

CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

I. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Chapter 2 in the textbook, the student should be able to:

I. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Number	Learning Objective	Page Range
1	State what is meant by public policy and describe the meaning of a republic.	38-42
2	Describe, understand, and outline the stages of the public policy cycle.	42-52
3	Define the meaning of power, evaluate the differences between group theory and power-elite theory, and explain the significance of groups in the American democracy.	52-57
4	Evaluate how the internal power relationships of organizations affect their goal accomplishments.	57-61
5	Analyze the difference between the internal and external cultures of public organizations.	61-67

II. SUGGESTED LECTURE

- A. Public Policymaking: Any policy is a decision on the part of government. Public policy is whatever a government decides to do, or not to do in response to a public issue. Public administration is inherently an instrument of policy. Public policymaking is hierarchical in nature. The broadest policy is made at the top, but officials at lower levels, also known as street-level bureaucrats, have discretion in interpreting policy and in the process of doing so may inadvertently and even making policy. In the United States the people are considered sovereign; through their elected representatives, they make public policy, and this concept is known as representative democracy. The legislative branch of government has the greatest number of enumerated powers and makes the law. The executive branch administers and enforces these laws, and the judicial branch interprets and enforces them. Each level of government – —federal, state, and local – involves these three distinct entities, or branches, of government.

- B. **The Role of Executive Power in a Republic:** The authors provide us with three views of executive power. The conservative view maintains that the president, governor, or mayor is an agent of the legislature, with powers restricted by the latter. A more liberal view is the one of executive prerogative, which holds that under certain circumstances the chief executive possesses and can use extraordinary powers to safeguard the nation. The stewardship theory of executive power is based on the belief that the president is a trustee of the people and can take any actions not specifically forbidden by the Constitution on their behalf. All presidents assume one of these three executive models.
- C. **The Policymaking Process:** The policymaking process is a complex group of activities. In our textbook these are broken down into five stages. All five stages are inherently political in nature.
- D. **Agenda setting or identification of the policy issue,** where the citizens produce ideas for change or improvement. These bubble up through the various political channels for consideration by the legislature or the courts, and are sometimes stimulated by a catalytic event—a riot, a flood, a terrorist attack, etc.
1. **Decision making:** where a choice is made, either rationally (based on complete information) or, more often, incrementally (bit-by-bit at the margins of problems).
 2. **Implementation** involves putting a government policy into effect. Implementation is an inherently political process. Frequently the agendas of those implementing the program seep into the implementation process itself.
 3. **Evaluation** is the appraisal process of policymaking to determine the effectiveness and the efficiency of a given program. Generally, the executive branch of government undertakes the evaluation, but courts also do so in their analysis and judgment of cases.
 4. **Feedback:** This stage of the policy process completes the cycle, and new agenda items evolving from the completed process start the policymaking cycle all over again.
- E. **The Role of Power in the Policymaking Process.** The theory of force fields helps explain the role of external and internal power that is brought to bear on an agency and its key players from many directions.
1. **External Power Forces:** Pluralism is a concept that begins in the government itself. The three branches of government – legislative, executive, and judicial – each exert power over the other and in this way balance and check each other. Additionally, American society is made up of competitive groups, and power shifts from one to the other over time. Some hold the view that groups of interested individuals with shared attitudes and special interests, not government, are the mechanism by which social policies are formulated. Elite theory states that key members of the group have the lion's share of power in policymaking. This creates a society that is divided into two classes—those who govern and those who are governed. The metaphor of the salad bowl explains that each socio-political group is a distinct power entity. Others believe that government itself is a group that competes with other groups.

2. **Internal Power:** Within organizations, coalitions jockey for power to secure scarce resources. Dependency power explains that individuals or groups who have control of key products and services make others dependent upon them. Those from the rational-structural school believe that power resides in legitimate authority, while others suggest that even those in authority are relatively powerless because their actions are invariably limited by others in a democracy.
- F. **The Role of Culture in Public Policymaking:** Organizational cultures are about the norms, values, symbolic behaviors, artifacts, and other tangible and intangible things that exert influence upon a group and link it to its environment.
1. **Impacts of the External Environment:** In the diversity that constitutes America, local and regional cultures impact the culture of public organizations in different ways. In this way, organizational culture reflects the overall values of society.
 2. **Impacts of the Internal Environment:** The internal culture of an organization is transmitted by socialization or enculturation processes. The professional socialization of organizational membership helps maintain and enforce the organizational culture. The conscious use of symbolic management, through dramaturgy, rituals, and symbols, preserves or develops the kind of culture that organizational leaders find desirable.

