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Summary of the Book Public Policy-Making

Public policy making is a series of actions that a governmental body or its approved proxy perform in order to produce an output that addresses a problem. To arrive at an output the policy makers commonly flow through the following steps: Identifying the problem, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation, evaluation. Public policy is not only what the government says it will do but what it does. Unlike private businesses where profit is measured in dollars, public business profit is measured in the positive impact it has on society less the cost in money and loss of freedom that it imposes. The sections below will describe the steps of public policy making with a focus on the idea that the customer does come first.

Before a problem can be solved it must be recognized by the policy makers. There are primary policy makers who have Constitutional power to make policy such as legislators, judges, and executives, supplementary policy makers who are delegated policy power such as the various administrative agencies, and unofficial policy makers such as interest groups, political parties, and the media who focus the policy makers on particular problems. Which policy maker will be responsible for any given problem depends on the political level of the problem. Micropolitics are policy issues that only affect a certain industry, company or even individual. Legislator's casework for a constituent or an administrative agency granting a license are examples. Macropolitics involving the chief executive, congressional leaders and administrative leaders addresses problems which affect broad segments of society. Other problems are addressed by policy coalitions where lobbyists, administrative agencies, congressional committees, etc. form working teams to address specific, longstanding policy issues. Which problems the policy makers will address depends on the geographical and socio-economic environment to determine what can be addressed with the available resources and on the political culture to determine what should be addressed based on the commonly held beliefs about the roles of government and citizens. The policy agenda consists of the input demands that policy makers deem to be public interest problems. Some variables affecting which problems will become part of the agenda and which will be ignored are based on pressure from interest groups who perceive some threat to their members, crisis events, emergent possibilities, protest activity, or the focus of the media. In addition, a policy maker may decide to champion some cause for political gain or to address some perceived need of society.

The next two steps of the process, formulation and adoption, are often combined because of the tendency to use incremental decision making processes where a proposed solution to a problem varies only slightly from existing policy and the goal of the policy formulation is to find a solution that will solve the problem and not to develop the best solution to the problem. If Rational-Comprehensive decision making were used then the formulation step would be greatly expanded as many alternatives would have to be developed and then a selection which most closely meets the stated goals while causing the least amount of undesirable consequences would be adopted after much debate. However, policy makers seldom have the time, desire, or knowledge to use this theory of decision making. Variables which affect which solution will become policy are party or department affiliation, ideological beliefs, personal values (e.g. pride, desire for wealth or power), economic conditions, constituency interests, general public opinion, precedence, bargaining, persuasion, command or coercion. At times, policy makers (President, legislators, & administration department leads) will defer to experts and simply approve policy written by interest groups and advisory commissions (study groups created by the president).

The fourth step of the policy making process is implementation. If legislation is passed but is not implemented then it is not public policy. The administrative departments make policy when they administer benefits or enforce regulation by the rules they make. Certain hard science departments

such as NASA, the Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, etc. are given more leeway in policy implementation than perceived soft science departments like the Office of Education or the Office of Economic Opportunity. Administrative departments can modify the formal policy statements using adjudication (case by case decisions) or by enforcing certain regulations or providing certain benefits and being lax on others. The official implementation route is the Administrative branch however other groups also influence implementation of policy. The President can put implementation directions (signing statements) on legislation he signs. The legislative committees can provide specific directives for implementation and certain legislators may become de facto leads on policy implementation due to their control of funding and appointments. The courts enforce criminal policies and influence the enforcement of policy by judicial review. Lobby and advisory groups can pressure administrative departments into applying the legislation in ways that benefit their members or leadership. Proponents of a policy can lobby to have the policy assigned to an administrative division which they feel will be sympathetic to their cause. The media can focus attention on procedures and outcomes. Even community organizations which are not formal parts of the bureaucracy can make policy by the way they choose to distribute benefits.

The final step of the policy-making process is evaluation and feedback. Three areas that can be evaluated are program impact (are the program having the desired effect on society), program strategy (which strategies of implementation are having the most effect), and project monitoring (evaluation of internal operations). The evaluation can be done internally, by the General Accounting Office at the behest of Congress, Presidential Commissions, the media, university scholars, private research groups, legislators while doing casework for or working on committees, etc. However, it is sometimes difficult to measure policy impact because of difficulty in creating control groups and gathering empirical data. It is difficult to measure indirect costs such as loss of personal freedom or aesthetic damage due to development and it is difficult to ascertain if a certain outcome was caused by the policy or if it would have happened anyway. Departments may resist measurement due to fear of negative evaluations. Sometimes failure to positively impact society may not be due to bad policy but instead failed because the policy objectives were not clearly stated or the program was not properly funded and authorized to enforce mandates.

