CHAPTER

1

Policy Overview

Policy and political processes are strategies that nurses and other healthcare professionals can use to implement community- and societal-level change. Policy development and formulation are considered population-based interventions useful in impacting the nation's health. There are various levels and types of policy. Therefore, policy development and formulation can occur at an individual, group, or institutional level. Policy is not random but purpose and goal driven. Policy and politics are interrelated concepts. Policy determines politics and politics determines policy.

Nurses and other healthcare professionals at all educational levels and in all practice settings should strive to become politically knowledgeable and actively participate in policy decision making. An individual who possesses the knowledge, skills, and ability to engage in policy formulation, implementation, analysis, evaluation, termination, and political processes is considered to have civic competence. Civic competence is a measure of active engagement in policy and political decision making. A basic prerequisite to civic competence is a knowledge base about the structure and processes of governance and government. Mason, Gardner, Outlaw, and O'Grady (2016) identified four spheres in which nurses can influence policy: government, workplace, organizations, and community. These four spheres can be applied to other healthcare professionals. These spheres of influence are based on the situational and organizational context in which nurses and healthcare professionals engage in practice. Nurses and some healthcare professionals are employed in government offices and the executive branch. Nurses and other healthcare professionals engage in policy development and formulation through their work environment. As professionals, healthcare providers are members of several clinical specialty organizations in addition to organizations of personal interest. As citizens, healthcare professionals are members of communities and in some situations the healthcare professional's workplace is encompassed within the community setting. This sphere

Chapter opener image Credit: To Come

of influence model emphasizes the healthcare professional's role in impacting policy based on the multiple contextual situations in which these individuals live and practice. In addition, the healthcare professionals are powerful both in numbers and in the intensity of their commitment to impact policy decision making and policy outcomes. Nurses and other healthcare professionals are encouraged to capitalize on their collective potential to influence policy.

Policy Defined

An understanding of the word *policy* requires comprehension of multiple definitions and the various manners in which the term is used to convey different meanings. The term *policy* can be used to refer to standing decisions or principles that serve as guidelines for actions. Policy used in this manner may not actually be written but more a practice that provides precedence for future activities. It has also been used to refer to proposals, goals, programs, position statements, or opinions of organizations. Therefore, policy has numerous definitions depending on the culture, context, and manner of use. Definitions vary from very simple to complex contextual meanings. The following is a brief summary of multiple definitions of *policy*:

- The principles that govern an action directed toward a given outcome
- A way and means of doing things
- A stated position on an issue
- A plan or course of action selected by any branch of the government or organization
- Authoritative statements, decisions, or guidelines that direct individual behavior toward a specific goal
- Authoritative decisions rendered by any branch of government— legislative, judicial, or executive (Longest, 2015; McLean & McMillan, 2010; Titmuss, 1974)

The multiple definitions of policy indicate that policy is considered a discipline, an entity, or an outcome, and it is a process for achieving a desired outcome. Therefore, the context in which the term *policy* is used must be considered in order to understand the intended meaning. **Table 1-1** presents other policy-related terms.

Policy and Political Theory

Theory attempts to describe, explain, and predict behavior and processes. Theories are made up of concepts and constructs that define the theoretical paradigm that facilitates describing, explaining, and predicting behavior and

TABLE 1-1   POLICY-RELATED TERMS

TERMS	DEFINITION
Policy solution	The proposed answer that will resolve the expressed issue or problem.
Private policy	Policy not within the public domain that is typically produced by or governing nongovernmental agencies or organizations.
Policy intention	The expected or anticipated outcome. The policy intention represents what is meant to be achieved by the policy.
Unintended consequences	Sometimes known as policy blowback, these consequences are the unexpected effects that result from the politics surrounding a policy or the development and implementation of a policy.
Policy effect	The measurable impact of a policy; it can be intended or unintended.
Regulatory policy	Regulations or rules that impose restrictions on a target group.
Distributive policy	A type of allocative policy that spreads benefits throughout society.
Redistributive policy	A type of allocative policy that takes benefits, money, or power from one group and gives it to another group.

processes. These concepts are linked together through a theoretical framework that identifies propositional statements. These propositions explain the manner in which the theorist perceives the concepts as related. From a policy and political perspective, characteristics of good theory exhibit a valid representation of reality; economy of scale; testability; heuristic nature; prediction simulation; relevance and usefulness; powerful inferences; reliability through replication; objectivity; veracity; and logical organization (Smith & Larimer, 2016).

Types of Policy

There are multiple types of policy. Policy types are designated based on the intent and focus of the policy. Some policy is not mutually exclusive to one typology.

For example, some health policy may also be considered public health policy. In addition to the various definitions of policy, there are different types of policy that further contribute to the meaning of the term. The different types of policy are health, public, public health, social, institutional, organizational, and legal. The type and scope of policy that exist are determined by the governmental structure and political and economic systems. These various types of policy are not always mutually exclusive in their defining characteristics.

Health Policy

Health policy can be generated through governments, institutions, or professional associations. Each branch and level of government in the United States can influence health policy. Health policy can also be made through private sector organizations such as insurance companies. Health policy consists of policy that impacts the health of individuals, families, populations, or communities. Health policy includes policies that affect the production, provision, and financing of healthcare services; however, these policies are more appropriately known as health systems policy. Health policy integrates the definition of health and policy. Health is a concept that is accepted as important to individuals and communities. Some definitions of health are rather simplistic; other definitions define health along a continuum. A simplistic definition of health is the mere absence of disease. Other definitions of health recognize health as existing along a continuum that includes maximal states of positive health and recognizes that an illness or disease process may be present but the individual may experience a positive state of being that is interpreted as "healthy." A generally accepted definition of health at both the national and international level is the World Health Organization's (WHO) health definition. The WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1998).

