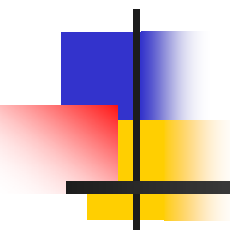


Can HIA be embedded within Policy Formulation in Ireland? An Investigation into the Utilisation of HIA Knowledge



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Today's Presentation

- How the policy sciences can contribute to HIA research; and visa versa
- HIA: Policy and Ireland
- Doctoral research rationale
- Background to the study
- Case Study Research Design
- Empirical research- 4 case studies of HIAs completed in Ireland, North and South



Fundamental Rationale for Informed Policy-Making

- 'I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, **the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion**' – *Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William Charles Jarvis, September 28th, 1820.*

Policy appraisal/ Influence of the policy sciences

- Separate conceptual root for policy appraisal
- Potential for analysis of HIA drawing from the policy sciences (*Lasswell & Positivism 1951; Lindblom, 1959; Lowi, 1972; Walt, 1994*)
- “Policy is rather like an elephant- you can recognize it when you see it but cannot easily define it” (*Cunningham, 1963*)
- Policy-oriented approach: Policy versus politics; rational versus incremental; Stages approach; Institutionalism; Policy discourse; NPM and the changing face of policy-making in Ireland → from government to governance



Policy sciences and HIA

- Although policy sciences have much to offer, IAs have been marginalised in the field (*Weston, 2002*)
- IA: Bridge between policy-makers and science
- Bekker *et al*, (2004): Rational, Incremental, Mixed scanning models → how knowledge utilization depends on decision-making model
- Putters 1996: Rational v incremental
- Putters 2005 → must spend less time defining HIA, and more time understanding the policy process which must assimilate HIA knowledge
- How to evaluate HIA as a policy-aiding tool? European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (*Wismar, 2004*)



HIA: Evolution of key ideas

- Although the idea that all policies affect health not a new concept (*Krieger, et al. 2003*), the systematic appraisal endorsed by HIA is novel
- Evidence-based policy-making (*Nutbeam, 2001; Dobrow, et al. 2004*)
- Values: Democracy, equity, sustainable development & ethical use of evidence (*WHO, 1999; 2005*)
- Flavour of the moment? (*Banken, 2001*); Must face the challenges ahead (*Kemm, 2005; 2006*)

HIA: What Irish Health Strategies say..

- South
- National Health Strategy (2001) "HIA will be introduced as part of the public policy development process" (Objective 1.1)
- North
- Investing for Health (2002) "This programme (of HIA) will address issues of coordination, capacity building, tool development and quality assurance"

Lack of usage in policy- process



- Most HIAs conducted at local level → more opportunities for networking, efficiency of evidence utilisation & transparency (*Davenport et al. 2006*)
- To a lesser extent at national level (*Lock et al., 2003*)
- Reasons for lack of usage in Ireland? Anecdotal evidence: Leader/ Laggard hypothesis; political culture; tarred with the same brush as other IAs → administrative burden (*Boyle, IPA, 2005*)



Lessons from Abroad

- 'Learning from experience' (Putters 1999, Kemm, 2000, Mittelmark, 2001)
- Pattern in all countries? HIA initially advocated in political circles & in policy documents, then institutionalisation in system
- → require political will and leadership for successful implementation (British Columbia, Canada example...)
- Across the UK.. (more emphasis on comm. participation than in NL)
- The Netherlands.. (national policy-making; expert-driven)
- Sweden.. (Local policy-making)
- Australia.. (More efforts at incorporating into EHIA)



What are the factors facilitating utilisation in other countries

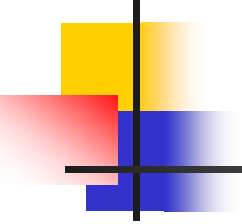
- Degree of institutionalisation in the political system
- Timeliness
- Lack of statutory recognition → need proactive research into understanding the policy process (O'Reilly, 2006, HIA conference Cardiff)
- Barriers to utilisation in Sweden: lack of clarity and subsequent causes of delay (*Finer, et al. 2004*)

Barriers and Enablers



Davenport *et al.* 2006 → HIA must 'fit' the organisational and political realities of the decision-making institution

- Enablers
- A balance between HIA credibility (objectiveness) & decision-maker ownership (subjectivity)
- pragmatic recommendations
- Lack of 'mainstreaming' (*Elliott and Francis, 2005; Fry, 2006 at the IAIA meeting....many of the best IAs are voluntary*)
- Less tangible aspects: networking opportunities; health awareness raising → difficult to quantify (*Elliott & Francis; Davenport et al. 2006*)

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- Barriers:
 - Lack of knowledge and realistic understanding of the policy process on the part of decision-makers and practitioners
 - Timeliness



PhD: Investigating HIA from a policy perspective

- **Key Research Question**
- How do HIAs influence public policy decision-making in Ireland?
- Why are some recommendations of HIA outcome reports taken on board, and others not?



