Journal Post 01 for class on January 28, 2019

1. Five bullet points summarizing your “takeaways” from the Fog of War

Robert S. McNamara spent a significant portion of his professional career as a policymaker on war activities. War is the most extreme example of conflict over ideas. Whether or not to go to war and how to wage a war are perhaps among the most important policy decisions that a government makes. McNamara was a principal actor in forming policy on the Vietnam War, which many consider one of the biggest policy mistakes ever made. As such, McNamara’s life serves as a useful case study from which we can draw important insights about the policy process. Five of these insights include the following:

* It’s important to empathize with your opposition because it enables you to understand the motivations of their actions (i.e., their world view), which provides you with the ability to negotiate policy that will incur the least opposition and achieve your primary objectives.
* Relying exclusively on rational decision making approaches focused exclusively on self-interested objectives can produce decisions that impede the achievement of goals and objectives.
* The decisions of policymakers are not entirely driven by self-interest. They are also driven by a sense of responsibility to society.
* Policymakers are human and humans often see what they want to believe.
* Because successful policymaking depends so much on alliances, you should take any lack of support from traditional allies as a signal to re-examine the reasoning that led you to a particular policy stance.

1. A paragraph comparing the view of science presented in Smith and Larimer as articulated by Harold Lasswell and the view presented in the video on the Pursuit of Ignorance.

There are significant differences between Harold Lasswell’s view of science (as explained by Smith & Larimer, 2016) and Stuart Firestein’s view of science presented in the “Pursuit of Ignorance” TEDTalk. Lasswell viewed science as a well-organized, well-structured search for answers to specific problems more akin to putting together a jigsaw puzzle in which success is marked by a clear endpoint where the full picture is completed. Firestein views science as a search for better questions that is more like trying to find a black cat in a room without any light and the possibility that there is no cat in the room at all.

1. One strategy you think would be helpful in overcoming our Political Preference Narrative by achieving a state of “being consciously ignorant,” i.e. activating System 2 thinking

One strategy for activating System 2 thinking to overcome our Political Preference Narrative is to employ the Devil’s Advocate technique whenever we’re faced with a significant decision or when the correct decision seems “obvious”. This would entail actively trying to develop the strongest counter-argument to our preferred position on a topic. Doing so would force us to at least try to interpret the facts of a situation from a different world view.

Another strategy is to try to create an alternative metaphor or analogy for a situation. Because System 1 thinking works through metaphor and analogy, consciously searching for an alternative metaphor or analogy may force you to re-interpret the facts of a situation from a different worldview, which can only be done by activating System 2 thinking.

Journal Post 02 for class on February 4, 2019

1. One example from *The Fires* of an attempt to apply the RAM model.

One example from The Fires of an attempt to apply the RAM model was Henry Rowan’s efforts to transfer the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) used by the Pentagon to social welfare agencies (Flood, 2010, p. 97). Rowan’s plan was to use the “RAND Method” to understand social problems, such as poverty, crime, urban planning, education, and healthcare, and develop policy solutions based on rational analysis of the problems (Flood, 2010, p. 98).

1. A paragraph describing your analysis of where the policy changes sought by John O’Hagan and John Lindsay would fall on Lowi’s policy typology. Where does your policy fall on the typology?

The policy changes sought by John O’Hagan and John Lindsay appear to be primarily regulatory policy on Lowi’s policy typology. O’Hagan implementation of standard operating procedures for how firefighters handled certain types of fires and Lindsay’s plans for reforming the bureaucracy and address the problem of crime were aimed at maintaining order and stopping behaviors that were detrimental to society. However, there are elements of distributive and redistributive policy in the changes sought by O’Hagan and Lindsay. Decisions about where to locate fire houses were essentially decisions about providing benefits to various segments of the city. Actions regarding welfare programs seemed to be focused on achieving economic equality.

Public Law 97-219 (Small Business Innovation Act of 1982), which created the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and subsequent reauthorizations and attempts to modify the law seem to fall primarily within redistributive policy. The policy is primarily an attempt to provide a level playing field for small businesses to participate in government research and development (R&D) by setting aside minimum percentages of the R&D budgets of agencies for small businesses. However, the aspects of the law aimed at promoting the transfer of technology derived from federally-funded research to the private sector seem to be more distributive in nature.

