT-STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK

In our sociological perspective on national policy making we find little room for the personality aspects of individuals who hold key institutional positions. Corporate organizations (Coleman, 1974) are the main actors

walking the metaphoric stage on which policy dramas are performed. The individuals who occupy formal leadership roles conduct themselves as agents, or fiduciaries, pursuing the interests of the collectivity, when necessary at the cost of personal aims and objectives. Hence, we can dispense with inquiries into how the social origins and training of individual position holders might affect the process and outcome of policy activities.

A second major assumption of our alternative policy approach is that much of the significant action takes place well before the definitive choice of a binding decision. We are not uninterested in policy outcomes--indeed explaining the choice that is ultimately selected is one of the main purposes of the framework--but we believe that important explanatory components are located at stages of the policy process considerably antecedent to the casting of roll call votes by the authorities. Thus, we take seriously into account the policy making roles performed by more "distal" actors, many of whom are not formally part of the Federal government, but whose involvements crucially shape the policy debate and its eventual resolution.

These assumptions entered, the essence of our proposed policy framework is a structural complex that connects consequential organizational actors with a set of temporally arrayed policy events. To understand how national policy unfolds, one must take into account how organizations perceive and respond to an opportunity structure for affecting policy outcomes that is created by the temporal sequence of policy-relevant events. Because a specific policy event is embedded in the context of other antecedent, concurrent, and impending events, policy analysts must incorporate the entire structure of organizations and events, and not focus narrowly upon single instances of either, as do most case studies (e.g., Dahl, 1961).

Central to an analysis of an organizations-events complex is the flow of trustworthy and timely information about events among a set of actors with interests in the outcome of the events. This communication structure among actors oriented toward a common policy area is a critical factor for explaining the dynamic unfolding of the policy process from initiation through completion. The content of information flowing through the communication structure may be scientific and technical, such as factual data about energy resource reserves (but see Wildavksy and Tenenbaum, 1981, on the problematic nature of such "facts"), or it may be socio-political, such as messages from potential allies or adversaries about their probable response to an organization's actions.

All policy actors, but especially organizations charged with proximate decision-making roles in democratic polities, have vast needs for valid, useful, and up-to-date information. Complex formal organizations, whose prosperity and very survival may be at stake in the outcome of policy controversies, develop elaborate organs to monitor continuously the environment for potential opportunities and threats (Wilensky, 1967). Information will be more reliable as a basis for framing organizational responses if it comes from sources of proven trustworthiness. A salient figure on the contemporary political scene is the indispensable "inside dopester" (Riesman, 1961), able to cut through a confusing fog of propaganda and trivial or misleading intelligence. An essential function of the recurrent sub-government, or "cozy triangle", relationships among congressional subcommittees, bureaucrats, and private interest groups (Ripley and Franklin, 1980: 7), may be to establish dependable control over critical information flows among those actors whose interests are most at risk.

Equally important as the trustworthiness of information sources is the timeliness of the information which is transmitted. Given that the policy process consists of a sequence of events in which organizational intervention is possible at various points, organizations must constantly search for maximum impact points. Leverage for framing policy choices by the judicious transmission of targeted information may be greater for some events in the policy process than for others. Organizational contributions to politicians' campaigns, most commonly funneled through PACs (political action committees), are best seen not as attempts to "buy" favorable policy outcomes but as insurance of access to proximate decision makers at appropriate opportunities when the presentation of an actor's factual or political information concerning an event may be most persuasive in influencing the outcome of an event.

The framework for concatenated event analysis is manifestly intended to serve multiple analytic objectives. First, we want to call attention to the variety of criteria that can be used to concatenate events into scenarios. The four fundamental types of scenarios that we ultimately identify can be used to explain the distinct patterns of policy development in a given domain. We shall argue that each type of scenario is associated with distinct configurations of elements in the policy process. These configurations include the characteristic ways in which policy options are placed on the agenda for authoritative action, the distinct patterns of participation by interested parties over the course of the policy cycle, the relative importance of the larger socio-political context with which the scenario events are embedded, the structure of adversary relations among the participants, and the final resolution of the process.

