

Chapter 6: Government and Policy Making

Comparative Politics Today

| A World View |



UPDATED SEVENTH EDITION

GABRIEL A. ALMOND | G. BINGHAM POWELL, JR.

KAARE STROM | RUSSELL J. DALTON

Introduction

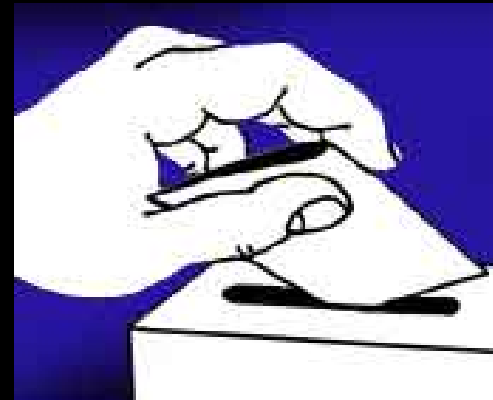
- Policymaking – The pivotal stage in the political process, the point at which bills become law, or edicts are issued by the rulers, whoever they are

Decision Rules

- Decision Rules – The basic rules governing how decisions are made, setting up agencies and offices with specific powers, assigning them territorial and functional jurisdiction, and the like
- All governments have them
- Most important rules that govern the policy making process and the voting process

Voting Rules

- Egalitarian – each member has the same voting power
- vs.
- Hierarchical – the highest person up is the only one that really counts, all the other members influence him/her

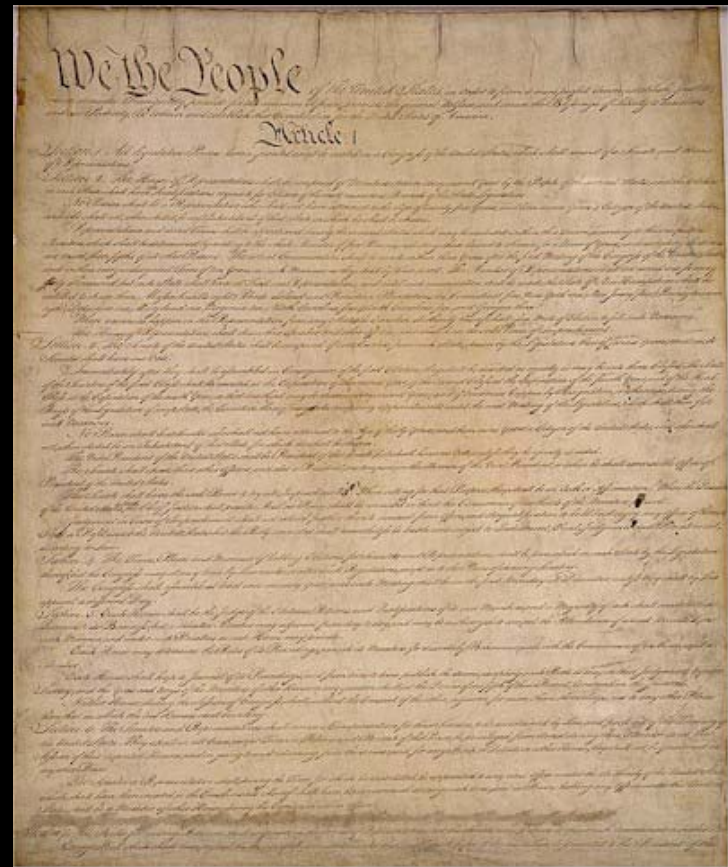


4 Types of Majority Voting

- Simple Majority – 51% - 49%
- Absolute Majority – must have support of a majority of all those eligible to vote
- Qualified Majorities – certain fraction over 50%
- Unanimity – 1 voter can block decision

Constitution Making

- Creates or transforms decision rules
 - Britain doesn't have a formal written constitution, but a set of customs



Institutions Involved

- 3 Institutions involved in policy-making:
 - Executive
 - Higher levels of bureaucracy
 - Legislative assembly

