

**EXPLAINING THE EXISTENCE OF POLICY NETWORKS BY  
MEANS OF A PUBLIC CHOICE APPROACH**

By

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Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
June 2003

Political scientists who study policy making and policy change by means of an inductive approach often depict the process by which governments make their policies as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities. The main reason why the policymaking process is often depicted by political scientists as being subdivided into a series of networks or subsystems is that they have observed that it is not always the same interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies. More precisely, political scientists have observed that policies that concern different fields or issues are usually made by a given government with the participation of different interest groups. For example, in the case of the Canadian federal government, it has been observed that the interest groups that usually participate to the process by which this government makes its policies concerning air transport are totally different from the ones that usually participate to the process by which this government makes its policies concerning the financial sector or the telecommunication sector, etc.

The observations that political scientists have made concerning the behavior (more precisely concerning the participation habits) of interest groups within the policymaking process of governments reveal two important things about interest groups and, more particularly, about the interest that interest groups have for public policies. These observations first of all reveal that the typical interest group is not interested in all the policies that a given government makes. The typical interest group rather appears under the light of these observations as being only interested in the policies that a given government makes that concern a particular field or issue such as, for example, air transport, the financial sector, the telecommunication sector, etc. These observations furthermore reveal that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies are not all interested in the same issues and, hence, in the same policies. The policies that are of interest to a particular interest group that participates to the process by which a given government makes its policies are therefore not necessarily the ones that are of interest to other interest groups that as well participate to it. So, in a nutshell, the observations that political scientists have made concerning the behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process reveal that interest groups are interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies that a given government makes.

Since interest groups are generally interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies, political scientists who study policy making and policy change often find it useful to classify the different interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies according to the particular field or issue that the observation of their participation habits within the policymaking process of this government has revealed is of interest to them. Interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies that have been observed to be interested in policies that concern different fields or issues are classified in different categories that some political scientists call networks, some other call communities, and also that some other call subsystems. A policy network (as well as a policy community and a policy subsystem) is therefore generally defined in political science as being the set of interest groups which have been observed to be interested in the policies that a given government makes that concern a particular field or issue such as air transport, the

financial sector, the telecommunication sector, etc. The subdivision of the policymaking process into a series of networks or communities is therefore essentially produced by the fact that the various interest groups that participate to it are not all interested in the same policies.

If the vision that political scientists who study policy making and policy change have of the policymaking process has been shaped mainly by the observations that they have made concerning the behavior (the participation habits) of interest groups within it, the vision that public choice theorists have of the policymaking process has for its part rather been shaped principally by the deductions that they have made concerning how types of actors such as interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within it. And it is interesting to note that the deductions that public choice theorists have thus far made concerning how interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process have never led them to view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities. The main reason why public choice theorists do not for their part view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or subsystems is that the assumptions that they make concerning the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience has led them to conclude that interest groups should all be interested in the same issue and, hence, in the exact same policies.

In this respect, let's note that the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to study the behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process all assume that the resource endowment of interest groups constitutes the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that they experience. When such an assumption is made, it can be shown (and I am going to show it later on in this communication) that it is logical to deduce that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies should all be interested in the same issue: which is of course convincing this government to enact one or some policies that will have the effect of increasing their endowment in terms of one or some specific resources (i.e., to convince this government to make one or some policies that will provide them a rent). And in a context in which the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies are all perceived as being interested in the same issue (obtaining a rent), they will of course as well all be perceived as being interested in the same policies (policies that provide a rent). It is the fact that public choice theorists perceive interest groups as being all interested in the same issue and, hence, in the same policies that, on the one hand, explains why they have never felt the need to classify the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies according to the particular type or sort of issue that they are interested into and, more fundamentally, that explains why they do not view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks, communities or subsystems since, as explained above, the main reason why political scientists for their part view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities is that they have observed that the various interest groups that participate it are not all interested in the same policies.

So, from this, it appears quite clearly that to convince public choice theorists that it makes sense to depict the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities, it would be necessary to convince them that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies could not all be interested in the same policies. More precisely, it would be necessary to provide them with a rationale to explain why a policy that is of interest to a particular interest group that participates to the process by which a given government makes its policies may conversely be of no interest whatsoever to another one that as well participates to it. Since public choice theorists identify the issues (and hence the policies) that are of interest to interest groups by deducing them from the assumption that they make concerning the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience; to convince public choice theorists that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may not all be interested in the same policies, it would be necessary to first convince them that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience by acting on an object other than their resource endowment. This of course begs the question: aside from modifying their resource endowment, how can governments affect the level of welfare that entities such as interest groups experience?

In this communication I will claim that, aside from modifying their resource endowment, governments can as well affect the level of welfare that entities such as interest groups experience by exercising some form of power (i.e., some form of control or regulation) over the way in which certain actions are being performed. And I am going to demonstrate that when the behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process is studied under the assumption that governments affect their welfare by controlling, regulating, the way in which certain actions are being performed, it will make sense in such a context to think, to deduce, that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may not all be interested in the same policies. More precisely I will demonstrate that when such an assumption is made, it will make sense to think that a policy that is of interest to a particular interest group that participates to the process by which a given government makes its policies may conversely be of no interest whatsoever to another one that as well participates to it. And, in a context in which it makes sense to think that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may not all be interested in the same policies, it will as well make sense to view the process by which this government makes its policies as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities; each subdivision of the policymaking process (called either network, community, subsystem, etc.) being of course constituted of interest groups that are interested in different policies.

So, in this communication, I am essentially going to make two demonstrations. First, I am going to demonstrate that it does not make sense to think that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may be interested in different policies when it is assumed that it is by modifying their resource endowment that governments can affect the level of welfare that they experience and, second, I am going to demonstrate that it does conversely make sense to

think that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may be interested in different policies when it is rather assumed that is by exercising some form of power or control over the way in which certain actions are performed that governments affect the level of welfare that they experience. I believe that these two demonstrations (especially the last one) should be of interest to public choice theorists since it shows how to proceed to explain, by means of the public choice approach, an empirical phenomenon (the fact that interest groups have been observed to be interested in neither all nor necessarily the same policies that a given government makes) that no theory that makes use of the public choice approach to study the behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process has thus far been able to explain.

