SARA R. RINFRET · DENISE SCHEBERLE · MICHELLE C. PAUTZ

Second Edition

PUBLIC POLICY

A Concise Introduction

Public Policy
A Concise Introduction

Second Edition

Sara R. Rinfret

University of Montana

Denise Scheberle

University of Colorado, Denver

Michelle C. Pautz

University of Dayton

$SAGE | CQ PRESS

Brief Contents

Detailed Contents

SECTION II   THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC POLICY

SECTION III UNDERSTANDING KEY PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

CHAPTER 8   **Civil Rights and Immigration Policy**   **195**

List of Figures and Tables

Preface

The study and practice of public policy are multifaceted and transcend disciplines. As a result, *Public Policy: A Concise Introduction* is a student-friendly public policy textbook that connects responsible citizens to the public policy world. We cover the fundamentals of American public policy in an engaging manner by incorporating the historical development with a contemporary examination of various policy areas. Additionally, we place a particular emphasis on giving readers an understanding of how policy works and the role those individuals on the front lines play in translating vague legislation into actionable regulations to achieve policy goals. In short, our focus is on the "doing" side of public policy and the role that citizens play in shaping it. This book will give you some of the background, analytical, and practical skills you need in order to understand complex problems and craft concrete solutions to the most important policy questions in the governance arena today. These are *public* policies, in that they involve issues that affect the common good, our common good as Americans. It is up to us to let policymakers know how we feel about the scope and nature of policy solutions that address these public concerns.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

In our second edition we bring attention to how we can collectively use public policy to raise individuals from the margins, addressing inequities that exist in our system and social justice concerns. Recent policy questions include how to shape the country's health-care system, to what extent national and state governments should address climate change, how to address issues of immigration and what those issues are, how to address income inequality, whether or not to lower taxes and who should benefit, how to grow the economy, how to address increases in costs of tuition, and whether or not the global pandemic (COVID-19) positively or negatively shapes our public education system—just to name a few. Education, energy, environment, social welfare, health care, civil rights, and immigration are large policy areas, and will likely touch each of us at some point in our lives.

WHY *CONCISE?*

This book addresses the large field of public policy in a clear and concise way. Although there are a number of public policy textbooks on the market, current offerings lack a brief, but comprehensive, overview that is essential for students. This introduction is meant to get us thinking about the way public policy develops, is

implemented, and who the major actors are that influence various policy areas. Other courses will dive into greater depth on these issues, and we encourage you to take additional classes in the public policy fields that interest you.

After all, policy wonks are not made without knowing the necessary basics that this textbook provides. Introductory public policy courses do not enroll just political science students; indeed, most public policy students are nonmajors who are taking the course as part of a public administration, business administration, communication studies, sociology, or criminal justice program, for example. Our textbook is designed to be approachable to readers with a wide range of interests and reasons for engaging in the study of policy.

APPROACH

While this textbook incorporates many facets of traditional approaches to public policy, we pay particular attention to the implementation of policy by focusing on the administration of policy—rulemaking, in particular. Accordingly, we designed this book to introduce students to what happens after a bill becomes a law and focus on policy implementation, how to research and design public policy, and how to be informed participants of the policymaking process.

Additionally, we consider several topics that are not often included in introductory public policy texts. We offer chapters on federalism and regulatory policy, and explore connections between civil rights and immigration, and the relationship between health care and social welfare policy. At the same time, we include the basics that everyone needs—an introductory chapter that defines terms; a chapter on the policymaking process, along with policy analysis—before shifting to the various public policies described above. This foundation gives students the grounding they need to explore substantive policy areas, including environment, crime and justice, immigration, and education policy. The essential elements of these foundation chapters are demonstrated in these chapters detailing specific policy areas.

Ultimately, we believe this book makes public policy worthwhile for a range of readers who come to the study of public policy for a host of reasons. Each of the substantive policy chapters follows a similar format: an opening story or vignette, an overview of the issue area, an exploration of its status and scope, its history, a review of major statutes, a look at major institutional and noninstitutional actors, and a concluding section enumerating challenges and possibilities for the future. We are confident our readers will come to understand the complexities of public policy while being able to engage in a richer debate about issues as they will understand that policy is far more complex than the binary choices that seem to be traditionally presented.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

This book includes three sections, totaling eleven chapters. Section I (Defining US Public Policymaking) of the textbook introduces students to how and why policy is

made in the United States. Section II (The Practice of Public Policy) focuses on connecting theory to practice through an exploration of federalism and how rules and regulations are crafted in a federal structure that includes state and local governments. Section III (Understanding Key Public Policy Issues) covers specific policy topics ranging from economics to immigration, civil rights, education, health care, criminal justice, and environmental and energy policy. Unique to this textbook is the everyday citizen connection and the policy choice sections of each of the topical policy chapters. Chapters 5–10 conclude with policy choice sections, which demonstrate policy dilemmas with several arguments for or against to engender meaningful classroom discussions. The policy choices are not painted as pro and con; instead, they offer several options to demonstrate that public policy is multifaceted and involves the consideration of multiple solutions before a problem can be addressed.

Chapter 2: The Policy Process and Policy Theories. Chapter 2 focuses on how policy is made and evaluated. The stages approach is discussed in great detail to give readers a foundation and vocabulary to discuss public policymaking, notably at the federal level. This chapter moves onto a discussion of other policy theories (e.g., rational choice, issues networks, punctuated equilibrium, multiple streams approach) to more accurately represent policymaking.

In Section II: The Practice of Public Policy, we include Chapters 3 and 4. Put succinctly, Chapters 3 and 4 are necessary to understand to contextualize the theme of our textbook—the doing side of policy. To make this case clear, Chapters 3 and 4 utilize everyday citizen connections to connect theory to practice.

Chapter 3: Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations. This chapter describes the evolution of federalism and explains how policy is affected by agencies at the federal, state, and local levels of government. Special attention is given to how interactions occur among state, local, and federal implementers of policy, and how policies connect across state lines. This chapter examines how federal, state, and local governments work together to tackle large-scale policy issues such as social welfare; or have widely different policy responses such as in responses to the pandemic. We document through our everyday citizen connections that sometimes states lead the way in policy change, such as in same-sex marriage or marijuana laws.

Chapter 4: Rulemaking and Regulations. Chapter 4 illustrates how vague policy language, often in the form of congressional legislation, is translated into rules and regulations for organizations and individuals to follow. We begin this chapter with an overview of the federal and state rulemaking processes. Accordingly, the lawmaking processes, or rulemaking stages, are overviewed in this chapter from the preproposal stage to rule finalization in the *Federal Register*. The second part of this chapter explains what happens after a rule goes into effect or how state inspectors ensure compliance with rules or laws. This chapter concludes with active reflection on the demographic makeup of federal regulatory agencies, the role of racial equity, and an everyday citizen connection, focusing on how and who participate in rulemaking processes in the United States.

The final section of the textbook, Section III: Understanding Key Public Policy Issues, focuses on substantive public policy areas, with each chapter concluding with policy choices to provoke fruitful classroom discussions and debate.

Chapter 5: Economic Policy and Government Budgeting. This chapter covers a varied array of the major factors that affect economic policy, ranging from fiscal policy (the taxing and spending policies of the federal government) and the Federal Reserve, which controls monetary policy (the supply of money and interest rates), to the types of taxes used, who pays them, and what difference it makes. As this is one of our chapters on substantive public policy, we conclude it with three policy choices for the future and to drive classroom discussion. This discussion centers on revamping the federal tax system.

Chapter 6: Crime and Public Policy. Despite lower overall crime rates than in the past, violent and serious crimes remain higher in the United States than in any other industrialized nation. Experts concede that the nation still has too much crime and that more effective rehabilitation is needed. Thus, in this chapter, we cover the major policy areas for crime and criminal justice, ranging from the causes of crime, to policies designed to combat or prevent crime, to prisons and capital punishment. Disparate treatment of white and blue collar crime is explored, as are racial disparities. This chapter is also concept driven, containing both theoretical frameworks such as theories on the causes of crime and practical examples of crime policy (e.g., drug-related crime). This chapter ends with three policy choices for the future exploring solutions to improving police–citizen interactions.

Chapter 7: Education Policy. Schools have remained one of the public's top concerns for decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic has become a wakeup call for educators in the United States. This chapter examines public education policy ranging from school funding to school performance, the roles various policymakers play, the impact of court decisions, innovations that have been implemented by states and local school districts, federal programs such as No Child Left Behind and Common Core, and alternative policies such as the voucher system and charter schools. This chapter concludes with three alternative policy choices for the direction of K-12 student evaluation criteria during a global pandemic.

Chapter 8: Civil Rights and Immigration Policy. This chapter opens with George Floyd's "I can't breathe" and children in cages on the US–Mexico border to situate how this chapter defines civil rights in the United States. This definition serves as a framework for addressing one of the most pressing and controversial policy issues of the twenty-first century—immigration policy. Following is a discussion of how US immigration policy has evolved over the last decade. In particular, this chapter examines how immigration policy has been shaped by societal events and also differing state viewpoints on immigration. As such, this chapter identifies how perceptions about immigration policy shifted post-9/11. This chapter concludes with an overview of choices for a pathway toward US citizenship.

Chapter 9: Social Welfare and Health-Care Policy. This chapter centers on the role and importance of social health-care welfare policy in the United States. The goal of this chapter is to document how the US social welfare and health-care systems developed to provide a solid understanding of "how we got to where we are today." This chapter's concluding policy choices spotlight using market forces to bring down costs and increase coverage, expand the current system to include and cover more people, and ultimately to consider a truly universal health-care system.

Chapter 10: Environmental and Energy Policy. This chapter begins by briefly contextualizing environmental and energy issues today in their broader historical evolution. Following is a discussion of how American society approaches scientifically and technically complex issues to enable a better understanding of the challenges of solving—or at least ameliorating—these challenges. Included here is a review of the major environmental laws that provide the structure for executing environmental and energy policy today. This chapter concludes with an overview of the choices that surround nonpoint source pollution.