To develop the full implications of an event-structured policy framework, several basic concepts first must be defined. The next three sections present these terms as a preliminary to illustrating some testable hypotheses about the organizations-events complex.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Policy decisions typically occur within a bounded subsystem of the national polity, or policy domain (Knoke and Laumann, 1982). Simply put, a policy domain is the substantive focus of concern of policy initiatives and debate. More formally, a policy domain is identified by specifying a substantively defined criterion of mutual relevance or common orientation among a set of consequential actors concerned with formulating, advocating, and selecting courses of action (i.e., policy options) that are intended to resolve the delimited substantive problems in question.

To illustrate this definition, we propose to construe a health matter today as referring to any phenomenon affecting the physiological, psychological, or health-related social well-being of an individual or group of individuals. A national health policy domain asserts the further restriction that the relevant health policy options include only those presently considered permissible to be undertaken by Federal government organizations or nonpublic organizations with nationally oriented clienteles. Similarly, the national energy policy domain is delineated by the set of all policy options involving the production or allocation of physical power resources that are seriously considered by the Federal government and the major private organizations with national markets or clientele.

The typical policy starts when one or more consequential actors label some condition as a problem or issue and draw the attention of other actors to that problem. It is an issue because there are at least two alternative ways by which the issue may be resolved—even if the alternative courses of action believed to be possible or feasible by the relevant actors are, in the simplest case, to do "X" or to do "nothing at all", i.e., leave matters as they

are. At root then, an issue is always a query, "what is to be done?", that has multiple answers. Thus, an issue is defined primarily in terms of its substantive content.

A policy option is the empirical unit act in the process of issue resolution. It consists of a statement made by a policy domain actor that advocates a specific action to be taken, either by that actor or some other authoritative actor, with regard to the issue in question. We thus have an unambiguous empirical "marker" for the existence of a policy option, namely, its advocacy by at least one actor in the policy domain. The authoritative selection of a particular policy option from the many that may have been proposed is the ultimate result of the issue resolution process. Once selected, however, a particular policy implementation may continue to generate opposition and thus to persist as an issue, especially if it appears to be failing in its intended purpose or if it lacks sufficient general support for its intended purpose. In other words, where the researcher decides to terminate an issue sequence is a matter of greater or lesser arbitrariness. Few issues, then, are ever definitively resolved; most continue as policy queries, even if somewhat transformed in institutional character because they are now the established policy rather than a policy option seeking acceptance for the first time.

As a practical matter, an actor's involvement in an issue is most directly observable through its participation in very concrete activities, such as advocacy or lobbying on a particular policy option. An important analytic problem in any empirical investigation of the issue resolution process thus becomes the rationale for ordering the concrete activities in a collective decision-making system in relation to each other and to more abstract and generalized concepts, such as the underlying issues.

To make our task theoretically and empirically tractable, we argue that one can identify events as basic markers in the policy process. An event is a critical, temporally ordered decision point in a collective decision-making sequence that must occur in order for a policy option to be finally selected. Every event is characterized as requiring an authoritative actor—be it a House subcommittee, the House as a whole, an executive officer, or a judge—to render a discretionary decision in a circumscribable time frame. Two or more events may comprise distinct points in a chain of related decisions leading to an outcome. Each intermediate decision event in a chain is a necessary but not sufficient gatekeeper through which an option must move (and thereby at times even be modified or transformed) in order to ripen into the final policy option selected for implementation. The decision-making process may be terminated by a negative decision at any event in the chain.

Obviously, some events in the chain may be of greater significance for shaping the final outcome than others. What happens, for instance, in the initial House subcommittee hearings and deliberations in drafting the bill may be of greater consequence in deciding the content of the bill than the point at which a Congressionally approved measure reaches the White House for Presidential signature. These events, then, provide the organizing focal point or rationale for the activities that the various actors in the policy domain undertake in seeking to influence policy outcomes. To be sure, particular events elicit distinctive sorts of actions that are appropriate to them. Efforts to assist a legislative aide on the specific wording of a provision is quite acceptable in the Congressional context, but strictly illegitimate when such assistance is directed toward a law clerk of a Supreme Court Justice writing the majority opinion on a case.