But I believe that these two demonstrations can as well be of interest to political scientists who use an inductive approach to study policy making and policy change since the public choice approach that will be used here to explain why the process by which governments make their policies often appears to be subdivided, fragmented, into a series of networks or communities as well allows to explain certain aspects of the policy network phenomenon that studies that make use of an inductive approach have thus far never really been able to explain. Most notably, the public choice approach can explain why the vast majority of policy networks that have thus far been identified and studied were dedicated to the regulation by a given government of some actions or activities. For example, in Canada, the main researchers that have advocated the idea that the policymaking process is subdivided into a series of communities are William Coleman and Grace Skogstad. And it is interesting to note that the policy community that Coleman has studied was dedicated to the economic regulation of the financial sector in Canada by the federal government whereas the policy communities that Skogstad has studied were dedicated to the economic regulation of the agricultural sector by various provincial governments in Canada. In the US, Paul Sabatier constitutes one of the most well-known researcher who has advocated the idea that the policymaking process is subdivided into a series of subsystems and the two main policy subsystems that Sabatier studied were dedicated to the regulation of the environment (the Clean Air Act and the environment regulation that applies to Lake Tahoe). The public choice approach can explain why it is especially when governments regulate that the process by which they make their policies subdivides itself into a series of networks or communities. The public choice approach can explain why the different regulation policies of a given government are usually made with the participation of different interest groups.

The communication will be divided in two parts. In the first part, I will briefly explain how the public choice approach proceeds to study the behavior of the various types of actors (such as interest groups) that participate to the process by which governments make their policies. The goal of this section will be, firstly, to highlight the fact that all public choice theories do indeed make assumptions concerning the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that entities experience and, secondly, to explain the impact that these assumptions have on the way in which public choice theorists perceive and understand the behavior of types of actors such as interest groups within the policymaking process and also, more generally, on the way in which

public choice theorists perceive the nature and the main function of the policymaking process itself. The second part of the communication will be dedicated to make the two demonstrations that were announced above, that is to say to demonstrate that it would not be logical to view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks when it is assumed that it is by modifying their endowment in terms of some resources that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience but that it would conversely be logical to view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities when it is rather assumed that it is by exercising some form of power over the way in which certain actions are performed that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience.

### **A brief description of the public choice approach**

To be classified in the public choice category, a theory must satisfy two main criteria. First, the subject of study of this theory must be a particular type of actors that participate to the process by which governments make their policies such as, for example, politicians, bureaucrats, interest groups, voters, etc. Second, the main objective of this theory must be to deduce the way in which the particular type of actors that constitutes its subject of study should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process from the preferences that it assumes are held by them concerning how the various public policies that they contribute to make should ideally affect the level of welfare that certain, specific, entities experience. This definition of the public choice approach therefore indicates that it is from the vantage point of the effects that public policies cause on the level of welfare that certain, specific, entities experience that the public choice approach proposes to study the behavior of the different types of actors that participate to the process by which governments make their policies.

More precisely, it could be said that what the public choice approach proposes to do, it is to study the behavior of the different types of actors that participate to the process by which governments make their policies by assuming not only that each one of them are aware of the fact that the various public policies that they contribute to make affect the level of welfare that many entities experience, but moreover (and more importantly) by assuming that each one of them actually care about the effects that the public policies that they contribute to make cause on the level of welfare that certain, specific, entities experience to the point of having preferences in that regard; that is to say to the point of preferring that the public policies that they contribute to make affect the level of welfare that certain, specific, entities experience in a particular manner rather than any other manner possible. Under such a light, it is not difficult to see that the main function of the assumptions that underlie a particular public choice theory is to substantiate the preferences that are held by the type of actors that constitute its subject of study so that it may become possible to deduce from them (i.e., from their preferences) the way in which they should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process. To substantiate the preferences that are held by the type of actors that constitute its subject of study, the assumptions that underlie a particular public choice theory will have to identify two important things.

The first thing that the assumptions that underlie a particular public choice theory will have to identify to give substance and consistence to the preferences that are held by the type of actors that constitute its subject of study are of course the entities that this particular type of actors care about to the point of having preferences concerning how public policies should ideally affect the level of welfare that they experience. In the public choice approach, the vast majority of the types of actors that participate to the process by which governments make their policies are assumed to only care about the effects that the policies that they contribute to make cause on their own, particular, level of welfare. Such is most notably the case of bureaucrats, of interest groups and of voters. The fact that these three types of actors are almost always assumed in public choice theories to only care about the effects that public policies cause on their own, particular, level of welfare of course explains why many people claim that the public choice approach has a more or less fortunate tendency to depict them as being egoistic and self-centered.

Politicians however constitute one of the few types of actors that cannot be said to be depicted by the public choice approach as being egoistic and self-centered since the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to study their behavior within the policymaking process (such as the median voter theorem) all assume that the entities that politicians care about are not themselves but rather the entities that are part of their electorate (especially the individuals that have the right to vote for them in the electoral contests in which they run). The case of politicians therefore clearly indicates that, from a strict technical standpoint, nothing whatsoever prevents a public choice theory to assume that the type of actors that constitute its subject of study care about entities other than themselves. The question that arises at this point of the discussion is of course: how do public choice theorists proceed to identify the entities that the types of actors that constitute the subject of study of their theories care about? In this respect, let's note that public choice theorists usually invoke the particular, personal, interest of the types of actors that constitute the subject of study of their theories to explain and, as a matter of fact, to justify why they have identify certain entities as being the ones that they care about. Hence, it is usually the way in which the author of a given public choice theory understands and perceives the particular, personal, interest of the type of actors that constitute the subject of study of his theory that will dictate his choice of assuming that they care about certain, specific, entities rather than some other ones.