Rationale for research

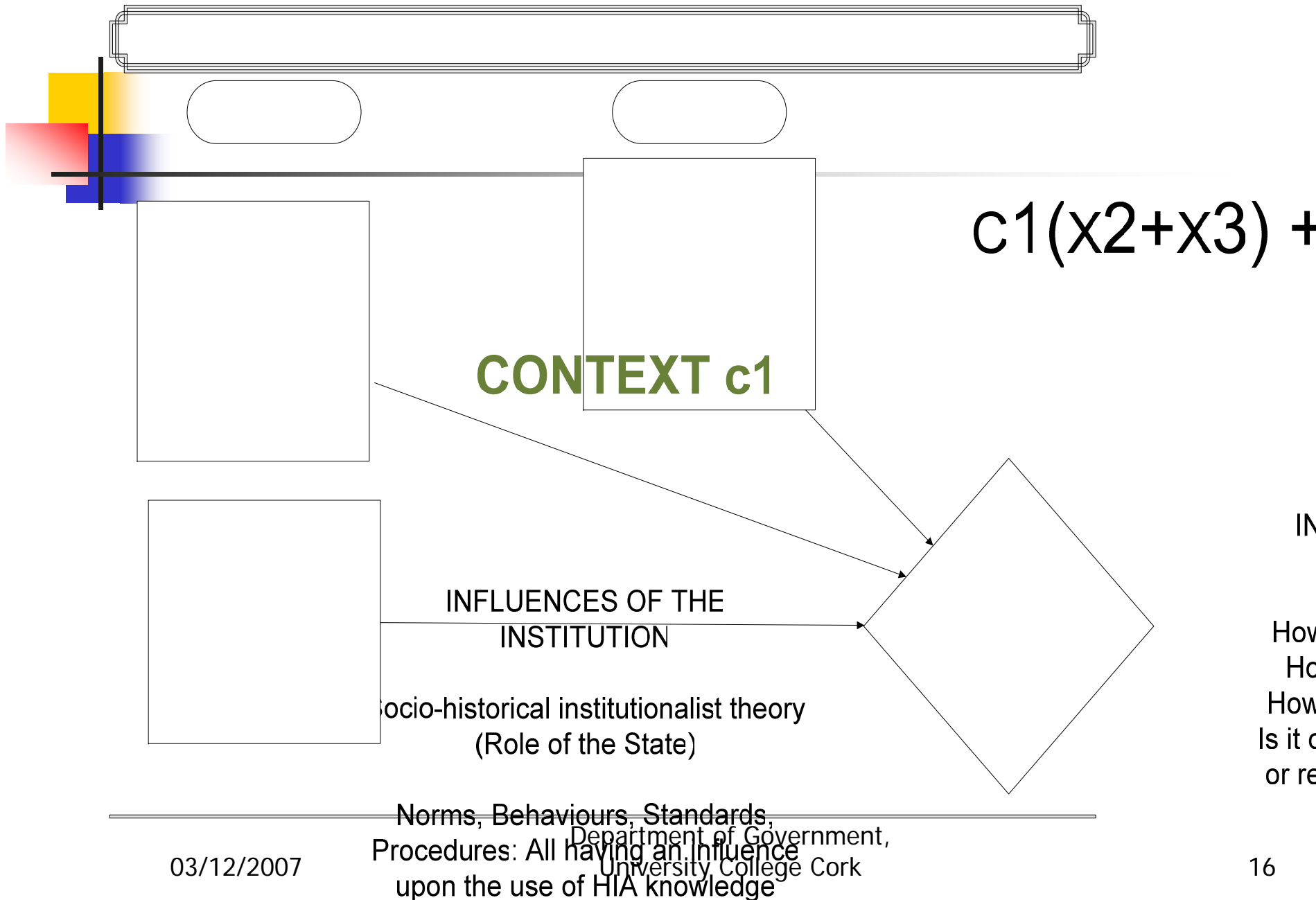
- Need to understand politico-administrative environment within which HIA must operate → maximise HIA utilisation (*Davenport, et al. 2006*)
- Each context has unique set of actors and environmental characteristics
- Less tangible aspects (*Elliott & Francis, 2005*)
- HIA process a political activity
- More than just an outcome report or I.S. (*Morgan, 1998; Birley, 2003*)
- Evaluation of HIA (*Quigley & Taylor, 2003; Atkinson & Cooke, 2005*)