The terms "policy domain", "core actor", "issue", "policy option", and "event" are basic to the policy framework we propose. Because the structure among policy events as they relate to the organizational actors present in a domain is the core of the framework, the next section elaborates on various attributes that must enter into consideration of how events are to be joined together.

CLASSIFYING EVENTS

Events do not occur in isolation, but are always embedded in temporally ordered sequences that provide the basic data for the analysis of policy decision. In our research, we are not interested in explaining why or how individual events come into existence nor in accounting for the diverse patterns that event sequences follow. That is, we will not propose a theory of event-formation, though conceivably one might eventually be developed (see Parsons and Smelser, 1956: 242-245, for a discussion of "phase movements" among system functions). Instead, events will be treated as givens, as the backdrop against which organizations perform characteristic roles in the policy domain drama. The sequence and timing of events shape the policy responses and initiatives of the core actors and set limits to the outcome of collective decisions. To understand how events orchestrate the policy process as it unfolds across time, we must attend to the characteristics of events that are most likely to affect systematically the involvement of actors in the domain.

The primary basis for classifying policy events is in terms of their consequences. In national policy making, under the Federal constitutional system, three generic types of events are likely to occur in every policy domain:

- (1) Program Initiatory (Terminating) Events: These events are, by definition, one-time occurrences that signal the start or end of some new activity. They may range from simple executive proclamations adding a minor function to an on-going agency to major congressional action creating a new cabinet-level department. The typical event is an enabling decision by an appropriate authority that calls a new entity into existence and establishes its purposes and authoritative relationships with other actors.
- (2) Regulative Events: These events concern authoritative actions that apply treatment principles to particular cases or promulgate new interpretations of rules carrying the force of law. At the national policy level, most regulative events revolve around specific regulatory agencies charged with the social control of public and private institutions.
- (3) Funding Events: These events comprise the national budgetary process in which on-going programs are given annual allocations to expand, contract, or maintain current levels of activity. Derivative funding events concern grants and contracts from public to private sector organizations for specific goods or services.

At times, all three types of events can occur in a meaningful sequence in exactly that order. For example, the creation of the Department of Energy in 1977 from pieces of other agencies was clearly a program initiatory event, as was the appointment of James Schelsinger as the first secretary. Within the Energy Department, however, the power to set energy prices, to regulate mergers and securities acquisitions, and to set oil pipeline rates was reserved to the independent five-member Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Thus, decisions made by FERC with respect to dozens of energy companies'

requests for economic relief are classified as regulative events. Finally, a \$6.2 billion authorization of Energy Department civilian research and development, which was vetoed in 1977 by President Carter because it continued funding the Clinch River nuclear breeder reactor program he opposed, is considered one in a series of annual funding events, albeit more dramatic in its outcome than the typical routine spending bill.

Other event characteristics can affect organizational involvement. Among the most important of these event attributes are visibility, scope, and controversiality. Visibility refers to the amount of attention devoted to an event by an audience, whether the general public, the mass media, or the more restricted population of interested core actors. The scope of an event is indexed by the number and variety of actors interested in the substantive content of the event. Although visibility and scope are generally correlated, they are analytically distinct concepts. For example, capitalization of nuclear power plants is an event with broad scope in its potential impact on consumer utility rates yet it has very low visibility outside the electric utility and construction industries.

Controversiality is revealed by the depth of polarization of interested actors into opposing camps that favor different outcomes to an event. A highly controversial event--which also may, but need not necessarily, have very high visibility and broad scope--pits bitter antagonists against each other in unyielding opposition, while noncontroversial events often enjoy wide consensus on the preferred outcome.

The relationships among events' consequential, visible, scope, and controversial attributes is not a theoretical matter from our perspective. Covariation can be determined empirically, but is taken here as a given. Instead,

these four characteristics of events can be used to generate hypotheses about organizational participation. However, we first must develop a procedure for joining or concatenating discrete events into larger sequences.