Health policy builds on this basic definition of health. Health policy, in general terms, is any policy that affects the health of individuals, communities, or society. Health policy is considered a broad type of policy that may include other types of policy such as public policy or public health policy.

Public Policy

Public policy is policy that impacts the general public or citizens. It generally serves the interest of the public. Public policies are authoritative statements generated from the three branches of government—executive, legislative, or judicial—that impact the general public. Defining attributes of public policy are

made in the "public's" name, made or initiated by a branch of the government, and interpreted or implemented by the public sector. The definitions of public policy are numerous, without consensus on one definition. The following are some accepted public policy definitions:

- Whatever the government chooses to do or not to do to regulate behavior, organize bureaucracies, distribute benefits, or extract taxes (Dye, 2017)
- The sum of government activities that influences the life of citizens, whether the government acts directly or through other agents (Peters, 2015)
- A government statement about what it intends to do or not to do, such as a law, regulation, ruling, decision, order, or any combination of these (Birkland, 2016)
- Authoritative decisions made by the three branches of government—executive, legislative, or judicial—that are intended to direct or influence the actions, behaviors, or decisions of others (Longest, 2015)

The definitions of public policy vary by author. However, the definitions of public policy do have common elements or themes. These commonalities focus on governmental influence or regulation and governmental action directed toward individuals or communities.

The World Health Organization further defines what is considered healthy public policy. The WHO (1998) considers healthy public policy as any course of action adopted and pursued (by a government, business, or other organization) that can be anticipated to improve (or has improved) health and reduce inequities in health. Public policy is generally considered a product of some public demand that elicits a government-directed course of action aimed at resolving a problem, or in response to political pressure. The distinctive purposes of public policy are to resolve conflict over scarce resources and provide programs that meet public needs.

Public Health Policy

Public health policy intersects policy that is health related but impacts the general population. It may be defined as "the administrative decisions made by the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of government that define courses of action affecting the health of a population through influencing actions, behaviors, or resources" (Porche, 2003, p. 318). This is in contrast to health policies, which are considered applicable only within specific organizations or institutions, known as organizational or institutional health policy.

Social Policy

Social policy consists of policy that impacts the general welfare of the public. Policy that focuses on meeting the human needs of education, housing, and instrumental social support is typically considered a type of social policy. Some exemplars of social policy areas include:

- Well-being and welfare
- Poverty
- Justice
- Living conditions
- Animal rights
- Unemployment
- Social security
- Housing
- Education
- Food subsidy programs
- Family and child protection

Institutional Policy

Institutional policies are policies that are developed or implemented by an institution that affects the respective constituents of the institution. Institutional policies frequently govern the workplace environment. Typical institutional policies consist of policies and procedures outlined in operational manuals.

Organizational Policy

Organizational policies are administrative decisions typically made by a board of directors that outline the decisions, position, or official statements that represent the constituents of the organization. Organizational policies can be in the form of bylaws, policy and procedure manuals, articles of incorporation, resolutions, or position statements.

Legal Policy

Legal policy is generally policy founded upon laws or officially accepted rules promulgated through a legislative or executive governmental process. In addition, legal policy does include case law that is developed through judicial opinions and judgments. Legal policy includes policies that relate to the legal profession. Legal policy includes policy that conforms to the law. Most laws are considered policy but not all policy is considered law or legal policy. For example, institutional and organizational policies may or may not consist of laws or legal policy.

Health, public, public health, social, institutional, organizational, or legal types of policy assume many forms. These various types of policies can be in the form of law, rules or regulations, operational decisions, or judicial decisions. Laws can be enacted at all levels of government. Laws are generally considered freestanding legislative enactments that attempt to achieve a predetermined outcome. Laws enacted at the federal or state levels of government are implemented through the formation of rules and regulations by agencies within the executive branch of government. In addition to the formation of rules and regulations, executive branch agencies develop programmatic operational decisions that further implement the intent of the law. These operational decisions can be in the form of policies or procedures. Decisions rendered through the judicial branch can also formulate legal policy. Administrative decisions from the judicial branch are precedent setting in the formation of policy, such as with case law.

Another typology of policy is whether it is substantive or procedural. Substantive policy is policy that significantly changes or alters the current status of events. Procedural policy informs the manner or process in which the policymaking body implements changes.

Policy Intention

Policy is developed and formulated with a specific strategic intention. Two strategies that assist with the implementation of the policy intent are regulation and allocation. A policy with a regulatory intent is designed to prescribe and control the behavior of a particular population. A policy with an allocation intent focuses on providing resources in the form of income, services, or goods to ensure implementation of policy to individuals or institutions. Allocation policies can be distributive or redistributive. Distributive policy doles out resources in a planned manner consistent with the policy intent. In contrast, redistributive policy redirects existing resources from a current allocation mechanism to a new direction through a different allocation mechanism.

Legislative policy may be formulated, then delegated to an executive agency for the development of specific rules and regulations to operationalize the policy. In this manner, the policy intention should focus the promulgation of rules and regulations to ensure that policy implementation is consistent with the policy intention.

Policymakers

The policy process engages a variety of different individuals and organizations. Individuals who participate in the development and formulation of policy are

referred to as policymakers. Policymakers consist of legislators, executive agency employees, and institutional and organizational administrators and leaders. Individuals who are in, or have privileged access to, the inner circle or upper echelon of Congress, the state legislature, executive agencies, or organizational and institutional leadership are referred to as policy elites. In addition, the policymakers themselves are also referred to as policy elites (Buse, Mays, & Walt, 2012).