The Conclusion. In our final chapter, we return to the importance of the "doing side" of public policy and revisit how it helps us to understand policies that range from regulation to federalism, civil rights, immigration, education, crime and guns, welfare and health care, and environmental and energy concerns. We conclude the text with a discussion about the future, noting the importance not only of the role of the doing side of policy, but the importance of policy facts and consensus building.

FEATURES

Our volume serves to enrich a student's learning experiences with an applied approach. For example, each chapter begins with a series of **Learning Objectives** in order to understand the key points to learn in completing each chapter. **Opening Vignettes** let us consider current examples of public policy in action. For example, we consider what life is like living on less than $2 a day in America; we look at the legalization of marijuana by several states, and how that plays into the constitutional notion of federalism; we explore gun violence through the lens of shifting policies on campuses regarding concealed-carry gun policies. In addition, each chapter includes a **Telling Stories with Data** section that invites students to evaluate data in order to decipher their impact on a particular policy issue or dilemma.

Also, this policy text includes in its chapters on various policy areas sections devoted to **Policy Choices** that make students think about the policy alternatives available—beyond the simplistic "for or against" approach so often conveyed in the media and public dialogue. These "policy choices" sections provide more than discussion questions—they are policy choices designed to make students think about and discuss the potential remedies to important policy questions and the consequences of those choices.

We also emphasize how our readers can engage in policy issues that matter to them in an effort to encourage political efficacy among the next generations of citizens and public servants. We accomplish this feat through **Everyday Citizen Connections** in each chapter to illustrate how people are affected by public policy. This is just a sampling of the ways in which we can engage in conversation about current, and real, policy dilemmas.

TEACHING RESOURCES

This text includes an array of instructor teaching materials designed to save your time and to help you keep students engaged. To learn more, visit sagepub.com or contact your SAGE representative at **sagepub.com/findmyrep**.

Acknowledgments

The origins of this book date back to 2008 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Sara Rinfret's first academic position was at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, serving under the direction and guidance of Denise Scheberle, her chair of the Department of Public and Environmental Affairs. Within this capacity, Sara attended the annual Midwest Political Science Conference in 2010 and met Michelle. We are fortunate that our paths crossed because the three of us share two common interests: (1) advancing understanding of the practical side of public policy and its significance, and (2) deep commitments to teaching and learning. The following pages of this book would not be possible without the help of our students, who are our inspiration and the reason why we do what we do.

First, we want to acknowledge our respective institutions, the University of Montana, the University of Dayton, and the University of Colorado–Denver. We owe a great deal of gratitude to students in the University of Montana's Master of Public Administration Program for their work on the first and second editions of this textbook—Christina Barsky, Sam Scott, Marci Lewandowski, Cara Grewell, and Elizabeth (Liz) Forster. Christina and Sam spent an entire year engaged in independent research projects that informed much of the background research for many of the chapters. Marci spent countless hours during a semester constructing and designing several of the public policy choices sections. Liz Forster's training in law and policy is noteworthy as she served as an instrumental research assistant revising introductory stories, background research, and data for several chapters. Cara ensured each policy choice was revised and relevant for student interest. We are indebted to their work, and the credit is all theirs. These students are exceptional graduate students, and we admire their ongoing commitment to the public service profession. Moreover, students in Sara Rinfret's Political Science 468: Public Policy and the Climate course read drafts of each chapter and provided invaluable feedback, including the observation that this is "Finally a book that we can apply to our own experiences and can comprehend because of its accessible style." Additionally, the expertise of Emily Kaylor Redman was essential in the initial drafting of Chapter 5 and Patrick Washington was instrumental in some of the updates to this chapter for the second edition. Nick Oesterling, who was completing his MPA at the University of Dayton when work on the second edition began and is now a doctoral student at Syracuse's Maxwell School, has also provided helpful insights surrounding revisions.

Michelle owes tremendous gratitude to her students, coauthors, colleagues, and family. Her students inspire her daily with their curiosity and desire to make the world a better place. In particular, those students who strive to serve the public in a variety of

capacities despite the multitude of challenges that beset the public sector, cultivate deep respect and admiration. The passion and commitment of Sara and Denise leave Michelle energized and desirous of following their example. Several colleagues at the University of Dayton merit specific mention, including Grant Neeley, who is an outstanding department chair and an incredibly supportive mentor, and Deb Bickford, associate provost and director of the Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center, whose leadership and commitment to learning inspire all those around her. The love and support of Michelle's family are the foundation of all she does. If it were not for Steven's steadfast patience, unwavering support, love, and encouragement, much would not be possible. It takes a special individual to love and support the kind of academic Michelle aspires to be, and he provides the essential foundation. Three special and amazing dogs—Sydney, Victoria, and Mackenzie—must be mentioned, as their assistance in this project was essential. Their supportive tail wags, occasional snore, and simple presence did much to facilitate these pages.

Denise believes that college students are the "spark plugs" who energize conversations about the common good, how to engage in public service, and what direction public policy should take to better serve future generations. Her students have inspired her with their grace, enthusiasm, and dedication, for which she is very thankful. She is also grateful to Sara and Michelle, who encouraged her to be a third author on this text, and to expand her own intellectual horizons in researching and writing this book. It's been a terrific journey, and you could not ask for better traveling companions.

Additionally, we want to recognize Anna Villarruel, Sponsoring Editor at SAGE Publishing and CQ Press, whose help was unwavering and enthusiasm contagious. Indeed, the entire SAGE/CQ Press staff have been a wonderful team, and we thank them all, with special thanks to Tiara Beatty for her skillful shepherding of our final manuscript into Production. We also extend thanks to the copyediting team, who used their sharp eye to copyedit our chapters.

And finally, we would like to thank the following reviewers, who offered their feedback throughout the process of writing this book:

Kwame Antwi-Boasiako, Stephen F. Austin State University
John Aughenbaugh, Virginia Commonwealth University–Monroe Park
Dorothy Dillard, Delaware State University
Laura Fidelie, Midwestern State University
Don Gardiner, Lewis University
Matthew Hale, Seton Hall University
Alton Jelks, California State University, East Bay
Martha Kropf, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
John Mandeville, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Karen McCurdy, Georgia Southern University
Ruth Moon, Louisiana State University
Minion "KC" Morrison, University of Delaware
Lisa K. Parshall, Daemen College

Jo Marie Rios, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi
Jay Ryu, Ohio University
Carlene Thornton, University of West Florida
Linda M. Trautman, Ohio University
William Wallis, California State University, Northridge
Mary Eleanor Wickersham, College of Coastal Georgia

Indeed, we have tremendous debts of gratitude toward all the individuals who supported our efforts here. Any and all mistakes are entirely our own.

Sara R. Rinfret
Denise Scheberle
Michelle C. Pautz
May 2021

About the Authors

Sara R. Rinfret is a Professor at the University of Montana, where she serves as an Associate Dean of Public Administration and Policy, and directs the Master of Public Administration Program within the School of Law's Baucus Institute. Her main areas of research are environmental regulations and the scholarship of teaching and learning. She is interested in the interactions between agencies and interest groups during the stages of environmental rulemaking at the federal and state level and the role of gender in the public policy classroom. To date, her work has been published in *Society and Natural Resources, Environmental Politics, Review of Policy Research, Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences, PS: Political Science and Politics, Public Administration Quarterly,* and the *Oxford Handbook of US Environmental Policy*. She has coauthored *The Lilliputians of Environmental Regulation: The Perspective of State Regulators,* and *US Environmental Policy: A Practical Approach to Understanding Implementation* (cowritten with Michelle Pautz) and *Who Makes Environmental Policy*. She serves on the Executive Council for NASPAA and was a Fulbright Specialist Program Scholar in public administration with the University of Aarhus (Denmark) in 2016. She holds a PhD in political science from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Public Administration from the Ohio State University.

Denise Scheberle is a Clinical Teaching Professor for the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado, Denver. She is Professor Emerita from the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, where she served as the Herbert Fisk Johnson Professor in Environmental Studies and professor and chair of the Department of Public and Environmental Affairs. She is the recipient of national, state, and campus teaching awards, including the American Political Science Association's (APSA) Distinguished Teaching Award and University of Wisconsin Regents Teaching Excellence Award. She is the author of *Industrial Disasters and Environmental Policy: Stories of Villains, Heroes, and the Rest of Us* and *Federalism and Environmental Policy: Trust and the Politics of Administration,* as well as numerous articles. Her research focuses on environmental policy, public service, and intergovernmental relations. She holds a PhD in political science from Colorado State University and an MPA from the University of Wyoming.

Photo courtesy of Sara Rinfret

Photo courtesy of Denise Scheberle

Michelle C. Pautz is a Professor of Political Science and Assistant Provost of the Common Academic Program at the University of Dayton. Her research has appeared in *Administration & Society, Administrative Theory & Praxis, Journal of Political Science Education, Journal of Environmental Studies & Sciences, Journal of Public Affairs Education, Policy Studies Journal, PS: Political Science & Politics, Public Voices,* and the *Review of Policy Research,* among others. She is the author of *Civil Servants on the Silver Screen: Hollywood's Depiction of Government and Bureaucrats;* coauthor of *The Lilliputians of Environmental Regulation: The Perspective of State Regulators* and *US Environmental Policy in Action: Practice & Implementation* (now in its second edition), both with Sara Rinfret; and coeditor of *Administering the US Food System: Revisiting Food Policy and Politics.* She is the recipient of the University of Dayton's Alumni Award for Faculty Teaching in 2016. She holds a PhD in Public Administration and an MPA from Virginia Tech. She earned a BA in Economics, Political Science, and Public Administration from Elon University.

The Foundation

PUBLIC POLICY AND OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

A personal experience can be the starting point to understand public policy. Think about how you cast your ballot to vote in your respective state last election or you use your cell phone as your daily alarm clark—both are guided by US public policies. The following stories—Professor Rinfret, Amish politics; Professor Scheberle, wool and banking; and Professor Pautz, marine mammals—demonstrate how our experiences can shape public policy.