EVENT SCENARIOS

We stated above our belief that understanding the national policy processes requires us to analyze the complex that connects organizations with events. This perspective requires that we establish equivalences among an empirical set of events that are spread over time within a domain, on the basis of their greater or lesser similarity. In other words, we need to adopt some criterion for concatenating discrete events into larger sequences, which we label event scenarios. Various concatenation criteria can be proposed, and the choice of a procedure is mainly a question of the researcher's purposes. We have identified four plausible alternative criteria:

- (1) Causal Dependency: Events are linked together according an inherent "logic of decision making" by which a prior event is a necessary and sufficient condition for a subsequent event. Mainstream political science analyses of congressional events employ this criterion to chain together the various events by which a bill becomes law (e.g., introduction, committee referrals, hearings, reports, floor debates, amendments, voting, conferences, revoting, presidential signature; see Oleszek, 1978: 15).
- (2) Content Homogeneity: Events are joined together under this criterion on the basis of identical or similar content, perhaps latent rather than manifest. For example, events that incorporate the same scientific or technical problems and solutions could be placed in the same equivalence class despite being spread across time (e.g., various efforts to enact national health insurance or to treat nuclear wastes).

- (3) Audience-Participant Continuity: This criterion for placing events in a scenario relies upon the reappearance of the same core actors from event to event. The illegitimacy of this approach for our theoretical purposes is discussed below.
- (4) Expert Evaluation: Under this criterion, events are classified as links in a chain according to an expert judgment by knowledgeable insiders, including if possible the policy makers themselves. In essence, expert evaluation requires persons having a thorough familiarity with the policy domain to reveal their "cognitive maps" (Axelrod, 1976; Roos and Hall, 1980) of how various events are organized into a hierarchy of successively more encompassing equivalence classes.

For our purpose, which requires concatenation of empirical events into scenarios that will help to explain how core actors become involved in domain policy making, the first three criteria are undesirable. Causal dependency is useful as far as it goes, but yields only very short chains of events with very limited generality. The content homogeneity criterion tends to impose an external, "social engineering" perspective on events that, at higher levels of generality, ignores the subjective understanding of the situation held by the core actors. An audience-participant continuity procedure comes closer to reflecting the perceptions and beliefs of the domain actors but, in using the observed pattern of involvement to concatenate events, an illegitimate tautology is built in. If the behavior of core actors is used to construct scenarios, these scenarios then cannot be usefully applied to understand core actors' behavior.

Thus, expert evaluation is the best method to concatenate events into scenarios. The cognitive world views held by consequential organizations

(i.e., their managers) form the basic "conceptual lenses" (Allison, 1971: 2), the frames of reference, and the assumptions that actors use to interpret the meaning of events in terms that are amenable to collective action. Any policy process is a continuously constructed and negotiated social phenomenon, not some concrete "objective" situation that can be observed in the same manner as the objects of a natural science. Therefore, informed experts' knowledge of the linkages among events is the preferred criterion for concatenating empirically observable events into successively larger and longer scenarios to be used in analyzing domain core actors' involvement.

CLASSIFYING EVENT SCENARIOS

Just as single events can be classified according to various attributes, event scenarios that consist of two or more temporally ordered events can be classified according to some common features. The elementary type of scenario from which all other types are compounded is the self-limiting standard decision cycle. We refer to what the civics texts describe as the "customary" or usual sequence of prescribed events followed in passing a bill through the Congress to Presidential action, promulgating an executive agency's regulation in the Federal Register, or initiating a court case at a court of original jurisdiction through the appellate process to the Supreme Court. Of course, on occasion significant departures from such a process may occur, but only when the rules are explicitly suspended. Essentially, however, the cycle is orchestrated by a set of explicit rules specifying each step that must successfully be completed before moving on to the next. We say that such a cycle is self-limiting in the sense that rules also specify when action on a measure must terminate because time has run out--for instance, at the close of a session of Congress. All the prescribed steps must be traversed all over again the next session if the measure is to be enacted into law. Because these steps are a matter of public knowledge and announcement, interested parties can organize their efforts accordingly. The many case studies of Congressional action on various pieces of legislation nicely document the changing nature of the sorts of interested parties and the character of their activities over the course of these standard cycles. To study the participation of public and private actors over the course of a standard cycle, the investigator must simply select the intermediate decision points of most significance to the cycle's progress and examine the activities of the interested parties

that are related to these focal events.