The second thing that the assumptions that underlie a public choice theory will have to identify to substantiate the preferences that are held by the type of actors that constitute its subject of study is the object on which a given government will have to act to affect the level of welfare that experience the entities that they care about. In this respect, let's note that the main idea on which is anchored modern economics is that entities derive the level of welfare that they experience from certain objects that are part of their environment. This idea truly lies at the heart of modern economics since, without it, it would be absolutely impossible for economists (as well for anyone else for that matter) to claim that the level of welfare that entities experience can be acted upon; that is to say that the level of welfare that entities experience can be modified, increased, decreased, maximized, etc.

The reason why economists must absolutely assume that entities derive the level of welfare that they experience from some objects to claim that the level of welfare that they experience can be acted upon is simply that, in science, it is only objects that can be acted upon. An action can only be said to have taken place if it is possible to point out the effects that this action has caused on some objects. In such a context, it therefore follows that the only way by which economists can claim that it is possible to act on the level of welfare that a particular entity experiences is by conceiving the level of welfare that this particular entity experiences as being the product of one or some objects. More precisely, to claim that it is possible to act on the level of welfare that a particular entity experiences, it is necessary to conceive the level of welfare that this particular entity experiences as having its source, its origin, in one or some objects that are part of its environment. In this respect, if indeed the level of welfare that a particular entity experiences has its origin, its source, in one or some objects that exist within its environment, then it becomes plausible, reasonable, to think that acting on these objects (i.e., modifying these objects in some way by acting on them) may very well change the level of welfare that they provide to this particular entity. But what are the objects that economists generally assume provide welfare to entities?

In economics, entities are generally assumed to derive the level of welfare that they experience from their resource endowment. Hence, economists generally assume that the resource endowment of a particular entity constitutes the object that must be acted upon in order to affect the level of welfare that it experiences. But how does acting on a resource endowment may change the level of welfare that it provides to a particular entity? It is the function of the model that represents the level of welfare that a given resource endowment provides to a particular entity to answer this question. More precisely, the model that represents the level of welfare that an object such as a resource endowment provides to an entity must highlight how the level of welfare that this object provides to this particular entity changes when one or some of its constituting elements are changed or varied in some way. In this respect, let's note that the constituting elements of a resource endowment are of course the various resources that it is composed of. In such a context, the model that represents the level of welfare that a resource endowment provides to an entity must highlight how the level of welfare that this resource endowment provides to this particular entity changes when the quantity of one or some of the particular resources that it is composed of is changed in some way (i.e., either increased or decreased). Thus, it is important to stress that models in economic theories represent the objects that are assumed to provide welfare to entities. The role of the model that underlie a particular economic theory is to highlight how the level of welfare that a given object provides to a particular entity changes when one or some of the constituting elements of this object are acted upon (i.e., changed in some way).

Economists therefore generally assume that entities derive the level of welfare that they experience from their resource endowment. As it is well known, the public choice approach was founded by economists. It is this simple and, in a sense, rather trivial historical fact that explains why virtually all existing public choice theories as well assume that entities derive the level of welfare that they experience from their resource



endowment. Since virtually all existing public choice theories assume that entities derive the level of welfare that they experience from their resource endowment, this of course implies that virtually all public choice theories furthermore assume that the resource endowment of entities constitute the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that they experience. Thus, to substantiate the preferences that are held by the type of actors that constitutes its subject of study, the assumptions that underlie a public choice theory will have to identify: (1) the entities that they care about as well as (2) the object on which a particular government will have to act to affect the level of welfare that experience the entities that they care about.

How public choice theories choose to substantiate the preferences that are held by the types of actors that constitutes their respective subject of study of course heavily influence the conclusions that they formulate concerning how these types of actors should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process. This fact is especially evident in the case of the assumptions that public choice theories make concerning the identity of the entities that the types of actors that constitute their subject of study care about. Making different assumptions concerning the identity of the entities that a particular type of actors care about will often drastically change the way in which they will be deduced to act and behave within the policymaking process. For example, it is rather obvious that the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to deduce the way in which bureaucrats should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process would have formulated quite different conclusions in that regard if they had assumed that the entities that bureaucrats care about are not themselves but rather the entities that are the intended beneficiaries of the policies that they have the task to implement. It is as well undeniable that the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to deduce the way in which politicians should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process would have come to quite different conclusions on this matter if they had assumed that the entities that politicians care about are themselves rather than the entities that are part of their electorate. Thus, clearly, the assumptions that public choice theories make concerning the identity of the entities that the types of actors that constitute their subject of study care about often heavily influence the conclusions that they formulate concerning how these types of actors should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process.

However, let's note that the assumptions that public choice theories make concerning the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that entities experience as well heavily influence the conclusions that they formulate concerning how the types of actors that constitute their respective subject of study should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process. More precisely, the conclusions that a particular public choice theory formulates concerning the way in which the type of actors that constitute its subject of study should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process are often heavily influenced by (1) the particular attributes and characteristics that either the object that provides welfare to the entities that they care about and/or some of its constituting elements are assumed to display (for example, an attribute that is often most important to take account of in the case of a good is whether it is assumed to be a private or a public good) and also by (2) the properties

that are assumed to characterize the causal relationship that links the various constitutive elements of the object to the level of welfare that it provides to the entities that they care about (for example, are the various constitutive elements of the object assumed to be positively or negatively related to the level of welfare that it provides to the entities that the type of actors that constitute the subject of study of this theory care about). In this communication, I will seek to derive new conclusions, new results, concerning how interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process by making different assumptions concerning the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that they experience. In this respect, as mentioned above, the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to study the behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process all assume that the resource endowments of interest groups constitute the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that they experience.