Professor Rinfret: Amish Politics

I grew up in a rural, small town in northeast Ohio—population: 3,000. When I was ten, my father ran for county prosecutor. As a result, I spent my evenings and week-ends knocking on doors and stating, "Please vote for my dad." In addition to nightly door knocking, I attended local meetings and pancake breakfasts with my dad. I still remember one rainy evening; we drove up to a local township building within the heart of our Amish community. Yes, I grew up in one of the largest Amish counties in the United States. I got out of our family minivan, but my dad stopped me and said, "Hey, you need to sit in the car tonight and work on your homework." I did not complain, but on the car ride home I remember asking, "Why wasn't I allowed to go inside tonight?" My dad's response: "Because you are a girl. Women do not attend Amish community meetings." This response invoked constant dinner conversations with my family about politics and continuous questions to my parents, teachers, and friends.

Professor Scheberle: Wool and Banking

As an undergraduate majoring in journalism, with a marketing emphasis, my first two jobs were eye-opening

experiences. My first "real" job was to write the monthly newsletter and press releases for the Wool Growers Association, an organization that represents the interests of sheep ranchers or farmers. The organization took strong positions on public policy matters. For example, the organization opposed the listing of the gray wolf as an endangered species, as sheep herders argued that wolves were attacking the sheep. After I received my bachelor's degree, my second job was as an officer of the bank. Officers were strongly encouraged to contribute to the American Bankers Association Political Action Committee (PAC), an organization pressing hard for deregulation of banks. The CEO would come to every officer's desk and collect contributions. He was an imposing 6′3″ man, and when he leaned over my desk, it got my attention! Regardless, these experiences increased my awareness that organizations try to sway policymakers' actions on policies designed to protect their perceived interests. I later developed an interest in environmental and natural resource policies, and understood the importance of education in advancing public good.

Professor Pautz: Marine Mammals

In middle school, I was fascinated by politics because I watched the nightly news; yet I did not think politics would be a viable career path for me. I entered college a declared economics major. It was not until the fall of my sophomore year, when I took environmental economics and environmental policy that I began to change my perspective. These topics were of interest to me because I grew up in the coastal city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where marine animals were common. Needless to say, I was mortified by the images from the *Exxon Valdez* disaster. It upset me to see how the oil spill damaged the ecosystem and habitat for wildlife such as whales. Because of my own appreciation for marine mammals and the heartbreak caused by *Exxon Valdez*, my environmental classes enabled me to understand the role of public policy and politics in these issues.

Our own stories present policy questions: Should women be unallowed to attend a local meeting? What is the role of organizations in influencing policy? Who should protect wildlife from an oil spill? What do these stories miss? What about the role of intersectionality?[1] Answering such questions is not easily done and can engender controversy. Furthermore, how do you answer these questions through a **value-neutral** lens instead of **value-laden** fashion? More specifically, how do you present solutions to such questions that do not incorporate a person's own biases (value-neutral)? Is this even possible? Or are all policy decisions driven with biased responses driven by personal opinions (value-laden)?

The purpose of the 2nd edition of *Public Policy: A Concise Introduction* is simple—to provide students with the necessary skills and tools to understand how and why public policy is created. Our goal is to provide connections between our own everyday experiences with the "doing" side of policy: **implementation**. In our second edition, this approach is examined through how we can collectively recognize our own biases and our privilege to lift people up that may fall within the margins. Our collective goal is for the reader to merge theory and practice, providing solutions for public sector problems. This chapter sets the tone as we define public policy, the process, key actors, theories involved, and how it all applies to you.

STARTING WITH A DEFINITION

The word **public** encompasses ordinary people, or community. **Policy** is a course of action adopted or created by the government[2] in response to public problems. When the terms are put together, public policy is a "confusing game of players, dynamics, processes, and stages" (Theodoulou and Kofinis 2004). Public policy is "a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by government in dealing with some problem or matter of concern" (Anderson 2003, 3). Reading these definitions of public policy serves as a reminder that "Every day the intended and unintended consequences of public policy intimately touch the lives of everyone within the United States" (Theodoulou and Kofinis 2004, 2). Public policy is government action to solve a public problem.

Power and Politics

Related to government action to solve a problem are power and politics. **Power** represents the ability to alter or influence a course of action (Theodoulou and Kofinis 2004, 3). Power is a person or group's ability to persuade or alter perceptions. For instance, in spring 1970, Senator Gaylord Nelson created Earth Day with more than twenty million Americans demonstrating in cities across the United States to protect the environment. As a result, the US Environmental Protection Agency (a new federal agency at the time) was created to tackle environmental issues. In a more recent example, January 2020, Amanda Gorman delivered the "Hill we Climb" at President Joe Biden's inauguration. Gorman, 22 years of age, became the youngest poet laureate to speak at a presidential inauguration, focusing on how the United States must confront racial injustices, by concluding her poem, stating, "When the day comes, we step out of the shade of flame and unafraid. The new dawn balloons as we free it" (Parsons 2020). The media portrayed both Gaylord Nelson and Amanda Gorman as symbols of positive change, impacting our perceptions about societal issues like the environment or racial justice, using the American people to usher policy pathways forward for change.

Politics, as Lasswell (1958) describes, is "who gets what, when, and how." However, politics is a broad concept—it defines the communication between branches of government and levels of government. Moreover, "Politics, at its essence, captures the competitive communication, exchange, discussions, and debate that emerge between competing ideas and groups within a state" (Theodoulou and Kofinis 2004, 8). Politics is part of policymaking and allows us to have a discussion and debate the merits of solutions to public problems.

As we define public policy and discuss the roles power and politics play within this definition, who in society controls policymaking? Pluralism and elitism help us to understand this question. **Pluralism** is the notion that we all have equal access to influence policymaking (Dahl 1961; Truman 1951). However, **elitism** suggests only a select few, the elite, have the power to influence policymaking in a Democratic society (Mills 1956). Although these two conceptualizations offer different theories, "In general, each perspective helps to identify that the concept of power should not be

measured solely as an explicit consequence, but as a complex interrelationship between the ability of certain actors to influence what actions are taken" (Theodoulou and Kofinis 2004, 4).

The prominent legal scholar, Kimberly Crenshaw, pushes us to question if the concepts of politics and power recognize who does not have a seat at the table and why. Specifically, Crenshaw argues we should take a closer examination of who benefits and why in public policy. She states, "Self-interrogation is a good place to start. If you see inequality as a 'them' problem or 'unfortunate other' problem, that is a problem. Being able to attend to not just unfair exclusion but also, frankly, unearned inclusion is part of the equality gambit. We've got to be open to looking at all of the ways our systems reproduce these inequalities, and that includes the privileges as well as the harms" (Steinmetz 2020).

With this in mind, public policy is not created by one person; nor does it happen overnight. There are a myriad of actors involved. Each year hundreds of laws and ordinances are created at the national, state, and local level. More specifically, US public policy is guided by a system of **federalism** in which power is divided between national government and the states.

A Federal System

Figure 1.1 illustrates a brief overview of our federal system, and Chapter 3 delves into the details more fully. For foundational purposes, each level of government has separate and overlapping functions to execute public policy. For example, the federal government is responsible for overseeing relationships with other countries, deciding whether or not to go to war, or creating money. Under the Tenth Amendment, anything not specified in the US Constitution is within the scope of state governments, such as public schools. Within this federal system, there is a lot of overlap, or shared

FIGURE 1.1

Levels of Government

- Federal government — • Declare war, coin money, oversee foreign relations
- State government — • Establish public schools, create local governments, conduct elections
- Local government — • Powers set forth by the state
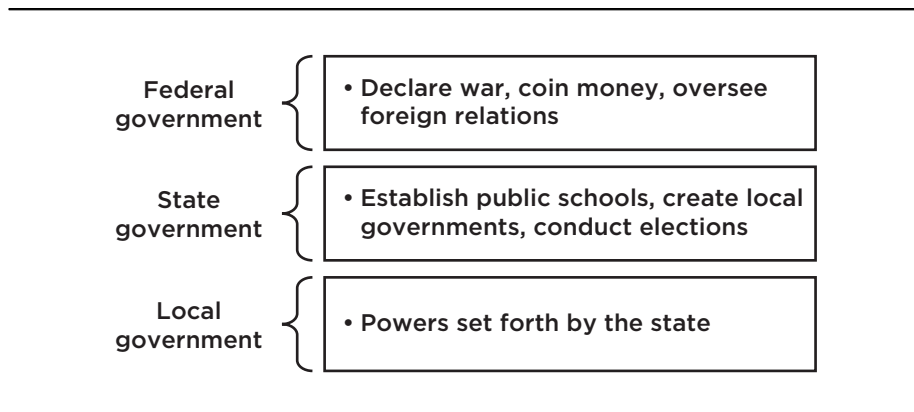
responsibility, in carrying out policy. For instance, public education standards are created by the federal government and carried out by state and local governments. Nonetheless, policy spans across governments and topics ranging from pollution control, business regulation, energy, welfare, and transportation, to name a few.

Categories of Public Policy

Scholars have attempted to categorize public policy into three broad categories. As Anderson (2003) suggests, "These typologies will prove much more useful in distinguishing among and generalizing about policies that have some of the more traditional and widely used categorization schemes, such as by issue area …" (10). Figure 1.2 defines the three categories of public policy.

Distributive public policy involves the allocation of resources to individuals, groups, corporations, or communities. This type of policy benefits a segment of the population. An example of a distributive public policy is a farm subsidy. In this example, the federal government provides financial support each year to farmers to manage their crops (e.g., cotton, corn, rice, soybeans) because of inconsistencies due to weather or disease.

