



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.