

Policy as Value Delivery

Pursuing the Common Good

POSC 315: Introduction to Public Policy

Lecture 1 (Part 3 of 3)

Summer 2025

California State University, Fullerton

Policy for the Common Good

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3. Policy as Value Delivery

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3. Policy as Value Delivery

Determines how goods, services, and opportunities are distributed and regulated

Policy Reveals Values

“Policies are revealed through texts, practices, symbols, and discourses that define and deliver values including goods and services as well as regulations, incomes, status, and other positively or negatively valued attributes.”

— Deborah Stone

Every Policy Choice Reflects Values

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How Values Shape Policy

- Choices about who benefits
- Decisions about resource allocation
- Judgments about what problems deserve attention
- Determinations of acceptable solutions

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What happens when change occurs outside government?

Grassroots Movements

- Bottom-up pressure for change
- Community-based solutions

Non-governmental Organizations

- Complementary service delivery
- Advocacy and agenda-setting

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Capacity Building

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Capacity Building

- How do we empower individuals and communities to engage?
- How do we enhance the ability to implement solutions?

The Common Will

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- When advocates convince the government to make a policy, one can claim the government does so in the *public interest*.

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Challenges

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- It changes over time

Case Study: School Lunch Programs

Arguments For:

- Ensures no child goes hungry
- Improves educational outcomes
- Reduces inequality
- Supports working families

Arguments Against:

- Parent responsibility
- Cost to taxpayers
- Potential inefficiency
- Individual choice concerns

What values are revealed by each perspective? Who defines “public interest” here?

Key Takeaways

- **Politics and Policy:** Tools for solving public problems and shaping society
- **Values Matter:** Public policy reflects societal priorities, values, and decisions
- **Active Engagement:** Understanding these concepts empowers meaningful participation in governance
- **Our Journey:** This course will deepen your grasp of theory, practice, and the dynamics of policy creation

“The future depends on what we do in the present.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Looking Ahead

Policy Process Models

- The stages model
- Multiple streams framework
- Punctuated equilibrium

Policy Actors

- Government officials
- Interest groups
- Citizens and communities

Please complete the assigned readings before next week's lectures