III. ASSESSMENTS

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. In the aftermath of the Watergate scandal when President Nixon was refusing to release his White House tapes he was invoking which form of Executive power?
 - a. Arch conservative view
 - b. Laissez faire (hands off) view
 - c. Liberal view
 - d. None of the above

Applied, pg 41, d

2. Which of the following presidents espoused the theory of Executive prerogative:
 - a. Ronald W. Reagan
 - b. Abraham Lincoln
 - c. Gerald Ford
 - d. William J. Clinton

Conceptual, pg. 40, b

3. The restricted view of presidential power was/is embodied in:
 - a. The governance of President H.W. Bush
 - b. William Howard Taft
 - c. Arch-conservative viewpoints

- d. Held by Libertarians today.
- e. All of the above

Conceptual, pg. 40, b

4. The “doctrine of the separation of powers was adopted by the Convention of 1787, not to promote efficiency, but to preclude the exercise of arbitrary power.” This statement meant that:
- a. A certain amount of governmental friction is needed among the three branches of government.
 - b. Government efficiency is not the primary need in a democracy
 - c. A and b
 - d. None of the above

Applied, pg. 53. c

5. The president who espoused the stewardship theory of the Presidency was
- a. Franklin D. Roosevelt.
 - b. Theodore Roosevelt.
 - c. George W. Bush
 - d. George H.W. Bush

Factual, pg. 42, b.

6. Which of the following is one of the typical outside forces impacting the head of a public agency?
- a. Judiciary
 - b. Auditors
 - c. Legislature
 - d. All of the above

Applied, pg. 56, d

7. Which of the following is NOT a player in the iron triangle?
- a. the government agency administering the policy
 - b. the office of the president promoting the policy
 - c. the legislative committee creating the policy
 - d. the special interest group that is advocating the policy.

Applied, pg. 57, b

8. The “power-elite” theory espoused by C. Wright Mills states that government is
- a. ruled by an elected majority.
 - b. controlled by “warlords,” “corporate “chieftains”, and political directorates
 - c. dominated by political, military, and business interests.
 - d. B and c.

Applied, pg. 53, d

9. Incremental policy decision making implies that
- rational policy decisions are made in a special predetermined order.
 - political elites make the majority of policy decisions.
 - small decisions made at the margins are usually the reality of change.
 - decisions of great importance are made quickly, while less important ones are made slowly.

Conceptual, pg. 47, c

10. Which of the following is NOT true about the process of public policymaking?
- In modern times the media is likely to distill a detailed policy into a sound bite.
 - It involves multiple players and political viewpoints.
 - Policy papers put out by various parties and interest groups need not be read because policy is explained *ad nauseum* in oral reports via the media.
 - It is a never-ending intangible process.

Conceptual, pgs 42-44, c

11. In a Republic like the U.S. the:
- The Legislative branch is supreme & has the most powers.
 - The Presidency is supreme & has the most powers.
 - The Judiciary is supreme and has the most powers.
 - No branch has more powers than another.

Applied, pg. 39, a.

12. "Mixed scanning" decision making
- is a synonym for the theory of incrementalism.
 - rejects incrementalism.
 - uses both the incremental and rational-comprehensive model of decision-making.
 - Uses theories of microeconomics.

Applied, pg. 48, c

13. John Locke's theories about government:
- Were used in the Declaration of Independence
 - Was used as a rationale for the break with England
 - Had a profound influence on the Founding Fathers
 - All of the above.

Applied, pg. d

14. During WWII, Germany and Japan were seen as exemplars of:

- a. Libertarianism
- b. Utilitarianism
- c. Fascism
- d. Communitarianism

Applied, pg. 63, c

15. Modern group theory derives from the work of:

- a. Arthur Bentley and Graham Allison
- b. Arthur Bentley, David Truman and Earl Latham
- c. Michael Lipsky
- d. Irving Janis.

Factual, pg 55, b

True/False Questions

1. The prerogative theory expressed a level of executive power that President Abraham Lincoln felt might not only exceed constitutional bounds, but also possibly act against the Constitution.

Conceptual, pg. 41, T

2. The seven step rational decision-making approach has been generally attributed to Harold D. Lasswell, the father of the policy sciences.

Applied, pg. 47, T

3. The stewardship theory states that the president should be free to take any actions in the public interest provided they do not conflict with the Constitution.

Conceptual, pg. 42 T

4. Your classmate insists that the mixed scanning decision-making model was developed by Herbert Simon, who won the Nobel Prize for this concept--is this True or False?

