

Policies and Policy Types

POSC 315 - Politics and Policy Making in America

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Policies

- Some types involve more interest groups and publics than others
- Some engender more conflict than others
- Some are more visible than others
- Some can transform inattentive publics into attentive publics

Policy Typologies

- A. Help categorize things
- B. Help predict what sort of politics will accompany particular kinds of policies
- C. Categories aren't always perfect
- D. A policy can transform into different types over time
- E. A policy can fit into multiple types at the same time

Classic Policy Typologies

- A. Distributive Policies
- B. Regulatory Policies
- C. Redistributive Policies

Distributive Policies

- Takes resources from a broad group and gives to a narrower group
- Can result from logrolling and backscratching (e.g., pork-barrel politics)
- Often results in "Interest Group Liberalism"
- Raises questions about equality vs. equity

Regulatory Policies

Two types:

① Competitive Regulatory Policy

- Limit provision of goods/services to designated deliverers
- E.g., licensed professionals, radio frequencies
- Low-visibility policies

② Protective Regulatory Policy

- Protect public from negative effects of private activity
- E.g., unsafe products, pollution, tainted food
- High-visibility policies

Redistributive Policies

- Take resources from one identifiable group, give to another
- Manipulate allocation of wealth, property, personal/civil rights
- Can work both ways:
 - Most well off to least well off (e.g., new taxes)
 - Least well off to most well off (e.g., tax cuts)
- Not always about money (e.g., civil rights legislation)
- Highly visible and often controversial

Alternative Policy Typologies

- A. Cost–Benefit Analysis
- B. Substantive and Procedural Policies
- C. Material versus Symbolic Policies
- D. Liberal versus Conservative Policies

Cost–Benefit Analysis

- Concentrated or Diffuse
- Based on extent of focus on particular interests
- Costs and benefits can be socially constructed

Substantive and Procedural Policies

- Substantive: What government does
- Procedural: How government pursues its goals

Material vs Symbolic Policies

- Material: Doing something concrete
- Symbolic: Appealing to values

Liberal vs Conservative Policies

- Easiest to generalize, least useful to analyze
- Liberals: Government can solve problems
- Conservatives: Government is often the problem