The purpose of a redistributive public policy is to promote equality, or occurs when the government allocates support from one group to another through social programs. However, consider the difference between *equity* and *equality*. **Equity** is the quality of being fair and impartial. **Equality** is the state of being equal, in status, rights, and opportunities. The financial aid you receive to attend college is an example of a redistributive public policy. It is based on your parents' annual earnings.

Regulatory policy imposes restrictions on the behaviors of individuals or organizations. This type of policy is exemplary of US environmental policy because regulatory policy limits the behaviors of businesses or organizations. For instance, a coal-burning power plant is allowed to produce a set limit of pollution into the air because of the

FIGURE 1.2

Policy Typologies

Distributive	• Allocation of resources
Redistributive	• Deliberative effort by the government to shift an allocation of resources
Regulatory	• Restrictions or limitations on behavior or individuals or organizations
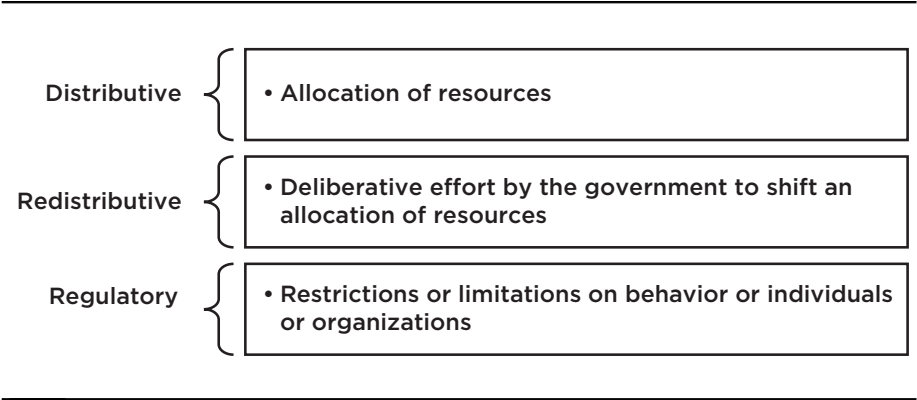
Clean Air Act. If a company exceeds its limits, a fine ensues. Although there are different categories of public policy, how does a policy come to fruition? Who are the actors involved? Is public policy made through the "how a bill becomes a law" steps you learned in your high school government class?

We offer these brief policy typology definitions here and encourage you to consider how each, in turn, may create a system of winners and losers. For example, what demographic benefits from each typology? How does this link back to the role of power and access to public policymaking?

THE PROCESS

The public policymaking process, coined as the **stages heuristic approach**, helps address the aforementioned questions. US public policymaking occurs across a variety of stages and includes several actors. Figure 1.3 provides a brief explanation and foundation of this process, with Chapter 2 delving deeper into specifics.

Stage One: Problem Identification and Definition. The first phase of the policymaking process is to determine that there is a problem. This is not an easy endeavor. A problem or an issue can be defined by the public or lawmakers. For example, Black Lives Matter, an activist movement, argued violence against Black people in the United States needs to end. Although a problem has been identified by Black Lives Matter, the

FIGURE 1.3
Policymaking Process
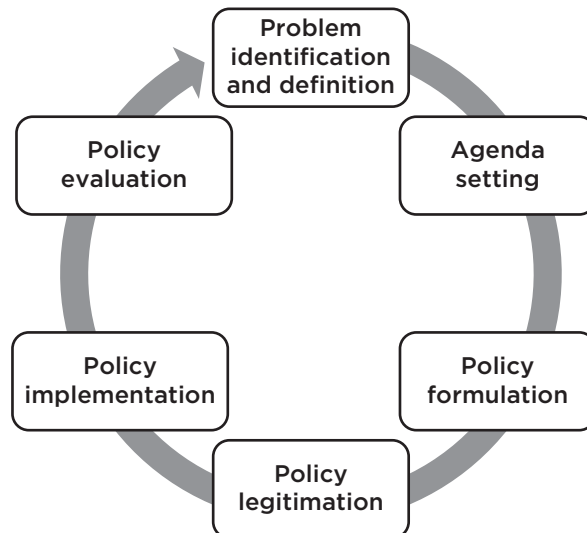
question then becomes how to define the problem. Many within the Black Lives Matter movement claim the problem is due in part to unwarranted police brutality against Black people. However, the police force defines the problem differently—lack of training of police officers. As such, problem identification and definition are inherently political. This stage can be driven by value-laden (biased) perspectives shaped by our own experiences. In this case, a member of the Black Lives Matter movement uses statistical evidence or their own personal experiences in which Black people are targeted more than whites and video footage of police brutality to demonstrate this problem needs to be addressed by lawmakers. Police officers define the problem as a lack of resources to properly train employees (Chapter 6 provides much more detail).

Stage Two: Agenda Setting. After determining a problem exists, the second phase is how to place the problem on lawmakers' agenda. This can also be a difficult endeavor. Focusing events and policy entrepreneurs are two explanatory factors to determine what gets placed on their agenda. First, a focusing event is a sudden event that can reshape the nation's attention. An example of a focusing event is 9/11. Combating terrorism was placed on lawmakers' agenda post 9/11 and resulted in body scanning devices now commonly used at airports across the United States. Another example is COVID-19, where more than 800,000 Americans lost their lives to the deadly disease and in response, the US Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act or the CARES Act.

Second, a policy entrepreneur could be a congressperson, governor, member of an interest group, or policy champion. This person fixates on a problem and calls for action. An example of a policy entrepreneur is Greta Thunberg. This Swedish teen-ager's quest is to address climate change and is well known across the globe for her speech at the United Nations in 2018. She challenged international lawmakers who must act now to confront global climate change and continues to be a formidable activist for climate change.

Stage Three: Policy Formulation. Once a problem has been recognized or reached the agenda of lawmakers, policy formulation or design occurs. As Schneider and Ingram (1997) suggest, "Policy design is inherently a purposeful and normative enterprise though which elements of policy are warranted to serve particular values, purposes, and interests" (3). It is at this juncture that lawmakers consider the pros and cons of a particular policy and potential solutions. For example, for health-care policy, lawmakers would consider the benefits and drawbacks for the public, hospitals, doctors, and insurance companies. The views of different groups allow for policymakers to determine a viable pathway moving forward.

Stage Four: Policy Legitimation. This stage is the one with which we are most familiar, or "how a bill becomes a law." For the sake of brevity, Congress (US House of Representatives or US Senate) assigns a piece of legislation to a committee. The committee determines if the bill should move to the floor for deliberation, debate, and a vote. If the vote passes both chambers of Congress, the president can sign or veto the legislation. If the president signs the bill, it becomes law. As Chapter 9 presents with

an examination of the Affordable Care Act, legislative lawmaking is a complex and arduous process. However, on average, Congress introduces 4,000–9,000 bills per year and less than 5 percent become law.

Stage Five: Policy Implementation. The fifth stage of the process is important, yet often overlooked. This stage addresses: What happens after a law goes into effect? Do members of Congress carry out every piece of legislation? There is no way for members of Congress to implement all of the policies it creates due to lack of time, expertise, and resources. This stage is where the "doing side" of policy occurs via implementation by administrative agencies. For example, the doers or implementers of public policy in Professor Pautz's vignette are agency officials who work for the US Environmental Protection Agency or the US Fish and Wildlife Service. These agencies were created by Congress to carry out laws that not only protect the public's health but also species. This is often where a lot of the excitement or real policy occurs, and why we focus Chapter 4 entirely on this stage in the process.

Stage Six: Policy Evaluation. Policymaking would not be complete without the final stage: evaluation. Within this phase, **policy evaluators** measure and assess the effectiveness of programs and policies. For example, a policy evaluator will determine if the Affordable Care Act has increased health benefits for the public. A policy evaluator researches the intended outcomes of programs and policies, and provides recommendations to members of Congress. Such recommendations could include that Congress provides more funding for a program or that a program should be eliminated. The goal is for a policy evaluator to use data-driven evaluations (value-neutral) in their assessment, not their personal opinion (value-laden) to document the viable options moving forward.

This description of the policy process model provides a brief introduction to how policy is made in the United States. Inevitably, there are flaws to this model. A policy might not occur in a linear fashion as described, does not make it all the way through each of the stages, or fails to consider the role of equity. Despite these shortcomings, Chapter 2 addresses these concerns and offers additional policy models for exploration. Regardless, each of the aforementioned steps is the foundation to understand the creation of public policy, from start to finish. The second edition of this book continues to question how public policy implementation determines whether the goals of the public policy created are realized. This is where the rubber meets the road, or as we define it, the **doing side of policy**.

A MOTLEY CREW: INSTITUTIONAL AND NONINSTITUTIONAL ACTORS

The policymaking process would not occur without the work and involvement of policy actors—institutional and noninstitutional. Table 1.1 highlights how the institutional actors (the three branches of government, the bureaucracy) and the noninstitutional actors (the media, interest groups, and us) are all drivers in US public policymaking processes.

TABLE 1.1

Actors and Involvement in Process

Actor	Role Within Policymaking Process
Congress	Agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation
President	Agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation
Courts	Policy evaluation
Bureaucracy	Policy implementation, policy evaluation
Interest groups	Agenda setting, policy formulation
Media	Agenda setting
Us	All stages of the process

The Three Branches of Government

Congress, the president, and the Supreme Court are all involved in US public policymaking. Article I, Section I, of the US Constitution clearly notes that Congress has the lawmaking authority to create or develop legislation. A total of 535 elected individuals comprise Congress: 435 for the US House of Representatives and 100 for the US Senate. In 2020, 126 out of the 535 members of the US Congress are women, with 48 women of color. Members of Congress determine what reaches the policy-making agenda and how these policies are formulated and adopted.

Specifically, within the stages of how a bill becomes a law, a policy can move forward or cease to exist within a committee. The committee determines which bills are heard and make it to the floor for deliberation for a vote. For example, in 2019, the House of Representatives Proposed the Equality Act to prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in public accommodations and facilities, to name a few. The fate of this legislation remains with the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Remember, even if you reach the policymaking agenda and out of committee, it needs to be passed in both the House and Senate. Nonetheless, Congress is a powerful power broker in setting the tone for US policymaking (Mayhew 2004).

