

Policy Conflicts and Strategies in the Policy-Making Process

Introduction to Public Policy

David P. Adams, Ph.D.

POSC 315 – Week 13

November 21, 2024

2024-11-21

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Welcome to this week's lecture on policy conflicts and strategies. Today, we'll dive into:

- The dynamics of policy conflicts
- Sources of conflicts
- Strategies to manage and resolve them

This understanding is crucial for anyone looking to engage in public policy effectively.

Walk through each objective:

- Sources: We'll examine stakeholder interests, ideological differences, and resource constraints
- Strategies: Focus on negotiation, mediation, collaboration, and litigation
- Reflection: Help students see both sides of conflict
- Application: Use real-world examples throughout

Key points to emphasize:

- These objectives are interconnected
- Understanding theory leads to better practice
- Real examples will illustrate each concept

- Understand the **sources** of policy conflict
- Explore **strategies** to manage or resolve policy conflicts 🎯

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Policy Conflicts and Strategies in the Policy-Making Process

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- Develop a foundation for applying these concepts to **real-world policy issues** ✓

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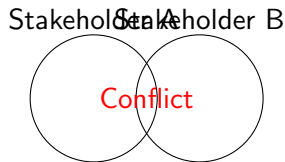
What is Policy Conflict?

Definition

A situation where stakeholders have opposing interests, goals, or values.

Key Elements:

- **Competing Interests**
- **Value Clashes**
- **Limited Resources**



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What is Policy Conflict?

- Policy conflicts emerge when stakeholders—like governments, businesses, or the public—disagree over goals or values.
- For instance, balancing economic growth and environmental conservation often results in competing priorities.

What is Policy Conflict?

Definition

A situation where stakeholders have opposing interests, goals, or values.

Key Elements:

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- Value Clashes
- Limited Resources

Stakeholder A Stakeholder B



- ① **Differing Stakeholder Interests**
 - Business vs. Environmental Goals
- ② **Ideological Differences**
 - Healthcare Debates
- ③ **Resource Limitations**
 - Budget Competition
- ④ **Regulatory Constraints**
 - Jurisdictional Overlap

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Common Sources of Conflict

Conflicts can arise for many reasons—stakeholder interests, ideological divides, or practical issues like limited resources or strict regulations. These factors shape the dynamics of policymaking.

Common Sources of Conflict	
① Differing Stakeholder Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business vs. Environmental Goals	③ Resource Limitations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget Competition
② Ideological Differences <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthcare Debates	④ Regulatory Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jurisdictional Overlap

Stakeholder Interest Conflicts

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└ Stakeholder Interest Conflicts

Stakeholder Interest Conflicts

Environmental Policy Example

- Conflict: Economic development vs. conservation
- Stakeholders: Industry, environmental groups, communities

Social Policy Example

- Conflict: Equity vs. efficiency in welfare programs
- Stakeholders: Taxpayers, beneficiaries, policymakers

Environmental Policy Example

- Conflict: Economic development vs. conservation
- Stakeholders: Industry, environmental groups, communities

Social Policy Example

- Conflict: Equity vs. efficiency in welfare programs
- Stakeholders: Taxpayers, beneficiaries, policymakers

- Stakeholder interests often clash over policy priorities. For example, businesses may prioritize profit, while environmental groups focus on sustainability. These conflicts can lead to debates over resource allocation and policy goals.
- Let's consider two examples. In environmental policy, industries often clash with conservationists. Similarly, social policies bring equity and efficiency into tension, particularly in welfare program designs

Ideological Clashes in Policy

Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Healthcare Reform<ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual responsibility vs. collective welfareTax Policies<ul style="list-style-type: none">Redistribution vs. growth-oriented strategies
Impact
Polarized debates slow policymaking processes

Examples

1 Healthcare Reform

- Individual responsibility vs. collective welfare

2 Tax Policies

- Redistribution vs. growth-oriented strategies

Impact

Polarized debates slow policymaking processes

- Ideological differences often shape policy debates. For instance, healthcare reform pits individual responsibility against collective welfare. Similarly, tax policies can prioritize redistribution or growth-oriented strategies.
- These debates can lead to gridlock and hinder policy progress.