Of course, far from me the idea of claiming that the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to study the behavior of types of actors such as interest groups within the policymaking process have been wrong to assume that governments can affect the level of welfare that entities experience by modifying their resource endowment. This assumption seems to me on the contrary to be most judicious and realistic since it is quite obvious (at least to me) that governments do have the capacity to act on (i.e., to either increase or decrease) the resource endowments of many entities. The billions of dollars that the various governments in Canada collect annually from the income (a type of resources) that earn the various entities (individuals and corporations) that fall under their respective jurisdiction constitute in this respect one of most eloquent proof of the fact that governments do have the capacity to act on (more precisely in the particular case of taxation policies: decrease) the resource endowments of many entities. The idea that I want to put forward and defend in this communication is therefore not at all that the various public choice theories that have thus far been developed to study the behavior of types of actors such as interest groups within the policymaking process have been wrong to assume that governments can affect the level of welfare that entities experience by modifying their resource endowment. The idea that I want to put forward and defend in this communication is rather that the resource endowment of entities does not constitute the only object that provides welfare to entities that can be acted upon by governments. But, aside from their resource endowment, what are the other objects about which, on the one hand, it could be reasonable to assume that they provide welfare to entities and, furthermore, about which it would be plausible to claim that governments do have the capacity to act on them in such a way that they can either increase or decrease the level of welfare that they provide to certain entities?

Concerning the first question raised above (that is to say concerning whether there exist objects other than resource endowments about which it would be reasonable to assume that they provide welfare to entities), French thinker Michel Foucault was for his part convinced, on the one hand, that actions as well often provide welfare to entities (and hence, as we are going to see below, that actions can as well be considered as a type of objects that provide welfare to entities) and, furthermore, he was convinced that it is possible to modify the level of welfare that actions provide to entities by exercising

power over the way in which they are being performed. And concerning the second question raised above (that is to say concerning whether governments do have the capacity to act on this other type of objects (in this case: actions) that provide welfare to entities), it seems to me that governments do have the capacity to exercise some form of power over the way in which certain actions are being performed. Regulation policies appear in this respect to constitute the perfect example of a type of policies whose main function and purpose is to exercise some form of power -of control- over the way in which certain actions are performed. This leads me to believe that it would be possible to study the actions and behavior of types of actors such as interest groups within the policymaking process by assuming that it is by exercising some form of power, of regulation, over the way in which certain actions are performed that governments affect the level of welfare that experience the entities that they care about. As a matter of fact, not only do I believe that it is possible to study the behavior of types of actors such as interest groups within the policymaking process by assuming that it is by exercising some form of power over the way in which certain actions are performed that governments can affect the level of welfare that experience the entities that they care about, I furthermore believe that studying the behavior of types of actors such as interest groups under this different assumption will allow to produce new results, new conclusions, concerning how they should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process.

The reason why I believe that it will be possible to produce new results, new conclusions, concerning how types of actors such as interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process by assuming that it is by exercising some form of power over the way in which certain actions are being performed that governments can affect the level of welfare that experience the entities that they care about is that an action constitutes a type of object whose attributes and characteristics are quite different from a resource endowment and also because the properties of the causal relationship that links the constitutive element of an action (as we are going to see below: power) to the level of welfare that it provides to some entity or entities are quite different from the properties of the causal relationship that links the constitutive elements of a resource endowment (i.e., resources) to the level of welfare that it provides to some entity or entities. But what are the attributes and characteristics of actions as a type of objects that provide welfare to entities and also what are the properties of the causal relationship that links power to the level of welfare that actions provide to entities that are important to consider and to take account of so as to be in a position to deduce interesting and meaningful results concerning how types of actors such as interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process? That is what I will try to highlight in the next section by briefly summarizing how Foucault understands power.

### **How Foucault understands power**

People are often surprised when I claim that I use Foucault's ideas on power in a rational, public choice, context to produce new results concerning how types of actors such as interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process. Many people consider that Foucault's work and public choice have nothing in

common whatsoever. As a matter of fact, some people seem to be convinced that Foucault's work and public choice are the antithesis of one another. Of course, I am well aware of the fact that Foucault was not a public choice theorist. Yet, I do believe that Foucault's ideas concerning power can be translated, transposed, in a rational (public) choice context. In this respect, as mentioned above, economists study the actions and behavior of various types of actors from the vantage point of the effects that their actions and behavior cause (or may potentially cause) on the level of welfare that certain, specific, entities experience. For economists, actions are consequential or, at the very least, they are of interest to study only to the extent that they produce some welfare effects (i.e., some effects on the level of welfare that some entities experience). And, in this respect, it makes no doubt that Foucault did believe that exercising power constitutes a type of actions that produce important welfare effects. For example, in his famous book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault claimed that: « Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility). » (Foucault, 1984: 182)

From this short quotation, it appears quite clearly that Foucault believed that bodies provide utility (since he claimed that discipline can increase the level of utility that bodies provide). However, one must be most careful when interpreting this particular quotation since Foucault did not believe that the utility -the welfare- that a given body provides irradiates directly right out of it like rays of light irradiate from the core of a star. Foucault rather believed that a body provides utility only to the extent that it acts. It is therefore the actions that bodies perform that, according to Foucault, really provide welfare or utility. Taking this into account, the major idea on which Foucault's conception of power rests is, I believe, the following: the level of utility that a given action provides is neither constant from one body to the other nor is it constant in time for a particular body. The utility that a given action produces will rather usually vary according to the particular body that performs it as well as according to the specific moment in time at which a particular body will be asked or made to perform it. And, in the end, it is this variability that characterizes the utility that actions provide to entities that gives its whole *raison d'être* to the exercise of power according to Foucault since, for him, the exercise of power refers to the various methods, techniques and disciplines that have been invented basically throughout the history of mankind to modify the way in which bodies perform certain, specific, actions with the intent of increasing the utility that these actions provide to some entity or entities. Hence, for Foucault, exercising power means to be able to dictate, to determine, the way in which an action is being performed and Foucault believed that entities care about the way in which actions are being performed because the level of utility -the level of welfare- that actions provide to entities depends first and foremost on the particular way that is used to perform them.