This is not to say that the president does not play a role in policymaking. The president can and does shape public policy. Presidents are elected every four years and can serve two consecutive four-year terms. Popular presidents can use the **bully pulpit**—speeches, radio addresses, YouTube videos, Twitter, or forums to engender public support for a position. For instance, in 2016, President Barack Obama's approval ratings were approximately 50 percent (Gallup 2016). Put simply, 50 percent of the population thought President Obama was doing a good job. Because of this, President Obama used public support to push for his policy directives to take shape. The idea is that popular presidents can use speeches to engender support from the public to then call their congressperson to pressure for action on a public problem.

One such example is paid parental leave for parents. In speeches to the public and the 2016 State of the Union address, President Obama stressed that the United States should pass legislation to provide six weeks of paid parental leave for all federal employees as part of the 2017 budget (Lunney 2016). As Lunney suggests, "Obama's push for paid parental leave is part of a larger agenda to strengthen the middle class by giving families more work–life flexibility." Although Congress has yet to adopt this policy, there is growing backing among members due to President Obama's and the public's support for the endeavor.

By way of comparison, a president's use of the bully pulpit can backfire. President Trump, a frequent Twitter user, was removed from the social media site indefinitely for his speech which led to the march on the US Capitol to challenge the 2020 election results. The January 6, 2021 March resulted in a second impeachment for President Trump.

The US Supreme Court is not an active participant in public policymaking like Congress or the president. The courts are reactive. Simply put, the courts do not initiate public policy, yet their decisions have public policy implications. We have a dual court system in the United States, guided by three types of law: public, criminal, and civil.

Public law deals with constitutional and administrative questions related to government actions, **criminal law** regulates the conduct of individuals, and **civil law** deals with disputes between individuals or organizations. Also, there are differences between federal and state courts. For instance, the entry point for all federal criminal cases (such as robbing a bank) or civil cases (disputes between states or individuals, such as divorce) is the US district court. If convicted at the US district court level, the accused have the right to appeal the case. If the appeal is heard, this would take place at the US court of appeals (thirteen total, eleven geographically located, and two specialty circuits for bankruptcy and patents). If again convicted, cases can be appealed to the US Supreme Court. However, on average, the US Supreme Court hears about seventy to eighty cases per year; this is about 1–5 percent of all cases appealed to the Court.

The US Supreme Court typically includes nine justices who are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The justices can serve for life, providing "good behavior."[3] The Court impacts policy by how the justices choose to interpret the law. If a business decides to sue the government because the business believes the Affordable Care Act placed unwarranted economic burdens on it, then the Court would need to interpret the intent of the law.

The Affordable Care Act was challenged by the arts-and-crafts chain Hobby Lobby in 2013. Hobby Lobby executives did not think they should have to cover restrictive contraception options for female employees, such as Plan B, also known as the morning-after pill. Company founders believed that life begins after conception, and therefore Hobby Lobby did not want to provide coverage for female employees. Hobby Lobby noted that its religious preferences were protected under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as the rationale for the suit. In *Burrell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, the Court found in favor of Hobby Lobby and concluded that for-profit companies do not have to provide employees restrictive contraception coverage due to

religious reasons. However, the company would still have to provide less restrictive coverage, such as birth control pills, for its employees. This case demonstrates how the Supreme Court impacts public policy, or how the Affordable Care Act is interpreted, which affects the lives of individuals who work for organizations like Hobby Lobby (Oyez 2016).

The Implementers

We often forget about the heavy lifters in the process: bureaucrats or the bureaucracy. There are a variety of ways scholars have defined "bureaucracy."[4] According to William Niskanen (1971), "the original use of the term, I understand, referred to cloth covering the desk (bureau) of eighteenth-century French officials" (23). The bureaucracy, as defined by James Q. Wilson (1991), is "a complex and varied phenomenon, not a simple category or political epithet" (10). Armies, schools, and prisons, as Wilson (1991) notes, are all bureaucracies. The seminal approach to define the bureaucracy originates from the work of Max Weber (1947). For Weber, the bureaucracy is synonymous with defining all large organizations.

However, when bureaucracy is mentioned, pejorative terms come to mind—lazy, incompetent employees, or paper pushers. This should not be the case, as Anthony Downs's *Inside Bureaucracy* (1964) reminds us:

> It is ironic that the bureaucracy is still primarily a term of scorn, even though bureaus are among the most important institutions in every nation in the world. Not only do bureaus provide employment for a very significant fraction of the world's population, but also they make critical decisions which shape the economic, political, social, and even moral lives of nearly everyone on earth. (130)

The bureaucracy and a bureaucrat's role in society are much more than the common stereotypes. These individuals are your next-door neighbors and ensure you have clean drinking water or protect the whales from oil spills in Professor Pautz's vignette. Yet are these individuals allowed to do this? Are bureaucrats doing Congress's job?

The bureaucracy was created by Congress to translate vague congressional statutes and to implement public policies. It is the people within the bureaucracy, the bureaucrats or civil servants—police officers, teachers, or environmental inspectors—who carry out legislation on a daily basis (Niskanen 1971). The bureaucrats are the individuals who work within the bureaucracy to implement public policy. Put succinctly, policy implementation "[r]epresents the state where government executes an adopted policy as specified legislation or policy action" (Theodoulou and Kofinis 2004, 166–167). The bureaucracy was created to implement public policy in the United States because members of Congress do not have the time or expertise to carry out the laws they pass.

Thus, agencies, including the Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to name a few, fulfill an essential role in ensuring that landmark legislation such as the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, or the Affordable Care Act are

carried out and implemented. The HRSA determines what contraceptive plans should be covered for women under the Affordable Care Act. The EPA protects the public's health by making sure the air we breathe and the water in which we swim is clean. And the USFWS ensures that species like whales are protected from oil spills. This introduction on the bureaucracy sets the tone for bureaucratic decision-making discussions in Chapters 2 and 4.

Although the aforementioned examples for Congress, president, Supreme Court, and bureaucracy are not exhaustive, the point is to begin to understand how each affects public policy. The remaining chapters of our text fill in the details.

The Media, Interest Groups, and Us

Noninstitutional actors—the media, interest groups, and us—play a pivotal role in public policymaking. There are three ways to classify media in the United States—**broadcast**, **print**, and the Internet. Broadcast media include radio and television, print encompasses newspapers and magazines, and the Internet is an online resource that incorporates cyber versions of the more traditional media sources (Ginsberg et al. 2013). Interest groups are organized groups of individuals who fight for a cause.

There are several types of interest groups in the United States, ranging from businesses and professional associations to public interest and ideological interest groups. A **business interest group** wants to protect economic interests and includes groups such as chambers of commerce, which represent small and large businesses in the United States. **Professional interest groups** include organizations such as the American Bar Association (lawyers) or the American Medical Association (medical professionals). Public interest groups include organizations that advocate for causes, such as consumer or environmental protection. One such example is the Wool Growers Association from Professor Scheberle's vignette.

The Wool Growers Association wants to advocate for policies that protect livestock or the economic interests of ranchers. This group would be in contrast with another public interest group—the Sierra Club, a large environmental organization that advocates for environmental and species protection. In this case, the Sierra Club would promote the protection of species like wolves to counter the arguments of the Wool Growers Association.

The final type of interest group, ideological groups, provides individuals with an organization to promote their broader political perspectives or government ideologies. For instance, individuals from a religious perspective might be attracted to the Christian Coalition. The purpose of the Christian Coalition is to allow individuals of faith a pathway to be involved in policymaking.

Shaping Policy

The media and interest groups can and do shape public policy. For example, the media coverage about a topic can impact Americans' perceptions about public problems. Journalists interpret or frame the story to the public. Framing is a powerful mechanism because it shapes a person's preferences regarding policy priorities. Moreover, framing

can and does set the policymaking agenda (Guber and Bosso 2013) because when a journalist uses images (e.g., photos or video), priming occurs. For instance, think about how the image below (Photo 1.1) after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill might have impacted individuals like Professor Pautz. Images like this stick in the minds of the American public, and interest groups use them to support their causes and pressure lawmakers to pass policy.

PHOTO 1.1
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

More specifically, each type of interest group attempts to advocate for positions to set the agenda for members of Congress. Interest group advocacy occurs through the act of **lobbying**. A lobbyist is a person who is hired by an organization to meet with congressional representatives to persuade them to pass policies to benefit their interests. Interest group advocacy is achievable because we are members of interest groups. Members of Congress listen to interest groups because they represent us, who elect them into office. Also, professional interest groups such as the American Medical Association can offer research on topics—for instance, the effectiveness of programs like Medicaid use per hospital in the United States.

In addition to lobbying, interest groups provide financial support for campaigns. Table 1.2 demonstrates the amount of money provided to members of Congress for 2019–2020. The idea is that if you donate money to a congressional candidate this helps to pass policies on your group's behalf. The top financial contributors to Congress for 2019–2020 were professional interests within the areas of finance, insurance, and real estate. Regardless, millions of dollars are spent to pressure lawmakers to act, and the question becomes if we can play a role in this process.

TABLE 1.2

Follow the Money

Rank	Interests Represented	Amount Provided to Members of Congress
1	Financial, insurance, real estate	$1,969,655,697
2	Ideology or single issue	$1,080,858,921
3	Lawyers	$381,959,589
4	Health	$628,270,718
5	Communications or electronics	$620,773,090

Source: Center for Responsive Politics. https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/.

What About Us?

Although the media and interest groups can affect our own perceptions about public policy or a policymaker, how can the normal, everyday citizen make an impact on US public policymaking? You can run for office, and if elected, shape the design or formulation of policy. But at the federal level, this only includes 535 individuals within Congress. There are over 300 million individuals living in the United States.