Limited Resources as a Conflict Source

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└ Limited Resources as a Conflict Source

Definition
Insufficient resources create competition among stakeholders

Examples
1 Infrastructure Funding
• Project prioritization
2 Disaster Relief Allocation
• Balancing urgency and equity

Definition

Insufficient resources create competition among stakeholders

Examples

- 1 **Infrastructure Funding**
 - Project prioritization
- 2 **Disaster Relief Allocation**
 - Balancing urgency and equity

- Resource constraints often lead to conflicts over project funding or disaster relief. Stakeholders must balance competing needs and priorities, which can create tensions and delays.
- For example, infrastructure projects require careful prioritization, while disaster relief efforts must balance urgency and equity.
- Resource limitations often force tough choices. Policymakers must decide how to allocate limited funds, such as prioritizing infrastructure projects or distributing disaster relief equitably.

Bureaucratic and Regulatory Barriers

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└─ Bureaucratic and Regulatory Barriers

Bureaucratic and Regulatory Barriers	
Definition	Impact
Conflicts from overlapping or restrictive regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Delayed implementationIncreased litigation costs
Example	
Federal vs. state laws on marijuana legalization	

Definition	Impact
Conflicts from overlapping or restrictive regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Delayed implementationIncreased litigation costs
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Federal vs. state laws on marijuana legalization	

- Regulatory conflicts can arise from overlapping or inconsistent laws. For example, federal and state regulations on marijuana legalization often clash, creating confusion and legal challenges.
- These conflicts can delay policy implementation and increase costs, as stakeholders navigate complex legal frameworks.

Key Strategies:

- 1 Negotiation 
- 2 Mediation 
- 3 Collaboration 
- 4 Litigation 

Importance

Effective management ensures progress and stakeholder satisfaction

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Managing Policy Conflicts

- Policymakers can use various strategies to manage conflicts effectively. Negotiation, mediation, collaboration, and litigation offer different approaches to resolving disputes.
- These strategies are essential for maintaining progress and ensuring stakeholder satisfaction.

Key Strategies:
• Negotiation
• Mediation
• Collaboration
• Litigation

Importance
Effective management ensures progress and stakeholder satisfaction

└─ Negotiation as a Strategy

Advantages:

- ◆ Cost-effective
- ◆ Builds relationships

Challenges:

- ◆ Power imbalances
- ◆ Requires trust

Real-World Example

U.S. budget negotiations between Congress and the President

Advantages:

- ◆ Cost-effective
- ◆ Builds relationships

Challenges:

- ◆ Power imbalances
- ◆ Requires trust

Real-World Example

U.S. budget negotiations between Congress and the President

- Negotiation is a common strategy for resolving policy conflicts. It can be cost-effective and help build relationships among stakeholders.
- However, negotiations may face challenges such as power imbalances and the need for trust among parties.
- For example, U.S. budget negotiations between Congress and the President require compromise and trust to reach agreements.
- Negotiation is often the first step in conflict resolution. It's cost-effective and fosters relationship-building, but it depends heavily on trust and balanced power dynamics, as seen in budget negotiations between Congress and the President.

Mediation as a Strategy

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└ Mediation as a Strategy

Definition

A neutral third party facilitates discussions to resolve conflicts

Real Example

Labor disputes resolved through federal mediation

Advantages:

- Reduces hostility
- Provides structure


Challenges:

- Depends on mediator skill
- Requires cooperation

Definition

A neutral third party facilitates discussions to resolve conflicts

Real Example

Labor disputes resolved through federal mediation 

Advantages:

- Reduces hostility
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Challenges:

- Depends on mediator skill
- Requires cooperation

- Mediation involves a neutral third party facilitating discussions between conflicting parties. It can reduce hostility and provide structure to negotiations.
- However, mediation's success depends on the mediator's skill and the willingness of parties to cooperate.
- For example, labor disputes are often resolved through federal mediation, which helps parties reach agreements and avoid costly strikes.

