

Week 11

Where are we now? Get out the map: PA's response to Plunkitt will be to bridge the gap between bureaucracy and democracy by building new organizations. In this process, our hands as managers will be tied by bureaucratic rigidity, vague goals, diffusion of implementation responsibility, penetration of the task environment, limited power over employees, conflicts over how and whether to use information, constant demands for increased productivity for tasks that are not very amenable to such improvements, and the ever present pressure to lower taxes while delivering more services. Our main tool for pursuing this complex and often contradictory bundle of goals – our human resources – will also face political pressure, since politicians are eager to use staffing as a way to reward followers and to enforce their ideological preferences on the bureaucracy.

Prefatory Notes for Chapter 10: This chapter presents a range of often confusing material that is really about three fundamental questions: (1) How *is* public policy made? (2) How *should* public policy be made? (3) How should we judge public policies? The first question is a descriptive one and here political scientists especially have devoted a great deal of attention to making models that would describe how policies come into being, what forces and factors influence them, and how the process of passing them through public decision-making bodies (like Congress) affects them. All the discussions of elite-mass interaction, interest groups, institutionalism, and the like, are really just generalized descriptions of how policies are made. The second question is a normative or prescriptive one. On this point the chapter describes efforts to improve the quality of policy-making. You will read about efforts to identify those things that governments should do and those things they should not; how administrators can present problems to elected decision-makers in such a way to get more desirable results (like planning); and concepts that might be used to direct and thus improve the way we think about policy (here the influence of economics is especially important). The final question is also a normative one. Is the measure of policy primarily efficiency or effectiveness or equity or ethics?

To state these main point another way, Henry argues that there are two approaches to public policy. One is descriptive, which is to say that it seeks to understand how policies are made, and is characterized principally by the incrementalist paradigm. The incrementalists argue that policies are not made *de novo*, but rather evolve from existing policies. One version of this perspective claims that policies are made by elites; yet another emphasizes the role of interest groups. Perhaps the most interest among this group is the schema presented by Kingdon involving windows where political, problem, and policy streams converge, at times, to result in policy changes. The second approach is normative and prescriptive, which is to say that these are arguments about how policies *should* be made. The goal of this school of thought is to articulate principles (often economic in origin) that legislators *should* use to determine what policies to enact. From the normative perspective, the goal is not to understand how policy is made, but to make recommendations about how to make better policy, with better defined as more efficient, more effective, more appropriate, etc. Missing from this discussion are two other perspectives that I believe we should consider. First, think back to Plunkitt: how did he make policy? What principles or approaches did he use? Do you think that he fits any of these models? Second, there are many cases of what might be called non-policies or accidental policies or inadvertent policies. It seems to me that discussions of policy-making like the ones found in this chapter do

not quite capture the reality of how decisions are made, or not made, in the public arena. They suggest that what is done in the public sector is the result of some conscious process to establish objectives, rules, and means. So I offer you the video and book excerpt on the long history of decisions, and non-decisions, that led to jails becoming mental institutions. At what point is policy “made” in this story? What is the policy and who makes it? To what extent is it left to public administrators to make policy on their own as they deal with problems that land in their lap?

Ask yourself how Plunkitt thought policy should be made? To what extent did he engage in planning? Or was his approach more opportunistic? How did he judge the results of his policies? And how would modern customer-service oriented managers make policy decisions? What criteria guide their efforts?

Chapter Ten

UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING PUBLIC POLICY

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The incrementalist and rationalist paradigms of public policy making are discussed individually and compared to each other. Particular attention is paid to the individual models that emerged in both paradigms. Public strategic planning is then discussed in terms of federal, state, and local decision making and its costs and benefits are contrasted with those of both incrementalist and rationalist paradigms.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss the incrementalist paradigm of public policy making. Identify the various models that fall under this rubric.
2. Discuss the rationalist paradigm of public policy making. Identify the various models that fall under this rubric.
3. Identify the characteristics of strategic planning. Explain its use by federal, state, and local governments.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS: A BRIEF HISTORY

Public Policy and the Policy Makers

Public Policy and the Professoriate

Origins

Political Science, Public Administration, and Public Policy

THE INCREMENTALIST PARADIGM OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

The Elite/Mass Model

The Group Model

The Systems Model

The Institutional Model

The Neo-Institutionalist Model

Arenas of Power

Coercion: Probability and Targets
The Organized Anarchy Model
Streams of Problems, Politics, and Policies
Phases
Windows and Agendas

THE RATIONALIST PARADIGM OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

The Rational Choice Model

Optimality

Tradeoffs

Externalities

The Public Goods and Services Model

Exclusion

Consumption and Use

Private Goods and Services

Toll Goods and Services

Common-Pool Goods and Services

Public Goods and Services

The Technology Assessment Model

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PARADIGM OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

The Problems of the Paradigms

A Third Approach

Public Strategic Planning

Adopting and Implementing Public Strategic Planning

Federal Strategic Planning

State Strategic Planning

Local Strategic Planning

Nonprofit Strategic Planning

Perils and Problems of Public Strategic Planning

Planning Problems in Governance: Vague Goals, Permeating
Environments

The Symbolic Uses of Nonprofit Planning?

The Benefits of Public Strategic Planning

TRULY UNIVERSAL STRATEGIC PLANNING (case study)

KEY CONCEPTS/TERMS

public policy

public policy analysis

policy analyst

incrementalist paradigm

disjointed incrementalism

elite/mass model

group model

systems model

institutionalist model

neo-institutionalist model

redistributive power arena

distributive policy

regulative policy
constituent policy
probability of coercion
target of coercion
organized anarchy model
problems stream
values
comparisons
categories
political stream
governmental agenda
policy stream
decision agenda
alternative specification
policy entrepreneur
softening-up phase
trial balloons
tilt effect
window
rationalist paradigm
metapolicy
rational choice model
public choice model
political economy
metropolitan organization
local public economies
Pareto improvement
Pareto optimality
indifference curve
value achievement curve
tradeoff
externality
spillover effect
public goods and services model
exclusion
high exclusionary control
low exclusionary control
consumption
use
joint consumption
individual consumption
private goods and services
toll goods and services
common-pool goods and services
public goods and service
collective goods and services

technology assessment
technological forecasting
strategic planning
strategic decision making
strategic management
public strategic planning
scenario planning
coercive pressure