The second type of scenario is called a consummated recurrent standard cycle because decision making about essentially identical substantive matters must be done on a regular or recurrent basis over time. Annual authorization and appropriation bills for various executive agencies exemplify such scenarios. To study these scenarios parsimoniously, one can identify the critical intermediate decision event in each of several years to glean some sense of the stability and change of the decision processes over time with respect to particular substantive issues. A recurrent standard cycle is always consummated--that is, authorization bills must be passed every year even if the relative amounts being appropriated may change dramatically over the years.

In the third type of scenario, an unconsummated recurrent standard cycle, we observe the recurrent submission of a piece of legislation proposing the adoption of a new policy initiative that simply fails to garner sufficient support for passage. Comprehensive national health insurance in the health domain and the coal slurry pipeline bill in the energy domain have repeatedly been considered by the Congress over the years but without success. Here we again propose to tag "marker" decision events in each unconsummated cycle to investigate the changing fortunes of support and opposition for such measures.

Finally, we can speak of the most complex type of scenarios, a constructed scenario, which combines decision events from a number of collateral decision cycles into a coherent whole, i.e., significant actors regard each set of policy options as belonging together to achieve some broader policy objectives or for strategic reasons of building a winning coalition. To illustrate, President Carter's efforts to curtail gasoline consumption

involved a multiplicity of measures requiring disparate Congressional and executive agency actions, including: the imposition of novel taxes (e.g., higher excise taxes on gas-guzzling cars and higher gasoline taxes), the changing of executive regulations on permissible emission standards and automobile fuel standards, and the enactment of standby authority to impose gasoline rationing in the event of critical fuel shortages. In this example, the scenario events were either program initiatory or regulative events, but it is feasible for a constructed scenario to consist of events of entirely one consequential type. Recurrent standard cycles are most likely to consist solely of funding events, since these appear with predictable regularity, but funding events may also be embedded in the more heterogeneous constructed or unconsummated recurrent standard scenarios.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

As implied several times above, our overarching interest in national policy making lies in understanding how the four basic types of event scenarios affect the various elements in the policy process. Table 1 summarizes the relationship we hypothesize between the four scenario types and five basic aspects of the policy process.

Table 1 about here

Policy proposals enter the national agenda by different means. For both the standard event cycles and their unconsummated counterparts, initial agenda placement should result primarily from interest group politics. That is, actors with the strongest interests in the outcome of the event will engage the usual set of influence activities designed to gain the attention of policy making officials: public media campaigns, constituency mobilization, transmission of persuasive information, contributions of political monies, formation of interest-group coalitions, direct appeals for consideration. To the extent that such efforts find sponsors in the Congress, executive branch department, or regulatory agency, the interest group will be successful in placing its policy proposals on the formal agenda.

In contrast to the standard cycles, agenda placement in a recurrent standard cycle is virtually an automatic system function. Once a program has become incorporated as an on-going part of the governmental system, the calendar routinely brings it up for reconsideration. The annual funding cycle of the budget ensures that agency and program requests for increments and reallocations will appear before the appropriate decision making body at approximately the same time during each fiscal year.

Constructed scenarios, as more heterogeneous combinations of events designed to achieve broad policy objectives, typically are coordinated by a single actor with a vision of how the various component elements fit into an overall scheme. At the federal level, constructed scenarios most typically are initiated by the office of the president through submission of legislation, promulgation of executive orders, filing of court briefs, and proposing regulatory changes. In taking these initiatives, the president can thus compel other actors to react cooperatively or defensively to a possibly overwhelming onslaught.