Collaboration as a Strategy

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└ Collaboration as a Strategy

Key Elements	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Trust and communicationShared decision-makingResource allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High transaction costsPower imbalancesTime-intensive
Real-World Example Skokomish Watershed initiative involving government, nonprofits, and local communities	

Key Elements

- Trust and communication
- Shared decision-making
- Resource allocation

Challenges

- High transaction costs
- Power imbalances
- Time-intensive

Real-World Example

Skokomish Watershed initiative involving government, nonprofits, and local communities

- Collaboration requires trust, communication, and shared decision-making among stakeholders. It can help allocate resources effectively and build lasting solutions.
- However, collaboration can be challenging due to high transaction costs, power imbalances, and time-intensive processes.
- For example, the Skokomish Watershed initiative brought together government, nonprofits, and local communities to develop a sustainable management plan, highlighting the benefits and challenges of collaboration.
- Collaboration builds long-term solutions by bringing all stakeholders to the table. It's resource-intensive but often leads to more durable outcomes, as seen in collaborative watershed management.

Definition

Resolving policy conflicts through the judicial system

Advantages:

- Provides definitive resolution
- Enforces legal compliance
- Sets precedent

Challenges:

- Costly and time-consuming
- May increase animosity
- Limited flexibility

Landmark Example

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)



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└ Litigation as a Strategy

- Litigation involves resolving policy conflicts through the judicial system. It provides a definitive resolution, enforces legal compliance, and sets precedents for future cases.
- However, litigation can be costly, time-consuming, and may increase animosity among stakeholders. It also limits flexibility in finding creative solutions.
- For example, the landmark case Brown v. Board of Education (1954) resolved a major policy conflict over school segregation, setting a precedent for desegregation in the U.S.

Litigation as a Strategy

Definition
Resolving policy conflicts through the judicial system

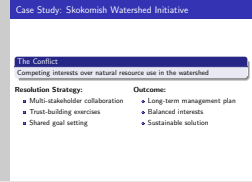
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The Conflict

Competing interests over natural resource use in the watershed

Resolution Strategy:	Outcome:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-stakeholder collaboration• Trust-building exercises• Shared goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term management plan• Balanced interests• Sustainable solution

- The Skokomish Watershed initiative addressed conflicts over natural resource use by bringing together multiple stakeholders. Through collaboration, trust-building, and shared goal-setting, the initiative developed a long-term management plan that balanced competing interests and provided a sustainable solution.
- The Skokomish Watershed initiative is a successful example of multi-stakeholder collaboration in resolving policy conflicts. By building trust and setting shared goals, the initiative developed a sustainable management plan that balanced competing interests.
- This case highlights how collaboration can address complex conflicts involving diverse stakeholders. Trust and communication were central to its success.

Transaction Costs of Collaboration

What are Transaction Costs?

Time, resources, and effort invested in collaborative processes

Examples:

- Long meetings
- Trust building
- Framework development

Benefits vs. Costs

Higher upfront costs but more sustainable long-term outcomes

What are Transaction Costs?

Time, resources, and effort invested in collaborative processes

Examples:

- Long meetings
- Trust building
- Framework development

Benefits vs. Costs

Higher upfront costs but more sustainable long-term outcomes

- Transaction costs refer to the time, resources, and effort invested in collaborative processes. These costs include long meetings, trust-building exercises, and framework development.
- While collaboration can be resource-intensive, it often leads to more sustainable long-term outcomes by addressing underlying conflicts and building lasting solutions.
- Collaboration is resource-intensive, requiring significant time and effort. However, these upfront investments can lead to lasting solutions and improved stakeholder relationships.

Common Challenges in Conflict Management

Trust Deficit

♥

Lack of faith among stakeholders

Power Imbalances

⚖️

Dominance of certain groups

Complexity

🧩

Multi-faceted problems

- Conflict management often faces challenges such as a lack of trust among stakeholders, power imbalances, and the complexity of multi-faceted problems.
- These challenges can hinder effective resolution and require careful strategies to overcome.
- Trust deficits, power imbalances, and complex issues are recurring challenges in conflict management. Overcoming these barriers requires patience and strategic thinking.