Applied, pg. 48, F

5. Public policy-making is a hierarchical process with the broadest, most overarching policy being made at the top.

Factual, pg. 38, T

6. Government in the United States is considered to be pluralistic because it is composed of multiple elements, and multiple competing levels of power.

Applied, pg. 53, T

7. Allison's Organizational Processes Model argues for the tenets of group theory-- that government decisions are the outcomes of negotiations between different groups and individuals with different bureaucratic perspectives and different political interests.

Applied, pg. 49, F

8. President Truman's application of the prerogative theory of executive power ultimately checked by the Supreme Court of the United States in the 1970s.

Applied, pg. 41, F

9. The decision making model known as "muddling through" was the contribution of Amitai Etzioni

Factual , pg. 48, F

10. Pressman and Wildavsky in their 1973 study of the impact of federal programs in Oakland, California, felt that policy planning should look carefully at the difficulties surrounding the implementation of a policy, in terms of who gets what and how and why from the government.

Conceptual, pg. 50, T

Matching Exercise

1. Harold Lasswell

a. Found in the theory of "bounded rationality," that was developed by Herbert Simon--that people make decisions based on satisfactory, not optimal, data. Pg. 47

2. Power-Elite Theory

b. Sees policy decisions being made in small steps in response to short-term political conditions. Pg. 47

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| 3. Lindblom's "incrementalism" | c. The notion that the United States is ruled by a political, military, and business elite whose powers preempt the democratic process. Pg. 53 |
| 4. Satisficing | d. A pioneer in developing the concept and methodology of policy analysis. Pg. 47 |
| 5. Public choice economics | e. a macroeconomic theory that holds that the citizen is a consumer of public goods and services. Pg. 53 |

1d, 2c, 3b, 4a, 5e

IV. ACTIVITIES

Class Exercise: Power : A Force Field Exercise

1. Power Influences on Public Administration:
 - a. Draw a circle representing a public organization. Examples are: the Environmental Protection Agency, federal level; or the State Department of Transportation, state level; or the county jail, local level. Class or instructor chooses one.
 - b. Draw power forces from fields that impact on this agency as follows:
 - i. Straight line arrows for negative power influences.
 - ii. Dotted line arrows for positive power influences.
 - c. Explain your model.
2. Draw the policy cycle as shown in your textbook using one of the following policies:
 - a. The Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - b. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
 - c. The Patriot Act of 2001
 - d. The Sarbanes Oxley Act of 2002
 - e. Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010

Instructor's Note: For #2, above, suggest the catalysts for each of the policies shown above, e.g., Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white man, inflamed and brought to a head the issue of inequality in America, and resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Discussion Questions

1. Choose two of the most significant public policies that were passed in the last fifty years. How have our social and political consciousnesses both shaped and been shaped by these policies?

Instructor's Note: There were many significant statutory laws passed since the middle of the twentieth century. Students can refer to the inside of the covers of the textbook for most of these public policies. The instructor can suggest the Civil Rights Act, 1964; the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1992; the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act; or even the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. As our knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences grows, social groups challenge the implications of such policies.

2. What does Michael Lipsky mean by the term “street-level bureaucrat”? Explain how a street-level bureaucrat, in implementing public policy, may actually be “making” policy.

Instructor's Note: Michael Lipsky defines “street-level bureaucrats” as those public officials who are literally close to the people by being most in contact with them. Examples would be police officers, welfare case workers, and public school teachers. In implementing on-the-spot public policy, some discretion is left to the bureaucrat. By constantly leaning too far to the left (i.e., with a liberal interpretation) or too far to the right (i.e., with a conservative interpretation) of the policy, a bureaucrat may be setting precedent for the policy to continue to be interpreted in a way not originally intended by the legislation. Thus an unelected official, viz., the bureaucrat, may unintentionally be making policy.

3. What is the difference between a rational-comprehensive approach to decision making and an incremental model? Explain where the polis model, posited by Deborah Stone, fits into these two models.

Instructor's Note: The rational and incremental models are often viewed as two opposite ends on the decision-making continuum. The first model assumes that totality of information is available so that decision makers are readily able to make rational decisions. Charles Lindblom rejected this in favor of an incremental decision-making model. The latter assumes incomplete information, and influence of immediate events and circumstances. Thus, policy is made in small incremental decisions based on short-term political considerations. Deborah Stone's view is the newest model of public policy decision making. It posits the notion that the political community – the “polis” – is better able to deal with the ambiguity of less than perfect information, often presented by the “spin doctors,” than to look at the hard facts. Her viewpoint, versus the rational and incremental models, is shown in the “Alternative Theories” box on page 50 in the text.