Characteristic patterns of actor participation in the events also vary across types of scenarios. In the initiatory policies represented by standard cycles, we expect to observe a persistent core set of interested actors who are "first in-last out" through the entire process. Additional actors with more marginal interests in the issue may be mobilized later in the cycle to support the core players. In contrast, both the recurrent standard cycle and the unconsummated standard cycle will exhibit much more stabilized participation patterns. Year after year the same set of specialized interests will appear at committee and commission hearings, offer the same basic testimony, and make the same lobbying pitches at the decision makers. The constructed scenario will display the most chaotic participation pattern, with the subsets of actors differentiated by the nature of the arenas in which various component events are fought out. That is, excepting the coordinating actor (usually the president's office), few if any participants will be found fighting simultaneously in the courts, Congress, bureaucracy, and regulatory agencies. This specialization of opposition and support in the constructed scenario gives a great advantage to the proponents.

The third element of the policy process, the importance of the larger socio-political context within which the scenario events are embedded, refers to such aspects as the prevailing mood of public opinion, the state of the economy, the level of international tensions, and the partisan composition of the government (e.g., who controls Congress and White House). For a standard cycle scenario, whose typical duration is less than a single year, the context is relatively invariant: short of a dramatic intervention such as the outbreak of war, the basic "spirit of the times" will be constant during the course of the scenario's unfolding. Both the recurrent standard cycles and unconsummated standard cycles, being spread out across a longer time, may take place in the context of more marked historical changes that alter the fortunes of the policy proposal. The most dramatic examples occur with a shift in the government's partisan composition, as when Ronald Reagan replaced Jimmy Carter and began to dismantle many liberal social programs. Constructed scenarios also exhibit great variability in socio-political contexts, but primarily between institutions rather than temporally. The various arenas in which different events are located have distinct procedural rules and ideological orientations that complicate the coordinating actor's task of melding the separate events into a unified policy. Of course, the more stretched out over time the process becomes, as with many anti-trust court cases that can take a decade or more, the greater the probability that significant alterations will occur in the socio-political contexts that impinge upon the events comprising the scenario.

Another important policy process element with variability across event types is the structure of adversary relations among the parties participating in the event scenario. Standard cycles should display an intermediate level

of opposition among the interest groups that favor or oppose the policy initiative. However, the level of opposition is not sufficient to block the policy from reaching a final decision. Unconsummated standard scenarios have much higher levels of adversarial conflict, which persist over time in blocking the outcome favored by the policy's proponents. In contrast, a recurrent standard cycle has only token opposition, since its successful incorporation into the on-going governmental functions indicates a battle already fought and won. For constructed scenarios, the nature of the oppositional structure critically depends upon the extent to which the time for decision is circumscribed across the various arenas involved. If time is pressing for a resolution, for example in a declaration of war or other state of emergency (e.g., a fuel shortage), adversary expression should be minimal. Potential opponents will have insufficient opportunity to mobilize their forces and prepare a counter thrust. But, to the extent that the time for a decision can be stretched out, delayed, and postponed, the typical adversary patterns within each institutional decision arena will have time to reassert themselves.

Finally, the nature of the ultimate outcome to the policy process differs by event scenario type. Both standard cycles and recurrent standard cycles, by definition, obtain closure with a binding decision: some form of the original policy proposal is adopted. Unconsummated standard cycles, again by definition, do not reach a final decision: their continual recurrence indicates that the ultimate outcome is postponed. For constructed scenarios, the interplay of influences across multiple institutional arenas is too complex in real instances to permit us to hypothesize with any confidence for general policy processes whether or not a final resolution will be achieved. Most probably,

some aspects of the heterogeneous policy set will be adopted, others delayed, and yet others defeated.

CONCLUSION

(UNWRITTEN YET)

APPENDIX: IDENTIFYING EMPIRICAL EVENTS

To undertake concatenated event analyses successfully, we confronted a number of critical theoretical and operational questions. Using various means to identify the core actors in the energy and health domains, we sought interviews with informants from each of about 200 energy domain organizations and 175 health domain organizations. We designed a questionnaire to gather data from each informant about the organization's involvement in policy domain events during the 1970s. As there were literally hundreds of events during the decade, it was patently obvious from the very beginning that we could not study all, or even most, intermediate events in all the standard cycles of interest to us. With less than two hours of interview time available, we were forced to choose a subset of events, marked by the dates (year and month) at which they occurred.