More realistically, you can make more of an impact as a member of an interest group, as a journalist, or as an implementer. If you are interested in pay equity, we might suggest you join the League of Women Voters to understand why men and women are paid different wages for the same type of position. You could major in journalism and interpret and present policy facts for us to digest. Or you could major in political science, wildlife biology, sociology, or forestry and work for a state or federal agency and implement public policy. Through these examples, we can and do shape the public policymaking process more broadly.

But you cannot forget that beyond understanding the process and the actors involved, you consume public policy every day. As you check Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, BuzzFeed, or Instagram, in what ways did you consume public policy today? Did you just skim the headlines that span across your Facebook feed? As you consume public policy, it impacts your judgments about what should or should not be done. However, are judgments and daily consumption driven by value-laden or value-neutral research?

POLICY ANALYSIS

One of the best ways we can become involved in public policymaking is to understand the profession of policy analysis. We consume information, but how do we know if a policy is efficient and effective? Policy evaluators regularly assess the effectiveness of all major laws to ensure they are achieving their goals. An entire field—policy analysis—has been dedicated to the evaluation of policy (Dunn 2008; Quade 1989). We suggest policy evaluation is "deconstructing an object of study—that is, breaking it down into basic elements to understand it better" (Kraft and Furlong 2015, 8).

Policy Evaluation

Policy evaluation, stage six of the policymaking process, is conducted by policy analysts or program evaluators. These individuals have varying skills, expertise, and educational backgrounds depending upon the policy they study (Bardach 2004). Policy analysts may have backgrounds in biology, ecology, political science, engineering, or economics, to name a few. More specifically, a policy analyst is not supposed to inject their values or beliefs into the analysis. Therefore, the evaluator can provide an evidence-based policy analysis that includes all of the relevant factors so policymakers can make changes or modifications based upon that objective information (Dunn 2008).

However, the act of policy evaluation is not this simple (Dunn 2008; Weimer and Vining 2011). Policy analysts do not have unlimited resources to acquire data regarding

every single policy problem (Weimer and Vining 2011). Also, how an evaluator structures analyses may elevate some priorities over others, based upon necessity (Dunn 2008). The supporter of the evaluation (the person funding the project) may also sway the overall outcome of the analysis based upon their own values (Bardach 2004; Weimer and Vining 2011). For instance, if a member of Congress does not agree with charter schools, they can pay a private firm in his home district to conduct an evaluation to provide evidence that aligns with his stance.

Since we are all consumers of policy, what sources have been evaluated in a value-neutral fashion? The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) assessments of policy are sources of unbiased and accurate analyses, but these are not the only entities that provide policy evaluation (Kraft and Furlong 2015). There are a whole host of other federal agencies, think tanks, trade associations, environmental interests, and other entities that provide policy evaluations, but their assumptions and evaluative criteria (the way a group evaluates a program) can vary greatly, which Chapter 2 delves into more deeply.

WHY STUDYING PUBLIC POLICY MATTERS

Public policy is complex, with a variety of actors involved and models to understand how and why policies are made. Without our participation in the policy process, we may get policies we do not agree with because someone from a different viewpoint may press policymakers much more strongly. For example, Chapter 6 explores the power of the National Rifle Association (NRA) to maintain limited gun control in the United States, even though many Americans favor additional controls. As such, understanding the study and practice of public policy is important for you because (1) it helps our communities address problems, (2) it follows a systematic process to provide solutions, and (3) it is designed and implemented by countless practitioners.

Public Policy and Community. Understanding public policy is important because "Public policy is about communities trying to achieve something as communities" (Stone 2012, 20). More specifically, community can be a political or cultural community.

As Stone (2012) succinctly remarks, "A political community is a group of people who live under the same rules and structure of governance. A cultural community is a group of people who share a culture and draw their identities from shared language, history and traditions" (21). It is within these communities that we define public problems or dilemmas. Simply put, our community defines our own experiences.

Our opening vignettes presented how different communities identify and grapple with public problems. Professor Rinfret's small, rural community allowed her to question more broadly what role women and minorities can, and should, play in society and that is okay to question societal normalizations that advantage certain segments of the population over others. Professor Scheberle's experiences were first defined by her work community, but later by her years as a college professor exploring public service and environmental policy, showing that life experiences of different communities can influence policy positions. Professor Pautz explained how her college community or the classroom demonstrated that solutions are available to protect whales from a public

problem—oil spills. These experiences identify that where we live or with whom we interact shapes how we define what a problem is.

Public Policy and Solutions. To address public problems, public policy is also the practice of a rigorous, systematic process. Answering our questions warrants "designated policy study" (Anderson 2003, 1). Specifically, the policymaking process is a method that is inspired by a series of steps on how public policy develops to tackle public problems. In this chapter we have discussed the stages heuristic approach, but more approaches will be discussed in Chapter 2.

The notion is that most public problems, if they reach the agenda, are addressed through a framework to provide solutions. The stages heuristic approach is invaluable for students of public policy to understand the evolution of the process. As Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) conclude:

> By focusing on each of these phases, and the various additional stages, students may come to understand how policies originate, develop, and grow in a step-by-step process. Although no method is perfect, the policy cycle approach offers students a solid, practical tool with which to understand the dynamics and structure of American policy making. (34)

Public Policy: A Profession. We could not understand public policy without studying the doing side of public policy. In particular, public policy is a profession guided by experts in specific fields (e.g., health, education, civil rights, environment, energy). These individuals not only translate vague legislation into programs to address public problems and evaluate its effectiveness, but they ensure we have clean water to drink or fresh air to breathe. Nevertheless, public policy is multifaceted and messy: it is affected and shaped by our communities; addressed through processes; and designed and implemented by public servants in agencies, nonprofits, or volunteers in local government.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Public policy is driven by our own experiences, but it is often messy due to the actors involved or the roles that power and politics play. Remember that the work of public policy is a process and does not end with its creation or inception, but continues with the doing side of public policy—implementation and evaluation.

Also, we cannot forget the important recognition of *value-neutral* and *value-laden*. We are consumers of public policy each and every day, and this consumption is defined by our communities, which can lead to value-laden decisions. Public policy experts across specialized fields are trained to make value-neutral solutions to address public problems, yet we encourage the reader to consider who is left out of policymaking conversations and how our collective work helps individuals at the margins.

In short, this chapter presented a variety of concepts to provide insights into why the field of public policy is far-reaching and essential. This chapter serves as a guidepost for what is to follow. And, by the time you complete this textbook at the end of your semester, you will have the skills necessary to engage in the process.

KEY TERMS

Broadcast 12
Bully pulpit 9
Business interest group 12
Civil law 10
Criminal law 10
Doing side of policy 8
Elitism 3
Equality 5

Equity 5
Federalism 4
Implementation 2
Lobbying 13
Pluralism 3
Policy 3
Policy evaluators 8
Politics 3

Power 3
Print 12
Professional interest groups 12
Public 3
Public law 10
Stages heuristic approach 6
Value-laden 2
Value-neutral 2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The chapter begins with our own, personal stories. What personal experiences have you had that raise a policy question?

2. A variety of policy actors are involved in the policymaking process. Yet many Americans do not involve themselves in this process. What suggestions would you present to your friends and family about how to get involved in policymaking?

3. From the list of categories to public policy (distributive, redistributed, regulatory),

what are the strengths and weaknesses of each category? Which category, in your opinion, best represents public policymaking in the twenty-first century?

4. Policymaking can be controversial. Select a current public policy you define as controversial and explain why the concepts of value-neutral and value-laden are important in these conversations.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Suggested Websites

GovTrack, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/committees/.
Oyez, https://www.oyez.org/.
U.S. Congress, https://www.congress.gov/.
U.S. Supreme Court, http://www.supremecourt.gov/.
White House, http://www.whitehouse.gov.

Suggested Books or Articles

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *The American Political Science Review* 56, no. 4: 947–52.
Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kraft, Michael, and Scott Furlong. 2015. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: A Radical View* (vol. 1). London: Macmillan.
Stone, Deborah. 2011. *The Policy Paradox*. W. W. Norton.

Suggested Films

All the Way, DVD, directed by Jay Roach (2016: United States), http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3791216/.
Confirmation, DVD, directed by Rick Famuyiwa (2016: United States), http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4608402/.

Iron Jawed Angels, DVD, directed by Katja von Garnier (2004: United States), www.imdb.com/title/tt0338139/.

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, DVD, directed by Frank Capra (1939: United States), http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0031679/.

The Suffragette, DVD, directed by Sarah Gavron (2015: United States), http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3077214/.

NOTES

1. Intersectionality: the interconnectedness of race, class, gender when considering how these groups overlap through the lens of disadvantages.
2. Institutions (e.g., Congress) and process by which policy choices are made or determined.
3. The US Constitution grants Congress the authority to determine the size of the US Supreme Court. The 1789 Judiciary Act set the number of justices at six, which fluctuated until 1869, when Congress set the number to nine justices; this has remained the same till today.
4. A federal agency is representative of the bureaucracy.

The Policy Process and Policy Theories

<div style="text-align: right;">2</div>

POLICY RHETORIC AND REALITY

It is logical to approach the study of public policy thinking that policy is about two choices: for or against a particular issue, since that is so often how policy choices are framed. Indeed, we are taught from a young age that you are either for something or against it. Think about other, long-standing policy issues, such as capital punishment. It would seem that one is either for it or against it. As is often the case, though, reality is far more complicated than policy rhetoric might lead you to believe. After all, consider your own view on capital punishment. Some of you might have clear-cut positions that are absolute; however, you may likely find yourself among the majority of Americans whose views on these issues are far more complex or nuanced. For instance, you might think the death penalty may be an appropriate punishment in certain circumstances, but you may still express trepidation about how it is carried out or the disproportionate representation of minorities that are on death row.