- **Innovation** 💡

- Inspires creative solutions

- **Stakeholder Buy-In** 👥

- Builds lasting support

- **Strengthened Institutions** 🏢

- Enhances capacity

- **Example:** ACA negotiations

└ Conflict as an Opportunity

- Conflict can be an opportunity for innovation, inspiring creative solutions to complex problems. It can also help build stakeholder buy-in, leading to lasting support for policies.
- Additionally, conflict can strengthen institutions by enhancing their capacity to address challenges and adapt to changing circumstances.
- For example, negotiations over the Affordable Care Act (ACA) led to innovative policy solutions and built support for healthcare reform.
- Conflict isn't always negative. It can drive innovation, strengthen institutions, and create better policy outcomes when managed effectively.

Conflict: A Challenge and Opportunity

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Conflict: A Challenge and Opportunity

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distrust• Inefficiency• Stalemates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better decisions• Engagement• Innovation

- Policy conflicts present challenges such as distrust, inefficiency, and stalemates that can hinder progress and lead to negative outcomes.
- However, conflicts also offer opportunities for better decisions, increased engagement, and innovation that can lead to positive policy changes and lasting solutions.
- By recognizing both the challenges and opportunities of conflict, policymakers can navigate disputes effectively and turn challenges into opportunities for positive change.
- Conflict can hinder progress but also serve as a catalyst for meaningful change. Policymakers must learn to harness its potential while minimizing its downsides.

Challenges

- Distrust
- Inefficiency
- Stalemates

Opportunities

- Better decisions
- Engagement
- Innovation

The Conflict

Ideological divides over healthcare access and government intervention

Strategies Used:

- Negotiation
- Compromise
- Incrementalism

Outcome

Landmark legislation with ongoing debates

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Policy Conflict in Action: ACA

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) faced significant policy conflicts due to ideological divides over healthcare access and the role of government intervention.
- Policymakers used negotiation, compromise, and incrementalism to address these conflicts and pass landmark healthcare legislation.
- The ACA remains a subject of ongoing debates and policy changes, highlighting the complexities of managing policy conflicts in practice.
- The ACA is a prime example of how policy conflicts can shape major legislation. Negotiation, compromise, and incrementalism were key strategies in addressing ideological divides and passing the landmark healthcare law.
- The ACA's passage exemplifies the challenges of managing ideological conflict. Incrementalism and compromise were key to its implementation.

Policy Conflict in Action: ACA

The Conflict

Ideological divides over healthcare access and government intervention

Strategies Used:

- Negotiation
- Compromise
- Incrementalism

Outcome

Landmark legislation with ongoing debates

Incrementalism as a Conflict Strategy

Definition

Small, manageable changes to address public problems

Pros:

- Stability
- Reduced resistance
- Easier consensus

Cons:

- Slow progress
- Limited impact
- May delay urgent needs

Example

Climate change policies using gradual carbon reduction targets

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└ Incrementalism as a Conflict Strategy

Incrementalism as a Conflict Strategy	
Definition Small, manageable changes to address public problems	
Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stability• Reduced resistance• Easier consensus	Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow progress• Limited impact• May delay urgent needs
Example Climate change policies using gradual carbon reduction targets	

- Incrementalism involves making small, manageable changes to address public problems. It offers stability, reduces resistance, and can lead to easier consensus among stakeholders.
- However, incrementalism can result in slow progress, limited impact, and delays in addressing urgent needs. Policymakers must balance these trade-offs when using incremental approaches.
- Incrementalism is a common strategy for managing policy conflicts. It involves making small, manageable changes to address public problems, reducing resistance and building consensus over time.
- Incrementalism allows policymakers to implement changes gradually, reducing resistance and fostering stability. However, it may fall short when bold action is needed.