In selecting events for study from the array of candidate events in a Congressional standard decision cycle, we adopted the pragmatic rule to select the month the first committee (House or Senate) issued its report recommending passage of a particular measure and the month the conference committee (comprised of both House and Senate members) issued its recommended compromise version of the measure. Published work on Congressional action as well as our informants suggested that these two events were typically the most critical in the passage of legislation. In unconsummated scenarios, we selected the month



the first committee in either the House or Senate voted against recommending passage of the measure and continued this process for each of the subsequent years in which the measure was under consideration. For consummated recurrent standard cycle scenarios, we selected the event of the first committee to report a bill out to its chamber in each new session. Since these cycles typically concern appropriations measures which must originate in the House by constitutional provision, the House committee report was typically selected as the focal event.

With respect to decision-making cycles involving executive agencies or the judiciary as the focal authoritative actors, it is rather more difficult routinely to identify appropriate intermediate events because, although just as orderly and prescribed as Congressional sequences, some of these events are less well-publicized and documented in publicly available sources than are Congressional events. We have thus specified a pragmatic rule that we select those executive agency events that relate to the month a regulation is formally promulgated in the Federal Register or the month the President publicly announces his nomination for an executive position. In the case of judicial decisions, we specified either the time the case was first filed for action in a lower Federal court or the time the Supreme Court agreed to hear a case on appeal.

With respect to constructed scenarios, which involve heterogeneous authoritative actors, we selected singular early events from a variety of standard decision cycles. Typically, constructed scenarios consist of the initial reviews, positive or negative, by Congressional committees or subcommittees, executive agencies, or filing dates for court cases. Broadly speaking, the health policy domain was more extensively institutionalized and

routinized in the decade under study than the energy domain, which just began receiving systematic attention by the national elite. Therefore, health policy events were typically concatenated in standard decision cycles while energy events were more often concatenated into constructed scenarios because many of the policy options were being considered for the first time. We consistently followed the above procedures in selecting events for the recent past (i.e., the Carter years, 1977-1980). In the more distant past, for reasons of fallible recall of events long ago, we selected consummatory events, .g., at the point of actual passage of the act by the Congress as a whole, rather than events preceding passage. For these early events, an informant merely had to recall that the organization actively participated in some (unspecified) events leading up to the final Congressional, executive, or judicial action.

Following the guidelines, we eventually selected 81 energy events and 85 health events for the two questionnaires. As presented to informants, a typical event, for the energy event, was:

April_1977 House Interior Committee reports a bill to control coal strip mining (Congress passes act in July)

For the health domain, one event used was:

May-1978 Williams Committee reports bill extending assistance to Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) through 1983. Legislation also includes provisions revising restrictions on HMO membership rates and operation.

The sets of events were classified as one of four primary types (paralleling the Parsonsian functional subsystems: adaptive, goal attainment, integrative, and latent pattern-maintenance). Each subset of events was presented as a block to the organizational informant during the interview. The informant indicated whether the organization had an interest in the event and, if so, the level of activity, timing of involvement, position taken on the event, involvement in formulating the policy or its alternatives, and collaboration with other organizations on that option. This information thus permits us to reconstruct both the histories of the individual events and the event activation profiles of every organizational actor in the domain.

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Table 1. Relationship of Event Scenario Types to Elements of the Policy Process

PROCESS ELEMENT	TYPE OF EVENT SCENARIO			
	Standard Cycle	Recurrent Standard Cycle	Unconsummated Standard Cycle	Constructed Scenario
Agenda Placement	Interest group politics	Systematic recurrence	Interest group politics	Orchestrated by leading actor
Participation Patterns	Persistent core, late entrants mobilized by early entrants	Stable set of specialists	Stable set of specialists	Episodic by arenas
Socio-political Context	Invariant	Historical Changes	Historical Changes	Inter-arena variation
Adversary Structure	Moderate	Negligible	High and stable	1. Minimal if time is truncated 2. Arena-specific if time is prolonged
Final Outcome	Binding decision	Binding decision	No binding decision	Indeterminate

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