

Full Length Research

Comparative Study on Public Policy

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An increasing number of comparative studies in public administration are required in today's era of globalisation to investigate the range of approaches taken by different nations while implementing new global models. Many of the key obstacles that have hampered the intellectual promise of previous waves of comparative administration remain to have an impact on the current state of the field. Presented at the PAR Symposium on Comparative Public Administration, this article offers a brief examination of the conceptual, epistemological, structural, and institutional obstacles to comparative administration and a few suggestions for overcoming them. This work makes an effort to synthesise and generalise findings from a number of comparative policy studies covering the areas of economics, social policy, education, the environment, and occupational health and safety. These nations are the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the United States. We apply the ideas of institutional and organisational structure, culture orientation, and policy style to create taxonomies that describe possible influences on policy outcomes.

Keywords: comparative politics, policy studies, policy design, Public policy studies, Comparative Public Administration

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INTRODUCTION

Public policy is the primary analytical unit in the interdisciplinary field of comparative public policy, which examines and contrasts public policy in various contexts, most often between different governments and other governing systems. It frequently investigates the how, why, and what influence various governments' policy choices have. It has issues with a lack of a thorough theoretical framework and contested identities of technique vs field. Its new research is tackling these issues head-on, and it's helping to build coherent, practical understanding in the social sciences.

The primary questions of this article are whether this is a strength or a weakness, and to what degree the policy process entering the stage could address certain blind spots of comparative public policy studies. We break down our discussion of these theoretical concerns into three sections. We next describe four major flaws in comparative public policy research: (1) an excessive preoccupation with covariance, (2) a lack of agency, (3) an ambiguous universe of instances, and (4) an overemphasis on results. After introducing these restrictions, we investigate whether the policy process theories presented in this issue can make allowances for these gaps. We wrap up this part by pointing out some outstanding issues and potential future lines of inquiry.

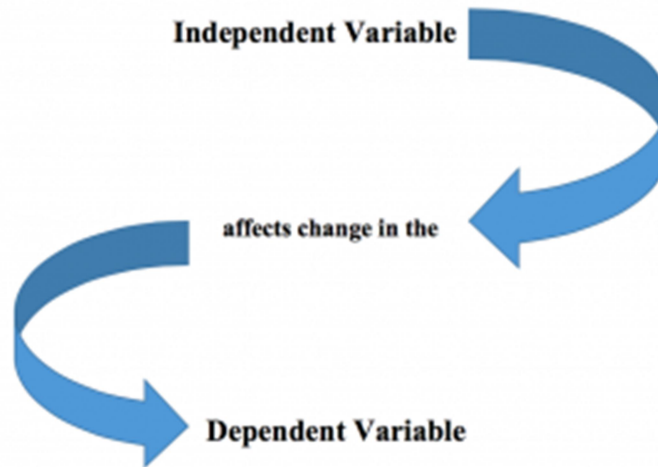


Figure 1 : Research in political science

Discovering the factors at play behind an observed phenomena is an example of an explanation in this sense. What you're really interested in learning about is the dependent variable, or the result of your experiment. Multiple independent variables (IVs) are usually necessary in social science research since there are often multiple possible explanations for an observed change. [1]

The Lack of Agency

When trying to understand the causes of variation in policy outcomes, experts who focus on comparisons have trouble giving credit to individual agency. This is because most quantitative comparative policy studies are characterised by a high level of abstraction and a large number of cases: Identifying the role that certain political players and their traits have in determining policy outcomes can be challenging when conducting research across a large number of nations and/or many years. Researchers in the field of comparative public policy do, however, concede that particular players may play a crucial role in illuminating the outcomes of policies studied. [2]

Comparative public policy boasts a rich history of comparing cases across systems in an effort to draw broad, empirical conclusions about the relationships between system features and the phenomenon of interest. Using Mill's difference or similarity method, the logic of comparison is straightforward: if you have two systems that are otherwise similar but diverge on the dependent variable, you should investigate the few differences between them to determine the cause of the divergence. Conversely, if two dissimilar systems have comparable policy outcomes, you should investigate the few commonalities between them. Though large-N multivariate statistics are typically employed to draw inferences from large-scale, randomised controlled trials, the underlying logic is quite similar to that utilised in small-N comparative case studies.