The feedback may result in modification of policy, a demand for new policy, revocation of a policy, or it may be ignored. Since policy is normally only incrementally different than existing policy it generally remains in effect if implemented. As time passes even controversial policy become normal. The likelihood of policy being revoked varies according to cost/benefit variables where the cost is how widely disbursed the expenses of the program are spread and benefit is how many people benefit from the policy. Policies which offer broad benefit and broad cost disbursement are widely accepted. The more controversial programs occur when the cost of the program is spread narrowly on only a few portions of society.

Anderson, J.E. (1975). *Public Policy-Making*. New York: Praeger.

Study Notes

I. Public Policy

1) Purposive course of action developed by governmental bodies and performed by an actor or actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern

A) Planned

B) Course of action - Not one act but the preponderance of all actions

C) Components

a) Policy Demands - requests for change

b) Policy Decisions - enact statues, judicial review, admin decisions

c) Policy Statements - What is said

d) Policy Outputs - What is done

> Money spent, things built, money collected, laws enforced

e) Policy Outcomes - Unintended and intended consequences

D) Developed and Performed - Not the decision alone but the actions

2) Reasons for Analyzing Policy

A) Scientific - Using policy as the independent variable to find out what the results will be on the society

B) Professional - To apply the scientific policy analysis

C) Political - Policy Advocacy to determine what is the "right" thing to do

3) Policy Analysis Guidelines

A) Explanation not prescription

B) Search for cause & consequence

C) Test propositions and develop reliable theories

4) Models of Policy Analysis

A) Political Systems Theory

a) Black box of the political system receives input from the environment (anything external to the system), demands and supports.

b) The output is authoritative public policy which then feeds back to system altering the environment which then creates new demands.

c) Supports are the people who obey laws and pay taxes

d) Cons - Does not explain any part of the black box or how the political system works

B) Group Theory

a) Public policy is whatever the dominant group wants mediated by concessions to the subordinated groups. The individual has no place in this theory nor does the opinion of the legislator

C) Elite Theory

a) An elite group makes all public policy and this explains how civil rights, an issue of the minority, was passed. The elite determined that it was the right thing to do.

→ My thoughts: It seems that group theory has a dominance right now simply because of the huge sums of money necessary to purchase air time on T.V. Otherwise, elite theory would seem more logical, except near election time, because the public seems to have such a short memory. Elites might pass public policy that the masses desire but that is only to appease the masses

D) Functional Process Theory (22)

a) Intelligence - How is info that will affect policy gathered and processed

b) Recommendation - How are possible solutions created and debated

c) Prescription - What is the process of applying decisions

d) Invocation - Who determines if decisions are valid

e) Application - how are laws applied and enforced

f) Appraisal - how is success measured - feedback

g) Termination - How are existing policies changed

h) Cons - It does not incorporate the effects of the environment

E) Institutionalism

a) Processes of the various institutions - legislatures, administrations, Judicial

F) Sequential Framework - Model used by Authors

a) Problem Formation -How is it determined that a problem is of public interest

b) Policy Formulation - How and Who develops alternative solutions

c) Policy Adoption - How and Who determines which solution will be implemented

d) Implementation - How is a policy implemented

e) Evaluation - How is success measured, who measures it, and how is feedback handled

II. Identifying the problem

1) Policy Makers (37)

A) Primary - Those with Constitutional power

a) Legislators

b) Executive

c) Courts

B) Supplementary - (40)

a) Those with authority from primaries. Must consider priorities of whomever funds them which restricts ability to act

b) Administrative Agencies (40)

> Complex, democratic governments allow for more policy setting by agencies instead of simply following executive policies.

> Provide both outputs and inputs in the form of legislation they submit and lobbying of congress

c) Legislators and executive are the sayers but if administration does not follow through then it does not happen and therefore is not public policy

C) Unofficial Policy Makers

- a) Interest Groups - clarify for legislators what is important to large groups of citizens
- b) Political Parties - take the many desires and promote those with large interest that won't antagonize too much of their support base
- c) Have no legal authority but create public policy by influencing the official policy makers. The legislator must keep the majority of citizens from rebelling to keep their jobs.