Networks

Issue networks consist of individuals or coalitions with an active citizen base that is politically interconnected. These issue networks have specialized policy knowledge especially regarding their issue of interest. Issue networks are considered important to policymakers and the policymaking process. Issue networks generally are aligned with the sentiment of the citizens. In addition, issue networks are a resource that has the ability to apply political power and pressure on policymakers and to generate policy solutions (Smith & Larimer, 2016). Sabatier and Weible (2014) refer to policy networks that are similar to what Smith and Larimer describe and characterizes policy networks as stable patterns of social relations between interdependent constituents that form around a problem or policy. Network management provides the ability to impact these policy networks in the manner desired for collective action.

Network management may be considered a political strategy. Network management consists of controlling and organizing constituents with different goals or preferences in relation to a problem or policy alternative into the same existing relationship network or coordinating divergent efforts within an existing network to impact a specific policy. Network management is also the merging of multiple networks into one network for a common purpose or cause. The effectiveness of network management is dependent upon the number of constituents, the critical mass of constituents needed to exert political power, complexity of existing networks, extent of self-reliance of network, dominance of network, and the degree of conflict of interest between network members and the entire network (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

Policy Decision Making: Influencing Factors

The policy decision-making process is influenced by multiple factors. A general systems model has been used to describe the forces that influence the policy decision-making process. Greipp (2002) identified three major forces that affect policy decision making: consumers, providers, and regulatory bodies. Motivating and inhibiting factors were identified that affect the decision-making process.

Consumers are considered clients, families, and communities. Consumer forces are represented by those who have a perceived need for healthcare services and products. Providers are healthcare professionals who render care to clients, and also scientists or researchers. Providers include family caregivers. The last driving force in health policy decision making is regulatory bodies. Regulatory bodies include governments, legal systems, third-party payers, political action committees, other special interest groups, and ethics and institutional review board committees. These three driving forces interact and influence each other during the health policy decision-making process. The factor with the greatest influence will shape the policy issue and policy adopted (Greipp, 2002).

Motivators and inhibitors are the intervening positive and negative variables that can influence the perspective of consumers, providers, or regulatory bodies. Motivators are the positive variables that influence the decision making in the direction of what is best for the common good. Inhibitors are negative variables that influence the perspective in the direction of self-interest rather than public interest (Greipp, 2002).

Agenda Setting

One of the first processes of policymaking is agenda setting. Many believe that agenda setting is the most critical aspect of policy development and formulation. The word "agenda" indicates that there is some type of prioritization of issues or some listing of issues that is defined as relevant or pertinent. Policymakers must be aware of competing and multiple agendas that influence the public and stakeholder opinion regarding policy. There are typically at least four agendas regarding each issue: media agenda, public agenda, political agenda, and the executive branch/government agenda.

Agenda setting is the process of determining what problems are deserving of policy solutions and resolution at the current time. Kingdon's policy development model proposes the interaction of three policy streams that create a window of opportunity when these respective streams align. These three streams are problem, policy, and political. An individual who ensures that the respective problem is brought to the policymaking arena is known as a *policy entrepreneur*. A policy entrepreneur seizes the opportunity within a favorable political climate to bring the policy problem to the forefront of the public agenda for policy development (Kingdon, 2011).

An agenda is a collection of problems, understandings of causes, symbols, solutions, and other elements of public concern that attract the attention of members of the public and/or policymakers. An agenda is also referred to as a coherent set of proposals, each related to the other and forming a series of potential
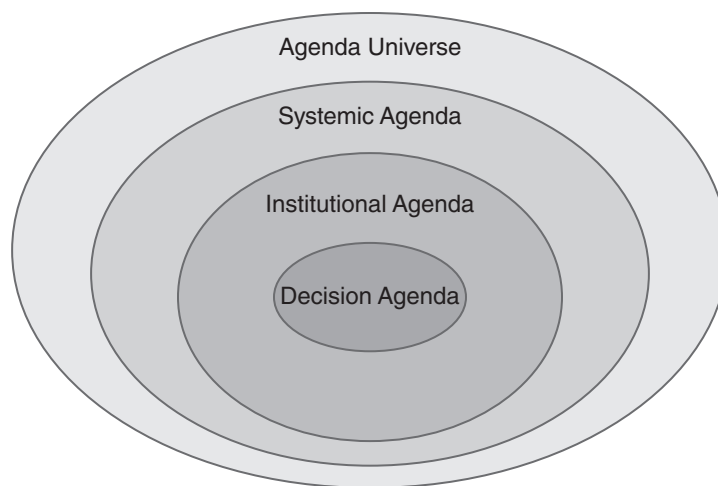
Figure 1-1   Agenda Levels Model

enactments. As stated previously, agenda setting is the process by which problems and potential solutions gain or lose attention and potential for policy action.

There are multiple levels of agenda. Each agenda level brings the issue or policy closer to the action potential of policymaking. The agenda levels are agenda universe, systemic agenda, institutional agenda, and decision agenda. The agenda universe represents all the ideas that could potentially be brought up and discussed within a society or political system. Systemic agenda represent the issues that are commonly perceived by members of a political group or community as meriting some public attention and involving matters within their scope of authority or legitimate jurisdiction for action. Institutional agenda is a subset of the broader systemic agenda. The institutional agenda represents the items explicitly being given consideration for action by the policymakers. Lastly, the decision agenda contains those items that are actively on the table for policymaking action by policymakers. **Figure 1-1** presents a model of the policy agenda levels (Kingdon, 2011). The movement of issues through the various levels of an agenda is influenced by multiple variables.

