

IMPLEMENTATION

POSC 315 WEEK 11-2

IMPLEMENTATION IN THE POLICY PROCESS

IMPLEMENTATION

THE THE PROCESS BY WHICH POLICIES ENACTED
BY THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES
ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE BUREAUCRACY AND
THE COURTS.

- A policy is generally useless if it is not implemented.
- Implementation battles are also where significant power and debate can occur.

IMPLEMENTATION BASICS

POSSIBLY THE MOST CRITICAL STAGE
OF THE POLICY PROCESS.

- Policies are not self-executing.
- Often determines the success or failure of a policy.

GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY CHARACTERISTICS

- Bureaucrats have *discretion* in how they implement policies.
- Bureaucrats are not completely unbiased nor are they free to do whatever they want.
- Responsible for *translating* goals and intent of policy into action.

IMPLEMENTATION STUDIES: FOUR GENERATIONS

1960S-1970S: THE FIRST GENERATION

- Theory came from case studies of specific programs.
 - Derthic's *New Towns in Town* (1969)
 - Pressman and Wildavsky's *Implementation* (1973)

1960S-1970S: THE FIRST GENERATION LESSONS

- Needed commitment in the executive branch.
- Consider local needs and preferences in policy design.
- Consider and adapt to local conditions.
- There is no “one” best way to implement a policy.
- Complexity of Joint Action

THE COMPLEXITY OF JOINT ACTION

(BARDACH 1977)

1. Simple and straightforward is often complex and convoluted.
2. Different perspectives and different measures of success.
3. Diverse implementers: agreement on the means but not always on the ends.
4. All depends on *interorganizational relationships*.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Organizations have:

- Incompatible goals
- Preferences for other policies
- Simultaneous commitments to other projects
- Dependence on others who are slow to act
- Differences of opinion on leadership
- Agreement coupled with lack of power.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

When a policy or program depends on so many actors, there are numerous possibilities for disagreement and delay.

1980S-1990S: THE SECOND GENERATION

- Theoretical development and empirical testing.
- An *era of theorizing*.
 - Systems-like models of implementation.
 - Bottom-up and top-down models.
- Strength: first attempts at creating some kind of unified theory of implementation.
- Weakness: too much emphasis on the rationality of the process.

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TOP-DOWN MODELS

- Assumptions:
 - Policy is a rational process.
 - clear goals, tools, and policy statements.
 - Policy is a linear process.
 - Policy is a hierarchical process.

TOP-DOWN MODELS ADVANTAGES

- Clear goals and objectives.
- Overhead democracy: accountability to the public through elected officials and appointed bureaucrats.
- Clear lines of authority and responsibility:
 - Clear credit for success or failure, i.e., there is someone to praise or blame.

TOP-DOWN MODELS DISADVANTAGES

- Policy is not a rational process.
 - Incrementalism and fragmented authority complicate this
- Emphasis on goals at the top and not on workers on the ground.
- Intergovernmental cooperation is often more difficult than expected.
- Implementers may circumvent the policy-makers' intent.

TOP-DOWN MODEL EXAMPLE: THE FOREST SERVICE

- The Forest Service is a top-down organization.
- Are the goals always clear?
 - The forest service has multiple goals: recreation, conservation, and resource extraction.
 - The goals are often in conflict.
 - The goals are often vague.
- What goal is the most important?
- How do you measure success?
- How do you measure failure?

TOP-DOWN MODEL: OTHER FLAWS

- Failure to consider the role of the courts.
- Doesn't always account for federalism
 - Federal officials can set guidelines better than they can hard rules
 - Local officials engage in “strategic delay”
- Most policies are based on multiple statutes and regulations.
- But... federal officials can impose roles on who implements and apply sanctions and rewards to promote a particular implementation design.

BOTTOM-UP MODELS

- Assumptions:
 - Emphasis is placed on where the government meets the people.
 - **Backward mapping:** starts with policy targets and works backward to identify which implementers and policy tools might affect behavioral change.
 - Policy design considers the abilities and motivations of the lowest-level implementers, the street-level bureaucrats or the engaged target population.

BOTTOM-UP MODELS ADVANTAGES

- Emphasis on the people who actually implement the policy.
 - Implementation begins with the service deliverers and the target groups
- Recognizes goals are ambiguous and that there are multiple goals.
- Allows for administrative discretion, acknowledging that one size doesn't fit all.

BOTTOM-UP MODELS ADVANTAGES

- Policy is likely to reflect community needs and preferences.
- Does not require a single statute or “policy.”
- Better accommodates a pluralistic society and a network of actors.
- Better accommodates federalism.

BOTTOM-UP MODELS DISADVANTAGES

- Overemphasizes the agency of the implementers.
- Discretion and differentially designated authority can create ambiguous goals and accomplishments.
- Street-level bureaucrats may subvert the intent of the policy and elected officials' goals.

BOTTOM-UP MODELS DISADVANTAGES

- Doesn't fully recognize power differences among interest groups and coalitions, even though they are participants.
 - Assumes that all groups have equal power and influence.
 - “Policies without publics” (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1980) often means low mobilization and low participation.
 - Target groups often lack power and influence.

LET'S HAVE FUN WITH A 2ND GENERATION POLICY

DRIVE 55 AND STAY ALIVE!

- The National Maximum Speed Law (NMSL) in 1974.
- The NMSL required states to adopt a maximum speed limit of 55 mph.
- The NMSL was repealed in 1995.

2000S: THE THIRD GENERATION

- Realizes implementation is communication between policymakers and implementers
 - Recognizes the importance of the **policy network**.
 - Synthesizes the top-down and bottom-up models.
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THIRD GENERATION PROPOSITIONS: SUCCESS

1. Implementation is a process of communication between policymakers and implementers.
2. Success comes from sufficient resources, clear goals, and a supportive political environment.

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IMPROVEMENT:

1. Strategic delay on the part of the states allows for policy learning and policy diffusion
2. This can lead to innovation and improvement as states learn from each other.

2010S: THE FOURTH GENERATION

- The fourth Generation is still being developed.
- It is a synthesis of the first three eras – particularly an outgrowth of the 3rd Generation.
- The general trend is to move away from long-term causal relationships and toward a more dynamic and interactive process.

FOURTH GENERATION PROPOSITIONS:

- Move to program implementation focus instead of the policy implementation orientation of previous generations.
- Other disciplines have moved away from the linear model of policy implementation to a more dynamic and interactive process of programs
 - health, environment, education, and social welfare, planning, etc.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- The programmatic focus is less on broad theories and more on *what works for a particular program.*
- Geared toward the practical considerations of making programs more effective.
- The core disciplines of political science and public administration are still focused on comprehensive causal frameworks of policy implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

- Implementation is the process by which policies enacted by the legislative and executive branches are carried out by the bureaucracy and the courts.
- Implementation is a critical stage of the policy process.
- Implementation studies have gone through four generations of development.

NEXT TIME POLICY FAILURE AND LEARNING