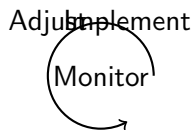
Adaptive Management as a Strategy

Definition

A flexible, iterative approach to policymaking that allows for adjustments based on feedback and outcomes

Key Principles:

- Monitor policy outcomes
- Incorporate feedback
- Maintain flexibility



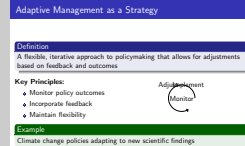
Example

Climate change policies adapting to new scientific findings

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Policy Conflicts and Strategies in the Policy-Making Process

Adaptive Management as a Strategy



- Adaptive management is a flexible, iterative approach to policymaking that allows for adjustments based on feedback and outcomes. It involves monitoring policy outcomes, incorporating feedback, and maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.
- For example, climate change policies often use adaptive management to respond to new scientific findings and evolving environmental conditions.
- Adaptive management is a dynamic approach to policymaking that allows for continuous learning and adjustment. It helps policymakers respond to changing circumstances and improve policy outcomes over time.
- Adaptive management focuses on flexibility, allowing policies to evolve in response to real-world challenges. It's especially useful for complex, dynamic issues like climate change.

Discussing Sources of Policy Conflict

Sources to Consider:

- Stakeholder interests
- Ideological differences
- Resource limitations
- Regulatory constraints

Discussion Goal

Identify patterns and real-world examples to contextualize conflicts

Sources to Consider:

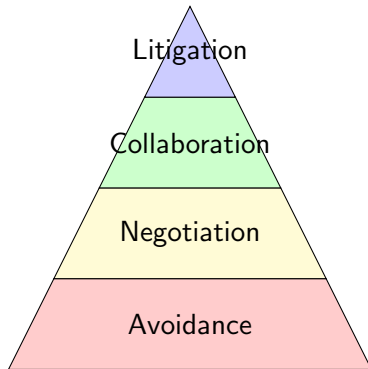
- Stakeholder interests
- Ideological differences
- Resource limitations
- Regulatory constraints

Discussion Goal

Identify patterns and real-world examples to contextualize conflicts

- Discuss with your peers which source of conflict you find most prevalent and why. Use examples from current events or historical cases to support your argument.
- When discussing policy conflicts, consider the various sources that can lead to disagreements among stakeholders. These sources include differing interests, ideological divides, resource constraints, and regulatory challenges.
- The goal of this discussion is to identify common patterns and real-world examples that illustrate how these sources of conflict play out in policy debates.
- By understanding the sources of policy conflict, you can better analyze and address disputes in your own policy work.

The Conflict Resolution Pyramid



Key Insight

Strategies should match the conflict's scale and importance

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└ The Conflict Resolution Pyramid



- The conflict resolution pyramid illustrates different strategies for managing policy conflicts, ranging from avoidance at the base to litigation at the top.
- The key insight is that strategies should match the scale and importance of the conflict. For minor disputes, avoidance or negotiation may be sufficient, while more significant conflicts may require collaboration or litigation.
- By understanding the conflict resolution pyramid, policymakers can choose appropriate strategies to address policy disputes effectively and achieve positive outcomes.
- The conflict resolution pyramid offers a framework for selecting appropriate strategies based on the scale and importance of the conflict. It helps policymakers navigate disputes and reach successful resolutions.
- The Conflict Resolution Pyramid shows how strategies vary in

Summary of Key Insights

Conflict Sources:

- Stakeholder interests
- Ideology
- Resources
- Regulations

Management Strategies:

- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Collaboration
- Litigation

Opportunities

Innovation  Engagement  Stronger Institutions 

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Policy Conflicts and Strategies in the Policy-Making Process

Summary of Key Insights

- Policy conflicts arise from differing stakeholder interests, ideological divides, resource constraints, and regulatory challenges. Understanding these sources is key to effective conflict management.
- Policymakers can use negotiation, mediation, collaboration, and litigation to address policy conflicts and reach positive outcomes. Each strategy offers unique benefits and challenges.
- Conflict can be an opportunity for innovation, engagement, and building stronger institutions. By managing conflicts effectively, policymakers can turn challenges into opportunities for positive change.
- Policy conflicts are complex and multifaceted, requiring careful analysis and strategic management. By understanding the sources of conflict and using appropriate strategies, policymakers can navigate disputes effectively and achieve positive outcomes.