1. Five bullet points describing an example from the NYFD of:
   1. a BHAG (big, hairy, audacious goal): President Johnson’s Great Society and War on Poverty initiates are examples of BHAGs (big, hairy, audacious goals) at the federal level while John Lindsay’s efforts to reform the bureaucracy of New York, City and welfare programs are examples at the local government level.
   2. Incrementalism: An example of incrementalism is the Tammany approach to problem-solving which essentially maintained the status quo until a problem arose at which point the government would fix the problem while disrupting the system as little as possible.
   3. Policy in intention: An example of policy in intention is John Lindsay focus on crime prevention.
   4. Policy in implementation: An example of policy in implementation is the establishment of testing for civil service jobs and promotions.
   5. Policy in experience: An example of policy in experience is how the problems reported by citizens were handled and resolved under the Tammany approach

Journal Post 03 for class on February 11, 2019

**Three bullet points that give examples of administrative evil from the Fires**

Three examples of administrative evil from *The Fires* include:

* The slum clearance policy, which was intended to eliminate squalor and poor living conditions but resulted in the destruction of industrial jobs and a domestic refugee crisis.
* The implementation of Residential Security Maps by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), which were intended to provide banks with better mortgage lending guidelines but resulted in discriminatory lending practices.
* John O’Hagan’s acquiescence to requests to reduce the fire department budget in spite of knowing that it had already been reduced to dangerously low levels, which resulted in worse fire response and increased human fatalities.

**In a succinct paragraph, describe how you think RAND, a champion of System 2 thinking, became a System 1 organization causing them to proffer a plan to close busy fire houses.**

Despite being a champion of System 2 decision making, the RAND Corporation arguably became a System 1 decision making organization which led them to propose irrational strategies including a plan to close busy fire houses. I propose that subscribing to a single decision making theory for all decisions was the fundamental issue. Paradoxically, the adherence to rational choice theory as the only theory of decision making for evaluating policy alternatives in fact violates the premise of rational decision making which presumes a comprehensive consideration of all alternatives. In a strict sense, this would include the consideration of alternative or complementary decision making theories that might be better suited to the facts and circumstances at hand.

**Chapter 3 in The Public Policy Primer again draws our attention to decision making – provide two sentences, one describing the ethical framework you think undergirds or flows from public choice theory and models like Tiebout and one describing the ethical framework informing cooperative, face to face problem solving.**

I believe that public choice theory and the Tiebout model are based on a utilitarian ethic because they posit that the objective is to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people through a market environment. I believe a dialogic ethic informs cooperative, face-to-face problem solving, which requires discussion and an exchange of information and ideas to solve complex problems.

Journal Post 04 for class on February 18, 2019

**Focusing on a specific policy within your policy domain of interest, bullet point in brief, descriptive statements how:**

* **Issues of equity are framed**
* **Issues of efficiency are framed**
* **Issues of welfare are framed**

With regard to the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program in the technology transfer policy domain:

* Issues of equity are framed by proponents as equal social blocs but unequal slices, with the social blocs being broadly defined as small business (e.g., less than 1,000 employees) and large businesses while the primary dimension of focus is membership.
* Issues of efficiency are framed by proponents as minimizing the number individuals employed by companies (input) that are necessary to generate a given number of innovations (output); however, this argument does not consider that some innovations are harder to come by than others.
* Issues of social welfare are framed by proponents in terms of material and symbolic dimensions with emphasis on ensuring the nation’s global competitiveness and maintaining the American way of life.

Journal Post 05 for class on February 25, 2019

**Using Stone's discussion of liberty and security, bullet point answers to the following:**

**In the strategy for framing your policy area, what following elements are present on each side of the debate?**

* **Appeal to the value of positive or negative liberty?**
* **Focus on a particular level of harm?**
* **Incentives based on libertarian paternalism?**
* **Articulation of security concerns at the political, psychological or scientific level or a combination of these?**

In framing the debate around the Small Business Innovation Act of 1982, proponents of the policy seemed to dominate.

* Proponents framed the issue in terms of positive liberty and providing necessary support to enable small businesses to participate in federal research and development. Opponents tried to frame the issue in terms of negative liberty and the federal government interfering with the ability of larger entities in the research community to pursue federal research and development funding.
* Both proponents and opponents of the policy focused on economic harms. However, proponents also linked the policy to personal security derived from the nation maintaining its global competitiveness and all that it implies.
* There didn’t appear to be any incentives based on libertarian paternalism because the debate never focused on regulatory policy intended to prevent individuals or organizations from voluntarily acting in ways that might be harmful to them.
* Proponents of the policy articulated security concerns at the political level by the implication that implementing the policy as designed would provide economic and personal security. Opponents didn’t seem to offer any counter proposal that addressed security concerns at the political level. By taking action perceived to address the economic challenges of the time, proponents were providing the psychological ideal of security by giving citizens reason to believe that they didn’t need to worry about events over which they had no control because the government would handle it. Opponents didn’t seem to address security concerns at the psychological level because they didn’t offer a counter proposal that could be seen by citizens as the government taking action to address security concerns so that citizens didn’t have to worry about them. Neither proponents nor opponents seemed to articulate security concerns at the scientific level because they never tried to include risk analysis in the debate.

Journal Post 06 for class on April 1, 2019

**An example of where a key agency in your policy domain made recommendations that were ignored by the macro political establishment.**

An example of a key agency making a recommendation that was ignored by the macro political establishment was the recommendation by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine to significantly increase the funding for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, which was established by the Small Business Innovation Act of 1982 (Pub.L. 97-219). Another example was the recommendation from the National Academies to judge multiple SBIR award winners by output, not the number of awards received. The macro political establishment has not acted on either of these recommendations.