Agenda setting is influenced by interpersonal social and political networks. These networks exert considerable influence on policy agenda setting. This process is sometimes referred to as interpersonal agenda setting. Interpersonal agenda setting uses social or political networks to mediate relationships among involved stakeholders and constituents such as policymakers, governmental representatives, elected officials, media, and the general public, to influence the agenda and ultimately policy.

Other driving forces of agenda setting consist of the problem's magnitude, research, political forces, public opinion, and the government's executive official. Problems that are defined and placed on the policy agenda for policy formulation are generally broadly identified by policymakers as important or requiring urgent action to resolve a public health or safety issue. In addition, the perceived magnitude of a problem can be influenced by the amount of public salience and amount of conflict surrounding the respective problem or policy. Problems that have a broad or widespread implication are more likely to be placed on the policy agenda for policy development and formulation. The placement of a problem on the policy agenda is also dependent upon the social and political context of the circumstances surrounding the problem at the given time (Longest, 2015).

A *problem* represents an unsettled matter that demands a solution or decision. Two general requisites of a problem are a perplexing or vexing situation and an invitation for a solution. A problem is generally considered an area in which there is a discrepancy between what is wanted (desired situation) and what exists (current situation). Sabatier and Weible (2014) proposes that problem analysis consists of examining the participants, positions, outcomes, action-outcome linkages, level of control participant's exercise, information available, and the cost and benefits associated with developing a policy to resolve the problem.

Research data provide support for the policy agenda. Research data, such as epidemiological data, outline the determinants of a problem and suggest the impact of an issue, for example, through morbidity and mortality statistics. Research determines the extent and nature of a problem, clarifies the associative or related factors, and provides evaluative data regarding potential policy alternative solutions. Research data clarify the problem for placement on the policy agenda. In addition, research presents data that form the baseline foundation for future comparison and measurement of the policy impact and outcomes (Longest, 2015).

Political forces influence the likelihood of a problem being placed on the policy agenda. Problems or policies directly related to a political party's platform are more likely to be placed on their policy agenda. Chapter 15 provides more detail on the influence of politics on policy formulation.

Public opinion's interaction with media creates a cyclic agenda-setting process. The media informs public opinion, and public readership impacts the media's focus on problems or issues of public interest. Each informs the other within the policy agenda-setting process. Public opinion can be shared directly with elected officials, obtained through special interest polls, and communicated with the press through letters to the editor.

The governmental elected officer (e.g., president, governor, or mayor) commands the attention of the public and media. These elected officials frequently communicate to the public through the media. During this communication, they are informing the public using the media as a means to prime and frame the problems. These governmental officers have the ability to communicate in the public domain their expected direction for problem resolution and the proposed policy resolution. Formal forums used to communicate these issues are framed as "State of the State" or "State of the Union" speeches. These speeches frequently outline the respective governmental elected officer's policy agenda (Longest, 2015). The manner in which the problems are outlined and policy resolutions are presented frame our thinking regarding the viable policy options and expected outcomes.

Policy Models

A *model* is a description of a complex entity or processes in an understandable manner. A model is sometimes described as a complex program, process, or entity that is replicable within other similar situations. Models are designed to be summative in nature. A model may be composed of a narrative description with an associated figure detailing the relationships between the concepts, variables, or items represented in the model. A policy model is a description of the complex process of developing, implementing, and evaluating the policies and the policymaking processes within a political sphere of influence. Some policy models are presented in the following material and in Chapter 9. These policy models are used to explain the policymaking process but can also be used as a framework to conduct policy analysis (see Chapter 10).

Hall Agenda-Setting Model

The Hall agenda-setting model proposes that an issue or problem emerges on the policy agenda when three criteria are strongly met. These three criteria are legitimacy, feasibility, and support. Legitimacy of an issue or problem is established if the policymaking body believes they have an obligation to engage. Feasibility represents the potential ability to implement the policy solution. Feasibility is dependent upon the availability of necessary resources, such as knowledge, human, fiscal, and physical. Support refers to the amount of public support for the issue or problem (Buse et al., 2012).

Policy Triangle Model

The policy triangle model is a simplified approach to understanding the policymaking process using four interrelated factors. Buse et al., (2012) propose four

factors that define the policy triangle as policy context, policy process, policy content, and actors. The policy context consists of the systemic factors that have an impact on the policy solution. Policy context also consists of situational factors (transient conditions that impact policy), structural factors (unchanging elements of society), cultural factors (value and belief systems), and exogenous factors (level of interdependence or level of sovereignty). The policy process is the systematic process of policymaking (problem identification, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation). The policy content consists of the policy resolution. Actors are individuals who engage in the policymaking process such as constituents, interest groups, or legislators (Smith & Larimer, 2016).

Politics, Policy, and Values Model

Policymaking is considered a complex, multidimensional, dynamic process that is influenced by the values of those individuals who establish the policy agenda, determine the policy alternatives, and define the goals to be achieved by the policy, the implementation methods, and ultimately the manner in which the policy is evaluated. This model asserts that the value framework of everyone involved provides the large context in which decisions are rendered. Politics is the next contextual sphere that is within the espoused value system and also provides a comprehensive context in which the policymaking process occurs. At the core of the model exist the policymaking stages, which are circular and repetitive. These stages consist of agenda, goals, policy alternatives, policy selection, policy implementation, policy evaluation, then cycling back to agenda setting. Politics influences each step of the process (Mason, Gardner, Outlaw, & O'Grady, 2016).