Methodology for research

- Method triangulation
- Case Study Research Design
 - The emphasis on context is vital in case study research (Yin, 1994)
- Qualitative: Expert Interviewing & Content Analysis
- Quantitative: Postal Questionnaire

■ Research framework





Case Studies

- HIA of Traffic and Transport in Ballyfermot (2004) (*transport*)
- An HIA of Northern Ireland Housing Executive Proposal to Redevelop Dove Gardens Estate (2005) (*housing*)
- HIA of Travellers' Accommodation Programme in Donegal, Ireland (2005-2008) (*housing*)
- HIA of the Draft Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast (2006) (*physical environment*)
- Each case has a unique set of policy-making settings and group of actors

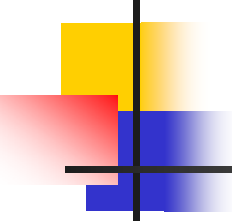


Ballyfermot Traffic and Transport HIA, (Dublin) (2004)

- Ireland and Transport
- Transport 21: Strategic vision on a national and local level
- Background to this HIA and Ballyfermot
- The Steering committee: HSE; DCC; URBAN II; Community Representatives; IPH; Dublin Transportation Office; External consultant
- Recent evaluation of the process, NUIG (June 2007)
- Work-in-progress....

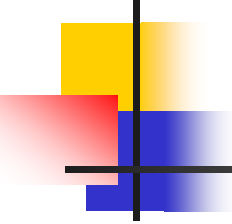
Preliminary findings..

- Content analysis of key documents
 - Proposal for HIA 2003
 - HIA Report 2004
 - URBAN II HIA leaflet to the residents
 - Ballyfermot Air Quality & Noise Assessment 2004
 - A Platform for Change-Strategy 2000-2016 (Dublin Transportation Office)
 - URBAN II Ireland, Ballyfermot: Community Initiative Programme, 2000-2006
 - Evaluation of the HIA of Traffic & Transport, 2007, NUIG (Kearns and Pursell)
- Expert interviews (HSE; URBAN; IPH; DCC; external consultant..to date)



To investigate how the political & institutional influences affect the degree to which HIA is utilised

- The time is right but HIA is restrictive
- Some actors in organisations and those involved in the policy process do not understand HIA
- Politics at play; “politics with a small p”



To investigate how and why norms and values affect the degree to which HIA is used in policy

- Values and attitudes are a major influence
- People's understanding of HIA impacted on their support of the process; willingness to contribute to the HIA depended on stakeholder's support
- Those doing policy would find it more restrictive; anything that slows policy is tarred as an administrative burden



Barriers and constraints in the use of HIA in policy

- HIA not understood
- Lack of awareness of the process; lack of support from the upper echelons in organisations and policy making institutions
- Competing against other IAs
- Lack of HIA experience



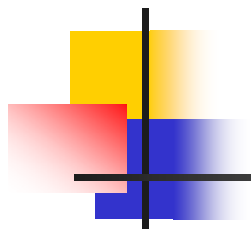
Influenced policy??

- Local Area Committee of Dublin City Council
- City and County managers received a copy of the HIA report
- This HIA paved the way for engagement with the policy process and systematic appraisal; 'it's the first and so made it seem possible to do'
- Local Area Group
- Local Government's subservient role in policy-making in Ireland, impacts on the use of HIA



Contribution to existing knowledge

- Current climate of evidence-based policy-making in all spheres of government policy; health and non-health sectors affect populations health → need to investigate & foster policy-making tools
- Examination of Irish cases from academic stand-point
- Calls for new approaches have been made from previous political science research in examining the role of HIA in policy-making processes (*Bekker, 2004; Putters, 2005; Wismar, 2006*).



Thank you!

Questions and Comments are
most welcome