

#### Political Science

Political science is...

the systematic study of power, decision-making and the production of order in society

### Political Science Questions

- Who governs?
- For what ends?
- And by what means?

### **Key Questions**

- What is the difference between government and politics?
- What is public policy?
- What are public problems?

### Questions to Consider

#### **IDEAS**

What is the difference between government and politics?



#### Government

- Institutions
- Political Processes
- Legal Authority



#### **Politics**

- Power and Influence
- "Who gets what, when and how" (Lasswell 1958)
- Who participants, influences, wins and loses



#### Government and Politics

Most simply, *politics* is about who holds power, *government* is the process by which power is allocated and used.



### **Key Questions**

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#### Questions to Consider

#### **IDEAS**

What are the common elements found in different definitions of public policymaking?

Tool: Public Policy Defined Handout



### Common Elements of Policy

- Authoritative decisions
- Deliberative action or inaction
- Conscious choice
- Dynamic processes
- Focus on means and ends
- Limited by capacity and/or feasibility

(Dye 1972; Jenkins 1978)

### What is public policy?

Most simply public policy is what those with *authority* choose *to do*, or *not do*, about *public problems*.



# Public Policy Outputs

#### What does public policy *look like*?

- Laws
- Treaties
- Executive orders
- Regulations
- Judicial rulings
- Taxes
- Grants
- Programs
- Action
- Inaction

### Public Policy Outcomes

#### What does public policy <u>do</u>?

- Distributive: costs and benefits to everyone
- Redistributive: taken from some to benefit others
- Constituent: "rules of the game"
- Regulatory: restricts

(Lowi 1972)



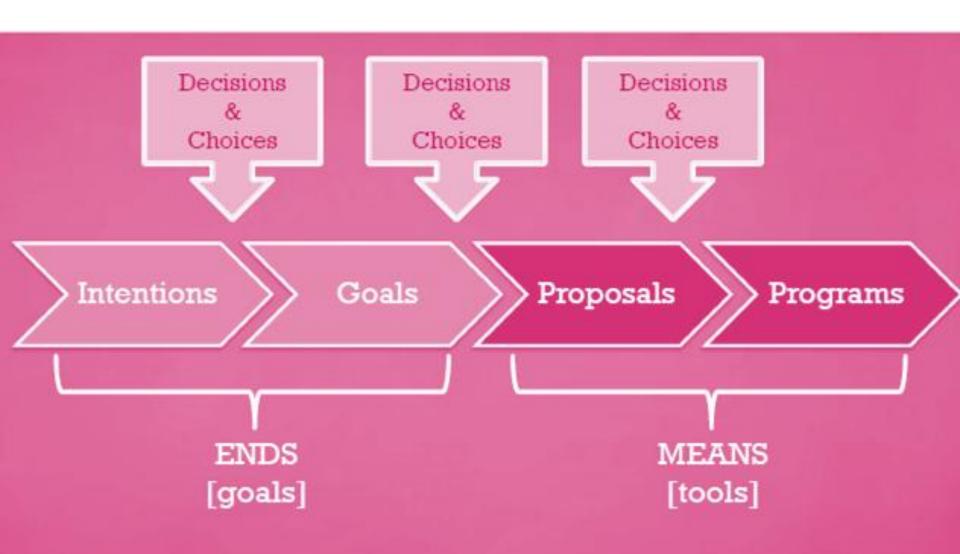
### **Understanding Outcomes**

What <u>impact</u> does public policy have? It depends...

- What problem was the policy intended to address?
- What was the policy intended to do about the problem?
- How was the policy structured?
- What group/geographic location is most affected by the policy?
- What are some potentially unforeseen consequences?



# Policymaking



# Policymaking

The process of matching goals and means has two dimensions:

- Technical: what is the best relationship between means (tools) and ends (goals)?
- Political: what are the ends (goals) that can be agreed upon and what means (tools) are considered 'appropriate'?

Policies often represent which of many different values and goals are given the highest priority in any given decision.

### Policy Analysis

Policy analysis...

the study of the causes and consequences of policy decisions

encourages deliberate critical thinking about the causes of public problems, the various ways governments and/or the private sector might act on them, and which policy choices make sense

requires knowledge of government and politics and the ability to evaluate policy actions



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#### **IDEAS**

What are some examples of public problems?

Are all problems public?

How do we decide?



### What are public problems?

Most simply, *public problems* are conditions that are perceived to be *unacceptable* and therefore *requiring intervention*.



#### Public Problems

#### Public problems can be addressed through:

- Government Action
- Private Action
- No Action

#### Depends on:

- Definition
- Public Opinion
- Feasibility

# **Questions?**