Now think about another, seemingly less politically charged topic and the rhetoric around it: the response to wildfires. During the summer and early fall of 2020, record-breaking wildfires ravaged large swaths of the Western United States, including more than three million acres of land in California alone—or an area about the size of Connecticut (Silverman 2020). The smoke and ensuing poor air quality affected states as far away as upstate New York. Wildfires are not new to the western part of the United States, but the 2020 fires were exceptionally bad and caused by myriad circumstances ranging from an abnormally hot summer, little rain, existing forest management practices, human behavior, and a changing climate. Dozens of people died, homes and businesses were destroyed making the economic losses difficult to calculate, and there is untold destruction to animals, plants,

Readers of this chapter will be able to:

1. Convey a definition of public policy

2. Discuss the context of public policy and the challenges that environment presents for achieving goals

3. Explain the desire for a coherent, universal theory of public policy

4. Apply the six steps of the stages heuristic model of public policy to a policy issue

5. Articulate strengths and weaknesses of competing public policy models

6. Discuss alternative policymaking models

7. Appreciate the multitude of actors involved in policymaking

and the ecosystem, which leads to a conclusion that wildfires are bad and should be stopped. Or should they? Fire ecologists and forest management professionals will tell you that wildfires are an important part of forest management. So where does that leave policymakers and the government? Do we acknowledge that fires are necessary and let them burn when they start or do we prevent them no matter what, indicating that fires are either acceptable or they are not? And these questions do not even begin to address who should do whatever has been decided. The point is that while it may seem like policy issues result in a binary choice—being for or against something—policy issues are far more complicated in reality than the rhetoric might imply.

WHAT REALLY IS POLICY?

The term *public policy* is ubiquitous. Whether it is the discussion of public policy that comes with the arrival of new presidents, such as Donald Trump, to the White House in 2017 or the circumstances that ushered in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration in the midst of the Great Depression, conversations about public policy abound. In particular, discussions of new policy directions and initiatives range from political circles, elected officials, the news media, to the classroom. But what really is public policy? Is it simply new leadership at the federal level in Washington, DC, or in a state capital? Is it the process of how a bill becomes a law? Is it a new regulation? Quite simply, public policy is all of this and much more.

Public policy, as introduced in the last chapter, is a course of action adopted or created by the government in response to public problems. As we will see in the coming pages, public problems are those issues identified by the public and elected leaders as worthy of a coordinated response from the government. A response could entail the passage of laws or may involve an executive, such as the president or a governor, directing a government agency to do something. Just as problems often beget action, it is important to recognize that public policy is just as much what a government decides to do as it is what a government decides not to do. Ultimately, public policy is all about choices.

Government policies are not always easy to spot. Of course, public policy includes the laws passed by legislative bodies, whether they are statutes or local government ordinances, including the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act from 2020 or the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of health policy). But policy is much more. Policy also encompasses the regulations promulgated by executive agencies that translate the often vague statutes into actionable steps, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. More broadly, policy is also the priorities of government entities, since policy is just as much about what a government does not do as what it does. Public policy was manifested in the US Department of Agriculture's MyPlate nutrition guidance, or in the US Forest Service's campaign to prevent forest fires with Smokey the Bear.

In this chapter, we introduce the process of government initiating action around public problems and supporting theories. The foundation here is instrumental for the

remainder of the textbook and your ability to apply the core concepts from this chapter to various areas of public policy, such as education policy and criminal justice policy. We begin by focusing on the context for policymaking before delving into the realm of policy theories and efforts to explain the often convoluted process that produces public policy. The most common policy theory, the stages model, is discussed, along with some alternative theories to understand policymaking. Finally, the chapter ends with an assessment of whether or not policy theory helps advance our comprehension of policymaking.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC POLICY

Before delving into the policy theories that offer insight into the policy process, it is essential to point out that public policy does not happen in a vacuum—it does not happen in isolation. Whether it is health-care policy or reforms to the tax code, public policy happens in a broader context with other concerns, priorities, and issues swirling about. Even though our subsequent chapters deal with particular areas of policy seemingly independent of other areas, this is not how policy exists in real life. What happens in immigration policy, for example, has implications for health-care policy and education policy, and vice versa. Policy areas are all interrelated. As a result, policy action on a particular, even seemingly unrelated issue may be competing with action on another issue. Just as you can only deal with a certain number of courses each semester, the government can only handle a certain number of policy options at any given time. What this exact number is varies and is ill-defined, but the point is that all sorts of policies compete with one another to become priorities of the government. Not every issue can be the government's—or society's—top priority (Photo 2.1).

PHOTO 2.1
Smoke From Forest Fires Over Missoula, Montana

Additionally, the priorities of a government can change rapidly and dramatically with focusing events. **Focusing events** are significant episodes or experiences that catapult particular issues to prominence on the public's agenda. The rapid emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2020 is a clear example of a focusing event, and the effects of this event are still unfolding and will be for some time. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 is another one. Airport security and the threat of terrorism were

issues prior to the attacks, but the prominence of those concerns changed decisively afterward, prompting new security measures and a new agency, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

More recently, mass shootings at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado, spas in Georgia, a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, or at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida have renewed debates about gun control. The 2010 explosion and sinking of the *Deepwater Horizon* drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico precipitated conversation about offshore drilling and environmental protection. Sometimes, focusing events have significant staying power in the national consciousness and result in policy action, such as the terrorist attacks, and other times, there are too many competing priorities and the nation's attention does not stay focused enough to compel action, as has been the case with the latest mass shootings. It is very difficult to determine in real time whether or not a focusing event will bring about policy change in the moment, but retrospectively, looking for focusing events can help us understand movement on public policy issues.

With a realization of competing priorities and focusing events, we discuss four factors that affect the context of policymaking: (1) the economic environment, (2) the social and cultural environment, (3) the political environment, and (4) the administrative environment. We unpack what each of these contexts means for creating policy.

The Economic Environment

The condition of the economy is a major factor when it comes to policymaking. After all, we all understand that money plays a large role in many situations. The health and overall well-being of both the American economy and the global economy can also have a significant effect on policy. When the economy is not performing well, Americans and their elected leaders are often focused on "fixing" the economy, and any other policy priorities are likely to be secondary.

These circumstances were evident during the Great Depression, which saw Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration propel policies under the New Deal designed to stimulate the economy. Another example is the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009, when the downward spiral of the automotive industry and the housing crisis brought sweeping policy actions to save major car manufacturers and bolster the financial markets—the explanation being that the health of the economy is paramount. And more recently, the effects of COVID-19 on the American and world economies are still being felt. During these times, policy conversations about other issues, such as environmental efforts or education policies, were pushed aside.

On the flipside, when the economy is performing well, the nation is willing to engage in other policy issues that may be construed as being more "quality of life." For example, environmental or social policies are likely to gain more traction when the economy is robust because the thought is that these policies might cost money—regardless of the accuracy of these perceptions—and the public is more willing to entertain such action. Remember, much of the economy is based on faith and perceptions, just like the value of money. If people perceive that the economy is doing well, then it will be a self-reinforcing cycle and the economy will do well

(for more on the contours of economic policy, see Chapter 5). But if people are worried that the economy is trending downward, they will be less inclined to spend money. These realities are related to the social and cultural environment as Americans espouse and their priorities around policy.

The Social and Cultural Environment

A second component of the policy context is social and cultural values. The norms of a society and what is culturally acceptable drive policymaking. Who we are as a country helps set the boundaries of what types of policies are likely to be enacted and successfully implemented. Consider the following scenario to illustrate this point. Perhaps scientists and engineers in the next year determine that in order to protect the planet from carbon emissions the most efficient and effective course of action would be for all Americans to drive Toyota Priuses. Accordingly, Congress takes up a bill to mandate that all other cars and trucks on the road nationwide have to be phased out over the next five years and replaced with Priuses. Let us also stipulate that Americans are desperate for action to curb emissions and politicians also support such steps. Would a policy like this one ever pass? In a word, no. And this conclusion is grounded in an understanding of Americans' culture and social values.

Since the creation of the interstate highway system during President Dwight D. Eisenhower's time in office, Americans' love affair with their cars has only grown. Moreover, nostalgia surrounds the freedom of the open road and even driving Route 66 across much of the nation. Additionally, fundamental to our identities as Americans is a belief in freedom and the free market. Therefore, when it comes to consumption, we value choice. We do not want to be told what kind of car to drive. Among your own friends and families, it is probably safe to assume that there are divergent opinions about the preferred style of car, much less the color selection. Some of us prefer American-made cars; others will only drive foreign cars. Still others like small, compact cars, while others want cars capable of hauling lots of people and their stuff. These realities about who we are as Americans and our preferences lead to the conclusion that there is no scenario—at least not at the present time—that can be envisioned in which Congress stipulates we all drive Priuses. It should be noted that values can and do change over time. These values feed the political environment, which is a third influence in policymaking.

The Political Environment

The political environment, or the politics of it all, deeply affect policymaking. In a polarized political climate, the role of politics is significant. More specifically, the priorities of political parties and elected officials do much to shape the policymaking agenda. For example, at the start of Donald Trump's administration in 2017, a stated policy priority was to repeal the Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare, which was enacted in 2009. Republican leaders in Congress pursued these objectives and scheduled a vote. This vote was pulled on the day it was scheduled; however, as it became clear the bill would not pass. And subsequent votes in the months that followed all failed to achieve that campaign promise.

This example brings up another dimension of the political environment—the cycle of elections. Politicians coming up on reelection can be more reluctant to take a position on controversial issues that their challengers in the race might use against them. Also, after an election, the new party in control—and particularly if that political party controls multiple branches of government—will try to work quickly to action many of the priorities its members campaigned on during the election season. The issues that are particularly salient to the electorate, as well, are likely to help shape the priorities of elected officials and influence the policy options that are pursued. In the 2020 presidential election, the salient issues for supporters of Joe Biden included the fight against COVID-19, protecting Obamacare, and economic relief. The early days of the Biden presidency demonstrate an administration making concrete steps to fulfill those, and other, campaign pledges. As Chapter 8 explores, the public opinion data do not support the construction of the wall, but only time will tell the outcomes of these policy efforts.