Summary of Key Insights

Conflict Sources:

- Stakeholder interests
- Ideology
- Resources
- Regulations

Management Strategies:

- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Collaboration
- Litigation

Opportunities

Innovation  Engagement  Stronger Institutions 



Tips for Managing Policy Conflicts

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└ Tips for Managing Policy Conflicts

Skills to Develop:

- Negotiation 
- Communication 

Strategies to Adopt:

- Flexibility 
- Evidence-based 

Key Focus

Building trust and maintaining open communication

- To manage policy conflicts effectively, develop negotiation and communication skills. These abilities are essential for building trust and reaching agreements among stakeholders.
- Adopt strategies like flexibility and evidence-based decision-making to address conflicts and adapt to changing circumstances. These approaches can help you navigate disputes and achieve positive outcomes.
- Focus on building trust and maintaining open communication with stakeholders. These practices are key to managing policy conflicts and fostering collaboration among diverse groups.
- Effective conflict management requires strong negotiation and communication skills, as well as flexibility and evidence-based decision-making. By focusing on building trust and open communication, policymakers can navigate conflicts successfully and achieve positive outcomes.

Tips for Managing Policy Conflicts

Skills to Develop:

- Negotiation 
- Communication 

Strategies to Adopt:

- Flexibility 
- Evidence-based 

Key Focus

Building trust and maintaining open communication

Final Reflection Questions

- 1 Drawing on specific examples from environmental or healthcare policy, analyze how competing stakeholder interests shape policy outcomes. How do different conflict management strategies affect the balance between economic and social goals?
- 2 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of litigation versus collaborative approaches in resolving policy conflicts, using historical examples from civil rights or environmental policy. What factors determine which approach is more likely to succeed?
- 3 Evaluate how resource limitations and ideological differences intersect to create policy conflicts in social welfare programs. How do these constraints affect the choice between comprehensive versus incremental policy solutions?
- 4 Analyze the role of federalism in creating and resolving policy conflicts. Using examples from drug policy or environmental regulation, discuss how intergovernmental tensions influence policy

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Final Reflection Questions

Questions test understanding of: - Core policy conflict concepts - Real-world applications - Critical analysis of management strategies - Institutional factors in policy conflicts - Trade-offs between approaches

Final Reflection Questions

- 1 Drawing on specific examples from environmental or healthcare policy, analyze how competing stakeholder interests shape policy outcomes. How do different conflict management strategies affect the balance between economic and social goals?
- 2 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of litigation versus collaborative approaches in resolving policy conflicts, using historical examples from civil rights or environmental policy. What factors determine which approach is more likely to succeed?
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- 4 Analyze the role of federalism in creating and resolving policy conflicts. Using examples from drug policy or environmental regulation, discuss how intergovernmental tensions influence policy implementation and outcomes.

See You Next Time!

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See You Next Time!

Role-Play: Negotiating a Policy Conflict

Scenario

Negotiating climate change policy among stakeholders

Industry



Economic Growth

Activist



Environment

Government



Balance

Task

Develop a policy proposal acceptable to all parties

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└─Role-Play: Negotiating a Policy Conflict



- In this role-play activity, students will negotiate a climate change policy among stakeholders with competing interests.
- Each group represents a different stakeholder—industry, activists, and government—each with distinct priorities and goals.
- The task is to develop a policy proposal that balances economic growth, environmental protection, and regulatory concerns to reach a consensus among all parties.
- The negotiation role-play will help students understand the complexities of policy conflicts and the challenges of reaching agreement among diverse stakeholders.

Post-Activity Reflection

Discussion Questions

- 1 What strategies worked best in your role?
- 2 What challenges did you face in reaching agreement?
- 3 How do power imbalances affect real-world negotiations?



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Post-Activity Reflection

- After the negotiation activity, students will reflect on their experiences and discuss the challenges and strategies that emerged during the role-play.
- The discussion questions will prompt students to consider the effectiveness of different negotiation strategies, the challenges of reaching agreement, and the impact of power imbalances on real-world negotiations.
- By reflecting on their negotiation experiences, students can gain insights into the complexities of policy conflicts and the strategies needed to manage them effectively.
- After the role-play, reflect on the challenges and successes you experienced. Think about how these dynamics mirror real-world policy negotiations.

Post-Activity Reflection

Discussion Questions

- 1 What strategies worked best in your role?
- 2 What challenges did you face in reaching agreement?
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