"Garbage Can" Model

This model proposes that there are policy solutions that have been previously discarded as possible or applicable that remain circulating with the potential policy sphere. These discarded policy solutions might get attached to an identified policy issue or problem (Hanney, Gonzalez-Block, Buxton, & Kogan, 2003). This discarded policy solution may or may not be appropriate to the problem or issue but gets attached as a viable solution.

Contextual Model

Policy models provide the framework to understand policy and the policymaking process. The contextual policy model proposes at least five contextual dimensions to define the environment that influences policymaking. This contextual model of policy can also facilitate policy analysis. The five contextual dimensions are:

- Complexity and uncertainty of the decision-system environment
- Potential for constituent feedback

- Ability by constituents to control policy formulation
- Stability of constituents and policymakers over time
- Activation of the interested parties

Schneider and Ingram Social Construction Model

The social construction model emphasizes the role of the target population's influence in policymaking processes. Schneider and Ingram (1993) propose that the policymaking process can best be understood by knowing the legislative official's perception of target populations and their respective needs. They further propose that the target population can be categorized as advantaged, contenders, dependents, or deviants. The manner in which the respective target population is seen and categorized will determine the level of influence the respective group has over policymaking. The social construction model perceives target populations along two dimensions: (1) positive or negative and (2) powerful or powerless. The target populations are perceived in relation to their relative power base and ability to influence policy. For example, children and disabled persons can be categorized as dependent and are viewed very positively but may be perceived as having less power than other groups.

In addition, Schneider and Ingram propose five categories of tools used to influence the policymaking process. These tools are authority, incentive, capacity-building, symbolic and hortatory, and learning (Schneider & Ingram, 1990). Authority tools are statements substantiated by legitimate forms of governmental power that grant permission or prohibit specific actions in certain circumstances. Incentive tools are motivators that influence an individual to engage in volitional behavior to receive the motivator. Capacity-building tools provide needed education, training, or resources to empower individuals to make decisions or engage in activities. Symbolic and hortatory tools use the individual's internal motivation as a catalyst for action based on their beliefs and values. Learning tools use needs assessment data to identify the informational needs and inform the needed policy.

Political Influence Model

Political influence represents the ability of an individual or group to impact the policy agenda and policy development and formulation process. The political influence model proposes that nurses have the ability to significantly influence policy development, formulation, and implementation within four spheres. The four spheres of influence are government, workplace, organizations, and community. A nurse's active engagement in these environments provides the nurse with an opportunity to advocate for specific policy agendas and
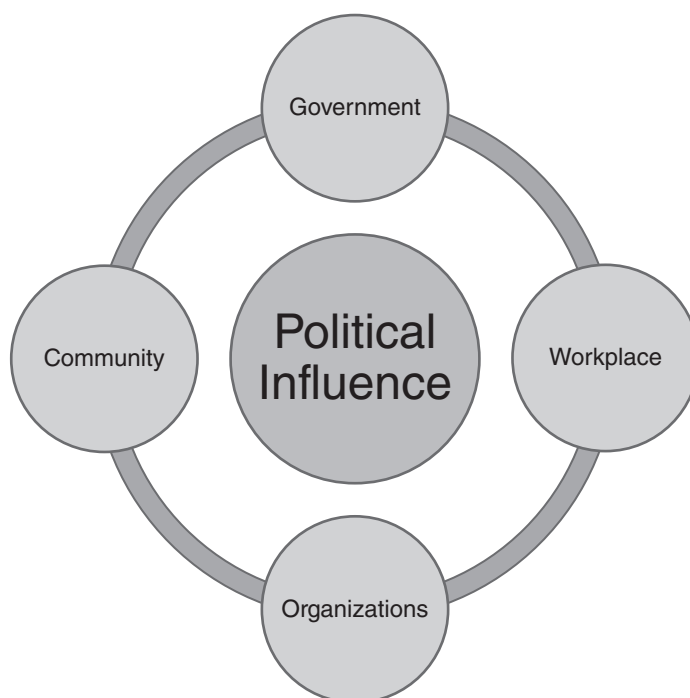
Figure 1-2   Political Influence Model

influence policy development and formulation from a nursing perspective. Other healthcare professionals as well as nurses can engage in political influence within these four spheres. **Figure 1-2** presents visual representation of the political influence model.

6 Ps Model

The 6 Ps policy model provides a simplistic framework from which to understand the multiplicative factors that influence policy development. The 6 Ps policy model consists of policy, process, players, politics, press, and public polls. **Figure 1-3** depicts the aspects of the 6 Ps policy model.