4. The “In the News: Accountability at Walter Reed” box in this chapter raises questions about oversight of bureaucratic agencies. What are the respective oversight responsibilities of Congress and the Presidency? Who was ultimately responsible for the poor conditions at Walter Reed?

Instructor's Note: It is useful here to review what the Constitution says, or leads one to believe, about oversight responsibilities. Has Congress delegated its oversight powers? Abdicated them? Do citizens have an obligation with respect to oversight issues? Has the

contemporary manifestation of executive power made it harder for Congress to properly exercise oversight (e.g., the appointment of presidential czars?)

Writing Exercises

Using one of the following key words or phrases of your choice, write a short analysis linking this notion in the text to an incident in your workplace, your daily life, or a media report that you have heard.

Policy implementation
democracy
efficiency/effectiveness
“power is relation-specific” (Pfeffer)
republic
street-level bureaucrat

mixed scanning
demagogue
health care reform policy
public choice economics
special prosecutor
group theory

Individual Exercises

Critical Thinking: “The Killing of Bin-Laden: Power Bases & Legality of the Action”

The resounding applause for President Obama by international leaders after the killing of Osama Bin Laden in 2011 have not drowned out misgivings about the legality of the action in the absence of prior debate in the UN Security Council. Opponents argue that it would have been more appropriate to have captured Bin Laden and turned him over to a world court, as was done with perpetrators of Nazi atrocities at the Nuremburg trials. Others say that the killing of Osama Bin Laden was not accomplished in legitimate self-defense. Prof Nick Grief, an international lawyer at Kent University, said the attack had the appearance of an "extrajudicial killing," and one that took place outside due process considerations.

On the other hand, proponents like Eric Holder, the US Attorney General, told members of the Senate Judiciary Committee that the U.S. raid on Bin Laden's compound was lawful "as an act of national self-defense." Holder also said. "It's lawful to target an enemy commander in the field." Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush both had also issued orders to kill or capture the terrorist leader. The CIA Director (now Secretary of Defense) Leon Panetta, affirmed that the authority (during the raid) was to kill Bin Laden. The White House asserted that the raid was consistent with the laws of war, and that the action was lawful.

Instructor's Note: Have the class consider the following questions: a) What were the pros and cons of the raid on Osama Bin Laden's compound? b) What might have happened if Bin Laden had surrendered to the Navy Seals? C) What could have happened if the White House went to Congress and the UN for permission to conduct the raid? Have students write a 2-page paper on using the questions as a guide.

Source: Breena E. Coates, Professor, Department of Management, California State University, San Bernardino, 2012.

Keynote In-Depth: The US War Powers Resolution

Review the powers of war granted by the US Constitution to the President and to Congress.

Then, read the War Powers Resolution (widely available, try:

http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscode50/usc_sup_01_50_10_33.html). Note any changes made since the original Resolution passed in 1973. Considering these documents, consider the Framers' intentions with respect to war powers. To whom did the Framers' give the power to declare war, Congress or the President?

Introduction to a Policy Paper

Locate and ready a policy paper published by an elected official, advocacy group, or academic institution. What is contained in the policy paper? Who is the intended audience? What do you know about the author(s) of the policy paper you have chosen? Do your best to assess the position of the author(s) in relation to the policy change contained in the paper. What are the values and assumptions motivating or underpinning the suggested policy change? Useful websites to locate policy papers include the following:

- Center for Economic Policy Research: <http://www.cepr.org/pubs/PolicyPapers/>
- Institute for Women's Policy Research: <http://www.iwpr.org/index.cfm>
- Cato Institute: <http://www.cato.org>
- Brookings Institution: <http://brookings.edu>

Discussion

Professors Shafritz, Russell, and Borick note the significance of policy dissemination via the media, especially television news and talk shows.

Go to the Website http://www.progressiveliving.org/mass_media_and_politics.htm and download the article "The Mass Media and Politics: An Analysis of Influence." Read the article and have an online class discussion. Discuss the following issues:

- Does the government control the media, or vice versa?
- Who owns the media?
- Is the media itself a big business?
- If the media is a profit-making entity does that change the nature of its neutrality on public policy and other issues?
- How do corporate interests bias media coverage?
- How do liberal interests influence media coverage?
- What is the power of the media in the policymaking process?

V. Additional Web Resources:

Executive Office of the President: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/eop.html>

Office of the Vice President: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/>

The American Presidency Project at UCLA: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>

Office of Management and Budget: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

Council of State Governments: <http://www.csg.org/policy/default.aspx>

State and Local Government on the Net Directory: <http://www.statelocalgov.net/>

American Presidency Online: <http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/academic/americanpresident/>