Democracy and Authoritarianism

- Democratic Regimes – Policymakers are chosen by votes by citizens
- Authoritarian Regimes – Policymakers are chosen by military councils, hereditary families, dominant political parties, etc
- Decision making rules differ by:
 - Geographic distribution of authority
 - Separation of powers among branches
 - Limits on gov't authority

Distribution of Gov't Power

- Confederal – Ultimate power rests with the states; all federal power derived from there
- Federal – both the states and central governments have separate spheres of authority and the means to implement their power
- Unitary – Power and authority are derived from the central government

Separation of Gov't Powers

- Democratic Presidential Regime – two separate agencies (executive and legislative)
- Parliamentary Regime – Executive and legislative branches are independent. Keeps stagnation from occurring
- “Semipresidential” – The president and legislative branches are elected separately, but the president can dissolve the legislative body
- Confidence Relationship – Makes Parliamentary Regimes possible; relationship between the Parliament and the executive branch

Limitations on Gov't Powers

- Constitutional Regimes – Powers of various governmental units defined and limited by a written constitution, statutes, and custom

Assemblies

- Assemblies
 - 80% of UN nations have assemblies
- Functions:
 - Deliberate, debate, and vote on policies
 - Control Spending
 - Enact and amend legislation

Assembly Structure

- Democracy: 1-2 chambers (bicameral)
 - Dominant → 1st representation based on population
 - Regional Interests → 2nd representation based on geographic units
 - Usually equal in power

Political Executives

- Executive Branch strongest with Chief Executive
- Includes:
 - President
 - Prime minister
 - Chancellors
- Individual or Collective and Effective or Ceremonial

Presidential Systems

- US – ceremonial and effective individual with advisors
- China – purely ceremonial individual
- Chief Functions: most important in policy maker, has veto power (Parliamentary less likely to veto)

Cabinet

- Most important collective decision making body
- Contains leaders of major departments
- Selected by Chief Executive
- Parliamentary: Elect cabinet's resulting in:
 - Majority single-party cabinet
 - Coalition cabinet (multiparty)

The Bureaucracy

- The largest contemporary organizations
- Systems of public administration

The Bureaucracy: Structure

- Important officials make up the civil service
 - Highest tier is top executives and policy makers (the elite group)
 - Others make up the rest of the civil service group, such as public employees or innumerous gov't agencies

The Bureaucracy: Functions

- Implement and enforce laws and regulations
- Articulate and aggregate interests
- Involved in communication of government info

Bureaucracy as an organization

- Decision making based on official jurisdiction, rules, and regulations
- Formal educational requirements for each position
- Hierarchical command structure
- Standard operating procedures
- Officials hold career positions; appointed and promoted by merit

The Bureaucracy

- Often “stodgy”, unmotivated to be innovated and efficient
- Executives and Bureaucracies are mutually dependent upon one another
- Ombudsmen – investigate citizens claims that they have suffered injury/damage due to gov’t action
- Internal controls upon the bureaucracy

Elite Recruitment

- Individuals can be selected for office through election, appointment, birth, and auction
- Chief Executives – tenure is limited either directly or indirectly (authoritarian systems rarely have effective procedures for leadership succession)

Representation Mirroring and Representational Biases

- Ascriptive representation – the idea that gov't officials should mirror the characteristics of the citizens
- Political representatives rarely ever do this
- Class bias as well as gender and age bias dominant due to lack of ascription

Preferences and Competence in Representation

- Govt officials should be selected for their ability to serve the interests of the citizens, whether or not they share the voter's background characteristic
- Officials should have the skills to effectively serve, such as education and experience

Control of the Elites

- Impeachment – most govts provide that an executive can be removed if they fall out of standing
- Parliamentary – impeached by a majority vote of representatives
- Authoritarians – no way to oust leader
- Democratic – in the middle of two extremes

Impeachment

- Process of Impeachment:
 - Impeachable offenses identified – presenting unusual danger to public will and safety
 - The sanction is removal from office/other criminal penalties
 - Cases decided by legislature

And we're finally done.....