Problem-Centered Public Policymaking Process Model

The problem-centered public policymaking process model presents a complex, dynamic, nonlinear, cyclical, and iterative process that can be used to understand policymaking and to analyze policy. The model is considered to revolve around a central core element, the problem. A premise of the model is
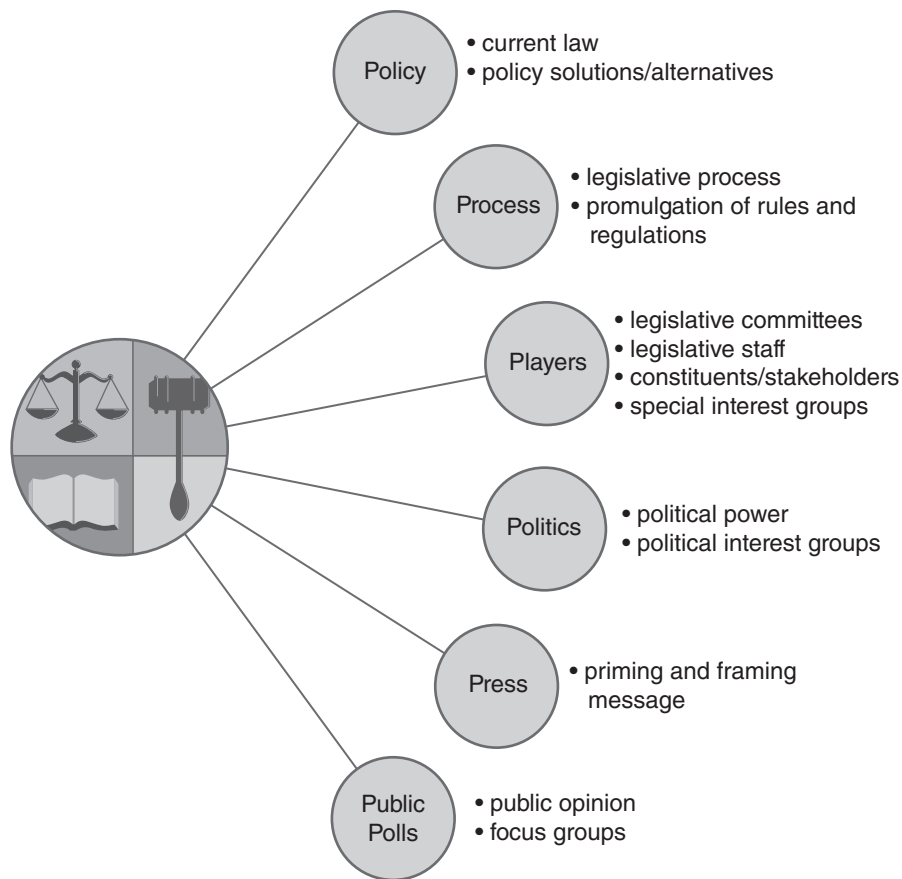
Figure 1-3   The 6 Ps Policy Model

that problem recognition and correct identification of the "real" problem are necessary conditions for the policymaking process. This model considers the major players in the policymaking process to consist of legislators, members of the executive branch, and members of interest groups. This model recognizes that policymaking and policy analysis are two separate processes; however, these activities may occur concurrently as a means to formulate or modify policy. The six phases of the problem-centered public policymaking process are:

- Agenda setting—the initial and crucial phase that uses Kingdon's three streams—problems, policy, and politics—to determine the readiness of the window of opportunity to develop policy

- Policy formulation—identifying policy alternatives and developing or formulating the selected policy alternative
- Policy adoption—selection of the policy
- Policy implementation—mobilization of the physical, human, and fiscal resources to carry out the intended policy
- Policy assessment—determining the extent to which the policy implementation is in alignment with the intention, statutory requirements, and expected objectives
- Policy modification—using the policy assessment to modify, maintain, or eliminate the implemented policy (Dunn, 2016)

Punctuated Equilibrium (PE) Model

Punctuated equilibrium describes the process of achieving policy change. This model proposes that policymaking occurs through incremental changes that occur over an extended period of time. These extended periods of incremental policy changes are followed by brief periods of major or transformational policy change (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

Policy Cycle–Process

The formation and implementation of policy experiences revision as findings from policy analysis, policy evaluation, and policy research informs policymakers of needed changes in the current policy. This process is referred to as the policy cycle. The policy cycle is composed of 10 components: issue raising, agenda setting, policy drafting, public support building, policymaker support building, policy development and formulation, policy passage, policy implementation, policy evaluation, and policy revision. **Figure 1-4** depicts the policy cycle. *Policy* consists of the current laws and policies that are competitive and similar along with all potential policy solutions and alternatives. *Process* includes the legislative processes required to evolve from policy idea to draft policy. Depending on the level of policy development—federal, state, or within an executive agency—the policy process may include the promulgation of rules and regulations in accordance with administrative law and procedures. Players include all individuals and groups that have a vested interest in the problem or policy resolution. Politics consists of the processes utilized to influence the public, legislators, or other stakeholders regarding the desired course of policy action. Press represents the media message regarding the problem or policy resolution. Lastly, public polls provide a real-time assessment of public opinion regarding the proposed policy (Hall-Long, 2009).
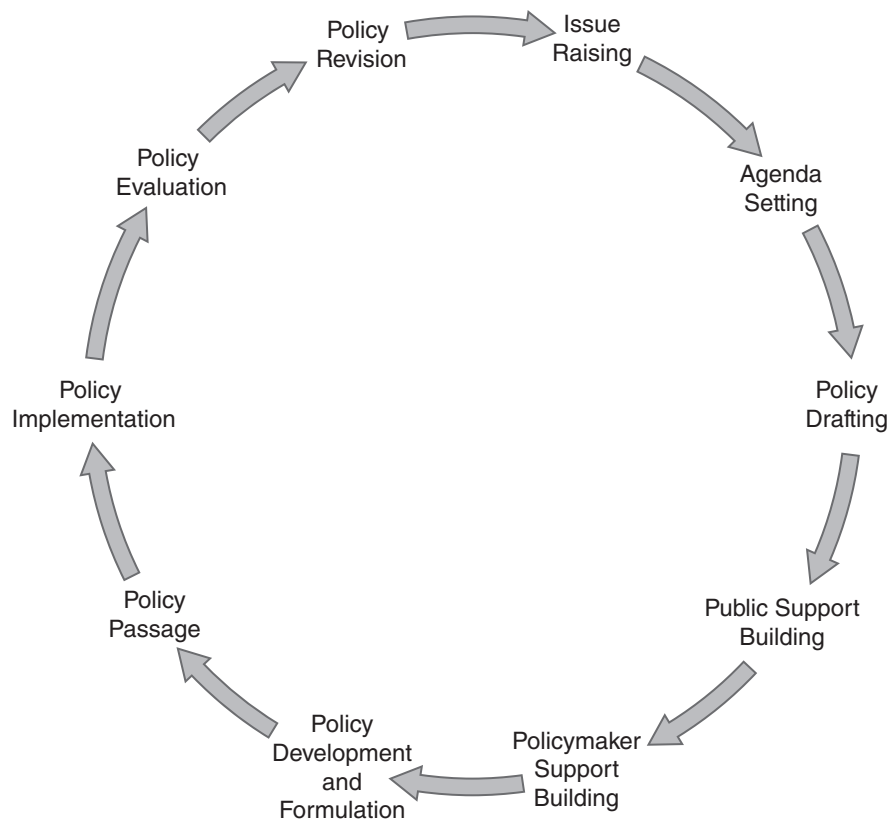
Figure 1-4   Policy Cycle