Reference: Reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR Programs: Hearing before the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the United States Senate, 112th Cong. 13-25 (2011). (testimony of Charles W. Wessner, Ph.D.).

**An example of where a key agency recommendation was embraced by the macro political system.**

The Small Business Innovation Act of 1982 (Pub.L. 97-219) is an example of a key agency making a recommendation that was embraced by the macro political system. The policy was recommended and piloted by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and very quickly gained broad support from Congress and the President.

**An example of how a key agency used incentives or rules to gain compliance.**

The set-aside provision of Pub.L. 97-219 is an example of a rule used to gain compliance. Each agency is required to direct a minimum percentage of their extramural research and development budgets for awards to small businesses.

Journal Post 07 for class on April 8, 2019

**Suggesting that our policy/politics are in a state of churn is a bit of an understatement.   Considering your policy domain and the specific policy you are focusing on, give examples of the following:**

* **The contested arguments that rely on different interpretations of the rights involved**
* **The contested arguments that rely on different definitions of rights (positive – negative)**
* **The power dynamics employed to change the course of the policy**

Pub.L. 97-219 The Small Business Innovation Act of 1982 established a minimum set-aside that federal agencies with extramural research and development (R&D) budgets in excess of a certain amount were to direct to small businesses.

* Proponents of the policy framed their arguments in terms small businesses having normative rights based on the expectation that the government would provide equal consideration for federal R&D funding. Opponents framed their arguments in terms of researchers at larger institutions having normative rights based on the moral principle of the same rules applying to everyone.
* The policy created a positive substantive right for small businesses that entitled them to receive a minimum percentage of federal R&D funding as a class.
* The power dynamics surrounding the policymaking process for Pub.L. 97-219 seem to highlight the advantages of centralization. Without centralization of power, national officials likely would not have been able to address the issues of broad national interests that were the focus of the policy or effect the redistribution of resources that was necessary to promote equality in federal R&D funding.

Journal Post 08 for class on April 15, 2019

**A short paragraph describing the new directions in policy research articulated by Smith and Larimer (i.e. incorporation of brain science) that seem promising in understanding what is happening in your policy domain.**

The new direction in policy research discussed by Smith & Larimer (2017) seems promising in understanding decision making in the technology transfer policy domain. For example, the theories derived from evolutionary psychology can provide new insights into why the Small Business Innovation Act of 1982 (Pub.L. 97-219) received such overwhelming support. The idea that people tend to conform to the majority opinion as well as evidence demonstrating that social exclusion produces neurological responses similar to those produced by physical pain helps explain for why 85 of 100 U.S. Senators signed on as sponsors of Pub.L. 97-219 during its consideration and debate. Proponents of the policy framed opposition to it as violating the social norms of fairness towards small businesses competing for federal research and development (R&D) funding. News articles and the strategic selection of witnesses for Congressional hearings gave the impression of mass support for the policy and may have caused policymakers who were indifferent or only tentatively supportive of the policy to back it because doing so would increase their reputational utility with minimal impact to their expressive utility.

Journal Post 09 for class on April 22, 2019

**A one paragraph reflection on Mike Colledge’s assertion that because of social media, political parties will become like record labels.**

I tend to disagree with Mike Colledge’s assertion that the influence of social media has necessarily had a negative effect on record labels and will likewise have a negative effect on political parties. To begin, record labels are still quite relevant to the music industry. Their roles in the industry and business models for creating value have simply changed. I think the same will be true for political parties. Moreover, Colledge’s argument doesn’t consider the benefits of division of labor and specialization that Adam Smith articulated in 1776. Just because social media enables a recording artist to perform tasks that were normally performed by record labels, doesn’t mean that the artist should perform those tasks or that they would even choose to perform those tasks for themselves. I believe this will hold true for political parties as well. Additionally, record labels and political parties will also make use of social media and find ways to integrate it with their other unique resources and abilities to influence policy and political discourse.

**A one paragraph reflection on the assertion by Clay Sharky that social media’s ability to create anti-power threatens not only autocracies but also democracies.**

Clay Sharky’s assertion that the creation of “anti-power” enabled by social media threatens both autocracies and democracies is interesting but flawed. He frames his argument around a concept he calls “anti-power”, which he defines as the ability of a group to prevent business as usual. However, this is neither a new concept nor a bad phenomenon. I argue that this is nothing more that the distribution of power and realization of protections for minority opinions that our founders intentionally structured into our constitution. Social media simply distributes power throughout a society by enabling more efficient synchronization of ideas, coordination of actions, and documentation of results. Sharky posits that this distribution of power (what he calls symmetric use of anti-power) may make democracies ungovernable. I suggest that in the long run it will actually force compromise and produce a more democratic society.