An object is usually defined in science as being something that can be modified. Since Foucault believed that the level of welfare that an action provides can be modified, this means that actions can be considered as being a type of object. But of course objects do not change by themselves. Objects can only change if they are acted upon. Since modifying the level of welfare that an action provides can only be achieved by exercising power over the entity that performs it, this implies that exercising power constitutes a type of action that addresses itself to other actions. This explains why Foucault ultimately

defined exercising power as acting upon other actions (Foucault, 1983). Furthermore, this indicates that power must be considered as being the constitutive element of actions since it is by exercising power over the entities that perform actions that it is possible to modify the level of welfare that actions produce. Hence the bottom line of all this is that not only do actions provide welfare or utility to entities but, moreover, it is possible to modify the level of welfare that actions produce by modifying the way in which they are being performed and, for Foucault, being able to modify and, in the end, being able to determine the way in which a particular entity performs an action means to exercise power over this entity.

The main question that arises at this point of the discussion is of course: what are the actions that provide welfare to entities? On the one hand, it is reasonable to assume that an action will usually provide welfare to the entity that performs it. But what about other entities? Can actions that are performed by a particular entity provide welfare to some other entity or entities? According to Foucault yes: an action can provide welfare to entities other than the one that performs it. However, Foucault did not believe that the actions that a particular entity performs provide welfare to each one of the other entities that inhabit our planet or even our universe. Foucault rather believed that the actions that are performed by a particular entity generally only provide welfare to certain other specific entity or entities. The fact that Foucault did not believe that the actions that are performed by a particular entity provide to each one of the other entities that inhabit our planet and universe has led him to use the term relationship to refer to situations in which one or some actions that are performed by a particular entity provide welfare to certain other specific entity or entities.

Examples in which certain entities can be said to be in a relationship with one another are numerous. In a firm, an employer and his employees can be said to be in a relationship with one another since the profits that an employer derives from his firm are obviously function of the way in which his employees perform their work and duties within it. In a given sector of activity such as air transport, air carriers that are competing against one another can as well be said to be in a form of relationship with one another since, when a given air carrier decides to enter a route that was already served by other carriers, this action will obviously affect the business of these other carriers. Finally, an environmentalist group that enjoys forests in their natural or pristine state of nature will feel that it is in a relationship with logging companies because logging activities can potentially have a most harmful effect on the natural, pristine, state of forests.

Thus, there exist many concrete situations in which some entities can, for one reason or another, be said to be in a relationship with some other entity or entities. There are many situations in which the actions that are performed by certain entities impact, either positively or negatively, the level of welfare that is experienced by some other entities. In such situations, it is reasonable to believe that the entities that derive welfare from the actions that are performed by some other entities will seek to exercise some form of power over these other entities in order to either increase the level of utility that they derive from the actions that these other entities perform (such as, for example, in the case of employer-employee relationships in which employers derive positive utility from

the actions that are performed by their employees) or to decrease the level of disutility that they derive from the actions that are performed by some other entities (such as, for example, in the case of the relationship that exists between certain environmentalist groups and logging companies in which environmentalist groups derive disutility from the actions that are performed by logging companies or like in the case of firms that compete against one another in a given sector of activity such as air transport in which firms derive negative utility from the fact that other firms enter their markets and undercut their prices). Thus actions can, just like resource endowments, be considered as being a type of objects that provide welfare to entities.

The main purpose of this brief section concerning how Foucault understands power was to highlight the main attributes and characteristics of actions as an object that provides welfare to entities as well as to highlight the main properties of the causal relationship that links power (the constitutive element of an action) to the welfare that it provides to an entity. On the one hand, probably the most important attribute of an action as a type of object that provides welfare to entity is without a doubt the fact that entities derive welfare from neither all nor necessarily the same actions. In this respect, as it was explained above, it is most unlikely that actions provide welfare to all the entities that exist. It is rather more likely that a given entity only derives welfare from certain, specific, actions and, hence, that some actions do affect the level of welfare that a given entity experiences whereas some other actions do not. Moreover, it is most likely that entities do not all derive welfare from the same actions. The fact that a given entity derives welfare from a particular action therefore does not necessarily mean that other entities as well derive welfare from this particular action. Hence, an important attribute of actions as a type of objects that provide welfare to entities is that actions provide welfare to neither all nor necessarily to the same entities.

With respect to the properties of the causal relationship that links power to the level of welfare that provides a given action, probably the most interesting property to note is that power is not always positively linked to the level of welfare that actions provide to entities. This property is most interesting to note since the various resources that compose a given resource endowment are, for their part, all assumed to be positively related to the level of welfare that it provides to some entity. The fact that the constitutive elements of a resource endowment are all assumed to be positively related to the level of welfare that it provides to some entity of course implies that a resource endowment can only provide a positive level or amount or level of welfare to a particular entity. But such is not the case with actions. An action can provide a negative level or amount of welfare to an entity because the extent to which an entity exercises power over the way in which another entity performs a particular action can be negatively related to the level of welfare that this action provides to this other entity as well as to some other entity or entities.

This is so since, as explained above, exercising power over a given entity essentially means being able to determine the way in which this entity performs a particular action. And, in this respect, nothing whatsoever prevents an entity that exercises power over the way in which another one performs a particular action to select

a way of performing this action that will decrease the level of welfare that this action provides to this other entity as well to some other entity or entities. That is why the extent to which an entity exercises power over the way in which another entity performs an action cannot be assumed to be always positively linked to the level of welfare that this action provides to this other entity as well as to some other entity or entities and, in the end, that is why an action, unlike a resource endowment, constitute a type of objects that can provide a negative amount or level of welfare to some entity or entities. Thus what distinguishes an action from a resource endowment as a type of object that provides welfare to entities is mainly that (1) an action generally only provides welfare to certain, specific entities and also that (2) an action, unlike a resource endowment, can provide a negative amount or level of welfare to some entity or entities. In the final part of this communication, I will show that the conclusions that can be reached concerning the way in which interest groups should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking process will be quite different if it assumed that it is by exercising power over the way in which certain actions are being performed rather than by modifying their resource endowment that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience.