Emerging Trends: Comparing Theories Across Institutional Configurations

When compared to the prior section's research, this new school of thought in comparative public policy differs in two key respects. First, it tends to place more emphasis on the why issue when contrasting varying policy results. Second, it does so by making overt use of theories of the policy process to account for the procedure and the decisions taken in each instance. Over the past decade, scholars in the field of policy theory have been increasingly curious about the specific institutional configurations that control policy processes. Scholars of the ACF, for instance, have pondered whether or not their paradigm can be successfully implemented in contexts that lack pluralism. They have adjusted the ACF to take into consideration "coalition opportunity structures" to address these disparities (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). They have learned that the degree of consensus required to modify policies and the transparency of the political system are both governed by institutional configurations. Although this is a step in the right direction, experts say more study is needed to determine how these structures affect the connection between outside factors and intersystem coalition activity (Weible et al., 2011). A number of researchers have taken steps in this approach by adapting the ACF for use in

a variety of academic contexts. Hirschi and Widmer (2010), for instance, implement the ACF in the context of Swiss foreign policy. Nohrstedt (2010) does the same with Swedish nuclear energy policy, applying the ACF. On the other hand, their current study is narrowly focused and does not make any systematic comparisons to other countries. While studies are being conducted in this approach, it is essential that we arrange our studies to maximise institutional variance by incorporating several cases. The following study contributes to our understanding of the policymaking process by comparing theories in different institutional settings. [3-4]

Objectives

1. An overview study on Public Policy.
2. Comparing different policies, inputs, outputs, and outcomes across institutional settings.
3. Major classification of comparative studies
4. Comparative public policy research and the policy process

Review of Literature

Studies in comparative public policy are crucial since they span many subfields of the social sciences (Adolino and Blake 2011; Castles 1998; Heidenheimer et al. 1990; Rose 2005). It's important for research and policy alike. The growing recognition of the limitations of siloed and compartmentalised knowledge of traditional academic disciplines in policy applications, as well as the urgent need to acquire theory-guided and empirically proven knowledge for resolving serious policy problems under a globalised environment, have contributed to its recent growth and influence. [5-6]

Many established fields in the social sciences choose their research subjects and methods according to their particular disciplinary priorities and theoretical presuppositions. The scope and depth of an investigation are limited when viewed via a single theoretical lens. While the theoretical strength of a disciplinary approach is an advantage of compartmentalising knowledge, the research findings that emerge from such an approach are often insufficient to meet the needs of academics and policymakers who require a more holistic understanding of a public problem (Welch and Wong 1998). [7]

Progress in comparative public policy research has the potential to advance not only public policy theory and practice, but also many of the social sciences' most prominent subfields that bear on the field. Comparative public policy, by virtue of its interdisciplinary character, can improve theory development by combining the theoretical perspectives and expertise of other fields. It is based on an issue- or problem-based approach, with "policy" serving as the primary analytical unit, and hence permits extensive theoretical-practical integration. In addition, it adopts a comparative viewpoint, synthesising experiences and instances from other countries and regions, so significantly contributing to the development of a worldwide social framework. Though it has come a long way from its infancy, there is still a distance to cover before it can fully deliver on its potential.

By providing an introduction to comparative public policy and critically examining the challenges and opportunities it faces, this chapter aims to contribute to bridging that gap. The following are the sections that make up this chapter. This section first provides a definition of the field, highlighting its distinctive features and relating it to other related fields of study. The second part of this analysis focuses on the controversy surrounding this study and evaluates three of the most prominent scholarly movements related to this topic. Two of them have the greatest promise for advancing the field by fixing its central issue, which is a lack of a well-developed theoretical framework. In the third segment, we look ahead to its future development and evaluate its main obstacles and potential. It wraps up by highlighting the concurrent and interactive growth of comparative public policy and social science.

As the world becomes more interconnected, governments around the world confront new obstacles when it comes to putting policies into action, and this is where comparative public administration (CPA) comes in. The rationale for this comes from two sources. The first effect of increased globalisation is that public administration actions in one region are more likely to impact and be affected by those in another region. Communication and transportation; economic interdependence through movement of products and capital; war, terrorism, violence, and ethnic conflict; pollution, natural disasters, epidemics, and climate change; and global migrations in search of economic and political security have all contributed to a smaller and more interconnected world.

In order to keep up with the policy demands brought on by globalisation, governments must have the administrative capacity to create, develop, and implement new programmes and policies. The theory, research, and teaching of public administration in the United States suffers from a pervasive nationalism that can be mitigated through a comparative approach, which is grounded in research and analysis. This has the potential to aid in the reorientation of U.S.-based foreign development initiatives from one-sided technology transfer to two-way, mutually beneficial dissemination of

innovation. Much of the canonical literature on public administration and development has been dedicated to the concept of "best practices," which suggests that successful interventions in one setting can be transplanted to another. Recent years have seen an uptick in the recognition by academics of the potential and obstacles presented by the wide range of governance environments, including institutions, administrative processes, and culture, in the process of adopting and disseminating best practices. Since "smart practices" are predicated on the idea that while we learn much from comparative study, applying what we learn must take into account variables specific to the context in which the lessons are to be applied, this line of inquiry concludes that these practices are best suited to adapting and sustaining exogenous innovations. This kind of study can be quite useful for public managers, as policy implementers will make very little headway if they aren't able to respond to unforeseen events.

a look back at the first category of comparative public policy literature, where the main emphasis has been on contrasting the results of various programmes in different countries and regions. 2 After that, two current directions in comparative public policy research are illustrated with recent case studies. Newer studies are distinguished by their emphasis on policy process theories and the use of the comparative method to further the development and improvement of these theories. This survey of the comparative public policy literature concludes with a summary of the main points made and some suggestions for future research. This review includes work that compares theories across institutional configurations as well as between distinct theories.

