Introduction to Political Science

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Week 4: Policy and Bureaucracy

What is Policy?

- Honesty is the best policy.

  Benjamin Franklin

- Honesty is the best policy - when there is money in it.

  Mark Twain

- I have a very strict gun control policy: if there's a gun around, I want to be in control of it.

  Clint Eastwood

What is Public Policy?

- Definition: "...a decision made, carried out and enforced by public officials (Meredith and Dunham 1999, 4)."
- In other words: policy is an outcome of the politics process
- Public policy is what governments decide to do or not to do

Policies of the State

- In 20th century states assumed more and more responsibilities
  - Government expenditures as % of GDP
- How much does the government choose to spend and what to spend on?
  - Depends on how rich/poor the country is
  - Type of regime (democracy or not)
  - Ideology

State policy areas

- Defence
- Education
- Research and Development
- Health and Social Welfare
- Economic sphere
- What about Armenia?
- https://www.e-gov.am/interactive-budget/

Defence: state's monopoly

Country	% of GDP spent on Defence
Bolivia	1.3
France	1.7
Israel	4.9
Mozambique	0.8
Myanmar	9.0
Singapore	4.9
United States	5.0
Armenia	3.9
Azerbaijan	4.6
Georgia	2.9

Education

Country	% of GDP spent on Education
Bolivia	6.3
France	5.6
Israel	6.4
Mozambique	5.0
Myanmar	1.3
Singapore	3.2
United States	5.5
Armenia	3.2
Azerbaijan	2.8
Georgia	2.7

Research and Development

Country	% of GDP spent on R&D
Bolivia	0.3
France	2.1
Israel	4.7
Mozambique	0.5
Myanmar	N/A
Singapore	2.6
United States	2.7
Armenia	0.3
Azerbaijan	0.25
Georgia	N/A

Health and Social Welfare

Country	% of GDP spent on Health (public)
Bolivia	3.4
France	8.7
Israel	4.5
Mozambique	3.5
Myanmar	0.2
Singapore	1.0
United States	7.1
Armenia	1.6
Azerbaijan	1.1
Georgia	2.2

FOR DISCUSSION

- How would YOU balance the Armenian state budget (i.e. which policy areas should be prioritised more)?

FOR DISCUSSION

- Is bureaucracy a good thing or a bad thing?
- Why is bureaucracy important?

Public Administration

- A day-to-day implementer (and shaper) of state policies
- Not directly involved in major political decision
- Employed by the government
- Are not under close political control *and this is both a strength and a weakness*

Good public administration

- Honest, accurate translation of political decisions into specific policies
- Flexibility
- No arbitrary use of flexibility
- Feedback of expert advice
- Efficiency

Bureaucracy

- A way to organize public administration
- Developed as a reform in 19th century
- Old system: "spoils" in US, for sale in Europe: *inefficient, low quality, lack of control or too much control*
- First used in appointing procurement officers in French and Prussian armies

Principles of Bureaucracy

- Appointments and promotions based on person's qualifications for the job
- Special training or experience are set for the position
- Standard administrative procedures
- Hierarchical command structure (clear lines of command)
- Shield from day-to-day political pressure

Problems of Bureaucracy

- Flexibility
- Difficult to evaluate
- Protected incompetence
- Is it socially representative? Should it be?

FOR DISCUSSION

- Use Shively's arguments about good/bad bureaucracy to describe Armenian bureaucracy or public administration in general. Does it look like the typical Western bureaucracy? Why yes, why not.