### **The subdivision of the policymaking process into a series of networks or communities**

As explained in the introduction, a policy network (as well as a policy community and a policy subsystem) is generally defined in political science as being the set of interest groups which have been observed to be interested in the policies that a given government makes that concern a particular field or issue. From this definition, it appears quite clearly that the main reason why political scientists view the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities is that they have observed that the various interest groups that participate to it are generally interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies. Thus, to see the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities, it is necessary to perceive the various interest groups that participate to it as being interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies.

If political scientists identify the policies that are of interest to interest groups by observing their participation habits within the policymaking process; economists and, more particularly, public choice theorists identify the policies that are of interest to interest groups by deducing them from the assumptions that they make concerning how governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience. In this respect, as explained above, the main assumption on which is based modern economics is that entities such as interest groups derive the level of welfare that they experience from objects. It therefore follows that the policies that will be of interest to interest groups are the policies that can affect in some way objects that provide them welfare. It is therefore the assumptions that public choice theories make concerning the object on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience that determine the type or sort of issues and, hence, the type or sort of policies that interest groups should be interested into.

In a context in which it is assumed that interest groups derive the level of welfare that they experience from their resource endowment, the policies that will be of interest to interest groups will of course be those that can affect the level of welfare that they derive from their resource endowment. Since the level of welfare that is provided by a resource endowment to an entity such as an interest group is always assumed in economics to be positively related to the quantity of each resources that it is composed of, it can therefore be deduced from this assumption that interest groups should be more particularly interested in convincing governments to enact policies that will help them increase the quantity of one or some resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of. In a context in which all interest groups are perceived as participating to the policymaking process because they want to convince governments to help them increase the quantity of one or some resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of, could a policy that is of interest to a particular interest group because this policy can help it increase the quantity of one or some resources that its resource endowment is composed of be conversely of no interest whatsoever to another interest group that as well participates to the process by which this government makes its policies to convince this government to help it increase the quantity of one or some resources that its resource endowment is composed of? The answer is negative. If a policy is of interest to a particular interest group that participates to the process by which a given government makes its policies because this policy can help it increase the quantity of one or some resources that its resource endowment is composed of, this policy should as well be of interest to each one of the other interest groups that as well participate to the process by which this government makes its policies to convince this government to help them to increase the quantity of one or some resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of.

In this respect, economists generally assume that it is by redistributing money in their favor that governments can help interest groups to increase the quantity of resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of. Let's note that money is not considered by economists as being a resource in itself; that is to say economists do not consider money as being a constitutive element of the resource endowment of entities. Money is rather considered by economists as being a means to acquire resources. More precisely, money is considered by economists as being a means to acquire any resource that may be a constitutive element of the resource endowment of a particular entity. Since money is considered by economists as being a means to acquire any type or sort of resources that exist, a public policy that redistributes money should be of interest to each and every interest group that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies to convince this government to help them increase the quantity of resources that their resource endowment is composed of since, no matter what are the particular resources that their particular resource endowment is composed of, they can use the money that is redistributed by such a public policy to acquire more of the particular resources that their particular resource endowment is composed of.

In a context in which it is assumed that the fundamental purpose of all the public policies that are made by a given government is to redistribute money, one would be led



to perceive the various interest groups that participate to the process by which this government makes its policies in order to convince it to increase the quantity of one or some resources that their particular resource endowment is composed of as being interested in all the policies that are made by this government and, hence, in the exact same policies. And, of course, in a context in which the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies are perceived as being interested in all and, hence, in the exact same policies, one would not in turn be led to see the policymaking process of this particular government as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities, at least not in the way that political scientists usually see it, since, as explained above, a necessary condition to see the policymaking process of a given government as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities is to perceive the various interest groups that participate to it as being interested in neither all nor necessarily the same policies.

Of course, the argument just developed above which led to the conclusion that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies should all be interested in the same policies was deduced from the assumption that governments help interest groups to increase the quantity of resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of by redistributing money to them. But would this conclusion still hold if it was instead assumed that governments help interest groups to increase the quantity of resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of by redistributing them actual resources? The answer is yes. The conclusion reached above would still hold even if, on the one hand, it was assumed that public policies redistribute particular, specific, resources and also if it was assumed that the resources that are redistributed by certain public policies are not constitutive elements of the resource endowment of all or even of none of the interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies. In this respect, as long as the resource that is redistributed by a given public policy made by a particular government is a constitutive element of the resource endowment of at least one entity, this policy should be of interest not only to this particular entity but also to all the interest groups that participate to the process by which this government makes its policies since, if this resource is redistributed to any one of them, they can trade it to the entity that considers this resource as being a constitutive element of its resource endowment in exchange for either money or for one or some other resources that they consider as being constitutive elements of their particular resource endowment.

Thus, when interest groups are perceived as being involved in the policymaking process because they want to convince governments to help them increase quantity of resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of, it is very hard to come up with a rationale to explain why a policy that is of interest to a particular interest group that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may conversely be of no interest whatsoever to another interest group that as well participates to it. This is so since economists generally assume that it is by redistributing either money or resources (i.e., a rent) in their favor that governments help interest groups to increase the quantity of resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of and, in such a context, if a given public policy can help a particular interest group to increase the

quantity of resources that its resource endowment is composed of, there does not seem to be any reason to think that this particular policy could not as well help other interest groups to increase the quantity of resources that their respective resource endowment is composed of. Assuming that it is by acting on the resource endowment of interest groups that governments can affect the level of welfare that they experience therefore generally leads to the conclusion that interest groups should all be interested in the same policies. This explains why public choice theorists generally do not see the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities.

As explained above, the resource endowment of entities does not constitute the only type of objects that provide welfare to entities such as interest groups that can be acted upon by governments. Actions constitute another type of objects that provide welfare to entities such as interest groups that can be acted upon by governments since to act upon an action and, more particularly, to modify the level of welfare that an action provides to a particular entity such as an interest group, one must change the way in which this action is performed by exercising some form of power, of control, over the entity that performs it and, clearly, governments do have the capacity to exercise power, control, over the way in which the various entities that fall under their respective jurisdiction perform many types and sorts of actions. In a context in which it is assumed that actions are the objects on which governments have to act to affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience, would the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies be perceived as being all interested in the same policies? The answer is negative. When it is assumed that it is by regulating actions that governments affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience, it is rather most likely that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies will be interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies that are made within it.