Policy on Policy

A policy on policy is a guidance document regarding several aspects of the policymaking process. Policy on policy implies that a policy is generated to outline the terminology used in the policymaking process, the manner in which policies are made, the policy approval process, the time interval for reviewing policies for modification and change, and frequently the policy model for the governmental body, organization, or institution.

Institutional policies frequently have a *policy on policies*. A policy on policies determines the process for the development, adoption/approval, and management of institutional policies in addition outlining the policy format and template. The policy on policies may also determine authoritative structure, accountability, and the types of policies within the institution.

Foundational Policy Concepts

Foundational policy concepts are thoughts, notions, or ideas that provide the supporting structure that is basic to the understanding of policy. Foundational policy concepts assist in the development, formulation, and interpretation of policy frameworks and implications. Some foundational concepts that will be relevant to the understanding of policy structure, analysis, and impact are authority, regulation, national security interest, supremacy, privacy, rights versus privileges, federalist structure, indemnification, balance of power, and democracy.

Authority

Authority is the power or right to give an order, make decisions, or enforce behaviors. Scope of authority is the amount of authority delegated to an individual, agent of an organization, or institutional body through some formal governance document, law, statute, or legally binding authoritative statement or under some agency agreement. Scope of authority is critical in policy to determine whether a principal is liable for the acts of his/her agent. It is critical to know, during policy formulation and approval processes, who or what body has the authority to approve or implement the policy under consideration. Scope of authority should always be a consideration in the political process of influencing policy.

Regulation

Regulation is a type of policy designed to carry out a specific type of legislation. Regulations are generally promulgated in accordance with the appropriate administrative law procedures at the local, state, or federal level. Regulations are rules designed to implement specific legislation that generally directs specific behaviors, actions, or procedures.

National Security Interest

National security interests are those interests that are relevant to the protection and maintenance of a nation's sovereignty and destiny. The concept of national security interest is based on the espoused perspective of supremacy of the nation-state. The several philosophical perspectives on the conceptual boundaries of national security interest vary from focusing on a single nation-state's interest over all other nations to a collective international perspective that considers the interrelationships among nation-states as essential to each nation's security and the collective security of all nations. Essentially, national security interest focuses on a nation's power structure to control the extent to which outside forces can harm a country or nation. In essence, it is the safekeeping of the nation as a whole. National security goals are to:

- Preserve the safety of the American homeland and protect our nation's domestic institutions and vital systems;
- Maintain a global balance of power for America and its allies;

- Guarantee freedom of the seas to promote world commerce and economic viability;
- Maintain a global economy based on economic freedom;
- Develop domestic resources and maintain international energy market free from political manipulation; and
- Ensure dedication to America's core values and universal freedom principles.

Nations use a variety of power instruments to protect national security interest such as the armed forces, law enforcement, intelligence agencies, diplomacy, foreign aid, and international financial controls.

The protection of national security interests consists of multiple types of securities. The prominent elements of national security interest are political security, economic security, energy and national resources security, technological security, and homeland security. Political security protects a nation's sovereignty of the government and political systems with the protection of society from unlawful threats and external pressures on the government or political infrastructure, systems, and processes. Economic security protects a nation's economic capacity to provide for the citizenry to include protection of the nation's wealth and economic freedoms to make financial decisions. Energy and national resource security is the protection of and access to a nation's natural resources such as oil, gas, water, food/vegetation, and minerals. Technological security is the process of implementing measures and systems to secure and protect a nation's communication systems and information. Homeland security focuses on domestic security. A nation's domestic security depends on securing a country's borders through airport and port security, border security, transportation security, and immigration enforcement.

National security interests are interconnected to collective defense, collective security, and global security. Collective defense is an official arrangement among or between nation states to offer support or defense to other member states if threatened or attacked. These collective defense policy agreements form the basic structure of national allies. Collective defense is considered as a form of collective security. Collective security is a regional or global concept of international institutions such as the United Nations, which uses international law, aid, and governance to maintain peace and protect member nations. Global security is the set of ideas developed by the United Nations on the premise that no single nation is secure unless all nations are secure. The focus of global security is on the elimination of conflict between all nations (Holmes, 2015; National Security Act of 1947).