2) Policy Environment Variables (29)

A) Geographical - Natural Resources, Climate, Topography

B) Demographic - Population Size, Age

C) Political Culture -

- a) The widely held beliefs of a culture about the limits of government power and citizen involvement
- b) Three Broad Political Cultures
 - > Moralistic , Individualistic , Traditionalist

D) Citizen Involvement

- a) Parochial - Little awareness of or expectations for the government
- b) Subject - Expects the government to provide services and authority but does not expect citizens to have input

E) Socio-Economic Structure

3) Levels of Politics

A) Micropolitics

- a) A policy that will affect only a certain segment of the population
- b) Company or even an individual
- c) Tax Provisions, immigration exemption for an individual, TV broadcasting licenses

B) Sub System Politics (Policy Clusters or Policy Coalitions)

- a) Inter-departmental groups working together on behalf of a particular policy. Coalitions of congressional committees, federal administrative groups, lobbyist, etc
- b) Generally refers to a "pattern of relationships" (50)
- c) Civil Aviation Regulation , River & Harbor development , Sugar prices & import quotas
- d) Highly specific to one aspect of govt. policy

C) Macropolitics

- a) Involves President, congressional leaders & admin leaders

4) Policy Agenda (59)

A) The input demands that policy-makers deem to be a public problem

B) Systemic

- a) Addresses public problems at a more general level such as "school children falling behind in math."

C) Institutional

- a) Addresses specific actions such as "additional funding for elementary schools to hire math teachers"

- > Old Items

- Recurring Problems
- Benefit or pay increases, congressional reform

- > New Items

- Unique or newly popular problems
- Foreign policy crisis or railroad strike

D) Details of Agenda are not necessarily enumerated

E) Variables affecting policy agenda

- a) Perceived threats to interests groups
- b) Political leadership choosing to champion some cause because of perceived need or for political gain
- c) Response to crisis or emergent possibilities
- d) Protest Activity
- e) Focus of Media

F) Non-Decision Making

- a) Purposeful suppression of items that should be on agenda using force or because of public acceptance of status quo

III. Policy Formulation & Adoption

→ Development of plan for solving a problem which may or may not be acted upon

1) Who

- A) President , Admin Dept leads, Legislators, interests groups
- B) advisory commissions (study groups) created by president

2) Policy Formation Process

- A) General Principles - What should be done
- B) Draft Legislation or Writing Administrative Rules

3) Models for Decision Making

A) Rational - Comprehensive Theory (10)

- a) The problem to be solved is considered in isolation from other similar problems. Many alternatives and their associated consequences are studied to find which one most closely meets the stated goals while causing the least amount of undesirable consequences
- b) Cons - Decision makers do not have the time to do this much research nor are there always clear indications of the causes of a given problem. In addition,

decision makers cannot be guaranteed to make value free judgements nor are all problems easily separated from value characteristics

B) Incremental Theory (12)

- a) Goal is to find a solution that varies only slightly from existing policy and is not the best solution but the solution that a majority of people agree will solve the problem
- b) Cons - Tends to focus on the problems of the majority while overlooking the problems that require careful study to find and fundamental changes to solve

C) Mixed Scanning (13)

4) Variables affecting decision making (15 & 77)

A) Political Values - Advancement of party or interest group goals

B) Party Affiliation - High Determiner

C) Organization Values - Government departments have goals and there are inter-departmental rivalries and competitions

D) Procedural Requirements

E) Ideological Values - Overarching political beliefs

a) Nationalism, communism, fundamentalism

b) "Political behavior of entire political systems" (18)

F) Personal Values - Pride, desire for wealth or power

G) Policy Values - Doing what is right

H) Economic conditions

I) Constituency Interests

J) Public Opinion - Affects broad policies but not specific decisions

K) Political & Social Pressures

L) Deference to experts

M) Decision Rules - Precedence

N) Recipient of policy : Education, Infrastructure, trade

O) Collective Focus Process (85)

a) Bargaining (85)

> Requires pluralism and interdependence

> Explicit (spelled out) Implicit (implied)

> Log-rolling - "mutual exchange of support on two different items"