In this respect, let's note that in a context in which it is assumed that it is by regulating certain, specific, actions that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience, an entity will be perceived as being interested in a given policy only if this policy regulates an action from which it derives a significant amount or level of welfare. The fact that an entity will be interested in a particular regulation policy or not will therefore first and foremost depend on whether it derives welfare from the action that is regulated by this particular regulation policy. So, to determine which entities will seek to participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies concerning the regulation of a particular action or activity, one will need to identify the entities that are affected by this particular action or activity. As explained earlier, the number as well as the identity of the entities that are affected by a particular action will vary from one action to the next. Action X may only affect the level of welfare of the entity that performs it whereas action Y may affect the level of welfare of one other entity aside from the one that performs it and action Z may, for its part, affect the level of welfare of a large number of entities aside from the one that performs it. There is no a priori rule that specifies the number as well as the identity of entities whose level of welfare is affected by actions.

But, for our purpose, what is most important to stress here is that it is easily conceivable and, as a matter of fact, it is most likely that certain actions do not affect all entities that exist within a given community and also that different actions do not necessarily affect the same entities. This fact is most important to stress since, as explained above, when it is assumed that it is by regulating certain actions or activities that governments affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience, interest groups will be perceived as being only interested in policies that regulate actions that affect their welfare. This of course means that in a context in which the different actions that a given government regulate do not affect all nor necessarily the same entities that fall under its jurisdiction, it would therefore mean that its various regulation policies would not all be of interest to the same entities and, hence, to the same interest groups. From this, it can therefore be seen that studying the actions and behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process under the assumption that it is by regulating certain, specific actions that governments affect the level of welfare that they experience allows for the theoretical possibility that interest groups may be interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies. That is why, in a context in which it is assumed that actions constitute the object on which governments have to affect the level of welfare that interest group experience, it does make sense to perceive interest groups as being not all interested in the same policies and, because of this, it does as well make sense to see the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities.

## **Conclusion**

The main purpose of this communication was to explain why economists, unlike political scientists, generally do not see the policymaking process of governments as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities. As it was explained during the communication, whether one will see the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of policy networks or not first and foremost depends on whether this person perceives the various interest groups that participate to it as being interested in the same policies or not. This is so since a policy network is generally defined in political science as being the set of interest groups that are interested in the policies of a given government that concern a particular field or issue. This way of defining a policy network implies that a person will be led to see the policymaking process as being subdivided into a series of networks only if it perceives the various interest groups that participate to it as being not all interested in the same issues and, hence, in the same policies. That is why, a good part of this communication has been dedicated to explain how economists and political scientists respectively proceed to identify the policies that types of actors such as interest groups are and/or should be interested into.

In this respect, it was argued that whereas political scientists generally identify the policies that are of interest to interest groups by observing their actions and behavior (i.e., their participation habits) within the policymaking process, economists rather generally identify the policies that are of interest to interest groups by deducing them from the assumptions that they make concerning how governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience. Each one of these two approaches to identify the policies that are of interest to interest groups has its strengths and weaknesses and, by and large,

the weaknesses of one approach are palliated by the strengths of the other. In this respect, an obvious weakness of the deductive approach is that there exists no guarantee whatsoever that the conclusions that are deduced from a given set of assumptions concerning things such as the types or sort of policies that interest groups should be interested into will correspond in any way with the type or sort of policies that interest groups can actually be observed to be interested into. And, in this respect, as Donald Green and Ian Shapiro have highlighted in their famous book entitled *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theories*, many conclusions that are formulated by public choice theories concerning how the types of actors that constitute their respective subject of study should rationally be led to act and behave within the policymaking indeed do not correspond at all with the way in which these types of actors have been observed to actually act and behave within the policymaking process. I believe that Green and Shapiro were right to point out that the conclusions that are formulated by many public choice theories are either not supported or flatly contradicted by empirical observations. However, I believe that they were wrong to conclude that public choice theories that formulate conclusions that are either not supported or contradicted by empirical evidence do not: «advanced our understanding of how politics works in the real world» (Green & Shapiro, 1994: 6).

Quite the contrary, I am of the opinion that public choice theories that formulate conclusions that are either not supported or contradicted by empirical evidence often make important contributions to our understanding of how politics really works since these conclusions that are either contradicted or not supported by empirical evidence highlight questions and, as a matter of fact, problems that, otherwise, may have appeared as being trivial, unimportant and, hence unworthy to study. Probably the most important question or problem that the public choice approach has highlighted and made worthy to study is why do people vote? Another important question that the public choice approach has highlighted is why are the various interest groups that participate to the process by which governments make their policies generally interested in neither all nor necessarily in the same policies that are made within it? Why are the policies that are of interest to a particular interest group that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies are often of no interest whatsoever to many other interest groups that as well participate to it? Political scientists who use an inductive approach to study the process by which governments make their policies must admit that they have thus far not devoted a lot of time and effort to study this question.

In this respect, most political scientists who study policy making and policy change rather take it for granted that interest groups are not all interested in the same policies as well as, more fundamentally, that the policymaking process is subdivided into a series of networks or communities. For example, Paul Sabatier has made of policy subsystems the basic unit of analysis of its advocacy coalition framework. The fact that Sabatier considers policy subsystems as being the basic unit of analysis of his framework means that one cannot make use of his framework to explain why the policymaking process is subdivided into a series of networks or communities since the framework takes the existence of policy networks for granted.