Research Methodology

We learned about Comparative study on public policy through a variety of secondary materials, such as books, educational and development publications, government papers, and print and online reference resources.

Comparison studies are only as good as their internal and external validity, respectively. If the study's environment, participants, intervention, measures, analysis, and interpretations are all sound, then the study has high internal validity. When discussing the generalizability of findings to different contexts, we talk about the external validity of the study.

In the last fifty years, comparative public policy has advanced steadily. Scholars in the field of public policy have long argued for the necessity of comparing various aspects of public policy, such as inputs, outputs, and results, across a variety of institutions. This study note summarises current research in the field of comparative policy, with an emphasis on three kinds of academic inquiry. The first is defined by its use of comparative international policy comparison as a methodological tool. Both the second and third categories of research (institutional configurations and theoretical comparisons, respectively) make use of the comparative approach in tandem with policy process theories.

Result And Discussion

Major classification of comparative studies

Table 1. Comparative Public Policy

Fields	Unit of analysis	Core discipline(s)	Main concerns in development
Comparative public policy	Public policy	Interdisciplinary	Contested identities: method or field Difficulty in theory development due to the complexity of the subject matter and its interdisciplinary nature of inquiry Applying and "borrowing" theories from other disciplines, lack of a coherent and comprehensive theoretical framework

Table 1. C o n t i n u a t i o n

Comparative politics	Political systems and institutions	Political science	Limitation in power of analysis and scope of inquiry by a single discipline
Comparative public administration	Bureaucracy, administrative, and governance systems	Interdisciplinary	A wide range of theories but mostly "borrowing" from other disciplines. Lack of a coherent and comprehensive theoretical framework A wide scope of inquiry from its problem-based approach but focusing mainly on administrative apparatus and capacity and the policy implementation stage

While comparative politics exists within the larger discipline of political science, the study of comparative public policy is inherently interdisciplinary, with political science serving as only one of several theoretical pillars (Heidenheimer 1985; Pontusson 1995; Scharpf 2000). The unit of analysis is another key distinction between the two fields; in comparative public policy, "policy" is used rather than political systems and institutions. [8-10]

As we have stated above, there are blind spots in the comparative public policy literature despite its great advancements. Numerous avenues for relief exist in a research topic as varied and complicated as this one. In this section, we'd like to point out that one option is to learn from theories and methods that put more focus on the policy processes, and to devote more time and energy to studying the policy process as a means of evaluating theories. While there is no magic bullet here, fostering greater theoretical cross-fertilization may help future comparative public policy research yield more fruit (see also John 2018). While progress in this area rests in large part on academics' openness to complementing their quantitative work with more qualitatively oriented analysis, other avenues exist for doing so as well. Two potential approaches are to (1) make case selection more transparent, especially in the context of large-N datasets; and (2) theorise how such datasets can start to incorporate measurements of the policy process. [11]

Table 2: Comparative public policy research and the policy process

Weaknesses of cross-national public policy research	Possible advances from policy process theories
Obsession with variance	A focus on policy processes within cases enables researchers to study nonvariance as well as variance within cases Causal drivers for nonvariance (that is, policy stability) have to be considered explicitly, e.g., via the study of drift Causality claims are based not on the occurrence of covariance but on causal process observations
Actors	Actors are key in policy process theories (policy entrepreneurs, advocacy coalitions, etc.), and these theories conceptualize their preferences Methodologically, preferences of actors are not assumed but are investigated (usually qualitatively)
Universe of cases	At first sight, the universe of cases is even more constrained, but, at the same time, the selection criteria and scope conditions are often much more clearly pointed out Generalizing from causal process observations may be possible if scope conditions are clearly identified
Focus on outputs	Policy process theories have a greater focus on processes instead of outputs both theoretically and when establishing (causal) relationships empirically

A well-conducted single-case study of the policymaking process will explain how the cases were chosen and will elaborate on the parameters of the study's scope. The question of whether theoretical notions transfer to other situations (as evidenced, for example, by the articles on multi-level strategic analysis and the programmatic action framework in this special issue) is difficult to answer. However, in our experience, researchers presenting single-case studies do acknowledge these issues more openly than comparativists conducting high N analyses on convenient samples chosen based on the data at hand.

CONCLUSION

The creation of theories and frameworks for understanding and interpreting social phenomena is necessary to improve people's lives, but it is easy to lose sight of the greater aim of the social sciences among the depth and uniqueness of the case studies that occupy policy research.

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