> Compromise - Meeting half way

b) Persuasion

c) Command or Coercion

d) Incrementalism - limited analysis & small changes

IV. Implementation (98)

1) Who

A) Courts (101)

a) Enforce criminal law

- b) Economic regulatory statutes such as Sherman Anti Trust
- c) Bankruptcy & Naturalization
- B) Community Organizations (103) - Application at local level
- C) Administrative Departments
 - a) Organization
 - > Policy backers want to use an administrative division which they feel will be sympathetic to their cause
 - > Creation and naming of new departments can focus interest on a particular policy
 - > Internal structure can affect funding. Grouping the department of microbiology research under National Cancer Institute makes it harder to cut funding because who wants to be known as refusing to find the cure for cancer.
 - > Agencies can become closely aligned with clientele resulting in change of focus and thus change in application to benefit client despite congressional focus
 - b) Variables (108) - How an agency implements a policy affected by
 - > Relevant laws, rules and regulations, accepted modes of procedures & concepts of fair play
 - > Constituency of the Agency (110)
 - Chief Executive - appointments, policy directives
 - Legislature (101)
 - Legislative directives are often general, not specific, and leave much leeway in application to the administration
 - Sometimes the bills are very specific or the committee reports may have implementation suggestions
 - Certain legislators may become defacto leads because they control funding and appointments
 - Courts - judicial review and statutory interpretation
 - Competing or overlapping administrative agencies
 - Other levels of govt. - State, municipal, & local - pressure & criticism
 - Interest groups Pressure Groups (102)
 - Lobby groups to administration
 - Advisory Groups - Groups formed of civilians by the government
 - Political parties - appointments & funding based on party priorities
 - > Media - focusing attention on procedures or outcomes
 - > Clientele - if they are organized for political support and not disadvantaged
 - > Perceived Expertise
 - Depts of hard science (dept of defense, NASA, Atomic Energy Commission) are deferred to in matters of policy implementation while soft sciences (Office of Education & Office of Economic Opportunity) have less.
 - > Morale of Department
 - > Leadership

c) Nuts & Bolts of Admin Policy Making (114)

> Hierarchical control results in a "separation of power and knowledge"

> Advantages

- Pool of expertise
- Secrecy allows for deliberation of unpopular alternatives

> How

- Rule Making
- Adjudication - case by case decisions define policy
- Law Enforcement - policy by policy - which policies will be enforced & which ones are within their ability to enforce
- Program Operation - Control or laxity in administering where benefits are used

2) Compliance

A) Causes

- a) Respect for authority
- b) Rational acceptance of value of compliance
- c) Self Interest - Can be used to promote compliance by offering benefits for compliance
- d) Punishment -
- e) Time - compliance becomes habit

B) Non-Compliance

- a) Ignorance
- b) Profit
- c) Community Standards
- d) Moral Opposition

C) Methods to ensure compliance

- a) Education & persuasion to change attitudes
- b) Coercion - provide benefit for compliance & punishment for lack
- c) Compromise - modify policy to make it more palatable

V. Policy Evaluation

→ My thoughts - the profit of public policy is the positive impact it has on society

1) Who (142)

A) Formal

- a) Congressional oversight - ad hoc evaluation while doing case work or committees
- b) General Accounting Office - audits financial, cost/benefit, & evaluation studies at behest of congress
- c) Presidential Commissions
- d) Department Internal Evaluation

B) Informal

a) Media

b) University scholars, pressure groups, private research companies, individuals
(Common Cause, Ralph Nader)

2) Systematic Evaluation (132)

A) Program Impact Evaluation - are the programs having the desired effect on society

B) Program Strategy Evaluation - Which strategies are having the most effect

C) Project Monitoring - Evaluation of internal operations

3) Variables affecting accurate measurement

A) Funding - was it funded adequately

B) Policy Objectives -

a) What is the specific intended objective of the policy

b) If multiple objectives are they prioritized

C) Clients - What segment of society should be affected

D) Externalities - unintended consequences to non-clients

E) Time Frame - When are impacts expected to occur

F) Direct Costs - Public Funds, & Private funds to meet regulation

G) Indirect Costs - Social & Personal Costs - loss of freedoms, aesthetic concerns

H) Causality (139) -

a) Did this policy cause this impact or was it something else that was the cause

b) If nothing was done would the problem have improved

I) Measurement

a) Difficult to create control group

b) Difficult to gather empirical data

c) Resistance to measurement because fear of negative evaluations

4) Cost/Benefit Variables Affecting Continuation of Policies

A) Costs - Who pays

B) Broad Benefit & Broad Costs

a) Social Security, highway construction, police/fire, public education

b) Broad acceptance

C) Broad Benefit & Narrow Costs

a) Environmental pollution control, auto safety, food & drug administration

b) Often amended because affected paying groups protest while proponents lose interest

D) Narrow Benefit & Broad Costs

a) Veteran benefits, river & harbor projects, hospital construction

b) Those reaping benefits are strong proponents and vast majority of payers are uninterested

E) Narrow Benefit & Narrow Costs

a) Oil import quotas, business vs labor,

b) Very contentious