Supremacy

Supremacy is a general state of being relatively superior to others in authority, power, or status. Supremacy establishes the power hierarchy to declare what

policies have power over or authority over other policies. The concept of supremacy is critical in the policy formulation process to ensure that a policy being developed and then implemented is commensurate with and does not violate the policy that is superior to it. For example, state level policy has to be commensurate with and not violate federal policy.

Privacy versus Confidentiality

The concept of privacy provides for an individual to be free from public attention, being observed, interference, or intrusion. Privacy also refers to an individual's right to control access to his or her body. The concept of privacy is rooted in common law. Privacy is frequently confused with confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to personal information that is shared with another person but should not be divulged to a third party without the individual's expressed consent. Confidentiality implies that information provided by an individual will be protected from release or being divulged to a third party.

Rights versus Privileges

Rights and privileges are frequently confused and incorrectly used interchangeably. An individual's perception of something as being a right or privilege may also influence his or her political perspectives on policy. A right is generally accepted as something that is inherently an irrevocable entitlement provided from the moment of birth as a result of being a human, whereas a privilege is an entitlement granted by another person, state, or body on some conditional basis.

Federalist Structure

The federalist structure is the division of political authority and power among various levels of government. In the United States, our federalist structure divides power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government but also delineates scope of authority among federal, state, and local governments. Broadly, federalism is a system of authority delineation and power structure division among various levels. Federalism is a concept that is also used in institutions and organizations as a framework to structure and distribute authority.

Indemnification

Indemnification is a policy clause used to allocate risk among individuals, groups, or parties. The purpose of an indemnification clause in a governing document, contract, or policy is to clearly state which individual, group, or party is responsible for what risk. Through an indemnification clause in the policy, an individual, group, or party is held harmless or secured against loss or damage (Byrnes, 2007; Garner, 2014).

Balance of Power

Balance of power is provided by our federalist structure. It is a system of checks and balances established through our U.S. Constitution to distribute power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The expected outcome from a balance of power is stability.

Democracy

Democracy is governing by the people. Governing by the people entitles individuals to have a voice into their governmental processes and policy formulation. Democracy can be executed directly or indirectly through a representative democratic process. Direct democracy enables each individual to personally, without a mediator or representative, engage in the decision-making or policymaking process. In a representative democracy, individuals select or elect others to provide voice and participate in the decision-making or policymaking process on their behalf. It is expected in a representative democracy that representatives act after consulting with their constituency. The following are considered essential characteristics of a democracy:

- People govern themselves through direct or representative democracy.
- People have the right to vote.
- Citizens are active participatory members in politics, civic life, and voting.
- Human rights for all citizens are protected under the law.
- The rules of law and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

Summary Points

- Policy and political processes are strategies that nurses and other healthcare professionals can use to implement community- and societal-level change.
- Four spheres in which nurses and other healthcare professionals can influence policy are government, workplace, organizations, and community.
- The term *policy* has been used to refer to proposals, goals, programs, position statements, or opinions of organizations.
- The multiple definitions of policy indicate that policy is considered a discipline, an entity, or an outcome, and a process of achieving a desired outcome.
- The different types of policy are health, public, public health, social, institutional, organizational, and legal.

- Health policy consists of policy that impacts the health of individuals, families, special populations, or communities.
- Public policies are authoritative statements generated from the three branches of government—executive, legislative, or judicial—that impact the general public.
- Public health policy intersects policy that is health related but impacts the general population.
- Social policy consists of policy that impacts the general welfare of the public.
- Institutional policies are policies that are developed or implemented by an institution that affects the respective constituents of the institution.
- Organizational policies are administrative decisions typically made by a board of directors that outlines the decisions, position, or official statements that represent the constituents of the organization.
- Legal policy is generally policy that is founded upon laws or officially accepted rules promulgated through a legislative or executive governmental process.
- Most laws are considered policy but not all policy is considered law or legal policy.
- A policy with an allocation intent focuses on providing resources in the form of income, services, or goods to ensure implementation of policy to individuals or institutions.
- Distributive policies dole out resources in a planned manner consistent with the policy intent.
- Issue networks consist of individuals or coalitions with an active citizen base that is politically interconnected.
- Network management consists of controlling and organizing constituents with different goals or preferences in relation to a problem or policy alternative into the same existing relationship network or coordinating divergent efforts within an existing network to impact a specific policy.
- Individuals who are in, or have privileged access to, the inner circle or upper echelon of Congress, the state legislature, executive agencies, or organizational and institutional leadership are referred to as policy elites.
- Three major forces that affect policy decision making are consumers, providers, and regulatory bodies.
- There are typically at least four agendas regarding each issue: media agenda, public agenda, political agenda, and the executive branch/government agenda.

- Agenda setting is the process of determining what problems are deserving of policy solutions and resolution at the current time.
- Kingdon's policy development model proposes the interaction of three policy streams that create a window of opportunity when these respective streams align. These three streams are problems, policy, and politics.
- Agenda setting is influenced by interpersonal social and political networks.
- Policymaking is considered a complex, multidimensional, dynamic process that is influenced by the values of those individuals who establish the policy agenda, determine the policy alternatives, and define the goals to be achieved by the policy, the implementation methods, and ultimately the manner in which the policy is evaluated.
- The six phases of the problem-centered public policy-making process are agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, policy assessment, and policy modification.
- The policy cycle is composed of 10 components that are cyclic: issue raising, agenda setting, policy drafting, public support building, policymaker support building, policy development and formulation, policy passage, policy implementation, policy evaluation, and policy revision.
- Policy on policy is a guidance document to the entire policymaking process for a governmental body or organization.
- Policy concepts form the basis for understanding and developing policy.

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