A Multiple Stream Approach and Understanding Resistance and Change: the Case of Czech Hospitals

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Abstract

Recent decades the roles played by the state and the market in the public sectors have seen a major transformation. Health systems have had to cope with many socio-economic and political environment changes, such as pressures to contain costs, changes in the welfare state, and globalization processes. A key feature of Czech health care reform after 1989 was the principle of de-monopolization and decentralization. At the same time, the health care reforms focused on the privatization of health care facilities and health care providers. Therefore, the paper deals with the efforts to change the organisational-legal status of hospitals after 2000, i.e. after a reform of the state administration occurred. The paper uses the multiple streams framework to describe successful process in giving a legislative anchor to the new organisational-legal form of hospitals and to identify the most important policy entrepreneurs. It maps all three streams (policy, politics and problem streams) and uses a broader concept including agenda setting as well as decision-making process. A policy window opened and allowed a policy change in 2006 when 245/2006 Coll., on Public Non-Profit Institutional Medical Facilities passed. The research adopted a single-case study design. Data were obtained through document analysis (law proposals, resolution of Constitutional Court, stenographic records, strategic documents etc.). Examined period covered years 2002 – 2006. Findings confirmed the assumption that all three streams play a role for agenda coupling while in case of a decision coupling, the political stream is the most important.

Keywords: health care system, hospitals, multiple streams framework