In a sense, political scientists would be right to take for granted and, hence, they would be justified to, just like Sabatier does, not devote a lot of time and effort to study and, eventually, to explain why the various interest groups that participate to the policymaking process are not all interested in the same policies if there was no reason to think otherwise. As a matter of fact, it could even be argued that if the public choice theories that have thus far been developed to study the behavior of interest groups within the policymaking process had rather come to the conclusion that it is logical to expect that interest groups should not all be interested in the same policies, political scientists such as Green and Shapiro would have criticized as much, if not even more vehemently, this conclusion since, according to Green and Shapiro, the few conclusions formulated by public choice theories that have not been falsified by empirical observations: «can only be characterized as banal: they do little more than restate existing knowledge in rational choice terminology» (Green & Shapiro, 1994: 6). Since it is common knowledge to the vast majority of political scientists that interest groups are not all interested in the same policies, I strongly suspect that Green and Shapiro would consider as being extremely banal the main conclusion that I have formulated in this communication which was that, when it is assumed that it is by regulating certain, specific, actions that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience, it makes sense to expect that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may not all be interested in the same policies.

The conclusion that I have formulated which holds that it makes sense to expect that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies may not all be interested in the same policies when it is assumed that it is by regulating certain, specific, actions that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience becomes interesting and harder to label as banal only in a context in which it is juxtaposed with the conclusion that was reached previously by certain other public choice theories which was that it makes sense to expect that the various interest groups that participate to the process by which a given government makes its policies should all be interested in the same policies when it is rather assumed that it is by modifying their resource endowment that governments can affect the level of welfare that interest groups experience since the juxtaposition of these two conclusions together suggests a result that, as far as I know, no political scientist has thus far reached; namely that policy networks should not be associated to all types or sort of policies that are made by governments. More precisely, the juxtaposition of these two conclusions allows to formulate an empirically testable hypothesis concerning the types or sorts of policies that policy networks should often be observed to be dedicated to versus the types or sorts of policies that policy networks should conversely be very rarely observed to be dedicated to.

The hypothesis that the juxtaposition of these two conclusions allows to formulate is of course that policy networks should often be observed to be dedicated to policies that regulate some actions and activities and, conversely, that policy networks should rarely be observed to be dedicated to policies whose main purpose and effect is to modify the resource endowment of some entity or entities. A simple look at the table of contents of two well-known books that contain case studies that have been made concerning policy

networks reveal that, indeed, a lot of the policy networks that have thus far been identified and studied are dedicated to policies that regulate some actions or activities and, conversely, that very few of the policy networks that have thus far been identified and studied are dedicated to policies whose main purpose and effect is to modify the resource endowment of some entity or entities. On the one hand, taking a look at the table of content of Coleman and Skogstad book on policy communities reveals that, out of the eight cases study that are included in this book which study some particular policy community, five of them study a policy community that is clearly dedicated to policies that regulate some specific action or activity, one of them studies a policy community that is most likely mainly dedicated to policies that regulate some actions or activities, one of them study a policy network that seems to be dedicated to policies whose main purpose and effects are to modify the resource endowment of certain entities and, finally, there is one case study that I was not able, based only on its title, to identify which type of policies it is dedicated to.

**Table 1: Table of Contents of Coleman and Skogstad book entitled Policy Communities Policy Analysis in Canada: a Structural Approach**

Title of case studies	Is the policy network studied in the case study clearly dedicated to policies that regulate some action or activity?
The State, Interest, and Policy-Making in the East Coast Fishery	Yes
The Farm Policy Community and Public Policy in Ontario and Québec	Yes
The Banking Policy Community and Financial Change	Yes
Forestry and Forest Products	Yes
Wilderness Politics in BC: The Business Dominated State and the Containment of Environmentalism	Yes
Official Language Minorities and the State: Dual Dynamics in a Single Policy Network	I would think so: The use of language is regulated by the Québec government and also, by ricochet, by the Canadian Constitution
Organized Women’s Group and the State	? (frankly, I have not read this case study)
The Poverty Policy Community in Canada’s Liberal Welfare State	This is the only policy community that seems to be most likely dedicated to policies that affect the resource endowment of certain entities (I have not read it either though)

The other rather important and well-known book that contains case studies that study some policy networks is Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith book entitled Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach. This book contains 5 case studies. Four of the case studies contained in this book clearly study a policy network that is dedicated to policies that regulate some specific action or activity whereas one of them should, in my opinion, be considered as studying a policy network that is dedicated to policies that regulate some specific actions or activities.

**Table 2: Table of Contents of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith book entitled Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach**

Title of case studies	Is the policy network studied in the case study clearly dedicated to policies that regulates some action or activity?
An Advocacy Coalition Approach to Change in Canadian Education	I would think so since the Canadian Constitution regulates (i.e., constrains) provinces to offer education in a given official language where the number of people that speak this language justifies it
Competing Advocacy Coalitions, Policy Evolution and Airline Deregulation	Yes
California Water Politics: Explaining Policy Change in a Cognitively Polarized Subsystem	Yes
Managing technological Change in Federal Communications Policy: The role of Industry Advisory Groups	Yes
From vague Consensus to Clearly Differentiated Coalitions: Environmental Policy at Lake Tahoe	Yes

In both books, most of the policy networks that are studied can be said to be dedicated to policy or policies that regulate some specific actions or activities. This therefore indicates that our hypothesis which holds that policy networks should more often be observed to be dedicated to regulation policies than to policies whose main purpose and effect is to modify the resource endowment of some entities is not falsified by these empirical observations. That is why I believe that the public choice approach can help to understand why the policy making process of governments often appear as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities and also, and more importantly, the public choice approach can help to highlight the conditions and circumstances under which it is most likely to observe that the policymaking process of a given government will be subdivided into a series of networks or communities. The conditions and circumstances under which it is most likely to observe that the policymaking process of a given government is subdivided into a series of networks or communities are when this government will engage itself in the regulation of various actions and activities and the reason why the policymaking process of a given government will appear as being subdivided into a series of networks or communities when it regulates various actions and activities is that the different actions and activities that a given government regulate most likely do not provide welfare to the same entities and, more particularly, to the same interest groups.

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