The Administrative Environment

The final environmental dimension of the policymaking context has to do with the practical, administrative side of policies. Put succinctly, the administrative environment concerns who in government (or the broader public sector, for that matter) will

PHOTO 2.2
Federal Tax
Forms

implement the policy; what level of government will be responsible for it? Many of these administrative and implementation details play an important role in public policy. It might be easy to argue at this juncture that these nitty-gritty details are of less significance, but we should recall the rollout of the Obamacare website, healthcare.gov, in October 2013. By almost every measure, the implementation of the nationwide marketplace website for health-care exchanges was atrocious. The website crashed repeatedly, frustrating many on all sides of the issue. The implementation challenges were steep, considering that the website had to work with various state websites that had created their own exchanges. The website also had to work with the Internal Revenue Service's systems, as income and tax information for potential enrollees was required. And unlike the norms of the information technology industry, healthcare.gov was not phased in in pieces or tested in certain markets the way other Internet retailers, such as Amazon.com, might do; rather, the website went live nationwide all at once.

A more contemporary example is President Trump's executive order in August 2020 to cut taxes, or more accurately, defer taxes since only Congress can cut taxes. This presidential order defers the collection of payroll taxes through the end of 2020 but it created a logistical nightmare. People who make less than $4,000 per two-week pay period may defer the tax collection until 2021, but that is only if their employers halt the collection of those taxes. Some employers have opted not to defer the tax collection. And if Congress does not make those cuts permanent—and at the time of writing there is little evidence that Congress will—then those employees whose employers defer those taxes will be on the hook for them in 2021, settling up an administrative nightmare for employees, employers, and the IRS.

Although these seemingly less important details are not as pervasive in public debate about a particular policy issue, they are extremely significant as policy ideas are being offered to solve a public problem. Sometimes the debate is less about a government doing something and more about what level of government should do about something. A large portion of Americans would concede that much needs to be done about public education in this country, so the policy conversation becomes less about whether something should be done and instead more about who should take action. A particular area of that divide concerns the role of the federal government and fifty state governments in education. Depending on one's viewpoint about which level of government should be at the forefront of education, policy reforms will drive discussions about policy actions. Oftentimes there is consensus that action is needed on a particular issue, but the challenge becomes how something should be done; therefore, this context of policymaking is significant, even if it is a bit less glamorous (Photo 2.2).

The key idea to take away from this discussion of the policymaking context is that policy action does not happen in isolation—many factors affect a particular policy idea that may have little to do with the merit or validity of a policy. At any given time, multiple policies in different areas are always competing with one another for the attention of people and their lawmakers; the politics of the moment are likely to play a role, just as the economic conditions will as well. Finally, questions about the administration of a policy solution are also intertwined with social and cultural values.

It is essential to keep these points in mind as we turn our attention to the path a particular policy idea must travel to be created and implemented.

THE QUEST FOR PUBLIC POLICY THEORY

With the complexities of the policy environment, it is unsurprising that there is a desire to produce theories that explain when policies will or will not move forward. Indeed, this quest for public policy theories drives many scholars and practitioners throughout their careers. But before we delve into the work of these scholars, we should start at the beginning: What is a theory? According to Google, a theory is "a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained." Theories help us understand phenomena, conditions, and events that seem to escape explanation. Even with just our brief discussion of what policy is in both this chapter and the last, it is already apparent that public policy is something that craves explanation. Moreover, since public policy can and does have significant effects on our day-to-day lives, it is unsurprising that we want theories to explain it.

More formally, Professor Paul Sabatier (2007) maintains there are five reasons why we seek theories of public policy. First, there are a great deal of people and organizations who are involved in public policy issues. Within this complex array of actors, individuals have various interests, values, perceptions, and preferences that can and do have tremendous effects on the creation and implementation of public policy. After all, if some actors do not even perceive an issue as being a problem, there are significant ramifications to any effort to enact policy to solve that problem. With this complexity, policy theories should help us better grasp the multitude of actors involved and what their impact might be on policy.

Second, policymaking encompasses significant time spans, so theories can help us grasp the timeline for policies. Think about some of the policy issues that have already been mentioned, including health care and air pollution. Neither of these issues is likely to be addressed quickly, and the existing policies about these topics go back decades. Arguably, the role of government in health care dates back to at least the 1930s, and the federal government has been involved in environmental policy since the 1950s and 1960s. Policy theory can help us account for the timelines of these policy issues.

As is evident in the brief examples in the previous paragraph, health care and environmental concerns are not encapsulated in just one policy. This inter-policy complexity is a third reason why theories are useful in understanding policy. In the discussion above, there are multiple policies and programs that may or may not align well with one another. It is not just the Affordable Care Act from 2009; there are numerous laws dealing with the creation of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (creating COBRA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or the Medicare Prescription Drug Act. The point here is that there are lots and lots of policies in any particular policy area, not just one policy, and theories that can help us understand how they fit together.

A fourth reason why theories are helpful is they account for all the different ways public problems are approached and understood. At first glance, it may be fairly simple for you to think about a public issue and what should be done about it. But as you reflect on that topic, you realize that your ideas about that problem are *your* ideas and others are likely to understand the problem differently, think about the problem differently, and offer a range of other solutions. And this leads to the final reason Sabatier offers about the value of policy theory: theories can help us understand and consider what government should and should not be doing. The debates surrounding public policy are rooted in our varying ideas about the role of government in society, how the government should fulfill that role, and what resources it takes to accomplish its objectives. To put it more succinctly, "understanding the policy process requires knowledge of the goals and perceptions of hundreds of actors throughout the country involving possibly very technical scientific and legal issues over periods of a decade or more while most of those actors are actively seeking to propagate their specific 'spin' on events" (Sabatier 2007, 4).

Of course, it may be appealing just to apply common sense or take an ad hoc approach to a policy, but that is limited in that you are unable to extrapolate from one particular policy topic at one particular time to any other instance of policymaking. Accordingly, numerous policy scholars have sought theories to explain policy in more than just one case. Theories can help us identify similarities and patterns across multiple cases that enable us to understand what is happening presently and perhaps even predict what might happen in the future. They provide an organizing framework and a vocabulary in which we can talk about policy. So with that in mind, we introduce next some specific policy theories, starting with the most common: the stages heuristic model. After a robust discussion of this pervasive policy theory, we also introduce several other theories that have gained traction in the policy community more recently.

THE STAGES HEURISTIC MODEL OF PUBLIC POLICYMAKING

The stages heuristic model of public policymaking, as described in Chapter 1, is without doubt the most common theory that endeavors to explain policy. It is worth pointing out that theories to describe policymaking are relatively new, as studying public policy in a formal, academic setting only began in the middle part of the twentieth century. Granted, this may not seem new to readers of this text, but keep in mind that biologists and theologians have been hard at work in their fields for centuries. Political scientist Harold Lasswell was the first scholar to describe a "decision process" for public policy and articulate "policy sciences" (Lasswell 1951, 1956). Although the language used to describe the steps of the policymaking process have evolved over the intervening decades, the steps of making public policy can be thought of in the following terms (as introduced in the last chapter): (1) problem identification and definition, (2) agenda setting, (3) policy formulation, (4) policy legitimation, (5) policy implementation, and (6) policy evaluation (see also Figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1
The Policymaking Process

PHOTO 2.3
Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Sugary Drinks Portion Cap Rule Effort
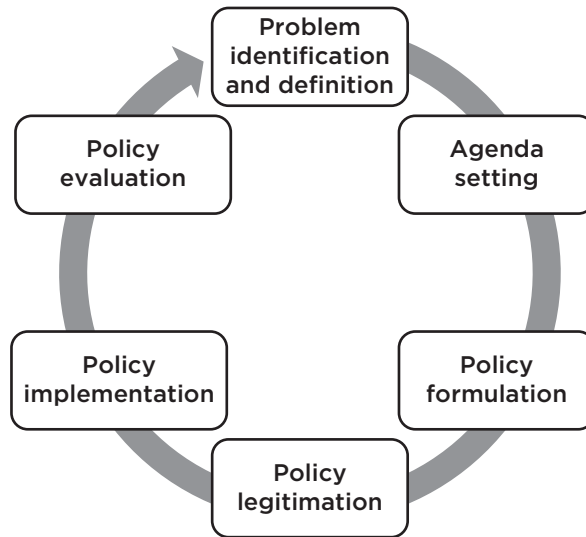
Sugary Drinks

As we consider each of these six steps, it is helpful to have an example to walk through each stage of the process. For our purposes, we have selected a fictitious and somewhat ridiculous example, but it is based in real life. In 2013, Michael Bloomberg was New York City's mayor and led an effort to limit the size of drinks sold in the city that were sweetened. The Sugary Drinks Portion Cap Rule, promulgated in 2013 for New York City, limited the size of drinks that were sweetened (e.g., sodas) to no more than 16 ounces. The thought was that by limiting the size of drinks with added sugar that people could buy, the intake of sugar would decrease. It is worth noting that this effort did not appear as part of his 2020 run for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party, probably because the attempts were unsuccessful, as New York state courts ruled that the city exceeded its authority in instituting the limits. Nevertheless, let us use this as a foundation to employ an example that helps us understa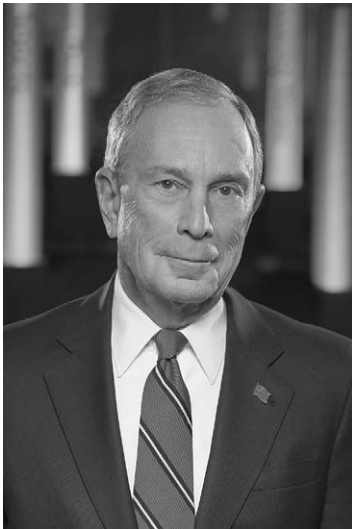nd the policy process (Photo 2.3).